







## Editor's Note

When I was asked to edit this issue of our *Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada* I did not expect we would receive as many articles as we did. Such a significant response to a call for a special issue on evaluation surprised us by reason of the fact that assessment, as a study and research area, is still a marginal discipline in Brazilian academy. Our undergraduate and graduate courses do not make space for its permanent inclusion in their curricula. Thus, as the articles herein indicate, this means that the majority of those who are responsible for dealing with evaluation processes or constructing testing instruments still do it intuitively, which, in turn explains the difficulty of obtaining meaningful results from evaluations for both the evaluators and those evaluated. As a fundamental concept in education, it is through evaluation that data are obtained for evaluation to play its best role – inform on actions that lead to better performances and outcomes in learning contexts; thus, the relevance to this issue.

The selection that we present to our readers has required us to make choices so as to keep within this volume the broad-spectrum of concerns brought into discussion by the authors, being careful to avoid redundancy or overlap. The articles in this edition deal with evaluation in the context of the school and the classroom with a focus on its impact on teaching and learning. Our readers, either those who are new to the area as well as those who are interested in it or conduct research will find a contribution to the challenge evaluation represents. At the same time, they will appreciate the complexity of issues raised by evaluation, such as: issues on (self-) evaluation, cognition and power in evaluation, the conceptions of evaluation that guide teachers and that are found in textbooks, teachers' and students' beliefs on error and correction, an analysis of tests constructed by public school teachers as well as the results of investigations on institutional evaluation and on students' learning experiences that reveal their evaluation of English as a foreign language teaching in different school contexts. Finally, we have received a review on Brown and Hudson's (2002), *Criterion-Referenced Language Testing*, which presents evaluation as a procedure that can be learned, develop and perfected. The presentation of articles has a logic:







the first three deal with theoretical issues, involving ideologies, politics and conceptions that affect evaluation; the next three articles focus on specific aspects of in-classroom assessment and the last two deal with institutional and teaching evaluation. Without further a due, I proceed to a brief presentation of each of the articles that compose this issue.

This tome begins with the article authored by *Sueli Salles Fidalgo* from PUC-SP, brings a brief review of the history of evaluation, focusing on currently in-use evaluation models, on fundamental concepts involved in quality evaluation, and on the assessment instruments available to teachers in the NCPs. She also discusses the difficulties of conducting self-evaluation as well as the tensions in defining an evaluation plan.

The authors, *Vera Menezes*, from UFMG, and *Liliane Assis Sade*, from UFSJ, take a look at the touchy issue of the relationship between power and evaluation in academia as they analyze school-life memories of students that refer to evaluation stories. As they scrutinize the relationship between assessment and the conceptions that aim to explain human cognition, they present us six principles that emerge from memory research. These are used in their interpretation of students' assessment memories and on their analyses of the impact of those memories. The implications of their analyses bring to light thorny issues for those involved in evaluation in academic environments.

The contribution from *Myriam Crestian Chaves da Cunha* from UFPA discusses the problems associated to the concept of formative and continued assessment in the teaching of Portuguese. Her approach to the subject reveals the risks of aiming for the transformation of practice through the introduction of concepts without their proper analysis, i.e., the peril of adopting a discourse but which, however, the practice does not reflect. The author's argument defends not only (1) rescuing the important relationship among the conceptions of teaching, language learning and evaluation as well as (2) clarifying learning objects, and (3) the importance of discussing new concepts within the parameters of didactics and methodologies to advance the meeting of discourse and practice.

Eyes on the relationship among evaluation, textbook, and beliefs are behind the article written by *Cláudia Hilsdorf Rocha* (Unicamp), *Leny Costa* (Unicamp) e *Kleber Aparecido da Silva* (UNESP) that presents the results of an ethnographic study involving four English teachers at work with students at the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> cycles of Public Schools in São Paulo.





Through the presentation of excerpts from their data, they present evidence of the incompatibility between the announced evaluation proposal and the one that is found in the textbook as well as in relation to these teachers' beliefs on assessment.

Next, dealing with ordinary classroom assessment, *Sulene Vaz da Silva e Francisco José Quaresma de Figueiredo* from UFG approach two teachers' beliefs on error and correction and some of their students' in the public school context. Based on a 2003 study carried out in four classes and a total of 120 students that generated 40 hours of class video footage plus questionnaire responses and interview data, their results evidence that background experiences have a role in the reproduction (or not) on the teacher's correction patterns and on the way students deal with errors. Thus, error and correction are concepts still associated to failure rather than to the possibility of success.

Focusing on 40 tests constructed by English teachers from public schools, *Maria Tereza Nunes Marchezan* da UFSM, present less than cheering results on the relationship between English teaching and classroom assessment. As far as teaching, the conception of learning that underlies what is tested through the tests maintains English learning as process of grammar and vocabulary acquisition. As for evaluation, the test frustrate as to the choice of question formats. Her article includes a thorough review of test-construction literature, discussing the urgency of initial or in-service teacher development program in assessment theory.

Leaving classroom assessment through correction and tests, the article by *Christine Sant'Anna de Almeida* from CESV and *Laura Miccoli* from UFMG turns its attention to institutional evaluation. Their results offer an appreciation of the state of affairs in which undergraduate programs find themselves in Espírito Santo, where English teachers get their degrees. The data come from a survey of four of the five institutions, which at the time of the survey (2002) had already conferred degrees or had graduating classes that year. The three groups in the university community – institution, professors and students responded questionnaires. Results indicate that in these institutions evaluation is not a current procedure and that the programs for English teachers' Certification need to improve in Espírito Santo.

*Mariney Pereira da Conceição* from UnB presents the reports of 51 students on their learning experiences prior to their entrance in University, which end up evaluating the quality of English teaching in



public or private schools. Based on a case study at a public university, the results that emerge are not cheering, for her data provide evidence that the advances in the area of foreign language teaching and learning have not arrived to these 51 students' classrooms. Outdated concepts still prevail, urging the transformation of such a reality through changes in teacher certification programs and on the implementation of teacher development courses for in-service teachers.

The contribution that closes this volume comes from *Ricardo Augusto de Souza* from UFMG, who reviewed the book by BROWN, J.D. e HUDSON, T. *Criterion-Referenced Language Testing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, offering our readers a detailed appreciation of the contents of this title and of its importance to those who are interested in conducting quality evaluation programs. After reading the review, I believe that Brown's and Hudson's book will be recommended to those who study evaluation and will be found in the personal library of all teachers who want to advance themselves in this area.

Finally, we thank the authors who sent us their manuscripts; thanks that we extend to the reviewers who, through their careful reading, have contributed to better the quality of the articles that have been compiled in this issue. We would also like to thank our student-apprentices, our reviewers and all the colleagues which one way or another have collaborated for the materialization of this edition. Hope you enjoy the reading!

Laura Miccoli

