

MEMORY, EXPERIENCE AND READING CIRCLES: LITERARY READING MEDIATION IN SENIOR RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUM

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ABSTRACT

Literature can and should extend into non-formal spaces, including all experiences and activities outside the traditional school environment. In this context, reading clubs, book clubs, reading circles, conversation circles, and experience circles are examples of initiatives that involve reading and discussing literary works. These activities serve as effective mechanisms for individuals outside the formal education system to engage their knowledge, memories, and emotions. The Aurora Extension Project embodies this approach by promoting multidisciplinary activities aimed at enhancing the well-being of elderly residents in condominiums. These activities are organized according to the schedules of various fields, including Literature, Pedagogy, Biological Sciences, and Nursing. Specifically, we focus on the literary component of the project, developed under the theme “RODAS DE VIVÊNCIAS, LEITURAS E MEMÓRIAS” (Circles of Experiences, Readings, and Memories), with an emphasis on reading and discussing literary texts.

KEYWORDS: Literary education, Literacy, Memory, Seniors, Senior Residential condominium.

RODAS DE VIVÊNCIAS, LEITURAS E MEMÓRIAS: MEDIAÇÃO DE LEITURA LITERÁRIA EM CONDOMÍNIO RESIDENCIAL DE PESSOAS IDOSAS

RESUMO

A Literatura pode e deve ocupar outros espaços, os denominados espaços não formais, cuja educação refere-se a toda e qualquer experiência e ação que esteja fora do ambiente escolar. Nesse sentido, clube de leitura, do livro, círculo de leitura, roda de leitura, roda de conversa, roda de vivência, são alguns dos nomes dados a ações de leitura e discussão de obras literárias, que se tornam mecanismos eficazes para aqueles que não estão mais inseridos no ambiente escolar acionarem seus saberes, memórias, afetividades. Sob esse pressuposto, apresenta-se o Projeto de Extensão Aurora, que tem como objetivo promover ações multidisciplinares visando ao bem-estar de idosos residentes em condomínios. As ações estão sendo desenvolvidas com cronograma próprio de cada área compreendendo Letras, Pedagogia, Ciências Biológicas e Enfermagem. De modo especial, apresentam-se as ações da área de Letras, desenvolvidas sob o tema “RODAS DE VIVÊNCIAS, LEITURAS E MEMÓRIAS”, com ênfase na leitura do texto literário.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação literária, Letramentos, Memória, Pessoa idosa, Condomínio residencial de idosos.

1 LITERATURE, ITS POWER AND PLACES

For both believers and non-believers, faithful and infidels, Literature contributes to humanistic education because, as Antonio Candido (1992) rightly points out, it educates and shapes as life does, “in¹ its highs and lows, lights and shadows”². In addition to being a synthesis and human experience projection, “something that expresses men then acts on its own development”³, as the author states. Literature also teaches us, as Umberto Eco (2003) notes, to die and to face the fact that things happen as they do, beyond our wishes and/or desires. For the Italian scholar, unlike “changeables” or hypertextual tales that educate us toward freedom and creativity, “already made” or “unchangeables” tales, as he calls them, alert us to the inexorable laws of life, guiding us towards accepting our fate. According to Zilberman (2008, p.55), the practice of literary reading provokes “[...] a rupture within the subject's experiences, pointing to the possibilities of another universe and broadening their opportunities for understanding the world.”⁴

The defense of the Literature place is, however, often associated with the school space which, in times of exacerbated pragmatism and technicism, not a few still resist the literary education significance in the contemporary world. For those defending the relevance of the literary text in the constitution of man as a social being, it causes indignation to question whether we still need Literature. This is because no one questions the importance of history, languages or mathematics in the school curriculum. For this reason, there are many researchers, scholars and teachers who advocate for the reading of literary texts, a practice that requires the commitment to knowledge that all learning demands; hence, they support the formal education of Literature. (Cosson, 2007, Soares, 2011).

As a collective right (Candido, 1995), Literature can and should occupy other spaces, called non-formal spaces, where education refers to all experiences and actions outside the school environment. As a formal space, the school institution is ruled by formalized teaching procedures (chronologically graded and hierarchically structured), established on guidelines and foundations defined by *Law 9394/96*. Alternatively, education held in non-formal spaces is a broad and versatile space-time for educational actions and processes carried out outside the formal education system, aimed at facilitating certain types of learning for various social groups (Trilla, 2008). And, by being separated from the regulated education system, Trilla (2008) explains, it tends to have flexible and participatory methodologies and is dedicated to social issues such as human rights, identity practices and social inequalities. In this context, it can be stated that, in addition to being an educational process that also takes place intentionally, but beyond the school walls, non-formal education seeks to train citizens by promoting personal and social development projects, whose

¹ The quotations in the footnotes are free translations. The original versions are retained in all instances.

² In the original: “nos seus altos e baixos, nas suas luzes e sombras”;

³ In the original: “algo que exprime o homem e depois atua na própria formação”;

⁴ In the original: “[...] uma ruptura no interior das vivências do sujeito, apontando-lhe as possibilidades de outro universo e alargando suas oportunidades de compreensão do mundo”.

initiatives, according to Padilha (2007), are generally instigated by civil society, institutional or not, with or without State support, offering courses aimed at the most diverse educational modalities.

Given that projects associated with non-formal education function as formative spaces, facilitating social transformation and contributing to individuals' development as citizens, literary reading offers readers transformative experiences, as it fosters a profound interconnection between the act of reading and lived experience, through which individuals emerge enriched and altered. As Vincent Jouve (2013) indicates, literary reading leads readers, given their personal involvement, to a movement outwards (out of themselves), translating into openness to alterity, cultural enrichment, world and self-knowledge, at the same time, a movement inwards (returning to themselves), a process of identification and projection with the literary universe, but also of exploration, transformation and (re)construction of identity. Thus, in addition to developing and educating, but not according to official pedagogy and/or ideology, as Candido (1972) teaches, Literature completes "the knowledge about the world through self-knowledge" (Jouve, 2013, p.54)⁵.

Reading clubs, book clubs, discussion circles, and experience circles are some of the terms used to describe spaces dedicated to reading and discussing literary works. Regardless of the name given, these spaces are an effective mechanism for those who are no longer part of the school environment, as they offer the opportunity for readers not only to engage with the literary text through a dialogue between the text and the reader, but also to exchange experiences with other participants on a sociocultural level and discover themselves capable of interconnecting their world knowledge with the wealth of knowledge that the literary text can provide. In this context, Manguel (2004, p. 53) words become meaningful: "[...]following the text, the reader utters its meaning through a vastly entangled method of learned significance, social conventions, previous readings, personal experience and private taste". Since these are places where people meet regularly, participants are invited to discuss and share the aesthetic experience provided by the literary text. The construction of meaning occurs both individually and collectively, allowing for the re-signification of reading practices from both personal and social perspectives, thereby broadening the horizon of learning and/or enjoyment that the reading practice entails.

It is understood that the reading personal enjoyment should not only be explored but also respected since each reader uses various strategies and a vast body of knowledge in the reading process: linguistic knowledge (grammatical and lexical), world knowledge (experiences, cultural background, values, etc.) and interactional knowledge, including illocutionary, communicational, metacommunicative and superstructural knowledge (Koch & Elias, 2007). Therefore, reading a text involves factors relating to the reader, on the one hand, and to the text, on the other, that can interfere with this process, to make it more difficult or easier. In the case of the literary text, the process of interpretation is based on certain indeterminacies/empty spaces, inherent to it; "places of uncertainty," as Jouve (2013, p.55) calls them, whose "[...] ambivalence or obscurity structurally requires the reader's creativity"⁶. Not to mention that each reader mobilizes their subjectivity in the reading act, referring, according to Rouxel (2013, p.21), to "self-knowledge", that comes "[...] from

⁵ In the original: "o saber sobre o mundo pelo saber sobre si".

⁶ In the original: "[...] ambivalência ou obscuridade solicitam estruturalmente a criatividade do leitor";

a personal thought expression and a judgment of an assumed interest"⁷. The challenge is to compare the reader's emotional reactions with the textual data, meaning that, what comes from the text and what each reader adds, in order to check whether or not the subjective configurations are compatible with what the text says.

In addition to this individual dimension, these interactions with the literary text, as mentioned previously, also presuppose a collective and shared dimension. The exchange of ideas, interpretations and emotions during the meetings develops a construction of meaning around the works, enriching the understanding and appreciation of the reading. Beyond that, it can foster new affective bonds and emotional connections, as it creates an environment that promotes social integration. The practice of collective reading also promotes self-discovery situations for the subjects involved: who they are socially and culturally; furthermore "[...] strengthen[s] social ties, identities and solidarity between people" (Cosson, 2014, p.139)⁸. And, given the connection between fantasy and reality, Literature fulfills one of the most basic needs of the individual: the need for fiction and fantasy, manifesting at every moment, "[...] even in the form of a lottery guess, daydream, ideal construction or anecdote" (Candido, 1972, p.83)⁹. Therefore, these practices are a powerful approach for building and rescuing the imagination, (re)leading the reader to the universe of dreams and fantasies; essential aspects for maintaining the individual well-being.

By its interactive nature, the meetings around the literary texts "[...] are social spaces in which the relationships between texts and readers, between reading and Literature, between the private and the collective are exposed and the meanings given to the world are discussed and reconstructed." (Cosson, 2014, p.154)¹⁰. Although, in this quote, Cosson is specifically referring to reading circles, it pertains to any space that fosters the encounter between the reader and the literary work.

Both Rouxel (2013) and Cosson (2014) see literary discussion meetings as a democratic space where respect for everyone's reading should prevail. Thus, the climate established within the interpretive community must be one of mutual trust and listening; attitudes that will facilitate peers to identify themselves as belonging to that particular group, encouraging their active participation.

In this collective and collaborative learning environment, designed to expand the interpretative horizon of individual reading, the role of the mediator is crucial. When participants come together to share and discuss books selected either by the mediator or themselves, the mediator's role is to foster interaction among readers. The mediator facilitates this engagement by drawing on prior knowledge, providing access to relevant books, and stimulating a love for reading through literary texts tailored to the readers' interests and needs.

To create a space for interaction and cognitive stimulation through reading, intending to promote moments of socialization and encourage imagination, memory and reflection, the

⁷ In the original: "[...] da expressão de um pensamento pessoal e de um julgamento de gosto assumidos";

⁸ in the original: "[...] estreita[r] laços sociais, reforça[r] identidades e a solidariedade entre as pessoas";

⁹ in the original: "[...] ainda que sob a forma de palpite na loteria, devaneio, construção ideal ou anedota"

¹⁰ in the original: "[...] são espaços sociais nos quais as relações entre textos e leitores, entre leitura e literatura, entre o privado e o coletivo são expostas e os sentidos dados ao mundo são discutidos e reconstruídos"

mediator first needs to connect with the participants. From this perspective, the mediator's sensitivity in perceiving nuances such as the state of mind, mood, individual interests of the subjects and even personal challenges is crucial to shaping a reading experience, going beyond literary language. It is, therefore, the capacity to interpret the subjective realities of others, that enables the mediator to not only choose the most suitable language but also to employ the most contextually appropriate strategies for each distinct situation; thus, it is crucial to create a supportive environment that allows participants to share their literary experiences effectively. In this scenario, the action of the mediator is not mechanical; on the contrary, it is a vibrant expression of passion for reading and dedication to promoting enriching literary experiences. This profile primarily characterizes the mediator when the participants are elderly, as exemplified by the experience to be detailed subsequently.

That way, more than just a space where the relationship between readers and texts is built—through the sharing of interpretations, sensations, ideas, and opinions, as well as the development of cognitive and social skills related to reading—group reading of literary texts serves as a locus where friendships and companionships are formed among participants of various ages, backgrounds, and social classes, within a community of readers.

2 THE INFORMAL SPACE IN FOCUS: THE AURORA PROJECT

2.1 Context of action

The state of Paraná, southern Brazil, has implemented the Viver Mais Paraná Program, a housing initiative aimed at providing accommodation for low-income elderly individuals who lack housing. The Program involves constructing gated communities designed to enhance residents' quality of life through regular health and social assistance. It also promotes the collective practice of physical, cultural, and recreational activities. In response to this demand and considering that the city of Cornélio Procopio (PR), which hosts a campus of the State University of Northern Paraná, inaugurated the Zulmira Machado Badaró Residential Condominium in December 2022, the Aurora Extension Program was subsequently proposed, in order to implement educational initiatives for elderly residents of the condominium, with funding provided by the Paraná Fund/Secretariat of Science, Technology, and Higher Education (SETI).

In view of the characteristics, needs and demands of this public, the Program seeks to foster the advancement of studies and research. It aims to provide targeted support to address these needs effectively and contribute to a deeper understanding of the relevant issues, as well as extension activities, that deal with aging as a process of biopsychosocial transformations of the elderly closed community residents, with activities carried out by multidisciplinary professionals. Specifically, the Program aims to identify the social, physical, functional and cognitive profile of these elderly individuals; to stimulate their expressive abilities, sensitivity, emotional memory, and intuition, enhancing their perspective on life and promoting quality of life within their environment;

to develop strategies for environmental education and sustainability; to train professionals involved in addressing their existing needs and demands.

In its proposal, the Program considered the fact that aging is one of the main challenges of modernity, due to the increase in life expectancy and the decline in fertility rates (Lima-Costa, 2011). It is a process to be considered on a global scale, especially in countries such as Brazil, where it occurred intensely and without planning to ensure quality of life. In 2019, the Brazilian elderly population reached the expressive mark of 28 million individuals, representing approximately 13% of the country's total population (IBGE, 2019). Although the aging process is often viewed as a sign of progress, driven by technological advancements and the development of social conditions, it is characterized by several factors that compromise quality of life. As people age, they become progressively more vulnerable to various changes in their living conditions, including social, economic and biological aspects. As a result, they become more susceptible to diseases, loss of autonomy and dependence on third parties to carry out daily activities (Organização Mundial de Saúde, 2015).

The World Health Organization's report on aging presents an analysis of concepts and approaches to promote healthy aging, as well as proposing substantial changes in the formulation of health policies and the provision of services for the elderly population. These transformations require a restructuring of health systems, with the replacement of preventive and curative care models by one that is based on the principles of integrality, intersectionality, multidisciplinary, and humanization, directed to the specific needs of the elderly. This is imperative, given that societal attitudes tend to perpetuate stereotypes of dependence, disease, and poor quality of life in relation to older individuals (Organização Mundial de Saúde, 2015).

Thus, the aging process imposes demands on both the State and society. One of these demands refers to the need for adequate housing for the elderly population (Fernandes & Soares, 2015). In this context, Brazil has adopted the development of legislation, policies and programs intent on improving the living conditions of this population, aiming to guarantee the integrity and dignity of elderly people (Fernandes & Soares, 2015). This includes expanding the effective protection of their rights, such as the right to adequate housing, whether living independently or within a family context (Brasil, 2003). In order for people to live long and healthy lives, the World Health Organization launched, in 2020, a global strategy action plan on aging and health called "Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030", consisting of guaranteeing elderly people the "rights to enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health; an adequate standard of living; education; freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse; living in the community; and participation in public, political and cultural life" (Organização Pan-Americana da Saúde, 2020, p.5).

In this scenario, it is necessary to develop actions that bolster the autonomy and independence of the elderly, by promoting healthy behaviors, stimulating participation in society. These actions aim to enhance positive self-perception of health, potentially reduce comorbidities (Kretschmer & Loch, 2022) and encourage socialization through cultural activities and various forms of literacy. In this regard, it is also important to provide residents with opportunities for literacy and reading practices, such as storytelling and listening activities, which can foster the enhancement of

creativity, critical thinking, oral skills, and cognitive development. As a result, an opportunity for cognitive development is created, contributing to the formation of the social critical character of the individual and favoring mutual respect between residents and, consequently, the exchange of knowledge and experiences, based on conversations about the texts and reports on their experiences.

Soares (2003), investigated the various definitions of literacy and reading in circulation, based on research and studies of professionals in education, and discussed reading and writing acquisition and the benefits they provide to the individual through social interaction. It is observed that, in response to the ongoing demands of contemporary urban society, the term 'literacy' encompasses more than just the ability to read and write. It involves interpreting and engaging with texts and the situations they present. In essence, literacy enables individuals to become active and informed citizens within literate societies. As can be seen, the term literacy brings a new perspective on the social practice of reading and writing, transforming the condition of individuals who embrace these skills and prompts changes across social, cultural, political, economic, cognitive, and linguistic dimensions that accompany this phenomenon.

Therefore, providing residents with opportunities to engage in certain literacy practices, particularly literary text reading, is crucial for ensuring quality of life in this stage and for promoting healthy aging. Hence, the objective of the project is to develop multidisciplinary activities that promote the well-being and integration of elderly people, in order to combat loneliness and social isolation, promote self-esteem, self-care and physical development, stimulating their autonomy and independence, resulting in significant improvements in their quality of life. In addition, it seeks to strengthen the commitment of those involved in caring for the residents, by establishing a support network and providing effective assistance.

2.1.1 *The subprojects*

The activities take place in the multipurpose space of the residential community, according to the schedule of each proposal thematic area, the same as in the integrated activities. Each session includes a series of activities such as physical evaluation, promotion and maintenance of their health, environmental education, literacy, socialization and leisure, being conducted by professors,¹¹ professionals and scholarship holders/volunteers of undergraduate courses in Nursing, Biological Sciences, Language and Literature, and Pedagogy.

¹¹ Project team: Vanderléia da Silva Oliveira, General Coordinator and Advisor in the field of Literature; Ivone Pingoello, Vice Coordinator of the project and Advisor in Pedagogy; Ana Paula Franco Nobile Brandileone, Advisor in Language and Literature; Miriam Fernanda Sanches Alarcon Daniel and Edna Aparecida Lopes Bezerra Katakura, Advisors in Nursing; Dhiego Gomes Ferreira, Luís Eduardo de Souza Gazal, Rodrigo de Souza Poletto and Emanuele Julio Galvão de França, Advisors in Biological Sciences; Maria Eduarda Capelin Strada Amorim Osinaga, Professional; Daniela Fernanda Vilela, Professional Fellow in the area of Nursing; Thiago Ezídio de Oliveira, Professional Fellow in Biological Sciences; Gabrielly Fernanda Pavaneli de Almeida, Undergraduate Student in Pedagogy.

It is noteworthy that the gated community features a lake, a garden and an orchard, requiring proper attention and guidance to ensure the residents enjoy them. Likewise, a vegetable garden that is maintained to stay productive and serves as a focus of attention for residents during their daily activities. In this regard, alongside health-related care (Nursing), the project's technical team is also engaged in activities related to Biology, as well as Language and Pedagogy, to address literacy and literacy processes.

Therefore, the proposal is developed through three interdisciplinary subprojects involving both trained professionals and undergraduate students, coordinated under the guidance of professors to ensure that each stage is properly planned and productive:

1. Nursing Project with Nursing Care Assistance: appointments focused on identifying health problems and interventions implementing aimed at prevention and health promotion; physical evaluation - measurement of vital signs, nutritional assessment, visual acuity, lung function, hydration status, oral hygiene, anthropometric measurement and control of chronic non-communicable diseases, especially Arterial Hypertension and Diabetes Mellitus; health education - development of lectures and/or roundtable discussions addressing topics on healthy aging (in these activities, elderly people are encouraged to participate actively, sharing their experiences and having the opportunity to choose topics to deepen their knowledge); cognitive stimulation - encouraging *online* and board gaming, with the objective of promoting socialization and stimulating cognitive functions, with the goal of mitigating the adverse effects of aging on memory.
2. Language and Pedagogy Project: 1st stage - evaluation and diagnosis of grammatical knowledge, numerical skills, and reading comprehension; evaluation of interpretive capacity, critical thinking, and social interaction practices; 2nd stage - promotion of literacy and literacy activities. At this stage, the Language area focuses on fostering interaction among readers and eliciting prior knowledge, such as memories, through both writing and reading, to encourage engagement with a variety of texts, particularly literary ones, tailored to the interests of the residents; leisure and recreational activities: reading circles, text dramatizations, film/documentary screenings, games, group excursions, and storytelling.
3. Biological Sciences Project: environmental education, sustainable practices and food security: lectures and guidelines aimed at establishing sustainable practices; lectures, guidelines and activities involving conscious waste management, aiming at the separation of recyclable materials for income generation, as well as organic components that can be used in the production of compost, that will be used in the fertilization of the community garden; guidelines and activities aimed at organic and sustainable practices for the revitalization and production of healthy foods in the community garden; lectures and guidelines on the importance of water resources, such as the lake, will include activities focused on daily practices that contribute to maintaining water quality in lakes and reservoirs, and also addressing the impact on the health and quality of fish inhabiting these environments; lectures, guidelines and activities on the microbiological and parasitological quality of the fish and vegetables, as well as possible diseases related to the consumption of these foods; guidelines and activities focused on the processing and preservation of food produced within the community, aimed at ensuring food security for the elderly residents.

2.2 On the activities implemented in the field of Language and Literature

In the initial phase, the Departments of Language and Pedagogy collaboratively conducted a comprehensive assessment of the residents' characteristics and profiles. They employed structured interviews to evaluate literacy-related aspects thoroughly. The mapping revealed 40 houses in the condominium, with 35 occupied and a total of 37 residents. Of these, 35 individuals participated in the survey, including 10 men and 25 women. Regarding age distribution, 8% were between 54 and 59 years old, 68% between 60 and 70, 21% between 70 and 80, and 3% between 80 and 90.

The results, particularly regarding literacy, showed that four residents were illiterate, thirteen were classified as functionally illiterate, and eighteen self-identified as literate. This finding was further confirmed by questions related to knowledge of letters and numbers, revealing that 21 elderly residents had reading and writing difficulties, with only 14 stating they could read and write well. When asked about the contexts where they most frequently encounter numbers and letters, respondents mentioned cell phones (22), television (8), books (4), and computers (1). Regarding their preferences for printed materials, twelve elderly participants indicated they enjoyed reading the Bible, three preferred history books, two enjoyed magazines, and seventeen selected "others, without further specification.

After identifying the residents' needs, intervention activities were planned, marking the commencement of the second phase. The Language Department launched weekly literary education sessions titled 'Circles of Experiences, Readings, and Memories,' designed to promote reading and discussion on reflective topics. These sessions may also lead to workshops on writing, drawing, and other creative activities. Meanwhile, the Pedagogy Department commenced literacy classes, incorporating preparatory activities for reading and writing. They also introduced digital literacy training, teaching residents to use cell phones as tools for recognizing letters and numbers in a virtual environment. The weekly meetings of the circles began in March 2024, each lasting two hours. Participation in these sessions, as with other project activities, is voluntary, leading to variable attendance ranging from four to eight individuals. Notably, four participants in this group also attend the literacy classes.

The first planned activity focused on the theme of "self-portrait", aiming to prompt participants to reflect on their own self-image through the poem "Autorretrato aos 56 anos", by Graciliano Ramos. The mediator read the poem aloud, projected the text for the group, and provided printed copies for everyone. Participants were encouraged to share their impressions of the text and their own self-images, recalling memories of school and childhood. Additionally, they viewed projections of well-known self-portraits (Frida Kahlo's "Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird," Vincent Van Gogh's "Self-Portrait," and Pablo Picasso's "Self-Portrait"). This activity led to a relaxed yet thought-provoking session, with the intention of revisiting the theme in the future through the creation of their own self-portrait canvases.

The decision to start the sessions with Literature was driven by its potential to facilitate self and mutual recognition through memory and emotional connections, thereby encouraging the exchange of knowledge. This approach resonates with Paulino and Cosson's (2009, p. 69) assertion that, through engaging with literary texts, "[...] individuals experience others through language, absorbing the experiences of others through words, thus creating a unique space for the development of their identity and sense of community."

The second activity featured a screening of the animated film "Viva: A Vida é uma Festa", offering an opportunity to reflect on themes of family values, loss, and the celebration of life. After watching the film, one resident mentioned that although she had seen it before, she had not previously understood its themes. She highlighted the importance of mediation in helping her comprehend certain scenes. This activity aimed to foster socialization, creating a space for residents to get to know one another and form connections, as they had recently moved into the condominium and still exhibited some distance or difficulty adjusting to communal living.

Recognizing that memory could serve as a catalyst for fostering closeness and bonds, the theme "memories of our city" was proposed, with the intention of using these recollections to gather life histories, touching on the subjective and unique aspects of everyone, as claimed by Eclea Bosi (1994). In conclusion, by narrating their own stories, individuals can reframe their existence, as well as that of those listening. This concept was explored through the narrative events in "Memórias, simplesmente memórias" (Villas Bôas Neto, 2015), along with images from the book, that allowed the residents to recall memories of festive occasions such as Carnival, the installation of the Christ the Redeemer statue—a key tourist landmark in the city—and other local histories. One resident contributed further by sharing personal memories related to her connection with the author of the book and the printing house that produced the newspaper mentioned, where she had previously worked. This session provided a foundation for a collaborative reading of Luiz Fernando Veríssimo's short story 'Lar Desfeito,' which was examined through its use of irony and satire. The reflection on how the characters in the story pursue 'unhappiness' to meet life and family expectations once again triggered memories and reflections among the residents, leading them to share a variety of personal experiences.

One of the most impactful activities, focused on sharing emotional experiences, centered around the theme of home. Through the reading of poems such as "Casa Arrumada" by Carlos Drummond de Andrade, "A Casa" by Vinícius de Moraes, "A Casa" by Adélia Prado, and "A Casa da Minha Infância" by Kleber Viana Torres, the residents were not only encouraged to participate in both individual and group oral readings but also to engage in artistic expression. They conveyed their perceptions of their current or childhood homes through both drawings and descriptive writing.

In another memory-driven activity, the theme of "travel" proved to be a powerful catalyst. Participants were asked to bring an object, photo, or anything that held a special memory of a meaningful journey to share with their peers. This was designed to encourage participation in an upcoming trip to the local forest, including a picnic. The poem "A Viagem" by Mário Quintana was used as a literary prompt, inspiring participants to narrate emotional memories from their travels.

Some chose to express these memories through drawings. Additionally, the poem "Viagem" by Eno Theodoro Wanke was read and discussed.

As the theme of travel concluded, a new topic was introduced for June: cultural festivals, in preparation for the condominium's Festa Junina celebration. Residents read *Cordel Junino* by Vinícius de Moraes, engaging in both individual and group readings, accompanied by an afternoon coffee prepared by the residents themselves. Additional texts, such as "Milho Embonecado" by Mariane Bigio, were also presented, complemented by word searches and targeted questions. Following the Festa Junina, the poetry workshops continued with readings of Carlos Drummond de Andrade's "Quadrilha" and Chico Buarque's "Flor da Idade." To wrap up the Festa Junina theme, the group participated in a recipe-sharing activity, exchanging family recipes and concluding with a communal coffee gathering in the community kitchen.

Thus far, the activities have aimed to strengthen emotional bonds between participants, offering them the opportunity to recall and share their memories, knowledge, and subjective experiences, while fostering a sense of belonging within the community. The facilitator played a crucial role in guiding the readings, ensuring that each text served as a focal point and exploring their potential to engage and resonate with the participants. This was particularly important, as some residents struggled to understand certain words or images due to their lack of reading habits or formal literacy. These challenges have been addressed through the imaginative possibilities offered by Literature, which has empowered the residents to confidently express their memories and showcase their creative abilities. Additionally, these activities have been guided by the perspective that:

[...] when a reader comprehends what they read, they are learning; as their reading informs them, it allows them to engage with the author's world of meanings and offers new perspectives or opinions on specific aspects [...]. Reading connects us with culture, or rather, with multiple cultures, and in this sense, it always constitutes an essential contribution to the reader's own cultural understanding. (Solé, 1998, p. 46, Free Translation)¹².

In the current phase, residents were invited to revisit Graciliano Ramos's text as a means of practicing artistic expression, this time by painting their own self-portraits on canvas. This activity was supported by a biologist who is also a visual artist. The artist introduced the residents to the world of painting, offering guidance on the use of colors, paints, and basic techniques to help them realize their artistic visions.

¹² In the original: "[...] quando um leitor compreende o que lê, está aprendendo; à medida que sua leitura o informa, permite que se aproxime do mundo de significados de um autor e lhe oferece novas perspectivas ou opiniões sobre determinados aspectos [...]. A leitura nos aproxima da cultura, ou melhor, de múltiplas culturas e, nesse sentido, sempre é uma contribuição essencial para a cultura própria do leitor."

3 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Based on observations made during the activities, the ongoing project is progressing well and is on track to achieve its proposed objectives. Since its implementation, the involvement of professional fellows and the interventions carried out have resulted in notable changes, not only in the physical environment of the condominium but also in the relationships among the residents. The residents' active participation, the dedication of the extension team, and the observable improvements in the surrounding environment are all evaluated positively.

Within the realm of Literature, the 'Circle of Experiences, Readings, and Memories' sessions have demonstrated the positive impact of the reading practices implemented, which are rooted in the sharing of personal recollections. Consequently, the significance of Literature in (re)constructing the physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being of the residents has become increasingly evident.

The project's activities can be followed on Instagram: @projetoauroraenp.

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