

It is our pleasure to introduce Volume 2, Number 1 of *Crisolenguas*, a regular issue of our journal. This first number of Volume 2 features two articles on French and Brazilian literature and three articles on various aspects of language teaching in foreign language classes. The first article by Culley Carson-Grefe discusses symbols of sexual differences in three novels by French-speaking authors: Monique Wittig, H  l  ne Cixous, and Christiane Rochefort. The second article by Rubia Yatsugafu presents an analysis of Brazilian crime fiction literature in the work of Patr  cia Melo. The three subsequent articles offer various approaches to writing activities in language classes through the creation of portfolios in German business classes (Carol Del Vitto), the evaluation of orthographic variation in a corpus of Internet Relay Chat (IRC) discussions in French (Ana  s Tatossian and Louise Dagenais), and the investigation of the effects of regular timed-writing sessions in the intermediate-level foreign language classroom (Stacey Beth-Mackowiak Ayotte).

Abstracts

Hole Studies: French Feminist Fiction

By studying imagery related to holes, we can learn more about a woman author's feminist vision. The three novels discussed in this paper are Monique Wittig's *Les Gu  rill  res*, H  l  ne Cixous's *Les Commencements*, and Christiane Rochefort's *Archaos, ou le jardin   tincelant*. Each novel uses the hole as a source of power, and the power takes a different form in each case.

A Agonia de M  iquel: Entre o Ser um Matador e o Estar em um Mundo Perdido (M  iquel's Agony: Trapped Between *Being a* and *Living in a Lost World*)

The novels written by Patr  cia Melo, a Brazilian contemporary author, have followed the development of Brazilian crime fiction literature in its relation to social, historical, and cultural matters. This article analyzes the novels "O Matador" (1995) and "Mundo Perdido" (2006), focusing on how the character of the "justiceiro" (vigilante) is created and developed throughout these two works. Both novels are narrated by M  iquel, a protagonist-narrator, who describes and justifies the process of his dehumanization, which shows his transition from an ordinary citizen to a "justiceiro" and, eventually, from this to a fugitive. In addition, the article examines the complexity and contradictions that arise in the progression of the narrative voice in both novels.

Simulated Stock Portfolios in Business German Courses: A Constructivist's Approach

This paper presents both the procedure and educational theory behind utilizing simulated stock portfolios in the Business German Classroom. Not only does such a project draw together the areas which are covered in a typical Business German course, such as geography, corporate structures, analyzing and presenting data, and written correspondence, but also develops the students' oral skills through regular presentations, opportunities to negotiate and team building. By implementing such a project the teacher acts as the facilitator, while the students act as co-constructors of their learning experience and knowledge.

Les procédés abrégatifs dans les salons de clavardage en français : une comparaison entre adolescents et adultes

This article presents the results of an analysis of orthographic variation in a corpus of Internet Relay Chat (IRC) discussions in French. The dataset comprises one sub-corpus of conversations among adolescents and another of conversations among adults. In a previous study of nonstandard French orthography in real-time chat forums, Tatossian and Dagenais (2008) established a four-way taxonomy of variation between standard and nonstandard spellings in synchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC): abbreviations, grapheme substitutions, neutralizations in final position, and expressive processes. One of the conclusions drawn from the study was that abbreviations dominate substantially in the two groups (60 % of all scriptural means). Focusing on the first of these, abbreviations, the present paper presents a combined quantitative and qualitative analysis of deviant spellings. At the center of attention lies the effect of age on the type and degree of abbreviations used.

Timed-writing in the Foreign Language Classroom: Does Practice Make Perfect

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of regular timed-writing sessions in the intermediate-level foreign language classroom in an effort to determine whether timed-writing helped students write more accurately. In addition, it was important to investigate the students' perceptions of the timed-writing sessions, and to determine if they felt that the practice with regular intervals of timed-writing aided them in overcoming writer's block in the target language. Results show statistically significant differences from pretest to posttest on all four timed-writing prompts, and the questionnaire results show that students felt they benefited from the timed-writing sessions. Finally, pedagogical implications are addressed.