

ARTICLE

**LITERATURE AND CO-LEARNING IN TEACHING:
A PATH THROUGH READING METAFICTION¹**

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ABSTRACT: This article concerns a study motivated by the need to foster debate about the mediation of reading and writing training of already literate children. It aims to analyze the potential of metafiction literature in enabling reflection on reading and writing literary practices at school. This paper is grounded in studies of literature, metafiction, and teaching. Through a qualitative perspective, this article is based on the principles of content analysis for the study of oral and written texts of 5th grade primary school children from a public school in Natal/RN (Brazil). The corpus of research was collected during a pedagogical intervention consisting of sessions of literary reading, writing, and rewriting of authorial texts. The results revealed that the mediation of writing via reading metafiction constitutes a process of co-learning: the children experienced themselves as writers and the mediator as a learning interlocutor of the processes of reading and writing literature.

Keywords: literature, reading, pedagogical mediation, writing process, teacher training.

**LITERATURA E COAPRENDIZAGEM NA DOCÊNCIA:
UM CAMINHO PELA LEITURA DE METAFICÇÃO**

RESUMO: Este artigo discorre sobre um estudo motivado pela necessidade de fomentar o debate acerca da mediação da formação leitora e escritora de crianças já alfabetizadas. Tem por objetivo analisar o potencial da literatura de metaficção para possibilitar a reflexão acerca das práticas de leitura e escrita literárias na escola. Fundamenta-se nos estudos sobre literatura, metaficção e ensino. Numa perspectiva qualitativa, apoia-se nos princípios da análise de conteúdo para o estudo de textos orais e escritos de crianças do 5º ano do ensino fundamental, de uma escola pública de Natal/RN (Brasil), durante uma intervenção pedagógica constituída por sessões de leitura literária, de escrita e reescrita de textos autorais.

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Os resultados revelaram que a mediação para a escrita via leitura de metaficção constitui-se em um processo de coaprendizagem: as crianças se experimentaram como escritoras e a mediadora como interlocutora aprendiz dos processos de ler e escrever literatura.

Palavras-chave: literatura, leitura, mediação pedagógica, processo de escrita, formação docente.

LITERATURA Y CO-APRENDIZAJE: UN CAMINO ATRAVÉS DE LA LECTURA DE METAFICCIÓN

RESUMEN: Este artículo trata de un estudio motivado por la necesidad de fomentar el debate sobre la mediación de la formación en lectura y escritura de niños ya alfabetizados. Objetiva analizar el potencial de la literatura de metaficción para permitir la reflexión sobre las prácticas de lectura y escritura literarias en la escuela. Se basa en estudios de literatura, metaficción y enseñanza. En una perspectiva cualitativa, se apoya en los principios del análisis de contenido para el estudio de textos orales y escritos de niños del 5° grado de primaria de una escuela pública de Natal/RN (Brasil) durante una intervención pedagógica consistente en sesiones de lectura literaria, escritura y reescritura de textos autorales. Los resultados revelaron que la mediación para la escritura a través de la lectura de metaficción constituye un proceso de co-aprendizaje: los niños se experimentaron como escritores y la mediadora como interlocutora aprendiz de los procesos de leer y escribir literatura.

Palabras clave: literatura, lectura, mediación pedagógica, proceso de escritura, formación docente.

INTRODUCTION

No one starts being a teacher on a certain Tuesday at 4 o'clock in the afternoon...
No one is born a teacher or destined to be a teacher.
We are formed as educators permanently through practice and reflection on practice.

Paulo Freire

The words of master Paulo Freire were chosen to begin this text because they will dialogue intensely with the ideas that will be developed here. We will analyze an experience that we consider co-learning, as it intertwines teaching and research for the benefit of children's reading and writing processes and also for the benefit of the teacher training process.

When we discuss teacher training, we are addressing a topic of extreme relevance to the field of education, because, in agreement with Paulo Freire, we understand that being a teacher requires endless preparation, precisely because no teacher, like other professionals, is born ready. The emphasis we place on the teacher is justified because we are referring to a professional who will dedicate to train people, who are in the process of interacting with and changing the world and themselves. In this sense, it would be contradictory to think that any higher education institution, for example, could propose a curriculum that would cover all the training needs of this professional, who, in fact, cannot consider themselves as finished, at the risk of their thinking and practice becoming obsolete.

Thinking more directly about the training of early grade teachers, with a view to preparing them to mediate the processes of reading and writing acquisition, we find, in the curricula of pedagogy courses, disciplines focused on understanding these processes and the proposal of strategies almost always aimed at working with the insertion of children into the literate culture. Rarely do discussions delve into how to mediate the advancement of reading and writing in children who already have basic mastery of reading and writing, whom we usually call literate.

We would like to add that the guidelines discussed in continuing education courses for teachers tend to prioritize training teachers to work in the process of appropriating reading and writing, leaving aside the approach of how to boost reading and writing skills in children who already read and write, so that they can expand their creative potential for writing texts. This information comes from our experience with teacher training in the National Pact for Literacy at the Right Age (PNAIC-*Pacto Nacional pela Alfabetização na Idade Certa*) and National Commitment to Literate Children (CNCA-*Compromisso Nacional Criança Alfabetizada*) programs.

The importance of providing advancement in the reading and writing ability of older children is undeniable and is clearly expressed in the objectives established by the National Common Curricular Base-*Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (Brazil, 2018). The document establishes that, when teaching Portuguese, from the initial years to the final years of elementary school, contact with textual genres should be expanded, considering the language practices already experienced and promoting the expansion of these, through new experiences. Regarding literary formation, it is argued that, in the continuity of elementary education, “it is necessary to assume – and therefore guarantee – the formation of a reader-enjoyer, that is, of a subject who is capable of getting involved in reading texts, of unveiling their multiple layers of meaning, of responding to their demands [...]” (Brazil, 2018, p. 138).

Contrary to what is expected regarding children's familiarity with language practices, as educators of 4th and 5th grade elementary school classes, we have observed a certain lack of motivation among children to read and write or even disbelief in their ability to create their own stories. A questionnaire that we administered to 4th grade children at a public school in Natal/RN brought unexpected revelations about how they referred to their condition of creating stories. We were surprised because they were our students, who belong to a school with a tradition of carrying out projects involving literary reading, which has an active library and teachers who are constantly involved in professional development actions.

**Box 1 – Children’s responses to the question:
Do you find it easy or difficult to create your stories?**

Maria	I find it difficult, because I can't imagine things very well.
José	Well, it's nice when you have inspiration.
Cristina	I find it a little difficult, because I like the story to be cool.
Pedro	I find it difficult, because I don't have much creativity.
Regina	Easy. I'm a child and every child has creativity.
Joaquim	Difficult, because I don't have much imagination and creativity.
Laura	Difficult, because I have no ideas.
Alice	Easy, because you just have to imagine.
Paulo	I think it's easy, because it's the person who creates the story.
Davi	I don't remember having invented it recently (only when I was little).

(Fernandes, 2019, p. 39).

The answers give rise to the interpretation that the children considered themselves to be uncreative or uninspired. They seemed to be unaware of or disregard the process behind writing a text, as if the virtues of writing were innate, given without effort or investment. Davi's answer (a fictitious name, like the others) caught our attention in a different way, as it raises doubts about whether the school was offering opportunities for the exercise of authorial writing, which contradicts the view that we, as teachers at the institution, usually have that we are enabling the good formation of readers and writers.

The universe of ten subjects consulted could be insufficient to provoke us to think about the deficiencies or gaps in the performance of schools in the formation of readers and writers, with the low national performance indicated by the reports of large-scale assessments of Portuguese Language in Brazil, such as the National System of Assessment of Basic Education (SAEB-*Sistema Nacional de Avaliação da Educação Básica*), applied in 2019. We emphasize here our awareness about the complexity of using this

data for analysis, due to the numerous factors that can interfere in the application of large-scale assessments and, consequently, in the construction of their results. However, when analyzing the report of the assessment, we were taken by the following concern: would children be reaching the last years of the 1st stage of elementary school still with little familiarity with reading and writing?

Checking the national results of the 2019 5th grade student assessment, we can see that there was a concentration of 38.91% of participants in the first four levels of the scale that was established for measurement (0, 1, 2 and 3). Here we have the skills that are verified in students who were classified at level 4, according to the matrix specified in the 2019 SAEB Results Report, to get a better idea of the result obtained:

In addition to the skills previously mentioned, students are likely to be able to: identify explicit information in synopses and culinary recipes. To identify the main subject and character in short stories and song lyrics. To identify ways of representing time measurement in news reports. To identify topics common to two news reports. Identify the effect of humor in jokes. To recognize the meaning of expression, narrative elements, and opinion in news reports, short stories, and poems. To recognize cause-and-effect relationships and the relationship between pronouns and their referents in fables, poems, short stories, and comic strips. To infer meaning resulting from the use of punctuation marks and the meaning of expressions in poems, fables, and short stories. To infer the effect of humor in comic strips and comic strips (Brasil, 2021, p. 96).

When we analyze that 60% of the students evaluated did not demonstrate mastery of the skills specified above, we have an indication of their lack of familiarity with the genres covered in the evaluation. Considering that “reading is a matter of making sense of written language” (Smith, 1989, p. 16), are children really able to make sense of and understand what they are reading, if they are? As educators, are we prepared to mediate the formation of readers and writers?

All of these issues justify our interest in studying the inclusion of children in literate culture, from a perspective that goes beyond the acquisition of basic knowledge in reading and writing, understanding that, much more than teaching literacy, it is also necessary to “literate” (Soares, 2009). We are anchored in the definition of literacy as “the state or condition of those who engage in the numerous and varied social practices of reading and writing” (Soares, 2009, p. 44), a condition that we believe is essential for the full exercise of citizenship.

Considering the above, we proposed a pedagogical intervention in 2017, submitted to and duly authorized by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, with the aim of promoting a reading and writing experience with 5th grade children, which would provoke them to think about the process of creating authorial texts. To this end, we selected the work *Fazendo Ana Paz* (Bojunga, 2007), by the writer Lygia Bojunga, precisely because it is conducive to reflection on the paths that can be experienced by an author to build a character and a life for him/her. In addition to the contributions of reading and discussing the work, our intention was also to verify the impact of peer collaboration in the revision and improvement of the texts produced, which motivated us to hold the so-called “writing conferences” (Calkins, 1989). Our expectation was to establish a practice of text production in school that was different from the solitary production exercises that are usually proposed.

The experience by reading and discussing the literary work went far beyond the objectives intended for the children: it allowed us, as educators, to experiment with a new process of mediating reading and writing texts, given that we were also “affected” by the literary text of a metafictional nature. While we intended to educate, we were also being educated as readers and teachers, in an experience of co-learning.

These are the achievements by literary texts, with an emphasis on co-learning in teaching, that we will reveal in this article. Our objective is to analyze the potential of metafictional literature to enable reflection on literary reading and writing practices in schools, assuming that training occurs continuously, precisely because “no one starts being a teacher on a certain Tuesday at 4 o'clock in the afternoon” (Freire, 1991, p. 58).

DEFINING THE PATH TO BE TAKEN: METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES

In this article, we analyze data collected in research carried out with children (Fernandes, 2019), in which we dialogue with the theoretical framework in the areas of literature and teaching (Amarilha, 2013, 2010, 1997; Candido, 2011), metafiction (Bojunga, 2007; Lodge, 2010) and teacher training (Freire, 1996; Nóvoa, 1992).

The research that originated the data is of a qualitative nature (Bogdan; Biklen, 1994) and proposed a pedagogical intervention in a public school in Natal/RN (Brazil), developed in 2017, after approval by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, according to opinion 2,368,665, issued on 11/07/2017. The aforementioned intervention was mediated by one of the authors of this article, who was the teacher of the participating group, consisting of 18 subjects, aged between 10 and 11 years old. The selection criterion was the adherence of the subjects and their families, following the ethical protocols approved and monitored by the aforementioned committee.

The data corpus consisted of 40 short story texts produced by the children and 15 video-recorded and transcribed sessions, consisting of: reading sessions of literary texts, writing sessions, socialization sessions, and text rewriting sessions. To proceed with the analysis, our reference was the principles of content analysis (Bardin, 2016), in an effort to perform an in-depth reading of the messages (speeches and writings of the subjects and researcher), inferring the meanings and developments that were implied, even if implicitly, to uncover the influence of metafictional literature on the teaching and learning relationships that were established in the research.

The reading sessions were dedicated to exploring the work *Fazendo Ana Paz*, by Lygia Bojunga (2007), using the scaffolding methodology (Graves; Graves, 1995). In addition, there were writing, discussion and improvement sessions for short fiction stories, which promoted the exchange of ideas among classmates – moments called writing conferences (Calkins, 1989).

Since it is impossible to present the entire work *Fazendo Ana Paz* here, which is essential for its true appreciation, we present a summary prepared by Amancio (2017):

[...] Ana Paz, the protagonist of *Fazendo Ana Paz*, like Lygia, was born in Rio Grande do Sul and moved to Rio de Janeiro when she was young. [...] Ana Paz comes to the author and introduces herself as an eight-year-old girl. [...] She reveals many facts about herself, but “disappears”, which frustrates Bojunga, who would like to give her a voice and hear her. However, this disappearance of inspiration does not last long: “After two more weeks in the blank, I felt the urge to create a girl [...]” (BOJUNGA, 2007, p. 16). This feeling makes her give life to another character, who, at first glance, has no connection with the missing little girl. However, in the beginning of yet another creation, a lonely old woman, Lygia realizes the temporal relationship between these three different personalities: they are both Ana Paz. Ana Paz-old is the present of the others, Ana Paz-child and Ana Paz-young woman. Ana Paz-old decides to return to her hometown, in Rio Grande do Sul, to reminisce about her childhood and to make up for having forgotten the promise she made to her father: “promise that you will never forget the frown [...]” (Bojunga, 2007, p. 14). The frown is the symbol of her union with her father, since many of their conversations were about this mythical figure (Amancio, 2017, p. 1).

In *Fazendo Ana Paz*, Lygia Bojunga uses a narrator-character to talk about the uncertainties and anxieties in the composition of Ana Paz. We used Ando (2013) to clarify the metafictional character of the work chosen for the aforementioned research:

[...] the aforementioned stumbling blocks of writing are materialized in Lygia Bojunga's writing, as it is on this path full of stumbling blocks and setbacks that the process of (dis)assembling a character emerges, responsible for placing author and writing in interaction, establishing unusual encounters between creator and creature (Ando, 2013, p. 2).

The unusual encounters between creator and creature presented in the text provoked the subjects/children and also the researcher/teacher to put themselves in the shoes of the narrator invented by Lygia Bojunga. This experience was possible through the structuring of a pedagogical intervention designed for this purpose, which was developed over fifteen sessions:

Box 2: Summary of the pedagogical intervention with 5th grade children

SESSION NUMBER	ACTIVITY PERFORMED
1st	Introductory meeting: discussion about what is reality and what is fiction based on the reading of a literary text and a news story. Individual production of a short story, at the participant's discretion.
2nd	Study of Lygia Bojunga's biography based on the exploration of the website casalygiabojunga.com.br and the reading of excerpts from the work <i>Livro - um encontro</i> (Bojunga, 2007).
3rd to 8th	Reading and discussion of the work using the <i>Andaimagem</i> methodology (Graves; Graves, 1995). Oral reading carried out by the research teacher with the children arranged in the room in a circle and holding the work individually in their hands.
9th	Planning of a second fictional story, by the children, following a script that was prepared for this purpose.
10th	Production of a new fictional story based on the character defined in the previous meeting. Note: most of the subjects did not complete the writing of the text in this meeting, and in some cases, it was necessary to set aside several days to complete it.
11th	Discussion about the feelings involved in the experience of writing the 2nd fictional story and a moment of socialization of the stories created. Some children preferred not to read to the class. Others chose to read it on another day, as a text to be contemplated in the daily moment of the class routine, which is intended for reading.
12th to 15th	Writing conferences among peers: meetings with 2 groups of 3 subjects each to exchange ideas about the texts and rewriting. For the rewriting, the subjects were free to choose whether they would like to dedicate themselves to the text alone, based on suggestions from their peers, or if they preferred to work together to write. One of them chose not to make any changes to the text, and his wishes were respected. Note: from this point on, in order to further analyze the process, we chose only 6 subjects to continue participating in the intervention.

(Adapted from Fernandes, 2019)

All reading sessions were structured with pre-reading, reading and post-reading stages, according to the reading approach called Scaffolding Reading Experience – SER, which consists of “a series of activities specifically designed to assist a particular group of students to successfully read, understand, apprehend and appreciate a particular selection of text” (Graves; Graves, 1995, p. 1). We used this procedure at the time of reading, whose discussions and learning benefited the writing process, as we will present in the results.

Choosing this approach for reading sessions requires that the implementation stage be preceded by the planning stage, at which time, among other definitions, the questions that would engage the children before, during and after the reading were considered. These questions constituted a script that, as we expected, was expanded during each debate, considering the participation and interest of the children.

AN ENCOUNTER WITH LITERATURE AND METAFICTION, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PROCESS

We will dedicate our attention to thinking about a founding concept for the ideas we develop here: the concept of literature. Candido (2011) teaches that literature is an incompressible good, like food, housing and clothing. It manifests itself through songs, anecdotes, stories, carnival samba, among other

human creations. It is, therefore, a universal manifestation of all men, at all times, a need that needs to be satisfied, a right (Candido, 2011).

Educational institutions are – or should be – the privileged spaces to guarantee the right to literature. Let us recall our case, as teachers who are researchers of the experience discussed in this text: as children, we studied at a school that did not have a library. Access to literary texts was possible by a few important initiatives, such as a teacher who brought a box of children's literature books to the classroom – at the time, no longer receiving the attention of the teacher's grown children.

When we were high school students, in the professional teacher training course, we finally attended a school with a library and engaged in various experiences related to reading, such as organizing a mini-library in the classroom, from which we would borrow books from the collection for our classmates. However, it was in higher education, in the Pedagogy course, through the mediation of the Literature teacher, that we were fully assured of the right to literature. Among the achievements of this privileged period of education, we highlight the intimacy built with authors such as Monteiro Lobato and Lygia Bojunga.

Years later, during my master's research, our interest in Lygia Bojunga's work was rekindled, driven by reading her book *Fazendo Ana Paz*. We highlight a fragment of this work, with the aim of sharing a little of the dilemma we faced regarding the craft of being a writer:

And then it started again:
 Today I'll make the father;
 On Monday without fail I'll make the father;
 This father will be ready by Wednesday;
 Who knows, maybe I'll leave the father for next week?
 Who knows, maybe I'll take the father out of this story?
 I stopped writing.
 I spent some time without any contact with Ana Paz.
 (Bojunga, 2007, p. 59).

We came into contact with this text in 2017, when we had completed twenty years of teaching, teaching reading and writing to children. Despite the training provided by the Pedagogy course and the countless opportunities for improvement experienced throughout our professional career, for the first time, we were able to “feel first-hand”, through the reception of the literary text, how complex the process of creating a character and a life for them could be.

When we feel the emotions described by the narrator of *Fazendo Ana Paz*, we are living the reading as an experience, in the ways described by Smith (1989, p. 83):

Reading is an experience. Reading about a storm is not the same as being in a storm, but both are experiences. We respond emotionally to both and can learn from both. But the learning, in each case, is derived from the experience.

The purpose of choosing this work for our research intervention was to provoke the subjects involved, just as we were provoked, to live the experience of a writer, through the narrative that is told by the narrator/character. This is one of the possibilities opened by literature, since, through fictional narrative, it is possible to experience all the emotions of the plot, with the advantage of not running the risks of real life (Amarilha, 2013).

Literature has the potential to temporarily suspend reality and transition to fiction. Readers who know and accept “entering the fictional game” return to reality with the possibility of having achieved a new perception of the world. Otherwise, without accepting that what they experience is make-believe, readers may be frustrated (Amarilha, 2013). Those involved in the intervention accepted the invitation to enter the “game of fiction.” Their speeches and actions revealed that they returned to the real world more convinced that writers do not have any “secret formula” for writing, nor are they even endowed with an innate ability to do so. Through the metafictional text, they were motivated to think

that writers construct their texts in an exercise that can be as pleasurable as it is frustrating or as revealing as it is intriguing.

To further understand the formative potential of literature and the consequent importance of its presence in school curricula, we turn to Barthes (2013), who refers to the many types of knowledge found in literary texts:

[...] In a novel by Robinson Crusoe, there is historical, geographical, social (colonial), technical, botanical, anthropological knowledge (Robinson moves from nature to culture). If, due to some excess of socialism or barbarism, all our disciplines were to be expelled from teaching, except one, it is the literary discipline that should be saved, since all the sciences are present in the literary monument (Barthes, 2013, p. 18-19).

Aware of the transdisciplinary nature of literature, we were prompted to reflect on how complex the activity of literary writing is. As a result, we became concerned about how written production has been mediated in schools, to the point of formulating the following questions: if writing is this laborious task of getting inspired, planning, drafting, improving, and even giving up and starting over, how does the school propose writing texts in a single occasion, with a limited time and conditions that are often not favorable for organizing ideas? How can we expect children to enjoy writing, to be persistent and competent if the writing situations that are usually proposed by schools disregard the fact that each writer is different and produces at different times?

All these questions suggest reflection on the role of the teacher as a mediator, that is, the one who will mediate the child's encounter with literary reading and the exercise of writing, without making the mistake of teaching literature.

CROSS-RELATIONS BETWEEN TEACHER LEARNING AND CHILDREN'S LEARNING

When researching the mediation of children's written production in school, we became familiar with Calkins' (1989) ideas and identified with the researcher's criticisms of the times and spaces that are generally dedicated to writing practice. According to her, the approach to the writing process requires a rhythm and classroom structure that are completely different from those used in our schools. If we want students to become deeply invested in their writing, if we want them to draft and revise, sharing their texts with others as they write, these children need time (Calkins, 1989, p. 36).

In addition to increasing the time, the author must become a reader of his or her own text, and be able to share it with peers if he or she so wishes, and modify it as needed. This idea of the author inspired us to hold writing conferences among colleagues (Calkins, 1989), which are nothing more than meetings in which participants present their texts, exchange ideas and can collaborate to improve each other's texts.

Such a possibility of organizing time and interactions would be unthinkable for us if we were rooted in more traditional practices of text production. The opening up to a different proposal for mediating this process was only possible thanks to the dialogue between research and teaching that was established during the master's intervention and that is currently being deepened in the doctorate. We are talking about research with and about literary texts, which resonated in the possibility of redefining teaching mediation.

On the subject of writing mediation in schools, we also highlight the thought of Smolka (2012):

[...] School has taught children to write, but not to say – but rather to repeat – words and phrases through writing; it is not appropriate for them to say what they think, for them to write what they say, for them to write as they say (because the “how to say” reveals the differences); school has taught children to read a univocal and literal meaning of words and texts and school has banished those who are unable to learn what it teaches, blaming them for their inability to understand and comprehend. What school, as an institution, does not realize is that incomprehension is not the result of an individual's incapacity, but is the result of a form of interaction (Smolka, 2012, p. 153).

We need to consider the importance of removing from the child the responsibility for his or her “supposed incapacity,” as well as removing from the teacher the responsibility for the gaps in his or her education as an agent who will form readers and writers. We see the need for quality interactions that need to be established with peers and with theoretical-practical and literary knowledge in the contexts of teacher training.

By believing in the potential of interactions focused on learning the writing process at school, we are anchored in the assumptions of Vygotsky (2008), who argue that the individual is a cultural being who learns through interaction with peers. Vygotsky (2008) also teaches that writing is the most elaborate form of speech, assuming complex forms, which gives rise to the need for drafts. The evolution of the draft to the final version of the text reflects the mental processing carried out by the one who writes. Therefore, for this theorist, writing needs to be planned, even if the draft is in a mental format, which is an inner speech. The results of his investigation show the unique character of writing, due to the high level of abstraction involved – its abstract quality is the main obstacle to writing and not any mechanical obstacle involved in its production.

When we think about how it could be beneficial for children to learn about the cognitive processes involved in writing, we are discussing an important concept in psychology: metacognition. Such knowledge would also be beneficial for educators, who are the main mediators of other people's written production. Regarding the concept of metacognition, we highlight the ideas of Flavell (1976):

Metacognition is related to the knowledge of cognitive processes, their products and everything related to them, for example properties relevant to learning, information or data [...] metacognition is related, among other things, to the active evaluation, to the regulation of these processes according to the cognitive objects or data about which they carry, generally to serve a purpose, a concrete objective (Flavell, 1976, p. 232).

Regarding cognitive processes, we also highlight the ideas of Jou and Sperb (2006), which provoke us to think about the importance of metacognition, asking ourselves: what would our lives be like if we were not aware of our own thoughts? How could we plan and correct our actions? How could we choose the most appropriate way to study? This understanding that we can have of our own thoughts is what cognitive psychology calls metacognition. In line with these ideas, we believe that learning to apply different knowledge to improve their performance is a skill that we need to develop in children, but it is, above all, a challenge present in the daily lives of educators, who need to mobilize their knowledge to exercise teaching.

Among the knowledge that we consider extremely relevant for teaching, we highlight knowledge about the writing process. Understanding that this knowledge is thematized by art, we arrive at metafiction. Lodge (2010, p. 213) teaches that metafiction is “fiction that deals with itself: short stories, novels, and tales that draw attention to their fictional status and the method used in their writing”. For this theorist, “metafiction writers have a sneaky habit of incorporating possible criticisms into their texts and fictionalizing them” (Lodge, 2010, p. 215).

A text by the writer Vinícius de Moraes invites us, in a literary way, to think about the craft of being a writer:

The exercise of chronicles

Writing prose is a thankless art. I mean idle prose, like a chronicler does; not the prose of a fiction writer, in which he is led half-heartedly by the characters and situations that, unfortunately for him, he created because he wanted to. With a prose writer of everyday life, things are more refined. He sits down in front of his typewriter, lights a cigarette, looks out the window and searches deep in his imagination for any fact, preferably gleaned from the morning news, or from the previous day, into which, with his peculiar tricks, he can inject some new blood. If there is nothing, he is left with the option of looking around and hoping that, through an associative process, the chronicle will suddenly appear, coming from facts and deeds of his exciting life awakened by concentration. Or, as a last resort, resort to the subject of the lack of subject, already quite worn out, but from which the act of writing can emerge the unexpected.

[...] But let the reader, the ungrateful reader, put himself in the role of the columnist. There are days when, positively, the column “does not go down”. The columnist gets up, sits down, washes his hands, gets up again, goes to the window, calls a friend, puts a record on the turntable, rereads past columns in search of inspiration – and nothing (Moraes, 2010, p. 15).

Throughout the text, the author provides us with some important lessons, such as: the understanding of literature as art; the lack of mastery of the text by the fiction writer; the search for facts and images to fuel the exercise of writing; the need to put oneself in the writer's shoes to understand the complexity of what it means to write; and the irony that the text does not emerge suddenly. As we have seen, many aspects of the craft of writing are offered by the writer when she chooses the act of writing as the theme for her text.

The reflection on the controversial writing processes that can be experienced by writers, encouraged by the work of Lygia Bojunga, expanded not only the understanding of the subjects of our research about the writing process, but also our understanding, as teachers/researchers. The clarity of this process brought about relevant changes in the way we plan and mediate reading and writing interventions with children. Regarding reading mediation, for example, we felt guided to previously prepare questions like those listed below, which were asked to the children after reading an excerpt from *Fazendo Ana Paz*:

- a) At what point did the narrator manage to perceive the connection between the three characters?
 - b) How did the three characters meet?
 - c) For what purpose did Ana Paz end up in that house?
 - d) What memories did the house trigger in the character?
 - e) Why does the scene with her father come back to the narrator's mind?
 - f) How will Lygia Bojunga unfold this story?
 - g) How would you continue the story if you were the writer?
- (Fernandes, 2019, p. 68).

These questions were posed after reading an excerpt from the book, during the 4th session of the intervention. The questions for all reading and writing sessions were defined in advance, throughout the intervention planning. In the example highlighted, the questions were intended to enable participants to: broaden their understanding of what is happening in the story (referential questions); put themselves in the narrator's shoes to guess what she was thinking; predict the continuation that the author would give to the text; and also put themselves as the writer to propose their own continuation. All this extrapolation of the text through debate also intended to foster curiosity and interest in reading the work.

In addition to the questions prepared for post-reading, the entire conduct of the encounters with the literary text and the authorial writing activity (Box 2) reflects decisions supported not only by the theoretical knowledge constructed by us, but also by the impact, enchantment and understanding made possible by reading the text of a metafictional nature.

We believe that this redefinition of the way we mediate reading and writing with children is an indication that reading literature is an instrument for teacher training/self-training, due to its transdisciplinary nature. Training through literary texts is possible because literature addresses different human themes, which speak of the world, of peoples and, in the case of metafiction, discusses writing. Given its relevance, shouldn't literature be the main subject in teacher training curricula?

Contrary to this idea, it was found that the presence of literature in initial teacher training curricula is still insufficient, according to notes by Saldanha (2018), who carried out a careful survey of the provision of literature in Pedagogy courses at 27 federal universities. The following two paragraphs bring notes present in the author's final considerations.

The data constructed and systematized and the reflections developed indicate that there is legal guidance for the inclusion of literature teaching in Pedagogy courses. Likewise, they indicate that there is awareness and movement by teachers and students at the universities surveyed that there is a need to include literature in the Pedagogy course. However, the legitimacy of literature in the Pedagogy

curriculum is still incipient, vulnerable and is not assured by the majority of the HEIs surveyed. Most federal universities do not offer the Literature discipline in their mandatory curriculum for Pedagogy courses (Saldanha, 2018, p. 228).

The aforementioned research highlights that, even in Brazilian states in the southeast region, whose universities have researchers with relevant production in this area, literature is only offered as an optional subject in their curricula. Saldanha (2018) emphasizes the need to overcome the understanding that literature should be an object of study only for students in the Literature course. Considering that, if it is the pedagogues who are leading the process of inserting children in early childhood education and the initial grades of elementary school into the literate culture, in addition to students in the first stage of EJA, they also need literary training.

We emphasize here the inseparability between teaching and research, as argued by Freire (1996). Without the opportunity to establish a dialogue between research and teaching, we would not be able to rethink reading and writing practices with children. However, as Nóvoa (1992) states, teacher training cannot be limited to the individual dimension. Collective actions are necessary, as these “contribute to professional emancipation and to the consolidation of a profession that is autonomous in the production of its knowledge and values” (Nóvoa, 1992, p. 15). For us, thinking about the collective dimension also means detaching the responsibility for training from the sole responsibility of the teacher, who sometimes feels oppressed in unfavorable contexts, which hinder investment in personal and professional training.

Nóvoa talks about a critical-reflexive perspective on professional training that results in the formation of a personal and professional identity. For him, “being in training implies a personal investment, free and creative work on one’s own paths and projects” (Nóvoa, 1992, p. 13). According to the author, training is not built through accumulation (of courses, knowledge or techniques), but rather through critical reflexivity on practices and the permanent (re)construction of a personal identity. This is why it is so important to invest in the person and give a status to knowledge from experience (Nóvoa, 1992, p. 13).

We conceive of reading literature as a formative path, transgressive in the learning of techniques and diverse in experiences for the constitution of these personal and professional identities. Amarilha (2010) defends the importance of reading literature for the constitution of a reading repertoire, which she calls a “stock of stories and poems”. For the researcher, it is this stock that will grant teachers pedagogical authority, boosting their creativity and ability to transgress previously established programs (Amarilha, 2010). Here we can learn about the importance of the literary repertoire from the researcher’s words:

Mastering this stock enables teachers to continually exercise their capacity to reflect and innovate on their practice, precisely because it bears the marks of their personal training and that related to the needs of the pedagogical context in which they work. With this vision, values the ability to perceive opportunities for advancement for themselves and their students that teachers must seek to increasingly enrich their literary repertoire, enabling them to teach in a way that is both rigorous and in continuous training, in tune with the provocations that their surroundings present (Amarilha, 2010, p. 87).

In line with this idea, getting to know Lygia Bojunga’s metafictional work was a key item in our “reading inventory” so that we could propose an experience of reading and writing authorial texts with children, based on the understanding that they need time, preparation of drafts, exchange of ideas and, mainly, the awareness that the text is not born ready. The following excerpt demonstrates how this awareness is possible for children. It is the transcription of a moment when Raíssa (a child identified with a fictitious name, like the others), in one of the research intervention sessions, after the sessions dedicated to reading the work *Fazendo Ana Paz*, answers our question about how she felt when assuming the role of writer:

Raíssa: I don't know. First, I thought of other things to do, and when I wrote this text, I tried to change it because I always had the narrator and not the character speaking. I also wanted to write about a boy because I don't think I've ever written a character other than a girl. I found it really interesting to be a writer, but also a little complicated. Yes, I think I felt the emotions that Lygia

went through with Ana Paz. Sometimes I thought about giving up when one of my friends lost her story and started over. I was thinking about giving up, that it wasn't good, but I still think that it could be a better story, but it's still good (Fernandes, 2019, p. 94).

In this speech, we can see how much reading the literary text referenced the exercise of writing and the subsequent analysis that the child made of her act of producing a text. When Raíssa recognizes that writing is also a complicated task, she demonstrates the potential that the literary text has to provoke the most diverse thoughts or feelings, including those that can be considered negative for school and/or society.

As Candido (2011, p. 178) states, literature is not a harmless experience – it “has a role in shaping personality, but not according to conventions; rather, it would be according to the indiscriminate and powerful force of reality”. By proposing situations for reading and discussing the literary work, we achieved the goal of enabling an experience of literary creation that considers the complexity of the act of writing. Here is another excerpt from the discussion, when we encouraged the participation of other children:

Teacher: Camille, do you want to talk? How did you feel in this position as a writer? Camille is still in the process of building her story, but she can already share this feeling.

Camille: Even though I haven't finished my story yet, I can still do a lot of work because I was working on it, but I regretted some parts, so I started it all over again, but with the same story, with the same objective. So I'm still at the beginning, even though I have more than four pages.

Teacher: What did you change completely? The characters?

Camille: No, like the story that was happening.

Teacher: And the boys? Joaquim, how did you feel when you were about to take on the role of writer?

Joaquim: I have fifteen pages and I have a doubt...

Teacher: What is your issue?

Joaquim: Whether I should kill the character or not (Fernandes, 2019, p. 94).

In this excerpt, it is clear that the construction of the stories occurred at different times for each child. While Raíssa had already finished her text, we can see in Camille and Joaquim's statements that they were still immersed in this process. It is also important to highlight that these children were naturally accepting the feeling of displeasure with what they were writing and the existence of the desire to start their story over again, as in the case with Camille. They were also accepting that it is possible to have doubts about what ending to create for the story, as in the case with Joaquim. In other words, they were understanding that the text does not start out ready in the writer's head.

Another aspect to be raised concerns the fact that, even without any indication from us about the number of pages of the story, the children were allowed to write longer texts than they usually did, without any rush to finish. Joaquim, especially, was a child who was not used to writing stories and surprised us with a much longer production, in which he decides that the main character does not die, but goes through many challenges and tense situations, in the struggle for survival alone, after the loss of his parents.

We extracted from our dissertation an excerpt that summarizes part of our analysis, after comparing the texts written before and after reading and discussing the book *Fazendo Ana Paz*. For this comparison, we verified, among other aspects, how the children constituted the elements of the narrative (plot, character, environment, time and narrator):

a) the children's literary is a reference for the creation of their stories, which was proven by evidence of other texts within the stories they created. It was possible to verify fragments/passages that were very similar to traditional tales that the children are familiar with. [...]

b) the children allowed themselves to try new writing experiences, such as starting the story by narrating an action that was already underway (in the middle of a dialogue between two friends) or a girl writing, for the first time, as a boy narrator, and also the use of time in a non-linear way, probably influenced by the way more experienced writers proceed in their creations;

- c) the creativity in the insertion of fictional elements and unusual events in the plots [...] showed that contact with literature was important for the children to understand that authors are inspired by reality, but are not limited to it, and that it is possible (and necessary) to go beyond the limits of what we commonly consider real;
- d) the speeches produced by the children after reading Fazenda Ana Paz show how much the work contributed to their developing the awareness that the author experiences the emotions of his/her creation, that he/she may have doubts and even dissatisfaction regarding his/her productions. Also, he/she has the right not to conclude and/or not to make public what he/she wrote; [...] (Fernandes, 2019, p. 171).

Among the many positive contributions that come from contact with literary texts, we would like to highlight the relationship between reality and fiction mentioned in these considerations. We invite the reader of this article to enjoy the story created by Jason, entitled “The Man with No Name”. It is essential to emphasize that this is a very introspective child who, throughout the year, has experiences in which his difficulty in controlling his emotions became evident. He used to write little and even not finish his stories, always making his “difficulty” in writing evident, compared to the level of production of the class. This awareness of his “supposed inferiority” in relation to the performance of his classmates made it even more difficult for Jason to face the difficulties he felt in carrying out and completing school activities. This is the context that justifies our enchantment with the authorial production below, whose writing was maintained exactly as the writer wrote it (including the capital letters).

The man with no name

On an island, there was a small town where there was a fisherman, a swimmer, a singer, and a salesman. There was everything there, all were friends, they always helped each other, everyone was happy.

Until a man with a mask arrived who always avoided talking to people and his house was the farthest until a man invaded the mysterious person's house.

- What does that man do, I will try to talk to him.

The man did it. He went to talk to the neighbor but before knocking on the door he looked at the window until he realized that the neighbor was not at home and saw him coming.

- Get out of my house, next time you come here I'll kill you.

- The neighbor said he was going to kill me only because I looked through his window

So, his plan was wrong but he saw that the neighbor was using a mask and decided to call him Jason.

- I'm going to talk to him but I'll be more careful. Neighbor, I want to talk to you, my name is Maykon, can I call you Jason?

- No, I already told you, don't come near my house.

- Ok, just tell me what you do and your name

- No, go away or I'll call the police.

Then Maykon went away but still wanted to know what his neighbor was doing so he didn't know what to do anymore. So, he thought to break into his house but Maykon had to be careful not to be seen by Jason.

- Ok, I think it's better to come from behind. I hope he doesn't see me, what's all that noise.

- Sorry, sorry.

- what's that

- Get out of my house or I will bury and

Then Jason buries Maykon but while he was burying him a woman saw him and called the police and he took of Maykon. Nobody knew the real name of Jason and they didn't see his face and Maykon never found out what was in the house

(Text written by Jason. Fernandes, 2019, adapted from the original in Portuguese for translation).

We were impacted by reading this story, which was given to us by the writer at the very end of the year, without even having been discussed and revised in the last sessions of the intervention, intended for conferences among colleagues. Fortunately, there was still time to personally praise the

author for his production and to be happy to hear him say that he would still write the second part of the story.

We do not know if there was any continuity in the text, but what Jason wrote in what he considered to be the first part of the story prompted us to ask a number of questions, especially since we had lived with him and knew his personality. They are: Why didn't the main character have a name and why did no one see his face? Why was the name suggested to the main character by the secondary character exactly Jason, which is the fictitious name chosen by the author of the text to identify him in the research? We also noticed that, at the beginning of the last paragraph, the author directly names the character as Jason. Why did the main character run away from others so much and even want to bury those who tried to get close to him the most?

We cannot know to what extent fiction and reality are intertwined in this story, but we are pleased with the construction of a writing that brought satisfaction to the author and that may have been a channel for him, using the disguise allowed by literature, to experience or express his feelings. As Amarilha (1997) teaches us, children can experience a process of identification with the story, to the point of projecting themselves into its plot. These are the words of the researcher about the fictional game made possible by the text:

This game of entering fiction teaches children how to adapt intellectually to deal comparatively with real and imagined facts. This ability to move between two worlds – which play provides – introduces children to the knowledge of the limits of things that have happened and things that have been invented. It helps them to develop discernment between what is real and what is fictional (Amarilha, 1997, p. 54).

As readers of “A Man with No Name,” we enter the fictional game proposed by Jason, even though we are uneasy about not being able to discern how much of the author’s reality may be present in his story. Being immersed in this curiosity in no way compromises Jason’s achievement through literature.

Jason taught us that each person writes in their own time, that is, there is no standardized time for everyone. He also taught us that it is possible for children to talk about themselves through other languages – in Jason's case, he seemed to feel safe when he was “disguised” as a narrator/character. This is an example of the identification process that is provided by reading fiction, a vicarious experience in which the reader lives, even if temporarily, the life of the character (Amarilha, 2013). In line with this idea, we consider that Jason experienced a process of identification through writing fiction.

Based on these reflections, it is possible to understand that the literary text fulfilled its formative role: it enabled teachers to learn about the mediation of the reading and writing processes and also contributed to children being able to experience a new way of feeling about themselves in learning language, as fiction writers – a process of co-learning in teaching.

CONSIDERATIONS ON A JOURNEY THAT NEVER END

The function of the reader/1

When Lucia Peláez was little, she read a novel in secret. She read it in bits and pieces, hiding the book under her pillow night after night. Lucia had stolen the novel from the cedar library where her uncle kept his favorite books.

Lucia walked a lot as the years went by. In search of ghosts she walked along the rocks above the Antioquia River, and in search of people she walked through the streets of violent cities.

Lucia walked a lot, and along her walk she was always accompanied by the echoes of those distant voices that she had heard, with her eyes, in her childhood.

Lucia never read that book again. She would no longer recognize it. The book grew so much inside her that now it is another, now it is hers (Eduardo Galeano).

We chose to appreciate Eduardo Galeano's creation to draw endless considerations from it. The aforementioned text represents, with a touch of lightness and depth at the same time, our understanding of the relevance of reading literature in teacher training. We can imagine that as educators

we can be Lucias, as we carry with us the echoes of distant voices present in the books we read. It is likely that we will no longer recognize these books, because, just like the aforementioned character, we have resized them within us, even if we are not aware of them.

Despite the results presented here, we recognize the incompleteness of the ideas that were raised. Like Lucia, we still have a long way to go. We agree with Paulo Freire (1996, p. 53), when he states: “I like being a person because, unfinished, I know that I am a conditioned being, but aware of the incompleteness, I know that I can go beyond it”.

The pedagogical work of teachers faces the daily challenge of serving a universe of students with specific interests, potentialities and difficulties, who require attention and opportunities. The analysis carried out here, based on the data from the pedagogical intervention, is part of our effort to become teachers, in the search to contemplate the needs that are posed - corroborating Freire's ideas that no one walks without learning how to walk and that the educator learns while teaching (Freire, 1996). When we proposed the pedagogical intervention, we did not imagine that it would be an experience of co-learning: while the children experienced themselves as writers, we experienced ourselves as interlocutors learning the processes of reading and writing literature, while also learning about literary language.

These results indicate that it seems relevant to us that teacher training actions enable the creation of a reading repertoire that can support the action of learning, evaluating and, at times, redimensioning pedagogical practice. Such a repertoire can favor teachers' autonomy and creativity, eliminating the risk of separating thinking and doing, which would reduce teaching to its technical dimension.

The progress demonstrated by children in the elaboration and improvement of their texts indicates that, as unique individuals, they need different times to produce stories. Children also need a repertoire of reading literature to reference their writing and opportunities to interact with their peers in order to exchange ideas, create drafts and revise their texts. It is important that schools consider these methodological specificities and, thus, favor the achievement of new achievements by children – so that they reach the last stage of the initial years of elementary school with greater familiarity with the processes of reading and writing. Achieving this familiarity with reading and writing will allow children to overcome the difficulties that are revealed both in more formal assessment situations (such as the exams they are subjected to), and will also help them overcome the difficulties that are evident in statements made in everyday life, which suggest that they do not believe in their own writing potential.

In view of the above, we believe that the literary education of children, young people and adults requires the attention of teachers' thinking and practice, not only so that they become readers, but also so that they can experience literary creation. Metafictional literature is a possible path for the personal and professional education of educators, helping them to advance in the mediation of students' contact with literary texts and authorial production. Literature can be a voice that, together with other voices, can echo and constitute us as teachers on many Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays...

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Author 1 – Project coordinator, active participation in data analysis and review of the final text.

Author 2 – Data collection, data analysis and text writing.

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest with this article.