

Evidential Paradigm: narrative research methods in the teacher's training context¹

Paradigma Indiciário: abordagem narrativa de investigação no contexto da formação docente

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to take the Evidential Paradigm as a narrative research method of teacher training. We highlight its autobiographical dimension, emphasizing the particularities of using narratives as a studied phenomenon, textual genre, and methodological conception. We carried out a comprehensive reading of Carlo Ginzburg's work, and from his contributions, we point out characteristics of narrative writing in research, understanding it as a conscious choice to look at the past and reconstruct it, considering the options made throughout the process, and the answers found at the end. We take, as reflexive axis, narratives produced by teachers, whose analysis show that this way of doing research enables understanding aspects of social practices that are not related to what was lived or to whom lived, but to how the experience is updated at the moment when it is decided to narrate, in dialogue with issues of our times, spaces and culture, becoming a powerful research and training instrument. We conclude by elucidating three temporalities, present in the investigation based on that Paradigm: time of life history, considering that it crosses and is crossed by research; time of research itself, understanding that the method occurs in constant movement between collecting, observing, deciphering; time of writing, understanding

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the linearity of a text that needs to be definitive, but opens up provisionally to the knowledge produced and the estrangement of ourselves.

Keywords: Narrative research. Evidential Paradigm. Narrative method. Evidential method. Teacher training.

RESUMO

Este estudo tem como objetivo tomar o Paradigma Indiciário como método narrativo de investigação no âmbito da formação docente. Destacamos sua dimensão autobiográfica, enfatizando as particularidades de fazer uso da narrativa como fenômeno estudado, gênero textual e concepção metodológica. Para tanto, realizamos leitura abrangente da obra de Carlo Ginzburg e, a partir de suas contribuições, apontamos características da escrita narrativa em pesquisa, entendendo-a como escolha consciente de olhar para o passado e reconstruí-lo, tomando as opções feitas ao longo do processo e as respostas encontradas ao final. Tomamos ainda, como eixo reflexivo, narrativas produzidas por professoras, cujas análises evidenciam que esse modo de fazer pesquisa possibilita entendimento de aspectos das práticas sociais que não dizem respeito apenas ao que foi vivido ou a quem viveu, mas ao modo como a experiência se atualiza no instante em que se decide narrar, em diálogo com questões de nossos tempos, espaços e cultura, tornando-se potente instrumento de pesquisa e de formação. Finalizamos apresentando três temporalidades, presentes em uma investigação com base no Paradigma: o tempo da história de vida, considerando que ela atravessa e é atravessada pela pesquisa; o tempo da própria pesquisa, entendendo que o método se dá em um movimento constante entre coletar, observar, decifrar; o tempo da escrita, entendendo a linearidade de um texto que precisa ser definitivo, mas se abre para a provisoriidade do conhecimento produzido e o estranhamento de nós mesmos.

Palavras-chave: Pesquisa narrativa. Paradigma Indiciário. Método narrativo. Método indiciário. Formação docente.

Let nothing be called natural. In an age of bloody confusion, ordered disorder, planned caprice, and dehumanized humanity, lest all things be held unalterable! ... Even if it's not very strange, find it estranging. Even if it's usual, find it hard to explain. What here is common should astonish you. What here's the rule, recognize as an abuse. And where you have recognized an abuse, provide a remedy!

(BRECHT, 1929 *apud* PEIXOTO, 1981, p. 60).

Narratives are oral, written and/or visual texts that have been circulating in different social spaces for centuries. Taken as a humanizing practice, the narrative encompasses intergenerational knowledge at the same time that it allows for the strangeness and expansion of the awareness of what is experienced. For this reason, it extrapolates the dimension of the individual who narrates or researches, as it connects with aspects of culture and society, updates, and is reframed when interpreted by the interlocutor.

A narrative is composed of an original sequence of lived situations, permeated by emotions and connections with other memories and images. To the pleasure of telling a story, the selection and organization are added due to the pertinence of what seems relevant to the interlocutor and the present context, as well as to the time one has to narrate and what one aims for with it.

There is a strong component in the act of narrating that makes us focus on this practice in the context of research. Very different from the idea of reporting or providing awareness, the narrative requires taking a position and implication in what has been lived and is told: we narrate what we consider relevant, we put our representations and expectations in it, we give a certain tone to the report. We also put aside concerns about explanations about the facts. The understanding is open precisely because the most relevant is not the description itself, but what is inexplicable and unusual (using Brecht's words *apud* PEIXOTO, 1981), which only expresses itself sensibly, which mobilizes and connects the narrator and readers in an interlocution that enables the understanding of oneself and reality.

Those narratives that refer to the specific practices, customs, and knowledge of school spaces, told by teachers, have been extensively investigated in the area of Education. Teachers build meanings from their experiences by giving them the form of narratives because from something lived, they create plots, list priorities, order the flow of events and plan actions (FERREIRA; ARAGÃO, 2020). When reading or listening to teaching narratives, we share intimacy, experience dilemmas, and the common sensations of the school's daily life.

As a research methodology, we consider the narrative approach to be one that is widely used in this type of report, taking it as a textual genre, a way of obtaining information, and a way of recording the investigative path. Still, Connelly and Clandinin (1995) highlight the relevance of narrative as a formative strategy for those who narrate: "Narrative research figures as a source of data, method and formative use (promoting changes in one's own practice and training through the subject's narrative)" (CONNELLY; CLANDININ, 1995, p. 62, our translation).

Taking for granted that the exercise of narrating is mainly formative, we understand that the narration of the research is also an exercise of constant reflection and improvement of the work of the researchers, as pointed out by

Serodio and Prado (2020). He/she is him/herself: author, writer, interlocutor, and sometimes also the protagonist of narratives, an individual who is looking for answers and, at the same time, causing changes in his/her own research spaces. Also, writing in a narrative genre enables connection and approximation between the academic environment and the school community, as a certain “[...] pedagogical language of its own” is created (PRADO; SOLIGO, 2007, p. 39, our translation), a personal dialect that, in order to occur, assumes the immersion of the researcher/author in his/her work and mobilizes him/her to think dialogically, considering the community with which he/she establishes a link through narration. Choosing narrative as a genre and method, thus, is to assume research as a movement of authorship and education.

The narrative asserts itself as a powerful alternative in research when it aims to investigate the intersection of cultures and practices, to reveal how the theoretical systems dialogue with everyday knowledge. Also, by highlighting the memories and stories that constitute us and enhance the processes of knowledge formation and production. As described by Aragão, Ferreira and Prezotto (2017), it departs from the micro but not from the individual, because in each speech there are resonances of generations and aspects of the whole society that echo in and of the relationships with the other.

At the same time that it is based on the words, practices, and knowledge constructed historically, updated in the speech of the narrator, the narrative thinking presents a certain air of novelty by breaking with the conventional ways of producing knowledge, in constant tension between form and content, tradition and innovation. Soligo and Simas (2014) point out that narrative writing is a “permanent exercise of construction through deconstruction”, that is, writing that goes against the type of logical-scientific thinking in which theses and dissertations are conventionally linked by their *a priori* structure. “It presupposes ‘thinking differently.’ If the perspective is to privilege narrative forms of recording, then it will be necessary to privilege the narrative way of thinking” (SOLIGO; SIMAS, 2014, p. 5, our translation).

“Breaking treaties, betraying rites”² when they imprison and prove incapable of sheltering the totality of research and the marks of the humanity of the subjects who participate in it. Reaffirm contracts when they preserve and revere the memories and stories that constitute teachers and their spaces. Circulating practices were previously restricted to small groups, giving visibility

2 Paraphrasing João Ricardo and Paulinho Mendonça in the song *Sangue Latino*, performed by *Secos e Molhados* (1973).

to the knowledge produced in the school environment. Choosing the narrative is a particular way of doing and understanding the research, which values the interpretative possibilities of a theme related to experiences lived by the narrator who, when reporting, also weaves articulations with the theoretical assumptions considered. It is a concept that has a social nature and aims to understand the transformations that occurred in the process, capturing tensions and subjective data, often not foreseen at the beginning of the research.

Given the meanings here attributed to the narrative methodology, understanding that being open, diverse, and susceptible to our choices are central characteristics of this way of doing research, we ask ourselves what the uses and possibilities of understanding the Evidential Paradigm as an essentially narrative investigation mode are. It is outlined, as our main objective, then, to understand that appropriations and knowledge production are made possible by this approach in the scope of teacher training, from the narratives woven by, with, and about teachers.

Like other qualitative research approaches, the narrative is not committed to conducting replicable studies or models developed. Seeking coherence with the principles that are typical of the narrative movement, we assume that there is not a single truth to be tested or proven. On the contrary, in agreement with Bragança and Ossa (2018), we consider the one who narrates as a bearer of a set of knowledge and practices that evoke diverse readings of reality, which can and should have a dialog and conflict with the researcher's view and with the theoretical systems, in a dialectical and dialogical form.

Signing our theoretical and methodological option, in order to offer elements that support the proposed reflection, we will initially make a resumption of the bases of the evidential paradigm, as we understand it in the reading of Carlo Ginzburg's work, highlighting the narrative element arising from it. Then, starting from such theoretical contributions, we organized four axes of analysis that point to possible uses of narrative as a method, presenting them through the narratives of Basic Education teachers³ who, in their writings, understood the investigative possibilities of narrating. We then developed, as a final synthesis of the study carried out, three temporalities that we consider to be present in an investigation based on the Evidential Paradigm and which are coherent, solid, and powerful in conducting research in the context of teacher training.

3 Narratives produced in a continuing education initiative carried out concurrently with research already completed, from which this study arises.

Construction of an evidential reading: the how to be involved narrative

Carlo Ginzburg is a reasonably well-known author in the field of History. Somewhat less in the field of Education. Of all his work, two of his texts are most referenced in the area of Education. The first is his monographic research entitled "*The cheese and the worms*" (GINZBURG, 2006). Originally published in 1976, it was translated into several languages, having its first Portuguese version published in 1987. It has editions for sale today and remains a widely circulated book. When analyzing the history of a miller from the Friuli region (northeast of Italy), in the 16th century, Ginzburg seeks to understand the cultural circulation between erudite knowledge and the knowledge of the popular classes. In addition to the very well-written narrative itself, as well as the unique cosmology proposed by the historical subject analyzed in the book, this work, methodologically, proposes to analyze a historical phenomenon from a single life story, starting from the documentation that allows access to it only indirectly.

The main terms that researchers inspired by Ginzburg's work started to use were taken from an essay published in 1979, republished in a book in 1986, and translated into Portuguese in 1989. It is the text "*Clues: Roots of an evidential paradigm*". Available in the collection of essays "*Myths, emblems, clues*" (GINZBURG, 1989), *Clues* seeks to qualify what the author calls the Evidential Paradigm, with remote origins in the practices of hunters of societies before the invention of writing, passing through several sciences that do not fit the modern science Galilean paradigm. It is about the construction of a knowledge that seeks the totality about an object whose access only occurs in an indirect way, which is possible through signs and indications, which are, in the author's words, "privileged zones" to decipher a reality that is "opaque" (GINZBURG, 1989, p. 177). By doing this epistemological exercise, Ginzburg is part of a debate about scientific paradigms and offers subsidies for thinking about qualitative research in the field of education (SUASSUNA, 2019).

Despite the synthesis and density of these two texts by the Italian historian, it is necessary to understand the ways of making an indicative reading in the dialogue between these texts and the rest of Ginzburg's work (as pointed out by LEONARDI; AGUIAR, 2010). We understand that this more comprehensive reading allows us to understand different aspects present in an index survey. In this, we retrace a complex reality from the narrative disposition of the evidence that we apprehend through fragments, in an erudite dialogue with the surroundings of these indications. The deciphering of these indications is

done through narrative questions that are constructed throughout our research in exercises of alternation between the micro and the macro, consideration of distance and estrangement, observation of recurrences and anomalies. Using a flexible rigor, we approach the other, preserving the undecipherable of everything human, including ourselves, involving us in the writing of a narrative that preserves the character of truth and totality⁴.

In these terms, different concepts expand the notion of evidence, pointing out that as or more important as the fact that, within this paradigm, we work with elements that are normally negligible (and neglected), the evidence is the consideration that they are developed narratively. For this, a set of attitudes towards the research materials is necessary, especially the referred exercise of distance and estrangement. This particular attitude is widely developed in the book “*Wooden Eyes*” (GINZBURG, 2001), from which we can understand that:

Strange is to be aware that, in a globalized society, in which “the whole world is our home”, “we all find ourselves astray, out of place, vis-a-vis some things and some people” [...]. It is with this awareness that we invite ourselves to be more surprised and to look for elements and themes that are not obvious. It is to act like the child who, curious, always asks “why” and the name of things (LEONARDI; AGUIAR, 2010, p. 117, our translation).

Feeling astray, distancing oneself are practices considered here as an exercise of looking deeply at oneself, trying to understand how we are involved in the research we carry out, and how we make explicit, narratively, our choices, doubts, tensions, and methodological decisions. Thus, the narrative is constituted as a way of thinking, organizing, and carrying out the investigation. Experiences and events are organized so that, throughout the research, another narrative can be produced, that of the researcher. When we are immersed in the stories of the research participants, we recognize a whole context in which each narrative develops, as well as important aspects of culture and social practices that are not only related to what was lived or who lived it, but how experience is updated at the instant one decides to narrate, in dialogue with the issues of our time, our spaces and our culture. According to Alves (2000),

⁴ The ideas in this paragraph come from the debate with researchers Paula Leonardi and Fernando Antonio Peres, with whom we prepared an article to discuss the uses of Ginzburg’s work in the History of Education. This article is being evaluated by another journal.

After so much research carried out in everyday life and after so many stories narrated (listened to and told), it was possible to begin to understand that, perhaps, narrating is the same way, on the one hand, that subjects express themselves about their daily lives whenever they wish to transmit it and, on the other hand, it can also be one of the most important methods for organizing the history of everyday life, better expressing it and enabling its better understanding (ALVES, 2000 p. 3, our translation).

Narrative research takes place, then, in this relationship between the micro and the macro, between the subject's narrative and the history of its context (GINZBURG, 2007b, p. 244). It refers to typically human issues, therefore transversal and urgent that enter the history of the subjects and materialize in the registered experiences. It is, therefore, particular and individual, while referring to the diverse and collective. We explain this perception concerning one of our researches:

First, we can only explain how the research was done at the end. When we were in the middle of the process, the way of analyzing the letters was different. [...]. The main consequence of these path changes during the research is the perception that questions that seemed insignificant have become fundamental and vice versa. The list of whys started to increase. [...] we understand that any explanation of how the research was conducted constitutes a new narrative, which can be recontextualized in the future. [...]. Secondly, as a result of this first item, we understand that the process of strangeness as distancing is not only in relation to the sources, but also in relation to our own methodological choices and the results of these choices. [...]. Finally, as a consequence of what we have just stated, the final narrative becomes a new object of strangeness, since there are elements that are beyond our own control as historians when we write our historical narrative. Our writing is always unfinished. [...]. The new questions only arise when we continue to find the sources strange. And in order for us to continue to find sources strange, we need to find ourselves, our certainties and our narratives strange (AGUIAR, 2012, p. 6579-6580, our translation).

We understand that narrative research requires reading indications when we consider the polysemic character of what we write. Writing contains more than words present explicitly and immediately. This way of looking at research is also based on the idea that instruments, being products of human action, are

fertile elements in meanings and open to multiple senses. For this reason, the narrative “[...] carries a transformative perspective, of actions and meanings, which assumes **a commitment to what is not formally said, but how it is conveyed by the recording**, leading the researcher to look for what is marked beyond obviousness” (FERREIRA, 2014, p. 241, our emphasis, our translation).

Still, we understand that the narrative dimension is the one that allows us to connect the points of the evidence that we found in our research. It is because we want to narrate our data that those marginal elements need to be explained, they must be meanings in order to come together coherently and cohesively through our narrative questions. Agreeing with Aragão (2010), we understand that “[...] the evidential analysis values components of singularity and secondary details often located in the appearance of things. The objective is to recognize and reassemble a given reality by establishing connective links” (ARAGÃO, 2010, p. 125, our translation). In this sense, the totality is not abandoned, on the contrary, it is rescued little by little, establishing a narrative connection.

Working with narratives allows access to a type of knowledge that is not present in the general models of modern sciences. In a generalizing science, the exception is excluded. In the Evidential Paradigm, the exception, the singular, the individual is necessary for knowledge. To understand what was experienced and reported, in all its richness, it is necessary to consider both recurring and singular elements, assuming the researcher’s subjectivity without giving up “flexible rigor” (GINZBURG, 1989, p. 179). We understand the flexible rigor of the Evidential Paradigm as the adoption and coherence with its own procedures, which are methodical (not unique or pre-established) and which consider doubt as a fundamental part of the process of knowing (therefore, distance and estrangement).

The maintenance of the doubt demands to be involved in the research, to be present, to ask narrative questions both to the object of the investigation, and to ourselves. Implicating oneself demands considering oneself and the other, as it is precisely the existence of the other that allows the construction of collective meanings for our implication. In this way, our evidential reading is the narrative of ourselves, of our research, of our object. That is why narrating is not just telling a story or the story itself. It requires commitment to the questions asked and objects studied, as well as the willingness to share with others, the choice of words and facts, a certain logical and judicious order that mobilizes emotions both in the narrator and in his/her interlocutors.

Evidential Paradigm and the research carried out by, with, and about teachers

In line with an evidential reading, we articulate these precepts to the context of teacher education by taking for analysis the narratives prepared by teachers of Basic Education in moments of continuing education, carried out concurrently with the research. We bring to the text potent fragments of the writing of teachers that help us in the identification and understanding of four aspects of the methodological constitution process of the investigation we defend here.

a) Thinking narratively: paying attention to the process

The movement of research, in the evidential paradigm, takes place in a constant collection, observation and deciphering. We collect recurrences, anomalies and gaps, varying the scales of observation, gathering different documents, data sources, study materials. We look for signs and repetitions. We observe the material we collect. For each piece of material, we can recognize things already known before (it is when certainties appear), we can doubt and propose questions (it is when doubts appear), or even intuit that there is something there that we still do not understand (because there are, in every research, not so evident elements). We can go back and search for other materials, based on what we observed, and again take a keen look.

However, the texts, the words, the ideas, the images, the sounds, whatever we have captured, only make sense if they are placed in a narrative. This is the act of deciphering. It is the moment of the exiled state of strangeness concerning our certainties, doubts or intuitions. In a reflection on history and photography, in dialogue with Siegfried Kracauer (1889-1966), a German writer, with remarkable work in the field of cinema studies, Ginzburg states that the historian, like the photographer, is an exile, someone who can develop a look of strangeness: “The instant of non-recognition opens the path of cognitive illumination to the viewer’s strangeness” (GINZBURG, 2007b, p. 238, our translation). In other words, by not recognizing it, we may wonder and understand:

It is only in this state of self-annulment, or in this **being without a homeland**, that the historian can enter into communion with the material that concerns his research. [...]. **Foreigner in relation to the world evoked by the sources**, he must face the mission – typical mission of the exile – to penetrate his external appearances, in order to be able to understand this world from within (GINZBURG, 2007b, p. 238, our emphasis, our translation).

It is when, through slow reading, we seek erudition in other bibliographic references, we insert the evidence in series (establishing categories) and reorganize our research records. Involved, we assume an exile posture about ourselves, in a constant movement of problematizing (us).

By breaking with the logic of research in a certain linear and neutral mold as a means of confirming or refuting hypotheses, narrative research expands the universe to be studied and places the researcher as a privileged interlocutor, someone who is willing to make use of the listening and of the word towards knowledge. This view significantly alters the teachers' relationship with their own knowledge and with the production of narratives, as externalized by Marina:

I don't know if this is what you expect me to say... We can speak from what we know because it happens at school, but it is the things that I live and that I know are powerful because they make sense when I realize the link with all the things I consider important, from the content, which I cannot give up, and even with the essence of being a teacher, at least for me ... but maybe you need me to talk like this, thinking more about what we study about development, right? I don't know what you need. But if I can tell you a little bit about what I do, I think you'll find the theories too, you know ... on second thought, that's it. I'm sure that the stories I have with the children here, will tell you things that we don't always notice, but are full of meaning. Excerpt from Marina's oral narrative (audio recorded, our translation).

Marina, a teacher of Early Childhood Education, reveals her concern with a conception of research that seeks to find, in her words, arguments that move in the direction of hypotheses previously elaborated by the researcher. Realizing that there were no closed prescriptions or rehearsed models, she organized her thinking and, thus, understood that the stories she shares, lived in the school environment, could refer to issues common to the development and learning of many teachers in different contexts. The problematization of the immediate opens space so that our certainties, when read in an evidential way, can bring links with other scales of observation. New meanings allow new questions in a narrative movement of looking at the research itself.

In this movement, the search for coherence between theoretical, methodological, and analytical framework is central. When referring to the narrative methodology there is even greater care to be taken because we understand that this is not a research mode given *a priori*, that is, with previously defined references and clear hypotheses to be conflicted, which requires the elaboration of others – new – methodological criteria.

Narrative research, in this sense, takes place in a coming and going between

theories, methodological choices and analyses, as we understand that the whole process must be revisited and questioned at each new step. It is worth clarifying that the researcher certainly has a set of knowledge and more or less stable questions that direct his/her gaze, which he/she uses to seek to understand the research object. However, to the extent that he/she comes into contact with the participants' narratives, realizes which choices seem right and which must be abandoned, moving dialogue and construction of a new narrative that of his/her investigation. Thus, the researcher must show him/herself open to deeply understand what is revealed by the group of subjects/material analyzed, in line with the theoretical fields that underlie his/her action, because as a researcher he/she takes the place of those who collect, organize and retell such experiences.

b) Beyond the events: consider the contexts

When considering what the subject narrates, it is necessary to look beyond the materiality of the words and try to also understand the silences, the pauses, the recurrences. The choices made alter the narrator's relationship with his/her elaboration, because what has been lived is updated and connected with the present moment, the space, and the people who place themselves as interlocutors.

When narrating, the individual orders his/her thought and submits what he/she lived concretely to his/her own judgment, representations, memories and emotions. For this reason, the narrative is always a creation and, as such, gains amplitude when we get to know the context of production. In this sense, we can only understand them in relation to space and time.

I left at the very end of the meeting yesterday because I was very tired and could not stand on my feet anymore, so tired, how bad it is to leave without participating in the closing with colleagues! It has been a real delight to be together. [...] I barely got home and already regretted not having stayed until the end, because I was unable to make a careful and complete record at home like we do together. I realize that being with the group makes me more creative, more lively, willing. Excerpt from Amelie's written narrative (registered in portfolio, our translation).

The narrated situations occur in the time frame of a life story and, therefore, the production context significantly changes its content. For this reason, knowing the signs, the nuances, the historical crossings, the interlocutors and the motivations of the narrator is necessary in narrative research, something that Amelie makes explicit when narrating to the researcher how she understood her absence (hearty, necessary, committed to the chores not realized due to her early

departure). Thus, the research as it is considered here contemplates the diversity of situations experienced as part of the investigated information, considering the necessary relationship between the micro narrated and the macro of the narrative inserted in a space-time context.

However, this space-time (which is so present!) is not always explicit as Amelie makes us realize. In a text entitled “*Latitude, slaves and the Bible*” (GINZBURG, 2007a), the Italian historian, on the scale of the life story of a single subject, analyzes two memorials written by Jean-Pierre Purry, an 18th-century Swiss bourgeois, in which, in general, justifies slavery and colonization from a very personal interpretation of a biblical passage on the latitude of the Holy Land.

Ginzburg points to the inspiration of his work in the ideas of the German philologist and literary critic Erich Auerbach (1892-1957) and in the view that this thinker had on the process that we now call globalization. When Auerbach wrote his *History of Literature* in the context of a worldwide interaction between different languages and cultures, he looked at the “starting points” and inferred their developments:

Auerbach believed that one has to look for Ansatzpunkte, that is, for starting points, for concrete details from which the global process can be inductively reconstructed. The on going unification of the world, Auerbach wrote in the conclusion of *Mimesis*, “is most concretely visible now in the unprejudiced, precise, interior and exterior representation of the random moment in the lives of different people” (GINZBURG, 2007a, p. 86, our translation).

Looking at people, their lives, their “random moments”, collecting and elaborating “starting points” was a procedure inspired by Marcel Proust and Virginia Woolf. It is a remarkable procedure in the work of Ginzburg. Here, the author deals with the fragmentary nature of reality and how evidence is a way to reconstruct a life story by reducing the observation scale. More than that, it is precisely the evidence present in our history that allows us to look at a broader historical reality:

The case of Jean-Pierre Purry, that early prophet of the capitalist conquest of the world, stands a chance of **knocking down some of the barriers thought to divide microhistory and theory**. A life chosen at random can

make concretely visible the attempt to unify the world, as well as some of its implications. In saying this I am echoing Auerbach. But Auerbach was implicitly referring to Proust. Let us allow Proust to have the final word: “People foolishly imagine that the broad generalities of social phenomena afford an excellent opportunity to penetrate further into the human soul; they ought, on the contrary, to realise that it is **by plumbing the depths of a single personality** that they might have a chance of understanding those phenomena” (GINZBURG, 2007a, p. 97, our emphasis, our translation).

In this sense, the evidential method comes close to the theoretical and methodological questions proposed by Ferrarotti (2010, p. 45), especially for his understanding of the individual as “[...] a unique reappropriation of the social and historical universal that surrounds him [...]” and the possibility of knowing the social aspect through the individual.

Starting from comprehension, presented by Connelly and Clandinin (1995), of narrative research as a practice based on the experience of individuals, re-signified by the narration of lived stories, we understand that this mode of investigation is based on the search for references that value the personal and human dimensions in addition to closed, cropped and quantifiable schemes.

c) Take part: register the research path

Narrative research, in this sense, is committed to transparency and humanization of the researcher. This means revealing in which conditions the data were produced and under which prisms they were submitted to be analyzed, the comings and goings concerning the chosen theoretical sets, the adjustments made and the paths traced. Such an attitude approximates and makes knowledge more easily understood by those who wish to learn more about the research developed.

The collective experiences, developed from the proposals of the participating teachers, mobilized other knowledge that was not foreseen at the beginning of the research proposal, of a formative character, endowed with broad aesthetic potential. Even though I knew that I should shelter and register what was produced there, I had the desire to direct the actions, as if to say: “Hey, it should not take that long to register, stop doing that and let’s go to what really interests me”. But I didn’t say that, luckily. I sheltered the interactions that happened and in a short time the group showed involvement, complicity and availability to carry out the work proposals with the completeness that we expected from it. I have learned it (FERREIRA, 2014, p. 133, our translation).

When narrating part of the research process, we take care of the reader, inserting him/her in the context and making him/her understand the decisions and dilemmas that were not foreseen at the beginning of the investigation. We recognize that there are constructions, appropriations, proposals and refusals that have a dialog and produce tension in the elaboration of knowledge, humanize this process and portray it as an action that is very close to other actions, removing the place of research as a practice feasible only to a few elected. Thus, we can say that the narrative record of the study is, above all, a political commitment to sharing the ways of producing knowledge.

Furthermore, when registering, we reaffirm the theoretical and methodological rigor of narrative investigation: its core values are present in all stages of study and are clear in the way in which this process is registered. The need for this care is evident when the research has several data production procedures that will often show different perspectives on the same situation/participant. Knowing that the analysis of the data translates the researcher's reading about the lived experience, it is essential to locate which sources were considered, avoiding the diminishing of meanings of the material produced.

All writing is autobiographical since the writer leaves traces of him/herself in the writing. In a way, all research time must be accompanied by writing. Research journals (not only for data collection in the field, but especially a diary that accompanies the entire research process), inventories of sources, tables, diagrams, maps, sketches, records are examples of texts that we wrote during the search. But there is a final writing, the one that concludes the research.

Ginzburg wrote many essays, taking this genre as his favorite, since it allows us to preserve, in the final writing, the evidential character of his research (GINZBURG, 2000). Writing in a narrative form is fundamental for registering research in the Evidential Paradigm. It allows bringing the research path, not only in the certainties, but also in the doubts, as well as it allows the gradation of certainties in the terms we use to write and makes the movement between provisional and definitive (which will become a new provisional) memorable in the knowledge produced in this paradigm. It consists of a writing that brings up both conclusions and questions along the way.

In this writing, we are present and, therefore, exposed. Our successes and, above all, our mistakes are visible to others. Ginzburg himself deals, in more than one text, with the criticisms he received and with several errors that other researchers have already pointed out to him. One of them, in particular, has a significant impact on the argument he developed in the book "*The enigma of Piero*" (GINZBURG, 2010), when someone showed that one of his inferences about a certain picture was wrong. Nevertheless, it is precisely because his writing has a narrative character that the inference was originally presented with a due degree of doubt.

Working with the daily memory of the many actions developed in the multiple contexts in which we live, requires bringing up a narrative that is neither linear nor progressive. Therefore, the researcher who works with narrative research must register his/her choices, doubts, and hypotheses throughout the construction of the investigation. Writing narratively, in addition to bringing new knowledge to the analysis resulting from the study carried out, is also potent for the formative character for other researchers who seek to learn more about the processes and dilemmas of the condition of professor-researcher.

d) Sign contracts: establish criteria of relevance

As the narratives are broad, diverse, full of meanings and emotions, when we take them as empirical material, they do not speak for themselves. Or rather, they speak in a polysemic and open manner, eliciting countless connections. For this reason, narrative research requires intentionality and the application of filters that lead readers to understandings obtained by the researcher. It is essential to clarify to the interlocutors what the intentions are, what questions we ask about the stories told and which authors/theories serve as a lens for interpretation.

In this same sense, we know that not all the content of a narrative is relevant to the topic studied. Given the characteristic flexibility of this way of doing research, the materials extracted from the investigation process can prove to be diverse in themes and meanings. In other words, even if the narratives are taken in their entirety, it is necessary to critically select the information that we will use to maintain attention in what is central and powerful in the development of the research, along with the aim of preserving the narrator from the exposure of information irrelevant to the course of the investigation.

There is a part of everything we talked about here that can be translated into lessons learned, knowledge and practices that certainly change my way of being a teacher. There is a lot in what we tell, and I realize how much we have in common. In this space, there is a dimension of experience that teaches me too much: it is what shows me the pleasure of living, of being at school, the joy of sharing with others, the enchanted look at the world. The colors of the classroom, the sounds from the patio, the movement of leaves and sand in the park, the delicacy of the touch of a sly embrace, the taste of coffee... Everything gets a little gray if we do not learn to feel with totality and wholeness. Excerpt from Hellen's oral narrative (audio recorded, our translation).

Hellen teaches us that the construction of the researcher's narrative itself will bring elements that enable the selection of stories, fragments and excerpts

that refer to the totality of the works, from the teachings that stand out, sometimes because they are common, sometimes because they are unprecedented among those who narrate. It is not necessary to include the entire narrative or all narratives in the research because each one, or each part of them, when chosen carefully, portrays/contains/reverberates a sum of experiences lived.

The reader or the one who appreciates the research may not initially understand the researcher's option of taking the data for analysis based on criteria that may not seem so clear (they may seem arbitrary or at random, in a first approach to the research). However, this is so because the paths of the initial research are different from the paths of the positivist research, marked by other methods and stages. Since it is not based exclusively on technical and deterministic rationality, we say that the research attitude in a narrative investigation is based on another way of understanding the real, as it starts from a sensitive reason without, therefore, ceasing to be intelligible. Thus, the choices and cuts made are those that are consistent with the narrative woven, to respect the course of history and the assumptions that support the study. There are possible articulations, evident connective links, connections that emerge from writing and that are sensibly undertaken by the researcher. This is what Ginzburg reminds us of in his essay on a 16th-century miller:

[...] in a sense he is one of our forerunners. But Menocchio is also a **dispersed fragment**, reaching us **by chance**, of an obscure **shadowy** world that can be reconnected to our own history only by an **arbitrary act**. That culture has been destroyed. To respect its **residue of unintelligibility** that resists any attempt at analysis does not mean succumbing to a foolish **fascination** for the exotic and incomprehensible. It is simply taking note of a **historical mutilation** of which, in a certain sense, we ourselves are the victims (GINZBURG, 2006, p. 26, our emphasis, our translation).

Excluded, forgotten, mutilated cultures reach us through fragments, which are often opaque because they carry a strong content of indecipherability. We understand little about it. When we are very close to our sources or objects of investigation, we tend to forget the (constant) existence of a certain level of indecipherability in any object whose historicity is inherent, such as, for example, the educational phenomenon.

In this sense, writing in a narrative form allows us to experience and value doubt, because it is what allows our knowledge to seek its character of totality. We preserve the indecipherability that exists in everything that is human, maintaining terms such as “maybe”, “probably”, “certainly” in what we write (GINZBURG, 2007b; DAVIS, 1987) and taking positions on the (necessary) choices we make.

Three temporalities of research in the Evidential Paradigm: by way of conclusion

When we think about the relationship between narrative research and the evidential paradigm, we understand that as important or more important than observing the evidence in the materials produced during the research, it is to understand that the evidential method is necessarily narrative, as it is the narrative that gives meaning to the evidence. This process of producing meanings occurs in a method that follows a flexible rigor and that we seek, in this article, to systematize in four attitudes towards research.

Faced with the exercise of the strangeness of our certainties, we seek to decipher the beginnings during the continuous investigation process. To think narratively is to pay attention to this process, in a cyclical stance of being involved and exiled from our narratives and the narratives of others. In the alternation between scales of observation, looking at a teacher's narrative and the broader historical reality in which he/she is inserted, considering the fragmentary character of reality, we look beyond the immediate events present on a scale in order to consider his/her training context.

Records such as those that make up the analyzes carried out in this study reaffirm narratives as a powerful way of mobilizing feelings, doubts, and reflective processes different from those experienced momentarily in action. Being a retaking experience - oral or written - of the lived experience, narrating is another event that takes over the teacher and allows to update past moments, lessons learned, contexts and perspectives not contemplated in the heat of the moment. This relationship of narrating what was lived and focusing on the experience is configured in a dialectical way: if it is sometimes the experience lived in the formative context that reverberates the narrative writing, in other situations it is the reading and contact with teaching narratives that favors important changes in attitude and conception concerning daily practices.

Realizing the intertwining of times that makes narratives unique and powerful, we highlight three temporalities of research: the time of life story, the time of research, and the time of writing. The time of life story is the one which we experience as reality and as culture. The fragmentary character of reality makes the different points of connection between things and their historical meanings not directly understandable. Our relationship with the real is mediated by culture. Entering the time of research is, in a way, exiling oneself from a daily time so that, in an exercise of strangeness and distance, we problematize this daily life. But this exile does not mean moving away from our life story, which

would be as impossible as moving away from culture. It is about entering the research involved with what we are when we started it and being accompanied by our certainties and our doubts during the entire conduct of the research (as well as after it ends). Our life story goes through and is crossed by the research we carry out. Time is, in a way, a constant, an eternal present.

The research time is that of the method, which, as we have said, takes place in the movement of immersion and distancing, based on three acts: collecting, observing and deciphering. It is not a specific stage of research. At all times we are gathering different documents, empirical and/or bibliographic data, in different scales of observation. Each new material raised is submitted to (and problematized by) our certainties and doubts, either in a rational process or through intuitive moments. This problematization requires from us an exercise of narrative understanding with acts such as reading more about the surroundings of that data (seeking greater erudition), establishing categories of work (inserting in a series), and/or reorganizing our records/inventories. This brings us back to new searches, new data collections. This continuous movement happens from the very first ideas of the research (even before it was formalized) and does not end (because there will always be something new to be deciphered and our ignorance is infinite). We understand this research time as something cyclical.

The third time is writing time. As we start from the assumption that all writing is autobiographical, since whoever writes leaves traces of him/herself in writing, we write all the time, in our diaries, inventories, diagrams, sketches, etc. But there is a moment when we have to structure a narrative, a final writing, which contains the path taken, the gradation of our certainties, and our conclusions (even if provisional). This final writing, given its conclusive character, occurs, in a way, in a linear time. Linear, because it is necessary to put an end to the academic text. The written text must end, and our research will be concluded at some point. But, when it is concluded, it opens up to new narrative questions, either about the same objects, or about a new world of ideas that opens up, or about ourselves - that we are no longer the same.

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