

# The virtual community of practices for trainers' educators: an invitation to write narratives about lived experiences<sup>1</sup>

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## *Comunidade virtual de práticas de formador de formadores: um convite à escrita de narrativas de experiências vividas*

Renata Barroso de Siqueira Frauendorf\*  
Guilherme do Val Toledo Prado\*

### ABSTRACT

The creation of a virtual community of practices for trainers' educators is a part of the doctorate's narrative inquiry, in process, which has its main goal in (re)gathering trainers' educators' narratives to organize a collection of records that may be a source of knowledge for these professionals. The trainers have always had good stories to tell, as well as teachers and educational professionals, but they have not always written about or shared them. There are inspiring and happy narratives; there are others that are inspiring and sad; and some which are not inspiring, but are very powerful to reflect on the performance and the working conditions which are offered to these professionals on continuing education programs, among other aspects. Since there is little literature on this subject, we consider there is still much to discover through the voice of the trainer's educator, who can contribute to broadening the corpus of knowledge about these professionals and their field of activity. To access these stories, the creation of a device was necessary to enable and mobilize the writing of experiential knowledge productions, in narrative and formative aspects. In this text, we intend to share the process of creating and managing a private group on a social network – during its first two months of operation – and what we, as narrative inquirers, have

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by Carolina Petrucci dos Santos Rosa. E-mail: [carolpetrucci@gmail.com](mailto:carolpetrucci@gmail.com)

\* Universidade Estadual de Campinas. Faculdade de Educação. Campinas, São Paulo, Brasil.  
E-mail: [re.frau@hotmail.com](mailto:re.frau@hotmail.com) - <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5567-3235> E-mail: [toledo@unicamp.br](mailto:toledo@unicamp.br)  
- <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2415-8369>

learned and reflected from the engagement of preparing and monitoring the posts and the reactions in the group.

*Keywords:* Education of trainers. Narratives. Continuing teacher education. Community of practice. Collectives.

## RESUMO

A criação de uma comunidade virtual de práticas de formador de formadores faz parte de uma investigação narrativa de doutorado, em processo, que tem como um dos objetivos (re)colher narrativas de formador de formadores a fim de organizar uma coleção de registros que possa ser fonte de conhecimento para esses (e dessas) profissionais. Os formadores, assim como professores e profissionais da educação, sempre têm boas histórias para contar, mas nem sempre as registram ou partilham. Há narrativas inspiradoras e felizes; outras inspiradoras e tristes; algumas nada inspiradoras, mas muito potentes para se refletir sobre a atuação e as condições de trabalho oferecidas a esse profissional dentro de programas de formação continuada, entre outros aspectos. Consideramos que há muito a se descobrir pela voz de formador de formadores, e que é possível ampliar o corpus de conhecimento sobre esse profissional e seu campo de atuação, uma vez que há pouca literatura sobre esse tema. Para acessar essas histórias se fez necessário criar um dispositivo que viabilizasse e mobilizasse a escrita de produções de saberes experienciais numa dimensão narrativa e formativa. Neste texto pretendemos compartilhar o processo de criação e administração de um grupo privado em rede social – no recorte de seus dois primeiros meses de funcionamento – e o que temos aprendido e refletido como investigadores narrativos a partir do movimento de elaboração e acompanhamento de postagens e reações no grupo.

*Palavras-chave:* Formação de formador. Narrativas. Formação continuada. Comunidade de práticas. Coletivos.

## Introduction

*Life is pregnant with stories. It is a nascent  
plot in search of a midwife...  
Richard Kearney*

This article is about the profile of the trainers' educator, and a part of the doctorate's inquiry entitled: "From the stars to a constellation: a community of formative practices for trainers' educators", still in progress. It is an inquiry-formation inspired by the concept of *research-formation* (BRAGANÇA, 2009), in which we adopted a narrative inquiry methodology (PRADO *et al.*, 2015) in dialogue with the theoretical framework of Walter Benjamin and authors, such: IMBERNON (2011), NOVOA (2002), SENNET (2008), GALZERANI (2009), KEARNEY (2012), and others.

We believe that this inquiry-formation could expand the corpus of knowledge disposed about this professional and his/her scope of work. In Brazil, we observe an increasing number of active trainers' educators, contributing to the knowledge that may be the basis for the training courses designed specifically for that professional. In the Brazilian context, public schools continuing education programs are built on public-private partnerships. The professionals who work on these programs have a different perception of his/her work compared to both the trainers' educators from Universities or the ones who have appeared in the literature of the field, so far. In general, the absence of training courses for teachers encloses these professionals with the responsibility of training themselves during the work process or with their pairs. The present inquirer-trainer, one of the authors of this article, is also a trainers' educator in this context of public-private partnerships, working side by side with many professionals from this field. In most cases, these professionals reveal in their speech personal and formative experiences in intense and unique oral narratives, which are rarely registered in writings or shared with their pairs. That being said, in conformity with Prado e Soligo (2007), we see as a matter of paramount importance the fomenter of writing registers of these experiences and their sharing. When narrating his/her day-to-day as a professional of continuous education, the trainers' educator shares fragments of his/her experience in training, as a professional and a person (NOVOA, 2002) who, at the same time as he/she teaches himself/herself, also teaches us (readers) how to be a better person and educator in the formative projects' contexts we develop. The documents of this study are written narratives that were labored by several professionals who work

in distinct continuous education programs and for many different institutions. These narratives were produced in conversation circles, sent by e-mail, and/or published on the social network private group called “Community of Trainers Educators’ Practices”.

The fact is that no matter how much technologies transform our modes of storytelling, people will always ‘enjoy going into a story trance and allowing themselves to be led through a tale by a masterful story weaver’ (KEARNEY, 2012, p. 411).

It is in the action of telling a story that an event gains embodiment: it materializes itself because the story is always placed in time and space. In the continuing education context, there are all sorts of stories or narratives of experiences lived by the trainers’ educators: amusing ones, unexpected ones, ordinary ones. These narratives have been interpreted and listened through the subjects’ expressions concerning what is seen and what is not, revealing these stories as a powerful way of constructing a dialogue between colleagues. We have learned from Benjamin (1994) that the good story is not the one written with elected words, but the one written with lived words. That is the end of intending to (re)gather these narratives: to compose a collection of stories which may contribute to thinking about the identity of this trainer and his/her field of activity, as well as its limits and possibilities. This learning process is also built in a sort of dialogue with Sobral, Soligo, and Prado, as they believe that:

[...] the narrative manner is convincing because it aims the verisimilitude, it presents probable conditions between two events, even comprising contractions without further damage to the meaning. Besides, it strives in generalizing without erasing the particular, the singular, by transcending it. The pragmatic manner characterizes itself for aspiring the universal truth, as the narrative manner aspires a verisimilar coherence construction.

Nevertheless, we consider it essential to signalize that this inquiry-formation comes to life and is encouraged by the research group<sup>2</sup> we belong to.

2 GEPEC - “Group of Studies and Research in Continuing Education” – Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Brazil, whose current vice-coordinator is Prof. Dr. Guilherme do Val Toledo Prado.

Since 1996, this group is dedicated to investigating the permanent training of teachers, based on the principles of *action-research* (GERALDI *et al.*, 1998) and, recently, on the concept of *narrative-inquiry* (PRADO *et al.*, 2015). It means the present study articulates the consciously transmitted past, both in stories and in traces left behind by documents, which are narrated in the productions of many academic researchers who contributed with this group's corpus of knowledge during twenty-four years.

In this article, we intend to narrate how the creation and management of a private group on a social network have revealed itself as a powerful device to permit, invite and, lastly, mobilize the narrative and formative aspects of experiential knowledge (TARDIF, 2012). This device has been an essential source of interpretable documents since it provided the posted narratives to be read by the community. It brings to light not only themes but also the subjects who work hard on making a continuing education program in Brazilian public schools and are often erased or forgotten.

## **The engagement in creating and managing the virtual community of practices for trainers' educators**

The desire to open a channel for experience exchanges between trainers' educators made it possible to create a private group on a social network. This group worked out as a kind of community of practices for trainers' educators.

To Imbernon (2011, p. 97),

A community of practices is a group which consists of developing specialized knowledge. The term cannot be used to discriminate what we call the scientific community, because its goal is to inform and communicate experiences, as well as share understandings based on thinking (nowadays, it joins the concept of knowledge management or reflective thinking practices).

We suspect this group, by potentializing interaction, could be an approach for creating a dialogue between many trainers who work in different contexts performing diversified actions. As it brings together the participants' flashes of memories and experiences, it could become a powerful space of reflective

thinking upon the knowledge and efforts of these professionals. In other words, this group could be an attempt of “virtually being together,” as Valente (2003) defends in the article “Higher Education at a Distance: solutions and flexibilities.”

The community was created on February 10th, 2019, and it is managed by the present inquirer-trainer who acts as a trainers’ educator in continuing education programs at Brazilian public schools. Although the community remains active, the doctorate’s inquiry-formation will only consider the productions of 2019. At present, it has 108 trainers’ educators’ memberships, mostly women who carry out these continuing education programs built in the public-private partnership context. These programs happen at schools, education centers, education secretaries, regional boards of education, and others. Mainly, these professionals are responsible for developing the continued education of managers and technical teams, making the nature of their knowledge connected with their practices and their being. It means that the educational process subject is not exclusively the teacher - the trainer of children or teenagers. It is fundamental to comprehend who exactly is this professional we are talking about, to attribute sense and meaning to the shared stories or narratives. Therefore, the trainers’ educator is:

[...] a person who brings in his/her repertoire a collection of knowledge regarding his/her practices in the institution, builds up an advisory to his/her pairs. It is due to this professional to attend the requests of teachers and educational professionals from a school, an institution or an educational network, in order to improve and develop collaborative teaching processes [...] (FRAUENDORF 2016, p. 68).

The idea was germinated; the community engaged. The desire to foster the constitution of a collective, even a virtual one, was fulfilled. Within Benjamin’s framework of thought, we consider the experience as the basis of knowledge, being a collectively created manner of producing it in society. Within this perspective, the communities of practices may be a refreshing counterpoint to the modern capitalist movement of undermining or devaluing collectives. This virtual community could become a loophole in the social tissue, a possible loophole that consists of ambiguousness. Especially, if we consider the social network as an invention of modernity in which the longing for shortening distances, time and space, and for connecting distinctive realities and thoughts, it all reinforces the capitalist ideas of individualism, life as a commodity, pleasure above it all, and the society of the spectacle (DEBORD, 2003) in which everyone

needs to see and be seen. These are times of a barrage of (dis)information and impatience in which the strength of images' phantasmagoria (BENJAMIN, 1994) characterizes the modern world through beauty, ideal, happiness, immediacy, and pleasant. It is an ambiguous feel, since as we seek this world with less distance, connected with different times and spaces – even more during the pandemic –, we also refuse all which comes along with it!

Even facing all these ambiguous feelings, it was in Benjamin's words (1994, p. 114) that we found inspiration to create this virtual collective, as, according to the author, the lived experiences must be "transmitted by word-of-mouth." The art is committed with that transmission, that communication, as the events which were not narrated do not leave traces. Therefore, we produce knowledge when we communicate with others the lived process, the building of understandings, the exchange of visions and feelings which make sense to us in relation with others. In general, established truths are used to address the trainers' educator work in the literature and researches of the field, being rare the presence of publications which attend the communication of this experiential knowledge built by many professionals, daily. In Kearney's words (2012, p. 425): "the narrative [...] is closer to art than to science; or, if you prefer, to a human science than to an exact one [...]".

A few people who were already closer to the community's inquirer-manager and have been working as trainers' educators were invited to join this private group. The adherence was very fast, and after nine days of its creation, the group had already had 69 members, including some professionals who were indicated by the original members. As it is a private group, a previous request is necessary for invitations. It reflects the concern of not deconfiguring a community of practices' essence, maintaining it exclusively for teachers educator's participation at this moment of the inquiry. For those who enter this place, the community of practices is introduced as:

This is a private group which begins with the desire of creating a channel for trainers' educators to exchange experiences. In my career as a trainer educator, I have met many trainers, and they always have good stories to tell; however, they do not always register them. I have heard some inspiring and happy stories; others inspiring and sad; some of them are not inspiring at all, but very powerful to think about our professional actions and the offered work conditions of our job. Fun stories, surprising stories, ordinary stories... There is a whole world to discover through the trainers' voice. I invite you to write about an experience, a memory, or a fragment of an event which occurred during a training meeting or its preparation, for example... I would like very much to hear your story,

thus, to organize a collection of stories from teachers' educators: if you had to narrate a story about your experience as a trainer, what would that be?... Let's foster our work and our educational field together by creating a community of practices for trainers' educators.<sup>3</sup>

With this warm and stimulating invitation, the community of practices' members entered the group and began to live with each other's narratives, being able to share their practices and lived experience on behalf of a built trust.

## Community engagement

*Life is times happier than sad. Better it is to be.  
Adélia Prado*

The initial engagement in posting and reactions was relatively slower than we had expected, a lot less interactive as we, as inquirers, had supposed. Perhaps, the educators have a kind of resistance in writing and exposing themselves, or there may be a lack of interest or even time? Perhaps our point of view is still trapped into the false idea of short-term actions success, due to the immediate answers which the new capitalism sells us (SENNET, 2008). Is the problem in them, or did we not see something?

The digital platform chosen for the community's creation has six possible different reactions: *like, love, haha, wow, sad, and angry*. Besides, it is possible only to visualize the posts or to comment on them. It is also possible to react to the comments and answer them. In this publication, we do not intend to enlarge upon that discussion. However, we briefly expose the meanings and significations of each reaction as well as the absence of reactions to the postings. We also analyze how it contributed, built, or even directed (maybe trapped, as well) the choices and paths which were drifted while fostering the community. During the process, these senses have been broadened and reframed, especially concerning the relationship with the absence of answers or, as we named it, the "silence."

<sup>3</sup> This text was adapted from an invitation letter sent to the participants of this research. All shared narratives had its use authorized by their authors, as well as the project has been approved by the Ethics and Research Committee under the CAAE 09711519.1.0000.8142, in the year of 2019.

Silencing in the sense of being quiet is also a form of manifestation, although the algorithm cannot control it. We intuit meanings and significations for these silences since there is not a single possible meaning or signification which can be taken.

The silence is not available for visibility; it is not directly observable. It goes through the words. It does not last. The only possibility is to glimpse it briefly. It drips in between the plot and the speeches (ORLANDI, 2007, p. 32).

We have learned that views or “likes” on a post can mean a kind of approach to the content, even a superficial one; however, it does not necessarily indicate the content reading. On the other hand, the reactions such as “love”, “sad” and “wow” presuppose a more specific interaction with the post since these are reactions that ideally indicate strong approval, empathy with the situation/post, or even surprise, probably demanding reading of the content (SOUZA, 2016)<sup>4</sup>. Another possible reaction is the reader’s comments, which demand from its author not only the reading or immediate reaction to the posted content but also the production of a text in which the reader/author expresses his/her opinion about what he/she has read, even though the size of these texts may be shorter and its speech tends to be much less formal. Initially, the community of practices has received two spontaneous posts from members and one from the community manager. Nevertheless, during the first weeks, the maximum of reactions was only a few “likes” and views.

In the face of this first observation, the community’s inquirer-manager posted a narrative which was part of her Master’s dissertation, along with the incitement: the trainers’ educator, what does one know about this professional?” We had considered this could be a powerful incitement and another way of starting the dialogue: acknowledging the fact of the community being joined by different trainers who act in different contexts and places, combined with the difficulty of defining the role of the trainers’ educator which is commonly found in the literature of this field. This indetermination about the role of this professional was communicated to the members through the following narrative:

4 About the reactions on social media.

The trainers' educator, what does one know about this professional?

During my Master's process of self-inquiry, this question anguished me a lot because I realized that that definition was not precise, and there was little literature about this theme. At that moment, this fact resulted in a professional crisis, as I realized it was not yet a social recognized activity [...]. I think all this confusion and the lack of clarity around this comes along with all the transformations which occurred on the conception of continuing education, as well as the denominations that these professionals receive: advisor, trainer, consultant, supervisor, teacher-trainer, counsellor. Of course, this is not only a matter of name variations, but it reveals quite specific actions which change regarding the program, the context, the conditions for producing, the previously lived education process of those subjects in training, and other variables. Thus, I organized a board from the written productions that I found. I remember that, at the time, it helped me a lot, at least partially, to find myself... (Register from the Community of Trainers Educators' Practices, published on 02/19/2019).

This incitement-post generated 58 views, two comments from members, one reply from the manager, one rejoinder, and 4 likes. Was not the initial slogan inviting or provocative enough? Again, the feeling of ambiguity arises!

Before silence and/or little interaction, the community's inquirer-manager wrote a new "invitationubpoena" or invitation/subpoena, to regain the community's goal: it being a space of shared experiences, as it can be seen in the following insert:

Hello, dear trainers and educators of this community. Our sharing experience space is open and waiting for contributions! All of us have lives full of responsibilities: agenda preparation, follow-up writings, travels, meetings, monitoring, assistance for the schools, organization of ppt, selection of texts to be studied and/or literary readings, beyond other things, isn't it right? How about telling us a little of your day-to-day as a trainer's educator? (Register from the Community of Trainers Educators' Practices, published on 02/27/2019).

55 members viewed this post, and it got 8 "likes" and 1 comment/question: "Where can I post?" which was directly replied to the participant, guiding her on how to do it. Still, as a response to this incitement, the community received

the posting of a narrative from Cora<sup>5</sup> in which she tells us about her experience as a school's educational coordinator and her routine of writing follow-ups to the teachers' records.

I was a municipal public school's educational coordinator for more than 17 years. In my routine, I used to analyze the activities disposed of on the students' notebook, grade by grade. After observing average students' notebooks, I used to write a follow-up to the teacher. In this follow-up, on a proper notebook, I used to discriminate suggestions for activities, question the excessive copies on 4h and 5h grade's notebooks, for example. These were a kind of training follow-ups, combined with a conversation that I used to have with them when handing the notebooks (Register from the Community of Trainers Educators' Practices, published on 02/27/2019).

This post received a reaction of 8 "likes", and 38 members viewed it. Four days after the "invitationubpoena", Melissa - an educational coordinator from a public school who also works as a trainers' educator for a federal government continuing education program - posted her narrative, perhaps incited by the previous ones: *A school without books*. Her post received 10 reactions, being 9 "likes" and 1 "love", this last one from the group's manager. 43 members viewed it.

#### A school without books

I experienced a moment while developing a work at other schools, not at the one I work as a Teacher Coordinator, a moment which I come to share with you through this narrative.

For the meeting planned for that week, the proposal was a study of reading with the literacy teachers. My goal was to bring light to the underlying reading conceptions in pedagogical practices, so we could think together how the school can reinvent itself. From the analyzes of internal and external indicators, we would make an Action Plan in which the school's team, particularly the teachers and the teacher coordinator, would present

<sup>5</sup> Here, the names are fictional. Some of them were chosen by the authors, such as Melissa. Others were inspired by the names of Brazilian literature authors, such as Cora and Hilda. The reason for that inspiration is our taste in reading and comprehending that a reader's training is one of the commitments that we make as an educator, meaning we intend to awaken the desire of reading in people, as we expand their repertoire of reading experiences.

an intervention proposition for making the students go forward into the building knowledge expected for that school year, especially regarding the matter of reading. [...]

The formative agenda was ready. I made a previous meeting with the teacher coordinator, aiming to draw a path for this proposal of performing a reading action at the school together. What a surprise it was when she told me the school doesn't have a literary collection. Not a single book, nothing! I was shocked and thought "how is it possible, a school without books?" [...] (Register from the Community of Trainers Educators' Practices, published on 02/28/2019).

This post also received a comment from the community manager, seeking to expand the dialogue. That comment generated 2 reactions: 1 "like" and 1 "love", this last one being from the comment author.

I thought your narrative was so heavy, Melissa! It makes me think about all the times I made a hole planning based on something I had thought to be a fact, and at the moment of action, I came across another reality. I think learning how to deal with it and consider it at the moment of planning; this is a trainer's knowledge.

From this kind of engagement, we had comprehended we had a lot to learn. Initially, as engagement "readers", we were trapped in the absence of reactions or the lack of interaction. We got stuck to the poor image of the meaning of silence: a socially-constructed image of devaluation, relating it to neglect or indifference as if the value of the action of narrating could be measured by a disordered noise or a buzz of reactions.

As we thought about it and regained the path, we were able to realize that the incitement provoked a reflective engagement: it encouraged two participants to write, it generated different reactions, things were being said and unsaid. In a manner, these thoughts encouraged us to maintain the proposition of the Community of Practices, at least until a new and long silence followed.

## Silences...other

*...every silence is a music in a state of pregnancy.*

*Mia Couto*

It had been almost a month since the last time someone posted, commented, or even reacted to any posting. It had been also a month of hard work for the community's inquirer-manager, involving many travels. It made her think about how usual it is to travel in the day-to-day life of a trainers' educator. It makes him/her be at many places in a short amount of time, especially when he/she is not part of an active school network. This brief exercise of thinking made us put ourselves in the community of practices member's shoes and envisage: "*if we had been hoping something would be posted on the community of practices, why had we not taken the first step in this direction?*". Facing this auto-incitement/acknowledgment, the present inquirer-manager of the community made a posting from the heart about a particular event she had observed.

I have been gone for a few days because I was in training. I went to Bahia, passed by São Paulo, and made an appearance in Sergipe, all in two weeks! Despite being tired and willing to come back home, I feel this is one of my greatest happiness as a trainer: the possibility of travelling around Brazil, knowing different realities, getting to know distinct people and revealing different experiences which tell the hurts and the charming of the day-to-day at school. On the other hand, many times, I come across some challenging and frightening situations during this journey, and I feel so powerless and fragile that I need to search for the courage to keep on. And the courage comes from the desire to transform the school's space in a place of life and learning, instead of an exclusion breeder space (Register from the Community of Trainers Educators' Practices, published on 03/21/2019).

This post generated 24 reactions: 18 “likes” and 6 “love”, 77 views and 7 comments, being 4 of them constituted of verbal text, and 3 as replies of approval/acceptance using emojis (EMOJI, 2020)<sup>6</sup>.

*Hilda: To train while being trained and transformed, so we can build this place of rebuilding in this place called life! A gift, not given. Earned! A great and generous partnership!*

*Adélia: It is swimming against the tide, mate; and we already know a little about swimming against the tide, isn't that right?*

These thoughts mobilized the inquirer-manager's desire to speak her mind again and react in an effective manner:

Absolutely, Adelia! To swim against the tide, many times in the same time-space and place. And our hearts sink when we see all that needs to be done. That's why working in partnership is what can make us stronger and give us meaning!

Yet, the dialogue was extended, and Elena spoke her mind in the face of the postings, writing:

I had also been absorbed in training last week and, on Friday, I was thinking that despite being very tired and willing to come back home, I love this very much! To meet people and learn with them, when we think together about training's contents, it is something incredible to me! I always go to the schools seeking to get closer to the local realities and to maintain my connection with the reason why we are there, the reason of our job: to guarantee the children's learning process! They are the reason for it all.

<sup>6</sup> Ideograms and smiles are used in digital messages and webpages. They are very diverse, including facial expressions, objects, places, animals and types of weather.

In these glimmers of lived experiences, we find traces of the learning community principle (WENGER, 2001) which relevance is in the possibility of exchanging experienceable knowledge produced in the excitement of the action and its reflection. The inquirer-manager posting provoked a series of reactions which we had not seen yet, such as 6 “love” from different members of the group. So, we question ourselves: would the narrative provoked them to think things they had not thought of so far? The exposure of a human feeling in a sort of rationality much more aesthetic and ethical than technical, which happened through the inquirer-manager’s text, materialized an experience lived by her and probably many others. This reunion made it possible for the word to circulate without control or boundaries. We understand this single narrative opened a loophole where some of the participants felt the desire of writing, sharing their feelings, their impressions in different times, spaces, or contexts.

One of the constitutive elements of a Community of Practice is people’s participation or, in this case, their sharing of actions, which gained meaning as put in dialogue with another, with a work partner (WENGER, 2001). While narrating her day-to-day as a trainers educator, reliving an event and exposing her ambiguous feelings towards her practice, the inquirer-manager opens a possibility of more profound, sensitive, and human communication between other trainers: the possibility of being frustrated on realizing the fragility and boundaries of this work, as opposing it to the idealized image of the trainer as a subject who has answers to everything and is responsible for bringing all the progress in most modern terms of education.

According to Kearney, “it is precisely this double-take of difference and identity – **experiencing oneself as another and the other as oneself** – that provokes a reversal of our natural attitude to things and opens us to novel ways of seeing and being” (2012, p.419, highlighted by us). In the underlying tissue of these comments and reactions happens a sort of reunion, an approach to the other. It is more than the feeling of empathy; as there are exchanges, there is tension; there is a match in experiences (GALZERANI, 2009).

## The Starry Night

After 77 days of creating this virtual space for trainers’ educators to share lived experiences, which at the point had 78 participants, the inquirer-manager changed the group’s cover photo. As it can be seen below, there was much to celebrate and highlight, even with the engagement not corresponding

to the expectation: many participants posting stories, a tremendous amount of interaction and comments. In the group, she elected Van Gogh's piece "The Starry Night" as the new cover and left the following message:

Hello, members of this community! It has been 77 days since the creation of this community, and we have 78 participants now. A group made of trainers' educators who, through writing, are helping me think about many things related to our actions, challenges, boundaries and joys [...]. To Walter Benjamin, here is the power of stories: as they are shared in a collective which you belong, it transforms a simple life story into an experience.

It is the purpose of a community of practices: to inform and communicate experiences, to share pieces of knowledge based on reflective thinking. It is interesting to think about this! [...]

At last, I leave an invitation for you to aimlessly go to a stroll in the group, to get lost into the labyrinth of comments and postings, and if you maybe come across a piece of writing or image or a comment that provokes you or gets into you anyhow, you could leave a trace that you were there. What about that?

It was necessary to think, and this invitation to wander around the group was an opportunity to stop time, to interrupt thinking, and go outside the box! Reliving this journey, which began two and a half months before with the creation of the community, was extremely important for the community manager and also for us, as narrative inquirers, to expand our comprehension about the real role of this device. As we aimlessly went to a stroll in the group, just as a *flâneur* (BENJAMIN, 2018), we could see an engagement that was not being acknowledged. We could see with "an eye that really sees," as Hoffmann invites us to do in many of the pieces of his autobiographical narrative, "*The Cousin's Corner Window*" (issue made by the book publisher Cosac Naif, 2010). We needed to acknowledge that there were things to celebrate because there were dialogues, reactions from the participants in many ways, several views in different posts, and there were silences. Into the context of this investigation, we have begun to acknowledge these silences and comprehend it as a form of expression as well, even when it brings a certain discomfort.

The aimlessly walks through the "arcades of the community" happened in similarity with the XIX century Parisian landscape so well illustrated in words and images of our readings of Walter Benjamin's thought. From his ideas of structure, iron girders, and glasses, we see a form of connection, social

network, and walls that teach us a lot as inquirers/educators. That was the relation of meaningfulness we needed to build the community of practices. All that engagement made us awake from dreaming about the necessity of a large number of “likes”, views, and comments to see its sense of success or efficiency. The modern capitalist movement had framed us. We had been held hostage by a society that applauds the instant, the immediate. Perhaps for these reasons, we were bothered with what we judged to be “the failure of the community”.

## **What have we learned with the community?**

*The book can be worth as much of that which in it was not fit.*  
*Guimarães Rosa*

Indeed, the Virtual Community of Practices for Trainers Educators has not been working as we had intuited it would be. From a place of intense story writing, images of daily situations where the trainers' educators live in different contexts, it became a place of reflective thinking and learning for the inquirer, which was intersected by silences, absences, presences, distinct reactions of the participants through the writing of comments. We do not consider this fact diminishing the initial purpose of the community or setting a simple “evidence” of a different path, concerning its previous plan. So far, we understand the story we tell here as a revelation of a journey in the process, a journey of building and rebuilding itself, as far as the device - in our case, the community of practices - was put into use and different people started to engage themselves with it, in the most diverse ways. Mainly, we see the possibilities and meanings which could be outlined by us, for us, and beyond us. All of these practices have intensely contributed to understanding both themes related to the trainers' educator and the narrative inquirer.

Writing about what happens to her/him, what comes to her/him, what she/he feels and her/him experiences; the educator/researcher builds a sort of consciousness about what crosses her/him. As well as a photographer, she/he makes decisions about what to focus, the necessary lightening, the better angle, what to include and exclude in the scene. She/He goes on making choices as registering, and it is precisely in this process of narrating

the raised thoughts, combined to the reason why she/he selected that theme or experience, in which the text could become a precious material to be analyzed and understood (FRAUENDORF *et al.*, 2016, p. 354).

In the words of Imbernon (2011, p. 59), we found nourishment, inspiration, and encouragement to keep on engaging the community when we think about the power it constitutes, relating to the continuing education and the inquiry:

Nobody learns to drive or swim entirely through power point's presentations. Nobody learns to think or to project theoretically. Many things in permanent formation are not taught; they are learned. We have to place the teachers, not as much in an attitude of teaching them, but in learning situations. For that, we should do more than teach or form; we should create situations and places of thinking and formation.

Here, we detail yet some initial thoughts about the learning possibilities which have been enabled by these fragments of lived experiences.

## **We are learning:**

...to look to the loopholes and comprehend the engagement which the community has been unveiling.

...to rethink how ideas of efficiency and success are related to the amount of “likes” and comments on a post.

...to awake the desire for dialogue and interaction - that being through writing or image.

...to understand the repercussion of what circulates in the community as possibly beyond being visible or explained through the participants' reaction, and there is no control about it.

...to understand the community as a collective that has a rhythm and an engagement of its own.

...to comprehend that perhaps the trainers' educator does not have the habit of sharing her/his experience in writing or image registers yet.

...for some people, the idea of “certainty” or exemplary practice still influences the process of writing, so it becomes a challenge for these subjects to risk themselves in shareable experience writings.

...to understand the device of writing narratives as it goes on revealing itself for us.

...to comprehend that “I” am a subject inserted in culture and so my perception and knowledge are all being socially and historically produced.

In other words, we can say we are living the idea of:

Working with narratives of life places the researcher before an epistemology dialogue, partition and empathy between two persons that learn and, consequently, compound in communion a new investigation and formation epistemology (BRAGANÇA, 2009, p. 37).

As researchers, we aimed to narrate our experience concerning many other experiences, which circulate explicitly or implicitly. The building of this collective, despite its virtuality, has also been crucial for this process.

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Text received on 07/30/2020.

Text approved on 10/08/2020.