

What can a diary do? A look at the academic literature

O que pode um diário? Um olhar para a literatura acadêmica

¿Qué puede hacer un diario? Una mirada a la literatura académica

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ABSTRACT

The work with diaries in research and formation processes is associated with different fields of knowledge and diverse theoretical and methodological approaches. This article aims to historicize and problematize how this genre has been used in research and formation and the theoretical and methodological contributions used as references, especially in the health and education areas. The present narrative review followed the movement produced through reading the texts, which left open spaces for interlocutions. The database was derived from the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) web portal and the *Brazilian Journal of (Auto)biographical Research*. Although the diary still bears traces of connection to ethnographic research, it has shown flexibility and multiple purposes in its use. The diaries travel through different academic benchmarks, under different names, and even reinvent themselves in polysemic perspectives, causing displacements on what has been established for them in academic or even outside spaces.


Keywords: Diary. Formative Processes. Interdisciplinary Research. Education. Health.


RESUMO

O trabalho com diários em pesquisa e em processos formativos vincula-se a diferentes campos do conhecimento e abordagens teórico-metodológicas. Este artigo tem como objetivo historicizar e problematizar os modos como esse gênero vem sendo abordado no âmbito da pesquisa e da formação, nas áreas da saúde e da educação, bem como os aportes teórico-metodológicos tomados como referência. A revisão narrativa realizada acompanhou o movimento produzido pela leitura dos textos, deixando espaços abertos para interlocuções. A base de dados foi o portal do Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) e da *Revista Brasileira de Pesquisa (Auto)biográfica*. O diário tem se mostrado flexível, com múltiplas finalidades, apesar de ainda carregar marcas da sua vinculação à pesquisa etnográfica. Transita por diferentes referenciais, com diferentes denominações e, até mesmo, reinventa-se em uma perspectiva polissêmica e flexível, provocando deslocamentos do que se tem instituído para um diário nos espaços acadêmicos e, até mesmo, fora dele.

Palavras-chave: Diário. Processos Formativos. Pesquisa Interdisciplinar. Educação. Saúde.

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RESUMEN

El trabajo con diarios, en investigación y en procesos formativos, se vincula a diferentes campos de conocimiento y enfoques teórico-metodológicos. Tenemos como objetivo historicizar y problematizar los modos cómo este género han sido trabajados en el ámbito de la investigación y de la formación, en las áreas de la salud y educación, como también los aportes teórico-metodológicos tomados como referencias. A la revisión narrativa realizada acompaña el movimiento producido por la lectura de los textos, dejando espacios abiertos para interlocuciones. La base de datos fue el portal Scielo y la Revista Brasileira de Pesquisa (Auto)biográfica. El diario se ha mostrado flexible, con múltiples propósitos, aunque todavía lleva marcas de su vinculación con la investigación etnográfica. Se mueven por diferentes referencias, con diferentes denominaciones e incluso se reinventan, en una perspectiva polisémica y flexible, provocando desplazamientos en los espacios académicos, e incluso fuera de él.

Palabras clave: Diario. Procesos de Formación. Investigación Interdisciplinaria. Educación. Salud.

INTRODUCTION

Diaries can be found in any bookshop and are part of a broadly disseminated literary genre. They can have different purposes linked to the production of knowledge, research, education, the construction and elaboration of stories, or be used to record lived experiences, whether at school, work or in personal life.

In the early 20th century the diary became an “instrument” for recording information in scientific research, although its existence as a record of events by social subjects predates its scientific use (El Hammouti, 2002; Hess, 2006; Oliveira, 2014).

Recording in diaries is a common practice that can be linked to different fields of knowledge and theoretical-methodological approaches, especially in qualitative research (Pezzato and L’Abbate, 2011). We have even found diaries used in research from a positivist perspective, employing quantifiable measures and in a “multi-method format, which includes quantitative measures and narratives analyzed qualitatively” (Zaccarelli and Godoy, 2010, p. 552).

Work with diaries, especially in the context of research, is strongly linked to ethnography. They are often identified as “field diaries”, even without a specific theoretical-methodological framework, and in other cases, as Roese *et al.* (2006) point out, no specific epistemological framework is mentioned.

Philippe Lejeune (2015, p. 11-19), in forty years of studying the genres of autobiographical and personal diaries written in French, asks: “Can a diary itself have a genesis?”. After exploring the theoretical implications of this question, he states that the primary purpose of a diary is to “accumulate *traces* and follow the life of its author”. He concludes that “the diary is an ambiguous object of study: essentially a writing practice, sometimes, and secondarily, the production of a work. It is up to us to articulate as best we can all the methods at our disposal”.

For René Lourau (2004, p. 276), another scholar of this genre, the production of diaries is a writing exercise that allows exploring different dimensions of what is lived, highlighting the narrative of “how research is done”, considering its temporalities and deviations. Becoming a device for intervention, a diary produces effects that provoke imbalances and denaturalize practices, assuming that its author is not neutral.

Following this path and also working with the (auto)biographical narrative *research education* approach,¹ the idea of thinking of an overflow for the meaning given to diaries is potentialized

1 We put the words together, highlighting them in italics, to go beyond the limits of the modern sciences, marking another form of writing and *epistemopolitical* positioning (Bragança, 2018).

in a crossing between movements of research and training. They involve a “different kind of *researcheducation* that does not give up methodical rigor and consistency, but continues to (re)invent ways of *livingnarratingresearchingeducating*” (Bragança, 2018, p. 76). It is a concept that is porous to the multiple meanings found in “(auto)biographical research”, as discussed in the essay by Pezzato, Bragança and Rosa (2023). In an interview, Remi Hess (2009, p. 63) places working with diaries in a biographical perspective: “there is a continuum of biographical writing in which one finds the life story, the autobiographical, the diary, correspondence, the family monograph. [...] the diary is more generally part of a biographical movement whose instruments are multiple and complementary”.

It is in this interconnection of meanings that we carried out a bibliographical review, as part of a post-doctoral research project by the first author at the Graduate Program in Educational Processes and Social Inequalities of the Faculty of Teacher Education of the State University of Rio de Janeiro (FFP/UERJ). The aim was to historicize and problematize the ways in which diaries have been worked on in research and education processes, especially in health and education, as well as the fields of knowledge and theoretical-methodological contributions used as references.

In this article we share the paths taken to carry out this narrative review, bringing glimpses of history presented by the literature studied. In other words, we offer an overview of how the articles selected in the review envision working with diaries in research and educational processes, concluding with the indications learned and reflections.

A NARRATIVE REVIEW

In the academic literature we find a certain tendency towards hegemonic scientism that frames and typifies any research activity, classifying it according to whether it has scientific rigor, as if there were only one rationality, one science. We don't intend to enter this discussion, but to affirm that we follow another epistemological perspective. We consider scientific rigor to be important, but we don't believe that it can be conceived in a single, measurable and pre-established way. *Epistemopolitical* options (Santos, 2011) that we make also imply an understanding of rigor. We thus come close to the ideas of “methodical rigor” in Freire (1996) and “flexible rigor” in Ginzburg (1989).

The narrative review followed the movement produced by reading the texts, seeking to identify a state of the art in the literature, leaving open spaces for interlocutions. The path followed was not random; it was constructed during the research, assuming possible “selection biases and subjective interferences” (Cordeiro *et al.*, 2007, p. 430), as part of the method of interpreting and understanding the findings, since we understand that researchers are not neutral in a research process (Lourau, 1988; 2004; Barbier, 2002).

We defined the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) portal and the *Revista Brasileira de Pesquisa Auto(Biográfica)* [Brazilian Journal of (Auto)biographical Research] as the databases for the search, as they are both excellent sources of studies and research in the fields of education and health. We used as descriptors the words “diário” and “diários” [diary and diaries], without a specific pre-determined question. We did not set a time limit for the search, which made it possible to find articles published in the last 24 years (1997–2021). We found a total of 186 articles. We began by carefully reading the abstracts to identify those with objectives similar to those of this review, in a qualitative approach. Of these, we selected 86 articles and proceeded to read the full texts, leaving open the possibility of other interlocutions.

Selecting excerpts from the texts, thinking about core meanings, focusing on reading and organizing the material to reflect on and converse with all these interlocutors and their references was an intense process. During the reading process, dialogues with other authors led us to read other texts, creating a “conversation circle” among them and their *epistemopolitical* links. Other articles,

books, book chapters, theses and dissertations were added to the readings and this movement contributed considerably to broadening our review and our field of study. As a result, 15 articles were included, making up a total of 91.²

The articles we read presented stories, reflections and theoretical insights that caught our attention and transported us to other narratives, producing a desire to find out more about diaries and diary writing, not just in educational and research processes, but in the multiple territories and fields of knowledge in which diaries are found. This process further expanded the countless possibilities of what “a diary can be”. As a result of this movement, we produced digitalized files that were attached/saved in folders for later access, allowing us to make a second selection and identify the most relevant texts that contributed to the objectives of this review, resulting in us working in this article with 49 articles, six books and eight chapters. We do not intend to cover all the discussions contained in this material, but rather to share the reflections produced by reading and analyzing it with regard to the purposes presented here.

GLIMPSES OF HISTORY: LOOKING FOR TRACES OF STORIES WITH DIARIES

In the bibliography researched, we found a number of articles that review the history of diaries, examining the foundational marks, and the developments in various forms of social use, in research and education.

We found a reference to the *hypomnemata* as one of the first recorded signs of diary writing in Ancient Greece. This was a notebook in which everyday memories were written down so that they wouldn't be forgotten and could be consulted later, read and reread, serving as an ethical guide (Domingues and Azevedo, 2019).

Around the 10th century, diaries appeared both in Europe among Anglo-Saxon clergy and in Japan, in the Japanese court, but still in a very restricted form, only among members of the literate elite who had access to paper and ink. With the expansion of the use of writing and technical resources, texts with personal testimonies became more widespread (Alaszewski, 2006 *apud* Zaccarelli and Godoy, 2010, p. 551).

Since the 17th and 18th centuries, diaries, memoirs and testimonials have been common procedures for personal writing, “without an awareness of the private self”, along the lines of personal diaries (Cunha, 2021, p. 255). Until the early 19th century, travel diaries were written mostly by men and served as a historical source in the colonial period, with the exploration of the “New World”. They described the flora, fauna, daily life, habits and knowledge of other peoples and their culture (El Hammouti, 2002; Pimenta, 2017; Cunha, 2021).

Throughout the 1700s, the diaries of voyages in the South Atlantic seas, written by geographers and cartographers, transformed European scientific discourse in terms of knowledge of geography, the “Nautical Science of the 1700s” and the historical records of these voyages (Domingues, 2008).

Such was the transformation caused by the age of navigation, as Andrade and Almeida (2018) point out, that the historical testimony contained in the diary of Vasco da Gama's voyage to the Indies was included in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization — UNESCO's “Memory of the World” register.

Following another form of writing, still in the 18th century, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions* became the “landmark of the autobiographical genre” (Lejeune, 2014, p. 13-14). For some authors, this work is considered a precursor to the intimate diary (Borges, 2002; Henrique, 2005; 2009; Cunha, 2018), and that “the diary is the nephew” of Montaigne's *Essays* (Charbel, 2020, p. 118),

2 Of the 91 articles initially selected, 75% were written by women, which indicates that diaries still have a strong presence of female writing.

written in the 16th century. In this work, the author makes personal and subjective reflections on various themes: religion, love, friendship, education, freedom, war, among others, portraying the historical moment lived in Renaissance Europe.

In the Romantic era, around 1800, a plethora of diaries, travel notebooks, autobiographical writings, memoirs, published posthumously, and the *journal intime*, as the diaries of young women from the French elite were called, emerged. There was also a progressive feminization of writing in intimate diaries (Lejeune, 1997; 2014; Gouvea, 2019; Cunha, 2021). As a result, we have a moment of intensified writing, which Lejeune (2014) calls an “autobiographical fever”. For French sociologist and demographer Alain Girard, it was during this period that “the diary became a new genre of writing” (Borges, 2002, p. 115).

In the 19th century, diaries even came to be used by certain sciences and researchers, mainly because this century had a fertile of new sciences (Oliveira, 2014).

Amiel’s intimate diary is a classic example of 19th century diaries. It contains records of 30 years of the author’s daily life, written in informal language, in a confessional tone, which was very unusual for philosophers of that time (Henrique, 2005). It is “an intimate diary of 16,000 pages, which tells about all the dimensions of his life” (Hess, 2009, p. 82).

According to Hess (2006, p. 89-90), the research diary was inaugurated in 1808 by Marc-Antoine Jullien’s “Essay on the method”, which sought to organize the use of time to be happy. This method proposed that young people write three different diaries: a diary of the body, a diary of the soul and an intellectual diary, “as a kind of total education of the being”. In a way, Jullien inaugurated work with diaries, linking research and educational processes, relating them to the vital dimensions of being human.

Gajanigo and Souza (2021, p. 52) consider that “from the 19th century onwards, everything will be written down and writing will be in the order of progress, leaving orality from elsewhere trapped in traditions, as Walter Benjamin rightly wrote”. The authors draw attention to the fact that the writing of everyday life, recorded in diaries, aroused interest as part of the social production of the time, influencing, from 1915 onwards, the first generation sociologists of the sociology department at the University of Chicago,³ to introduce autobiography as a teaching method. This allowed for “the elaboration of studies that led to the construction of hypotheses, theoretical frameworks and scientific conceptions across a broad spectrum” in the social and human sciences (Morales *et al.*, 2021, p. 67).

The book “Argonauts of the Western Pacific”,⁴ by anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, was the first to consolidate the use of diaries in scientific circles in 1922. This is considered to be the inaugural mark of the ethnographic method, with the field diary being one of its research tools, along with other key concepts — field research and participant observation — which underpinned the development of the “so-called qualitative research methods in the social sciences” (El Hammouti, 2002, p. 11). The field diary was the product of the author’s theoretical observations, during fieldwork carried out between 1914 and 1918, in the Trobriand Islands (South Pacific) (Malinowski, 1978).

An intimate diary was also produced by Malinowski during this period, in the context of this same ethnographic research. However, it was kept secret for over 40 years by the author himself. Published posthumously, it revealed “the complexity of ethnographic encounters” (Firth, 1997, p. 35), hitherto little considered. Still little known and recognized in academic circles, this diary and

3 In the following years, the Chicago School developed a group of studies on the city, adopting ethnography as a method, bringing important contributions to the field of sociological research, centered on urban phenomena (Cachado, 2021).

This school is taken as an important foundational milestone for life story research and other (auto)biographical approaches.

4 Its first edition was translated and published in Brazil in 1976.

its publication have received a lot of criticism from scholars/researchers (Geertz, 1997; Lourau, 1988; 2004; Henrique, 2005; Weber, 2009).

An analysis of Malinowski was made by René Lourau (2004, p. 281), based on these two Malinowski diaries. Lourau tried to show the importance of the “extra-text”, from the “construction site” of the research, and suggests a third diary: “the diary of the diary”, which he calls the research diary, said by the author, to be a “new intertext within the extratext”.⁵ It was published in 1988 in the book *Le Journal de recherche: matériaux d’une théorie de l’implication*,⁶ in which the author studied the diaries of other researchers in the human sciences: Margaret Mead, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Sandor Ferenczi, Edgard Morin, Michel Leiris, Jeanne Favret-Saada, André Gide, and others. For the author, diary writing “reintroduces the hidden dimension of research: temporality”, which is often refused analysis, as well as the charge of subjectivity, which is often not made explicit in the field diary (Lourau, 2004, p. 203).

According to Hess (1988, p. 10), from 1985 onwards, “the diary technique became a passion” among professors in the Department of Educational Sciences at the University of Paris 8. The author points to a convergence of French experiences with work on diaries in teacher education carried out by the Spaniard Miguel Zabalza (1994).

In 1989, a special issue of the journal *Pratiques de Formation* (n. 9) published several texts by the “pedagogues of writing” of Paris 8, one of which dealt with René Barbier’s (2002, p. 130) “itinerancy diary” technique, as a “tool for investigating oneself in relation to the group”, associated with existential action research.

Zabalza (1994), in turn, highlighted the importance of the narrative favored by a diary for reconstructing action and the meanings attributed to it by diarists, highlighting the focus of diaries on teachers’ practice. It also located work with diaries “in the context of personal documents and autobiographical materials”. A diary is transversally linked to research and education. In research, diaries provide a “narrative space for teachers’ thoughts [...], an expression of the teacher’s version of their own performance in class and the personal perspective with which they view it”. And in education, they are important because of the reflective potential of writing, “that is to say, narration becomes reflection” (Zabalza, 1994, p. 82-95).

Cunha (2021, p. 252) points out that it was “from the 1980s onwards, in line with the proposals of Cultural History”, that this type of source was given a new look, which was conventionally called “cultural practices of the sensitive”, making personal diaries “valuable documents for understanding everyday lives”.

Along the same lines of valuing “ordinary” stories, a few years later, in 1992, Lejeune inaugurated the Association Pour l’Autobiographie et le Patrimoine Autobiographique (APA), which was dedicated to collecting and preserving unpublished texts, such as autobiographies, diaries and correspondence written by anyone who wanted to share their records related to their life (Lejeune, 2014; Simonet-Tenant, 2017; Gajanigo and Souza, 2021).

Henrique (2005, p. 289) recalls the writings of Gilberto Freyre, who, in 1933, drew attention to the need to research the “domestic life of our ancestors”. He also affirmed that after encountering the work of the Annales school,⁷ which considered intimate diaries historical sources, Brazilian researchers in the social sciences dedicated themselves to analyzing them, although they were still

5 “Journal du Journal”: autre intertexte dans le hors-texte...” (Lourau, 1988, p. 52).

6 The book has not yet been translated into Portuguese, but the chapter analyzing Malinowski’s diaries has been translated and published in Brazil (Lourau, 2004).

7 The Annales School caused a true revolution in the way history was produced because of its criticism of the positivist historical method that prevailed in the 19th century. Also known as the Annales movement, it took place in France at the beginning of the 20th century. The main objectives were to combat historical positivism and to develop a type of history that considered the addition of new sources to historical research and a new type of approach (Burke, 1997).

restricted to “important people in the country’s history, such as D. Pedro II. [...] But they also began to value the intimate records of common people, whose existence had hitherto been unknown to Brazilians, as is the case with the diary of the Viscountess of Arcozelo”. Vasconcelos (2020) took this diary as an object of study, just as other articles have recovered diaries of women with different social positions, as documentary sources, recovering ways of life, daily life and their customs, their domestic intimacies and women’s writings from different eras (Lejeune, 1997; Borges, 2002; Henrique, 2005; Alves, 2012; Pimenta, 2017; Simonet-Tentant, 2017; Gouvea, 2019).

Even with some movements that value diary writing, in keeping with the great social and cultural changes of the 20th century, these practices have diminished, mainly with the rise of the internet, and have migrated to other territories such as blogs, YouTube and other media — territories open to unrestricted reading. “It is no longer a solitary act, as in the 19th century, but an act to be seen, bordering on exhibitionism”. They establish other modes of personal writing and sociability (Cunha, 2021, p. 258).

Records of the ordinary were very present during the year 2020 when we lived through the COVID-19 pandemic (Charbel, 2020; Nascimento, 2020; Gajanigo and Souza, 2021).

Gajanigo and Souza, (2021, p. 40) report that, as a result of the APA movement in France, a manifesto was produced by French archivists and historians, spreading “a broad call: ‘For an ordinary memory of the extraordinary’, in April 2020”. The authors begin

with the hypothesis that the form of registering daily life, such as diaries, reports and testimonials, has become a privileged social form for organizing the pandemic experience. [...]; and when they appear adjectivized, like the “pandemic diary”, they serve as organizers of an experience that is simultaneously ordinary and extraordinary. Ordinary because it is a diary, attentive to the details of the routine, and extraordinary because it is a diary qualified as a special time, a specific period removed from the condition of simply being a diary. (p. 42)

Faced with this historical narrative of diaries, with their different moments and movements, which have left *traces* in research and education processes, and on what has been produced scientifically since then, the question that arises for us, in this narrative review, is: what can a diary do?

DIARIES IN RESEARCH: FOLLOWING TRACES

In academic literature, we find a variety of ways of understanding and working with diaries, based on different fields of knowledge and theoretical-methodological references. In our study, however, we found that many papers also lacked a specific conceptualization and theoretical-methodological framework for approaching diaries.

According to Oliveira (2014, p. 72), in the 20th and 21st centuries, diaries were and are present in “various fields and aspects of research that span psychology, social work, history, anthropology, sociology, education, among others”. In addition to these, our review found other fields of knowledge, such as pedagogy, French institutional analysis, nursing, public health, oral health, literary theory, administration and the arts, with a wide variety of theoretical-methodological designs: ethnography/participant observation, intervention research, narrative research, (auto) biographical research, cartography, action research, oral history, post-structuralist studies, life history/autobiography, multi-referentiality, documentary research, research in/of/with everyday life and case studies.

Despite the frequent presence of diaries in research work, it is a fact that, for some researchers, the diary “is nothing more than a scattered collection of heterogeneous notes” (Weber, 2009, p. 157).

Cachado (2021, p. 557) refers to a certain “insecurity that the field diary can still provoke” in the scientific sphere, especially when the only documentary basis of ethnography⁸ is field diary entries. This leads many studies to use multiple sources to have the opportunity to triangulate methods, with “interviews, as well as other quantitative techniques, such as scales and tests”, allowing the research to be complemented and validated (Zaccarelli and Godoy, 2010, p. 560). Another point raised by Cachado (2021, p. 558) was the conceptual instability of the field diary, since it is used in different ways, with no “ethnographic model” to be followed and receiving a variety of names, without a unification as occurred with the “cousin interview”, for example (open, structured, semi-structured); “while the field diary remains as one that is known from afar, everyone knows what it is, but few interact with it in an epistemological way”.

In this light, Roese *et al.* (2006) conducted a literature review based on the need to find bibliographical references in the literature related to the construction and use of field diaries, focusing on their relation to ethnographic research.

Although there is no theoretical framework that supports how diaries have been approached, there are *tracks* that offer clues. One of them is the fact that there is no specific conceptual framework to guide working with diaries, as if there were only one way of working with them and that this way is a given in anthropology, “that is, although the field diary is referred to and there are theoretical-methodological reflections on its use, it is sometimes taken for granted by ethnographic practitioners, ignoring its elaboration”, even by non-anthropologists (Cachado, 2021, p. 555). Carneiro and Fleischer (2020, p. 10) raise relevant questions about “making a field diary”, in an attempt to demystify it, since

we rarely read other people’s diaries, we rarely consider them to be socially constructed. Few field diaries are published and few anthropologists are willing to share their field diaries as an official publication. [...] There is an understanding in the field that, naturally or spontaneously, the anthropologist will know how to produce her field diary when the moment demands it.

Another clue would be that, because it is considered practical work, making records in a diary “is possible for any lay person who is sensitized and aware of the social relations they experience and who is in some way initiated into the technique” (El Hammouti, 2002, p. 14), carrying with it the occupation of non-academic territories, therefore outsiders, which would not justify a theoretical corpus of how or why. As Lejeune (2015, p. 12) affirms, “the diary, however, is primarily a practice, [...] a series of dated traces, written in the first person”. Of the articles selected for this review, eight have no specific conceptual reference to diaries (Domingues, 2008; Alves, 2012; Queiroz *et al.*, 2013; Ferreira and Marques-Schafer, 2016; Jinzenji, Luz and Campos, 2017; Pimenta, 2017; Charbel, 2020; Pereira *et al.*, 2020).

A third clue would be that, when the author of the study is an anthropologist, the field diary “is supposedly understood as part of the norm in research involving ethnography” and, therefore, there is no need to explain a specific diary reference, as anthropology has “a monopoly on the use of the field diary as a central resource in their empirical collections”, despite recognizing that other social sciences also use this resource (Cachado, 2021, p. 551).

In the texts we studied, which are affiliated with other fields of knowledge, we found a variety of names for the diary: intimate, personal, travel, on-board, research, of itinerancy, from the classroom, educational, for school, class, of moments, institutional, reflective, inverted, collective,

⁸ Cachado (2021) recalls that there isn’t just one ethnography and not all of them work with written records in the same way and for the same purposes.

pandemic, cartographic, affective, for reading, virtual and photographic. What changes when we adjectivize a diary? Does the adjective alone define its theoretical-methodological link? By changing the name from field diary to research diary, for example, are we defining a theoretical-methodological framework? Or is this change related to the many ways it can be inserted into a research project?

Following in the *tracks of* research using diaries in the fields of health and education, we found that diaries play a variety of roles as a: data collection instrument, research technique, methodological tool, research device, documentary source; or for reflection on practice, writing about oneself, recording experience, monitoring a process, producing data, recording observation, as a researcher's narrative, recording a creative process, as narrative space for thought, a pedagogical tool, data production strategy, memory record, photographic record, and methodological technique.

Nóvoa (1992), in systematizing studies on the (auto)biographical approach, identifies three main groups in terms of objectives: those that have essentially theoretical objectives, related to research; essentially practical objectives, related to education; and those that focus on essentially emancipatory objectives in a research-education approach.

In the articles linked to education, we found many works with diaries linked to theoretical studies that take diaries as a research opportunity. In this context, there is research on the history of education, in which diaries constitute documentary sources, such as the study conducted by Cunha (2018), which thematizes diaries, together with other (auto)biographical writings, as documents of memory produced by immigrants. Jinzenji, Luz and Campos (2017) examined diaries for a study on the training of teachers in rural schools in Minas Gerais.

Similarly, we have found a significant number of articles presenting research into teaching practice and training, using diaries as a methodological option. Zibetti (2004) presents the diary as a device for the pedagogical practice of an initiating literacy teacher, with the aim of discussing teacher distress from a Freudian perspective. With a focus on reflection on teacher practice, Freire and Fernandez (2015) share research on supervised teaching, based on class diaries written by student teachers in a teacher accreditation in chemistry course. Also in the context of supervised internships, Pereira *et al.* (2020) analyzed writings in courses in introductory practice and student teaching in a teacher certification in history program. The strategy developed consists of the production of plans and diaries by student teachers, and which are treated as a research source. Garofalo and Miño (2021) discuss the contributions of diaries to collaborative self-assessment and evaluation in the production of new teaching methods for biology classes at the University of Buenos Aires.

With regard to research in the field of health, in relation to essentially practical objectives (Nóvoa, 1992), the field diary, in Silva *et al.* (2020), was an instrument for recording visits, based on the assumptions of ethnography. For Kroef, Gavillon and Ramm (2020), the field diary was a methodological tool for recording and analyzing the experience of the researcher and participants, including the recording of conversations held outside the research fieldwork. Araújo *et al.* (2013) include, in addition to the field diary, a research diary as a qualitative health research technology and do not restrict it to observation notes and interviews. However, the authors do not present a theoretical foundation for this proposal. In a move to shift away from a more traditional way of working with diaries, introducing theoretical and emancipatory elements, Carneiro and Fleischer (2020) worked with the idea of a shared field diary to circulate "information collected" with the rest of the group, reflecting on authorship and ethics in working with diaries. Oliveira *et al.* (2013) propose a reflective diary in a multiprofessional health residency, pointing to similarities with the ethnographer's field diary and reflective portfolios. The authors describe an ethnographic "type" of work, emphasizing a concern not to distort the original characteristics of the field diary.

Domingues and Azevedo (2019, p. 24) incorporated into the field diary the concept of device and affirm that a diary, because it contains intimate and personal writing, “should follow the flow of thought”, without protocols.

In addition to emancipatory objectives (Nóvoa, 1992), we found articles that present different types of diaries, in that they disconnect them from registering research field activities and link them to a journey, basing them theoretically on different references. Pezzato and L’Abbate (2011, p. 1297) work with three diaries in a single investigation: a research diary, an institutional diary and a diary of moments, making it possible “for diarists to reflect on their own practice, denaturalizing it”. Felix-Silva, Oliveira and Bezerra (2020, p. 307) work with the cartographic diary as a data production strategy for “recording reports and writing about oneself”. Pezzato, L’Abbate and Botazzo (2019, p. 307) use the research diary as an intervention device in a multi-center study that fulfilled “a dual function: writing about oneself and encouraging reflection on the work carried out and its pedagogical content”. Borges and Silva (2019, p. 2) report on their experience of how the research diary was a “powerful tool for monitoring learning and analyzing the involvement of the student/researcher” during their doctoral studies.

These *traces* that give testimony to the work presented, with research diaries, in the fields of health and education, lead us to this affirmation by Pezzato, L’Abbate and Botazzo (2019, p. 301): “The use of diaries transcends research and, rather, has been and continues to be widely used in the daily lives of many people, often becoming a style of being”.

DIARIES IN HEALTH AND EDUCATION TRAINING PROCESSES: FOLLOWING OTHER TRACKS

Returning to the systematization carried out by Nóvoa (1992), we identified that the practical objectives in working with diaries, directly related to education, stood out in both the health and education fields. However, some brought emancipatory elements from a research-education perspective.

In healthcare courses and teacher education, diaries have a significant presence, especially in subjects involving fieldwork and supervised internships. In this sense, on the one hand, the articles share experiences lived in these fields of work and, on the other, they contribute to the production of scientific knowledge in education, and to an epistemology of education focused on the sharing of pedagogical and (auto)biographical narratives through diaries.

In the context of education in healthcare, we found articles that report on experiences with diaries in internship activities and other practice situations, registering one of the moments of the education process, under the name: field diary. Guzzo *et al.* (2019, p. 5-6) point out “the importance of sensitive writing in the elaboration of lived experiences and the possibilities that this takes on in education [...] of healthcare professionals, being “indispensable for the articulation of theory and practice”. In Soares *et al.* (2011) and Queiroz *et al.* (2013), the use of field diaries made it possible to record experiences during a supervised internship.

With unique proposals on how to work with diaries, Oliveira *et al.* (2013) suggest a reflective diary in a residency course in family health, combining the field diary (ethnography) with a reflective portfolio (education) aimed at recording the process. Federici *et al.* (2021, p. 12), in an experimental proposal, propose an inverted field diary, in which teachers recorded their experiences, which were read by the students, making it possible “for the field diary format to be re-signified and revitalized”. Flores and Souza (2014) worked with a digitalized cartographic diary, sent by email to the teacher, without many pre-established rules, as part of the assessment of the subject and with the aim of monitoring the educational path.

In teacher education courses, emancipatory objectives (Nóvoa, 1992) predominated. We found a wide variety of names to refer to and describe the diaries, which indicates the openness and inventiveness present in research and training practices anchored in narrative and (auto)biographical approaches. It is interesting, however, that the name field diary also marks its preponderance, signaling the strength of the contributions of ethnography, as well as the expression class diary, based on the theoretical-methodological contributions of Zabalza (1994).

We observed a significant presence of work with diaries in student teaching programs. Souza *et al.* (2012, p. 187) highlight “the formative potential of diary writing”, with emphasis on the possibility of following up, based on feedback from teachers and the reflections triggered by sharing among students. The article by Charréu and Oliveira (2015, p. 424) shares an experience in the training of visual arts teachers in Brazil and Portugal, highlighting the potential of the class diary in the investigation and reflection on practice and as a biographical testimony of the teaching experience, as well as the possibility for weekly sharing, provided by the moments of socialization of the experiences lived in schools. These authors indicate an opening in the production of diaries, reaffirming that “there is no model [...], each student/teacher in training will choose a particular language, will make more or less use of technology, will make more or less use of images, in short, everything will depend on their training path”.

In another article on teacher accreditation in visual arts, Cardonetti and Oliveira (2019, p. 3-11) state that they opted “for this method because they believed that the diary could be a narrative space for thoughts, expressing impressions textually and/or visually [...], both in the work carried out at school and in the study meetings at university”. Diaries were produced by the students, both in textual and/or visual versions, such as “letters, postcards, *performances*, patchwork quilts, posters, videos, comics, PowerPoint slides, radiographs, tablecloths and albums”, pointing to the openings and (re)invention present in the narrative and (auto)biographical paths of education. Baldi’s article (2018, p. 712) presents an experience of working on a teacher certification in dance, as “training processes for future *teachingartists*”, in which logbooks accompanied dance as records of creative processes, in contexts of putting on shows, favoring the narrative of “life stories and their relationships with dance, art and movement”.

In the pedagogy course [teacher certification in early childhood and elementary education], Bampi and Araújo (2020, p. 1424) see the field diary as a device in teacher training, whose objective is to allow students to take “the place of the subject of the experience, to focus on what they have experienced, narrating orally or from the records in the field diary, *in, with and for the group*”. El Hammouti (2002, p. 18) uses diaries with pedagogy students, to encourage reflection on one’s own practice, calling it a lay ethnographic diary, as he considers that “any social actor as an ordinary ethnographer can practice ethnographic diaries in the various senses described here, breaking down the barrier often made between the professional intellectual and the ‘lay’ practitioner (teacher, worker and student, etc.)”. Castro (2012) presents the use of diaries to support thematic reflections on gender and sexuality, in an elective subject in a pedagogy course, valuing questioning about formation, both of identity and in professional education, in which writing about oneself is understood as a practice of experimentation with the self, favoring processes of subjectivation in dialogue with Foucauldian perspectives.

Andrade and Almeida (2018, p. 99) present a literature review relating reflective practice to working with diaries, to indicate their potential for personal and professional teacher development. Based on this research, these authors listed a set of contributions related to this genre, of which we highlight that diaries: “help in the interaction of teacher-researcher and teacher-student, teacher-teacher”; “develop criticality”; “record the development of teachers in initial or continuing education”; “stimulate reflection and self-analysis”; and “facilitate the identification of teaching problems and encourage teaching autonomy”.

From the perspective of education with diaries as a teaching strategy, Ferreira and Marques-Schäfer (2016) share their experience in teaching German, focusing especially on their contribution to processes of documentation and self-regulation of learning, stimulating reflection, awareness of values and implicit theories, and also the use of diaries as an assessment tool.

Dias (2016), in the context of a study group, presents fragments of his research diary (Lourau, 2004) to address other forms of academic writing, in which the diary records the research process and the text to be returned. “The record of the research work thus takes on the function of a device, not exactly to conclude the work or present its final results, but as a trigger for the development of the research”.

With this overview of the texts, highlighting some of them and initially trying to identify those most directly focused on research, in this item, education, they lead us to question the boundary between these dimensions found in the articles reviewed. In various ways, the studies that use diaries as an opportunity for the production of sources, by encouraging writing or using diaries that have already been produced as a documentary source, mobilize reflective and potentially formative processes for those doing the research and/or for those who are invited to write. It is pertinent to note that work with practical objectives, focused on education, such as those highlighted above, by mobilizing writing and shared reflection, also produces research in education. Diary writing thus moves us towards an inseparability between research and education, facilitating the production of knowledge in education and health, involved with life and its permanent (trans)formation, indicating the transversality between *researcheducation* in (auto)biographical narrative writing, in diaries, in their various modes of experimentation.

Tracing a parallel with the permeability of diaries in the different spaces they have traversed and continue to traverse, “the course of biography — over approximately two millennia, from a broad perspective — has oscillated between forms of knowledge or art, in other words, between ‘science’ and ‘art’, or between history and literature” (Borges, 2002, p. 117).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS: COMPOSING FROM THE *TRACES*

everyone invents their own path in this genre of which there are perhaps models, but no rules. (Lejeune, 2014, p. 299)

We began our review without a sense of the size of the territory we were about to explore. The narrative review made this adventure possible, searching, following and composing with the narrative *traces* found, which allowed us to historicize and problematize the work with diaries in research and training processes, especially in the fields of healthcare and education.

We began with the origins of diary keeping in ancient Greece and saw, with the studies of Lejeune (1997; 2014; 2015), that it reached its apogee in the 19th century, with the intimate diary. This position was demarcated in a similar way in the articles selected from the fields of history, literary theory and the arts. Another movement referred to the transdisciplinary interlocutions proposed by Lourau (1988; 2004) in the research diary (“diary of the diary”) and with the record of the process lived and reflected on with the class diary proposed by Zabalza (1994), which made it possible to give other contours and movements to the work with diaries and diaristic writing, which had been “stuck” under the label of participant observation notebook. So, how can we legitimize consistent theoretical-methodological support for the production of a diary that is not just a “field” diary? Furthermore, assuming that in every diary there is a movement of a *self*, which by expressing itself through multiple languages constitutes a character of itself, thus constructing in a Bakhtinian architectural perspective an *I-for-myself* (Bakhtin, 2003), a diary author can

describe this self as he or she wishes and insert it into the production, whether in education, research or *researcheducation*.

Following this path, diaries go hand in hand with and can occupy writing territories open to the creation and invention of the self and the other. They move through different references, with various names, and even reinvent themselves, in a polysemic and flexible perspective, causing shifts in what has been established for a diary in academic spaces, and even outside of them.

In this group of articles, some explained that working with diaries in research is (inter) connected, in some way, with educational processes, with the writing of the self, leaving *traces* and giving clues to possible movements in these territories, having a multiplicity of denominations. As such, diaries are an opportunity for producing narrative sources for research in many fields of knowledge and culture, particularly education and healthcare.

In the field of healthcare, we find a predominance of diaries linked to fieldwork, and referred to as field diaries. Perhaps this perspective is a “legacy” of the strong ethnographic imprint exerted by the social and human sciences in the field of qualitative research in health. The narrative review made possible the realization that, even in the field of health, theoretical and methodological references from other fields of knowledge have caused shifts not only in their functionality, but also in the writing involved, whether in research in healthcare or in the training of health professionals, such as those in nursing, speech therapy, social work, dentistry, psychology and multi-professional residencies in family health, which were present in this review.

In the field of education, specifically teacher education, working with diaries can be a powerful tool, given the formative nature of self-writing, as an opportunity for experimentation and self-experience, favoring the sharing and questioning of aspects of each person’s training in a collective context, with broad theoretical and methodological support, not only from education, but also from related areas and even the arts, detaching itself from professional disciplines, such as internships and teaching practices. As a result, this device can support reflections, whether in education or research, as a powerful narrative source available for singular and plural, individual and collective understandings and interpretations. This will help construct an idea of education that is closely associated and related to the political, the cultural and the social.

Considering what Lejeune (2014, p. 299) says about diaries being a form of writing that allows composing *traces*, loose fragments of the author’s memory, in a lived *spacetime* and inspired by the plasticity of forms, tones, meanings and contents, found in the group of texts in this review, we propose an “opening” of the diary. We envision a diary that is open to territories of creation in educational and research processes, *researcheducation*, and is recognized as a powerful device, with a dense theoretical-methodological body that can support different ways of working, in different theoretical perspectives and different methodological approaches.

It is from this perspective that we understand working with diaries, whether in research, education or other territories, understood to be open to the possibility of other inventive, creative and personalized formats, in which verbal language is not the only one that constitutes them. Much of what can become a diary will depend on the meanings and purposes that the diarist proposes in its production. In line with the *traces* followed in Lejeune’s writings, highlighted in the epigraph to these final considerations, it is up to the diarist to define what the diary is or will be.

This, and perhaps more, is what a diary can do...

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