

## Scenic Experiments in Initial Teacher Training

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**ABSTRACT – Scenic Experiments in Initial Teacher Training.** By asking about the potential of scenic experiments in initial teacher training, this text presents part of an investigation, using cartographic methodology, carried out with students from ten different undergraduate courses, proposing body movements that, at university, are not usually part of learning to be a teacher. In the company of studies that are situated at the interface between art and education, and amidst the implementation of practices in a class of the Didactics curricular component, the research pointed out possibilities of formative paths biased by *poetic movements of teaching*: movements of listening, playfulness/joking, time-space-presence.

**Keywords:** Teacher training. Listening. Presence. Playfulness. Art in Education.

**RESUMO – Experimentações Cênicas na Formação Inicial Docente.** Ao perguntar pelas potencialidades de experimentações cênicas na formação inicial docente, este texto apresenta parte de uma investigação de metodologia cartográfica realizada junto a estudantes de dez diferentes licenciaturas, propondo-se movimentos do corpo que geralmente, na universidade, não fazem parte do aprender a ser professor e professora. Na companhia de estudos que se situam nas interfaces entre arte e educação, e em meio à realização de práticas numa turma do componente curricular Didática, a pesquisa apontou possibilidades de caminhos formativos enviesados por *movimentos poéticos da docência*: movimentos de escuta, de ludicidade/brincadeira, de tempo-espaco-presença.

**Palavras-chave:** Formação docente. Escuta. Presença. Ludicidade. Arte na Educação.

## Introduction

Can artistic experimentations challenge the field of teaching and open spaces for creation in teacher training courses? Do the performing arts hold potential in initial teacher education?

These were the questions that guided our master's research in education, which aimed to map the potentialities of scenic experimentations in initial teacher education with students from ten different degree programs, proposing bodily movements that, within the university context, are generally not part of learning to become a teacher<sup>1</sup>.

In dialogue with studies situated at the intersection of art and education — Ciotti (2013), André (2008), Hoff (2011), Nardim (2014), Coutinho (2018; 2022; 2024), Loponte (2014; 2023), Storck (2015), among others — the research was not concerned with identifying or solving a problem within the field of teacher education. Instead, it sought to experiment, together with preservice teachers, possibilities for educational paths influenced by what we call poetic movements of teaching: movements of attention, presence, listening, improvisation, composition, creation, collectivity, childhood, among others (Coutinho, 2025). These possibilities — which took shape before the aforementioned master's research and, in a way, created the conditions for its development — emerged from teaching, research, and outreach projects conducted by the *Coletivo de Estudos Poéticas do Aprender*<sup>2</sup> (Collective of Poetic Studies of Learning). This collective offers continuing teacher education programs in municipalities of the state of Rio Grande do Norte, proposing scenic practices to investigate the poetic dimension of teaching with education professionals associated with public education networks<sup>3</sup>. Thus, what we had already been doing within the Coletivo Poéticas in the field of continuing teacher education, we proposed to experiment within initial teacher education with students from different licensure programs.

Having situated the general context of the research discussed here, we organized the discussion of this text into five sections. In the first, we present the theoretical framework of the investigation, referencing studies that helped us weave a panorama for researching the potentialities of scenic experimentations in initial teacher education. In the second section, we provide a general characterization of the research locus and its methodological orientation. In the third section, we discuss four practices carried out in the research, associated with movements of listening and play. In the fourth section, we discuss some of the research findings, based on the emergence of other movements — of time-space-presence — that intersected between the boundaries of the performed practices. In the fifth and final section, we present our concluding remarks, outlining some possible developments and implications of this research.

## Conceptual Framework

For a long time, educational narratives have been a subject of dispute. Many scholars have engaged in dialogues seeking ways to confront the colonial, capitalist, and productivist legacy that shapes the field of education. Karine Storck (2015, p. 48) states that “[...] there is a will, a longing for something else, even if we do not quite know how to do it. There is a perception that the current configuration no longer meets present needs. Changes, alternatives, and new possibilities are being sought.” (*our translation*). In this regard, our focus lies on teacher education as a window of access to other ways of thinking/doing education that aim to be disruptive from the ground up, the foundation, the soil where educational practices take place.

More than fifty years ago, Paulo Freire (1970) had already emphasized the need for teacher education and practice capable of overcoming content-based teaching done since the logic of knowledge transmission. The starting point of his critique lies in what is understood as knowledge: as if it consisted merely of information and facts external to the people who participate in the pedagogical act. In contrast, Freire (1970) argues that teachers should be engaged in education (understood as a possibility for social transformation) through a dialogical relationship. It is, therefore, about shifting the focus: from the transmissive teaching of contents to dialogical relationships in the learning process. Teacher education aligned with this involves sensitivity and sharing, in which preservice teachers are encouraged to discuss knowledge about teaching, starting with the expression and reflection of their own experiences and worldviews.

In line with this, bell hooks (2013) understands that initial teacher education should include reflection on one’s own experiences, biases, and privileges. To do so, she refers to the need to challenge the conception of the university as a place for “[...] people merely competent in book knowledge” (p. 28, *our translation*), sustained by the supposed separation between mind and body. In response to that, the author asserts that “[...] the masking of the body encourages us to think that we are hearing neutral and objective facts. We must return to a state of bodily presence to deconstruct the way power has traditionally been orchestrated in the classroom” (hooks, 2013, p. 186, *our translation*).

The discussions of Freire (1970) and hooks (2013) invite us to think about and practice teacher education that is experienced as a space of dialogue and reflection; of encounter and openness to differences, to the unforeseen, to mistakes, to invention; of sharing and collective construction of knowledge that is at the same time self-transformative, opening ways and walking toward new teaching practices that are not confined to techniques, methods, and critiques already limited by a predictable field of possibilities. This does not mean, by any means, dispensing with techniques, methods, and critiques, but to give them enough openness to shift the boundaries of what is

already established in relation to what can be said and thought within teacher education.

Among the many possibilities to be invented in this direction, we find in the connections between art and education a fruitful partnership in our attempts to develop other formative approaches of teaching that do not conceive knowledge solely as external content to be communicated and acquired, but that challenge us in relation to conventional ways of mobilizing knowledge in teacher education programs. We agree with Karine Storck (2015, p. 67) when she states that:

Art has much to challenge in education, in ourselves and in what we make of ourselves within/through the school [and we would add here, within/through the university and licentiate degree courses]. We must allow ourselves to face the challenges and take risks in this work, for more beautiful, more intense existences, for a courage of a life with all the unpredictabilities and failures that it may offer. (*our translation*).

From this perspective, it is an art that is not necessarily tied to beauty or to the created work, but rather connects to an imaginative potential and substantial in its way of knowing and relating to the world (Helguera, 2011). Art not necessarily as a product, tool or content, but as a way of life, through its poetics, thoughts, and practices, which leads us to Foucault's well-known and powerful question (1995, p. 261):

What surprises me is the fact that, in our society, art has become something related only to objects and not to individuals or life; that art is something specialized or made by specialists who are artists. However, couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? Why should a lamp or a house be an object of art, and not our life? (*our translation*).

Reflecting on these dialogues between art and education, we reiterate the question posed by Mônica Hoff (2011, p. 117: "[...] is it possible to carry out productive experiences that integrate the contemporary artistic world and the educational system without the contemporary art world and the educational system without, in practice, one being accessory to the other?" (*our translation*).

According to Luciana Loponte (2014), through an approach to education that fosters a closer dialogue with the contemporary artistic production, it is possible to challenge, or at least question the tendency toward linear thinking that is often present in educational work related to planning, curriculum organization, and other pedagogical activities. Through these dialogues and an active research practice — which generates movement and does not fix only on what is given or presented as *good* —, the constitution of teaching practice may be closer to a perspective of inventive teaching (Mossi, 2016).

In this sense, we agree with Guillermo Gómez-Peña (2011, p. 2), when he says that "[...] perhaps the classroom and/or the workshop space could become an extension of the *performance* space and of the social world: a kind of demilitarized zone and central nerve for progressive thinking and action." (*our translation*). This artist researcher

refers to performance art, understood by Medeiros (2008, p. 25) as something that:

[...] takes place in time and materializes in the ephemeral, being, therefore, by excellence, a flow. Performed collectively and open to the participation of the *interactor*, it is an exchange, its space is gaseous. It is heterogeneous: as a living exchange, it does not stabilize; being ephemeral, it defies death. Artistic *performance* is always unique and inconstant, constructing itself as circumstance (*Our translation*).

Eleonora Fabião (2013, p. 6) defines the *performer* as a body-in-experience, that creates “[...] relationships, associations, assemblages, extraordinary modes and affects” (*our translation*). In line with these ideas, we can refer here the concept of the teacher-*performer*, by Naira Ciotti (2013), for whom teaching is a process of creation and experimentation. Just as in *performance* art, the teacher-performer moves through different qualities of presence and states of attention. As Thaise Nardim (2014, p. 3236) states,

The teacher-performer deterritorializes didactics because, as an attentive being, remains aware of the ‘interdetermined’ nature of form and content in their practices. Thus, they understand that one cannot teach something, but only teach — even when the goal is to reflect on a particular subject matter. For this teacher, teaching is intransitive, just as making art is. They draw their map with drafts of rules for games and play that help the group collectively approach to other elements of life, which we usually call, at school ‘subjects.’ (*our translation*).

These studies helped us weave a panorama for researching the potentialities of scenic experimentations in initial teacher education, together with students from different licensure programs, enrolled in a Didactics course, in a study that did not intend to identify and resolve any problems related to the teaching and learning processes within that specific curricular component, but rather to investigate formative possibilities using bodily movements that are not normally part of learning to become a teacher. The scenic experimentations proposed and carried out in the class opened and signaled possible pathways for teacher education, also through “[...] movements — of attention, presence, listening, improvisation, composition, among others — characteristic of the creation processes of the performing arts, treating them as a specific problem common to both fields: education and the arts” (Coutinho, 2025, p. 3, *our translation*).

### ***Locus and Methodological Orientation***

The scenic experimentations were carried out during the second academic semester of 2023 with undergraduate students from various licensure programs — Visual Arts, Social Sciences, Physical Education, Physics, History, Portuguese Language, English Language, Brazilian Sign Language (Libras), Mathematics, and Theatre — in a mixed class of the curricular component Didactics, offered by the Department of Educational Practices and Curriculum at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN)<sup>4</sup>.

Regarding the composition of the class, we highlight the following aspects: the diversity of fields of knowledge (ten different licensure programs); the stage of each student's educational journey (the Didactics course is offered in different periods, depending on each program's curriculum design); and the differences in their professional experiences in education (some students were already working as teachers in public or private schools, or in non-formal educational settings, while others had not yet had any teaching experience). The elements of this composition established a space of multiple perspectives on teaching, classroom relationships, what may constitute the content of a class, and even what a class itself can be. We consider that this profusion of places enriched the collective experience, since nothing was given from a single point, but rather emerged from the multiple situations present there.

While this variety was fundamental to the expansion and the confronting of conceptions surrounding educational issues, most of the class had no prior relationship with the performing arts, which initially led to some discomfort arising from the proposed displacements, as if their bodies were asking: Is this really a class? or Why are we doing this in a Didactics class? Even though such conflicts were not properly verbalized, they were visible in the students' bodies, some hesitant, others shy, somehow displaced. As the practices were unfolded and collective moments took place, it became possible to notice their expressions changing with each new meeting, as if participants were gradually allowing themselves to be affected, breaking away from the need to control themselves, time, the other, and their own convictions about what a teacher education class should be.

This gradual openness occurred during the meetings, possibly due to the readings assigned to the class (a main text and a complementary one were indicated before each class)<sup>5</sup>, or perhaps because the students began to feel more comfortable engaging scenically with elements related to teaching (listening, attention, presence), or maybe because they started trusting more in the effects the experimentations had on the discussions that the class itself was having about becoming a teacher, or perhaps due to a combination of all these factors. Regardless of the reason, we began to notice a growing disposition in the group, a disposition in presence that had not been there in the first meeting, but was being built and revealed throughout the work we proposed through poetic movements, so we can collectively investigate the potentialities of the performing arts in initial teacher education.

In relation to the methodological orientation of the research, we were guided by the cartographic approach proposed by Deleuze and Guattari (1995), which we understand and practice as an act of creation in academic research, following the notion that "[...] to cartograph is to follow a process and not to represent an object" (Kastrup, 2008, p. 469, *our translation*). It is a non-prescriptive perspective, allowing us to follow processes that belong to the order of the invisible and the plane of sensations (Kastrup; Barros, 2009). Since the research dealt with movements, the processes that composed its mobile map

were immersed in lines that connect, intersect, and/or unfold, taking on different meanings with each new gaze cast upon them. To create and recreate. Not to establish, or, if to establish, to permit room for reinvention. To accompany the movements of what arises in each new encounter and its relations with what has already happened and ceased to happen. What was and what could not be resonate in the before, the after, the now, among their flows. As Virgínia Kastrup and Laura Barros (2009, p. 77, *our translation*) state:

[...] the [cartographic] method takes shape as one accompanies the movements of subjectivities and territories. It is, therefore, a processual method, created in tune with the equally processual domain it encompasses. In this sense, the method does not provide a model of investigation. It unfolds through clues, strategies, and concrete procedures.

We sketched the scenic practices to be proposed to the class and selected the tools for accompanying the cartographic research, such as a field notebook, photos, and videos to record sensations, information, words, drawings, images, reflections, dialogues and others, throughout the practices, including the discussion circles held with the students participating in the research at the end of each meeting.

In these conversations, called *circles of affections*, we experimented with attempts at open dialogue, sensitive listening, and suspension of judgment, paying attention to the paths each person constructed while attributing meaning to educational issues and to themselves as future education professionals. It was interesting to observe how the understandings of the same individual were shifting, dissolved, and reformed at each meeting. We believe that these shifts in thinking, made visible in the circles of affections, were made possible primarily through the demechanization of the body (Boal, 2009), achieved as an effect of the scenic practices performed before the discussions. This leads us to affirm that working with the poetic movements of teaching enhances an openness and a disposition to experience thought as an act of sensitivity (Kohan, 2007), something that may face resistance or become stagnant in the case of more rigidly formalized classroom structures. What can the body feel-think-speak not only after movement, but through it, putting thought itself into motion?

Thus, the research sought to capture the nuances of the proposed experimentations as they unfolded, attempting to perceive how scenic practices, through poetic movements of listening, attention, creation, improvisation, and others, could impact the discussion on becoming a teacher. We reiterate that this process involved assigning meaning to aspects of teaching, but in a *non-finite process*, that *moved* in each meeting and, we believe, continues to move in every reader of this text. This means that our goal was not to describe or propose a new way of teaching Didactics or to establish a new method for teacher education. Our research pointed to clues regarding the potentialities of scenic experimentations in initial teacher formation, yet these clues are mobile, and therefore cannot be replicated, for they cannot



be fixed: they emerge, each time, from a unique combination of forces that is always singular.

### Some practices carried out

The scenic practices with the Didactics class were initially proposed, within the research, to encourage work with three specific poetic movements: listening, creation/improvisation, and playfulness<sup>6</sup>. Out of the eight experiments conducted, we will highlight in this text four practices, two associated with *listening movements* and two associated with *playfulness movements*, as follows.

Regarding listening, we engaged the Didactics students in two games<sup>7</sup>. One of them consisted of inviting the group to stop and listen. Only to listen, for a certain period of time. The only rules established were: *to remain silent in order to listen*, and *to be present in that moment and in that space, attempting to keep one's thoughts there as well*. We stayed like that, in silence, listening, for almost fifteen minutes, as a class activity: listening. Yet only the proposer of the game knew, at the end, that it had been nearly fifteen minutes, since this chronological time was not measured along the action, nor was it disclosed at the end of the game, and ended up being perceived differently by the different people who performed the activity: some felt it had been three minutes, while others thought it had been twenty.

It was interesting to notice how each person developed their own ways of dealing with the silence that filled the room, and that, at first, seemed rather awkward. In relation to that, silence tried to establish itself, but initially accompanied by shy laughter. It was as if people were asking themselves: Can we really stop talking to listen? The giggles gradually turned into bodily stiffness, and people slowly stopped moving, as if they wanted to remain completely still, as if the silence of the human voice rendered them motionless. They stood still in their places, without even looking around. In the discussion circles we held with the students at the end of each meeting, some said that they had experienced that initial silence in the same way they did when their schoolteachers used to shout for silence in class, trying to silence not only the children's voices but also their bodies. And that seemed to be precisely how the pre-service teachers reacted in the game. What bodily memories do we carry from school regarding listening? When we stop to listen and pay attention to listening itself, do we distinguish silence from silencing? How do we feel our bodies when we listen? Does being silent in order to listen require us to hold our bodies tense, rigid, almost static?

After some time in the game, people began to move a little more and seemed to pay greater attention to the different sounds, their listening appeared to become more attuned, as if they could perceive things beyond discomfort, something that could be heard from the bodies themselves: as if they realized that their bodies were part of composing the space. Those initially static bodies began to move slightly: crossing their legs, adjusting their chairs, relaxing their shoulders. Even so, overall, people seemed to be in conflict with



themselves during the activity. What we had initially thought to be seemingly simple — listening — revealed its complexity. Someone eventually ended the game, breaking the moment with their words: *How much time has passed?*

Experimentation has shown us that, although it may appear to be simple and not requiring many resources, the game demands a committed, available group, one that is *willing to sustain listening*. To sustain listening. When we proposed this game in the Didactics class, we departed from what is usually expected of a Didactics class; but, in doing so, it is as if we have stepped outside the class itself... Being in a space and stopping to listen. — *And is this a class?*, a student asked during our discussion circle. — *What did we learn today in Didactics class?* — *We learned to listen*. How can we sustain discomfort in a collective while being in a state of listening? What do we hear when we are silent? What are the sounds of our surroundings when we listen attentively? How does the body position itself when it is set to listen? What can listening tell us about teaching? *What movements does listening allow us to make?*

Another listening game we proposed to the group was done in pairs (one narrator and one listener) and consisted basically of the following. The narrator tells a brief personal story to the listener, who listens with as much openness as possible, paying attention to the details of the story, to the words used, and to the parts that seemed most significant to the narrator. Then, the listener is invited to retell to the narrator what they heard, without adding any comments of their own, simply recounting what was heard, as it was heard. One person does not interrupt the other, but simply pays attention solely to listening. This occurs in the intimacy between narrator and listener. The story is not shared with the group. There is a choice of a place for listening, a choice of a memory to be narrated, an orality that pervades the encounter between those two people, a willingness to listen, and an openness to be affected by the classmate's words and listening. Almost like a ritual, these elements of the game interconnect, composing the exercise of deep listening. Every detail heard matters. Every word spoken about what was heard matters. Does the listener hear what the narrator says, *as* she says it? Is what the narrator says the same as what the listener hears? Again, a game that seems so simple, whose realization reveals its complexity.

These two practices that we proposed to undergraduate teaching students functioned as moments of rupture, interruption, and pause within this body of usually mechanized classroom actions, as a counterpoint to what is expected from a class in a teacher education program. The time to listen. The space to listen. The act of listening. To stop and dedicate oneself to listening. In this exercise, attentive listening is the foundation for other connections that unexpectedly shimmer in the present time-space.

In the discussion circles we held with students at the end of each meeting, the words *disposition* and *presence* resonated among many of them, who highlighted how much the listening practices

challenged them to truly be present in that relationship to listen, to put distractions aside and focus on what they were experiencing at that instant, in that room, with those people and those objects. For example, one of the participants said that such games challenged him to explore listening as a form of connection with the space around him, feeling himself as part of that space, as if for a moment there was no distinction between himself and the space, but rather a relationship. Initially awkward, the silence gradually became an opportunity for people to listen and explore movements in the body, perceptions, sensations, and information they began to perceive from the space, highlighting the need to be present for a connection with one's own experience.

From these two games, much was said in our meetings about the differences between these listening practices and the daily life of a school classroom, for instance, as if children and young people in school were not invited to deeply experience this movement, even though it is quite common for them to be required to listen. There was also a discussion about the difficulties many teachers face when trying to make students listen and pay attention in class. By experiencing these movements in their own bodies, future teachers began to assign new meanings to what they called the need for presence, which requires the creation of other spaces within a class. Thus emerged one of the first clues we could perceive throughout the scenic practices we proposed to the class: we were dealing with a movement of presence that seemed to cross all others (we will return to this in the next section, where we discuss some research results).

In addition to practices related to the movements of listening, we also carried out practices associated with playful movements, of which we will refer here to two entirely simple games that require no resources other than bodily disposition itself. One of the games proposed was the statue game: becoming a statue when the music stops, whoever moves is out of the round; in each new round, a new suggestion is made for how the statue should freeze: hands up!, feet together with another person!, belly to belly!, four-person statue!. The other game, a childhood classic in Brazil, was tag (also known as tica-tica). All it took was our invitation and the group immediately organized itself into two teams, each with one tagger who tried to catch members of the other team by touching them. The participants themselves proposed some variations of this game to the group. In one version we tried, when someone was tagged, they had to freeze like a statue, legs wide apart, until another teammate released them by passing underneath their legs. Safe zones were defined by the group within the play area, spaces where it was possible to take refuge without being tagged. It was possible to enter and exit these safe zones during the game, staying in them for a few seconds (the group agreed that the time could vary, depending on each person's physical condition, so that everyone could play). Childhood seemed to emanate from their pores, together with the sweat of running. Feeling the limits of one's body during this game was especially challenging. What was supposed to last ten mi-

minutes became fifteen... twenty... thirty minutes of playing, and they wanted more! Once again, without realizing the passage of minutes, the participants surrendered to inhabiting another temporality.

To experience oneself in poetic movements of teaching through play in an academic environment (the university), marked above all by the formality of educational relations, allowed for a surprising openness on the part of the undergraduate teaching students. How serious is it to experiment the limits of a teaching body through play in an open area, in the middle of the university? How imposing is a group of adults playing tag in the parking lot in front of the classroom building? Running among cars, laughing aloud... The experiments we conducted within the scope of playful movement showed that play practices constituted moments of exceptional attentiveness to what was being done, an integrity and commitment that disrupted the opposition between seriousness and joy.

Laughter filled the room when we returned to hold our discussion circle about the experimentation and its possible effects on teacher education. Bodies in a state of joy. Joy here in the Spinozan (2022) sense, not as a feeling, but as a force that increases our capacity to act in the world. Bodies de-mechanized by the political force of play (Coutinho; Alves, 2023). Open thought which flows among exhaustively active, attentive, agile, pulsating bodies, more sensitive to collective and unforeseen elaboration around other forms of teaching that speak about planning, teaching, and assessing, experimenting with conversing such themes in a mode of improvisational thinking when faced with a question that should permeate every teaching practice: what is the place of the body in school? The body of children, but also the body of teachers, of the principal, of the cafeteria worker, of the janitor... What does school do with our bodies? What do we do with our bodies in school? What kind of school do we make with our bodies? What is a teaching body made of? Or, as Coutinho and Lucena (2025, p. 18) urge us to ask: "When we are at school, do we dare to experience the poetics of the student-body adrift in the classroom, in teaching, in learning?"

At the beginning of this work, we believed that the relationship between the proposed practices and the discussions we hoped to provoke in teacher education would be more directly established in the listening games than in the playful ones. Still, we took the risk and consider it important to affirm the place of *play* as a movement in itself, one that takes shape in the body, perceived in an open smile, in the complicity of people that laugh by looking at each other, in a singular bodily disposition by its spontaneity and surrender, as if spending the time at school during recess. A feeling difficult to explain, but easy to feel. A type of connection with *the child we are*: a state that, in adults, seems to manifest as a blend between the child we once were and the one we could not be<sup>8</sup>. Of all the practices we carried out with the Didactics group, accessing the poetic movements of teaching through these two games was an unexpectedly unique and strong.

We believe this strength may be linked to the absence of purpose in play. Because, although in very open and distinct ways, all the other practices we proposed were games, with some form of intentionality as a starting point, which was not the case with the playful practices, which seemed to us to be a far more genuine expression, as if play had allowed a more spontaneous surrender, perhaps because it had no predetermined end, did not aim at an objective to be achieved, did not foresee a culmination: it simply was, in all its force, and continued to happen: without the need to reach any previously specified destination, the participants' own interest was the only element that brought the play to an end.

Thus, the work showed us, in action, the differentiation between playing and gaming. Mello (2023) calls attention to the fact that, when translated from Spanish (*juego*), the words game (*jogo*) and play (*brincadeira*) are generally used in Portuguese as synonyms; however, according to the author, there is a group of scholars from whom we can distinguish these two terms. Although there is an inseparability between playing and gaming, and both can be understood as ludic activities,

[...] in the game, the rule is always well defined and already established, even though every game has the possibility of rule modification, depending on the context and the players' intentions. In play, the rules are not apparent because they are always intrinsic to social relations, as well as to imagination, and, most importantly, they are defined by those who play, based on their repertoire of experiences in relation to people, objects, spaces, and the social situation (Mello, 2023, p. 11, *our translation*).

Thus, created in the present moment from the participants' own repertoire of experiences, we realized that the experimentation of the space-time of playing opened paths toward the perception of childhood feelings, of that other space-time where nothing is more serious than surrendering to what one does: to play. The memories of the child's body are present within us, even if, at times, with all the sobriety of adulthood, they are weakened by everyday life. Childhood inhabits the body in some way, regardless of age (Kohan, 2021), especially when engaging in play.

Childhood, we must say it clearly from the start, is a mystery, an enigma, a question. I am not referring, of course, merely to a chronological stage of human life, but rather, before anything else, to that condition that inhabits us, sometimes more perceptibly, sometimes almost imperceptibly - since we inhabit the world. This condition, we must also say from the beginning, never abandons us, even in the form of silence or of an imperceptible presence, until we ourselves abandon the world (Kohan, 2015, p. 217, *our translation*).

For Ana Caldas Lewinsohn (2021, p. 78), the state of play “[...] involves a fundamental surrender and presence, where nothing else matters, where there is a *suspension of ordinary life and the creation of other laws* that temporarily govern the environment and relationships” (*our translation*). Recognizing the value of play in adults is to af-

firm childhood as a force present in bodies, not merely as a stage of life, but as a way of being in the world. Play is not limited by the chronology of age: it transcends time, produces effects in the body, stirs curiosity, imagination, and shared laughter. Adult people live the childhood that they are, this ludic state of being, this powerful state of play, in which one inhabits another kind of time, deeply committed to what one does.

It is also this state that holds the power to inaugurate the world anew each time; and perhaps it was this very force that, subsequently, enabled deeper and more open conversations about the meanings of being a teacher sensitive to what we call the poetic movements of teaching: to listen, to pay attention, to create, to improvise, *to child*...

## Some results

From the first work sessions with the group, we could verify that the practices carried out went beyond what we had previously imagined, confirming that the poetic movements could not be pre-conceived fixedly, nor would they occur according to an expected order or sequence: precisely because they are movements, they emerged from what was lived there, from the bodies and their relationships. The arts seem to have this power to displace the functionalities of *something made for that*; as a result, what arises cannot remain static: that is why it is about *movements*, which emerged during the course of the meetings<sup>9</sup>.

Thus, even though we had initially proposed practices associated with three specific movements (listening, creation/improvisation, and play), in each encounter with the group, the bodies seemed to be affected and to affect one another without the need to announce the end of any given practice. Experimentation displaced us and displaced the very purposes. To experiment was to experience oneself within the relationships woven through the composition of the encounters (Coutinho & Haderchpek, 2019). In this way, the unfolding of the work revealed the emergence of other movements that intersected the boundaries between the practices, among which we highlight what we call movements of *time-space-presence*, which traced a mobile map of the potentialities of scenic experimentation in the initial education of teachers. The following are some considerations about these movements.

In proposing the experimentations with the Didactics class, we invited participants to set aside watches and cell phones - the devices that offer us the chronological measurement of time — as a challenge to enter the games and playful activities with a different attitude, not guided by clock time or by any learning goal to be achieved at the end of a period; an attitude unconcerned with timing each practice to verify teaching objectives to be fulfilled. Even though we had a chronos mark to indicate the beginning and end of the meeting (from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.), we agreed to make an effort not to fragment that shared interval we would have for our experimentations, trying not to *pre-occupy* ourselves - that is, not to worry in advance - with the pas-

sage of time (what had happened before or what would happen afterward), but rather to *occupy* ourselves with inhabiting the present moment through the relationships that were unpredictably being established. Thus, given the participants' integral immersion, each of the practices exceeded the chronological time initially planned: an extension of activities that can be understood as a reflection of how the practices affected and involved the participants, and, therefore, as a reflection of the group's willingness to face the limitations of chronology. Moreover, the group engaged so intensely in experimenting with what was proposed at the beginning of each meeting that some of the practices we had planned (as complements of the previous ones) were not carried out, that required us to recognize that what we had initially understood as absence might, in fact, be even more interesting to the research, precisely because it ended up opening space for feelings and thoughts that emerged in the moment, connected to the collective formed through singularly established relationships.

In this way, we felt that the scenic practices in teaching spoke to us about an attempt to live within the fold of time, a time that challenges order within the classroom. A time of suspension of what is already expected. A time of presence: of attentiveness to the present. A time (chronos) made so that we could lose and inhabit it, chronologically unproductive in terms of goal achievement, and entirely open to the possibilities of experimenting with thought on teaching through bodily affections.

Attention is precisely being present in the present, being there in such a way that the present is capable of presenting itself to me (that it becomes visible, that it may come to me and I may come to see it), and that I am exposed to it in such a way that I may be transformed or 'pierced through', or contaminated, that my gaze may be liberated (by the 'command' of that present). For such attention makes the experience possible (Masschelein, 2008, p. 42, *our translation*).

Rufino (2019) affirms the necessity of "[...] practicing disorder as a course toward a new order, crossing the bars of time as a spiral, always maintaining a dynamism, rejecting any form of adjustment and immobility" (p. 109, *our translation*). A living time. A spiraling time, as Leda Maria Martins (2021, p. 42) teaches us: "[...] a time that does not erase chronologies, but subverts them," (*our translation*) lived as

[...] a curvilinear movement that synchronically integrates, in the actuality of the performed event, the present of the past and of the future. [...] an action of a continuous past, synchronized in a present temporality that attracts to itself the past and the future and also spreads into them, abolishing not time itself, but its linear and consecutive conception. Thus, the idea of temporal succession is obliterated by the reactivation and updating of the action, similar and diverse, already performed both before and after the instant that restores it, as event (Martins, 2021, p. 87, *our translation*).

By allowing ourselves to experience time at the university as a curvilinear movement, we learned together, in the Didactics classes,

that the time of education can be other than linear, which is ruled by the clock: even though the field of teaching is saturated with contents, meanings, and pre-existing senses (which are equally important to be known and discussed), the teaching practice - the one enacted in the act itself, contains in it the potential to open up other meanings that shimmer in the present moment, when we experience a certain state of presence, which involves the suspension not only of *cronos* time but also of given space.

Some participants (who already work as teachers) expressed that the physical arrangement of the classroom played a fundamental role in the experimentations and emphasized the possibilities (opened by the practices carried out) of reconfiguring the spaces of the classrooms where they teach. Moreover, the practices also led to a discussion about what constitutes the spaces of a class, expanding the idea that a class would only happen within the boundaries of a classroom.

Such conversations allow us to affirm that, although it was not a previously defined intention, the experimentations enabled the group to discuss about the organization of educational spaces and times, endowing them with other meanings that, here, does not need to be explained, since their power lies precisely in recognizing not a particular form of organization that could be fixed, but especially in the principle that it is always possible to invent singular forms created within the relationships themselves. It is about creating spaces within the space of a class; creating times within the time of a class, through a kind of improvisational surrender. And this cannot be replicated.

In this sense, it is important to situate improvisation here as it is understood and practiced in the field of the performing arts: it does not mean doing just anything, but rather engaging in processes of creation without a prewritten script, even though these are made possible by repertoires of knowledge we already possess.

To im-pro-vised (which etymologically means not-before-seeing = not foreseeing), contrary to common understanding, indeed requires preparation. but in ways different from those usually employed in formal education, which tend to control pedagogical processes by anticipating (foreseeing) what will happen in them [...]. In education, the intentionality of this anticipation (fore-sight) is justified primarily by the definition of a shared meaning and, therefore, in the name of a common understanding: the content of learning, converging [and reducing] the infinite possibilities of signification into processes of common identification previously established. By confronting the analytical categories related to teaching and learning in these terms, the concept of improvisation promotes an essential opening and, as it gives room to the unpredictable, shifts the focus of educational processes to the here-and-now of the class (Coutinho, 2018, p. 124, *our translation*).

To conceive of improvisation in education “[...] as a process of creating in-between spaces” (Coutinho, 2018, p. 121, *our translation*) does not mean dispensing with repertoires of knowledge, since it is



from them that one can improvise. This also emerged in our discussion circles with the undergraduate students. One of them described their experience in the Didactics sessions as “[...] a movement of improvisation,” emphasizing how the scenic practices, even though they had a certain direction, encouraged them to explore their own limits creatively and spontaneously. They found themselves challenged to respond with certain agility to the webs of connections their classmates were making from their own bodies of knowledge, which they drew on unexpectedly in the moment of the class.

Thus, the scenic experimentations offered the teachers and students of that Didactics class the opportunity to experience a distinctive experience in relation to the time and space of the class, “[...] instigating a sensibly more attentive way of inhabiting the present, the only time-space in which we can effectively act in the world” (Coutinho, 2018, *our translation*). What took shape was a time and space of collective and heterogeneous creation of meaning within the class, as experienced in action. In other words, not only was there talk about the creation of space-times, but the very discussion about it derived from a collective creation, as though we were first passing the discussion through the body in a state of presence, so that its affections around it could release a way of feeling and thinking somewhat freed from the constraints of a didactic-discursive order that frames what we are supposed to feel and think regarding matters of education.

And, quite interestingly, the discussion about the organization of the classroom spaces gave way to a discussion about the spaces of our own thinking... When we talked in our circle of affections about the potentialities we perceived in scenic practices for speaking about teaching, one participant observed that, although the exercises were *physically tiring*, they were, at the same time, *mentally relaxing*. She posed a question to the group: *how can something that tires the body relieve the mind?* It was as if, by experiencing this time of acting in the world, there was an expansion of inner spaces. It was as if, in that uninhabited place of previously shared ideas, a force was at work that stretches the possibilities of feeling and thinking of a body that fully experiences its capacities for relating to the world. In other words, it was as if

[...] the excessive state we experience with the energy of presence opens a gap, a fissure, a breach in the knowledge we have of things, in the alternatives we have for thinking them, in the choices available to us: all of this suspended, in a provisionally lacunar state. It sustains itself for a few moments with such intensity until the emptiness of those things is soon filled by some formulation that produces minimally shared meanings, around which discussion unfolds (Coutinho, 2022, pp. 11–12, *our translation*).

And we realized that what allowed us to suspend, all at once, the given time and space of a class was precisely the experimentation of a certain state of presence (Gumbrecht, 2010), capable of engaging people in attempts of creating spaces and times whose processes of creation consider into account the forces of a class, since such spaces

and times do not exist outside the relationships singularly woven in the present of the encounters.

Regarding this certain state of presence, we could feel that it emerged in the connections of trust and openness that were being established. One student highlighted the “[...] expansion of senses” that the practices provided, allowing her to experience “[...] a capacity to feel and perceive the surrounding environment. The movements connected me to a deeper awareness of myself and of the group.” It was a state that did not manifest in everyone at the same moment nor in a single practice, but one that permeated the unfolding of the encounters, as something we gradually learned to experience together, each from their own place. It is a state that seemed to make us suspend the meanings we habitually attribute to a class in a licenciante degree, even if only temporarily, to bring our bodies into presence, above all else. Relationally present bodies studied Didactics by experiencing themselves in the poetic movements of teaching.

### Final considerations

Investigating teaching in its relationship with the field of the performing arts, in an attempt to envision formative trajectories of teachers from different licensure programs that are traversed by such connections, is both our research wager within the field of education and our commitment to public teaching practice. We hope that the results of this research may contribute to the ongoing debate about the ways in which we conduct teacher education in universities, attending not only to the dimensions traditionally considered in teacher training (sociological, psychological, philosophical, methodological, etc.) but also to its equally important artistic dimension (Coutinho, 2022; 2025).

In this regard, we reiterate that the focus of this research is not Art with a capital “A” and in the singular; nor that canonical, Eurocentric, beautiful, formal, white, heteronormative, cisgender Art; nor even Art (of whatever kind) as *something to be taken* to licensure students; nor an additional form of knowledge to be incorporated into their formative repertoire. Rather, it concerns the mobilization of the students’ artistic potentialities through scenic experimentations that stimulate poetic movements of creation, improvisation, presence, and so forth, which we consider fundamental to the work of teaching. To that end, we begin from the premise that students in the various licensure programs already know and live the arts: in the music they hum, in the dance moves they improvise, even in the ways they perform being students and teachers of one type or another. They know and live the arts in their most essential poetics: those of lived experience.

Thus, in this work involving the artistic dimension of teacher education, it was never a matter of proposing Art as some form of salvation that would promise to improve teacher education programs. Nor were we experimenting with a new didactic model to later be implemented in school subjects through performing arts — as if the arts

could serve as pedagogical tools for teaching Didactics or other curricular contents. Although some participants expressed interest in trying the games with their own classes, it became quite evident that our experimentations were not intended to enrich pre-service teachers with a repertoire of didactic methods and techniques through the arts. Instead,

[...] the wager moves in another direction, consisting basically of attempts to demec hanize the body and to shift gazes, perceptions, ways of feeling and thinking (about oneself, about the collective, about the school, about the teaching, about the things that involve education, about our presence in the world...), in an artistic kind of displacement, characterized by what most genuinely distinguishes artistic making: removing our actions from their utilitarian contexts, displacing their formal interpretation and opening possibilities for creation (Coutinho, 2025, p. 10, *our translation*).

In this sense, we can say that the scenic practices in this research conducted with licensure students, constituted time-space of affection, creation, listening, playfulness, attention, presence, which allowed us to feel the possibilities of a disruptive teaching practice; and it was these feelings that moved our reflections on elements that involved the teaching (planning, curriculum, teaching, assessment, etc.), even though the practices carried out did not explicitly *address* these topics. Collectively, we learned the content of Didactics through the ways we were affected by the encounters, displacing the logic of knowledge transmission, since *being affected cannot be transmitted*. Thus, we believe that experimenting with different approaches to teaching attitudes in teacher education programs challenges both teacher formation, as well as the established times and spaces of school practices, inviting us to experience other ways of doing class, school, and teaching.

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## Notes

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<sup>2</sup> The *Poetics of Learning Research Collective* (UFRN) is a CNPq research group that investigates the connections between performing arts and education through two main lines of inquiry: (1) the elaboration of cartographies of the educational potentialities of artistic processes in theater, dance, and performance, exploring how their different aesthetic matrices can help us shift crystallized meanings and practices in the educational field; (2) research on the poetic dimension of teaching, investigating how the performing arts contribute to the production of knowledge related to initial and continuing teacher education. Having experimentation as a way of inhabiting research between performing arts and education (COUTINHO, 2024), the Collective currently comprises master's, doctoral, and postdoctoral researchers affiliated with the Post-Graduation Programs in Education (PPGED) and in Performing Arts (PPGARC), undergraduate students in Pedagogy, Theater, and Dance at UFRN,

as well as collaborating professors from the *Núcleo de Educação da Infância* (NEI-CAP/UFRN), the Institute of Arts at UNESP, and the Faculty of Arts at the University of Luanda (Angola). @poeticasdoaprender | E-mail: poeticasdoaprender@gmail.com.

- <sup>3</sup> The research project *The Poetic Dimension of Teacher Education*, funded by CNPq through the *Universal Call* CNPq/MCTI No. 10/2023 (process 421193/2023-9), is associated with the research project *Poetics of Learning: Connections Between Art, Philosophy, and Education*, funded by PROPESQ/UFRN (PVN15757/2018), and with the extension project *Ongoing Pedagogical Provocations*, funded by PROEX/UFRN (PJ156/2021-2024), in this context, the *Artistic-Pedagogical Residency: The Poetic Dimension of Teaching* (COUTINHO, 2023) is carried out. Actions derived from these research and extension projects have already taken place in the north municipalities of Bom Jesus (2018), Senador Georgino Avelino (2021), Carnaúba dos Dantas (2023), Jandaíra (2023), and Natal (2024), involving teachers from different fields of knowledge, schools, levels and modalities of basic education (Coutinho, 2025).
- <sup>4</sup> The class consisted of 50 students from different departments of UFRN who met every Monday morning at the Department of Arts for the Didactics course.
- <sup>5</sup> Among other supplementary readings, the following texts were recommended: MASSCHELEIN, Jan. E-ducando o olhar: a necessidade de uma pedagogia pobre. *Educação & Realidade*, v. 33, n. 1, p. 35-38, jan./jun., 2008; TAKARA, Samilo; TERUYA, Teresa Kazuko. Por uma didática não-fascista. *Educação & Realidade*, Porto Alegre/RS, v. 40, n. 4, p. 1169-1189, out./dez. 2015; HELGUERA, Pablo. Transpedagogia. In: HELGUERA, Pablo; HOFF, Mônica (Org.). *Pedagogia no campo expandido*. Porto Alegre: Fundação Bienal de Artes Visuais do Mercosul, 2011, p.11-31; CORAZZA, Sandra Mara. *Como dar uma aula?* Que pergunta é esta? Disponível em: <http://ifscdidatica2010.blogspot.com.br/2010/10/como-dar-uma-aula.html>. Acesso em: 24 jul. 2025; CORAZZA, Sandra Mara. Didaticário de criação: aula cheia, antes da aula. *XVI Encontro Nacional de Didática e Práticas de Ensino*. UNICAMP; Campinas: Junqueira & Marin Editores, 2012. p.235-241; KOHAN, Walter. O. O que pode um professor? In: AQUINO, J. G.; REGO, T. C. (Org.). *Deleuze pensa a educação: a docência e a filosofia da diferença*. São Paulo: Segmento, 2007, p. 48-57; COUTINHO, Karyne Dias. Por uma didática da improvisação. *Em Aberto*, Brasília, v. 31, n. 101, p. 121-132, jan./abr., 2018; GALLO, Silvio. As múltiplas dimensões do aprender... In: *Congresso de Educação Básica: Aprendizagem e Currículo*, Florianópolis-SC, 2012; CARMINATTI, Simone Soares Haas; BORGES, Martha Kaschny. Perspectivas da avaliação da aprendizagem na contemporaneidade. *Estudos em Avaliação Educacional*, São Paulo, v. 23, n. 52, 2012, p. 160-178.
- <sup>6</sup> The decision to begin with these three movements was primarily due to the impact that working with them had in previous experiments conducted in continuing teacher education, through the CNPq research project, named *The Poetic Dimension of Teacher Education* (Coutinho, 2025).
- <sup>7</sup> The listening games were inspired by the *Philosophical Literacy* course coordinated by Walter Kohan (Salas et al., 2022), held in July 2022 by the *Center for Studies in Philosophies and Childhoods* (NEFI/UERJ), with literacy educators of youth and adults, as part of the *Program for Overcoming Illiteracy in the State of Rio Grande do Norte*.
- <sup>8</sup> As Paulo Freire states in relation to the best thing he did in his life: “[...] not letting the boy I could not be and the boy I once was die within me” (Freire apud Kohan, 2021, p. 71).
- <sup>9</sup> Coutinho (2025, p. 5) draws attention to the fact that “[...] although we work with a wide variety of scenic games to experiment with what we call poetic movements,

the focus of our work is not on the game itself, but on the movements it can produce... These are movements that may occur within scenic games but extend beyond them, just as one moves from the game to the scene, or from the game to life. Thus, these movements do not belong to scenic practices; they are flows that traverse scenic practices, and, we believe, also traverse teaching practices. [In this sense,] we understand the poetic movements that open us to creation processes as a shared concern of both fields (education and arts)".

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