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Wilson Profirio Nicaquela and Adelino Inácio Assane

The Everyday Life of School: Narratives as Epistemology and Educational Research Method

Abstracts

EN

This study is a proposal for a theoretically and practically based argument, developed in the context of deepening the understanding of everyday school life as a line and way of developing research in the Popular Education and Everyday School Life Research Group. The aim is to problematise everyday school life as an alternative for developing research in education. This study applies the qualitative approach, comprising secondary data (literature review) and primary data (fieldwork). In this sense, the guiding problem of this study was: How do narratives constitute an epistemology or method for research in schools? In the fieldwork phase we had the participation of eight teachers from the districts of Monapo and Ilha de Moçambique. Data collection was based on pedagogical letters produced by the teachers (study participants), in which they shared their experiences of educational practice. Our discussion throughout the study centred on three axes: the place of the researcher in everyday school life, narrative as a research methodology and the experiences and challenges of research with and in everyday school life through narratives. The consulted authors, some testimonies from teachers (participants in the study) and our experiences as teacher-researchers have allowed us to conclude that educational activity challenges its practitioners to become continuous researchers of their activities. The subordination of other ways of producing and organising knowledge, such as narratives, encourages the silencing of various experiences in schools. In fact, this article shows that teacher-researchers could adopt other options that allow them to collect, systematise and share the phenomena of school life without necessarily being guided by the fixed ways of collecting data used in more usual research, such as the interview or questionnaire.

DE

Bei dieser Studie handelt es sich um einen theoretisch-praktischen Diskussionsvorschlag, der im Zusammenhang mit der Vertiefung des Verständnisses des Schulalltags als Ansatz und Weg zur Entwicklung der Forschung in der Forschungsgruppe „Volksbildung und Schulalltag“ entwickelt wurde. Ziel ist es, den Schulalltag als Alternative für die Entwicklung der Forschung im Bildungsbereich zu beleuchten. Es handelt sich um eine Studie mit einem qualitativen Ansatz, die sowohl Sekundärdaten (Literaturübersicht) als auch Primärdaten (Feldforschung) umfasst. In diesem Sinne lautete die Leitfrage dieser Studie: Inwiefern konstituieren Erzählungen eine Erkenntnistheorie oder Methode der Forschung in Schulen? Acht Lehrer:innen aus den Bezirken Monapo und Ilha de Moçambique nahmen an der Feldforschungsphase teil. Die Datenerhebung basierte auf Briefen, die von den Lehrer:innen (Studienteilnehmer:innen) verfasst wurden und in denen sie über ihre Erfahrungen in der pädagogischen Praxis berichteten. Unsere Diskussion während der gesamten Studie konzentrierte sich auf drei Aspekte: den Platz des Forschenden im Schulalltag, die Erzählung als Forschungsmethode und die Erfahrungen und Herausforderungen der Forschung mit und im Schulalltag durch Erzählungen. Die konsultierten Autor:innen, einige Aussagen von Lehrer:innen (Teilnehmer:innen an der Studie) und unsere Erfahrungen als Lehrer-Forscher ließen uns zu dem Schluss kommen, dass die pädagogische Tätigkeit ihre Praktiker:innen dazu herausfordert, kontinuierlich zu Erforscher:innen ihrer Aktivitäten zu werden. Die Unterordnung anderer Formen der Wissensproduktion und -organisation, wie z. B. Erzählungen, begünstigt das Schweigen über verschiedene Erfahrungen in den Schulen. Tatsächlich zeigt dieser Text, dass Lehrer-Forscher andere Optionen anwenden könnten, die es ihnen ermöglichen, die Phänomene des Schullebens zu sammeln, zu systematisieren und mit anderen zu teilen, ohne sich zwangsläufig von den festgelegten Methoden der Datenerfassung leiten zu lassen, die in der üblichen Forschung verwendet werden, wie z. B. das Interview oder der Fragebogen.

PT

Este estudo é uma proposta argumentativa teórico-prática, desenvolvido no contexto do aprofundamento do quotidiano escolar, enquanto uma linha e maneira de desenvolver pesquisas no Grupo de Pesquisas em Educação Popular e Cotidiano Escolar. O objetivo é problematizar o dia-a-dia da escola como alternativa para o desenvolvimento de pesquisas em educação. Trata-se de uma estudo com abordagem qualitativa, que comporta dados secundários (revisão de literatura) e dados primários (trabalho de campo). Nesse

sentido, o problema orientador deste estudo foi: Como é que as narrativas constituem uma epistemologia ou um método de pesquisa na escola? Na fase do trabalho de campo contamos com a participação de oito professores dos distritos de Monapo e Ilha de Moçambique. A recolha dos dados foi baseada nas cartas pedagógicas produzidas pelos professores (participantes do estudo), nas quais partilhavam as suas experiências sobre a prática educativa. A nossa discussão ao longo do estudo ficou centrada em três eixos: o lugar do pesquisador no cotidiano escolar, a narrativa como metodologia de pesquisa e as experiências e desafios da pesquisa com e no cotidiano escolar por meio de narrativas. Os autores consultados, alguns depoimentos de professores (participantes do estudo) e as nossas experiências, enquanto professores-pesquisadores permitiram-nos concluir que a atividade educativa desafia os seus praticantes a se tornarem contínuos pesquisadores das suas atividades. A subalternização das outras formas de produzir e organizar conhecimento, como o caso das narrativas, incentiva o silenciamento de várias experiências nas escolas. Com efeito, este texto mostra que, professores-pesquisadores podiam adoptar outras opções que lhes permitam recolher, sistematizar e partilhar os fenómenos da vida escolar sem, necessariamente, guiarem-se pelas formas fixas de recolher dados usadas nas pesquisas mais habituais, como o caso da entrevista ou questionário.

JA

本稿では、理論と実践に立脚した議論をおこなう。ここでの議論は、日常の学校生活を探究する文脈で展開したものであり、大衆教育と日常の学校生活について研究グループでプロジェクトをすすめるにあたっての方針と方法でもある。本稿の目的は、教育の現場で研究をすすめるための選択肢として、日常の学校生活という主題を問題提起することにある。研究グループでは、質的研究を採用しており、二次的データ（文献レビュー）や一時的データ（フィールドワーク）を検討している。これに照らし、本稿は次の中心的な課題を検討する：ナラティブはどのようにして認識論や学校での研究方法を構成するのか？フィールドワークには、モナポとイルハ・ド・モザンビークの2地区で8人の教師が参加しており、教師（研究参加者）が作成した教育にかかわる文書にもとづいてデータを収集している。この文書では、教師が教育実践に関する自身の経験を共有しあっている。この研究を通して、日常の学校生活で教師がおかれている立場、研究方法論としてのナラティブ、そしてナラティブを通じた日常の学校生活との、またそのなかでの研究に関する経験と課題、という3つの軸について議論する。先行研究、教師（研究参加者）の作成した文書そして「教師－研究者」としてのわたしたちの経験により、教育活動のただなかで実践家がその活動を継続的に研究してゆくことには困難が付きまとうことを述べる。こういった「教師－研究者」がナラ

ティブのような知識を生み出し、組織してゆくほかの方法では、学校でのさまざまな経験が沈黙させられてしまう。これに対して本稿では「教師—研究者」が、インタビューや質問紙調査といった従来のデータの固定的な収集方法によって誘導されることなく、学校生活の諸現象を収集し、体系化し、共有することのできるほかの方途の可能性を示している。

Introduction

In this article, we discuss the contours of research in the school context, understanding that the school has become an object of continuous scientific exploration, which requires recourse to various possibilities for this purpose. Teachers' diaries, the narrative texts produced during school practices, can be a relevant way of producing knowledge within the schools of the various subsystems, which we consider to be everyday school life.

We are in a *space-time*¹ of re-edition of epistemic adversities, where the unique and hegemonic model of producing knowledge is again facing chains of questions about its legitimacy in establishing limits and norms to control the world (Alves 2008). This is a time when other theoretical-methodological approaches emerge, given the constant social dynamics.

The methodological uniformity², which was imposed by modern thinking, has created conditions for an environment of discomfort, and consequently for the emergence of other ways of researching in the area of Social Sciences and Humanities, especially in the educational field. The transition and emergence of other forms of research was not abrupt, as there were several factors that accompanied evolution and social dynamics. According to Bogdan and Binklein (1994), the characteristics of everyday social life contributed substantially to the emergence of concepts related to qualitative research, although the literature considers the 19th century to be the landmark of this paradigm. According to Santos (2011), modernity seems to have excessively fulfilled its promises on the one hand, and on the other hand it reveals itself incapable of continuing to make a contribution in the ongoing social dynamics. Therefore, although the modes of social production continue to be dominated by

1 The concept of space-time refers to a place and a moment that are configured simultaneously and where there are continuously occurring understandable phenomena. This way of writing is not about joining or associating words, nor inventing them. It is an exercise in distinction and not exclusion. From two common words we create a third to reveal a simultaneous action, which modern science divides into two distinct parts (Ferreira 2008).

2 In the emergence of modern thought, the positivist paradigm exclusively predominated. Research was solely a process of testing and validating or refuting hypotheses.

capitalism, other, non-capitalist forms of production challenge this pseudo-hegemony³, in order to be recognised with their respective specificities, such as ethnography, narratives, conversations, biographies and, above all, diaries and pedagogical letters⁴. Education has shown itself to be a field of multiple actions and performances. That is, education attracts anthropologists, philosophers, historians, sociologists, pedagogues, psychologists, and others, who research with and the culture of everyday life at school; this confirms the complex character of education and its *space-time*.

Research in and with school is not concerned with quantifications, does not exclude or generalise. Researches on everyday school life qualify, contemplate, and specify in a holistic way. Therefore, research on everyday school life makes it possible to consider aspects that are often overlooked, such as the social life of students and teachers. Researching in and as an everyday practice, is a circuitous exercise; it requires taking up positions and facing challenges. Our position seeks to be associated with qualitative research of a bio- and autobiographical nature. As can be seen in our article published in the *Práxis Educativa* magazine (Nicaquela & Assane 2021a), we adopt the same methodology in which we do not strictly separate ourselves from the study participants, that is, we collect the data with the participants as subjects of our research.

In this text, we present reflections on the place of researchers from our experience with narratives as an epistemology and research method in school. We understand the school as a field where narratives emerge both in oral form as well as in the form of written field texts (Nicaquela & Assane 2021a).

The position of the researcher in everyday school life

The first challenge we have faced as *teacher-researchers*, individuals who teach while researching their own practices, is not being able to establish an exclusive place that separates us from those who participate in our research. That is, research in and as everyday practice prevents us from adopting the classical ways of being mere observers, according to which paradigm there should be a total detachment from the object of study (Sampaio 2003).

3 The modern paradigm seemed to be the most perfect, the ideal, the irreversible one that established the definition of what should actually be considered scientific knowledge and what should be produced with rigorous and anchored criteria, what Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls the “establishment of the abyssal line” (Santos 2011). This way of doing science was hegemonic. However, time has shown that it is not linear, that science can be done using other techniques without being limited to fixed criteria, revealing the falsity of this assumption.

4 Pedagogical letters are texts produced by teachers describing their own professional life or educational practice (Freire 1999).

The choice for the model of research/ing with the researched, learning with the research/ing of our own journal⁵, as teachers through narratives has provided us with a double perception: On the one hand, we understand that voices emerge, taken by the formalism of thought (the one that recognises fixed forms of producing knowledge), separating and excluding everything else that is not of the 'normal science' paradigm. In this regard, Mia Couto argues that some thinkers stubbornly present themselves as supervisory authorities about what is scientific with reference to the Western model, imposed by the rules of positivist methods (Couto 2009). On the other hand, as researchers who seek to share our results, we realise that in the everyday life of school there are no linear boundaries, where absolute separation is made between the subject and the object of study. Therefore, in the school context it is not possible to state with precision that a teacher assumes at different times positions such as that of educator only, or that of simple observer (Alves 2008; Sampaio 2003). Hence, the concept of *teacher-researcher* comes to mind, since the teaching person researches and while researching teaches, all simultaneously.

Those who live school life, working in it, face problematic situations that the educational reality places in the focus and that require solutions in a continuous and rational manner. Thereby, the researching teacher is inevitably asked to identify the kind of problem, which procedures to use for the possible answer, and from where or with whom to get the necessary answer to the problem. There is no way to research and write about everyday school life other than to research and write about one's own practice and life. Writing and researching one's own life requires the construction of long narratives.

According to Clandinin and Connelly (2015: 74), "narrative research characteristically begins with the researcher's autobiographically oriented narrative, associated with the puzzle (riddle) of the research, called, by some, as research problem or research question [...]"⁶. The narrative variant in educational research is an undertaking involving a high complexity (Morin 2013). The complexity proposed by Edgar Morin is an approach that strives to (re)know the other without isolating oneself from it, a different way to revolutionise scientific thinking, without denying the value of formalism, but seeking to reveal what makes it different.

Therefore, as *teacher-researchers* in the everyday life of the school we become part of the object of our study, as Carlos Ferraço says, we become *hunters* (Ferraço 2003), in the sense that we go from simple researchers to be part of

5 The classroom and teaching practice is marked by events and day-to-day practices, thus each event that we consider to be salient in the exercise of the profession becomes a content to be analysed and discussed.

6 All direct citations from texts which were originally in Portuguese (see references) were translated to English for this text.

what we seek not from others, but with others and from ourselves. There, at school we research our own practices, our mistakes, our uncertainties, our understandings, etc. According to Ferraço (2003: 160) researching everyday school life is a *space-time* that is different from the classical way of conducting social studies. In researching with and in the everyday life of the school

“[...] instead of asking how is the meaning of this attitude? What does that poster mean? What does that text mean? What is the meaning of that speech? We should ask what reading do I make of that attitude, poster, speech?” (Ferraço 2003: 160).

That is, in these enquiries we seek to understand ourselves and give up enquiring about others.

We are not postulating automatism in the transformation from teacher to school life researcher. This is a gradual process. Indeed, Franco (2011) calls attention on this, for when he mentions the collective construction of knowledge in schools, he incorporates the problem of poor use of school space for the development of research by teachers:

“[...] not all university professors [for example], who work and engage in research, manage to transform the teaching space, the classroom, into a collective research space. Just as it is not enough to know the contents of a discipline to automatically become a good teacher. [...] Likewise, it is not enough to be a researcher to automatically know how to transform the classroom into a research space” (Franco 2011: 177).

If we want to present other variants of knowledge production that go beyond the known traditional forms, we need to presume that we are able to produce them in a different way, that is, in a way that differs from the usual model. As Larrosa (2016) writes to clarify the need not to exclude the essay as a scientific genre, it is necessary to respect these genres as means and ways of producing knowledge, because for giving an account of different dimensions of scientific discoveries there is no other way than writing differently. In fact, our experiences in school are a complexity and need to be represented from various perspectives, using all sources, narrating our own professional, socio-economic and cultural realities and making science and research a literary field that is written and thought without uniformity or using diversity (Alves 2008).

In this movement of qualitative research, there are no sources that are marginal, it only depends on how they are explored and fitted together. There is an attempt to weaken other ways of doing science or producing scientific knowledge that is not of the modern matrix. As Larrosa (2016) says, in order

for something to be science, it is important to write as God commands⁷, to think in a uniform way, and to externalise knowledge and understanding as God commanded. However, in research or for those who research the life of and in school, there are no recipes (Garcia 2003).

The research findings can be presented in the format of music, poem, prose, biography, image, or illustrations, after all, everything in science and especially in this endeavour of qualification all is narratives, although the approach may be different, this is not restrictive. On the contrary, the various meanings of a concept broaden understandings accordingly (Bogdan & Binklein 1994). As they were the driving force behind the formalist modern model of knowledge production, the new methods and new theories lead to the emergence of crises that Boaventura de Sousa Santos mentions when he questions the continuity of modern thinking, according to which, the higher education institutions were the only space granted by the state and society with the authority and ability of cultivating the most congenial and lucid ideas (Santos 1997).

The narrative as a research methodology

At this point, we want to explain the procedures that we use, and have used, in the research model that we have developed. It is a way of producing knowledge from wisdom, and of narrating experiences we have lived or heard, in a perspective that is not revolting as Cláudia Mortari and Luísa Wittman call it, but it is still a methodology that seeks to distance itself from the model imposed by the colonial-capitalist mentality⁸ (Mortari and Wittman 2020).

The editors of the book *"Insurgent Narratives"* in their presentation insist that researching in narrative form is not a mere "denunciation, which is enclosed in itself, but one of overflowing pre-existence in the construction and viability of plural knowledge and equity projects. That is, it is strength in the midst of chaos" (Mortari and Wittman 2020: 20). Therefore, it is certain that its mentors will encounter resistance from advocates of the traditional patron-colonial model of knowledge. Indeed, we rely on Larrosa (2016) who, recognising this resistance, aims to speak up, while encouraging those who align themselves with the new approaches to prepare themselves to hear that their text is very good, presents coherence, speaks of real facts, but with all that, it may be more of a novel or an essay, and not research or scientific knowledge.

7 Metaphorically Jorge de Larrosa in his essay on academic writing considers the formalist model as if it were a religious dogma that cannot be questioned and must be followed linearly.

8 The authors refer to exclusionist theories, which consider ways beyond the usual matrix of knowledge production as secondary methods or techniques. This way of thinking was predominant in the expansion of colonialism, a regime that substantially subjugated other indigenous knowledges of the dominated communities.

The stories of everyday school life that we share can be understood as a form of epistemological disobedience, for not respecting fixed structures of the Western model of conducting research. Data were collected through conversations and field texts produced from letters written by the participants. This is in agreement with Carlos Ferraço, who considers research with and in everyday life

“[as] a space/time of productions/interlacing of knowledge, imaginations, tactics, creations, memories, projects, tricks, representations, and meanings. A space/time of actions, diverse in which we, researchers, establish a network of relationships with those who are there. Whether we like it or not, we are part of the researched quotidian and no matter how alien or neutral we wish to be, we always end up changing it” (Ferraço 2008: 103).

Therefore, the data were collected in a complex and not linear or definite way. The letters (field texts) were received without them being first or last in relation to the conversations, but rather simultaneous. The theoretical-methodological aspects to which we are grounded, as we have been necessarily repeating since the beginning of this text, fit into the movement of rethinking other epistemological possibilities. According to Mello (2003):

“Building the science of the complex, the fluid, the unrepeatable, the uncertain, the different, has been a challenge for all who believe that, historically, and based on the parameters of modern science, the ways we learn to think, are excluding. In education, being the place of construction of man- and womanhood for many, it is no longer acceptable to refer to normality [...] the task and the challenge is to seek another way of thinking which considers the multiple and the difference as constructive elements of human processes and can understand them in their own logical and epistemological bases” (Mello 2003: 83).

Experiences and challenges of research with and in everyday school life through narratives

Here we present some empirical examples resulting from our research with teachers in two ‘Zonas de Influência Pedagógicas’ (ZIPs)⁹ in the districts of Monapo and Ilha de Moçambique, Nampula province, in the northern region of the country. In the following, we present some excerpts revealing experiences we gained, learning from narratives on one of the journeys back to the elementary school to meet with the teachers:

9 A ZIP (literally: Zone of pedagogical influence) is an organisation made up of a minimum of 2 elementary schools and the school with the best conditions (infrastructure and human resources), is considered the headquarters.

Some teachers have been or are a real barrier to the execution of curricular plans, and consequently make it violently impossible for children to learn. There are colleagues nowadays, who arrive at their duty station, if they don't find the school principal or the pedagogical assistant principal, they don't even enter the room. **Many teachers stay all their lives fixed to their cell phones, taking and posting pictures on social networks. Therefore, other ways for the teacher to be absent while present have emerged. Many teachers miss work while they are present in the school space.**" (Teacher 2)¹⁰

This narrative that we gathered from a teacher in the context of the research conducted in mid-2020 on 'pedagogical supervision, myths and perceptions' takes us back to a reflection of the cross-side of information and communication technologies (ICT). They are associated with the new model of absenteeism or a determining factor of this new variant of teacher absenteeism at school.

This situation allows us to agree in part with the criticism imposed on the technological theories that considered information and communication technologies as a salvation in the educational process. That is, ICT was seen as an important contribution to the improvement of the teaching and learning process, but it turned out to be a mere utopia (Bertrand 2001). This utopianism gains momentum in countries where ICT emerges abruptly, without a prior technological alphabetisation, making its use imperfect.

The study conducted by the Ministry of Education and Human Development regarding the condition of teachers in Mozambique (MINEDH 2017) defines teacher absenteeism as the justified and unjustified absence of the student or teacher from school. However, Pereira (2016) considered the waste of time during class, answering a phone call, or attending a colleague's visit during class, as other forms of absenteeism. Therefore, this is partial absenteeism.

This record about the implications of ICT was not the basis of the research, this narrative, as we mentioned, emerged in the middle of deepening the supervision of pedagogical practices in school. We have tried to go back to our beginnings, our research always goes back to that beginning (Primary Education)¹¹. This return is the basis of the enrichment of our experiences with school life, through the contacts that we establish as hunters of experiences and stories

10 In the main research for Wilson Profirio Nicaquela's PhD thesis, from which these excerpts are taken, the teacher narrators were coded with the expression Prof. [Portuguese abbreviation for 'Teacher'], followed by a natural number to maintain anonymity. The narratives were originally reported in Portuguese and translated to English for this text.

11 As we said in the introduction, we published two articles in the same line, the training of elementary school teachers and experiences and narratives with teachers (Nicaquela and Assane 2021a, 2021b).

in this diffuse journey, which makes us eternal *student-teachers*¹², as Ferraço (2003) calls those who, even after sailing other tides of learning and teaching work, return to learn in basic schools with teachers and remember life as students and/or teachers in this educational subsystem.

Our compassion and closeness to the life of the elementary school do not mean an unquestioned consistency, without mismatches or diversities. Our research together and/or individually seeks to listen to male and female teachers and pupils¹³ in or from school.

Our concern is not confined exclusively to the school, we have tried to get involved and learn equally with the communities that make up the schools in their various dimensions, and with them we seek to understand the complex dimension of social life (Morin 2008). In this search, we are ultimately trying to *drink from all the sources*: teachers, students, parents and/or guardians, the community, and others who, without hierarchising their understandings and feelings, are sources of *doing-thinking* in everyday life (Alves 2008).

This drinking from all sources enables us to understand the ecological character of school as a *space-time* of multiple knowledges. That is, in the interaction with the school actors we need to be prepared to learn contents from ethics, mathematics, geography, history, crafts, design, and many other areas. It was in this return to the school in the *hunt for our past*, that we were surprised by a critique on the concept of humility in the middle of a narrative that was about teachers' professional knowledge in continuing education. Below we transcribe this narrative, which we consider *complex*, extracted from a conversation with a teacher from the ZIP of Jembesse, in the district of Ilha de Mocambique:

There is something strange about this supervision process, technicians with no experience are appointed to come here and supervise a teacher who has been in activities for more than 20 or 30 years. These technicians have just been hired, they think they know much more and when they interact with the teachers they don't respect, they don't speak with humility, **although they always say in their interventions in my humble opinion. This humility of theirs is false. They use it like those politicians who, when they rise to power, when they characterise themselves, instead of saying they come from a poor family, they misleadingly euphemise, and say: they come from a simple family. Poverty is not synonymous with humility, nor does political or economic power make an individual humble.** So, it's not the

12 The subject who, by sharing his own experiences, knowledge and wisdom, sees it as an appropriate space-time to learn.

13 With the rise of gender theories, it has not been consensual to treat men and women collectively in a uniform way, i.e., the determinant "all" is masculine, hence we name the subjects by profession or occupation differently (male and female teachers, male and female students).

fact that the supervision technician copiously says the word humble that makes you humble. These young people need to learn how supervision is done.” (Teacher 2)

Analysing the narrative transcribed here, in fact, reveals this complexity, for the narrating teacher ended up diving into many sources and specific areas of knowledge, from pedagogical supervision itself, which was the focus of the research as a method of continuing teacher education, to professional ethics and deontology, sociology topics (poverty for example), politics and the like, in a short speech. So, the school is a true milieu where various complexities cohabit.

Returning to the notion of complexity that we now present, it does not mean “[...] only to think the one and the multiple together, it is also to think together the certain and the uncertain, the logical and the contradictory, and it is the inclusion of the observer in the observation” (Morin 2013: 206). To make our action coherent and more interventive in 2016, we constituted the Group of Studies and Research in Popular Education and School Daily Life (Grupo de Estudos e Pesquisas em Educação Popular e Cotidiano Escolar, GEPECE), at Rovuma University, a *space-time* for discussion, debate of ideas and establishment of identity for the field of research in education.

This group emerged as an effort to strengthen our ideas and way of networking. For today more than ever there is a need to strengthen the notion of groups at the expense of building a singular scientific authority. Therefore, when we analyse the core of GEPECE for us, borrowing a thought from Morin (2013: 205), it does not emerge as a space to search for scientific certainties, but a *space-time* of study, research and construction of dialogues, where “it invites criticism of established knowledge, which imposes itself as certain. It encourages self-examination and the attempt of self-criticism [...] the work with uncertainty is an incentive to rationality; a universe that was only order would not be a rational universe, but rationalised [...]”.

School has been constituted for us, beyond teaching, or beyond learning. When we research, we recognise the value of storytelling and the narratives embodied in it by its actors. Researching narratives in school is a *space-time* to learn and gain other experiences, we remember the experiences we have had as students, others as teachers, and above all, the experiences linked to research, which allow us to establish this distinction between the usual way of researching and this possibility of contrasting through narratives. In conversations with teachers from the schools where we have collected data for the elaboration of papers or articles, we have come across remarkable stories that reflect the real professional experience, as we read in the narration of another teacher with whom we interacted, who explained and presented evidence of his experiences:

When I speak of the need for a pedagogical supervisor to have experience, I do not speak by chance, although I cannot assume myself as the example, I have lived through some situations that many supervisors have never experienced and this makes a huge difference. In 2006-2007 I worked in a school in the province of Manica, in the centre of Mozambique, teaching 4th and 5th grade. It was in an area where many students had no access to pencils or A4 paper. In that place we would stay for a month without seeing a car or a motorcycle. The people in the area had already memorised the sound of the engine of a vehicle that came there to load wood occasionally. When it arrived, all the students would abandon their classes to go watch or chase the tractor vehicle. The question of A4 and pencils has to do with Visual Education class, one day I talked about a pencil case, and the students were amazed, because they had never heard of this name before. At that school I became creative, in math classes I used bricks that I produced with the students as teaching material (geometric figures). In history classes, for lack of books in the classes about empires I organised the students in groups and they represented armies of kingdoms fighting to conquer territories. I was a teacher with no psycho-pedagogical training; when I went to graduate school and took the General Didactics course, I was happy to realise that I was doing necessary things, but innocently enough. Once I asked the children why they didn't wear shoes or slippers if on June 1st we all came to school well stuffed? One of them answered me: "Teacher, we wear shoes to go to church because it is once a week. Or on June 1st, because it is one time a year, so the shoes take time to wear out." A teacher, a supervisor must live these realities, because being a teacher and teaching is a reality and not a place to apply wills." (Teacher 4)

John Dewey holds the view that experience is a concept of multiple meanings and cannot be considered a complete achievement. That is, Dewey (1979) states that:

"The term experience can be interpreted either as a reference to the empirical attitude or to the experimental attitude. Experience is not something rigid and closed; it is alive and, therefore, it grows. When dominated by the past, by custom, by routine, it often opposes what is reasonable and what is thought. Experience, however, also includes reflection, which frees us from the growing influence of the senses, from the appetites of tradition. Thus, it becomes capable of welcoming and assimilating everything that the most accurate and penetrating thought discovers. In fact, the task of education could be defined as the emancipation and enlargement of experience" (Dewey 1979: 199).

However, not every experience should be considered as valid for the educational process, for that there are some assumptions that contribute in the analysis and definition of certain conditions for the effect. Dewey (1958) states that:

"[...] experience, to be educational, must open up an expansive world of study subjects, consisting of facts or information, and of ideas. This condition is satisfied only

when the educator considers teaching and learning as a continuous process of re-construction of experience" (Dewey 1958: 118).

Jorge de Larrosa discusses substantially the notion of experience and in his approach, it seems to be aligned with the narrative we transcribed above about the teacher who taught children who had neither paper nor pencils in a school in Manica province. Larrosa (2014) states that:

"Experience is what passes us by, what happens to us, what touches us. Not what passes, not what happens, or what touches. Each day many things happen, yet at the same time almost nothing happens to us. One would say that everything that happens is organised so that nothing happens to us. Walter Benjamin, in a famous text [the storyteller], already observed the poverty of experience that characterises our world. Never have so many things happened, but experience is increasingly rare" (Larrosa 2014: 21).

Our research methodology arouses curiosity in us as *teacher-researchers* at the same time that it creates discomfort for the formalist researchers of the classical model. In our research, whose results have been published in journals, book chapters, proceedings of events and/or in theses, in addition to those awaiting publication, we have sought to reveal the multiplicity of methods (Assane 2017; Nicaquela & Assane 2021a; Nicaquela 2018). According to Alves (2008) research with school and other common everyday life starts from the sociological methodology perspective and other perspectives emerge, such as those of historical, anthropological, psychological, ethnographic origin, etc. Therefore, instead of looking at the school from the surface, we need to dive into it, the similarity that a community of residents needs to be understood from its *daily practice*, to live its feelings and emotions. As Adelino Inácio Assane writes in his doctoral thesis, in researching everyday life we need to *get the mud of the farmers*. He explains further: "getting the mud from the farmers implies stripping off all preconceptions and not considering them as objects of research but as subjects who are in the whole process [...]" (Assane 2017: 57).

Conclusion

Research on the everyday life is a struggle for identity, a constant search for the space of interposition within the scientific class to which we seek to belong or build. The complexity of the *teacher-researcher* career emerges in the fact that teaching is an act of research at the same time that we need to teach while researching. As we mentioned at the beginning of this text, the approach which is now under discussion, by distancing ourselves from uniformity and hegemony, may generate misconceptions about the effort of glo-

balisation, systematisation, inclusion, or who knows what else understandings emerge around the research of narratives of experiences in the school context, as it seems to be the most suitable.

We anticipate these disturbances, because we do not construct the thesis of perfection of the research developed in the complex approach, that is, it is impossible to unify knowledge – it is one more discovery or result and not exclusive; complex knowledge is unfinished – it requires constant updating; it creates uncertainty – demanding constant reflection and research to make decisions about the phenomenon; it demonstrates unresolvedness and dynamism – the phenomena studied present *metamorphoses*¹⁴ that need constant monitoring.

Our research is not a thematic unit, at the same time that it is not a set of themes or subjects associated in a single approach. Our focus in this study was, and has been, to recall professional experiences of teaching in the most complex way possible, to live the teaching knowledge, to reconstruct practice, to recover didactics, to find dialogues or interpersonal and labour relations among educational actors.

Our study proves that it is possible to do research and share knowledge in other ways, without necessarily discrediting different ways. What makes scientific knowledge scientific is not rigidity, inflexibility, or repetition of pre-established forms, but the rationality and analytical depth with which it seeks to explain its results using a multitude of data collection techniques.

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14 Morin (2008) considers that a social reality is capable of going through two processes (disappearing or entering a deep transformation to reappear-the process of metamorphosis).

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