

Narrative, experience and training: dialogues with children within the process of becoming a teacher¹

Narrativa, experiência e formação: o diálogo com as crianças na constituição de tornar-se professora

Gabriela Barreto da Silva Scramingnon*

ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study - which derives from a doctoral research - is to address the narratives of a teacher from early-childhood-education and from the initial years of elementary school within a public municipal school, so as to analyze the teaching profession as a process that occurs within the relationship with children. The methodology adopted in the current study was based on the theory by Walter Benjamin (1994; 1995; 2006) and Martin Buber (2003; 2009; 2012); analyzing the narratives of the aforementioned teacher's routine dialogues with children at the school. The notebook with the registers of these conversations thus became the tool for research empiricism. Thus, the biographical narratives herein were understood as being the research and training methodology (JOSSO, 2004). The analyses highlight that: children are privileged testifiers of their condition, who give clues about the relationship they establish with teachers at school; therefore, they indicate other possibilities for pedagogical praxis development; teaching is an unfinished process open to constructions and deconstructions; biographical narratives are the way to build one's professional identity; the space and time guaranteed at school have an important role in enabling teachers to make their registers and use them to think about their own work. Thus, taken as experience, the research and the narrative text are current developments.

Keywords: Narrative. Teachers. Child. School. Training.

¹ Translated by Deirdre Giraldo. E-mail: deegiraldo@gmail.com

* Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil.
E-mail: gabrielabasil@gmail.com – <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3819-8302>

RESUMO

Este artigo, fruto de uma pesquisa de doutorado, toma como objeto de estudo as narrativas de uma professora da Educação Infantil e dos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental de uma instituição pública municipal, e tem como objetivo discutir a constituição da docência como processo que se dá na relação com as crianças. A estratégia metodológica, sustentada no diálogo com Walter Benjamin (1994; 1995; 2006) e Martin Buber (2003; 2009; 2012), foi de analisar as narrativas da trajetória da professora no cotidiano escolar em seu diálogo com as crianças. O caderno com os registros dessas conversas converte-se, dessa forma, em empiria de pesquisa. Assim, as narrativas biográficas são compreendidas enquanto metodologia de pesquisa e de formação (JOSSO, 2004). As análises destacam: as crianças como depoentes privilegiados de sua condição, e que nos dão pistas sobre as relações que estabelecem com os professores na escola, indicando possibilidades outras para o desenvolvimento da prática pedagógica; a docência como processo inacabado, aberta a construções e desconstruções; as narrativas biográficas como caminho para a constituição de uma identidade profissional; a importância de espaços e tempos garantidos na escola para que os professores produzam seus registros, considerando-os como possibilidade de pensar o trabalho. Nesse sentido, como experiência, a pesquisa e o texto narrativo são acontecimentos do presente.

Palavras-chave: Narrativa. Professores. Criança. Escola. Formação.

Introduction

The narratives in the registers of an early-childhood-education and elementary school (initial years) teacher from a public municipal school were taken as research empiricism and support the discussion proposed in this text. The study was based on a doctoral research in which the production of knowledge analyzed, based on dialogues with children, the possibility of teaching teachers the importance of always asking themselves questions about the way they do things and what they do in the school routine, understanding training as an unfinished process. In this sense, what is unfinished always undergoes a process of construction and reconstruction.

In the perspective that children do not directly reproduce the adult world, but are able to establish a new relationship with what the world offers them, they, by presenting what is unforeseen and spontaneous at school, invite teachers to think about new work perspectives, by showing how the school routine, which is something thought about and directly planned by adults, can be different.

The theoretical-methodological framework of the study is outlined based on Walter Benjamin and Martin Buber, whose concepts instigate the central questions of the proposed discussion. How do the children reveal their understanding of themselves, others and the social world in their speeches and games? What do they say about the school? Which topics, conversations and questions do the children bring up in their relationship with the teachers? Which aspects - in the teachers' narratives about their own practice - can contribute towards the production of knowledge to do things in another way at school?

Understanding that teachers' work needs to be taken from a perspective that is capable of considering the human being in his totality and uniqueness, the contributions of Benjamin's philosophy are useful: the concept of narrative; experience; working with fragments; the idea of construction and deconstruction; history at the intersection of the present, past and future; the critical conception of children and childhood; the human being as a historical, social, language-producing subject, always immersed in collectivity. For Benjamin (1994), the listener and the narrator share a common experience and an interest in conserving the narrative to avoid the degradation of the experience. The challenge of narrating the past is understanding that all events matter.

When dealing with education as a relationship, Buber asks: "what possibilities does the school recognize for this type of education?" (BUBER, 2012, p. 91). According to the author, education needs to be based on dialogue, where listening and responding are drivers of educational relationships and practices. Education is a responsibility with the world: to turn towards the other, with authentic relationships, to recognize the other as being different to you and realizing this, to address an answer to the other that meets their need. Responding to what happens to us.

In this sense, this text, acting as a challenge by interweaving the narratives of the teacher's encounter with children and their childhood in the school routine with the writing, at first addresses the contributions of Benjamin's anthropological philosophy, understanding that the narratives provide an investigative path. Next, based on the dialogue with the children, from their view of the school, the pedagogical praxis is placed under pressure, leading to the reflection that teacher training is an unfinished process, and also one that occurs in the relationship with the subjects who live a daily routine. The considerations retrieve the main findings of the study, emphasizing the need to think that the training of teachers is a place where they have the right to tell their stories.

Memories, registers, narratives, self-writing

When criticizing the project of modernity, Benjamin denounced the impoverishment of expressive language, the inability to connect between the present and the past, the inability to narrate and establish links of collectivity, and to exchange experiences. The concept of experience, the main point of Benjamin's work and which is fundamental in this study, is understood in a broad sense, which is more comprehensive than what is expressed in common sense. This concept is found in several of his texts. In "*Experience and poverty*", (1933) and "*The Storyteller - considerations about the work of Nikolai Leskov*", written in 1936 (Benjamin, 1994), this concept is being developed. In "*Experience and poverty*", he talks about an elderly man who, before dying, tells his children that there is a treasure in their lands, thus giving them a wisdom of life experience as a result of the activities of a lifetime that, when told to younger people by the elderly, allow the continuity of tradition and of itself. This is the experience that has always been communicated to young people,

[...] concisely, with the authority of old age, in proverbs; verbose, with its loquacity, in stories; sometimes as narratives from distant countries, in front of the fireplace, told to children and grandchildren (BENJAMIN, 1994, p. 114).

In the text "*The Storyteller - considerations about the work of Nikolai Leskov*" (BENJAMIN, 1994), the concept of experience acquires a collective dimension and the main discussion that goes through it is the author's blunt criticism on the disappearance of the art of narrating. The experience becomes increasingly scarce in modernity, due to the subjects' inability to narrate memorable events, on the technological advances that are a characteristic of progress and which end up minimizing the collective memory. The storyteller in Benjamin is one who knows how to give advice, since giving advice is seen much more as a possibility of continuing to tell a story than as a practical guide for life. The narrative does not seek to inform, "it immerses the thing in the narrator's life and then removes it from him. Thus the narrator's mark is imprinted in the narrative, like the potter's hand on the clay of the vase" (BENJAMIN, 1994, p. 204).

Benjamin differentiates between the historian who writes stories and the chronicler who tells stories. For him, it is impossible for the conventional historian to simply present the events to which he refers, without explaining them in one way or another. Showing daily events as examples of responsibility of the world is the chronicler's task. It is the chronicler who narrates the events without, beforehand, distinguishing between the great and the small, taking "into account the truth that nothing that ever happened one day can be considered lost to history" (BENJAMIN, 1994, p. 223). Critical of his time, he undertakes a philosophy against forgetting.

When formulating theses on the concept of history and making a critique of the ideology of progress, he invites us to think about temporal categories based on the criticism of the understanding of life as a sequence of evolutionary stages, considering the intertwining of past, present and future. Based on this perspective of temporality, history does not arise from a primordial starting point, it can be constantly remade and retold. The narrative's decline is linked to the gradual loss of memory and the inability to leave traces. Thus, Benjamin warned of the importance of the narrative experience as a condition of the historicity of the human being (BENJAMIN, 1994). With regard to teacher training, the redemption of a memory that reveals a significant experience brings possibilities not only to redefine what has already been lived, but also to take action in the present.

It is in this historical time of intensity and not of chronology; it is in this present time that the meetings take place. In life, in everyday life, and why not, in the profession? Has teaching been a meeting place between children and their teachers? And apart from the meeting, have the teachers had room for the narrative of their experiences? Have the training processes considered the retrospective appropriation of the teachers' life history? Remembrance brings out what has been lived, experienced, learned; and it can bring reminiscence, a sudden image of something that was in some almost inaccessible corner of our lives, because "the past brings with it a mysterious index that impels redemption" (BENJAMIN, 1994, p. 223). The past needs to be looked at from the encounter with the present, and such an encounter proposes a revolution in the way thought is constructed. In digging and remembering, Benjamin says:

He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging. Above all, he must not be afraid to return again and again to the same matter; to scatter it as one scatters earth, to turn it over as one turns over soil. For the matter itself is no more than the layers which yield their long-sought secrets only to the most meticulous investigation. That is

to say, they yield those images that, severed from all earlier associations, reside like treasures in the sober rooms of our later insights – like torsos in a collector’s gallery. It is undoubtedly useful to plan excavations methodically. Yet no less indispensable is the cautious probing of the spade in the dark earth. And the man who merely makes an inventory of his findings, while failing to establish the exact location of where in today’s ground the ancient treasures have been stored up, cheats himself of his richest prize (BENJAMIN, 1995, p. 229).

Digging up and recalling memories based on the dialogues established with the children requires, as Benjamin proposes, to highlight them in today’s terrain. Drawing on the memory of the past to speak of the present locates the place of experience we are looking at, and shows that the place of research is not far from the researcher. Narrating what occurred together with the children throughout my experience of being a teacher is related to my life experience, to what makes me a teacher, to the moments when they surprised me, in a relationship that left marks in my history.

In this respect, the narrative goes beyond the individual dimension of the teacher’s work. And why narrate and register? For Josso (2004), teachers’ biographical narratives can be considered a way to understand the training process, by promoting:

[...] The self-reflexive process, which requires a retrospective and prospective look, has to be understood as an activity of critical self-interpretation and awareness of the social, historical, and cultural relativity of the referents internalized by the subject and, therefore, constitutive of the cognitive dimension of subjectivity (JOSSO, 2004, p 60).

Telling about an experience enables a double movement: thinking about praxis, teachers’ work in the school’s daily routine, but also from the research perspective, producing knowledge, making it public, collective, strengthening the school’s political dimension.

The recalled fragments, in Benjamin’s work, are not just about a particular experience. Benjamin’s focus is on what the narratives can evoke in those who relate to them: “his intention is not to fix the content of what is said in his own life, but to make it communicable in the broad and complex sphere of culture” (PEREIRA, 2012, p. 43).

When emphasizing that an era does not allow itself to be captured by its contemporaries from the great movements, but that they are the intrinsic fragments of daily life, the small details, the shrapnel of great transformations, Benjamin (1994), without worrying about making use of what it is considered valuable to develop his concept of history, brings the residues of history and applies the principle of assembly to it; “that is: to erect large buildings from tiny elements, cut with clarity and precision. And, even, discover in the analysis of the small individual moment the crystal of the total event” (BENJAMIM, 2006, p. 503).

For Pereira (2012, p. 29), the meaning present in Benjamin’s philosophy of moving between the different dimensions, “the small and the big; the fragment and the whole; the individual and the social; the instant and the era; the childhood experience and life experience”; is a consistent study methodology. The author ponders “that the concepts of ‘small’ and ‘large’ are designed and defined from ethical, aesthetic and epistemological relationships” (PEREIRA, 2012, p. 29).

In this sense, the narratives dealt with in this text show residues, deviations, escapes from a training process that understands the importance of dialogues that did not start with the teacher, and the questions that she did not ask. The belief on otherness between the children and the teacher as a possibility to retrieve the faculty to exchange experiences and thus, dialogically, produce knowledge, authorizes the adult, teacher and researcher, to tell about what was possible to experience and hear from them in this relationship. The notebook with the registers of these narratives thus becomes empirical research. The concerns and inquiries; experiences and stories; the teacher’s voice and the voices of several others were kept. Considering the discussions that involve ethical issues in research with children, their names are fictitious and, to guide the reader, dialogues used as empirical material appear in the text always followed by the contexts in which they were produced. The children’s age in the events is indicated in the body of the text, and deals with the context of early childhood education when referring to those aged four and five, and elementary school for those aged six to nine.

The narratives demanded the challenge of looking from the *outside*, but also from the *inside*. In Buber’s words, “start with yourself, but don’t end with yourself; starting from yourself, but not having yourself as an end” (BUBER, 2011, p. 38). The end must be the world, and what we can contribute to it. In this sense, it is possible to think of the teachers’ narratives as being more than an individual perspective of work, but also being collective, social.

For Clandinin and Connelly (2011, p. 18), “true narrative research is a dynamic process of living and telling stories, and reliving and retelling stories, not only those that the participants tell, but also those of the researchers”. For the authors, the work of the narrative as a study methodology considers oral or written narrative to be empirical material.

Thus, different authors have pointed out the importance of teachers’ registers in their notebooks and diaries as a possibility for investigative work on daily life.

[...] the records are the carriers of the stories - stories of the practices (failures, successes) and the theories that underlie them (even if they are not explicit, as the record allows this view at what is behind the practices). Stories of affections and partnerships, marked by the people who form and complement our training; stories of a time and space lived (FUJIKAWA, 2007, p. 250).

When writing about the experiences, the teacher reconstructs their understanding of knowledge by analyzing it, now, from another place and with different views. For Mendes (2007), the experience of the writing course teacher in his own practice is not solely restricted to the structure of the text: “narrating what one does, in the sense of saying, revealing oneself, exposing oneself, comprises a process of self-knowledge” (MENDES, 2007, p. 20). For Cunha and Nunes, “the teacher’s writing can be a tool for biographical reflection on initial and continuing education, a time when the challenges, difficulties and crises of professional life are exposed, based on memories of the school history and reflections on the present and the future” (CUNHA; MENDES, 2017, p. 9).

Thus, saved registers, when revisited, can produce new meanings, and reflections that were never made. Writing keeps the place of memory, but it also offers other possibilities.

It seems that in this encounter between the “infinitely small” and the “finitely large” between the “general” and the “particular”, between the “objective” and the “subjective” that this theoretical/methodological tendency presents itself more and more as an interesting resource for thinking about teacher training, especially continuing education in teaching. Why is reflecting on my past and present important for the future of my profession? (CUNHA; MENDES, 2017, p. 9).

The narrative presents itself as a way of recovering the memory in the sense of revealing a significant experience, allowing the resignification of the experience in the present. Writing about oneself favors an exercise in understanding, interpreting and reflecting on the teacher's practice, as it allows:

To explain the singularity and, with it, glimpse the universal, perceive the procedural character of training and life, articulating spaces, times and the different dimensions of ourselves, in search of life wisdom (JOSSO, 2004, p. 9).

The writing exercise allows the place of teachers' authorship. The organization of memories in the text gives the experience a new meaning, enhances the look at the past memories based on the analysis in the present. In this sense, for the organization of the narratives, it was possible to find contributions in Benjamin's work (1994), especially when the author presents one of his central characters: the collector. When bringing the concept of knowledge as a collection, he affirms the need to decontextualize an object so that it works as a text. The collector is able to decontextualize the object and, in this case, decontextualize the narratives, giving them different possible meanings, to then bring them together based on what they had in common from a theme. What makes the collection effect possible is the convergence, which is based on what they have in common. In this way, the narratives in the following item were organized into two collections in a Benjaminian sense: "*Dialogues that invite one to look at the other*" unites small gestures, subtleties, in the school routine; the collection "*Dialogues of teaching and learning*", on the other hand, deals with deviations, ruptures, in the pedagogical praxis.

Dialogues between the teacher and the otherness of childhood

Looking at the child as another, implies in establishing a dialogue with them. However, for Benjamin (1995, p. 23) "the freedom of dialogue is being lost". People talk more and more about superficialities; concerns and needs are secondary. Each one is committed to "the optical illusions of their own isolated point of view"; trapped in their own world, they "lose looking at the human beings' outline" (BENJAMIN, 1995, p. 24).

Superficiality in the dialogue, which does not allow us to talk about ourselves, preventing the construction of a relationship that confronts, alters, which Buber calls “verbosity”: the opposite of genuine conversation, set up by the authenticity that surpasses appearance and is free of “every desire to show off” (BUBER, 2009, p. 155). In his work, the author presents three types of dialogue: the authentic, the monologue disguised as a dialogue and the technical.

In authentic dialogue, “each of the participants actually has the other or the others in mind in their presence and in their way of being and turns to them with the intention of establishing a living reciprocity between them and themselves” (BUBER, 2009, p. 54). There is an intention to listen to the other and not just speak. For the author, this dialogue is rare.

The monologue disguised as a dialogue occurs when two or more people are together and talk to themselves (BUBER, 2009). There is no listening to the other, this is not considered as being present in the dialogue.

[...] a conversation, which is determined neither by the need to communicate something, nor by the need to learn something, nor to influence someone, nor to contact someone, but is determined solely by the desire to see one’s self-confidence confirmed, deciphering in the other the impression left, or having it reinforced when indecisive; a friendly conversation, in which each one sees oneself as absolute and legitimate and the other as relativized and questionable (BUBER, 2009, p. 54).

The technical dialogue is “driven by the need for objective understanding” (BUBER, 2009, p. 54). The participants in this dialogue have a conversation in order to have an explanation about something. This dialogue is necessary and there is nothing wrong with it. However, it is necessary to think about how we, teachers, fit in, when the child breaks the technical dialogue.

Dialogues that invite you to look at the other

A walk around

The children were all seated while I was writing the tale of the blonde of the bathroom that they had dictated, on the board. Suddenly, Felipe got up and walked around the room. His movement caught my attention and that of the class. I looked at him as if asking what was going on, and he motioned with his hands for me to wait.

Teacher: *Are you all right, Felipe?* Felipe nodded, yes, then finished his walk and sat in his seat. I continued writing and at the end of the activity I called Felipe to talk.

Teacher: *Are you all right? You signaled me to wait.*

Felipe (9 years old): *Yes. I just wanted to do a windy and I didn't want to leave the room. I was afraid of this story. If I stayed in my place, everyone would know it was me, but when we're walking, nobody knows who did a windy* (SCRAMINGNON, 2017).

Felipe breaks off the technical dialogue leaving the teacher in a place where there is no answer, because the child is the one speaking of a physical, human need. As teachers, we often put ourselves in the place of those who need to know everything and the children show us that not everything is our business and that even with all the expectations we will not be able to handle everything. Thus, education, for Buber, is not an imposing act, but a relationship that requires openness and requires trust, whose premise is the immediate relationship with the other:

Confidence is something that, obviously, is not obtained when we strive to acquire it, but rather, insofar as one participates in an immediate and frank way in the life of the students and when one takes the responsibility that arises from it (BUBER, 2003a, p. 41).

When dealing with education as a relationship, Buber emphasizes that this education has to be in defense of dialogue as a grounding, since its basic principle is openness to the other. Listening to the child is a path to relationships at school that seek to break the coldness.

“I still can’t”

During the Brazilian game of Hen Hatching², José (6 years old) cries impatiently because no classmate hid the object behind his back so that he could get up and run.

Teacher: *José, you don’t have to cry. Your turn will come. Just wait.*

Crying, José replies: *I know I have to wait, but I still can’t help crying when I want something* (SCRAMINGNON, 2017).

There is something “unfathomable that childhood words do to adults” (BENJAMIN, 1995, p. 81). “*You don’t have to cry*”, such a common and almost automatic phrase said to the children leads José to respond in an unusual way: “*I already know that, but I still can’t stop*”. The desire to play and the impatience with the wait have a different significance for both. The teacher’s speech who sees crying as something unnecessary, after all, for her, it was just a game, provokes an unknown response in the boy.

For Benjamin (1995, p. 37-40), children are “indescribably concerned with what happens” ; “They are linked in the here and now, everything happens to them” ; “Behind the curtain they become something wavy and white”. The “*I still can’t*”, presented as a childish weakness, points to a truth that exposes the “precious and essential experience to man, of his maladjustment in relation to the world, his first insecurity, in short, his non-sovereignty”, thus understood by Gagnebin (2005, p. 180). The author clarifies that, for Benjamin, the child is not naive or innocent, but has a certain inability to deal with the world in opposition to adult confidence.

The new, brought by the children, is in process and there is no control over it. They bring up issues that mobilize a different look at what we are used to seeing. They are forms and ways of interpreting experiences, values and knowledge that they have produced and revealed as typical of their lifetime, teaching different ways of thinking within the other.

2 This Brazilian children’s game refers to a hen hatching, where the children sit in a circle and one child who remains on the outside of the circle must put an object behind a child sitting while running outside the circle. As soon as the seated child sees the object he must run after the other child who runs around the circle in an attempt to sit in the other child’s vacant place before being caught.

“Quiet Everyone”

During the class I did not feel well and was sick in front of the children. While I was sitting recovering, Karina entered the room with the director. Director: *They came to call me, said you were feeling sick.*
Karina (9 years old): *Gabriela, we already asked the director to call your father to pick you up. You can go, everyone will be quiet* (SCRAMINGNON, 2017).

From the children’s point of view, being quiet can be a way of caring for the teacher who is feeling sick. Involved and committed to giving a human response to a call for help, children show how they are able to care for adults. In the way of perceiving, they indicate attitude and position towards the other.

And how can we notice the other? How to get to know them? For Buber, there are three ways in which we can notice a human being before our eyes: observe, contemplate and take in intimate knowledge. “The observer is entirely focused on recording the human being he observes in their mind, on ‘writing it down’. He scrutinizes and draws them” (BUBLER, 2009, p. 41) The contemplator, on the other hand, is not absolutely focused: “He puts himself in a position that allows him to see the object freely and waits unconcerned for what will be presented to him” (BUBLER, 2009, p. 41) . The third way of perceiving implies more: something is transmitted, taken in, accepted, received. Thus, looking at the other requires attention. Recognizing the other as a legitimate other is a step towards taking responsibility for him. It is not just about feeling responsible, but translating responsibility into action.

Feelings

While reading a story, Jordana interrupts and asks:
Jordana (8 years old): *I am feeling something that I think is a feeling. Teacher, does everyone have feelings? Does everyone feel what I’m feeling?*
Teacher: *People can feel many things, but I don’t know if everyone feels what you are feeling.*
Jordana: *It’s a different thing* (SCRAMINGNON, 2017).

Human beings have feelings; they reside in human beings (Buber, 2003b). And, in a receptive hour of life, “find me a man in whom there is something, which I cannot capture in an objective way, who says something ‘something’ to me”. And that something can be a question: “*Does everyone feel what I am feeling?*” This in no way means that this thing tells me what this man is like, what is going on in him or something” (BUBER, 2009, p. 42).

Only Jordana knew what she was feeling, and me, what I felt when I heard her. It was not possible to know if we felt the same way, but what I felt choked up my voice and almost prevented the reading from continuing. The girl was able to hear what she was feeling and spoke about the human possibility of undergoing the experience of listening to ourselves. What the other says to me “transmits something to me, transmits something that is introduced into my own life. It can be something about this man [...] but it can also be something about me” (BUBER, 2009, p. 42). At school, when reading a story, the child helps to remember that institutions are also alive and dynamic, especially humanized by the feelings and encounters that occur there. Life, even within the school, can be humanized with practices that may have other outlines.

Dialogues for teaching and learning

I only speak in private

On one page of the textbook, the proposal was for the children to draw their families and share the drawings made with the class. When they showed the drawings made to the class, it was Vítor’s turn, who commented: *I want to talk to you in private.*

I asked the class for a few minutes and walked away with him.

Vítor (9 years old): *I will only talk about my family if it is in private.*

Teacher: *So you don’t want to show your drawing to the class?*

Vítor: *I didn’t draw anything because I don’t want to talk about my family to everyone. There are people in my family that I don’t like and I didn’t want to draw.*

We entered the room and when resuming the activity Vítor commented to the class: *I will not show it because I only talk about my family in private.* (SCRAMINGNON, 2017).

The supposed naturalness with which some practices take place at school prevents dialogues with children and their singularities. Starting from the assumption that drawing or talking about the family is something simple, is to disregard the experience of each one. This is what Vítor reminds us when he gave up on the activity. In bringing his story, he speaks of the challenge of turning to the other and the creative possibility of children doing it differently when faced with what always seems to be the same way. What should be done with this potential? How not to waste it? Living means being the target of the directed word, and children invite us to respond to the spontaneity they bring, opening space for uncertainty, for vulnerability, inviting the teacher to rethink her practice.

Listening to children and their stories is to open space for a new rationality in the institutions. In this perspective, educational practice involves “spontaneity” (BUBER, 2003a, p. 13) that appears in relationships, where the teacher takes the place of the mediator who welcomes plurality and multiplicity of children’s manifestations, making education a reciprocity experience.

Note

Flávia, from a preschool class, near departure time, after receiving the agenda with a sticky note, said:

Flávia (4 years old): *Teacher, can you read the note on the agenda?*

When asked why, she replied:

Flávia: *It’s just that when I read to my grandmother she understands, but when she reads what you wrote by herself she doesn’t understand it.*

I immediately read it to her and, while gathering the class to read, Flávia, with the agenda in hand, told the children about the text in the note. At departure time, at the school gate, when she met her grandmother, she took the diary out of her backpack and read the note (SCRAMINGNON, 2017).

What Flávia was saying was that her grandmother did not know how to read and that she needed to be aware of the contents of the notes to keep her informed. The girl lived with her grandmother, who was illiterate, and a younger sister. Her request showed the importance of constantly reading the notes sent to families with the children; and in addition to reading as a practice that makes up the work in Early Childhood Education, what Flávia teaches is that it is possible to rethink the practice from the questions raised by children. She says about the possibility of learning from them, doing it differently at school.

Rehearsal

The work proposal presented by the school was to hold a party to celebrate Mother's Day, with the children's musical participation. When I started the rehearsal, I noticed that some of them remained seated where they were and showed no interest.

Teacher: *Why aren't you rehearsing?*

Sandra (5 years old): *I will not rehearse because my mother will not be able to come. She works.*

Olivia: (5 years old): *I don't live with my mother and my grandmother can't come.*

Marcelo (5 years old): *My mother said she won't come because she can't bring a plate of biscuits* (SCRAMINGNON, 2017).

Disturbed by the situation, I stopped the rehearsal and, when talking to them, I concluded that the celebration had no meaning for most of the class. I understood the reality of the families and asked myself: which mothers could really be at school for a celebration at 11 am, when many worked far from the community where they lived and would not have the facility to leave work to take part in a school party on a Friday? Did the song they were going to sing represent the feeling they had for their mothers, since the choice of music had been made by the school? Was it the children's wish? Was that party significant for that group?

To recognize the children as capable of expressing feelings and thoughts is to accept "that there are social realities that can only be discovered, understood and analyzed from the children's point of view and of their specific universes" (SARMENTO; PINTO, 1997, p. 65).

Red Pen

When returning the corrected notebook to Carla, she comments:

Carla (8 years old): *I didn't want you to correct my notebook like that.*

Teacher: Like what?

Carla: *With a red pen. Correct it with a pencil so I can erase it later. My notebook is ugly, all scribbled on. I cannot erase or understand what is written* (SCRAMINGNON, 2017).

What might initially seem elementary made me wonder how many times many of us teachers spend hours correcting notebooks that take us a long time to do, when we could do so many other things in our relationship with children because, as the girl said, they don't understand what we do. Carla made me think about the meaning of correcting the work and changing my practice. Her comment prompted a question: for whom do we correct the notebooks? For the children or the parents/guardians? Wouldn't it really be necessary to be careful with this particular object that is someone's notebook? Acting as a teacher, I was invasive on a daily basis in terms of the children's organization and writing. Carla's questioning made me think that I, an adult, a teacher, had a peculiar form of register in my notebooks, and how much I was being disrespectful with the children's writing. "Authorship occurs in the marks that we leave in the world and in the marks that the world inscribes on us; what we do, say, write, build, what is written on our body, in our actions and productions" (KRAMER, 2013, p. 311). The children's production had the mark of the teacher's red pen, which literally went "over" the children's authorship.

And, regarding everything I've heard, what does my vision of this story build by confronting it with my career as a teacher and with the children with whom I spoke? And why listen if you are not going to answer? "Responsibility always means responsibility to someone. Responsibility to oneself is an illusion" (BUBER, 2012, p. 79). In this sense, when listening to memories and retrieving memories, a significant experience in the relationship with the children was revealed. The questions they raised displace the teacher's certainties. They take things from their usual place to give them new meanings: nothing is whole, everything is broken into many meanings. Children "renew their existence through a multiplied and never complicated practice" (BENJAMIN, 1995, p. 229). Gagnebin (2007) also states that the "in" (in-fancy) means absence in human thought, for Benjamin it is the space that allows nakedness and misery, on the threshold of existence and speech. This "in" is not of absence, incapacity, incompetence, but of incompleteness, which makes invention possible.

Considerations

The debate proposed in this text mentioned the children's invitation to the teacher to address issues related to daily work at school. In the narratives presented, the impulse of the word of others - of children - triggered dialogues

to think about teaching. The questions they asked provoked the teacher's replies, the need to ask what they were doing and how they were doing it, answers that required positioning.

In the narratives, the reframed past imposed itself showing how children ask questions that help teachers to find themselves again. The dialogue with them mobilized memories allowing me to hear my own story: as an adult, teacher, researcher. During this process, writing, by catching the unknown senses, showed how much reflection, apart from talking about the children in the present, also speaks of curiosity for the way children give meaning to the world, and a peculiar teacher work dimension: the discovery of the child as another that challenges and provokes us. More than a report, the narrative reflects on the experienced process and makes the meaning that is not discovered, but remade, explicit: the place of teaching is formed in the relationship with the social, historical, cultural context, with the subjects, in the formative processes.

It was in the dialogue with my own memories that I was provoked to ask myself: how could the investment in the training process have helped to build registers as the production of other knowledge of one's own praxis? Why did written memories take a certain direction in my career as a teacher? Did what was written always have the same meaning? How, in the present, could the exercise of analyzing the collection of memories allow a different understanding of fragments that are a part of becoming a teacher? How can one learn to write about one's own practice, to narrate, making the experience shared? When does my story match the story of other teachers? In this sense, it is important to think about whether the training projects have made it possible for teachers to rise above superficiality, understanding fundamental aspects of this profession in order to focus on their praxis. It is worth emphasizing the need to invest in spaces and times in which they can narrate their experiences, tell their stories, register, say, make the experience collective, shared. Understanding that the temporal dimensions seem decisive in this process has to do with the opportunities for teachers to produce these narratives, defended in this discussion as a right.

It is necessary to debate the political function of training, considering that the way teachers are perceived may or may not guarantee the achievement of the right to be narrators of their stories, which, in turn, bring new ways of looking at what we are accustomed to. For Benjamin (1994) the narrative is not to inform. In the story of a children's teacher, the experience with them was fundamental to educate. "A man listening to a story is in the company of the storyteller; even a man reading one shares this companionship. (BENJAMIN, 1994, p. 213). In this meeting lies the possibility of making the 'new within always the same'. But for that, you need a bond, a presence. You must have someone to listen!

REFERENCES

- BENJAMIN, Walter. *Obras escolhidas*. Magia e técnica, arte e política. Ensaio sobre literatura e história da cultura. Tradução de Sérgio Paulo Rouanet. 7. ed. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1994.
- BENJAMIN, Walter. *Obras escolhidas II*. Rua de mão única. Tradução de Rubens Rodrigues Torres Filho e José Carlos Martins Barbosa. 5. ed. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1995.
- BENJAMIN, Walter. *Passagens*. Tradução de Cleonice Paes Barreto Mourão e Irene Aron. Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG; São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado de São Paulo, 2006.
- BUBER, Martin. *Do diálogo e do dialógico*. Tradução de Marta Ekstein de Souza Queiroz e Regina Weinberg. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2009.
- BUBER, Martin. *El camino del ser humano y otros escritos*. Traducción y notas Carlos Díaz. Madrid, España: Fundación Emmanuel Mounier, 2003a.
- BUBER, Martin. *Eu e tu*. Tradução de Newton Aquiles von Zuben. 6. ed. São Paulo: Centauro, 2003b.
- BUBER, Martin. *O caminho do homem segundo o ensinamento chassídico*. Tradução de Cláudia Abeling. São Paulo: É Realizações, 2011.
- BUBER, Martin. *Sobre comunidade*. Tradução de Newton Aquiles von Zuben. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2012.
- CLANDININ, D. Jean; CONELLY, F. Michael. *Pesquisa narrativa: experiências e história na pesquisa qualitativa*. Tradução de Grupo de Pesquisa Narrativa e Educação de Professores da Universidade Federal de Uberlândia. Uberlândia: EDUFU, 2011.
- CUNHA, Maria Amália Almeida; NUNES, Célia Maria Fernandes. As biografias educativas como fonte de pesquisa e estudo no campo da formação docente: notas iniciais para uma discussão teórico/metodológica. *Thema*, Pelotas, v.14, n. 2, p. 9-13, 2017. Disponível em: https://www.repositorio.ufop.br/bitstream/123456789/9503/1/ARTIGO_BiografiasEducativasFonte.pdf. Acesso em: 15 jul. 2020.
- FUJIKAWA, Mônica Matie. A escrita como pretexto de reflexão da prática pedagógica e como estratégia de intervenção na formação de professores. In: PRADO, Guilherme Do Val Toledo; SOLIGO, Rosaura (org.). *Porque escrever é fazer história: revelações, subversões, superações*. São Paulo: Alínea, 2007. p. 229-243.
- GAGNEBIN, Jeanne Marie. *História e narração em Walter Benjamin*. 2. ed. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2007.
- GAGNEBIN, Jeanne Marie. *Sete aulas sobre linguagem, memória e história*. 2. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Imago, 2005.

JOSSO, Marie Christine. *Experiências de vida e formação*. Tradução de José Claudino e Júlia Ferreira. São Paulo: Cortez, 2004.

KRAMER, Sonia. Formação e responsabilidade: escutando Mikhail Bakhtin e Martin Buber. In: KRAMER, Sonia; NUNES, Maria Fernanda.; CARVALHO, Maria Cristina (org.). *Educação Infantil: formação e responsabilidade*. Campinas, SP: Papyrus, 2013. p. 309-329.

MENDES, Maria Francisca. *Práticas, narrativas e reflexões no diário de uma professora de alfabetização*. 2007. 153 p. Dissertação (Mestrado em Educação) – Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2007.

PEREIRA, Rita Marisa Ribes. Um pequeno mundo próprio inserido num mundo maior. In: PEREIRA, Rita Marisa Ribes; MACEDO, Nélia Mara Rezende (org.) *Infância em pesquisa*. Rio de Janeiro: NAU, 2012. p. 25-58.

SARMENTO, Manuel Jacinto; PINTO, Manuel (org.). *As crianças: contextos e identidades*. Braga: Universidade do Minho, 1997.

SCRAMINGNON, Gabriela Barreto da Silva. *Ser criança, ser adulto, ser professor: encontros, diálogos e desvios com crianças de seis a dez anos*. 2017. 167 p. Tese (Doutorado em Educação) – Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2017.

Text received on 08/03/2020.

Text approved on 10/21/2020.