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Reimagining ethnographies: the use of video ethnography in educational research by Frederick Erickson and Carmen de Mattos[1]

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Abstract: The article is a theoretical-methodological essay that examines, ethnography and video ethnography from the perspectives of Frederick Erickson and Carmen de Mattos. They are ethnographers who conduct their research in educational settings using video and microanalysis. Erickson 's talk is included first, with the objectives of reviewing fundamental aspects of ethnographic research in education, briefly describing the history of ethnography, discussing the crisis of confidence in traditional ethnography, and presenting three ethnographic approaches: teacher-researcher, participatory action research, and performative ethnography. Mattos goes on to expand on the author's arguments and discuss the use of video in ethnography, in an attempt to address the question: how can the use of video in the classroom expand the analytical possibilities of the interactions seen in the school space? How were the video recordings used and what are the limits and possibilities for their use? And, in what way do ethnographic vignettes, based on video images, contribute to signify fieldwork and impact the researcher's reflexivity? Considered pioneers in the use of video images in classroom research, the authors complement each other and challenge the reader to reimagine ethnographies as unfinished projects with the potential to become so in the future, not only boosting school practices, especially in the classroom, but also informing and modifying public policies in education.
Keywords: traditional ethnography; video ethnography; microethnography; classroom; Frederick Erickson

1 Introduction

> *Human beings talk to themselves, usually in silence. This mental activity is called self-talk. People generally disregard the ability to maintain internal dialogues (Margaret Archer, p. 33–62, 2007).*

This article is a theoretical-methodological essay on ethnography, focusing on the use of video ethnography as an approach that makes it possible to reimagine ethnographies. Researchers argued that Frederick Erickson (Johnson; Amador, 2011) in the United

[1] Article translated from English to Portuguese and vice versa by Carmen de Mattos.

States and Carmen de Mattos (2004, 2022) in Brazil were pioneers in using videos as an instrument in classroom ethnographies.

The introduction outlines the conception of the article, its structure, and its objectives within the special issue of *Ethnography in Education: Methodologies and Epistemologies.* The second session provides guidelines for conducting ethnography in the school environment and emphasizes important considerations when using video as an auxiliary data collection instrument for field research.

In the third session, Erickson (2009)[2], an anthropologist who studies ethnography in the classroom, gives a speech in which he talks about the basics of ethnographic research in education, gives a brief history of ethnography, talks about the lack of trust in traditional ethnography, and tries to answer these criticisms by talking about three different ethnographic approaches: teacher-researcher, participatory action research, and performative ethnography. The author argues that these approaches, as well as others that emerged after 2010, signified innovations to classical ethnography and are alternatives for its improvement (Erickson, 2006).

Continuing, in the fourth session, Mattos presents video ethnography in connection with microethnography as an important. Continuing, in the fourth session, Mattos presents video ethnography in connection with microethnography as an important resource for the ethnographies carried out by the authors (Erickson, 1996; Mattos, 2001). Based on fragments of research conducted and guided in the context of the (NetEdu) Center for Ethnography in Education[3], the author tries to answer the flowing question: How could the use of video in the classroom expand the analytical possibilities about the interactions observed in the school space? How were video recordings used, and what are their limits and possibilities? How do ethnographic vignettes, based on video images, contribute to fieldwork and impact the researcher's reflexivity?

In the final considerations section, the article discusses the trends in ethnography today, first through a handbook published by Erickson (1982), which offers paths to researchers on the use of videos in ethnographic research, and second through the meta-analytical research conducted and guided by Mattos, who trace paths to evaluate ethnographic productions and go through self-reflexive processes in order to outline future ethnographies.

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[2] This session presents the speech reproduced, transcribed, and translated from an audio, by Mattos, authored by Frederick Erickson, under the title *Reimagining the portrayal of schools and schooling: current approaches in ethnography*, which was presented as part of the III Colloquium Education, Citizenship, and Exclusion: Gender and Poverty, promoted by the Center for Ethnography and Education (NetEdu) and held at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ). Maracanã, Rio de Janeiro, November 4-6, 2009.-62, 2007).

[3] NetEdu – Center of Ethnography in Education. Research, teaching and extension's group, created, in 2004, by Mattos, Department of Applied Studies to Teaching, Faculty of Education, State University of Rio de Janeiro (Uerj).

In the context of qualitative research, this article is dedicated to reimagining ethnographies as they are and as they can become. It is therefore provocative, as ethnography can be a multifaceted, complex, and unique approach that has been unfolding in increasingly innovative strands to its classic version. Reflecting ethnographies demands approximations and distancing that reaffirm its greatest characteristic, which is to give voice to those who are invisible in their cultures.

2 Comments on the use of videos in ethnography

The use of images and video as instruments in ethnography is not recent (Bateson; Mead, 1942). However, video data collection is becoming more and more widespread as a form of recording as an aid to fieldwork, especially as a complement to participant observation and interviews (Pink, 2007).

In part, it happens thanks to technological advances that have sped up the recording process and reduced equipment costs. In education, in particular, the use of video has become a sine qua non condition because it allows analysis in layers of speech (Goffman, 1979) related to face-to-face interactions, which include gestures, looks, facial expressions, body alignments, and body movements, as well as, more broadly, the semiotic aspects present in the environment to be researched (Pitard, 2016; Kendon, 1990, 1981; Goffman, 1985, 1979; Goodwin, 2018).

However, video isn't a crystal ball that's going to give everything away; it can record a meeting, but it can't explain who the participants are or why they're there; cannot capture sensations, smells, ambience, and other components of a scene that require detailed description (Geertz, 1973).

One of the most important and controversial aspects of ethnographic narrative with the use of video is the researcher's reflexivity. According to Berger's (2015) definition, reflexivity considers the researcher's positionality. For him, reflexivity is commonly seen as "a continuous internal dialogue and critical self-assessment of the researcher's positionality, as well as the active and explicit recognition that this position can affect the research process and outcome" (Berger, 2015, p. 220). The author argues that researchers need to focus more and more on self-knowledge and sensitivity to better understand the role of the self in the creation of knowledge and to carefully self-monitor the impact of their personal biases, beliefs, and experiences on their research so as to maintain the balance between the personal and the universal. While, for Margaret Archer,

> Reflexivity is the regular exercise of the mental ability shared by all normal people to consider themselves in relation to their (social) contexts and vice versa. Such deliberations are important since they form the basis upon which people determine their

> future courses of action—always fallibly and always under their own descriptions (Archer, 2007, p.4).

The use of video cameras and audio-visual recording equipment in people's daily activities in their homes, workplaces, neighborhoods, villages, or educational institutions can provide ethnographers with subtle information, but if done unethically or unprofessionally, it can also annoy participants (Erickson, 1989, 1982).

Body language is usually recognizable by people who are familiar with participants, even when faces or voices are blurry in data that is made public for conference presentations or as multimedia resources for students to use in class. Therefore, consent for video recording needs to be comprehensive and explicit about who will be filmed, why, how the video recordings or photos will be used later, and whether the data will be deleted or kept somewhere, such as the ethnographer's computer, a secure cloud server, or a public archive.

Thus, it is crucial to follow the appropriate procedures and obtain the free and informed consent of all participants who may be in the video before starting the fieldwork and keeping an eye on the development of the research activities while in the field.

Long before the researcher arrives at the location he or she has chosen for his or her fieldwork, video ethnography is already underway, with logistical, technological, and ethical consequences that need to be considered throughout the research process. Ethnographic research necessitates a relative length of time in the field, usually four months to two years. Additionally, it necessitates a consistent frequency, typically one to three times per week. This requires discipline in the organization of records and the maintenance of the equipment to be used. The literature on this topic is vast and can be found in the area of visual communication.

However, data in videos is a complement to human eyes; it is not data itself. Mattos (2010) asserts that data only is a data, when it becomes a data. In other words, the *corpus* of data does not consist of a random collection of images; it requires their interpretation. This relationship between the collected material and the culturally relevant data demands, in the first place, a sensitive eye and a keen listening to this material, an intense process of revisiting the images until they are confirmed as relevant data, their validation by the research participants, and the property of generating new knowledge or a theory relevant to the theme under study. Secondly, a sharp critique of the cultural context in which these images belong, a description that is reliable and supported by other field evidence, That image should be iconic or truly ethnographic. That is, it must be part of the culturally meaningful whole but unique in the sense that, to the layman's eye, it gives meaning to the whole. As if the camera captured what the other sees, unveiling the meaning of the action expressed by it.

Derry *et. al.* (2010) make use of an analogy between words, the objects that support the construction of scientific knowledge, and the communication or return of research data with the use of video. The authors explain that such objects, as well as the people who react to them, serve to build the cumulative base of scientific knowledge from the video recordings. The authors suggest that participants may agree, with little controversy, to the use of images: of themselves, other persons for whom they are responsible, of the spaces they inhabit, and of the objects existing in these spaces, but the standardization or generalization of these images, that is, their use, a posteriori, can cause discomfort to the participants and provoke debates, which, in turn, would stifle the researcher's innovation and creativity. Derry and his colleagues point out that the use of video recordings in complex environments, such as classrooms, poses challenges to:

> 1. *Selection.* How does a researcher decide which elements of a complex environment should be recorded, or which aspects of an extensive video corpus should be sampled for further examination?
> 2. *Analysis.* What analytical frameworks and practices are available, and which of these are scientifically valid and appropriate for given research problems?
> 3. *Technology.* What technological tools are available, and which social tools must be developed and disseminated to support collecting, archiving, analyzing, reporting, and collaboratively sharing video?
> 4. *Ethics.* How can research protocols encourage broad video sharing and reuse while adequately protecting the rights of the human subjects who are represented in such recordings? (Derry *et. al*., 2010, p. 7)

On the one hand, the complexity of the use of video in the classroom is a challenge because, in addition to the challenges presented by Derry *et. al*. (2010), other procedures are indispensable to the treatment of each scene; for example, they must be: transcribed, decoupled, paragraphed, categorized, and thematized as to belonging to the object of study. On the other hand, this environment is typically appropriate for recording with the use of videos because many interactions take place at the same time and the individual gaze of the observer, or even of a small group of people in this locus of research, does not encompass the scenes in their entirety.

Researchers and ethnographers who use video as a data collection tool should also pay attention to the issue of narrative in ethnographic texts. The use of ethnographic vignettes is suggested for the reporting of events and video scenes in aid of field descriptions.

We understand that ethnographic vignettes serve as important narrative resources to illustrate ethnographic text. In general, they are derived from stories produced by field observations that were annotated for later reference or edited scenes from videos that illustrate the stories experienced at the research site. These records contain annotated interpre-

tations and reflections. They should be validated by triangulation of data from different data collection sources and, when possible, substantiated by theoretical elements. They support ethnographic writing or generate empiricism-based theories.

Unlike the common narrative, the ethnographic vignettes contain elements that, in principle, unequivocally represent the subject of the narrated research. It must provide vivid images so that the reader is able to transport himself to the scene described and feel privileged to have access to that space, that person, or that object or situation described. In general, an ethnographic image is the object. One of Erickson and Mattos' favorite writing tools for research data representation. Whether they are representative of scenes that they choose for the analysis of data collected during on-site participant observation or those that arise from the revisiting of videos at a later time, The vignettes play a significant role in summarizing the object under study, showcasing its narrative potential, particularly when it comes to data from video ethnography.

For Jayne Pitard (2016), the use of vignettes has the advantage of revealing multiple layers of the researcher's consciousness, what he calls layered reporting (Goffman, 1972). The diverse voices of the researcher and the research contribute to the richness of their analyses, and the reflective academic voice leads their interpretation. Pitard (2016) argues that this is achieved by creating a six-step structure where each of these layers offers a unique perspective on the vignettes. He designed a structured vignette analysis model with the following steps: context; anecdote [episode]—which means a brief narrative of an interesting, amusing, or biographical incident; emotional response; reflexivity; development strategy; concluding comments in layers (Pitard, 2016, p. 6).

The described model becomes useful in the sense of differentiating, for example, an ethnographic vignette from a commercial vignette. This model typically garners popularity due to its potential for promoting specific products in commercial advertisements. How to forget the Coca-Cola vignette—now it is!—or the American Express credit card—don't leave without it! With the same meaning—that of drawing attention and fixing an idea in the consumer's memory—but with a different purpose, the ethnographic vignette aims to signify, semiotically, the object of study. In both cases, it fulfills its role.

3 Frederick Erickson's observations on the history, crisis of confidence, new methodologies, and potential improvements in ethnography

On the fundamental aspects of ethnographic inquiry in education, the essential purposes of ethnography and qualitative research in general are to describe in detail the behavior of everyday events that occur in community practices, to identify the meanings that these events have for those who participate in them, and to consider how these particular forms

may be similar or different from the usual actions and signify local perspectives that are also found in other communities. In other words, the narrative reports that people normally produce can show how they are making sense of their actions while considering other forms of organization in daily life (Conklin, 1968; Anderson-Levitt, 2006; Hammersley, 1990).

This approach is particularly appropriate for educational research when we want detailed information about the conduct of these surveys by answering the questions: How was the data collected? What were the effects of this treatment? Or, when we want, to identify the subjective nuances that motivate participants in a given place and also to identify and understand the changes that have occurred over time in a given place.

Ethnography is not so much a set of techniques or methods as it is a particular intellectual instance (Wolcott, 2008). Therefore, we must consider the intellectual history from which the perspective and attitude of ethnography developed.

The word ethnography was invented at the end of the 19th century as a new expression based on the combination of two Greek words: *graphân,* the verb to write, and *ethnoi,* a plural noun to designate nations and others. The Greek lexicon written by Liddell and Scott (1940) defines the singular noun *ethos* as – a number of people accustomed to living together, a company, a group of men, etc. But this definition does not note a distinction that makes a lot of difference: for the ancient Greeks, *ethnoi* were not just groupings of people, regardless of their organization or origin, but rather a group of people. They were the groupings of people who were not Greeks. *Ethnoi* was used, in contrast to the term *ellenoi* used for the *Hellenes*, the *we* and the *ethnoi* were the Thracians, Scythians, Persians, Etruscans, Egyptians, and Mesopotamians.

The Greeks were more than just a little xenophobic, so the term ethnoi carries pejorative implications. To see the force of this expression, we may consider that in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, the Hebrew term for the personal pronoun they was *goyim*, which was translated as ethnoi. Also, in ancient and modern Hebrew, the term *goy* is not a compliment. All of this is to say that the most accurate definition of the term ethnography, given its etymology and its early use in the nineteenth century to refer to the description of the way of life of non-Western peoples, is to write about other people.

Ethnographic accounts embraced a deeper and more comprehensive perspective in their description of what had previously been done in the reports written by travelers, soldiers, Ethnographic accounts embraced a deeper and more comprehensive perspective in their description of what had previously been done in the reports written by travelers, soldiers, and colonial agents. Perhaps the first monograph of the kind that would become a modern ethnography comes from urban sociology. Dubois (1899) conducted a census study of a sector of Philadelphia, which was then the main residential neighborhood for African Americans in the city. His report, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*, combined demo-

graphic data, maps of the area, the history of the community, and surveys of local institutions and groups, with some descriptive accounts of the daily lives of the people who lived there. His purpose in writing, which can be considered the first ethnography, was to make visible the life, the absence of structure and order in the lives of people who were previously invisible.

A similar purpose and descriptive approach, but combining demography, health statistics, and narratives, was described in one of the 17 volumes of reports prepared by Charles Booth (1889), under the title *The Life and Labour of the People of London*. These accounts included the diaries of Beatrice and Sidney Webb, where they described the lives of working-class people in East London and presented photographic illustrations of scenes from the time.

A greater emphasis on narrative description can be found in a study published by journalist Jacob Riis (1890) under the title: *How the other half lives: studies among the tenements of New York*, an account of the daily life of immigrants on the *Lower East Side* of New York, written and illustrated with photographs.

All of these authors were social reformers. They were not simply producing a description for their own sake; they were describing it in order to advocate for and inform a process of social change. Although their descriptions were not of neutral value, the early practitioners of what might be called ethnography did not purport to describe everyday life from the point of view of those who lived it. Their descriptions, in other words, were carried out from an ethical point of view, based on a language descriptive of the facts that were presented as self-evident, precise, and objective in terms of behavior.

They did not intend to identify behavioral differences that make a difference to the agreed-upon subjective meaning between the people whose lives were being described, i.e., they did not claim that their descriptions had an *emic* epistemological *status*. The interpretive meaning of certain behaviors for everyday meaning, as Geertz (1973, p. 6) puts it, "what distinguishes – blink of the eye – from – an eye blink," was not what they had in mind. To portray social action as – small blinking of the eyes, rather than the behavior of – blinking the eyes, i.e., to describe the behavior of daily life in such a way as to make contact with the subjectivities and sense of perspectives of those whose conduct is being reported. This is a fundamental shift to hermeneutical interpretation within ethnography, which is claimed to have been accomplished by Bronislaw Malinowski (1922) claims to have undertaken this fundamental shift to hermeneutical interpretation within ethnography in his monograph Argonauts of the Western Pacific: an account of native enterprise and adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea. He argues that the ethnographic description should not only be accurate but that it should represent "the native point of view, its relation to life, in order to present its worldview" (1922, p. 25). Malinowski, who was Polish, began his fieldwork

in the Trobriand Islands in 1914; shortly thereafter, he was interned by the British colonial authorities on suspicion that he might be a spy. Forced to remain in the Trobriand Islands for four years, he turned necessity into virtue in his long-term fieldwork, as well as learning the local language. This enabled him to write a report that not only covered the system of everyday life in its entirety but also represented nuances of local significance and the daily conduct of the community.

People would later say that his descriptive account had emic or interpretive validity. After Malinowski, this became a hallmark of ethnography in anthropology, reporting the descriptions of those who made contact with the sense of perspective of the daily actions being described. However, this goal is never fully achievable. The ethnographer cannot fully uncover or convey the worldview of the people under study. Nor is there necessarily a single, identically shared view among those who are studied. However, the intentionality that defines ethnographic work lies in approaching the meaning of the perspectives of those under study.

Nevertheless, in the two decades of the twenty-first century, ethnographic research has suffered severe criticism and is experiencing a crisis of confidence in its authority as a methodology. The classical ethnography has been criticized for being colonialist, ethnocentric, and having a patriarchal orientation, proposing a type of truth that is not based on evidence (Clifford; Marcus, 1986; Rosaldo, 1989). We can at least partially justify these criticisms, despite their sometimes extreme nature. Ethnographers sometimes get it wrong! They can misrepresent what people do in their day-to-day lives and misrepresent the ways in which the people being studied make sense of what they're doing.

These distortions result, in part, in the mismatch between the life experience of the ethnographer who is an *outsider* (Becker, 1963) and the members of the local community being studied – *insider*. Malinowski's goal was to identify – the point of view of the natives, this goal is very difficult to achieve for an *outsider researcher*. In addition, participant observation, which is the main instrument of ethnography, may not be as participatory as ethnographers often think.

I myself, in my career, have become aware of the limitations of classical participant observation through experiences such as the one that occurred when I was observing a classroom:

Vignette 1 – It was the morning of March 25, 1982, and I was looking at a second-grade classroom, which I had been visiting frequently since September of the previous year. A few days earlier, the teacher had asked the students to write an essay. Each student had to study a different animal and write a few paragraphs about the various aspects of that animal's life. The teacher would then combine the paragraphs into an essay, typically comprising four or five paragraphs. Alex's animal was a lynx. The lynx is a smaller version of a

type of animal known in Brazil as the jaguar. During a conversation with Alex that morning, the teacher told him that he should write about how the bobcat found its food. So, the question for Alex turned into: How does the lynx get its food?

In that class, Alex was the student with the least fluency in reading. He left the teacher's desk, and I went with him. Alex walked to the back of the room to a table where there was a large encyclopedia of animals with colorful figures. The book was too big for the children to use their own tables, so each child waited their turn to look at the book that was on that table. Alex sat down at the table, and I sat next to him. The book was closed. Next to the book, he had placed his notebook and pencil. Alex stared at the book for a few moments. It seemed as if he had stopped.

I suggested to Alex that he look at the content. He seemed to be confused. The table of contents, I explained, was back in the last pages of the book. Alex opened the book in front of him and turned the pages to get to the table of contents. "The alphabetical order lists the animals, and I navigated through the pages until we reached the letter L," I said. There was an entry for the word Lynx, with the page number next to it. Alex read the name Lynx and stopped. I said that the word immediately to the right of the word in the index showed the number of pages in the book on which information about the lynx could be found.

Alex slowly turned the pages of the book until he found the indicated page in the table of contents. On that page, there was a little text written on it, but it made no mention of the lynx. The page was mostly covered in an image that showed various animals that could be found, as the title of the image said, *Mixed Forest and Temperate Climate Prairie*. The lynx was lying on a tree branch near the forest's edge. Rabbits, wild chickens, and other small animals were on the prairie and on the ground under the trees.

I indicated the bobcat's location on the page. Alex looked. I said, "The lynx eats meat. How do you think the bobcat gets its food? Alex said, "Does he jump?" I said, "That's right, the lynx can jump off the tree branch and capture the rabbit, the chicken, or even a squirrel that's on the ground. Alex closed the book and went to his desk to write about what the bobcat ate.

A few times, he went to the teacher's desk to ask how to spell a word. Other kids were writing their essays and producing paragraphs expertly. By the end of the morning, Alex had not yet finished writing the answer to the question, "How does the lynx get its food?" Alex was making progress, but it was difficult.

I recalled a poster I had seen when I was younger, promoting a charity drive for the orphanage that cared for the town's boys. In the poster, an older boy carried on his shoulders a younger boy who held a cane. The older boy said, "He's not heavy, Dad; he's, my brother." On March 25, 1982, my notes read: Poster of the orphanage for boys in the city. Alex is heavy. I feel exhausted.

Never before, as a participant observer, had I felt that kind of weight—the weight that a child, as Alex represents for an elementary school teacher. I had also never felt anything like the weight that Alex probably felt doing that task. It's no wonder many teachers avoid students like Alex and pass them on to other teachers. It's no wonder that students like Alex just walk through classrooms or switch off when faced with the kind of assignment they've encountered. During my interaction with Alex, I encountered the concept of social gravity, which I first encountered in a scene from my early fieldwork and in the descriptive reports written from a less participatory stance. Without this experience, I would not have been able to learn (Erickson, 2006).

This experience with participant observation in ethnography in education alerts us to the new approaches in ethnography that emerged at the time. They appeared to be attempts to respond to criticism in an attempt to improve conventional ethnography.

The teacher-researcher research approach to their own practice has, as natives themselves, the responsibility of studying their own actions in daily life rather than being research done by outsiders. In the participatory action research approach, university researchers and practitioners work together with public school teachers to improve their pedagogical practices. Whereas the approach of performative ethnography, involves someone or something, with its means particularly lived and reported.

The first approach, teacher researcher, is increasingly evident in the descriptive reports of teachers' teaching practices. In the United States, over the last fifteen years prior to 2009, it developed under the aegis of the teacher-researcher movement, led by researchers such as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993), Ballenger (1999), and Frank (1999). In this approach, the teacher-researcher is able to identify nuances of meaning that, sometimes, an outside researcher does not perceive or misinterpret. That's the primary focus of this type of work. One of its limitations is that habitual actions become transparent to us as we practice them. But what is familiar becomes invisible. We say in English that we can't see the nose on our face. Thus, there is a balance between the sensitivity of an insider's perception of local meanings and the tendency to overlook crucial aspects of habitual action that have become invisible to the actor.

Secondly, there is the participatory action-research approach (Erickson, 2006). It is an attempt to correct the limitations of research with an outside researcher. It can distort local action and its meaning, as well as the limitations of the researcher insider, who, in the ethnographic report, may neglect aspects invisible to their own practices. In participatory action research in education, university researchers collaborate with members of the school community, conducting research aimed at improving pedagogical practices. Such a collaboration is not easy to build, but it has the potential to correct the limitations of other approach-

es and maximize the benefits from both the insider's and the outsider's perspectives. Here are some examples:

Vignette 2 – After the Alex and Lynx incident, I started participating in participatory action research with the teachers in the early grades. A few years later, when I moved to the University of Pennsylvania, I became involved in two projects where we worked more collaboratively with professors. One of them was called *Taking Stock and Making Change*, where we worked with five elementary schools. In each school, we created a study team that included the principal and a group of teachers, some of whom were members of the school board of directors.

The teams searched their schools for issues they wanted to address and reflect on, with the aim of promoting some kind of change. In one of the schools, a research question was: Where are all the reading books? Over the years, various teachers in an urban school with scarce resources had individually appropriated all kinds of teaching materials, sometimes during construction. The research resulted in teachers feeling comfortable discussing the location of books, leading to a shift in the school's literacy relationships.

Vignette 3 – At another school, teachers began looking at the issue of racial fights and slurs among children in the courtyard during lunch. As they began to observe and take stock, they discovered that the cooks, who were also supervising the children in the courtyard, might be yelling at the children, as a consequence, the children were yelling at each other. In the course of the research, the teachers began to realize that they had never talked to the cooks. They never asked the cooks what they knew about the problem. The result was a joint research project between the cooks and some of the teachers who began to look at the way the playground was being organized, which allowed some profound changes to be made. This collaboration quickly resulted in a sharp drop in the number of children who were sent to the school nurse with bloody noses, and in the number of children who were sent to the principal for shouting some racial slur at someone. So, it seemed that teachers and members of the school community, with a little outside help, had the ability to study their own situation and discover aspects that made a difference.

At the *University of California Los Angeles* (UCLA), I was involved in a project with the professors at the university's school. The goal was to develop digital libraries about the practices of these teachers under their own direction. This project had similar goals to the Philadelphia project. The school, as a whole, was engaged in the development of its website, which would include videos and other materials and show, in detail, how teachers conducted teaching in the school. The website would make this material available on the Internet with the objective of promoting the continuing education of these teachers and those of others, establishing relationships between them using dialogical relationships through direct or virtual contacts. The proposed relationship initially aims to respect the teachers'

existing knowledge, and then builds upon it by incorporating their insights and perceptions about their practices.

The third approach is performative ethnography, it is an attempt to report, in a more vivid way than conventional ethnography, how everyday actions are conducted, how these actions make sense to local social actors in a way that engages the readers of the ethnographic reports, thus avoiding the antiseptic voice of the scientist. In this approach, a more evocative voice is adopted, such as that of the novelist or the poet or the theatrical writer (Conquergood 1993; Denzin 2003). Sometimes this approach is dramatic, and its account involves a literal performance, as in a kind of improvisation, as in street theater, or as in what is called – reader's theater, in which the dialogues of the various characters are read aloud and by different people.

This dramatic form of reporting takes the form of ethnographic writing, for example, in poems, which can be written by professors-researchers, and, in the case of participatory-action-research, the writings can also be done by professors who are in collaboration with university researchers. Writers can incorporate passages reminiscent of a novelist's portrayal of everyday life into their performative research reports. In the classroom, teacher-researchers can ask their students to write poems or short stories that communicate their perspectives on their lives in and out of school. Reports can also use visual media.

Nowadays, as more and more people have mobile phones, they can be invited to take photographs or short videos that show relevant aspects of their daily lives. Teachers can document their practices on video and prepare portfolios that show these practices through writing with audio-visual illustrations.

An organization in the United States, the *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards*, has asked teachers to prepare these portfolios if they wish to be considered for certification as excellent teachers, and you can access and read these portfolios on the website of that institution. The *Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's* website provides another example.

These multimedia representations can be considered performative ethnographies. This type of ethnography is limited because not all artistic productions and innovations succeed. Some turn out to be big failures. However, attempts to make the reporting of ethnographic research more interesting to audiences are worthwhile endeavors.

To conclude, the goals of classical ethnography are difficult to achieve, both in educational research and in disciplines such as anthropology and sociology. Still, I continue to believe that the attempt to show what Malinowski called the native's point of view to discover his vision of his world is a noble endeavor, though not always completely successful. Classical ethnography has received severe criticism, and we have seen the proliferation of new approaches in response to these criticisms. However, I am confident that the future offers

more possibilities for the emergence of new approaches than we can currently imagine. And you, the ethnography researcher, will be among those who invent these new approaches. The time of exploration in ethnography is not over; it is just beginning!

4 Carmen de Mattos' perspective on video ethnography in classroom research.

To answer the question: How could the use of video in the classroom expand the analytical possibilities of the interactions observed in this school space? How were the video recordings used, and what are the limits and possibilities for their use? How do ethnographic vignettes, based on video images, contribute to fieldwork and impact the researcher's reflexivity? Mattos's initial assumption is that video is a magnified lens used by the ethnographer to imagine, explain, know, and signify the data experienced in the field, and video ethnography is the theoretical-epistemological approach that aims to construct, analyze, criticize, interpret, and describe the data derived from videos. In this context, Mattos brings fragments of videos derived from some of the research he has conducted or supervised in the last three decades in order to illustrate video ethnography, using ethnographic vignettes to narrate the video data.

Certainly, the questions asked, as well as the discussion about the use of video and ethnography itself, lead to an open discussion that does not end with these illustrations, but it offers a clearer picture of what ethnographic practice is.

In 2014, Mattos completed studies at the University of British Columbia (UBC), in Canada, on the topic of digital ethnography (Mattos, 2012), during which time she revisited more than 100 (one hundred) hours of videos of her research, looking for clues to prove her hypotheses on the issue of difficulties among elementary school students. As a result, the researcher came across a video scene representative of the objects of study she was investigating (Mattos, 2014). The scene was as follows:

Vignette 4 – On May 11, 2011, eight NetEdu researchers went to the research field, as they did every Wednesday. The research was entitled *Gender and Poverty: Educational Practices, Policies, and Theories—Images of Schools* (Mattos, 2008, 2010). At first, the focus was on the themes of gender and poverty, but the vice-principal, a collaborator in the research, and the students of the 9th and 6th grades, participants in the study, requested that we include the theme of violence due to the high rate of violence associated with the school. It was a public school with more than a thousand students, located in the town of Comendador Soares, municipality of Nova Iguaçu, known for violent crimes resulting from frequent clashes between the police and local drug traffickers. The school reflected this reality.

A foreign visiting professor led the other group of researchers, who observed a mathematics class in one of the 6th grade classrooms, while the coordinator trained the 9th grade

students to act as interviewers for the 6th grade students. Two researchers stood at the back of the room, one filming the class while the other, sitting among the students at the back of the room, took notes on what was happening.

The class was composed of 45 (forty-five) students, crammed between the desks. In front of the chalkboard, the teacher explained the topic of the class, which required the students to use rulers, squares, compasses, etc. The selected scene showed two students sitting at the back of the room next to the two researchers. They didn't pay attention to class and played with bars and a bunch of shredded papers. These papers, taken from the tears on the sides of the sheets of the scratched notebook, were shredded into capital pieces, almost powder. Although unclear, the frame (Erickson, 1981; Goffman, 1979) makes up the 31-second sequence of a 50-minute film.

In the scene, one of the students slams the side of the square on the fragments of the shredded paper, mimicking what cocaine users do, before sniffing the powder. The frame of seconds leaves no doubt about the nature of their action—they were playing cocaine line.

The segment of the video was identified by Mattos, years after it was recorded. She was not present in the classroom, but she knew the reality of the school and the students, as she had studied at this school for almost ten years.

Figure - Playing cocaine line

Source: Mattos (2011)

When he returned to Brazil in 2014, three years after the video recording, he revisited, Mattos met with the team of researchers from Netedu. This meeting included: undergraduate and graduate students from UERJ; five former students of the 9th grade; two teachers; and the vice principal of the Comendador Soares School. The meeting focused on watching some videos of interest to the team; among them, a sequence of 31 (thirty-one) seconds of video was watched. Mattos asked the group, "What are you seeing in this scene?" The

group was silent for a while until the deputy headmistress said, “You can’t, you can’t!” Not this girl! She’s an acquaintance of ours, the granddaughter of the school cook; she comes from a religious family; she’s not doing that! And Mattos asked, “What is that?” And the students responded in chorus: A cocaine line!

This scene serves as an example of how an ethnographic video can extrapolate the objective for which it was filmed but find the object of study unequivocally. The classroom image underscored the theme of violence in the school under investigation.

The scene, which can be seen in any context worldwide, will be identified as an image of a joke about a line of cocaine. Therefore, it is a representation of the violence that surrounded the school and the children.

In this sense, theoretically, the scene evokes the concept of reflexivity on the part of the team coordinator. This reflexivity is put on hold during the meeting because, according to Bourdieu (1989), subjectivity and objectivity are twin sisters living in the researcher’s subconscious. Both the researcher-coordinator’s subjectivity and the researcher-collaborator’s *embarrassment* weighed heavily on her. For a while, she resists acknowledging the scene’s significant objectivity, only to feel pressured by the students’ subjective interpretations and the objectivity depicted in the images. But what is embarrassment, and how do these feelings impact face-to-face interactions? According to Goffman (1956, p. 264),

> *Embarrassment* is a possibility in every face-to-face meeting, it demonstrates some generic properties of interaction. It occurs whenever [someone] feels that an individual has projected incompatible definitions of himself onto those present in a given situation. These projections do not occur by chance or for psychological reasons, but in certain places where social interactions prevail over principles that are incompatible with social organization. In the prevention of conflicts between these principles, embarrassment has its social function.

Goffman explains that embarrassment has to do with unfulfilled expectations, that is, “manifestations of the social identity that each person possesses in a given context.” Despite their distress and embarrassment, the participants in the scene observed inappropriate conduct. This embarrassment could be increased, but in “an unexpected flash of a social machine,” the situation was saved in an unpredictable way (Goffman, 1956, p. 268). The video segment expanded the classroom setting and showed the violence that the school would like to combat. The cocaine career joke scene took place out of expectations. The students reacted by confronting the vice principal, dispelling the uneasiness created by the question, and thus restoring the normality of the discussions.

For Mattos, dealing with embarrassing topics that embarrass the participants during the return of their research is common, since most of them deal with difficult topics such as

poverty, gender ordering, exclusion, school failure, etc. The limit that was imposed in the ethnographic process was to show how much the subject of the research is shown in the scene, as a vivid portrait of what a classroom in a school where the circumstances are violent is imposed through a classroom scene.

The following example can also be seen not only to demonstrate how video was a crucial tool to assist the narrative about the classroom but also to ratify that it is a complex, sometimes chaotic, and difficult locus, and this can generate multiple interpretations by the reader.

Vignette 5 – On August 8, 2005, Mattos and his team began research entitled Ethnographic Images of School Inclusion: School Failure from the Student's Perspective (Mattos, 2005; 2008) at Ciep Nação Rubro-Negra. A school of the City of Rio de Janeiro is located in Leblon, one of the most privileged neighborhoods in the south zone of Rio de Janeiro. In 2006, Ciep had more than 1,000 students, most of whom lived in the Rocinha favela, considered the second largest favela in the world, and therefore one of the most chaotic and violent in the city. Ciep operated full-time, and its clientele ranged from kindergarten to the fourth grade of elementary school. During the research period, the progression classes were created (Castro, Fagundes, and Mattos, 2011). In these classes, there were sixty (60) students. They were the *loci* of the research. The two teachers of Progression Classes I and II, the principal and the assistant director, collaborated with the work and authorized the filming in the two classes, and Class I gave up, two months after the research began. During the six months of observation, we produced more than 300 (three hundred) hours of films and collected numerous documents. The research team consisted of thirty-three researchers, including the school's collaborators. Generally, two researchers conducted the observations in the classroom to avoid disrupting the class activities. Two cameras recorded the observations on video over a four-hour period.

In the Progress II classroom, teacher Marcia (a collaborator) provided information about the students, about the dynamics of the classroom, and also about isolated cases that affected the progress of the school's routine. She concentrated her classes on literacy tasks such as writing, reading, and counting. In general, the students had enormous difficulties solving these tasks. The students in Progression II were lagging behind in age for the grade they attended; the age range was between nine and seventeen years old. They were engaging in multiple repetitions, ranging from two to five times per session. One characteristic of the interaction among the students was the frequent occurrence of fights. These happened without distinction of sex; everyone fought among themselves, for whatever reason. One of the reasons given by one of the students for the fights was that most of them said, "He was the son of a bandit, and that's how things were solved. One of the students stated that his fa-

ther was in prison because he worked in organized crime. Many others said they were very close to the criminal world and expressed fear and insecurity about the violence in Rocinha.

The fights in the classroom usually happened when the teacher, Marcia, was absent from the room at lunchtime for approximately an hour and a half. At that time, no adult had replaced the teacher. During the fights, one of the students would stand at the door, watching the hallway. They didn't mind the presence of the researchers and the cameras. When the teacher, Marcia, arrived, those who were beaten denounced it, and that was enough for them to be beaten more in the next opportunities. The results of these fights sometimes culminated in the summoning of those responsible to come to the school so that the teacher and the principals could communicate their complaints about the fights; other times, after the fights, the students involved missed classes. Generally, these fights resulted in the formation of groups, with the weaker students submitting to the protection of a stronger group with class recognition.

In Progression II, there was a student known as Captain. He was sixteen years old, very strong, and a leader among the other leaders. Depending on his permission, the students would be beaten by each other. He had his authority recognized, not only among the students but also by the teacher and school administration. The behavior and organization of the students in the class corresponded to that of the gangs of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and the groups formed by organized crime.

The study's main locus was Progression Class II. The participant observations took place between 6/22/2006 and 12/16/2006. The school was observed twice a week, and all visits were filmed. The collection of the Progress Class II record consists of 23 DVDs (Digital Versatile Disc), with approximately 190 hours of film. We created a database of images to organize these records and elaborated a chart to place the researchers in relation to the scenes selected for the vignette. It identifies the film collection date, the filming location, and the type of media used for recording. The entire collection was named, digitized on computers, transcribed, and prepared for the watch phase of the videos, from which the scenes that make up this vignette can be highlighted.

The featured event was filmed on June 22, 2006, and was titled *They understand each other: They fight all the time*, and the scene is: *Behind closed doors, there is a fight: While the teacher doesn't come.* In the edition, several segments of the fights between students of Progression Class II were placed in sequence, as it pictured an instance in which the teacher, Marcia, left the room for lunch after passing a task on the board and the students met behind closed doors. One or two boys guarded the door; others were under the command of the Captain, a young man who was so nicknamed in reference to his connection with the Militia, a type of gang formed by ex-military and paramilitary personnel who compete for power in the favelas. Often, the Captain would have some students beat each

other at this time, so fights would start between the leaders of other groups in the class. As previously stated, these groups corresponded to the organized crime groups of the Rocinha favela: the Red Commando, Third Commando, Friends of Friends, and the Militia.

All the students were fighting for power, beating someone under the order of the Captain. The Captain's leadership was recognized, as he was the largest and strongest in the class. The teacher frequently called him to assist with tasks on the blackboard, as he struggled with them. This fact reveals the positive relations he had with the teacher, who always asked him to act on behalf of the other students. The teacher thus validated the power he exercised.

However, in the scene narrated below, four sequences were selected, totaling 5 minutes of film. A girl provoked and attacked one of the boys in these sequences, altering power relations (Mattos; Conti, 2015). Upon witnessing the fight, the boys found themselves unsure of how to respond. The Captain looked at the fight, approached, and then withdrew. Other boys in the class tried to calm the student down; others threatened that the teacher was coming; others opened the door; others called attention to the fact that they were being filmed; and so the fact that a girl unexpectedly put herself in the place of a boy, provoking, maintaining a fight, and beating 4 or 5 boys at the same time caused chaos in the classroom. We can interpret the girl's seizure of power, which was previously exclusive to boys, as a shift in the gender order (Connell, 2002; Mattos; Conti, 2015). The scene went as follows:

> **Event** - *They understand each other: they fight all the time.*
> **Scene** - *The fight behind closed doors: while the teacher doesn't come*
> **Opening scene** - The teacher writes a math assignment on the chalkboard and goes out for lunch
>
> **1st segment:** 1 minute, 12 seconds, then the student Anthony leaves his desk, goes to Maria's desk, and punches her twice in the head. She stands up and fights back with her hands. Anthony advances with her feet; she defends herself, then attacks him with her feet as well. The Captain arrives, but he doesn't contain the fight. Anthony runs, and Mary runs after him. Someone warns that Globo is filming—the symbol of Globo (referring to the TV network). And he says, "Mayday... Mayday... [Help... Help...].
>
> **2nd segment** - Maria leans Antonio against the wall of the room. Mario comes up behind them and tries to push her away; she breaks free. Henry steps in and tries to push her away, she pushes him away as well. Anthony arrives to confront her, with Maria pushing him against the wall several times. Claudio says, Auntie is coming! Mario says, It's a lie! they argue. Anthony takes off his cold coat and goes at Maria with a ready-to-fight attitude, pushing her hard. Maria grabs him by the neck and gives him a tie. Several students arrive to watch the fight, which is getting dangerous. Janaina, a 15-year-old student, goes to the door and pretends that she is warning the teacher, Marcia. The students become tense as the fight intensifies, with

nearly all the boys observing Maria's altercation with several other students. Some girls remain motionless, focusing on their tasks, while others occasionally glance at the ongoing fight. Mario and Claudio try to get Maria off Antonio; Mario succeeds. Maria confronts Mario for excluding her from the fight. Mario curses and argues with Maria, telling her that she has to stop fighting. Maria persists, and Mario restrains her once more. Now Mario and Claudio hold her, one on each side, and pull her away from Antonio, who continues to beat Maria by the wall. Claudio curses Maria—piriquita, piriquita! He runs around the room, humming the curse—piriquita, piriquita! Maria, filled with fury, initiates a fight with Claudio, while Henrique and Márcio stand by. They ask her to stop fighting. Maria explains that Claudio can't curse her mother like that because she's not a whore. Maria asserts, "She's not a whore, and neither is my mother." Maria inquires, "Do you enjoy the label of a whore?" She keeps screaming and fighting. Meanwhile, Cristina pretends to fight with Henry, mimicking Maria's actions. Cristina makes a movement, imitating a typical male gesture—she adjusts her scrotum. And the scene ends.

3rd segment - Maria initiates another fight with Claudio, this time near the room's wall. It shows that she hurt him. She remarks, "It's commendable that you're fabricating the story that Auntie arrived, when in fact she didn't!" Maria continues to slap Claudio, saying, She didn't arrive; you said she arrived, but she didn't; she didn't arrive! They continue the fight until Professor Marcia returns. She addresses Maria, and all the students speak at the same time, pointing to Maria.

Final scene - Maria lied to the teacher, claiming that the boys were beating her, that she had nearly broken her nose, and that everyone was hitting her. Anthony hit her, pointing out Anthony. Mary weeps, playing the offended and spoiled part. The boys look at the scene in bewilderment and say, "It's a lie, Auntie; it was her!" However, the teacher takes no notice of their speech and hugs Mary. Marcia strokes Maria's head and face, trying to wipe away the tears that soaked her face. She tells Maria to go to the bathroom and wash her face. Maria leaves, and the teacher yells at the classroom, addressing Antônio and then all the students. She says, You want to be without recess, right? Because you make a mess, I can't go out to lunch for a minute! They should do the board tasks, the teacher says. Then she says, You have to do the homework on the painting when I leave; otherwise, you won't make it through the year! disregarding the fact that in the progression class, the students do not know how to read and, therefore, copy the tasks but are unable to perform them (Mattos, 2008).

Students used both femininity and masculinity to manipulate the asymmetry of power in the classroom, altering the gender order (Mattos; Conti, 2015). The gender order established in social relations outside of school is often replicated in the classroom. When threatened or altered, the stability or predictability of acts considered masculine and feminine causes instability and chaos (Mattos; Conti, 2015). While exacerbated manifestations of one role over the other or the change of role can also provoke instability.

Another possible analysis is about how students can make use of tricks such as those employed by Maria, who quickly moves from a typically masculine attitude to another, typi-

cally feminine, with the aim of obtaining approval, praise, and affection from the teacher or punishment from classmates as a result of manipulating the situation.

5 Final considerations

Ethnography is a theoretical-epistemological-methodological approach that, every day, has become more prestigious in various fields of knowledge (Erickson, 1986, 2001). In education, it has gained exponential application due to its versatility and characteristics, which provide for participant observation and a critical look up close within schools and for the subjects of education. But this was not always the case. In the years leading up to the 2010s, ethnography in education suffered severe criticism from the academic community, especially in the field of anthropology. As reported by Erickson (2009) earlier in this article.

Erickson and Mattos faced enormous challenges in their research. There were all sorts of difficulties associated with the scarcity of financial, human, technological, and logistical resources necessary for long-term research. When compared to the facilities for capturing images that exist today, it can be said that they experienced the stone age in terms of the use of video in educational research. However, they possessed an advantage that traditional ethnography lacked. It is appropriate here to use a phrase from common sense—a picture is worth a thousand words—and these ethnographers believe it.

These excerpts of Erickson ‘s speeches show the difficulties he faced at the beginning of his work:

> Edward Hall invited William Condon to give a talk at Northwestern. Condon had been influenced by Ray Birdwhistell, and he did microanalysis of face-to-face interaction. He showed his movies, and I thought, “That’s it!” There were really two things that captured me while doing the doctoral study. That was one, and the other was I read Charles Frake’s paper called, “How to ask for a drink in Subanun.” It was from the special issue of the American Anthropologist’s Ethnography of Communication that had just come out in 1964. In this article, he describes these men who sucked homemade rice beer through straws, squatting around under a little roof and talking with each other. I thought, “Wow, what if there was a sound cinema film of this, so you could really see what they were doing at the same time as you were hearing the talk?” That led to the first videotape I made. (Erickson, in an interview with Johnson e Amador, 2011, p. 94–97).

> In the fall of 1967, I produced my first videotape as part of a study on small-group discussions among young people in middle school. I used a camera that weighed at least 25 pounds, mounted it on a heavy, wheeled tripod, and recorded on reels of tape that were an inch thick and about 16 inches in diameter. We could only use this setup in a studio, so I brought a discussion group to that space, seated them in front of the camera, turned on extra lights around the room, and continuously recorded

> using the widest-angle camera lens. Having previously recorded such discussions using audiotape alone, one single videotape seemed marvelously illuminating; I could see who the speakers were addressing as they spoke—a particular individual, a subset of the group, or the whole group. A multimodal and multiparty analysis of the locally situated ecological processes of interaction and meaning making became possible using such an audiovisual record. By 1970, a camera weighing about four pounds was available. I used it in my next study, which focused on interaction processes in job interviews and academic advising interviews. (Erickson; Shultz, 1982).

In 1982, Erickson, in a presentation to *Sights and Sounds of Life in Schools: A Resource Guide to Film and Videotape for Research and Education*, argued that teachers and administrators live in an extremely complicated decision-making climate. in which they must act and solve problems according to the multifaceted complexity of everyday life in schools. The author adds that both education professionals and researchers are beginning to recognize that, from moment to moment, contexts are always changing.

Also in this presentation, the author explains that the traditional methods used in educational research are incapable of capturing, in real time, adequately, the dynamic quality and particularity of the circumstances of the school routine and how they should act in the day, week, and school year. He understands that audiovisual documentaries, in particular, can bring us closer to the actions experienced in schools, but simply being close may not help us create new insights.

Erickson (1982) explains that audiovisual documents are not always useful for either professionals or researchers. Because of the audience of these videos, they approach these materials with specific goals and perspectives, as well as traditional techniques of visualization and media interpretation. Thus, “documents are often created and presented in specific ways, and we should be less romantically naïve about the exploitation of audiovisual documents to get closer to reality” (Erickson, 1982, p. 4). He concludes by saying that “we need to understand more, to develop a more critical awareness, to know how to make more effective use of professionally produced audiovisual materials, or how to create homemade documents for ourselves” (Erickson, 1982, p. 4).

In this handbook, Erickson suggests changes in the ways of making films, describing them in writing, showing them, and discussing them with the audience. Its aim was to show the changes and modernizations that could help make video documents on school life more useful for: teachers; administrators; in-service trainers; managers; politicians; and researchers in education. Through a series of tips and procedures useful to the beginner researcher in ethnography on how to make use of videos, the author makes it clear that this manual does not deal with specific equipment, or the analysis of the materials produced.

Forty-two (42) years after its publication, this document remains relevant today, especially for the same audience. This is due to the rapid evolution of equipment and analysis techniques, which has made the discussion the author avoided in the document relevant.

In this same line of scientific production, Mattos declares that ethnography, as a method or epistemology, has been the object of his investigations for more than three decades (Mattos, 2009). She adds that, in 2017, the Netedu group's database included more than 55 (fifty-five) thousand scanned, cataloged, and studied documents on the subject. However, most of these documents were created prior to 2010. An analytical study based on a research report published by Mattos and Castro (2010) on ethnography in education in Brazil analyzed this collection and showed that, in addition to the fact that there are not many studies on ethnography in education in Brazil, when they existed, few were ethnographic. For Mattos, it worked like what she metaphorically called *a punch in the pit of the stomach*. This academic scare resulted in the creation of a self-reflexive research project entitled *Ethnography and Exclusion: an interpretative meta-analysis of the research carried out by the Center for Ethnography in Education from 1984 to 2016* (Mattos, 2017). Its objective was to study the ethnographic research carried out by NetEdu and evaluate whether or not it met the criteria to be considered ethnographic research in education. Since thousands of files were studied, this fact was not verified. Mattos felt that he needed to innovate, look for new data, resume the old work, and check where the failure was. Consequently, as of 2017, she sought to update this database and, at the same time, evaluate her production and that of her team in order to verify whether the ethnographies they carried out were, in fact, ethnographic.

While two of his doctoral students carried out a meta-analysis of NetEdu's production, Mattos updated the database with documents available online on reputable academic platforms. The biggest challenge was to find the flaws in his way of doing ethnography and thus prevent his followers and colleagues from repeating these mistakes in the future. The errors in video recordings were more evident; however, attending to the particularities that she herself had determined for research to be considered ethnographic required crossing a frontier that few researchers dared.

The work of Conti (2020) and Araújo (2020) was fundamental to starting this search. Conti studied 71 (seventy-one) research studies conducted by the NetEdu team, covering 32 (thirty-two) years of studies. She highlighted those that touched on ethnography as a category of analysis and constructed and followed some criteria for the inclusion and exclusion of documents that belonged to this category. The researcher's statement demonstrates the possibilities and limitations of using meta-analysis as a method of evaluating ethnographic research. She warns the researcher to be careful when conducting ethnographic research so that "the subject speaks only what he or she intends to hear and not a fanciful story" (Conti, 2020, p. 128). The author cites Mattos' statement as a significant example of the ethnographic approach she pursued in her meta-analysis. "Doing ethnography is a bit of a

scientific donation, of dedication and joy, of vigor and mania, of study and attention." To do ethnography is to perceive the world being present in the world of the other, which no longer seems to exist" (Mattos, 2011, p. 45).

Conti's (2020) meta-analysis revealed themes that illuminate the current paths of ethnography. Researchers in the field must comprehend the construction of relationships and interactions, she emphasizes. He explains that there is a face-to-face, virtual, or digital future, which explores the importance of digital ethnography linked to old concepts of ethnography in new virtual and digital scenarios. In this context, the author's meta-analysis revealed that, even though there is a non-physical space, the experience of understanding the whole from the parts and the researcher's posture of being a listener to his subjects is necessary in this new place of research that takes place in the field of becoming.

Araujo (2020) conducted a second study that examined the creation and application of ethnographic images in Mattos and his team's research. The research sought to understand the way in which the ethnographic image was identified and how it contributed to the studies about the classroom. It also sought the limitations and difficulties in the production of these images and thus studied them as visual culture, that is, if by incorporating ethnographic images into the text, they confirmed or signified the object of these researches.

Araújo's research analyzed 376 (three hundred and seventy-six) texts produced in the context of NetEdu's research, all based on images. Her results show, according to the vestments she created, that most of these images can be considered ethnographic.

And finally, in an attempt to update the database, Mattos added 5,890 (five thousand, eight hundred and ninety) documents to the NetEdu collection, having as a criterion the inclusion of the word ethnography – in the title and as a cut-off period the publications between the years 1999 and 2023. The documents studied reveal ethnographic tendencies and new ventures, such as the following: Autoethnography; Digital Ethnography or Netnography; Historioethnography; Metaethnography; Artethnography; Video ethnography; Performance Ethnography; Collaborative Ethnography; Critical Ethnography; Multi-Situated Ethnography; Institutional Ethnography; Environmental Ethnography; Feminist Ethnography, Documentary Ethnography, Business Ethnography, Legal Ethnography, etc.

However, in today's digital age, democratically shared by immigrants, natives, and digital nomads, we live with artificial intelligence. Every day, this reality introduces new strangeness and disarticulation to the school, challenging the boundaries that existed until recently.

The challenge for the current generation of digital ethnographers is to create a handbook that is useful to these schools. The first step is to guide parents and teachers on what is happening in the digital age, distinguishing between information and disinformation, knowledge and fake news, instructional applications, and (un)educational creations. We cannot defer this task to the future.

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