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## Between educational precariousness and teaching reinventions: the pandemic (ex)posed the clean face of public education

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the teaching profession, taking as its *locus* a Public Basic Education School, during the Covid-19 Pandemic period, from an empirical *corpus* consisting of a set of narratives of experiences of eight teachers of the early years of Elementary School. An exploratory intercession for the multiplicity of teaching in the face-to-face mode, on the school floor, sometimes of its immateriality, in the remote mode. The objective of this analysis is to understand to what extent this change in everyday life affected the teaching singularity, in order to allow the expansion of an exercise of understanding about teaching, inspired by a cartographic thought, which accompanies the course of this writing and moves like a dance with Tango steps. The problematization was developed from a conversation about experience, teachers, unrestricted defense of the school, and the love for the world that all this contains. It brings writings of procedures to think and resignify the territory of the educational field. It remains possible to affirm that the teaching in question, in this cut of time and space, becomes resistant and demonstrates the ability to give dynamics and appreciation to its profession, whatever the technical or structural situation to which it is submitted. We enunciate the importance of the existence of a cooperation network that provides conditions of possibility for permanent coformation of teachers.

**Keywords:** teaching; basic education; public school; experience; Covid-19.

### 1 Introduction: A test tube that falls into the classroom

This article brings to the discussion a research clipping, from a writing supported by the idea that approaching the events that cross the world is one of the ways to test our lucidity as a "key to freedom" (Nóvoa, 2022, p. 38). Thus, and under this premise, we challenge ourselves to write about the production of our thoughts and, we announce from now on, that the First Author of this text is a teacher of early years, works in a public basic school, driven by the multiple ways of moving through the daily pedagogical gaps, which challenge him to transit through paths that are not repeated, by the constant production of its renewals. The Second Author has his history marked in Basic Education as a Mathematics teacher in schools in the periphery. More recently,



he interrogates the research conducted by the First Author in his role as a study advisor (sometimes a study dis-orienter) — a role that lends centrality to teaching in Basic and Higher Education, among other areas. The Third Author, a scholar of Social Literacies in Higher Education, contributes with her experience in the research that deals with the relations between academic literacies and teaching action, with a close look at the initial and continuing training of teachers.

Thus supported, this article makes use of the power of the method to question, even, the lucidity of research in education itself, and its ways of conversing with this changing world, without fear of stumbling or being contaminated by obviousness, or even disregarding them, where the teaching/school pair evolves hand-in-hand over a kind of shifting ground, from which, by analogy, this narrative originates and is situated: within a timeframe we call the COVID-19 Pandemic, set in the school environment shaped by teachers' ways of being. It is a period of distancing from the work of producing face-to-face knowledge at school as a place of study, after all "School always means knowledge for the sake of knowledge, and this is what we call study" (Masschelein; Simons, 2021, p. 40). Inspired by the idea of cartography, which makes it possible to go back and forth (as one lives in a choreography when dancing an Argentine Tango, set in a typical place for this practice, called *Milonga*), in which we play places both in time and space that contains us, in which we find ourselves walking in various directions, according to what the text is doing with us and what we are doing with it: in this place emerge the narratives of eight teachers, who also situate us through all this writing.

The research that gives rise to this text was set in the teachers' room, of a same Municipal Elementary School, in a period still affected by mistrust with the existence/activity of the Covid-virus19 in our midst; It brings to its universe of interest the totality of teachers from early years who work there (all are pedagogues, with extensive experience in the area, for classes from the first to the fifth year) and who are invited to the conversations that flow during the narrative interviews on the theme to be addressed, during three scheduled meetings, considered as minimally sufficient for the production of the data to be analyzed, as established during the submission to the protocol of the Research Ethics Committee (CEP), linked to the university of the First Author, who, not by chance, is also a teacher/ Researcher Involved, in alluded school. As this production took place in the period of return to face-to-face classes, we had the

consent of the management team, and the students were dismissed in the last hour/class of the shift, in each meeting, so that the teachers/research subjects could share their impressions in that teaching collective. We emphasize that, for the organization of the text, each excerpt brought from these statements is identified with the name of its author through its respective number/pseudonym in Latin, which are, from one to eight: Una, Duae, Tres, Quattuor, Quinque, Sex, Septem, and Octo. We present Nulla (zero) as a double personality of a researcher implicated, inserted in loco, in the production of the teachers' narratives. Thus, and under such conditions, we try to understand together, ethically and singularly aesthetic.

When we write of this place of affection and sharing where we live and educate, go together in words the feelings that emanate from the knowledge of experiences that only teacher can report, that is "[...] what is acquired in how one responds to what happens to them throughout life and how we make sense of what happens to us" (Larrosa, 2015, p. 32). Under the event of the existence of a virus that has spread throughout the planet, came the announcement that we would no longer wait until school our students to talk personally about education. The order was to go home, all without exception, and wait in isolation for the arrival of the storm. It was not even up to us to discuss the author of the phrase: "Who bumped into my pipettes and burettes?" Our professional condition was collapsing, after all, we were being excluded from the work environment and the possibilities of being there, but without ceasing to be what we were; "In a few days it was possible to change what many considered to be impossible to change: from the outset, the learning space, from the classroom to home, with all the consequences for family and social life [...]" (Nóvoa, 2022, p. 29).

But, in this research, we do not try to understand the pandemic specifically, to look at the blindness of the denials or to dissect the statistics resulting from it (although potentials, such as methodological choice/approach), but to understand how the constitution of teaching took place, specifically in basic education, in a public school located in the southern region of Brazil, under an unusual context. Thus, from now on, we announce that the post-pandemic moment echoes, reverberates and sometimes silences in this text, in an attempt to capture languages/ teachings from its previous; therefore we argue that the way we write and the positions we take are also authorized by the way we defend, as stated by Gustsack (2018, p. 3): "of the impossibility of neutrality in research and education." We support this way of becoming involved

researchers, who produce and live the experiences of interaction in the fields of their own research, providing the possibility of understanding, among other things, how a certain metamorphosis occurred from the performance on the classroom wall board as a territory of teaching existence, to the screen of electronic devices.

Nevertheless, in this sense we propose to problematize and try to understand to what extent this change of everyday life affected the teaching singularity, in a teaching that goes from face-to-face to remote that, in the context of crisis, we assume it is no longer possible "Experience is always of the singular [...] it is precisely that of which there can be no science, but passion, [...] because it is nothing other than affection for the singular. In experience, then, the real presents itself to us in its singularity" (Larrosa, 2015, p. 68). Face-to-face, where it is possible to be together and touch the school floor. In class. Remote: it is delivering classes to students in a way and in a place beyond the doors of the classrooms and the walls of the schools; even for those without rooms and/or walls.

## **2 Methodological inspiration: paths and directions**

What we expose is crossed by the care as we were producing a language loaded with intentionalities and communicative senses, because "[...] what we need, then, is a language in which it is possible to elaborate (with others) the sense or absence of meaning of what happens to us and the sense or absence of meaning of the answers that this happens to us demands from us" (Larrosa, 2015, p. 68). Considering the thought about this theme "[...] by what differs, by what escapes, circumvents, opens possibilities for the educational field itself to be resignified and aired" (Camozzato; Santaiana, 2020, p. 3) Here, among other things, we potentiate our fascination for the poetic dimension, and try to understand how to establish coformative conversations, since, "in the process of talking, sharing and this sharing (auto) forms the subjects, because each experience lived in this share has the possibility to mess with our learning networks, shaking our comfort zone [...]" (Reis; Campos; Martins, 2021, p. 1057); socialized conversations, in which we learn and teach to perhaps continue experimenting with other modes of representation of thought, and be present in it.

Our writing serves as a strategy of resistance. According to Tavares and Fróes (2018, 1 min), "writing is a physical act, almost an athlete's discipline." Here we know

the idea of path and journeys that lead to different places, and that the relations of power, struggle and resistance are as subtle as extremely powerful in their conditions of perception, so "fragility is sometimes more devastating; it wins more than brute force. [...] that language is sometimes a form of blindness. [...] It's a weapon so effective and so fast that it sometimes distracts us from essential things" (Tavares; Fróes, 2018, 5 min). It's about attention and sensitive understanding.

We base the development of this article on an essayistic way of thinking, as a means to temper our academic constitution (and/or vice-versa). Thus, we consider it necessary to emphasize the understanding of the essay as a mode of writing, according to Larrosa, when he states that "the deepest formal law of the essay is heresy. Only the violation of the orthodoxy of thought makes visible, in the thing, that which the objective purpose of orthodoxy secretly sought to keep invisible" (Larrosa, 2003, p. 102-103). We argue that each journey incites other departures, producing heterogeneity in the address of arrivals, traversed by the multiplicity of dances (or walks); therefore, we chose this moment to give visibility to the general objective of this article: to problematize teaching based on the narratives of a group of teachers from the initial years of public basic education, in the context of a pandemic crisis. Specifically, we list the following: to identify teachers' pedagogical attitudes when faced with the challenge of reaching students in places far from the school floor; to understand how the process of connecting what the teachers knew, since their academic training, with what they needed to do for fulfilling their instructional roles; and To analyze the extent to which the pandemic crisis influenced the formation of teaching in basic education.

We risk understanding these experience reports by looking at the notions of description and sensitive understanding, which also allow us to challenge pedagogical thinking and "[...] welcome educational experience both as an event, that is, as an irruption of the unforeseen and the extraordinary, [...] conceive educational action in another language that allows us to transgress habits of thought" (Richter, 2016, p. 93). We combine this statement with our intention to transgress ways of doing and thinking about educational research, and to interpret the teachers' reports in the Larrossian way of thinking about experience: what happened to them in this time of crisis. Thus, we walk with steps marked by a certain "[...] subjectivity, uncertainty, provisionality, fleetingness, finitude of the body, of life" (Larrosa, 2015, p. 40).

What is lucidity but the human capacity of thinking? According to Sampaio and Carvalho (2021), in *The Life of the Spirit*, Hannah Arendt evokes thinking as a faculty that distinguishes us and singularizes us as humans. Writer and eyewitness of a world of dehumanization, Arendt evokes the "urgent need of reason", understood as the activity of thinking, which is based on meaning and not cognition. Therefore, it is credible to affirm that "What humanizes us is no longer knowledge, more technical, truer, but the search for meaning for our actions" (Nóvoa, 2022, p. 38). Thus, we questioned in the article, with choreographic inspiration in a dance of Tango: it was in a *Milonga*, for which we traveled to Córdoba, in Argentina, where we took lesson and learned that the steps are basic execution and have "mandatory" figures to be developed with creativity and rhythm that is peculiar, according to the technique of the executors; that it is necessary to "feel" the music, let it enter the mind of the dancers, producing commands that lead to the co-execution of figures/dance steps previously rehearsed/trained, or improvised in free creative aesthetic mode.

According to a suggestion of Nóvoa, this text adopts a certain musical rhythm, perhaps choreographic, too, because "there is not a single human being on this planet that has no relation with music: 'most of humanity does not read books, but sings and dances'" (Steiner, 2006, p. 9). Also, "music unites us and liberates us. Like education." (Nóvoa, 2022, p. 36). Obviously, there is no tango dancing or research in any way. There is a certain protocol, a certain aesthetics. A methodology that rules and tries to open new ways.

Considering that the word Tango can assume a certain multiplicity when designating a culture as a way of life, a choreographic dance, a melody, we announce that its sound crosses the writing of the thesis and echoes also in this article. We will dance throughout his writing, as part of a reality production process, where we investigate through a procedural accompaniment, which is methodological. Although cartography inverts the etymology of the word method, being this a given way to walk with goal, it starts from walking in relation to a non-goal, even if not having one is, by itself, a goal.

A constructible goal during an experimentation, assumed as an attitude, because cartography employs a procedure of emergencies, accompanying the insurgency of becomings. Furthermore, according to Lanzarini (2021, pp. 22-23): "It's a methodological reversal: it transforms *metá-hodós* (walking to achieve pre-fixed



goals) into *hodós-metá* (walking that traces its goals along the way). "[...] A method not to be applied, but to be experimented with and assumed as an attitude". Therefore, cartography is not an account of experience. It is not replicable; it is shareable. Although it allows for working with accounts of experiences (in this case, with teachers' narratives).

In this way, we open ourselves up and are agentified, incited to estrangement, also by the stance we adopt when embarking on the research journey. Inspired by Barone (2017, p. 59), to agentify ultimately consists of an act of renouncing what is already known and surrendering to strangeness itself. Thus, we expose ourselves to conversation with the group of teachers, during our meetings and some disagreements, inspired by Larrosa's expression "The Art of Conversation," cited by Skliar (2003, p. 211), which announces a mode of speaking, for a conversation is not merely something one does, "but something one enters into [...] And by entering into it, you can go where you had not expected to... And that is the wonder of conversation... That, within it, you might end up saying what you did not mean to say, what you did not know how to say, what you could not say". Still under the assertion that "[...] experience, not truth, is what gives meaning to education" (Skliar, 2003, p. 211), a certain production of documents takes place through the creation of conceptual maps, writings on A4 sheets, writings on the whiteboard, drawings, sound recordings, a virtual social network group, among others.

During the meetings, the study's proposal was explained, and the formal invitation for the teachers to participate was extended; with the use of the cartographer's first variety of attention, from the analogical appropriation of jumps that provide certain overflights through the theme — the tracking: as a sweep of the field, with an attention that aims at a kind of goal or moving target, locating clues, following changes in position, speed, acceleration, rhythm. To make contact with the ground — a light contact; a roughness; a disturbing element, at the level of sensations (not at the level of perceptions or representations of objects); is when the cartographer's attention is involuntarily captured, almost reflexive, but it is not yet known what it is.

Here, methodological rigor is sought to be ensured without abandoning the unpredictability of the knowledge production process. The landing: the gesture of landing indicates that perception, whether visual, auditory or other, makes a stop and the field closes, in a kind of zoom. A new territory is formed, the field of observation is

reconfigured. Attention changes scale. It goes from closed to expanded, with attentive recognition. It's the "let's see what's happening". Following the process, not representing the object. It is then necessary to calibrate the functioning of attention again, repeating the gesture of suspension once again.

To recognize an object and make use of it. This is when we begin to map the unknown territory and create our own territory of observation, drawing from the teachers' accounts: How what was done — something not yet experienced — came about; something that needed to be produced, invented. This cartography as a principle of the rhizome, which maps its acentrality (as the impossibility of pointing out a center), would be an art of using the encounter and reception of attention in its multiple nuances, for action (or not) on the possibilities arising from this functioning.

Considering cartography as a strategy to look at the rhizome, we think that the constitution of this writing, due to the question of identification or coupling, may even be debatable, but not negligible. Thus, "this is the meaning of cartography: following paths, involvement in production processes, connecting networks or rhizomes" (Passos; Kastrup; Escóssia, 2015, p. 10). So, the inspiration for this methodological strategy becomes an investigative procedure, aiming for a conversation with the subjects of this research, connecting things we know, or things others say, and we learn, much like a process of sewing and basting. So each connected part makes it, from now on, influence the whole that is in the future, in the becoming.

Rhizome? In their work *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (1995–1997) borrow from botany a way of thinking with plants: the rhizome suggests an alternative form of organization. It's a system of horizontal stems with differentiated, polymorphous, horizontal growth, lacking a defined direction. Grass is a good example; it spreads across the yard, occupying all the territory it can. There's no center, hierarchy, order, or depth. The rhizome is a process where multiplicity connects through itself. Thus, the study was comprised of multiple possibilities and movements, which led to methodological choices. After many detours, spins, and stops, we arrived at the book *Pistas do método da cartografia: pesquisa-intervenção e produção de subjetividade* by Passos, Kastrup, and Escóssia (2015). Among others, we also visited *Caminhos Investigativos (Investigative Paths* by Veiga-Neto *et al.*, 2002; Wortmann, 2005). The realization of this search mobilized our ways of being and thinking as researchers.



As we describe knowledge, we appropriate it, modify it, and reinvent it. Thus, and for this very reason, we also produce it, because "Objects can be the results of the discourses enunciated about them" (Oliveira, 2006, p. 83). We are shaped by the books we read and by teachers who welcome us, offering us choices of paths and directions. For Larrosa, a teacher is someone who has already read. His elegance is measured by the books he has chosen to read and then display on his table for others to read. So, there is no teacher without reading. And there is no reading without someone who thinks in order to write. Therefore, thinking precedes science. And it is science itself. In our view, this historic moment of disruption in the teaching routine needs to be made visible and understood through qualified discussions with the rigor of the method and academic reading.

### **3 Open veins of the analysis territory: the teaching voices**

We propose that a poetic pedagogical gaze is a possible act in our way of being, especially when we establish an environment with a loving, affective connotation that, which thus builds the realization of the desire to be in the world. Thus, bringing poetry into teaching is an act that is ethical, aesthetic, but also: pedagogical, didactic, methodological, and structural. It is important to note: poetry is not just a romanticized instrument for expressing feelings; it is a political act of being, seeing, desiring, and interfering in the world, in a constant symbiosis and feedback loop between the desire and the possibility of producing and agentifying knowledge.

It is up to the teacher to constantly understand what's happening around them and to bring to their student's eye and mind a state of constant attention that produces perceptions, as a way of thinking through doing (Sennett, 2020). A teacher in permanent training, within a society focused on individual skills and performance, puts themselves to the test, studies, thinks, and plans in order to reach their students.

During the pandemic, with online classes, the necessary distance obscured some things but possibly illuminated others. For example: the recurrent structural precariousness in the teaching work environment; the emergency of needing a special focus on qualified permanent training. The teachers' statements that they had to reinvent themselves during this period sound like a denunciation, almost a cry for help. Thus, we reoriented ourselves amidst the social and educational issues that coexisted and co-produced each other, because "[...] language is not just something we have,

but rather almost everything we are, determining the form and substance not only of the world, but of ourselves, our thought, and our experience" (Larrosa, 2015, p. 58). With this research movement, we delved into the etymology of experience, which "[...] comes from the Latin *experiri*, meaning to test (to experiment). [...] it inseparably contains the dimension of crossing and danger" (Larrosa, 2015, pp. 26-27).

According to Larrosa (1999), we are the meaning of what we are. It depends on the stories we tell and the ones we tell ourselves. Yes, it's culture, as Stuart Hall (1987) posited, that prompts us to think about the contradictions and power struggles in a globalized, borderless environment, which are increasingly evident in our daily lives. Attempting to contribute to this school that provides education to young people is, at the very least, an act of love. It's that love for the world Hannah Arendt speaks of, which permeates all her work. We also find resonance in what Masschelein and Simons (2021, p. 19) state: that "[...] a declaration like 'school is not a business' expresses a different responsibility: the responsibility — even love — for the young generation as a new generation”.

During the narrative interviews (which served as instruments for this qualitative research, with methodological characteristics explained below), the teachers were given free to narrate on the topic. The discussion began and centered on teaching during the pandemic, and nothing more. The narratives emerged free from leading questions or any pre-structured format. The methodological and ethical thinking in the research was always in a praxis mode. This involved careful consideration not to interfere with or direct the subjects' responses, weighing for analysis, according to Ravagnoli (2018, p. 7), the exclusive use of the interviewee's language.

In this way, and with the mission of trying to understand these events, we highlight the teachers' voices that emerged during the proposed meetings. We'll present some excerpts from these statements in tables for emphasis.

Table 1 – Narratives from research participants

<p>- <i>At that moment, during this pause we had at home, we also got to know ourselves. I got to see what I'm truly like... what I want for myself... (Una); - And I realize that, especially at the beginning of the pandemic, we made a huge difference in the children's lives, because what did they have? Amidst all their parents' fear, and our own fears, what did they have? Us. (Duae)</i>"</p>
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Source: Narrative research interview. Produced by the first author.

These are narratives that speak of their lived experiences. They operate with the meaning of experiential knowledge, as in the Larrosa's vision (2002), or what

derives from his inspiration in Walter Benjamin's conception: that it is "[...] what passes through us, what happens to us, what touches us" (Larrosa, 2015, p. 18). This statement, though recurrent in academia, contributes significantly to our reflection on what emerges from the teachers' voices and illuminates the unyielding power of a richness that touched them.

As if the precariousness of internet accessibility in Brazil weren't enough, we also live tangent to the utopia of screens for all as a didactic means, not an educational end. This is because, for Nóvoa (2022, pp. 41-42): "Given the infinite possibilities of the digital, no one in their right mind can deny its importance. However, technological issues aren't just technological; they are pedagogical and political"; Therefore, dispensing with the perception and emergence of innovation might not be the best choice, at the risk of turning our own existential territory into a restricted and bordered place.

Perhaps it is from the conceptual distance between information and knowledge that we announce the conflict—from the scraps we gather to weave a larger network. According to Harari, given the speed of changes in the 21st century, in an analogy about the possibilities of the teacher (whom we refer to as in-person) in relation to information technologies, students will, at some point, need to be alert to the feeling that "[...] they will never be sure if what adults are telling them is the result of timeless wisdom or outdated prejudice. So, who can you trust? Technology, perhaps? That is an even riskier bet" (2018, p. 5). He further argues that technology can help, but it's crucial to know how to moderate its use, lest one become a hostage to its power.

Here, we connect with Nóvoa's (2022, p. 46) assertion that "there is a human heritage impossible to digitalize." This refers to students having to study at home, isolated from the school with its protective walls, because, according to Larrosa (2017, p. 17), school is also "[...] a place of refuge, preservation, protection, and custody." Thinking from this perspective guides our research decisions. To contribute to this quest of better understanding the world we inhabit and our relationships, Mia Couto (2020, p. 1) states that we need to "[...] pay more attention to our surroundings, for it educates us towards the decentralization of ourselves [...]". This will allow us to focus more on what the other wants to tell us. This is also our intended approach: a way of distancing oneself that goes from being an activist to being a militant, in order to think about, defend, and give visibility to contemporary education.

We take a militant stance when we assert that "[...] school education is a force for the new, for overcoming, for thought" (Tomazetti, 2019, p. 17). For teaching, even when affected, all that remains is the attempt at a rational response. This response draws on teaching's erudition and complexity, which is sublimated and built upon simplicity — found in the natural way of expressing how much of nature exists in the world it speaks of. This highlights the clear potential for a new language to emerge, one that names a form of teaching constituted by its thoughts and made mutable by its expressions. This aligns with Gustsack's (2008, p. 1) statement: "I take language as a manifestation of the human in its becoming." This concept resonates with this unusual moment, one that our generation will likely not experience again—unless we continue to make the same mistakes of aggression and neglect toward the natural order of our living planet Earth, which could "[...] leave us behind and go its own way," as Ailton Krenak (2021, p. 1) warns and argues. Even with Artificial Intelligence on our doorstep, it is a given that science feeds on the indispensability of the source from which our Natural Ignorance springs.

The conversation with the research participants became a coformative experiment, given its nature as a process of integrated production and collective support. It lent itself to the cartographic approach we were practicing, in which we only spoke superficially about the proposed topic. Perhaps this research took shape, as Masschelein and Simons (2014, p. 21) state, not as an event that merely reveals something "[...] or offers knowledge about our educational present, but rather as a thought exercise, making a public gesture and inviting us to think—that is, putting ourselves to the test". It is as if we were in a laboratory where we bring forth issues that challenge us to a state of constant critical thinking, pushing us toward a movement of public thought. This work also aims to present itself as a source of inspiration and reference for teachers in a time of academic (trans)formation.

We set aside specific times for this conversation, though as Esteban (2016, p. 71) reminds us: "teachers' conversations have no end. Only brief interruptions, to be resumed a little later, frequently revolving around a common theme: the delicate and complex challenge of being a teacher [...]"(2016, p. 71); With this in mind, we established a form of listening that observes and seeks to interpret what happens to us, making it possible to "[...] find strategies to escape from the systems of thought that underpin them and to open bodies to other images of thought" (Paraiso, 2014, p.

44). This is why we raise the question from Corazza (2018, p. 4): “How can we reflect on the dramatics of teachers (shared by students) in the classroom, while maintaining the audacity to think about teaching differently than has ever been thought or is currently thought?” This way of thinking is potentiated not only by its method, but also by the unusual and rushed nature of its occurrence — which is the very disruption to which education was submitted.

It was in this educational environment that we experienced other forms of coexistence and a sense of shared purpose in the act of teaching. This is where an inspiration emerges from the poetic perspective of Manoel de Barros, which provides the idea that the greatness of teaching is also found in the minutiae of daily life, in minimal gestures, without spectacle or artifice. In his *Tratado Geral das Grandezas do Ínfimo* (2010, p. 403), he emphasizes that, “for me, powerful is the one who discovers the insignificances (of the world and our own)”.

Thus, we challenged ourselves to understand the provisional meanings of some markers in this analysis, inspired by Nóvoa (2022): protect, transform, and value. We emphasize that these words take on multiple meanings depending on the diversity of contexts, as in this research, they assume a certain prominence and are sustained by this particular situation, during this specific time and place of research:

Table 2 – Research participant narrative

<p>— <i>It was quite complicated, because we couldn't reach all of them in the same way... some would come to pick up the printed activities... others online... we tried various methods and approaches, but even so, there were still some we couldn't reach. (Quinque).</i></p>
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Source: Narrative research interview. Produced by the first author.

This teacher, when navigating the frontiers of chaos in her practice, wanted to take her pupils by the hand and lead them, without leaving anyone behind. This was a tacit act of protection, even as she suspected that to "reach" everyone at the same time and with the same intensity is a task that, in all circumstances, borders on utopia. After all, one of the words most often used to discuss the possibilities for teacher action, even in the face of uncertainties, is reinvention. They turn to this concept even without a full understanding of it, as the concept itself emerges during their self-constructive actions. This, too, is a form of teaching in the midst of a transformational event.

Table 3 – Narratives from research participants

— *We weren't prepared; we were caught by surprise—teachers, parents, and students too... so we had to reinvent ourselves and create strategies, means to be able to reach our students, even from a distance. (Septem)* — *We had to adapt to teaching remotely... to sending lessons... and the school went home... (Sex)* — *It's like we were going to do some construction... without our foundation, without our base... because we had to go back and start from scratch to be able to rescue these students. (Septem)* — *I felt like I was in the first year of my teaching degree all over again. (Sex)* — *During the pandemic, we had to reinvent ourselves, and in this year of returning, we've had to reinvent ourselves even more because we're working with this whole variation of levels... also in the classroom... having to start, so to speak, from scratch. (Tres)*

Source: Narrative research interview. Produced by the first author.

Here, Tres announces a reinvention of reinvention: it's a third situation that accounts for what was, what had to be, and what will need to be. As if that discussion weren't enough, we also found genuine, though provisional, concepts for reinvention:

Table 4 – Narratives from research participants

— *[...] to be a teacher is to reinvent, to be elastic, it's push and pull all the time... (Sex)*  
 — *[...] having to start, let's say, from scratch... (Tres)*  
 — *[...] we had to create strategies, means to be able to reach our students, even from a distance... (Septem)*

Source: Narrative research interview. Produced by the first author.

All of this leads us to reflect on how much we are guided by the concept of existential fluidity. How mutable we are in a changing world. There are indications that beyond the content-focused function and the multiple didactic techniques used to produce that act of teaching, there is a certain kind of caring teaching: the kind that is created with a loving outlook toward oneself and toward the full and happy existence of one's students:

Table 5 – Research participant narrative

— *In addition to seeking new approaches, I also thought a lot about the human side... I was thinking about them... I wasn't just thinking about their learning... I was thinking about the hunger, the violence... because they were isolated at home all that time. (Quattuor).*

Source: Narrative research interview. Produced by the first author.

The school exists beyond a condition of human life; it is a necessity that constitutes it. Thus, they are "caring teachers" announcements of the effects of seeking excellence in welcome. And yes, to love others, you must love yourself.

Table 6 – Research participant narrative

— *What helped me was the exchange with my colleagues. We would form groups and talk... I learned a lot from my colleagues. I also learned a lot from my mistakes during the pandemic... I was "forced" to learn other ways, other techniques... that made me a better teacher. (Octo)*

Source: Narrative research interview. Produced by the first author.



Here is the idea of continuous professional development, the kind that makes you think and seek help for what you don't know. It's the kind that doesn't shy away from asking questions, from learning about successful examples, from embracing the opportunities of courses and lectures, or from finding greatness in the smallest detail of an encouraging comment, endorsed by a colleague's successful practice. These are also characteristics of what we could call a flexible approach to teaching, one that seeks to understand in order to share those understandings.

Table 7 – Research participant narrative

*— It was kind of an adaptation... we first had to work on their emotional side... we see their emotional need... they have a necessity... they're always hugging, wanting to make contact with us... that's when we see the importance of human connection... how much it was missed. (Tres)*

Source: Narrative research interview. Produced by the first author.

What this teacher brings to the discussion, which speaks to her preparation for the teaching profession, is also a sense of welcoming. Even in the face of unpredictable actions, her capacity to offer shelter, refuge, and protection stands out. This announces not only the urgency of providing an education that goes beyond the transformation of the individual but also one that is rooted in attention and the transmission of love for the world. a school that is richer in experiences and permeated by richer experiences, which in turn creates the world. According to one of Paulo Freire's (1981) most emblematic statements, "no one educates anyone, no one educates themselves, people educate each other, mediated by the world". Thinking this way, if what's in the middle is always the world or some fragment of the world, then one of the teacher's main tasks is to open it up to children, transforming it into material for study and revealing its beauties.

We also found that the teacher doesn't speak directly about herself; she reveals herself through her actions with the student. She is present in the will to teach. She doesn't say, "I am this way and that way," in many words... Instead, she brings up the student and what she did or didn't do, what she said or didn't say, and what she understood or failed to understand. She is the world she creates with them.

Table 8 – Narrative of a researcher involved in the research

*— At no point did the teachers complain about what they had to do... Their concern was, at all times, with their named students... At no point did they demand the right not to die doing that.... no matter where it came from. (Nulla)*

Source: Narrative/research discovery. Produced by the first author.

According to the teachers who participated in this research — and which gets to the very core of what it means to care for human beings — the human condition of poverty emerges. This condition is not just defined by a scarcity of food on the table, but by the precariousness of lives within their social environments. Here, we identify characteristics of prosociality: behaviors that we understand and classify as being aimed at supporting and overcoming daily challenges, benefiting, and concerning themselves with the maintenance and quality of life of their students.

For Biesta (2017, p. 16), "[...] education is always an intervention in someone's life; an intervention motivated by the idea that it will make that life, in some way, better: more complete, more harmonious, more perfect — and perhaps even more human." Perhaps all our lessons, with their preparations, planning, organization, attention, and care, are meant to minimize the effects of existential poverty, the kind that makes both voids and bodies ache.

Table 9 – Research participants narratives

<p>— <i>Because I believe they went through a lot of hardships... and now they're valuing the food (school lunch). (Una); — We know their reality is pretty complicated... most of them, right? So the school ends up being kind of their family, you know? (Tres); — I think for learning to work, there has to be a lot of humanization... sometimes they need guidance... a perspective that's more focused on the personal side... on their humanity. (Una)</i></p>
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Source: Narrative research interview. Produced by the first author.

Perhaps the understanding of "more human" can be perceived here as belonging to a different kind of sensitivity that emerges in the face of such difficulties. After all, protecting the poorest (who inhabit the school and its surroundings) is not just about avoiding danger by putting a shield between the student and a knife, a bullet, a rock, a fall on a rough floor or on the stairs, or hitting their head on a wall amid the chaos of recess. Or to deafen and/or blind them to the insults and humiliations in their various languages, with their representative gestures. Protecting the poor students and the non-poor is to show them how much life plays tricks on us in its repetitions, and how much we lack a survival manual or tutorial. Without it, we succumb or suffer until we understand what's happening, if there's even time.

It is to show them the grandeur of the common world's minutiae and to make that sensitivity a condition for rationality in their choices of paths. Defending the existence of schools is an inescapable factor for a basic protection of the human arriving into a world with a society. In this, we associate ourselves with the statement

from Nóvoa (2022, p. 44): "The school, with all its flaws and limitations, is still one of the few institutions that can protect the poorest and most vulnerable". This is also a teaching condition: understanding how to navigate this human and humanizing terrain.

What awaits the university student entering this profession, or the one who also wishes to speak about it? This is a philanthropic and well-intentioned welcome text. Therefore, that culture which is commonplace in school classrooms has now been converted into writing. This is how we understand our relationship with Richard Sennett (2020) regarding the craft of thinking, and with the scaffolding that provided access to this text: beyond a concept to operate with, there's the touch of craftsmanship in our ways of being and expressing ourselves.

To delve into the singularity of teaching thoughts is what school is about, as an educational laboratory. And the school we're talking about isn't generic in the etymological sense. It has power to be public, municipal, basic, elementary, located in the periphery, and far removed from any romanticized victimhood. It needs to be made visible, announced, and articulated, though everything can be restarted, because, according to Nóvoa (2022, p. 14), when addressing a system's inability to deal with its own vital problems, it "[...] degrades, disintegrates, or else is capable of eliciting a meta-system able to deal with its problems: Disintegration is probable. Metamorphosis is improbable, but possible". While doubts and uncertainties proliferate, we align with Masschelein and Simons' (2021, p. 60) idea that "in school there are no problems, only questions". We weren't just distanced from the physical school; rather, we were producing a school that had not yet fully materialized from paper and imaginations.

It is essential to understand that "what's at stake is the school model, as it has been organized over the last 150 years, [...] and not the school itself, for its capacity to lead all students to learning, but also for its role in building a common life" (Nóvoa, 2022, p. 15). It's also a strategy of struggle and resistance against this model of socialization and conviviality, in an attempt at a transformation analogous to a salvific and reconciling metamorphosis of the school. He ratifies this defense for three main reasons: "[...] education is not limited to learning alone; [...] the school constitutes a central institution for social life; the school, [...] must also be considered a public good and a common good" (Nóvoa, 2022, p. 14). Therefore, moving away from the private, purely consumerist, and market-driven logic.

#### 4 Dissecting the profession of teaching

Even in this post-pandemic time and place, we can state that the system's responses, when analyzed from a macro perspective of education, were fragile and inconsistent. This was due to a reliance on platforms and content provided by private companies and the difficulties in even ensuring access to digital tools for students in general. This included both a deficit of devices and a lack of access to the internet. As for the schools, the responses were much better. This was due to the support and engagement of the administrative teams, who, as much as possible, managed to establish a good connection with families by delivering printed materials and organizing groups on free social media platforms. It's relevant to highlight the importance of the teachers (see Table 1) for their responsive potential, because, according to Nóvoa (2022, p. 26), "it has become clearer than ever that teachers are essential for the present and future of education".

As for learning environments, the importance of building coherent educational spaces emerges, ones that allow for the realization of "[...] student involvement and participation, valuing study and research, cooperative learning, an integrated and multi-thematic curriculum, pedagogical differentiation, etc." (Nóvoa, 2022, p. 27). Our movement, just like the folds that emerge from teacher narratives and the on-the-ground reality of school — where each statement is linked to the hand we take to move forward — becomes a research choreography. It brings together the school, with its educational apparatus, and dance as representative examples of a passionate spectacle that lays the world bare, while also being the world itself. After all, "[...] from passion, an epistemology and an ethics also emerge, perhaps even a politics, and certainly a pedagogy" (Larrosa, 2015, p. 42). This is where the coupling of dance movements with the ways of teaching emerges, which is what we're focused on understanding.

This is when the possibilities for other choreographic creations emerge. Other forms of teaching. It's as if the teachers were seeking to overcome their limits, their wills, and their as yet unknown possibilities. According to Barone (2017), in his dance on a clinic floor, bringing dance as an intercessor for his ways of looking and acting, she surrenders to the possibilities of his own creation: "With this clinic-body invited to dance, we only have our own body to try and create another one" (Barone, 2017, p.

59). Therefore, we highlight dance as an external reference that imitates and expresses our thoughts.

Thus, also inspired by the studies of Benedetti (2015), we coupled the choreographic contribution of Tango with a certain way of movement from the order of sensory fields. From the perception of what is happening to us, stemming from what we encounter and how we name what happens to us. Teaching is not a casual encounter. We realize that the things that happen to us in these places cannot be made invisible or escape being named before they are emptied out and become porous, forgotten memories. We argue that what we have seen and felt needs to be recorded to fuel discussions that can create other solutions. Thus, we distance ourselves from the sameness of repertoires and arguments that stifle the search for new paths and ways of walking. We offer movement to complacency by exposing and making it visible what makes us uncomfortable and ripe for discussion.

It's evident that we're experiencing a major educational gap, as it wasn't possible to provide significant contributions beyond educational palliatives when teaching was deterritorialized. Education during the pandemic, much like other areas of public service, with rare exceptions like the health sector — which, despite political difficulties and obstacles, had a commendable, if not heroic, performance — instead went into a mode of disordered retreat and dispersion. While in healthcare (which, though not our focus of study, we can use for an analogy), society converged and flocked to its central points of care. From schools, however, people dispersed. They left their doors closed and their rooms empty, and a certain lack of centrality was assumed in educational operations. At this point, we align with what Nóvoa (2022, p. 37) identifies as a critique of three dangerous illusions circulating in our times:

First — The illusion that education exists everywhere and at all times, and happens "naturally" in a variety of environments, especially family and virtual ones. Second — The illusion that the school as a physical environment is over, and from now on, education will take place mainly "at a distance", with the help of different learning "guides" or "tutors." Third — The illusion that pedagogy, as the specialized knowledge of teachers, will be replaced by technologies "doped up by artificial intelligence"

These are perceptions that emerged and began to justify their role in a global information technology network, using cell phones, computers, and spreading digital educational technologies, etc. An issue that arises is the judicialization of education. As in-person pedagogical contact was limited and suspended, judicial decisions began

to receive scrutiny and attention. The legal basis and authority quickly rose to prominence with the force of the new rules, but at no point did they disregard the importance of the teachers' role in this process.

Among other examples, we can bring up the emergence of the term "Active Search". It represents the control and surveillance of students to see whether or not they were receiving content from their enrolled schools. This was also used to justify their legal eligibility for government assistance policies, which activated a public apparatus that included schools, guardianship councils, and the public prosecutor's office. Stated differently, this was a way to combat educational inequality by trying to guarantee equal access to content (this effort was hampered by the limited in-person availability at schools and the precariousness of the tools that would have enabled remote access); while also mitigating school dropout rates.

Perhaps these gestures can be associated with the constant need for a firm and decisive production of policies that confront the woes of inclusion and exclusion, which are recurrent in our country. Also, the pressure from society for solutions regarding their children's education gained a certain "solidity" based on the determinations emanating from the judiciary. Nevertheless, what reached the students were (with rare and commendable exceptions) sporadic pieces of content, delivered in a purely detached manner without the best explanations, amounting to a literal transmission of a mere jumble of data.

We saw the contribution of teaching with a form of education that goes beyond the cultural and educational issues (although, in some way, these are always present). School is a place for treatment from the perspective of equality. It is a suspension of the natural, unequal order. Everyone is received with the same rights and duties, and in this aspect, they are humanized as a primordial condition for them to exercise their sense of belonging to the world that contains and involves them.

The difference is not — and should not be — naturalized but rather understood from the perspective of equality of being and existing in the world. On the other hand, it also "[...] emerges as the materialization and concrete spatialization of time that literally separates or removes students from the (unequal) social and economic order (the order of the family, [...] of society as a whole) and into the luxury of an egalitarian time" (Masschelein; Simons, 2021, p. 29). The advent of the health crisis forced us to reconsider the concept of teaching as a phenomenon in constant construction. It



brought forth a range of unlisted possibilities, making it imperative to state that there is still much to add and/or revise.

The period and the attitudes developed also allowed for a more attentive look at the importance of teachers and everything they represent for the construction of society. The teaching profession gained much more positive visibility compared to society's previous understanding of its role. Today, it is in a state of frank strengthening, as there's no denying that "[...] the pandemic revealed that change is not only necessary, but urgent and possible. It is this awareness that allows us, today, to imagine, that is, to build the school of the future" (Nóvoa, 2022, p. 30). We also emphasize that the educational sector is not, and does not intend to be, resistant to criticism; quite the opposite. Self-criticism has been a recurring theme, with constant self-assessments, in the search for the best way to maintain the excellence of its services to society.

We speak from a place of attention that is permeated with purpose for the school that was or needs to be produced. These places are anything but innocent, except when they lovingly receive and welcome the lives that renew their own world. For the teacher, "the formative aspect of teaching infused with love is the brilliant shadow of their mastery" (Masschelein; Simons, 2021, p. 80). The interest, care, and pedagogical affection for the person who turns to you—for that student who is your vital responsibility—is a type of love. "With the pandemic, the future changed a great deal. Did the tragedy of Covid-19 wake us up? Good. In this uncertain present, we need to affirm that there is always the possibility of other futures (Nóvoa, 2022, p. 52).

This study was not interested in establishing a hierarchy or a debate over the importance of in-person versus remote teaching. Instead, it seeks to understand how this abrupt and necessary transition from one to the other occurred given the circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and how this affected the ways of being for teachers in schools that had in-person teaching as their premise. Thus, we (us and this research) and this study were constantly dissecting the profession of teaching, while being teachers.

We're not arguing that remote teaching harmed or diminished the possibilities for instruction. Instead, we are discussing the precarious conditions under which it was possible to carry out the teaching profession with students, a situation caused by both the rushed implementation and the lack of equipment — for the students themselves

and for the providers of excellent access. Perhaps the main issue is the impossibility of living together in the school space. Other shared experiences (forms of shared living) were prompted, but we are unsettled by the possibility of a new kind of school reality emerging. It is also possible to bring into the discussion the relative ineffectiveness or impracticality of the full power of control that the current educational system would like to exercise over students, in comparison to the one it thinks it exercises in the in-person mode.

How much this entire school apparatus affected a boiling society, permeated by contradictions and multiple interests — which is nothing new when it comes to the works produced in a collective/social way and crossed by a multiplicity of interests.

We must also consider the extent to which these students returned to the classroom having benefited, or not, from all that was done during that time. And the influence of how much teaching was overwhelmed by job insecurity within an asymmetrical home/school relationship to meet class schedules.

If not cataloged, these events would likely fail to contribute as historical and critical sources for this ephemeral present, hindering the new perspectives that will emerge in all futures. If COVID-19 ultimately caused the anchors supporting our educational beliefs to float away, we are left with alternatives, drawn from our studies, to contribute to the evolving role of the school. This role is entrusted by society to its authority as a specialized teaching system, concerning the right and duty to promote the schooling of children and young people. According to Reboul (1980), as cited by Nóvoa (2022, p. 48): "Between the individual and society there is the humanity. Therefore, the education of the human being is determined by two dimensions: to be free and not to be alone." What we can do in this decisive phase of the school's history, given a scenario in constant metamorphosis, is to consider our doubts and debate them collectively, with rigor and responsibility. This is how the need for the constant renewal of our ignorances occurs: we are in a permanent flight from what we are, because we want to be better, to know other things, other possibilities of being in the world.

One of the strategies for seeking knowledge is the attempt to be involved in a permanent training, which allows us a certain personal growth and gives us visibility in the world we live in. This training becomes coformation when there is the possibility of learning from others. This broadens the sense of freedom, which is always relational

and therefore "[...] questioning and dialogue, which can become a space for coformation between peers and continue to feed on relations with other formative spaces in the community" (Bahia; Fabris, 2021, p. 200-201).

Teacher, when he speaks of school, usually exposes a subtle but fervent and resistant defense of its existence. The possibility of living with their peers and learn from them in this mutual relationship of sharing, which is indispensable for the constitution of being and being human in the world, because: "[...] regardless of years of experience, we are in constant (trans)formation, but the insertion into the profession can be the moment with greater challenges" (Bahia; Oliveira, 2018, p. 4). Also because of this, school is a place and a condition that precedes any discussion about educational issues. First make the school.

## **5 Considerations we give (to ourselves) at the exit of this *Milonga***

In this text, besides being of the order of understandings, it gains humanizing connotations, by respect for people (see Table 5); looking at school issues, we will address next, among other things, that school is a place of emotions; our world needs to be better cared for; the whole period of sanitary crisis represents a great educational gap, for more "contents" that have been delivered to the students, the teaching was not present in its plausible fullness; it when education was deterritorialized; we saw the emergence of judicialization of education; we experienced the need for the production of policies to deal with the ills of in/exclusion, recurrent in our country; We also saw the emergence of greater visibility to the teaching role and its representativeness in building a more just and democratic society, because "the pandemic revealed that change is not only necessary, but urgent and possible. It is this awareness that allows us today to imagine, that is, to build the future school" (Nóvoa, 2022, p. 30).

Based on our studies, we consider that, for Basic Education, the most urgent issue is the discussion about the permanent reconceptualization of the term "basic"; we list the predominance of precariousness (see Table 2) with which it was possible to develop the teaching profession with students, as well as the providers of the possibilities for excellence in this access. The apparatus and the school model in force at that time, which seemed immutable, did not realize the potential for accentuating social differences, but announced them. We saw the emergence of the urgent need for permanent training, which enables us and makes it possible to learn from others: the

teachers, participants in the research, bring this announcement (see Table 6). We envision a teaching that is resistant, capable, valued, qualified, competent, welcoming, caring, trans (by extrapolating its own place of existence) and coformative (by the property of doing together). Thus, at this time, there was an educational praxis crossed by a process of reinvention ethics (see Table 3). Let us be aware that a teacher is one who is not yet. And never will be. We are the threshold of incompleteness.

Thus, we affirm from our research that forming oneself is by need to stop being what we are. To erase school is to deny the full extent of these correlations. Although in the midst of discussions about offering school modalities, it is necessary to pay attention to the place that encompasses the concept of public schools and for all. It is possible to say that there is much more in schools than in the courses that deal with them. The health crisis has especially offered us the experience of social distancing, but it has reinforced the perception of the need to be together as a human maxim.

Even in the face of the profanation of the concept of normality, generated by the uncertainties that have permeated current educational practices, we discuss teaching as it has been and as it could be. We listened to the teachers from their very discourse within the analytical environment — this space, time, and attitude. We extended all possible coverage across the territory, including its viscosities, textures, flaws, and knots, and sought to look beneath and from every perspective and dimension. According to Manoel de Barros (2010, p. 461), “I have the privilege of not knowing almost everything [...] And that explains the rest.” So do we. Distancing ourselves from the “school of Yesterday” does not mean erasing the “school we want”, but rather an exercise in loving resistance, full of “other” possibilities in conducting research, by trying to produce and envision what kind of ‘free time’ we are sedimenting for future generations.

In time, we can only list some possible “clues” for future teachers and researchers on the subject: What difficulties today would be enhanced consequences in this unusual time? Will quick answers continue to reverberate in academic discussion rooms? Our students mixed in this whole broth: are there others we have, and not those that we would have? Let's continue to fight so they understand the importance of studies in their lives. Let us continue to struggle so they perceive the importance of studies for their lives. May the territory of teaching we inhabit and constantly rethink, which we dedicate ourselves to exploring, is sedimented with

ignorances and discoveries. Therefore, it's imperative that we clearly understand the lesson from the wall chart: the pandemic (ex)posed the clean face of public education.

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