


**Narrative inquiry:  
reflections on productions of the last 14 years**

*Pesquisa narrativa:  
reflexões sobre produções dos últimos 14 anos*

*Investigación narrativa:  
reflexiones sobre producciones de los últimos 14 años*

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**Abstract:** This article presents the results of a bibliographic research, whose methodology involved a survey on the journal portal of the CAPES. This study is one of the research stages of the main author's doctoral dissertation, and sought to gather data pertinent to the use of narratives as a method and as a phenomenon, considering the works that presented results of investigations on the narrative inquiry methodology based on the authors Connelly and Clandinin. The research was conducted between December 2018 and March 2019. The data were organized considering the descriptor: Narrative Research, the dates of publication and the methodology presented. From the analysis of the data, some terms that compose the framework of this methodology are discussed, such as Experience, Three-Dimensional Space, People and the place the theory occupies in the research. These are terms that approach the interest of this text's authors.

**Keywords:** Narrative inquiry. Professional development. Three-dimensional space.

**Resumo:** Apresenta-se, neste artigo, os resultados de uma pesquisa de natureza bibliográfica, cuja metodologia envolveu um levantamento no portal de periódicos da CAPES. Este estudo configura-se como uma das etapas de pesquisa de doutorado da autora principal deste texto e buscou levantar dados pertinentes ao uso das narrativas como método e como fenômeno, considerando os trabalhos que apresentaram resultados de investigações a partir da metodologia de pesquisa narrativa, com base nos autores Connelly e Clandinin. A pesquisa foi realizada entre os meses de dezembro de 2018 e março de 2019. Os dados foram organizados considerando o descritor: Pesquisa Narrativa, as datas de publicação e a metodologia apresentada. A partir do tratamento dos dados, são discutidos alguns termos que compõem o arcabouço dessa metodologia como Experiência, Espaço Tridimensional, Pessoas e o lugar da teoria na pesquisa, termos estes que se aproximam do interesse dos autores deste texto.

**Palavras-chave:** Pesquisa narrativa. Desenvolvimento profissional. Espaço tridimensional.

**Resumen:** En este artículo se presentan resultados de una búsqueda con perfil bibliográfico, cuya metodología ha tenido en cuenta los datos del sitio web de periódicos de la CAPES. Este estudio se configura como una de las etapas de búsqueda del doctorado de la autora principal de este texto, que ha buscado detectar datos pertinentes a la utilización de las narrativas, como método y como fenómeno, considerando los trabajos que han presentado resultados de investigaciones a partir de la metodología de búsqueda narrativa con base en los autores Connelly y Clandinin. La búsqueda ha sido realizada entre los meses de diciembre de 2018 y marzo de 2019. Los datos fueron organizados considerando el tema: Búsqueda Narrativa, las fechas de publicación y la metodología presentada. A partir del análisis de los datos, son discutidos algunos términos que forman el marco teórico de esta metodología como Experiencia, Espacio Tridimensional, Personas y el lugar de la teoría en la búsqueda. Estos términos se acercan al interés de los autores de este texto.

**Palabras clave:** Búsqueda narrativa. Desarrollo profesional. Espacio tridimensional.

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## Introduction

The use of narratives as a way to collect, produce or build data in scientific research has been constantly performed in the field of education since the 1980s, especially when it comes to researches involving teacher education and professional development processes. This finding is justified by the understanding that

studies which are called “qualitative” encompass a heterogeneous set of perspectives on methods, analysis techniques, including ethnographic studies, participative research, case studies, action research and even speech and narrative analysis, memory studies, life histories and oral history (ANDRÉ, 2001, p. 54).

Concerning the use of narratives, Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2002, p. 90) point out that it has been gaining great importance in qualitative researches. They also point out a significant growth which indicates being related to the “growing awareness of the role that telling stories performs forming social phenomena. At the dawn of that new awareness, narratives become a research method widespread in the social sciences”. One of the highlights in the uses of the narrative is related to the great possibility of use, “because it is through them, that people remember what happened, put an experience in sequence, discover possible explanations for it and play with the chain of events that build the individual and social life” (JOVCHELOVITCH; BAUER, 2002, p. 91).

Several researchers (TELLES, 1999; MELLO, 2004; FREITAS; GHEDIN, 2015; MARIANI; MONTEIRO, 2016; OLIVEIRA, 2017) show us that, besides the use of narrative as an instrument, it has also been adopted as a research method and as the phenomenon to be studied (CONNELLY; CLANDININ, 1995, CLANDININ; CONNELLY, 2015). Thus, we can say that the Narrative Inquiry is highlighted as a trend in the researches about teacher training, considering spaces for the expression of subjectivity in the field of scientific research (OLIVEIRA *et al.*, 2016).

Considering the question of subjectivity and researcher participation as part of the research to be developed, Clandinin e Connelly (2015, p. 120) will say that:

When narrative researchers are in the field, they are never there as recording minds of someone else's experience. They are also living an experience, namely the research experience which involves the experience they want to investigate. The researcher's narrative experience is always dual, it is always the researcher living the experience and also being part of his/her own experience [...] that is, we, the narrative researchers, are part of the parade we presume to study.

Thus, we can say that “the narrative inquiry has established its place as an emancipating form of research in education by providing the necessary context for teachers to become” participants in an investigation and authors of their own narrative (TELLES, 1999, p. 81). The narrative inquiry is announced as a possibility to understand and compose meanings about the experience, and this happens in a collaboration process among the researcher and other research participants.

The accomplishment of the research that resulted in the writing of this text was thought and elaborated having a larger research as context, the doctoral research of one of the

authors of this text, that has been searching for a theoretical improvement on the narrative inquiry methodology, considering that it is one of the methodological options for conducting an investigation with educationalist teachers who are starting in the profession, in order to understand how they produce meaning and share meanings about the teaching experience. In this stage, the objective was to conduct a bibliographic research, whose methodology involves a survey in the the journal portal of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES - *Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior*), from the descriptor narrative inquiry. From the survey, it was possible to make some reflections on the use of the narrative inquiry, proposed by authors Clandinin and Connelly (2015), mainly as discussions that involve some of the terms used by these authors, such as the concept of **Experience in John Dewey**, the **Three-dimensional Space**, essential for the construction of narratives and to reflect on the **tensions** that permeate the accomplishment of a narrative inquiry.

### Brief considerations on the methodological course

For this work, we have anchored in the theoretical assumptions of Pizzani *et al.* (2012), to carry out this bibliographic research, whose methodology involved a survey in the the journal portal of the CAPES, having as theoretical input, the contributions of Pizzani *et al.* (2012, p. 54), mainly because we consider, like those authors, that a “bibliographical research is a thorough investigative work”, which requires accuracy and attention in its accomplishment.

Initially, the search began with the insertion of the descriptor **Narrative Inquiry**, in order to find the quantity of works that use this methodology and are available in this space. It is worth mentioning here that, as a temporal cut, we chose to consider the works published between 2004 and 2017. The choice for the initial year, 2004, is related to the period of the beginning of the research group to which the authors are linked, and the final year, 2017, was chosen as the last possible year since the search was conducted in December 2018. In this first search, 108 papers were found mentioning the descriptor **narrative inquiry** at some point.

In the second part of the research, by reading the titles, abstracts and keywords, 38 works were selected among 108. During the initial reading, the works that used the narrative not only as ways of collecting or producing data for the research were considered. In other words, those that since the presentation of the abstract considered the narrative also as a method. Although the term Narrative Inquiry had been identified in several studies, in most cases the Narrative appeared only as an instrument of production or data collection.

Following the process of organization and analysis of the data, we chose to manually select from among the 38 papers found, only those that, besides having as methodology the narrative inquiry, used the contributions of authors Clandinin and Connelly to carry out the research. At the same time, we consider the works that specifically discussed teacher education and teacher professional development. Thus, 16 works were selected to identify the incidence of the term Three-dimensional Space, the concept of Experience in John Dewey, as

well as some of the terms considered by those authors as tensions in narrative inquiry. The choices presented here are justified because they are topics which interest the authors of this text.

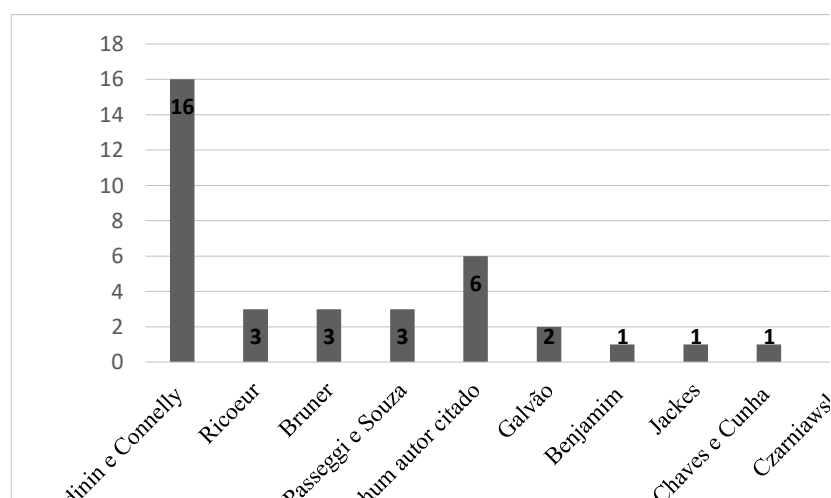
Then, after reading and filing the 16 works found, we began to organize the information in the form of graphs and tables, trying to find the key terms used by Clandinin and Connelly (2015) and presented earlier. In this course, we tried to group the most significant aspects to support the reflections presented here.

## Narrative inquiry and the productions in the journal portal of the CAPES

According to Pizzani *et al.* (2012), it is necessary to be rigorous when choosing the database for the research. Therefore, the choice of the the journal portal of the CAPES was due to the importance of this space in terms of the range and diversity of the databases, and the practicality of the search and especially the amount of full texts available. From the first searches, it was possible to delimit the terms, considering the advanced search mode, which allowed a precision in the collection of works.

When we proceeded with the first movements of the analysis process of the texts found in the CAPES repository, it was possible to notice, among the 38 texts identified in this search, 16 used the authors Clandinin and Connelly (2000; 2011) and Connelly and Clandinin (1995) as references to justify the option for the narrative inquiry methodology, three works based on Ricoeur's contributions, three sought foundation in Bruner's works, and three other texts used the contributions of Nóvoa, Souza and Passeggi. It is noteworthy here that these were the most cited, considering the general context of the 38 works, but, besides these names, several others emerged and even a significant number of works in which it is not possible to identify an author for the discussions of the narrative method, as we can see in the graph below.

**Graph 1.** Main references cited to justify the choice for the Narrative Inquiry methodology - 2004 to 2017



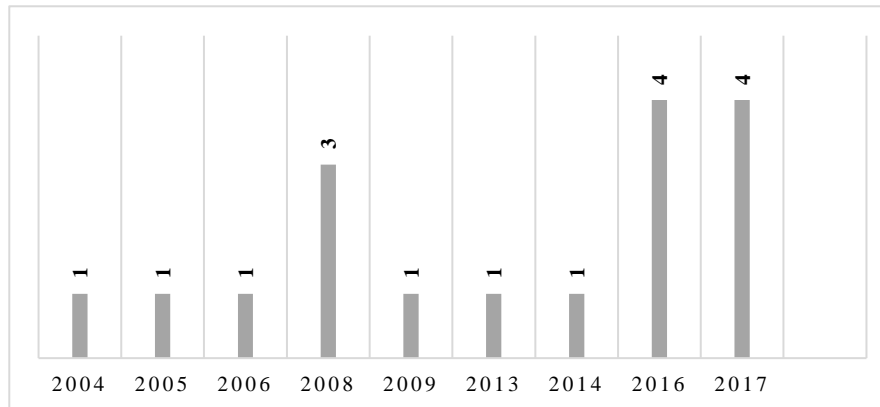
Source: Data produced by the authors from the bibliographic survey.

The information highlighted in graph 1 allows us to deduce that, among the works available on the platform adopting the narrative inquiry methodology, 16 of these works adopt the contributions of authors Clandinin and Connelly as reference in their works. This information draws our attention because we recognize that, within this quantitative, seen here as a small sample, this percentage is quite significant.

Another aspect that draws our attention during the analysis of these texts is the fact that we find among the themes of the productions subjects such as: Teacher Education, Urban Spaces, Cultural Studies, Written Language and Digital Technologies, Old Age Narratives, Science Teaching, Supervised Internship, Visual Arts, English Language Teaching and Learning, Environmental Education, Professional Development, Curriculum, Mathematical Education, among others. This finding allows us to think about the scope of areas that use narrative as a research method, considering its potentiality for this activity. We can say, therefore, that the narrative consists in the study of the different ways in which we experience the world (CONNELLY; CLANDININ, 1995), since the “phenomenon constitutes the history, while the method that investigates and describes it works out in a narrative” (GALVÃO, 2005, p. 328).

Thus, we highlight that, from this stage onwards, we will consider only the 16 texts that are based on the authors mentioned above for the development of their works.

**Graph 2.** Texts using the Narrative Inquiry methodology from the contributions of Clandinin and Connelly - 2004 to 2017



Source: Data produced by the authors from the bibliographic survey.

This information assures us a broader view of an increase in the last two years in research using the narrative inquiry methodology from the contributions of Connelly and Clandinin. This finding corroborates and allows us to infer that there is an increase in demand for methodologies that enable the “researcher to escape the role of controller of hypotheses that can be tested or proven” (CLANDININ; CONNELLY, 2015, p. 114), which also provide new ways of doing research that make it possible to think about the experience and consider the engagement with participants and research spaces no longer as an obstacle.

The reading and analysis of the texts, considering the chronological criterion, also brings us back to what researchers as António Nóvoa (2000) say about the increased interest of researchers in investing in new approaches in the field of Social and Human Sciences, investing efforts in seeking new ways of thinking and developing researches that give researchers conditions to talk **to and from** school, rather than talking **about** school or **about** teachers (LIMA; GERALDI; GERALDI, 2015).

Like the above mentioned authors, we can say, with Mariani and Monteiro (2016, p. 113), that the choice for this research methodology is based on the interest and search for:

[...] a new way of doing research, which, without neglecting the rigor and depth of knowledge production, is capable of breaking with the more formalist perspective of research, looking at the possibility of a knowledge built from the experience lived in the school day to day, in the subjectivity of relationships and perceptions of those who live the daily contradictions that involve the teaching-learning process.

Another issue that emerges when reading and analyzing the texts is related to the formative aspect of narrative inquiry. Authors such as Serodio and Prado (2017), Freitas and Ghedin, 2015), among others, highlight that this way of doing research “enhances the production of awareness and knowledge in the educational area” (SERODIO; PRADO, 2017, p. 1). When we note this occurrence, we confirm that, like us, the authors of this text, other researchers also experience this diving movement in search of a deepening and understanding in the use of this research methodology, which allows us to capture the personal and human dimensions that cannot be quantified, but which are extremely important for the understanding of the studied phenomenon (CLANDININ; CONNELLY, 2015).

Thus, from this moment on some reflections are presented based on the contributions found during the data analysis, while it was possible to dialogue with other authors who, like us, have been developing researches and studies around this methodological proposal.

## **Experience, three-dimensional space and other tensions in the development of the narrative inquiry**

By studying the texts found, we did it in order to identify some reflections that would help us to think more deeply about the concept of **Experience** proposed by **Dewey**, the **Three-dimensional Space** and the **tensions** in narrative inquiry, which are central issues for the authors who have been developing their researches based on the contributions of the authors highlighted here.

Clandinin and Connelly (2015, p. 80), when dealing with the challenges facing the task of developing a narrative inquiry, state that it is necessary, above all, to think narratively, while discussing the places where the narrative thinking passes, considering what they will call the “intellectual territory of other ways of thinking”. Referring to this place as boundaries, the authors highlight the two main boundaries imposed by the ways of thinking: **the reductionist and the formalist** boundaries.

Initially, by exploring the boundaries of narrative thinking with the dominant narrative present in **reductionist research**, Clandinin and Connelly (2015, p. 81) will describe **five tensions** resulting from this boundary: “temporality, people, action, accuracy, and context”. Subsequently, they start reflecting upon the boundaries between the narrative inquiry and the **formalist inquiry**. Based on this reflection, they list **four other tensions**: “The place of theory, the balance of theory, people and the place of the researcher”.

By listing these tensions, the authors also warn that they do not intend to suggest that they may be strictly related to either boundary. In fact, they will say that all these tensions reflect the way they have experienced narrative inquiry at these boundaries over the years. They also state that:

We also know that the terms and distinctions are not so precise and clear as to make it possible to offer a fixed list - five tensions for the reductionist boundary and four with the formalist boundary. [...] Moreover, our intention is not that the list of tensions is read as an exhaustive list. These tensions are the ones we experience most often [...] they are tensions that highlight important aspects of narrative thinking (CLANDININ; CONNELLY, 2015, p. 81).

Thus, when reading the texts selected in the CAPES repository, it was possible to realize that, in one third of the works, the authors adopted a concern to further discuss the methodological issues, and these issues are relevant because they allow us to understand the theoretical development of the field, the theoretical-epistemological approaches employed, the trends in training and research. As in the text entitled: “Writing-Event in the radicality of the narrative inquiry” of the authors Serodio and Prado (2017). Initially, the authors present reflections on the narrative writing as an event and, when writing about some roles of narrative inquiry, they point out that “the narrative takes much more than the roles assigned to it in narrative inquiry studies” such as the roles of “registration, memory, historical reconstruction, documentation of work [...]” (SERODIO; PRADO, 2017, p. 5), among others. These authors, who rely on the contributions of Connelly and Clandinin (1995), agree that

narrative is both the phenomenon under investigation and the method of the investigation. Narrative is the name of this quality which structures the experience that will be studied, and it is also the name of the research patterns that will be used in the study (CONNELLY; CLANDININ, 1995, p. 12).

The study of this text also contributed for us to look at narrative inquiry as a way to investigate teaching action, without, however, objectively dealing with issues full of human subjectivity. In this paper the authors also announce that, when analyzing some researches of the group which they are part of, they realized that, in those, “the narrative inquiry, in its radicality, enhances the production of awareness and knowledges in the educational area” (SERODIO; PRADO, 2017, p. 1).

Since the reading of the first texts, we have noticed some differences in the way researchers portray research participants: some of them still use the term “subject” or “collaborator”. We highlight this aspect because it is pointed out by authors Clandinin and Connelly (2015, p. 77) “as one of the strongest and ever-present tensions”, which indicates the need for clarity on how we conceive “people's place in research”:

One of the simplest ways of saying this is that in formalist research if people are possibly identified, they are considered samples of one form - of an idea, a theory, a social category. In the narrative inquiry, people are seen as the embodiment of lived stories. Even when narrative researchers study institutional narratives, such as school stories, people are seen as compound lives that constitute and are constituted by social and cultural narratives (CLANDININ; CONNELLY, 2015, p. 77).

Clandinin and Connelly (2015, p. 81) also state that “people are at the heart of all researches in social science” and therefore the way they are considered in an investigation may indeed represent a point of tension. Therefore, people have a “special place in the narrative inquiry”. Thus, someone who collaborates, narrating their formative experiences, is considered a research participant and not a mere collaborator or a subject that provides information to others.

In another text selected in the survey, “Challenges and potentialities of writing in teacher education in mathematics”, Freitas and Fiorentini (2008), like the authors above mentioned, are also concerned about reflecting on the place of people in narrative inquiry. They mainly discuss the place of research participants, considering:

In the narrative inquiry, the research participant is a partner of the investigation process who shares interpretations and meanings about the lived experiences with the researcher, because the participant's personal and professional histories, related to the actions or activities performed, bring relevant information and evidence about his/her training process over the time (FREITAS; FIORENTINI, 2008, p. 142).

Like Freitas and Fiorentini (2008), Dorneles and Galiuzzi (2016) highlight in their work, “Narrative Inquiry in Chemistry Teacher Training”, also selected during the survey, one of the tensions explored by Clandinin and Connelly when we reflect on the assumptions of the narrative inquiry. Dorneles and Galiuzzi (2016, p. 182) say, “one of the central tensions is to think of the place of theory in narrative inquiry”. What has been seen is that we often consider it “common to begin the research by the theory, but the narrative researchers tend to begin with the experience as it is expressed in lived and told stories”.

The authors above cited, by highlighting the issue of theory, considered as one of the most common tensions for the narrative researchers, challenge us to think about the dilemmas experienced daily by taking on the challenge of the narrative inquiry, because as Clandinin and Connelly (2015) say, for many researchers who rely on more traditional modes of research, the narrative inquiry is not sufficiently theoretical, as if it were not valid, or even lacking the necessary credibility for not following traditional modes of doing research.

Therefore, researchers should always be aware of these issues, while focusing on what interests them most, as for narrative researchers the greatest challenge is trying to understand the experience. Based on the arguments of Clandinin and Connelly (2015), narrative grows out of the experience and returns to it in a cyclical evolution of living, telling, retelling and reliving. Understanding this cyclical process which spirally connects these continuous moments and in an inseparably way is to think/research narratively.

Evangelista (2017) also reports the tensions experienced around the place of theory. As a novice narrative researcher, he outlines his effort to “situate the place of theory in the writing of the thesis report”. Even revealing that at first he could not “begin writing without



seeking references in theories on which I could move”. He adds that this movement around this tension led him to learn, within narrative inquiry, other ways of doing research. Evangelista also points out that at all times he was insistently invited to “think of a *continuum* of professional development in which personality, professionalism and contexts intersect indissolubly” (EVANGELISTA, 2017, p. 28).

In another selected text, whose title is “Cognition, emotion and reflection in the classroom: for a systemic approach to English teaching-learning”, Aragão (2005, p. 108) points out that by “taking Dewey’s concept of experience and continuity, narrative inquiry draws attention to the relationship between historical variables”. For this author, “Every present has a past and a possibility of future history rooted in this previous space. This way of characterizing our experience projects important conceptualization about the construction of the research” (ARAGÃO, 2005, p. 108), because it allows us to think about the experience beyond what has been accumulated.

For Clandinin e Connelly (2015), Dewey's theory is considered foundational for their research, mainly because it follows its teachings from what Dewey (1976) calls *experiential continuum*, and based on this concept, and borrowing the terms: **position**, **continuity** and **interaction**, they define the concept of **Three-dimensional Space** that we will see later on. Freitas and Fiorentini (2008, p. 142) also quote the philosopher Dewey when addressing this issue. For them “when the narrative process begins, narrative inquiry pulses with back and forth movements through time and along a *continuum* of social and personal considerations”.

In quoting Dewey, Clandinin and Connelly (2015, p. 30) also assume that one of the “criteria of the experience is continuity, namely the notion that experience develops from other experiences and that experiences lead to other experiences”. So, when someone takes a stand on this *continuum*, which can be “imagined now, imagined in the past, or imagined in the future - each point has a past experience as its basis and each point leads to a future experience” (CLANDININ; CONNELLY, 2015, p. 30).

Vassallo and Telles (2008), authors of another text selected for analysis, writing about a foreign language learning experience, also use Connelly and Clandinin's narrative inquiry as methodology. The authors reflecting on the production of narratives, also considered “historical reports from field texts” (VASSALLO; TELLES, 2008, p. 344) named by Clandinin and Connelly (2015) as research texts. They claim that they actually represent a challenging transition and that researchers should, throughout the process, consider the personal dimension as well as “the lived experience to the social dimension, otherwise the narrative will be nothing more than a narcissistic movement”. On this issue, Vassallo e Telles (2008, p. 344) reinforce that:

To avoid such limitation, it is necessary to give constant attention to the *three-dimensionality of Narrative Inquiry*. For example, the stories we will narrate in this article were situated in a *space* (pointing to a certain situation), in a certain *temporality* (within a certain time - present, past and future) and transited between the personal and social dimensions of our lived experiences. When writing this narrative article (research text) about our teaching / learning experiences *in tandem*, we had to learn how to think about them in a narrative way, paying attention to our lives with the foreign languages (Italian and Portuguese) as narratively lived and

also to contextualize our investigation within this *metaphorical three-dimensional space*.

Clandinin and Connelly (2015, p. 129), when speaking about the three-dimensional space in the research, highlight some concerns about the ambiguity of the work in the three-dimensional space, they also point out that the “notion of such space can place artificial and restrictive limits on research”. They similarly say that doing “narrative inquiry is a way of life. Living in its most general and unlimited sense”. And they warn that there is “a potential paradox if the research space is viewed as a closed box rather than an infinitely open space with more current concepts of space”.

Clandinin and Connelly (2015, p. 130) also point out that they “hope that the balance of the idea of three-dimensional space will open imaginative possibilities for researchers, possibilities that could not be easily noticed in the absence of this concept”. It is also important to highlight the question of ambiguity, the importance of being aware of the place where we and our participants are placed at all times.

Carvalho (2017, p. 53) also discusses the concept of Three-dimensional Space and invites us to reflect on the issue of relationships, since “narrative inquiry, being relational, being developed from the notion of three-dimensional space, requires the researcher to recognize that he is not alone in this space”, a space which involves everyone with whom he works, especially the research participants.

[...] as narrative researchers, we work in the space not only with our participants but also with ourselves. Working in this space means that we become visible with our own lived and told stories, sometimes it means that our nameless and perhaps secret stories come to light, as well as those of our participants. [...] we are accomplices of the world we study: to be in this world we need to remake ourselves as well as offer the research insights that can lead to a better world (CLANDININ; CONNELLY, 2015, p. 98).

Mariani (2016, p. 112), writing about the learnings about teaching practice of students who are about to graduate in Physics, points out that:

When we look at this three-dimensional movement of narrative inquiry [...] we can see that it necessarily implies two other movements that need to be developed by both the researcher and the participants in the research process: a movement that implies the “look at yourself”, inside, it is an introspective look and the other movement points outward to the contexts around, it is an extrospective look.

Therefore, it is extremely important to pay attention to this three-dimensional space, considered one of the key points of narrative inquiry, because

it is from this that the whole process of construction of a narrative work will develop. The researcher, in the construction of his research texts, whether temporary or final, at all times should be aware of the three-dimensionality aspect. All the sense-making work will need to take into account these three places, or dimensions, precisely because they are conditioners of the phenomenon which seeks to understand (MARIANI, 2016, p. 110).

Also, Moreira (2019, p. 42), when writing about Narratives and multiculturalism, highlights that:

This three-dimensional space of narrative inquiry is a place of continuous movement; researcher and participant move between time, social, individual and the context in which they are inserted. The experiences lived as they are narrated and observed and tend to promote reflection as they are observed and may be redefined, the participant is invited to see himself / herself. In this movement, the individual is modified by the context in which he/she is inserted and at the same time he/she acts in it, he/she also transforms it.

Beyond these questions, it is always important to emphasize that, in this way of doing research, we need to look carefully at what Clandinin and Connelly (2015, p. 233) will call “narrative risks, dangers and excesses”, always taking care to maintain a level of criticality, in order to avoid a composition to turn into a narrative with “Hollywood plot, in which everything ends well”. Or even a text that is built based on an always loaded good intention of researchers and participants:

[...] the researcher must make a series of decisions to know how to balance the softness contained in the plot with what is obscured due to this softness. [...] It is a matter of being as alert to the untold stories as to the told ones. [...] One of the ways we learn to think about the risks, dangers, and excesses throughout research is to look through our multiple “selves” as narrative researchers. [...] We cannot avoid the task of criticism (CLANDININ; CONNELLY, 2015, p. 234).

Thus, we realize that developing a research considering all these aspects, puts us in a situation of permanent alert, because this is one of the most important tasks of the researcher who chooses this methodology. It is also necessary to look carefully at the aspects that involve the quality of narrative inquiry and what can be considered in its execution so that it can be presented as something inviting, that presents authenticity, that evidences adequacy and plausibility (CLANDININ; CONNELLY, 2015).

## Final considerations

By deciding to carry out the research that culminated in writing this text, we did so in order to gather information about the use of narratives, as a method and as a phenomenon. At that time, we had a number of issues in mind, and we also sought to identify researchers who, like us, have relied on contributions of Clandinin and Connelly to conduct their researches, in order to understand how they have been addressing these challenges that narrative inquiry raises.

During the research, it was possible to realize that, much more than finding other works and authors using this methodology, we could learn a little more about the challenges of this methodology from those who had been doing studies much longer than us. We were also able to confirm how much access to what other researchers are developing enables us to understand Ferrarotti's statement (2014, p. 22): “we can start learning together with others”.

It is also worth remembering that the study of this methodology imposes on us a constant state of search for improvement of this way of doing research. Thus, based on the results, it is possible to point out that further investigations may be carried out, considering

the possibilities of use in the development of the research, mainly because they believe in its potential to develop formative processes for those who take part in it.

Therefore, because it is clear that narrative inquiry is in a state of development, we must at the same time maintain a standing alertness from the very beginning, when the idea of the research is conceived, until the moment of the final writing, always keeping attention on issues such as ethics, authorship, anonymity and others.

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