

**THE MOBILIZATION OF EMOTIONS IN THE TRAINING PROCESS OF  
EDUCATORS WHO EXPERIENCE THE SCHOOL INCLUSION OF STUDENTS  
WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER**

***A MOBILIZAÇÃO DE EMOÇÕES NO PROCESSO DE FORMAÇÃO DE  
EDUCADORES QUE VIVENCIAM A INCLUSÃO ESCOLAR DE ALUNOS COM  
TRANSTORNO DO ESPECTRO AUTISTA***

***LA MOVILIZACIÓN DE LAS EMOCIONES EN EL PROCESO DE FORMACIÓN DE  
EDUCADORES QUE VIVEN LA INCLUSIÓN ESCOLAR DE ALUMNOS CON  
TRASTORNO DEL ESPECTRO AUTISTA***



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**ABSTRACT:** The aim of this study was to understand the process of mobilizing emotions in educator training meetings developed through work with autobiographical narratives regarding the school inclusion of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This study was part of a doctoral research characterized as training research. Ten biweekly online meetings were held with 29 professionals from a public school that houses classes from late elementary school to high school. By analyzing the data based on the historical-genetic method and the principles of the evidentiary paradigm, it was observed that narrating one's own experiences and listening to narratives posed by others aroused emotions that mobilized the participants to reflect on discourses and practices that have been causing the exclusion of students with ASD within the school. In this way, educators were given the opportunity to seek out new possibilities for action in the school context.

**KEYWORDS:** Teacher training. Emotion. Autism. Historical-cultural theory.

**RESUMO:** O estudo realizado teve como objetivo compreender o processo de mobilização de emoções em encontros de formação de educadores desenvolvidos por meio do trabalho com narrativas autobiográficas referentes à inclusão escolar de alunos com transtorno do espectro autista (TEA). Esse estudo constituiu parte de uma pesquisa de doutorado caracterizada como pesquisa-formação. Foram realizados dez encontros quinzenais on-line com 29 profissionais de uma escola estadual com turmas dos anos finais do ensino fundamental e do ensino médio. Analisando-se os dados com base no método histórico-genético e nos princípios do paradigma indiciário, observou-se que a narração das próprias vivências e a escuta de narrativas elaboradas pelos outros suscitaram emoções que mobilizaram os participantes a refletirem sobre discursos e práticas que têm causado a exclusão dos alunos com TEA no interior da escola. Desse modo, oportunizou-se aos educadores a busca de novas possibilidades de atuação no contexto escolar.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Formação docente. Emoção. Autismo. Teoria histórico-cultural.

**RESUMEN:** El objetivo de este estudio fue comprender el proceso de movilización de las emociones en los encuentros de formación de educadores desarrollados a partir del trabajo con narrativas autobiográficas relacionadas con la inclusión escolar de alumnos con trastorno del espectro autista (TEA). Este estudio formó parte de un proyecto de investigación doctoral caracterizado como investigación-formación. Se celebraron diez reuniones quincenales en línea con 29 profesionales de una escuela pública con clases en los últimos cursos de educación primaria y secundaria. Analizando los datos con base en el método histórico-genético y en los principios del paradigma indicativo, se observó que narrar las propias experiencias y escuchar las narrativas producidas por otros despertaba emociones que movilizaron a los participantes a reflexionar sobre los discursos y prácticas que han causado la exclusión de los alumnos con TEA dentro de la escuela. De este modo, los educadores tuvieron la oportunidad de buscar nuevas posibilidades de actuación en el contexto escolar.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Formación de profesores. Emoción. Autismo. Teoría histórico-cultural.

## Introduction

Throughout Brazil's history, the spaces designated for the education of people with disabilities<sup>3</sup>, as well as the underlying concepts, have undergone significant changes. In recent decades, special education has been guided by an inclusive perspective (Baptista, 2019). According to Jannuzzi (2004), the adoption of this perspective began in our country in the 1990s, in alignment with international guidelines, and influenced the formulation of the current National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (Brasil, 1996).

In the following decade, the advocacy for inclusive principles became more explicitly expressed in official documents related to the education of people with disabilities, among which the National Guidelines for Special Education in Basic Education (Brasil, 2001) and the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education (Brasil, 2008) stand out. The guiding principles of these documents were further strengthened in 2015 by the Brazilian Law of Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Brasil, 2015).

The adoption of an inclusive policy represents a significant advance. However, in many schools, the inclusion of students with disabilities has not been accompanied by a revision of the concepts and paradigms that underpin the functioning of the school and the pedagogical work (Kassar, 2016). Therefore, we observe the construction of a contradictory context. Despite the diversity of students found in schools today, homogeneous curricular and pedagogical proposals still prevail (Pletsch, 2020). These proposals, by disregarding the individualities of students, limit the learning and development opportunities of those with disabilities, thus hindering or even preventing the process of appropriating school knowledge (Camargo; Monteiro; Freitas, 2016).

Within this contradictory scenario and often considered the primary individuals responsible for resolving existing conflicts, teachers are emotionally affected by how they experience these situations. Among the emotions that emerge are anguish, fear, and insecurity (Freitas; Monteiro, 2016).

According to Honnief and Costas (2012), in a school context marked by the inclusion of special education students, some teachers become unsettled by their often unsuccessful experiences, and this unease motivates them to seek ways to change reality. However, the

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<sup>3</sup> When referring to people with disabilities, we include those who have autism spectrum disorder, since, according to Law No. 12,764, of December 27, 2012, a person with this disorder “[...] is considered a person with a disability, for all legal purposes” (Brasil, 2012, p. 1).

authors also note that other teachers feel so frustrated by the challenges they face that they do not even believe it is possible to find alternatives to overcome them.

To prevent these professionals from becoming paralyzed in the face of difficulties, it is necessary to create collective spaces to discuss the concrete conditions of the school, thus allowing emotions to be externalized. In this direction, we conducted the study presented in this article, which aims to understand the process of emotional mobilization in formative meetings of educators, developed through work with autobiographical narratives related to the inclusion of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

We focus on the training of educators related to the schooling of students with ASD because, as Effgen (2021) states, the particular ways in which these students behave, communicate, and interact have challenged regular schools to review curricular proposals, pedagogical practices, assessment procedures, and the spatial-temporal organization of the teaching and learning process. These are challenges that, when shared in formative meetings, evoke different emotions in educators, which can motivate reflections that help these professionals in their task of making sense<sup>4</sup> of their work and the way the school operates.

Our study is based on cultural-historical theory, particularly on Vygotsky's theses regarding human development. Therefore, in the following section, we present reflections on the concept of emotion and its role in psychic functioning, based on this theoretical perspective. Subsequently, we detail the methodology adopted in our research, followed by an analysis of data collected through formative meetings with educators from a basic education school. Finally, we present our final considerations based on the analysis developed and the objective established.

### **The Constitution of Emotions: Contributions from Cultural-Historical Theory**

According to Vigotski<sup>5</sup> (2001), emotions are mobilized in relation to the environment and others. When an individual, based on previous experiences and the meanings constructed through them, believes they can easily meet the demands placed upon them, positive emotions, such as satisfaction, develop. Conversely, when an individual feels incapable of meeting these demands, negative emotions, such as depression, weakness, and suffering, arise. According to

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<sup>4</sup> Based on the historical-cultural theory of human development, we understand meaning as a dynamic, continuous, and dialectical process that occurs in social practices and in relationships between people.

<sup>5</sup> Although this author's name appears spelled in different ways in his various works, we standardized its spelling based on the recommendations of the Brazilian Association of Technical Standards (NBR 6023:2018).

Vygotsky (2001), positive emotions are associated with pleasure and well-being, as opposed to negative emotions. However, the classification of an emotion as positive or negative does not determine the type of reaction it will provoke.

This understanding of emotions helps explain why many teachers experience, as Schmidt *et al.* (2016) state, fear and frustration regarding the inclusion of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Teachers find themselves required to work with these students. Yet, many, given their concrete conditions of training and professional practice, shaped by the meanings assigned—through social relations—to ASD, the teaching profession, and the school, feel incapable of contributing to the educational process of students with this disorder. This conflicted relationship with the demands imposed by their context is responsible for the mobilization of negative emotions.

Continuing his discussion on emotions, Vygotsky (2001, p. 139, our translation) asserts:

Every emotion is a call to action or a renunciation of it. No feeling can remain indifferent and unproductive in behavior. Emotions are the internal organizers of our reactions, which tighten, excite, stimulate, or inhibit these or those reactions. Thus, emotion maintains its role as the internal organizer of our behavior

Emotions always provoke reactions in the individual, but the way each person reacts to a particular emotion varies. For instance, the frustration a teacher feels upon noticing that a student with ASD is not grasping the academic content may motivate the teacher to avoid engagement with the student, believing they have nothing to offer, or it may drive them to seek ways to alter the situation, overcoming the challenges encountered and facilitating the student's educational process.

Reactions depend on the environment in which the individual finds themselves, their previous experiences, the ways in which they have appropriated socially circulating discourses, and, consequently, the manner in which they have developed. It is important to emphasize that how a person reacts to a particular emotion is not constant or immutable, as humans are in constant development, understood as a complex, dialectical, non-linear process marked by evolution and involution, and by the interaction between external and internal factors (Vigotski, 2000c).

Building on this perspective of development and considering the role of emotions as organizers of behavior, we highlight the importance of valuing affective aspects in the processes of teacher training. According to Vygotsky (2001, p. 143, our translation), “no form of behavior

is as strong as that linked to an emotion,” which allows us to assert that emotions should be considered in all educational work. However, according to Faria and Camargo (2018, 2021), most teacher training programs have only explored cognitive factors, ignoring teachers’ emotions, who have not found spaces to express their feelings regarding their work in an inclusive context.

The exclusive emphasis on cognitive aspects in educator training suggests that, as noted by Barbosa and Bernardes (2021), the current conception of emotion is still seen as something dissociated from and inferior to intellect. This conception is strongly criticized by Vygotsky (2004a), who argues that emotions are not merely physiological changes but complex processes with psychic content and functional significance.

Thought does not arise from other thought but from the field of our consciousness that motivates it, encompassing our inclinations and needs, our interests and motivations, our affections and emotions. Behind thought lies an affective and volitional tendency. Only it can provide the answer to the ultimate ‘why’ in the analysis of thought. If we had previously compared thought to a floating cloud that showers a rain of words, continuing this figurative comparison, we would have to liken the motivation of thought to the wind that moves the clouds. Effective and complete understanding of another’s thought only becomes possible when we discover its effective deep affective-volitional cause (Vigotski, 2000a, p. 479-480, our translation).

The author’s statements allow us to understand the inseparability of affection and cognition. Thought does not constitute itself in isolation. Ideas do not simply arise from other ideas; they are motivated by affective-volitional factors. This relationship, however, is not unilateral. As Barbosa and Bernardes (2021, p. 212, our translation) emphasize, “Emotion and thought are interconnected; both affect each other; that is, it is not the only emotion that affects thought, but the opposite also occurs.” In this interaction between affective and cognitive aspects, the production of meanings occurs.

When we are emotional, we do so within the web of social and personal relationships, in social and individual history, which is why controlling or dominating emotions is so difficult. We do not simply feel; we feel with meaning and significance. Through the word/sign/verbum, human emotions, with their biological character, gradually transform into socio-historical or, more precisely, historical-cultural (Magiolino, 2010, p. 163, our translation).

It is within social relationships, mediated by language, that emotions are shaped. Studying emotions does not mean merely analyzing organic sensations; it involves considering



the concrete living conditions of the individual, their interaction with others, and the process of meaning-making that occurs in this interaction through signs, among which words are prominent. Therefore, we can affirm that affection, cognition, and signification are always interrelated.

It is the fact that emotions are not tied to the events themselves but to the way each individual interprets their lived experiences (Vygotsky, 2004a) that highlights the importance of teacher training programs in special education from an inclusive perspective, which values affective aspects. As Faria and Camargo (2018, p. 224, our translation) assert, “Understanding the teacher’s emotions in relation to inclusion is to understand the reality of inclusive education from within, behind the trained and stereotyped discourses. Emotion is a powerful and authentic expression that reveals how the teacher truly relates to inclusion.”

Through their emotions, each educator expresses the individual meanings they attribute to the process of inclusive education for students with disabilities. These meanings result from their previous experiences, shaped by diverse social relationships and the internalized meanings within those relationships. Thus, understanding educators’ emotions helps us avoid being guided solely by idealized discourses of inclusion, allowing us to seek ways to overcome the challenges encountered in everyday school life based on how educators have experienced these challenges.

One tool capable of promoting emotional mobilization in teacher training is autobiographical narrative, whose formative potential arises from its ability to encourage individuals to reflect on their own experiences (Passeggi, 2010). This reflective work involves both cognition and emotion, as experiences are defined by the way an individual becomes aware of events and emotionally relates to them, attributing meaning to them (Vigotski, 2010).

Since autobiographical narratives are connected to the lived experiences of their authors, “[...] they are not just any writing or a mere recounting of facts, but a production that can be constructed from what they feel, what moves them, and what prompts them to engage in dialogue with the reader” (Frauendorf *et al.*, 2016, p. 352-353, our translation). Anyone narrating an experience presents in their text something that affects them, i.e., that in some way mobilizes them emotionally. Therefore, working with educators’ narratives allows for the proper valuation of emotions, enabling the exploration of their role in the process of meaning-making, behavior organization, and motivation.

Considering that emotions “[...] emerge and (trans)form in the relationships between people” (Magiolino, 2010, p. 161, our translation), we emphasize the importance of formative

proposals providing not only autobiographical writing, i.e., the creation of narratives about one's own experiences but also their sharing, to enable heterobiographical processes (Passeggi, 2021). This refers to the processes that occur when listening to or reading others' narratives and are related to the following questions: "What is the effect of listening to and reading others' narratives on our own lives? How do we grasp the meanings that someone attributes to their lived experiences?" (Passeggi, 2021, p. 100, our translation). Thus, through heterobiographical processes, facilitated by the interaction between educators and between educators and trainers, new emotions emerge, which are important for the development of the formative process.

### **Methodological Aspects**

To achieve the objective of this work<sup>6</sup>, we conducted a research-training study, which, as Josso (2004, 2010) asserts, allows for the reconciliation of investigative and formative purposes. Through research-training, a

[...] dynamic of psychological and behavioral transformations is promoted, involving the dialectic between the individual and the collective. During these transformations, unlearning, accompanied by feelings of indecision, absurdity, fragility, or loss, is balanced by the emergence of a new sensitivity and the discovery of new levels of knowledge and unsuspected abilities (Josso, 2004, p. 56, our translation).

In the dynamic described by the author, social meanings and personal senses are related in various ways, being (re)elaborated through a process of reinterpretation of experiences, where emotion and cognition act together, promoting the interaction between individual and collective ways of feeling and thinking. Thus, participants in the research experience an opportunity for learning and development, gaining insight into themselves and others, making it possible to reflect on how the past has been interpreted and subsequently replan future actions.

To meet the dual purpose of research-training, we employed autobiographical narratives as a data collection tool and a means of training for participants and the researcher-trainer. We highlight that narratives are well-suited to the purposes of research training due to their subjective nature, emphasized in our previous study (Monteiro; Freitas, 2021) and also by Aguiar and Ferreira (2021, p. 3, our translation): "Very different from the idea of reporting or

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<sup>6</sup> This work constitutes part of a doctoral research, developed by the first author of this article (identified in the text as a researcher-trainer), under the guidance of the second author.



informing, the narrative requires a stance and involvement in what was lived and is being told: we narrate what we consider relevant, infuse it with our representations and expectations, and give a certain tone to the account.”

Working with autobiographical narratives, therefore, involves considering how individuals are affected by their experiences. In our research, the investigative and formative process occurred through training sessions for educators focusing on the inclusion of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The sessions involved 29 professionals from a state primary education school located in a medium-sized city in southern Minas Gerais. At the time of the research, the school had 405 students enrolled in the final years of elementary and secondary education. The choice of this institution for the research was motivated by the fact that the principal and other members of the management team demonstrated concern about the schooling conditions of students with disabilities, highlighting in institutional documents the need for actions aimed at improving these conditions.

When the research was conducted, the school employed 24 regular classroom teachers responsible for teaching subjects in the mainstream classes; 2 teachers for library instruction, accountable for activities in the school library; 2 special education teachers, one responsible for the resource room and the other for supporting communication, language, and assistive technologies in the classroom; 1 pedagogical supervisor; 1 educational counselor; in addition to the principal and the vice-principal. Among these professionals, only three chose not to participate in the research: a Mathematics teacher, an Art teacher, and the teacher responsible for communication, language, and assistive technologies, who was on maternity leave. Prior to the start of the research, all participants signed the Informed Consent Form (ICF).

Given the large number of participants, they were divided into two groups to facilitate interaction between them and the researcher-trainer<sup>7</sup>. Each group attended ten bi-weekly sessions, each lasting 90 minutes. The sessions for both groups were held on the same dates, with only the timing varying. Due to social contact restrictions arising from the coronavirus pandemic, the sessions were conducted online via Google Meet and were recorded using a tool available on the platform itself.

The same methodology was employed with both groups. After introducing herself and explaining the work proposal during the first formative session, the researcher-trainer requested that each educator briefly discuss their thoughts and feelings upon learning that they would be working with a student with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) for the first time. This allowed

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<sup>7</sup> The school principal, by her own choice, participated in both groups.

the educators to begin reflecting on the meanings they attributed to the school inclusion of students with ASD and enabled the researcher-trainer to start understanding the ideas and emotions related to working with these students in the participants' contextual experiences.

At the end of this session, the researcher-trainer assigned a task: each educator was to write, before the second meeting, an autobiographical narrative about a situation experienced with a student with ASD. Each educator could establish their own criteria for selecting the situation they wished to narrate. All educators completed the task. They sent their narratives by email to the researcher-trainer and shared them with the other participants during subsequent meetings.

We emphasize that the researcher-trainer did not specify the particular themes to be addressed by the educators in their texts. This approach allowed them to narrate the experiences that were most significant to them, so that the reflections developed during the sessions would consider the issues in the school routine that most affected the participants, some of which had not been anticipated by the researcher-trainer. As Leandro and Passos (2021, p. 12, our translation) state, "chance is also present in the process of narrative analysis. The narrative itself may present the researcher with something unexpected."

During the formative sessions, one participant would read their text aloud, followed by a group reflection on the narrative. Participants expressed their thoughts and emotions regarding the shared experience and orally narrated other experiences related to the text. In these reflective moments, the researcher-trainer also contributed, aiming to encourage educators to reflect on important points of the narratives that had not been previously mentioned and to provoke thoughts on other possible meanings of the narrated experiences. Additionally, the researcher-trainer provided foundational elements of historical-cultural theory related to the topics being discussed, citing and commenting on Vygotsky's studies on human development and disability, to facilitate the connection between theory and practice in the reflective process.

After all the sessions, we transcribed the recordings in full and established the analytical axes based on the identification of recurring factors in the educators' reflections on the school inclusion of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). We considered factors recurrent if they appeared in reflections from both groups, in more than one session of each group, and in statements from different participants.

Based on the identified factors, we defined four analytical axes:

- The focus is given to different constitutive elements of the narratives;

- The various perspectives on the schooling of students with ASD;
- The relationships between the meanings attributed to the school inclusion of students with ASD and the conceptions of human development and disability;
- The mobilization of emotions in the educator training process.

We analyzed the first three axes in previous publications (Monteiro; Freitas, 2021; Monteiro; Freitas, 2023) and in this article, we explore the fourth axis. We highlight that the analytical axes were not predefined but emerged from the data produced, as we understand that in narrative research, the researcher needs to be open to considering important issues presented by the participants that were not anticipated by them (Aguiar; Ferreira, 2021). Therefore, it is the narratives and the reflections resulting from them that guide the researcher on the paths to be followed in their investigation, even though it is oriented by the proposed objective of the research (Leandro; Passos, 2021).

Having established the axis around which we would develop this article, we selected excerpts from the meetings held with the educators for analysis, including narratives read by the participants and the reflections they triggered. Adopting a qualitative perspective in our research (Bogdan; Biklen, 2010), we did not focus on quantifying the excerpts where emotional mobilization was observed in the formative process but on thoroughly analyzing certain ones where significant elements for the intended investigation were concentrated. These elements were also present, though more dispersedly, in other narrative passages and statements made by the educators during the meetings. As Aguiar and Ferreira (2021, p. 17, our translation) note, in narrative research, "it is not necessary to include the entire narrative, or all narratives, in the research, as each one, or each part of it, when chosen judiciously, portrays/contains/reverberates a sum of lived experiences."

To analyze the selected excerpts, we employed the historical-genetic method, which prioritizes the explanatory analysis of data (Vygotsky, 1991, 2004b). As Pino (2005, p. 179, our translation) clarifies, descriptive analysis "[...] remains on the exterior of phenomena, i.e., on their phenomenal or apparent aspect"; whereas explanatory analysis "[...] delves into their interior, into their dynamics and historical genesis or essence." Consequently, developing an explanatory analysis involves investigating a process, seeking the relationships between facts.

In investigating the educators' training process concerning the school inclusion of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), we sought, within the narratives and statements of the research participants, indications of emotional mobilization within the group's

formative dynamics. We adhered to the paradigm of evidence, which, according to Ginzburg (1989), is based on the interpretation of clues and signals and the development of inferences, rather than on seeking evidence. This paradigm aligns with Vygotsky's semiotic conception, as pointed out by Pino (2005). In the interpretative analysis of the clues, we considered the relationships between the texts—both written and oral—their authors, and the historical-social context.

### **Emotions in the Educators' Training Process Regarding the School Inclusion of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Analyzing the narratives and statements from the educators who participated in the formative meetings, we found indications that one of the factors affecting them in the context of inclusive education, mobilizing their emotions, is the way students relate to their peers with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). In the fourth meeting with Group 2<sup>8</sup>, Robert<sup>9</sup>, a Sociology teacher, orally recounted an experience with a 3rd-year high school student with ASD, which prompted other educators to highlight that this student enjoyed talking and participating in classes. At this moment, Felicidade, the school principal, made the following observation:

Very interesting. Very good. But I still notice in him [referring to the 3rd-year student with ASD] and in other students, sometimes during breaks or other activities, we have a certain isolation. This bothers me. [...] You may notice that he is usually not with a peer during breaks. He talks to me or a teacher. (Excerpt from Felicidade's statement presented at the meeting on 09/23/20, emphasis added).

Based on Robert's narrative and the comments it prompted, Felicidade was engaged in a process of heterobiographization, contrasting the teacher's account with other experiences and articulating thought and emotion. As Barbosa and Bernardes (2021, p. 213, our translation) state, "in the apprehension of reality, the affective dimension is related to how the subject feels it [...]. In the process of internalization, affectivity relates the subject to that lived reality, while cognition pertains to the apprehension of the object or phenomenon."

The perception that students often left their peers with ASD isolated troubled the principal. Continuing her statement, she recounted that, one day, an 8th-year student with ASD

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<sup>8</sup> Since the meetings were held at different times with each of the groups, they were identified as 1 or 2, observing the order in which the meetings were held.

<sup>9</sup> The research participants are identified in the article with fictitious names, chosen by themselves.

asked her to lock him in the classroom during recess because he did not want to be near his peers, knowing they did not accept him. This narrative, combined with what the principal had previously reported, allows us to infer that students often exclude those with ASD from interactive situations, either because they do not know how to handle behaviors different from those socially valued or because they consider those with the disorder incapable of engaging in typical conversations and play. Felicidade's discomfort with the exclusionary attitudes of students in the school environment was highlighted during the formative meeting due to the perception that these attitudes were not being considered by other educators in their discussions.

The notion of incapacity associated with students with ASD is also expressed in the way their peers understand their (non)participation in school activities, as indicated by Márcia's narrative, a Physics teacher, read during the sixth meeting with Group 2:

A few years ago, when I taught a high school class at a public school, I encountered a situation that left me paralyzed. In this class, there was a student with ASD who did not communicate, did not look at you, and just stayed there, sitting in the chair. His classmates told me: 'Teacher, don't worry about him, he behaves this way in all classes. He has autism, he doesn't do anything.' I was even more perplexed. (Excerpt from Márcia's narrative read at the meeting on 10/21/20, emphasis added, our translation).

Through the relationship between intellect and effect, Márcia attributed meanings to one of her experiences in the process of autobiographization. The emotions she expressed were mobilized in the interaction/absence of interaction with others in the classroom. Confronted with an immobile student, the teacher felt paralyzed, much like him. It seems that a process of identification occurred between them: both did not know how to (re)act. Márcia's perplexity in this situation was intensified by the statements of the student's peers, which indicate that the view of those with ASD as "[...] beings trapped in their own inaccessible world [...]" (Schmidt *et al.*, 2016, p. 224, our translation), remains common. This is an exclusionary view, according to which those who behave and express themselves differently from the majority are considered incapable of participating in the activities carried out by others.

The emotions experienced by Márcia in the school context, characterized by exclusionary conceptions, were mobilized again through autobiographization, working in conjunction with cognition in the process of meaning-making inherent to the act of narrating. Therefore, the specific conditions in which Márcia found herself during the formative activity led her to highlight the emotions mentioned in her narrative, rather than others.

Throughout the meetings, other narratives were shared that referenced how students understand and interact with their peers with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), which also mobilized emotions. In the sixth meeting with Group 1, Francisco, a Geography teacher, orally recounted an experience that affected both the school principal and the researcher-trainer:

Francisco: "Suddenly, he [referring to a student with ASD] got angry with me, didn't want to talk to me in the classroom. But then the kids helped me. They said he had a problem, that he had a diagnosis. [...]"

Felicidade: "Look how interesting! The students told you: 'He has a problem, he has a diagnosis.' Did you notice the impact of that? The whole class sees that he has a problem. [According to his peers] The problem is that he has a problem. [...] Already labeled."

Researcher-trainer: "What concerns me a lot is that when they said 'has a problem, has a diagnosis,' implicitly what did they say to Francisco? Don't pay attention to him, don't worry about that reaction. [...] This affects us a lot. [...] It's as if there's nothing to be done." (Excerpts from statements presented at the meeting on 10/21/20, emphasis added, our translation).

Freitas (2019), in analyzing the mediating function of narrative in social interaction, emphasizes that it affects not only the narrator but also others, mobilizing them to make interventions. Therefore, heterobiographization can result in a process of collective reflection, as individuals, when affected by another person's narrative, are often motivated to share the meanings they attribute to the narrated experience. Felicidade and the researcher-trainer expressed that they were emotionally mobilized by Francisco's words or, more specifically, by the students' words, as he reported. As Magiolino (2010, p. 162, our translation) states, "the word, as the sign par excellence, impacts, transforms, and redefines human emotion."

The students' comments presented by Francisco seem not to have affected the teacher in the same way they affected the principal and the researcher-trainer. There are no signs in his narrative that he was concerned about these comments, which seem to have provided him with some reassurance, helping him attribute the student's unexpected reaction to ASD. Considering that in a previous meeting, Francisco had stated that he lacks special education training and experience with students with ASD, feeling therefore unprepared to work with them adequately, we can infer that the diagnosis revealed by the peers was viewed by the teacher more as a means of justifying the student's behavior than as information to be considered for re-evaluating his actions as an educator. This corroborates the findings of Silva, Molero, and Roman (2016), which suggest that many teachers, upon discovering a student has a diagnosis, use the disability diagnosis to justify the student's academic failure rather than seeking changes in their pedagogical approach.



Felicidade's question, "Did you notice the impact of that?" signals her apprehension about whether the other educators had paid attention to the implicit meanings in the students' remarks, as reported by Francisco. Affected by the narrative she heard, the principal felt compelled to prompt the educators to reflect on the negative connotations associated with the students' behavior described by the teacher. This demonstrates the role of emotions as internal organizers of behavior, that is, as mobilizers of action (Vygotsky, 2001). The researcher-trainer, having also been emotionally involved with the narrated experience, felt motivated to continue the reflection initiated by Felicidade.

In analyzing the emotions elicited by Francisco's narrative, it is essential to consider the social roles of the participants in the formative meeting, as the constitution of the psyche and the process of interaction between people are inseparable from their social positions (Bakhtin, 2006; Vigotski, 2000b). We can infer that the researcher and the school principal were strongly affected by the teacher's narrative due to their roles in that context. As the trainer and the manager responsible for the outcomes of her team's work, respectively, they were concerned that the other educators might not be outraged by the students' comments cited by Francisco, thus normalizing them.

In the reflective process, they proposed, Felicidade and the researcher-trainer sought to highlight the negative semantic value associated with the term "problem," which places the student with ASD in a position of inferiority relative to his peers and attributes to him the responsibility for his difficulties in relationships and the teaching and learning process. According to Gonçalves (2021), this perspective on individuals with ASD is based on the mistaken conception that clinical diagnosis, which only considers biological aspects, determines the limits of the individual's learning and development.

This conception, expressed in the students' remarks, constitutes a social construct internalized by them. As Bakhtin (2016, p. 54, our translation) asserts, "our discourse [...] is full of other people's words [...]. These words from others carry with them their expression, their evaluative tone that we assimilate, rework, and reaccentuate." It is, therefore, necessary to analyze the discourses that students have appropriated and how these discourses manifest in the school environment.

Felicidade appears to have recognized this need, as she invited the other educators to engage in this investigative work with her at the end of the sixth meeting with Group 2, immediately after Cris, a Chemistry teacher, read her narrative. The initial sentences of Cris's narrative are as follows:

In the first few days of class, I noticed a student at the back of the room who did not pay any attention, not even to his classmates. He remained distant even when I called him. The classmates immediately expressed that he was just like that (Excerpt from Cris's narrative read at the meeting on 10/21/20, our translation).

Felicidade had already been deeply affected by the conflicts that characterize students' relationships with their peers with ASD, as expressed in various narratives. Due to this emotional involvement, it was precisely this issue that drew her attention to Cris's text, leading her to pose the following question:

In Cris's narrative, the same situation arises where students are aware that he [referring to a student with ASD] has a problem, that he is just like that. So, here is a question: How do the students learn about this? When and in what manner is this information conveyed to the students? (Excerpt from Felicidade's remarks presented at the meeting on 10/21/20, our translation).

Cris's narrative seems to have triggered in Felicidade a similar discomfort to that which she had previously expressed when narrating and hearing other educators recount experiences that revealed an excluding view of students towards their peers with ASD. The discomfort felt by the principal led her to propose that the other educators reflect with her on the causes behind the students' expressed viewpoints.

This reflection developed throughout the following meeting, permeated by reading narratives from other participants. To better understand the processes of exclusion of students with ASD within the school, Felicidade felt compelled to analyze her behavior and that of other educators:

We hold the meeting at the beginning of the year and inform you like this: this child has this, has that. And then, when we enter the classroom, we carry the label of the diagnosis. So, for us, the child has a diagnosis, and we don't see this child as a child, as a young person. [...] And we rely on this. [...] We don't know what to do and end up yielding, removing him from the class, placing him in a differentiated activity, distancing him from the group because he has a diagnosis, he has a disorder. So he becomes known in the school. [...] This is what I'm noticing with everything we're discussing. So, I'm not going to do this anymore, talking about the child like that, as if he has this diagnosis. Sometimes, we say to the class that the child is more troublesome because he has a little problem (Excerpt from Felicidade's remarks presented at the meeting on 11/04/20, our translation).

Analyzing Felicidade's previous comments regarding the students' remarks about their peers with ASD and her transcribed statement above, we find indications that she, influenced by the narratives she heard, began to realize that her own and other educators' work was guided by similar conceptions to those presented by the students. Since the beginning-of-year meeting, school professionals allowed their view of students with ASD to be shaped by the biological aspects described in the diagnosis, seen as determinants of various learning and developmental limitations. Relying on these limitations, educators excluded students with ASD from various school activities and opportunities to interact with their peers. As Effgen (2021, p. 81, our translation) highlights, "[...] if autism constitutes the whole of the subject and a limitation, we are unable to think about the student's learning because there is a belief that they will not achieve it—this is the 'inertia' of many schools and professionals in the face of this student."

The use of the diagnosis as a guideline for pedagogical work and as a tool for blaming students for their difficulties is frequently observed in the current school context (Christmann; Pavão, 2018; Pletsch; Paiva, 2018; Silva; Molero; Roman, 2016). This practice reinforces the superiority attributed by society to certain forms of human functioning and accentuates the valorization of medical discourse over pedagogical discourse, demonstrating that the relationships produced in the school can only be understood considering the sociocultural context in which educators and students are situated (Venâncio; Faria; Camargo, 2020; Zaqueu-Xavier, 2021).

Educational professionals, by expressing, through their actions and speech in daily school life, the belief that students with ASD are not capable of relating adequately to others or learning much of the school content and that the school is unprepared to work with these students, legitimize discriminatory acts and words of the students. Thus, exclusionary discourses circulating socially, instead of being questioned within the school environment, are reinforced in this space.

Felicidade's remarks show signs that she not only became aware of her participation in this process of exclusion but also committed to changing her behavior in an attempt to break away from practices that, in her perception, harm relationships with students with ASD within the school. Thus, she seems to have recognized the "non-alibi in existence" (Bakhtin, 2010, p. 92, our translation), meaning that everything she can do cannot be done by anyone else, at any time. The principal, therefore, embraced the responsible act, which is based on the recognition that

[...] I am real, irreplaceable, and that is why I need to fulfill my peculiar uniqueness. In relation to the entire real unit, my singular duty emerges from my singular place in existence. As a unique self, I cannot even for a moment not be a participant in real, inevitable, and necessarily singular life; *I need to have my own duty*; in relation to the whole, whatever it may be and in whatever condition it is given to me, I need to act from my unique place [...] (Bakhtin, 2010, p. 94, author's emphasis, our translation).

Bakhtin (2010) further notes that the responsible act is always permeated by an emotive-volitional tone. Driven by her emotions, shaped through interaction with others (“This is what I’m noticing with everything we’re discussing”), Felicidade was willing to assume her duty concerning the education of students with ASD. She defined this duty based on reflections motivated by the educators’ narratives.

Finally, we highlight that, by sharing her reflections with other participants in the formative meetings, the principal enabled each of them, based on their particular ways of meaning their experiences, to also assume their own responsible, unique, and irreplaceable acts. Throughout this process, emotion and cognition acted dialectically, promoting the re-elaboration of meanings.

### Final considerations

With the study presented in this article, we achieved the objective of understanding the process of mobilizing emotions in formative meetings of educators based on work with autobiographical narratives related to the school inclusion of students with ASD. Through autobiographical and heterobiographical processes, the participants in the conducted meetings were affected, respectively, by their own experiences and those of others, with emotions such as discomfort, perplexity, and concern being mobilized in these processes.

These emotions indicate that the education of students with ASD still constitutes a challenge for education professionals. They are emotions that, when experienced in the school environment, can lead educators to a renunciation of action, motivating them to avoid engaging with these students out of fear of not knowing how to act.

However, as we can infer from the analyzed data, when educators have the opportunity to express themselves and listen to other professionals sharing their experiences through narratives, the mobilization of these same emotions can motivate them to reflect on the challenges faced in their daily work, enabling new ways to understand them. These reflections allow each individual to reconsider their own role in the school inclusion of students with ASD.

Therefore, we can conclude that formative work with autobiographical narratives makes it possible to overcome the opposition between intellect and emotion, facilitating, through interaction among educators, the mobilization of emotions capable of prompting them to question school practices and the discourses that sustain them. These inquiries are essential to prevent the normalization of exclusionary processes for students with ASD and to advance the implementation of special education from an inclusive perspective more broadly.

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