Research training and life stories:
Interweaving opportunities in inclusive education

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ABSTRACT

The paper proposes a methodological approach that allows incorporating the knowledge of the teachers of resource rooms in the production of knowledge, so taking forward the policies and practices of school inclusion in the country, a major objective of the National Observatory of Special Education. It presents an experience of research training that incorporates methodological proposals to the life stories of educators from one of the towns that participated in the Observatory's research. Such a methodological approach, is presented by arguing about the possibilities of interaction, in practice, between research training and life story. Effective participation of the teachers of resource rooms in the survey of knowledge about themselves, and the policies of the history of special education showed great heuristic potential in the study of how such knowledge is embedded in the actions and in the training processes of these teachers.

KEYWORDS

public policy; inclusion; multifunctional resource rooms; life story; research training.

PESQUISA-FORMAÇÃO E HISTÓRIA DE VIDA: ENTRETECENDO POSSIBILIDADES EM EDUCAÇÃO INCLUSIVA

RESUMO

O trabalho apresenta uma proposta de percurso metodológico que visa possibilitar incorporar os saberes das professoras das salas de recursos na produção de conhecimento, de modo que faça avançar as políticas e as práticas de inclusão escolar no país, objetivo maior do Observatório Nacional de Educação Especial. Para tanto, apresenta uma experiência de pesquisa-formação que incorpora à proposta metodológica as histórias de vida das educadoras de um dos municípios que participaram da pesquisa do Observatório. Apresenta-se tal percurso metodológico argumentando sobre as possibilidades de interação, na prática, entre pesquisa-formação e história de vida. A participação efetiva das professoras das salas de recursos no levantamento dos saberes acerca de si, das políticas e da própria história da educação especial mostrou grande potencial heurístico no estudo de como esses saberes estão imbricados nas ações e no processo formativo dessas educadoras.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

políticas públicas; inclusão; salas de recursos multifuncionais; história de vida; pesquisa-formação.

INVESTIGACIÓN-FORMACIÓN E HISTORIA DE VIDA: TEJIENDO POSIBILIDADES EN LA EDUCACIÓN INCLUSIVA

RESUMEN

El presente artículo propone un enfoque metodológico que permite la incorporación de los conocimientos de los maestros de "salas de recursos multifuncionales" a la producción de conocimiento, a fin de llevar adelante las políticas y las prácticas de inclusión escolar en el país, principal objetivo del Observatório Nacional de Educação Especial. Se presenta una experiencia de investigación-formación que incorpora a la propuesta metodológica las historias de vida de las educadoras de un determinado polo de investigación. Se presenta el camino metodológico, discutiendo sobre las posibilidades de interacción, en la práctica, entre la investigación-formación y la historia de vida. La participación efectiva de los profesores de las salas de recursos de la encuesta sobre el conocimiento de sí mismos, de las políticas y de la historia de la educación especial mostró un gran potencial heurístico en el estudio de cómo este conocimiento se incorpora a las acciones y a la formación de estas maestras.

PALABRAS CLAVE

políticas públicas; inclusión; salas de recursos multifuncionales; investigación-formación.

INTRODUCING THE ISSUE AND RELATED MATTERS

This paper presents the methodological approach adopted by the Studies and Research Group of the Special Education Center (Grupo de Estudos e Pesquisas do Núcleo de Educação Especial - GEPNEES) to identify the knowledge that teachers who work in special education services perceive that they have as educators about policies and the history of special education as they have experienced it. We also tried to identify overlapping between this knowledge, the education of these teachers and activities in the pedagogical field.

The need to develop a specific methodological approach arose from our municipality's participation in the National Observatory of Special Education (Observatório Nacional de Educação Especial - ONEESP). The broader study to which this study is related will be briefly described before we turn our attention to our specific project. ONEESP, created in 2010, involves researchers from across Brazil in an effort to generate information that will support the policies and practices of inclusive education in Brazil for people with special needs and to improve the correspondence between research results and the development of educational policies. The national special education policy's inclusive education plan (Brasil, 2008, 2010) focused on creating Multifunctional Resource Rooms (Salas de Recursos Multifuncionais - SRMs)[1] in public schools. For this reason, the National Observatory's initial goal was to determine how effectively these rooms implemented inclusive education policies. We were assigned the task of studying the resource rooms in the municipality where we work in Pará. This decision was made jointly with the municipality's Department of Special Education team and local teachers during a special education event.

Since then, we have participated in the training process offered by the Department of Special Education (an agency of the Municipal Secretariat of Education of Marabá) and began attending the group's monthly meetings. These meetings consisted of research-training activities, and we were involved less as trainers and more as participants in a collective learning process. Six four-hour meetings were held in 2011, and constant contact was maintained via *e-mail*. The participants included the research team, the Department of Special Education, the resource room teachers and nine students from the Teacher's College who were writing their end-of-course reports in the fields of inclusion and disabilities.[2]

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1   "The Secretariat of Special Education offers equipment, furniture, and didactic-pedagogical and accessibility materials to the multifunctional resource rooms, according to requests made by education departments in each joint action plan (Plano de Ações Articuladas - PAR). From 2005 to 2009, 15,551 multifunctional resource rooms were made available and can be found in every Brazilian state and the Federal District. These rooms served 4,564 Brazilian municipalities—82% of the total" (taken from the *website* of the Ministry of Education, 2011). According to Decree 6571/2008, "the multifunctional resource rooms are environments with equipment, furniture, as well as didactic and pedagogical materials" that offer specialized educational services (Art. 3, § 1).

2   They performed the majority of the technical work, including interview recording and transcription, some of which was repeated several times to subject as much of the teacher's story to the analytical process as possible.

Because the Observatory's research has a national scope, its general methodology could not be altered lest it produce inconsistent data. Therefore, the survey is being conducted via structured interviews, quantitative surveys, and other easily systematized formats. Nevertheless, we believe that this joint activity would be more productive if we were able to see and analyze it as part of an important historical moment. More than studying special education and inclusion policies, we wanted to study ourselves as embedded in the policies and study the policies in the life stories of the educators. We therefore began to organize ourselves into a large convivial study and research group that considered research an internal effort to understand the presence of the subjects of the story. Of the thirty-five teachers that work in resource rooms in the municipality, twenty-two agreed to participate in the process.

To address the issues raised at the beginning of this text with the participation of resource room teachers, this phase of the research sought to determine which methodological approach and which instruments would best integrate educators into the survey and reflection process designed to assess teacher's knowledge and special education and inclusion. This methodology should be capable of identifying and reviewing the knowledge that the teachers who work in specialized education (now embodied in the resource rooms), have about themselves, education policies and the history of special education. It should also reveal how this knowledge is imbedded in the activities and education of teachers. To develop such a methodology, testing and analysis of methodological possibilities were conducted in 2011. This article presents the construction of the desired methodological approach. Without discussing the actual analysis of the teachers' knowledge bases, we examine the importance of incorporating the life stories of those surveyed, students and educators, into a research-training process.

LOOKING FOR COMPLICITIES IN THE LITERATURE ON RESEARCH-EDUCATION AND LIFE STORY

For quite some time we have been working with interviews of special education teachers and have been concerned about classifying their statements according to categories proposed by (or implied in) a study's research objectives. We have increasingly asked about the educationalexperience of marginalized people (as in the case of those with disabilities). We questioned if the texts we organized actually reflected their experience or ours as researchers. Did our analyses yield interpretations that approximated their experiences? What is it that marks these teachers that makes them "special education" educators? Jorge Larrosa Bondía (2002, p.20 and 28) highlights the importance of experience as that which, while happening to us, marks us:

> I will begin with the word experience. We could say, from the start, that experience is, in Spanish, "o que nos passa". In Portuguese, it is said that experience is "o que nos acontece"; in French, experience is "ce que nous arrive"; in Italian, "quello che nos succede" or "quello che nos accade"; in English, "that

what is happening to us"; in German, "was mir passiert". Experience is what goes on with us, what happens to us, what touches us. Not what goes on, not what happens, nor what touches. Every day, many things go on but, at the same time, almost nothing happens to us. One would say that all that goes on is organized so that nothing happens to us. The first note about the knowledge of experience thus emphasizes its existential quality, i.e., its relationship with existence, with singular and concrete life of a singular and concrete existence. The experience and knowledge that derives from it are what allows us to appropriate our own life.

In our research, we participated in the things that happened to resource room teachers, such as their training activities. We suffered from the affliction of every educator. Of all that happens to students, of all of their intentionally educational experiences, what is it that touches them? What is it that they appropriate and incorporate to their unique existence? To obtain this knowledge, we developed two processes. The first was to transform the training process itself into research (producing a "research-training" process), and the second was to create opportunities for the subjects not only to report their experiences but also to reflect on the statements about their experiences; by conducting an exercise of appropriating that which happened to them and which gained substance through a narrative.

In the field of special education, several researchers have studied the possibility of incorporating research into the teacher education process and applying the principles of action research to these processes. Jesus (2010), Martins (2010), Almeida (2010) and Naujorks (2010), who discussed this issue at the 2nd National Research Seminar on Special Education (II Seminário Nacional de Pesquisa em Educação Especial), described training experiences that were generally based on research-training principles. According to Jesus (2010), these principles include the involvement of the researcher, the collective dimension of the research (group approach), a permanent evaluation process, collective modes of immersion in and production of the problem, and, finally, collective authorship.

Similar to the experience described by Jesus (*idem*), our proposal oscillated between action research of an institutional nature (given that the training process in which we were involved was conducted under the auspices of the Municipal Secretariat of Education) and that of an emancipatory nature (considering that the teachers' expectations influenced the training process, incorporating to it their stories as educators, with a critical perspective).

As researchers, we have participated in this process for many years as we have investigated the inclusion of students with disabilities in common classrooms. During this process, the advancement of educational inclusion led to the enrollment of blind students in higher education, shifting our role from that of researchers to that of teachers in training. As such, we were required to participate in dialogs and learn from the knowledge already consolidated in basic education, while critically approaching this knowledge.

The collective dimension of this research—understood by Jesus (*idem*) as a group approach—was evident in the fact that the group of teachers working in the

resource rooms had already been involved in their own training for many years as participants in the initiatives of the municipal secretariat of education. Based on previous studies, we decided to focus this intervention primarily on the selection of the content to be studied collectively rather than on an evaluation of the teacher education process because the participants were not sufficiently prepared. To study this process based on the educators' own stories could help understand this consistently negative evaluation. We took as our starting point the subject and his or her life story, but the focus was placed on how these stories were intertwined with everyone else's story.

To ensure that the research-training is an open experience that is constructed throughout the research process, we performed a continuous assessment. This assessment was performed as the educators read and re-read the texts they produced, even evaluating the ways in which the researchers approached these texts. This process of textualization and re-textualization is recommended by Gattaz (1996) and Caiado (2006). Furthermore, the involvement of educators in this categorization effort (the process of locating, in the text, signs that indicate experiences that were significant for the author) led to discussions that involved the reassessment of the experiences of the other educators and our relationship with the collective.

Therefore, the research problem was not exclusively ours, nor was it presented *a priori*; it emerged and took shape through the collective effort to study it. The national research project conducted by the Observatory, as mentioned initially, proposed two central questions: a) How can knowledge be produced to advance educational inclusion policies and practices in Brazil? b) How can the correspondence between the knowledge produced and educational inclusionpolicies be improved? Within the aims expressed by these questions, we developed the following research questions: What knowledge do teachers who provide specialized education services, currently embodied in the multi-function resource rooms, have about themselves as educators, about education policies, and about the history of special education? How is this knowledge intertwined with the activities and the training process of these educators? These questions echo the concerns of other researchers, such as Jesus (2011, p.14), who states:

> Understanding its meanings [that of specialized educational services] for professionals who work daily in AEE seems to be the foundational question. We need to understand what trails they are walking on, what possibilities and tensions they envisage. We believe this to be the ethical-academic responsibility of those who operate in the spaces-times of training .

Concerned with advancing policies and practices of inclusive education and inserted in a national movement of researchers who focus on this issue, we see the school as the *locus* in which these policies and teachers are consubstantiated as its main agents, regardless of whether they align themselves with the objectives or guidelines of such policies in general. In this regard, Monceau (2005, p. 479) rightly warns,

Whether it is educational research funding agencies who make policy decisions, or large national or international bodies, is not isolated from the fact that research is increasingly focused on teaching effectiveness. Paradoxically, the direct cooperation with the field, its concerns, and its urgencies perhaps make the researcher less dependent on a specific way of thinking about educational problems according to which political imperatives could be confused with heuristic imperatives.

The aim of the research collective was, therefore, to raise awareness about policies and their effectiveness regarding the operational level of teachers because it is teachers who provide the Observatory with data about the operation of resource rooms. When teacher education is treated as an activity, a learning situation, each proposed action is carefully examined, the important aspects are contextualized, and meanings are proposed for the statements of these subjects. This allows these meanings to be historicized and articulated to the general knowledge or knowledge from authorized sources (in the sense that Foucault used the expression).

> According to that epistemology of action, the situation is not pre-existing to the observation: it results from the interaction of the actors (students, teachers, professors of teachers, researchers) and the material, social, and cultural environment in which they operate. The other actors, the objects, the material and symbolic environment, are also included if they are significant to the actors. Thus, the situation results from a set of social and contextualized interactions. The activity is considered simultaneously with the situation from which it emerges, receiving a fundamentally asymmetrical and circular interpretation: it is the action that defines the situation, which in turn defines the action, etc. Resulting from a unique adaptation to that situation that it creates, the action is specific to it. (Durand; Saury; Veyrunes, 2005, p. 58)

Finally, the principle of authorship as a collective process that acknowledges individual contributions gained a dimension larger than initially planned. Although the teachers' accounts were brief texts of two to six pages, they had a strong emotional presence and placed themselves at the center of the research in an almost autonomous way. The teachers could, therefore, be treated as authors within our research, in accordance with Sales's (2008, p.155) experience:

> Thus, the work of investigation with the Memorials produced made me consider this writing as a form of co-authorship of my research process. I adopted the reading and analysis of these Memorials and gave to the group of teachers in training an authorial status in the writing of my doctoral thesis. Therefore, it is not befitting, here, to omit the names of the people involved in this work of mine, as is the usual procedure in other studies. Each Memorial composes the literature for my investigation, together with the other authors with whom I sought dialog. I thus combine the power of signing my text with the *histories of people that are not (yet) in books* and give name to this text and I give a name

to this text. The authors and the Memorials are found in the references, at the end of the text.

With regard to the second possibility, in which subjects not only describe their historical relationship with the issue of disability but also comment on their own statements, Barros et al. (2007, p.31):

> [...] the experience of reporting their life story offers him or her an opportunity of (re)-experiencing it, thus assigning a new meaning to his or her life – which implies an ethical dimension of the study, bringing a contribution that we consider essential - as we just noted above. According to Nogueira (2004), the life story proposes a committed, engaged and participatory listening. The relationship of complicity between researchers and research subjects provides him or her who tells his or her story the possibility of assigning a new meaning to his or her path and of continuing to construct meaning in the face of this addressed account.

If education should always be thought of as an experience, and if experience must be reported on for it to be analyzed, then this report cannot be a report of the present. Rather, it must be a reflection, in the present, on past experiences that are made sense of in the present. The life stories of the teachers reveal the ways in which they were inserted into the history of special education, especially in this historical moment in which they are responsible for the multi-functional rooms.

We therefore sought to discover whether any previous special education research had adopted this approach. We found a review performed by Glat in which she identifies several studies that have taken such an approach and emphasizes their importance to the field:

> As mentioned, this method is particularly fertile for research in the area of Special Education, by having as its object of study subjects discordant with the social pattern considered "normal" [...] Thus, for focusing, both in the collection and in the analysis of the data, on the view of participating subjects, this method offers an advantage to studying the discourse of marginalized groups because it allows the researcher to let go of his or her own preconceptions and stereotyped representations and give voice to those who he or she wants to understand. (Glat et al., 2004)

Glat et al. refers not only to students with disabilities but also to all those indirectly affected by the stigma of disability: parents, caretakers, teachers, and classes treated as special. Teachers in the multi-functional rooms are treated as teachers of "another type" of student, and our previous studies of teachers in common classrooms confirm that prejudice affects them and their expectations of their activities and education.

The work of Caiado (2007) reveals another important element in the use of life stories as an educational activity. Caiado discusses the importance of the effort of

the collective that conducts the research (including the authors) to perceive, in the analysis of the stories, the multiplicity of determinants in their education process.

> Here, the life story is understood as empirical reality, as a fragment or a synthesis, which conserves multiple and complex determinations of human life. Thus, as empiric reality, the life story of an individual can be revealed through different sources, such as oral testimony, social indicators, photographs, and clinical, school and work documents. After collecting all the oral and documentary evidence, one must perform a categorical analysis that relates this particular life to the social relations that engendered it, and thus, one can apprehend the processes of constructing a specific individual, the synthesis of multiple and complex determinations. Even with the use of different and varied sources, the primacy of listening to the oral testimony as an important source in the construction of data is not denied here. (*idem*, p. 147)

We performed a successful search in the literature to better understand the school as a *locus* where policies are shaped through teaching activities. These studies confirmed that such activities can be investigated within a collectively created context (research-education) assuming that "the situation is not pre-existing to the observation [...]" but the result of "a unique adaptation to that situation that it creates, the action is specific to it" (Durand; Saury; Veyrunes, 2005, p. 58). The educational activities, of which the teachers are co-authors, are thus the object of collective focus. The effort of reflecting on the past, writing their own stories and studying them as a group, is an example of authorship as a collective process. In this process, the voices of those whom we want to understand (and who wish to understand themselves as historical agents) engage in a practice of "committed, engaged and participatory" listening (Barros et al., 2007, p. 31) as they attempt to understand the multiplicity of determinants of the educational journey and its dynamic and open character, ripe with possibility.

THE COLLECTIVE CONSTRUCTION OF A RESEARCH APPROACH

Having discussed the theoretical-methodological perspective adopted, I will now briefly describe the research-education meetings. As stated above, the teachers of the Specialized Educational Service first became involved in the Observatory's general proposal in 2010, during the 4th Special Education and Inclusion Workshop (IV Jornada de Educação Especial e Inclusão). The group was excited to participate in the research and was especially interested in the opportunity to gain a clear picture of national inclusion initiatives. Nonetheless, the quantitative aspects of the research had limited appeal, especially because we had already worked for several years with this group while collecting data on school inclusion in the municipality.

It is important to clarify that this approach was not pre-established; rather, it was constructed through the researchers' coexistence with the group of teachers and the readings performed. During the training, each proposed work day was regarded as a specific activity within the overall research-education program. The work

proposals were electronically publicized in advance, and proposed modifications were incorporated. Each data collection technique was explained in detail and in relation to the general research project and was then put into practice by applying it to the teachers. The understanding of the concepts was always debated and negotiated within the group.

In the May meeting, the Observatory's objectives were analyzed and the proposal to collect life stories was presented. The recording and transcription technique was discussed, and a preliminary exercise in which stories were presented and recorded was performed in groups, with the colleagues and undergraduate students acting as interviewers. The result was quite tentative; the groups produced only short texts that ranged from presentations of conceptual aspects of what the interviewees imagined inclusion should be to descriptions of the difficulties involved. We observed that it would be necessary to read the stories of other teachers to increase the understanding of what constituted a life story. The teachers were also perturbed by the literal transcription of the accounts, which retained all the elements of oral speech. Repetitions and oral markers such as "né"[huh] and "tá" [okay] appeared often, although the teachers insisted that they did not speak this way. Almost all the teachers demanded a new recording and transcription, arguing that there were many errors. The uneasiness created seemed to threaten the future of the research.

We distributed the text of "As memórias e a arte de lembrar: sou professora porque[...]" ["Memories and the art of remembering: I am a teacher because..."], by Dias (2008), to every member of the group. A shared reading of this text was conducted in the June meeting. The discussion of the text considered the objectives of Dias' research, the content of the statements and the reflections presented. As the group reflected on the statements previously collected, it debated the following questions about their own stories: a) Which was more difficult, remembering or telling the stories? What was not told? What is important to tell? What is our goal in telling the stories that we are producing? Being able to reflect on an experiment that was performed on subjects similar to themselves allowed the teachers to feel more relaxed about the quality of their own production. Concluding that there was still much to be told, a plan was made to collect the stories more carefully. To this end, the recording and transcription tasks were performed between meetings in scheduled interviews between undergraduate grantees and teachers. Twenty-two reports were produced, which were read and complemented on by the teachers. By this point, we had realized the need to go beyond literal transcription and create collective possibilities for textualization.

Once the material collection process was concluded, we considered it necessary to undergo a period of imagistic representation before the final textualization and analysis. Representation of a story through images involves finding other forms of signification beyond the written text. This was achieved through the production of an illustrated cover for each individual compilation and through the creation of titles that incorporated what each person considered significant in every person's story. This process involved both representing the story

itself in an image and representing the collective story in a phrase, moving from the individual to the collective.

Textualization was used to allay the uneasiness caused by the transcriptions, an uneasiness that forced us to find methodological solutions. We developed a way to transform the oral text into written text that used the resources of written language to better express that which had been produced orally, taking care to preserve the content of what was said. Caiado (2006, p.50-51) argues that textualization should confer greater transparency and clarity to the text. Similarly, Gattaz (1996, p.135) indicates the need to transform an oral-based text into an effectively written text:

> For the narrator to recognize himself or herself in the interview's text, the transcription must go beyond the strict transfer of words from tape to paper. A literal transcription, despite being extremely necessary, will only be a stage in the making of the final text, which I call textualization, by being, after all, a way for an interview to be correctly and honestly reproduced in written form.

Because textualization is a process in which a narrator recognizes himself or herself in the text, the first stage of textualization was performed by the texts' authors, who used examples provided by the group. Repetitions were excluded, clarifying excerpts were incorporated, the topics were organized into paragraphs, and other elements of written language applied. The final review is still being conducted by the research team. During this stage, the teachers' involvement with their own stories was evident and was likely reinforced by our satisfaction as researchers. The texts were powerful and engaging, and they revealed a dimension of the group of educators that we had not noticed, nor had they, despite a long history of collaboration. More than ninety pages full of life were produced in which educational action was imbued with feelings, emotions, beliefs, and expectations.

For the analysis, we initially selected several categories that could be used to describe the elements that seemed to us most evident in the text. This selection was based on the discussions that occurred during the collection and recording process. Considering our interest in the life stories of the educators, we emphasized the following issues:

a) first contact with the issue of disability;
b) motivation for working in special education;
c) training process (both coursework and noteworthy experiences);
d) construction of identity/self-definition: how the person analyzes himself or herself in the process (ways and words with which he or she describes himself or herself, limits that he or she identifies in himself or herself, qualities, potentials, etc.);
e) relationship with the conceptual aspects of disability;
f) relationship with more general policies and norms (local, national, international): how the narrator aligns himself or herself with these policies.

This research stage was also recognized as a collective action. We hoped that the narrators, by searching the texts for the categories that we proposed, would

discuss and critique our choices and propose their own categories. The collective process of analysis began in October and took the following steps: the above-mentioned categories were written on forms and placed on the floor in front of the participants. The categories were explained and initially accepted by the group. Each teacher was then assigned to review another's story and a drawing was conducted to determine whose. If a teacher was randomly assigned her own story, they would draw again. Finally, each teacher identified excerpts in another teacher's story that she considered representative of the proposed categories. She also marked other passages that, although they did not belong to the defined categories, seemed to be significant.

The teachers then presented and discussed the categories marked in each story. With the group following along, the teacher-analyst discussed the marked excerpts and explained why she felt that they corresponded to a given category. If there was divergence of opinion, a discussion was held until a consensus was reached regarding whether the passage should be incorporated into an existing category or into a new one. Through this process, the following new categories were proposed:

a) professional (teaching) life;
b) moment of questioning or refusal of special education teaching job;
c) other experiences.

The new categories that emerged indicated that each teacher saw more elements in the stories than those that defined them as AEE educators. This observation broadened the study's focus and alerted us to the reductionist tendencies of our original categories. Finally, the marks indicating the excerpts considered by the teachers as representative of each category were transposed onto the collective text, which was now ready for systematization and for the resumption of the interpretative process.

In 2012, we collectively produced a timeline in which the experiences identified in the stories were arranged linearly and associated with the defining moments of the history of special education and educational inclusion in Brazil and in the municipality. In addition, we reflected on the relationship between the teachers' experiences in the multi-functional rooms and the knowledge bases constructed by them, based on the accounts of their life stories. This process should generate new articles that build on this article. In the second semester of 2012, the main issues noted in the initial research stage were addressed in focus groups to explore each more thoroughly.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

Larrosa (2010), whose research was cited at the beginning of this paper,[3] states that education is a journey, albeit an open journey. How do we know in

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3   In the previous reference, the author is cited as Bondía, the name under which the author published the first paper.

advance what is going to touch us deeply or what is going to represent an individual and group transformation? What challenges in the education proposal will seem fascinating and which will not be challenges? Which will we face and which will we reject as impossible, difficult, or scary? The educational journey, he states, is an exercise in becoming what one is. The phase of the journey that we shared with the teachers of the multi-functional resource rooms demonstrated that we are becoming researchers and that the presence of the teacher as a subject-participant in the research makes us aware of additional perspectives. Moreover, our research about them and with them demystifies the research process and its certainties.

We can provide several preliminary conclusions that address the Observatory's central question: how to produce knowledge that will advance policies and practices for educational inclusion in Brazil? It is not possible to do so without the teachers that execute these policies through their practices. Truly including these teachers does not mean simply asking them to describe their practices and then evaluating them. Rather, it involves realizing that knowledge mobilizes these practices and is mobilized by them and understanding how this knowledge interacts with the formal knowledge presented through official education.

We now plan to collaborate with the teachers in the analysis and interpretation of that which we recognize as intentionally educational experiences during the first stage of the research-education project. It is important to emphasize that aspects of their historical experience as special education educators have marked their identity construction, which is an ongoing process, and are manifest in their pedagogical actions. It is important to us, in our educational journey, to understand the experience of the other and sympathize with it to produce collective meanings; so that through this process we can see ourselves as part of a historical movement.

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