

Autoethnography as a methodology in research on the memories of a motherteacher of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in everyday school life

La autoetnografía como metodología en la investigación sobre las memorias de una madreprofesora de estudiantes con Trastorno del Espectro Autista en la vida escolar cotidiana

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses autoethnography as a methodological approach in the field of Special Education, based on a Master's in Education research, which used the trajectory, memories and reflections of a mother-teacher of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in/of/with the school routines. The theoretical foundation is based on the work of authors such as Santos (2017) and Chang (2008), on autoethnography, and Alves (2001, 2003), on everyday research, and seeks to highlight the centrality of reflexivity, subjectivity and engagement critical of the researcher, highlighting the interrelationship between individual experiences and macrosocial phenomena, such as inequality and discrimination, in everyday school life. The article has four parts, the first being a contextualization of research on students with ASD and school daily lives; the second on the characteristics of autoethnography and its potential contribution to studies of school everyday life; and the third brings one of the autoethnographic memories of the teacher mother and her fight for her daughter with ASD's right to school education; and the fourth discusses the contribution of autoethnography to research on the memories and trajectories of the mother-teacher of students with ASD in everyday school life. Autoethnography is presented as a powerful methodology for producing significant knowledge, in addition to acting as an agent of transformation in the inclusive school context.

KEYWORD

Autoethnography; school daily life; Autism Spectrum Disorder; school inclusion; memory.

RESUMEN

Este artículo aborda la autoetnografía como abordaje metodológico en el campo de la Educación Especial, a partir de una investigación de la Maestría en Educación, que utilizó la trayectoria, memorias y reflexiones de una madre-profesora de estudiantes con Trastorno del Espectro Autista en/de/con las rutinas escolares. La fundamentación teórica se basa en el trabajo de autores como Santos (2017) y Chang (2008), sobre autoetnografía, y Alves (2001, 2003), sobre investigaciones cotidianas, y busca resaltar la centralidad de la reflexividad, la subjetividad y el compromiso crítico del investigador, destacando la interrelación entre las experiencias individuales y los fenómenos macrosociales, como la desigualdad y la discriminación en la vida escolar cotidiana. El artículo consta de cuatro partes, siendo la primera una contextualización de la investigación sobre estudiantes con TEA y el cotidiano escolar; el segundo sobre las características de la autoetnografía y su potencial aporte a los estudios de la vida cotidiana escolar; el tercero trae una de las memorias autoetnográficas de la madre maestra y su lucha por el derecho de su hija con TEA a la educación escolar; y el cuarto discute la contribución de la autoetnografía a la investigación sobre las memorias y trayectorias de la madre-profesora de estudiantes con TEA en la vida escolar cotidiana. La autoetnografía se presenta como una poderosa metodología para producir conocimiento significativo, además de actuar como agente de transformación en el contexto escolar inclusivo.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Autoetnografía; vida cotidiana escolar; Trastorno del Espectro Autista; inclusión escolar; memoria.

1. Introduction

Autoethnography, derived from the Greek terms *auto* (self), *ethnos* (nation, group), and *grapho* (to write), is a research approach that integrates self-reflection and cultural understanding to explore personal experiences, aiming to understand dynamics within society. According to Santos (2017), this methodology challenges normative forms of investigation and representation, positioning research as a politically conscious and socially just act. Introduced by Karl Heider in 1975 and expanded by David Hayano in 1979, the concept gained relevance in the 1990s, driven by growing interest in qualitative methods that value subjective narratives, an emphasis on research ethics, and increased participation of women and academic minorities, allowing these marginalized voices to share their own experiences (Adams & Ellis, 2011).

As a social research methodology, autoethnography emerges in areas such as education, social psychology, and anthropology, reflecting a shift in the academic field towards a greater valuation of individual experiences and an ethical focus on investigation methods. Certeau (1994) states that understanding everyday practices, composed of social interactions and individual experiences, is essential for delimiting the field of study. These practices are formed collectively, organizing social space and constituting the social fabric, which, although marked by bonds of solidarity, is also permeated by conflicts and power disputes:

The choice of autoethnography as a research methodology in the context of research by a mother-teacher is motivated by the need to explore, in a dense and self-reflective manner, the experiences lived in the intertwining of these two identities. According to Adams and Ellis (2011), it is an approach that allows the researcher to perceive their own experience to understand broader cultural and social issues. We seek to understand how autoethnography can provide a mother-teacher, the protagonist of the research, with an investigation that values subjectivity and allows the individual trajectory to be centered on understanding the dynamics of inclusive education and interactions with the educational system.

In the specific context of a mother-teacher of child-students (*filhos-estudantes*) with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), we examine how autoethnography makes it possible to articulate these personal experiences with the struggles and challenges faced by other individuals involved in this field, such as educational policies and inclusive practices, as discussed by Santos (2017).

Given the complexity involving the inclusion of students with ASD, we seek to investigate the possibilities of autoethnography offering a suitable methodological path to explore the challenges and opportunities of this reality. We consider here that the narrative of a mother-teacher, who deals daily with the inclusion of her child-students in the educational system, can constitute a source for understanding the investigations and contradictions that permeate inclusive processes.

The use of expressions such as mother-teacher and child-students in our writing reflects a linguistic practice that seeks complex and inclusive ideas. This approach is grounded in the reflections of Nilda Alves (2003), who explores the transformative power of language and communication. She argues that a "junction" of terms can create new meanings and promote significant changes.

This practice illustrates an approach that highlights the importance of language as a tool for the construction and deconstruction of realities, directly impacting the formation of identities and the promotion of social justice. In this context, the particular use of words becomes a metaphor for the union of diverse voices, perspectives, and experiences in the educational field. By combining words, Alves (2003) not only creates new meanings but also expresses complex ideas that promote an inclusive and egalitarian vision of education. This approach aims to build bridges, promote inclusion, and transform realities, reaffirming the commitment to an education that values and respects diversity in all its forms. Therefore, the use of expressions such as mother-teacher and child-students is not considered merely a stylistic choice, but the reflection of a more intense process of inclusion and dialogue in the educational environment, where the voices of all involved are known and present.

In the quest to build a trajectory that seeks to think about the connection of the mother-teacher's experiences to studies of social, political, economic, and cultural relations, this article is organized into four parts. In the first section, the specificities of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are addressed, including its characteristics and challenges in the educational context. We will also explore the subjectivities and belongings that emerge in the *mother-teacher's* experience and the implications of these elements in studies related to everyday school life;

In the second part, we will discuss autoethnography as a methodological approach that enables the understanding of interactions between the research subject and the context in which they are inserted. The theoretical foundations supporting this methodological choice will be highlighted, emphasizing its relevance for the analysis of personal and collective experiences, as well as for the construction of narratives that dialogue with contemporary social and cultural issues.

In the third part, we will present, in the third person, one of the autoethnographic narratives constructed by the mother-teacher during the process of preparing her Master's research in Education; specifically presenting the conditions under which she assists in the construction and application of the Individual Development Plan (IDP) for her own daughter with ASD, covering the challenges faced and strategies adopted to promote inclusion, showing the intersections of the family daily routine with the school daily life itself, as a mother and as a teacher.

And finally, the contribution of the autoethnographic method to understanding the dynamics of everyday school life, the ways in which meanings surrounding inclusion and ASD are produced, circulated, and diffused, and the researcher's perceptions regarding the process of struggle and militancy to guarantee the rights of the presence of children with ASD in schools are discussed and presented. Here, the research results and their implications for the training of professionals and for the promotion of a school environment that is more inclusive and sensitive to the needs of all students are presented.

2. Autism Spectrum Disorder and Studies in Everyday School Life

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is classified as a neurodevelopmental disorder that significantly affects psychoneurological development in the areas of cognition, language, and social interaction of the individual. The etiology of ASD, that is, its origin, remains a controversial issue among doctors and researchers, as it is often characterized as a disorder of multicausal origin. This complexity involves an interaction of genetic, environmental, neurological, and social factors, making it difficult to associate ASD with a single specific cause.

In recent decades, the incidence of ASD cases has increased exponentially, with estimated rates of 1 in every 36 live births, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an agency linked to the United States Department of Health. This significant increase in the prevalence of ASD raises concerns about appropriate identification and support for these individuals. Furthermore, according to the CDC, a study conducted among 8-year-old children revealed that more than a third of this population has Intellectual Disability, a condition that can hinder not only learning but also the independence and autonomy of these individuals.

These data evidence the need for effective interventions and inclusive educational policies that recognize the diversity of the needs of students with ASD, ensuring they have access to resources that promote their integral development and quality of life. Understanding the characteristics and challenges associated with ASD is essential for the formulation of pedagogical and social practices that respect and enhance the singularities of each individual in the school environment and in society as a Whole.

In the educational context, students with ASD often face various challenges that can compromise their learning and inclusion. According to the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (Decree No. 6.571, 2008), inclusive education must ensure that all students, regardless of their characteristics, have quality.

Beyond social challenges, students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) often face emotional issues that impact their academic performance. The literature points out that anxiety, eating disorders, sensory processing disorders, and stress are common conditions among these students, especially in educational environments that are not adapted to their specific needs (Kanner, 1943), implying the need for greater support in educational care.

Teacher training is an aspect that deserves highlighting when addressing educational inclusion. Insecurity and difficulty in dealing with children with special needs are common feelings among many future educators. As pointed out by Lima (2006), there is a recurrent complaint among pedagogy and licensure students, as well as practicing teachers: "I was not prepared to deal with children with disabilities" (p. 40). The pursuit of quality teaching for children with special educational needs implies the necessity of at least two strands of professional training. The first reference is the training of regular education teachers, who must possess minimum knowledge to deal

with students presenting "special educational needs". This training is fundamental, as inclusion often takes place in the context of the classroom, in everyday school life.

Many educators do not feel prepared to meet the specific needs of students with ASD, resulting in comfortable pedagogical practices that do not share their particularities. Curricular adequacy, adaptation, and flexibility can make learning accessible and meaningful for students with specific educational needs. For Bueno (1999), "curricular adaptation consists of the modification of content, methods, techniques, and instruments to meet the differences and singularities of students in the teaching-learning process" (p. 32). In this sense, it is a strategy aiming for effective inclusion, respecting the pace and potential of students with learning difficulties.

Corroborating this perspective, Mittler (2003) points out that "curricular flexibility allows students to participate fully in school life, promoting not only academic learning but also the development of social skills and practices for life" (p. 49). This approach allows the curriculum to adapt to the needs of each student, without compromising the quality of education.

Everyday school lives reflect the practical life of students and educators, showing how educational experiences happen in real-time. Studying this daily life allows for direct observation of conditions that facilitate or hinder learning, especially for students with special educational needs, such as those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The daily routine is where pedagogical theories are put to the test and adapted to the individual needs of students. For Special Education, studying everyday school life allows identifying how the school deals with diversity and inclusion demands. These micro-dynamics help to better understand how social interactions, norms, and school rules affect the participation of students with ASD.

Pais (2007) highlights the need for a sociological sensitivity that values everyday experiences, allowing for deeper reflections on investigated realities. This understanding goes beyond theoretical knowledge, being influenced by subjectivity and daily interactions. Alves and Garcia (2002) argue that teaching practice develops from living in the school environment, not just through formal training.

The daily actions and decisions of teachers, managers, and students form a rich source of pedagogical knowledge. Researching everyday school life allows understanding how educational practices are adjusted to concrete reality, especially in inclusion contexts where needs vary from student to student.

Studies in/of/with everyday school lives (Oliveira & Sgarbi, 2018) offer the opportunity for critical reflection on educational practice. By focusing on the day-to-day of schools, researchers can identify areas reflecting change and transformation, whether in the scope of pedagogical practices, teacher training, or educational policies. In the context of students with ASD, this approach can reveal how institutional structures and educational practices need to be rethought to ensure effective inclusion.

The social interactions that occur in everyday school life between students, teachers, and other education professionals are fundamental for students' development. Studying everyday life allows observing how these interactions influence their behavior, emotional development, and learning. In the case of students with ASD, daily social interactions are often challenging, and therefore, observing how these interactions occur can provide more effective strategies to foster inclusion and the social development of these students.

Issues such as the lack of resources, limited teacher training, or resistance to change are observable in detail in everyday school life. This allows for a realistic assessment of the barriers to inclusion and points to paths for viable solutions. Daily experiences in schools have accumulated a vast practical knowledge, often undocumented. Research on everyday school life allows recording these practices and tacit knowledge, which do not appear in pedagogical manuals but are essential for the functioning of an inclusive education. This type of study also values the knowledge of educators, who adjust their practices as challenges arise.

Studies on everyday school life have the potential to influence public policies because, by evidencing how educational policies are applied in practice and what the gaps are between legislation and school reality, this research provides concrete data for the reformulation of policies aimed at a more inclusive and equitable education. It is through the investigation of everyday life that many of the challenges and achievements of inclusion are revealed, allowing for more sensitive, adapted, and effective practices to be developed. In the case of students with ASD, this approach

allows one to move beyond theoretical generalizations, providing a more humanized perspective that is closer to their daily experiences.

3. Autoethnography: Reflexivity and Subjectivity in Education and Everyday School Life Research

Autoethnography places the researcher at the center of the investigation, using their personal experiences as a lens to analyze broader social and cultural discussions. This perspective, as elucidated by Chang (2008), emphasizes the intrinsic relationship between the subject and the context, proposing an analysis that emerges from the researcher's interactions with the environment in which they are inserted. Unlike traditional ethnographic approaches, autoethnography does not seek to eliminate or minimize subjectivity, but rather to incorporate it as an essential part of the investigative process.

In this sense, the researcher positions themselves reflexively in their research, registering themselves as an active part in the construction of knowledge. Reflexivity is central to autoethnography, as the author explores their own experiences, emotions, and internal processes to understand broader social preferences. Santos (2017) argues that this critical stance is fundamental to access a deeper dimension of data, covering not only "external," observable events but also subjective aspects influencing the researcher's perception and analysis. This is particularly relevant in contexts where issues of identity, power, and exclusion are at play.

According to Santos (2017):

[...] autoethnography allows us to problematize the role of the researcher subject at the moment of their insertion and action in the research field, in social relations. Thus, we can consider that, if what we research in sociology are social relations, woven from institutions and individual interactions, even having the goal of guaranteeing rationality and objectivity by distancing ourselves, we cannot deny that we are part of these processes of interaction and social relation; analyzing reflexively these movements that surround sociological research, the interactions of proximity between researcher and researched, and the relations (political, cultural, ethical, and racial affinities) of this researcher with the theme and object/subject of the research (p. 225, our translation).

The impossibility of complete neutrality or distancing of the researcher is highlighted, especially in social and educational contexts. By adopting autoethnography, the researcher regulates their place within the research field, positioning themselves as an integral part of the social interactions and relations being investigated. This is particularly relevant in research involving personal and identity experiences, where the boundaries between "self" and "other" become tenuous.

According to Geertz (2008), the focus of ethnographic analysis is on people and the context in which their lives occur, being fundamental to authentically and significantly understand the complexity of human experiences. Custer (2014) complements this view by describing autoethnography as an autobiographical style of qualitative research that relates individual experiences to social and cultural institutions.

The triadic balance, described by Chang (2008) and Santos (2017), is fundamental for understanding social and educational phenomena, especially in the field of school inclusion. The research thus seeks to transform personal experience into an academic object, contributing to more inclusive educational practices.

Autoethnography stands out both as a reflexive process and as a final product. By valuing personal narratives, it challenges traditional research norms, providing a more inclusive and critical understanding of the studied realities. For Adams et al. (2011), autoethnography promotes a conscious and integrated analysis of knowledge, where the author assumes an active role in data construction and interpretation. To narrate these data, we consider the proposal of "literaturizing science" suggested by Alves (2001) in studies of everyday school lives to be very pertinent. These narratives capture the complexity of lived experiences, offering insights and emotions that traditional methods, such as quantitative ones, may not capture.

In investigations regarding everyday school lives, autoethnography offers a rich approach to understanding the complexities of daily life. The everyday, frequently considered trivial, reveals a multiplicity of experiences and learning opportunities. For Alves (2001), total immersion in this space is essential to capture its nuances. The

proposal of "feeling the world" suggests that the researcher must deeply engage with the everyday life they study, valuing sensory and direct immersion as a fundamental part of transformative research.

By focusing on day-to-day experiences, researchers access nuances and profound meanings that enrich the understanding of reality. Santos (2017) highlights that autoethnography allows for problematizing the role of the researcher in the social interactions and institutions they investigate. Although research seeks objectivity, the researcher is part of the social interactions and processes, and autoethnography facilitates a reflexive analysis of these interactions, aligning political, cultural, and ethical affinities with the research theme.

Applied, in the case of our research, to the everyday school life of students with autism, autoethnography can provide a series of other data surrounding social dynamics and experiences lived by these students, including challenges and inclusion strategies. By incorporating the researchers' personal experiences, autoethnography enables very organic understandings of the social and cultural interactions impacting the school experience, revealing stereotypes, prejudices, and gaps in the understanding of these students. For Bossle and Molina Neto (2009), this approach promotes self-reflection, essential for understanding the ambiguities surrounding the researched subjects.

A autoetnografia também contribui para o desenvolvimento de políticas e práticas pedagógicas mais inclusivas, iluminando as necessidades individuais dos estudantes com autismo. Ao integrar narrativas pessoais, como cartas, memórias e artefatos, o/a pesquisador/a se torna parte ativa da pesquisa, visibilizando-se no processo e trazendo novos olhares sobre identidade e cultura escolar (Anderson, 2006).

In addition to being introspective, autoethnography integrates memories, diaries, and other personal records with social and cultural theories, generating new understandings of school and cultural dynamics. Autoethnographic researchers are driven by their personal experiences, which confer authenticity and meaning to the research. This connection strengthens scientific analysis, expanding the horizons of knowledge regarding school inclusion and offering insights into how to welcome diversity in the school.

Autoethnography values the incorporation of the researcher's personal experiences and feelings as essential data for understanding the observed social world. Unlike the objectivity characteristic of positivism, this approach privileges subjectivity and reflexivity, offering a richer and more contextualized analysis of sociocultural phenomena.

Reflexivity" here refers to the researcher's capacity to turn towards their own experiences and identities, recognizing their influence on the research process. This approach is especially relevant when exploring the dynamics of everyday school life, promoting a deeper understanding of interactions and pedagogical practices.

Autoethnography allows exploring emotional reactions and ruptures in school routines, challenging institutional norms, as discussed by Spink and Medrado (2013). This critical approach records emotions such as surprise, confusion, and empowerment, promoting coping strategies and resilience. In this sense, Spink and Medrado (2013) argue that "normally, it is through the rupture with the habitual that it becomes possible to give visibility to meanings. This is, precisely, one of the central strategies of social research" (p. 25). From this perspective, the breaking of daily and predictable patterns allows the emergence of new meanings and interpretations, which can enrich the understanding of educational and social specificities.

Thus, it not only documents these ruptures but also offers a critical lens to examine how these experiences impact school dynamics and reveal the values, particularities, and practices that structure the educational environment. By bringing these lived experiences and emotions, autoethnographic research contributes to a more perspectival and dialogical process of reflection, given that the intersections and affections of the researchers themselves are taken into consideration more emphatically, enabling investigations to contribute to the construction of a more inclusive educational space aware of the subjectivities involved.

Autoethnography, as both method and methodology, emphasizes reflexivity, personal engagement, and the vulnerability of the researcher, rejecting fixed conclusions in favor of a relational and processual understanding of reality (Gama, 2020). It unveils layers of meaning and lived experiences, as described by Guattari (1992), providing a personal and critical approach to the study of educational experiences and the inclusion of students with autism.

In summary, autoethnography is characterized as a research method that combines reflexive process and final product. By valuing personal narratives, it challenges traditional research norms and offers an inclusive and critical understanding of the realities studied. We consider that this method, by expanding the epistemological and methodological fields of research in education and contributing to other interpretations of everyday school life and educational practices, assists in the observation of "blind spots" in other methodological perspectives, especially in studies of everyday school life.

4. Autoethnographic passages of a mother-teacher of child-students with ASD in everyday school lives

After the diagnosis of ASD for the mother-teacher's daughter and the beginning of her motor rehabilitation, a school was sought that was not only close to our residence but also offered an inclusive environment. A municipal daycare was found willing to adapt the environment and pedagogical practices according to her needs. The school performed a complete anamnesis and incorporated the girl's preferences and skills, such as her interest in newspapers and magazines, into pedagogical activities. The flexibility and welcoming nature of the school team provided a gradual adaptation, without imposing behavioral standards that disregarded her specificities. This adaptation contrasts with experiences of other families, who report requests for the withdrawal of students in situations of atypical behavior.

The elaboration of the Individual Development Plan (IDP) for the mother-teacher's daughter revealed a significant challenge in 2014. Upon requesting the construction of the IDP with the Special Education sector, there was resistance from professionals who disregarded the importance of the document. This experience underlined the mother's role as a defender of the rights of child-students with ASD, encouraging her to seek support to ensure adequate educational care. The support from pedagogical guidance was based on the construction of an IDP together with a multidisciplinary team, including family members, teachers, and therapists.

After filing the request for the IDP in 2015 and receiving a denial from the Sector Responsible for the Care of Students Eligible for Special Education Services, the request was forwarded again to the school with the intention of sensitizing the management team. Before this, however, silently, the mother-teacher had already initiated in-depth research on the subject. Various sources were consulted, such as the websites of AMA-SP and APAE, and documents produced by Poker et al. (2013), in addition to maintaining conversations with psychopedagogues who provided relevant information. However, available IDP models were predominantly aimed at special schools, which operate in a distinct context from regular schools.

Faced with this, the mother-teacher began to make an initial draft of the IDP, incorporating necessary adaptations, and would send it to a more accessible person who, at that moment, had recently started their professional activities in the sector responsible for Special Education.

The silence of the night—which was the possible moment for the construction of the IDP by the mother-teacher—was paradoxical and deafening, made even more evident when the girl's babbling interrupted the focus, forcing greater attention from the mother. At other times, working in this nocturnal silence felt like involvement in an illicit or irregular activity, as if that search were clandestine or forbidden. At the height of exhaustion, the mother-teacher came to believe that, in a way, she was infringing some rule. However, in reality, she was breaking an inner silence to challenge imposed conformism, breaking barriers and defying established norms. The censorship imposed on her was not enough to stop the work, as the search for justice and rights functioned as endorphins for the continuation of the writing.

The pedagogical advisor who received the IDP demonstrated great solicitude, endeavored to understand the document's foundation, and subsequently organized meetings to begin its construction. This process relied on the support of a multidisciplinary team composed of a psychologist, teachers, an occupational therapist, a social worker, and a speech therapist. The construction of the IDP was pioneering in the context of municipal education in the city of Sorocaba, generating discussions that eventually led to the implementation of similar practices throughout the educational network in subsequent years.

According to the Reference Framework of the Municipal Public Network of Sorocaba, the multidisciplinary team—of which the mother-teacher then became a part—is constituted by professionals from the areas of psychology,

social work, physiotherapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy, with work focused on the educational context. Its function is to promote the appreciation of human diversity and respect for differences, with an emphasis on the construction of meaningful learning. This approach is grounded in the principle of equity, taking into consideration both the individual and collective needs of the students.

The team plays a central role in the development of the students' intellectual, socio-emotional, and cultural skills, in addition to promoting the strengthening of critical thinking and child and youth protagonism. Furthermore, its performance contributes to the implementation of democratic management practices in educational institutions, fostering the transformation of these institutions into inclusive spaces capable of meeting the diverse demands of the school Community.

Multidisciplinary work is aimed at students eligible for Special Education services whose needs arise from conditions, dysfunctions, limitations, or disabilities, or even those not related to a specific organic cause. Thus, it seeks to guarantee that the educational environment is accessible and capable of meeting diverse demands, offering support for the full inclusion of students in the educational process. However, its implementation still faces structural and organizational challenges in many municipalities, which limits the universalization of this specialized support model.

Each of these teams also includes pedagogues, expanding pedagogical support and strengthening joint action in meeting specific educational needs, according to the particularities of each territory.

And it is in this context that the complex dynamic of the mother-teacher is inserted, occurring due to the fact that she lives, simultaneously, both roles: that of the mother and that of the teacher, in which the responsibilities and challenges of each function intertwined, creating a unique and multifaceted experience in the school environment.

In the home, currently, every day follows the same routine: the mother-teacher wakes up at 5:30 AM to ensure her husband has woken up and stays a little longer in bed until six, organizing herself sensorially. Inevitably, she needs to get up running, without even having breakfast, to prepare her son's milk and her daughter's bath, who prefers to have breakfast at school, this being one of the ruptures she promoted in the everyday school life.

The difficulties in organizing the routine followed as soon as the daughter-student was discharged from medical and therapeutic treatments performed at home and authorized to carry out her activities, such as going to school and treatment in the clinical and educational environment. The day was calculated precisely so that it was possible to handle all activities defined by the health team, as well as school practices. The clock seemed to consume her. It gave the sensation that 24 hours were insufficient for the quantity of activities to be performed in the day. Furthermore, she needed to be attentive to all feedback from therapists to be able to assist her daughter in her treatment. Traffic often did not cooperate, making time seem even more scarce. However, at the end of the day, even with the body crying out for rest, the sensation was of having accomplished what she desired.

The mother is the family member who most adapts her roles and life routines to meet the demands of care and dedication to the child with special needs (Matsukura et al., 2007; Misquiatti et al., 2015). Culturally, it is common for the woman to be seen as the main person responsible for the care of the house and children. This role, traditionally attributed to women, reflects social norms and expectations associating care and domestic management with female tasks.

Such a view can impact how women are perceived and supported in their multiple roles, both in the family and professional environments. It is rare to see fathers accompanying their children with ASD to therapeutic appointments. Furthermore, there is another relevant factor: some fathers, upon receiving their children's diagnosis, request a divorce and even waive shared custody. According to Lourenço (2020): 'many fathers cannot bear the loss of the 'ideal child' and abandon the family' (n.p.).

In the educational context, this role can intertwine with professional responsibilities, especially for mother-teachers who deal with the inclusion of their own child-students with special educational needs. The overload of responsibilities can affect their teaching practice and their capacity to promote effective inclusion, in addition to influencing the social perception of their work. Recognizing and challenging these cultural norms is fundamental to promoting a fairer balance and adequately supporting all dimensions of these professionals' lives.

Regarding the impact of having a child with special educational needs, these mothers have their daily lives shaken by work overload, reducing the time dedicated to activities they enjoy. Furthermore, they face prejudice, deal with bureaucracies to access benefits, and need to manage the child's behavior (Matsukura & Sime, 2008).

This is the reality of thousands of atypical families in Brazil. In addition to daily tasks, atypical families present a routine loaded with activities, ranging from therapies and physical activities to periodic medical appointments that are part of the struggle for the quality of life of their sons and daughters.

5. Autoethnographic Research and the Inclusion of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Everyday School Lives

When addressing the inclusion of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), autoethnography, in our investigation, was used to offer a panorama of the complex social and institutional dynamics shaping the experiences of these students in the school environment. Inclusion—or often exclusion—of students with ASD does not occur only on the pedagogical plane, but also in more subtle layers of social, cultural, and institutional interactions, which can be deeply affected by structures of discrimination and inequality. In this sense, autoethnography allows research to explore these dynamics from a privileged perspective, connecting individual experiences to collective and structural issues.

In the context of this research, the choice of autoethnography as a methodology was justified by the singularity of the position occupied by the mother-teacher. This figure, who simultaneously performs the roles of mother and teacher of students with ASD and teacher of others with the same condition, offers a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities involved in inclusive education. By sharing her memories, emotions, and reflections, the mother-teacher reveals a complex web of meanings transcending the simple description of school events, allowing a profound problematization of the practices and dynamics involved in the inclusion process.

Furthermore, autoethnography, in this case, acted not only as a research methodology but also as a tool for empowerment. Following Alves (2001), who argues for the need for a researcher to construct a narrative about their own experiences, we think of autoethnography as a promoter of the creation of new epistemologies emerging directly from subjectivity and critical engagement. For the mother-teacher, this engagement was potentiated by her dual experience: in the personal scope, dealing with the demands of being a mother of a child with ASD, and in the professional scope, acting as an educator of students with similar needs.

The contribution of autoethnography to the field of Special Education, particularly in relation to the inclusion of students with ASD, resided in the capacity to approximate individual experiences to the broader reality of exclusion and marginalization these students face. By connecting her experiences with the school reality of her students, the mother-teacher not only described the challenges of the educational everyday but also offers a space for critical and transformative reflections. Her personal experiences thus became starting points for a broader analysis, aiming to question and reformulate educational practices that are still based on exclusionary paradigms.

By allowing the researcher to position herself as subject and object of investigation, the autoethnographic method allowed revealing the social and cultural dynamics permeating educational practices and the power relations sustaining them. In the case of the mother-teacher, autoethnography not only reflected her experience but was also potentiated as an instrument of struggle and transformation, as the trajectory of the mother-teacher of child-students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) emerged as a report exploring daily experiences.

Everyday school lives are dynamic environments where inclusion manifests in diverse forms. By focusing on daily experiences, autoethnography reveals both the challenges faced and the strategies adopted to overcome them. It is crucial to recognize that inclusion is not limited only to curricular adaptations, but involves the construction of relationships of respect and empathy among all participants of the school community. This approach also highlights the need for an educational environment that not only accepts but also values individual differences.

The autoethnographic narratives allowed bringing to light some of the practices that function as models of inclusion. For example, the description of a collaborative project among students, where a student with ASD is valued for their specific abilities, can inspire other classes and teachers to adopt similar approaches. These reports not only document successful practices but also serve as tools for sensitization and training for educators, promoting a deeper understanding of the students' needs and capabilities.

Applied to the everyday school life of students with autism, autoethnography contributed to the construction of another perspective for understanding the social dynamics and experiences lived by these students and their families, primarily including challenges and inclusion strategies. By incorporating the researchers' personal experiences, autoethnography made it possible to understand other dimensions of the social and cultural interactions that impact the school experience, revealing other facets of the stereotypes, prejudices, and gaps suffered by these students. Reinforcing what Bossle and Molina Neto (2009) state, this approach promotes self-reflection, essential for understanding the ambiguities surrounding the researched subjects.

Autoethnography also contributed to bringing to light situations that are frequently hidden and erased in the process of developing more inclusive policies and pedagogical practices, illuminating the individual needs of students with autism. By integrating personal narratives, such as letters, memories, and artifacts, the researcher becomes an active part of the research, making themselves visible in the process and bringing new perspectives on identity and school culture (Anderson, 2006).

6. Final Considerations

In the construction of narratives and stories of situations, events, and processes—of repetition and rupture—in everyday school lives, by the very actors producing the daily routine of school space-times, autoethnography allows the knowledge and experiences of those who come from the margins (Reigota, 2010) not to be erased, besieged, and forgotten by the field of educational sciences. By perceiving themselves not only as subjects or objects of research, but simultaneously as both, researchers in everyday life can, in autoethnographic collection and interpretation, construct other nuances of everyday school life.

In this sense, we perceive that autoethnographic investigation, by revealing facets of everyday school work and intertwining it with their own daily lives, can perceive the processes of production and circulation of meanings in school space-times, with their consequent legitimation and even normalization of notions, concepts, ideas, and positions, regardless of whether they are close or not to scientific and/or academic truth of what is being diffused.

By centering on personal experiences, this methodology allowed us to reveal some nuances and complexities of the day-to-day life of schools and the lives of teachers themselves, as discussed by Alves (2001) and Alves and Garcia (2002) regarding the pertinence of investigation in everyday school lives. It was in this sense that the perspective of a mother-teacher of child-students with ASD offered a singular view on the challenges of school inclusion and some of the strategies necessary to promote the learning of these students, in addition to the very right to their presence in school life. In this sense, the pursuit of inclusive educational environments encompasses not only legal and political guidelines but also the realities lived by students, educators, and their families in everyday school life.

"When applied as a data collection method in the everyday school life of students with autism, autoethnography provided a detailed analysis of the social dynamics and lived experiences of these students, including challenges and inclusion strategies. The incorporation of personal experiences, such as letters, memories, and artifacts, transforms the researcher into an active agent of the process, bringing new perspectives on identity and school culture (Anderson, 2006). By applying autoethnography to everyday school life, it is possible to reveal interconnections between daily experiences, knowledge construction, and teaching relationships.

Curricular adequacy, in the construction and implementation of the IDP, together with critical reflection (Chang, 2008), contributed to creating inclusive educational environments, breaking barriers and promoting the inclusion of all students, regardless of challenges, and recognizing neurodiversity as an essential part of the learning process. The narrative of this process, through autoethnography, therefore, not only assists in understanding experiences in the educational context but also sensitizes the reader to exercise empathy, strengthening the reflexive engagement of teachers and students.

Autoethnographic research based on memories consolidates itself as an essential methodology for investigating individual and collective experiences, especially in inclusive education. When applied to the school context of inclusion of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), autoethnography enables the researcher to articulate personal experiences with a critical analysis of pedagogical practices, inclusion policies, and institutional structures that permeate everyday school life. As Ellis and Bochner (2000) argue, autoethnography allows the researcher 'to engage in a deep analysis of their own experiences as a means of shedding light on broader cultural and social

aspects' (p. 733). This approach enables the connection between the individual and the collective, fostering reflections on conditions that affect the inclusion of students with ASD.

Following Alves (2008), who states that memory, in this context, both registers what was lived and helps to understand the connection of meanings regarding one's own experience, we consider that the use of memories in autoethnography allowed the teacher-researcher not only to reflect on her pedagogical practices and interactions with students, revealing other nuances of the inclusive process. But, primarily, to understand the processes that construct the meanings of legitimation and/or delegitimation of the presence of children with ASD in everyday school lives, and the struggle of their mothers to guarantee this right.

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Érica Monteiro Nunes Bastida: Conceptualization – Data curation – Formal analysis – Writing – original draft – Investigation.

Rodrigo Barchi: Conceptualization – Formal analysis – Methodology – Writing – review & editing – Supervision.

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