



NARRATIVE INQUIRY AND SCHOOL BIOGRAPHY. PROFESSIONAL DIMENSIONS AND ARTISANSHIP REVEALED THROUGH THE NARRATIVES OF NOVICE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

NARRATIVAS Y BIOGRAFÍAS ESCOLARES. LA DIMENSIÓN PROFESIONAL Y LA ARTESANAL DEVELADAS EN LOS RELATOS DE PROFESORES DE INGLÉS NOVELES

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Abstract

In the present work, we will explore through a qualitative research study led by narrative inquiry, marks of teaching practices printed in the school biography² of novice English Language Teachers graduated at Mar del Plata National University. We carried out in depth interviews which allowed us to reflect on traces of educational biography. From the analysis we could focus on our findings that were related to the professional dimensions, and artisan practices. In this way, we intend to lead a path that allows us to consider teaching practices within a specific frame, the one of crafts.

Key words: narrative inquiry; school biography; novice english language teachers; professional dimension; craft

Resumen

En este trabajo intentamos explorar, por medio de un estudio cualitativo con un enfoque narrativo, huellas de prácticas docentes impresas en la biografía escolar³ de profesores de inglés noveles graduados en la Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata. Para ello realizamos entrevistas en profundidad que nos permitieron reflexionar acerca de las trazas de las biografías escolares. Luego pudimos concentrarnos en los hallazgos que se relacionaron directamente con la dimensión profesional y con las practicas artesanales. De esta manera, buscamos trazar un camino que nos permitió considerar las prácticas de los profesores de inglés dentro de un contexto en particular, el de la artesanía.

Palabras clave: narrativa; biografía escolar; profesores de inglés noveles; dimensión profesional; artesanía

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This paper stems from the lines of research the group GIIEFOD⁴ have been exploring for the last two years. We have extensively interviewed four English Language Teachers, each with less than three years of professional experience. Specifically, we focused on teachers who received their graduate degree from the National University of Mar del Plata. They are professionals who have a wide range of knowledge regarding teaching practices to be able to work in a variety of educational institutions. These interviews set the framework for *Estudiantes y docentes en contextos de formación II. Análisis*



interpretativo de experiencias biográficas en el Profesorado de Inglés de la Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata (Students and teachers in Formative Contexts II. Interpretative analysis of biographical experiences in the English Teaching Education of the National University of Mar del Plata).

The objective of the main study that guided this article was to interpret through the analysis of school biographies of novice teachers and their narratives, the perceptions and representations that left traces in their schooling, tracking how these marks become evident in their own practices. Considering that it is impossible to separate the teaching profession from the macro-social context in which it takes place, we aimed to examine the teachers' experiences while also taking into account four specific dimensions that helped frame them: the affective, the professional, the institutional, and the macro-social. The participants were willing to share their professional and educational biographies, allowing us to get to know them through their beliefs, emotions, expectations, and experiences. Each of their stories revealed itself in layers, often showing the teaching profession from various dimensions at the same time.

First, we focused on the educational background of the teachers who participated in our investigation. The information we obtained from each of them was vast and rich in biographical details, and for this reason, we decided to focus specifically on the professional dimension, which is most directly connected with the theoretical concept that interests us -that of teacher as artisan.

Literature review

Research, narratives and biographies

Narratives are like furrows that we open to find those traces hidden in our memories and help us reconstruct the past. Traces are in turn, significant events in our lives that would have no value if we did not unveil them, that is why we decided to reconstruct stories related to those teaching practices that were still unrevealed. Gabriel Murillo (2015) explores the game between memory and pedagogy and suggests a journey through the different stages of education through the words of its actors. The productions of the novice teachers that were part of the research we carried out were writings framed in what Leonor Arfuch (2012) describes, as *writings of the self* or *genres of intimacy*. Narratives that, in the very act of narrating, far from accounting for the facts that actually occurred, set life itself into meaning. They seize words, keep authorship, restate positions of authority, witness having lived or seen, undress emotions and sign a policy of identity (Arfuch, 2012).

A narrative research, is built from the dialogue with others and with oneself -inter and intrapersonal- (García Huidobro, 2015). The author focuses her attention on the tension over the affective and erotic turn when, through sensitivity and empathy, we see ourselves facing encounters that provoke openness and the sharing of experiences and feelings. A *bricoleur* where times, stories, actions, voices, gestures, reflections, expressions, meanings and understandings will meet. As she says, instead of explaining and describing the results, the intention is to tell stories as part of the research process and to produce a narrativized dialogue in an attempt to transform it into a *performance* where hints from the memory help reconstruct the past, relate it to the present and the future. The fictional possibility of the narrative plays with the times of the lived experience in a game of truth, openness and literary or fictional resources to reconfigure scenes of the past. Thus, biographical narratives are ethnographic reconstructions knitted with theoretical background (García Huidobro, 2015).



The biographical-narrative story is a specific form of discourse organized around a plot, in a sequence of time, with specific characters. It refers to a situation that makes the statements have their own contextual meaning within the plot (Bolívar, Domingo and Fernández, 2001). We can say that through the readings of the narratives, we try to discover the nuances of the lives of others. Ricoeur (2016) talks about the place that can be given to narrative innovation as in *poiesis*, the result is only one in particular and not another.

Traces of educational biography

We felt inclined to investigate the school biographies of these novice teachers due to the work of various authors, such as Andrea Alliaud (2010), who argues that before professional preparation occurs, teachers also learn about their craft, though lacking technical knowledge, through the many hours they spend in contact with teachers and schools. Alliaud states that the strongest tendencies are acquired during this period and later fortified during vocational teacher education. She adds that there are a number of studies that emphasize the important role the early years of development play later in a teacher's work. In this sense, Jackson (2002) believes that the experience lived in schools as a student results in what he defines as *school sense*, the simple concept of what the work of a teacher implies, including both knowledge and aptitudes. This long and uninterrupted experience is enough to form strong and sustaining opinions and beliefs about teachers and their work (Jackson 2002).

As Gary Festermatcher (1989) argues, teaching is not a practice that can be reduced to the technical abilities of the teacher, but rather teaching must be defined by considering its educational aims and the beliefs of the teachers. Mónica Calvet and Liliana Pastor (2008) argue within the framework of their research, that certain teaching practices can have different interpretations, considering the biographies of the students. In this context, morality as a category of analysis gains a new value, as the practices themselves often illustrate concrete situations of in-school life and reveal much about the person who transmitted it. The authors do not aim to support the idea that teaching practices should only be interpreted by focusing on the educational development of each specific teacher, but to emphasize that this imprint opens up a variety of novel reconstructions and interpretations in relation to the data.

It is in this way that one's experience in school constitutes, for those that become teachers, a source of experience, which leaves impressions that ultimately manifest themselves in their professional performance, especially in those teachers whose educational experiences are still fresh in their memory. Often with anxiety and uncertainty, these young educators take their experience as students and form their own styles and strategies for teaching. In this sense, we will focus on those *teachings that leave a strong imprint* on those who later, consciously or unconsciously, recreate these same practices both inside and outside of the classroom.

Professional dimensions and artisanal practices

In the research study we highlighted those aspects of the past that the participants chose to select and that made their experiences unique. We did this without seeking control of the subjective dimensions revealed in their life experience. Their biographical production enabled the decisive space of self-reflection for the consolidation of individuality and professional identity. The *self* developed its shape through writing.

Teaching is a profession that has its center of action in the souls of others. To teach is an act that comes in production, and those who teach are producers or transformers of



others. In this sense, we can understand teaching as a craft, using the definition of *the ability to do something well* (Sennett, 2009) solely for the fact of doing it well. To do something well, be able to do something well, and feel a sense of reward and satisfaction from such work. To be able to teach and do one's work well, represents one of the largest compensations for those that we work with, that work with us, and that work with others (Alliaud, 2017). Different from other professions, those that operate directly focused on people, require knowledge and capabilities of the subject as well as values and principles that affect the students. Teaching contemplates the way each person works, that is to say, it is the *work* of someone -the teacher- that accomplished slightly changing something that was previously thought certain (Alliaud, 2017). We consider this a formative, transformative, and emancipative role. It is *a masterpiece in the purest form*. Phillippe Meirieu (2006) alludes to the natural magic of the pedagogical act that takes place when teaching and learning come together. Although we will never be sure if that which happened to a student is the effect of the action of the teacher, we can take certain attitudes of students, such as enthusiasm and participation, as indicators of our skilled craftsmanship, and a product of the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation that the teacher provides.

Study design

This article stems from a qualitative research study with an interpretative approach, understood as a process of comprehending the close representations of the subjects themselves, which requires the configuration of a reading of meanings -these meanings fall on a spectrum between the general and the particular (Taylor and Bogdan, 2007), In other words, between the immediate details and the theory surveyed. The main and direct sources of the data are natural situations. The phenomena must be interpreted within their spatio-temporal references and their context (Denzin and Lincoln, 2015). Additionally, researchers are the main instruments for collecting information because of their adaptability to data collection and their holistic view.

The interpretative approach holds that social reality is not permanent and stable, but instead undergoes a process of constant construction based on objective and subjective elements. It analyzes the meaning of social action from the perspective of the participants and conceives communication as a production of meaning within a given symbolic universe. From a methodological perspective, interpreting implies explaining to oneself and to others, understanding, deciphering, translating, and making perceptible or clarifying. These actions of thought or cognitive functions are integrated and interwoven by processes, skills, and intellectual strategies (Denzin and Lincoln, 2015). Research that addresses social reality seeks to describe the observable characteristics of a fact, as well as interpret what the participants reveal. We seek to focus on the context that is perceived by the subjects involved, along with their representations and recreations expressed by their narratives.

We adopted a narrative perspective. Since the educational research has undergone its narrative turn (Matti Hyvärinen, 2010), we have begun to study the lives of the teachers and students in which the knowledge of the past matters (Bruner, 1991). The connection between biographical narratives of novice English Language Teachers, and the sociocultural and institutional context in which they are inscribed, can transform the individual into collective. The narrative constructions made by the same participants reveal that it is possible to see the interweaving between the emotional and intimate through the exercise of a profession.



The narrative biographical research involves at least four elements Bolivar, et al. (2001): a *narrator* who gives a voice to his life, an *interpreter* or researcher who analyzes these stories to produce a report, the *texts* that, on the one hand, collect what has been narrated and, on the other, are the body of the report that is elaborated *a posteriori*, and, lastly, the *readers* of the published narratives. This is the skeleton for the origination of the dialogical process. The textual material here constitutes a legitimate source of new knowledge about the social world. The narrative perspective is characterized by being a way of constructing reality and the central instrument for this is the interview. The biographical interview is not only an instrument for collecting information since, through dialogue, a shared meaning is developed and constructed. The result is the final construction of the story. The interview takes the form of a co-structure (Bolivar, et al., 2001) by the interviewer and interviewee because both are in a place of symmetry within the dialogue; the participant is then resignifying the experiences with the interviewer.

Narrative research utilizes the term *field texts* (Clandinin, Steeves and Chung, 2008) to define the documents that provide the data. Due to their nature, the location of the text implies its configuration by the researchers, participants, and the subsequent re-configuration of those who access the final text. Likewise, when we live, write, speak, relate, listen, read, respond, relive and retell, compose, attend and observe, we discover the things our own selves and others possess as unique (Clandinin, Steeves and Chung, 2008).

Participants and Setting

We carried out four in depth interviews with four novice English Language Teachers from the National University of Mar del Plata. Each interview lasted approximately an hour and a half and provided a framework rich with information that can be interpreted and explored from a variety of points of view. To protect the identities of each participant, we asked them to select a false name we could use to identify them. On this occasion we will focus on the data provided by one of them, Lourdes. Her interview helped us to reveal traces of professional dimensions and artisanship that we would like to analyse in this article.

Findings

Professional dimensions

There are many facets by which one can judge or analyze the professional work of a teacher. The first mentioned in the interviews we conducted is motivation, a trait that is reflected in the entirety of the interview with our participant, Lourdes, a graduate of the English Language Teaching program at the National University of Mar del Plata who earned her degree three years prior to the time of the interview. Sennett (2009) argues that motivation is, in some circumstances, more important than talent, and it is a key aspect to take into account when teaching. Students learn more, he adds, when are positively motivated to do so. The first teacher that Lourdes remembers well and who played a role in the beginning of Lourdes' elementary school experience was her third grade home room teacher, Laura. However, in this particular case, we can establish a relationship with motivation by opposition, that is to say, for its absence:

Lourdes: [...] We also had, she always had meetings with my mother, during which my mom would ask her to let me go out for recess, and she said no because she was afraid I would fall or something would happen to me, something which in reality didn't happen.



And these were my first memories that I can remember to make a biography. No issues, nothing about which subjects I liked or didn't. I was an average student [...]. So my memories, my first ones are like this, my third grade teacher and later, well, it changed, luckily, in fourth grade when we started to receive three teachers, in the different areas, but then, well, a little more relaxed than, than the pressure that the third grade teacher put on me. And it was in this way that, that she changed me, we'll say, that before any sort of assignment I would say, "my head hurts" like kids do.

Through her interview, Lourdes brings the image of Laura as a teacher. However, she does not remember her for her innovating activities, for the topics that captured her attention or for any specific positive reason. Lourdes mentions Ms. Laura in her schooling trajectory for restricting her freedom and preventing her from going out to recess to play with her classmates. This act on the part of the teacher demotivated our interviewee from going to school and from attending full time classes all together. It is this lack of motivation on the part of Laura that marked Lourdes as a student and eventually as a teacher.

Considering the mark that Ms. Laura left on the educational biography of Lourdes, we can perceive two distinct and alternate paths: the first, that Lourdes imitates this behavior and limits the freedom and actions of her students; the second, that she works in the opposite way, trying to prevent any unnecessary restrictions of freedoms and promoting socialization inside and outside of the classroom. In the case of Lourdes, the second option prevailed. Our participant looks to avoid the model of Laura, which drastically affected her own motivation as a student. Lourdes speaks of this various times throughout the interview; here we will focus on a few examples:

Lourdes: [...] I try to destructure a little [in class], because...

[...]

Lourdes: Because I get bored, they [students] get bored, they show up bored (*smiling*) from their house, so I try, if they say, I don't know "today we could do..." and if they give me the framework to do it, if they propose something, I try to figure out how I can make it work.

Lourdes looks to adapt her classes to maintain the harmony between the individuals and the group. At the same time, she uses intuition when choosing to allow the students to pick their own activities. The development of intuitional thinking, reflection, and analysis is crucial in the education of the teacher, just like in the majority of learning contexts (Atkinson and Claxton, 2002). Referring to the concept of "intuition" the authors define it as thinking, impossible to articulate based on the tangible staging of experiences and learned things that one acquires through practice. This holistic approach to problem solving is unconscious and usually accompanied by a sense of success. It is really interesting to see how teaching approach is shaped by early experiences.

We find fragments in this interview that show how her schooling experience as a student affected her initial work as a teacher, recently looking to improve herself in contrast to what she experienced. Taking into account that as an English Language Teacher, one of the many goals of Lourdes' classes is to achieve that her students are capable of communicating orally and through writing in a language they are not immersed in daily.



Lourdes: I never liked presenting grammar, because all my life [during elementary and secondary school] I had a traditional training and I was never able to find the return to, well, to create the necessity to, well...

Interviewer: The context...etc.

Lourdes: Exactly.

Interviewer: (*laughs*)

Lourdes: I was never able to find it [context] in that first, um...

Interviewer: Micro-teaching experience⁵?

Lourdes: In that first experience I couldn't find it. I don't remember how I presented the grammar point I had to teach. I think I put different forms of the conditional in the white board, but even that I discussed with the tutor who helped me prepare the class. [...], it was very difficult for me to present grammar in context because of the traditional method my teachers had used in their classes.

Lourdes schooling experience with respect to grammar took place within a traditional context, very different from the contemporary strategies, in which grammar was introduced to students isolated, without context, and which placed emphasis on accuracy over fluency. Now as a teacher, Lourdes' experience as a student has resulted in an obstacle, especially under the magnifying glass of the *Post-method Principle* extremely present in our classrooms these days.

The transference of what Lourdes had established through her scholastic sense regarding the learning of English grammar as a foreign language to the new paradigms that mold to her initial practice occurred gradually. This can be interpreted from the following segment of the interview,

Lourdes: I don't remember how I presented it [grammar topic], I think I put different forms of the conditional in the white board, but even that I discussed with the tutor⁶ who helped me prepare the class. I had to be open to my tutor's comments and be able to adapt my own teaching styles to new paradigms.

On this occasion, and in order to break with the way that she learned English in primary and secondary school, our interviewee proposed a sort of negotiation with her tutor, to find a middle point where she could reshape her practice and break from her lived experience as a student.

Artisanal practices

Through Lourdes's story we can see the framework for the concept of the teacher as *artist* (Sarason, 2002); the job requires that the teacher thinks, feels, intuitively, and adapts in a flexible form to the individual students with the end of generating comprehension and a sensation of growth in the audience (Branda, 2011). Here, we can examine Lourdes general flexibility and interest in maintaining individualities in the classroom, specifically with large groups of adolescents and adults.

Lourdes: So now what I've implemented is that students prepare, in some schools where I can, half an hour of class. They choose a song and they do the activity.

[...]

Lourdes: And sometimes, without sorry or glory, the activities or the things that I bring don't work, so I put them on the spot (to propose an activity themselves). And this is good, because it forces them to reflect over what it means to be there, as a teacher I mean... and they say that "now my companions don't listen to me and it makes me nervous and I'm shouting and I don't know what to do. Teacher, I don't know what to do."



[...]

Lourdes: Of course it's difficult! It's very fun! And students take an active role in the class.

[...] And they choose something that they like. I supervise the song, the activity or the video they suggest.

Returning to the concept of the artisan in which motivation is more important than talent (Sennett, 2009, in Branda, 2016), we observe that, facing the difficulty in satisfying the likes and interests of all her students, Lourdes implemented a group work strategy, centered on them. This consisted, in small groups for half an hour of class time, in the students designing and sharing an activity based on a song they choose. After the teacher gives them a framework for their curriculum design, the students choose what they do with their class time. This strategy has captivated the motivation of the students, who define their classes with Lourdes as *fun*. Lourdes decided to use this classroom technique when she realized that it was impossible to meet all of the individual tastes and tendencies of her students.

Lourdes: Yes, yes, "Kids, I don't know what to do with you all." (*Smiling*) I say to them.

Interviewer: Specifically with what age group?

Lourdes: With adolescents.

The search for growth in this teacher and her students has been based on the awakening of the collective motivation. It is also worth mentioning Lourdes's pre-disposition to being flexible and promoting the different individualities of her students; she invites them to play active roles, *to be on stage*, without loosening their hands or watching their every step. This not only accounts for the will of the students to stay motivated during class, it also makes them active in the search for knowledge acquisition and personal and group growth.

Throughout the interview, several examples came up demonstrating the artisan of Lourdes' teaching practices.⁷ In her interviews, Lourdes discusses the occasions in which she had to reflect over her school biography.

Lourdes: [...] I asked myself about these questions [good teaching and memorable teachers] after I had to do a final project for, for a seminar in my master's program on teaching methods, and it was fairly difficult, um...the fact of finding perhaps a couple, a few memorable questions that would reflect my methods, or why I chose to teach to begin with. But contemplating these questions, I realized I don't have many memories from primary school, sure, some teachers and their maternal characteristics (here she makes reference to Ms. Laura, her third grade teacher, but not as a memorable teacher for her good teaching, but for her over protection).

Lourdes: Um... (*long pause*). I think that it all, in all courses [of the university], that I took, the majority, really about 90%, all had some impact, of course, on my formation on some respect, even those I liked and didn't like, on my teaching practices. Um...in the case of the teacher...yes, my first year teachers, I always remember them warmly, and I've worked with them and beyond the academic level of all those studying to be teachers. From the first year teachers, I still use some effective classroom strategies, and how to relate to students.

Lourdes understands that she has learned as much from those teachers who lack a passion for teaching as she has learned from those *who were clearly passionate about their work*. Perhaps it is for this reason, that besides apathetic teachers hurting her in her personal trajectory, it also worries her to think about the traces she is leaving on



her students. This brings up an interesting point regarding how we, as teachers, learn to do what it is we actually do.

Interviewer: How do you think you influence your students' future?

Lourdes: I don't know. It's...I panic just thinking about it, sometimes.

Interviewer: Why?

Lourdes: Because I see how teachers influence the lives of their students, and I don't know, I don't know if I'm prepared to influence (*Smiles*). I don't know. It's strange. It's difficult to see how one makes an impact, I don't know. I don't know.

Her reflection derives from a conscious intent to avoid repeating the teaching practices that negatively affected her schooling experience. Her attempts to innovate are clear at various points throughout the interview, including the following examples

Lourdes: [...] and what happens for me is that it all *depends* because I experience all the time that I'm learning from me, from them, from everything. So, this year I'm doing things that the year before I didn't do and vice versa and there are things that I'll never do again. I don't know.

Interviewer: Because you reflect on it.

Lourdes: Of course and I'm changing. This year I'm showing tons of videos, next year, maybe, I won't show even one video the whole year. I don't know.

Auto-criticism and constant reflection are components that help Lourdes polish her craft and her *ability to do things well*. Lourdes has revealed herself as a restless teacher who daily reconsiders her practices and their potential consequences. The change to which she alludes to illustrates a time in which she hopes to find herself as a teacher. This perennial search requires auto-criticism to be able to reach the goal of perfect artisan, which is an intrinsic eagerness to do one's work well. When questioned about the compensation she receives for her work as a teacher, Lourdes emphasizes the value she receives from her students remembering her, or even her lessons in contexts outside school

Lourdes: I try, in classes, above all, it depends on the age, to generate spaces for reflection about the local reality, and I participate in a grouping and we go to a neighborhood where we can lend a helping hand, in the periphery of the city. The other day I told the kids, and after they heard I don't know what in the radio, "I thought of you [teacher], and they said 'I'm sure the teacher is there.'"

The artisan, according to Sennett (2009), does not explain, but shows. Our interviewee not only teaches through words, but also through action. To see how her students act in consequence, gives her emotional compensation.

Through Lourdes narrative, we can find instances of artisanal practices, in which she looks to make the students experience something for him or her self, sensitizing *the point of the fingers*, as Sennett (2009) calls it.

Lourdes: So now what I've implemented is that students prepare, in some schools where I can, half an hour of class. They play a song and they do the activity.

[...] And sometimes, without sorry or glory, the activities or the things that I bring don't work, so I put them on the spot (to propose an activity themselves). And this is good, because it forces them to reflect over what it means to be there. Sometimes their partners do not listen and you hear them complaining "now my companions don't listen to me and it makes me nervous".

Evidence of the increased sensitivity to which Sennett alludes can be found in the work of the artisan teacher. Lourdes does not only aim to teach English, she also worries about the social commitment and values that come into play in the society in which she lives. Our interviewee looked for alternatives to keep her students motivated in her subject, while also using materials and resources of a variety of interests. At the same time, she raises debates about relevant topics that in other contexts are overlooked. She also alludes to and puts in practice the commitment to the other. Perhaps it would be too bold, although pertinent, to consider here to delve into the vast work of Sennett, that professional artisans should not fulfill their work alone. On the contrary, almost a prerequisite to aim to becoming an artisan, *the ability to do things well*, and in this particular case, the teacher artisan, is to immerse oneself in his or her context, considering who they affect, and what role they play in the community in which they work.

Reflections

The use of metaphors and indirect language also emerges in narratives, representing a new counter- current force and defying, once again, other more traditional concerns in teaching. (Porta and Yedaide, 2014 pp. 208).

In the meetings held with the participants we took risks and the initiative to reinvent and enrich ourselves. We let the narratives dive into our emotions, feelings, stories, desires and experiences. We sought theoretical, epistemological, ethical and political options in other logics and other languages. We were open to frameworks of otherness, to the singular and the different (Connelly and Clandinin, 2008). We were aware of the concepts related to the theory of narrative as a powerful strategy for the recovery of memory; also, for the deconstruction of the identity of the narrator in order to find important issues in everyday experience that signify our interpretation of the world and allow us to find meaning in our attitudes and actions of our teaching practices.

At the beginning of our study we had on hand a copy of Richard Sennett's (2009) *The Artisan*, which represented a great source of inspiration in advancing a diverse number of questions on which we had already been working on in GIIEFOD, our research group, namely those focused on good teaching practices, memorable teachers, the intellect-affect relationship, and teaching as an art of representation. If previously we had delved extensively into the line of thinking of Sennett, this time, his ideas deeply captivated us and encouraged us to continue to look for artisanal work in the educational biographies of the participants, the artisanal being the ability to do one's work well, for the simple pleasure of working in this way; one cannot separate the artisanal production that comes from the hand and from the mind, they are united. Another concept that impressed us aimed at overcoming the technical processes of monotonous mechanization that comes with any work by using personal thoughts and feelings to make one's work more interesting. We understand teaching as a profession, a work with a specific author with personal tendencies and habits, as an intervention, as a transformation of something or someone who, as a consequence of a teacher's action, has the possibility to fully *form or change* his or herself. This role puts us in a place where we must be conscious of our power and of how to use it.

I would like to close this reflection evoking Philippe Meirieu (2006) who argues that the moment has already arrived to look at the often forgotten dimension of our profession,



that moment when we ourselves first felt enticed to become teachers. In the proper sense of the term: it is this moment that keeps us standing.

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Notas

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- ² We use the term “school biography” to refer to the period of time and the lived experiences from elementary school through the university of each. The term has a methodological connotation and its analysis can be interpreted as schooling.
- ³ Usamos el término “biografía escolar” para referirnos al período de tiempo y a las experiencias vividas desde la educación primaria hasta la universitaria de cada docente que moldean su bagaje educativo.
- ⁴ GIIEFOD (Grupo de Investigación en Idiomas, Educación y Formación Docente, Facultad de Humanidades, Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata)
- ⁵ Micro Teaching Experiences are instances in which students from English Teaching Program at Mar del Plata National University have to teach one class or one activity in a given context. This practice is guided by a tutor who helps the students plan the class to be taught.
- ⁶ At the English Teacher Education Program tutors are teachers who guide trainee students who are doing their teaching practices.
- ⁷ To return time and again to take action allows for self-reflection (Branda, 2016).