

## CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES AND THE PROBLEM OF ATTENDANCE WITHOUT ATTENTION AT SCHOOL

*PRÁTICAS CONTEMPLATIVAS E O PROBLEMA DA AUSÊNCIA DE  
CORPO PRESENTE NA ESCOLA* 

*PRÁCTICAS CONTEMPLATIVAS Y EL PROBLEMA DE LA AUSENCIA  
DE CUERPO PRESENTE EN LA ESCUELA* 

 <https://doi.org/10.22456/1982-8918.143052>

 **Flávio Soares Alves\*** <flavio.alves@unesp.br>

\* Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP). Rio Claro, SP, Brazil.

**Abstract:** The school environment often suffers from a certain attendance without attention that directly affects classroom relationships. From this problematic delimitation, research was developed with schoolteachers who were interviewed. Field journals were produced by the researcher. Data production was constituted as an exercise of experimentation of thought, so it was sought to support the philosophy of difference, in composition with contemplative studies. It was observed that the school reality places teachers in the face of distracting factors, which trigger the teacher's reactive circuits, generating illness. It was found that these factors are part of the lesson and therefore should be viewed from a less reactive attitude, which is a great challenge for the teacher. It is in this direction that mood and empathy are highlighted, understood as principles of action that operate powerful actions to face the problem of attendance without attention at school.

**Keywords:** Presence. Contemplative practices. Philosophy of difference. School.

Received on: Oct. 05, 2024  
Approved on: May 07, 2025  
Published in: Nov. 03, 2025



This is an article published  
in open access under  
the Creative Commons  
Attribution 4.0 (CC BY 4.0)

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The demands of contemporary life have imposed on us, social subjects, a certain attendance without attention (Castro, 2019; Carbonara; Zucco, 2023), which alienates attention, that is, that disconnects us from what gives us at the present moment. In the wake of this idea, we could say that this same problem also appears within the school environment, affecting not only students, but also teachers in the classroom.

By placing the problem of attendance without attention in these terms, outlined above, it is worth noting the following: what is at stake when thinking about presence in the school context, is not whether or not students are physically present in the classroom, because in this direction the notion of presence is understood as an attribute and, in this discussion, there is not much to advance in reflexive terms. Thus, much more than an attribute – as Ferracini teaches us (2014) - presence must be seen as a compositional effect that resonates with the relationship between bodies in a given meeting, in this case, a school educational meeting.

In this sense, we dare to state here - inspired by Ferracini (2014, 2017), Ferracini and Feitosa (2017), Ferracini, Hirson and Colla (2020) - that the theme of presence shifts attention to the modes through which the relationship between school bodies is intensified, in order to mitigate the problem of attendance without attention installed there.

Thus, presence is a subject that prompts the rethinking of a whole mode of organization of school relations, inasmuch as it draws attention to the immanent dimension of the educational experience, that in turn points to a certain ethical posture of school space occupation, one that is more interested in encounters, that is, in affective interactions concretely triggered among school agents, that together compose the school environment.

It is in this place, which is produced by affective interactions, that the notion of contemplative practices is located. According to Shapiro, Brown and Astin (2011), the field of study of contemplative practices seeks to trace relationships between the work of contemplation<sup>1</sup> – that has been known for millennia by the oriental philosophical traditions - and the pedagogical exercise.<sup>2</sup>

It is also noteworthy that contemplative practices present a diffuse field of knowledge by promoting theoretical, conceptual, and methodological alliances with different areas of knowledge, among which stand out oriental philosophy - which feeds on the legacy of contemplative traditions - and poststructuralist philosophies, among which the Foucauldian studies are placed, particularly the context of the stylistic of

1 The work of contemplation opens ways to a peculiar form of knowledge achieved not through cognitive and intellectual thinking, but by intuition that gives passage to a modality of knowledge that is always situational, perennial, and provisional (Wallace, 2009).

2 From these relationships arise the context of contemplative pedagogies that refer to a mode of composition of the educational practice that places both the teacher and the student in a position that is open and receptive of processes that traverse and intensify school educational relations, thus qualifying the exercise of learning (Oliveira; Antunes, 2014; Shapiro; Brown; Astin, 2011).

existence, where contemplative practices will seek interesting alliances to think about the effects of these practices on the ethical, aesthetic, and existential elaboration of the subjects who practice them.<sup>3</sup>

Such practices also approach the context of the face-to-face and performative arts, as well as the field of so-called somatic education. In this sense, contemplative practices reaffirm their counter-hegemonic profile, as they shy away from hasty categorizations, depending on more open, heterogeneous, differential, and transversal views.

A particularly potent feature in the context of contemplative practices is that they draw attention to the ways of being and existing of those who practice them (Plá, 2017). In the wake of this idea, Oliveira, Antunes (2014) and Ergas (2019) note that, although it is fully possible to map the different practices that make up the universe of contemplative practices, this mapping should never be pre-established, because the exercise of contemplation depends greatly on the interactions, needs, and forces involved in the contexts where they are cultivated, as an exercise of the living of agents that are involved in them.

It is in this sense that contemplative practices use the studies of presence, as there are powerful reflective possibilities to draw attention to the unique modes of how subjects present themselves, by cultivating, in their own existence, actions to confront attendance without attention denounced at the beginning of this project.

In the wake of this idea, one wonders: What contemplative practices do they gain from school? This question began an investigative movement that intended to verify how such practices – which here are called contemplative - offer powerful spaces to place the problem of attendance without attention at school, pointing to resolution possibilities negotiated and experienced, always and each time, in the unique consistency of school relations.

## 2 RESEARCH TERRITORY, PROCEDURES, AND ANALYSIS

To echo the ideas outlined above, this research conducted fieldwork focused on dialogue with schoolteachers from the network of municipal and state schools in the city of Rio Claro, São Paulo.<sup>4</sup>

First, the researcher established a weekly meeting space with schoolteachers during the HTPC sessions (Collective Pedagogical Work Hours) at two educational institutions in the city of Rio Claro, São Paulo: the "Professora Heloísa Lemenhe Marasca" State School and the "Professor Elpídio Mina" Municipal School. This fieldwork took place from March to November 2023.

3 In the wake of these approaches with Foucauldian studies, contemplative practices are understood as technologies of themselves, that is, as practices of ethical and aesthetic elaboration of existence, which include an ascetic (related to the preparation) dimension and erotic (relational) dimension that escapes the realms of theoretical knowledge, precisely because it shifts the focus to the practices, through which the subjects constitute their modes and exist (Foucault, 2006; Plá, 2017).

4 This research was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Biosciences Institute, UNESP, Rio Claro campus. The approval data are as follows: CAAE: 67305323.3.0000.5465.

The research sample was formed based on convenience and voluntary adherence by the participating teachers. These meetings allowed for an observation exercise of the concrete school reality, which supported the compilation of notes developed in the researcher's field journals.

These journals contributed to the process of raising the researcher's awareness of the forces, that is, of the affects and intensities that permeate educational relationships in schools. Thus, through journal writing, the goal was to open up pathways for listening to and embracing the singularities and needs that permeate the school space, thus giving vigor to the potentialities that mitigate the problem of the attendance without attention of a physical presence in the school.

It is worth considering that journal writing is a powerful practice for giving visibility to this interactive dynamic, as one allows oneself to be affected by the forces that permeate the encounters, to open the furrows of what demands passage during the act of writing (Barros; Passos, 2009; Nascimento; Silveira-Lemos, 2020). In this sense, the use of field journals was widely considered in this research, not only as a data production tool, but also, and primarily, as a powerful device for producing research writing, as it presents more multiple and transversal pathways for conducting the act of writing.

Regarding the classification of schoolteachers, it is worth noting that of the 20 participants, 10 are men and 10 are women. Respecting the inclusion criteria defined in the research project, all participants have more than 10 years of experience as schoolteachers in elementary and secondary education. The participants teach the following subjects: 7 in Physical Education, 3 in Geography, 3 in Science, 3 in History, and 4 in Mathematics.

Twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted with the schoolteachers to understand their views on the issue of attendance without attention and what coping actions they may take to mitigate it.<sup>5</sup>

The analyses were constituted as an exercise in thought experimentation (Deleuze, 2006; Deleuze; Guattari, 1995), seeking to engage with the reality under study, rather than seeking to extract supposed truths from the school context. To this end, we sought support from contemplative studies, already mentioned in the introduction to this manuscript, as we identified a particularly interesting field of knowledge therein for maintaining the researcher's attention on the forces that permeate school-based educational relationships.

We also sought analytical approaches developed in the context of participatory research — particularly intervention research in light of the Philosophy of Difference

<sup>5</sup> Regarding data collection procedures, here is a clarification. Considering that this present research sought to think of issues regarding the presence in the school context, understanding it as a compositional effect that is constituted in school educational relations, we are aware that it may lack a data collection instrument dedicated exclusively to cover the point of view of students, like the instrument of the school teachers from the interviews. However, in our understanding, the practice of journal writing managed to partly meet this demand, particularly due to the profile of this writing demand that is concerned with the organizational realm of a more compositional register and is, therefore, less surrendered to individualized views (Barros; Passos, 2009; Nascimento; Silveira-Lemos, 2020). Thus, as a composition, the journals also welcomed the different voices expressed by the students, expanding them and differentiating them in the course of school educational relations considered in this research.

(Passos; Kastrup; Escóssia, 2009; Passos; Kastrup; Tedesco, 2014) — so that interventional attention could be sensitive to the forces that permeate the investigative work intended here.

The research writing sought to weave a compositional movement, of a heterogeneous and differential nature, around issues related to presence in the school space, which were sensitive to singularities, but also to the tensions that occur there.

### 3 ANALYTICAL COMPOSITIONS

To mobilize the discussions in this research, several analytical fronts were generated, three of which will be highlighted here: 1) Distracting Factors, 2) Humor, and 3) Empathy. The main discussions contained in each of these three devices will be developed below:

#### 3.1 DISTRACTING FACTORS

According to Barbezat and Bush (2013), "distracting factors" (p. 28) refer to any and all stimuli, whether internal or external, that distract us from the moving horizon of contemplation, making shallow, and therefore less intense, the relationship of connection and integration between the parties that constitute a given encounter. Based on this theoretical assumption arising from contemplative studies, we were interested in verifying what the recurring distracting factors would be in the educational encounter established between teachers and students in the classroom.

It was observed that the school environment confronts teachers with several distracting factors, such as excessive student noise in the classroom, inappropriate "chat," lack of dialogue and interaction with the teacher, and discouragement, among other factors reported by schoolteachers during the interviews.

At first glance, we could say that these distracting factors reveal, at the very least, divergent directions between the parties that make up the educational encounter: on the one hand, the teacher seeking to uphold a certain educational intentionality and providing a certain interventionist direction to their class; on the other, the students who not only follow this didactic process but also intervene in it, as they find themselves influenced by their own interests and needs related to the exercise of learning.

It is in this intersection, that is, in this tense encounter established between educational intentions and situational issues, that attendance without attention occasionally appears, pointing to a certain unstable - and tense - dynamic in the connection established between teachers and students in the classroom.

In an interview conducted in 1988<sup>6</sup>, philosopher Gilles Deleuze speaks a little about this unstable dynamic that arises within a classroom:

6 Gilles Deleuze's *L'Abécédaire* is a French documentary produced between 1988 and 1989 with interviews with Claire Parnet. It was only made available in 1996 after the death of Deleuze. Several sites offer the content in full.

For me, a class isn't meant to be fully understood. A class is a kind of matter in motion. That's why it's musical. In a class, each group, or each student, takes what suits them. A bad class is one that suits no one. We can't say that everything suits everyone. People have to wait. Obviously, there's someone half-asleep. Why does he mysteriously wake up at the moment that concerns him? There's no law that dictates what concerns someone. The subject of their interest is something else. A class is emotion! It's both emotion and intelligence. Without emotion, there's nothing, there's no interest whatsoever. It's not a question of understanding and hearing everything, but of waking up in time to grasp what suits you personally. That's why a diverse audience is so important. We feel the shifting of centers of interest, jumping from one to another. This forms a kind of splendid fabric, a kind of texture (Deleuze, 2023).

This discussion contributes to looking at the problem of attendance without attention from a more interesting and powerful perspective, given that it does not seek to moralize the problem of the attendance without attention, nor does it advocate a pretense about the importance of minimizing it. Rather, Deleuze invites us to consider attendance without attention as a constitutive problem of the very exercise of teaching, since its execution is marked by emotions, that is, by intensities in a constant modulation process, which shifts the centers of interest of the class at each new moment.

Although this tensional dynamic, so characteristic of the act of teaching, is a constitutive dimension of educational action, the fact is that these modulations in the level of student engagement and interest are not always harmonious experiences, and not infrequently involve a certain level of instability that favors the mobilization of reactive attitudes, both on the part of the teacher and the students.

In this direction, here is the speech of one of the teachers interviewed:

*That's why I think teachers often have to be artists, because they have to evaluate their approach at every new moment and understand the recalculations they need to make to bring the student's attention back into the classroom... Now, imagine doing this six times a day, twice a session, 32 times a week! Do the math per month... per year... It requires effort! What we do is no joke! That's why we teachers need to be valued! Because what we do in the classroom, no one else can do, because it involves a lot of love!* (Interview conducted on August 16, 2023).

The excerpt above compares the teacher's work to that of an artist. In this sense, it highlights that aspect of intervention work that cannot be calculated or measured, but is always on the lookout for events, placing the teacher in direct dialogue with the demands of unpredictability and adaptability. As the teacher above says: "Imagine doing that six times a day, twice a session, 32 times a week! Calculate it monthly... per year!" This excerpt, in particular, draws attention to the laborious dimension of the educational exercise, which exposes the inner workings of the teacher's work as they ride the crest of the events that permeate the classroom experience.

In the interviews, this visceral dimension of education was frequently compared to the progressive process of precariousness and devaluation of education today. Many teachers believe that long-term exposure to these two factors combined has negative effects on their health and quality of life. Here are some excerpts that point in this direction:



*We love what we do, but love sometimes hurts! Sometimes we worry, and there's no way not to take that worry home! For more than once, twice, or three times we took that energy from the classroom home, but for me, there was no way around it... my love for the classroom was so great that it made me worry about life too! And this was detrimental to my health at times... I've taken several leaves of absence, in over 20 years of work, due to stress... due to excessive tension... and there's no way around it, we get sick! But because we care! We want to collaborate, we want to do our best, that's where the health problems come from. (Interview conducted on May 17, 2023)*

*I have a lot of trouble with students talking out of turn. It tires me out! But what can you do? I think the school has that role too, right?!" It's about fostering socialization, but the problem is that inside the classroom, we want students' attention in a different way... It's also about having to feel the class. Some days they'll be noisier! And that's okay! But in the long run, feeling all of this isn't easy! I'm just returning from medical leave... another one in 20 years of teaching! So it's not easy! (Interview conducted on May 3, 2023).*

These excerpts show that when excessive, the tensional dynamic that reinforces attendance without attention in the classroom ends up strengthening reactive chains, especially when the teacher reacts negatively to distracting situations that permeate the classroom experience.

Besides the processes of illness, this reactive attitude also brings another problem: it is a kind of anesthesia, that is, a kind of armor that shields the teacher from the distracting situations that so undermine their potential for action and expression in the classroom. We found evidence of this anesthesia in the statements of some teachers, as follows:

*I'm tired! When I see that a student doesn't care about class, I don't even bother! I give them what I have to give them, period! (Interview conducted on June 28, 2023).*

*I don't leave room for chance. The student doesn't want to exchange with me? That's why I always leave the door open! Don't let it hit you on your way out! So, I'll send that student out right away! But I don't think twice! (Interview conducted on September 19, 2023).*

*Look, it's really hard for us to control the classroom, but we can control our content. So what do I do? I fill the board! I do what I can do, which is teach! (Interview conducted on May 3, 2023).*

*It's difficult, you know! I lose my temper easily! But that's what the principal's office is for, right? So, send them to the principal and they will come back more quietly tomorrow. (Interview conducted on October 17, 2023).*

The excerpts above point to a directive mode of conducting the educational relationship, in which at any sign of distracting factors in the classroom, a specific reaction is instituted on the part of the teacher, which tends to end the problematic situation, demarcating the power relationship between the teacher and the students. Generally, when the teacher reaches this level of modulation of their educational action, it is because they have tried everything, but nothing has worked. It is in this situation that the anesthesia mentioned above sets in, which reveals, as a result, a reactive attitude on the part of the teacher that only further exacerbates the problem of attendance without attention.

It is worth emphasizing once again, that this reactive attitude offers a kind of shielding, as it diverts the teacher's attention from the concrete situations that permeate school educational relationships to what needs to be done. And what needs to be done? In other words: what is imposed as an imperative, directive, and contingent fact that validates and legitimizes the act of educating?

In the educational context - in its regimented context - everything that needs to be done defines the teacher's connection with an object dimension, through which the educational exercise is instituted and legitimized. Much of this object dimension is related to the teaching content previously stipulated in the curriculum, which, through contingent force, guides the guidelines for what needs to be taught. When this contingent force imposes itself excessively in the classroom, school educational relationships are often relegated to the background, due to prior content that must be provided and legitimized at any cost. The major problem with this contingent force is that the student's presence is not there, but rather in the form of an absence... of a physical presence (Carbonara; Zucco, 2023).

Given this injunction, the question is: How can teachers adopt a less reactive attitude when faced with the emergence of these distracting situations in the classroom? Here, then, is a new interpretation of our initial question: What contemplative practices are gaining traction in schools?

According to the discussions mobilized in this research, a powerful strategy being used by many teachers is the practice of humor and empathy. It is these practices, therefore, that we will discuss in the following sections.

### 3.2 HUMOR

In Foucault's (2010) view, humor is a discourse that holds within itself the power to make people laugh. But laugh at what, or at whom? The effects of humor are directed toward those situations that seek to diminish our potential for action and expression. In this sense the effects of laughter fall upon those who position themselves under the aegis of established powers - such as scientific discourse in its most binary, moral, and disciplinary form - and who, therefore, place themselves in a position of superiority that makes them recognize themselves as experts, that is, specialists who claim to hold a certain power of truth, through which they reaffirm relations of domination and oppression.

From this perspective, the effects of truth produced by humor are constituted through the disqualification of those who produce them - this is what Foucault would call *ubuesque* power (Dalmoro, 2023). The humorous attitude fosters a *ubuesque* imagination, which, in turn, expresses itself through the unleashing of an ironic vocabulary, which wanders within the boundaries of scientificity.

According to Dalmoro (2023), the *ubuesque* imagination, characteristic of humorous discourses, has the power to disturb us, that is, to provoke us, as it laughs at already consolidated dispositions toward other possibilities, other experiments of thought. In this sense, humor always appears as an invitation to reinvention and



modification of oneself and others, which requires a certain displacement to be different from who we are. In line with this idea, humor embraces within itself that vital power that marks a place of resistance and existence always to ensue from the humorous attitude.

We found evidence of this humorous attitude in the interviews with the teachers. When asked how they deal with the problems they face in the classroom, two teachers expressed themselves as follows:

Because that's it! The guy is a human being... and I need to understand that I'm dealing with human beings... so, if the student is tired... their attention wanders... they're not present here!... then you ask me: how do I deal with this? That's where the humor comes in... in my case, I think it's more of a compassionate way... I see that the student is having trouble paying attention in class, so I go there... I approach them... and ask: "Is everything okay?" But I don't do it to scold them, or to tell them off... I try to have a chat... I try to connect with the student in some way... (Interview conducted on May 15, 2023).

...it's very common these days to teach a completely unmotivated class... they fall asleep during class... they fall asleep leaning over their desks and snoring... [...] so, when this happens, I like to stop the class to try to connect with the student in some way... but I always try to do it with a good-natured tone... because it won't do any good to raise my voice... to send them to the principal... why? That only makes our relationship even more difficult... so I try to make a good-natured warning like, for example [puts his hands over his mouth and begins to imitate the sound of someone speaking into the loudspeaker], "Attention, gentlemen, planet Earth calling! Planet Earth calling!", or I start clapping and singing a well-known song that they like... then they start laughing and join in the fun... and with that, I gain a little more time and attention... which soon passes and they lose focus again, but anyway... it's what I can do... It's a struggle, but also a pleasure! Because it provokes you... challenging you to continually win them over... (Interview conducted on May 3, 2023).

In the excerpts above, the interviewed teachers encountered a humorous attitude when faced with students' frequent lack of motivation and disinterest. In this context, a humorous attitude opens up a field of possibilities for intensifying those processes that occur in interactions.

In Rudd's view, humor is an essential ingredient for achieving contemplative states, as it contributes to the mobilization of a perceptive openness, of a non-judgmental nature, through which "we learn to laugh at ourselves and our excessive seriousness" (2018, p. 64). Following this understanding, the author also argues that what becomes most important when we act with humor "is connecting with people, listening to their hearts, and enjoying their company as much as possible" (2018, p. 64).

Adding to this idea, the excerpts presented above seem to point to the understanding that humor gains vigor in school when the teacher allows his/her presupposed intentions to relax, to deal with those processes that arise during the intervention exercise and that permeate school educational relationships, requiring a certain overcoming of that neuroticized relationship, that often we establish with the content to be taught that, ultimately, reaffirm the reactive circuits of the schoolteacher.

In this sense, the humorous attitude affirms an educational work constituted in reverse, that is, one that is done and remade against conventions, and most importantly, against that imperative and contingent dimension that tends to impose on schoolteachers a list of presupposed content and practices that must be created and transmitted at any cost, pointing to other possibilities for composing the educational exercise.

It is in this sense that the humorous attitude approaches the context of contemplative practices, as it generates connection and integration with the demands currently being made in the educational relationship, so as to harness in an intense and joyful way - in the most Spinozistic sense of the term "joy" (Espinoza, 2008) - all those factors, including distractors, that permeate school educational relationships, in the name of expanding the power of the agents involved, namely, teachers and students.

This idea outlined above is similar to Rudd's (2018) thinking about humor in the context of contemplative studies. According to the aforementioned author, humor endows us with a necessary lightness, with which we guide our relationships with otherness. As long as we base our relationships with humor, we are continually reminded that "life has a way of resolving itself" (2018, p. 66).

In this sense, when we allow this self-resolving process to take place - without imposing that indolent desire to assert our own way of resolving things - we give way to the integrative dynamic that ultimately empties us of ourselves, connecting us emotionally with the situations that arise, allowing us to respond to them in a less reactive manner.

### 3.3 EMPATHY

In this section, it is important to present another practice that stood out in the teachers' speeches during the interviews they gave: empathy.

To this end, a teacher's statement is worth quoting here, as follows:

Whenever something happens at school... and it throws me off balance... I try to understand human beings better... because, like, we live in a world where no one has patience for anyone. We're always rushing around and getting screwed... so we have to try to understand a little about what the other person must be going through... I know we can't do this all the time, but at least trying is an important way to connect with situations and be able to deal with them better. And we don't do this if we don't allow ourselves to stop for a moment and look at the other person. This pause is essential... it makes you vibrate on a different level... (Interview conducted on September 19, 2023).

Although the term "empathy" was not mentioned in the excerpt above, it is clear that this was what the teacher was talking about. According to Sennett, empathy denotes a "feeling of curiosity about others and what they are "really" (2012, p. 36) and demands a boundary-pushing approach that requires the shedding of assumed intentions for the open, curious, kind, and generous embrace of otherness.

For Rudd (2018), empathy paves the way for an attitude of generosity, through which we progressively become accustomed to the feeling of discomfort in the face of otherness, until we are able to accept and embrace it fully, without giving rise to a reactive attitude. In this sense, there is no affective connection if empathy is not activated, as it is the empathic attitude that smooths the path of affective encounter with otherness, mobilizing the tensional dynamic that expands the potential for action of the parties involved.

Following this idea, Rudd (2018) highlights that an empathic attitude opens up interesting paths to achieving integration, which, in this author's view, is the ultimate goal of contemplative practices. To better understand this idea, it is necessary to briefly revisit the reflective path developed by this author, according to which contemplation demands an anchoring point for attention, through which it progressively intensifies toward expanding self-perception. In this expansive movement, three distinct movements are evident: "pause, pivot, and integration" (2018, p. 16).

While the pause provides an opportunity to break with already consolidated patterns, pivoting directs attention toward other paths that progressively intensify toward integration. Following this reflective direction, Rudd (2018) points out that the pause is fundamental for entering the realms of contemplation, and the pause cannot be achieved without an empathic attitude.

In a way, the interview excerpt presented above provides some clues that support this reflective direction. When the teacher points out:

I know we can't do this all the time, but at least trying is an important way to connect with situations and be able to deal with them better. And we don't do this if we don't allow ourselves to stop for a moment and look at the other. This pause is essential... it makes you vibrate on another level... (Interview conducted on September 19, 2023).

Note that intuitively, the interviewed teacher feels the urge of the empathic attitude, which calls on him or her to "stop for a moment and look at the other". Pausing is essential to at the very least, allow for a transition to another realm of school educational relationships, even if temporarily. That is why to advance the discussion on empathy, it might be interesting to discuss the pause moment in more depth.

Rudd points out that pausing "is nothing more than noticing the natural pauses in life and simply knowing how to enjoy them" (2018, p. 27). By finding pauses and allowing ourselves to enjoy them, we open ourselves to listening and embracing otherness. At the same time, in the imminent encounter with the other, the pause "begins to create a circle of stillness within us" (2018, p. 41), which helps break the neurotic rhythm with which we imprint our mundane daily actions. In this sense, the pause is essential to providing us with opportunities for other worldviews, different from those already habitual.

The essential thing about the pause is to break the habitual perceptive threshold to allow a certain rapture of sensitivity, capable of directing our attention in another direction not yet stabilized, and therefore, more open and suspended to the reception of different things.

In line with this idea, it can be said that the pause provides a moment of suspension of perception, which, in turn, makes possible the encounter with a "broad time of experience" (Rudd, 2018, p. 30), that is, a prolonged time, crisscrossed by insights that make us feel-think-act with greater openness, acceptance, and receptivity toward processes that were already there virtually, but which we were not aware of, precisely because our sensitivity was not attentive to them.

It is within this long time of experience that empathy resides, in its full attitude of openness, acceptance, generosity, and compassion. In neurophysiological terms, authors Barbezat and Bush (2013) emphasize that the empathic attitude opens interesting possibilities for the composition of new synaptic connections, generating new neural circuits that activate the relationships between thinking and acting in different ways, generating intensification of neuro-musculoskeletal relationships that ultimately expand our adaptive capacity, making us more creative in the face of the demands that are placed on us, and instigate us to feel-think-act continuously throughout life.

In the following excerpt, we can find some evidence of this discussion on empathy mentioned above:

We need to understand that before we are teachers, before we are parents, children... we are people... and therefore, we have feelings, desires, difficulties... problems to solve... one day we are happy, the next we are sad... so, when we understand this, we humanize our relationships within the school! And that's when we begin to enjoy it more, to understand the importance of empathy, of play... we have to learn to play at school! When I say "play," I mean the following: we need to learn to interact with others... to interact more calmly... in a less neurotic way... When you allow yourself to play a little, laugh with the students, and let go of what needs to be done... this is extremely important, as it lightens the atmosphere and takes away the feeling of stress... [...]. This brings quality to the school relationship. (Interview conducted on June 28, 2023).

It is within this discussion of empathy that it makes sense to talk about contemplative practices in schools, understanding them not as just another category of practices, among many already established, but rather as an attentive attitude, that is, as a principle of action that adjusts the teacher's perception of problems and of the ever-possible solution cases that, when fueled by humor and empathy, operate actions, always in the process of differentiation, to deal with the problem of attendance without attention at school.

#### 4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The discussions developed in this manuscript draw attention to the ways in which the schoolteachers we interviewed deal with the problem of attendance without attention in the classroom, based on the concrete reality they experience daily in their educational activities.

Initially, the encounter with this problem revealed the distracting factors that trigger the reactive circuits of the schoolteachers we interviewed, a process that in the long term generate illness. It was found that these factors are part of the classroom

and therefore, much more than mitigating them at any cost, they must be approached in a less reactive manner, which is a great challenge for teachers. It was in the wake of this challenge that the starting question of this research was updated throughout the analyses, so that it was configured as follows: given the relentless emergence of distracting factors, what contemplative practices thrive in the school context?

In response to this question, it was possible to observe two practices associated with the exercise of contemplation: humor and empathy. According to contemplative studies, both humor and empathy are dynamics that contribute to the qualitative intensification of the relationships that are organized in a given encounter. This intensification generates a presence effect, that is, a compositional effect that expands the potential for action and expression of the parties involved, and it is precisely in this presence effect that the exercise of contemplation lies (Rudd, 2018; Barbezat and Bush, 2013).

By analyzing the field journals and the statements of the teachers interviewed, we found evidence of humor and empathy in the establishment of this presence effect in the classroom. It was observed that while humor brings a certain lightheartedness that favors the intensification of educational relationships, empathy paves the way for generosity, which endows teachers not only with a broader attitude of welcoming but also with full acceptance of the concrete school reality they experience daily.

It is also worth considering that according to the discussions generated in this research, the practices of humor and empathy cannot be pre-established, as they are directly related to the effects of presence - that is, to the compositional dynamics that always emerge in the relationship established between teachers and students during the classroom experience. This means that operational solutions to deal with the problem of attendance without attention in the classroom must always be modulated on a case-by-case basis.

In this regard, it might be prudent to raise the following counterpoint: in light of more traditional educational views, this suggestion of case-by-case modulation appears to be an impractical strategy, one that diminishes its persuasive power when compared to more directive and operational solutions. To anticipate this criticism, it is important to remember that in the eyes of the exercise of contemplation, what guarantees the concreteness of educational work, and consequently, its concrete solutions, is precisely this concern with those processes that arise in school educational relationships, and therefore, only appear as an effect of this compositional exercise between teachers and students in the classroom (Oliveira; Antunes, 2014; Shapiro; Brown; Astin, 2011).

This means that the concrete solution found in a given encounter can never be replicated without becoming something else, because even if the action protocol is the same, the intensities that permeate another encounter will always touch on different paths, following the footsteps of the composition woven between the parties involved in this encounter.

Of course, the teacher not only can but should start from referential functions (such as, for example, the general idea that they should infuse their teaching with

certain doses of humor and empathy), because these referential functions provide at the very least, a starting point for guiding the didactic-pedagogical work. And this guidance, in turn, is essential to affirming a certain educational intentionality that is ongoing during classes.

What the contemplative approach will make us see is that this intentionality is transformed and, at the same time, singularized, as the teacher opens themselves to the interests and needs of the students. And it is precisely there that the solution effectively found always goes beyond the most directive operational formulas, pointing to singular productions that cannot be reproduced on a large scale without first becoming something else, another production resulting from a compositional effect underway in a given encounter.

Finally, to conclude this discussion without intending to exhaust it indefinitely, it is worth reiterating that when we speak here of the need to deal with the problem of attendance without attention, the intention is not to eradicate this problem from the school reality - especially since it is constitutive of the educational exercise - but rather to better direct energy, that is, the ways in which educational activity is organized, to respond to the problem in a more compassionate, humorous, and empathic manner, and therefore, more accustomed to embracing all that is different in the school-educational relationship. This in turn expands the potential for action and expression not only of the students, but also of the teacher themselves.

However, to access this other realm of the composition of school-educational relationships mediated by humor and empathy, it will be necessary to pause - albeit temporarily - the regular and contingent demands that require compliance at any and all costs. And this is precisely where the great torment of teachers lies, as many seem to see no way out, faced with the overwhelming and insensitive list of a thousand and one things they have to do.

In this sense, the findings of this research seem to point to the following: when the overwhelming and insensitive list of things to do begins to weigh too heavily on teachers' shoulders, bringing reactivity, constant conflict, and illness, the challenge will be whenever possible to employ humor and empathy, not as magical practices that solve the problem of attendance without attention in school, but rather as strategies for modulating the teacher's attentional activity that guarantee at least, a pause, albeit temporary, to relax the reactive circuits that do so much harm to the teacher.

## REFERENCES

BARBEZAT, Daniel P.; BUSH, Mirabai. **Contemplative practices in higher education:** powerful methods to transform teaching and learning. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2013.

BARROS, Regina Benevides; PASSOS, Eduardo. Diários de bordo de uma viagem-intervenção. In: PASSOS, Eduardo; KASTRUP, Virgínia; ESCÓSSIA, Lillian. **Pistas do método da cartografia:** pesquisa-intervenção e produção de subjetividade. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2009. p. 172-200.



- CARBONARA, Vanderlei; ZUCCO, Amanda Khalil Suleiman. A ausência do corpo na escola: um olhar sobre a corporeidade dos estudantes. **Debates em Educação**, v. 15, n. 37, 2023. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.28998/2175-6600.2023v15n37pe14077>
- CASTRO, Alex. **Atenção**. Rio de Janeiro: Bicicleta Amarela, 2019.
- DALMORO, Isabel Cristina **Especulações Foucaultianas sobre a imaginação ubuesca e a patafísica**. 312 f. Tese (Doutorado em Educação em Ciências: Química da Vida e Saúde) – Instituto de Ciências Básicas da Saúde, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, RS, 2023. Disponível em: <http://hdl.handle.net/10183/263743>. Acesso em: 25 set. 2024.
- DELEUZE, Gilles. **Diferença e repetição**. 2. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 2006.
- DELEUZE, Gilles. B de beber (do Abecedário de Gilles Deleuze). Tradução de André Martins. **Revista Trágica: estudos de filosofia da imanência**, v. 16, n. 1, p. 167-170, 2023. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59488/tragica.v16i1.58085>
- DELEUZE, Gilles; GUATTARI, Félix. **Mil platôs: capitalismo e esquizofrenia**. São Paulo: Ed. 34, 1995. v. 1.
- ERGAS, Oren. A contemplative turn in education: charting a curricular-pedagogical countermovement. **Pedagogy, Culture & Society**, v. 27, n. 2, p. 251-270, 2019. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2018.1465111>
- ESPINOZA, Baruch. **Ética**. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2008.
- FERRACINI, Renato. A presença não é um atributo do ator. In: ORLANDI, Eni P. (org.). **Linguagem, sociedade e políticas**. Pouso Alegre: UNIVÁS; Campinas: RG Editores, 2014. p. 227- 230.
- FERRACINI, Renato Invenção como composição: presença e treinamento. **Revista Landa**, v. 6, n. 1, p. 172-184, 2017. Disponível em: <https://tinyurl.com/4k7vnfju>. Acesso em: 25 set. 2024.
- FERRACINI, Renato; FEITOSA, Charles. A questão da presença na Filosofia e nas Artes Cênicas. **Revista Ouvirouver**, v. 13, n. 1, p. 106-118, jan/jun. 2017. Disponível em: <https://seer.ufu.br/index.php/ouvirouver/article/view/37043/20371>. Acesso em: 25 set. 2024.
- FERRACINI, Renato; HIRSON, Raquel Scotti; COLLA, Ana Cristina (org.). **Práticas teatrais: sobre presenças, treinamentos, dramaturgias e processos**. Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 2020.
- FOUCAULT, Michel. **A hermenêutica do sujeito**. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2006.
- FOUCAULT, Michel. **Os anormais**. Curso no Collège de France (1974-1975). 2. ed. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2010.
- NASCIMENTO, Maria Livia; SILVEIRA-LEMOS, Flávia Cristina. A pesquisa-intervenção em Psicologia: os usos do diário de campo. **Barbarói**, n. 57, p. 239-253, jul./dez. 2020. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17058/barbaroi.v0i57.14675>
- OLIVEIRA, Albertina L.; ANTUNES, Bruno Miguel Gouveia. A pedagogia contemplativa no ensino superior: para uma abordagem completa ao que o ser humano convoca. **Revista Portuguesa de Pedagogia**, n. 48-2, p. 43-60, 2014. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.14195/1647-8614\\_48-2\\_3](https://doi.org/10.14195/1647-8614_48-2_3)
- PASSOS, Eduardo; KASTRUP, Virgínia; ESCÓSSIA, Lillian. **Pistas do método da cartografia: pesquisa-intervenção e produção de subjetividade**. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2009.

PASSOS, Eduardo; KASTRUP, Virgínia; TEDESCO, Silvia. **Pistas do método da cartografia**: a experiência da pesquisa e o plano comum. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2014. v. 2.

PLÁ, Daniel Reis. Contemplative practices and performing art learning in higher education. **Conceição | Concept.**, v. 6, n. 2, p. 44–53, jul./dec. 2017. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20396/conce.v6i2.8648587>

RUDD, Richard. **A arte da contemplação**: um suave caminho à plenitude e prosperidade. Poole: Gene Keys Publishing Ltd., 2018.

SENNETT, Richard. **Juntos**: os rituais, os prazeres e a política da cooperação. Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2012.

SHAPIRO, Shauna L.; BROWN, Kirk Warren; ASTIN, John A. Toward the integration of meditation into higher education: a review of research evidence. **Teachers College Record**, v. 113; n. 3, p. 493-528, 2011. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811111300306>

WALLACE, Bruce Alan **Ciência Contemplativa**: onde o Budismo e a neurociência se encontram. São Paulo: Cultrix, 2009.

**Resumo:** O ambiente escolar sofre, muitas vezes, de certa ausência de corpo presente que afeta diretamente as relações em sala de aula. A partir desta delimitação problemática, foi desenvolvida uma pesquisa com professores escolares que cederam entrevistas. Diários de campo foram produzidos pelo pesquisador. A produção dos dados se constituiu como um exercício de experimentação do pensamento, para tanto, buscou-se respaldo na Filosofia da Diferença, em composição com os estudos contemplativos. Observou-se que a realidade escolar coloca os professores face aos fatores distratores, que desencadeiam os circuitos reativos do professor, gerando adoecimentos. Verificou-se que esses fatores fazem parte da aula e, portanto, devem ser encarados a partir de uma atitude menos reativa – o que é um grande desafio para o professor. É nesta direção que se destacam o humor e a empatia, entendidos como princípios de ação que operam ações de enfrentamento potentes ao problema da ausência de corpo presente na escola.

**Palavras-chave:** Presença. Práticas Contemplativas. Filosofia da Diferença. Escola.

**Resumen:** El entorno escolar sufre, a menudo, de una cierta ausencia de presencia corporal que incide directamente en las relaciones dentro del aula. A partir de esta problemática, se desarrolló una investigación con docentes que concedieron entrevistas. El investigador elaboró diarios de campo. La producción de datos se concibió como un ejercicio de experimentación del pensamiento. Para ello, se buscó apoyo en la Filosofía de la Diferencia, en combinación con estudios contemplativos. Se observó que la realidad escolar expone a los docentes a factores distratores que activan circuitos reactivos, generando malestares. Se constató que estos factores forman parte del aula y, por lo tanto, deben abordarse desde una actitud menos reactiva, lo cual representa un gran desafío para el docente. En esta línea, el humor y la empatía se destacan como principios de acción que permiten afrontar de forma potente el problema de la ausencia de cuerpo presente en la escuela.

**Palabras clave:** Presencia. Práticas Contemplativas. Filosofía de la Diferencia. Escuela.

## USE LICENSE

This article is published as Open Access under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) license, which allows its use, distribution and reproduction in any medium as long as the original work is properly cited. More information at: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author states that there is no conflict of interest in this work.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

**Flávio Soares Alves:** Conception, development and final edition of the text.

## FUNDING

The present work was carried out without the support of financing sources.

## RESEARCH DATA AVAILABILITY

Data usage not reported.

## RESEARCH ETHICS

The research followed the protocols in force in resolutions 466/12 and 510/2016 of the National Health Council of Brazil and was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of the Institute of Biosciences, UNESP, Rio Claro campus. CAAE: 67305323.3.0000.5465.

## HOW TO REFERENCE

ALVES, Flávio Soares. Contemplative practices and the problem of attendance without attention at school. **Movimento**, v. 31, p. e31039, Jan./Dec. 2025. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22456/1982-8918.143052>

## EDITORIAL RESPONSIBILITY

 Alex Branco Fraga\*

 Elisandro Schultz Wittizorecki\*

 Mauro Myskiw\*

 Raquel da Silveira\*

\*Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Escola de Educação Física, Fisioterapia e Dança, Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil.