

Abstract

The Journey of Transformation: A Polyethnography of Swiss-Brazilian Teacher Educators

In the face of environmental disruption, social inequalities, and economic disparities, educational institutions seek to align with UNESCO's sustainable development goals (United Nations, 2015). In language education, transculturalism is a key competency for negotiating diverse perspectives and supporting community well-being (de la Fuente, 2022). This presentation reports findings from a polyethnographic study embedded in the Swiss-Brazilian Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project on Linguistic and Global Citizenship, a partnership of the University of Teacher Education Lucerne, the State University of Campinas, and the State University of Mato Grosso do Sul. The project centres on teacher educators as researchers, foregrounding sustainability-oriented language education through linguistic citizenship (Stroud, 2018) and global citizenship education (UNESCO, 2014), with Freire's critical pedagogy as orienting stance (Freire, 2018).

Methodologically, the study uses phenomenological polyethnography (Olt & Teman, 2019), integrating hermeneutic phenomenology (van Manen, 2023) with duoethnography (Norris & Sawyer, 2012) and works reflexively with preunderstandings. The Swiss-Brazilian research team generated multimodal diaries across key phases (course preparation; on-site visits) and recorded researcher dialogues. Analysis employs the Becoming, Unlearning and Relearning scaffold (Hill et al., 2023) to trace shifts in stance and practice (Mezirow, 2000) and links to identity and mission (Korthagen, 2017). The study centers affect within transformative educator learning, treating discomfort as pedagogical and political (Zembylas, 2013), while recognizing how positive emotions build enduring resources (Fredrickson, 2001).

Findings centre on *embodied sustainability* (Hilsdorf, Hashiguti & Krompák, 2025) as a dynamic, circular process enacted across three dimensions; *time*, *space*, and *emotion*, through three relational practices of *sensing*, *sharing*, and *caring*. These emerged inductively across polyvocal diary entries and dialogic sessions, revealing how transformative professional learning unfolds at the intersection of affective experience, epistemological difference, and North-South positionality. The study demonstrates how hybrid methodology enables critical, paradigmatic transformation in transnational language teacher education, contributing directly to applied linguistics' own ongoing transformation as a field.

Keywords: polyethnography; embodied sustainability; transformative learning; affect; teacher educator identity; decolonial methodology

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