

# **The Class Diary of the Pandemic. Comics of the Transformations of the 'Presence' in Brazilian Schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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**Abstract** *The Class Diary is a lecture tool for registering the daily routine and the presence of students. In 2020 and 2021, we ethnographically investigated the transformations brought about by the pandemic through the stories of those particularly affected in the educational context: teachers and students. These stories were collected and illustrated as a diary that anthropologically explores the experience of having new ways of 'presence' in the pandemic. Each story has their own particularities but together they are crossed by interconnected experiences and sensations. The fear of the present shares space with the hope of change in the future. We were interested in the transformations that arose in teacher-student relations – at that moment exclusively online ones – that resulted in a new mode of 'presence' of these subjects, and consequently, a new way of experiencing their senses and the establishment of relationships. By appropriating the notion of Class Diary for the record of daily presence, we explored these records and transformed them into illustrations to sensitively comprehend and express this new sense of 'presence' experienced by our interlocutors. A virtual and everyday presence. A way of experiencing different moments, previously physically present, but now in an online environment. The Class Diary is seen as a registration of stories, feelings, and the relationships between these subjects. But how to represent hope in the future, if the future was extremely uncertain to those facing that moment? Our challenge was to transform these stories into a comic book, without missing the point of view of our interlocutors and the miscellaneous senses that crossed them, seeking ways of expressing it artistically.*

**Keywords** *Comics; Pandemic; Education; Presence*

## Introduction

Programa de Extensão em Educação Política (PROEEP)<sup>1</sup> is an outreach program<sup>2</sup> in Political Education that aims to develop and disseminate educational content on politics, enabling people of all ages to participate in public life. Our group was created in 2019 as an initiative of undergraduate and master's students of the Institute of Philosophy and Human Sciences of the Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP), in a partnership with the Legislative Branch's School of Campinas, Brazil (ELECOMP). In this project, we carry out activities in the Youth Parliament, an initiative that receives elementary and high school students from public and private schools from all municipalities to simulate sessions of the city's legislative body. The students learn about all the processes within that space, from the creation of a bill to voting.

By the end of 2019, the project was fully linked to the partnership with the legislative body, but in the following year (2020) we could start executing different plans and ideas. However, with the pandemic, all these plans had to be changed, and the physical presence had to be transformed completely. The project migrated to the online environment, and we had to adapt to this new type of work and think about what we would do from there onwards since our main activity, the Youth Parliament, was paralyzed.

Therefore, we increased our content production for social networks, such as posts explaining some concepts and indicating artworks, books, and documentaries to help people think about political themes. We produced online courses and classes, prepared two board games about the Brazilian legislative process and a booklet about the elections in the country. Finally, during this period, we produced two editions of "The Class Diary of the Pandemic" book, which will be the theme of this paper.<sup>3</sup>

PROEEP is built by undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students from Unicamp, assembling various professional and training experiences. During the pandemic, we were included in a privileged space of one of the best universities in Latin America and faced several obstacles generated by the transfer of traditional face-to-face teaching to distance learning. These changes entailed profound transformations in several layers of our experience as university students, something that can

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1 PROEEP's social networks, productions, and work are available here: <https://linktr.ee/PROEEP>

2 Outreach, alongside teaching and research, constitutes the three pillars of Brazilian public universities. The particularity of the outreach programs is the exchange of knowledge and collaboration between the university community and external society.

3 They are not published yet. The first edition of The Class Diary of the Pandemic is available here: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1igar2omXHq5Z61YjzOLEEn4PeV7-o1NM/\\_view?usp=hare\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1igar2omXHq5Z61YjzOLEEn4PeV7-o1NM/_view?usp=hare_link)

be felt and made sense through our bodies, which had to suddenly adapt to a teaching-learning model that we were not used to. The consequences of these transformations are something that we seek to investigate through the reports of students and teachers of different levels of education. The impact of the pandemic was different across Brazilian institutions, and our university had more resources than other smaller educational institutions.

The notions of time and space gained other nuances due to the dynamics of distance learning. We no longer had the commute to the university, the conversations in the corridors, the interactions in the classroom, the coffee breaks, the schedules, and the traditional evaluation methods. In the online study environment, where we had to be present at distance, technical problems were common, fatigue became generalized by the hours on end in front of screens, as well as pain from sitting too long in front of a computer. The teaching-learning space suffered the most significant change, as there was no longer a physical place to go to and live our student life. The boundaries between home and the university/school space have become blurred over time. This blurring happened not only in our university experience but also in the reports of many students and teachers living this period. With these transformations, social inequalities among students became even more evident. Some had all the gadgets and features they needed to comfortably carry on with the school year at home, but for many, there was a lack of internet, a computer, study space, and food.

As humanities students, these elements already caught our attention before, but we became even more interested when we were taking the place of teachers. In our education path at Unicamp, we can follow different areas, Anthropology, Sociology, Political Science, a bachelor's degree and or a teaching degree. Thus, some of our members were experiencing all this change from two different spectra: as a student and a teacher.

Our initial curiosity took the form of a desire to record what we did not see being registered. In the beginning, we looked for references, whether or not they were produced, and we came across materials that documented life stories of people who died of COVID-19. However, we wanted to make room for the stories of people living during the pandemic, more specifically teachers in elementary and high school.

We made an open call for reports to the project we called "The Class Diary of the Pandemic". What is a class diary? A class diary is a document used by teachers in the classroom, where they record the life and dynamics of that space, including the presence and participation of students and lesson planning. Thus, through these day-to-day reports during an unprecedented social-political scenario, we aimed to understand the changes and permanent situations from the perception of these individuals. We perceived something we felt in our own experiences regarding the notion of presence: what was considered to be present before was no longer possible in a period of social isolation.

Given the health and political emergency of the pandemic, we realized the importance of thoroughly investigating the experiences of those deeply affected individuals and the consequences for teaching, which cannot be understood until this day. Thus, we are guided by the observation and description of these stories, through processes of experimentation and sensitization with different modes of expression (text, sound, images, comics). We searched for details and connections of this experience with what is beyond it, although it does not seem so at first. Our goal was to leave the experience and go to the artistic expression of these stories, to allow the understanding of this historical moment.

On June 9, 2020, we launched our open call and contacted our network of acquaintances to collect these reports. The questions that guided these conversations included: Teacher, are you working through distance learning?; What digital platforms and lesson formats have you adopted?; How have students received them?; Have you adapted the topics in the classroom to address issues related to Covid-19? Which ones?; What challenges has the pandemic brought to the realization of your teaching work, inside and outside the classroom?

The answers that came to these questions were the most diverse and came in different formats. Some teachers felt more comfortable sending audio files, others preferred video files, and others sent texts. These open questions also provoked a reaction that we did not expect, which ended up bringing consequences to the development of the project. While some reports came full of details, others were very succinct and direct.

Another important point was the identity of these interlocutors. As they were active teachers, many of them felt more comfortable using pseudonyms to avoid any complications with their educational institutions; after all, their reports showed asymmetrical power relations between teachers, parents and the managers from the schools, conflicts, and criticism of the positions adopted by the schools. Aside from the pseudonyms, in some cases we needed to change the physical appearance of the characters, who, as a form of registration and as a tribute, were illustrated based on the actual participants. This request for anonymity appeared when we introduced the invitation to participate, a fact that made us add the possibility of anonymity to the other public calls we would post in our networks. An example of this is the report by teacher Maria Luiza, who requested the use of a pseudonym and a different representation in the drawings. She informed us that she preferred to remain anonymous for fear of being fired or having problems with the school.

The fear that the teachers shared with us is not banal. This feeling must be observed within the historical processes that Brazil has been through until today. The rise of a fascist and military government shortly before the pandemic in Brazil contributed to the establishment of a set of economic, political, social, and health crises with the arrival of the pandemic. In this context, there was a brutal deepening of social inequality, the establishment of genocidal policies by the federal government,

devaluation of teachers, a drastic reduction in funding at all levels of education, and the return of Brazil to the hunger map, among many other aspects that generated acute insecurity among us and our interlocutors.<sup>4</sup>

Our idea was to collect the reports, illustrate them, and then post them on our social networks, as a sequence of images that referred to each story. However, shortly before finishing this process, we were faced with the opportunity to launch them in book format, which led to adaptations to produce a comic book. This adaptation process will be better covered in the next section but mentioning this change is crucial to understand the choices we made in the construction of the second edition.

On 1 June 2021, we opened a call for submissions of reports to the second *The Class Diary of the Pandemic*. In this edition, we aimed to tell the stories of students in the ninth grade of elementary school, high school, college prep school, and adult education. This time, however, the collection method was different: we organized a form that should be completed by the student with some personal data, authorizations, contacts of their legal guardians, and a series of questions regarding the experience of students in the pandemic.

The construction of this form went through several stages because it would invite people of different ages. It had to be understandable and, at the same time, have a logic structure of questions – which were open and free – to ensure clear communication and wealth of details. The questions were the following: How did you feel when the pandemic began?; How has your daily routine been? How is school part of your routine?; What moments of face-to-face teaching do you not find in distance learning? What do you miss?; Tell us a memory or a story of yours about online teaching. When the pandemic is over, what do you think you will remember the most?; Which class do you most like to attend? Why?; Which class do you least like to attend? Why? Do you have access difficulties? How is the internet access at your home? Do you have a cell phone? Do you have a computer? What changes and difficulties have you experienced with the transition to online teaching?; How do you feel about your school, your friends, and your teachers? Has this relationship changed with the

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4 All these socio-political transformations can be seen in these newspaper articles: Alves, Lise. 2021. "Pandemic puts Brazil back on the world hunger map." *The New Humanitarian*, July 19, 2021. <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2021/7/19/pandemic-puts-brazil-back-on-the-world-hunger-map>; Lino Gomes, Nilma. 2020. "Racismo e novo coronavírus: armas mortíferas no Brasil." *Nexo Jornal*, July 4, 2020. <https://www.nexojornal.com.br/ensaio/debate/2020/Racismo-e-novo-coronav%C3%ADrus-armas-mort%C3%ADferas-no-Brasil>; Ramírez Ramos, María Fernanda. 2023. "Genocide Of the Yanomami People in Brazil: An Announced Tragedy Involving Bolsonaro." *LatinAmerika Post*, February 2, 2023. <https://latinamericanpost.com/43344-genocide-of-the-yanomami-people-in-brazil-an-announced-tragedy-involving-bolsonaro>; Rodrigues, Meghie. 2021. "Scientists reel as Brazilian government backtracks on research funds." *Nature*, October 22, 2021. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-02886-9>.

pandemic?; If you could leave a message for your future self about the learnings and discoveries you had during the pandemic, what would it be?; If you were to illustrate yourself, how would you draw yourself? (For example, curly hair, glasses, brown eyes, etc.); If you were to create a character based on yourself, what would his/her name be?

Furthermore, we organized workshops entitled 'Build this diary', where we presented the first edition of The Class Diary of the Pandemic, followed by a discussion about the importance of diaries and their place as historical records. In the workshops, we used Anne Franks (1952) "The Diary of a Young Girl" and the book by Carolina Maria de Jesus (1963) "Child of the Dark: The Diary of Carolina Maria de Jesus". The two diaries were selected as a reference because they have comic versions. In the activity, we used other materials of this genre, but we took these two as our main focus because they dialogue more directly with our work, both in the narrative genre and in the media used for its presentation.

The workshops were open for the community and happened in virtual spaces such as high school virtual classrooms and live broadcasts in Unicamp's event calendar, the Unicamp Open House (UPA)<sup>5</sup>. The main objective of these workshops was to present the reflections we developed throughout the construction of the first book and idealization of the second and to encourage students to participate and send their reports. By arguing about the importance of the record of a historical moment, we wanted them to understand the importance of their daily experiences and feel motivated to participate.

The result of this work, combined with the growth of the project on social networks and an increase in the number of partnerships, led to a much larger number of people and attracted more reports. While in the first edition we had 13 reports, in the second we received 136, of which we selected 13. The selection was made by the illustrators based on previous experience and the proposals established for the book. They selected some questions from the questionnaire in which the answers best dialogued with the proposal; then, those that presented distinct realities and perceptions among reports were selected so that we could represent heterogeneous experiences within an already selected group.

Unlike the first, which gathered the reports as individual stories, the idea of the second book was to build a narrative that connected the stories. Thus, our protagonists would be in the future doing a job of revisiting the past to understand the transformations caused by the pandemic in social life. They would do this through

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<sup>5</sup> UPA is an annual event organized by Unicamp. In it, each institute of the university offers a special program to receive the general public. This program consists of activities prepared by the students and aims to present what is produced inside the university. One of the main focuses is to show high school students how the courses work, what is taught, etc. so that they can decide on the courses they intend to take in the future.

the reports and, as a consequence, show the similarities and differences of realities experienced during the same period, recorded by different individuals. Above all, this is an important historical record of our time, including the dynamics and political and social relationships involved in the experience of these subjects.

Two authors are crucial to comprehend our work, Merleau Ponty and Georges Didi-Huberman. Both address how we access the world through our bodies crossed by our emotions in this process.

Merleau Ponty (2004) in his lectures builds reflections on embodiment and how we access the world. He shows that there isn't a division between body and mind, emotion and reason. Merleau Ponty indicates that our access to the world is embodied – we are our senses, we don't use our senses. His reflections are important to think about what happens when students are obligated to interact only through videos, in the destitution of interaction moments related to day-to-day life in the classroom teaching-learning environment. This radical change is implicated in different embodied experiences, emotions, and sensations. This new experience is what we explored in our work.

Didi-Huberman (2016) makes a historical approach to how emotions in intellectual and philosophical history were faced as a demonstration of weakness, flaw, and powerlessness. From Plato to Kant, emotions are opposed to reason, and most of these philosophers considered reason the best thing. According to Didi-Huberman, emotions would also be opposed to action making a triple impasse: language impasse, emotional I became mute; Thought impasse, emotional I lose my references; Action impasse, emotional I cannot move. These intellectuals criticized emotions as something negative. In our project, we sought through these reports to comprehend what was being experienced during the pandemic, something that is intrinsically embodied and felled through our interlocutor's senses and emotions.

Didi-Huberman proposes to rethink the opposition between action and passion. For him, emotions are not only producers of an impasse but active gestures that provoke and move us. In this sense, emotions are movements and actions, a sensible knowledge capable of changing. Mobilizing Merleau Ponty, Didi-Huberman (2016, 28) explains: "It is an affective movement that 'owns' us, but which we do not 'possess' entirely since it is largely unknown to us".

We sought to appropriate these reports and transform them into comics. So, we could express how our interlocutors were being crossed by the pandemic. Which meant getting closer to their emotions and how this process happened through their bodies.

## Comics

During the idealization period of The Class Diary of the Pandemic project, we thought of some ways to express the stories we were interested in accessing and sharing. We started looking for references in May 2020 and came across several artistic productions, among them the Instagram account @reliquia.rum – which collected reports from family members of COVID-19 victims and made collages that represented those victims – and a book that gathered drawings by various artists about the experience in the pandemic. These references shaped both the idea of the project to collect reports and the way it would be presented. However, we believe that one of these references played a more significant role.

One of the most striking elements of this whole process was the fact that we, as researchers, were also experiencing the pandemic at the same time we were presenting other people's accounts of it. One of the illustrators, for example, began to do this type of art during the pandemic, since he inserted himself more deeply into the world of comics during the isolation period. This approach to comics also led him to read the comic version of Anne Franks "The Diary of a Young Girl" and this was the work that most inspired us to turn our stories into an illustrated series.

Comics and the process of drawing are a powerful medium. Nowadays, several productions have explored the many possibilities they offer. In anthropology itself, or the humanities, it is already possible to see a series of works in comics and also those that use the medium as a way of presenting themselves.<sup>6</sup>

In our view, the richness of this medium is in the infinity of possibilities generated by the combination of text and image; after all, even the absence of them can express different meanings on a page. Sylvia Caiuby Novaes (2014) writes about the power that photography and narrative would have to embrace experience if people contemplated and listened to them, respectively. We can transpose this reflection to comics when we think about the power of images allied to a narrative that, at the same time, guides the reader and invites them to interpret the message.

In 2014, Art Spiegelman, author and artist of "Maus: A Survivor's Tale" (1986), presented a lecture at Harvard's Sanders Theatre titled "What the %@&\*! Happened

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6 In the 2020 edition of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA), two laboratories explored the relations between drawing and anthropology. The Laboratory "Drawing as Anthropology-Making" was about the use of comics in research, whose speakers, Letizia Bonanno (University of Kent) and José Sherwood Gonzalez (Manchester Metropolitan University), produced their dissertations in the format of graphic novels. The Laboratory "Artistic Explorations of Ageing and Technology: drawing as elicitation method" explored drawing as a method to examine experiences in social life. Many anthropologists and humanistic researchers also dwell on the role of drawing and its contribution to knowledge production. Such as Afonso and Ramos (2004), Azevedo (2016, 2017), Bonanno (2022), Hendrikson (2008), Ramos (2004), Sherwood González (2022) Taussig (2009, 2011).

to Comics?". He talked about the history of comics, from its beginning to that moment, and presented a sentence that caught our attention and made us reflect on the originality of our work and why comics made it so unique. According to Spiegelman "Comics are time turned into space" (Shao 2014).<sup>7</sup> Thinking about this possibility of transmutation between time and space opens several possible questions to understand these two fundamental categories in the history of Social Sciences. What times and spaces is the author referring to? How can we express the changes in the perception of time and space between our interlocutors? What is the relationship between the notions of presence, time, and space?

We can think of the working time involved in the process of drawing up such a project and turning it into the space of pages. Or, using the very reference of Maus, the time in which that, or those, stories passed converted into spaces on paper. However, what interests us is the existence of the different times – the time needed for production, the moment the author was living, the temporal space in which that story takes place, the time in which the reader finds themselves and is crossed by these stories – being transported and expressed in those small spaces between one panel and another. These gutters are vague spaces of time imagined by the reader. In addition, those stories gain space and materiality that will persist in time. This notion directly dialogues with those workshops we produced to collect reports for the second edition; it became increasingly evident that we needed to think of these materials as documents of their time, as living archives.

In *The Class Diary of the Pandemic*, we needed to produce the illustrations of each report every week so that the ready-made and published art would also become an invitation to new reports. These dynamics and the limitations imposed by social networks defined some of the aesthetic choices we made in the project. For example, we sought to represent as many elements present in the story as possible in one panel, so it was practically a semiotic exercise to put subtle details that summarized complex ideas of those stories. This was especially true in the first phase of the project, when we designed it to work as posts in our Instagram account (@proeep\_unicamp).

When we decided we would dig deeper into the rich material we had in hand and started working on the comic book, the possibilities increased. We could use more frames and formats other than the 1080x1080 pixels of an Instagram post, and we started to create longer dialogues between panels. This last aspect significantly altered the stories we were telling because the relationships between images and words could be expressed in a denser way, and through details we could approach the experiences of subjects.

7 The material produced about this Spiegelman presentation is only available on news portals like this one: (Shao 05.12.2014) <https://www.bostonmagazine.com/arts-entertainment/2014/05/12/art-spiegelman-boston-what-happened-to-comics/>.

It is precisely through the expressiveness of images and their relationships with the short text excerpts of the reports that readers would be able to apprehend the realities of the Brazilian educational context and its transformations during the pandemic. We chose to work these reports artistically in images because we believe in their communicative power to reveal nuances of social life that are difficult to grasp through written text alone. In speech, only one word can be said at a time, while in images a set of elements can be placed at the same time.

As Sylvia Caiuby Novaes exposes, images have a muted aspect of saying without speaking, inciting comments on what it evokes, without necessarily showing it visually. She points out how, "when the observer allows himself a dip in the image, it evokes and awakens in him feelings, memories and sensations about which he begins to talk" (Novaes 2014, 61).<sup>8</sup>

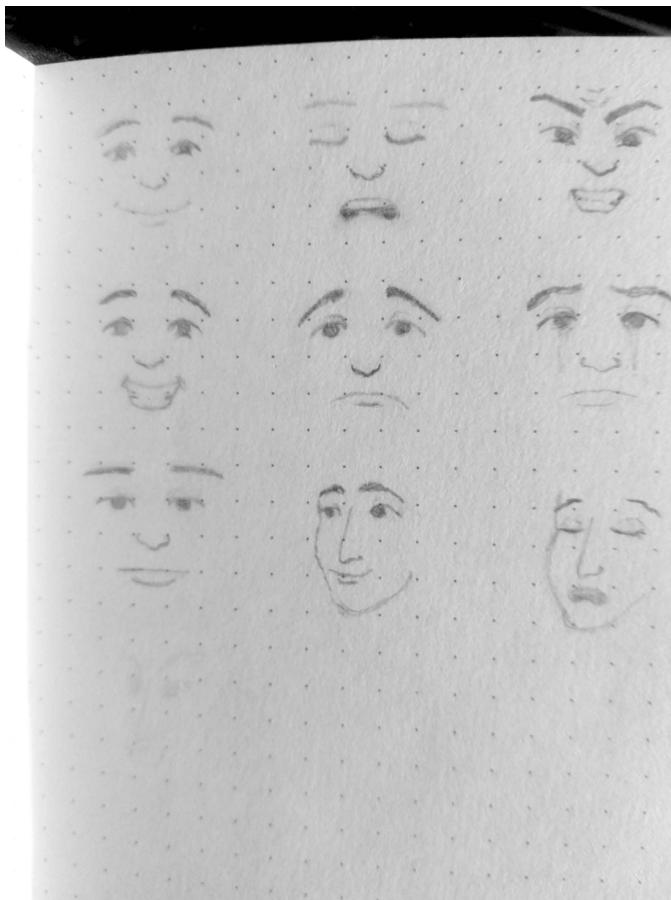
During the creative process, the production took on greater and greater proportions, and the painting of the panels demanded a lot of time. At some point, we had to decide whether we would make more panels or dedicate ourselves to painting. The choice was not easy; the colors were very important elements to tell those stories. Through them, we were able to create several nuances, such as determining the materials of which objects were made, hair colors and skin tones of characters, or the colors of the sky to circumscribe the moment of the day in which the action took place. Another possible element to represent with colors was the interaction with the lights emitted by electronic equipment, the main, if not the only, means of communication and contact between students and teachers at that time. All these elements need to be reimaged when we start using black and white, after all, these nuances need to be presented in different ways.

Below we present some images of the sketches produced throughout the construction of the two editions to show the elements we have been commenting on, in addition to some other details.

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8 From the original: "Quando o observador se permite um mergulho na imagem esta evoca e desperta nele sentimentos, lembranças e sensações sobre os quais começa a falar" (Novaes 2014, 61).

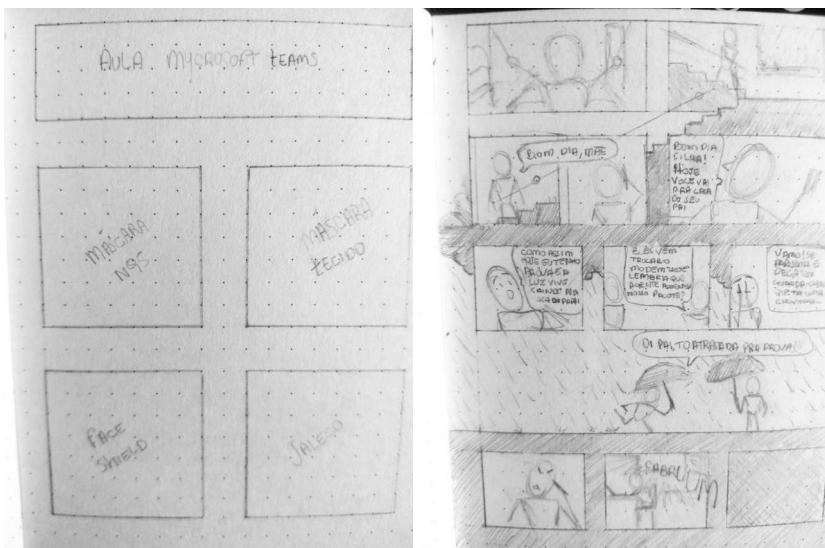
*Picture 1: Facial expression studies. Drawings by Matheus Fred Schulze.*



With a limited number of panels and following the previously mentioned logic of concentrating on as much information as possible, the use of facial expressions was essential. The characters needed to be expressive to show the emotions in the stories. In the sketch above, we see an example of facial expression studies that could be used in the reports. The need to use these pantomimes is also related to these new dynamics of presence in a scenario of social isolation. Most reports told a reality of difficult communication between students and teachers, always mediated by virtual spaces and affected by all the adversities to which this medium is subject. So we needed to tell these stories, mostly through moments of silence.

Another interesting element to analyze in the sketches is the way comics were structured.

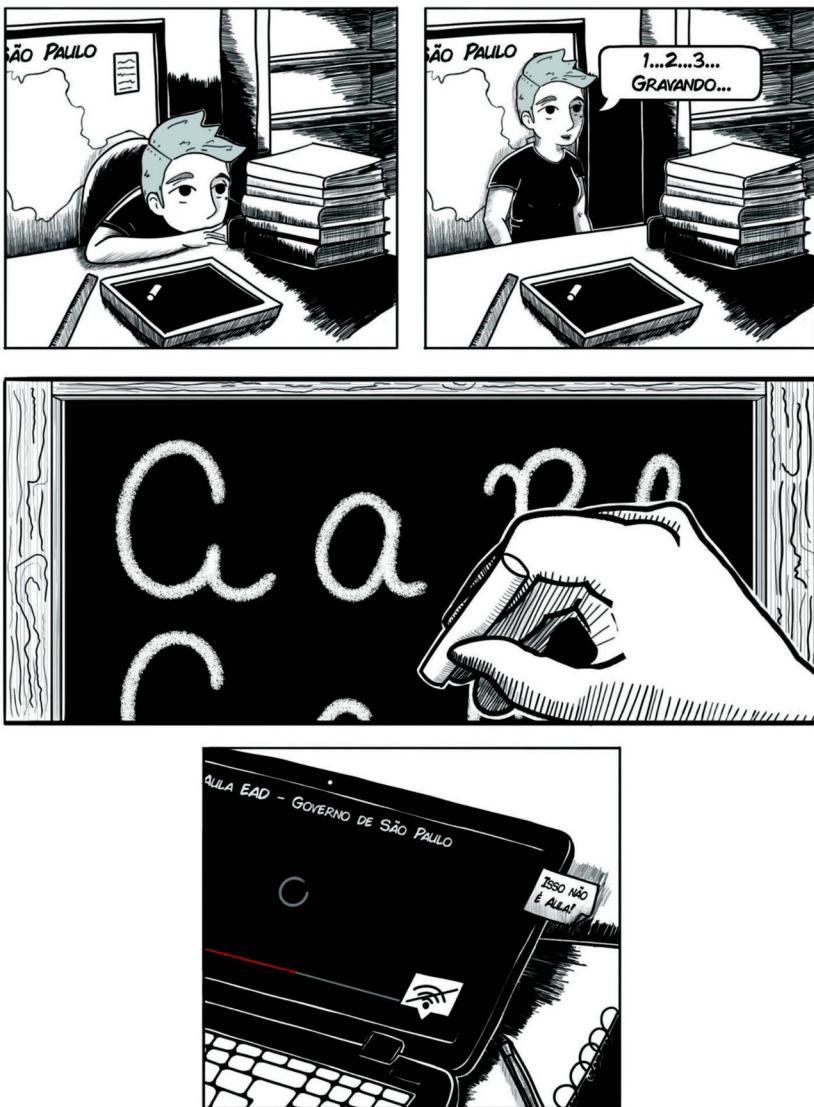
Picture 2 and 3: Sketches. Drawings by Matheus Fred Schulze.



The picture 2 is a one-page diagram of the first edition of the book. It was the first time of illustrators with this type of work, added to the challenge of adapting the reports to this new format. These aligned factors culminated in a structural choice that caused some problems. For example, some elements were not positioned, such as speech balloons for the drawing of a comic, which created a difficult scenario to work with. The second image shows the structure of a report for the second edition, and it is already possible to perceive the changes that the experience had produced.

Returning to the topic of using specific signs to express complex ideas in the painting, we need to consider that in all this artistic exercise there is the place of the artist. In our work, the choices to express all stories and subtle details present in each one were made by the illustrators. They expressed other people's pandemic experiences using their own experiences during that same period as informant signs for reference on their artistic work. Therefore, from the elements that drew the most attention to stand out in the story to the way one imagines the plan of a house, its furniture, etc., they go through the artist's filter.

Picture 4: "Maria Luiza". Drawings by Matheus Fred Schulze.



For instance, in the report illustrated above, sent by Teacher Maria Luiza, we can see some interesting elements. At one point, she talks about the fact that she used a map, which she had at home, to explain the regions of Brazil and the state of São Paulo – following the proposed syllabus. We then added this element in the background of the space she uses to record her video lessons in the panel. It is not an element directly linked to the story, but through it we can tell she gives lessons that

require the use of maps and where this report takes place, as the teacher is in that state.

The stacked books improvising a support for her cell phone was a way to show the precariousness and lack of structure that many teachers had to face. They had to adapt to remote teaching almost without any help from schools and the State. This was, in fact, the technique that the illustrator used when he needed to record some audiovisual material. The blackboard where the educator writes the alphabet is a reference to the fact that she needs to assemble extra content for some students.

In the last panel, we have several details of the report gathered. The computer with internet connection problems while the teacher watches a video provided by the government of São Paulo. This reinforces the locality in which the story is inserted and presents the fact that the teacher is part of the public education system.

Finally, there is a sticky note on the notebook saying "It is not a lesson!". In her report, Maria Luiza mentions she did not believe that this form of distance learning could be considered teaching. This direct and pertinent criticism of the situation could not be left out of the illustrations, even if briefly. This also informs us about the perceptions about presence, the so precious being together and crucial for pedagogical practice, which completely changed in the new dynamics established by the pandemic.

Picture 5: "Valéria". Drawings by Matheus Fred Schulze.



In Valéria's report, we can see other details. In the first panel, a magnifying glass on the cell phone is a narrative resource to show different access difficulties of each

individual. Even with the lesson adapted to the online environment, with the use of a presentation, this format may remain inaccessible to some people.

In addition, the position of the comics builds a direct opposition between past and present, clearly showing the differences between these two moments. In person, the dialogue between teacher and students is much easier and more direct. The dynamics and perceptions of physical and online presence is a central point in this section of the report, where the teacher reveals difficulty in establishing connections with her students. Physical distance and access difficulties significantly compromise the teaching and learning process. Showing the opposition between past and present and reinforcing the changes and permanence between these two moments was very important for our work. Through this, we were able to show that realities had changed. Before the pandemic, the classes were synchronous at school, but with social isolation, this synchronicity was not possible for everyone anymore because of a lack of structure, such as a good internet connection and knowledge to use these call platforms, besides common issues that always happens on these virtual spaces. Also, with the pandemic, asynchronous classes were more spread inside educational institutions without training for teachers and students to learn how to deal with this new educational process.

The medium of comics allows us to do this in different ways, enhanced here by the richness of our reports. One of these ways and tools is the positioning of frames within the page. In this case, and several other moments, we used it to present elements, create sensations and intensify others, to tell these stories to our reader.

Finally, we have the issue of lack of structure again, reappearing with some health problems. Beyond the striking representation of bodies and gestures, the proximity between teacher and student to show something in a book is a counter-point to the online experience with back pain and the need for magnifying glasses. The teacher did not have an adequate space in her home to work remotely, as represented by the use of an unsuitable chair for work, which ended up causing pain in the character.

Picture 6: "Staphanie". Drawings by Matheus Fred Schulze.



In the report above, we can see again the direct opposition between past and present, with the new dynamics experienced by the teacher. Her routine totally

changed, as the following panels show. In her report, Stephanie told us she worked many more hours than before. This issue of changing the notion of working time during home office was very present in all reports. We represented it through three panels with colors, indicating morning, afternoon, and evening. This intense work routine sickened the teacher and forced her to change her routine again.

*Picture 7 and 8: "Tom". Drawings by Matheus Fred Schulze.*



We have Tom's report above. He is a teacher in a private school in the state of São Paulo. In a few lines, he narrated the transition process from face-to-face teaching to remote teaching and all the implications derived from this. Through the images, we can think of different aspects of this process of time/space transformation during the pandemic in teaching and learning environments. These changes go through learning how digital tools work and adapting to being within these spaces. The whole educational practice had to be changed, and this can be seen, for example, in the opposition between the three panels representing the tired and distressed looks in the classroom and the three panels of students with disabled Google Meet cameras.

The transformations and adaptations to the digital presence must also be perceived through bodies, as these phenomena affected all the senses of students and teachers. The senses and feelings of our interlocutors are expressed in the panels in their gestures: the teachers' tired looks, the student propped on the table, and the nostalgia of face-to-face teaching.

Finally, adaptations were not the same for everyone. Not all students had an adequate space for their studies and ended up having their experiences deeply impacted by the lack of structure during remote lessons.

## Conclusion

Throughout the development of our work, we were constantly concerned by the experiences of Brazilian students and teachers during the pandemic. Like our interlocutors, we were deeply impressed by the pandemic and its impact on the Brazilian social-political context. The effects of these transformations on the very notion of presence were present in all of us in the most varied ways, expressed in our bodies and our changed perceptions of time and space. Our goal with this work was to bring together this diversity of experiences and express them in a sensitive and intelligible way to a wide audience, promoting conversations and debates about this historical moment and its contemporary developments.

The artistic output of comics to tell stories stands out for enabling the expression of the senses and feelings of those who faced education during the pandemic. This artistic output is a proper anthropological movement, which starts from observation and description towards the details of what connects these stories with what is beyond the particular experiences during the pandemic. Through these reports and our comics, we can see similar senses and emotions shared between teachers and students about the class's environment transformations. Also, how synchronous and asynchronous ways of connecting students and teachers in virtual environments transformed the notion of presence. Our effort is to move out of experience towards expression.

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