



NARRATIVE AS A FORMATIVE DEVICE

Fostering Well-being in Educational Relationships through a Contemporary Humanistic Pedagogy

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I. INTRODUCTION

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Contemporary educational environments operate within conditions marked by diffuse forms of cultural discontinuity and weakened mediation (Bauman, 2000; Han, 2010), which Santoni Rugiu (1975) had already identified as symptomatic of a deeper transformation in the educational relationship. Within this landscape, Narrative is here approached as a fundamental epistemic device, viewing it as a structure individuals use to interpret experience, construct meaning (Bruner, 1990), and configure identity via the process of *mise en intrigue* (Ricœur, 1990). This perspective adhere to the idea of cultivating the ability to a "complex thought" (Morin, 1999) through narrative imagination, helping with the inner skills that sustain democratic citizenship (Nussbaum, 1997; Greene, 1995). The encounter with cultural objects is reframed as an aesthetic experience capable of mobilizing cognition and affection (Schaeffer, 1999; Fialho, 2024) through interpretive cooperation (Eco, 1979). Classrooms become generative spaces, grounded in situated and socially mediated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Vygotskij, 1934), where narrative work enables the weaving of knowledge and experience.

OVERVIEW



QUESTIONS

How, and through what processes, can a narrative-based didactic intervention mediate the teacher-student relationship, influencing perceived well-being, knowledge appropriation and reception and the capacity to operate as a reflective community?

EQ Example
How do existing relational dynamics currently shape school well-being and self-perception?
TQ Example
To what extent does the intervention foster the evolution of the class group into a reflective community?

2. METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN:

This study adopts a Multiphase Mixed Methods design (Trinchero & Robasto, 2019) articulated as a Sequential Explanatory strategy (Creswell & Clark, 2018) embedded within a Participatory Action Research framework (Orefice, 2006; 2010). The design operates as a recursive cycle where inquiry and iterative change remain tightly interwoven. It is grounded in the hypothesis that narrative practices function as a transformative device capable of mediating the educational relationship and supporting well-being through the integration of cognition, emotion, and values (Dewey, 1938; Nussbaum, 2010). Fidelity is examined as an index of feasibility, while triangulation assess Efficacy.

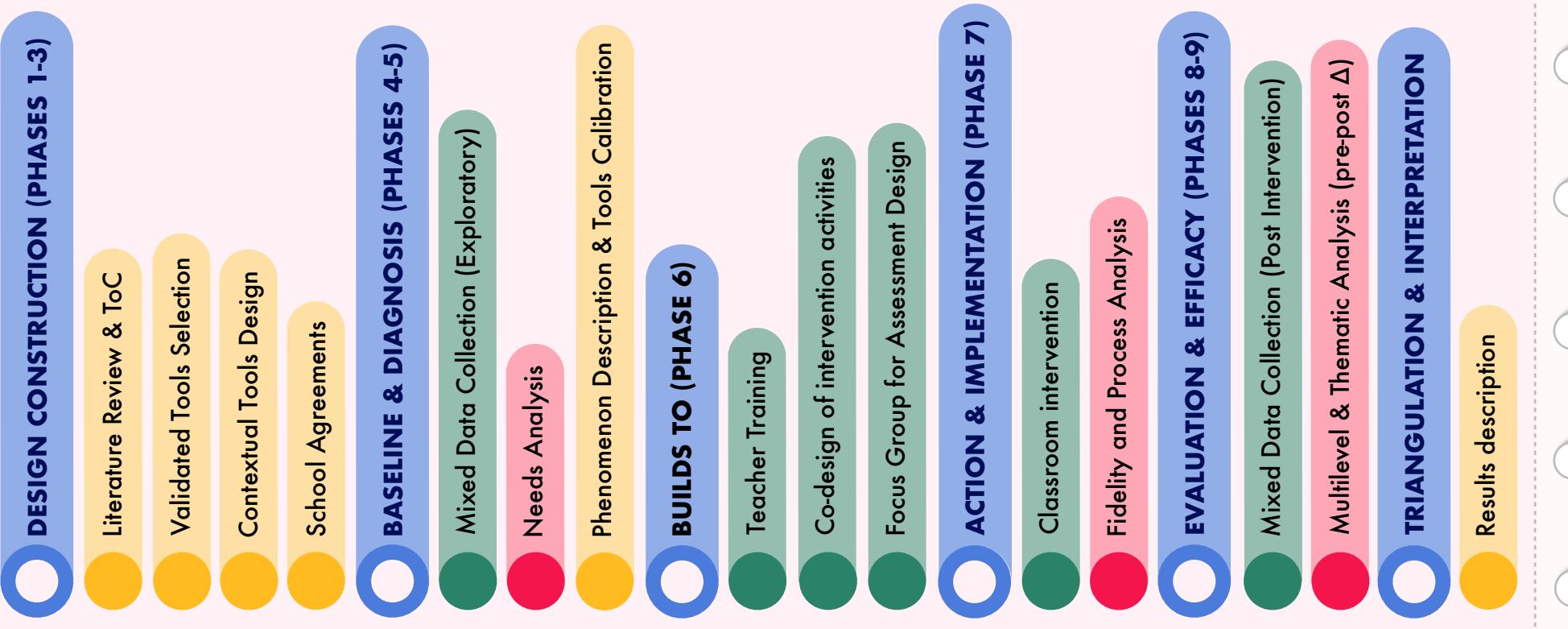
PROCESS ARCHITECTURE:

The research follows a logic of ecological validity, positioning teachers as co-researchers (Fals-Borda, 1987; Orefice, 2006), and unfolds across three recursive movements:

- 1. Diagnostic (Convergent):** A qualitative-quantitative Needs Analysis maps the classroom's relational ecology to guide the design.
- 2. Co-Design (Bridge):** Teachers engage in the training and in the calibration of evaluation tools, ensuring context-sensitive monitoring.
- 3. Intervention (Quasi-Experimental):** The intervention is implemented with a wait-list control group to identify the specific contribution of narrative practices.

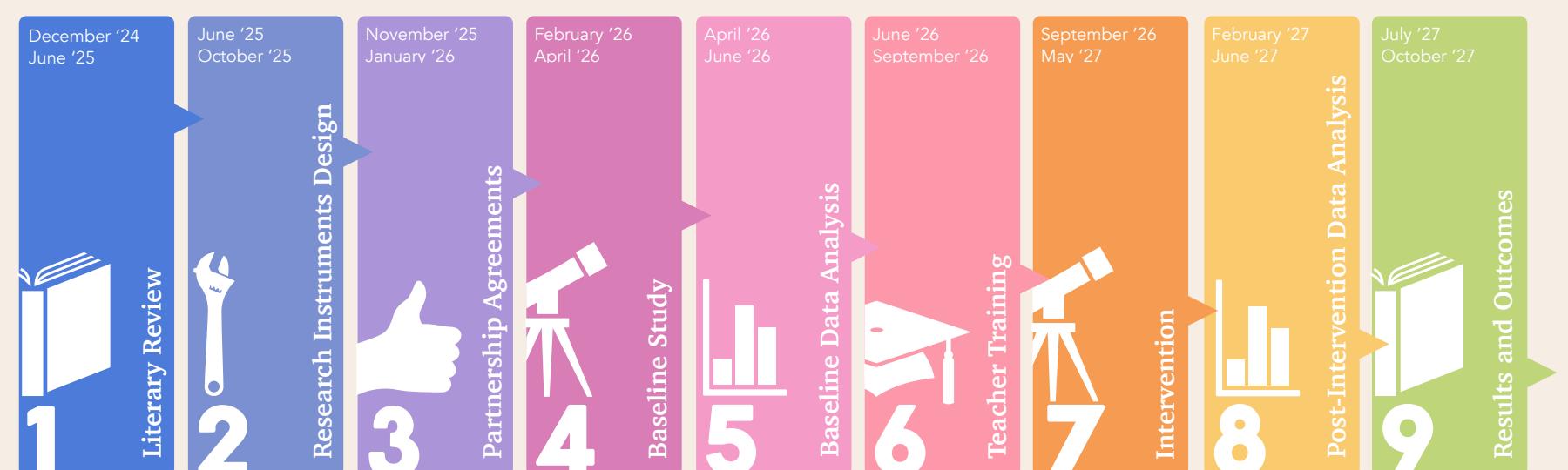
RESEARCH FLOW

The figure below visualizes the logical architecture of the design, highlighting the recursive sequence where diagnostic evidence directly informs the co-design of the intervention.



3 | RESEARCH AGENDA

The operational structure of the study is detailed in the following timeline, which outlines the nine phases of the action-research cycle, defining objectives and timing for each stage.



4. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

A "CORE-PLUS-CONTEXT" STRATEGY

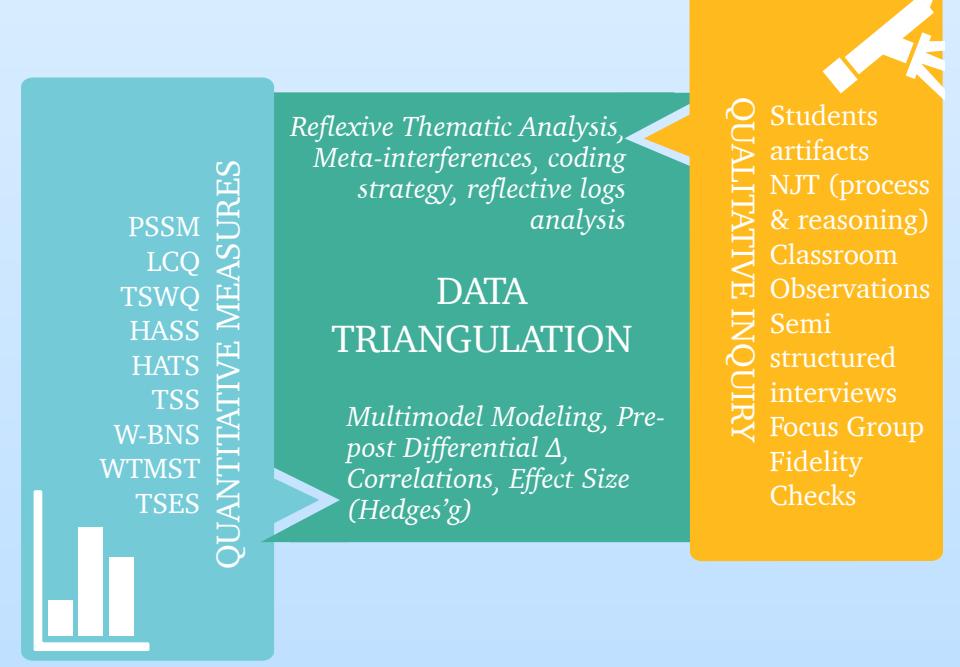
Self-report Surveys:
Validated Scales: PSSM, TESS, ICQ, TSVQ, TSS, AMS, QAR, TSES
Context Scales: HASS & HATS

Performance Tasks:
Student personal, reflective, creative writings and rewritings; Narrative Judgment Test (NJT, original tool assessing ethical reasoning and argumentative skills through cultural dilemmas)

Interviews & Dialogue:
Semi-structured Interviews: Teacher reflective practice & professional posture; Focus group: codesign and negotiation of meaning.

Ecological Observation:
Codedesign classroom protocols: fidelity checks & interaction analysis.

To capture the complexity of the "narrative turn," a multi-layered instrumentation ecosystem is implemented, anchoring original and contextual heuristic tools within established international frameworks. This Core-Plus-Context strategy maintains psychometric rigor while remaining sensitive to situational specificities.



6. STUDY PROFILE

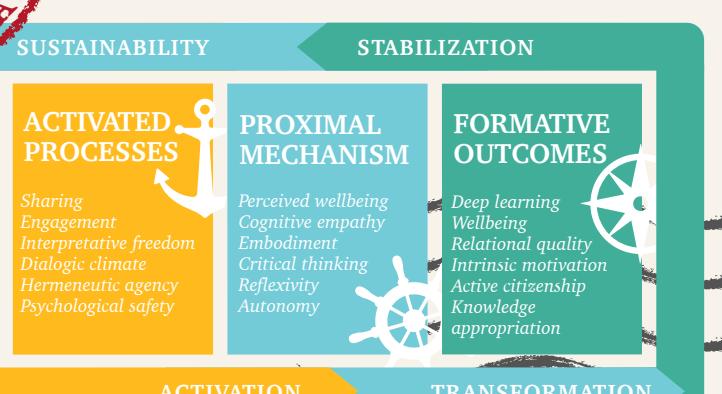
A TARGET | Secondary Schools (year III - IV) Students and Teachers

TITLE: «Narrative as a formative device»

METHODOLOGY
Multiphase Mixed-Methods
Sequential Explanatory Design

Literature Review	Disciplinary Field M-PED 01
Framework	Timeframe 24 Months (Longitudinal Cycle)
Data Analysis	Multilevel Models & Reflexive Thematic Analysis
Policies	Agenda 2030, SDG 4 (2015); EU Rec. on Key Comp. (2018); LifeComp Framework (2020)

5. EXPECTED OUTCOMES



The research aims to develop and validate a transferable model that frames the classroom as a hermeneutic community, where well-being becomes a precondition for sustained learning (Immordino-Yang, 2016). By showing how narrative practices activate proximal mechanisms such as psychological safety and interpretive agency, the study connects literary theory with pedagogical practice in a grounded, operative way. The project cultivates a sustainable culture of peace (UNESCO, 2023) by supporting the inner skills that enable students to navigate complexity and inhabit the world as active and critically aware citizens (Ricoeur, 1990; Nussbaum, 2010; Unesco, 2015)

EMPOWERMENT

Agency
Inner skills
Wellbeing
Critical Thinking
LifeComp

Narrative Learning
Humanities
Literacy
Cultural Awareness
Deep Learning

MEANING MAKING

8. REFERENCES

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