

## Dissident narratives: cartographing a lesbitransviada queer mica and the (re)affirmation of the body in chemistry education

### ARTICLE

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### Resumo

Este artigo investiga as vivências de três pessoas LGBTTQIAPNb+ no campo do ensino de Química, por meio da cartografia de narrativas (auto)biográficas – uma mulher lésbica, uma mulher trans bissexual e um homem gay afeminado. Com base em uma metodologia cartográfica e em uma epistemologia queer, as experiências são compreendidas como dispositivos de resistência à cisheteronormatividade estrutural presente na escola e na universidade. As narrativas revelam os impactos do apagamento e da exclusão, mas também os deslocamentos, as estratégias de pertencimento e a reinvenção dos espaços curriculares. Propomos, com isso, uma queer mica lesbitransviada como força político-poética que tensiona os limites da ciência e da docência. Os resultados apontam para a urgência de repensar o ensino de Química como prática ético-estética de liberdade, pluralidade e (re)invenção curriculares para uma química das diferenças.

**Palavras-chave:** Química. Estudo e Ensino. Diversidade Sexual. Narrativas Pessoais. Currículo. Epistemologia.

### Narrativas em dissidências: cartografar uma queer mica lesbitransviada e a (re)afirmação do corpo na educação química

### Abstract

This article investigates the experiences of three LGBTTQIAPNb+ individuals in the field of Chemistry education through the cartography of (auto)biographical narratives – a lesbian woman, a bisexual trans woman, and a feminine gay man. Grounded in a cartographic methodology and a queer epistemology, these experiences are understood as devices of resistance against the structural cisheteronormativity embedded in schools and universities. The narratives reveal the impacts of erasure and exclusion, while also illuminating displacements, strategies of belonging, and the reinvention of curricular spaces. We thus propose a queer mica lesbitransviada as a political-poetic force that challenges the boundaries of science and teaching. The results point to the urgent need to rethink

Chemistry education as an ethical-aesthetic practice of freedom, plurality, and curricular (re)invention for a chemistry of differences.

**Keywords:** Chemistry. Study and Teaching. Sexual Diversity. Personal Narratives. Curriculum. Epistemology.

## 1 Introduction

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The academic environment is often celebrated as a space of emancipation, as a promise of a better life grounded in scientific knowledge. However, what one sees and feels in the hallways of universities and school laboratories does not always align with this universalizing narrative. For dissident bodies, especially LGBTTQIAPNb+ individuals, the university and the school still operate as devices of regulation, surveillance, and control (Dutra-Pereira; Tinôco, 2025). Not rarely, the visibility of such existences is turned into vulnerability. *Cisheteronormativity*, understood here as a political regime of intelligibility that determines which bodies are possible, which voices are legitimate, and which forms of knowledge are valid, structures the educational and scientific fields in an exclusionary way. As Dutra-Pereira (2023, p. 224) states:

[...] when we are traversed by the insertion of Chemistry as a field of knowledge in Basic Education, it becomes necessary to revisit our ancestors [...] to understand that this Science [...] is racist and has been structured within a theoretical-practical framework built on a patriarchal, sexist, conservative, colonizing, LGBTQIA+phobic, and Christian *modus operandi*.

This work proposes a crossing between normativity and dissidence, between the technical curriculum and the pulsating body, between traditional Chemistry and *queermistry lesbitransviada*. The study emerges from listening to and composing with the experiences of three LGBTTQIAPNb+ individuals who work in Chemistry education: a cis lesbian woman, a trans bisexual woman, and a cis gay man. By inhabiting the *universityschool*, they not only resist but also reconfigure the ways of teaching, researching, and living science.

The narratives that compose this research are understood as poetic-political devices (Gurgel; Maknamara, 2021), expanding the field of Chemistry education by

bringing it into contact with the concrete lives of dissident subjects. They allow us to question the compulsory cisgenderism embedded in pedagogical discourses and in spaces of scientific training. This is a writing in movement, inscribed within the framework of *COM-FABULAÇÕES: ateliê de pesquisas inventivas em Educação* (UFPB/CNPq), and guided by an ethics of presence and co-affection, as Gurgel and Maknamara (2021, p. 193) affirm: “life and research with and for lives are made in Babelian terms.”

The wager here is on a *queer epistemology*, one that does not seek to fix identities or represent experiences, but to challenge the structures that silence and to affirm the power of difference as a productive category of knowledge. Such a perspective destabilizes the assumptions of neutrality and objectivity in science, revealing that every production of knowledge is traversed by the politics of the body, desire, and language. As Dutra-Pereira and Tinôco (2025, p. 43) point out, “the neoliberal and cisheteronormative logic that structures high school education and its curricula imposes on subjects a life project that excludes deviant existences, rendering their practices, knowledges, and ways of being invisible.” To reclaim the presence of these bodies in Chemistry education is more than a matter of representation; it is about opening space for other ways of teaching and learning, where lived experience is not an appendix to theory, but its very foundation.

In this sense, the (auto)biographical narratives that compose this research are not understood as self-reports, but as devices of displacement. They function as epistemological tools that challenge dominant modes of thinking about curriculum, content, and the very place of teaching. Inspired by the minor practices of cartography and by writings of the self that challenge the archive, we understand these narratives as *fabulations*, as compositions in becoming. Santos and Torga (2020, p. 124) affirm that “the individual perspective of each subjectivity on the world and its relationships with it begins to offer their collectivity the conditions for intellectual and material enrichment.” These are, therefore, narratives written with bodies and with contexts, crossed by affections, silences, and cries that keep demanding: we are still here.

It is in this crossing between writing, teaching, and dissidence that the figure of the *queermistry lesbitransviada* emerges, a concept that pulses as both a political and poetic

force. It is a body-concept that escapes classification, that pushes the limits of language, and that imagines other possibilities for Chemistry education. *Queermistry* is less an identity and more a line of flight. As Dutra-Pereira and Ribeiro da Silva (2025, p. 2) provoke, “the curriculum becomes cohabitation, welcoming, continuous reinvention of teaching and learning.” The presence of *queermistry* in the narratives mapped here points to new ethics of teaching that do not dissociate content from existence and that make difference the organizing principle of the pedagogical act.

Throughout this process, Chemistry is destabilized as a disciplinary field. We reject the idea of a neutral and universal science, for we know that all science is localized, situated, and marked by historical interests. The Chemistry we teach, and that seeks to reinvent itself, is crossed by disputes of meaning, by erasures, and by resistances. As stated in other works (Dutra-Pereira, 2023; Dutra-Pereira; Tinôco, 2025; 2025a), the science taught in Brazilian schools, when it refuses to engage in dialogue with cultural and sexual pluralities, becomes a project of erasure and exclusion.

Our investigation is therefore both epistemological and existential. We ask: how do dissident bodies reconfigure the ways of producing knowledge, inhabiting spaces, and constructing curricula? In what ways do they challenge traditional epistemologies and propose other ways of knowing and teaching? What alliances can emerge from these presences, transforming the curriculum and the very idea of science?

These questions do not emerge from a void. They are born from our own experiences, from our bodies in crossing, from our encounters with other subjects who inhabit the boundaries, the interstices, and the cracks of the field of science education. They are also questions nourished by the urgencies of the present, by a time in which schools and universities are disputed by exclusionary and conservative projects that seek to silence everything that is different. Against this, we affirm: it is necessary to imagine other possible worlds. As Dutra-Pereira and Tinôco (2025, p. 1) state, “it is necessary to resist the neoconservative wave in order to build a school that teaches, inspires, and liberates, as a space of social transformation, where every voice is heard and every difference is respected.”

This article therefore does not seek to offer ready-made answers or methodological formulas. It presents itself as a crossing, as a living cartography of bodies that narrate themselves and make themselves science. A study that wagers on writing as a political gesture, on listening as a practice of care, and on difference as a possibility for epistemological reconfiguration. The following section presents the cartographic methodology that guides this research and that makes writing an act of presence, resistance, and creation.

## 2 Cartographic Methodology: writing with-bodies, with-life, with-fabulations

Inhabiting the interstices of the university and the school with queer bodies is more than a challenge; it is a practice of resistance and creation. This research is not built upon observed subjects but with lives that vibrate and inscribe themselves in a process of *co-fabulation*, where narrating means shifting, questioning, and reshaping the contours of curriculum, science, and the ways of inhabiting the world. Considering the written narratives, this work is methodologically grounded in qualitative research and based on the concepts of cartographic writing as proposed by Passos, Kastrup, and Escóssia (2009), who dialogue with Deleuze and Guattari (2011). We chose to write (auto)biographical narratives as “[...] movements that can greatly contribute to the articulation of new ways of thinking and to the deconstruction of single modes of reading society” (Lima, 2024, p. 19), in order to understand how and where dissident queer bodies make themselves present in Chemistry Education, identifying the specificities, differences, and individualities of each body-life experience.

The methodology adopted is anchored in inventive cartography, as formulated by Deleuze and Guattari (2011), mobilized by Passos, Kastrup, and Escóssia (2009), and experimented through collective practices such as those of *COM-FABULAÇÕES: ateliê de pesquisas inventivas em Educação*. Here, it is not a matter of collecting data but of accompanying movements of subjectivation, the forces that traverse bodies, and the lines that make them (im)possible within educational spaces. As Dutra-Pereira (2025a) points



out, cartographic research is written with the body in becoming, with the margins and their intensities, with the urgency of the present that calls us to displace teaching.

We composed three (auto)biographical narratives: a cis lesbian woman, a trans bisexual woman, and a cis gay man, all inscribed within the field of Chemistry teaching as ways of being that refuse to be confined by the cisheterocentered norms of academic training. These narratives are not mere accounts; they are becomings, they are potencies. They are devices that question and overflow the curriculum. As Dutra-Pereira and Tinôco (2025a) affirm, it is necessary to co-fabulate other *curricula-lives* for nomadic and dissident youth and teachers who refuse compulsory normativity.

This methodological choice aligns with what Dutra-Pereira and Ribeiro da Silva (2025) call *co-fabulative writing*, in which “the classroom becomes a possibility, where the curriculum is cohabitation, welcoming, and the continuous reinvention of teaching and learning.” The narrative of Chemistry teaching, in this context, becomes a space of symbolic dispute, epistemological reinvention, and existential insurgency. It is within this field of forces that the mapped experiences are inscribed.

The writing of queer lived experience within a Chemistry course, as proposed here, constitutes a collective and minoritarian enunciation, a gesture that affirms the power of the margins to challenge the centers. The *queermistry lesbitransviada* is not a stable identity but a force that disorganizes patterns and creates new possible maps for science, for curriculum, and for the university. The choice of cartography was not only theoretical but also political. It aligns with the need to disobey colonized epistemology and technical-rational teaching, as already defended by Dutra-Pereira (2023) in the manifesto for a frank curriculum in Chemistry Education: “we can no longer teach a Chemistry that wounds, that normalizes, that operates according to the pacts of whiteness and cisheterosexuality.”

When mapping the narratives of dissident bodies in the Chemistry course, we were careful not to transform cartography into a procedural technique or a methodological fad. We follow Costa’s (2025) warning not to “bureaucratize cartography,” that is, not to reduce it to a set of fixed steps or a script of procedures that guarantee supposed scientific rigor. Instead, we understand cartography as a mode of being-in-research, implicated with the

lives that are spoken and produced in the interstices of knowledge and affection. As the author points out, “a cartography is not a sequence of ordered steps but a practice of attention, listening, and composition with what emerges” (Costa, 2025, p. 38). Thus, the writing of (auto)biographical narratives and *queermistry* experiences was not guided by pre-established directives but by a radical openness to the unpredictable, the unspeakable, and the fabulations that spring from encounters.

This methodology is therefore a wager. A wager on writing as an insurgent gesture, on research as the invention of worlds, and on curriculum as a place of cohabitation among diverse bodies and knowledges. As Dutra-Pereira and Tinôco (2025) highlight, what is at stake is the possibility of resisting neoliberal projects of subjectivation and affirming pedagogical practices that celebrate difference.

We carried out the composition of the narratives through collaborative writing, grounded in an ethics of implication and co-affection. There is no hierarchy between researcher and participant, since the very distinction between subject and object of research dissolves within the plane of cartography. As Romagnoli (2009) states, this is a form of research that is also intervention, one that transforms even as it understands. The data were not analyzed but accompanied. Each narrative was treated as a plane of immanence, allowing the emergence of what has not yet been said. The analyses took place through conceptual approximations, affective assemblages, and the fabulations that arose from the encounters. The results, therefore, are not closures but openings: mobile maps traced in delicate lines, along unpredictable routes.

The materiality of this study unfolds through (auto)biographical narratives, understood not merely as individual accounts but as political and epistemological devices that enable the emergence of new ways of understanding the teaching of Chemistry. As Santos and Torga (2020, p. 124) argue, “the individual perspective of each subjectivity on the world and its relationships with it begins to offer their collectivity the conditions for intellectual and material enrichment.” Thus, the experiences of the lesbian woman, the trans woman, and the gay man are treated as elements that allow us to think about Chemistry Education and its relationship with gender, sexuality, and power.

This research was conducted through the analysis of public documents produced within the collective *COM-FABULAÇÕES: ateliê de pesquisas inventivas em Educação*, affiliated with the Federal University of Paraíba and registered with CNPq. The texts analyzed are (auto)biographical narratives voluntarily shared in training spaces, research meetings, and academic productions of the collective, accessible through publications in conference proceedings, repositories, academic social networks, and scientific dissemination platforms associated with the group.

Since these documents have already been published and are available in the public domain, this investigation adheres to the ethical principles of research involving human subjects, in accordance with Resolution No. 510/2016 of the *Conselho Nacional de Saúde* (Brazil, 2016), particularly in the articles regulating the use of publicly accessible data, which exempt the study from submission to a Research Ethics Committee. However, we chose to adopt a broader ethical stance, one not limited to regulatory compliance but also engaged with care in writing and in the circulation of affections, names, and lived experiences.

Accordingly, all names included in the narratives are real, as per the desire and prior authorization of each participant, since these writings of the self are also political and aesthetic affirmations of presence. To conceal them would be to inflict another form of violence. As Gurgel and Maknamara (2021) propose, it is necessary “to write with lives and not about them,” which led us to assume the ethical commitment of preserving the integrity of the narratives and the authors’ desire to inscribe themselves in a dissident voice.

Because we understand this research as a cartography rather than a process of data codification, we chose to present the narratives in their entirety, without analytical fragmentations or edits that might compromise the aesthetic-political gesture of writing the self. We believe that each narrative carries its own rhythm, a unique time of enunciation that must be respected. To cut, dissect, or summarize would be to break the way in which lived experience presents and reinscribes itself within the plane of writing.

The complete narratives are therefore not mere appendices to the analysis but constitute the very body of the research. As Passos, Kastrup, and Escóssia (2009) indicate,



cartography accompanies ongoing processes, unfinished movements, and multiple becomings. It is precisely in the intertwining of these stories that new possible entries and exits are drawn, openings that allow the reader to *rhizomatize* the reading, connect affects, and generate new assemblages (Deleuze; Guattari, 2011).

Instead of a schematized textual corpus designed for analytical purposes, we propose a living field of listening, where the research text unfolds into narrative planes that coexist and affect one another. The narratives thus operate as lines of flight that question the very traditional structure of the scientific article, inviting a reading experience that is more errant, more fluid, more intensive. As Costa (2025, p. 40) argues, “one does not make cartography with the desire to order or to conclude, but with the commitment to follow life where it pulses, where it escapes.”

By preserving the narratives in their wholeness, we affirm a methodology that does not seek to be objective or neutral, but one that is sensitive to the gesture of self-writing, of placing oneself in the world through words that pierce, that rupture, and that announce other ways of teaching and researching. From these narratives, we seek to reveal the importance of amplifying the voices of bodies that are often erased, so that Chemistry itself may be transformed into other, more colorful reactions.

### 3 Results and Discussion

The experiences of dissident bodies in Chemistry education reveal not only the challenges faced within schools and universities but also the strategies of resistance and reinvention that emerge from these spaces. The presence of LGBTTQIAPNb+ individuals in the sciences, a field historically marked by discourses of neutrality and objectivity (Dutra-Pereira, 2023; 2025), exposes the tensions between an academic model that privileges cisheteronormativity and the possibilities of building a more plural science.

The first narrative, recounting the experience of a lesbian woman in the university, shows how erasure and solitude can act as silent forms of exclusion, while also revealing how research and collectivity become devices of legitimization and belonging. Her account

invites us to ask: who is allowed to exist fully within academia? Which forms of knowledge are recognized as valid? And, most importantly, how can we construct a Chemistry education that not only includes but values the multiple subjectivities that traverse its spaces?

*When we are children, we tend to follow what we are taught by our “adult models,” whether they are our parents, uncles, aunts, or grandparents. But for us, LGBT people who grow up in extremely homophobic and religious families, this becomes much more difficult. Having to listen to your parents making jokes and prejudiced remarks while you are trying to understand yourself is not easy, and because of that, you end up forcing yourself to fit into a social pattern that is not your own, one that keeps you from feeling you belong anywhere: the well-known lesbian solitude. As a child, in an effort to fit in, I started dressing in an extremely feminine and, in a way, sexualized manner, always wearing very short shorts and tight, cropped tops. Somehow, clothing was the way I found to pass as a straight woman or, worse yet, a straight child. When I discovered myself as a dyke, I began to better understand my place as a dyke woman and how I truly saw and felt comfortable with myself. My first step toward self-acceptance was clothing. I started dressing in a way that made me feel good, with what people call masculine clothes or, as my mother says, men’s clothes. Even today, five years after I began wearing men’s clothes, my mother never misses a chance to comment or complain about the way I dress. And I understand her – she was taught from an early age that being a dyke was wrong, ugly, and shameful, a word she so deeply rejects. I will never forget what my father once told me: “It’s okay for you to be that. I don’t mind you dating a woman, but you don’t have to dress like a man.” That sentence really struck me, because it showed that for him, me being a dyke was acceptable as long as I didn’t show it to others. “What will people think of our family?” he said. From that moment on, I understood that if I kept living to please others, I would never be happy. When I stopped trying to live to please other people and started living for and by myself, I became truly happy. Because I grew up without having a space at home where I could be myself, it’s natural to try to find that space somewhere else. But as children, we are usually only at home or at school. Unfortunately, for most of my school years, I studied at a small neighborhood school where everyone knew each other and where the administration subtly imposed a certain religiosity. Even though it wasn’t officially a religious school, this made me, as a dyke student, uncomfortable to come out as LGBT, turning the school into yet another place where I couldn’t express myself, where I felt the need to hide and pretend to be straight to fit into the heteronormative standards that were also enforced there. That was one of the main reasons it took me so long to at least accept that I had romantic and affectionate feelings for other women. Many queer people feel the need to compensate for being LGBT. I was like that. I tried to be a good daughter: the one who gets good grades, who doesn’t cause trouble, who is polite. This need to compensate is not healthy. It shows that we care about pleasing and respecting people who definitely don’t feel the same need to please and respect us. And this pattern of compensation doesn’t just apply to our parents and families. It ends up seeping, without us realizing it, into many parts of our lives, including our academic life. When we enter university, especially in the fields of exact and natural sciences like mine, Chemistry, it’s normal to feel reluctant to come out to classmates or professors because we know we belong to*

*an academic and scientific community centered on traditionalism, one that is openly homophobic, sexist, racist, cisheteronormative, and Eurocentric. And even in cases where we feel comfortable speaking openly about our identity, we sometimes feel that same need to compensate for who we are. A vicious cycle. (Narrative 1 – The solitude of lesbian women).*

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The first narrative demonstrates how solitude can be one of the most perverse effects of exclusion and the erasure of dissident bodies in academic spaces. The experience of the lesbian woman in the Chemistry teaching degree program exposes the contradiction between a supposed acceptance of diversity and the structural silencing that prevents certain existences from being fully recognized (Faustino et al., 2024). From the very first semester, her identity seemed to have no place in academic life, since, as she recounts, “I always felt a solitude in being the only person who spoke openly about being LGBT in my cohort, feeling that even if people accepted it, there was still a certain discomfort for others.” This passage reinforces how educational institutions operate within a cisheteronormative logic, in which acceptance often does not mean true inclusion but rather a silent tolerance that fails to question the norms that marginalize dissident bodies (Dutra-Pereira; Tinôco, 2025).

The university, which should be a space of intellectual emancipation, often reproduces structures of oppression that have long existed in schools. The absence of others who share similar experiences turns solitude into a defining mark of her trajectory. According to Novaes et al. (2024), this sense of displacement and non-belonging is common among many LGBTTTQIAPNb+ students, who must constantly negotiate their existence within an environment that insists on keeping them at the margins. In the case of the lesbian woman, the impact of this invisibility was profound: “For a long time, I thought that who I am could not be part of my academic experience.” This feeling reveals how erasure operates not only through explicit rejection but also through silence, lack of representation, and the absence of safe spaces for sharing experiences and building community.

However, there is a turning point in her story: the discovery of a research group that validates her existence not only as a research subject but as a producer of knowledge.

Upon joining a study on Chemistry teaching and queer pedagogy, she finds, for the first time, a space where her identity is not a burden but an essential element in constructing a more plural academic understanding. “That was the first time I felt I could talk about who I am sincerely within the university.” This moment represents more than an individual achievement; it points to the need for institutional initiatives that recognize dissident epistemologies within the exact sciences. Chemistry, traditionally perceived as a neutral and objective field (Dutra-Pereira, 2023), also becomes a site of dispute where historically excluded bodies can assert their right to produce knowledge from lived experience (Dutra-Pereira; Tinôco, 2025).

Nonetheless, the narrative also reminds us that institutional recognition remains fragile and that the existence of a single welcoming space does not solve all the layers of exclusion embedded within academia (Faustino et al., 2024). Although the research group offered a sense of belonging, the broader challenge of transforming the university persists. The journey of the lesbian woman demonstrates that resistance is an ongoing act and that science education must be reimagined not only as a field of technical knowledge transmission but as one where diversity and subjectivity truly matter.

For her, solitude was initially a burden, but the creation of networks of support and research revealed that transformation is possible. Yet, this prompts further reflection: how does this transformation occur for other dissident bodies? How does the university engage with the presence of trans individuals in its spaces? The next narrative invites us to think through these questions from the experience of a trans woman who found in the university a space for self-reinvention, though not without facing barriers and silencing.

*One of my earliest school memories is of a very brief conversation that, nonetheless, left a deep mark on me. It was between me and a new classmate, back when I was in first or second grade. My hair at the time was straight and blond, which made it quite popular. That classmate complimented it during our chat. I remember thanking her and saying, “your hair is really pretty too. I wish mine were as long as yours.” And she simply replied, “why don’t you let it grow? My brother has long hair too.”*

*Back then, Catarina was studying at a Christian school, so the teacher nearby quickly stepped in to interrupt the conversation and emphasized how much prettier my hair looked short, insisting that I should keep it that way. I remember that moment so vividly because my family had always been strict and certain about the path I should follow. That was the first time someone presented me with the idea*

*of going against the “normalities” that had been imposed on my life. Unfortunately, I only came to truly understand the weight of that conversation much later.*

*It wasn’t until the pandemic, during the transition from middle to high school, that I began to grasp the damage those norms had done to my sense of self. I had always wanted to have been born a girl, but only gradually did I realize that I already was one, and that the gender printed on my documents didn’t dictate who I had to be. Even so, my voice was still silenced. I was afraid to try to exist in a place that, if it could, would consider me a crime. It is suffocating to try to live in a world that deems you wrong simply for existing.*

*When I entered high school, I had just discovered I was trans. Every time I tried to bring it up with my “friends” from the previous year, I heard transphobic jokes, so I wasn’t going into the new school year with much hope. However, on the first day of class, still during remote learning, I noticed that one of the students had a picrew image in their email profile, with the trans flag in the background. It was there for everyone to see. That felt otherworldly to me at the time. I had lived so long inside the bubble my family created that seeing that person was like witnessing a miracle. When classes eventually returned in person, that person became the first trans individual I had ever met outside of a screen. And the simple fact that he could exist openly as trans in school was a beacon of hope for me.*

*Honestly, I think I was lucky at the start of high school. Besides having one openly trans person at school, there were also many other LGBT students. The school had just opened and had a small number of students, so it was generally a peaceful and safe environment. It was there that I took my first steps as a trans person. I didn’t have the courage to come out publicly because the school still had a religious administration, and I feared they would inform my family. But those small crumbs of acceptance became the foundation that later gave me courage. The fact that all my friends knew my real name and used it exclusively was an incomparable feeling for teenage Catarina. It’s incredible how powerful acceptance can be, even within a small social bubble.*

*Unfortunately, that good atmosphere didn’t last long. The following year, the school began losing students and didn’t survive past that. I transferred for my final year of high school to an even more conservative school than the previous ones. They even played the national anthem before classes. This school was far less open to differences, especially among the students. I remember my History teacher at the time. Although he never discussed sexuality, there were always homophobic comments about him, sometimes even in his presence. The lack of action from the administration gave a frightening first impression of this new stage in my life, especially because the situation escalated to the point where, after that teacher was assaulted during a robbery, another teacher started spreading rumors that the attack had happened because of an affair with another man. Not long after, the victimized teacher left the school.*

*If the previous school had shown me that it was possible to live and be respected, this last one showed me how hard that could actually be. And all of that happened within the first three months of classes. There were many other cases of aggression and microaggressions against LGBTQIAPN+ people and minorities in general. Fortunately, I only had to endure that hostile environment for one year before finally freeing myself from religious educational institutions. But that period left a deep mark on my memory, especially because a considerable part of the homophobia I witnessed came from teachers – people who should be responsible for preparing students to live together in society. Yet those were the same people who committed hate crimes more than once. How can I hope for a better future from people who learn from such examples?*



*It was only when I finally entered higher education that I found the courage and the support to come out openly. Once again, I think I was lucky. Among all the people who started the degree in teaching at the same time as I did, only three did not identify as LGBTQIAPN+. That made things much easier, especially after the first class in Scientific Methodology, when, for the first time, I had an openly gay professor who addressed the topic in class. Experiences like these gave me the strength to be in a public space where everyone knows and respects me for the woman I am. I must admit, I hadn't expected discussions on social issues in a course focused on the hard sciences, but it was precisely that experience – having my lived reality validated within the academic field – that became the foundation allowing me to show myself to the world. Knowing that there is a safe place for me, even in the most unexpected environments, is what motivates me to (trans)form more and more spaces into safe ones. (Narrative 2 – What can a trans woman do in the hard sciences?).*

The second narrative reveals an essential element for understanding the presence of trans bodies in higher education: the systematic invisibilization and the constant negotiation of one's own existence within academic spaces. From childhood, school already functioned as a disciplining mechanism of cisgendered normality, imposing standards that excluded any possibility of dissidence (Travesti, 2023). The episode in which the protagonist expresses her desire to have long hair and is reprimanded by her teacher illustrates how gender normalization takes place early and rigidly: “the teacher nearby quickly stepped in to interrupt the conversation and reaffirmed how much prettier my hair looked short, saying I should keep it that way.” This passage shows how institutional discourses not only regulate the body but also restrict the imagination of possible ways of being. School, in this sense, does not operate merely as a space for learning but as a device that reinforces normativity and excludes any identity that does not fit established standards.

A *panoptic gaze* that, on one hand, automatizes and de-individualizes by universalizing behaviors and making visible those who are “outside the norm,” imposing upon the excluded an individualizing discipline; and, on the other hand, universalizes disciplinary controls by modifying behaviors and “training” or “domesticating” individuals (Cavalcante; Dias, 2025, p. 8).

Throughout the narrative, we perceive that this exclusion persists into adolescence, when self-denial becomes a mechanism for survival. The protagonist mentions having spent years “trying to exist in a place that, if it could, would consider me a

crime.” This statement exposes the impact of the social environment on identity formation and how institutionalized transphobia operates not only through explicit violence but also through the denial of the right to exist fully.

The transition to higher education, however, represents a moment of transformation, where, for the first time, the protagonist finds a space in which she can be recognized as a woman. It was only within a course component focused on Chemistry education research that her trans experience could be validated. The impact of that moment is clear when she states: “it was this experience of having my lived reality validated within the academic field that served as the foundation for me to show myself to the world.” This recognition, however, did not occur spontaneously or universally but rather emerged from a specific research context that broke with traditional academic normativity.

The trans woman’s experience highlights the urgency of institutional policies to ensure the permanence of trans students in higher education (Travesti, 2023). Her narrative indicates that even within a university environment where spaces of resistance exist, the academic structure as a whole has not yet been designed to accommodate dissident bodies. The presence of trans subjects should therefore not be treated as an exception or an individual matter, but as a collective challenge requiring concrete action from professors, researchers, and administrators.

Moreover, her narrative reinforces the importance of collectivity and representation in creating a more inclusive academic environment. It was by finding spaces where other dissident subjectivities were present that the protagonist was able to assert herself as a legitimate part of higher education. This aspect is crucial for rethinking the epistemologies of science education, as it demonstrates that knowledge production is inseparable from the experiences and affects that traverse the bodies constructing it.

If, for the trans woman, the university represented a space of reinvention and affirmation, this process was far from free of conflict or structural barriers. Her presence in higher education not only challenged deeply rooted institutional norms but also required a continuous effort to guarantee her existence in a space historically not conceived for trans bodies. Even though she found support within a research group, her trajectory shows that

academic recognition for trans individuals remains fragmented and confined to specific niches within the university.

Meanwhile, other forms of gender and sexual dissidence, such as the experience of an effeminate gay man in courses traditionally dominated by cisheteronormative masculinity, face different yet equally revealing challenges. The third narrative invites us to reflect on these tensions within the field of the hard sciences, demonstrating how the presence of dissident bodies destabilizes normative structures and creates new possibilities for the construction of knowledge.

*I am the backlands! I am the being of the backlands! I was born there, in the sertão of Paraíba. In the caatinga. In the strength of the sun that burns, but also in the rain that softens the heat. I am a witness of time, and resistance is taught to us before we even learn to speak. My body has always been a deviation, a point off the curve, a flaw in what was expected of me. I was the effeminate child, the boy with the soft voice, the one who liked to stay among the girls, the one who avoided the boys' circles because I knew I was a target there. I grew up hearing names that tried to mark me, to shrink me, to contain me: "faggot," "sissy," "fairy," "queer." And for a long time, school was a battlefield. No one there welcomed me, except the friends we make and keep as shields, even if some silences worked against us too. At fifteen, I left home to study Chemistry in a small town in the Curimatá region of Paraíba. I left behind my family, my land, my ground. But my story continued. I was driven by the promise of a better future, but the university was not exactly a refuge. I found new walls, new forms of exclusion. Science, which should be a space of discovery, often worked as a machine that crushed bodies like mine. Still, I persisted. Among experiments and theories, among professors who challenged me and others who stood by me, I learned to stay upright. And I was more welcomed there than I had ever been at school. I had to lie – because that's the first thing we LGBTTIAPNb+ people learn, even when no one teaches us how. It wasn't easy. To live passions, loves, and heartbreaks. To realize that my body was still a problem for many. But the truth that moved me was greater than any mocking laugh. The desire to live did not bow to the shame they tried to impose. "I am the failure of everything they ever wanted me to be." Then came my master's degree in Mechanical Engineering – an environment even more masculine, more conservative, more hostile. Where a man like me – effeminate, gay, from the backlands, a dreamer – seemed like a system error. I resisted. I did my research, wrote my dissertation, defended it. While they looked at me with disbelief, I proved that science does not belong to a single body, a single identity. Science must dance. But it was in school that I truly found myself. Facing students who, like me, carried the marks of a society that wants us invisible, I saw in them the same anguish, the same search for a space where existing could be possible without fear. And there, in the classroom, I decided that my fight was also theirs. School needed to be a place of welcome, not of exile. I taught Chemistry, but I also taught courage. I taught pride. I found other LGBTTIAPNb+ teachers, other stories of resistance, other ways of building a more beautiful world. I returned to the university for my doctorate. No longer as someone who needed to prove his worth, but as*

*someone who wanted to open paths for others, for other stories. I defended my thesis, passed the exam, and now my research is not only about science – it is about bodies, about curriculum, about the power of existing. Today, I help train LBTTQIAPNb+ teachers who believe in a colorful Chemistry, who know that teaching can be an act of freedom. Who refuse a gray world and bet on the beauty of knowledge that crosses borders. What once was fear is now strength. What once was pain is now struggle. There is still much to be done. There are still students who look over their shoulders, afraid of what names they'll be called in the hallways. There are still curricula that erase us, discourses that silence us, doors that close. But there are also alliances, encounters, gestures of care and love. And I keep going. Because I learned from Linn da Quebrada: "I am the failure of everything they wanted me to be," but I am also the invention of something new. Of a teacher who teaches Chemistry. Who imagines chemistry for a more livable world. A world where school welcomes. A Chemistry where no one ever has to run away to be who they are. (Narrative 3 – I am the failure of everything they once planned for me!)*

The third narrative, marked by territorial and social displacement, broadens the discussion by incorporating an intersectional perspective that considers not only sexuality but also regional and class inequalities within the academic experience. The protagonist, a gay man from the *sertão*, experienced from an early age both the weight of homophobia and the impact of being a subject from the rural Northeast in spaces historically occupied by an intellectual and white elite (Dutra-Pereira, 2023).

His trajectory was marked by processes of exclusion and ridicule, leading him to develop survival strategies that included silence and concealment of his identity. He reflects on this process himself when stating: "I had to lie because that is the first thing we LBTTQIAPN+ people learn, even when no one teaches us." This need for dissimulation, common to many dissident bodies, highlights how the university and the school still operate within a normative logic that demands certain existences become invisible in order to be tolerated.

Chemistry education, followed by a master's degree in Mechanical Engineering, became an even more hostile environment, reinforcing the idea that the exact sciences remain dominated by a patriarchal, conservative, and cisheteronormative mindset (Dutra-Pereira; Tinôco, 2025a). The presence of an effeminate gay man in that space was read as a displacement, an anomaly that had to be corrected or expelled. Resistance, however, was not only expressed in the completion of the master's degree but also in the refusal to

accept science as a neutral and universal field. The statement that “science must dance” synthesizes the central proposal of this narrative: to understand knowledge as a contested territory, where lived experiences, bodies, and subjectivities are not obstacles to research but essential elements in the construction of knowledge.

His return to the university as a professor and researcher marks a significant turning point, as it represents not only the conquest of a position of power but also the possibility of transforming it. By occupying this space, he does more than assert his presence within a historically exclusionary field; he works to open pathways for other forms of dissidence. He emphasizes the need to teach Chemistry in a way that breaks with academic normativity, ensuring that “no one has to run away to be who they are.” His work as a trainer of LGBTTQIAPNb+ teachers is a strategic movement so that transformation becomes not only individual but also collective and structural.

This narrative reinforces the idea that the struggle for a more plural university and school cannot be limited to the mere presence of dissident bodies; the institutions themselves must be reconfigured at their core. The experience of this teacher demonstrates that education should not be a space of fear and exclusion but a territory of invention and affirmation. By challenging cisheteronormativity and the rigidity of science curricula, his trajectory points toward a path where teaching and research are driven by diversity, listening, and the recognition of multiple ways of existing and producing knowledge (Silva; Nascimento; Caetano, 2021).

If the school and the university often operate as devices of exclusion, they are also spaces of resistance and creation, where alliances emerge as strategies to confront institutional and symbolic violence. When read together, these three stories point to the urgency of rethinking Chemistry education and the university from queer and dissident perspectives. If curricula and pedagogical practices still operate as normative devices, the presence of these bodies reveals fissures and opens possibilities for an education that is pluricultural and affectively committed to the dignity and recognition of all subjectivities. What becomes evident from these experiences is that science does not need to be a space



of oppression; it can be reinvented as a territory where diversity is recognized as strength rather than threat.

## 4 Final considerations

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This study aimed to investigate the lived experiences of dissident bodies within Chemistry education, drawing from the narratives of a lesbian woman, a trans woman, and a gay man from the *sertão*. Throughout the research, we sought to understand how these subjects experience school and university life, what challenges they face, and how their presence challenges and redefines academic and curricular spaces. The narratives reveal that exclusion and silencing remain structural features of scientific education, yet they also show that resistance emerges through encounters, alliances, and the creation of epistemologies that break with cisheteronormativity and with the notion of a neutral and universal science.

The solitude of the lesbian woman, the trans woman's struggle for recognition, and the transformation driven by the effeminate gay man within Chemistry education demonstrate that the university and the school, far from being neutral territories, are spaces of dispute. What does it mean to teach Chemistry to LGBTQIAPN+ students in a context where their bodies are still seen as strange? How can we transform curricula that insist on disregarding the multiplicity of human experiences? While these narratives expose the forms of violence that dissident bodies face, they also show that science and education can be reinvented from difference rather than in spite of it.

The results of this research suggest that building a more inclusive scientific education does not depend solely on the presence of LGBTQIAPN+ individuals in academic spaces, but on the creation of structures that recognize, respect, and empower them. To achieve this, it is necessary to question the devices that regulate and normalize what is considered valid knowledge, who is allowed to occupy certain spaces, and which voices are authorized to speak. Science does not need to be rigid, exclusionary, or a field of absolute certainties; it can be driven by doubt, by desire, by invention. When Chemistry

education is traversed by diversity, it becomes a practice of freedom—an opening for the creation of other possible worlds.

By training LGBTQIAPN+ teachers, we are not only ensuring representation but also questioning the foundations of an educational system that still operates under normative and authoritarian logics. How can we envision a science that does not need to erase bodies in order to be recognized? How can we construct curricula that do not merely tolerate diversity but celebrate it as a creative principle? These questions have no definitive answers, yet they point to the urgency of an education that does not confine itself to reproducing models, but rather experiments, destabilizes, and imagines other ways of existing and teaching.

Finally, this study does not close a debate but opens it to new questions: what if Chemistry teaching were not merely a set of rules and formulas, but a field of life experimentation? What if school were a space where no one had to hide who they are? What if the curriculum could be conceived as a living, mutable, ever-flowing organism? Education, like science, can be a territory of invention. The question that remains is: are we willing to make room for that transformation?

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