EDUCAÇÃO
V.12 • N.3 • Publicação Contínua - 2025

ISSN Digital: **2316-3828**
ISSN Impresso: **2316-333X**
DOI: **10.17564/2316-3828.2025v12n3p1-12e**

INTERFACES CIENTÍFICAS

INTERVIEW WITH DR. MONTY W. JONES

FOSTERING INTERCULTURALITY IN THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN EDUCATION

Interview conducted by
Jefferson do Carmo Andrade Santos[1],
Simone Lucena[2]

INTRODUCTION

Internationalization activities in Graduate Programs (PPG) in Brazil have been constantly emerging since 2005. They were systematically implemented through the Fifth National Graduate Program Plan (PNPG), which was created by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES). However, these activities were only expanded after 2011 thanks to the Sixth PNPG and the creation of the Science Without Borders Program, according to Valero-Ribeiro-Saes and Invernizzi (2023). Although undergraduate degrees were the priority of the Science Without Borders Program, graduate studies also benefited from this program through scholarship offerings such as the Sandwich Doctorate, Full Doctorate, Post-Doctorate, Professional Master's, and Technological Development programs. Such an internationalization policy was of great importance for the scientific and technological development in Brazil, as it enabled the academic mobility of students and professors to countries in the Global North and South.

Currently, graduate programs have different forms of funding to carry out internationalization activities, especially after the creation of the CAPES-PrInt Institutional Internationalization Program in 2018 for graduate programs classified as excellent. Each PPG has sought ways to promote internationalization in its Strategic Planning since then. At the Federal University of Sergipe (UFS), the Graduate Program in Education (PPGED) has been

investing in an internationalization process through the annual opening of calls for funding of technical visits by faculty members to foreign universities, aiming to strengthen research actions, technical cooperation, and expand networks among researchers. The PPGED/UFS calls are funded with resources received from CAPES through the Graduate Support Program (PROAP). Thus, faculty members are selected to carry out working missions or technical visits to a foreign university every year.

One of these universities is the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in Richmond, Virginia, United States, which has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Federal University of Sergipe. Since 2022, PPGED students have participated in academic mobility to VCU via Sandwich Doctorate programs funded by CAPES scholarships. The University of Waterloo, in Canada, and the University of Madeira, in Portugal, are also partner institutions which PPGED students have visited during their doctoral studies.

In 2024, in addition to student mobility, there was also a faculty technical visit to the VCU School of Education. As a result, we decided to interview our supervisor in the light of his experience with computational thinking and teacher education. This interview was conducted by the PhD Candidate Jefferson do Carmo and Dr. Simone Lucena, both from UFS, with Dr. Monty Jones, their supervisor at VCU. Dr. Monty Jones is a tenured professor at the VCU School of Education, and he advises graduate students and teaches courses focused on technology and education. Furthermore, he develops a research project in basic education schools with students who learned programming through music. Dr. Monty Jones is also a musician and incorporates his artistic influence into his classes.

In this interview, we understand that academic internationalization is also a cultural, social, and political exchange whose final product is always the sum of many learning paths and experiences, providing us with lasting impressions and the desire to continue learning and sharing knowledge with other people in our country. This is a narrative interview (Jovchelovitch; Bauer, 2002; Josselson, 2021; Zhang, 2023) that preserves the participant's language as much as possible. Thus, we tried to maintain a natural flow in the transcription, where only truly necessary edits were made in terms of grammar and collocation. We set a plan with some guiding questions, but other questions emerged during the interview. As a result, we display herein an academic conversation that unfolds in a rhizomatic way, as we were all making meanings. In Figure 1, we introduce ourselves in order to bring a welcoming atmosphere. Take a seat, make yourself at home and enjoy our interview:

Figure 1 - Having a narrative interview

Source: personal archive

INTERVIEW

Jefferson and Simone: We are here interviewing Dr. Monty Jones from Virginia Commonwealth University, as we have been interacting and talking to him about technology and coding. We are Dr. Simone Lucena and PhD candidate Jefferson do Carmo. So just to start with, we want this to be a conversation. So it's really informal as if we were talking on a couch and having a drink or maybe some coffee. So that's it. Monty, first of all, thank you for letting us interview you. This is a pleasure for us!

Monty: Absolutely!

Jefferson: I have been experiencing life in Richmond for nine months as a visiting PhD candidate, and you are one of the highlights that I have here because you are such a cool person, you're a nice person and I love that you're also involved with music. This is what makes you better! So, we are both immersed in studies on how technologies make new social practices emerge in society. How would you describe your relationship with technologies on a personal level and also on a professional level ?

Monty: Oh, thanks! I think on a personal level So, my background coming out of undergraduate was as a computer programmer. And so, you know, for a decade, that was my job day in and day out, was thinking about how to design computer systems. I think, so I was pretty immersed from the late 80s through the 90s just doing programming which was a really interesting time because at that time you're starting to see the internet be used widely. This is still pre-cell phones but we're starting to see email take off, we're starting to see programming languages and we're starting to honestly see the use of the personal computer which makes me sound really old! But when I first started programming, it was for large mainframe computers for giant companies, right? During this time, personal computers became more and more popular. So when I was in college, and I was a systems major, we didn't have our own computers. We all went to the computer lab where they were, and most of those were actually hooked up to a large mainframe. Even those weren't always personal computers. They were just dumb monitors on another one. And so, you know, for a long time, this has sort of been my life of thinking about technology and how it's used. And then eventually I went into education, where I started thinking about how we use it in education? First, how do I use it with children? Then how do I use it with teachers? And so I think my personal and professional life, it's really just been kind of seeing the entire from personal computers to now mobile phones to now AI; and thinking about how that can be used. It used to be how it could be used to get more people credit cards now it's how it can be used to teach students.

Jefferson: Wow! So, was it in the 90s when you started your career?

Monty: 90s yeah that's when I got out of my undergrad program I spent the next 10 years traveling all around the US as an IT consultant and I was working primarily with banks. And so we had this: The company I worked for had a system that decided who got credit cards. And I was actually on the team that created the system for Capital One. They were spun off from a bank around here. And so we went

in to set up their system. And so, yeah, that whole 10 years was in the banking industry and really revolved around decision points. And this is when we were talking about artificial intelligence. Our system decided who got credit cards and how much credit they got. And it was just a lot of decision trees. A whole lot of decision trees, right? A whole lot of decisions. But I don't feel that it was artificial intelligence. It was just a static decision tree.

Jefferson: So this is back in the 90s. Wow! So, do you see now that you're not dealing with such a field directly, seeing it as a person, as a citizen, do you see any difference between the systems that you helped create in the 90s and the ones that you deal with nowadays as a person, as an individual?

Monty: Well, it's hard to say. I've been out of the business world for so long. I see evidence of how those systems are used, right? So, I saw the way we programmed our system to look at the amount of credit you have in my credit; you're asking for what your assets are, what your income is and then running it through some models not models like teaching the computer but very static models. And being like this is the amount of risk we believe we can take in giving you this amount of money and I see this sort of the same thing with, you know, when you're signing up for a magazine and you go to cancel it. When you're signing up for any subscription, you go to cancel it, and they come back with the offer. How about six more months of this? How about cutting it by this price, right? So, I know that's all just generated from certain models, so I do see that. Now, in terms of education, I haven't... It seems like there would be a direct translation from the business world into dashboards and learning analytics where a student will be learning this. You see they make this mistake and you drive them here. But I haven't done that work. So that would be a direct correlation from the professional into the learning. I just haven't done much with learning analytics. I know it's a big topic and I think it's a cool topic. But you can't do everything!

Jefferson: So you chose that technological field as a major, to work and to study, but... How about your childhood and when you were a teenager? Were those times responsible for leading you to choose anything technological?

Monty: No, I only chose that because my roommates were doing it! I was in college and I was like, I don't really like any of this. And my roommates were like, we're doing IT. And I was like, OK!

Simone: But was your childhood immersed in technology?

Monty: Not at all! No, no, I never had a computer. Cell phones weren't a thing. I got cable television late. So no, there was no technology at all.

Jefferson: Do you remember any interests you had as a kid? Music, maybe?

Monty: Yes, yes, music obviously! I started playing drums when I was three. When I went to college, my first year was as a music major here at VCU, and I did it for a year, and, you know, if you want to keep doing it pretty quick. A whole lot of people drop out of music school very fast. I did stay with it for that one year, but I knew I didn't want to pursue that type of music as my job.

Jefferson: It's more of a hobby! So, do you think that helps you? Because music in the 90s for someone that was not involved professionally, it was not too technological maybe. Even having music as a hobby, have you seen differences in how you can perform music nowadays compared to that time?

Monty: Yes, yes! So, I mean, technology has played an enormous role musically for me. You know, starting back then, you just get together with a group of people and you play. Slowly, when I got to college, we started getting four tracks, which is just tape that you could record drums and record the bass, right? And that was fascinating! And then as soon as you got digital, same thing, but it's all on the computer. But I think what was so interesting for me to realize was that... When I was with a group of programmers at a large corporation, the conversations we had were the same conversations I would have with my friends playing music. And so playing music, you'd have a friend come up and be like, oh, listen to this, play something. And you're like, that's really cool! How would you do that? And they go, oh, you took the B flat and you add A suspended fourth. And you're like, that's really cool! Programmers do the same thing, right? So someone's like: check this out. I've actually figured out how to make this just by adding a negative, you know, and that makes everything go backwards. And you're like, oh, that's so cool! It's just coming up with these neat ideas.

Simone: And this is why I tend to think that some people think of coding and programming almost like a restricted thing. But I reckon that it requires creativity. So, do you see connections in coding and music? Is this why you have chosen to make them together, to put them together?

Monty: I mean, they're both just about numbers. I know there's more to each than numbers but at the end of the day you they're both about numbers. Music just creates waves, and you can measure those waves. And depending on how big the wave is, when it hits your ear, you realize what note it is. So, you know, it's just creating a wave. If I could flap my hand hard enough, it would create a sound. That wave would hit your ear. And that's all measurable, right? Computers are just numbers too, right? So, we can just assign numbers and values and we can tweak them and move them around and add them and subtract them, right? So, I mean, it's really the same thing. It's just this manipulation of numbers. And again, with one it's waves, with the other it's just digital. So, yeah, I find them just to be remarkably similar. So, when you put them together, it brings this out. Right? It brings out that you can just put a number on every piano key and be like... And the code is that simple. So, we have a function. We use Python as the language. And we just write play notes. And then in parentheses, you give it a number. Right?

Simone: Could you explain a bit what Python is?

Monty: Yeah. Python is just a computer language. So it's just one of the many. There are Python and Java. And Python is the one that is embedded in the system called TunePad. So, it's just a language. Yeah, that's all.

Jefferson: Speaking of coding and music, I don't know if you remember, but I translated one of your lectures in my graduate program. And you mentioned that you used to work with K-12 education and the idea of coding and music. Could you report on that?

Monty: Absolutely! For K-12 at the time, I had worked with a group of teachers. And this sort of goes back to what we were talking about earlier. I am ultimately interested in K-12. Now, for me to get an idea into K-12, and, you know, I do have doctorate students that we can go in and do work with, but I have found my most success working with teachers. training them to do an idea and then they can implement. And I found that successful because they are all better teachers of their students than I am. They see them every day. They are in the class every day. I haven't been in a K-12 classroom in forever. So, I like the idea of sort of showing them, here are the possibilities, and then having them sort of fill in here's how it can be used. I value their experience in teaching. I think my value is that I have some ideas that I think could be useful. But to have that fully fleshed out, I think it's the teachers. So in one experiment, I've done two studies. One, we had a group of K-12 teachers and I brought them in and that was using the Snap programming language that we developed at University of Virginia and we did music with them. The second opportunity was when I had a group of five pre-service teachers and I was able to do the same thing with them. So I haven't been into working with students myself. I am interested in doing that. You guys have to find the opportunity. The opportunity came to work with adults through a program with a group called Computer Core up in Washington, DC. Opportunity came up, and we put a grant application in and it got funded. So, that's been our biggest study to date, and that is with adult learners, largely the immigrant population, largely non-native English speakers who are trying to upskill. So they've done various activities. Now they want to think about going into computer science. This class is an introduction to it. And my colleague, Dr. Hansen, has created an entire pathway where you can start with the music course. Then it goes to a Python course, then to a community college course. And then, at the end, there's a company who is willing to hire these people as interns to get into the business. So, it's almost a complete career pathway.

Simone: Do your doctorate students go to schools or teachers come to the School of Education? Is it maybe as a module?.

Monty: Oh, so far we've just had teachers come here. Now that's with the music coding thing. Yeah, the first thing I had with the teachers was when we got funding from the University of Virginia, and I was able to pay the teachers for a six-week online workshop. I think I had about 20, about 20. They were in-service teachers, mainly around this area.

Simone: Great! So, speaking of that, I have been researching in quite similar fields. I have been researching computational thinking in K-12 education and K-12 teacher education as well since 2022. And prior to that, I had already advised a PhD dissertation on such a topic that focused on helping students develop logical reasoning in school during a virtual class, actually, some virtual classes.
Jefferson: I remember that. There is the Resolution n. 1, officially from October 4th 2022, which is known as the Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC) for Computing[3]. It is a sort of guidance as to how to

3 The BNCC of Computing is a document established by the National Council of Education (CNE) in Brazil. It is structured around three pillars: Computational Thinking, Digital Culture, and the Digital World. It provides guidelines for the use of both plugged (digital) and unplugged technologies in Early Childhood Education, Elementary, and High School education (Brazil, 2022).

teach topics such as computing in K-12 education. There are three points, three key points, which are digital culture, digital world and computational thinking. Then they focus on how technologies have been implemented and how they are used in society, which devices are being used, and the idea of computer thinking. A sort of how we think as a computer or something like that and how we use that knowledge on a daily basis. So, we want to hear from you about planning on how to teach those in-service teachers. Have you based your modules or your courses on any legislation regardless of being a national or a state one?

Monty: It was more of a local So it was funny when I first got here there was no class for instructional technology. And then one of the national organizations, CAPE, which is College Education Preparation, something like that, they implemented new standards around technology. And they were fairly broad. But we determined that there was no way to meet those standards just in their regular methods classes. Also, VCU, I think, was unique at the time that we did not have a class solely focused on educational technology. So I created that course using those standards. And again, these are fairly broad. And I could look them up because it's like using social media, learning to do virtual instruction, assessment and evaluation. There's like five or six, and they're pretty broad. So that was the way the course was originally designed. Now, what's interesting is there are new standards, and I think they've dialed back some of what they need to see. But we had a conversation here. Could the technology standards be built into their methods courses? We determined no. We needed to add a course. It would be too much to ask the math professor to embed certain standards, the science professor to embed certain standards. So we created this course. And it is based, those are my learning outcomes are from the CAPE standards. And it's funny, the ones you have, that seems it's the three level, the three sort of tiers you were talking about tears but the three arms of it seem broader; ours were pretty much like they're like learning outcomes um so yeah it's and again. I think they're fairly dated because they've been around now for five years and we know how fast things change, especially when we deal with technology, right? I mean, we still have social media for sure but it's changed so much since then and there's no real recognition of VR or AI, or anything that's kind of new there. But I think they leave it up to us to be like, all right, let's incorporate that stuff. So we constantly revamp to make sure what we're doing in there.

Simone: I think you're one of the few professors here that deal with and advise in the field of technology at the VCU School of Education. So, how do you see the increase of lines of research on technology in education programs, the ones that you have the chance of interacting with?

Monty: Yeah! So, it's interesting. I'm not of the opinion that you need to infuse the latest technology into everything, right? Like learning to write and teaching someone to write, teaching someone to read. I think there are tools that can be helpful for sure. But I think it can often be overused. So it's the reason that I really like the TPACK model because, in my class, we actually teach, okay, let's write a lesson plan. Don't worry about technology. Let's write a good lesson plan, right? So, what is the learning outcome? Just like basic instructional design. I think that if I can get my students to just understand basic instructional design, here's your outcome, here's where they are, here's how you get them there. Then what tools are going to be helpful, right? And I try to encourage: we're only going to use tools when those tools can show you something you

can't see without it. Now, it's hard to do. And I tell my students: if you come up with a great lesson and there's no technology, that's fine. Now, no one ever does it because it's technology class and they think they know what I want to see. But I try to encourage it. It needs to be thoughtfully put to use because it can get in the way just as much as it can help. You know, anytime you whip out an ink gadget or whatever, it can get in the way just as easy as it can help. And so the biggest point of that class is that I want my students to come up with solutions where the technology adds something, hopefully something significant for them.

Jefferson: That's great! We are going to ask you about what you have been doing so far in terms of research itself. For instance, for my Master's research, I worked with digital technologies in English language classes. I had the chance to attend some of your classes last semester here at VCU, and during my observations I noticed that most students were not from a technology major or a musical major. How did you consider that such a scenario influenced the outcomes, the results that you had? And were you surprised by the results last semester?

Monty: So, that class, let's just put it in context. That class is not a class to teach technology. That class is designed to increase people's appreciation for art and computation. That course is called *Creating Art and Music through Computer Coding*. Oh. Those are students from across the university. It is a general education elective course that fits one of the buckets they have to check off. And so I get people from business, I have a nursing student, arts students, computer science, engineering from all over the campus. And what's interesting about that? What I expected is to increase what they think about computing. And it's the one thing I can measure right now. So we do have a validated survey that we give them at the beginning, at the midpoint between art and music, and at the end. It's the same instrument that we use with adults. And we have found statistically significant gains in how they perceive computing towards the positive. They see themselves as programmers. They believe they can program more, they show that they have the ability to, when they get stuck, to move on. So, that's what we have so far. Now, I'd like to find the same thing for art and music. That's a little harder to measure, and not that I don't have varying backgrounds of computation, you'll have wildly varying backgrounds with art and music, right? You got someone who's been playing piano since three and someone that's never touched an instrument or sung a note. But I do want to measure that as well, just to see, because I do have students who are like: I never thought I was an artist! Or I never thought I was a musician. And they go and say "I can make music". And there's another course. here, that uses a similar platform. It's in the School of the Arts. It's all sample-based. So, you write programs, but you just use samples. And their compositions probably sound better, but I don't feel like they learn as much music theory. We actually learn a lot of music theory. Most of my friends who play don't understand, you know, in the key of F, what chords are major, what chords are minor, right? My students can tell you every chord in every key.

Jefferson: So they play by ear, right? I wish I could do that! I can sight read, but I can't play by ear. I haven't exercised. That is the reality.

Monty: I would love to be able to sight read. Wow! Oh, my friends, yeah! They grab a guitar and do a thing, right?

Jefferson: Heading to the end, because I know that you're going to teach now. What have you been doing this semester and what do you plan on doing in the future?

Monty: Last semester, I was using the music platform from Northwestern, the art platform from University of Virginia. This semester, I'm still using the same music platform, but the art platform we're using is something called Processing that is out of MIT, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. And it is very similar to the music piece. So it is also using Python as the code base. It looks very much like TunePad. I wanted to capitalize on what they learned in the first half for the art. Now, all that being said, we're all learning together. So, the art is more complicated. It's more complicated. I don't have as much background in that. And I try to ask my students: What do you guys think we should do? That's why I do have some art students there. And so the art piece is a little more complicated. I met with some professors and I said: How do you teach art? They're like, well, it's a pretty big question! Yeah, and there are some things you can do, some ways to think about it. But I have to, actually, because there is something called art education. We have great professors here, but what I'm teaching is really at the crossroads of art and computation. So, instead of thinking how do you classically teach music or art, I try to think about how you teach this concept of art that happens to really line up with this concept of music or this concept of computation, right? So, if you're writing a song, you usually have a verse and a chorus, right? And you repeat that verse and that chorus. It's a good time to use a loop, right? That's when we can teach, let's do the loops. And so I try to find concepts that sort of line up. All the art that we're doing is generally like a generative based on algorithms. And if just make some colorful circles, right? But we're going to make those circles go back and forth. We're going to use an algorithm. And so I'm trying to find what that connection is in the middle. Ultimately, I want to find what computer concepts strongly line up with music and art concepts. How did those two things teach each other in a very powerful way? And it's sort of the same thing I was saying about when you think about any technology. What is the powerful thing that this thing does? I want to ask, what's the powerful thing that music does for computational thinking? What's the powerful thing that art does for computational thinking? Does that make sense?

Jefferson: Wow! This sounds like a tension chord! And I think we are going to end with the tension chord. We're not going to solve that cord, unfortunately.

Monty: Yeah, it's gonna be a while!

Jefferson: We could stay here for the whole day talking about that. Thank you so much! We appreciate your time and your kindness to talk to us about your experiences. I think we are going to have more connections growing throughout these upcoming years. Thank you so much!

Monty: Absolutely!

FINAL REMARKS

We decided to propose a narrative interview in order to exemplify how research connections can be treated as life experiences. Thus, we kept the conversation flow and register, as informal terms, contractions and abbreviations were maintained. In our opinion, such an approach makes sense as a way of portraying internationalization as a matter of human connection and not only as an office-related issue. We inspire people and people inspire us, as we both learn from each other and contribute to institutional development as well.

This experience helped us learn about the current mechanisms performed in teacher education in regards to technology use, instructional design and computational thinking in the USA. However, we also contributed to the VCU School of Education as we discussed and exemplified how technology has been fully and vastly explored in teacher education and graduate studies in Brazil. Therefore, we contributed to show that Brazilian Educational graduate programs are massive and consistent.

REFERENCES

BRASIL.Parecer CNE/CP 2022. Ministério da Educação. Conselho Nacional de Educação. Normas sobre a computação na Educação Básica- complemento à BNCC. Brasília, 2022.

JOVCHELOVITCH, Sandra; BAUER, Martin W. Entrevista narrativa. In: BAUER, Martin W.; GASKELL, George. **Pesquisa qualitativa com texto, imagem e som**: um manual prático. Tradução de Pedrinho A. Guareschi. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2002, p. 90-113.

JOSSELSON, Ruthellen. **Essentials of Narrative Analysis**. Washington DC: American Psychology Association, 2021.

VALERO-RIBEIRO-SAES, Klarissa; INVERNIZZI, Noela. A política de internacionalização na pós-graduação brasileira: efetividade da mobilidade acadêmica para internacionalizar a produção científica e a colaboração internacional. **Rev. iberoam. educ. super**, Ciudad de México , v. 14, n. 41, p. 20-38, 2023. Disponible en <http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2007-28722023000300020&lng=es&nrm=iso>. accedido en 12 nov. 2024. Epub 05-Abr-2024. https://doi.org/10.22201/iisue.20072872e.2023.41.1579.

Zhang, Yue. L2 investment and Techno-reflective Narrative Interviews. **TESOL Quarterly**: invited research issues, p. 1–16, 2023.

W. Monty Jones
PhD in Education from the University of Virginia.
Associate Professor in the School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU).
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4797-7922.
E-mail: joneswm2@vcu.edu

Recebido em: 20 de Julho de 2025
Avaliado em: 30 de Julho de 2025
Aceito em: 5 de Agosto de 2025

A autenticidade desse artigo pode ser conferida no site https://periodicos.set.edu.br

1. Jefferson do Carmo Andrade Santos
Doctor in Education from The Federal University of Bahia (UFBA). Permanent Professor in the School of Education and the Graduate School of Education at the Federal University of Sergipe (UFS). Head of the Research Group Ecult.
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1636-7707.
E-mail: slucena@academico.ufs.br

2. Simone Lucena
Doctor in Education from the Federal University of Sergipe (UFS) with a nine-month term at the Virginia Commonwealth University, USA. Assistant Professor at the State University of Feira de Santana (UEFS), Bahia, Brazil. Member of the Research Group TECLA.
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3299-0948.
E-mail: jeffer.leitor@gmail.com