

# Specificities of Teaching in Rural / Field Schools in Argentina and Brazil

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**Abstract:** The article problematizes and recovers meanings about Rural Education / do Campo approached in schools of Primary Level Schools of Rural Modality of the Province of Entre Ríos, in the Argentine Republic and other institutions of the same modality located in three Municipalities of the State of Rio. Grande do Sul, in the Federative Republic of Brazil. Attending to the transformations that ruralities hold, as well as the current processes of elucidation of knowledge, the teaching practices developed by teachers and professors have been analyzed and problematized in multiple sections and some simple sections. The story shares meanings of a qualitative case study, with an approach to ethnographic studies. Case No. 1 is made up of two schools in Argentina, located in Colonia Viraró, Province of Entre Ríos. The other three cases correspond to the State of Rio Grande do Sul. Case No. 2 involves a school belonging to the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST) in the Municipality of Nova Santa Rita. Case No. 3, consisting of six schools located in the Municipality of Arvorezinha. Finally, case No. 4 is made up of an Indigenous school located in the Municipality of Viamão. Each of the cases reflects singularities, which have occurred due to the territorial transformations and the social struggles that have occurred in the rural social space. The approach to teaching at school in a rural context is not intended to be a comparative study, but rather shows two specific and diverse realities, regarding their national, geographic, cultural and historical sovereignty. Through different pedagogical strategies, teachers account for the didactic licenses selected as a way of responding to the specificity of teaching in a rural context. The exploratory analysis reveals that the rural school is a heterogeneous space where relationships between residents are configured, contributing to cultural strengthening through the transmission of cosmological knowledge. An existential perspective is also noted, based on understanding the world, social integration and the exercise of citizenship, key dimensions for the full recognition of the rights of humanity and the construction of a local and collective identity.

**Keywords:** Rural / Field Education, Didactic Licenses, Cosmological Saber

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## 1. Introduction

Roads back and forth, rehearsals that are constantly recreated with exercises of finitude. Wandering knowing what you don't have, of what there are no certainties, of the error that makes us invent, that makes you dream on the way to Our America", Walter Omar Kohan, [13].

This report reveals meanings about Rural Education and the teaching processes developed in elementary schools with multiple sections and some simple sections located in a rural or rural context in Argentina and Brazil<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This contribution has been prepared as a result of the research "Teaching: Social construction of knowledge in multiple sections of the school in a rural context"

In the first place, we expose the situation of rural schools in Latin America, based on a study by Civera, where he states that it spread in Latin America induced by elites obstinate in civilizing and modernizing the population, making it more effective to At the end of the 19th century, when the agro-export system admitted the accumulation of

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(2017). The aforementioned study was developed within the framework of the Master's Degree in Education and Rural Development, a postgraduate degree offered by the Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA), at the National University of Entre Ríos (UNER) based in the City of Paraná, Province of Entre Ríos, Argentine Republic. This postgraduate course was linked to the Project of PFGG 0004/11 to Strengthen Postgraduate Careers of MERCOSUR, which the University of Entre Ríos maintains with the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) in Brazil.

capital, generating, consequently, a more centralized organization of public administration systems [3]. In addition, there were inconveniences that suppressed the growth and expansion of the school, among them political fluctuation, lack of resources and communication channels; It also increased the apathy of a sector of the population to attend class.

With regard to the situation of rural schools in Argentina, we scrutinized different studies related to the subject studied and numerous texts on Rural / Countryside Education, we observed that the State has shown instability and little interest in the schooling processes aimed at the population that lives in rurality, reflecting it in their educational policies, such as in the school curriculum, which have little recognition of the rural concept [1]<sup>2</sup>. In this sense, the studies by Cragnolino Terigi, Gutierrez, Mayer, Petitti, Chelotti and Chmuck and Lionetti [4, 12, 14, 15, 20, 24], show that rural education has not been a priority for the Argentine educational system, reflecting itself as a space scarcely investigated from a historical perspective. Entering the XXI century, in Argentina, rural / field education has a notorious place with the enactment of the Education Law No. 26,206 of 2006, where it appears as Rural Modality, this guarantees the educational population of the rural context the access to the levels of compulsory schooling, taking into account their demands and peculiarities.

In Brazil, on the other hand, the rural school and particularly the Field Education acquired centrality at the end of the 20th century, with the emergence of Law N ° 9394/96, of Guidelines and Bases of national education, reformed in 2018 In addition, the Rural School Regulations [11], together with the aforementioned Education Law of the Brazilian territory, have highlighted the educational task carried out by teachers in the rural schools, by attempting to consolidate the exercise of the rights of students and the peasant families. In this regard, it is appropriate to mention that the research carried out is assumed as a space for the production of knowledge and a fundamental input to understand teaching and the way of building knowledge in the rural / field context. Likewise, it exposes characteristics of the various contexts investigated and of the rural schools visited, revealing forms of organization and operation and a descriptive analysis about the daily practices and pedagogical interventions developed by teachers and professors<sup>3</sup>; taking into account

that in these schools various dimensions intersect with peculiar organizational dynamics, thus exceeding the task of teachers and / or professors Neufeld; Cragnolino and Lorenzatti; Mayer [19, 5, 15]. Consequently, this logic of teaching in schools in a rural / rural context requires other times, another way of occupying the school space and other interactions between school subjects. In this sense, according to what was outlined by Rockwell and Ezpeleta [23], the study of daily life in the schools investigated has resulted in a significant element of analysis, starting from the observation, as much as possible, and from the interpretation of the interviews and documents. investigated.

In this way, documentary analysis, like the relationships built with the social subjects involved, admits understanding representations and constructions of meanings of those who inhabit the rural context; at the same time, it enables the knowledge about the educational practice that the teachers build, trying to strengthen the cosmological knowledge that the inhabitants possess.

## 2. References on the Methodological Study

### 2.1. *The Empirical Study in Argentine Schools Located in a Rural Context*

The referred study focused on the educational practices developed by teachers and / or teachers in dissimilar primary schools with multiple or multi-series<sup>4</sup> sections and some simple or serial sections located in a rural or field context. The selected schools were grouped in four cases.

A first case corresponds to Argentina, made up of two primary level educational organizations of the Province of Entre Ríos, located in Colonia Viraró, La Paz Department<sup>5</sup>.

### 2.2. *The Empirical Study in Brazilian Rural Schools*

The three remaining cases belong to schools of the educational coordination of Brazil, they are located in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, located in different municipalities<sup>6</sup>. The second case is constituted by a school of the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST) in the Municipality of Nova Santa Rita. The third case made up of six schools located in the Municipality of Arvorezinha, made up of Italian immigrant families. The fourth case is

<sup>2</sup> The neglect of rural schools, according to Ascolani, has increased due to the difficulty of students to access school, the low budgetary remuneration for teachers or the meager institutional capacity of educational policies to extend primary education in the countryside.

<sup>3</sup> In the textual production, the first person plural is used, considering that in this article a dialogue is established with the authors and documents of the educational policies consulted. Likewise, we refer to the conversations carried out with different school actors that were part of the field work, who related aspects of the vital reality of the inhabitants of the colonies and towns, as well as the way of building knowledge in the practices of teaching. In particular, fictitious names are used to name teachers, with the intention of preserving their identity. The voices of the interviewed researchers were also included. It should be added that in the development of the story we use the masculine gender so as not to overload the writing.

<sup>4</sup> The multi-series section category refers to a pedagogical practice developed in a heterogeneous environment that occurs due to the relationship between the age group and whose grouping includes socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic-racial factors, among others; Such practices offer significant experiences of transformation among the students who frequent these training spaces. See Mendes Freitas M. N. [16]. While the multiple section meaning refers to those sections that group boys and girls who are in different grades of schooling Terigi [24].

<sup>5</sup> Fieldwork in the two schools in Argentina began in 2011 and ended in 2015, with long intervals between the aforementioned years. In Brazilian schools, the empirical work was developed in the last quarter of 2014 and 2015.

<sup>6</sup> The term municipality in the Portuguese language refers to the departments or geographic areas that make up each province; on the other hand, when I point to Ensino Fundamental, I am referring to the stage of Primary Level or Primary Education, corresponding to the Argentine Educational System.

made up of an Indigenous school from the Tekoa Nhundy Village, located in Estiva, Municipality of Viamão.

### 3. Theoretical-epistemological Aspects

#### 3.1. Discussions on the Rural Education

For some time has been the center of debates. Such discussions show that it articulates multiple dimensions that make up complex contexts, they are differentiated by their temporalities and spaces. As Werle Obino Correa [26] warns, the historical construction of the school organization, as its temporalities reveal different modes of institutionalization, disputes there struggles, powers and interests, mediated, in addition, by the culture of the inhabitants, their ways of life, such as the school and private histories of the subjects that make them up.

In the case of the Argentine Republic and the Federative Republic of Brazil, Rural / Countryside Education has gained interest in the last century, although there is a more pronounced gap between the two states, regarding their origins; in Brazil, the educational laws issued by the Ministry of Education make mention of Rural Education; Years later, with the emergence of popular social movements<sup>7</sup>, it was called Rural Education, essentially associated with the struggle for working land.

Rural Education in Argentina has been incorporated into the National Educational Policy since the end of the 19th century, however, little recognition can be observed from the State. In this sense, Ascolani exposes “in terms of educational policies, the educating State has shown greater fragility in rural areas” [1], reflected in the difficulty of students to access school, the scarcity of budgetary remuneration to teachers or the insufficient institutional capacity of educational policies to extend primary education in the countryside, as in the diffuse appearance of the rural concept in educational policies and in the school curriculum. In this regard, Cragnolino, Mayer, Lionetti [1, 15, 14], among others, declare that rural education has not been a preference for the Argentine educational system, appearing as a very little investigated area along the throughout Argentine history.

In recent years, with the enactment of the Education Law No. 26,206 of 2006, where it is considered a Rural Mode and two years later with the enactment of the Provincial Education Law No. 9890/08, Rural Education has a prominent place in the regulatory frameworks, guaranteeing access to the mandatory levels of the educational system, to the school population living in rural areas, attending to their needs and particularities.

<sup>7</sup> For a better understanding of this concept we have referred to the study of Michi, in his work he deepens the meaning of popular social movements starting from the work of De Sousa Santos, 2001 “We understand, then, by popular social movements to which they express in their themes, or articulate in their social base, the popular, understood as the product of economic exploitation, the political oppression that in Latin America is expressed as poverty” [17]. As we can see, each movement has a popular character, in which economic, political and social interests are disputed, fundamentally.

#### 3.2. Deliberations on Rural Education on Brazilian Soil

Currently, Rural / Countryside Education retains a preponderant place in the rural social space<sup>8</sup>. Meanwhile, its social relevance among the inhabitants depends on the school practices configured by the teachers, such as the relationships and / or tensions that the school articulates with families and with other local organizations. In this sense, Mayer [15] exposes “The pedagogical strategies and organizational models of institutions are adapted to the characteristics of the contexts”. Consequently, it is possible to speak of different ruralities, according to Civera [3], which differ in the form of production, commercialization, the relationships generated with State agencies and the internal market, the distance from urban centers, such as the sociocultural characteristics of the population that inhabits the colonies, among other issues. For their part, the new school dynamics respond to a territorial development that occurs in the rural social space, full of transformations and new conflicts, Truffer and Berger [25].

In the case of Brazil, Law No. 9394/96, on National Education Guidelines and Bases, modified in 2018, together with the 2014 Country School Regulations, has endorsed the work of the Country School, in the study and strengthening of human emancipation. However, conversations with different researchers reveal certain discrepancies between the Rural Education and Rural Education categories:

Rural Education is that education that provides knowledge and knowledge to emancipate workers, while Rural Education has tried to control them, generating a dependency with the United States; many of them left the rural area, due to the lack of peasant policies. Freedom, emancipation and autonomy in times of the French Revolution have shaped Education in the Countryside” (Dra. Marlene Ribeiro, September 2014).

Official documents state that the emergence of peasant education did not have the same scope as urban education, with regard to its beginnings, although it was indicated in the Constitutions of Brazil, it took place after the emergence of the Brazilian Educational System, according to the expose the Directives of Educação do Campo [10].

In the conversation with Vieira Medeiros (2015) he adds “The term Education of the Countryside is recent and has a broader construction than it is rural. Today when we talk about Education in the Field, our gaze reaches out to man as a citizen of and in the field” In this way, the identity of the settlers as social beings in the context of the countryside is valued.

Expanding on the aforementioned, Cristianne Vieira Medeiros (2015) points out "Education do Campo has to do with the question of identity, the place of that culture, seeing what happens there in the environment where you live, today that is valued". As the researchers consulted clearly state, Rural Education arises in the midst of a latifundist economic

<sup>8</sup> The concept of rural social space mentioned by Mayer is developed by Cragnolino [4], who refers to a multidimensional space of positions of the agents, insofar as it allows us to understand the social relations that occur in the rural context.

policy that benefited landowners. This situation of inequality agitated social struggles, demanding legitimate rights for the inhabitants of rural areas. In part, social revolutions and Rural Education itself have been guided by the thinking of Russian pedagogues, such as Makarenko and Stake<sup>9</sup>, who bequeathed the importance of cooperative work in school institutions, through joint practices associated with the valorization and cultivation of the land. We exemplify the above with statements made by Professor Lourdes, director of the “Davide Filippi Tomé” School, who meticulously explains “The rights of workers are being worked on with certainty (...). We work a lot on that thing of not being alienated, that they act in society” (September 2015). In this way, the school strengthens the fighting spirit of the inhabitants; at the same time, the precursor ideas of the intellectuals wanted to testify that Rural / Countryside Education is an instrument of emancipation, based on a human conception with a collective perspective, Ribeiro [22].

### **3.2.1. Didactic Licenses as a Teaching Practice in the Multiple Section**

We refer to the decisions made by teachers in the teaching process carried out in the multiple section. The relevance of the Didactic Licenses category is of interest in what refers to the curricular practices of these schools, in which teachers opt for a teaching approach that gives supreme value to ancestral knowledge and, consequently, affirms the knowledge carried by rural populations. In this regard, Graciela, director of School No. 32 “Argentine Confederation” of Entre Ríos, Argentine Republic states “We here, as central axes of teaching we take into account the experiences that the gurises have, perhaps we come with something prepared and they have other expectations, because of what they have lived or what they are interested in pressing” (October 2011). The teaching process reveals dialogues and questions about the rural reality itself. Consequently, the problematization generated by the teachers enables common sense knowledge to enter into dialogue with scientific knowledge. A genuine example is offered by Cristianderson, vice-rector and professor at the “Nova Sociedade” School of the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST)<sup>10</sup>, of the Itapuí Settlement, located in the Municipality of Nova Santa Rita, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.:

“The school works on the question of capitalism, that question of the world, of socialism, of agrarian reform, a fight of all, for nature, the environment, the fight against agribusiness that is closing in on us, work as valorization of man, education as a way to build another less alienated society, other forms of alternative education, because not only does one learn in the classroom, but there are forms of work that allow learning” (October 2014).

The conversation with the teacher shows that the school is

not an environment alien to world events, by questioning different problems of a cultural, environmental, social order and those linked to the history of populations. Confirming what was commented by the vice-chancellor, Elizabete, director of the aforementioned school, states “The school has always been identified as a school of struggle”, also adds that a participant in the meetings that summons them. In this sense, it makes it clear that every collective space is an area of knowledge, stating that teaching goes beyond the classroom.

Another example to take into account is made visible in the “João Gozzi” Elementary School of Arvorezinha in Brazil, where professor Eunice comments “We try to show the cultural facts, now with the electoral process the good side is shown and the bad side bad” (October 2014). In an analogous sense, Cristina, director of the School No. 43 “Gregoria Pérez” of Colonia Viraró, Entre Ríos, Argentina, during the teaching of the Theme of Food, in the Area of Natural Sciences expresses “Look at your house what products elaborate find; look at the origin, if it is imported or manufactured in our country” (October 2011), a didactic situation that encourages thought and doubt about vital issues that involve society as a whole. However, at the “Mathilde Gelhen” School, teacher María addresses the topic Living Beings, in the area of Natural Sciences, from a story she encourages the care of plants and other living beings (September 2015), insisting on the importance of offering water and protection so that they grow healthy and beautiful.

As can be seen, the teaching process itself is critically rigorous, both in the study of ancestral knowledge and that held by rural populations, as well as knowledge about the world promoted by society, culture, history, politics, among other disciplines. In this way, we notice in educational organizations a genuine pedagogical bond, Wetzel [27], sustained in the encounter, as in trust and love in oneself and towards others.

In these pedagogical conditions, teaching becomes based on dissimilar didactic licenses or learning proposals, based on research, resolution of problem situations, production of conceptual maps, reflection on facts of general interest, which involve the study of the local social reality, regional, national or global, recurring; consequently, the activities are based on the reading of newspapers and materials that deal with transcendental events for the population and the world in general.

Likewise, among the didactic licenses developed, we observe the selection of certain curricular areas, fundamentally, Mathematics, Language. Natural Sciences and Social Sciences. In this regard, Professor Laura from the “Nova Sociedade” School of the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST), confidently states:

“Mainly the teaching process consists of observing each group of students, the type of learning, the literacy of the written language and numeralization in mathematics, I also try to see their interests and the procedural and conceptual knowledge linked to the philosophy of the school (October 2014).

<sup>9</sup> Expressions offered by Marlene Ribeiro in the interview carried out in 2014, during the research journey carried out in Porto Alegre, State of Rio Grande do Sul.

<sup>10</sup> The “Nova Sociedade” School is located in the Itapuí Settlement, located in the Municipality of Nova Santa Rita, State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

In this sense, the approach to values and meanings related to the philosophy of struggle and defense of the land that protects the school, contributes to the human formation of students, by allowing the release of emotions in the act of looking, touching and to listen, breaking into other languages and other fields of knowledge in the pedagogical task, capable of strengthening autonomy and freedom in educational subjects.

Among the effects that stand out in simultaneous teaching with different cycles, the gradual nature of didactic developments in higher grades stands out. Teaching that comes from the approach of knowledge typical of rural reality, appropriate from the observation and contemplation that students have experienced from a very young age, whether in the field, between the mountains, the streams, the farm or in the nearest town, social settings that allow discussion and construction of new and relevant knowledge.

### 3.2.2. *Cosmological Knowledge in Rural Reality*

Cosmological knowledge is that knowledge that accounts for the reality or worldview of the students.

The origin of cosmological knowledge comes from the concept of cosmology<sup>11</sup>. According to Bergamaschi [2], it refers to a totality, it includes here the human being, the society or community of human beings, their culture and the other beings of nature; they make up ways of life and conceptions of the world.

The act of teaching founded from this cosmological or existential perspective involves an epistemological rupture, since it endorses the wisdom of our ancestors, acquiring said knowledge the status of science, among the knowledge of rural reality.

## 4. Conclusions

After going through an arduous and complex search process, it is possible to affirm that Rural/Countryside Education elevates plurality as a human condition, consequently encouraging the collective participation of students and the protection of the knowledge of the peasant people, through a teaching process that takes place in the vital space where the inhabitants live, thus strengthening the knowledge of the rural social space, the local and abundant culture, the ancestral knowledge.

It is concluded that the didactic licenses instituted by teachers and professors constitute a fruitful pedagogical proposal, as a means to strengthen the wisdom of the elderly. Consequently, the premise "You can" established by Ranciere [21], materializes in the educational task deployed in the rural/country school. At the same time, it is a seditious invitation for those of us who walk through the school territory, having to be vigilant against the processes

of knowledge, inciting us to constantly value the triple question that Master Jacotot gave us <<And you... What do you see? What do you think? What would you do?>>. In this sense, we recover the thought of Kohan [13] ratifying the importance of educating in the rural or field context, always recognizing that the teacher's job implies a wandering along fortuitous paths, in which the improvisation of shortcuts that they make/make the appropriation of knowledge viable.

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<sup>11</sup> The term cosmology developed by Bergamaschi alludes to a scientific discipline whose object of study is "the origin, evolution and destiny of the universe in different scales of temporal distance, of a universe that is not ending" [2], the researcher explains that cosmology constitutes models of realities. These make up relationships in which the human, nature and the cosmos are articulated.

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