



Rural education and legitimization of State actions¹

Ensino rural e legitimação das ações do Estado

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Abstract

The Rio Grande do Sul State Department of Education, Brazil, published the *Boletim de Educação Rural* (Newsletter of Rural Education) in the 1950s. It was a policy tool, a publication in the format of a printed magazine, focusing on the institutions, the players, the role of education and projects for the rural area. This paper analyzes the importance of this publication, its function of legitimizing the policies for the sector, the content and the context in which it circulated, as well as the topics, articles, news, facts, administrative documents and pedagogical content aimed at rural life. It is concluded that this publication helped establish guidelines for the work of teachers, for emulating exemplary practices, as a strategy to constitute the professional identity of rural teachers, and to disseminate the expansionist policies of the sector.

Keywords: Educational publication. Rural education. Educational policy.

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Resumo

A Secretaria de Estado da Educação do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil, publicou, na década de 1950, o Boletim de Educação Rural, um instrumento de política, uma publicação em formato de revista impressa, focalizando as instituições, os atores, o papel da educação e projetos para a área rural. Nesse trabalho se analisa a importância desse impresso, sua função de legitimar as políticas do setor, o conteúdo e o contexto em que ele circulou, bem como as temáticas, artigos, notícias, fatos, documentos administrativos e o conteúdo pedagógico voltado para a vida rural. Conclui-se que tal impresso contribuiu para o estabelecimento de normativas do trabalho docente, para a emulação de práticas exemplares, como estratégia de constituição da identidade profissional dos professores rurais, e de divulgação das políticas expansionistas do setor.

Palavras-chave: *Impressos educativos. Educação rural. Política educacional.*

Introduction

In this text, educational publications are studied looking at them in their fleeting and immediate character, according to the logic of reaction to events. We understand, on the other hand, that they are a form of affirmation of groups and in a space for collective regulation. For Nóvoa (1997), the “educational press” includes a broad spectrum of publications that reveal “the multiple facets of the educational processes, from an internal perspective of the system of education (courses, programs, curricula etc.), but also as regards the role played by the families and by the different instances of socialization of children and of youths”. The educational press transmits ideas that are very close to the events, to the context of the time, recording opinions and reactions produced in the heat of events.

Independent of the public for whom they are meant, and of their instance of origin, pedagogical publications can be classified differently: printed matter from teacher and student organizations (associations of alumni, students’ unions at school, university student centers,

student agencies etc.); related to levels of grades of education (from the elementary to the graduate level); newsletters of student associations (student unions, university student centers, and alumni associations); school periodicals (written at the initiative of elementary and secondary schools); yearbooks, analyses, newsletters and reports of teaching institutions (from the basic level to the level of higher education, public and private institutions) (CATANI; SOUSA, 1999). They can be publications made by teachers or for teachers, they can also include those funded and maintained by the educational system or by other institutions connected to education, such as workers' unions, class associations, Church, political parties (BASTOS, 1997). The publications do not "produce facts", they shape, rearticulate and modify them, emphasizing some items and ignoring others; circulating ideas and thus forming its readers.

There are two lines of approach to these newspapers. One focuses on an "internal analysis" of the printing itself and its production, the life cycle (duration, periodicity, people responsible, collaborators, recurrence and predominant topics), and the other focuses on "analysis of the context", by which it is possible to reconstruct the educational field with the disputes and debates undertaken by the groups involved (CATANI; SOUSA, 1999).

In this study, in the light of these contributions the publications printed in "Rural Education" are studied. The title (*Educação Rural, Boletim da Superintendência do Ensino Rural*) Rural Education, Newsletter of the Superintendency for Rural Education of the Rio Grande do Sul Department of Education and Culture, printed matter, 28 × 16 cm size, was launched in March 1954 as an official instrument to disseminate rural education and for communication with the rural teachers. Considering its variable periodicity, the newsletter is analyzed as a document to establish policy and consensus leading to support for government decisions. In it there is praise, criticism and guidance to public and private institutions of education, and articulation of concepts of public school and rural teachers. The empirical material covers the period from 1954 to 1958, and the interpretations give attention to the texts published, analyzing especially the content of the different sections of the newsletter.

Regional context

At the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th, Rio Grande do Sul underwent a certain expansion of the agricultural and livestock and rice planting sector. A cooperativist movement of small farmers in the German and Italian colonial area was articulated, and associations were established for the rebirth of Rio Grande do Sul livestock farming. In the 1930s, the State of Rio Grande do Sul continue to carry out a development policy based on agriculture and cattle and advocating the interests of the sector. In the next decades, however, the colonial small farm developed a crisis, at the same time as farming large landholdings expanded requiring modern machinery. The rural exodus from the cattle farm areas and the colonial zone that was in trouble was notoriously expressed in the Thirties and Forties. It is against this backdrop that rural education became particularly relevant.

In the second decade of the 20th century, the job of teaching reading and writing in the rural and suburban zones was insistently assigned to the municipalities. Intending to fight illiteracy and disseminate civic culture, the municipality was to be articulated with an efficient inspection, besides raising the teachers' salaries and building adequate houses for the schools. In the rural zones of the state, especially in the farm areas, it was mostly parochial schools that taught reading and writings. These were schools which were private initiatives connected to communities of Catholic or Evangelical farmers. The isolated schools and those that received subventions, in the 1930s and in the following decades are marked by a typology that distinguished the rural establishments from the urban ones. The position of the teachers in their career reinforced this difference. The teachers entered their profession at schools in rural zones that were farthest away from populous centers. The urban schools were desired and considered to be a professional promotion. The schools were classified as 1st, 2nd and 3rd level according to the characteristics of enrollment and faculty; the 3rd level ones being located in urban zones and the 1st level were schools where

teachers had just begun their careers. Although at the federal level education, beginning in the 1930s, had ministry separate from the issues of the interior and of justice, at a state level this situation only changed in 1935, when the State Department of Education and Public Health and the State Council of Education were founded.

During the *Estado Novo*² period, also in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, the participation of the state in organizing the system of education by increasing the number of school buildings, enrollments and production of regulations (QUADROS, 2005) increased. In 1943 the Center for Research and Educational Guidance of Rio Grande do Sul was founded. This was a regulating agency with a centralizing role, intervening directly in the operation of the schools. This center was characterized as a technical-pedagogical guidance agency, and its purpose was to promote improvements in education, perform investigations and find out in which direction the school system is going.

In 1947 the Rio Grande do Sul Department of Education and Culture was reorganized. The Offices of Elementary and Normal Education and Physical Education were closed. Their tasks were transferred to the new agencies that had been created: the Superintendencies which, connected to the CPOE were a lot more specialized than the former Offices. The Superintendencies of Elementary Education, Normal Education, Secondary Education and Rural Education, among other functions were to supervise, guide and inspect education in each branch of teaching.

Thus, in the 40s, the structure of the system of education in Rio Grande do Sul was changed to cover specific areas, resulting in the Superintendencies, including the one for rural education. The importance of rural education in the administrative system of education at that time was expressed in the strong institutionalization of the inspection of rural schools and in creating strategies to inform

² *Estado Novo* in Brazil is the period from 1937 to 1945 under President Getulio Vargas. It was a period when the government was highly centralized.

and shape the practice of rural teachers. That is, the public administrative structure offered dynamic and functional guidelines for the teachers' work, adopting different forms of action. This included individual visits, written guidance and publications. These publications and printed matter had several authors, many of them with internationally acknowledged and legitimized information, who were part of the hierarchical body of the state system. An example of this is Ruth Ivoty Torres da Silva³, the author of a book *A Escola Primária Rural* (The Rural Elementary School) and one of the directors of the CPOE (QUADROS, 2005), an agency that was outstanding as the articulator of educational policy actions and as a guide in multiple forms of rural education. Besides this work on teaching, Ruth Ivoty wrote articles for the *Revista de Educação*, and for *Cacique*, a magazine for children. Thus, she exerted influence through intellectual production and also by the jobs she held in management of the system of education, which reinforced the importance and legitimacy of her written work.

³ Professor Ruth Ivoty Torres da Silva is the author of the book *A Escola Primária Rural* (The Rural Elementary School), volume 10, of *Biblioteca Vida e Educação*, published by Editora Globo, Porto Alegre. It should be pointed out that this schoolbook for rural elementary schools was first published in 1951, with 3,000 exemplars sold in several parts of the country — Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Pernambuco, besides Rio Grande do Sul. In 1966 this book received significant support as a result of an agreement signed between the Brazilian Government and Aid for International Development (United States Agency International Development — USAID). With this support it was distributed free of charge to all libraries in Brazil. The book by Ruth Ivoty Torres da Silva had several editions. Its content, in five chapters, discussed topics such as the importance of agriculture, the characteristics of rural men and boys, the need to create a mindset of sympathy for agriculture in the new generations. It also showed historical records of the Brazilian and Rio Grande do Sul rural movement. It analyzed Elementary School in rural zones, their functions and the teachers who worked there. Ruth Ivoty dedicated a significant part of her work to presenting agricultural activities at all elementary schools in the more characteristic rural zones of the State. She debated the agricultural clubs and presented suggestions for the development of work at isolated schools, at grouped elementary schools, detailed by course and zone, be it agroindustrial, be it agricultural and cattle, be it a zone for agriculture and fishing. It also indicated experiences to be performed at the different levels of elementary school, including the "League of Friends of Nature", celebrating "Tree Day", excursions, museums, newspapers, cooperative and libraries.

The *Boletim da Superintendência de Ensino Rural* in 1958, for instance, honored Ruth Ivoty Torres da Silva, specialist in education at the SEC (Department of Education and Culture). She had been invited to teach at the Escola Normal Rural Superior of Loiro, Venezuela, which shows the intense, acknowledged connection between this educator and rural education, not only in Brazil but in Latin America.

In this context of orientations, regulations and guidelines for education, the Superintendency of Rural Education, of the Rio Grande do Sul State Department of Education and Culture published a Newsletter called "Rural Education".

Educação Rural, Boletim da Superintendência do Ensino Rural (Rural Education, Newsletter of the Superintendency of Rural Education) of the Rio Grande do Sul Department of Education and Culture was an official publication for rural elementary schools and rural normal schools, for teachers and guidance counselors, a mixture of a system activity report and space for pedagogical and agricultural advice.

Seven volumes of *Educação Rural: Boletim da Superintendência do Ensino Rural da Secretaria de Educação e Cultura do Rio Grande do Sul* were analyzed to elaborate this article, including issues 1, 2/3, 4/6 of the first year of publication, 1954; issue 1 of the second year, 1955; a volume without a number, of 1956; a volume, number 1, of year IV, 1957; and an exemplar of year V, number 1, of June 1958. The Newsletters are printed by the Official Press, with different amounts of pages, the thinnest with 35 pages and the other with 652 pages. This is the set of materials that are the main sources of analysis for this text. The analysis identified the content of the newsletters systematically, using analytic filecards, describing the topics handled, the photographs, articles, notes, news, letters and documents.

The newsletters were generally organized in three parts, beginning with "Information, articles, miscellaneous", continuing with a topic about "Rural Life", and ending with the section on "Education".

The first announced the purpose of the publication: "I am sure that [...] the BOLETIM DE EDUCAÇÃO RURAL will fulfill its noble

mission of efficiently serving rural teachers who are the basic factor in the education and development of our rural population” (RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 1954, p. 5).

Section of the Newsletter in which the hierarchy of the system of education exercises the standards and disseminates achievements

“Information, articles, miscellaneous” was a section in which the Superintendency presented the standards, clarified and informed what it had done and disseminated legislation. It was the section with the largest number of pages, in which, for instance, the school calendar has been printed, the budget and the department’s plan. It was a section that disseminated information and values that provide legitimacy and standards, such as regulations on rural education, decrees, official notices, circulars and the by-laws of public teachers, news from the local offices of education, the summary-table of rural teachers employed, rural education by radio, administrative rulings, official letters.

There is also information about different administrative facts, such as construction and installation of schools, reappointments, courses, acquisition of consumables, school materials and agrarian materials. An example has been mentioned in the paragraph transcribed from the 1958 Newsletter: “Rural education was ministered at 350 rural schools by 581 teachers. In 1956, 62 rural schools were established and 70 units can begin operating during the present year” (RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 1958, p. 5).

The difference in pages among the Newsletters analyzed may be attributed mainly to the government’s need to use this instrument of communication to disseminate the facts and findings, a consequence of visits to the schools, announcing what has been planned and, especially, the expansion of rural education in the 1950s. Thus, for instance, regarding the expansion of rural education, in the newsletters it was common to find the list of grouped elementary schools in the countryside of the state, region by region, indicating the towns and names of each school, and also the new Rural Schools

created and the municipalities where they were located. In October 1957, for instance, at the request of the SEC Superintendent of Rural Education, the most complete survey of rural education in the state was presented, including 385 isolated rural schools, 25 joined-together rural schools, 27 rural grouped elementary schools, 6 primary rural schools attached to rural normal schools, a total of 443 establishments of rural education for the initial grades in Rio Grande do Sul.

Rural education was reinforced in the announcement of the government's achievements, in a way that indicated how much was being solved and how active the schools were, and the office within the Department of Education that dealt with matters of rural education. The news disseminated in this part discussed issues such as: National Week in Itatiba, establishing a rural school in Tramandaí, inspection trip, Rural Week in Ijuí, agricultural and livestock exhibitions. The Newsletter not only emphasized events referring to the rural world, but general information from the cultural area, informing how many cultural auditions and theatrical plays had been presented in the main theater of the State, Teatro São Pedro, how many musical auditions had been held at the Public Disk Library.

The newsletter also transcribed general news, for instance, the one published in *Gazeta do Sul* and reproduced in the Newsletter, concerning the Asian Flu epidemic that occurred in the region and the need to close down schools in order to avoid contagion among the students.

Other items published were annual plans for the orientation of rural education, indicating the municipalities involved, the goals, the technical-pedagogical, technical-agricultural and administrative part. There is clear emphasis on normalization and on sustaining government rules acquired by the orientations to teachers working in rural areas.

Newsletters and Guidance counselors in rural education

The role of the guidance counselors was emphasized in the newsletter, clearly showing that this employee of the Superintendency was

responsible for the implementation of regulations and determinations from the top, and also for informing the Regional Office of Education and the Superintendency of Rural Education about the needs and deficiencies found at the schools and about resources related to the sector of rural education. As to pedagogical aspects, actions were proposed such as when visits were made, to have a look at school life, advising the teachers regarding anything that was needed, and to develop in them a love and interest in the school. Furthermore, the technical-pedagogical part included: guidance about verifying the annual progress of the students by means of objective tests; guidance of the head teachers of disciplines and other teachers in previously elaborating the Class Diary in order to avoid wasting time because of different classes gathered in a single room and taught by the same teacher; improvement of teaching method and processes; guidance in elaborating the teachers' work plans recommending their application in an alternating manner in the classes they directed.

As to the technical-agricultural part, it was proposed that the activities should motivate teaching reading and writing, and for this several actions were suggested to guidance counselors of rural education, such as asking the teachers to preserve, expand and improve agricultural activities (at the least a garden or vegetable garden), and using rational agricultural methods applying modern techniques. As to the administrative aspect, there were recommendations such as: cooperating to update the teachers' files and also redistributing school material coming from the Superintendency; sending the monthly report of the rural schools to the appropriate department; guiding the head teachers, as to school records and notations; and asking teachers to, in addition to fundamental techniques, teach civics, physical education and religion. The action of guidance counselors for rural education was not limited to the school space; they also mediated demands in relation to the municipal government, asking the mayors for help in maintaining the infrastructure.

Reports by the rural education counselors were often published in the rural education Newsletters. Thus, administrative aspects were described (buildings, furniture, cleaning materials, teachers, agricultural

activities), technical-pedagogical aspects (class work, students' attitude) and pedagogical recommendations (attitude regarding guidance, pedagogical hours, minimum of study sessions per month). The deficiencies of rural education were recorded, such as: the very precarious infrastructure; the lack of cleaning materials; the weak development or even the lack of agricultural activities when the plots were not yet laid out and fenced it; the fact that teachers almost did not use teaching materials; the non-functioning of the in-house school fund of each school at some schools because of deficiencies in the organization and lack of participation of the students, or even lack of recreation at the schools. Many of the bulletins informed about the functioning of school institutions such as the Parent-Teacher Circle and the rural school mobile library; they also encouraged communications among parents and teachers so that the school would be the community center, which as one said, was the ideal sought in modern pedagogy. There were also references to rural activities, praising the teachers who organized vegetable gardens and poultry farming.

It could be said that the representation of the rural teacher was of someone courageous, dedicated, hopeful and a fighter. This can be found in the report by a rural guidance counselor on a school in the German colonization zone characterized as "sovereign and active", a beacon of salvation that is being built to indicate the way to progress to the "hinterland" populations who, almost all of them are always drowning in the darkness of ignorance". He goes on to say that the aforementioned school, with its Agricultural Club, was a different reality with 400 fruit trees, vegetable garden and garden.

It can be inferred that the Newsletters of Rural Education were policy instruments covering several contexts. They disseminated rules and standards, but also instituted a vector of influence on practices. The claim to interfere in the practices occurred in multiple dimensions: in the recommendation of procedures that the rural education guidance counselors were to follow when visiting the school, for the use of modern agricultural techniques at the schools, for making vegetable gardens and gardens at the schools and in the communities.

The publication of the rural education guidance counselors reports in the Newsletters also followed a principle of constructing practices whose object was both the teacher and the school as an institution. The focus on the institution was evidenced in the description of model administrative procedures (cases of success as providers of regulations), requests for providing infrastructure, functioning of departments and school collegial bodies and school curriculum.

Newsletters of Rural Education and teacher training

In the Newsletters, much news was found about rural normal schools (Figure 1). These were records of the Superintendency agents themselves, evidencing the need to improve the school buildings, as for instance the record of a request by the Superintendency Assistant for improvements at the Escola Normal Rural Murilo Braga de Carvalho, in Santa Cruz do Sul, which continued to function in an old building remaining from the previous Fumaça Railway.

The Newsletter was also space to disseminate news of the graduation of classes of rural teachers. On such occasions, the profile of the group, number of graduates, motto chosen by the graduates for their graduation ceremony, who was the guest speaker, the number of boys and of girls among the graduates were disseminated.

Likewise these newsletters also published the diploma ceremonies of rural normal school students which occurred at private establishments in these Newsletters as: graduation from Escola Normal Rural Murialdo, of Ana Rech, Caxias do Sul, in the Italian colonization zone, with 14 graduates; the graduation from Escola Normal Rural La Salle in Cerro Largo when 17 graduated, proclaiming as their motto "Action, not words (Res non verba)"; the graduation from Escola Normal Rural Dr. Hermeto Jose Pinheiro, at Três de Maio, where nine girls graduated, honoring Father Afonso Durigon, the Municipal Mayor and two nuns, the

provincial and the mother superior, indicating the motto “Winning for the truth, constructing for the ideal”; and the photo of the graduating class at Escola Normal Rural de Osório, graduates of 1956, whose motto was “It is not enough to have land, one must deserve it”.

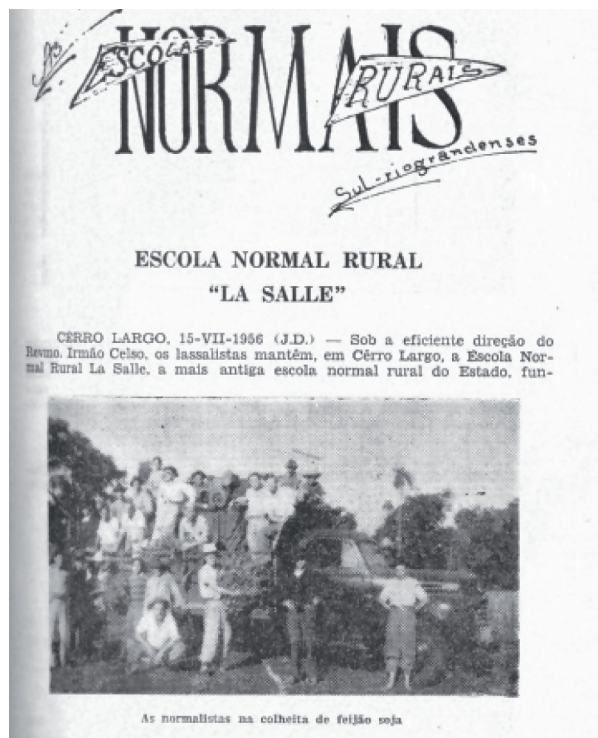


Figure 1 - News about an Escola Normal Rural

Source: RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 1952.

Thus, the Newsletters showed the successful school practices performed at Rural Normal Schools, recording graduation ceremonies, which in a way meant strengthening rural education in the State, demonstrating that

the number of teachers involved was growing. They also showed the social enhancement of this festive event by publishing the speeches of the speakers, photos of the graduation ceremonies and of the class pictures.

They also recorded news of festivals held at rural normal schools, such as the Feast of Trees and the program about this festivity, broadcast by wireless, when it was proposed that the rural schools should institute a “Small School Forest”, with trees producing hardwoods and the most common types of forest plants in the regions. These and other items recorded show how the rural normal schools became integrated with the political powers, the communications media, and the religious power. The newsletters informed about solemnities and festivities promoted by rural education establishments when authorities of local society participated, such as the bishop or personalities from the state and municipal executive in the region to honor inaugurations, festivals and graduations.

Incentivizing modernization in the countryside through the school

Basically, the Newsletters was to be “a precious means of strengthening the ties that should approach and unite, the renegade class of beneficent rural educators of the blessed ‘farroupilha’” soil without discouragement or indirection; this was written by Juvenal José Pinto, then Superintendent of Rural Education, when the first issue of the Newsletter was launched. However, in the Rural Life section of Rural Education Superintendency Newsletter the objectives proposed were indoctrination and extension of specific knowledge on the rural environment. In this section, the topics involving rural life were further studied and detailed: animals, plants, soil, monitoring the health of plants and animals, problems and aspects of the rural environment.

The topic of animals included several questions, among them: poultry farming, fissures in animals’ hooves, bees. As to plants, likewise, the topics were various such as: plantains, maize, onion crops, the multiple value of soybeans. About the soil, information was made easier about

conservation of natural resources, erosion and rational use of the land. Regarding monitoring health aspects such as parasitosis and poisoning of domestic animals were discussed.

Many texts focused on rural life and the agricultural and livestock practices mediated by education, such as: student associations; founding the school agricultural club; school funds; the garden at the Rural School; photos of agricultural clubs; parent-teacher associations; exhibitions; press in rural Education; school museum; geography and history club; school philately clubs; traditions and folklore, including the description of a Gaucho Traditions program for the Rural Schools; protection and incentive to traditional arts and crafts of Rio Grande do Sul, folklore and traditions groups. As to problems and aspects of the rural environment, rural exodus and rural mindset were discussed the campaign of forestry education, rural social action in Brazil, how the Rural Social Service operated, the Statutes of rural work and the pedagogical significance of the National Campaign of Rural Education. It was also discussed the guidelines for the development of agricultural activities, the rural leaders, the role of teachers in the integral education of rural boys, and also news on the structure of rural education in other states of the country and news on intensive rural information courses and seminars for adult education economics and rural administration.

Therefore, following the line proposed by Ruth Ivoty, the Rural Life section was a translation of knowledge on agriculture, zootechnics, hygiene and environmental care for rural teachers and for action at rural schools. This is not information presented in a line of scientific knowledge, but practices.

Section on practices for rural teachers

The section "Education" was subdivided into subsections involving the fundamentals of education: philosophy, history of education, educational sociology, psychology, but also contents referring more to the didactics of subjects to be taught, physical education, recreation and school nutrition.

“Philosophy” contained an agglutination of precepts and advice related to the human sense of basic education, advice on good reading, discipline and freedom, spirit and technique in education, the teacher’s decalogue, ten commandments of child education, vocation and well-being, adult education, what is a rural school, what is the meaning of the regulation of religious education, what is studying, and pedagogical values. These were topics that signaled a broad reflection on education and human life, for integral education, questions and proposals on how to create a good school and a good teacher.

In “History of Education” there were biographies of educators such as Jean Piaget and topics such as education among primitive peoples, Greece and the East. History of Education did not contextualize the issues discussed but announced model figures, biographies and realities very distant from the practices of rural schools.

In “Educational Sociology” the information dealt with characteristics of the rural family, sanitation among rural populations, the purpose of education for social efficiency. Topics were proposed, such as social and cultural cell and group ideals. In “Didactics” the functions of arithmetic were discussed, the pedagogical time (hour), orthography, theorems, teaching national history, teaching orthography, learning to work the land, the school vegetable garden, the teaching plan of activities, general didactics, the rural guidance service, teaching writing. It also handled the topic of tests of the school population determining the level of attention, abnormality, need to organize a psychology service, problems of pedagogical psychology, memory, development of habits, personality, character, children’s temperament. All these topics were discussed in the “Psychology” subsection.

In “School Nutrition” the physicians discussed problems of school meals and dangers related to nutrition during the school age. The topic of nutrition was not present in all issues of the Newsletter, but in its absence there was a subsection on “School Hygiene”, where broader issues were dealt with, such as: mental health, forming habits necessary for health care, physical exercise at school, mental hygiene and the school soup.

No discussion of teachers' practices was proposed, because the topics were approached from a normative aspects and counseling, without articulating a reflection on the action of teaching. There was news of weddings, deaths, and photos, especially articulated in the Rural Life and Education section, that could be interpreted as the presence of the teacher in the Newsletter, because, by initiative of the collaborators they were sent to the Newsletter editors.

It has been identified in the ensemble of Newsletters that what prevails is content tending to institutionalize education by reinforcing the action of supervision, normatizaion and control by the State Department of Education. It was rather a document to disseminate and legitimize the action of the State, to disseminate and construct the standardizing and bureaucratic identity of the system of education, rather than a vehicle for communication among the teachers who worked in rural education.

Images that illustrate the Newsletters of Rural Education

All the Newsletters have on their cover an image of the rural school (see Figure 2). Inside they also have illustrations of photographs of school buildings, teachers and students. Nothing can be said about the source of the images, but some of the photographs, especially in the sections of Education and Rural Life, were certainly sent by teachers, illustrating how much their students dedicated themselves to agrarian work.

The school buildings stand out in the Rural Education newsletters. Most of the images focused on the buildings, generally of masonry. The buildings were always a single ground floor, with a block of classrooms. They were built amid gardens, or between the garden and the vegetable garden, or amid land with trees, without residential buildings and other close by, visible buildings. Some buildings were photographed to highlight the external water tank, others to emphasize the maize and wheat crops planted on land next to the school, or to demonstrate the intense snowfall that had occurred in winter next to a rural school.



Figure 2 - Cover of the Boletim de Educação Rural 1954/1955

Source: RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 1954.

There are images in which the students stand in front of the school buildings. The photos were taken at formal moments, with the students grouped around their teachers who usually sit at the center of the group. Most of the rural school students are wearing a school uniform. The photos are identified and designated by the location of the school, enhancing the value of the place mentioned. Some titles of the images refer to the future students of these schools as rural workers: "Rural school

gives practical lessons on loving the land”, “The farmers of tomorrow”, “Wheat and the school” and “The future rural teachers”.

Other images show the students performing the activities of sowing, harvesting, weeding, using fertilizers, cleaning the gardens, or carrying out specific cultivation techniques. Several images show the students and emphasize the tools used in rural work, such as hoes, wheel barrels, seeds, but there is no large, heavy duty agricultural machinery. All the same, no picture shows the animals associated with agricultural activities, or people from the community involved in work with students and teachers.

The outside environment is highlighted in the pictures in the newsletters. Some photos show the teachers in the open air, with a group of students who are plowing the earth or doing something agricultural with the specific technique.

Several images show parades and celebrations at rural schools, such as for Mother’s Day, student parades and civic feasts at the school during national week. These are images that, however, do not show the outside community at these events. Instead they show the students with flags or marching in platoons, in the field, without groups of people around them.

Several photographs show not only the reality of rural schools, but also the Rural Normal School where teachers are trained. In this case, often the images are from inside, in classrooms with the students in uniform seated. When the Normal School building can be seen in the image, one can also identify several rural properties built in masonry. Comparing the images of elementary rural school buildings to the Rural Normal School building, we can see the simplicity of the isolated rural school and the grandeur of the Rural Normal School.

The 1958 Newsletter shows several pictures of the activities developed at schools attached to the Rural Normal Schools. There, small boys in uniform appear during the educational activities, distributed through the classroom, or highlighting their participation in “specific activities”, accompanied by Normal School students and their teachers.

Many of the photos published in the Newsletters have been given as a collaboration by the rural teachers, recording manifestations

that were held in the name of the school, the place and who the teacher is. Generally, the images shown in the Newsletter are standardized. We can see emphasis on the intention of showing the size of the school buildings and agricultural work involving students and teachers.

Conclusions

The Newsletters of Rural Education are important materials to study the working conditions at schools in the public policies for rural education in the 1950s in Rio Grande do Sul.

They were instituted when the government gave more attention to rural education by creating a specific Superintendency which uses the Newsletter as an instrument to gain legitimacy. Previously there were only the Departments of Physical Education, Elementary Education and Normal Education. At the end of the 1940s the Superintendency of Elementary Education, Normal Education, Secondary Education and Rural Education was created. During that period, the rural population was the majority and there was an ongoing, broad process in which the rural population was moving to the cities. The school was charged with the responsibility of keeping the rural population in the countryside, seen as a resource for technological innovation in agriculture, of dissemination of habits of hygiene and of the national culture.

The process of structuring the administrative hierarchy of the school system in Rio Grande do Sul uses the *Boletim de Educação Rural* mainly to strengthen its institutional action and gain legitimacy. The newsletter shows the articulations of administrative bureaucracy responsible for guiding rural education with the political power and the religious power. Thus, the Newsletters inform the participation of mayors and important people in the institutional projects with feasts and records their support for the development of rural education.

The players who occupied important jobs in the hierarchy of the educational system had, in the printed form of the Newsletter, an

important space to institutionalize their objectives, to publish articles and guides for the teachers. Thus, the newsletter strengthened rural education, public policies, the position of the bureaucrats and of the specialists of the Superintendency itself, legitimizing them.

It should be highlighted that the director in charge of the Newsletter, the chief editor and the editor were government employees working for the Superintendency. The functions of the director in charge of the Newsletter and director of the Rural Education Superintendency were the same. In other words, the Newsletter imposed a view constructed by the hierarchy of the system of education for Education in Rural Zones of Rio Grande Sul, a view of the bureaucracy itself that reinforced its own purposes for action, which was generated and reproduced from the perspective of the norms of the system of education. This coincides with the proposal of the culture of moving inland and the organization of education to contain the rural exodus.

The Newsletters also function as a report from the Superintendency of Education to the rural population through circulars, messages, plans, regulations, orders, materials referring to school construction, purchase of materials etc. Thus they have a normative and descriptive role in the policies for the sector.

On the other hand, the Newsletters had a major profile in guiding and establishing normative practices of the teachers. The rural schools emphasized in the Newsletters were those that maintained gardens and all kinds of activities, and that also taught agricultural practices to their students.

The Newsletters are also vehicles to strengthen and form the professional identity of rural teachers, which is demonstrated by the space that was offered to them to send photographs of the students who worked the land and messages about their school practices. The space of rural normal schools was also highly visible in the newsletter pages, be it through photos, or by presenting reports of practices with the students, or informing about new graduating classes of teachers. Thus, the newsletters underlined the importance of formal training in education and growth of the number of rural teachers able to teach in rural areas.

Many recommendations regarding the use of land, the treatment of animals and planting techniques were present in the pages of the newsletters. Special attention was given to the pedagogical translation through agricultural clubs, training rural leaders, the development of rural social action, seminars for dissemination and management courses for rural zones.

The newsletters had a rather unattractive graphic structure which blended the colors of the images that illustrated their pages. These were images that highlighted the efforts made by the government to build rural schools, and the importance of rural schools to educate the students in rural practices.

It is concluded that the analysis of teaching printed and edited by the bureaucracy of the school systems is invaluable material to understand the proposals of education in the country, especially the proposals for rural education in the 1950s.

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