

From creation to closure — historical aspects of the first (Mathematics) teacher training course in Ituiutaba – MG¹

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RESUMO

Este artigo é parte de um estudo que teve a intenção de elaborar uma versão histórica sobre o movimento de criação dos primeiros cursos de formação de professores (de Matemática), no Triângulo Mineiro, Minas Gerais. Aqui, discutimos mais especificamente sobre os movimentos que vão desde a criação ao fechamento do primeiro curso de Matemática em Ituiutaba. Mobilizamos como metodologia de pesquisa a História Oral, tal qual a concebemos e praticamos no Grupo de Pesquisa História Oral e Educação Matemática – Ghoem. Além das fontes orais foram mobilizadas outras fontes, acessadas em arquivos públicos e privados, e outros trabalhos que nos ajudaram a elaborar compreensões sobre o tema. Apresentamos uma síntese dos resultados, que abrange um movimento de constituição do ensino superior em Ituiutaba, da formação da Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras de Ituiutaba e da criação ao fechamento do primeiro curso de formação de professores (de Matemática) nessa localidade.

PALAVRAS—CHAVE: Curso Superior de Matemática. História Oral. História da Educação Matemática.

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ABSTRACT

This article is part of a study which had the intention to elaborate a historical version about the creation movement of the first formation courses of (Mathematics) teachers, in the Triangulo Mineiro, Minas Gerais. Here, we discuss more specifically about the movements that go from the creation to the closing of the first Mathematics graduation course in Ituiutaba. We used Oral History as a research methodology, as we conceived and have practiced in the Oral History and Mathematical Education Research Group — Ghoem. In addition to the oral sources, other sources were also used, accessed in public and private archives, and other researches that helped us to elaborate understandings on the theme. We present a synthesis of the results, which includes a movement to establish higher education in Ituiutaba, the formation of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Ituiutaba and the creation of the first (Mathematics) teacher training course at that location.

KEYWORDS: Mathematics Graduation Course. Oral History. History of Mathematics Education.

Desde la creación hasta el cierre: aspectos históricos del primer curso de formación docente (en Matemáticas) en Ituiutaba — MG

RESUMEN

Este artículo es parte de un estudio que tenía la intención de elaborar una versión histórica sobre el movimiento de creación de los primeros cursos de formación de docentes (de Matemáticas), en el Triangulo Mineiro, Minas Gerais. Aquí, discutimos más específicamente sobre los movimientos que van desde la creación hasta el cierre del primer curso de Matemáticas en Ituiutaba. Utilizamos la Historia Oral como metodología de investigación, tal como la concebimos y practicamos en el Grupo de Investigación de Historia Oral y Educación Matemática — Ghoem. Además de las fuentes orales, se utilizaron otras fuentes, a las que se accedió en archivos públicos y privados, y otros trabajos que nos ayudaron a elaborar entendimientos sobre el tema. Presentamos una síntesis de los resultados, que incluye un movimiento para establecer la educación superior en Ituiutaba, la formación de la Facultad de Filosofía, Ciencias y Letras de Ituiutaba y la creación del primer curso de formación docente (en Matemáticas) en ese lugar.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Curso Superior de Matemáticas. Historia oral
Historia de la educación matemática.

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Introduction

The history of (Mathematics) teachers training has been the focus of different studies carried out in Brazil, and it has gained coverage in the research developed by the Research Group on Oral History and Math Education — Ghoem⁴. One of the main projects of this group is to elaborate a (historical) mapping about the formation and performance of teachers who teach/taught Mathematics in Brazil.

We understand that this project aims to understand, analyze, elaborate, discuss, study teacher's statements and other available sources in order to build histories within History itself, addressing geographical, institutional and temporal diversity (GARNICA, 2013; 2018).

To develop a work in this perspective, it is necessary to assume a certain historiographic posture, according to which the study of the past, of the educational process, must be motivated by the present — aiming at collaborating with the present — bringing out assumptions, practices, attitudes and prejudices. In this sense, the past events can have different meanings, depending on the way they are registered, interpreted and transmitted, constituted in different versions and inventions (ALBUQUERQUE JR, 2007).

Most of the studies developed within the mapping project is part of the History of Mathematics Education. In this field of research, it aims to understand the changes and permanence in practices related to Mathematics teaching and learning; to study how communities organized themselves with regard to the need to produce, use and share

⁴ For further information visit <http://ghoem.org>. Accessed in April 2020. We also recommend reading Baraldi (2018), Garnica (2018), Martins-Salandim (2018), and Silva (2018).

mathematical knowledge and how, after all, past practices can — if they can — help us understand, project, propose and evaluate present practices (GARNICA; SOUZA, 2012).

In tune with these ideas, we conducted a survey where we studied the first six (Mathematics) teachers training courses in the Minas Gerais Triangle — Uberaba, Uberlândia, Araguari and Ituiutaba. For this article we will discuss the movements that took place in the city of Ituiutaba, mainly because there are different aspects from the other courses.

We can advance that one of them was the constitution of all higher education in the locality by means of isolated courses⁵. To understand how this happened, besides discussing other aspects, we have elaborated a historical version from narratives mobilized through interviews of our collaborators, besides other documents (MARIN, 2019).

To do so, we used the methodology called Oral History, of which we will present briefly below.

Oral History: A Methodological Path

We have mobilized Oral History as the research methodology described above, because we understand that it helps us to build a historical version and also it accredits us to understand the objects we intended to focus on. In this particular case, it allowed us to elaborate an understanding about the creation of higher education and the first (Mathematics) teachers training course in Ituiutaba city, Minas Gerais.

Opting for Oral History

[...] it is not simply a matter of opting for the collection of testimonies and much less of putting writing and orality as rivals. It is about understanding Oral History from the perspective of, given the impossibility of constituting “The” history, (re) building some of its various versions, in the eyes of social actors who have experienced certain contexts and situations, considering as essential elements in this

⁵ We will discuss more about that later. For now, we recommend reading of Cunha (2007).

process the memories of these actors — generally neglected — without, however, discrediting “official” data, without denying the importance of primary sources, archives, monuments, and the many possible records (GARNICA, 2007, p. 89).

The narratives resulting from the oral testimonies trigger the historiographic operation, about teachers’ histories and the stories told by them, their living and experiences, their discourses about the way these livings and experiences happened. The narratives are the inventors of practices. With them, we create realities, we interpret lives and train human beings⁶. In this way, we structure ourselves through them, either as authors or when narrated by other people who directly or indirectly involve us. Moreover, in Garnica (2010, pp. 34-35) we see that in the

narratives, then, lies the very possibility and potentiality of what we have called Oral History, and we try to think of them no longer as constituting “the” history, but as constituting possible stories, legitimized versions as truths of the subjects who have experienced and relate certain times and situations. As far as the description for qualitative research is concerned, oral narratives fixed by writing are taken as intentionally constituted historical sources, which are not subjugated to a criterion of defined value through the “reality” and “concreteness” of the world.

Although we understand that methodology is not just about procedures, we have adopted a series of referrals which have helped us in the research. Initially, we made contact with some interviewees and the others were located through the network criteria (GARNICA, FERNANDES and SILVA, 2011). We concerned to record all the interviews and, through collation with other sources, we sought to answer “How did happen the movement of creating the first (Mathematics) teachers training courses in the Minas Gerais Triangle?”, our research question.

⁶ For further exploration, we recommend Garnica (2014; 2015; 2018), Morais (2017), and Garnica, Gomes (2020).

To make up this story, we took the first (Mathematics) teachers training courses as the time markers of study, so this research is comprised between 1960 and 1980. We had as collaborators teachers and students who, in some way, experienced the environments of the first (Mathematics) teachers training courses in the Minas Gerais Triangle. This way it was possible to interview fifteen people in the cities of Uberlândia, Uberaba, Ituiutaba and Araguari.

In this article, we focused on the city of Ituiutaba. We had a degree course in Mathematics, installed in 1970, at the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Ituiutaba. We interviewed professor: Vanderli Anacleto de Campos, Julmar de Oliveira Diniz and Maria Mirza Cury Diniz who, in some way, experienced the movement of creation of higher education and the Mathematics graduation course, in this location.

After the interviews, the recorded testimonies went through a process called transcription, constituting a first written record of the dialogues that took place between researchers and collaborators. The transcribed testimonies passed, later, through the moment of textualization, generating a joint text of authorship of the researchers with the interviewees⁷. We understand that the result is a collective construction, to which contributed the analyses, exchange of ideas, suppressions and additions of interviewees and researchers (BARALDI, 2003).

In the set of sources available and created with the interviews, it was possible to trace some understandings about the aspects of the creation of the first (Mathematics) teachers training course in Ituiutaba, to which we narrate bellow.

⁷ It should be clarified that all our interviewees have signed documents authorizing the disclosure of their names and have ceded to us the rights regarding the recordings, transcriptions and textualization of their interviews.

About the first (Mathematics) teachers training course in Ituiutaba

The creation of the first higher education course to teach Mathematics in Ituiutaba is confused with the movement to create higher education in this location. According to professor Maria Mirza, “there was in Ituiutaba, an attempt to open a University in the 1960s” (Narrative by Maria Mirza Cury Diniz *In Marin*, 2019, p. 173).

According to Silva and Quillici Neto (2011), the authorization to operate a foundation called Fundação Universidade do Triângulo Mineiro was authorized under State Law nº 2.914, of October 30th, 1963, with the purpose of maintaining and creating a university in Ituiutaba, which would have the name Universidade do Triângulo Mineiro.

At the time, this Institution did not get off the paper because it did not meet the criteria set forth in Law nº 4.024 of 1961, which provided that universities would only be constituted by the unification of five or more institutions of higher education.

Silva and Quillici Neto (2011) also pointed out that only in 1968, with the designation of the Foundation Curator Council, the first higher education institution in Ituiutaba began to be designed and this Council opted for the creation of a Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters. We must also take into consideration that in 1968 the Law nº 5.540 (BRAZIL, 1968) was approved, which dealt with the reorganization of higher education and this may have directed the referrals to the opening of a college.

Because it did not have a specific place to function, higher education in Ituiutaba began in 1968 with the creation of isolated courses that were supported in different schools in the city. According to our collaborator, professor Maria Mirza:

[...] in the beginning, the courses that existed were spread throughout some schools in the city. It was at São José School⁸, Marden Institute⁹ and Santa Teresa School¹⁰. The

⁸ Created in 1940, it was the first confessional institution dedicated to male formation in Ituiutaba, linked to the Stigmatine Congregation, and it ceased functioning in 1971 (PACHECO, 2012).

Mathematics course was also born in this movement of scattered courses. (Narrative by Maria Mirza Cury Diniz *In Marin*, 2019, p. 174).

The constitution of higher education institutions, through isolated courses, is not a particular characteristic of Ituiutaba. This has occurred since the beginning of the development of higher education in Brazil, when the imperial family arrived, in 1808 (VASSELAI, 2001; MASETTO, 2008). More recently, this movement has taken place in Tocantins (CURY, 2011) and in Mato Grosso do Sul (SILVA, 2015) when the respective states of Tocantins and Mato Grosso do Sul were emancipated.

Corroborating what was said by Maria Mirza, Professor Julmar de Oliveira Diniz stated that “in the beginning, the courses occupied the classrooms of some schools in the city, the Marden Institute, São José School, because there was no building” (Narrative by Julmar de Oliveira Diniz *In Marin*, 2019, p. 168). Our collaborators pointed out that the courses of higher education that were spread throughout the schools in the city were Pedagogy, History, Biological Sciences, Letters and Mathematics.

Regarding the teachers training course, Vanderli Anacleto Campos, who taught Statistics in these initial courses, pointed out that, at the time, “we used the facilities of São José School to teach our students in the Mathematics course” (Narrative by Vanderli Anacleto de Campos *In Marin*, 2019, p. 162).

The teachers training courses in Ituiutaba underwent a change when the Fundação Universidade do Triângulo Mineiro received, by State Decree n° 66.602 of May 1970, the authorization to operate the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Ituiutaba, with the courses that already existed.

⁹ Marden Institute was established in 1933, serving boys and girls, it was of lay and private origin. The school closed its activities in 1979 (MORAES, 2004).

¹⁰ Created in 1939, it served boys and girls. After the construction of the new building, the school was dedicated to the education of girls, linked to the Congregation of the Scalabrinian Sisters. It is still in operation today (OLIVEIRA, 2009).

Before the creation of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Ituiutaba, Maria Mirza reports that the sponsor of the Fundação Universidade do Triângulo Mineiro was considering opening other colleges with higher education courses.

In the beginning, [the keeper] wanted to implement a College of Agricultural Sciences, because of the nature of the region, since the city is agricultural. We were the rice capital. But after some studies about the city and the region, it was decided to open a Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters because of the lack of qualified teachers to work in the schools. (Narrative by Maria Mirza Cury Diniz in Marin, 2019, p. 174).

With the intensification of discussions about the creation of institutions for higher education, or courses, at the time, Maria Mirza was a teacher at São José School and she also was the principal of the Governador Clóvis Salgado School Group¹¹. Because of this, she was invited to participate in these discussions in the city.

[...] In a meeting we discussed the importance of another higher education in the city, I remember they claimed that this would bring many young people to Ituiutaba and it could improve even the marriages. We were very excited about all this. (Narrative by Maria Mirza Cury Diniz *In* Marin, 2019, p. 174).

This new course to which the teacher refers was Business Administration and would be installed at the Ituiutaba School of Business Administration (EAEI), approved in 1968. However, this course only began its activities in 1970, after the Faculty of Philosophy began operating at the Marden Institute (SILVA; QUILLICI NETO, 2011).

Pacheco and Lopes (2009) point out that since 1972, EAEI has been operating at its own head office. Only in 1975, this institution and

¹¹ It was created by the bill presented to the Legislative Assembly of the State of Minas Gerais through the then State Representative of the region, Dr. Omar de Oliveira Diniz, 1956, which was approved by the acting State Governor, Dr. Clóvis Salgado, starting his activities on July 17th, 1957. The definitive building was inaugurated in February 1960. By 2020 it was still in operation. (MARIN, 2019).

the course offered were recognized. Later, in 1983, EAEI changed its name to Ituiutaba Higher School of Business Administration (Escola Superior de Ciências Administrativas de Ituiutaba - Escai), but in 1985, due to the installation of the Accounting Sciences course, another change was necessary, and Escai was renamed Ituiutaba Higher School of Accounting Sciences and Business Administration (Escola Superior de Ciências Contábeis e Administrativas de Ituiutaba - Escai) (SILVA, 2013). From 2002, with the creation of the Advertising and Tourism courses, it received the denomination of Faculty of Minas Gerais Triangle (Faculdade Triângulo Mineiro - FTM), still in operation.

Regarding to the Faculty of Philosophy, with the support of the city hall, the construction of its own site began. Maria Mirza tells us that “they began to build the first building on the campus that exists until today. When the Mathematics course was taken for this campus, it was already in the third year of the first class”. (Narrative by Maria Mirza Cury Diniz *In* Marin, 2019, p. 173).

Similar to what Professor Mirza said, Professor Julmar gave a little more detail:

first a building was built and then, very slowly, others were being built, but I cannot fail to mention that, at that time, the Faculty obtained the help of deputy Romel Anísio Jorge¹² for the construction of other buildings, including one named after his father. (Narrative by Julmar de Oliveira Diniz *In* Marin, 2019, p. 168).

One of the first teachers to teach in the Mathematics course, at its own head office, was Vanderli Anacleto Campos:

¹² A politician from the city of Ituiutaba who, in 1971, joined the National Renewal Alliance (Arena), electing himself a councilman for two consecutive terms. In the City Hall he was secretary, vice-president and president, remaining in the house until 1977, when he disputed a vacancy in the Legislative Assembly of his state, electing himself for the four-year term 1978-1981. In 1982 he was mayor of Ituiutaba. From 1990 to 2002 he was a federal deputy. In 2007, he was nominated Undersecretary of Municipal Affairs of the Government Secretariat in the management of Aécio Neves (MARIN, 2019).

I remember that in 1972 the Faculty had its own head office and I was the first teacher to teach in the new campus, which is in the same place until today. That day I started classes at 6:10 pm, in an extra hour¹³. The construction was simple. It had the shape of an H, but it didn't have the upper floor on one side. (Narrative by Vanderli Anacleto de Campos *In Marin*, 2019, p. 162-163).

This memory of Professor Vanderli caught our attention when we located in the 1975 Documenta Magazine (174) the Faculty's operating authorization report:

The building in which the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Ituiutaba works is a recent construction, in modern style, in the shape of an H, with a central hall for recreation, all of them in two floors. Of the four blocks planned and interconnected, three are completely built. (Documenta (174), 1975, p. 317-318).

In 1973, there was a change in the name of the Fundação Universidade do Triângulo Mineiro, which came to be called Fundação Educacional de Ituiutaba (Feit). This change in the name of the maintainer coincides with the installation of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters in its own place. According to Professor Mirza, this was so significant among teachers, employees, students and the population of the city, that they began to call the place Feit, even after other colleges were opened.

In the same year of Feit's creation, the maintainer obtained authorization for the creation of the Ituiutaba Engineering College, with the installation of the Electrical Engineering course. Then, in 1984, the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences was authorized to operate with the Agronomy course (SILVA; QUILLICI NETO, 2011).

In February 1986, there was a change in the organizational structure of the institution, with the creation of the Higher Institute of Education and

¹³ It was common for the direction of the Faculty to place classes at 6:10 pm to arrange schedules of teachers who taught in other places (MARIN, 2019).

Research of Ituiutaba (Isepi). According to Professor Julmar, with the creation of this Institute there was a merger of the faculties of Philosophy, Agronomy and Engineering by Feit.

In 1989, there was another event for the higher education of Ituiutaba. Professor Vanderli points out that, with the promulgation of the Minas Gerais Constitution¹⁴, this year, it was created the possibility of the stateization of the courses maintained by Feit, by integrating them to the State University of Minas Gerais (UEMG). This event would be important for the city and region, since there would be a public institution in this location, considering that the courses maintained by the Feit were all paid. However, this process did not take place. From Professor Vanderli's narrative, we understand that the Feit became the first unit aggregated to UEMG, being recognized as a foundational campus. Silva and Quillici Neto (2011) make the same proviso and add that the courses offered were still being paid.

When we made our first visit to the Feit campus in 2016, we knew that the Institution had gone through the state process. This occurred in April 2014, by State Decree n° 46.478. Thus, Feit ceased to exist, becoming from that date one more UEMG's campus¹⁵.

In this period of transition and changes in the management of the institution, the course of Mathematics suffered an adaptation, which was not the only one during its existence. Prior to this, we identified in Documenta (229), 1979, the conversion of the Mathematics graduation course into a Bachelor's Degree in Science, with a qualification in Biology and Mathematics.

From other documents provided by the institution's management, we identified that, in 2002, the course where the teacher was trained to teach Mathematics was converted to a Degree in Mathematics. In that same year, we understood from Maria Mirza's narrative that there was a change at Feit

¹⁴ Constitution of the State of Minas Gerais, in September 21st, 1989.

¹⁵ For further information about UEMG, access: <www.uemg.br>. Accessed in sept. 19th, 2018.

that affected all the graduate courses. This happened from the creation of the Higher Institute of Education in Ituiutaba (Isedi). Maria Mirza was the first coordinator of Isedi.

This Institute continued to be linked to the maintainer and was responsible for administering all the “courses for trainers of professionals for Basic Education, i.e., for Kindergarten, Elementary and High School” (Narrative by Maria Mirza Cury Diniz *In Marin*, 2019, p. 174).

According to the same teacher, since the creation of Isedi “there has been an improvement in administrative, financial and pedagogical assistance through lectures and courses for the teachers and students of the institution” (Narrativa de Maria Mirza Cury Diniz *In Marin*, 2019, p. 174).

Despite this new possibility for Feit’s degree courses, through the support established by Isedi, this was not enough to avoid the extinction of the Mathematics course in 2008. According to Professor Vanderli Anacleto Campos, “the main reason for its closure was the lack of students” (Narrative by Vanderli Anacleto de Campos *In Marin*, 2019, p. 164).

Based on Professor Vanderli’s narrative, who stated that one of the reasons for this closure was due to the lack of students, we anticipate the possibility that this occurred due to the offer of a new teacher training course (of Mathematics) in Ituiutaba, linked to the Federal University of Uberlândia — UFU.

When a new UFU campus was opened in Ituiutaba, the Institution still did not have its own place to operate. This made the courses of higher education, which were under its administration, spread throughout the city, many of them were installed in the Feit’s campus.

In 2006, a Mathematics Degree course held by UFU was started. This course worked at Feit initially and competed with its own Mathematics course, which was paid by the students. The creation of this new course in a public institution contributed to the formation of (Mathematics) teachers of Feit to be without students and, consequently, no longer offered.

All these aspects raised by us, fired from the interviews of our collaborators, have formed a set of indications that direct us to perceive these movements that go from the creation to the closing of the (Mathematics) teacher training course at the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Ituiutaba.

Final Considerations

We realized the need to present some considerations that can help us in other understandings that surround the first (Mathematics) teacher training course in Ituiutaba, which began in the late 1960s.

A first aspect, which we believe is important to address, refers to the structuring of higher education in Ituiutaba. This movement began in 1968 with the creation of isolated courses that worked in different schools in the city, which was not a particular characteristic of Ituiutaba.

Cunha (2007) points out that the structuring of higher education in the country was initially in the form of chairs, which were later succeeded by isolated courses, moving on to isolated colleges, with the private initiative responsible for the installation of most of them.

Through the collation of narratives with other sources, we understand that the movement for the constitution of higher education in Ituiutaba went through this process described in Cunha (2007), even though the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Ituiutaba was maintained by the private initiative made up of businessmen from the city.

Another aspect was that the fact of the Institution that housed the first (Mathematics) teachers training course was a Philosophy faculty. In his study, Martins-Salandim (2012) discusses that from the 1960's on, the Faculties of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters, ended up multiplying, in isolation, following the tradition of Brazilian higher education, we also realize that it occurred in Ituiutaba.

The same author also points out that this movement of growth of the Faculties of Philosophy aimed to respond to the pressure for higher

education of a society in the process of change, with a growing aspiration to this level of education, with the objective of training the teacher to act in secondary education.

From the teachers' interviews, it became evident that the intention of the Mathematics course that existed in Ituiutaba was to train the teacher to teach in secondary school and, according to this determination, the course was conducted.

It is worth remembering that we presented a cutout of a larger research, and also that our work, materialized in this article, represents a contribution to the understanding of the movements around the creation of the first (Mathematics) teacher training course in Ituiutaba.

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Received in June of 2020.

Approved in November of 2020.