

# Narratives that tell a story about a rural school group<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

The article presents the results of a master's research. The objective was to develop understandings about a Rural School Group in Paraná, a public educational experience implemented around the 1940s and extinguished in the mid-1970s, which represents a limited number of rural schools in Paraná. Therefore, we mobilized the Oral History methodology to produce oral narratives, whose collaborators were teachers and students at this School Group. Analyzing these oral narratives, with the assumptions of an analysis of singularities, we exercise a writing in the aspect of a fictional narrative analysis, allowing a (re)construction of the history of rural education in that community. This results in a rural school full of interpretations and enabling some perceptions about the right to education.

**KEYWORDS:** Oral History. Rural School Group. History of Mathematics Education. Narrative

*Narrativas que contam uma história sobre um grupo escolar rural*

## RESUMO

O artigo apresenta os resultados de uma pesquisa de mestrado que teve como objetivo elaborar compreensões sobre um Grupo Escolar Rural paranaense, uma experiência educacional pública implantada por volta da década de 1940 e extinta em meados da década de 1970, que representa um número pequeno no conjunto de escolas rurais

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paranaenses. Para tanto, mobilizamos a metodologia História Oral para produzir narrativas orais, cujos colaboradores foram professores e alunos desse Grupo Escolar. Ao analisar o que registram essas narrativas orais, por meio dos pressupostos de uma análise de singularidades, exercitamos uma escrita na vertente de uma análise narrativa ficcional, permitindo uma (re)construção da história da educação rural naquela comunidade. Disso resulta uma escola rural cheia de interpretações e possibilitando algumas percepções sobre o direito à educação.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** História Oral. Grupo Escolar Rural. História da Educação Matemática. Narrativa.

*Narrativas que cuentan una historia sobre un grupo escolar rural*

#### **RESUMEN**

El artículo presenta los resultados de una investigación de maestría que tuvo como objetivo elaborar entendimientos sobre un Grupo de Escuelas Rurales de Paraná, una experiencia educativa pública implementada alrededor de la década de 1940 y extinguida a mediados de la década de 1970, que representa un pequeño número en el conjunto de escuelas rurales en Paraná. Para eso, movilizamos la metodología de Historia Oral para producir narrativas orales, cuyos colaboradores fueron maestros y estudiantes de este Grupo Escolar. Al analizar lo que registran estas narraciones orales, a través de los supuestos de un análisis de singularidades, ejercemos una escritura en términos de un análisis narrativo ficticio, permitiendo una (re)construcción de la historia de la educación rural en esa comunidad. Esto da como resultado una escuela rural llena de interpretaciones y que permite algunas percepciones sobre el derecho a la educación.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** História Oral. Grupo Escuela Rural. Historia de la Educación Matemática. Narrativa.

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### **The context, intentions and paths...**

Telling stories, narrating, relating, enunciating... Telling story is an art of retelling it. Each voice brings new stories, “my enchantment comes from the fact that a carpet is made of lots of threads and I cannot resign myself to follow just one, my entanglement comes from the fact that a story is made of a lot of stories” (LISPECTOR, 1964, p. 6). And our story has a goal: understand a Rural School Group through some characters’ narratives; teachers and students. We established the parameters in the Oral History methodology and this story started to be constructed, to be alive, pulsing!

This text is, then, regarding to a mastering research results about a rural school and it involves people who told us their story. In our case, the narrators played the leading role in the movement of a Rural School Group, and moreover, experienced part of their lives in benefit of a rural education, in the Pioneer Northern of Paraná State, in the period between 1947 and 1977. It is about the Rural School Group of the Bandeirantes Mill, located in the countryside of Bandeirantes-PR, in the vicinity of a sugar and alcohol mill complex.

While presenting our interest in the School Group, we focus on a movement, a period of time, a practice in its various forms of happening, of presenting itself, in the several ways it was appropriated by the people and by the story. It is not a given past anymore, it is a constructed past, (re)created in the present and allowing new understandings. We questioned the experience vestiges, memories, traces, tones and sounds, and how they were possible, what motivated their permanency and, yet, what exposed the alteration in a certain rural school setting.

In terms of experience, our inspirations are in Larrosa (2002): “the experience is what happens to us, what touches us. Not only what happens or what touches” (p. 21), that don’t consider the experience just as it is

performed, but mainly as what touches us and when it does, it changes us in a certain way, leaving marks on us.

The experience, possibility of something happening or touching us, requires an interruption gesture, a gesture that is almost impossible in this era: it requires to stop to think, to look, to listen, think slowly, look and listen closely, pay attention to the details, suspend the opinion, suspend the common sense, suspend the desire, suspend the automatism, cultivate attention and courtesy, open eyes and ears, talk about what happens to us, learn the slowness, listen to the others, cultivate the art of meeting, to silence, be patient and give yourself time and space (LARROSA, 2016, p.25).

We seek not only for experience explanations, but for versions that allow us to awaken in order to elaborate other stories that make us think in an educational future, analyze and reflect on rural schools of a past.

We presented our record in a fictional narrative, according to White (2014)<sup>4</sup> ideals, and we sought to emphasize the movements of a Rural School Group, without the intention to write traces about its history, but redo and (re) construct acts of the rural school history, allowing us to understand not only the school universe, but also understand something we did not know<sup>5</sup>. We asked questions and searched for ways of breaking some of the silences and, on the other hand, questioned the historical conditions that permitted this situation not being buried in the past. It is, many times, a creator (re) telling.

After making our intentions known, we will show, in the next section, the importance of oral narratives as source for this research, how we mobilized the Oral History to produce such narratives and how we mobilized a possibility of narrative analysis about oral narratives.

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<sup>4</sup> As stated by White (2014), the style is not only found in the writing field, but in its interaction with the writer, the literary style does not turn the representation of reality unfeasible. "They are essentially contents, more than its form of presenting them, because the historical report contents are real events, things that really happened, and not imaginary events, created by the narrator" (WHITE, 2014, p. 65, author's highlights).

<sup>5</sup> The School Group official documents regarding the studied period were not found. There were searches performed in the Municipal Department of Education and also in the city schools, which information was showing them as possible places where the School Group documents could have been stored, however, our searches were unsuccessful.

## Oral narratives, Oral History and analysis

An open setting, a (re) writing possibility of conditions in which the implementation of the School Group occurred, in such a way that the teacher's performance happened, a walk through a path made of alterations and adaptations, finding the history of a rural school implemented and stimulated in the end of the 1940 decade, through oral narratives.

Thus, the narrative is not simply the communication of information, it is an exposure of a person's experiences, of a narrator, that shows singularities because it is subjective, intentional and it brings an information structure approaching multiple possibilities of readings and production of meanings. "A way to constitute realities, that is, the narrative does not limit to the expression of singular dimensions about the lived experience, but, in a potent way, shapes the social construction of reality" (TIZZO, 2019, p.257).

So, Oral History can be seen as a methodology that allows historical sources to be constructed. "It is in the terms of the "non-generalization" and it contributes to relativize concepts and assumptions that tend to universalize and generalize the human experiences" (DELGADO, 2010, p.14). In consequence, the interviews could be seen as foundation, since the constitution of historical sources occurs through narratives that are constituted based on orality. In search of constructing a School Group history, we are inclined to believe in the methodological possibilities guided by the Oral History, and we believe that this methodology makes this profusion of reverberating voices happen, registering, always in an inaugural way, signs of an educational experience.

In this research, we mobilized the Thematic Oral History towards a specific moment of the narrators' lives: their experiences related to the

Usina<sup>6</sup> Bandeirantes Rural School Group, and the narrators' life histories intertwine to the studied theme. Based on the Oral History, we sought for, showing a view to the people's experiences and subjectivity.

From the previous readings about the history of the Rural School Group in the state of Paraná, as well as the educational, historical and social context of the period, and with a deponent group already established<sup>7</sup>, we elaborated a script to the interview performance. The guiding questions goal was to help us understand the school institution aspects, in a sequence that approached a movement from an external vision of the School Group, as well as its settlement, and for vestiges that "told us" about its constitution, the interests involved in this construction, how it was possible and going through slowly until it enters the classrooms, approaching aspects of the relation that connected teachers, principals, community, teaching and learning sources.

After performing interviews with our deponents' group, we started the audio treatment of each interview. We carried out the transcription, that is about writing, word by word, and also from the attempt to register the intonation, breaks, expressions of everything said in that interview moment. The researcher seeks for reproducing, as much faithful as possible, all the linguistic elements in the dialog between researchers and narrator during the interview, without cuts and additions. However, we understand that while transcribing an interview, some of the elements may be lost. There is a writing limitation of transporting to the paper all the aspects that compose the interview. About this topic, Matucheski (2016m p.342) sympathizes:

Before ending this text, I want to register a moment of sadness of mine: in almost all the interview recordings, it is possible to listen to the singing birds in the UFPR Litoral<sup>8</sup>. This record reminds me of how peaceful I feel when I am in

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<sup>6</sup> We kept the term in Portuguese because it is the name of the group. Usina means Mill.

<sup>7</sup> Our deponents' group was formed by three students and five teachers from the School Group.

<sup>8</sup> The Universidade Federal do Paraná coast campus.

the UFPR Coast surroundings, and this – those sounds, that peace – made the transcription process less distressing and more lyric, but it also brought anguish: “What to do, in the textualizations, in terms of the bird singing?”... I did not get an answer for that. So, I record here the limitation of the paper, the limitation of the written text, and my limitation as the author of these texts: I could not record the birds singing; I could not record the tear of one collaborator in this research; and I could not record what I felt while I was performing these interviews.

As Matucheski (2016) anticipates in her quotation, followed by the audio transcriptions, there is a possible treatment to the texts, which is named textualization. We understand textualization as a meaning production process, that according to Tizzo (2019, p. 379):

[...] while we proceed with the exercise of textualization, we involved ourselves in a process of aspect understanding that surrounds the experiences that were narrated by the deponent, since we tried to establish coherence to the enunciations, and evaluate the meanings that they have to who enunciates.

Thus, the source constituted from the negotiations is not the recordings neither the transcriptions anymore, “what we have is the constituted source that could be full of new meanings made by the collaborators” (GONZALES, 2017, p. 38).

Before they were published for research purpose, the narratives passed through a narrator (deponent) legitimation process. In the final negotiations of these texts, we requested the signature of a Letter of Assignment about the textualization<sup>9</sup> from the collaborators.

With the narratives finalized, we started a moment of analysis, that according to Gonzales (2017) “it is for elaborating comprehension about what one seeks to answer. What is different in this work step is the way the comprehensions are organized and elaborated” (p.39).

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9 The textualizations of each interview we performed are in Souza (2019), together with the letters of assignment for the use of the interviews.

In search for developing an analysis under the constituted sources, in this paper, our intention was to elaborate a fictional narrative of narratives according to the ideas stated in White (2014). For this, we searched for, at first, performing an analysis of singularities with theoretical support in Martins-Salandim (2012).

So, we proposed the production of an analysis about and from each interview, presenting a view to the parts that called the attention in each one of them and we sought “focusing the potentialities that the artistic forms carry to orient – and let themselves be oriented – by the generated narratives” (GARNICA, 2008, p. 86).

We sought and found in Martins-Salandim (2012) our support and inspiration to the singularities analysis, once we considered the voices that told us about the situations lived in the School Group. This analysis was the support to highlight the singularities in each deponent and, through this investigation, we could emphasize and record some characteristics of the school (like the school building architecture, the rules, instituted demands and routines, teaching conditions, the contexts and relations in the school environment) themed here. In the author’s perspective, an analysis of the singularities could be understood as a systematization process of an analytical step that intends to register, under the researcher’s view, aspects that define the interviewees and the testimonials given in an interview. In this regard, “we sought to record our perceptions on how each narrative is displayed, in their point of view, their marks” (MARTINS-SALANDIM, 2012, p. 242).

In order to write the fictional narrative, we based on the ideals in White (2014) that indicate “the history is a type of art.” The historical narratives are, according to him, fictional verbal manifestation, of which content is invented as well as discovered and which forms have more in common with its equivalent in the literature than with its correspondents in Science (WHITE, 2014, p. 39). As stated by White



(2014), what differs the historical report from the fictional ones is essentially the contents more than the way of presenting them, because the historical report contents are real events, things that really happened and not imaginary happenings invented by the narrator.

After stating the considerations about Oral History and oral narratives, we will briefly present – due to the restriction of pages an article demands – some cuts of what the singularities analysis highlighted in the oral narratives that, according to our view, they provide a rupture of certain crystallized truth, allowing a new view to the educational environment transformation.

### **The singularities (seen by us) in the narratives**

Considering the ideas above, we recognize that there is not a single way of viewing the oral narratives produced. We could, under different perspectives, attain this point of view, taking into consideration that the story is not simply a description of what happened.

Hence, we performed a singularity analysis according to the support in Martins-Salandim (2012), as we already stated. In the singularity analysis, each of the narratives was analyzed separately, seeking to look at their peculiarities as well as the information that each one of them was providing us about the theme we proposed understanding. The intention was to focus on the narrated experiences and in the way the narrative was structured: what else could we listen from that narrative beyond our specific research theme?

We noticed and highlighted that some narratives were structured from the deponent's professional development; some others were related to the School Group development, as the school was becoming important to the community; other narratives were based on the structural development of the institution; others yet were related to

the way the deponent see oneself as student in that school; some others have personal circumstances as axis, the way the deponents are involved in different situations inside the school.

In each narrative, the set portrayed represents the educational aspects, recreating, lastly, a version of the school, the meaning of being student, teacher, and all the values linked to the represented School Group (discipline, hierarchy, standardization and respect...) From everything we have listened, we noticed a series of liturgies that indicate certain rituals, intrinsic to the schooling, that permeated the School Group routine and, nowadays, they display themselves as clearness in the memories.

We could assume that these rituals were simpler in the classes, however, in the extent that the republican school was institutionalized as a citizen formative environment, it was necessary to invest in many symbolic aspects that, considering the recurrence these happened, left marks in the memories of those who experienced the School Groups.

The speech is permeated by the remembrance and beliefs from what the deponent believes as teaching and learning essential aspects, while they stand for their ideas. Some narratives constituted the cultural universe that were peculiar while describing how the way of teaching was in that time (simple classrooms, short in apparatus, traditional classes based on the reading-counting-writing triad) and the teaching educational purpose of the School Group.

The narratives revealed the constant presence of punishment in this school; revealed the School Group single aspects, as the principal figure, the runner on the floor, the issues about uniform; the physical structure of the school; the teachers' requirements; the school routine such as, among others, civic rituals, as singing the National Anthem every day. The collaborators also highlighted the rigorous rules of discipline, of which the fulfillment was checked daily, outside the classroom by the principal, as well as inside the classroom by the

teachers. They presented us a field made of punishments, warnings and fears, rules were necessary in all the classes and accomplishment of the activities developed inside the school. There was, yet, commitment, a conscious liberty between what one could do and perform inside the school environment.

The narratives allow us to understand a bit more about the transformations in the primary teaching, as grade level definition, one classroom for each group, the difference of perspective structuration in Paraná rural education, the school organization, the teacher's role and the teaching conditions.

Also, the narratives make the access to the School Group possible in terms of mathematics teaching and, above all, a brief overview of this school teacher formation. While listening to the teachers' narratives, it is possible to perceive the differences and similarities in their formation on mathematics teaching and the signalization of a formation with gaps, without deepening in mathematics contents.

The majority of teachers got their formation in the "Normal School"<sup>10</sup> and sometimes it was not articulated to the practice in the classroom. This formation mismatch and the practice reflected, above all, in their way of teaching and especially in the way how they developed the contents. Concerning the mathematics classes, according to some teachers, what they learned in the Normal school was "really far from" what they would teach to the School Group students. For a teacher, who has not a formation in the Normal school, and only a formation from the first school years, she used to reproduce what she had learned in her Elementary school (basic operations and multiplication table) and, also because of that, she considered herself as a "good" literacy teacher.

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<sup>10</sup> It refers to a course that capacitates teachers to work in the Elementary schools. In Portuguese is called "Curso Normal."

It is latent in the narratives that the mathematics teaching in the Group privileged the decimal system teaching – practically restricted to the counting learning – the four fundamental operations, “problem solving” (which was application problems) and the multiplication table from two to nine. Concerning multiplication table, the work was intense to comply with the main goal: learn it by heart. This ability, for the teachers, were essential in order to solve situations that involved division and multiplication mathematics operations. With the gaps in their formation, the teachers sought developing strategies to teach the mathematics contents, even more in a school that was lacking teaching resources. They noticed the possibility of using the students’ own resources or materials available in the rural area as their school materials. Specially for counting, they used seeds, matches and corncobs, in an attempt to bring the student’s reality closer to the Mathematics contents.

Their narratives, their leaderships, are characterized by a movement peculiar to the art of telling. Our characters’ stories and their words composed a plot that includes remembrance, records, observations, silences, analysis, emotions, reflections, testimonials. By projecting images of a school in a rural environment, they present us about their dreams of a rural education, traces of a school culture, outlines between the road dust and the rural education history path.

Voices that give life to a ground, a place, a school. In a field like this, of various memories, registered in various texts, we show our understandings about these varied versions through a narrative. Following we present some cuts of the fictional narrative we elaborated.

### **A thin fabric of many threads: this is a School Group narrative...**

This story starts with an “once upon a time”, magically transporting us, you and me, to a land, a very distant place, full of

charm, in a period without time, with fabulous and weird characters, a deep diving in the enchantment.

The lands (neither so enchanted nor too distant), in which this story happens, are from Paraná State, more precisely from the north of Paraná State, in the city of Bandeirantes. In a period measured by the tiny grains of sand that slowly drain by the small fissure, silently, the time sand runs, drains, make the days pass without being noticed. A past told and experienced again by the voices that informed facts, that made blooming the story where the dust lived, hid, hushed! Hidden under the time marks, memories, remembrance, they were waiting for the chance to awake and this research movement echoed like a flash, like a breeze; the fertilizer needed for them to sprout from that ground, the stories, by the art of recalling.

Lands known as red land, purple land, that brought up sugarcane cultivation and a sugar mill right there. At that moment, the door opened, and the population started to appear in a crowd and stayed there, people from all over, building wooden houses, simple and unassuming, houses, little houses, big houses... the size was insignificant, everybody fitted there, and this was dignifying. Many of them, spread by these lands extension, maybe, we could say they were also lands of hope.

In this period well delimited of tough life, the date was an invitation to everybody from the surroundings come. In 1947, there was a possibility of access to education in this land, a school: Usina Bandeirantes Rural School Group. Between the dust and the smoke, the mill and the road, among the houses and the passage, sharing the extension of all backyards in this space.

The school was located in a dry land, right in the center of the wooden houses, with a ceiling of tiles that spun around itself as a hank, by the side of a grey stone mill, unrolling pulleys, smoking. There were buildings with different heights, connected by a dusty road, and in that place, with architectonic lines and curves, a school was built. That is

what they told about its construction: men and women, from different races, had a dream. They dreamed about a school for their children and, so, the mill owner decided to build a school to make his settlers and other residents from the regions dream come true.

No one knows what was the commandment that induced the founders to give this shape to the school. What we know for sure is that when anyone is asked to describe their life in that school, they always describe it in the center of the little houses. Maybe, a different school, with loose standards and traces, but always built from this combination of space elements.

Everyone and everything passed through the road, the “boias-frias”<sup>11</sup> passed, the children passed, between comings and goings... The dusty road that guided them to work every morning was the same red land road that kept the blooming hope at the end, the school. By this path, in the open air, from far came a girl with her clothing, clean clothes, without uniform. In this school, the uniform was not common due to the community conditions, what mattered was the school being accessible for everybody. In this way, they walked the path, bringing notebook, pencil and eraser in their hands. By this path came João, came Maria, came..., all those children came slowly, appearing in the curve of the road.

One opened the door and while they were entering, what they saw caused astonishment. It was a school with space and time coordinates, the children’s eyes were enchanted by everything! Their eyes were filled with the school shapes. Who saw the students’ face were also enchanted. They had the pleasure to observe the different traces through the school: straight traces on the pillar, curves on the chalkboard, traces covered one by the other, overlap curves, the windows presented many shapes varieties to the school: rectangles, squares, crescents. Many types of pavement covered the floor: rocks, bricks, tiles, from red to redder. In all the parts, the school offered

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<sup>11</sup> The term is used to designate rural workers.

surprises to the eyes: a set of vases at the end of the hallway, a runner on the red floor, classrooms with wooden desks. One could see a teacher by the school door, the look crossed the walls, the hallway, as if those were written pages that contained, hid something. The ones that had the school to learn every day were happy and they never finished seeing the things that the school had.

There were just a few classrooms, with some desks, a chalkboard, and in front of the class, the teacher's table. In the back, there was a closet, children separated by groups called "grade levels", a red floor, a well cleaned hallway, with a runner in the middle. The hallway was so long that it ended in the entrance door, outside the courtyard, after that, the extension of all backyards. It is necessary to forget about everything one knows about school in order to understand this one. Thus, we venture to say that, considering the view from the ones who experienced this School Group, the school was a luxury!

Oh! The runner, always the runner, it is passage, it is rule, it is the runner! With not much charm, but at the school taught knowledge, it had a spotlight place. It also gets a spotlight in the memories. They attended, walked, together or isolated, sliding in their well calculated steps, on the runner, without stepping out. No stepping out was allowed! Never! They could not step outside the runner and everybody obeyed... it is passage, it is rule, it is the runner! And the rules in this schools were obeyed. To other students, the runner was seen as meaning of cleaning. Cleaning is another word that really characterizes this school, it was possible to notice from the red floor to the bulb that lighted it, cleaning was also present in this school that taught knowledge, amid the soot and the dust. It is passage, it is rule and it is also cleaning! They crossed the runner with balanced steps, arriving in the classroom and, before the teachers started teaching knowledge, there was a moment for praying. Everyone standing, posture! No playing, it was a moment to be thankful.

The school courtyard, with the ground covered by bricks, that in bright days had a shadow reflecting the foliage, there was nothing different, a space with not much enchantment for the children play. In this space, they contemplated fascinated the Nacional Flag hoisted in its pole. They sang the National Anthem, extended the string, rolled the flag up, everybody in lines, and they remained like that until “dos filhos deste solo és mãe gentil, pátria amada, Brasil”!<sup>12</sup> Very well known, the students knew that this ritual was necessary before the classes started every day in this school that taught knowledge. When in line, one could not distinguish who were the students, all of them were well-behaved in this routine, always following the same itinerary: lined up in the courtyard, sang the National Anthem and hoisted the flag; after that, they went to the classroom, one at a time, be careful! Don’t step outside the runner! Every day was started and guided by the runner, the anthem and the prayer.

The school was an education “model”, that is the way everyone refers to it. A space that hosted, during mornings and afternoons, all the children who lived in the surroundings. The bell rang to inform that it was time to start the classes, everyone already knew they had to line up. That was the way that one more day began, in which the youngsters learned new lessons at school. Runner, anthem, prayer, the ring of the bell, line! They learned numbers, counting, reading and writing, the life lesson, in a period with time, the education made itself present and reflected the light they were looking for. In this space, located right in the center of the wooden houses, the children approached, studied with what they had, it did not matter what they said, it was all like that, in the simplicity of a population.

While entering the classroom, the children already knew it was not allowed to play games dissociated to the school context in that space, they were aware that, either by the parents or by the confidants, the

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<sup>12</sup> Last sentence of the Brazilian National Anthem.



period of studying was sacred, no incident, only studying and obeying were allowed. In the school environment, in the classroom, nothing sophisticated, the basis and essential was taught: reading, counting and writing. And obeying! The teachers taught knowledge in the classrooms. Oh! The teachers, who are they? Where are they from? In the daily fight for happiness, in the quotidian for the ones that do not know yet, in gray mornings, in sunny afternoons and in evenings without stars, there they came, inside the bus or in trucks, they also fought battles in this education movement.

That is the way they arrived at school. Teacher, every day, with their autonomy, cultivated the mysterious teaching and learning process, skimmed and taught how to skim the textbooks and books, challenged what they could by using chalk, letters, syllables, words, numbers, calculations, multiplication table, that is how they taught literacy.

A series of reports, the teachers who attributed a constant sort of qualities to the School Group, when compared to the other schools of the city. Teachers who came and went daily until it became habitual and, the shortcomings and the difficulties for teaching in a rural school lost the excellence in an adjustment of virtue. They captured a solid and compact image of the school and the result: it was better working in this school than in a school in the city, they said. Thus, to the teachers who worked there, in certain times, in certain roads, occurred the suspicion that there was something unmistakable, rare, maybe magnificent; they felt the desire of discovering what it was, because of that, they always emphasized that they taught in a school where it not only grew because of the name, but they figured out that the school grew over the ground.

The bell rang. The class period was over. The teachers left. Students went away. Others arrived. A new class began. New knowledge was taught. How did the teachers teach? They entered in the letters, numbers and lots of reading routine, what they taught transformed those children in literate people. The ones that arrived there could

listen, from the door, to the teacher in the guided reading activity, and right by the side, one could listen to the sound of the multiplication table. That is the way the knowledge was taught in this school. Separated by groups, each group learning a new lesson.

Knowledge taught in defined period, one after another, either Portuguese or mathematics, without appropriated methodologic resources and consequently they invented tools and techniques. Posters were made as they needed them, some seeds, resources less evident, teaching is an art! In order to the students learn, everything they found was used, teaching mathematics with seeds, grains and any other plantation that they could find on the ground. It was the technology of that time. Numbers, addition and subtraction calculations, mathematics was taught this way. It was an innovation for them.

Tests. Failing. Approval. In this school, the command was studying; with tests scheduled, students reviewed their notebooks, they took it seriously. It was reading test day, in their desks, they payed attention, everything was synchronized, the test began. On the board, the text for shared and independent reading, the teacher organized: one started, other finished. The principal also gave tests. There was oral test: student by student, one at a time, they went to the principal's office, they arrived there cold sweating because of nervousness, test time! The principal evaluated the reading skills, asked questions about the multiplication table, asked about everything. That is the way the children were evaluated. They were engaged in order to be approved, they studied, learned things by heart, acquired knowledge, that is the way it worked and, in the end, the results: approved... One could say that there was no failing at this school. In the school where knowledge was taught, there was much politeness. There was the runner, the anthem, the prayer, the ring of the bell, the line, the tests, the approval and little failing.

There was discipline, concentration, joy and efficiency in this school. Everything was controlled by the principal. “Look! The principal!” She was the first to arrive and the last to leave. With her energetic way, well respected, she was tough with the children, she was the one who controlled everything, well known rules and duties, in this school that taught knowledge. Like the maestro that controls the symphony, this principal coordinated and controlled the discipline, the politeness, the lack of obedience and the mess, she managed the school on her way. Recognized by the teachers, the principal always assisted and supported everything and everyone, she was a very remarkable figure for those who was part of the school, either students or teachers, she left a good behavior legacy, dedicated her profession without leaving space for controversies. We may conclude that the principal figure was respected in all the school extension, inside and outside. It is impossible to listen about this school without listening about the principal.

There were duties, punishments and much obedience at this school. Children did not disrespect; they knew what they could and what they could not do. Leaving their houses, parents gave lots of advices, do not fight neither disobey the teacher. Disobedience was a word usually listened by the children, there were fear, respect was above everything. At this school that taught knowledge, students were also educated to obey.

Nowadays, the school that taught knowledge became a museum: the population, students and teachers visit it because of the memories, which correspond to their desires. They contemplate it imagining, traveling through each remembrance and sliding through life experiences in spiral design.

In 1977, the School Group started to lose life, the traces and curves lost their outline. The school that taught knowledge weakened, ended. It was the end of the School Group, its habits, its teaching ideologies and it opened space for another school, other values... There are not the

National Anthem and the hoist of the flag anymore, there is no prayer, the ring of the bell is silenced, and it does not announce the lineup time. There is no line, no rules, no punishments, no obedience, neither tests, nor the principal! They lost the official documents, but there are memories, stories that did not get lost when they closed the Group doors and windows. The school continued; the Group continued in the memories. The runner persisted. Oh, the runner... that passes, takes, and continues alive in memory and its distinct functions will remain.

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The knowledge continued to be taught in these lands, not in the Usina Bandeirantes School Group anymore, but in its building, with some modifications, with another name, other habits, other realities, it continued being educational shelter for many people of this community for some years.

It remains the name, the place where it is located, the memories... Some people say: “It is over there” and it is necessary to believe; the places are deserted. At night, by leaning the years on the ground, sometimes one can listen “there comes the principal...”

### **Finishing...**

Teachers and students from the School Group allowed us to write this story, they gave us rhythm, colors, words and their oral narratives, as regards, making the comprehension of the educational experiences possible, which goes beyond the search for the truth of the facts. After all, narrating is to tell a story, narrating is to tell a story in which we were also part and felt like a character. We could understand the story, constructed in the deponent’s narrative to the researcher, this is an interpretation story that assists and allows us the understanding of a rural school. We noticed that the Usina Bandeirantes Rural School Group is pride, memory and possibility for them.

Their voices echoed, spotlighted. Therefore, this story follows a path in which the ground is drawn by the memories, a mosaic, a set, a collection that is special, story and memory, organized in a disposition that is associated to a layout of the view we constructed and elaborated as organizers. This narrative is only one of the many forms of composing a fictional production, which fuels itself from the powerful imaginative jump cuts, configured under the view of who was present in this school.

This organization, as we understood, allowed the exposition/creation of a School Group from the search for the correlation between the dots, lines and regions of connections among the oral narratives, according to a view that transmute, a view full of theories, experiences and voices that authorize the research retelling in this way, this moment, what they consider reasonable and pertinent saying.

The narratives, in a general way, potentialize the production of knowledge about our subjectivity, people and events formation, guiding us to the intention of certain worlds, to the creation of multiple realities (WHITE, 2014). Bringing the fictional narrative to the scene, showing how important to the study is exercising and discussing how they can offer us various resources to the comprehension of a reality, especially school institution realities.

We do not consider this experience detached from its time, place and practices. In consequence, we did not had the intension to (re) construct “the School Group experience”, including the reality in its totality, because we believe that there are always other points of view to be contemplated, it will always be possible to create other “Usina Bandeirantes Rural School Group.” This exercise, in our opinion, allowed us to problematize aspects of a rural school institution, ascribing comprehensions that we have elaborated about narratives, memories, history, historiography, sources and analysis, as well as the methodology, practicing in the way of communicating, writing, facilitating other understandings, other interpretations of what was

said, which allow us to reaffirm that communicating something in different ways is to say different things, construct other knowledge, maybe new ones.

Through this research, we elaborated an educational product, a collection of booklets composed by three volumes; the collection: “ *Eu Conto, Tu contas, Nós contamos: histórias sobre o Grupo Escolar Rural Usina Bandeirantes*”. The booklets, in which contains our collaborators’ narratives, retell the local and regional education history, from the rural world, and approach the richness of this school experiences. The booklets were organized in three volumes: the first one is constituted by the former students’ narratives, the second one contains the narratives of the teachers who taught in the School Group and, the third and last volume consists of a narrative we presented about the school from what we had listened.

Lastly, the presented fictional narrative seems to enable us to finalize, without concluding, the Oral History read with the stories and the stories cannot be reduced to a single meaning (PORTELLI, 2016). With the loose threads, we invite you to wonder the composition and potentialize new uneasiness, new School Groups.

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