

TRAJECTORY, TEACHING AND MEMORIES FROM A PROFESSOR FRAGMENTS OF RURAL TEACHING IN NOVO HAMBURGO MUNICIPALITY/RS (1940-1969)¹

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the facts and reflections on teaching the history of a primary school teacher, whose career developed in rural areas of Novo Hamburgo/ RS between 1940 and 1969. This study is directly related to the broader research, which deals with the trajectories of which were subject teachers teaching in multigrade classes in the public schools of New Hamburg, on the field, in the context of time (1940 and 2009). In this particular job, from reflection on teaching in different localities of Lomba Grande, a teacher - Gersy - in developing their practice woven into lessons on rural education. The research is qualitative, using the methodology of oral history, with some semi-structured interviews. The theoretical framework is based on the perspective of cultural history, and memories as a document. The teacher in question, still very young in the profession of the father realizes the choice of teaching and that their teaching knowledge is built from the memories of their time student. The memory of this teacher allowed knowing a little about the top public school in Lomba Grande emphasizing the process of building isolated schools, one aspect that distinguishes it as a teacher.

Key words: *Journal of Latin American Education History, Oral History, History of Education, Collective Memory, Rural Education.*

INTRODUCTION

The educational history, mainly the regional history represents an empiric field very rich and not to much explored. Rural education studies in Brazil constitutes an area of investigation that is still in marginality, prioritizing determined groups and ignoring others, letting in complete shadows, big zones from pedagogical practices and about the social actors, referring on the urban space emphasis³.

In present paper we intend to give light in a different face that was little explored in this history: to rebuild fragments of history of education in a rural zone on xx century,

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³ Doris Bittencourt Almeida, *Voices in forgotten rural horizons: stories of teachers* (Rio Big South: Thesi (Master of Education) - Graduate Program in Educatio Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, 2001), 241.

starting from memories of an elementary (first grade) professor, whose docent practice was developed in multistage classes in Lomba Grande a Novo Hamburgo/RS municipality, how we can see in picture I.

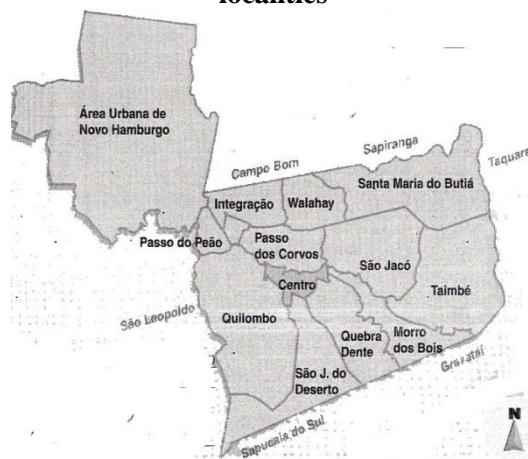
Picture I – Map of Novo Hamburgo from Rio Grande do Sul Brazilian State (RS)



Source: 280px-RioGrandedoSul_Municip_NovoHamburgo.svg (2011)

Novo Hamburgo is a gaúcho municipality from Rio Grande do Sul Brazilian State(RS). It is located at geographic micro-region of Vale dos Sinos far 50 kilometers from Porto Alegre the capital of the state. The present study investigates from memories of a professor, the professional trajectory developed in rural zone as a main scene for her practices. Picture II evidences the rural neighborhood of Lomba Grande⁴ in its localities.

Picture II – Map of municipality of Novo Hamburgo it is located of Lomba Grande in its localities



Source: JORNAL NH... (2005) adaptado pelo autor

The teacher Maria Gersy developed her trajectory in different localities: Central region of the neighborhood, in United classes of scholar Group from Lomba Grande and in Getúlio Vargas Kindergarten; São Jacó, in Municipal School Humberto de Campos, Santa Maria municipality in Expedicionário João Moreira school and in Passo dos

⁴ The origin of the name, according to information from old residents, is linked to their relief that is wavy, with many hills, various altitudes, where he held racing. As a specificity of place in the 1985 Master Plan established a perimeter to urban Lomba Grande 3.5 km², located in the central region, highlighted in Picture II and a rural area of 148.3 km². Its total geographical area comprises 156.31 km² aria Martins Schütz Liene, *Novo Hamburgo, its history, its people*. [S. L.], New Hamburg, 2001. 121.

Corvos municipality, in Castro Alves school.

1. Memory and Cultural History: Its implications with the research.

The theorist option is for “New Cultural History” constituted from “Analles”, presenting here as a way to think the historical science considering culture as “[...] a group of meanings shared and built by men to explain the world”⁵. This search is understood as History the knowledge production field that is nourished by explicative theories and fonts that corroborates to comprehension of different human actions in time and space.

The memory when its not history is understood as a social construction, that depends of relationship, position, subject social action with the world and life. Memory is collective, in this memory the subject has an individual position in lived facts, but it happened by the interaction of community members and the experiences lived by them⁶.

The present proposal reflection is not to rebuild the life history, neither the scholar institutions history in a rural space, but to register the trajectory marks of a professor and how her formation and practices are represented by the narrative that emerged from interviews and how it allows to rebuild fragments of rural education in Novo Hamburgo municipality. We opted for semi structured interviews, using the Oral Story methodology.

An over structured search was used and were done and ten questions about the work and trajectory in multistage classes⁷. At first⁸ asking about the first experience in schools (elementary school); the special moments in teaching activities; how her practice was built, and which were her continued formation moments, as so on as so far. Culture is here understood as a particular field of practices and production in multistage classes and it shows the cultural appropriations which have been materialized for different enunciation and conduct. On this way were investigated how practices and productions in multistage classes can manifest the cultural appropriations that were built in this professional path. This singular way to work the Education in a Municipal neighborhood have given a group of meanings, historically constructed that expresses in a symbolic way a know-how that can develops culture, teaching and knowledge and make it eternal⁹.

In Thompson (1992) the History was treated from oral evidences and is possible to bring about elements that in other way, or if different instruments were applied, we can not have access. In this way Oral Stories interviews had been taken as documents and they made possible the understanding and reflection of the past, written documents, images and other kind of registers were also done. Interviews are acts of construction and selection of certain knowledge about reality and how it works, “[...] colored memories by the lived moments in different historical moments and not in an

⁵ Sandra Jathay Pesavento, *History & Cultural History* (Belo Horizonte: Authentic, 2004), 15.

⁶ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Ed Centaur, 2006).

⁷ Augusto Triviños, et al., *Qualitative research in physical education: methodological alternatives* (Porto Alegre: Editora UFRGS, Sulina, 2004).

⁸ There were two interviews and three meetings with this teacher. Each interview records two hours of recording. We opted for the identification of the subject as consent form signed.

⁹ Roger Chartier, *The Big Falesia. The history between certainties and restlessness* (Porto Alegre: Editora University, UFRGS, 2002).

unique space or relative period of talkers lives”¹⁰.

When the evocation of memories is done is possible to realize , in a net of power and relation , how the subjects are located in their professional carrier lifetime, revealing interests and motivation that were not allowed to be public before it. Those are the lengths, defined by the historicist , that took from memories (constructed documents) made a drawn of history that reconstructs, omitting parts involuntary, or overexposing facts, or even telling just small parts of a totality.

2. Formation and Pedagogical Practice in multistage classes Fragments of a docent history

Rural education, in first part of XX century, was seen as a tool that was able to form, and shape a citizen adjusted with his own original halfway, but crystal shaped by scientific knowledge supported by the urban center .There were rural schools in many parts or Rio Grande do Sul State at first it was religion supervised or by the own community. By European influence, in XIX century beginning, German immigrants have found the first schools¹¹. Suggests the triple (Church, school and cemetery), aspects that figured the German communities scene that were installed in different parts of the country. Opened ways by immigrants they origin places, it happened in Lomba Grande. The construction of a local culture was done by the opened paths that prepared the place to daily experience¹². Arendt (2008) identifies this original kind of school as “Kolonieschulen” (Rural schools).

The local place narratives indicated the existence of private classes that happened in most different localities .They happened in teachers, their own houses, granted places, or in the houses of important local personalities from Lomba Grande.

The Teacher Gersy has pointed that her father was professor in Federal Public Classes, as seen in Picture III. She reminds that her father was called by Educational Department, to unite classes and found united classes number 5 in the last of 1930 decade;this time Gersy started her school life. In 1949 decade, these classes united gave origin to the first school group from Lomba Grande city Madre Benícia Educational Institute.

¹⁰ Flavia Werle et al., “Rural Normal School in La Salle Alumni Voice: meanings and appropriations” in *Rural education in international perspective: institutions, practices and teacher training*, Eds. Flavia Obino Correa Werle (Ed.) (Ijuí: Ed UNIJUÍ, 2007), 197-235.

¹¹ Lúcio Kreutz, “Escolas comunitárias de imigrantes no Brasil: instâncias de coordenação e estruturas de apoio”, *Revista Brasileira de Educação* Rio de Janeiro Vol. 1, No. 15 (2001): 159-177.

¹² Elizabeth Arendt, *Education, religion and ethnic identity: the Allgemeine Lehrerzeitung and evangelical school in Rio Grande do Sul* (São Leopoldo: Oikos, 2008): 35.

Photography I - Public Lessons gathered Lomba Grande, students and prof. José A.Höher in 1932



Source: Acervo pessoal da professora Maria Gersy Höher Thiesen, 2010

The teacher Gersy learned the first letters at Lomba Grande School group, and it was there where she could understand herself as a teacher too. She remembered that the students were very educated and respectful too. That time it was necessary to raise the hand and wait the right time to talk. There were much students and they help each other and they showed full interest for learning process.

A mark in memory of all teachers were Brazilian or religion Educational classes. It was common to occur catholic ceremonies catechisms classes that happened in local municipalities when periodically the priest visited the place. Gersy remembered also that these classes happened at Expeditionary João Moreira School as it is seen in picture IV in Santa Maria(local place). Gersy and her friend Ilse Becker were who bought cucas (local food), and offered to students and to local citizens who went to the church ceremonies, mainly the time when the wood church was destroyed for the construction of a new one.

Photography II- Municipal School Students Expeditionary João Moreira and prof. Gersy, 1950



Source: Acervo pessoal da professora Maria Gersy Höher Thiesen, 2010

In a general way, the catechism experience was a docent way of experimentation, as it had figured the context of multistage group classes in different places of Lomba Grande. In this way Gersy says: “There Gersy was also teacher, [...]she did everything, specially [...] give injections, medicine [...]. I was professor, gave catechism classes,teach the kids to read and write[...]”. The catechism were docent attributions even because the society the model of a professor was exulted by the society those times in favor of vocation, unconditional responsibility, the professor tend to call to himself the honor to dedicate from body and soul in the mission of prepare men to God and citizen to society¹³.

The different experiences lived affective and emotional important in students lives, when child or in young hood ,are part of docent professional lives, existing a chain of experiences that make the professional historicity. In a special way the adventures of this professor showed that the act of educate broke the logic of biggest number, to conclude the elementary school education and work with agriculture. Gersy remained in the school as a teacher, which also shows the way she gives value to knowledge and her profession¹⁴.

The majority of professionals entered in this career as auxiliary signing a contract, fulfilling the existent places, they were submitted to a knowledge test which they testify to graded at 5th grade of Elementary school. The teacher Gersy reminds that she had done a test and started working as a municipal teacher in 1940. She started as auxiliary at first and second grades in United Municipal and State schools from Lomba Grande. She also reminds that in 1942 she was made effective as professor of the first kindergarten of this same neighborhood.

In Gersy formative context it was emphasized that the maintainer gave special formation for thosewho didn't know how to teach at all and acted as multistage classes as teachers. In this way, besides the meetings and vocation courses the maintainer and Public Power and other institutions worked together for the teacher formation as the University Feevale.

Vocation courses for municipal teachers received different names time after time. Investigating documents from Novo Hamburgo district government which allowed the search we could find some laws which regulated this practice. The first vocation course was signed in law 35/61 law and it was the first document that officially instituted the Vocation Courses. While, the law number29/64 instituted the obligatory vocation course made on July15th up17th in 1964, it was by Educational and Teaching Department responsibility. Law 40/65 instituted the “Orientation and Didactic Review Intensive Course” to municipal teachers, and it was done from 12th up 24th July in 1965 and the following expressions were pointed “[...] municipal magistrate has distinguished for care and devotion in primary education”. This course were not obligatory for effective teachers, but it was an obligation for contracted teachers, because it was an exigence if they want to renew the next year contract”.

¹³ Beatriz Daudt Therese Fischer, *Teachers: stories and speeches of a past present*(Pelotas: Sap, 2005), 304.

¹⁴ Ignatius Maria Elizete, successful teaching practices: bringing to mind what potentiates and significance to the theory for a new perspective of the practice. In: *Forum of studies:readings Paulo Freire*, 12, 2010. 15.

Gersy registers in her memories that had meetings and dates for municipal professors formation. Picture V register one of these moments, in 1953 at São Luiz School in Novo Hamburgo municipality.

Photography III- Meeting of teachers RMENH, approximately in 1953, St. Louis College



Source: Personal collection of Professor Hélia Koetz, 2010.

We can see at picture III, besides the local authorities, teaching Kurt Walzer-wearing a white suit-in front of him it was teaching Maria do Carmo Schaab, by teaching Kurt side we can see wearing a black skirt-professor Hélia Gomes Pereira(Koëltz).The third placed in vertical way, positioned after professor Kurt wearing a black dress is teaching Maria Gersy Höher Thiesen.

The teacher Gersy also remember that the pedagogical practices where the appropriation of the way to prepare the classes is evidenced by the time she was still a pupil. For this reason the memories about how she used the didactic book in classroom, she remembers that she was used to answer questions about religion and catechisms. This way of questions and answering it is a typical methodology by that time, and during many years, it was used at multistage classes as the proper way used to teach the students. The way they teach and do the classes, even in rural locality, could attend the serial division of contents, which was proposed by the urban model. The final exams and pedagogical supervision monitoring from government department even want that work maintained a same model in the way it was applied in schools.

Teaching are used to start the class explaining the daily activities, they distributed papers with exercises, “carbonate papers”, or they used the green board and wrote the exercises on it, dividing by grades the exercised spread on the board. For older students,(3rd and 5th grades) they put more activities on the board or papers, so this way they could have more time to teach the younger(1st and 2nd grades)teaching them the letters and alphabetizing them. They work in a “rodizio” (alternation) way, which

means when the 4th and 5th grades copied the exercises from the board, the teacher took the lessons from 1st, 2nd and even the 3rd grades.

In general way, the memories are recurring the responsibility and mission of each professor. The alphabetization was the most important aspect in this way. These forms of knowing used by teachers on a “inventing” a manner of how to teach, that were not on the books, and neither in teaching inspectors orientations, this way of teach was revealed only in the exercise of making it, remembered here. Although, the experiences changed by these professors, their informal talk, the informal visit they did each other on weekends, or even in the friends meeting, it constitutes in a diverse patrimony about knowledge that was shared.

The teacher Gersy also remembered that her students loved to listen her stories, the telling hour or tale hour, little by little started as a practice, which was being incorporated on the Curriculum of the school. Having a space, a day and hour determined to happen in school daily life. Gersy was fan of children stories and literature and she brought about a particular way to tell the stories as she reminds

Ligia Bohn (orientation work) said that we had to tell stories, and I had to tell stories for my and Eni's pupils. Eny said -Gersy we have to change the tale time because my students are so serious listening you. I told them stories like The little red hat, as so on as so far¹⁵.

Gersy remembered that in the old building at Castro Alves street, a wood house where we could see the spaces without doors (there were curtains dividing the room), it was necessary to adapt the class time that she and her workmate built. On this special way of doing, very, were to joint all students to tell them histories. So we changed our time (schedule). “All students were together, [...] all the group and Gersy told him stories, -Gersy you transform, you change your voice, you are, you enters in the character, [Eni speech]. I changed my voice and Eni enjoyed listening the stories”.

Gersy told to children moreover than stories as little red hat, three little pigs, she remembered when her students asked to tell more stories she used also parables from the Bible:

When was the dry time- this were one from the Bible- So we did: The Egyptian caught all the grains and put them in big sacs. A little bee said that was hungry, One day she discovered a little hole in the sac, so she flew and could take a little grain. It was in the end of the morning and students want more and more stories, so she went and said: -entered a little bee, and it told to another bee, but they could not enter together in the little hole to take the grain so this way entered just a bee, and took a little grain, it flew away and went with the grain, so entered other little bee in the hole and took other grain and so on and so far. Suddenly they got tired and also me. -Please professor Gersy, is enough of bees, and so I said, no, the just took a little bit of grains, and showed them the amount with my hands, they have so much grains to take¹⁶.

¹⁵ Thiesen, María Gercy Höher. *Oral history interview about teaching in multigrade classes in Lomba Grande*. New Hamburg, April 23, 2010. Interview by José de Souza Edimar.

¹⁶ Thiesen, María Gercy Höher. *Oral history interview about teaching in multigrade classes in Lomba Grande*. New Hamburg, April 23, 2010. Interview by José de Souza Edimar.

Rural schools among their functions were to teach how to live, create a habit of reading and enjoy it, to create a habit to read a lot, for example general education, they should to develop the take care of the body and maintain hygienic good habits, good health, the knowledge about mathematics operations and the use on daily life¹⁷. The knowledge about something about the world and the own country are also considered a general education, that the students from public primary schools should have. This kind of learning could be applied for the sort of things that could come later.

The teacher Gersy remembered the civic aspect of her practices, what let her very proud.

I had my kindergarten and they used to sing the entire national civic song, from the beginning up ending. When the group made a party the kindergarten was invited.[...], after mom told me – Gersy I was so proud. You could not imagine, how I was happy. When I was singing the National civic song when it passes for the first strophe for second, with my kids, the group got touched and almost stopped to sing together with the musician professor. My kindergarten singing this song. I can feel it till now one, I fell happiness remembering my mother so proud about me. And people noted it!.

Gersy also told that the students of kindergarten were very good in Orpheus songs classes. She got touched when telling about this practice, she tells that present community in the Civic events celebrating the Country date, perceived that the others students got lost in the music letter and her students keep singing the song saving it. The register from this memory allows us to understand that Gersy had dedicated herself a lot in her professional life and even appropriating this task with her civic commitment with the nation.

Werle and Meltzer¹⁸ argue that during many time, the civic enthusiasm were incorporated in attributions of those who wished to become a professor. The philosophical sense of this profession was expressed in the memory of all interviewed professor revealing that the act of teach was understood by them as a vocation, as professor Gersy registered in the end of this interview, in her opinion to be a teacher means “to educate children as sons” of the “beloved Nation called Brasil”.

The teacher Gersy also reminded situations that emphasized power relations¹⁹, as she summarizes, “I always confront and said what he thought, pleasing to the authorities or not, because I was a teacher,” and that was part of the characteristics of his way to understand the teaching. Gersy reminded that obstacles in its path teacher, referred to relations with the Church and with the keeper.

¹⁷ Miguel y Maria Elisabeth Blanck. “As escolas rurais e a formação de professores: a experiência do Paraná – 1946-1961” in *Educação rural em perspectiva internacional: instituições, práticas e formação do professor*, Eds. Flávia Obino Corrêa Werle (Org.) (Ijuí: Ed. Unijuí, 2007), 79-99.

¹⁸ Flávia Obino Corrêa Werle y Metzler, Ana María Carvalho. “En busca de Contenidos y Sentidos para la Educación Rural” in *Educación rural en iberoamérica: experiencia histórica y construcción de sentido*. eds. Teresa González Pérez, Oresta López (Anroart – Ediciones, 2009), 79-109.

¹⁹ The power is, for Foucault, an infinitely complex network of micro that permeate all aspects of social life. In this sense power is not only, or even primarily an instrument of repression, but of creation. It establishes a truth and thus creates the conditions of its own legitimation (Castelo Branco, 2007).

As catechism teacher professor Gersy remembered that the priest gave her congratulatory for the way she prepared children for the first Catholic ceremony the “Comunhão”. She remembered that the Catholic ceremony was made in a school classroom [Humberto de Campos school], the priest put me on heaven, “[...] and after it I became a devil for him, because he didn't like the way José, treated him contesting [...]”.

That time, in 1950 it was common the visit of priests at school to make catholic ceremonies there, Gersy told us a situation when the municipal priest visited the school where she was working (Humberto de Campos school), on this situation were present the local priest and also the Thiesen the urban priest which was Gersy relative. She reminds what the priests told each other: “I also taught him how to vote [...] they were talking about her husband”. She reminds that it was enough, and the reason of what the priest was “following” her in other occasions.

After this politics motivational incident, other episode had mark Gersy trajectory, when she was working at Expedicionário João Moreira school and she asked for her a wardrobe to keep the books and some classes materials, so she wrote for the educational supervisor responsible that time, she was professor Iracema Brandi Grin “You should certainly know that the catholic ceremonies are done in my classroom, and I don't want nobody touching in my books, that was the reason I want a wardrobe, (Wow), I just was not fired because I was lucky” (Gersy). She remembered that few days after sending this letter, the local priest talked in a ceremony.

[...]He started talking such it the discourse was for me. So I thought let he talks, and I was just listening. When the bell rings finishing the ceremony people didn't go away soon and they stood there talking. Cecilia Fish a retired professor said – Gersy what the priest has against you, everything he talked, he looked to you so serious. This way the the big “noise” started in Lomba Grande, I went to talk with the vice Major who was my relative. I was so pissed off. I went back home because the night was coming, that day. I could say almost everything I wanted, I was so bored. Did You understand? You should be afraid about me. I don't know what happened with them, but I received my wardrobe and I could keep my books, and I stood in the same way²⁰.

Another situation involving professor Gersy, was the purchase of an own building to the municipal school Castro Alves. This school was in a rented building, so it was necessary to build an autonomy practice to get money and buy the place, where the school is located nowadays. Gersy remembers:

We did meetings at night to find a place and buy it to built the school there. With our teas we got the money to buy the place. I wanted 4 classrooms and one room to meal time, but they wanted to make just three classrooms. I was very angry, knock my feet on the ground and said- So you could not gain no money from our school. We bought the place. What are you doing with the place? Said the major. We are going to sell it! I said. And what are you going to do about he money? - We are going to eat everything in barbecues and you are not our guest (talking about the major). He laught a lot, but we received four classrooms²¹.

²⁰ Thiesen, María Gersy Höher. *Oral history interview about teaching in multigrade classes in Lomba Grande*. New Hamburg, April 23, 2010. Interview by José de Souza Edimar.

²¹ Thiesen, María Gersy Höher. *Oral history interview about teaching in multigrade classes in Lomba Grande*. New Hamburg, April 23, 2010. Interview by José de Souza Edimar.

Gersy thinks the dreams are only steps to be reached for the qualification of work and dedication to Lomba-grandense community. The ways used to get everything wanted from major, demonstrates the practical power about a know how built by the teaching work. Acting behind the own strategic action, about who directs and maintain the political power. Using the smartness “[...] in the way to deal with the clauses of social contracts, a thousand way to play each other games[...]”, was established for her in this moment²². One of the points that were evidenced by her were the discursive and persuasive ability to expose the ideas.

The amount group of narratives and memories from this professor reveal the representative docent value of this time (1940-1969). This way to go over with all difficulties that she have to deal with the precarious multistage schools, the bad situation of the railways and dealing with the priest it means the value contained in the “magistracy office” understood by her as the office to prepare students for God and for the Nation. The history of professor Gersy recuperates even that in a fragmented way, the history of the Rural education in the first part of XX century, and bring us the idea that the teaching transcends the fact of only teaching pedagogical knowledge but it implied in a social and political commitment.

CONCLUSION

Marks of resistance and tenderness, aspects that represent professor Gersy as a docent that fight for the Public Lomba Grande school legitimation is evidenced by her gestures and the way she remembered her practices. The memories from docent practices allow us to know a little the routine from rural schools in Novo Hamburgo municipality from 1940 up 1969. We can conclude that knowledge that she had in her pupil's time and the way her teachers developed their practices could be as inspiration and base for her own practices constructions and that she could make to her own the instruments of the culture of school.

The arts of to know how to work was expressed for Gersy reminiscences about her own trajetory, emphasizing how she incorporated the professional responsibilities, in your time, that are not so different for today responsibilities; To teach the pupils a possible reading about reality. How is written in Fischer lines is possible to see the vocation to teach and how it is important, the mission of love and sacrifices that was incorpored in this professional choice²³.

The lesson taught was about lettering. The alphabetization was seen as the most responsibility aspect from this professor and even it was the reminds that showed more thankfulness and recognizance about the docent action. Gersy work even reveals her sensibility facing the reality of building with the community the school, showing the place and the importance of knowledge, not even to “take the tools,” or “know how to read, write and count”²⁴, but also an appropriation place, a place of power.

²² Michel Certau, *The invention of everyday life* (Arts to: Petrópolis-Voces, 2011), 79.

²³ Fischer, “*Teachers: Stories*”, 304.

²⁴ C.f.r. Eliane Marta Santos Teixeira Lopes, et. al., 500 years of education in Brazil. (Belo Horizon: Authentic, 2000), 136.

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