

Alternance in the formation of countryside educators: looking for markers in the academic productions and social representations of education students

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Abstract

The Education in the Countryside is part of a national movement that, starred by collective individuals of the countryside, has conquered several social, political and academic accomplishments. Among them, the Program of Support to Higher Education in Countryside Teaching – PROCAMPO, which has its origins in the fights and claims of social movements, allowed the creation of 42 new courses of Education in Rural Teaching in different Brazilian Higher Education Institutions. These courses work under Alternance training, between Time-School and Time-Community, contributing to the expansion, in our society, of the Formation by Alternance in the Higher Education, particularly in the Rural Education Graduation Courses, constituting a very recent phenomenon in the Brazilian Universities. Aiming to find a better comprehension about this educative phenomenon, the present paper has the purpose of presenting an overview of the national academic production about the alternance in the courses of formation of countryside educators, analyzing the social representations of alternance built by Rural Education students of the Federal University of Viçosa, looking for advance makers, challenges and perspectives in this pedagogical dynamic in the Higher Education.

Key-words: rural education teaching, training by alternance, social representations.

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Alternância na formação de educadores do campo: buscando indícios nas produções acadêmicas e representações sociais de licenciandos

Resumo

A Educação do Campo constitui um movimento nacional que, protagonizado pelos sujeitos coletivos do campo, tem realizado diversas conquistas sociais, políticas e acadêmicas. Dentre elas, o Programa de Apoio às Licenciaturas em Educação do Campo que, com origens nas lutas e reivindicações dos movimentos sociais e sindicais do campo, favoreceu a criação de 42 novos cursos de Licenciaturas em Educação do Campo em diferentes Instituições de Ensino Superior brasileiras. Tais cursos funcionam em Regime de Alternância, entre Tempo-Escola e Tempo-Comunidade, contribuindo para uma expansão, em nossa sociedade, da formação por alternância no Ensino Superior, particularmente nos cursos de Licenciatura em Educação do Campo, constituindo um fenômeno muito recente nas universidades brasileiras. Na busca de uma melhor compreensão sobre esse fenômeno educativo, o presente artigo tem como propósito apresentar um balanço da produção acadêmica nacional sobre a alternância nos cursos de formação de educadores do campo, analisando as representações sociais de alternância construídas pelos educandos da Licenciatura em Educação do Campo da Universidade Federal de Viçosa, de maneira a buscar indícios sobre os avanços, desafios e perspectivas dessa dinâmica pedagógica no ensino superior.

Palavras-chave: Formação por Alternância; Licenciaturas em Educação do Campo; Representações Sociais.

Alternancia en la formación de educadores del campo: buscando indicios en las producciones académicas y representaciones sociales de licenciandos

Resumen

La Educación del Campo constituye un movimiento nacional que, protagonizado por los sujetos colectivos del campo, ha realizado diversas conquistas sociales, políticas y académicas. En el caso, destacamos, por medio del Programa de Apoyo las Licenciaturas en Educación del Campo, la creación de cursos de Licenciaturas en Educación del Campo en diferentes Instituciones de Enseñanza Superior brasileñas. Cursos que asumieron como organización curricular, el Régimen de alternancia, cumplido entre Tiempo-Escuela y Tiempo-Comunidad. De esa forma, el presente artículo tiene como propósito presentar un balance de la producción académica nacional sobre la alternancia en los cursos de formación de educadores del campo, analizando las representaciones sociales de alternancia construidas por los educandos de la Licenciatura en Educación del Campo de la Universidad Federal de Viçosa, buscando indicios sobre los avances, desafíos y perspectivas de esa dinámica pedagógica en la enseñanza superior.

Palabras clave: Licenciaturas en Educación del Campo; Formación por Alternancia; Representaciones Sociales.



Introduction

Rural Education constitutes a national movement that, carried out by the collective subjects of the countryside, has made several social, political and academic achievements (CALDART, 2012). Among them, we highlight the recent Program of Support for Rural Education Graduation - PROCAMPO, created under the Secretariat for Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion – SECADi, from Ministry of Education - MEC. With origins in the struggles and demands of the social and trade union movements of the countryside, PROCAMPO enabled the creation of courses in Rural Education Graduation in several Brazilian public universities (SANTOS e SILVA, 2016). Particularly, the Notice MEC/SESU/SETEC/SECADi No. 02/2012¹, which summoned the Federal and State Universities and Institutes of Science, Education and Technology to submit proposals for training courses for rural educators, favored the creation of 42 new courses in Rural Education Graduation in different Brazilian Higher Education Institutions.

With the purpose of guaranteeing the permanence of the students in the courses and the maintenance of their connections with the reality of life and work in the rural areas, the Notice MEC/SESU/SETEC/SECADi No 02/2012 had as one of its requirements that the proposals of Teaching degrees presented “curricular organization by stages equivalent to the regular semesters fulfilled on a rotation basis between Time-School and Time-Community”. In addition to guaranteeing the students’ access to higher education and maintaining their connections with work in the countryside, the requirement of alternance was also proposed as an alternative to enable an articulation between the training practices of graduation courses and the contexts of life, work and the struggle of learners in their territories.

It is important to emphasize that the recognition of the pedagogical potential of alternance training in Higher Education, particularly in the Rural Education Graduation Courses, is a very recent phenomenon in Brazilian universities. In this context, the present paper seeks to analyze, from a balance of the national academic production on the alternance in the training courses of rural educators, the social representations of alternance constructed by the students of the Rural Education Graduation – LICENA, from Federal University of Viçosa – UFV, in order to seek indications on the advances, challenges and perspectives of this pedagogical dynamic in the formation of rural educators.

LICENA was created at UFV in 2014, in the scope of the Notice MEC/SESU/SETEC/SECADi No 02/2012, aiming at the training of educators qualified for multidisciplinary teaching, with qualification in Natural Sciences, emphasis in Agroecology, to act both in the final grades of Elementary and High School, as well as in the management of educational processes and other socio-educational spaces existing in reality from countryside (PPP/LICENA/UFV, 2013). Thus, as a political pedagogical space, the Rural Education Graduation Course integrates this “academic novelty” of the training by alternance in

¹ Document available at: http://portal.mec.gov.br/index.php?option=com_docman&view=download&alias=11569-minutaeditais-selecao-ifesifets-03092012&category_slug=setembro-2012-pdf&Itemid=30192.



the UFV, favoring the emergence of social representations of alternance by the subjects involved in the training process of Rural Educators.

Social representations understood as “a form of knowledge, socially elaborated and shared, that has a practical objective and contributes to the construction of a reality common to a social set” (JODELET, 1993, p. 4. Our Translation), that emerge from the processes of interaction and social communication, in occasions and places in which the subjects meet, relate, communicate and reaffirm, collectively, their concepts and ideas. From this perspective, social representations guide not only the processes of interpretation of reality; but also the relation of the subjects with the world and with the others, organizing and guiding the conducts and social communications (JODELET, 1993).

In order to identify the social representations built by the LICENA students, 09 students were interviewed during the course in the group of 2015 who, along their school paths and participation in social movements, had some previous experience with the alternance training proposal. In the search for a better theoretical basis for the analysis of the social representations constructed by the students of LICENA, we carried out a balance of the national academic production on alternance in the Rural Education Graduation courses.

What does the national academic production reveal about alternance in rural education graduations?

Graduation courses in Rural Education, as well as the experiences of alternance training in Higher Education, are recent educational phenomena in the academic context. Thus, there are still few studies that analyze the specificities and contours of alternance in these training courses for rural educators. Under this logic and recognizing alternance training as a foundational pedagogical practice for the construction of the training dynamics of these courses, we conducted a review of the literature on graduation courses in Rural Education, seeking to identify what these productions reveal about training by alternance.

In the literature analyzed, we highlight the contributions of Costa’s (2012) studies, Trindade (2011), Silva (2012), Barbosa (2012), Silva (2013), Bentes (2014) and Teles (2015) who, seeking to understand the conceptions and meanings about the initial process of rural educators training, and also, from reports of learners, present important elements about the experiences of alternance in Higher Education.

As a common element, the papers emphasize the importance of the initial training of educators to work in rural schools, social movements and other processes and socio-educational practices with children, youth and peasant adults. In addition, they also highlight the diversity of learners attending the courses. This diversity is related to the connection to social movements, living conditions, work in the countryside, age group, ethnic groups, among other aspects that favor valuable exchanges of knowledge among the students, which, in turn, positively and potentially interfere in the construction of the identity and training practices of these Graduations.

In general, the Graduations in Rural Education aim to implement training courses for educators to work in multidisciplinary teaching - with emphasis on the school or-



ganization of pedagogical work in the final years of elementary and high school and in the management of school and community processes from countryside (MOLINA, 2015). Analyzing this purpose shared by the courses, Molina and Sá (2012) highlight as being the founding dimensions of the Graduations in Rural Education in our society “to prepare for the qualification of teaching by area of knowledge, for the management of school educational processes and for the management of community proceedings” (MOLINA e SÁ, 2012, p. 470. Our Translation).

In this process, the Rural Education Graduation Courses assume alternance as the central axis of formation, recognizing the potential of this pedagogical dynamics both for the maintenance of the learners’ connections to their contexts of origin, and for guiding the processes of formation constructed in dialogue with the life experiences, struggle and work of these students. From this perspective, Antunes-Rocha and Martins (2011, page 224. Our Translation) emphasize that the use of this pedagogical dynamic in the training of educators “requires a new look, a new way of doing things, a new way of understanding the organization of the contents, the work of the educator and the student in the academic context”. The alternance is conceived, therefore, as a pedagogical dynamic that is the driving force of innovative conceptions and practices in the training of rural educators.

And what are these innovative conceptions and practices in the training of rural educators? Analyzing specifically the pedagogical dynamics proposed by the Rural Education Graduation Courses, the studies of Costa (2012), Trindade (2011), Silva (2012), Barbosa (2012), Silva (2013), Bentes (2014) and Teles (2015) evidence the different conceptions and meanings constructed by the students of the courses on the process of training of rural educators, which, in turn, reveal a set of elements that characterize the alternating experiences in course in Higher Education.

A common element highlighted by the analyzed works is the importance of the initial training of the educators for an action both in the rural schools, as well as in the social movements, unions and other socio-educational spaces of insertion of the children, teenagers and adult peasants. And in this respect, the studies also show the presence of a socio-cultural diversity of the students who are part of the training courses of rural educators. Diversity expressed by the social movements of origin; material conditions of life and work; age group; ethnic groups; among other aspects that are evaluated as potentiators of interactions, articulations and exchanges among learners which, in turn, contributes significantly both to the processes of building the identity of the rural educator and to the development of the pedagogical practices of the process of Graduation trainings that dialogue with the realities of life, struggle and work of these subjects.

And in this respect the works of Costa (2012), Trindade (2011) and Silva (2012) evidence that, in the logic of the students of the graduation courses studied, the alternance is understood as a dynamic that favors the interaction of the training with their realities of life in the communities, settlements and/or territories, thus constituting a pedagogical practice of valorization of peasant culture. In the evaluation of students (TRINDADE, 2011. Our Translation), the alternance is an essential condition for the functioning of the Rural Education Graduation, considering that it is a pedagogical dynamic that assumes as a principle of the educator training the dialogue and interac-



tion between theory and practice in their different times and training spaces - community time and university time.

Despite the difficulties faced by the courses in articulating the educational experiences built in these different spaces and times of training, as highlighted by Silva's (2013) work, the alternance, besides being considered by the students as a methodological dynamics adequate and coherent with the principles of the training of the rural educators; is also valued for the possibilities of contributing to a more critical understanding of their realities, as their experiences of life, struggle and work are strengthened in the different spaces of training - community and university.

It is also under this logic of articulation built between the times and formative spaces that the work of Costa (2012), Trindade (2012) and Silva (2013) identify the presence of advances in the graduation courses in Rural Education researched. Specifically, the studies are convergent in the recognition of the training by alternance in the LedoCs as being an innovative dynamic training by the possibilities of promotion of diagnoses, systematizations and socio-educational interventions in the peasant territories, guided by the theoretical references of the courses. They are practices that contribute, among others, to a better understanding of the students about intervention processes in their territories, with a view to the collective involvement of families and communities.

On the other hand, in the courses analyzed by Barbosa (2012), Bentes (2014) and Teles (2015), the limits and difficulties experienced by the LedoCs in the implementation of alternance training are more explicit. They are studies that, in common, reveal the presence of conflicts and the absence of interconnection between the times and training spaces of School Time and Community Time. The studies also highlight the difficulties reported by the students of the Graduation in Rural Education to understand the purposes and theoretical contents that guide the performance of research and insertion activities in their communities. In the students' reports, they tend to associate the difficulties experienced both with the absence of a systematic follow-up and orientation by the educators, and with the complexity of the contexts of life, struggle and work present in their territories that end up extrapolating the demands of the researches (BARBOSA, 2012; BENTES, 2014; TELES, 2015. Our Translation).

Analyzing this lack of systematic accompaniment by the educators in the accomplishment of the Community Times, the works converge in considerations that evaluate this difficulty as compromising of the process of articulation and integration of the different times and spaces that integrate the training process of the LedoCs. In their analyzes, the work also highlights that Alternance does not consolidate itself as Pedagogy if its educational dynamics does not involve the protagonism of the rural subjects in the development of practices that favor an understanding of the reality oriented to interventions and transformations of their realities of life, struggle and work in the countryside.

Particularly, the work of Barbosa (2012, p. 266. Our Translation), which analyzes the training of rural educators in the Graduation course in Rural Education of the University of Brasília, emphasizes that "complementarity of School Time and Community Time is the structuring axis of the course" and, as a process of articulation and integration of times which has challenged the subjects involved to build another pedagogical logic. A



logic that, contrary to the traditional banking education model, is based on interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary educational processes and practices of spaces, times, subjects and knowledge, considering the experiences of life and training built before and throughout the graduation course. And in this direction, also the studies of Costa (2012), Trindade (2011), Silva (2012), Silva (2013), Bentes (2014) and Teles (2015) reveal that the alternance training in the graduation courses in Rural Education, present in different Brazilian universities, even with the development of different practices and for diverse purposes, has been gradually consolidated.

In this context, facing different challenges in the construction and recognition of its potential in academic training, Alternance has challenged not only the students, educators and coordinators of the courses, but also the universities and their traditional logics regarding, inter alia, development of the purposes, principles and pedagogical tools proper to its educational dynamics. A very complex challenge that, in addition to the commitment of the individuals involved in this pedagogical dynamic, also demands that universities integrate themselves with the commitment to implement a differentiated curriculum and infrastructure that guarantees the political and social training of the rural educators and, also, the students of the other courses.

On the whole, the results of the analyzed studies indicate that the construction of the alternance in the Rural Education Graduations has made important advances and achievements, constituting a differential element in the training process of rural educators, as a human, social, political and professional training. Despite these advances, the challenges of the courses are still numerous and diverse. Particularly, in the perspective of consolidation of the alternance in the training of rural educators, the works are convergent in the identification of a necessity of advances toward a greater articulation and integration among the processes and educational practices carried out in different times and spaces of training, highlighting as being one of the greatest current challenges of the courses the insertion of community time as training time.

The alternate training in the social representations of the students of licena-ufv

As in the analyzed academic production, the set of social representations constructed by LICENA students reveals a tendency among them to first associate alternance with an idea of interaction between times and educational spaces of the university and of the communities. From this perspective, the alternance training dynamics is oriented to make feasible an articulation between the activities built in University Time and the activities of Community Time, that is, in the reality of life, work and the educational processes experienced by the students in their communities, territories and social/trade union movements. In spite of this tendency shared by students to associate alternance with the idea of interaction between times and training spaces, the purposes attributed to this pedagogical dynamic are understood in different ways. Thus, of the 9 (nine) students interviewed, 6 (six) of them understand the purpose of alternance training as a conciliation between the process of university training and the permanence of the students in the peasant territories; while the other 3 (three) learners understand its purpose as an active methodology.



In the understanding of alternance as a reconciliation of school training and permanence in the countryside, learners show a tendency to associate alternating training with a pedagogical and political strategy that favors the access and permanence of rural subjects to university training, without breaking the link with their reality of life, work and of socio-political action in their territories.

The alternance here at LICENA is a form of education that gives you the possibility to be studying and also working with your family, to be participating in the activities, helping your community, the people you live with in the countryside [...] (RICARDO. Our Translation).

Associated with this understanding of alternance, the students highlight the possibilities of alternance at LICENA as a proposal of academic training that allows them to maintain links with the experiences lived in their territories. In this aspect, analyzing the initial training processes in the Rural Education Graduation of the Federal Institute of Education and Technology of Pará - IFPA, Costa (2012) and Silva (2013) identified that the alternance in that course has also been considered by the students as a fundamental methodology for the effectiveness of the principles and curricular proposals of training of rural educators, by the possibilities of this methodological strategy for the development of a more critical conception of the reality of life of peasant subjects and in dialogue with the training processes carried out in the School Times.

They are, therefore, logics that approach and present convergences with the representation of the students of LICENA that comprise the alternance as a methodology that favors, in the training of rural educators, an approximation and interaction between university, community and territories. From the perspective of the students of LICENA, the alternance is valued both by the possibilities it offers to reconcile university education and the permanence of students in the countryside, and by the contributions to articulate the content of the training course with the realities of life and work in their home territories.

It is interesting to note that this School-Territories relationship composes the pedagogical matrix of the Undergraduate Courses in Field Education, and it is foreseen that it is through alternance that the universities, communities and peasant territories must maintain a permanent dialogue in order to enable with which the training of the rural educators is carried out in a context of socialization and integration of popular and academic knowledge (ANTUNES-ROCHA and MARTINS, 2011. Our Translation). This logic of alternance as a way of building dialogues between university, community and territories is also guiding the understanding of the students of LICENA, who evaluate the dynamics of training experienced in the course as an opportunity even for them to know more properly, their territories of life and, if they know or recognize themselves as country subjects.

In analyzing the students' reports it is also possible to identify that they highlight not only the opportunity, with the alternance of times and spaces, to know the dynamics and processes of production and agricultural work; but also of the educational processes and practices developed both within the rural schools and in other spaces and movements in their territories.



The alternance in relation to LICENA, we stay there for a week that is the community time ... then we begin to investigate in our territories to identify the educational processes, to enter the schools, to understand these spaces of formal and not formal school training [...] we have a time to have this relationship with the community, not to lose this connection (IPÊ AMARELO. Our Translation).

It is interesting to note that this perspective of alternance as a relation between School and Territories is understood by the students of LICENA under a logic in which, rather than alternating different times and spaces, tends to value the development of educational practices in which the action-reflection-action dynamics are directed to the intervention processes in their territories, based on the community demands, schools, social, union, community organizations, that is, in the various formal and non-formal educational spaces. Thus, alternance training, materialized in the dynamics of going and coming between School Times and Community Times, is valued by the possibilities it offers to identify and relate what has been lived in their communities – whether in agricultural production, participation in social/union movements, among others; with the previous experiences and the activities carried out in the context of the schools, the classrooms, as well as in other contexts of training experienced in the University.

As to the understanding of alternance training as an active methodology, expressed by three of the nine interviewees, it is based on a logic that, seeking to differentiate from a traditional pedagogy, fragmented and disconnected from the life reality of learners, comprises alternance as a pedagogy which allows dialogues with different non-formal educational spaces, through the use of active methodologies, which promote the autonomy of learners. These methodologies are valued for favoring more dynamic and meaningful relationships of learning in the course, in which the knowledge and experiences built by the learners in their daily lives complement and articulate themselves to the knowledge and contents taught by the educators in the academic environment.

And in this aspect, when analyzing the UnB Rural Education Graduation as possibilities of counter-hegemonic actions in the spaces where it is held, Trindade (2011) found that the alternance training in that course is also understood by the students as a pedagogic practice of valorization of peasant culture – a fundamental principle of a training course for rural educators, which favors the dialogue between learning processes carried out in different times and spaces, School Times and Community Times, Where it takes place. This understanding of alternance as a pedagogical dynamic that seeks to enhance the dialogic relationship between the diversity of subjects, practices, educational experiences and pedagogical processes involved in the training is thus shared by the students of LICENA. In the logic used by them, alternance training at LICENA is associated with dynamics and the use of active methodologies that stimulate students' participation, favoring the construction of dialogic relations between theory and practice; popular knowledge and academic knowledge; territories and university.

It is an education that came to facilitate and dialogue with the spaces that we have in the countryside, which has different dynamics that has such methodologies, I think it is more liberating, active methodologies that build within the student this participation, that presence while educating within the classroom. The alternance is liberation (GIRASSOL. Our Translation).



They are, therefore, representations that reveal an understanding of the alternance as a dynamic of training oriented to the search of dialogue with the spaces, knowledge ways of life and work of the rural subjects; in which the use of active methodologies favors greater autonomy and participation of learners in the different times and training spaces of the course.

Some considerations

Today, in our society, we are experiencing an expansion of alternance within the Rural Education Movement. In this context, the originality and timeliness of this educational phenomenon stimulate their understanding, especially in terms of the contributions, challenges and perspectives of this pedagogical dynamic in the Graduation Courses of Rural Education. Thus, analyzing the academic production that has been produced in our country on this phenomenon, we identified that the alternance training in the Le-doCs has been considered as a challenging educational practice that, among other aspects, has enabled the students, educators and managers of the Universities involved, various learning processes oriented to overcome traditional educational and pedagogical practices, unrelated to the reality of life, struggle and work of the rural subjects. However, in spite of these learning, of the potentials and of the advances identified by the analyzed academic production, the challenges and limits faced by the undergraduate courses in the processes of training of rural educators.

In this respect, specifically in relation to alternance, the works converge to a realization that one of the major challenges that some Rural Education Graduations face is the lack of interconnection between the times and training spaces of School Time and Community Time constructed in these courses, accompanied by the absence of the systematic follow-up and orientation of the educators in the territories of origin of the students.

It is also in this same direction that the analysis of the social representations of the LICENA students about the alternance training reveal to us an understanding of the group that highlights the possibilities of this pedagogical dynamic in the articulation between educational spaces of the university and the community that, through the curricular organization in School Time and Community Time, has made possible the access of students to Higher Education and, at the same time, made possible the permanence of workers, and peasants in the countryside. They also reveal the possibilities of this training dynamic in the construction of learning methodologies that value the experiences and knowledge of the rural people, in articulation with the training practices built in the course. Finally, they are logical that share a valuation of the training by alternance as a strategy for the development of dialogues and educational dynamics oriented to an articulation between spaces, times, subjects and different pedagogical knowledges.



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