


Spring 2011

# The Escola do Campo João sem Terra: A Look Inside the Process of Making Education Relevant in the Landless Worker's Movement Settlement 25 De Maio.

Owen Grooms  
*SIT Study Abroad*

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## Recommended Citation

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**SIT**

**Brazil: Social Justice and Sustainability**

*The Escola do Campo João sem Terra: A Look Inside the Process of Making  
Education Relevant in the Landless Worker's Movement Settlement 25 De Maio.*

**An ISP Monograph Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of:**

**ISPR 3000**

**June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b><u>CHAPTER</u></b>	<b><u>PAGES</u></b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Statement of Social Relevance</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Findings</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Indications for Further Research</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>59</b>

## Abstract

This paper explores the process of implementing the goals of the *Escola do Campo João Sem Terra* within the Landless Worker's Movement of Brazil (MST), a social movement pushing for agrarian reform that is establishing a network of schools in its communities, of which the newest branch is the *Educação do Campo* concept, which involves establishing high schools based around the reality of students in the *campo*, or countryside. As the first of these *Escolas do Campo, João sem Terra* is experiencing the difficulties of this process in becoming such a different school. The school has issues with the state, as their educational goals seem opposite yet the movement needs the state funding to accomplish its goals. Inexperienced teachers wrestle with teaching a state curriculum in a way relevant to the students, as they, together with the students, seek to adapt to this one-of-a-kind academic environment. There are already victories and grand plans for the future even though the school only opened its doors in April of 2010. The school intends to make "subjects" out of their students, capable of social and political action, real knowledge of their world, and the conscience to keep the culture of both the movement and their homeland, the *sertão*, alive. The school intends to do this with the agricultural tools to better their production and their lives, and the type of education that raises their consciousness, as opposed to the capitalist, un-engaging, and even oppressive education they were receiving only a few years ago.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all of the members of the community of Quieto who welcomed me with open arms. I would like to especially thank Sandra, Ileana and Danielson for putting up with me and graciously answering my questions. I would like to thank Sintônio for being my friend and helping me into the school to get my work done. I couldn't have done it without you and your friendship. You'll always have a friend in Alabama, just as I will always have one in Brazil. I would also like to thank all of the students for being friendly and helpful, Goretche for letting me stay in her home, and all of the wonderful professors in the school for letting me be your friend, interview you, and observe you teach. Much love to all of you in Quieto. *Para todos os professores e todas as professoras e administradoras: Vocês me inspiram através seu trabalho e sua determinação. Eu queria voltar e ensinar com a gente por que vocês têm razão e estão lutando para uma coisa beleza. Até a Vitoria sempre!*

## **Glossary of Terms:**

*Agrotoxicos*—Pesticides and similar chemicals that are harmful to the environment

*Campo*—Literally “field,” the campo also has the connotation of “countryside.” Thus it is used in terms of the Campo Experimental, a place to grow food and practice agricultural techniques, or as opposed to the city, as in the rural area, where all of the students and most of the teachers in this paper are from and live.

*Catinga*—The environment that surrounds the school and makes up the settlement. One of the specific environments of the sertão, the catinga is mostly made up of shrubs and smaller trees.

*Conteúdos*—These are parts of a curriculum. In this context, they make up the Base Comum, the curriculum all of Brazil must follow for ensino medio. For example, “Linear Systems” is a conteúdo of Mathematics, and the Protestant Reformation is a conteúdo of History, and thus both must be taught in all Ensino Medios in Brazil. These basic parts are what the teachers at the EEM João Sem Terra seek to link to the children there.

*Dias Integrais*—literally “whole days.” Students in Brazil usually go to school for only half of the day, either the morning or afternoon, so this concept of students going the whole day is not only different but will also demand more of the student than now, though each student will only go for the full day twice a week.

*Escola do campo*—Literally “School of the Field” or “Field School,” this is a specific type of school that the Brazilian Landless Worker’s Movement (MST) has developed to meet the needs of ensino medio or high school education in their settlements. It is not only located in the “campo” or “countryside,” but it is a school that is “of” the reality of that area as well.<sup>1</sup>

*Educação do Campo*—This is the specific type of education taught at these countryside schools. It is an education linked to their reality, taught with the pedagogy of the movement in mind, and about agricultural production as well.

*Ensino medio*—The Brazilian equivalent of American Senior High. It is the 3 years between Educação Fundamental (American Elementary and Middle School) and Universidade (American College)

*Formação*—or literally Formation, this term is used quite often in the Escola do Campo, and means education in a specific area. For example, a teacher may have formation in the *pedagogia da terra*, and not in Mathematics.

*Habilitação*—Similar to formação, habilitação means qualification to teach a subject.

*MST*—*Movimento Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*: The Landless Rural Worker’s Movement.

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<sup>1</sup> I use “the Escola do Campo” “*The Ensino Medio João Sem Terra*” or just “the school” to discuss the *Escola do Campo João Sem Terra* specifically.

*Pedagogia da Terra*---This is the pedagogy of the MST, strongly rooted in the writings of Roseli Caldart, Dossiê, Paulo Freire, and Karl Marx, among others.

*Sertão*—The semi-arid region that characterizes the interior of much of the Northeast of Brazil. It is also the region which the Escola do Campo is located in.

## **Introduction**

The following is a look into the first of a revolutionary and new type of school, one “differentiated” from those of the state (See FJ page 40). This school, the *Escola do Campo João sem Terra*, is located in and focused on, as the name would suggest, “o campo,” or “the countryside” of the *sertão* region in Ceará, Brazil. This *ensino medio*, or high school, is located within the community of Quieto, which is a part of the larger *Assentamento 25 de Maio*, the first *Movimento Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* or Landless Rural Worker’s Movement (MST) settlement that was established in Ceará. This is the story of an institution of learning with a different curriculum, different goals, and a different story than most schools. My three-week view is only a look at the first years of the story, as classes started in April, 2010, and my research began in March of the following year. Yet it is a beautiful story already, full of emotion, determination, struggle, and even success. It is the story of a community faced with the problem of a high school education for their children that was not only totally disconnected from their reality, but also socializing them in a way that was contrary to the goals of the MST and the culture of the region. Their story is the struggle to put an end to this reality and create not only a different education for their children, but a new and better society as well. Though now is an exciting time to view the story, the school will only improve, as it implements more of its desired projects, and students and professors begin to adapt more to the differences the school already has.

To explain this story I will need to answer several questions. What is the historical context of the state of Ceará and the larger Northeast, especially in terms of education, that led to this oppressive education? What is the MST, why do they exist, and what is their role in education? What is the historical context of the individual community

and settlement themselves? After these questions are answered, I will look at the school itself, to show its dreams, problems, different curriculum, and how it goes about with these issues on the ground.

### **Statement of Social Relevance**

Robert Arnove writes that, “In Latin America historically the education and social systems have worked together to deny citizens both the competencies and opportunities for significant participation, the basic means for affecting social change” (Mackie, 12). One historical example of this is the *sertão* of Northeastern Brazil, where *latifundism*, or the domination of land by large landowners, has reigned for centuries, and education has been correspondingly non-existent or oppressive in order to maintain the status-quo. Fortunately, the Landless Worker’s Movement (MST) has wrestled countless hectares from the grips of the elite of Brazil, giving thousands of families land and a chance to live. The movement has also developed an educational system that seeks to provide their young people the tools not only for participation and thus social change, but also for understanding their reality and world, valorizing their rural roots and culture, and bettering their life as farmers, if they choose the lives of their parents and forefathers. The MST’s educational goals are best seen in the plans and actions of the educators of the first *Escola do Campo* in Brazil, the *Ensino Medio João Sem Terra*, which is beginning to offer a revolutionary education that will help make Ceará, Brazil, and the world a more just place.



## Methodology

I spent three weeks inside the Escola do Campo João Sem Terra, interviewing, conversing, observing, and making friends in late May through early June of 2011. In the morning I would talk with who was there, usually secretaries and administrators. In the afternoon, I would observe classes, and on one occasion a special presentation of a month-long environmental project the school completed. After school, I would often converse with the professors to grasp their side of things.

Most information is drawn from interviews and discussions, while I also learned a great deal from observations of classes, meetings, and everything in between. I observed the *Planejamento dos Professores*, a planning meeting of the professors and administrators, a meeting of problem students and their parents, and the meeting of the leaders of the *nucleous de bases*, which are student groups that work together. I also observed a *mistica* and cultural night, which commemorated the twenty-second anniversary of the settlement, which helped me understand several things about the movement, the settlement, the history, and current feelings towards this. I observed eleven classes in all, which helped me realize that teachers are teaching well, but also that they need help. I also drew knowledge from various books and articles on education and the MST in order to gain background knowledge on the movement and oppressive education. I used the work of Paulo Freire to analyze the progress of the education at the

school, as the MST has based many of their academic ideals on his work.<sup>2</sup> I wrote all of my findings in a field journal, which is the basis for most of this monograph.<sup>3</sup>

### **Historical Background of the Region in Question: The *Nordeste***

*Terra*, or land, is at the center of life for everyone on this earth, especially those who make their living from it in the *Nordeste* (Northeast) region of Brazil, of which Ceará and Quintero are both a part. The concentration of this fount of life has historically and problematically been concentrated in the hands of the powerful and few in this region especially and the nation itself as a whole. In 1956, 3% of the people owned 50% of the land in the Nordeste, and currently in all Brazil's rural areas, "Scarcely one percent of the landowners control 45 percent of the nation's farmland (Barnard 1981:19, Carter 2009:13). Consequently, this concentration of *terra* has forced a huge number of people to maintain a landless existence, as "close to 37% of the landowners possess only 1%" of farmland in Brazil (Carter 2009:13). This reality is rooted in the history of Brazil during its colonial period, when "vast *sesmaria* land grants" were given to privileged Portuguese families and the institution of slavery was developed and maintained. When slavery was abolished in 1850, a "Land Law" was decreed to allow the sale of land into private ownership, in effect gifting large parts of Brazil to a select group of private landowners," while former slaves were not able to buy land of their own. The historical importance of sugar has historically pushed growing food for workers into the arid *sertão* region of the *Nordeste*, while the best land on the coast was used to export the sweet crop and others

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<sup>2</sup> To attest to his importance within the movement, one of the classrooms in the school is named after Freire.

<sup>3</sup> When quoting the Field Journal, I will merely state See FJ, and then give the page number and what is on that page of interest if needed.

thereafter. To this day, all of the best land is still in the hands of large landowners as they produce food for export, rather than for the people of Brazil (Barnard 1981:19). In the 1950s onward, the country would experience a massive modernization of agriculture, which pushed many off the land, while the military dictatorship squashed those wanting land and democracy, and through their policies, made land “an investment, bought and sold for profit, not for productive use” (Kane 2000:38). While agriculture in Brazil has modernized technologically, it is socially backwards and “dominated by archaic property relations and supported by a political system which exacerbates their effects” (Hammond 1999:470). This political system continues to benefit the powerful landowning families, who hold a high level of power in the Brazilian congress and through this play a large role in sustaining inequality in the region by slowing land reform (Carter 2009:39).

Because of these realities, “some 32 million Brazilians are undernourished,” while the “vast majority of privately owned land is either badly used, under-used or not used at all” (Kane 2000:37). Barnard notes that in 1950, only one-tenth of 125 million acres in the Brazilian northeast was cultivated (1981:20). This reality looked like it could change in 1981 with the ushering in of the new Brazilian Constitution, which, as Kane notes, “allows for the expropriation of land not performing its 'social function'” (2000:37). The reality, however, did not change immediately, and the law has really only been shown to be put into effect when the people force the government’s hand.<sup>4</sup> One of the main groups to do this is the *Movimento Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*, whose main goal is to push the Brazilian government to uphold this promise and take land from large landowners

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<sup>4</sup> Lecture. Nenê (MST Militant). 4/9/11.

through occupying land, and then democratizing land through developing the countryside with new technology and other outside support (Kane 2000:37).

First organized by the 'Pastoral Commission on Land' of the Catholic Church, the movement began as autonomous, disconnected peasant land occupations all over Brazil in the 1970s. Made up of those who had “lost everything,” they established their three major aims: land, agrarian reform, and a just society. Officially established in 1984 in Rio Grande do Sul as the country transitioned from military dictatorship towards democracy, by the mid 1990s, the movement had grown to exist in 22 of 26 states while “146,000 families were living on some 1,564 settlements” that had once been land held by *latifundistas*, or large landowners (Carter 2009:13, Kane 2000:38-39). When the movement first occupies land, it creates an encampment of black tarps, tough living and precise collective organization that gives the “struggles in encampments their major formative experience.” Besides this formative experience, the MST places a great deal of importance in forming youth to be “subjects” of change through its own schools (Kane 2000:42). If they are successful in acquiring land, the camp becomes a settlement with permanent housing, gardens, and a school to follow through with its ideals (Kane 2000:38). One such example is the *Assentamento 25 de Maio*, the oldest in the state of Ceará.

### **History and Context of the settlement**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of May, 1989, the MST’s first occupation in Ceará was realized by approximately 450 families. They won General Wicar’s 22,992,498 hectares of land, the biggest latifundio occupied by the MST during this period. The MST not only had to

occupy the land here, but 200 people also had to occupy INCRA, the Agriculture Reform agency in Fortaleza. What had been mostly unproductive land where 100 families of “moradores,” or sharecroppers, lived, worked and saw their babies die of hunger, became a settlement full of different communities and productive land for all the families that lived within them (See FJ pg 8, PPP, 3).<sup>5</sup> Today, families plant a great deal of corn, beans, sorghum, palm, and cotton, and raise many different kinds of animals including cows, pigs, and chickens both individually and collectively. The settlement also produces artisanal products, hats, bags, and oils (PPP, 4-5).

### **Quieto: The Physical Environment**

The settlement is organized into different communities joined together by “associations” that serve as government and a body that seeks to advance the community with new projects. One of these communities is Quieto, the location of the *Escola do Campo*. Rolling mountain ranges grace the horizon of this very flat and scrubby area that boasts not only the structurally impressive and very new (built in 2010) *Ensino Medio João Sem Terra*, the only high school in the settlement, but also an *ensino fundamental*, or elementary school, built in 2006, a newly created soccer field, small church, and radio station, which provides music, employment, and news to the community. Everyone who lives here has land just outside of the community, but among their houses, the residents generally have goats, perhaps some cows or donkeys, and sometimes ducks which wander freely around, unfenced within the community itself. All of the communities are

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<sup>5</sup> The PPP in this citation refers to the Projeto Político Pedagógico, or Political Pedagogical Project, of the very same Escola do Campo João sem Terra. This document has no individual author, as it is the school’s long-term plan and foundation.

joined by dirt roads, and each community tends to be about twenty minutes or more apart. On their land, people grow beans, corn, and other crops. The ground is very dry and dusty, and small shrubs and cactus abound, with some smaller trees dotting the landscape as well. This environment is called the *catinga*, and the climate is known as “semi-arid.” The general mood is very relaxed and tranquil, though life is filled with hard work in the fields. Everyone knows each other, almost all of the men play a lot of *futebol*, and neighbors talk on each others’ porches for hours on end (See FJ, pg 5).

### **Difficulties in the Settlement**

In addition to land, in the twenty two years of the settlement’s existence, the people have also won access to health and good water (See Field Journal, Speech by Dra Maria Lima pg 8). Until very recently, however, the people of the Assentamento 25 de Maio had not won education for themselves. Because of this, today only 324 youth and adults are literate, which is 10% of the population (PPP, pg 5). One main difficulty of the people in this settlement was that they had no schools in the settlement themselves, and that the schools elsewhere, such as in Madalena had education which I would deem oppressive. The settlement only first started to acquire schools of its own in 2005, according to Aurenice, who works in the secretariat of the Escola do Campo and herself went to school in Madalena. Though by 2006 there was access to “*educação fundamental*,” or elementary education, within and by the movement in the community of Quietto, “already access to High School education had been a great struggle.” When students throughout the settlement finished elementary school, they had to be relocated to high schools in the neighboring towns of Quiexeramobim, 42 kilometers away, or Madalena, 12-36 km away, depending on the community one lived in and proximity to

the cities. One main difficulty she mentioned was getting to the school itself. “I would leave at noon and get back at 7 at night,” she said. “It’s a lot closer here.” She also mentioned that the students from Quieto would often leave at 11 and get back at 8 o’clock at night because of the longer time it takes to get there. Because of this, the children had a difficult time learning: “If they (students) go to school in Madalena, they’re spent, tired, and they don’t learn as well,” she said. As for the *Escola do Campo*, the students “want to stay in the classroom here,” while in Madalena, it was not like this. She discussed professors in the classrooms there in the city not caring if students went to classes or not, so there was a big problem with students just going to friends houses in the city and not actually attending class. Here, on the other hand, “we will ask student’s parents if they do not come to class” (See FJ, 49).

Aurenice, who attended *ensino medio* in Madalena, said it was “very weak,” and while she believed the professors to be good, they only taught *conteúdos*, and that “you only learned if you searched for it,” that they did not seek to make you interested (See Int w/ Aurenice, pg 52). This “weak” education is no isolated incident. The traditional public education system of Brazil has systematically been depriving many students, especially in poorer, rural areas, of quality education, or any education at all.

### **Educational Realities in Brazil: Oppressive vs. a “Different” Education**

What I deem ‘oppressive education’ in Brazil has been shown to be a conscious effort by the elites to maintain their own power and deprive it from others. Fry and Kempner illustrate the fact that the under-education and underdevelopment of the Nordeste are linked and purposeful. They assert: “Even with the emphasis on literacy

campaigns in the Northeast, the population of this region remains the least schooled of Brazil, with the lowest overall enrollment rates, the lowest literacy rates and the lowest mean years of schooling in the country.” However, this is no coincidence. Fry and Kempner continue: “This historical underdevelopment and undereducation of the Northeast has always assured a cheap and plentiful labor force” both for the Nordeste and the more industrialized South. The authors also demonstrate that race also plays a part as well: “Because the workers from the Northeast are predominantly Black or mulatto there has been little political incentive to alter the situation.” Because of this lack of opportunity in an underdeveloped and undereducated countryside and employers eager for cheap labor, literally half of the Brazilian population moved from the countryside to the city between 1925 and 1975. As this migration continues today, it is no wonder why elites regard rural people or *camponeses* in Brazil as “*especies em extinção*,” a “species in extinction.”<sup>6</sup>

What is also important to note is the content of the education, as well, not just the lack thereof. Barnard notes that formal education, rather than vocational and practical skills, is taught in rural schools, “where it would seem least appropriate.” He notes that the rural school curriculum is “dominated by the... self-perpetuating interests of the urban middle strata and elites,” “divisive and dysfunctional,” teaches “respect for tradition and the established order,” and is a “barrier to genuine development.” Indeed, he also notes that the tendency for these rural schools is to “develop competitive and authoritarian relationships, while alienating students from their environments” (1981:38). Furthermore, in “Nossa concepção de Educação de Escola,” the MST says that in the

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<sup>6</sup> Por uma educação básica do campo pg 21.



“campo” and elsewhere in the society, the education that predominates conforms people to work for their own destruction by driving people to “individualismo, consumismo, egoísmo,... and destruição da natureza” (individualism, consumerism, pride... and environmental destruction). Harnecker elaborates on this subject by saying that traditional schools only “prepares ‘parts’ of a productive machine.” She goes on to say that the end result are “individualistic, competitive and machista” people who are also “passive and dependent.”

Danielson, who works with several MST schools including *João Sem Terra*, has similarly noted that the education that students received in the cities of Madalena, and other neighboring cities like Quiexeramobim was preparing thoughtless parts of the capitalist machine. Danielson described this education as “capitalistic” because it was “forming students by and for the market, in order to compete,” without giving them the tools to be social critics. He stated that this type of education is a demand of the state, in accordance with the market. He also brought up the notion of “consequences for the future” and “prejudices” for those who did not have a state sanctioned education. Thus, Danielson states, “We have to work to break these barriers, and work to build an education of equality differentiated from the other of the state” (See FJ, pg 39).

### ***Educação do Campo and a Paradigm Shift***

To provide exactly the opposite sort of education, the MST began to plan their revolutionary new schools, the *Escolas do Campo* in 1999. The driving force behind this thought is the desire to build “*uma Escola vinculada á sua realidade,*”<sup>7</sup> a “school linked

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<sup>7</sup> Organizando a estratégia de implementação das escolas do campo do MST

to the students' reality," herein, the reality of life as an agricultural worker, and actively participating member in an MST settlement. It was important not just to be a school "no campo," or in the rural areas, but a school "do campo," which means *of or about* the rural areas.<sup>8</sup> But because of a lack of resources, they had to win these schools from the clutches of the Brazilian Government.

In this settlement, the struggle to have their own schools began in 1999 with the occupation of the "prefeitura" or local government that allowed them to build *colegios*, equivalent to middle school, in their settlement. All of the compelling reasons above prompted the 2005 National March for Agrarian Reform, which helped bring momentum to the Escola do Campo struggle. This massive march of 18,000 Brazilians from all over the country, marching by foot on the capital of Brasilia capped this long struggle for the movement's own ensino medios to be funded by the state (See FJ, Int. w/ Sintônio pg 55). With this valiant show of courage and determination, the MST won the rights to their very own escolas do campo. In 2007, the governor of Ceará mandated that the escolas do campo be built, though it would not be until 2010 that the first, João sem Terra, opened its doors (PPP). Meanwhile, the settlement worked on building a base of teachers and started teaching ensino medio with teachers from the movement, and for its own students for the first time (See Field Journal, Int. w/ Girleía, pg 36). In 2008, the *Assentamento 25 de Maio* finally acquired the first year of ensino medio education, though without a school building. The school was taught at first in a large storage building very close to where the school itself stands now. There were many problems such as a lack of teachers, classrooms that were too small, and a curriculum that was still just based on conteúdos,

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<sup>8</sup> Por uma Educação Basica do Campo.

or basic state curriculum. (FJ, pg 36). In 2009, they added another year, and finally, in 2010, the first manifestation of their victory in Brasilia opened its gates, welcoming the final year of ensino medio. Their struggle for a school structure may have been completed, but the journey to establish this new curriculum had only begun.

As the first Escola do Campo, the one-year fledgling experiment of Joao Sem Terra is just now beginning to implement all of the components of a practical education that these students need to be liberated members of the movement with the practical skills needed in the sertão region. Before we see exactly how the school is going about this, we need to look at how those within João sem Terra see their work and their main goals, as to understand how and why they do what they do.

### **Conceptions of the Escola do Campo**

I came into this project only knowing written things of what the escolas do campo were supposed to be like. Thus, it was important for me to ascertain what people who work and study here thought about what this school meant to them and for those who would be impacted by it. During my research, I discovered what the main goals of this “different curriculum” were for the Escola do Campo João Sem Terra specifically. For Ileana, an administrator, it is ending this concept that the city is a better place to live than the countryside. She says students can build a dignified and better life here in their home in the campo instead if we empower them with education and new agricultural techniques that will better their lives. It is also about environmental *conscientização* or “consciousness raising”—protecting the campo and caring for the earth and future generations (See FJ, pg 29).

On the other hand, one student I interviewed, Marciano, stated that his future vision for the school is “*formando jovens*” or “preparing youth” for practical work in the labor market as well as agriculture. He is not interested in being a farmer like his father, and instead wants to be a biologist. Although he may not become a farmer as the educators might hope, he is very supportive of the school’s teaching of human rights, work with values and morals, and environmental education. Because the professors take time to focus on setting students on the right path, and even because of their focus on agriculture, he thinks this school is better and different than those in Madalena (See FJ, pg 56). Though he is supportive of the school and its goals, he hopes to go to college and not become a farmer both for his parents, who have very little, and for himself (See FJ, pg 56). Because of the current lack of resources in the community, both Marciano and Mariana, also a student, believe the school should do work that helps increase the base income and employment in the community (See FJ, pgs 47,58). This is more similar to the fashion in which Ivanildo and Ileana hope to change in the future, to convince students that they themselves can better their own lives and their community, through agriculture that brings increased benefits, including cash through exporting food (See FJ pg 51). However, this school is preparing students to go to college, in other areas than just agriculture of course, as this agricultural life cannot be forced on students. Though now there is one college option in the settlement, it is very limited, so Marciano, Mariana, and others, will all most likely have to go outside to get the education they desire (See FJ pgs 3,13,54). The school is trying to help them succeed in this venture by helping them on the vestibular, however (See FJ pg 54, and Planejamento dos Professores). The realities and needs of the students mandate some measures such as the

campo experimental, which will enhance their desire for more money to enter the community, while their desires to go to college and not take up the role of their parents is both at odds with and exactly for what the school is about, as the school desires students to stay in the campo, but also receive higher education.

For Danielson and Luis Paulo, their focus is different. Danielson stresses politicization, conscientização, becoming subjects, and knowing and understanding your reality. The issue is having a “vision of the world” with what is really going on, and being critical in the way you learn and live (See FJ, pg 40). Luis Paulo similarly stresses “the formation of citizenship, of politicization, based in the formation of the human subject and of values based in your own reality.” Luis Paulo focuses on the need to work on developing and thinking about values, and thinks that this should come before things like agricultural production (See FJ, pg 37).

### **Creating a Different Kind of Student and Society**

How will this school do this, change students minds, making them subjects, and conscious about the world around them? The school’s “nucleus do bases” or “nbs,” are a start in this process, said Portuguese and English professor Aglaísa (See FJ pg 33). Each of the three years of *ensino medio* are split into two or three *turmas*, a group of students that attend all of their classes together. For example, the third year is split into two *turmas*, Tercero A, and Tercero B, each with their own weekly schedule of classes. Each of these *turmas* is split into two or three nbs, and these groups do all group work together throughout the year (See FJ, pg 9). Danielson explained that this is a fundamental from of

organization that “gave birth to the movement,” in which students “can do more because they have more elements to organize better, work and develop this issue of participation.” It is also important in the process of “forming subjects,” because the students become more able to participate in many things in the school and also evaluate them, and thus “become a critics.” The nbs help students “be able to build this process of education together” with the professors, and also aid in the process of changing the process of education from just copying conteúdos because “they have better comprehension with more involvement” (See FJ, pg 44). Aglaísa said they give practice for the students in collective work, and help create a society that is “não só para eu,” where its not just about “me.” They helped with citizenship formation, expression, and participation. The nucleus do bases are also important sources of autonomy and a way for the students to express their reality, and to really be able to talk about their problems. They can talk about the important real world themes they are learning about in the classroom, and how they are playing out in their own lives. Aglaísa also said that it was also an “abertura,” an “openness” for criticism, as it gives them more power to criticize their teachers and the curriculum (See FJ pg 33). I also sought student views of this process.

One student, Mariana, stressed how the nbs help to a great extent in the learning process through collective work, which is something that her experience with *ensino medio* in the city lacked. “We are getting knowledge collectively,” she said, while “the professors have noticed that group work is better than just individual work at the school.” Additionally, she noted that the nbs help with self-expression and vocalization of individuals, which she said is a weak point of many individuals in the school, and something I noticed as well (See Field Journal, Int w pg 47, and pg 4, observation).

Similarly, the nbs build leadership qualities in students, and through this, yet more participation in the school. Each nb elects a leader, a vice leader, and a secretary. I seemed to observe that the leaders themselves did most of the work, as they were the ones who have “Meetings of the Leaders” together with professors and the director of the school. Though Airton said that the role of the leaders of the nbs was accompaniment of the professors, he also said the leaders of the nbs will “work with this process of how students are thinking about this process of education, together with educators” more officially and specifically in the future as well (See FJ, pg 60). When I observed the meeting of the leaders of the nbs, I realized what this task meant, that a great deal was expected of them already, and that they were already capable of being a voice of the students and critical.

In the “Reunião dos Líderes,” or “Leader Meeting” Sandra, the director of the school, stated that the first expectation of the leaders is to be “revolutionaries of this escola do campo... by building capacity, and driving your turma like you will one day drive society.” The leaders of nbs are also expected to spark discussion, contribute to what the professors are doing, give examples, and by all of this help “*conscientize*,” or raise the consciousness of, the classroom (See FJ pg 11). Her elaboration of other details, such as keeping attendance sounded a bit more mundane, but it is a very needed function in the school, as my observations of student misbehavior and disinterest can attest. I noticed, in some classes, that professors clearly need help, and I did not notice any examples of nb leaders taking a stand for their professors and helping them control the classroom in my brief period of observation (See FJ pg 13). I did observe the rapt attention and good participation of knowledgeable students growing in their capacity of

leadership in the meeting (See FJ pg 11). With a forum like this meeting, students can also give some evaluations of how the school is going and give grievances. For example, they gave feedback about how the format for testing the last week was unacceptable, and through their voice and the admittance of mistakes by the administration and faculty, were guaranteed that this format of testing would never be used again (See FJ pg 11). Already, students are making their voices heard, learning to work collectively, and becoming better with self-expression. Hopefully with their growing leadership, a better sense of citizenship will emerge within the school, and through this, the *escola do campo* will become a better place to learn, with more of a culture of study and more engagement in the curriculum. Now, we move to discussing what exactly this curriculum is, how it is being made different, and how it will be expanded in the future.

### **A Different Curriculum, taught in a Different Way**

Dossie, in his work *MST Escola*, describes how a school must go about being different in two key areas: Taking away the focus from the classroom, and taking away the focus from conteúdos, or base curriculum. He says that you should still have this base curriculum, but that it should be taught in a way that is connected to their reality, the problems of daily life in the settlement, so that they can understand the world both far and near (See FJ, page 8).

Professors receive the same *Base Comum* curriculum that every other *Ensino Médio* in Ceará does: Matemática, Português, Química, Biología, Sociología, Filosofía, História, Geografía, Educação Física, Arte, one Língua Estrangeira, Espanhol, and Formação Cidadania (27, Interview w/ Ileana). But the professors have been given the



task of changing the curriculum that the state provides, and mixing it with the “*pedagogia da terra*” (the pedagogy of the MST) in order to make it relevant and connected to students’ reality as Dossiê describes (Grooms, Interview w/ Airton, 27). I interviewed teachers and also observed many classes in order to find out how this was really done in practice, how normal conteúdos were transformed into relevant pieces of knowledge that could impact their lives.

According to Sara, an administrator, most of the professors teach the state curriculum differently, though some more than others (18). Professor Airton believes all teachers change the state curriculum, and that as a professor, you must (11). Sandra, the director, says that it is not an issue of changing, as much as it is to “dialogar” the curriculum, to dialogue and put the conteúdos in context (See FJ pg 43). Sara stated that those who have the most success with changing the curriculum according to the goals of the PPP are those teachers who have been here the longest, or since the school began (18-19). Even though he is “of the movement,” Airton said it is very difficult to change the “*elitista*” or “elitist” curriculum. The professors I talked to are all in agreement: teaching to the *pedagogia da terra* is difficult. But how is it actually done in practice?

Airton says this linkage is easier for him than some as a Sociology teacher, because he can talk about social issues like urban-rural migration, keeping the rural people and culture alive, and other issues. This is the sort of material included in the school’s “generative themes,” one of the main ways the students learn about their reality and real world issues that are important in their lives. Before each school year, the teachers and administrators get together, establish these generative themes, and create conteúdos that relate to these topics, and then disperse them to the different teachers and

subjects in which they can be taught (See FJ, Planejamento dos Professores, pg 18). Dossiê states that these themes should be issues taken out of their reality and their community, for the goal of constructing concrete knowledge that will benefit both the students and the people around them equally. By teaching through these themes, you allow the students to understand their reality directly. For example, you could teach area and perimeter abstractly, or you could do it through the context of the settlement, looking at the characteristics of the settlement. Usually, he says themes are based on learning objectives the community creates, and could be topics like these: life in the city, and problems of production in the settlement (See Field Journal pg 68). When I talked to Girleia, a History and Geography professor about teaching generative themes, she said, “we have to make the contextualization” of the *conteúdos* into the themes. This means picking out relevant *conteúdos*, and bringing it to their reality by relating them to the themes, but doing it in a way that makes sense (35). For example, one theme the school worked on recently is the issue of production as well as all of the issues of the agriculture and economy of the settlement. The students learned about this within the context of “our *catanga*,” or the local ecosystem ( See Field Journal, Int w/ Danielson pg 46).

Other examples of differentiating this curriculum, both through generative themes and not, abound. Aglaia discussed how she has her students read newspaper articles and other sources about real issues and themes concerned with their reality, and has them write summaries and reactions to them. This not only works on reading comprehension, and vocabulary building, which she says these students are behind on, but it also raises their awareness about important issues such as drugs, alcohol, and other world problems, giving them a chance to reflect and think deeply about these issues that are either actually

confronting them now, or will in the future. She also presents texts about important figures to the movement such as Paulo Freire, and others, which help them gain a base of fundamental knowledge about the movement and its theory and goals (32). Gerlena, who teaches Physical Education and Citizen Formation, discussed how she had her students write about how they fit in the school, what types of relationships they have, and about values that are important to them. She also had students do a project about food in the context of the region and settlement. Jerri, who teaches math, discussed making linear systems relevant by inserting statistics about students' preferences into the equations. Antoniel discussed how he has students work with biographies of important people in the movement in his Portuguese class, just as Aglaísa does. Ivanildo, who teaches chemistry, described taking students to the nearby lake to study pollution in a chemistry class (50). Antonio Filho, who teaches physics, discussed a project he worked on with students about consumption of energy by the settlement over time. This is practical knowledge students should know, which increases their awareness of environmental issues related to energy consumption. It is firmly about their reality, and still linked to the *conteúdos* of physics. Clearly, many professors are finding ways of doing this work in the classroom. Yet there are other ways the school seeks to make this connection, mostly through their varying projects they have during the school year. Professors kept mentioning the project that had just ended when discussing this topic: *Projecto Meio Compromisso Socio Ambiental*, or My Social and Environmental Duty.

### **My Social and Environmental Duty**

The *Projecto Meio Compromisso Socio Ambiental*, is probably one of the best examples of this connection between the classroom and reality. During all of the Month of May, the students in each *turma* had a leader who helped them explore a certain environmental issue or two, and then present it to the entire school in a special program at the end of the month. For example, two turmas explored “agrotóxicos” (pesticides and other agrochemicals) and their problems. Messias’s turma wrote a newspaper article about the various poisons, and presented a radio show about it at the assembly. Many groups presented newfound environmental knowledge in creative ways such as poetry and parody, as well. At the end of the presentations two of the older, presumably most outstanding students presented works on the need to change the environmental situation of the school for the better, such as dealing with trash better and getting recycling to the settlement. They also discussed what was already being done, such as the “arborização” of the school (See Field Journal, pg 3-4). This was one of the biggest points of the program, according to Girleia, the Geography and History professor, to raise environmental consciousness among the students and then for them to bring it home to their parents, so that their learning and efforts impact the whole community (See FJ pg 36). As Ileana pointed out, this environmental consciousness raising is very needed “to change their relationship with the environment,” because some heads of households just think it is easier to use “*agrotóxicos*”(pesticides) or do other environmentally unconscious things because they do not see the consequences (See FJ pg 16). Gerleia also added that the reality of the students is that their parents treat the Earth badly because of their conception that “God gave it to us, so we can do what we like.” She was not sure this “environmental conscientização would be effective, but she was hopeful that it

would. She was sure to point out that the school needs this environmental education year round, not just in a month-long program (See FJ, pg 36).

Another example of work during this project comes from Aglaísa, who had her students study the botany of the area, go out into the field, find the most common plants, take pictures, do research on uses and such, and of course, present the findings to the school (See FJ, pg 32). I thought this was a great example of students actually learning about and connecting with their reality. Hopefully they will use the real knowledge they gained and use these plants and this knowledge to their advantage, but also by getting to know the landscape better and engaging with it, do more to protect it, as many trees in the area are close to extinction from overharvesting (See FJ, Int. w/ Sintonio 54).

In addition to academic environmental work in the classroom, students also had a chance to work in the mornings during the month of May, doing various projects such as planting the *mudas*, or seedlings of the trees that will produce fruit for the school in the future (See FJ pg 47). This involved working with preparing a good soil for the plants, a process taught to them by Sintonio, the main groundskeeper at the school. The students learned to mix three types of soil together with natural fertilizer (cowpies). This is the kind of technique that some of them probably had seen, but not done, and the sort of knowledge that will help them in “changing the production” in the future, as he says (55). Students also learned how to graft fruit trees to make them produce faster. This process includes tying a branch from an already developed tree to that of a seedling. With this method, called “em jeito,” these fruit trees will produce many years faster than they would with just growing from a seedling, meaning they will be able to eat from these trees in the next few years (See FJ pgs 26,55).

In addition to planting the seedlings, in the mornings, students planted the ornamentals of the school, and also worked with environmental seminars, where they discussed different issues, as well as cordeis, a popular form of literature from the Northeast of Brazil that tells stories in verse. Everything was related to the environment, and all was coordinated not only by the educators, but by the students as well (47). These special morning sessions were very important for the students as a time of preparation and transition for their future “dias integrais” or “whole days” where they will attend the school in the morning as well as the afternoon, and thus have more time for field-based classes and do more work with agricultural production.

### **Fossa Verde and Environmental Education with UFC**

Another aspect of this green education linked to the campo is the work the Federal University of Ceará (UFC) does with Fossa Verde. UFC has been sending researchers to the settlement for some time, and through its work, has partnered with the school to teach the outcomes of their research. The Fossa Verde is a new way to deal with waste water, and the University has joined with the school to teach about this in a 35 hour course for students. Marciano, who took the course, said a “majority” of students came. They learned how to implement a Fossa Verde, how it works, through the lens of environmental education and issues of preservation. Their learning also stepped outside of the community and into bigger issues of capitalism and government’s role in environmental policies. (See Field Journal, Interview w/ Marciano 57-8).

UFC has not stopped researching after the success of Fossa Verde, however. I also observed UFC students and a professor researching a new environmental aspect of

the community, overfishing in the community lake. The student informed me that this overfishing of one kind of fish that the settlers prefer may lead to an imbalance in the lake ecosystem, causing drastic consequences for the various populations within, and the humans as well. While there, the Fossa Verde team works in the school laboratory, and they have another office within the school. This relationship not only enables the UFC people to do better work, but provides real, needed environmental education for the students in the context of their settlement and the real problems within. Truly, becoming an Escola do Campo means not only learning about your reality, but learning how to save it (See Field Journal pg 24-5).

### **Linking Conteúdos in the Classroom: A Deeper Look**

Clearly, professors are doing this work of making this education more relevant and dynamic for the students. I desired to see this work being played out in the classroom, however, not just hear about it. I observed two classes that successfully integrated the students' reality with the topics being learned, though in different ways: one with concrete examples and the other by bringing in other disciplines and real world problems. In a class of Biology with Ivanildo, he did a good job of taking the focus away from the conteúdos by weaving in real world issues of the reality the students face. For example, to contextualize his discussion of natural selection, he presented the destruction of the Amazon and global warming, giving them context and a real world problem to connect with, not only of Brazil, but of the whole world. He also discusses "agrotóxicos" in the peppers that are causing many problems in Europe. The offender, E coli, is not organic, but is rather a pesticide, and is used with "transgênicos" or genetically modified organisms. For the same reason, he said, whenever you eat an apple, you should cut the

bottom and top off to avoid pesticides, because these concentrate more in these areas when the fruit grows. He also connected growing genetically modified crops in Brazil to concepts learned earlier, and even discussed negative aspects of the export agriculture system. Though he also spent a good deal of time on conteúdos, this system of linking the curriculum to their reality by examples was interesting to watch. Clearly, this was not a perfect demonstration of educação do campo I action, and I am sure I never saw it. But, as everything else in the school, this class showed that teachers are making progress.

Teachers are also progressively thinking outside of the box of rigid disciplines. Luis Paulo told me that one of his biggest goals is to connect different subjects, to diversify, and to introduce them to “different disciplines” and by doing this, making things more relevant and useful for students, and also expanding their knowledge and helping to “change their mentality” (See FJ pg 34). One day, he very excitedly showed me this assignment he had created for his classes that included an article entitled “Fome e a Aquecimento do Planeta” or “Hunger and the Global Warming” (See FJ pg 32). Clearly, this would be a very “differentiated” class of Mathematics. He explained how it was an interdisciplinary assignment, as the students read a document about how hunger and climate change were connected. Then, with the statistics included within, the students could work on conteúdos such as percentages. I was lucky to have the chance to see him give this class in person, as it was the best example I saw during my time of connecting conteúdos to reality.

Luis Paulo quieted the noisy and giggling class of mostly thirteen and fourteen year olds as he passed out the assignment for his ninety-minute class. With some distinct whistles, he was able to get their attention and introduce the assignment. He engaged the



class by having a student begin reading the assignment. He stopped her at the second sentence: “The solution to this obscene problem (world hunger) is intimately linked with climate change.” He repeated the sentence, asking the class to enter into some discussion and think about why this might be. When he did not get a response, he discussed the accumulation of the world’s wealth into the hands of a few countries, and within them, still a relatively small population. It was these countries, he said, that were producing the most pollution that was causing the problem of climate change for all, while using most of the world’s resources as well. He also briefly discussed such events as the colonization of Africa and other historical events that made a for this world system today. One could observe from his hurried analysis and delivery (besides the fact that this was a Math class) that these problems were not among his areas of expertise, but he still managed to bring up some important questions like the international distribution of wealth that might help them begin to question and wonder more about the world they live in. The article brought up the issue of larger, more powerful countries buying land in poorer countries to grow for their own consumption, at the expense of the people in that “bought” country. One example of his connecting the conteúdo of “porcentagem” or “percentage” with this article was figuring out the number of “subalimentadas” or “malnutrioned” in the world from the statistic given in the reading. After finishing the entire reading, he gave the class the formula for finding a percentage, and had the class do other problems like figuring the percentage of poor people in a population and determining the percentage of how many voted in an election.

I was able to see first hand the difficulties of this interdisciplinary and “different” teaching. Firstly, when doing this style of teaching, you lose time teaching your base

conteúdos, which also means the students may have less of a chance to grasp what you teach. Indeed, he discussed later about how he had discovered that they had trouble dealing with large numbers through this lesson and that he would have to do an “intervention” with them and sums in the billions and millions, which, while an important discovery to make, could have been solved with more time on the conteúdos. On the other hand, the students may be more interested in learning the material if they see a real use. Students, I observed from my interactions with them, did not grasp all of what he said, or were a bit disinterested. This may be a sign that he needs to work more directly with their reality in the settlement, especially as this was a first-year class (See FJ pg 14).

However, for him and the students, this is a start. They have increased knowledge in this area of percentages, new ideas with which to view the world, and some ways to connect the two. He is learning with every lesson and with every free chance he gets, to learn more about the “*pedagogia da terra*” and how to teach better and differently (See FJ pgs 33, 37). I could tell with how he taught the lesson and how he discusses teaching, that he is committed to better himself, his students, and the movement. Without this determination for change and difference in teaching, the Escolas do Campo would have nothing new to give to the students. Even with his subject that is considered “chato” or boring, by himself and his students, he is extremely excited to have had the victory of teaching three students this year who want to pursue Mathematics in college, the first students he has gotten interested in the subject in his career (See FJ pg 34). It is clear that his work in trying to engage students with other methods and show important uses of his subject have helped in convincing at least a few students that Mathematics is not just *chato conteúdos* to learn, but is something that can be an integral part of their lives, a

passion and profession as well. The difference between his teaching and actual interest in students and that of the professors in Madalena is immense. That is not to say that he and the other teachers do not have great struggles with making this happen in the classroom every day, teaching in a more revolutionary style each day. The administrators and teachers both consistently believe the difficulties in teaching in this way derive from a lack of formation in the movement and with its method of teaching, the *pedagogia da terra*.

### **Problems of Professors: Teaching and Formação**

Teaching at the *escola do campo*, with all of the expectations of differentiated methods, is not an easy task, and ones that the professors “suffer” through because they have not had proper “*formação*” or specific education in this differentiated pedagogy, and have little practical experience teaching or learning in this new way. (Grooms, 33 Int w/ Aglaisa). Sandra lamented that that professors “come from traditional universities, where it is just *conteudista*,” or “about the *conteudos*.” Similarly, Danielson argues that the professors “only know the traditional” in terms of curriculum, which, as discussed earlier, is the opposite sort of learning this school embraces. Because of their backgrounds, some professors are too linked to the “process of the city,” and thus the “transition to the countryside and the *escola do campo* is hard.” They are teaching to a different public, and need to better understand their involvement and how the school would like to function (See FJ, Int. w/ Danielson, etc. 19-20). Finally, several teachers are “not of the movement” at all, and thus lack knowledge about the movement and its politics, as well as have problems being fervently behind the movement and its goals (See FJ, Ileana 19). Not only were many professors educated in ways counter to the goals of the movement or

are unaware of them, but since the school is so new, they have little actual experience teaching in the way that they are asked.

Only a few teachers, including Girleía, have been teaching in the community since 2009, before the school was opened in April of 2010 (See Int w/ Girleía, pg 36). So, the most experience teachers have with this revolutionary pedagogy is about two years, while some teachers started last year, and several began only this year. According to Sara, who works in the secretariat, believes that even those who started last year know more about the desires and needs of students, and how to teach in the *educação do campo* form (31).

Finally, only two of the professors, Messias and Ivanildo, have *formação* in the movement, the *pedagogia da terra*, which teaches instruction in the “differentiated” form the MST has developed (45). The others are engaging in the process of formation, but it is a long process. For example, one of the things Danielson says these professors without formation need to know is that “these students are subjects, too, that they are also professors” (22). With *formação* aside, making state-chosen and often irrelevant conteúdos dynamic and relevant for the students is difficult. I saw this struggle to teach a different pedagogy play out in both victories and defeats in the *sala de aula*.

I observed several classes in which the professors were not able to realize this connection between the *campo* and the classroom. Both are difficult to teach in a “different” way: one was a chemistry class taught by Ivanildo (See FJ pg 1), and the other, Mathematics by Jerri (See FJ, 16). Both, I believe, could have been taught differently however, if the professors had planned differently. Still, as Ivanildo, a

chemistry professor above who has training in the pedagogia da terra said, “In my discipline, it is hard covering this issue” because the specific conteúdos he has to cover, aspects of organic chemistry for example, are seemingly impossible to teach in terms of students’ realities (See FJ, Planejamento dos Professores, pg 18). Another traditional class was Biology, taught Messias, the only other professor with formation in the movement. The class started badly, as the professor had a hard time engaging the students, and the whole class was spent on written assignments from the textbook that the nbs worked through. This surprised me, as he had told me he has an easier time making conteúdos relevant because of his field of Biology, which makes sense, because of the inherent link with the natural world of the students and agriculture (See FJ, 32). Clearly, having training in the pedagogia da terra or teaching Biology does not make one immune to teaching with and through the textbooks, which are of course outside of the reality of these students. Progress needs to be made to make every class relevant in this school, and this starts with more support for the teachers to move them away from conteúdos and textbooks. Still, these are all science and Math classes, and as Sandra, the director of the school says, “the humanities have the greater duty” (See FJ pg 18). I observed one class in this area, History, that made me question whether all teachers in areas such as the humanities have enough training or support to teach in the way that is required of them.

The class was about the Reformation and Martin Luther. Virtually all of the class time was spent on writing some important sentences straight from the book onto the board for the students to copy.<sup>9</sup> After this, the students split into nbs and did what was

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<sup>9</sup> I have left the teacher nameless. No harm intended, only support in what you are doing.

meant to be “group work,” but what was instead silently answering questions from the book. I thought this was a blatant example of the banking concept of education, a term Paulo Freire uses to describe when information is just put into peoples heads passively, without dialogue or engagement with the student.<sup>10</sup> I asked why she was doing this, and why students could not just bring their books home to read, and she answered that the school does not yet have an adequate supply of books, so they have to copy passages from the book to study (See FJ pgs 9-10). This is a terrible fault of the state, and one that will hopefully be rectified in June when a new shipment arrives (See FJ, pg 53 Int w/ Ivanildo). As for now, however, the state is crippling both the students’ ability and good time management of the teachers.

This method of copying information on to the board and students copying this is obviously not effective and a poor use of class time. Indeed, when I asked several students if they knew why Martin Luther was important, none could answer. Just copying a few sentences means you do not engage as a student, and that you really learn. Even though enough books are not available to take home, having the class copy sentences totally outside of their reality is not the only way to present material. The questions written in the book are just as removed from their reality. The teacher would be able to try and start dialogue with the students, discussing for example the relation between the revolution Luther caused, and the MST, both of which have caused significant social change. For instance, she did manage to connect Luther with Patativa do Assaré, a famous poet from Ceará and Ché Guevara, but only after I started a bit of dialogue (See FJ page 9). Perhaps she would have taught differently with *formação* from the movement,

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<sup>10</sup> See Freire, Paulo. *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum: New York.

but as we have seen with the other professors with training in the pedagogia da terra, this is not always the case. What is clear is that professors lack the tools they need, both in terms of formação and a “differentiated” curriculum formulated for the escolas do campo but focusing on the same conteúdos, in order to take the emphasis off of the books and make this education relevant.

Not only are there not enough books, they are also “not about our reality” of the campo, and instead, are written in the industrialized south and thus are more concerned with life in the city. The state requires each class to have one state-approved book. While there are a few options, none are very relevant for students, and Airton, for example, supplements a great deal with other sources to make the class more dynamic (See FJ pgs 34, 59). Airton claims the books of the state are “muito pior,” or “very bad” and for this you have to get other books (See FJ pg 59). They are “pior” because they are elitist and bourgouise, he says. The curriculum, much like the textbooks of the state, is distant from student realities. This is something, however, that you cannot change as easily as books. Airton informed me that you cannot get away from the curriculum too much, and that 85-90% of what they do in the class is for conteúdos of the state. He also says that you have to stay within the state matrix, but the material is so bad that you often do not attend to it. This often means giving the students an alternative point of view than what is written: “For the social aspects of the campo, we are studying Karl Marx, Nietzsche, Palmares, because we work a lot with these elitist books. We have to give our own pure vision, the history of what the people *no campo* have. The escola do campo has this philosophy, so we’re giving that” (See FJ pg 60). School concerns, like helping students do well on the vestibular, also make teaching to students’ reality difficult (See FJ pg 18).

Even though the school's desire to teach two foreign languages (only one is required by the state) I found a disturbing lack of lack of language experience held by both the Spanish and English teachers. Deficient knowledge in a subject area is perhaps the biggest determining factor of being able to teach the material in a dialogical, dynamic, and relevant way or not. Aglaísa told me that she only knows the grammar of English, and cannot really speak it (See FJ pg 38). In English, students copied down words and their meanings as I pronounced them (See FJ pg 14). Marina as well, told me that she could not speak Spanish, because she had never had practice. In the Spanish class, the students merely copied very rudimentary forms of things like personal adjectives that she copied to the board (See FJ pg 19). In both cases, the result can be nothing but "bank method" education because the teachers do not have the background to teach in any other "differentiated" way, such as a "Problem Posing" Freirian methodology as discussed by Cecilia Silva.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps, even, this is the reason the History professor I mentioned did not make the lesson relevant, as she attempted to do in other classes I observed her teach (See FJ pgs 6,16). All three of these teachers are still seeking education, and I applaud this (See FJ Obs pgs 9,15). It is the school that is asking them to teach things they are unqualified to do. Instead, the school, in my opinion, should focus the talent of their teachers on efforts the teachers can teach more dialogically and in a way that opens the minds of the students. Though these problems sound formidable, there are both real and potential solutions to problems like books, as well as other more difficult problems of formação and curriculum.

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<sup>11</sup> See "Problem Posing Activities in Foreign Language Teaching" by Cecilia Silva, Tohoku University.



## Solutions for a Differentiated Curriculum

In terms of *formação*, the little information and training teachers have already received from the Movement is not only helping to change the paradigm of education in the lives of the students, but it is also “transforming our (the teachers’) lives” says Aglaísa. She continues to explain that it is tearing down the ideas and concepts built up by their experience in the traditional, market-oriented world: “[I]t is taking away the capitalist in us, which is difficult because it is our culture” (See FJ, pg 33). This training, however life changing, is still a work in progress. According to Danielson, only the director of the school, Sandra, along with Biology professors Ivanildo, and Messias who were mentioned earlier, have formation in the pedagogia da terra (See FJ pg 45). The other ten professors have only had a few “cursos formações” at the school in the past, according to Aglaísa, professor of Portuguese and English. The main reason for the lack of formation I found is not reluctance to obtain the formation, but lack of access and time (See FJ pg 33). Luis Paulo explained that he searches for formação in every way and chance he gets. “The little we know,” Aglaísa added, discussing the pedagogia da terra, “we do, the teachers ourselves, at night, researching a little here and there.” Luis Paulo believes that all of the professors have this drive to teach better, and specifically in this context of educação do campo. While perhaps all are not seeking it out with as much determination as Luis Paulo and Aglaísa, he said, “They all have the duty as well to get better, and everyone wants to change, but it is the challenge of being new in this situation and not knowing how to go about it. They’re not accustomed with the pedagogy, but not because we don’t want to be. It’s hard work here, but we all really want to do it.” This

struggle clearly requires determination and heart: “We need to dream,” he said finally (See FJ pg 37).

The school is serious about offering its professors *formação*, however, and official steps have been taken. In January, all of the teachers underwent a one-week training in exactly this “*pedagogia da terra*” (37). Aglaísa called it “transformative” for her and others because it “opens peoples’ minds” (33). Sadly, as of now, there is no access to more lasting and complete *formação* for professors. This is something Sandra is working on changing now. The way to ultimately break these paradigms and change these conceptions of the traditional education system is to give the professors formation through a “differentiated” “*concurso publico*” or “public competitive exam,” one specifically for the teachers of all five *escolas do campo* (See FJ pg 41-2). All the teachers would be required to perform this differentiated training and examination during times like the “*ferias*” or holidays when students are not attending the school. In the future, this *concurso publico* would be mandatory to teach at an *escola do campo*. This assistance, because it is “public,” would have to be negotiated with the state (See FJ, pg 42). This is problematic, as the state secretariat of education, “does not have the openness for working with social movements” (See FJ Int. w/ Danielson 39-40). Aglaísa is more blunt: “We have to work with a normal curriculum and with a secretary of education that is against the *pedagogia do campo*” (See FJ page 33). However, the fact that the state and this MST school are working so closely on developing a curriculum matrix just for the *escolas do campo* and other projects such as the *campo experimental* is encouraging. Sandra says the struggle with the secretariat is constant negotiation, though she says it is progressing: “A few years ago, we would have thought it impossible that us, a social

movement, would be working this much with the Secretary of education.” (See FJ pg 43). Hopefully in the future the school will have to negotiate less and instead be able to work with more friendly partners, such as the other five schools in the state with very similar aims.

While the school will continue to push for the state to help them with financial support, the *escolas do campo* themselves are also beginning to unite, meet and plan together in order to trade ideas and help each other in this struggle of “differentiating” their education. One aspect of this is *formação*. All of educators in all five schools from Ceará met in January 2011, which Sandra said was a very positive meeting filled with formation, and sharing ideas and methods that have been effective (See FJ, page 42). Another is working for a unified *parte diversificada*, or the part of the *escolas do campo* curriculums that are not required by the state.

While trading ideas amongst schools is highly effective, this is something that logically cannot happen very often. To gather and advance as a school, João sem terra has monthly meetings called the *Planejamento dos Professores* or (Professor Planning Session). The name, however, is misleading, as much more than just planning occurs within. It is a time for all professors, the director, and other administrators to meet, reflect, discuss problems, seek solutions, evaluate, share methods, and above all work to advance the goals of the school (See FJ, *Planejamento Dos Professores* pgs 16-18). The meeting I attended started with a poem, and group reflection on the topic of transforming students. Throughout the entire meeting, you could see that these teachers sincerely desire to see this blooming in their students as well as continued change in themselves and how they teach. The group talked a lot about methodology, while Airton and Aglaísa

specifically brought up the point of a lack of time for meeting and sharing ideas. Airton said that the group did not have enough knowledge about methodology or pedagogy, while Aglaísa stated that there should be more time for planning, for discussing methods, for wrestling with this issue of teaching differently (See FJ, Planejamento Dos Professores, pgs 17-18). She also discussed how education has to be collective, all planning, all decisions, but above all, she stressed that they will have to improve as a group, that the teachers will not improve without trading ideas and methods. She was particularly upset that the planning this day was only a morning session, as usually it is throughout a whole day (See FJ pg 63). Ileana brought up the fact that “We have to know that we need to get better; if we don’t we never will.” She also discussed how teachers should gather in smaller groups for more exchange and development by discipline (See FJ pg 18). A great deal of the time was spent discussing methods of how these teachers sought to link the conteúdos with reality and in other ways fulfill the goals of the school.

Clearly, this process of becoming a better educator is a process for them all. There are other short term solutions for formation before the escolas do campo receive their own “concurso publico,” such as courses through such partner universities as the Federal University in Fortaleza (UFC), and other closer universities such as Unilab, that offer this type of “different” formation in various fields and disciplines. Though these are fairly “traditional” universities, the material taught is coordinated and formed by the MST itself (See FJ page 23). There is also Facete, housed in the elementary school Jette Joop, located directly across from the escola do campo, which is training a few of the professors now. For example, Ivanildo, who already has formation in the pedagogia da terra, is attending classes at Facete, which range from theology, Portuguese, and history

of education, because he wants to improve as a teacher. As he told me, you cannot be a teacher without a formation in Portuguese, in terms of communication. Through my observation of a class at Facete, taught by professor Airton, who also teaches at the escola do campo, I determined that the education there is attempting to be Freirian and of and for the movement, while it is still a work in progress itself. Airton used examples of Freire when discussing the need for objectivity, context, and critical questioning instead of copying when discussing theology and how to teach it, though the class was still in a fairly traditional European lecture style, and some students indeed seemed to be merely copying (See FJ, pgs 2-3). Clearly, this institute of higher learning along with the process of getting habilitação, or qualification, from the state, is still in the process of becoming, just as Ivanildo and all of the other teachers are.

One important solution of my particular interest is seeing an established plan of connecting conteúdos to reality for all escolas do campo. Airton says the state is working on a curriculum matrix just for the escola do campo, which will include not only the Parte Diversificada (largely concerned with agricultural production), but also the Base Comum, the state mandated curriculum shared by all schools. Though this is not being established by the escolas do campo themselves, as I would like to see, perhaps this will be of some benefit to professors as it will hopefully be itself “differentiated” from the normal curriculum. Airton believes that it would be better if the schools themselves came up with their own matrix, but believes it is an issue of “organization” that the school would not be able to take on, and thus is better left to the state (See FJ pgs 59-60).

In terms of future solutions, one other exciting new way the school seeks to link the students to their reality is through the “aulas do campo” or field classes. While these

will only occur three times a year, they provide students actual chances to get out of the classroom and study real, local, and pertinent issues. For example, in sociology, an aula do campo could be working within the community and the local “association” to learn about how they function and what projects they are planning and implementing (See FJ pg 61). This is extremely important in my opinion because it gives students an academic and analytical view of a group that helps bring positive change to the community through new projects. For instance, the associations do a lot of important work with projects such as with raising fish that improve the community for all (See FJ, Int w/ Sintônio, pgs 54-5). Hopefully, this work will spur more students to get involved in the associations as well. Another example Airton gave of the salas do campo was discussing the concept of industrialization in Sociology or History and then taking the students to the factory in Quiexaromobim to see how it works in reality, seeing both its problems and benefits (See Field Journal pg 61).

With or without help from the state, the most important solution to this issue of teaching in this way is the willingness to engage in the process I saw throughout my time at the school. I have found a strong desire among the teachers to improve themselves and to be fervently behind the goals of the school. Many professors such as Luis Paulo, Aglaísa, Girleía, among several others are still getting more training in their fields, becoming more complete teachers. And it is this passion for self improvement that will cause this school to prosper in the future, as it itself becomes more complete and well rounded as well.

### **To the Future: Dias Integrais**

This school cannot be what it desires without embracing this issue of bettering agricultural production in the settlement, and as Ileana says, showing the students that a dignified, better life in the campo is possible. To complement the Base Comum with this knowledge, the school is working in conjunction with the other escolas do campo to come up with a systematized “Parte Diversificada” which as of now only includes English. In the future, this will include theoretical classes like “Agroecología,” and time for practical classes outside of the classroom. This cannot be accomplished now, as the school only teaches in the afternoon, and this time is filled with conteúdos that the state requires. To really make this a true escola do campo, they will have to have what they call “*dias integrais*” or “whole days.”

With these *dias integrais* come a few issues. First, there is the issue of providing food for the students who live too far away to go home for lunch. This will be resolved fairly simply, says Sintônio, the main groundskeeper for the school. He believes all of the food for the students will come from the campo experimental, the fruit trees already on campus, and the planned garden, which will be started soon. Also, there is the issue of places for those students who live far away to sleep and bathe.

Secondly, the school planned to hire three additional staff, agronomists and agricultural “tecnicos” to teach the classes and guide the students through this new learning experience. The state conceded only one agronomist and one tecnico, who will both be arriving in August (See FJ, pg 42). While still a victory, even three technicians could not work with all of the school every day. This situation would include too many students for too few teachers. So, each turma will have two dias integrais a week. There will not be a day absent of students coming in the morning, but there will only be two or

three turmas at a time, making it manageable for the amount of supervision and support the school will have. Still, as Sintônio says, this is “little time” to learn these things, and without the other steps for the future, technical level agricultural education, and then habilitação in agroecologia and other subjects, this education will not be enough for the students (See FJ, pg 53-4). He said these students already know how to produce, and he seems to see the campo experimental and the other classes that go along with it as helpful, but only preparation for the technical course the school plans to have (See FJ pg 53-5). Without this “*curso tecnico*,” he says “this knowledge will not grow, it won’t be enough.” He continues to state that, “without government investment in the curso tecnico, a college level, they [the students] will still leave for the city.” He also lamented that the current plan for dias integrais is “little time to learn.” He continues: “You have to stay in the school to learn. Just two days doesn’t work out for me” (See FJ pg 53). On the other hand, he also sees great benefit in the dias integrais because “they will learn how to produce better and then bring that knowledge home,” the main purpose of this project.

With these dias integrais, the morning will be spent focusing on “the other dream of making the school about agricultural production” through working in the “*Campo Experimental*” or “Experimental Field.” This area of ten hectares will be located between the lake and the school in now undeveloped land (See FJ Int w/ Danielson pg 38). Here, they will have several different projects, which they are now in the process of designing and negotiating with the state on. This will be an exciting time not only for learning agricultural production, but also for linking the conteúdos more firmly in reality. As students learn more about respiration or soil types in Biology, they can go out and connect this learning with the plants they work hard with every day (See FJ pg 50). There



are several projects planned for the future, which the school and community together have chosen from several offered by the state (See FJ Int w/ Sandra, pg 42).

### *The Mandala*

This project is the most developed because there has already been work done by groups in the settlement with this type of production. The Women's Association already has a model version of this that is in production. Students already go there to learn and participate. The one that the school will construct will add to this collective knowledge and contribute to the future. To build a mandala, one makes a large tank to raise about 200-300 fish. In the area around the tank, which is buried in the ground, one has a space for chickens and ducks. The fish eat the bird waste, and the birds eat various things in the tank and around it. Around this circle, you will plant whatever crops you like, who will benefit from the nutrients bestowed upon them by the birds and their waste. Thus, you have a complete system of agricultural production (See FJ, page 40).

### *Mudas*

As has been mentioned, the mudas, or seedlings that were planted during the Projecto Meio Compromisso Socio Ambiental project will produce food for the school for snacks and such. The fruit trees as of now include: coconut, mango, banana, olive, guava, jambeiro and orange. In the future, they will include passion fruit as well. Many trees, especially orange are planted, but there are many more to be planted in the future ( See FJ Sintônio 26-7).

### *Fundo de Quintais*

Perhaps the most important part of the campo experimental is the chance the students will have to bring this knowledge home to their families. They will accomplish this most directly with these “*Fundo de Quintais*” or literally, “the back of the backyard.” Because of the need to also pass this new technical agricultural knowledge to parents, and because many families have all of their land away from their communities and homes, they will be implementing gardens in each family’s “backyard” of their home this year with a certain plan, so that the students can bring back information from the Campo Experimental and try it at home and develop what you learn (See FJ pg 40).

### *Other Projects*

Other agricultural projects include the “agropastorido” or “agro-pastoral” project which will feature working with animals and native plants together (See FJ, pg 39-40). Another exciting part of the dias integrals, is that the students will form “teams” for cleaning, health, and other things. There will be a pharmacy, with medicinal plants from their own garden (50). There will also be time for other exciting projects such as recycling, theatre, and more learning about the movement and agrarian reform. Along with this the students are planning to participate in more *misticas*, a special MST ceremony, as well as be able to work to clean up the environment, and have time for reflection (See FJ pg 50). While all of this is important, and are good plans, I tend to agree with Sintônio who thinks the dias integrals are not enough time for everything the school would like to do.

### *Schools within a School*

As has been partially elaborated before, there is a strong desire to make the school not just a place for high school level education, but a place for higher education as well. Students will be able to graduate from the high school and go on to a *nível medio*, which is a technical course. Next, there is a nivel superior, with habilitação or qualification to teach “agrarian sciences” and “agro-ecology” (29). This is very important, as Sintonio says, so that the movement does not have to rely on outside technicians who do not know their reality as well, and have less real, working knowledge than the farmers here themselves. He says you can complete a course like this in Fortaleza, just writing. Because of this, technicians come here not being able to do basic tasks such as milk cows or ride horses. This course, he believes will be different, more based in the campo (54). With this *nível medio*, the settlement will be able to produce their own technicians with local knowledge, who will improve production here. The school is also working so that students not seeking an agricultural education will not have to leave for the city to acquire a higher education. Airton discussed how the educators here are working on bringing Unilab, a Federal University based in the Cearense capital of Fortaleza, to the *escola do campo*. The new campus, again located in the same building, will have two turmas and teach Mathematics, Portuguese, Geography, and History (60). All of these are fantastic opportunities to have higher education in their own settlement that will complement Facete, which already exists but does not cover the needs of all students, especially those who want to focus on agricultural production.

### **Giving them the Tools and Conscience to Live in the Campo**

The campo experimental is not only about better agricultural production. This project seeks to show students through practical knowledge that life in the campo can be

good and dignified, and that life in the city is not the only option. Currently, a large amount of students leave for the city before finishing their education to become domestic workers, or to take on other low-paying jobs because “agricultura é pouco aqui” (agriculture is small here) and does not pay much. Thus, students feel like they have to leave the campo for the city to find work and support themselves and their families (See FJ pg 48, Int. w/ Mariana). But as Ivanildo says, “Their fathers are farmers and they’re getting old. Who is going to produce for the next generation? Someone needs to.” The problem is that now, they do not have the desire to do this. “The vision is for the city,” he said. Because of this, we need to “conscientizar,” to raise their awareness, and “we need to valorize this culture,” he said (See FJ pg 51). One other way to make life better is to bring in *tecnicos* (agricultural technicians) who can help and bring new technology and wisdom, and thus better the agricultural production and way of life here. It is about “learning techniques that will allow them to stay here,” he said. “They need to understand,” he continued, that “*Podem sobreviver aqui,*” that “they can survive here,” and thus the exodus to the city is not necessary. For him it is also about glorifying the benefits of life in the campo that is “more tranquil,” and has a “better climate” with “less pollution.” The vision is to “make critics,” students “capable to not leave for the city” and to “conviver” or “coexist” here, he said (See FJ, pg 50). These critics would reject all of the current cultural propaganda dominant in many of these students’ minds that glorify the city instead (See FJ Int. w/ Danielson, pgs 39-41). This is where the two main conceptions of the campo, forming “subjects” through conscientização, and agricultural production, come together with the mission “to make them want to live here” through

negating the culturally embedded and financial desire to flee to the city (See FJ, pg 50). Changing this mentality takes a period of adjustment, as professors will attest.

### **Students: Adjustment to this Education**

To find out the difficulties of implementing this “different” curriculum, I had to look at the problems of this specific group of students. What I found from interviews and observation is very similar to the issues caused by the oppressive education discussed earlier, of which a great deal of these students have exposure to because of the lack of schools within the settlement until recently (See FJ, pg 39-40). Luis Paulo described what the students have been forced on them by capitalism and globalization as the “Cultura da Massa” or a culture of acquiring material goods, nice shoes, and of places like the “U.S. and Rio” (See FJ pg 34). Danielson states that it was the education these kids had before that served the interests of the state by making them into consumers and competitors whose main interest was “marcas” or brands (See FJ pg 40-41). Because this is the culture that has been forced on them through their history of exposure to the education in the cities, they have a hard time with this complete paradigm shift in their education, especially in terms of things like the campo experimental. Mariana, a third year student, claimed that “you have to make the students interested” because “not all of them are ready for the dias integrais.” Though many individuals are not ready, she believes the student body as a whole is. Professors have hope as well. Aglaísa and Luis Paulo said that the Projecto MCSA was such a success because a majority of students, including problem students, came. Things like this are important to the process of socialization for these students, they said (See FJ pg 33).

Not only does the “cultura da massa” make the adjustment to this new education harder, but globalization and capitalism also help to diminish their own culture of the sertão. As Danielson says, television and the capitalist system are causing them to “lose their cultural customs” (See FJ pg 41). For this reason, misticas (which a majority attend) and cultural nights are so important, as are all of the things the school does to keep the culture of the sertão alive. One example of this is a fair the school had recently which demonstrated a lot of work with science, physics, theatre, and several aspects of the culture of the area through poetry and cordeis. It was well attended, and the students enjoyed their work. Indeed, one student I talked too, Lucivane, wanted to see more emphasis on the local Nordestino culture in the school through more creative opportunities like music and theatre, which are currently not taught in the school (See FJ, pg 53). That the students are increasingly keeping both the culture of the sertão and the movement alive is important, because in communities like that of Luis Paulo, the movement is almost dead. Indeed, many of these students have not learned a lot about the movement yet, so the professors continually work on things like the history of the settlement with them. This is yet another main goal of the school, to keep both cultures, of the sertão and the movement, alive and well in the next generation, which could easily have lost both (See FJ pg 36).

## **Conclusion**

This school is clearly not fully an escola do campo yet. Students come to school wearing fashionable clothes instead of being ready to get dirty as they learn techniques to improve their lives and those of their parents and other community members (See FJ page 55). However, the school *will* begin this work in their new campo experimental starting in August (See Int. w/ Sandra pg 42). Many classes are still taught like those in Madalena (See FJ. Pgs 58, 10). However, the school is already making a struggle out of teaching classes differently, and has the passion to realize their classroom goals (See FJ pg 1, 18). I believe the school can accomplish a few things to improve their “differentiated” teaching in the classroom, however.

During my time in the school, the biggest problem that arose was the lack of teachers’ abilities to be able to consistently teach in a “different” and more relevant way in every class. There are several reasons for this: Lack of time for planning, for various reasons including vigorous concern for the teachers to better educate themselves, should be resolved because the professors have expressed they desire more exchange and collective thought (See FJ: Planejamento dos Professores). Lack of formação and lack of comfort with subjects can and will be resolved, helping professors greatly. While professors are coming up with their own ways to link conteúdos to reality, and this should be encouraged, in order to build a better education there, I believe the escola(s) do campo should aspire to build their own system for what they have to do, an established method to connect every conteúdo to the reality of the student: a *pedagogia do campo*, if you will.

This can be achieved school by school, as this will help pertain more to local realities, but it could also be more general, for all escolas do campo, and made specific by

each teacher, as professors would still have the task of connecting the settlement itself to the learning experience of the students. My dream is taking every conteúdo, and forming a way to teach it differently, in another context and form than the state does. This will help teachers move away from the state books a bit more, as I observed a large reliance on teachers using these highly irrelevant and “bourgeois” books to teach, reading directly from them, and having students do very un-dialogical and Freirian exercises within them, sometimes for very long periods of time. One of the best examples of doing the opposite came from Airton, who was able to engage students in dialogue and use a variety of sources to teach with (See FJ pg 12). This is positive, and perhaps he would not need the “pedagogia do campo” as much as others, but even he, and all other professors, find this work challenging (See FJ Interviews). Thus we need some group, and preferably not the state, to carefully go through every conteúdo and ask, how can this be taught differently, more relevantly for students living in the campo?

In all, I have a great deal of hope for this school. I know because of the determination and love for the students and education the administrators and professors have, they will succeed in offering a life changing education when compared to what was offered. I know they will also succeed in acquiring the funding and support they need. As Aglaísa says, “*Mesmo movimento luta movimento consegue!*” or “As the movement struggles, the movement is able!” (See FJ page 35). This model of escola do campo will only blossom more in Brazil, as this pioneer, João sem Terra has done a lot of the dirty work such as being the first to win the battle for a campo experimental, and will most likely be the first to win many more in the future, such as a nível médio for agricultural technicians, the nível superior, and habilitação in teaching the educação do campo. All of



the other *escolas do campo* will have an “easier struggle” as all do that come after the pioneers. As professors kept repeating, “it is a process,” both of forming young people to be “subjects” and of beginning to educate differently (See FJ Interviews. Specifically pg 45, 22, 25 among others). I believe the process is working.

Finally, though the *escolas do campo* are changing the face of rural education in Brazil, this revolution need not stop here. This model of rural education that preserves cultural and gives technical skills is also needed in other countries across Latin America and the world as people continue to flee the country for the city. There is much to save in the *campo* of every country: a different culture, a slower way of life, and ancient knowledge. We, as a human race, should work to preserve the rural culture of the world. Perhaps one of the best ways we can go about that is to dialogue with communities, see what they want to provide in terms of education for their children, and work with them and their governments to provide this. Though the MST is a wonderful bargainer with states, it is only located here in Brazil. Because of a lack of adequate social movements in the rest of the world, we all have the task to be ambassadors for an *educação do campo* in every place we can. This is the work of creating “subjects,” protecting the environment, *conscientização*, and dignifying a life most people in the world have already left.

### **Indications for Further Research**

I believe this, and the other *escolas do campo*, should be studied more in the near future. There are many exciting things to research including the *campo experimental* (both its implementation and development), the addition of the superior training in agriculture, and the *habilitação* the school will offer for *agroecologia* and *educação do campo*. All three will be fascinating topics, and will enable one to look at the full cycle of *educação do campo* in action, all in the same school. Those who desire should also research the effects of this school once it becomes more established. In what ways will students in ten years really be better prepared for agricultural work than they are today? I am also eager to know how students will have adapted in one, two, five, and ten years down the road, as students finally pass through all of their education, from *educação fundamental* through university here in the settlement, as opposed to outside of it. How will the *campo experimental* aid in linking the classroom and the *conteúdos* more effectively? There are a myriad of other research questions that will come forth. Finally, others should research the feasibility of this sort of education in countries outside of Brazil, perhaps in other Latin American countries with similar *latifundista* histories.

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### **Bibliography of Primary Resources:**

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Sandra, Director of the School

Sara, Secretariat

Sintônio, Groundskeeper, Agricultural Educator, Parent of Children in the School

## **Appendix**

1. Could you have done this project in the USA? What data or sources were unique to the culture in which you did the project?

I could never have done this project in the USA. I was researching a school and how it is developing, and you cannot study a school without being inside of it, talking to the people that teach, and making first hand observations. Also, there are no sources currently about this except perhaps their Pedagogical Project, which I would not have had access to in the US.

2. Could you have done any part of it in the USA? Would the results have been different? How?

The only part I could have done in the USA would have been my background research on education in general in the Northeast of Brazil. The results would have been very different because I would have no actual findings, no discussions with teachers or observation of how the students act, how the teachers teach, and how the administrators work. I would only be able to talk generally about the deficiencies of education in the northeast, what the MST is doing about it, but I would not have been able to discover anything about the escolas do campo because they are so new, and would not have been

able to see the difficulties and progression of this kind of education first hand and in a specific context.

3. Did the process of doing the ISP modify your learning style? How was this different from your previous style and approaches to learning?

I felt comfortable learning from observation like this. Yes, some of it was tedious and perhaps more difficult than other types of learning, but I believe I did learn a great deal from just engaging people in conversation and observation. Thus, I learned how to interview better, more efficiently, and how to ask the right questions. I believe I am also a better observer now, and able to distinguish from important and relevant information from less relevant information. I also learned how to connect different issues and think more broadly because this experience was so real and not theoretical like my thinking in the past. Thus, I was able to better engage in what I was learning at the settlement.

4. How much of the final monograph is primary data? How much is from secondary sources?

Perhaps about 15% is from secondary data, and 85% from primary.

5. What criteria did you use to evaluate your data for inclusion in the final monograph? Or how did you decide to exclude certain data?

I paid attention to my main focus, difficulties and solutions of becoming an escola do campo. I did not include as many things that had less to do with curriculum such as discipline.

6. How did the "drop-off's" or field exercises contribute to the process and completion of the ISP?

I learned some from the drop off exercise, though, since I mostly talked in English with whom I met at the site, It was an extremely different experience than my total immersion in my three weeks at the field site. Other field exercises helped me a great deal, as I got better at interviewing and just talking to different Brazilians during these excursions, how to interact, etc.

7. What part of the FSS most significantly influenced the ISP process?

The field excursion to the MST settlement, as I spent time and got to know the area a bit before I went there for my ISP. Besides this obvious example, the trip to Aracati was a great experience where I began to develop my abilities to research in the field as well.

8. What were the principal problems you encountered while doing the ISP? Were you able to resolve these and how?

I would say one big problem was just the business of administrators, especially Sandra, and the fact that they were not always at the school. Also, the fact that many students left so quickly to go home (in several trucks as many lived very far away) hindered my ability to interview them. I was able to resolve these by learning to insist more on interviews, though I still had a hard time in balancing insisting too much and being annoying or a nuisance, and being too complacent in them saying they didn't have time, and generally not trying hard enough to talk to them. Usually I just went with the flow and asked them, and was perhaps a bit too complacent, but the fact is that they really were busy, and I

eventually did get the interviews I needed. Also the period of written tests was really bad for me because it lasted for most of my time there, and thus I was able to observe far fewer classes than I had anticipated.

9. Did you experience any time constraints? How could these have been resolved?

I did not experience that many time constraints. The one was having one final interview with the director of the school that never happened, as it was the day I left and she ended up being busier than she thought. I should have been more eager to seek her out I guess, though this probably would not ended up helping very much.

10. Did your original topic change and evolved as you discovered or did not discover new and different resources? Did the resources available modify or determine the topic?

My topic did change and evolve. I started with looking at field based education, and the difficulties of implementing this, and I began to focus more on how teachers actually connect state mandated curriculum to kids' lives. This was because the school has plans for field-based education, but has not done as much yet. I did find some examples of both getting out of the classroom and making the classroom itself more relevant, and included them both.

11. How did you go about finding resources: institutions, interviewees, publications, etc.?

Since I was in the school every day and lived a one minute walk away, I had no trouble finding resources. I became friends with the professors by hanging out in their sala, and engaging them in discussion about their difficulties and hopes for the future. I tried to make myself always available for meetings and thus worked almost exclusively at the school.

12. What method(s) did you use? How did you decide to use such method(s)?

I used interview, observation, and participant observation. I interviewed students, teachers, and administrators to get their valuable thoughts and input on the questions I had, and interviewed classes to see how professors really did it, not just how they said. Interview was really the best method, because I could learn the most in the least amount of time.

13. Comment on your relations with your advisor: indispensable? Occasionally helpful? Not very helpful? At what point was he/she most helpful? Were there cultural differences, which influenced your relationship? A different understanding of educational processes and goals? Was working with the advisor instructional?

I met with my advisor for a bit when he picked me up, and then he had someone else take me to the settlement and I never saw him again. We did not talk about my project very much as the situation did not really allow for this first interview, though I talked about my project with the Director, Sandra and Danielson, who was kind of like my advisor. I thought he would be at the school most days and it was a bit into the project that I realized he would not come to the school at all, and that he had gone to São Paulo. I ended up not really needing an advisor, I do not think, because I developed my project well on my own. No fault to my advisor, I think he is a good guy, he just never communicated with me about anything or answered his email.

14. Did you reach any dead ends? Hypotheses which turned out to be not useful? Interviews or visits that had no application?

There was the initial dead end of not enough field-based education to study. The week of testing that kept me from observing was also frustrating, though I still got to observe classes.

15. What insights did you gain into the culture as a result of doing the ISP, which you might not otherwise have gained?

If I had not spent three weeks in the area talking to people I would not have learned as much about the culture. I think the ISP gave me the view of academics as helping to preserve culture, and thus introduced me to things like cordeis, and caused my to seek out more of this culture of the northeast that is trying to be kept alive by the movement and the school itself.

16. Did the ISP process assist your adjustment to the culture? Integration?

I think so. I got a lot better at Pourtugues, more fluent, and more used to the hard to understand accent of the country. Now I am a more comfortable speaker, now able to integrate more easily into the culture.

17. What were the principal lessons you learned from the ISP process?

I learned to be more insistent on interviews, because they will not come up to you remembering the interview, saying this is a good time for them. You have to ask, each time. Also, introduce yourself and be friendly to people even if they don't seem interested to talk to you. Most likely, once you engage them and be friendly, they can and most likely will help you, and maybe even become an important friend for you.

18. If you met a future student who wanted to do this same project, what would be your recommendations to him/her?

By all means do it! Pick a specific topic so you do not do too many things, but still be willing to be flexible and change your topic as your interests and materials seem to lead you. There is so much to learn at that school, and it keeps changing s they add new things!

19. Given what you know now, would you undertake this, or a similar project again?

I would. The community around this school is wonderful, and the people in the school are so passionate. There is MUCH still to be started there, as this is only the beginning for them.