

Continuing education in practice: research as an educational process in rural education*¹

Fernando José Martins²

Orcid: 0000-0001-9924-4678

Gisele de Souza Gonçalves²

Orcid: 0000-0001-6723-9161

Abstract

This article presents a discussion on concepts of continuing teacher education based on a concrete experience—planned and developed between 2018 and 2024—involving the university and the municipal education system, as well as teaching, research, and extension. The empirical realities, according to their characteristics, led to a theoretical and practical debate on Rural Education, given the nature of the schools served by an extension project, as will be presented throughout the article. The methodological procedures were based on participatory research, involving a series of practical interventions with the schools. The actions developed for this education process included: the offering of a specialization course for schoolteachers; educational support for students from the participating schools; and joint interventions with the communities of these school institutions. With the development and completion of the activities, formative processes and intervention projects were carried out. Based on these experiences, it is possible to affirm that research in education is a practice that benefits schools and their communities, the university and research, as defended by authors such as Paulo Freire and Carlos Brandão, who advocate for a form of science grounded in reality as a means of transforming it.

Keywords

Education – Extension – Dialogue – Research – Continuing education.

* English version by Miriam Regina Giongo Kuerten and Sofia Giongo Kuerten. The authors take full responsibility for the translation of the text, including title of books/articles and the quotations originally published in Portuguese.

1- Data availability: Every data set that supports the results of this research were published in the article itself.

2 Universidade Estadual do Oeste do Paraná, Foz do Iguaçu, Paraná, Brazil.

Contacts: fernandopedagogia2000@yahoo.com.br; giselegoncalves.letras@gmail.com



<https://doi.org/10.1590/S1678-4634202652290061en>
This content is licensed under a Creative Commons attribution-type BY 4.0.

Introduction

This article is based on the assumption that the university is responsible for the initial education of graduates who are in the process of constructing their educational praxis within school units across all education systems, as well as for the continuing education of these professionals. In fact, this responsibility extends not only to teachers, but to all individuals educated by the university, as indicated by Backes *et al.* (2002), in dialogue with Paulo Freire's reflection: within the "commitment of the professional, whoever they may be, lies the requirement of constant improvement, of overcoming specialization" (Freire, 1999, p. 21). Just as the university is responsible for training professionals in various fields of knowledge, it also becomes responsible for education during professional practice, especially within public institutions. This movement of continuing education is presented in this article, with an emphasis on research as a means of integrating school and university.

Education systems seek support for their continuing education processes from other organizations, including universities, which develop projects to meet these demands according to their structural and institutional conditions. However, the very conception of continuing education often lacks a solid theoretical and practical foundation. Many systems understand continuing education as an addition of activities, especially during planning periods at the beginning of academic terms, which are most often disconnected, punctual, and distant from the everyday school reality of education professionals. This led us to ask: what continuity exists in continuing education? Or, more fundamentally, does it truly constitute a process? Thus, before any action or reflection, it is necessary to understand the concept used to comprehend continuing education processes.

As a conceptual starting point, we rely on the conception collectively constructed by the National Association for the Training of Education Professionals (ANFOPE), presented in Helena de Freitas' text (2002, p. 148-149), from which we reproduce the following synthesis:

Continuing education is one of the important dimensions for the realization of a comprehensive policy for education professionals, articulated with initial training and working conditions, salary, and career. It must be understood as the continuation of professional education, providing new reflections on professional action and new means to develop and improve pedagogical work; a process of permanent knowledge construction and professional development, grounded in initial training and viewed as a broader proposal of humanization, in which the integral, omnidirectional human being produces themselves while also being produced through interaction with the collective (ANFOPE, 1998). Defended by educators as a duty of the State and contracting institutions—public and private—and as a right of teachers [...].

Based on these premises, we sought to meet one of the many demands of education systems arising from basic education, particularly from the first cycle of elementary education, in the city of Foz do Iguaçu, where one of the campuses of the Universidade Estadual do Oeste do Paraná (Unioeste) is located. Initially, the Municipal Department of Education of Foz do Iguaçu approached the university seeking a continuing education

project that would encompass the entire municipal school network. However, in order to put into practice the assumptions described above regarding the nature of a continuing education process, it was not feasible to include a network consisting of fifty schools and nearly eighteen thousand elementary school students. Therefore, a delimitation was made—methodologically referred to as a delimitation of the field of action—serving as the empirical basis for this article. The proposal included the city's so-called small-sized schools, which are remnants of the national phenomenon of rural school closures. As a result, only a few schools with rural characteristics remain, and only one officially designated as a rural school. Based on the characteristics and official designation (or lack thereof) of these units as rural schools, three institutions and their respective communities were involved: Eleodoro Ébano Pereira Municipal School, in the Lote Grande neighborhood; Ceres de Ferrante Municipal School, in the Três Bandeiras neighborhood; and Brigadeiro Antônio Sampaio Rural Municipal School, in the Alto da Boa Vista neighborhood, in Foz do Iguaçu—a city whose economy is based on tourism and which is located at the triple border between Paraguay and Argentina, in the state of Paraná.

Thus, the continuing education initiative became the empirical field for the considerations presented here regarding teacher continuing education and reflections on educational praxis more broadly. The article is structured into two main blocks of discussion: the first describes the methodological process and the actions undertaken, since the empirical locus is a significant element for the conclusions presented; the second reflects on issues related to Rural Education, teaching work, and continuing education, which intersect with concrete elements of the research and provide insights into the process examined. This contributes to the systematization and proposal of continuing education actions for teachers that permanently link university and basic education—establishing a coherent relationship between theory and practice.

On practices and methodologies

The approach adopted here, both in methodological practices and in the theoretical foundation for understanding continuing education, culminates in the perception that research is a fundamental principle of educational practice. However, this study does not adhere to the experimental and laboratory-oriented perspective of a traditional and supposedly neutral approach. Instead, it draws upon participatory research as its primary reference. Educational work, as emphasized in Paulo Freire's practices, emerges from the socio-historical reality in which the educational process is carried out, with learners positioned as subjects of that reality.

Understanding educational action as a process that extends far beyond the mere transmission of knowledge, we constructed and participated in this extension initiative by proposing research as a methodology for continuing education, aimed at uniting theory and practice. In order to value art, literature, science, and technology, among other important cultural and epistemic elements, workshops and activities were offered to students from the participating schools. The themes of these activities were suggested by the teachers, according to the realities of each community, as discussed throughout this article.



As Arroyo (2017, p. 138) states, it is necessary to “recognize that every social experience produces knowledge, and that all subjects of social experiences are producers of knowledge.” Therefore, researching this reality is fundamental to any further development of the study. We thus defend the educational principle that begins with a conception of educational praxis aimed at achieving its objectives while considering the realities of the subjects involved. In the field of education, particularly in the Brazilian context, Paulo Freire is a central reference for such a conception, as illustrated in the following excerpt: “I teach because I seek, because I have questioned, because I question and question myself. I research in order to ascertain; I intervene, and in intervening I educate and educate myself” (Freire, 1996, p. 29). In this way, Freire establishes essential elements for educational praxis, with which we concur: educational intervention also educates educators; the educational process is intervention, transformation, praxis.

These foundations, which lead us to more specific descriptions of research as an educational principle, were systematized in Brazil by educator Pedro Demo and incorporated into numerous academic works and educational practices across diverse school settings. In order to clearly demonstrate the meaning of the concept and directly reference its author, we cite the following passage well versed in the adopted principle:

Research as a scientific and educational principle is part of every emancipatory process, in which the autonomous, critical, and self-critical historical subject is constructed—participatory and capable of reacting against being treated as an object, and of not treating others as objects. Research as dialogue is a daily process integral to the rhythm of life, both the product and the motivation of conflicting social interests, and the basis of learning that is not restricted to mere reproduction; in its simplest sense, it can mean knowing, being informed, learning in order to survive and to face life consciously (Demo, 2017, p. 42-43).

Methodological strategies must be aligned with the principles chosen to ground the text. As noted, this formative process was based on participatory research. This does not imply total exclusivity, as teachers in training employed various strategies during the process, such as case studies, content analysis, and bibliographic research. Using participatory research as a foundation means that the research field itself guided the paths of investigation and interventions. According to Carlos Brandão (1988, p. 12), “it [participation] determines a commitment that subordinates the scientific research project to the political project of popular groups whose class situation, culture, or history one seeks to understand because one seeks to act.” The practice described, like any meaningful and competent continuing education process, is grounded in concrete demands arising from the realities addressed. To enable these premises in praxis, it was necessary to establish prior, concrete contact with the realities of the schools served, through meetings and conversations regarding the needs of those directly involved in the educational environment. Visits were conducted jointly with university representatives to all small-sized schools in order to gather elements necessary for action planning. Building dialogue among subjects was essential, as participants initially articulated their school demands and engaged with the possibilities for implementing a coherent continuing education process.

Dialogue was the foundational premise motivating the construction of the intervention process: The request made by the Municipal Department of Education to serve the entire municipal school system. It was precisely this perception and analysis of the concrete conditions that made it possible to delimit the scope of the continuing education initiative. Although, due to institutional constraints, the university was unable to serve all schools in the municipality, the project sought—within its available conditions and partnerships—to engage a specific group through researchers affiliated with the university, united by a common field: Rural Education.

We understand that sensitivity to the educational realities to be addressed is a constitutive characteristic of the university, particularly in research involving marginalized populations, especially in the field of education. This applies not only to basic education but also to postgraduate education, as enabled by the proposed continuing education initiative. From a methodological standpoint, we align with Batista and Faria (2024, p. 146), who argue that the adoption of participatory research entails commitment on the part of those who undertake it:

It is assumed that adopting participatory research as a theoretical-methodological movement requires a political stance and the commitment of the university and its academics to class struggle and to the process of territorialization of social subjects.

As previously indicated, this initiative was encompassing, thereby elevating the level of institutional commitment required from the university. We understand that, to implement the proposed activities, a commitment extending beyond formal institutional obligations was necessary, resulting in the formation of an interinstitutional collective. The initiative involved three higher education institutions, namely: Universidade Estadual do Oeste do Paraná (Unioeste) – Foz do Iguaçu campus; the Universidade Federal de Integração Latino-Americana (Unila); and the Instituto Federal do Paraná (IFPR) – Foz do Iguaçu campus. The project also included the participation of postgraduate and undergraduate students from these institutions, as well as the support of the Municipal Department of Education of Foz do Iguaçu. And so is introduced an additional challenge: engaging in dialogue with individuals from different organizations and disciplinary backgrounds, which required an interdisciplinary stance from the groups involved. Consequently, meetings, discussions, production processes, and planning activities demanded open and coherent listening and speaking practices to enable the collective construction and development of the initiative across all its dimensions. Fritz Wallner (2011, p. 102), in “Seven Principles of Interdisciplinarity in Constructivist Realism”, explains that openness has two meanings: “openness toward other research groups or social formations, as well as openness in the sense of a willingness to reflect on the aims of research and, correspondingly, on the strategies employed.” Thus, openness in its multiple meanings had to be experienced so that the project could emerge, expand, and effectively serve its intended audience.

The initiative reached the entire school community of the units included in the research, encompassing technical staff and teachers from the Municipal Department of Education of Foz do Iguaçu, as well as faculty from the participating higher education



institutions. In quantitative terms, the three schools combined serve approximately 130 students and 26 teachers involved in the extension and teaching activities developed. To better understand the empirical dynamics of the continuing education process, it is necessary to describe the set of activities carried out with these three school communities. For didactic purposes, the process is synthesized into three distinct axes, as outlined below.

Teacher Education Activities – These consisted of formative activities based on a systematic teaching process articulated with school realities and practical activities. The themes addressed included: Research Methodology; Educational Policies and Rural Education; Foundations of Rural Education; Organization of Pedagogical Work and Rural Education; Literacies in Rural Education; Natural Sciences and Rural Education; Teaching Methodology; and Human Sciences and Pedagogical Workshops. From a formal and institutional perspective, this initiative was offered as a *lato sensu* postgraduate specialization in Rural Education, totaling 360 hours. It was also offered as an extension course for teachers who already held undergraduate degrees or who participated in the activities without formal enrollment in the specialization program. Classes were held three times per month at the Unioeste campus in Foz do Iguaçu and at Ceres de Ferrante Municipal School, selected for their accessibility to participants. Some classes were conducted remotely, particularly when guest lecturers—research professors from other institutions—were invited to contribute, alongside the teachers involved in the construction of the project.

Educational Support for School Students – Following a process of awareness-raising with the Municipal Department of Education and by group consensus, one of the monthly training sessions for teachers was scheduled during regular school hours, while pedagogical activities were carried out with students. During these periods, students from the participating schools took part in workshops and activities conducted by faculty members and students from the higher education institutions, while their teachers studied. These workshops had a pedagogical focus and were designed in dialogue with the students' school and curricular realities. This stage also fostered institutional exchange, as the activities were itinerant and offered across all participating entities, including universities and small-sized schools in Foz do Iguaçu. It is noteworthy that workshops, lectures, and visits to other institutions were planned and implemented based on group observations and the contributions of the teachers enrolled in the specialization, who were familiar with the students' realities, promoting the experiences and thereby enhancing learning experiences.

Interventions in the School Community – As the overall formative process was methodologically grounded in participatory research, the initiative's objectives extended beyond the school itself. Community involvement was central to the intervention projects proposed by the teachers enrolled in the program. These interventions addressed demands originating within the community and related to the schools. Examples include environmental campaigns, visits to local production units, work on the school's political-pedagogical project, the development of school gardens, among other actions.

From a methodological perspective, the presentation of these practical actions is essential to the analyses conducted in this article, as they point to broader works and universal concepts for educational practice derived from a reality that is not merely observed,

but actively in motion, encompassing all the characteristics that work reality may offer. And this action is also formative, since in a process grounded in research as a guiding principle, the participants—who become researchers—are also engaged in their own formation.

Thus, the training methodology presented here also constitutes, to a certain extent, an object of analysis, as it corresponds to an understanding of reality in motion and oriented toward transformation. Unfortunately, this perspective is not commonly assumed within academic environments, even within the field of educational sciences. This may be a consequence of the lack of dialogue between university actors and those in basic education, a dialogue that, if effectively established, would enable a deeper understanding of educational realities. As Paulo Freire (2021b, p. 90) states in *Pedagogy of Indignation*: “my role in the world is not only that of one who observes what happens, but also that of one who intervenes as a subject of occurrences.” This premise served as a guiding reference for the research work conducted by the teachers participating as learners in this project.

Categories and contents of and for the observed reality

The intervention process, which serves as the empirical basis for this debate on teacher continuing education, revealed a series of categories that surround this particular case while also contributing to broader analyses of continuing education in the educational field. For the purposes of delimiting this study, four essential categories are highlighted, not only for this analysis but also for the practice realized in these schools that acted as empirical fundament for this research: Rural Education, Dialogue, Continuing Education, and Intervention. These categories evolved throughout the entire intervention process—from its initial conception and debate, through the development of activities, to the interventions carried out by educators within the community. Rural Education, for instance, was initially assumed as a foundational category but gradually became intertwined with school praxis during the formative process. Dialogue and Intervention functioned both as presuppositions and as methodological instruments throughout the process. Continuing education itself emerged as a category that underscores the fact that the activity is not an isolated action, but part of a broader conceptual and public education policy framework, and therefore a right of the school community.

Rural education at the border

Although the schools involved in the continuing education initiative are classified as “small-sized schools” by the municipal education department, and only one carries the official designation of a rural school, the formative process was grounded in Rural Education following observation and analysis of local realities. This category, although relatively recent in chronological terms—approximately three decades in its current conceptualization—already has a solid conceptual production and legal foundation. Therefore, this article does not reiterate concepts already consolidated in official educational documents, such as the National Guidelines for Rural Education and its recognition as an educational modality, as established in the National Curriculum Guidelines for Basic Education published in 2010.

Instead, it offers reflections that contribute to the broader conceptual debate, based on the realities studied and the schools that participated in the intervention.

The roots of Rural Education lie in social movements, particularly in land struggles led by rural popular movements, especially the Landless Workers' Movement (MST). It emerges through movement and becomes a movement itself (Munarim, 2008; Silva, 2020). However, the full incorporation of this modality within public schools is not automatic. Many rural schools remain distant from the praxis of Rural Education. In the case studied, four small-sized schools exist in Foz do Iguaçu, but only three engaged in the debates and recognized themselves within the context of Rural Education. This reality is more common than often assumed, raising a crucial question: do rural schools, or schools located in rural areas, necessarily belong to the Rural Education movement? Recognition, relationships, and rapprochements are part of the formative process and are essential for consolidating Rural Education within municipalities, formal school systems, and schools themselves.

In various studies in this field, there are realities in which many communities identify themselves as urban, and thus the condition of being a rural school does not always imply integration into the Rural Education movement. This is partly due to the territorial configurations in which schools are embedded. In the specific case examined, Foz do Iguaçu is a border region with tourism and leisure activities also located in rural areas. This adds a particular dimension to Rural Education in the city, beyond traditional agricultural production. It constitutes a market-oriented rural area not focused on agribusiness, but on leisure and recreation, with characteristics distinct from traditional rural areas. Notably, the area where such properties are concentrated is where the school that did not identify with Rural Education is located.

Another phenomenon worth highlighting is the blurred boundary experienced by one of the schools, but a situation common in many Brazilian cities: the rural-urban frontier, where urbanization encroaches upon rural areas. In the case studied, areas formerly composed of small agricultural properties have increasingly hosted urban institutions, such as public services and residential developments. The "city" advances and "engulfs" the countryside. Nevertheless, families and communities continue to survive with features of rural life, producing food, raising animals for sale and consumption, and maintaining a shared cultural heritage—visible, for example, when residents say they are "going to the city" when referring to the municipal commercial center. A debate that challenges some entrenched concepts in the Rural Education Movement.

In order to value researchers and educators in the field of Rural Education, throughout the development of the specialization program in question, teachers and popular educators from various other institutions took part in the classes, including universities and rural schools located in MST settlements. This participation sought to broaden the debate on the diverse realities experienced by these populations.

The trajectory of Rural Education has shown that the "field of rural education" (Fernandes; Molina, 2005, p. 53) is grounded in village agriculture, and by emphasizing the centrality of space and territory, Fernandes (2006) incorporates the paradigm of the agrarian question. As discussed, these conceptualizations are relevant for the historical and political categorization of the Rural Education movement. However, local realities

centered on urban centers present configurations that do not fit within such definitions. These are schools that, in our view, need to be integrated into the Rural Education movement, even though certain elements of the general conceptual framework may not be applicable to their specific contexts.

These “frontiers” identified in the practice of the observed rural schools are generalizable and pose challenges to the Rural Education movement. They are also termed frontiers because, while they mark distances, but, overall, they also announce possibilities for rapprochement. Thus, it is necessary to highlight that, in each research context, the local community, even when not part of an organized social movement, can itself function as a meaningful movement capable of sustaining school practices aligned with the Rural Education conception, grounded in the principle of being and becoming a movement (Gonçalves, 2022).

Dialogue as mediation and praxis

Given the diversity, particularities, and subjects involved, the empirical realities examined require extensive use of dialogue for understanding and intervention, both pedagogically and socially. This understanding also underpins our conception of continuing education that genuinely impacts on school pedagogical action. In this case, it is important to highlight the process beyond the practices themselves. Following the education department’s request for a partnership with the university, the delimitation of a pilot action began through dialogue with school communities. This involved three years of preparatory processes, communications with the education department, teacher visits to the university, university faculty visits to schools, collective debate and planning, followed by two years of practical field intervention. These phases demonstrate the complexity of dialogue as a category. Paulo Freire’s work is foundational in systematizing dialogue within educational praxis. The following excerpt illustrates its core dimensions:

What is intended through dialogue, in any context (whether around scientific and technical knowledge or experiential knowledge), is the problematization of knowledge itself in its undeniable relationship with concrete reality, where it is generated and upon which it acts, in order to better understand, explain, and transform it (Freire, 1979, p. 52).

Freire synthesizes three fundamental principles: knowledge, reality, and transformation. In education, this involves questioning knowledge itself. Some findings related to knowledge that seem obvious are being questioned at present including its political dimensions, democratization, and accessibility. Besides the question about who is benefiting with the knowledge transmitted in formal education, said question corresponds with the second principle, that is dialogue properly aligned with the concrete reality in which the educational act is performed. It is impossible to carry out an educational process without considering the concrete reality of the school community, of the cognitive subject, and of the relationships established in social interactions that go beyond the school. The material reality surrounding the school is also educational, so educational agents cannot

disregard knowing and engaging with reality. And finally, no less important, but perhaps even more so, the act of dialogue has a purpose: to transform. As Freire has stated in other writings (2021, for example), dialogue is not mere chatter and/or exposition. Dialogue systematizes an issue from two or more points of view, it questions, analyzes, and, above all, proposes alternatives for the element from which it originates. Thus, in an unequal and exclusionary reality like ours, dialogue seeks transformation.

Continuing education as a right and a necessity

Dialogue with reality is the crucial starting point in all aspects, and mainly for any meaningful continuing education process. Thus, we may consider:

[...] for continuing education to truly make a difference in everyday school life, actions must be rooted in praxis and reality. Education must be linked to the daily life of school units in order to truly function as an effective formative process (Martins, 2020, p. 143).

This starting point is of fundamental importance for breaking with the heteronomous logic that characterizes the formative practices currently in force within education systems. For this reason, we emphasize that continuing education must be understood as a right of education professionals.

Initially, understanding education as a right refers to the obligation of the State (at any level of the federation) to provide spaces in which teachers can engage in collective professional development within their working hours. Many administrators indicate that the time allocated to so-called non-teaching hours may also be used for education, or they concentrate, at the beginning of academic terms, occasional opportunities for broad lectures on a wide range of topics. While such activities are important, they do not conceive continuing education as a process, nor do they recognize it as a right of educators. For education to constitute a genuine process, teachers must have formally established spaces, remunerated and embedded within their working hours, in which continuing education can take place. These spaces may include external advisory support but must, above all, preserve processes of self-education grounded in analysis, evaluation, and planning based on school realities. By way of example, as in the case that provided the empirical basis for this study, negotiations with the Municipal Department of Education of Foz do Iguaçu enabled participating schools to allocate one day per month exclusively to formative activities. Although modest, this measure signals the concrete possibility of exercising the right to continuing education.

It is important to emphasize that the formats and perspectives outlined here run counter to prevailing practices within education systems, as highlighted by researchers in a recent review study on the subject:

Currently, continuing teacher education courses tend to be accelerated and minimally dialogical, particularly when promoted through partnerships with education systems; in most cases, they

result in discontinuous actions, contradicting the idea of education as a process (Benvenuti *et al.*, 2024, p. 1771).

Continuing education is a crucial strategy for the construction of pedagogical practices and emancipatory learning. By questioning ineffective models, which unfortunately remain hegemonic, the aim is to contribute to the development of dialogical continuing education practices that promote integral human formation, oriented toward human and social emancipation. Self-education grounded in scientific foundations and directed toward critical formation is therefore a necessity, especially within schools and educational processes, which are specialized and fundamental spaces for human development.

Intervention as educational praxis

Among the research activities reported, there is space for a pedagogical intervention which, from an institutional standpoint, took the form of the specialization program's final course project. In practice, however, it went far beyond this formal requirement. From the outset of the continuing education process, clear objectives had been established. Centrally, these involved the identification of the participating schools and communities with the Rural Education movement. Nevertheless, additional actions were also necessary, such as the formulation of public policies in the municipal context, the development of materials, and the implementation of pedagogical interventions and tools capable of bringing the reality, in this case rural, closer to pedagogical practices.

Objectives, purposes, and even interventions can be highly flexible terms from an epistemological perspective. This is especially evident in the current trend toward so-called active methodologies, in which intervention may be reduced to a pedagogy of "learning by doing" or to other forms of voluntarism emptied of content, particularly scientific content, resulting in a kind of intensified neo pragmatism. It must therefore be made clear that, both in relation to the actions undertaken and to the theoretical understanding advanced in this article, intervention is intrinsically linked to the concept of transformation, as articulated by Paulo Freire. This notion can be further expanded through the concept of transformative praxis within the framework of historical-dialectical materialism, as systematized by Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez (2007, p. 206), who emphasizes the significant educational dimension of the theory-practice relationship: "Between theory and transformative practical activity lies a process of educating consciousnesses, organizing material means, and developing concrete plans of action." These assertions are necessary not only to situate the concept of intervention within this text, but also to reaffirm, from a methodological standpoint, that intervention results in transformation that is not merely subjective, but also objective, exerting an impact on concrete material reality.

From a methodological perspective, the experience report has gained increasing recognition, becoming a format for final course projects, including in professional master's programs, and has been systematized as both a research and intervention methodology (Mussi; Flores; Almeida, 2021; Padilha; Maciel, 2015). Nevertheless, as previously noted, although this article refers to an intervention project and contains elements of an



experience report, it cannot be reduced to that genre. Rather, the text advances theoretical reflections grounded in a practical experience and employs these empirical elements to develop theoretical analyses of continuing teacher education, a category that was concretely enacted in this experience and whose elements are essential to deepening the reflection. Thus, this is an intervention that, although presented in a reflective format, is rooted in and informed by lived experience.

Results

Perhaps “results” is not the most appropriate term for a subsection of this article, since not all outcomes are measurable. Nevertheless, it aligns with a methodological profile concerned with the presentation of elements produced by the research. As this is a participatory research study, the processes undertaken, beyond everyday classroom practices, generated tangible and even quantifiable elements. This allows us to reinforce the assumptions regarding continuing teacher education by demonstrating the activities carried out throughout the process. Initially, it can be highlighted that this modality came to be understood more systematically by the participants: training as a right; the structured continuity of the formative process; the responsibility of public authorities; and the scientific contribution of higher education institutions. In short, continuing education as a category.

For the extension action, a set of courses was developed comprising the specialization in Rural Education, which also served other participants in the format of an extension course. All curricular components were articulated with school realities, as each course consisted of sixty instructional hours, including fifteen hours of practical activities. It is worth recalling that, prior to the offering of the courses, meetings and visits were held at the schools so that the proposal would adequately respond to the public’s realities (including the extension-course modality, enabling teachers without undergraduate degrees to participate and receive certification, thereby valuing broad participation and contributing to professional advancement in accordance with the existing career plan).

This set of activities contributed to an epistemological understanding of the category of Rural Education. As is common in the rural–urban divide, rural schools are often regarded as peripheral; in the case of the units involved in this process, as previously noted, only one formally carries the designation of Rural Education. Through the training process, the modality, understood as a category, revealed elements that enabled recognition by the school community and helped to dismantle prejudices that stigmatize rural schools as inferior within the educational system.

Another action proposed by the project involved public school students, approximately 130 children, who participated in the workshops offered. This initiative also included undergraduate students from the three participating institutions, always under faculty supervision. It is important to note that the workshop themes were suggested by the municipal schoolteachers, as previously discussed. One suggestion emphasized with particular intensity was the inclusion of cultural activities, especially theater, given that, in consideration of the schools’ location, the communities weren’t much in touch with artistic performances.

The activities and workshops included: Indigenous graphic art; storytelling; a recipe laboratory; visits to laboratories at higher education institutions; short film screenings; dance and movement; medicinal plants in the school environment; circus performances; astronomy and everyday life; geometry and storytelling through tangram; visits to the “Parque das Aves” tourist attraction; educational traffic circuits; mathematical games; lectures and games on dengue and public health; storytelling sessions and visits to the library of the Unioeste – Foz do Iguaçu campus; science and playfulness; the *Línguas para Brincar* workshop; art and paper folding; the theatrical performance *A Ópera Sai do Baú*; artistic production and folklore activities; and visits to the toy library at the Unioeste – Foz do Iguaçu campus.

It is evident that the set of workshops and activities offered to students from the three schools involved extensive dialogue, engagement, contact, and coordination, planned collaboratively by faculty and undergraduate students from the Language Studies, Physics, and Pedagogy programs, as well as by public servants from sectors beyond education. A categorical assumption guiding these actions was dialogue. This required interinstitutional planning, grounded primarily in the realities of the students, through collective planning with the pedagogical teams of each school. This process offers a lesson for the academy, which traditionally positions itself as the primary holder of knowledge; however, as Paulo Freire (1996, p. 70) affirms, the “[...] subject who opens themselves to the world and to others inaugurates, through this gesture, a dialogical relationship [...]”. Thus, dialogical actions were pursued, including interinstitutional dialogue and exchanges of knowledge enabled by diverse spaces, universities, the federal institute, tourist attractions, and even among the participating schools themselves, each with distinct realities.

Finally, the last action carried out, though no less important, was the materialization of the intervention projects, which were designed and implemented by the teachers enrolled in the specialization program from the participating schools. Most of these projects extended into the communities in which the schools are located, involving practical, pedagogical interventions in everyday school life. The schools and corresponding projects were as follows: (1) Municipal Rural School Brigadeiro Antônio Sampaio – Reading and Interpretation: Sowing Authors; Mathematics and Interdisciplinarity: Creating a Playful and Interactive Game; and Literacy and Interdisciplinarity in Rural Education; (2) Municipal School Ceres de Ferrante – Possibilities for Teaching and Learning: The Birds of My Region; The Schoolyard as a Pedagogical Space; and School Garden: A Pedagogical and Experiential Space; (3) Municipal School Eleodoro Ébano Pereira – Knowing the Local Community and Preserving the Environment.

This set of actions seeks to go beyond activism or mere pragmatism. By defining intervention as a category, we approach a conception and a method that deepens the understanding of the term. Intervention is part of a broader totality and is not an isolated action, therefore, the community, understood as a structure that extends beyond the school, was chosen as the locus of action. The challenges posed by schools through their interventions are also social and political, oriented towards transformation, which, paraphrasing Freire, goes beyond interpretation and seeks transformative action.

Final considerations

Considering the history of engagement with Rural Education, the proposal of this extension action sought to connect with the reality of the public school system in Foz do Iguaçu. In particular, within the schools, we educated teachers who, through theoretical-scientific and pedagogical deepening, promoted critical and contextualized formation of the knowledge and practices developed in educational contexts in rural schools—both through an understanding of the legal framework of Rural Education (Brazil, 2012; Vasconcelos, 2018) and through engagement with the theoretical debates in the field (Martins, 2020). Taken as a whole, it can be stated that the process connected the schools involved to the Rural Education modality, generating, in some cases, demands for formal recognition.

The actions consisted of a genuine continuing education project, as they involved two years of conceptual formation, continuously designed and redesigned based on practice. This modality is necessary for education systems and school units; however, its implementation requires a series of investments that exceed conventional limits. In the case examined here, this included the reorganization of the school routine to accommodate study days and the necessary logistical arrangements, as well as school transportation, which proved to be a weakness of the project. Nevertheless, the actions achieved their proposed objectives and encompassed the full scope of a truly continuing training initiative within the school context, fostering the understanding that it is possible to implement institutional, systematic formative meetings with higher education institutions as partners.

To further deepen the proposed analysis, it is important to highlight that, beyond the continuing education of basic education teachers grounded in Rural Education and dialogue, this movement, constructed and materialized through an extension action, also provided knowledge production in the field, research activities by scholars from the participating institutions, and learning opportunities for undergraduate teacher education students through the workshops and activities that engaged the children enrolled in the participating schools. The set of actions detailed throughout the article offered both conditions for academic activities for schoolteachers and formative experiences for students from the schools and higher education institutions.

In addition to these actions, the involvement of schools and communities was also achieved through the intervention projects, which documented moments in which students' families drew closer to the schools and their educational agents.

The participation of educators and researchers from other institutions and regions in the Rural Education specialization classes brought new experiences and realities to the group served, contexts that many participants had little prior knowledge of before joining the extension action. It is also worth noting that the municipal education system of Foz do Iguaçu places strong emphasis on assessments linked to the national Basic Education Development Index (IDEB) ranking. The small-sized schools included in this training initiative tend to occupy a peripheral position within this policy. However, even without specific training focused on this type of assessment, in the final year of the project one of the schools served by the initiative achieved the highest IDEB score in the city. This indicates that a broad, general, and genuinely continuing education process

provides sufficient formative conditions to succeed in such examinations, even when these assessments are questionable in terms of the quality they claim to measure.

Finally, this movement, constructed by multiple actors, generated significant outcomes not only for one group, but through their integration, contributed to transforming their realities in various ways, whether in knowledge production or in educational practice. We observed that many individuals were involved; notably, three participants entered master's programs during or after the specialization. Through their actions, they demonstrated the possibility of critically transforming what had previously seemed immutable, reaffirming that it is always time to discover hope as a practice.

References

ARROYO, Miguel. **Passageiros da noite**: do trabalho para a EJA: itinerários pelo direito a uma vida justa. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2017.

ANFOPE. Associação Nacional Pela Formação Dos Profissionais Da Educação. **Documento final**: IX Encontro Nacional. Campinas: Anfope, 1998. Disponível em: <https://www.anfope.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/9%C2%BA-Encontro-Documento-Final-1998.pdf>. Acesso em: 28 nov. 2025.

BACKES, Vânia Marli Schubert *et al.* A educação continuada dos alunos egressos: compromisso da universidade? **Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem**, Brasília, DF, v. 55, n. 2, p. 200-204, 2002.

BATISTA, Sinthia Cristina; FARIA, Camila Salles de. Pesquisa Participante, direitos territoriais e mapeamentos coletivos: o entrelaçar entre o uso e a vida. **Revista Campo-Território**, Uberlândia, v. 19, n. 53, p. 124-150, 2024.

BENVENUTTI, Dilva Bertoldi *et al.* Formação continuada de professores no Brasil: história, objetivos e contribuições. **Cuadernos de Educación y Desarrollo**, Málaga, v. 16, n. 1, p. 1751-1773, 2024.

BRANDÃO, Carlos Rodrigues (org.) **Pesquisa participante**. 7. ed. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1988.

BRASIL. Ministério da Educação. Secretaria de Educação Continuada, Alfabetização, Diversidade e Inclusão. **Educação do campo**: marcos normativos. Brasília: Secadi, 2012.

DEMO, Pedro. **Pesquisa**: princípio científico e educativo. 14. ed. São Paulo: Cortez, 2017.

FERNANDES, Bernardo Mançano. Os campos da pesquisa em educação do campo: espaço e território como categorias essenciais. *In*: MOLINA, Mônica Castagna (org.). **Educação do campo e pesquisa**: questões para reflexão. Brasília, DF: Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário, 2006. p. 28-40.

FERNANDES, Bernardo Mançano; MOLINA, Mônica Castagna. O campo da educação do campo. *In*: MOLINA, Mônica Castagna; JESUS, Sonia Meire Santos Azevedo de (org.). **Por uma educação do campo**: contribuições para a construção de um projeto de educação do campo. 2. ed. Brasília, DF: Articulação Nacional "Por uma Educação do Campo", 2005. p. 53-90.



FREIRE, Paulo. **Ação cultural para a liberdade e outros escritos**. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2021.

FREIRE, Paulo. **Extensão ou comunicação?** 4. ed. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1979.

FREIRE, Paulo. **Pedagogia da autonomia**: saberes necessários à prática educativa. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1996.

FREIRE, Paulo. **Pedagogia da indignação**: cartas pedagógicas e outros escritos. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2021b.

FREITAS, Helena Costa Lopes de. Formação de professores no Brasil: 10 anos de embates entre projetos de formação. **Educação & Sociedade**, Campinas, v. 23, n. 80, p. 136-167, 2002.

GONÇALVES, Gisele de Souza. **Escola e comunidade em movimento**: Escola Municipal Eleodoro Ébano Pereira e seus sujeitos. 2022. 132 f. Tese (Programa de Pós-Graduação em Sociedade, Cultura e Fronteiras) – Universidade Estadual do Oeste do Paraná, Foz do Iguaçu, 2022.

MARTINS, Fernando José. **A escola e a educação do campo**. São Paulo: Pimenta Cultural, 2020.

MUNARIM, Antônio. Movimento nacional de educação do campo: uma trajetória em construção. *In*: REUNIÃO ANUAL DA ANPED - GT 3, 31., 2008, Caxambu. **Anais [...]**. Caxambu: Anped, 2008. Disponível em: <http://www.anped.org.br/biblioteca/item/movimento-nacional-de-educacao-do-campo-uma-trajetoria-em-construcao>. Acesso em: 28 nov. 2025.

MUSSI, Ricardo Franklin de Freitas; FLORES, Fábio Fernandes; ALMEIDA, Claudio Bispo de. Pressupostos para a elaboração de relato de experiência como conhecimento científico. **Práxis Educacional**, Vitória da Conquista, v. 17, n. 48, p. 60-77, 2021.

PADILHA, Regina Célia Wipieski; MACIEL, Margareth de Fátima. **Fundamentos da pesquisa para projetos de intervenção**. Guarapuava: Unicentro, 2015.

SILVA, André Luiz Batista da. A educação do campo no contexto da luta do movimento social: uma análise histórica das lutas, conquistas e resistências a partir do Movimento Nacional da Educação do Campo. **Revista Brasileira de História da Educação**, Maringá, v. 20, p. 112-121, 2020.

VASCONCELOS, Paulo Henrique de. Educação do campo: marcos normativos. Quais indivíduos as políticas públicas pretendem formar? **Revista Histedbr On-line**, Campinas, v. 18, n. 3, p. 865-883, 2018.

VÁZQUEZ, Adolfo Sánchez. **Filosofia da práxis**. São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2007.

WALLNER, Fritz. Sete princípios da interdisciplinaridade no realismo construtivista. *In*: JANTSCH, Ari Paulo; BIANCHETTI, Lucídio (org.). **Interdisciplinaridade**: para além da filosofia do sujeito. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2011. p. 95-106.

Received on September 05, 2024

Revised on June 30, 2025

Approved on August 18, 2025



Editor: Prof. Dr. Fábio de Barros Silva

Fernando José Martins is a doctor in education by the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (2009); he is an associate professor at Universidade Estadual do Oeste do Paraná, Foz do Iguaçu campus (PR), and a senior postdoctoral fellow supported by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq).

Gisele de Souza Gonçalves is a doctor from the Interdisciplinary Program in “Society, Culture, and Borders” at the State University of Western Paraná and is a teacher in basic education at the municipal school network of Foz do Iguaçu (PR).