

Artigo

**SCHOOL CULTURE PRESCRIBED IN
EXPERIMENTAL SECONDARY SCHOOL
CLASSES IN PORTO ALEGRE (1959)**

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to understand the school culture prescribed in the curricular plans sent to the Ministry of Education in 1959 to obtain authorization for experimental secondary classrooms in some schools of Porto Alegre (RS). Public schools proposed two different courses with nuclei of mandatory and elective subjects. The private school, directed to the female sex, defined only one school course, which consisted of mandatory and elective subjects, in addition to participation in clubs.

Keywords: Secondary Education, Experimental secondary school classes, Porto Alegre.

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CULTURA ESCOLAR PRESCRITA NAS CLASSES SECUNDÁRIAS EXPERIMENTAIS DE PORTO ALEGRE (1959)

RESUMO

Este artigo pretende compreender a cultura escolar prescrita nos planos curriculares enviados para o MEC, em 1959, para autorização de classes secundárias experimentais em algumas escolas de Porto Alegre (RS). As escolas públicas propuseram dois percursos distintos com núcleos de disciplinas obrigatórias e optativas. A escola privada, direcionada para o sexo feminino, definiu apenas um percurso escolar, constituído por disciplinas obrigatórias e optativas, além da participação em clubes.

Palavras-chave: Ensino Secundário, Classes Secundárias Experimentais, Porto Alegre.

CULTURA ESCOLAR PRESCRITA NAS CLASES SECUNDARIAS EXPERIMENTALES EN PORTO ALEGRE (1959)

RESUMEN

Este artículo busca entender la cultura escolar prescrita en los planes curriculares enviados al Ministerio de Educación en 1959 visando a obtener autorización para clases secundarias experimentales en algunas escuelas de Porto Alegre (RS). Las escuelas públicas propusieron dos recorridos diferentes con núcleos de asignaturas obligatorias y optativas. La escuela privada, dirigida al sexo femenino, definió sólo un recorrido escolar, que consistió en asignaturas obligatorias y optativas, además de la participación en clubes.

Palabras clave: Educación Secundaria, Clases Secundarias Experimentales, Porto Alegre.

CULTURE SCOLAIRE PRESCRIT DANS LES CLASSES SECONDAIRES EXPÉRIMENTALES DE PORTO ALEGRE (1959)

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article a pour objectif de comprendre la culture scolaire prescrite dans les plans scolaires envoyés au Ministère de l'Enseignement en 1959, pour l'obtention d'autorisation pour des classes secondaires expérimentales dans certaines écoles de Porto Alegre (RS). Les écoles publiques ont proposé deux parcours différents avec des noyaux de matières obligatoires et électives. L'école privée, destinée au sexe féminin, n'a défini qu'un seul parcours scolaire, composé de matières obligatoires et électives, en plus de la participation à des clubs.

Mots-clés: Enseignement secondaire, Classes secondaires expérimentales, Porto Alegre.

INTRODUÇÃO

Amid the 20th century, in Brazil, the Secondary Education Organic Law (BRASIL, 1942) was in effect. The pioneers of the new education understood such a law as defining a traditional, propaedeutic schooling process which was far from fulfilling the youth's and society's wishes. These educators pointed at changes in secondary schooling expecting they would provide more sense for this level of education. Such group of educators advocated that, beyond the humanistic and scientific contents, the issues of practical life should be present in this schooling culture, allowing an approximation between the everyday school routine and the social demands that the youth would live after they finished their studies. They believed that a renovated secondary teaching would also turn this stage of studies into something more democratic, allowing its expansion and the attendance of teenagers from all social extracts.

According to such a perspective, during the 1950s, the first innovative experiences in the Brazilian¹ secondary teaching started to emerge inspired by French, English, and North American models. The first attempt of renovation took place at Nova Friburgo School, in the eponymous city located in the state of Rio de Janeiro. In 1950, this institution is inaugurated, mobilizing an innovative schooling culture, having as a pedagogic work basis the Morrison Plan, and, as coordinator, teacher Irene Carvalho (OLIVEIRA, 1968). In São Paulo, from 1951, the educator Luis Contier organized an innovative experience in some of his classes at the Alberto Conti Institute, based on his experience with the pedagogical model of the *Classes Nouvelles* through the *Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques*, located in Sèvres, France (VIEIRA, 2015). The state of Rio Grande do Sul was also a place where innovative experiences were staged, with the foundation of the Rio Grande do Sul Federal University's School of

¹ From 1942 to 1971, Brazilian secondary schooling had two cycles: the gymnasium course (*ginasial*), which lasted four years, common to all secondary students, and the second cycle known as college (*colegial*), divided into two courses: classic and scientific. The innovative experiences at this stage of the teaching system, in the 1950s, originated, most importantly, the gymnasium course (the first cycle of the secondary schooling).

Application, in 1954, under teachers Graciema Pacheco's and Isolda Paes' direction; the latter also participated in a practicum at the *Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques*. (LIMA, 2016).

Influenced by the emerging experiences in several Brazilian states, in 1958, the Ministry of Culture and Education (MEC) authorized, through the "Instructions on the nature and the organization of Experimental Classes" (MINISTRY, 1958), innovative pedagogical experiments in the Brazilian secondary schooling, calling them secondary experimental school classes. To establish this legislation, it is worth mentioning the efforts of Gildásio Amado, then head of the MEC's Secondary Schooling Board (DES), as well as Anísio Teixeira's, who coordinated the Educational Research Institute (INEP) (DALLABRIDA, 2014). Both of them worked to democratize secondary schooling in the number of admissions and schools, stimulating mainly to public schooling system, as well as ensuring a schooling culture that included the diversity among Brazilian teenagers.

The objective of implanting experimental secondary school classes on the secondary schooling demarcated in this specific legislation was "to test the application of pedagogical methods and schooling processes, as well as types of curricula compatible with the legislation of secondary school" (MINISTÉRIO, 1958, p. 80). To achieve such an objective, the experience should be featured as follows: the organization in suitable schools which presented pedagogical conditions of creating the experience; such schools should start by organizing the first cycle of the secondary teaching; there should be few experimental classes per schooling institution; the students' families should be clarified about the experience, besides authorizing the participation of the teenagers; finally, the teachers should be specially accredited (MINISTÉRIO, 1958).

In order to obtain the permission for the secondary experimental school classes, the institutions should observe the following directives: prepare the curriculum aiming at the general preparation of the students with a solid human formation content; the curricula should take into account individual abilities and

also enable the integration of several subjects; the classes should have no more than thirty students; there should be less teachers in the first years of the gymnasium; there should be periodic meetings with the teachers (class councils); and, finally, it was necessary to enable an active participation among the students, consolidating an articulated relation with the students' families (MINISTÉRIO, 1958). It was based on this regulation that the innovative experiences in Brazilian secondary schooling authorized by MEC could be conducted (DALLABRIDA, 2017).

One of MEC's concerns regarded observing these experiences throughout the time, by visiting, interviewing directors and teachers, and also applying questionnaires to teachers and the students. This routine happened every semester; and technicians from MEC were sent to observe *in loco* the practice of the experimental classes. This systematic observation resulted in a report called "Secondary Experimental Classes: assessment of an experience", published in 1963 in the Brazilian Magazine of Pedagogical Studies (CUNHA e ABREU, 1963). According to the document produced by the researchers Nadia Cunha and Jayme Abreu, until 1962, there were seven secondary schools which held secondary experimental school classes, located in Porto Alegre, Santa Maria and Passo Fundo – five of them were public, and the other two, private.

According to the report written by Cunha and Abreu (1963), in the first four years of operation of the secondary experimental school classes in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, this pedagogical experiment was implemented in five public schools – five in Porto Alegre and one in Passo Fundo, as well as in the Americano school, located in Porto Alegre, and in the Centenário School, in Santa Maria, both run by the Methodist Church. The four public schools in the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, led by UFRGS' School of Application, sent MEC a single action plan concerning the experimental class in the gymnasium course (COLÉGIO, [1959?]), and the Americano School also sent its proposal of innovating the first cycle of the secondary school (COLÉGIO, 1959). Therefore, the objective of this paper is to comprehend the prescribed school culture in these two school

documents, which present the plan for organizing the secondary experimental school classes in Porto Alegre. These documents are interpreted as proposals produced by the direction board and teachers from the schools, aiming at the authorization, by MEC, of such experimental secondary school classes.

School Culture is understood in this context, according to Julia (2001, p. 10), as “a set of *norms* that define the knowledge to be taught and conducts to induce, and a set of *practices* that allow the transmission of such knowledge” (JULIA, 2001). Based on this concept, one can say that the culture of the schooling institutions is made of learning processes to be passed on and of behaviors to be embodied by the students, which are prescribed by normative texts put into practice especially by the teacher’s mediation. Vidal and Schwartz (2010) say that authors such as Dominique Julia, Andre Chervel, Jean Claude Forquin, António Viñao Frago, and Escolano Benito invented the concept of schooling culture in a way of privileging the everyday practices in schools, which have multiple forms in nature, also involving the space (FRAGO e ESCOLANO, 2001). On the other hand, they conclude that the schooling culture practiced in classrooms generally are far less historically documented, a fact that makes its study more difficult.

The prescription of the schooling culture is done throughout prescriptive texts such as laws that rule schooling, official documents of ministries and educational secretaries, regulations and plans concerning curricula thought by schools, and teaching plans elaborated by teachers. These prescribed texts, which come from different instances, operate specific sections in the knowledge produced by society, to the extent that, based on cognitive and political criteria, some knowledge is selected and turn into learning materials (FORQUIN, 1993). It also involves the selection of strategies of transmission and assessment of the school knowledge as the control of space and time, the stimulus to the regular job, assessment devices which take place in order to induce patterns of conduct (VARELA; ALVAREZ-URÍA, 1991). As we propose to understand the plans concerning the organization of the secondary experimental school classes sent to

MEC, we are going to deal with the prescribed school culture, that is, the definition of the specific subjects and the devices through which it is transmitted and assessed.

The text is divided into two parts. The first one analyzes the document which presents the formation of the secondary experimental school classes in four schools of Porto Alegre, a collective outcome of several school units. The second part focuses on the organization plan of secondary experimental classes in the Americano School, considering its bond with the religious Methodist culture.

INTEGRATED PROPOSAL OF INNOVATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Cunha and Abreu (1963) state that, in early 1959, principals and teachers at UFRGS' School of Application, and at the three public schools in Porto Alegre, reunited to formulate a common plan to innovate the gymnasium course, which resulted in a document entitled "Plan for the Organization of an Experimental School Class in the First Secondary's Cycle (COLÉGIO, [1959?]). This plan, collectively elaborated by the four schools, was sent to MEC for its approval concerning the execution of the experimental classes by this entity of the federal government. Once it was authorized, the experiment could be conducted in the four schooling institutions. It is important to emphasize that, since its foundation in 1954, the UFRGS' School of Application aimed at offering a differentiated schooling process based on the ideals of the New School, and there is no evidence that such practices also happened in the state public schools before 1959.

On the planning elaborated by the four public schools in Porto Alegre, which aimed at integrating the secondary schooling to the previous level, the objective of the secondary classes was: "To promote directly and comprehensively the unitary development of the students' experiences and the fulfilling of their growing possibilities of integration in the areas of life" (COLÉGIO, [1959?], p. 2). According to this document elaborated by the four schools, to accomplish such

an objective, the gymnasium courses of secondary experimental school classes should be observed through the elevation of the educational standards, by differentiation and adjustment. These last ones are principles of New School followers, which envisioned to approximate schooling and the reality of Brazilian teenagers; at the same time, they aimed at the adequacy of the school process according to the wishes of the urban industrial society. To accomplish this, it would be necessary to fulfill the following requirements:

QUANTITATIVE LIMITATION: of the curriculum contents and programs, in order to achieve safe and productive educational results, within a criterion that values fundamental aspects.

STRUCTURE: able to propose valuable experiences for personal development and for the needs of life, making it possible, simultaneously, the fulfillment of the individual needs.

DINAMICITY: it has to allow the continuity of the student's movement to remain always open, aiming at his/her organic social ascension.

RESPONSIBILITY: shared not only by the members of the school organism, but also by the students and their families.

COMMUNICATION: with an environment that allows a systematic reciprocity of services, and for its better use as a resource of observation and direct experience, and also as an expression of the Brazilian and universal realities.

ORGANIZATION: in an integrative and progressive way, taking into consideration: either the way the differentiated ones on the plan are related, or the sequence of acquisitions in each one of them (COLÉGIO, [1959?], p. 1).

The prescription established that the school path should not be the same to all of the teenagers. Therefore, the first two years would be common to all students, and, in the last two years, there should be some differentiation, that is, according to their individual abilities, the teenagers would be directed to different curricula as follows: Plan A, theoretical-systematic, and Plan B, practical-functional. Plan A was to be destined to the students that wished to take the college course – the second cycle of the secondary school – or the normal school and had a more propaedeutic character. Plan B would be more suitable for

students that had practical abilities, or that needed to work immediately (COLÉGIO, [1959?]). It is important to emphasize that, even though Plan B offered a curriculum devoted to technical courses, there was the concern that it also provided humanistic contents. The intention was not to propose a strictly technical training, privileging only contents linked to the technical professional education. The prescription said that the transference of the students from one plan to another, and the articulation of the experience for students in secondary experimental school classes with the other courses, would be implemented according to the forms of adaptation already established in the country (COLÉGIO, [1959?]).

The subjects were organized into three areas. The first one would comprehend the fundamental subjects (Portuguese, History, Math, Geography and Sciences), and these contents would figure as mandatory in the two stages of the course. There was the understanding that these subjects in the first area configured “the realization of man’s life itself” (COLÉGIO, [1959?], p. 5), once it consisted in expressing oneself through the language use, the movement in time and space, and the conquer of the natural environment. The second area was consisted of foreign languages (Latin, English, French). Teaching of foreign languages would be conducted as flexibly as possible, taking into consideration the students’ features and their individual needs. Thus, the subjects related to foreign languages were put to practice in levels, from the basic level to the advanced ones; and, through tests, students were assigned the level and the classes that met their performance. This rationale would be applied in the conception of the two stages of the course (COLÉGIO, [1959?]).

The third area concerned Arts and Physical Education (it was composed of the following teaching units: Drawing, Music, Physical Education and Practical Activities); in this area, a mobile set of subjects and technical activities would be offered as eligible ones. On stage I of the gymnasium course (the two first years), these didactic units would be articulated to subjects within the other areas and aimed at collaborating, completing, and exploring the school’s educational plan,

besides helping the community, whenever circumstances demanded. On stage II of the gymnasium course, as students would be oriented towards Plan A or Plan B, this area also aimed at solving vocational questions. In this case, students could deal with some practical activities already foreseen on Plan B, which were: typing, notions on general accounting, stenography, drawing, domestic arts, mechanic arts and general crafts. In order to obtain the gymnasium course's diploma having attended Plan B, it was necessary to finish at least one of the offered courses (practical activities) (COLÉGIO, [1959?]).

The teaching methodologies, or techniques, should allow the participation of the teenagers in the tasks of planning, execution, and result verification. Therefore, some practices such as directed studies, work group, personal research and activities that entailed the creating expression were emphasized (COLÉGIO, [1959?]). It can be noticed the presence of ways of teaching which consider students as active parts in the learning process, thus their actions were encouraged and expected. The search for knowledge was rewarded and included the active participation of students.

In order to develop the course based on these features, the curricular flexibility above them all, work from the Educational Orientation Service, present in the four schools, was needed. Such a service would have to follow all the learning process concerning these students, promoting among them the appreciation of the acquired knowledge, as well as “motivating them adequately towards the options that might seem necessary” (COLÉGIO, [1959?], p. 16). This issue is treated diffusely in the secondary experimental school classes document in the four public schools studied, in the city of Porto Alegre.

The gymnasium course would be developed as a fulltime regime, totaling 32 weekly hours at maximum, including educational orientation work (an hour weekly) and religious orientation. Within the time dedicated to each subject, there would be the directed study, which, in the planning for these four schools, would be dealt with in each subject. The school year was composed by two four-month periods – the first one lasting from March to June; the second one lasting

from August to November. In both stages of the course, the majority of the classes were allocated to subjects such as Portuguese Language, Math and Foreign Language – in this precise order.

The assessment could be qualitative or quantitative, through a written report, four times a year (COLÉGIO, [1959?]). The several exams required by the Organic Law on the Secondary Teaching were substituted by procedural assessments, which had these objectives: “to support the servicing of the student in a differentiated and adjusted way”, and “to serve as a reference for the student’s classification, according to levels of optimal usage” (COLÉGIO, [1959?], p. 13). These recaps and tests should not be applied in formal assessments but added as an organic part of the studies and activities conducted. Two general result surveys were scheduled, namely: one at the end of the second year, which corresponded to the first stage of the course and aimed at orienting students that followed Plan A or Plan B studies, and another general assessment at the end of the four years of the course, aiming at the granting of the gymnasium course diploma.

The prescription stated that a weekly meeting with the principal board, the teachers and the other technical crew took place, in order to improve the coordination of the pedagogic work in secondary experimental school classes.

The admission to the gymnasium course could only be accomplished by presenting the certificate of conclusion regarding the primary course. In case the number of candidates exceeded the number of stipulated vacancies, the following selection criteria would be used: school background, age, place of residency (if close to or far from the school), if the student had already attended to the primary course in the school, socioeconomic conditions, and admission tests developed by each school (COLÉGIO, [1959?]).

Aiming at servicing the individual specificities of the distinct groups of children, principals and teachers thought of a school culture with two differentiated schooling paths in the gymnasium course, amplifying the possibilities also with optative subjects and courses. One of these paths would be more devoted to a long-term formation, aiming at undergraduate courses, and

the other one would focus on a short-term professionalizing schooling, which also included humanistic subjects. The way these choices were made by the students is an issue that History of Education still needs to study.

THE PROMISE OF AN INNOVATIVE METHODIST SCHOOL

The Methodist movement emerged in England in the 18th century, at the Oxford University, through the minister and professor John Wesley. The name “Methodist” was created in 1730 “after the feature related to systematization and organization in his intellectual, spiritual and devotional life dedicated to Christianity” (FONSECA, 2009, p. 76). The first Methodist missionaries arrived in Brazil around 1860, and their first church was settled in 1871 in Piracicaba, the Piracicabano, in 1881, dedicated to serving girls (FONSECA, 2009). In Rio Grande do Sul, the first teaching institutions were settled in Uruguaiiana: the União Institute was founded in 1870, and, in Porto Alegre, the Americano School was founded in 1885². The schools founded in the southeast and in the south of Brazil were attended by the feminine elite; they conjugated a home-devoted education with scientific contents and also oriented to the job market, which showed the pursuit of a liberal and modern education (FONSECA, 2009). In 1922, in the center of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in the city of Santa Maria, the Centenário³ school is founded, “having as first two principals two missionaries from the Episcopal Methodist Church of the South, just arrived from the United States” (FONSECA, 2009, p. 80).

After the Ministry of Culture and Education authorized the secondary experimental school classes, the direction boards and the teachers at Americano

² The Americano school was founded by the Methodist missionary born in Uruguay Carmen Chacon (FONSECA, 2009).

³ The name of this school was chosen because it was, at the time, the 100th anniversary of the Methodist missions in the United States, and also because the date also marked the 100th anniversary of Brazil’s Independence.

School sent to the responsible authorities a document entitled “Americano School – Experimental Class Plan” (COLÉGIO, 1959), in which they describe how they saw the secondary experimental school classes in this schooling establishment. Because they considered that the curriculum within the Organic Law of the Secondary School was far too segmented and long, and that it did not provide insight on the individual needs of the students, neither did it regard the time development of the children, the Americano School sought after the renovation of its secondary school. That is the reason this document had as the main objective “to fulfill, in a better and more direct way, the possibilities of development regarding students, without erasing the humanistic affection proper of the traditional gymnasium course” (COLÉGIO, 1959, p. 8). To accomplish such an objective, the experimental classes’ schedule would be in a fulltime fashion; there would be better use of the school year, once there would not be so many tests and general exams; the curriculum would be organized in departments with integrating activities; the school work would be organized in unities that would contemplate all the departments aiming at a more globalized work, and with a continuous evaluation process on the school work (COLÉGIO, 1959).

The Educational Orientation Service, already operative in the school since the 1930s, would keep their basic line of work, namely: work groups, participation of the school community, helping with curriculum elaboration, and suggesting activities that could enrich the school experience, not to mention individual advice and case studies that deserved more attention. The new activities that the Educational Orientation would start to perform in an experimental character, due to the secondary experimental school classes, would be included in these guidelines and gradually be consolidated in the routine of this service. The objective of the Educational Orientation Service in the secondary experimental classes was defined in the Americano School document as follows:

To individually meet the students’ demands determining their character, their abilities, and their interests, so they can have the adequate environment to the shaping of personality towards integrity

resulting from the updating of their potentialities. To adjust them to life through living experiences that conduct them to a healthy philosophy of life based on the transcendental values of Christianity (COLÉGIO, 1959, p. 14).

The Educational Orientation Service used the following techniques to conduct its job: it would compile a cumulative file of the student; it would assess the discrepancies between I.Q. and the individual performance; it would guide the writing of an autobiography; it demanded the filling of a collection of anecdotes; it applied the sociogram⁴ technique, as well as it interviewed the families and the students, always observing the routine of the school. These were the activities that involved the entire body of teachers. In some cases, through the information obtained with these applications, the Educational Orientation Service required the participation of the Psychology Office to address some situations with the students (COLÉGIO, 1959).

The installation of the experience concerning the Experimental Secondary School Classes was an opportunity to turn the curriculum into something more flexible, that is, an opportunity to adequate the contents and experiences to the “character” and to the “interests and abilities”, and it was the Educational Orientation Service’s duty to psychologically assess the students and be the link between this knowledge and the curricular planning. Such a flexibility in the curriculum aimed at the development of the personality of the students as a whole, that is, it related to the following areas: Philosophy of Life and Religion; Family Relations; Sympathy and Personal Enchantment; Physical Health; International Relations; Work and Study; Community Relations; Vocational Preferences; Free time and Leisure.

The document “Americano School – Experimental Class Plan”

⁴ The sociogram consists of a graphic that aims at making visible what is invisible, that is, the way in which the relations among the members of a certain group are established. Such a graphic is obtained through the application of the Sociometric technique created by the Romanian psychiatrist Jacob Levi Moreno. This technique consists in the application of a questionnaire to each member of the group about his/her preferences or rejections concerning the people pertaining to this group (MORENO, 1992).

(COLÉGIO, 1959) details the school culture, starting by the activities coordinated by the Educational Orientation Service itself, through its counselors. In each class a teacher was chosen either by the students or by the educational adviser as a counselor, somebody to be present helping the students in a given group whenever needed, and also organizing activities as directed home-classes (a group of students would daily meet at somebody's house to attend to a class given by the counselor), clubs (in this period, 23 clubs were offered), students assemblies (twice a week, these would work on oratory abilities), charity activities (developed the sense of responsibility with the community and its members), social activities (in which male students were also invited) and trips (aimed to explore the subjects seen in class) (COLÉGIO, 1959).

It is worth mentioning that the institution would offer 23 different clubs and the attendance to these clubs had a special function in the role of orientation, once the students chose or were guided to choose the associations that fit their abilities, interests, and preferences the most. The group work also had a privileged spot in the activities conducted in the clubs, because it was expected that it would be something spontaneous, considering that the interests among the students who attended to each club were similar. The directive board and the teachers at the Americano School believed that the informal contact in the clubs, when mediated by real situations, played quite important a role in the schooling process (COLÉGIO, 1959).

When it comes to the subjects, the first and second series of the gymnasium were divided into four departments, with mandatory subjects: 1. Languages Department (Portuguese and English); 2. Sciences Department (Math and Social Sciences); 3. Arts Department (Sculpture, Ceramics, Metal Work, Music and Physical Education); and 4. Department of Educational and Integrating Institutions of the Curriculum (Getting to Know our Wonderful World, Arts Appreciation, World and National Informative Bulletin, Typing, Health Troops, Our Friends from Other Lands, Home Activities, Sports, Civism and Religious Education). It is emphasized that in each one of the institutions

there would be elective activities, and that the individual differences would be fulfilled in each subject (COLÉGIO, 1959).

The third and fourth series in the gymnasium course were organized into five departments, and, at this stage, it was possible to choose between mandatory and elective subjects. In the first department, devoted to languages, the mandatory subjects were Portuguese and Latinity and English, while the elective ones were French and Latin. The second department dealt with sciences and had as mandatory subjects Math, Social Sciences and Science Initiation; the elective subjects were Mathematical Theories, Botany and Zoology or Physics and Chemistry. The third department comprehended Arts and included subjects such as Visual Arts, Music and Physical Education as the mandatory ones, and History of Art and Music as the elective ones. The fourth department had a technical character and was composed of elective subjects only: Typing and Home Economics. The fifth department dealt with educational and integrating institutions for the curriculum and had the same subjects as department number four in the first series of the gymnasium course (COLÉGIO, 1959). The document written by the Americano School also describes each subject's program, demonstrating the knowledge perspectives for each series within the gymnasium course.

The secondary experimental school classes would work fulltime, that is, 30 weekly hours. The students would attend to class every morning and afternoon. In the morning period, essential subjects would be taught, as well as other activities related to the Educational Orientation Service. In the evening, students would work on the directed study and on integrative activities related to the curriculum. The afternoons would also be destined to fulfill the group's needs in a flexible fashion. The school year would be divided into two periods of four months: the first one from March 1st to June 30th, and the second one from August 1st to November 30th (COLÉGIO, 1959).

Beyond the subjects to be taught, there were the conducts that composed the prescribed school culture in the planning of the secondary experimental

school classes. This item is expressed when the text mentions the concept of educated person, who would be somebody eager to learn, worried about her health, as well as about people under their care; a person who directs her own life, who uses the free time to practice sports and admire art; somebody who also appreciates the family as an institution, keeping her ideals, being capable of working and playing with other people; somebody who feels satisfied in being a good worker, who takes care of her financial life and has civic responsibilities, observing the laws (COLÉGIO, 1959). In this regard, some attitudes and values that define the schooling routine are described.

According to the document “Americano School – Experimental Class Plan” (COLÉGIO, 1959) , the assessment of the female students would be conducted based on the following criteria: pre-tests, tests, and re-tests, concerning the content taught; assiduity; interest; participation; results in individual and work group research, and the teacher’s evaluation. The students that showed any fragility in learning would take part in recap classes and also be guided in directed studies. These actions aimed at avoiding failures. Only at the end of fourth grade, a general test would be applied to ensure the granting of the certificate regarding the gymnasium course. This assessment would be conducted through an objective test about general knowledge, an objective test about the contemporary world knowledge, a vocabulary test, and a written and oral presentation on a topic randomly assigned 24 hours in advance (COLÉGIO, 1959). It was also established in the document a comparative study between the performance of the students in the Secondary Experimental Classes and of the students enrolled in the traditional course.

In the prescription “Americano School – Experimental Class Plan”, there are also criteria that would be used to select the students who would take part in the experimental secondary school classes. Initially, these criteria were not taken into consideration, and all candidates would be accepted, but, if a selection were necessary in the middle of the experiment, age would be the first criterion. Only girls who turned 11 until June 30rd during the school year, or the ones who were

12 and a half years old at maximum at the moment of enrollment, would be accepted. This aspect was based on the notion that, for an experience like this, the ideal situation would involve homogeneous classes in terms of age. Another aspect to be evaluated for the selection was the non-acceptance of students who could possibly be transferred.

The cooperation of the family would also be seen as a favorable point for the acceptance of the secondary experimental school classes. If necessary, the institution would propose meetings with the candidates and their relatives to explain the characteristics of the experiment and assess the agreement from the family when it came to fulltime schooling, acquisition of the resources needed, availability to participate in events, among other school situations. And, finally, the students who came from the own institution's primary school would be given the preference to enroll in the Secondary Experimental School Classes. The possible giving of tests and exams would also be considered, if, during the experience, the school deemed it necessary.

TheAmericano School saw in the Secondary Experimental School Classes the possibility to offer the Secondary School to the daughters of the elite from the south of Brazil, without being rigidly attached to the Secondary School's Organic Law. They made the organization of the subjects more flexible, promoting articulations between them and inserting in the curriculum knowledge and several practices that they deemed important for the plain development of young women devoted to servicing the needs of marriage and family constitution, as well as to the home management and all their home chores. At the same time, they offered the possibility of preparation for a future profession, with the scientific and literary subjects, as well as practical subjects that could serve as a preparation for labor beyond the home realm.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the Secondary Experimental School Classes was to make the curricular structure more flexible, so schools could include teenagers and their individualities, expanding this level of schooling to different social extracts and allowing that this stage in teaching fulfilled other objectives other than the mere preparation to the enrollment in undergraduate courses. Therefore, this kind of classes was supported by the New School's ideals, which contemplated students as the main part in the process and, once knowing him/her, the school could adjust the curriculum to motivate them, offering a schooling process connected to his/her life and future purposes.

In the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in the first four years of the MEC-regulated experience, its broader circulation was in the public-school institutions (five) comparing to confessional schools (two). This situation differs from the ones in other states in Brazil, such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, for instance, in which the circulation was more intense in private catholic schools. The presence of the secondary experimental classes in confessional Methodist institutions must also be pointed out. The group concerning the public schools and the one concerning the private and confessional schools planed distinct school cultures in the plans that aimed at authorizing the implementation of the Secondary Experimental School Classes.

The public schools, which had a diffuse attendance, offered two types of courses: Plan A and Plan B. These different courses also had elective subjects and different professionalizing paths. The ways in which the student's choices would be made deserved more studies, but, in this paper, it is possible to observe the flexibility and the concern for offering a curricular path focused on professionalization, which also valued the integral education of students. The permanence in the fulltime school was also a change in relation to the Secondary School's Organic Law; in addition, the assessment became procedural, and not rigid, through tests and general exams.

On the other hand, as a private and Methodist institution, the Americano School attracted more equal students, once they came from the elite, were female, and believed in the Methodist religion, or were sympathetic to these religious practices. A school model based on these teaching features reflects them in their curricular design. There was only one course, even though the club activities and elective subjects were wide. These social segmentations always appeared on the contents approached. There was a concern in the Methodist education about the scientific knowledge and the training for professionalization, together with subjects and actions devoted to the education of the good wife, mother, and housewife.

It is pointed out, both in the public schools and private ones, such as in the Americano School, the centrality of the School Orientation Service, which was mandatory for the concession of the secondary experimental classes. It was from the educational orientation's work that the knowledge about the capacities, interests and abilities was built. Based on this information, it was possible to plan strategies so that each student could be educated in an integral way. It was this department that connected the students' individual features and the pedagogic work.

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Recebido em: 06 de maio de 2020

Aprovado em: 15 de setembro de 2020

Editora responsável: Dóris Almeida

