

Eva Gomes and the historical-educational trajectory of the former Conceição do Buraco-CE

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Abstract

This study presents research conducted using the oral history method, aiming to share accounts of the pedagogical experiences of teacher Eva Gomes, the first educator in the former district of Conceição do Buraco – na area now submerged by the waters of the Orós Reservoir, in Orós, Ceará, Brazil. Accordingly, the research follows a qualitative approach, and its typology aligns with both biographical and field research, combining elements of semi-structured interviews with theoretical support. Furthermore, in the Results and discussion section, we explore issues related to the interviewee's academic background, her early teaching career, the community's and school's context, the teaching methods used in that historical setting, and the sociocultural impacts of the region on the educational process. Finally, the educator's memories allowed us to identify the educational challenges faced by rural society in Ceará during the 20th century.

Keywords: Oral history. Education. Teaching. Ceará.

Eva Gomes e o percurso histórico-educacional da antiga Conceição do Buraco-CE

Resumo

O presente estudo trata de uma pesquisa desenvolvida mediante o método de história oral, de modo a apresentar relatos de vivências pedagógicas da professora Eva Gomes, a primeira docente do antigo distrito de Conceição do Buraco – atualmente submerso pelas águas do Açude Orós, em Orós-CE. Diante disso, a abordagem utilizada na produção deste trabalho é qualitativa; além disso, sua tipologia se enquadra na pesquisa biográfica e de campo, combinando elementos de entrevista semiestruturada com suporte teórico. Ademais, na seção de Resultados e discussões, levantamos questões referentes à formação acadêmica da entrevistada, prosseguindo sobre sua fase inicial no magistério, a realidade da comunidade e do ambiente escolar, as técnicas de ensino aplicadas naquela conjuntura histórica e os efeitos socioculturais da região no processo didático. Por fim, as memórias da educadora nos permitiram reconhecer os

desafios enfrentados no âmbito educacional pela sociedade interiorana do Ceará, especialmente da cidade de Orós-CE, no século XX.

Palavras-chave: História oral. Educação. Docência. Ceará.

1 Introduction

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The settlement of Conceição do Buraco, which currently refers to the district of Guassussê/Orós-CE, lies submerged beneath the waters of the Juscelino Kubitschek Dam, better known as the Orós Dam. Nevertheless, its former inhabitants, who moved to other districts of Orós, such as Guassussê, Palestina and Santarém, as well as to several municipalities when the locality was flooded, preserve the memories of their place of origin, passing down to later generations the stories lived in the former community. Among these experiences, we address that of the first teacher of Conceição do Buraco, Eva Gomes Juvenço, who recounts her teaching practice from the events preceding the construction of the reservoir to the rebuilding of the village in a new location.

In light of the above, we carried out a biographical study of the educator mentioned in the previous paragraph in order to understand the educational contexts and procedures used in the community during the period highlighted by the interviewee, the mid twentieth century. Accordingly, we discuss as a central issue the importance of gathering teaching experiences through the method of oral history, recognizing traditional praxes that have influenced changes in the present time, as well as accounts that were, for the most part, overlooked by official historiography (Burke, 1992).

In addition, the authors' interest in this theme is justified by their appreciation of the memories of the places where they live, as well as by their participation in the Scientific Initiation Project *Memories, narratives and the reconstitution of the history of education in the Center-South of Ceará in the twentieth century*, affiliated with the Pedagogy program at the School of Education, Sciences and Letters of Iguatu (FECLI/UECE). This project aims to carry out a historical reconstitution of education in the Center-South region of Ceará from the perspective of subjects such as students, teachers and education professionals throughout the twentieth century.

Furthermore, we establish as the general objective of this manuscript the legitimization of the pedagogical memories narrated by Eva Gomes, a teacher from the former Conceição do Buraco, between 1944 and 1982. The specific objectives are to analyze the academic and professional training contexts of the interviewee, to describe and examine the educational techniques employed in the twentieth century in the now defunct settlement, and to associate the declarant's experiences with the theoretical framework, fostering dialogue between local education and the macrosocial aspects that shape it.

Given the above, we emphasize that the relevance of this study lies in the sociocultural sphere, for amid the collective memory portrayed in the respondent's accounts, we infer that through her testimony, the history of the village and its residents is explored from the standpoint of teaching. This reveals the value of instruction for the region at that time, which is often viewed today merely as an obligation.

2 Methodological paths

The present study was conducted in light of a qualitative approach, since it is not limited to numerical findings. In addition, we relied on the deductive method which, according to Severino (2013), concerns the line of reasoning that guides research, with its initial arguments composed of universal principles that move toward more specific inquiries.

From this perspective, we invested in biographical and field research. The former was supported by a theoretical framework consisting of contributions from authors such as Sousa (1961), Fernandes, Sousa, Santos (2022) and others who address the historiography of education in Ceará and in Brazil during the twentieth century. As for the second type, we interviewed Ms. Eva Gomes Juvenço, the first educator of the former settlement of Conceição do Buraco. The interview took place in the teacher's own home in Guassussê/Orós-CE on December 17, 2024.

With regard to this, the interview was planned based on the guidelines of Ruiz (1996), who argues that an interview should center on dialogue with the participant,

allowing them to feel at ease so that essential data can be efficiently gathered. Furthermore, questions to be asked of the respondent were outlined, though not strictly adhered to, in order to keep the conversation as fluid as possible, in line with the techniques of semi-structured interviews recommended for such production by Castro and Oliveira (2022).

We also equipped ourselves with a notebook and pen for taking notes, as well as a cellphone to record the entire interview. It is worth noting that we used Google Docs to transcribe the teacher's statements. Thus, both the Free and Informed Consent Form (TCLE) and the Interview Validation Form were objectively presented and signed. The TCLE explained the research objective, the teacher's role as a participant and the manner in which the data would be disclosed, while the validation form reaffirmed Eva Gomes's consent to the dissemination of the information.

The interview, conducted in accordance with oral history principles as methodology (Meihy, Holanda, 2007), took place on December 17, 2024, at the residence of Eva Gomes in Orós-CE, and lasted fifty-five minutes and eight seconds. Validation of the narratives documented herein occurred on January 25, 2025, during which the biographed teacher was able to reaffirm the information previously shared, as well as add and/or remove certain passages as she wished.

Therefore, data analysis was supported by oral history methodology which, according to Freitas (2006), enables interaction between written and oral sources and furthermore requires the researcher to develop a project that defines the theme and objectives, organizes an outline and its strategies for conducting the work, produces a transcription that is preferably faithful to the original language of the selected subject, and finally observes all ethical and legal considerations.

It is also emphasized that we chose to preserve the oral quality of the biographed teacher's speech exactly as she narrated it, as we understand that it carries traces of a regional identity worth maintaining in a biographical text that speaks not only about the teacher herself, but also about the regional, social and cultural context that frames her.

3 Accounts of the pedagogical experience of Eva Gomes

In this section, we articulate the experiences recounted by a teacher from the former Conceição do Buraco-CE in light of theoretical support, so as to understand the circumstances, structure and functioning related to teaching in the community between 1944 and 1982. From this standpoint, we encounter other educational realities that existed in the interior of the state of Ceará during the period portrayed, which dialogue with the events narrated by the interviewee of this study. In sum, as we examine the beginning of the teacher's pedagogical journey and then the sociocultural conditions and practices found in that place, we can perceive the applicability of the educational philosophies used at the time, noting that certain approaches were abandoned while others remained or evolved, shaping today's educational models.

For greater reading clarity and textual organization, the discussion of the research findings is divided into topics, namely: First steps in teaching, in which we address the academic trajectory of the biographed educator; Context of practice, which discusses the structural and operational aspects of the school environment described by the interviewee; Tracing the lines of literacy, which details the instructional strategies adopted by the collaborator in this study; and The sociocultural influence on the teaching and learning process of Eva Gomes, which presents points related to the cultures, traditions and social praxes that constitute the everyday life of the region's residents.

3.1 First steps in teaching

The participant in this research, Eva Gomes Juvenço, was born on December 20, 1929, in the community of Conceição do Buraco, where she was also baptized and married, though she spent her childhood and adolescence in Orós, which at the time was a district of Icó-CE, in order to study. In addition, she has five siblings, two men and three women,

and seven children, one man and six women. With this in mind, at the beginning of our conversation, the interviewee recounted how her education unfolded in the place where she grew up:

[...] At that time it was the late Maria de Seu Gabriel, she was the teacher but... she taught up to the fourth grade. So I only studied up to the fourth grade, there was nowhere else to go. Those who could would go take the admissão exam in Icó, and those who could not stayed with only the fourth grade, because there was no teacher to teach beyond that, it was behind (Gomes, 2024).

In view of this, we perceive that before its emancipation, Orós had an incomplete educational system, which offered schooling only up to the fourth grade. Those who had the financial means had to travel to the municipal seat, Icó, in order to complete their studies. This was contingent upon passing the admission exam mentioned by the biographed teacher, a mechanism similar to a college entrance exam aimed at selecting the *best* students while leaving many others on the margins (Saviani, 2013). In addition, the participant mentions the name of the teacher Maria, who was the mother of the former mayor of Orós known as Dr. Leimar (in memoriam), and then describes the location of the school: “[...] there was a hou... big house like that... a chalet, that was the school [...] It was... Facing the city hall, with the school on the side of the stream, that... culvert. [...] There was only that school and it only taught up to the fourth grade” (Gomes, 2024).

We thus note that, at the time, there was only one school to meet the community's existing needs and to contribute to the intellectual development of its residents. As Fernandes, Sousa and Santos (2022) point out, even though education was offered only up to the fourth grade, for the period in question that context represented progress for the reality of the Ceará hinterland, given that in many other small localities there was not even a formal educational institution.

Furthermore, having completed her schooling through the fourth grade, the teacher biographed in this study decided to return to her birthplace, Conceição do Buraco, which today lies within the municipality of Orós-CE but at the time was located within the territory of Icó-CE, with the aim of beginning her career in teaching:

So I went back, I was 15 years old, then I went to where my mother was, and there I started teaching private lessons, I came up with the idea of teaching, because there was no school there, there was no one who even knew... knew how to sign their name to vote, and only those who knew how to sign their name could vote. So I started teaching... private lessons. There were even old folks of... fifty-something years studying, and it was mostly at night with... lamplight. Do you think that was good?! (the interviewee laughs) [...] (Gomes, 2024).

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In the citation above, the teacher discusses the beginning of her trajectory as a professional, which started when she was between 15 and 16 years old, as a lay teacher, that is, without specific training for teaching (Fernandes, Sousa, Santos, 2022). In view of this, when she observed the reality of the community, which had no school and displayed a high rate of illiteracy, she took the initiative to teach privately the knowledge she had acquired during her time in Orós. Thus, this teacher's entry into the teaching field resembles the path experienced by Maria Fernandes in Quixadá-CE, another inland municipality, as discussed by Fernandes, Sousa and Santos (2022, p. 1104):

[...] Thus, in the absence of a school, Maria Fernandes's father ensured her studies by paying a woman in the region who had little schooling and who gave private lessons to those whose parents could pay with the aim of teaching them to read and write, which once again marks the social distinction of her family background, which had the means to invest financially so that she could have access to literacy [...].

In the passage above, we observe that the authors address the issue of literacy, which was the primary goal to be achieved by the inland population in order to secure their rights, among which was the right to vote. Based on this, the teacher Eva Gomes highlights that only those who knew how to sign their name were allowed to vote, adding that she taught even people over 50 years old with the aim of helping them fulfill their desire to exercise citizenship. This was a reality that affected not only people in Ceará, but many other Brazilians as well, given that the correlation between voting and literacy only came to an end in 1985, in the first election after the Military Dictatorship, when illiterate citizens were finally able to vote (Saviani, 2013).

Thus, it became necessary to create a space and, above all, to ensure that the entire community had free access to education, a challenge faced by Eva Gomes with some difficulties, as she narrated:

[...] Then later I stayed, then Seu Eliseu, he protected me a lot, he helped me so much. He liked me, I was raised with them, right?! Then... he found a... [school] for me to teach through the city hall of Icó, because in Orós there was nothing [...] So I started... he found a way for me to teach through the city hall of Icó. Then I... had a little school, but... there were no chairs, there was... no blackboard, we did all the work in notebooks, do you think that was a sacrifice?! Doing everything in notebooks and they copied from the notebook (the interviewee laughs a little) [...] (Gomes, 2024).

As we see in the citation, it was through the respondent's friendship with Eliseu Batista (in memoriam), former mayor of Orós, that the inhabitants of Conceição do Buraco had the opportunity to study, free of charge, the essential knowledge for their education. Taking this into account, we observe the influence of a political figure, a man, in the teacher's entry into professional employment, a situation also described by Sousa (2023) in his doctoral dissertation in Education, in which, when biographing two teachers from the interior of Ceará, he found that both began their teaching careers through connections they had with influential men in local politics. Therefore, it becomes evident that this was a common reality in the twentieth century, when women were subjected to patriarchal structures and required the support of a man, often submitting themselves to clientelism in order to enter the job market, particularly positions tied to municipal governments.

In this regard, the teacher states that she began to receive in her classes a diverse group of students, starting at seven years of age. However, the school environment lacked resources, such as chairs and a blackboard, and she had to write the content in her own notebook so that the students could later copy it into their learning materials. As a result, given the low financial condition of many of her students, many erased what they had already written so they could write again and reuse the notebook pages. Thus, we draw an analogy with the analysis of Fernandes, Sousa and Santos (2022, p. 1109):

In the absence of a school space, the environment where Maria Fernandes taught was her own home. There, there was a large wooden table and benches; there was no blackboard, so she taught by writing in the children's notebooks. And despite the difficulties, the children learned to write, to read words, sentences and short texts [...].

Considering the excerpt above, we identify that the lack of school supplies is one of the obstacles present in the experiences of two teachers, the interviewee in this study and the one referenced by the authors, from different localities in the state of Ceará. In this sense, both had to reinvent their teaching methodology, seeking to carry out the teaching and learning process with the resources available to them. As a result, the participant in this study reports that once public education began to be offered, the demand for students increased, and she eventually had more than fifty in the same classroom:

[...] Then... teaching, it started, then there were too many children, there were fifty-something children, I could not teach... [...] In the same room. From literacy onward, I would teach... Since I had only completed the fourth grade, I would teach up to the fourth grade and whoever went to... Icó, to take the exam, would pass. Do you think so?! [...] I liked teaching, what I knew, I taught. I taught, there were... there were those grammar books, Portuguese, there was everything, yeah... then we would teach [...] Then I taught all... all the verbs, all, everything there was, whatever there was I taught. [...] (Gomes, 2024).

In light of the above, we find that the demand for formal knowledge was significant in the community, revealing at first glance a sense of overload on the local teacher. Nevertheless, she emphasizes that she was proud of her work, for even though she had studied only up to the fourth grade, she obtained promising results from her class, including students who, upon going to study in the municipal seat, Icó, were able to achieve satisfactory scores on the admission exam. Finally, we asked whether the materials, such as the Grammar book, were provided by the municipal government, and the interviewee replied that she had kept these items from the time she was a student in the school of Orós. In other words, they were not resources funded by the city hall for the teacher, but materials she had used as a student and that served as support for her lessons, which once again highlights the precarious state of education in the Ceará hinterland (Sousa, 1961).

3.2 Context of practice

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A school is not limited to the architectural structure that constitutes it, but expands in synchrony with its functioning in order to ensure the integral development of individuals (Pereira, Macêdo, 2018). From this perspective, we perceive that in various settings of Brazilian public education, applicability outweighs the infrastructure of educational institutions, thereby compromising the quality of the pedagogical system. In this regard, the teacher Eva Gomes recounts that, even while accommodating the entire community in the school space, the salary she received was incompatible with the workload that had been assigned to her:

[...] Then... it went on, then it kept increasing, it kept increasing, then... but I only taught one shift because the money... I do not think I earned even one real at that time. It seems it was ten cents (the interviewee laughs a little), I have the card, I have the card that was signed, but that was already here, but I do not even know what the total was. [...] (Gomes, 2024).

In light of the account above, we asked the participant whether she could show her work card so we could understand the amounts mentioned. With her permission, we examined her employment record, which lists her first payment as fifteen cents in March 1957. In 1958, the amount listed is Cr\$ 0.35; in 1961, Cr\$ 1.50; and the value increases each year, with the final recorded amount being Cr\$ 5,700.00 in October 1982. With that established, we asked how classes were conducted in Conceição do Buraco, to which she replied:

[...] Then there was no school group, there was nothing. So I found a... a little space to teach, but... we brought the chairs ourselves, because there were no chairs, there was no blackboard, it was as I told you, it was writing... in the notebooks for the children [...] No, they brought them, because I did not have chairs for a bunch of children. It kept increasing, increasing, it started only at the beginning because no one knew, right?! But when... the word got out that there was this teacher, then children came from... the surrounding areas... the whole village of Conceição to study. That is it, people came from... more than a league away to study, because there was no school and people had the desire to learn, right?! And I wanted to, I enjoyed teaching, I would teach until 11 o'clock, and if that was not enough time, I stayed longer, earning a pittance (the interviewee laughs) [...] (Gomes, 2024).

As narrated above, in the village of Conceição do Buraco there was no dedicated space for conducting classes, so the biographed teacher made an effort to provide an environment that could accommodate the students under the conditions available, a reality common in the Ceará hinterland, as shown in Sousa's (1961) study, in which he traveled through various cities of Ceará and found that teachers themselves were responsible for equipping the spaces where they taught. In this regard, students had to bring their own seats to attend class, since the space was not supported by the government. Nevertheless, due to the spread of free education in that locality, residents of surrounding areas committed themselves to traveling long distances in search of the instruction essential to their lives. The participant notes that class hours were set from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.; however, because of the large number of students, there were occasions when this period was exceeded in order to attend to everyone and teach the lesson.

With respect to this, Pereira and Macêdo (2018) address the contexts related to multigrade schools in Brazil, which was precisely the model of school in effect during Eva Gomes's teaching years, highlighting the perspectives associated with this educational method:

A large portion of multigrade schools in rural areas are located in small communities far from municipal centers, where various factors directly affect teaching practice. These schools, in addition to facing challenges related to operating conditions, deal with the stereotyped view that the heterogeneity found in multigrade classrooms is an obstacle to what is classified as quality education [...]. (Pereira; Macêdo, 2018, p. 152).

With regard to this scenario, we understand that, because of the difficulties surrounding multigrade schools and the locations in which they were generally situated, society viewed them as inferior institutions. However, despite the obstacles faced by the interviewee and other teachers who experienced this reality, this does not mean that the multigrade methodology was unproductive; on the contrary, at that time, having the opportunity to study was an achievement for the community. Thus, multigrade schools and classes represented in Brazil a highly valuable opportunity for educational development in more remote communities (Sousa, 2023). With that in mind, the declarant continues reporting that the school environment itself posed yet another challenge to be resolved:

No, I would not teach... I taught in the... when they put it in the engine room after they had already removed the engine that provided the electricity. [...] After they removed it, [...] I started teaching, there was nothing there, it was just the hall, which belonged to the father of... the late Alfredo Mossoró, they lived there and had gone away to Macambeira, and it was closed, then my... they gave it to me so I could teach. [...] Yes, I already taught in the engine room, but after they removed it, because they tore down the one where I taught, then I went to teach in a house behind the church, which belonged to... the owner of the Patrimônio, then... I left, and when I came back I was teaching where the engine had been, then they tore it down and gave me the materials so I could bring them and make my little mud house, [...] Yes, it was just moving around, people already tearing down the houses, people tearing down the houses to bring them here. (Gomes, 2024).

According to the excerpt above, due to the absence of a fixed property, the school underwent changes in its physical space, a fact that corresponds to Pereira and Macêdo's (2018) assertion regarding the difficulties connected to the functioning of the educational establishment. The interviewee reports having taught in a property that was closed because the owners had moved away; later, classes came to be held in the hall that had housed the power generator; and afterward, instructional meetings took place in a house behind the Mother Church. Thus, this illustrates part of the obstacles faced by the teaching profession, especially in the interior of the *terras alencarinas*, which was neglected by public authorities (Sousa, 1961) and, in a certain way, reinforced the spread of disparaging stereotypes about rural schools.

Furthermore, upon learning that the participant attended to students of varied age groups, we asked which employment sectors the families of the community were involved in, and in response we found that: “[...] They were, in the fields. There we barely got by, because there was no... work, wasn't there?! The place was poor, the little village very small and poor. [...]” (Gomes, 2024). In light of the economic situation described by the educator, it became an object of interest for us to investigate what impact financial conditions might have had on the students' performance, to which she addressed the following:

[...] Yes, the adults... those adults I taught at night, I think I even did... I started with private lessons, but... I do not know if... I continued teaching at night. Because during the day it was only the children, the students... not the adults, they were all in the fields. [...] Yes, they only went to study. They went every day. There was the afternoon, wasn't there?! I taught in the morning. Then they had the afternoon to work with their father. [...] (Gomes, 2024).

As a result, we find that adults attended classes in the evening, since during the day they worked in their fields; children, on the other hand, studied in the morning and could go to work with their guardians in the afternoon, because, as Sousa (2023) explains, it was crucial for inland communities to involve children in agriculture from an early age, as this was the means through which families secured their livelihood. Moreover, we see in Eva Gomes's account that on every school day the children were present in the instructional meetings, confirming that families viewed this opportunity as a priority in the lives of their descendants, despite the fact that they were also part of the agricultural workforce. Thus, the rural inhabitants reconciled farm work and schooling, hoping that the young would not grow up in idleness and would develop both intellectually and socially.

3.3 Tracing the lines of literacy

The objects of knowledge defined by the BNCC (Brazil, 2017) refer to what the student will learn in accordance with the curriculum component addressed in class. Although the terminology is current, in earlier times teachers were already working with content in the classroom, aiming for students to apply what they had learned in their daily lives. With this in mind, we spoke with the teacher about the concepts addressed in class, and she explains the following:

There were argyment days on Saturdays, there were argyment. I do not know who got rid of... well, the paddle I brought, I had such a well-made paddle, but I do not know who... got rid of it... I think I was not giving swats anymore (the interviewee laughs) [...] then I would say this and that, and... the one who did not know would pass it to the one in front, the one in front if they did not know would pass it along, and if it got to me... then that was it. If no one knew and I was the one who had to say it, then swats for everyone [...] (Gomes, 2024).

In view of this, the *argyment* that the interviewee mentions refers to the spelling activity, which in that context involved punishments with a paddle for those who mispronounced the letters. With regard to this, Graça (2002) states that the paddle was a wooden implement used by the Jesuits to inflict violence on Indigenous peoples who

resisted acculturation and that it later made its way into classrooms, where it was used to strike the palms of students who were undisciplined or who did not know how to answer the lesson, as in the case described by Eva Gomes. The teacher recalls her paddle with nostalgia when she would show it to visitors; in addition, she explains the procedure used in administering the spelling exercise, noting that she would do it in rows and, in the end, if no one knew how to spell a given word, all were penalized with paddle strikes.

In addition to this, the participant goes on to recount other subjects she taught, among them penmanship, which exercised students' handwriting in order to improve the form of their letters:

[...] The penmanship lessons were to make... one... I would write "I like to study very much," then write the lowercase alphabet and the capital alphabet to see who made the best letters, everyone to see if they made the letters well. [...] It was on Saturdays, they would write three lines [...] of the names, "I like to stu...", any sentence, "I like to study," "I like to play," any sentence at all, they would write it three times, then write the lowercase alphabet and the capital alphabet. Then they would write their name. (Gomes, 2024).

Given this, we highlight that at that time great value was placed on handwriting that was not only legible but beautifully formed. Moreover, the practice relied on repetition, aiming for students to internalize the content taught through a teaching approach grounded in traditional and mnemonic instruction (Saviani, 2013). In this sense, the teacher asked the class to write three times, in their notebooks, any sentence from their daily lives, as well as the alphabet in both uppercase and lowercase forms; in addition, each student was to write their own name. Consequently, Eva Gomes speaks about another method she used in the literacy process, called Dictation: "And the dictation, for... we... looked for a reading, then I wo... was there with the book and dictating this and that, and they writing over there... then when they finished the whole reading, writing it, then I would correct it to... see the mistakes there were, some people had few mistakes, but some... wrote very wrong. [...]" (Gomes, 2024).

From the account above, we notice that the teacher relied on a book from which she read aloud so that the class could copy the words she pronounced and later correct

the grammatical deviations found in students' writing. Similarly, Viana (2021, p. 78) states that Dictation, at its core, involves "[...] words being dictated by teachers and written in notebooks by students. It is a practice that survives to this day with the goal of highlighting spelling errors [...]". From this, we understand that this teaching practice applied by the biographed teacher and discussed by the aforementioned scholar is a highly common systematization, especially in the period during which Eva Gomes taught in the community of Conceição do Buraco. Thus, we asked the participant whether there were punishments for students whose lessons contained many errors in Penmanship and Dictation, and she stated that there were not; reprimands were applied only in the *argymnt*.

Because of this, we asked what types of punishments were used to correct the students and promote their learning, and, in response, we obtained the following:

[...] I would put them in time-out, or give swats if they were ill-behaved, the... my school was disciplined, no one got up, no one talked, it was only studying. Came to see what? Came to study? Then, well, it is for studying. You did not come to talk or to make fun, you came to study and not to get up. [...] That is it, well... [...] those who did not want to study then I would put behind the door and prop the door so they stayed behind it or else they would go home or not go to recess, it was... and today the children practically beat the teachers. [...] That is it, I would say: "Look, your mother is at home, but here it is me, you do what I tell you to do" [...] (Gomes, 2024).

Supported by the excerpt above, we identify the following methods of correction used for students who were not committed to their studies: the use of the paddle, losing recess, being kept behind the door, or being sent home. From this perspective, the teacher believed she would achieve, as a result, a class composed of obedient and respectful students — so much so that she states that her school was disciplined — and, consequently, would obtain positive performance in assessments. Therefore, these practices also reinforced the teacher's authority in the classroom, instilling in students the obligation to show respect to that professional. Similar to this, Sousa (2023) explores the issue of the use of physical punishments in the school environment in the excerpt below:

Following this perspective, in order to achieve success in teaching, physical punishments, such as the paddle, were common in teachers' practices, who used them as negative reinforcements through which they believed they were educating

their students [...] This practice created conflicts between teachers and students and parents, but it was also crucial for them to be regarded, even today, as good education professionals in their places of work [...] (Sousa, 2023, p. 170).

Based on this, we understand that although these punitive mechanisms used by educators at the time carried negative implications — and could produce in certain students a feeling of coercion — they also reinforced a positive effect on the teacher's professional image. In this regard, the declarant even notes that she was often invited by her students to serve as *madrinha de São João*, a traditional role linked to the June festivities, attesting to the respect and affection she earned as a teacher. Thus, although we consider them inappropriate today, the punishments employed in the teaching profession of past centuries reveal that, even with changing educational conceptions, they were crucial for learning and for forming students' collective memory.

Furthermore, Eva Gomes herself mentions that before she began her teaching career in Conceição do Buraco, there was a man who already taught in that locality and relied on brutal methods, showing that the educational practices of the time were not limited to the interviewee:

[...] Yes, there was an old man... who taught private lessons, but... My goodness! He nearly killed... the students with swats. [...] when I got married, I lived next to him, I lived next to him, he was harsh with his wife, we would wake up to him whipping the poor woman. With... with no reason at all, to the point that he put... tacks on the... lash to whip the woman. That is right, then he died, she went to live in Palestina, but it was horrib... living with a wall as a neighbor to him. But when I arrived he was no longer teaching, I never studied with him either. (Gomes, 2024).

Grounded in the excerpt above, we understand that the violent acts committed by the teacher already originated in his home, for, as the declarant points out, he even put tacks on the lash to beat his partner, without needing any reason for such cruelty. Similarly, in the literary work *Menino de Engenho* by José Lins do Rego (2003), the protagonist Carlinhos, when taking lessons with Judite, the wife of the teacher known as Dr. Figueiredo, notices that she “[...] was beaten by her husband [...]” (Rego, 2003, p. 30). Thus, we observe fiction mirroring reality, in which both male teachers assume the role of oppressor toward their students as well as their wives, legitimizing various forms of aggression in both

educational and domestic spheres. Moreover, both the aforementioned literary work and the narrative of Eva Gomes bear traces of the customs of the time, when it was socially accepted and legitimized that a man could commit violence against a woman, with no legal mechanism in place to protect her (Sousa, 2023).

3.4 The sociocultural influence on Eva Gomes's teaching and learning process

Access to diverse cultures is a fundamental element, defended by the BNCC (Brazil, 2017), that contributes to students' recognition of their own identity formation and to their social inclusion. In this regard, during the interview with the participant, we observed the constant presence of cultural traits that permeate the pedagogical sphere. Thus, when we consider the set of sociocultural characteristics that shaped education in the state of Ceará, we find the notable presence of Catholic religiosity, as shown in the following: "[...] And I would teach catechism on... on Sundays. [...]. I would go to church with those children to prepare them to make their first communion, I did everything. [...] It was in the church, on Sundays I went to church to give catechism classes" (Gomes, 2024).

From this standpoint, we analyze the figure of the teacher who also provided religious formation, which was likely a concern felt by families who wanted their children to make their first communion, at times simply out of custom. In this sense, even the day on which catechism meetings were held carries meaning, for Catholic tradition teaches its faithful that Sunday is the day celebrating the resurrection of Jesus, the Day of the Lord. In parallel, Sousa (2023) refers to two teachers from Ceará in the last century, one of whom catechized all her students within the school itself, while the other prepared only those whose parents requested it, using either the church or the families' homes as the setting. Therefore, it becomes evident that catechization was routinely carried out by teachers in the Ceará hinterland, whether within schools or outside them.

Still in line with this perspective, we observe the connection between Catholic religiosity and the educational process in the celebrations of São João, in which students

regarded the teacher as a figure of great esteem, to the point of asking her to serve as godmother in the festivity:

Then there is that bonfire and we [...] gather around the bonfire with the person, if I am the godmother then they say “Good evening my godchild!”, then you go and say “Good evening my godmother! Saint John said, Saint Peter confirmed that you will be my godmother because Saint John sent word!” you say it three times, then that is it, they be... become your godchild forever. And there are some who respect those São João godmothers more than even the baptism godfather. [...] (Gomes, 2024).

In light of the above, we learn about a tradition that, over time, has been lost in many communities in Ceará; we refer here to the *São João* godparenting ritual which, according to the interviewee, was sometimes valued even more than baptismal godparenting. In this sense, the teacher even explains the lines spoken by godmothers and godchildren at the moment of the ritual, which took place around the bonfire. We infer that cultural habits experienced in the past were essential in strengthening the bond between school and social conventions, particularly those linked to Catholic celebrations.

Moreover, Sousa (1961) shows that in the Study Plan of the Rural Normal School of Juazeiro do Norte-CE, the first rural normal school in Brazil created to train primary school teachers, the discipline of Drawing was included in the curriculum of the Normal Course. Similarly, the declarant reports having taught drawing classes, as shown in the excerpt, even though she had not been trained by that institution: “[...] It was notebook, colored pencils, I would teach them to color. [...] Yes, they painted and I would take the pencils back with me. That is right, I drew and colored, at the end of the year there were the exams, then on the exam cover I would draw a very beautiful bunch of grapes and a ribbon bow [...]” (Gomes, 2024).

Given the above, we notice that the teacher relied on the materials she possessed so that the class could practice their artistic skills, taking and bringing back her colored pencils as a strategy to look after the items, which did not arrive at the school space free of cost. In addition, even the cover of the exams students answered was marked by a creative design that included a bunch of grapes and a ribbon bow, demonstrating the teacher’s care and organization at a significant moment: “[...] and I said who passed and who did not pass. [...] I think it was only... I think it was only at the end of the year [...] to

see... what the result was, wasn't it?! [...]" (Gomes, 2024). In this way, the class felt encouraged to face their results and built affectionate memories of the school terms.

In addition to this, another subject that stimulated students' artistic abilities was Drama, regarding which the interviewee recounts having encouraged one of her students to dedicate herself to the performing arts: "[...] Erotilde Honório. She says she is grateful to me for everything. Because today she is an actress, she is I do not know what, she has [...] something I do not know what in Fortaleza. [...] Ah, it is theatre, yes, then she said... that she owes everything to me, because I taught drama on Saturdays, there was drama, you know, do you know what drama is? [...]" (Gomes, 2024).

In connection with the excerpt above, we observe the applicability of schooling in students' lives, who make use of the knowledge they assimilated to employ it in their professional lives, in addition to it appearing as a novelty within that local and chronological context. Regarding this, Sousa (1961) states that Theatre appears as one of the Units of Work to be developed in accordance with the proposals of the Reform of Normal Education in Ceará from the second half of the twentieth century onward, aiming to complement the training of future teachers. Thus, we interpret the drama classes offered by the declarant as a new element integrated into instruction, since even before that practice was implemented in teacher training in the state of Ceará, in Conceição do Buraco the population was already refining this skill through the Drama lessons led by Eva Gomes — though it is unknown whether other teachers also did so.

Furthermore, the teacher comments that when the community was established in its new location, as September 7 approached, the students were prepared for the civic parade. In this sense, upon recognizing the event as valuable for collective memory, we asked whether it had also taken place in the former locality, and in response we obtained the following:

No, there it was behin... behind the times, but I... still came up with the idea of going around the street. [...] Yes, there was a game [...] it was the game, so good! I thought that game was so good, I even taught it here, and we still played... the girls and the boys, and I... when it was recess time we went to play [...] I was the one who was the quipa, but I was strong for playing. One day one... one of them knocked me down, but we just thought it was funny because she... she cut off my ball and... and

that was it, and she knocked me down. Yes, we played all the time during recess, at recess we had this game, a very good game [...]. (Gomes, 2024).

From this, we understand, based on the account above, that the civic tradition present in the district of Guassussê originated in the former Conceição do Buraco, although, as Sousa (2023) discusses, this does not necessarily indicate that she was encouraging students to be patriotic. Furthermore, the respondent says that it was customary, after the parade, for a game called *Missibol* to take place, taught by the teacher herself – who also participated in the recreation during recess – to the students, claiming to be an exceptional player. Therefore, we note the significance of recreational games in the school environment, which proved to be an integral part of shaping children and adolescents and a resource for interaction. We emphasize the interaction of the teacher Eva Gomes with the students during the games, a conduct not common among teachers of her era, given the traditional teaching practices that prevailed at that time (Saviani, 2013).

It is also worth highlighting the evenings spent in the flour house, known as *Bulandeira*, which welcomed the inhabitants of the village, providing them with employment and food derived from cassava, in addition to fostering sociocultural practices that spread the community's shared memories of these gatherings

[...] the Bulandeira only happened during cassava season, [...]. Then it was lively! We went there at night to sift the dough. If you had a boyfriend, you sifted the dough with him. [...] Those who did not have one went to sift alone. And it was good! During the day some were scraping cassava and others washing the dough, then they spent the whole day, and at night they went to sift the dough, and others went to toast the flour. It was good in the Bulandeira! [...] No, it was the owners of the... of the flour houses, they made it to sell because there was a lot... of cassava, they would spend two, three days... pulling cassava and the people scraping and... and... and... and the Bulandeira... eating, there was the... the thing... the men turning... the wheel. That is right, it was lively! This... stubborn one came from there, from the Bulandeira. [...] Yes, came from the Bulandeira. [...] Yes, at night it was lively! Everyone went there. It was there... in front of the street, up on a rise. It was good there! (Gomes, 2024).

As we observe above, despite the effort required for a process that lasted the entire day — from harvesting to toasting the flour made from cassava — we notice in the teacher's account feelings of euphoria and nostalgia, which reveal the excitement people felt in taking

part in this experience, which even led to courtships. Concerning this, Sousa (1961) explains that in the region where Conceição do Buraco was located, the Sertão of Alto Jaguaribe, there was extensive agricultural activity, including cassava planting; however, the author emphasizes the cotton crop. Therefore, this attests that agriculture was highly developed along the banks of the Jaguaribe River, providing subsistence for the rural population and shaping its sociocultural dynamics, a context in which formal education held a valuable place for a considerable portion of the population, yet was of little importance in terms of public funding, as Eva Gomes's educational trajectory revealed to us.

4 Final considerations

The present manuscript addressed the professional trajectory of Eva Gomes Juvenço, one of the first educators of Conceição do Buraco, a now extinct community in the Ceará hinterland, highlighting her protagonism in the educational sphere of the locality mentioned. We take her as an oral source who, today, despite her advanced age, is lucid and recalls with clarity many aspects of her educational practice.

In light of the results presented above, we verified the significance of oral history as an instrument for reconstructing experiences related to teaching in the interior of Ceará, especially in the old Conceição do Buraco. From this perspective, we observed that in the twentieth century the rural population, in addition to living with poverty, still had to face several difficulties, among them the lack of schooling, which often prevented the guarantee of their rights, such as the right to vote. Thus, having access to schooling at that time was seen as a privilege, and its free availability motivated high demand from families who traveled long distances to reach the school.

In addition to this, we also saw that, due to the lack of support from the government, the participant in this research provided, within her means and through her own resources, quality instruction to her students. In this sense, she succeeded in encouraging study, as occurred in the drawing classes, for many guardians could not afford to buy a box of colored pencils, but the teacher lent her own materials. Consequently, attention to the sociocultural

context also facilitated the teaching and learning process, integrating it into the everyday life of the population, which recognized the significance of the lessons in their lives.

In sum, the facts narrated by the interviewee made it possible to disseminate knowledge about local history, which constitutes a piece of a puzzle that reveals the identity of the residents of the district of Guassussê and of other regions of the municipality of Orós. In this regard, we consider that the objectives set for this work were achieved, combining various features that make up the pedagogical experiences of the respondent. Thus, the methodological strategies employed in this production were essential for the culmination of this result, following a logical organization that consolidated it.

It is concluded that the educational trajectory of Eva Gomes Juvenço holds great importance for the history of local and regional education, for it allows for the discussion of details that dialogue with the macrosocial context and that, consequently, nourish the history of education, especially that of the Ceará hinterland, a field of study that requires greater attention from researchers, given the focus placed on large cities. Therefore, we highlight the need for further studies to be carried out in this direction, in order to broaden knowledge and triangulate the data obtained, which are now made public

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