

The Experimental Classes: Different Secondary Education in Brazil in 1950s and 1960s

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to understand the normative prescription and experimental secondary school implantations in Brazil in the late 1950s, and the developments in the decade that followed. Thus, attempts to shed light on the political and educational conditions that enabled the Ministry of Education and Culture to bring in legislation that allowed the implementation of the so-called experimental secondary-school classes. This paper also focuses on the pedagogical practices in these experimental classes, taking into account that most of them were appropriated from French pedagogical models – the *classes nouvelles* in public schools and personalized and communitarian pedagogy in Catholic schools. It uses the circulation and appropriation concepts, understood from the perspective of the historian Roger Chartier, who considers that cultural goods circulate and are used in different ways, so that the reception is held with creativity through resistance, resignification and arrangements. This historiographical perspective is adopted in the educational field to acquire the pedagogical circulation and appropriation model operations. This documental *corpus* of this historical investigation is made up of written documents from French educational institutions – the *Centre International d'Études Pédagogiques*, located in Sèvres, and the *Centre d'Études Pédagogiques de Paris* – and the archives of university institutions and Brazilian school collections. This paper analyses the Ministry of Education's legislation on the experimental classes (1958) and the uses of French pedagogical models in the public system and Catholic schools.

Keywords: experimental classes; secondary education; pedagogical renewal; Brazil.

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1. Introduction

Brazilian secondary education began to be effectively transformed only from the 1950s, as part of a pedagogical renewal movement that took place in Brazil after the Getulist dictatorship, largely stimulated by UNESCO – a new and global educational agent. Thus, it began to integrate, although not in a priority way, the national education agenda both in the National Institute of Pedagogical Studies (INEP) and

at the Secondary Education Department (DES) – Ministry of Education and Culture bodies (Dallabrida, 2014). Since 1952 Anísio Teixeira was in charge of NIPS and implemented several campaigns to overcome the national education system fragility, among which the Inquiry and Survey Campaigns for High and Elementary School (ISCHES), coordinated by Jayme Abreu, which resulted in several work publications about the Brazilian secondary education situation. Entitled «Secondary Education in Brazil» and prefaced by Anísio Teixeira, Abreu's book (1955) is the result of a study which he presented at the Inter-American Seminar of Secondary Education, held in Santiago, Chile in 1955. In this study the author records the accelerated expansion through Brazilian secondary education from the 1940s, as well as the pedagogical traditionalism maintenance, underlining the need for methodological renewal. During the Anisiano INIS (1952-1964), Jayme Abreu was noted for his research on secondary education.

At Armando Hildebrand management the DES created a movement aiming to modernize the didactics on the secondary education, which resulted in a National Campaign on the Secondary Education Dissemination and Improvement (CADES), becoming official by the decree no. 34,638 in November 17, 1953. The main objective of CADES was to promote courses for lay teachers of secondary education, taught by teachers from large centers and held during the holiday seasons, in order to prepare them for the sufficiency examination, which conferred the licentiate degree. The relevance of these courses is due to the fact that in the 1950s there were more than 80% of lay teachers teaching in secondary schools, an emergency that justified the creation of a campaign. In 1956, when Gildasio Amado got in charge of DES, he made efforts to create a newsletter advertising CADES experiences that started in June of 1957, with the published journal called «Secondary School», that had a didactic-pedagogical perspective edition and remained for five years (Rosa, 2014). CADES had a national scope through its courses and newsletters, contributing to milden the fragile secondary education framework.

In the early 1950s started to be made renewal experiences in the Brazilian secondary education, both in public and private schools, especially from French and North-American pedagogical model appropriations. Based on an agreement between Getúlio Vargas Foundation (FGV) and Nova Friburgo City Hall, on March 11th, 1951 Nova Friburgo School was founded, which adopted the Didactic Unit Methods, a pedagogical proposal based especially on Morrison Plan Unity Notion. On the other hand, at the same year, in the educational public system of São Paulo started to be implemented a pioneering experience, held by Professor Luis Contier at Alberto Conte Education Institute and inspired in the French *nouvelles classes*. In the previous two years, Contier took an intership at the *Centre International d'Études Pédagogiques* (CIEP), placed in Sèvres, which had been producing and improving a renewal proposal for secondary education in France (Vieira, 2015). This initiative was well received by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), which allowed the experimental secondary class implementations in Brazilian secondary education.

Thus, the purpose of the present work is to understand the normative prescription and the experimental secondary class implantations in Brazil in the late 1950s and its developments in the following decade. On the one hand, it is sought to study

the political-educational conditions that turned the publication viable by the Ministry of Education and Culture, of a legislation that allowed the so-called experimental secondary class implantations, as well as prescribed a series of requirements for opening these classes, being careful to assure its pedagogical essay features. On the other hand, this paper focuses on the experimental class construction on the secondary education, taking into account that most of them got appropriated of French pedagogical models created on the immediate postwar period. It means the *nouvelles classes*, a pedagogical model managed in the public education system in France, which had a republican and lay bias; and the personalized and communitarian pedagogy elaborated by the French Jesuit Priest Pierre Faure, who had a global and particularly Latin American circulation.

We adopt the perspective of the historian Roger Chartier (1992) to read this issue, who considers that cultural goods are produced, disseminated and used in different ways, so that the reception is carried out creatively, through resistances, resignifications and arrangements. In the school field, from Carvalho (2003) and Rockwell (2005) insights, it is considered that the pedagogical models are produced in specific times and spaces, circulate through different mediators and supports and are appropriated in different educative system instances and, finally, by the teachers in the classroom. The appropriation operation has a central importance because it reads the uses of French pedagogical models by experimental secondary classes. The sources used in this historical investigation are the followings: MEC educational legislation, written documents – manuscripts and printings – and iconographic produced by the schools that carried out the experimental classes and reports made by INEP technicians or by educators involved in the experimental secondary class coordination, as well as papers published in French journals that reported experimental secondary classes in Brazil.

In this work, the focus of analysis is placed on the experimental secondary class experiences that became 1950 and 1960 the main renewal essay in Brazilian secondary education, having as reference the new pedagogical environment of the immediate postwar period. It is believed that the essay re-reading of the secondary education experimental classes can contribute to enlighten the current Brazilian high school, which is going through a structural crisis, being considered the most fragile stage of Brazilian basic, elementary and high school educations. The experimental secondary classes represented, effectively, the first renewal movement of Brazilian secondary education, marked by pedagogical traditionalism. In this way, it is believed that the historical re-reading of the experimental secondary classes can contribute to understand the current high school impasses.

2. The experimental class prescriptions

The Experimental secondary classes were prescribed by the «Instructions about the Nature and Organization of Experimental Classes» (Brazil, 1958), published by the Ministry of Education and Culture on July 4th, 1958. This legislation established the experimental class implantations on the secondary education from the beginning of the school year in 1959. It is the legal reference for establishing the experimental secondary classes in public and private schools in Brazil, but it should also be read

as a specific renewal essay start-points and political-educational ways in Brazilian secondary education. The main pedagogical experience that must be highlighted was held by Professor Luis Contier in a public school in São Paulo State from the *nouvelles classes*. It is a circulation and appropriation case of this French pedagogical model which undoubtedly turned viable through Louis Contier internship in France. Therefore, it is important to understand what the *nouvelles classes* represented in the French education system.

The creation of the *nouvelles classes* in France is due to Gustave Monot's political and pedagogical engagement, particularly in the immediate post-war period context. At the beginning of 1945, he was nominated by the Education Minister of the Provisory Government, who was the Secondary Education Director - a strategic position in the French education system. In the same year, he set up the *Centre International d'Études Pédagogiques* (CIEP), placed in Sèvres, in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France and UNESCO, with the aim of creating exchanges between countries about the pedagogical renewal and announced the creation of *nouvelles classes* for the beginning of the 1945-6 school year in 140 schools (Lecocq & Lenderlé, 2008). This project, which had the assistance of Paul Langevin, predicted the *nouvelles class* implantations initially on the *sixième classe* of the high school cycle¹; in the second year in the *cinquième classe* and so on until the last year of high school cycle – the *troisième classe*. Thus, the *nouvelles classes* intended to offer an innovative pedagogical model for French secondary education, which presented, among others, the following traits: class with 25 students, personalized and cooperative active methods, directed work, environ study through visits to different places, approach to handmade and intellectual work, class council, use of detailed observation files of student's behavior by the teachers, establishing dialogues between parents and teachers, and optional Latin language teaching (Araújo & Dallabrida, 2017).

Since its foundation, the CIEP has become an important reference for many Brazilian educators who sought to renew secondary education. Thus, Marques (1985) states that in 1949 French Consulate in Brazil began to invite teachers for training courses in Sèvres, so that among the first group of Brazilians to go to CIEP was Luís Contier, a French teacher and the director of the Alberto Conte Institute of Education – placed in Santo Amaro neighborhood in São Paulo City. Contier held an internship at CIEP between 1950 and mid-1951, when he studied and had a close relation with *nouvelles classes* pedagogy. After coming back to Brazil, he began a renewal pedagogical essay at Alberto Conte Education Institute. This educational essay was based on the activism didactic strategies, as directed study, environ study and group activities, which were appropriated from the *nouvelles classes* (Vieira, 2015).

¹ At French education system, secondary education was and still is formed by two cycles: the collège, formed by four classes years of school (*sixième*, *cinquième*, *quatrième* and *troisième*) and lycée, constituted by three classes, *première* and *terminal*). In Brazil, between Francisco Campos Reform (1942) and the Law 5,692, of 1971, the secondary education had similar structure of the same French education level, that is to say, it was formed by high school cycles (with 4 classes / (with 3 classes / schooling years), but the classes of both cycles were increasing.

On the light of the concept of «appropriation as a tactic» (Carvalho, 2003, p. 273), Vieira (2015) values the innovation initiative held by Luís Contier at Alberto Conte Education Institute concerned with the secondary education stuck framework which claimed for Capanema Reform. This educational experience is identified by the following traits: research in groups, environ study, disciplines-knowledge integration, self-discipline stimulus, class council activity and Educational Guidance Service, closer relationship between parents and directory and teacher's board and a decreasing number of students per class (from 50 to 40 students), inspired by the *nouvelles classes*, which predicted 25 students per class with the intention of giving them personalized service. The method of working in teams «[...] was organized from dividing the class into groups of students, being chosen a leader and a sub-leader by team to carry out studies about previously proposed subjects» (Vieira, 2015, p. 41). Thus, students were encouraged to lead small-group investigations and present them to the class verbally, also through dramatizations for educational purposes. The research work in groups, the educational process central axis, was articulated with the environ study and stimulated activities in laboratories and field studies – an activity that most approached the teachers and parents for sharing logistic responsibility. In this way, this educational guidance emphasized at the same time student activism and collaborative work, to the detriment of the usual competition through the grading system.

The educational experiment led by Professor Contier at Alberto Conte Education Institute, which began quietly, gradually gained visibility. Firstly, Edmée Hatinguais – director of CIEP – in Brazil, in 1954 and 1956, who gave lectures on the renewal of French secondary education invited by the Federal Government. Secondly, visits of educational authorities to the pioneering initiative of Contier as well as Gildasio Amado, director of the secondary education department of MEC who had visited the *nouvelles classes* in Sèvres (Amado, 1973), and Marina Cintra, teacher inspector in São Paulo State. In addition, the visit of Laerte Ramos de Carvalho, Professor of the Educational College of São Paulo University and renowned education editor of *O Estado de São Paulo* newspaper, who published a complimentary article about the renewal essay at Alberto Conte Education Institute, 2015). In this way, in the mid-1950s, the pioneering appropriation of the *nouvelles classes* by Luis Contier was known as the main initiative on the secondary education renewal in São Paulo.

The avant-garde initiative in secondary education at Alberto Conte Education Institute had an unparalleled institutional resonance in the 1st Study Journey of Directors of Secondary Education Schools promoted by the Secondary Education Sectional Inspection of São Paulo and held from October 15th to 20th, 1956. In that event, Luís Contier presented the lecture entitled «Suggestions about the renewal of methods and teaching processes presented to the Journey of Secondary Education Directors», a report of his experience of adapting the *nouvelles classes* to the reality of Brazilian secondary education, as well as the indication of some pedagogical convictions (Vieira, 2015). Luís Contier's speech reverberated in political-administrative instances such as the State Education Secretariat of São Paulo and the secondary education department of MEC. In this sense, it is important to underline that the experimental secondary classes were regularized

and nominated by the Federal Government, making a reversed way of Capanema Reform, formalized by a bill.

Thus, Gildásio Amado as the director of MEC Secondary Education department, made efforts to regulate this experience in secondary education and, to this end, formulated a list of requirements to the Minister of Education and Culture, which would result on the publication of the «Instructions about the nature and organization of the experimental classes» (Brazil, 1958), legislation which authorized the experimental class facilities into the two secondary education cycles from the school year of 1959 (Amado, 1973). Its item 3 establishes «the experimental class features» determining that, as a matter of priority, they should be implemented in the first secondary education cycle that is, in junior high school; in a reduced number of classes, starting at the first class and, under evaluation could be expanded to the other junior high school classes (Dallabrida, 2014). This legislation established strict control mechanisms for MEC through the need of a previous authorization and «special assistance» of the Secondary School Board and the accreditation of teachers, as well as the «previous consent of parents or the ones responsible for the enrolled students» (Brasil, 1958, p. 80). And they determined the following «general norms» for experimental secondary classes:

- a) on the curriculum organizations, one will have in mind not the specialization in this or that direction of studies, but in the general preparation with a solid human formation content and better opportunities of assisting the individual skills;
- b) better teaching articulation of several disciplines and coordination of school activities;
- c) maximum number of thirty students in each class, so that teaching can be better adapted to each student;
- d) the number of teachers in the initial high school classes can be reduced to avoid the inconveniences of the abrupt transition from the primary to the secondary regime. Teachers will have, in this way, more time with the students and they can better evaluate their tendencies and exert effective guidance;
- e) regular meetings of the teachers of each class for the class appreciation in its psychological aspects and its better and more homogeneous pedagogical orientation;
- f) possibility of options that correspond to the student skills;
- g) increasing school educative function with longer daily stay at school and extracurricular activity attendance;
- h) directed activity planned in a way that the student can participate actively to acquire his/her own working method and conscious and dynamic life style;
- i) closer articulation between teachers and parents, so necessary for the harmony that there must be between the school educative work and the family (Brazil, 1958, pp. 80-81).

These experimental secondary class prescriptions indicated the new class appropriations held particularly by Luís Contier. Thus, there was a Brazilian use of French pedagogical model as in relation to the decreasing number of students in the

classroom while in the French classes the limit was 25 students, in the experimental secondary classes the maximum number was 30 students. On the other hand, it is noticed the didactic strategy presence as active methods, the pedagogical orientation importance in respect to the student skills, the curricular integration, the essential requirement of regular meetings of teachers, the tendency of full-time working, specially supplying extra-class activities and the involvement of the parents in school working. The model prescribed for the experimental secondary classes, therefore, gets far away from the current secondary education standard of Capanema Reform, marked by the traditional method and curricular rigidity.

3. Secondary education in an experimental pace

At the beginning of the school year of 1959, eight schools of state teaching networks implanted the experimental secondary classes, especially in junior high school, being most of them placed in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro States (Cunha & Abreu, 1963). In São Paulo State, the experimental classes of Narciso Pieroni de Socorro Institute of Narcissistic Education started being remarkable at regional and state levels. In the late 1950s, Socorro was a small city in the countryside of São Paulo, with an economic predominance in handcrafts and known by conservative Catholicism, so that it was little affected by the innovative social environment. The trio of educators who supported the experimental secondary classes in this city was formed by the School Director Lygia Forquin Sim, the Educational Instructor Maria Nilde Mascellani, and the Mathematics Teacher and Educational Counselor Assistant Olga Bechara. The inauguration ceremony of the experimental classes at the Narciso Pieroni Education Institute took place on March 3, 1959, with the presence of the Director of Education Department of São Paulo State – Professor Luis Contier and a lecture given by Professor Maria Nilde Mascellani entitled «The importance of the Directed Study for Secondary Education» (Vieira, 2015, p.66). The subject of the lecture approached one of the main didactic strategies of the activist methodology and indicated the intellectual leadership of Professor Maria Nilde in the experience of the so-called experimental classes of Socorro.

Among the renewal pedagogical practices of these classes, one can list the discipline integrations, the use of active methods, the environ study, directed work, qualitative evaluation and class advice. Vieira (2015) believes that the environ study highlighted and placed the students organized into team works and in touch with different natural and social world dimensions. As examples, she stated the Inhanduti study, a kind of handcraft very present in local economic life, with a network of producers who were exploited by the intermediaries; and the comparative research between the famous Lindóia and Socorro waters. According to Mascellani (1961 apud Vieira, 2015 p.76) «studying environ is not only to observe, but to compare, to conclude and, particularly, to conclude about oneself. The study of the community itself will always allow the awareness making about the role of each citizen». Therefore, it was carried out through a methodology that necessarily implied three phases, it was developed in the school environ, in the classroom and integrated several disciplines, as Vieira (2015, p. 74) explains:

The environ study activity had as a concern; in the class environ to enable the student to acquire social responsibility notions in relation to what was observed [...]. In this direction, the studies took place in three stages: the first observation, where the students surveyed the data, followed by the association stage, where the students associated spatially and temporally in relation to the studied topics and, finally, the expression phase, where they showed what they had learned. In one of the examples she pointed out, this last phase which was characterized by poster organizations and panel elaborations and handmade works that were exhibited to the parents, students and teachers of São Paulo – including from Science and Letter Colleges of USP.

Theorized by Maria Nilde from Jean Piaget's and Amélia Castro's insights, the directed study was also present in the experimental classes of Socorro. In order to call the attention of the students to be interested for scientific research and text elaborations, the textbooks were abolished and being replaced by scripts produced by teachers and reference bibliographies. The students were organized in teams and carried out investigations in several printed materials and systematized them in files which were reviewed and evaluated by the teachers, so that the self-management should have a growth during the junior high school year. This working pace, very different from traditional secondary education, is enthusiastically recalled by Brandão (2015, p. 15), when he says: «we had a guided study in the morning. Then, there were several groups and each group had a teacher. What I thought it was important ... because you were going to research a certain subject in a book, the student read it, the group interpreted it, and from that interpretation, the ideas started to come up for the text».

Both in the environ study and in the directed study the students were stimulated to work in teams, which valued the cooperation and solidarity among the students in the usual competition detriment on the traditional secondary education. The role of teachers underwent by a Copernican revolution in a way that the educational activity coordination started being carried out by the students. The teaching staff of each class used to meet weekly in class council to plan the activities and to hold qualitative evaluation of the students, whose the criteria were interest, critical sense, ability to work in a team, leadership and self-criticism. This new school culture of secondary education sought to emphasize the critical spirit of the students through text readings and natural and social environment research where the school was inserted. Not without reason, Vieira (2015, p.69) supports that the experimental classes of Socorro became «a matrix socialization appropriation of the *nouvelles classes*» carried out, above all, by Maria Nilde Mascelani. However, this educator also used the so-called social Catholicism of the post-war years, which had a critical attitude towards social inequalities.

Although remarkable at the state level, the experimental classes in Socorro had short-lived because they were closed down by the Director Lygia Forquin Sim at the end of the 1963 school year, largely because of the vocational high school project implementation (Vieira, 2015). Through Law 6.052, dated February 3rd, 1961, the Education Secretariat of São Paulo State created vocational high schools – polytechnic schools inspired by experimental secondary classes – and nominated

Maria Nilce Mascellani to coordinate the Vocational Education Service (SEV) – the department responsible for these schools in São Paulo State. The vocational high school experience was carried out from 1962 to 1969, radicalized the non-directivity experimental classes of Socorro and the perspective of a critical awareness formation of its students in a conjuncture marked by the Military Regime (Chiozzini, 2014). The mediation among the experimental classes of Socorro was held particularly by Maria Nilde Mascellani, who was an educational and intellectual leader at Narciso Pieroni of Socorro Education Institute and became SEV coordinator, but also by Olga Bechara, who migrated to the vocational high school and had an expressive performance. In this way, to a large extent, vocational high school replaced the experimental secondary classes in the public school system in São Paulo State.

However, from 1959 the experimental secondary classes also spread to private schools, especially those of Catholic network. Although, the pedagogical matrix used in São Paulo and Brazilian Catholic schools was not the *nouvelles classes*, but the personalized and communitarian pedagogy developed by the French Jesuit Priest Pierre Faure, from the middle of the 20th century, in the *Centre d'Études Pédagogiques of Paris* (Audic, 1998). The Faurian methodology is hybrid because it is appropriated from Catholic texts and several renewal pedagogical proposals such as those conceived by Maria Montessori and Célestin Freinet, as well as by Dalton Plan and French post-war educational reforms (Klein 1998, Faure 2008). The Catholic educational tradition was founded by *Ratio Studiorum* and being updated to the pedagogical and political aspects of the XX century by the papal encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri*, published in the late 1929. In order to construct personalized and communitarian pedagogy, Pierre Faure filtered with ingenuity and diplomacy, the New School contributions from the Catholic-Jesuitical sieve.

The personalizer and communitarian dimensions of Pierre Faure's pedagogical proposal are materialized in his work tools and in his didactic moments. The first ones are formed initially by the programming – content and technique selections carried out by the teacher to stimulate the student personal work, that must be adequate to the region and country prescriptions, but must go beyond them; work plan defined by the student; use of guides or files for the student's personal work which does not exempt the collective class of the teacher; and didactic material, formed by classroom library or a common one to several classrooms with books and papers, sensory-motor material, audio-visual material as well as student self-control material. The teaching moments (independent work, group work, sharing, personal synthesis and registration, oral and written presentation and continuous assessment) do not have a fixed order and can be flexible according to the needs of the students. In this way, the teacher should become a learning itinerary organizer, instigator, animator, provocateur and counselor, as prescribed by the New School movement (Klein, 1998). Finally, personalized and communitarian teaching sought to provide an integral education, which included the social and spiritual dimensions.

The personalized and communitarian pedagogy became the pedagogical matrix linked to the Catholic Church that circulated and was appropriated among the Catholic schools that implanted the experimental secondary classes (Dallabrida, 2018). The first three secondary schools run by Catholic congregations that established pedagogical renewal in Brazil – Santa Cruz, *Notre Dame de Sion* and Canas de

São Agostinho Schools – were placed in São Paulo State (Saviani, 2008). These are three educational institutions run by French-speaking congregations, being two for females and French ascendance and one for Canadian males – the Fathers' Congregation of Santa Cruz. At the beginning of 1959, Pierre Faure taught a course to train teachers of these three schools in personal and communitarian pedagogy in order to introduce their experimental secondary classes. In the 1960s, Father Faure returned to Brazil almost every year to encourage Catholic school teachers in São Paulo and other Brazilian cities.

Catholic school educators – religious and lay people – went to an internship at the Center for Pedagogical Studies in Paris under the guidance of Father Faure. According to Klein (1988), these educators were from the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and in the 1950s and 1960s the following names were included: Father Yvon Lafrance (Santa Cruz School), Sister Isabel Sofia (St. Augustine School), Sister Valentina (House of Childhood), Sister Arlete (Mary Sacred Heart School) and teacher Marília Palhares (Terezião School). The first one was sent to Paris by the Director of Santa Cruz School in São Paulo, in November and December 1958, in order to get know *in loco* the personalized and communitarian pedagogy (La France, 1959). Father La France began his internship by visiting schools run and encouraged by the Center for Pedagogical Studies run by Father Faure. In this way, there is a double-handed flow, represented respectively by Pierre Faure's technical visits to Brazil and by training courses of Brazilian educators in Catholic institutions in France guided by Father Faure.

The experience put into practice at Santa Cruz School is best known in the education historiography thanks to the reports of Father Yvon La France, who took a training course in Paris. In the year of the experimental secondary class implantations at Santa Cruz School, Yvon La France (1959) reported the educational essay that he presented at the III General Assembly of A.E.C. – Catholic Education Association – indicating the history, basic pedagogical principles, methods used and some questions related to pedagogical activism in a conclusive way, which was published (La France, 1959). After forming the experimental group of junior high school, Father Yvon La France wrote a report to send to the Ministry of Education, which was also published (Lafrance, 1963) - with the two parts of the author's surname combined. This is an unfolded evaluation of the experimental classes in the Junior high school of Santa Cruz School, presenting also excerpts from the qualitative evaluation made by the students. Based on these papers and other written and iconographic documents, Schreiber (2016) wrote an academic work in which he analyzed this educational essay, exploring its spaces and times and teaching by researching.

Santa Cruz School, placed in Alto de Pinheiros in São Paulo and run by French-speaking Canadian priests of the Fathers' Congregation of Santa Cruz, constituted its experimental class junior high school course through admission exam, the consent of the parents and, due to great demand and to avoid homogeneous class, through raffle (Lafrance, 1963). The guided research by working files appropriated technique from Pierre Faure's pedagogical proposal – was the main school innovation working at Santa Cruz School. The use of files in the experimental teaching, La France (1959) states:

The sharing of subjects led us to the time sharing in the day and the semester. We organized work fortnight units through files for the subjects worked. The cultural subjects were given through lecture or round table in the afternoon. We divided the semester into 8 fortnight units and we organized our file systems according to this unit to let the student to work individually in the morning. Teachers succeeded in the classroom, not to speak, but to help the students to control, to lead since the work was predetermined by the files (La France, 1959, p. 28).

Unlikely the traditional classes which were expository ones, the experimental class started with the teacher's guidance about the researched subject, which was carried out individually by the students, but later they had knowledge socialization moments in their teams and with all the class groups (Schreiber, 2016).

The research through files demanded a new classroom layout, luckily the tables and chairs were mobiles, enabling the teamwork and even experiences that used several furniture. The experimental class of the junior high school had also three living rooms: paintings and handicrafts; the one for natural sciences that was separated in the areas of biology, chemistry and physics; and the one of projection and music with equipment that projected images for history and geography subjects and for the cine-club, as well as of a phonograph and piano. On the other hand, this experimental class had a new temporal organization, structured by fortnight school work, formed for 12 to 18 days, so that this period always ended on Saturdays. Santa Cruz School worked as a semi-boarding school – a full-time course – being in the morning the disciplines that required more mental effort, such as Portuguese and mathematics, as well as the students' individual research. After lunch at school, it was held more practical activities such as physical education, handmade and laboratory work; at the middle of the afternoon intellectual disciplines were taught – history, geography and languages (Schreiber, 2016). This way of teaching was different from regular classes of Santa Cruz School, as well as the classes of most other schools of that time. As the main thinkers of the Federal Legislation that became viable the Brazilian secondary education renewal at the end of 1950, Gildasio Amado (1973) underlines the unprecedented feature of the experimental classes, assures:

In any case, the curriculum programs of the experimental classes represented the first concrete attempt to turn the secondary education easier. Although with undisguised prudence, they launched a new phase, in which certain principles would be very present. One was the option which essentially means the consideration of the learner, not as a piece to be inserted into a pre-assembled mechanism, but as an individual, a life with identity, potentially with self-aspirations.

In São Paulo State - and, *mutatis mutandis*, in Brazil - the experimental secondary classes were practiced at State Public educational schools and in private confessional schools, being supported by the French models respectively by the *nouvelles classes* and by the Personalized and Communitarian Pedagogy. These renewed education essays evidently have common traits because both are

appropriated from the New School tradition movement, but also have differences such as the focus on the teamwork, critical awareness development (public schools), individual/group activities and spiritual dimension development (Catholic educators). In São Paulo State, while the latter unfolded the education renewal in the 1960s, also stimulated by Pierre Faure, the experimental secondary classes in the state secondary school network had a random peremptory in the early 1960s, being reinvented in the vocational high school.

4. Final considerations

Among the initiatives that renewed Brazilian secondary education in the 1950s and 1960s, the most striking and effective was the experimental secondary classes because it was built up an innovative school culture. In fact, between 1951 and 1958, an essay took place in the junior high school at Alberto Conte Education Institute from the *nouvelles class* appropriations by Professor Luis Contier. In that first moment, it was an isolated work of this professor, who reinvented the junior high school course from the stuck legislation gaps of Capanema Reform. In the mid 1950's, the educational experience at Alberto Conte Education Institute began to spread through Education Secretariat of São Paulo State and at the Secondary Education Department of MEC, as well as in the press – especially from São Paulo. Due to this movement and the school educational internationalization launched by INEP and the Brazilian Center of Educational Studies, the Federal Government established in 1958 a national legislation prescribing criteria for the opening of experimental secondary classes.

In 1959 experimental secondary classes started being implanted, especially in the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro and in a more numerous way in private schools –particularly the ones which integrated the catholic network. In São Paulo educational system, the experimental classes of Socorro, encouraged by Maria Nilde Mascellani, became a regional and state reference due to their pedagogical innovations such as directed study; environ study, collective teaching work in the class council, use of active methods and qualitative evaluation. It is important to emphasize that this new school culture in the junior high school at the Narciso Pieroni Education Institute intended to develop on the students the critical spirit and social awareness, especially through the environ study activities. The students were encouraged to maintain direct contact with local and regional reality on the tours organized by teachers and parents and, in particular, to think about socioeconomic problems and inequalities. Despite this educational experience being short-lived, it was remarkable for the education renewal history in São Paulo and it was used and enriched in the 1960s by vocational junior high school.

In Catholic Schools, the experimental secondary classes were carried out from Pierre Faure's personalized and communitarian pedagogy, which had similarities, but differed itself from the *nouvelles classes*. The Faurian pedagogical proposal was based on the renewal pedagogy matrixes, based on Catholic educational tradition filters, which in the 20th century was updated by the papal encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri*. The experimental classes ongoing in Catholic educational network did not match with the regular classes insofar as they introduced individual and

group research into class libraries, qualitative and concept evaluation, and full-time education, as well as an alternative use of school spaces and times. The traits of this renewal school culture can be seen, for example, in Father Yvon Lafrance's (1963) report about Santa Cruz School, which reveals an instigating Catholic New School experience.

Read in historical perspective, the experimental classes meant a school culture rupture of the secondary education, marked by pedagogical traditionalism. In this way, they represented the emergency of an unprecedented and small wave of pedagogical renewal in Brazilian secondary education, which would unfold in the following decades and place itself in the current experience of innovative secondary education.

5. References

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