

## The approach of the Policy Cycle in the study of the curriculum policy of the municipal education network of Uruguaiana/RS

*A abordagem do Ciclo Político no estudo da política curricular da rede municipal de ensino de Uruguaiana/RS*

*El enfoque del Ciclo de Políticas en el estudio de la política curricular del sistema municipal de educación de Uruguaiana/RS*

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**Abstract:** This article discusses curriculum policies, exploring Stephen Ball's (1992) Policy Cycle approach, as interpreted by Mainardes (2006). The study aims to understand the process of creation and implementation of curriculum policies, focusing on the Guidance Document of the Municipal Territory of Uruguaiana/RS (DOTMU), from the perspective of the Coordinators of the Municipal Education Network of Uruguaiana. The methodology used was document analysis, centered on the DOTMU as the corpus of analysis. Supported by the Policy Cycle approach, the study analyzes the DOTMU in the three contexts proposed by the authors: Context of Influence, Context of Text Production, and Context of Practice. After the analysis, especially in the Context of Practice, weaknesses were identified even with the participation of education professionals in the construction of the DOTMU. The effective implementation of a living and conscious curriculum, based on intentional planning, represents a continuous challenge. However, the DOTMU reveals potentialities by being perceived by professionals as an organizing means of pedagogical practice, standing out for its theoretical consistency and democratic formulation, contributing to the educational journey in the schools of the Municipal Education Network of Uruguaiana.

**Keywords:** Curriculum policies; Policy cycle; Curriculum.

**Resumo:** Este artigo discute as políticas curriculares, explorando a proposta do Ciclo de Políticas de Stephen Ball (1992), interpretada por Mainardes (2006). O estudo busca compreender o processo de criação e implementação das políticas curriculares, com foco no Documento Orientador do Território Municipal de Uruguaiana/RS (DOTMU), sob a perspectiva das Coordenadoras da Rede Municipal de Ensino de Uruguaiana. A metodologia utilizada foi a análise documental, centrada no DOTMU como corpus de análise. Apoiado na abordagem do Ciclo de Políticas, o estudo analisa o DOTMU nos três contextos propostos pelos autores: Contexto da Influência, Contexto da Produção do Texto e o Contexto da Prática. Após a análise, especialmente no Contexto da

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Prática, identificaram-se fragilidades mesmo com a participação dos profissionais da educação na construção do DOTMU. A implementação efetiva de um currículo vivo e consciente, baseado em um planejamento intencional, representa um desafio contínuo. No entanto, o DOTMU revela potencialidades ao ser percebido pelos profissionais como um meio organizador do fazer pedagógico, destacando-se por sua consistência teórica e formulação democrática, contribuindo para o percurso educativo nas escolas da Rede Municipal de Uruguaiana.

**Palavras-chave:** Políticas curriculares; Ciclo de políticas; Currículo.

**Resumen:** Este artículo discute las políticas curriculares, explorando la propuesta del Ciclo de Políticas de Stephen Ball (1992), interpretada por Mainardes (2006). El estudio busca comprender el proceso de creación e implementación de las políticas curriculares, con foco en el Documento Orientador del Territorio Municipal de Uruguaiana/RS (DOTMU), desde la perspectiva de las Coordinadoras de la Red Municipal de Educación de Uruguaiana. La metodología utilizada fue el análisis documental, centrado en el DOTMU como corpus de análisis. Apoyado en el enfoque del Ciclo de Políticas, el estudio analiza el DOTMU en los tres contextos propuestos por los autores: Contexto de la Influencia, Contexto de la Producción del Texto y el Contexto de la Práctica. Después del análisis, especialmente en el Contexto de la Práctica, se identificaron debilidades incluso con la participación de los profesionales de la educación en la construcción del DOTMU. La implementación efectiva de un currículo vivo y consciente, basado en una planificación intencional, representa un desafío continuo. Sin embargo, el DOTMU revela potencialidades al ser percibido por los profesionales como un medio organizador de la práctica pedagógica, destacándose por su consistencia teórica y formulación democrática, contribuyendo al recorrido educativo en las escuelas de la Red Municipal de Uruguaiana.

**Palabras clave:** Políticas curriculares; Ciclo de política; Plan de estudios.

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## Introduction

This article addresses educational and curricular policies based on Stephen Ball's Policy Cycle proposal, interpreted by Mainardes (2006). The Policy Cycle approach contributes to the analysis and reframing of educational political texts, with a special focus on the municipality of Uruguaiana/RS, the *locus* of the present study.

The purpose of this article is to understand the process of creating and implementing curricular policies with an emphasis on the Guiding Document of the Municipal Territory of Uruguaiana/2022 (DOTMU). The analysis is made from the perspective of the Coordinators of the Municipal Education Network of Uruguaiana/RS. The context of international influences on curricular policies is considered, the legal text

is analyzed and the practice of Pedagogical Coordinators in implementing the curricular document in the municipality is evaluated.

First, the article presents the introduction. Then, the section entitled “Educational Policies and Curricular Policies: paths and challenges for education” discusses, based on scholars and in a contextualized way, what educational policies and curriculum policies are. The second section addresses Stephen Ball's Policy Cycle and its contributions to the analysis of curricula. This section is subdivided into three parts: a) the context of influence, which addresses the role of international organizations in curricular texts and their intentions; b) the context of text production, in which it analyzes the written, legal text, exploring everything from the Federal Constitution (CF/1988), through the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDBEN) no. 9394 (BRAZIL, 1996); by the National Curricular Parameters (PCNs) (BRASIL, 1998); National Curricular Guidelines for Basic Education (DCNs) (BRASIL, 2013); National Education Plan (PNE), Law No. 13,005 (BRAZIL, 2014); National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) (BRAZIL, 2017); Municipal Education Plan (PME/2016) and, finally, the Guiding Document of the Municipal Territory of Uruguaiana/2022 (DOTMU); c) the context of practice, in which the DOTMU is analyzed, from the perspective of the Coordinators' pedagogical work, focusing on the curriculum, how it is thought and lived, that is, how what is thought is effective in practice. Finally, the final considerations reflect on what was developed throughout the article.

Considering the previously mentioned points, the analysis of the curriculum policy of the Uruguaiana/RS Municipal Education Network is justified, grounded on Stephen Ball's Policy Cycle, as interpreted by Mainardes (2006), based on three contexts: Context of influence, Context of the text and Context of practice.

### **Educational Policies and Curricular Policies: paths and challenges for education**

Educational policies are implemented and standardized by a government, whether at the federal, state, or municipal level, guiding a society in a given historical and political context. To better understand public policies, it is essential to understand the relationships and differences between State policies and Government policies.

The State comprises the set of political institutions that represent, organize, and serve the population. It is responsible for the creation, implementation, and oversight of policies, carried out by public servants and experienced by citizens. On the other hand, the Government, as one of the institutions that make up the State, administers it through the

formulation and implementation of measures that consider the country's economic dynamics.

While the State encompasses the entire political society, the Government is formed by a political group elected to administer the State for a determined period.

According to Hofling (2001, p. 310),

[...] State as the set of permanent institutions - such as legislative bodies, courts, army, and others that do not necessarily form a monolithic bloc - that enable government action; and Government, as the set of programs and projects that society (politicians, technicians, civil society organizations and others) proposes for society as a whole, configuring the political orientation of a given government that assumes and performs the functions of State for a certain period.

Thus, a public policy occurs when the State, through its actions, implements a government project. In the formulation and implementation of public policies, especially in education, challenges arise because individuals involved have different social, economic, and cultural needs, requiring that such policies encompass several variables, as an educational policy is

a set of decisions taken in advance, to indicate society's expectations and guidelines to school, [...] aims to ensure adequacy between the social needs of education and the services provided by educational systems (AKKARI, 2011, p. 12).

Public education policies are intrinsically linked to the country's historical context, which directly influences constantly changing educational needs. They are designed and developed taking this context into account.

Educational policies are seen as tools to build values and knowledge that promote the holistic development of students. By establishing educational models idealized by both citizens and the government, the aim is to contribute to the growth of society. However, it is crucial to critically understand the underlying intentions of each educational policy.

It is important for society, and especially education professionals, to know, understand and adopt a critical stance in relation to these policies. Educational policies materialize through curriculum policies in federal, state, and municipal education systems.

The curriculum policy analyzed in this study is local, focusing on the municipal scope. The curriculum is shaped by the maintainer (Municipal Education Department of Urugaiana/RS) in collaboration with the entire school community. In other words, it is the network's school institutions that reinterpret and diversify policies. Therefore, curriculum

policies are interpreted by various political actors within the school environment, not limited to mere implementation. In this sense, the curriculum is an object under construction whose importance depends on the process itself, it is necessary to see the instances that define it (SACRISTÁN, 2008).

There is often conflict and discussion between schools and governments at the federal, state, and municipal levels. On the one hand, schools and education professionals criticize the government for imposing policies that they consider inappropriate to reality. On the other hand, the government claims that schools do not comply with policies and proposals effectively.

However, questions arise: do both sides have valid foundations? Do schools manage to integrate these policies into their daily practice? Do professionals understand their responsibility in implementing these policies, critically analyzing them, and adapting them to their local reality to develop a heterogeneous curriculum? And does the government, when formulating curricular policies, do so in a democratic, collective manner that considers the multiculturalism of society?

Thus, it is possible to understand that the school is the space where these policies are implemented, and interpreted as instruments of government power. The responsibility for implementation is shared between the government and schools, reflecting the need for a collaborative and joint approach.

Reinforcing the above, Lopes (2006, p. 38-39) states that

[...] the idea of curriculum policy as a package “launched from the top down” in schools, determined by governments, with schools only being responsible for implementing or resisting this package. It is also confronted with the distinction between politics and practice as the two instances in which domination and resistance, action and reaction are polarized.

In light of this quote, it is necessary to understand that, even if the curriculum policy is hegemonic and guides a common curriculum, when this policy is put into practice, it becomes heterogeneous, because the contexts of practice vary according to each reality. This hegemony, in curricular documents, is extremely divergent, since all individuals are different, learn in different ways, and have distinct life contexts. Based on this, the question arises: Why adopt a common curriculum? Why not customize curriculum policy according to individual needs? Furthermore, it is necessary to reflect on whether it is a desire for all citizens to have the right to education? Does the curriculum seek to provide everyone with the same right to access knowledge?

Curriculum policy is not only a tool for structuring school knowledge, but also a cultural expression that shapes conceptions of knowledge and ways of interpreting and constructing the world. In this sense, the curriculum as a public policy must be constantly reevaluated by everyone involved in the educational process, that is, by the school community. This review and reframing can be conducted through the Pedagogical Political Project, requiring the school community and society to be active, participatory, and critical to perform their citizen and political roles. Curricular documents and policies are not limited to written documents; they incorporate planning, and experiences lived and reconstructed in different spaces by different agents, including education professionals.

### **Policy Cycle Approach: a methodological possibility for analyzing Educational Policies**

When proposing to analyze the implementation of the curriculum policy of the Urugaiana/RS Municipal Education Network, it is considered that the Policy Cycle Approach, by Stephen Ball, interpreted by Mainardes (2006), is the appropriate analysis methodology. The choice of this approach is due to its relevance and theoretical richness, which provide a deep and comprehensive analysis of curricular policies. According to Mainardes (2006, p. 49), the approach

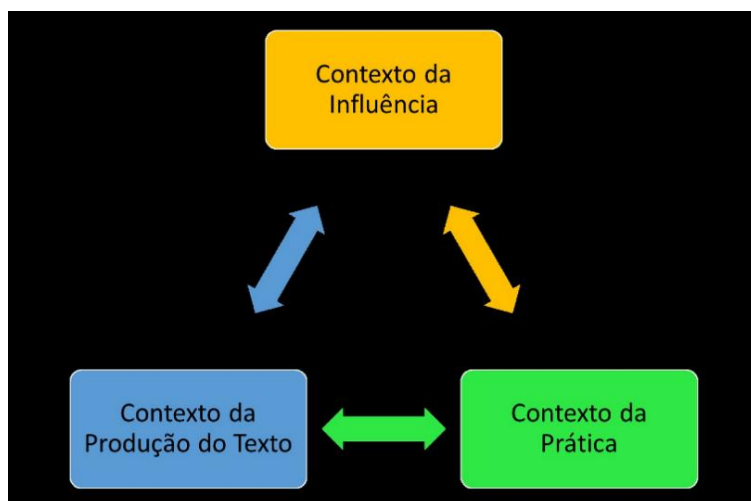
[...] highlights the complex and controversial nature of educational policy, emphasizes micropolitical processes and the action of professionals who deal with policies at the local level and indicates the need to articulate macro and micro processes in the analysis of educational policies.

From this perspective, Stephen Ball and Richard Bowe, according to Mainardes (2006), highlight that numerous intentions and disputes influence the political process, as education professionals participate in both the formulation and implementation of these policies. According to the Policy Cycle Approach, in the analysis of educational policies, it is necessary to consider not only the political discourse but also the active interpretation carried out by teachers and managers in the school space, that is, in the context of practice (MAINARDES, 2006).

The Policy Cycle consists of the approach to three contexts. The first is the Context of Influence, where public policies begin, and political discourses are constructed. In this Context, influence plays a significant role in educational policies. The second is the Text Production Context, in which texts represent policy, consisting

of legal and official documents aimed at the interest of the public. The third and final is the Context of Practice, where policy is interpreted, redefined, and recreated. It is in this Context that the policy acquires new meanings and effects, and may represent changes in the original policy as it is implemented. Below is a representation in Image 1:

Figure 1 – Policy Cycle



Source: Mainardes (2006). Image translation: Context of Influence; Text Production Context; Context of Practice

Therefore, this study will discuss the perspective of three contexts: the Context of Influence, the Context of Text Production and the Context of Practice. This method of analysis allows for in-depth and more critical analysis, enabling a more comprehensive understanding up to local implementation at the school. These contexts will allow us to analyze how local policy was and is translated by schools, through the work of the Pedagogical Coordinating Teachers of the Municipal Education Network of Uruguaiana/RS.

### Context of Influence

It is in the Context of Influence that public policies generally begin and political discourses are constructed. It is in this Context, therefore, that the dispute occurs between groups with similar interests in these policies, seeking to influence and define the social purposes of education (MAINARDES, 2006).

Therefore, to understand the current context, it is important to present the context of globalization and internationalization of education and curriculum, as in this

study, the Context of Influence will be considered. For Ball (2001, p. 3), the essence of the globalization thesis

[...] rests on the question of the future of the National State as a cultural and political entity. This thesis is articulated through four strongly interrelated perspectives that refer respectively to economic, political, cultural, and social transformation. In the case of the first two, the central question is whether, in the context of global economic transformation, individual nation-states maintain their ability to lead and manage their economies in the face of the power of “uprooted” multinational corporations, the flow and influx of global financial market and the expansion of modern industrial production.

The author further explains the other two theses. On the issue of culture, the essential aspects revolve around the continued relevance of national and local cultures in the face of the unifying and homogenizing effects of Westernization or Americanization, Hollywoodization, and the production of a generic consumer. In other words, are we experiencing the creation of a “McWorld”, driven by the interests of global cultural industries and disseminated by the global media - television, cinema, and internet? From a social point of view, the nature of personal social experience has been fundamentally altered in the face of the space-time compression of globalization (BALL, 2001).

From the above, it is possible to perceive that educational policies, consequently curricular ones, transcend global spheres. Before reaching local politics, these policies have already been designed and constructed globally. Many global influences and movements impact these policies, along with the interests involved, as education, for many organizations and political elites, is a form of commercialization and competition of interests, supply and demand, and market dynamics. The circulation of these ideologies and interests in the different spheres of the curriculum does not have an exclusive and predetermined path (top-down or bottom-up); there is a large web of interests constituted on a global map whose flow follows, dialectically, in several directions (BALL, 2001).

The global movement towards the internationalization of the curriculum involves the formulation of its most recent policies, which Ball (2001) calls the Context of Influence. Internationalization in Basic Education comprises predominantly political and economic interests, which have been strengthening, driven by influences from state or private organizations that operate in transnational spaces and instances. These processes of curriculum policy internationalization can include the formulation of broader curricular policies to reconfigurations, redesigns, adaptations, or curricular adjustments focusing on knowledge content, student learning, assessment, and respective teaching methodologies.

More broadly, these actions aim to align education, curriculum, and school training with the standards of the current global economic system but are discursively presented as alternatives (THIESEN, 2019).

It is in the Context of Influence that concepts gain legitimacy, building a base discourse for politics. It is the space between the elaboration of public policy and the formation of discourses, where the influences of international organizations come into play, such as the World Bank (WB), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Union (EU), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Labor Organization (ILO) and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). Thiesen (p.5, 2019) states that

They are, therefore, movements that put pressure on governments and their respective educational systems to formulate reforms that, in general, involve curricular issues. The arguments that justify initiatives of this nature are predominantly based on the ideals of innovation, improving efficiency and effectiveness, with a consequent increase in results – all aligned with the required or internationally established standards.

These influences are reinterpreted by each country, taking into account local particularities, that is, there is an interaction between the global and the local, always recontextualizing.

### Context of Text Production

The Context of Text Production, according to Mainardes (2006), translates into “[...] political texts, therefore, represent politics. These representations can take various forms: official legal texts and political texts, formal and informal comments on official texts, videos, etc. (p. 53).” These political texts are the result of disputes and agreements; therefore, policies are textual interventions that also carry material limitations and possibilities (MAINARDES, 2006). In this context, the legal bases are established for policies to be put into practice, interrelated with the Context of Influence, as these texts are formulated and constructed according to global interests to meet global, and consequently, local, demands.

Lopes and Macedo (2011) emphasize that politics must be understood as both discourse and as text. Politics is subject to different influences that can be legitimized through discourse (disputes, commitments, interpretations, and reinterpretations), establishing negotiations through the influences of meanings and meanings in the readings to be conducted. Thus, the policy includes all actions, texts, and elaborations that seek to

guide the work of schools and dissemination by government bodies. In curricular texts, according to Ball (2001), the context of political text production is official documents and legal texts. There are other contexts of text production, such as materials produced from these texts, seeking greater popularization (LOPES; MACEDO, 2011). Therefore, it is important to understand and revisit Brazilian legislation and educational texts, as they represent policies and guidelines that reflect the interests of the population. Over the decades, the country has implemented numerous curricular policies.

In 1988, with the Federal Constitution (BRASIL, 1988), education became a right for everyone and a duty of the State and the family, promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, aiming at the full development of the person, their preparation for the future. exercise of citizenship and qualification for work (BRASIL, 1988; Art. 205). By guaranteeing the constitutional right to education, the same legal text establishes national minimum content and specific local and regional content, providing for a common national curricular base for elementary education (BRASIL, 1988; Art. 210).

Soon after, in 1996, the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDBEN) was approved, Law no. 9394 (BRASIL, 1996), which defines, organizes, and disciplines the different stages and levels of education in the Brazilian educational system, ensuring the social right to education for Brazilian students.

In 1997 and 1998, the National Curricular Parameters (PCNs) (BRASIL, 1998) were approved and published, serving as non-mandatory guidelines aimed at guiding educators in the construction and elaboration of basic education curricula by standardizing some fundamental factors for each area of knowledge.

In 1998, the National Curricular Guidelines for Basic Education (DCNs) were regulated and became mandatory. They guide the curricular planning of schools and education systems, assisting in the organization, articulation, development, and evaluation of their pedagogical proposals, established by the National Education Council (BRASIL, 2013).

In 2014, the National Education Plan (PNE) was established by Law No. 13,005 (BRASIL, 2014), determining guidelines, goals, and strategies for education over 10 years (2014 to 2024). The PNE reiterates the need to establish and implement, through the Interfederative Agreement (Union, States, Federal District, and Municipalities), pedagogical guidelines for basic education and the common national basis of curricula, with students' rights and learning and development objectives for each year of Elementary and Secondary Education, respecting regional, state, and local diversities (BRASIL, 2014).

Following previous legal frameworks, the PNE, more specifically in goal 7, reiterates the importance of a common national curricular base for Brazil, focusing on learning as a

strategy to promote the quality of Basic Education in all stages and modalities. After the approval of the PNE, the states and municipalities began to build their respective State Plans and Municipal Plans.

In 2015, the first version of the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) was presented, followed by the second version in 2016 and the third and final one in 2017. The BNCC was ratified in December 2017, by resolution of the National Education Council CNE/CP No. 2, of December 22, 2017. Starting in 2018, states and municipalities needed to construct their frameworks and curricula in a collaborative regime aligned with the BNCC (BRASIL, 2018). The purpose of the Base is to define learning rights and competencies to be developed by students in each modality of Basic Education. As already mentioned in this article, the demand for the BNCC appears in the Federal Constitution (CF/88) and in the previously mentioned legislation. The BNCC text refers to the Federative Pact, social inequalities, and the country's diversity, articulating with curricula and educational actors.

BNCC proposes a set of learning and developments to which everyone is entitled, aiming for equity in education. To achieve this, it is necessary to contextualize it to the reality of each federated entity, taking into account each stage of Basic Education and the teaching modalities: special, indigenous, *quilombola*, professional, youth and adult, and rural education. The diversified part of the curriculum, as indicated in the LDB, in Art. 26, and the DNCs, it will be included in the preparation of each curriculum. Therefore, each curriculum must pay attention to the local reality in the objectives proposed by the BNCC.

The discussion about curricular policies, especially BNCC, allows reflection based on the question asked by Almeida and Jung (2019, p. 7): “Does the National Common Curricular Base promote emancipation, or does it represent an important regulatory instrument?”. Therefore, it is crucial to understand what this regulation entails and which ideologies are behind curricular policies, questioning the impact of these policies and the BNCC, as “[...] they represent an opportunity for emancipation” (ALMEIDA; JUNG, 2019, p. 7).

Following the trajectory of national curriculum policies, each state and municipality must construct their curriculum policies aligned with the BNCC. The municipality of Uruguaiana/RS created its Municipal Education Plan, approved in April 2016, with a validity period of 10 years. To develop this Plan, a coordinating committee composed of various segments of society was formed. Considering the need to align with the BNCC, the PNE, and, consequently, the PME, the municipality began the process of constructing the municipal curriculum, a set of guidelines, concepts, and

guiding principles of educational policies for Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education to be implemented in Uruguaiana/RS.

The development of this curricular document was articulated and aligned with the provisions of the BNCC, the Gaúcho Curricular Reference (RCG) (2018) and other legal Education provisions in the country. The document began to be conceived, constructed and developed in 2018, shortly after approval by the BNCC. This process was carried out in a democratic, collective, and collaborative way, with groups of teachers from all fields, in monthly Continuing Training meetings offered to the network's educators.

Initially, an analysis and comparison were conducted between the legal and pedagogical documents of municipal schools and the BNCC. In 2019, this process and discussions about learning rights, competencies and skills highlighted in the BNCC and the Gaúcho Curriculum Reference intensified, resulting in the document entitled "Guiding Document for the Municipal Territory of Uruguaiana" (DOTMU) (Uruguaiana, 2022). The municipality's curriculum policy is based on national and municipal legislation, as well as the conceptions and identity of the political pedagogical projects of the schools in the Municipal Network of Uruguaiana/RS.

According to the document, the curriculum is configured

[...] in the set of guidelines, conceptions and guiding principles of educational policies for Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education, to be implemented in the municipal territory of Uruguaiana, articulated with educational policies and actions at the national and state level through alignment with the provisions of the BNCC, RCG and other legal provisions of Education in the country (URUGUAIANA, 2020, p. 13).

Using the Document of the Municipal Territory of Uruguaiana (DOTMU) as a foundation, school discourses and actions must be developed following municipal educational policy. To ensure quality basic education, it is essential to reflect on the context of each space and the social diversities present, understanding that the policy, to be implemented in the city's schools, needs to be analyzed, interpreted, and redefined according to each school reality.

Through the historical trajectory of legal texts, the importance of the context of text production in defining standards and analyzing the educational path in curricular policies is understood, as these texts represent policies. Mainardes (2006, p. 52) explains that

[...] such texts are not necessarily internally coherent and clear, and may also be contradictory [...]. Policy is not made and finalized at the legislative time and texts need to be read to the specific time and place of their production.

That is why policies can be considered textual interventions, even though they have material limitations and possibilities. The responses to these texts have real consequences, experienced in the third context: the context of practice (MAINARDES, 2006).

### Context of Practice

In the Context of Practice, the policy is subject to interpretation and recreation, producing effects and consequences that may represent significant changes to the original policy (MAINARDES, 2006). Education professionals involved in this process are active in implementing policies, recreating and interpreting them based on their beliefs. Every time someone reads and interprets the policy and transposes it into daily practice, it changes.

Considering the reinterpretation of policies in the local context, in this study, the Context of Practice is represented by the implementation of the Municipal Education Guidance Document (DOTMU). In light of this, it is important to discuss how this document was constructed. The researcher participated in the creation of this document, allowing us to provide detailed information about the process.

The DOTMU was created collectively during monthly Continuing Training meetings for educators in 2018, in the municipality of Uruguaiana/RS. At these meetings, a comparative analysis began between the BNCC, which indicates the learning rights, minimum competencies and skills to be worked on in Basic Education, and school documents (URUGUAIANA, p.13, 2022). The DOTMU presentation highlights the importance and challenges of its construction, reaffirming the collective in the process:

[...] Construction of a territory's Curriculum Guidance Document requires an enormous challenge, as it presupposes dialogue with all actors involved, educators, managers, pedagogical teams, sponsors, and collegiate entities (URUGUAIANA, p. 11, 2022).

In the first semester of 2019, groups were formed by representatives from all stages of education to systematize contributions (URUGUAIANA, p. 12, 2022). The meetings were monthly and, sometimes, fortnightly, guided by reflection, research, study, and debates. This process was marked by the active, democratic, and

collaborative participation of everyone involved in the systematization of the proposals and the directions that constructed the text.

The analysis of this curricular policy and the DOTMU construction process reveals the intention of guiding pedagogical praxis to qualify teaching and learning processes, reinventing and giving new meaning to learning at school. Thus, “it is understood that subjects need to be analyzed in their contexts and that historical and legal factors influence and contribute to decisions regarding the implementation of public policies [...]” (URUGUAIANA, 2022, p. 15). In practice, these policies expressed in legal documents, such as the DOTMU, are interpreted and translated, producing significant transformations in the original policies.

In the Context of Practice, actors are immersed in a variety of discourses, some more dominant than the others. Politics as text and policy as discourse are complementary conceptualizations. While politics as discourse emphasizes the limits imposed by the discourse itself, politics as text emphasizes the control that is in the hands of readers (MAINARDES, 2006).

The process of thinking and living the curriculum becomes practice. In this context, there is immense potential to reconfigure policies and give them meaning according to the local reality. The Guiding Document of the municipality of Uruguaiana/RS has this premise, in theory and practice. Since its creation, studies and practices have had the same intention: to guide and guide work, as “education is a constant process of training, present throughout life. It is through education that values, practices, skills, competencies, and different knowledge are constructed and reconstructed considering the demands and needs of a society in constant transformation” (DOTMU, 2022).

The construction and preparation of this document, until today, through the formation groups and studies carried out, show that the Pedagogical Coordination seeks support from DOTMU to implement pedagogical practice. Therefore, it is important to highlight that it is not just another document “shelved” in educational institutions, but rather an integral part of the school experience.

The analysis of the lived experience of this curriculum will focus on schools that offer Elementary Education in the municipality, through the Pedagogical Coordination group of these schools, which, in their pedagogical practice, are guided by this guiding document, always seeking to ensure that it is considered and lived since they participated in its elaboration.

The process of implementing DOTMU and experiencing the curriculum is explained by the researcher's experience. Thus, the report of this context is given not

only through the analysis of the document, but also through the researcher's insertion in this context.

It is possible to identify implementation through the continuing training sessions conducted by the Municipal Department of Education, from March to November, as guaranteed by the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law 9394/96. The studies carried out in these training sessions have DOTMU as their main reference. Each group has a specific area Coordinator. Any educational demands are addressed by the coordinator, who seeks alternatives and solutions to the problems and difficulties faced by the schools to the teaching and learning process.

Imbernón (2010, p. 10), states that “[...] we cannot separate training from the work context, because we would make mistakes in our speech.” These moments of study are always contextualized to the reality of schools and their needs. Continuing training seeks innovation and change, functioning as a gear. The context provides conditions for these formative practices and their reflection (IMBERNÓN, 2010). Continuing training [...] must be capable of creating spaces for training research, innovation, and imagination, and teacher trainers must know how to create spaces to move from teaching to learning (IMBERNÓN, 2010, p. 11).

The Context of Practice occurs in an interconnected and connected way. The analysis of the implementation of the curriculum in schools in the Municipal Network of Uruguaiana, represented by DOTMU, reveals that the process is developed through the continuing training program for education professionals promoted by the sponsor. These trainings aim to contribute to the evolution of pedagogical practices, allowing educators to add knowledge capable of generating transformation and impact in professional and school contexts.

With advisory and follow-up visits, conducted from March to December, the Municipal Basic Education Schools (EMEB) and the Municipal Elementary Schools (EMEF) dialogue with the management and the pedagogical team about their pedagogical and didactic practices. These practices include activities, programs, and projects developed by schools according to their realities. They receive support and guidance from the Pedagogical Coordination, which, according to the School Calendar and the needs of each school, conducts Continuous Training sessions. All these actions are aligned with the current educational legislation.

The pedagogical work of the Pedagogical Coordinators and the projects and programs of the Municipal Network have as their focus the Pedagogical Political Project

and the DOTMU as guides. Therefore, schools experience the document in practice, using it as support for all referrals.

The DOTMU reflects the conceptions of each school, as it was collectively built by all schools and educators. This facilitates its interpretation in practice. However, analysis of the document and the researcher's follow-up reveal that not all schools are at the same level of implementation, which is understandable given the different contexts and challenges. Schools that consciously and meaningfully engage with the Pedagogical Political Project experience the DOTMU with greater intentionality.

To overcome difficulties and to think about and experience the curriculum meaningfully, the Pedagogical Coordination and the Administration must understand and engage with the Pedagogical Political Project with pedagogical intent. Schools that understand their curriculum documents and effectively implement the DOTMU face challenges but achieve positive results in student learning. This is observed by the researcher, who is present in the continuous training sessions and the management of the Municipal Department of Education.

The curriculum is a discursive practice, laden with meaning and power. It constructs reality, projects identities, and guides actions, always producing meanings. This discourse is produced in different social and cultural contexts, reiterating and recreating meanings (LOPES; MACEDO, 2011).

The weaknesses identified are that not all education professionals have in-depth knowledge of DOTMU, despite having participated in its construction. The Pedagogical Coordination group knows and seeks to implement the document, but the biggest challenge is in the day-to-day pedagogical process, in ensuring that everyone intentionally experiences the curriculum, that is, that the actions have pedagogical intentionality.

Implementing the curriculum involves facing several challenges, demanding a careful and strategic approach on the part of educators. It is crucial that the Pedagogical Coordination plays its role and connects theory and practice, transmitting this clearly to teachers. Experiencing the curriculum intentionally and consciously requires continuous training and studies on the part of educators so that they can understand all dimensions of a curriculum policy. For this, they need to be willing to deepen their knowledge. Although pedagogical work takes place, the curriculum still represents a significant challenge for everyone. The researcher's experience in this process with the coordinators reveals that the topic demands theoretical deepening to become more conscious and effective. Implementing the curriculum in all fields of the school, and following its guidelines, remains a weakness identified in the educational context.

## Final Considerations

This text analyzed the Municipal Education Guidance Document (DOTMU) in light of Ball's Policy Cycle (2001), emphasizing the three main contexts: Context of Influence, Context of the Text, and Context of Practice.

The DOTMU was developed with the participation of education professionals from the municipal network, pointing out its intentional implementation in schools, each adapting it according to their understanding and execution of this policy. Unlike other documents previously prepared, the DOTMU involved all educators in an intensive reflective and dialogical process, which probably differentiates its approach. In addition, there was face-to-face participation from those involved. After its construction, it became an integral part of school practice and educational management, providing the basis for pedagogical work in municipal schools.

Thus, the Context of Practice emerges as central to this study, reflecting how each school and its community internalize and enrich the proposed curriculum, considering social, cultural, political, religious, and economic aspects. However, despite the significant participation of professionals in the construction of DOTMU, the implementation of this curricular policy progresses slowly in practice aligned with theory. Understanding that learning occurs through a dynamic and conscious curriculum, guided by planning, represents an ongoing and evolving challenge. The potential of the DOTMU lies in the professionals' perception that the document is an organizing tool for pedagogical practice, grounded in its theoretical consistency and democratic formulation.

There is a gradual progress observed in the schools of the Uruguaiana Municipal Network towards a more deliberate and experiential approach to the curriculum, highlighting the need for careful planning and execution.

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