

The School in and Linked to the Rural Territory: Educational Practises in Connection with the Context from an Ethnography Study

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In a context where social, political and educational decisions, driven by globalisation, put the sustainability and maintenance of rural communities at risk, schools located in rural areas might promote rootedness and favour sustainability. These schools are presented as backbones in connection with the social, natural and cultural environment. In this sense, the purpose of this article is to contribute to the knowledge about the role played by space and territory in schools located in rural areas. Specifically, the aim of the study is to identify which educational practices are based on the relationship with the context take place and to know how teachers (families and pupils) experience this kind of teaching learning practices. The study is carried out through an ethnographic design in 3 rural schools of different nature (one grouped rural school and two small rural schools) in the region of Aragon (Spain) through participant observation and semi-structured interviews that are complemented with informal conversations. The results show, on the one hand, that practices in relation to the environment are presented as a natural resource that facilitate the inclusion of values, traditions and cultures within the curriculum. And, on the other hand, that, through these practices, the value of place goes beyond the word “place”, encompassing within itself, the relationships and interactions established within the community. Thus, this study highlights the need for educational policies that make it possible to address for the particularities of schools, through a flexible and open curriculum based on community opportunities and context-based learning.