

The importance of environmental practices within the school context

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SUMMARY

This study focuses on analyzing the importance of environmental practices within the school context, considering their pedagogical application, the content they address, and the impact they have on students' critical and civic development. The choice of this topic is justified by the growing social and academic demand for incorporating Environmental Education as a structuring element of the educational process, as provided for in Law No. 9,795/1999 and the guidelines of the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC). Environmental practices in the school context not only encourage environmental preservation and conservation but also promote active student participation in socially relevant issues, strengthening the link between theory and practice. The methodology adopted was a literature review. Scientific articles, books, and official documents that discuss the concept of environmental practices, the curricular approach to the topic, and their impact on student development were selected. The overall objective of this study is to analyze the importance of environmental practices in the school context, highlighting their contribution to the development of environmentally conscious and responsible individuals. The specific objectives are: to understand the concept of environmental practices and their application in the school environment; to identify the curricular contents that address environmental practices and how they are inserted into pedagogical proposals; and to evaluate the impacts that the approach to the theme of environmental practices has on the critical and civic development of students.

Keywords: Environmental practices; environmental education; citizenship training; school context.

ABSTRACT

This study is delimited to the analysis of the importance of environmental practices within the school context, considering their pedagogical application, the content that addresses them, and the impact they have on the critical and civic formation of students. The choice of the topic is justified by the growing social and academic demand to incorporate Environmental Education as a structuring element of the educational process, as provided for in Law No. 9,795/1999 and in the guidelines of the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC).

Environmental practices in the school context not only encourage the preservation and conservation of the environment but also promote students' active participation in socially relevant issues, strengthening the link between theory and practice. The methodology adopted was a literature review. Scientific articles, books, and official documents discussing the concept of environmental practices, the curricular approach to the theme, and its impact on the formation of the individual were selected. The general objective of this work is to analyze the importance of environmental practices in the school context, highlighting their contribution to the formation of conscious and responsible individuals regarding the environment. The specific objectives are to understand the concept of environmental practices and their application in the school environment; to identify the curricular content that addresses environmental practices and how it is inserted in pedagogical proposals; and to assess the impact that addressing the theme of environmental practices has on the critical and civic formation of students.

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Curriculum (BNCC). Environmental practices in the school context on the ground encourage the preservation and conservation of the environment, which also promotes student participation in questions of social relevance, strengthening the link between theory and practice. The methodology adopted was the literature review. Scientific articles, books and official documents that discuss the concept of environmental practices, the curricular focus of the theme and its impacts on the subject's formation were selected.

The general objective of the work is to analyze the importance of environmental practices in the school context, highlighting their contribution to the formation of conscious and responsible subjects in relation to the environment. The specific objectives are: understanding the concept of environmental practices and their application in the school environment; identify curricular contents that address environmental practices and how they are included in pedagogical proposals; and evaluate the impacts that the approach to the theme of environmental practices causes in the critical and civic training of students.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The environmental crisis that has plagued the planet in recent decades has increasingly awakened the urgency to rethink contemporary society's ways of life and production. Global warming, deforestation, the scarcity of fresh water, the loss of biodiversity, and increased pollution are some of the countless environmental problems that directly impact the quality of life of the world's population. In this context, schools represent a fundamental space for building a critical and sustainable consciousness among new generations.

When incorporated into pedagogical practices, environmental education enables students to develop values, attitudes, and knowledge focused on preserving natural resources and coexisting harmoniously with the environment. More than simply imparting theoretical content, the school's role is to foster meaningful experiences that connect students to local and global environmental realities, empowering them to become active advocates for sustainability. Therefore, incorporating environmental practices into daily school life is an essential strategy for developing citizens committed to the future of the planet.

Historically, environmental issues have been addressed sparingly in school curricula, often limited to subjects such as science or geography. However, more recent educational guidelines, such as the National Environmental Education Policy (Law No. 9,795/1999), recognize that environmental education must be a continuous, integrated, permanent, and transversal practice across all stages and modalities of education. This means going beyond isolated actions, integrating environmental issues into the pedagogical project of the school and institutional culture.

Discussing the importance of environmental practices within the school context is, therefore, an urgent need in light of contemporary challenges. The school environment is one of the first social spaces where children learn to relate to the world around them. Therefore, it is essential that school practices encourage environmental care, from simple actions such as responsible water use to more structured projects such as school gardens, selective waste collection, or awareness campaigns.

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Furthermore, when the school promotes environmental actions, it also contributes to the development of socio-emotional skills, such as responsibility, empathy, solidarity and cooperation.

These values are essential not only for environmental education, but for human development as a whole.

Environmental practice, in this context, is not just a subject to be taught, but an experience to be incorporated into daily school life.

Finally, addressing this issue is a way to strengthen the relationship between the school and the community. Environmental projects can extend beyond the school walls and involve parents, guardians, and local residents.



creating networks of care and collective responsibility. In a world that calls for sustainable solutions, schools play a strategic role in developing individuals who know how to respect, protect, and preserve the environment. environment in all its dimensions.

The overall objective of this study is to analyze the importance of environmental practices in schools, highlighting their contribution to the development of environmentally conscious and responsible individuals. The specific objectives are: to understand the concept of environmental practices and their application in schools; to identify curricular content that addresses environmental practices and how they are incorporated into pedagogical proposals; and to evaluate the impacts of addressing environmental practices on students' critical and civic development.

The work used as a methodological resource the systematic literature review, where research was carried out - the most significant works that address this theme, which is so important for the development of the work, were read and selected, so that it would be possible to develop the expected expanded debates.

To organize this article, the work was divided into three distinct subtopics, each responding to one of the work's specific objectives. The first addresses the general concept of environmental practices and how they are developed in the educational environment. It then discusses how these contents are present within the educational curriculum. The final section discusses the impacts of a broader approach to these contents on students' comprehensive education.

2.1 Concept of environmental practices

The environmental crisis that has intensified in recent decades has demanded profound changes in the way humans interact with the environment. In response, various social sectors have begun to discuss and implement actions aimed at environmental preservation and sustainability. In this context, schools emerge as a strategic space for the introduction of educational practices focused on ecological awareness.

Environmental practices, when incorporated into daily school life in a structured manner, represent an opportunity for comprehensive student development. They are pedagogical initiatives that involve sustainable values, attitudes, and behaviors, fostering the development of critical and ethical awareness regarding environmental issues.

Understanding the concept of environmental practices means recognizing that such actions go far beyond One-off events or symbolic activities. This is an educational approach committed to social transformation and the construction of a culture of care for life in all its forms. Environmental practices, therefore, need to be ongoing, interdisciplinary, and connected to the students' realities.

According to Loureiro (2012), environmental practices involve cognitive, affective, and ethical aspects, constituting an educational process that extends throughout the individual's development. The author highlights the importance of overcoming the fragmented vision between society and nature, proposing an experiential and transformative. He states:

Environmental practices in education are understood as actions that involve both the cognitive and the affective and ethical aspects of individuals. It involves fostering a new relationship with the environment, overcoming the dichotomy between nature and society. Environmental practices, in this sense, are experiential, political, and transformative, capable of awakening in students a sense of belonging and responsibility for the world in which they live. They are not limited to specific activities, but involve a continuous educational process integrated into the school routine (Loureiro, 2012, p. 43).

This view broadens the traditional understanding of environmental activities, which are often limited to



commemorative dates, such as Arbor Day or Environment Week. While these actions have their value, they are not enough to promote real behavioral changes. The challenge lies in integrating environmental practices into the school curriculum and the institution's political-pedagogical project.

Carvalho (2012) also reinforces this perspective by considering environmental practices as components essential components for civic development. For the author, the school space should be understood as a place of collective construction, where students can experience, reflect, and transform their reality through conscious and participatory action. She emphasizes:

Environmental practice must be understood as a collective construction that allows for the problematization of social and environmental relations in the school environment. By recognizing the school as a microcosm of society, it is possible to develop pedagogical strategies that engage students in concrete actions, in which they can experience, reflect on, and transform the reality around them. Environmental practices cannot be reduced to commemorative dates or isolated actions, as their true potential lies in the ability to articulate knowledge with civic practice" (Carvalho, 2012, p.

These practices also contribute to the development of students' autonomy, responsibility, and leadership. Through activities such as school gardens, composting, recycling, and awareness-raising projects, students learn, in practice, the importance of sustainability and cooperation.

Sauvé (2005), when addressing the concept of environmental practices, further expands this understanding by linking these actions to innovative methodologies and transformative pedagogical experiences. She believes it is necessary to break with traditional teaching models so that environmental issues are truly significant in the educational process. She states:

To discuss environmental practices is also to discuss innovative educational practices that break with the traditional logic of content transmission. Schools must encourage participation, dialogue, and collective action, fostering experiences that lead students to understand the complexity of environmental problems and actively position themselves in the search for solutions. In this context, environmental practices constitute a way to experience environmental education in a critical, integrative, and emancipatory manner (Sauvé, 2005, p. 112).

The author proposes a pluralistic, inclusive environmental education based on the construction of knowledge through the active involvement of individuals. This implies a change in pedagogical practices and in the way schools organize themselves to embrace and develop environmentally-friendly initiatives.

Another key aspect of understanding environmental practices is their relationship with the territory and the school community. Environmentally-focused pedagogical initiatives gain even more meaning when connected to the real-world problems of the students' localities. This encourages critical analysis of the environment and a sense of belonging to the space in which they live.

In this sense, schools should be seen as agents of socio-environmental transformation. By incorporating environmental practices into their routines, they strengthen students' ethical and political development and encourage active participation in collective projects to improve quality of life. This transforms the school environment. in a true citizenship laboratory.

Furthermore, environmental practices foster interdisciplinarity by promoting dialogue between different fields of knowledge.

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Environmental projects can be approached through science, geography, Portuguese, mathematics, and other disciplines, demonstrating that environmental problems require solutions that consider multiple areas of knowledge.

The involvement of the entire school community—teachers, students, administrators, staff, and families—is essential to the success of these practices. A collective commitment to sustainability strengthens bonds between individuals and encourages shared responsibility for preserving the school environment and nature more broadly.

Thus, understanding the concept of environmental practices implies recognizing that these actions need to be rooted in the school's culture, guiding its management, curriculum, and pedagogical practices.

- is a continuous work, which requires planning, awareness and training of educators.

Therefore, environmental practices cannot be reduced to a set of symbolic or decorative actions.

They should be understood as part of a broader educational process that seeks to develop critical, compassionate individuals committed to building a more just and sustainable society. In the next subtopic, we will discuss how these environmental practices are present in educational content.

and in the curriculum.

2.2 Contents that address environmental practices

Addressing environmental issues in basic education is a growing demand in light of the ecological challenges of the 21st century. Understanding which curricular content enables the development of environmental practices is essential for planning pedagogical interventions that are effective in developing conscious, critical individuals engaged with sustainability.

The National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), a normative document that guides the curricula of re- Public and private institutions in Brazil reinforce the importance of environmental education in a transversal manner, that is, present in various fields of knowledge. The proposal is that environmental content be integrated, articulating knowledge and stimulating reflection on real environmental problems.

In the area of Natural Sciences, for example, environmental themes appear frequently, especially especially in the curricular components that deal with the use of natural resources, the functioning of ecosystems, climate change, and the relationships between living beings and the environment. These contents allow a broad approach to environmental practices in everyday school life.

However, environmental education shouldn't be exclusive to the sciences. The BNCC proposes that topics such as sustainability, environmental citizenship, and conscious consumption also be addressed in Geography, History, Mathematics, and Portuguese. Interdisciplinarity, therefore, becomes an essential path to ensuring that environmental practices are not restricted to a single discipline.

For Leff (2001, p.37), the construction of a significant environmental education necessarily involves through the articulation between school knowledge and knowledge of everyday life. The author argues that:

Environmental education cannot be seen as an isolated subject or a peripheral topic in the curriculum. It must be integrated and ongoing into the school's pedagogical project. This integration requires teachers to critically assess environmental content, understanding its role in shaping sustainable values, attitudes, and behaviors. Environmental knowledge must be present in all disciplines, contributing to the development of ecological and ethical awareness in students.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that curricular content focused on environmental practices must engage with students' realities and local socio-environmental issues. By contextualizing the content, the school fosters the

construction of meaningful knowledge capable of mobilizing attitudes.

transformers.

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In this sense, Gadotti (2009) emphasizes the importance of an environmental pedagogy that transcends the simple transmission of content and is based on action, so that students go beyond academic knowledge, knowing how to apply it in their daily lives. For him:

Environmental education should be present at all levels and modalities of education, as a structuring axis of the curriculum. More than just learning concepts, students need to be protagonists in projects and actions that help them understand and act on the environmental problems of their community. This



implies rethinking methods, content and learning spaces, so that they become coherent with the principles of sustainability and planetary citizenship (Gadotti, 2009, p. 88).

The inclusion of environmental content in the curriculum also favors the development of important skills, such as critical thinking, empathy, teamwork and social responsibility.

These skills are essential to train citizens prepared to deal with today's environmental challenges.

Through interdisciplinary educational projects, environmental topics can be addressed concretely. For example, when working on the topic of water, it's possible to discuss scientific concepts about the hydrological cycle, geographic data about river basins, social issues related to water access, and argumentative texts about the responsible use of this resource.

Sauvé (2008) reinforces this integrated and practical approach when dealing with the multiple ways of working environmental education at school. The author highlights:

It is necessary to multiply educational experiences that foster the critical and creative appropriation of environmental content. This means going beyond theory, promoting experiences that combine knowledge with practice, understanding with action. Environmental content, when addressed from a systemic and participatory approach, enables meaningful learning, in which students become subjects of their own educational process and agents of global transformation (Sauvé, 2008, p. 45).

Thus, content that addresses environmental practices is not just a curricular topic, but rather a tool for exercising citizenship and social participation. They encourage students to reflect on their role in the world and to act in favor of the community and the environment. Environmental practices gain greater pedagogical relevance when combined with content that develops critical thinking, allowing students to understand the complexity of environmental issues and actively participate in the search for sustainable solutions.

Educators are faced with the challenge of planning teaching situations that promote the connection between theory and practice, between formal curriculum and school experiences. This requires ongoing teacher training and institutional support from school administration.

It is essential that environmental content be aligned with the school's political-pedagogical project and current educational guidelines. Only then will it be possible to consolidate an environmentally committed, critical, and transformative educational practice.

Finally, identifying and incorporating environmental content into the curriculum is more than a legal requirement. It's an ethical commitment to building a sustainable future, in which schools fulfill their social role of developing conscious, compassionate individuals capable of transforming the reality in which they live. All of this has a significant impact on the development of those educated, which we will discuss next.

2.3 Impacts caused by the approach to the theme of environmental practices in the formation of the subject

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Introducing environmental practices into the school environment isn't limited to imparting knowledge about ecology or sustainability. Its most profound impact lies in the student's overall development, encompassing cognitive, socio-emotional, and ethical aspects. By experiencing experiences that encourage environmental care, students develop skills and values that directly influence their citizenship.

The educational process focused on environmental issues promotes the development of critical awareness. This means that the student not only understands the importance of environmental preservation, but also



also becomes capable of identifying problems, reflecting on their causes and proposing concrete solutions.

This development is essential to form active and socially engaged individuals.

According to Jacobi (2003, p. 190), environmental education plays a transformative role in students by promoting reflection and behavioral changes that go beyond the school environment, becoming present in the most diverse spaces these students experience. He highlights that:

The environmental education approach must go beyond the informational dimension, seeking to develop students' capacities for critical analysis and decision-making that contribute to the construction of sustainable societies. This educational process aims to encourage students' active participation in collective actions, through which they can exercise their citizenship and understand the interdependent relationships between human beings and the environment. Thus, environmental education becomes an instrument of emancipation and social transformation.

As we can see, the author advocates for the need to go beyond academic teaching, in a search to make the student a multiplier in their families and community on the practice of preservation and adequate management of ecosystems.

The impact of environmental practices is also manifested in the strengthening of socio-emotional skills, such as empathy, cooperation, and a sense of responsibility. By working on collective preservation projects, students learn to value teamwork and the importance of solidarity.

Thus, citizenship formation, stimulated by environmental education, involves both the individual and social dimensions of the collective.

Environmental education, when systematically integrated into the curriculum, enables students to understand that their individual actions have collective repercussions. This understanding broadens their sense of responsibility and commitment to the community, encouraging engagement in environmental and social causes. It is not just about developing technical knowledge, but also about promoting ethical and political education, in which students recognize themselves as an integral part of their environment and as agents of change (Carvalho, 2012, p. 74).

Another important impact is the ability to transfer the learning acquired at school to everyday life. When students internalize sustainable values, they tend to reproduce them at home, also influencing their family and community. Thus, the school acts as a multiplier of practices and behaviors that benefit society as a whole.

Working with environmental practices also fosters the development of cognitive skills related to complex problem-solving. Environmental issues, due to their multidimensional nature, require students to mobilize different areas of knowledge and consider multiple perspectives to arrive at viable solutions.

The environmental practices approach helps students learn to deal with complexity, developing their ability to analyze, synthesize, and act. By participating in projects involving sustainability, they understand that solutions are neither simple nor immediate, requiring collective effort, dialogue, and planning. This strengthens critical thinking and prepares individuals to act consciously and responsibly in different social and environmental contexts (Sorrentino, 2002, p. 36).

These impacts are also related to the development of ecological awareness, in which students perceive themselves as part of an interdependent system. This perception is essential to breaking away from the anthropocentric and utilitarian view of nature, fostering a more nurturing relationship.

balanced and respectful of the environment.

Environmental projects in schools allow students to experience, in practice, concepts such as sustainability, conscious consumption, and the preservation of natural resources. These experiences foster lasting learning by meaningfully combining theory and practice.



Furthermore, a continuous approach to environmental practices throughout school increases the likelihood that students will carry these values into adulthood. In this way, schools contribute to the development of citizens prepared to face the environmental and social challenges of the future.

Another relevant point is that environmental education, by developing critical thinkers, also contributes to the democratization of decisions involving the environment. A well-informed and conscientious citizen is capable of actively participating in public policies and collective initiatives promoting sustainability.

We can therefore see that the impacts of addressing environmental practices in schools go beyond content acquisition. They involve profound changes in how students perceive the world, relate to others, and make everyday decisions.

Therefore, investing in environmental practices as part of school education is not just a pedagogical requirement, but a social responsibility. By assuming this commitment, schools become spaces for transformation capable of generating lasting positive impacts for society as a whole.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The analysis developed throughout the subthemes allows us to understand that environmental practices in the school context represent much more than specific awareness-raising actions and, if well-worked, can help in the integral development of students, which goes beyond the school walls and has repercussions in your adult life.

We can therefore affirm that the overall objective of this work was achieved, as all the specific objectives were also met. The first specific objective achieved was to understand the concept of environmental practices and their application in the school environment.

Understanding the concept of these practices was found to be essential to recognizing their educational, ethical, and transformative nature. The reflections of authors such as Loureiro, Carvalho, and Sauv  demonstrate that, to be effective, environmental practices must be integrated into everyday school life, encompassing cognitive, affective, and political aspects, and constituting an ongoing process of civic development.

Then, the specific objective was achieved, which was to identify the curricular contents that address environmental practices and how they are inserted into the pedagogical proposals, where an expanded and multifaceted presentation of these possibilities within the educational curriculum was perceived.

It was identified that content addressing environmental practices should be present in a transversal and interdisciplinary manner in the school curriculum. This perspective, supported by documents such as the BNCC and thinkers such as Leff, Gadotti, and Sauv , reinforces the need to articulate knowledge and experiences, valuing making the connection between theory and practice.

The understanding that environmental education is not limited to a single discipline, but permeates all areas of knowledge, expands the scope and relevance of pedagogical actions, also facilitating a broader understanding of these contents by students.

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Finally, we reached the final subtopic, which aimed to assess the impacts of addressing environmental practices on students' critical and civic development. It became clear that a consistent approach to environmental practices has profound impacts on individual development.

As Jacobi, Carvalho, and Sorrentino discuss, these impacts include strengthening critical thinking, developing socio-emotional skills, fostering community engagement, and fostering active ecological awareness. These results demonstrate that environmental education is not limited to acquiring information; it also transforms behaviors and broadens the sense of social responsibility.



We can therefore say that there is an intrinsic relationship between the concept, the contents and the impacts of environmental practices in the school environment. A clear understanding of their significance, combined with planned and cross-curricular inclusion, enhances the positive effects on students' critical and civic development. In this way, the school assumes its role as an agent of socio-environmental transformation, contributing to the construction of a more just, supportive and sustainable society.

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