



## BRIEF HISTORY OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, CONCEPTS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE

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### SUMMARY

This article seeks to emphasize a brief history of environmental education, concepts and their importance for maintaining life and environmental awareness, through a bibliographic review. Schools are the most appropriate places to develop and implement participatory and active teaching, in order to build knowledge and thus disseminate it to society in general. Environmental education should be used as an important part of the process of social training and continuing education to solve problems in a targeted way and promote active public participation. Such an approach is important in seeking to disseminate knowledge about it. Understanding and being an integral part requires knowledge that in fact, it is with this intention that we will approach the subject as a synthesis of the entire subject covered using: Cascino (200), Grün (1996), Dias (1998), Reigota (2007), Sauv e, 1992, 1994) and among others.

**Keywords:** environmental education, concepts, history.

### ABSTRACT

This article seeks to emphasize a brief history of environmental education, concepts and its importance for maintaining life and environmental awareness through , a literature review. Schools are the most appropriate places to develop and implement participatory and active teaching in order to build knowledge and thus disseminate it to society at large society in general. Environmental education should be used as an important part of the process of social and continuing education in order to solve problems in a targeted way and promote active public participation. Such an approach is important in dissemination of knowledge. To understand and be part of It is with this in mind that we will approach the subject as a summary of the whole subject. the subject as a synthesis of the entire subject addressed using: Cascino (200), Gr un (1996), Dias ( 1998), Reigota (2007), Sauv e, 1992, 1994) and others.

**Keywords:** environmental education, concepts, history.

### RESUME

This article intends to highlight a brief history of environmental education, the concepts of education and its importance for maintaining life and environmental awareness, through a bibliographic review. The schools are the most appropriate places to develop and apply participatory and active teaching at the end of and active teaching at the end of building knowledge and thus spreading it to society in general society in general. Environmental education must be used as an important part much of the social education process and continues to solve society's problems in general. Education continues to solve problems selectively and promote active public participation. This approach is important for spreading knowledge. Understanding and forming part of this sense, we will approach the theme as a synthesis of all the matter and the theme as a synthesis of the entire theme covered using: Cascino (200), Gr un (1996), Dias (1998), Reigota (2007), Sauv e (1992, 1994) and others.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental education (EA) has different concepts, several scholars on the subject define this topic, always seeking to ensure that people understand the world and can thus assimilate information about responsibilities and guidelines so that we can preserve and conserve the environment.

National Environmental Education Policy - Law No. 9795/1999, Art. 1. "Environmental education is understood as the processes through which the individual and the community build social values, knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies aimed at conserving the environment, an asset for the common use of the people, essential to a healthy quality of life and its sustainability."

In view of this, we can say that EE is a construction, that is, it is necessary that from an early age the individual can have access to it so that they can build critical thinking focused on the issues that permeate their daily lives, as such attitudes are essential for quality of life. The National Curricular Guidelines for Environmental Education, Art. 2, defines: "Environmental Education is a dimension of education, it is an intentional activity of social practice, which must give individual development a social character in its relationship with nature and with other human beings, aiming to enhance this human activity with the aim of making it full of social practice and environmental ethics."

Although there is already legislation that addresses the importance of including EA, little is included in regular education.

It is necessary to disseminate knowledge on the subject to consolidate environmental awareness and, above all, to act in the environment as transformers in search of a single purpose, the common good, which is everyone's responsibility.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. Brief history of environmental education

According to Grün (1996), since, as a result of hermeneutics (interpretation of the meaning of words), the past is not seen as an element that must be overcome, surpassed or eliminated by the new, as it provides the very basis for understanding of the present.

Therefore, the past cannot be considered a residue of accumulated events, but rather a flow in which we constantly move and participate as social-historical beings, being, therefore, inserted in history given the fact by which we exist (Grün, 1996).

### 2.2. The 60s

In this period, according to Cascino (2000), great transformative movements occur in humanity, such as the hippies, the explosion of feminism, the black movement or Black Power, pacifism, sexual liberation and the "pill", drugs, rock- and-roll, the anti-Cold War demonstrations and the nuclear-arms race, anti-Vietnam. And it was in the middle of 1962 that, according to Dias (1998), journalist Rachel Carson released a book entitled *Silent Spring*, becoming a classic of the global environmental movement. Where Rachel warned about the harmful effects of human actions on the environment, such as the loss of quality of life produced by the indiscriminate and excessive use of chemicals and their subsequent effects on the environment, such as the use of pesticides.

### 2.3. The 70s

In 1971, with the support of politicians, scientists and an entity related to *The Ecologist* magazine, *A Blueprint for Survival* was published in Great Britain, considered today, according to Dias (1998), a historical document being a classic that proposed measures in the search for a healthy environment, pointing out that where they insisted on an indefinite increase in demand it could not be supported by finite resources, not reaching a global balance.

### 2.4. The 80s

It was in this decade, according to Guimarães (1995), that the term "Environmental Education" became popular

definitely in the world.

In 1985, MEC opinion 819/85 further reinforces the need to include ecological content throughout the training process of primary and secondary education, integrating all areas of knowledge in a systematic way. and progressive, thus enabling the „formation of the ecological awareness of the future citizen“.

## 2.5. The 90s

The year 1992 was extremely important in the historical composition of the EA in Brazil and why not in the world, as it was in this year that the Second United Nations (UN) Conference on Environment and Development took place in the state of Rio de Janeiro from 03 to June 14, where the Treaty for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility was developed, being signed at its International Day, at the Global Forum parallel to ECO-92.

A new vision of the world began to take shape, more actively, with environmental education starting in 68 and going through 72, 77, 87 and 92, with transformations that sought something new. This new closely associated with new ideas, new global cultural references, new readings of human relationships, new strategies in the search for changes in forms of coexistence and construction of social and environmental relationships for a more balanced world (Cascino, 2000).

In 1992 in Brazil, MEC actions can still be seen, promoting a workshop in Jacarepaguá with the aim of socializing the results of national and international experiences in the EA scenario, discussing methodologies and curricula. The meeting resulted in the Brazilian Charter for Environmental Education. In 1993, Ordinance 773/93 of the MEC permanently established a Working Group for the same with the objective of coordinating, supporting, monitoring, evaluating and guiding the actions, goals and strategies for its implementation in education systems in all levels and modalities, thus seeking to implement the recommendations approved at the Second United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Dias, 1998).

In 1999, Law No. 9,795 of April 27, 1999 was enacted, establishing the National Environmental Education Policy, which should be regulated after discussions in its Temporary Technical Chamber at CONAMA.

MEC Ordinance 1648/99 creates the Working Group with representatives from all its Secretariats to discuss the regulation of Law No. 9795/99 and the MEC proposes the PCNs in Action Program in response to States' requests. Environment is one of the cross-cutting themes, worked on in 2000.

## 2.6. 2000s

A big step for Education in Brazil was the elaboration of the National Curricular Parameters (PCNs) with the theme “Social Coexistence, Ethics and Environment”, where the environmental dimension is inserted as a transversal theme in the Elementary School curricula, appearing as a Means Environment. Covering basic notions of Environment, Sustainability and Diversity in its composition (Brasil,2000).

According to Reigota (2007), international meetings such as those that were the focus of this resumption of historical data have allowed a great debate and exchange of experiences between experts from all over the world, and in accordance with UNESCO characteristics, these works are carried out in official spheres with proposals and perspectives on Environmental Education from the governments of the respective countries.

## 2.7. 2010s

Significant advances in the world take place in EA's focus across the globe.

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Awareness of the need to change habits driven by climate change, advances with: partnerships in religious educational institutions: formal and informal.

Public policies in favor of the long-awaited ecological awareness gained prominence, marked by the increased information on the topic and increased knowledge that something needs to be done to guarantee the future of humanity.

## 2.8. 2020s

Environmental education has gained prominence in the world, climate change has brought an impetus for the environment to gain prominence in the search for inclusion and integration of EA, at all levels of school education.

The Covid-19 pandemic contributed to online teaching, often through social media, which brought changes to education systems, highlighting the link between human health and, consequently, planet Earth.

### 3. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CONCEPTS

According to Sauv e:

“[...]”The concept of EA is limited to the protection of the natural environment (ecological issues, economic and aesthetic values) without taking into account the direct needs of the population in relation to this environment as an important part of the ecosystem” .. .”

Environment	Relationship	Characteristics	Methodologies
As nature	To be appreciated and preserved naturally pray	Nature as a cathedral, or as a womb, pure and original	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• views</li> <li>• immersion in nature</li> </ul>
As a resource	To be managed	Collective biophysical inheritance, quality of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• campaign of 3 Rs</li> <li>• audits</li> </ul>
As a problem	To be resolved	Emphasis on pollution, deterioration and threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• case studies</li> </ul>
As a place for to live	EA for, about and not to care for the environment	With its social, historical and technological components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gardening projects</li> <li>• places or legends about nature</li> </ul>
As biosphere	As a place to be divided	Spaceship Earth, “Gaia”, the interdependence of living beings with inanimate beings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• case studies on global problems</li> <li>• stories with different cosmologies</li> </ul>
As a co-project community	To be involved	Nature with a focus on critical analysis, political participation of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participatory research</li> <li>• Discussion Forum</li> </ul>

Table 1 - The typology of conceptions about the environment in EA (Sauv e, 1992, 1994).

Sauv e emphasizes the need for environmental education for sustainable development:

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“[...]”SD is the most decisive objective in the relationship between “men” and the environment. This reorients EA (Unesco, 1995-b) and presents a “remodeling” of the entire educational process to achieve this end. (Unesco, 1992)”

It also outlines some conceptions for the environment and for each different conception there is a different way of working in the educational process.

Environmental education supports a recent discussion on environmental issues and transformations of knowledge, values and attitudes that must be followed in the face of the new reality to be constructed, constituting an important dimension that needs to be included in the educational process. It is relatively new and continues to evolve and advance as educators practice it daily. It has the important

function of influencing the entire population, including new generations, forming citizens capable of dealing with the processes of change in the planet's current environmental conditions. As traditional education cannot prepare individuals for complex global realities, EE becomes a necessity, a continuous and permanent process that must cover all school levels and stages of formal and informal education (Guimarães, 1995).

It is an educational process that follows a new philosophy of life and a new behavioral culture, and seeks humanity's commitment to the environment now and in the future. Its application makes the educational process more oriented towards the formation of citizens in all social spheres.

Education for sustainable development must take into account regional realities and respect the cultural diversity of the population.

Therefore, it must essentially constitute an interdisciplinary teaching that, over time, must move towards transdisciplinarity in all disciplines of knowledge, thus achieving a learning process that forms citizens capable of living sustainably (Ab'saber, 1994).

#### 4. IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Human survival has always been linked to the natural environment. However, the pattern of development based on the accumulation of capital leads to an abusive appropriation of natural resources, causing an imbalance in the relationship between man and the environment. This process of degradation compromises the quality of life, especially in more developed countries, since public policies generally do not address environmental problems in a priority and emergency manner. (Oliveira, 2016).

In Brazil, there is a specific law that deals with environmental education. Law number 9,795 of April 27, 1999, provides for EA, establishing the national policy.

It is understood that by protecting nature, we can protect the health of individuals and the lives of natural resources available on the planet.

According to UNESCO (2005, p. 44): The discipline of environmental education has a long history, focusing on the connection between man and the natural environment, as well as strategies to conserve, preserve and effectively manage its resources.

Therefore, the PCNs (National Curriculum Parameters) are essential for educators to emphasize the importance of incorporating environmental education (EE) into their practices in the school environment, as this vital role is fundamental in the formation of the much-desired awareness of individuals and in the integration from different fields of knowledge. However, the reality of our country does not align with theory, with practice and subject training taking a backseat. The environmental topic is typically confined to Geography and Science classes in many educational institutions, rather than being integrated across all subjects. Consequently, the integrative nature of the environment remains theoretical, further reinforcing the prevailing anthropocentric belief that humans are separate from and superior to the environment.

Ferreira (2011), highlights that EA is a proposal that seeks to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes in human beings, aimed at preserving the environment, the citizen begins to possess new concepts and thoughts forming an innovative awareness, understanding the importance to educate oneself for cooperation in the use of natural resources.

The school is the most appropriate place for carrying out and implementing participatory and active teaching in the construction of knowledge that will consequently be transmitted to the entire society.

According to Capra (2008), research that began in the 1950s indicates that exposing children to an environment rich in sensory experiences and cognitive challenges has lasting results, since in early childhood the brain's sensitivity to environmental influences is more intense. Scientists and psychologists are increasingly convinced that childhood development, full of sensory experiences and

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Cognitive challenges have beneficial effects, which can last for a long time, while not participating of so many experiences can inhibit future neurological development.

The schools in the center work with projects that use the garden or the restoration of a watercourse as a reference, for example. This only happens because the educational space has become a true learning community, where teachers, students and administrators are connected in a network of relationships, working together. "Teaching does not happen from the top down, but there is a cyclical exchange of information. The focus is on learning, and everyone in the system is both master and apprentice" (Capra, 2008).

According to Ferreira (2011) apud Souza (2003) states that Environmental Education is a tool



used as support to aid social understanding, as it is planned by creators of a policy of governing managers for appropriate social changes.

It must be treated as an essential component in the process of training and ongoing education of society, having a targeted approach to solving problems and contributing to the active involvement of the public. In this way, it must be considered as the most relevant and realistic educational system to establish greater interdependence between these systems, the natural and social environment, with the objective of developing an increasing well-being of human communities (Rosa, 2001 ).

Therefore, the purposes of this education for humanity were determined by UNESCO, after the Belgrade Conference held in 1975: {...} to form a world population conscious and concerned about the environment and the problems related to it, a population that have the knowledge, skills, state of mind, motivations and sense of commitment that allow you to work individually and collectively to solve current problems, and to prevent them from recurring (Unesco, 1999).

## 5.CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the understanding and importance of Environmental Education is crucial to establish criteria that guide the teaching-learning process. Enabling reflection on the topic under discussion is recognizing the complete need to implement this knowledge, **so relevant in the construction of a society aware of its responsibility**, faced with a complex world that urgently needs practices that guide sustainable development.

Over time, the idea of building **ions of laws** in search of specific knowledge such as Environmental Education, it was inserted mainly as a result of a Planet that became industrialized and the capacity to transform the natural environment was much greater and consequently the environmental impacts were drastically worsened. For example, including in the historical approach the influence of International Conferences on the environment or what we call the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

It was evident that each event understood as a conference sought to address relevant themes pertinent to the globalized world that the capacity to change the environment was increased mainly with the technological advances established by the 3rd Industrial Revolution.

Therefore, if it is necessary to think about a social transformation focused on Environmental Education, it is precisely through an educational system that prioritizes its interdisciplinarity/ transdisciplinarity in fact and that is developed in educational institutions that cover children, adolescents and adults. Knowing that transformative actions will only be achieved with mandatory curricular implementation at educational levels, which take place truthfully and serve all social spheres.

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