



## The importance of teaching Environmental Education in educational institutions

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### SUMMARY

The work refers to an excerpt from the Master's Dissertation that addresses **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: A critical reflection on the problem of "fallen lands" on the coast of the municipality of São Paulo de Olivença-AM, and its main social and environmental consequences with students from the Calixto Ribeiro Full-Time Education Center.** With the increasing technological evolution in recent decades and its implications in all spheres of society, especially in the industrial sphere that shamelessly seeks only profit in the exacerbated "consumerism" of the population that directly and indirectly corroborates the degradation of the environment that undergoes harmful changes, which put at risk not only the fauna, the flora but also man himself, who often exploits the available natural resources without planning the possible harmful impacts on the living space in which he lives. In this context, Environmental Education in society, especially in schools, has emerged as a necessary philosophy in educating individuals, aiming to raise awareness and mobilize them to act in favor of socio-environmental issues, aiming to gradually remodel selfish attitudes and build postures that are beneficial to environmental balance.

**Keywords:**Environmental Education. School. Students.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

It is understood that the school is one of the most important pillars in this direction, as it is responsible for informing, providing conditions for research and training future managers of human society, ensuring an ideal scenario of quality of life without disrespecting the environment.

Thus, the present scientific work entitled ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: a critical reflection on the importance of teaching Environmental Education in educational institutions, aimed to present the great relevance of Environmental Education in schools as a social mechanism for raising awareness or even educating students to design a healthier society, balancing sustainable development between man and the resources of nature, using as a theoretical basis theoretical foundations of the area: Loureiro (2002), National Curricular Parameters (PCNs, 2001), Penteadó (2001), Reigota (2001), among others used.

Regarding the methodology used in the study, bibliographical research on the proposed subject was used to better understand the subject. The data collected was thoroughly analyzed using the deductive method, which led to the conclusion that educational institutions at all levels have a fundamental role in encouraging, preparing and ensuring that future citizens are engaged in preserving the environment for future generations.

### **1. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS**

It is clear that the school environment is essential in structuring a more critical and active society in relation to the various social, cultural or environmental problems that harm the quality of life of citizens. In this sense, the insertion, practice and development of Environmental Education in schools has become essential over the years as one of the first steps towards raising awareness or even educating students in the formation of future proactive citizens, as agents of transformation of their realities in the face of the problems that arise in everyday life.

And to guarantee the philosophy of Environmental Education in schools in Brazil, law no. 9,795 was enacted on April 27, 1999, which allowed it to be worked on in an interdisciplinary manner in the classroom, and it can also be related to all levels of education, whether formal or non-formal, because it is an essential and permanent component of national education.

Also addressing the subject, Penteado (2001, p.16) adds that “school is, without a shadow of a doubt, the ideal place to promote Environmental Education, given that changes in society pass through it by providing the exercise of citizenship to future citizens”. It is understood with respect to what was mentioned previously that it is extremely important to simultaneously refine ideal concepts and values with learners, such as: the critical, ethical and moral sense of those involved in the teaching-learning process, making them better human beings in solving problems that arise in everyday life. In line with the exposed fragment, the National Curricular Parameters (PCNs) show that:

The main function of work within schools on the subject of the environment is to contribute to the formation of conscious citizens, capable of making decisions and acting in the socio-environmental reality in a way that is committed to life, to the well-being of each individual and of local and global society. To achieve this, it is necessary that, more than information and concepts, the school proposes to work with attitudes and procedures. This is the great challenge for education. Environmentally correct behaviors will be learned in the practice of everyday life at school: gestures of solidarity, personal hygiene habits and hygiene in different environments (PCN, 2001, p.67).

The excerpt explicitly highlights the beneficial attributes that Environmental Education, with its ecological foundations, brings to students in the classroom, contributing directly and indirectly to their political education, in the sense that it demands and prepares citizens to demand social justice, national and planetary citizenship, self-management and ethics in social relations and with nature. In the same line of reasoning, (REIGOTA, 2001, p. 38) contributes by adding:

School is a privileged space for awareness; knowledge; behavior; competence; assessment capacity; and participation. Awareness is summarized in bringing individuals and associated groups an understanding of global environmental awareness, in addition to providing them with an understanding of related problems, so that they demonstrate their sensitivity to them. Knowledge is knowing and perceiving environmental problems, thus providing critical responsibility for human beings. Behavior seeks to acquire

the meaning of social values, contributing to environmental protection and quality. Competence refers to providing individuals with the success needed to solve environmental problems. Assessment capacity refers to the process capable of evaluating measures and programs related to the environment, whether based on educational, economic, ecological, political or even social-aesthetic factors. And, last but not least, participation, which makes individuals realize their responsibility in the search for solutions to environmental problems, demonstrating the need for immediate action on the environment, acting actively in favor of environmental quality, its conservation and preservation.

In the author's view, the school has all the necessary and suitable conditions to overcome melancholic scenarios and make them self-sustainable for the community. For the philosopher and important writer of Brazilian literature Libâneo, Environmental Education has its specific objectives, which corroborate the same in the education of an individual:

[...] – environmental education leads students to reflect on environmental issues in the sense that human relationships with nature and with people ensure a quality of life in the future, different from the current economic model of progress;

- educating children and young people to protect, conserve and preserve species, the ecosystem and the planet as a whole;
- teaching to promote self-knowledge, knowledge of the universe, integration with nature;
- introducing the ethics of valuing and respecting the diversity of cultures, the differences between people, as human beings are included in the concept of nature;
- engaging students in strengthening democracy, citizenship, community ways of discussing and solving problems, and popular education;
- leading to positions being taken on the conservation of biodiversity, against the capitalist model of economy that generates individualizing societies, exploiters and predators of biophysical nature and human nature. (LIBÂNEO, 2004, p. 10)

In the writer's opinion, Environmental Education should be discussed in all educational spaces, at all levels of education, since it provides students with a broad critical-reflective understanding of the place where they live, awakening social attitudes, skills, motivations, empathy and understanding of social, cultural or environmental issues that affect society and threaten the common good.

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Therefore, one of the great challenges of environmental education is to transform the way of thinking and, consequently, the way of acting. Thus, it is clear that such education will provide a healthy environment, both for present and future generations.

## 2. BRIEF CONCEPTS ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN THE CLASSROOM

Currently, Environmental Education in the classroom has become an excellent and viable tool in the process of raising awareness and educating learners about their future roles as individuals engaged in the development of a more self-sustainable society between man and nature with its precious finite resources. For Loureiro (2002, p. 25), “the inclusion of Environmental Education in the education of young people is essential for teachers/students to project a healthier coexistence with nature”.

In this regard, the writer stresses that those involved in the process of constructing knowledge must act in full congruence, meticulously organizing actions to alleviate or, if possible, remedy socio-environmental damages present in the vital spaces where they live, healthily creating a philosophy of conservationist ideals, making students aware that the environment is not individual property, but conceiving it as a place for everyone, thus making it necessary to care for the nature in which we live. Jacob (2005, p. 15) highlights:

The role of education professionals is essential to drive the transformation of an education that is committed to developing a critical vision, values and ethics for the construction of an environmentally sustainable society. The relationship between the environment and education is taking on an increasingly challenging role, demanding the emergence of new knowledge to understand increasingly complex social processes and intensifying environmental risks.

In this context, it is noted that Environmental Education within schools must prepare students to form their own values based on leading to a respectful coexistence with the environment and other species that inhabit the world. Certainly having the conservationist philosophy in which nature is not an inexhaustible source of material resources and must always be used in an ecological way, avoiding waste and appreciating recycling methods in favor of a healthier life. Travassos (2006, p. 51) contributes by explaining:

The practice of Environmental Education in teaching environments will contribute to solving the environmental problems faced today and in the future, but for this to work, it should not be addressed only during environment week, emphasizing only aspects such as nature and waste recycling, it must be addressed in the individual's daily life, taking



taking into account the culture and social problems of the place. Therefore, it must be present at various moments in the school curriculum.

However, Environmental Education has proven to be one of the main pillars of formal and informal education, essentially by teaching us ethical, moral, cultural and related values that will be responsible for forming people capable of managing society in all its aspects, reconciling a promising future for future generations.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

With detailed readings and analyses of articles and periodicals based on the theme addressed and available on the internet, it is possible to measure, with theorists and researchers in the area, the extreme importance of working with students in the classroom on Environmental Education and its ideology, sensitizing them or making them aware of the ethical, moral and sociocultural values that will contribute to the formation of citizens who yearn to guarantee a better future for the next generations.

In this way, education is equipped with the ability to literally transform reality, and it is up to those involved, teachers and students, to work tirelessly to create a scenario where society not only respects the environment but also prioritizes the most basic rights of a civilian, providing opportunities to change the reality that surrounds them. However, this work will offer possibilities for future researchers in the area to continue, who will be able to appreciate it and develop new knowledge within the scope of the theme addressed, adding to and helping in a certain way to produce new paths towards an ideal world that everyone dreams of.

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