

Mapping my place: an experience report on a formative trip along the Riacho River, Aracruz/ES

ARTIGO

João Alberto Miranda de Souzaⁱ 

Secretaria de Estado da Educação do Espírito Santo, Aracruz, ES, Brasil

Israel David de Oliveira Froisⁱⁱ 

Secretaria de Estado da Educação do Espírito Santo, Aracruz, ES, Brasil

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Abstract

The aim of this experience report is to present the moments that make up a formative trip developed with students from the Caboclo Bernardo State School along the Riacho River, located in the district of Barra do Riacho, in the city of Aracruz/ES. To do this, we used a qualitative approach, with the methodological procedure of critical description. The pedagogical aim of the proposal was to enable students to take a different look at the place where they live, in the context of the development of the elective subject called "Mapping my place". The results were satisfactory, given the mobilization of the students during the course with the local fishermen.

Keywords: Field lessons. Geography teaching. Praxis. Human formation.

Mapeando meu lugar: um relato de experiência sobre a viagem formativa ao longo do Rio Riacho, Aracruz/ES

Resumo

O presente relato de experiência tem como objetivo apresentar os momentos que constituem uma viagem formativa desenvolvida com alunos da Escola Estadual Caboclo Bernardo ao longo do Rio Riacho, localizado no distrito de Barra do Riacho, município de Aracruz/ES. Para tanto, utilizamos a abordagem qualitativa, com o procedimento metodológico da descrição crítica. A intenção pedagógica da proposta foi proporcionar aos estudantes outros olhares sobre o lugar onde vivem, no contexto da disciplina eletiva denominada "Mapeando meu lugar". Os resultados foram satisfatórios, tendo em vista a mobilização dos alunos ao longo do percurso realizado com os pescadores locais.

Palavras-chave: Visita de estudo. Ensino da geografia. Práxis. Formação humana.

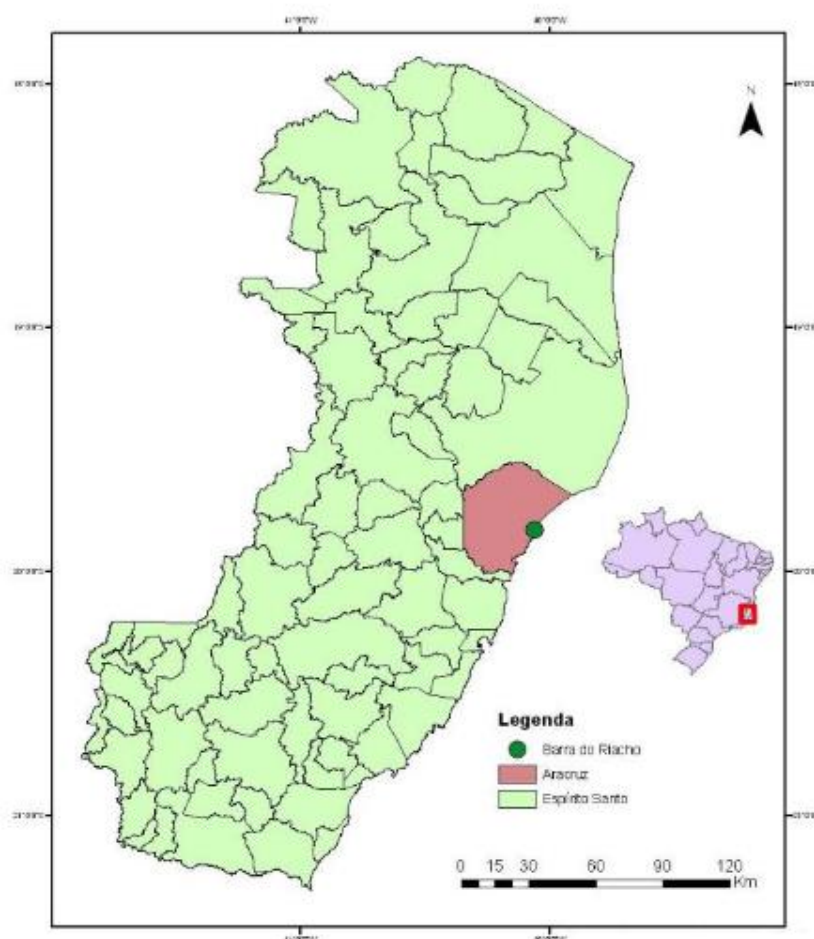
1 - Introduction

In this experience report, we highlight the potential of educational work in the process of unveiling geographical reality. In particular, with regard to the Riacho River, which has its mouth in the district of Barra do Riacho, located on the central-eastern coast of the municipality of Aracruz, in the northern region of the state of Espírito Santo (Map 1).

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The aim of this report is to present the moments involved in the educational trip along the Riacho River.

Map 1. Location of Barra do Riacho



Source: VIEIRA, 2018.

The urban area of the Barra do Riacho neighbourhood, traditionally made up of a fishing community, is bordered to the east by the Riacho River, which flows into the Atlantic

Ocean, to the southwest by the Suzano Celulose industrial complex, to the south by the Barra do Riacho Specialized Terminal - Portocel, to the north by a development in Nutripetro and to the west by the Mãe Boa Lagoon (FERREIRA et al., 2021).

The Riacho River, which gives the neighborhood its name, is the extreme stretch of a river system in the Rio Doce deltaic plain complex, which runs in a north-south direction on the eastern edge of the Barra do Riacho urban area, collateral to the coastline, and is separated from the sea by a vegetated sand bar (FERREIRA et al., 2021) (Photo 1).

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Photo 1: Riacho river and sand bar in the Comboios reserve



Source: Author (2023).

It should be noted that the east bank of the bar, which separates the river from the sea, is part of the Comboios indigenous area and has therefore preserved its natural restinga and mangrove vegetation. On the west bank, however, was the place where urban occupation took place. While initially this occupation was due to artisanal fishing, in which territorial appropriation took place considering the manifestations of identity and belonging to the traditional way of life, after the arrival of Aracruz Celulose (currently Suzano

Celulose) in the 1960s, another logic of appropriation of space was established, which, hegemonized by capital, began to be reified in the form of industrial productive arrangements (VIEIRA, 2018).

Thus, the conflicts and contradictions in which the community is inserted are constituted in a "globalitarian" context, in which the demands of the reproduction of global surplus value (SANTOS, 2001) overlap and make vulnerable the various possibilities of producing traditional local existences.

It is in this contradictory scenario that the Caboclo Bernardo State Primary and Secondary School is inserted. It is a public school in the state of Espírito Santo's education network that offers secondary education, final year primary education and youth and adult education (EJA), with a total of 596 students in the 2023 school year, distributed as follows: in the morning shift it has 289 students enrolled in secondary school and 88 enrolled in the 9th year of elementary school; in the afternoon there are 248 students enrolled in the 6th to 8th year of elementary school and in the evening it offers the EJA modality and has 65 students, 20 enrolled in EJA elementary school and 45 in secondary school. The school is located in the district of Barra do Riacho, Aracruz/ES and its public has a socio-economic profile in which a certain social vulnerability can be seen, given that more than 30% of the students are beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família program¹.

Thus, the educational trip was carried out with 25 high school students (1st, 2nd and 3rd grades) enrolled in the elective subject entitled "Mapping my place". It should be noted that most of the students, despite living in a community with a fishing tradition, had never been on a boat or sailed, either on the Riacho River or by sea. We therefore believe that the experience was enriching for the students' development.

For organizational purposes, we have structured this work in three parts. Firstly, we present the conceptual basis on which the formative journey is based, as well as the principles of critical environmental education. Next, we highlight the methodological

¹ Data obtained from the Espírito Santo State Government's General Student Reports. Available at: <https://sites.google.com/edu.es.gov.br/seges-relatoriosvisuais/in%C3%ADcio/relat%C3%B3rios-gerenciais-gej> Accessed on: 24 jun. 2023.

procedures used in the development of this work. Finally, we discuss the results of the educational praxis developed.

2 Bildung: the field class as a formative journey

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There are various ways of conceiving school educational work outside the classroom, such as technical visits (PERES, 2005), class trips (FREINET, 1973) and field classes (MARQUES, MOTA; SOUZA, 2020; ZORATTO; HORNES, 2014; SILVA, 2016).

However, this proposal starts from the understanding of the field class as a formative journey based on the contributions of the Study and Research Group on Education in the City and Humanities (GEPECH).² through the studies, reflections and productions developed by its members (CÔCO, CHISTÉ; DELLA FONTE, 2019; CÔCO et al. 2021; CÔCO et al. 2022).

Drawing attention to the term Bildung, Suarez (2005) gives it various meanings, such as work, translation, philology, training and travel. Among these meanings, two are important to guide what Côco, Chisté and Della Fonte (2021) call a "formative journey": Bildung is work and it is also a journey. It's work, because it "[...] forms, shapes; work is mediation or formative action; it presents itself as a practical process in which, through action on the world, the object (humanized world) and the subject who works as human are formed" (CÔCO; CHISTÉ; DELLA FONTE, 2021, p. 45). But, according to Suarez (2005), Bildung is also a journey. Beyond the strict sense of the act of travelling, as a journey to a distant place, the "formative journey" is conceived not only as "[...] a walk in the city, an intentionally organized stroll in some city places. The journey has a metaphorical nuance of evoking a departure from the familiar, from everyday and ordinary life, in order to visit the extraordinary" (CÔCO, CHISTÉ; DELLA FONTE, 2021, p. 46). Even if this

² GEPECH was registered with CNPq in 2016 and is linked to the Graduate Program in Humanities Education at the Federal Institute of Espírito Santo (IFES). Available at: <https://gepech.wordpress.com/> Accessed on: May 26, 2023.

extraordinary is nearby, its perception is sometimes crossed by hurried, inattentive and ordinary looks.

With this understanding, we are inspired by the poetry of Mario Quintana, who points out the virtues of "[...] the true art of traveling [...] as if all the paths of the world were open before us" (QUINTANA, 2006, p. 863), regardless of whether commitments and obligations are there to develop our formative journey.

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It should be noted that the term Bildung can be used "[...] to talk about the degree of 'formation' of an individual, a people, a language, an art [...]. Above all, the German word has a strong pedagogical connotation and designates formation as a process (SUAREZ, 2005, p. 195).

Therefore, based on our reflection on the German term Bildung (SUAREZ, 2005), we turn to its meaning in relation to formation, as well as its dimension of work and travel to highlight the concept of the "formative journey", since Bildung refers to human formation whose starting and ending point is the human being himself in his process of forming himself in otherness, that is, in the other. It is in this sense that the expression Bildung refers to the journey, because "The 'great journey' that characterizes Bildung does not consist of going anywhere, no matter where, but where we can form and educate" (SUAREZ, 2005, p. 195).

For this reason, the German term Bildung (cultural formation) is taken as the mainstay of the proposal to leave the classroom, given that the process of human formation through the mediation of the different, of the other who shares their cultural riches forged over time in a collective way. It is from this understanding that the process of planning, organizing and carrying out the educational trip was developed. With a commitment to human formation, we prepared to travel through spaces and experiences in order to share new knowledge.

3 Methodological procedures

In methodological terms, this experience report takes a qualitative approach through descriptive methodological procedures (GIL, 2008) of the educational trip along the Riacho

River, in Aracruz/ES, as it seeks to describe the educational phenomenon from the links with pedagogical action. In this case, our description is characterized as critical, with a view to establishing a process of reflection on teaching practice (MUSSI et al., 2021). Based on this understanding, we will now discuss the moment prior to the educational trip, in order to contextualize the educational experience developed.

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The pedagogical interventions reported in this work took place in the context of the elective subject³ entitled "Cartografando o meu lugar" (Cartographing my place), developed during the morning shift at the Caboclo Bernardo school during the first quarter of 2023. At first, during the classroom lessons, some cartography concepts were explained according to Fitz (2008) and Martinelli (2016), so that the cartographic sketches could then be drawn up. After this, some geographical concepts were developed, such as: geographical space; territory; place; landscape and region (LISBOA, 2020). In particular, the category "place", emphasized in the discipline, which can be conceived as a part of the geographical space appropriated by living and survival, from which various daily activities established by the human being are developed, with the construction of bonds and socio-affective relationships with this space (LISBOA, 2020).

Subsequently, some walks were taken around the neighborhood, which allowed the students to reflect on the changes the neighborhood has undergone over the years, such as: the disorderly growth of houses and businesses in the vicinity; the arrival of equipment such as the Emergency Care Unit (UPA); social projects; a housing unit from the Federal Government's "Minha casa, Minha vida" project, which should have an impact on the region's demographic growth; the disruption caused by the railroad, which is part of the branch of the Vitória a Minas Railroad (EFVM), belonging to Vale S. A. and which passes right next to the community; as well as reflections on the pollution generated by the emanation of gases and vapors from companies that are located around the neighborhood and which, in turn, flow into the Riacho River.

³ A subject taught to high school students in the Espírito Santo state education system. Content incorporated into the curriculum after the approval of the New High School, which complements the Common National Curriculum Base..

Finally, the students began to draw and paint a sketch of the place where they live, according to their perceptions and, lastly, they took a boat trip on the Rio Riacho together with some fishermen who are part of the Barra do Riacho fishing colony.

The Rio Riacho formative trip took place at the end of the 1st quarter of the 2023 school year as one of the culminations[The other culmination was the making of maps of how the students see their place.] of the Elective subject. According to Santos and Malheiros (2020), electives are subjects whose purpose is to carry out different activities within school units. In our view, such a subject only makes sense if it is developed with the aim of enriching the educational process, relating it to the preparatory content. In this case, this subject establishes a direct link with geography and its basic categories.

One of the aims of this elective was to show students the space they live in from other perspectives. In one of them, it was possible to observe it from inside a boat on the Riacho River. In this way, the students were able to see the place where they live from the point of view of the fishermen who use the river for their livelihood. In addition, it was possible to see up close how the river has been suffering from the deforestation of the riparian forest on its west bank, silting and pollution along its course.

4 The formative journey along the Riacho River

The formative trip took place on 05/05/2023 and was a moment of interaction between theory and practice, since the students first studied the content in class and then went to the river to observe and analyze the different landscapes. For many students, this lesson became extraordinary, as it was the first time they had been on a boat and enjoyed the river from the perspective of the navigator, the fishermen, in line with the perspective of formative travel (CÔCO et al., 2021).

After leaving the school, the first stop was Porto das Lanchas, where there is a pier for embarking and disembarking boats. In this area, where we boarded the boat, we could see a boatyard where many of the community's fishermen build and maintain their boats. Before boarding, we were able to observe and reflect on the poor infrastructure that people

who make a living from fishing have. The students were then divided into five groups with five students on each boat.

After boarding, it was often the fishermen who explained and talked to the students about the river and their vision of the community. In one of their speeches, the fishermen warned that the river is becoming increasingly polluted. This has a direct impact on the amount of fish the fishermen are able to catch. At one point, the students were shown some pipes which, according to the fishermen, contain materials that pollute the river.

Along the way, the students were very close to the mangrove swamp, which helped them observe the environment and its vegetation. The mangrove is an ecosystem located along the coast and is characterized by the transition between the terrestrial and marine environments. In addition, it has halophilous plants, i.e. those adapted to brackish environments and always associated with the meeting of fresh and salt waters, at the mouth or bar.

Going upstream, the students were able to see how silted up the river is. The fishermen reported that the river is progressively silted up, making it difficult for boats to pass through some parts of the riverbed. At one point, one of the fishermen had to use an oar to keep his boat from running aground.

Along the river, it is possible to see that some boats have run aground and have subsequently been abandoned. For Tucci (2005), the siltation process is evidenced by sandbanks, which are conceived and described as accumulations or deposits of sediment along the bed of a river. Thus, silted river channels are characterized by shallow depths and increased width between the banks. These characteristics contribute to a progressive increase in water temperature, impacting on the level of the river and the level of fish.

After about 25 minutes of sailing, the fishermen stopped their boats on the east bank of the river, located in a beach area. After disembarking, the fishermen told and showed the students the channel they had to open due to the heavy rainfall last summer. The

rainwater caused the river to rise and hit some houses. As a result, it was necessary to open a channel to drain the water from the river to the Atlantic Ocean⁴.

Later, the fishermen reported their concern about the creation of an APA (Environmental Protection Area) in the region. According to them, the future APA Foz do Rio Doce⁵ will prevent them from continuing to fish in the region. According to the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMBio), society can participate with suggestions and/or criticisms about the creation of this APA⁶. During this reflection on the beach, the students were able to follow the work of a Tamar Project employee who catalogued and analyzed sea turtle nests in the region.

Photo 2 - sketch drawn up by the students during the course



Source: Author (2023).

⁴Article in the newspaper A Gazeta entitled "Residents dig ditch for rainwater to drain off the coast of Aracruz". Available at: <https://www.agazeta.com.br/es/cotidiano/moradores-cavam-vala-para-agua-da-chuva-escoar-no-litoral-de-aracruz-1222> Accessed on: May 30, 2023.

⁵ Available at: <https://www.icmbio.gov.br/centrotamar/ultimas-noticias/42-apa-foz-do-rio-doce-oportunidade-de-resgate-socioambiental-desta-importante-regiao-atingida-por-desastre-ambiental> Accessed on: May 30, 2023.

⁶ Available at: <https://www.gov.br/icmbio/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/ultimas-noticias/sociedade-podera-participar-da-criacao-da-apa-foz-do-rio-doce> Accessed on: May 30, 2023.

After the talk on the beach, the students boarded the boat and went down to the mouth of the river. Before reaching the river bar, the fishermen showed the students some of the pipes that pour liquids into the river, which according to the fishermen are chemicals from nearby companies. When they reached the mouth of the river, they saw a fisherman casting an artisanal net in search of fish. The fishermen in the boats reported that the river is not what it used to be, as it is "increasingly losing water that reaches the sea"⁷. For the fishermen, this decrease in water flowing into the ocean makes it difficult for larger boats to enter the river. Photo 2 below shows one of the sketches drawn up by the students during the elective course.

5 Final considerations

In this way, it is understood that the formative trip achieved the proposed objective of enabling the students to take a fresh look at their lived reality, i.e. the place where they are linked and establish social, cultural and emotional relationships. The process that began in the classroom and culminated in the "journey" (SUAREZ, 2005) along the Riacho River, mediated by the teacher and the fishermen, gave the students a better understanding of the subjects studied in theory.

It is understood that the teaching-learning process takes place by linking theory and practice, i.e. through praxis. Therefore, by articulating knowledge, we have the possibility of developing educational potential that mobilizes students and promotes a broad human education. In this way, it is possible to analyze the relationships between the (local) community and the (global) society in which it is inserted.

Finally, it is understood that formative journeys can be seen as a process of human formation and an invitation to knowledge and recognition of otherness. Given this understanding, we hope that this work will inspire other journeys into the unknown, which is often very close to us.

⁷ Report from one of the fishermen.

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ⁱ **João Alberto Miranda de Souza**, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9866-6473>

Secretaria Estadual de Educação (SEDU/ES).

Graduação em Geografia (UNIP), Mestrando em Educação (UNIVC).

Contribuição de autoria: escrita teórico-conceitual, escrita e revisão.

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/5514039260784941>

E-mail: joaoalbertomiranda@gmail.com

ⁱⁱ **Israel David de Oliveira Frois**, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3529-6297>

Grupo de Estudos e Pesquisa sobre Educação na Cidades e Humanidades (GEPECH/IFES) e

Secretaria Estadual de Educação (SEDU/ES)

Graduação em Geografia (UFES); Mestrado em Ensino de Humanidades (IFES) Doutorando em Educação (PPGE/UFES); Professor de Geografia (SEDU/ES).

Contribuição de autoria: escrita teórico-conceitual, escrita e revisão.

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/1692304398450693>

E-mail: israelfrois@gmail.com

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