

Psychopedagogy applied to geography teaching: overcoming learning barriers

ARTICLE

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Abstract

This article is part of a conclusion work for a specialization course in Psychopedagogy and seeks to reflect on the contributions of psychopedagogical approaches to the teaching of Geography, analyzing their support for identifying and implementing more effective strategies for students with difficulties in learning. By exploring the intersection between psychology and pedagogy, psychopedagogy offers an integrated approach to identifying and addressing barriers to learning, thus promoting a more inclusive school environment conducive to students' cognitive and socio-emotional development. To achieve the proposed objectives, bibliographic research and activities with a psychopedagogical bias were carried out in Geography classes at a public school in the city of Fátima do Sul-MS. As a result of the proposed activities, it was noticeable that learning became more enjoyable and meaningful for students, in addition to enabling their active participation in the process of building their geographic knowledge.

Keywords: School Geography. Learning difficulties. Inclusion. Strategies.

Psicopedagogia aplicada ao ensino de geografia: superando barreiras de aprendizagem

Resumo

O presente artigo é parte de um trabalho de conclusão de curso de especialização em Psicopedagogia e busca refletir sobre as contribuições das abordagens psicopedagógicas para o ensino de Geografia, analisando seus subsídios para a identificação e implementação de estratégias mais eficazes para alunos com dificuldades de aprendizagem. Ao explorar a interseção entre psicologia e pedagogia, a psicopedagogia oferece uma abordagem integrada para identificar e abordar barreiras à aprendizagem, promovendo um ambiente escolar mais inclusivo e propício ao desenvolvimento cognitivo e socioemocional dos alunos. Para atingir os objetivos propostos, foram realizadas pesquisas bibliográficas e atividades com viés psicopedagógico aplicadas nas aulas de Geografia de uma escola pública no município de Fátima do Sul-MS. Como resultado das atividades propostas, ficou perceptível que o aprendizado se tornou mais prazeroso e significativo para os estudantes, além de possibilitar sua participação ativa no processo de construção de seus conhecimentos geográficos.

Palavras-chave: Geografia Escolar. Dificuldades de Aprendizagem. Inclusão. Estratégias.

1 Introduction

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Learning is a complex process that takes place in various environments, with schools playing a key role. This process involves not only the transmission of knowledge, but also understanding the different ways in which students assimilate and process information.

However, not all students succeed equally at school, facing challenges that can hinder their progress. In Geography teaching, these challenges become even more evident, as it encompasses not only facts and concepts, but also an understanding of the social, economic and environmental processes that permeate the contemporary world. This requires students to be able to understand the world around them and develop geographical thinking.

In this sense, psycho-pedagogy has emerged as an important ally in the development of more effective pedagogical strategies adapted to students' individual needs, offering valuable insights and targeted interventions to improve the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. By understanding the particularities of each student, psychopedagogy provides support for the creation of more inclusive and motivating learning environments, capable of enhancing the teaching-learning process.

This study is part of the conclusion of a specialization course in Psychopedagogy and aims to explore the contributions of activities with psychopedagogical approaches in Geography classes, analyzing how they can help teachers identify students' learning difficulties and adopt methodologies that promote greater understanding, construction of geographical learning and interest in learning.

The target audience was made up of students from the Senior block class of the AJA/MS Project, corresponding to the 8th and 9th grades of a public school in the

municipality of Fátima do Sul, in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. The AJA/MS Project is a flow correction project (age/year distortion) run by the Mato Grosso do Sul State Education Network (REE/MS).

In the end, we hope to highlight the importance of integrating psycho-pedagogical approaches and geography teaching, with the aim of promoting more inclusive teaching and enhancing the development of geographical learning, thus contributing to the educational success of students.

2 Methodology

The type of methodology used in this study was descriptive and bibliographical. Considering that a descriptive methodology is a set of techniques and procedures used to describe, detail and analyze a phenomenon, event or situation, we sought, through this methodology, to observe and reflect on the adoption of psycho-pedagogical strategies in the teaching of Geography. We used playful and interactive activities that involve a psycho-pedagogical approach, such as diagnostic assessments, building sketches of the route from home to school, educational games and problem solving.

Based on bibliography, we built our reflections on the contributions of various authors, such as Cavalcanti (2007), Vygotsky (2007), Rocha and Pinho (2019), among others, who enriched our study and enhanced our discussions.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Learning and psychopedagogy: some reflections

Learning is a complex process that involves interactions between the subject, knowledge and context. Psychopedagogy, in turn, is the field of knowledge dedicated

to understanding and intervening in this process, especially when there are difficulties or disorders that interfere with the acquisition of knowledge.

Psychopedagogy is understood and defined by authors and scholars as the combination of psychology and pedagogy, as its name suggests. However, its field of action is much broader, it is multidisciplinary, dealing with various aspects of the individual and their ability to learn (Cavalcante *et al.*, 2020).

It is essential to understand that learning is not a linear and uniform process. Each individual has unique characteristics that influence the way they assimilate and organize knowledge. Psychopedagogy recognizes this diversity and seeks to understand the particularities of each learner, considering cognitive, emotional and social aspects.

According to Vygotsky (2007), learning is mediated by culture and social interaction, and it is essential to consider the role of others in the construction of knowledge. Piaget highlights the importance of the processes of assimilation and accommodation in the construction of knowledge, emphasizing the need for imbalance for learning to occur (Moreira, 1999).

Psychopedagogy, in turn, is a multidisciplinary area that investigates and intervenes in learning processes, considering cognitive, emotional and social aspects of the subjects. Its aim is to understand learning difficulties and develop strategies to overcome them, promoting more meaningful and autonomous learning

According to Scoz (1992), the psychopedagogue promotes the building of interpersonal relationships, the establishment of bonds and the application of teaching methods in line with the latest conceptions of the educational process. In addition, they seek to engage school staff, helping them to understand students' needs and encouraging them to read the world.

One of the pillars of psychopedagogy is the understanding that learning takes place on different levels and dimensions. In addition to the intellectual aspect, there are affective, motor and social aspects that influence the learning process. It is

therefore important to consider not only what the student learns, but also how they learn and what factors may be hindering this process.

Another important point is the importance of psycho-pedagogical diagnosis. Through assessments and observations, the psychopedagogue identifies possible learning difficulties and their causes, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, among others. This diagnosis is essential to guide appropriate interventions, which can involve anything from specific teaching strategies to therapeutic support.

In addition, psychopedagogy plays a crucial role in understanding the causes of school failure and is concerned with preventing learning difficulties. Corroborating this discussion, Rocha and Pinho (2019, p. 8) point out that:

[...] psychopedagogy takes on the role of demystifying school failure, from the moment it realizes where the error was in the procedure for constructing knowledge. Not in the sense of looking for culprits or acting with pity. He assesses the situation in a more efficient and fruitful way. In this assessment, the meeting with the family is an important resource, since psychopedagogy doesn't deal directly with the problem, it deals with the people involved.

Through preventive actions, such as promoting a welcoming and stimulating school environment, with family support, the development of socio-emotional skills and early identification of possible difficulties, it is possible to minimize obstacles to the learning process.

Also according to Rocha and Pinho (2019, p. 9):

Psychopedagogical work is wide-ranging and interferes directly or indirectly in all the spaces that influence the student's learning: family, school, seeking to broaden the view of the student and the circumstances of knowledge production and helping the student to overcome the obstacles that may arise during the process of their education.

Psychopedagogy proposes and helps to develop projects that promote changes in education, with the aim of discovering and developing children's abilities, as well as helping students to understand and interpret the world in which they live, enabling them to interfere in it safely and competently (Rocha and Pinho, 2019).

That said, it is important to note that psychopedagogy is not restricted to the school context. It also works in other learning spaces, such as companies, hospitals and NGOs, seeking to understand and intervene in the different situations in which learning is present.

In short, the relationship between learning and psychopedagogy is based on an understanding of the complexity of the learning process and the search for interventions that favor the full development of the individual. By considering the multiple dimensions of learning and acting in a preventive and therapeutic way, psychopedagogy contributes to building a more inclusive and democratic society, where everyone has opportunities to learn and develop.

3.2 Psychopedagogical strategies in geography teaching: an experience in the AJA/MS Project

Psychopedagogy focuses on understanding learning processes, considering cognitive, emotional and social factors that influence student performance. Its work in the school environment makes several contributions, such as identifying learning difficulties, providing individualized support and developing socio-emotional skills, among others.

Considering the context of Geography teaching, which, according to Callai (2005), has the role of providing students with the theoretical tools necessary to understand the spaces in which they live, the adoption of psycho-pedagogical strategies in the classroom can contribute to the development of students' spatial thinking, especially for those who have greater learning difficulties in the curricular component.

When teaching Geography, it is important to consider ways of making the content accessible to all students, regardless of their specific needs. This involves a reflective process on the part of the teacher, who must seek to adopt teaching strategies in their pedagogical practices that contribute to improving the teaching-

learning process for students. These strategies include the use of adapted teaching materials, such as texts in accessible formats, clear visual resources, interactive digital resources, interactive activities in the classroom that encourage students' active participation in lessons, among other tools that engage students and arouse their curiosity to learn Geography.

That said, we will point out some strategies with psycho-pedagogical approaches developed with the students of the Senior Block class, corresponding to the 8th and 9th Years of Elementary School, of the AJA/MS Project, in a school of the State Education Network of Mato Grosso do Sul, located in the municipality of Fátima do Sul-MS, in Geography classes where the author of this study is the teacher of the curricular component in that class.

The AJA/MS Project is a study acceleration and flow correction policy of the Mato Grosso do Sul State Education Network, the aim of which is to provide opportunities for inclusion in the education system for young students with age/year distortion. The project aims to enable access to and completion of studies in an integrated, qualified and participatory manner, covering adolescents aged between 13 and 17 at the elementary school stage and between 17 and 21 at the secondary school stage (Mato Grosso do Sul, 2020).

It's worth noting that some of the students in the AJA/MS Project are young people with a profile characterized by a lack of motivation to study and attend school, learning problems and an unsuccessful school record. Many of them work during the day and, when they arrive at the classroom, they are tired and uninterested in the content, seeing their studies as irrelevant to their lives. This scenario requires educators and the entire teaching team to be attentive, welcoming and encouraging in order to motivate these students and prevent them from dropping out and failing.

The class in which the activities were carried out is made up of thirty students. In addition to the peculiarities surrounding the project's target students, which involve contexts of demotivation and school dropout, the class is also made up of students

with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Intellectual Disability (ID) reports.

Thus, in order to understand and analyze how strategies with psycho-pedagogical approaches can contribute to students' learning in Geography classes, activities with a psycho-pedagogical bias were carried out during the first two months of the 2024 school year, with the aim of improving students' understanding of geographical content.

Initially, a diagnostic assessment was carried out on basic content for building geographical learning, such as the concepts and categories of geographical analysis, Geographical space, Place, Landscape, Territory, Region and some content on orientation in geographical space, in an attempt to identify the students' possible understanding and difficulties with these topics.

Based on the results of the assessment, it was possible for an educator to adapt her school planning to meet the specific needs of the class, advancing the content on which most of the students already have a good understanding of geographical concepts and devoting more time to the topics in which the students had the greatest difficulties.

The diagnostic assessment helped to identify not only the general difficulties of the class, but also the individual difficulties of each student. This allowed the teacher to offer personalized support focused on the students' difficulties.

Corroborating this perspective, Rabelo (2010) points out that, in educational practice, learning assessment is seen as an important resource to help students acquire knowledge. It is essential that educators understand that assessment is not just a final event, but must be continuous throughout the educational process. Assessment serves as an instrument for identifying and addressing students' difficulties effectively.

It is important to emphasize that diagnostic assessment is not an isolated event, and should not only take place at the beginning of the school year. It should be used as a pedagogical strategy throughout the educational process, as part of a

formative assessment. In this sense, diagnostic assessment is part of a continuous assessment process that helps inform teaching and learning over time, making it an extremely important tool during the educational process.

From the diagnostic assessment carried out, it was identified that most of the students had difficulties understanding geographical concepts, such as Place and Landscape, as well as limitations in understanding elements of spatial orientation, involving the skill of laterality. Many students showed confusion in relation to the spatial notions of right, left, front, back and reference points.

In order to remedy these difficulties, the teacher worked on three activities with psycho-pedagogical approaches in Geography classes over the course of the two months, based on the curricular content for that grade/year. The activities focused on the themes of “landscapes” and “geographical orientation”, seeking to link these contents to the students' previous knowledge and local space.

The first activity carried out after the diagnostic assessment was to draw sketches of the route from home to school, with the aim of understanding the students' spatial perception of their local space.

Figure 1 - Sketches produced by the students



Source: Seccatto, 2024.

The analysis of the sketching activities revealed a number of significant contributions to geography lessons. The sketches allowed the students to develop spatial and cartographic representation skills in a playful and creative way, understanding the importance of elements in cartographic representations such as vertical view, title and captions (Figure 1).

During the activity, the students also identified and represented geographical elements such as streets, squares, buildings, parks, rivers, among others, which helped them to understand the complexity of the urban and rural environment. These elements are part of their daily lives and are reference points for their location in the geographical space.

The students learned how to represent physical and social space on a simple map, establishing connections between their living space and geographical content. By mapping the route they take every day, the students connected the geographical space to their own experience, realizing the relationship between the places they visit and the wider geographical context.

The students observed landscapes and their transformations, such as new constructions, changes in traffic flow and different uses of buildings and public spaces, which helped them understand the dynamics of geographical space. In addition, they understood the concept of place, realizing how different places have different characteristics and how their own environment influences their daily routine.

In subsequent Geography lessons, the teacher used a GeoBingo in the classroom, which is an educational game involving orientation and location content in geographical space. The aim was for the students to develop orientation and socialization skills through the activity.

Figure 2: Educational game GeoBingo used in the classroom.



Fonte: Seccatto, 2024.

During the development of the game, students were challenged to answer questions about geographical elements of location and spatial orientation, which contributed to the development of reasoning and orientation skills, such as understanding coordinates, landmarks and compasses.

The use of GeoBingo offered a playful, practical and interactive approach to learning about orientation and location, making teaching engaging and fun for the students. This involved the class and transformed the educational environment into an inclusive and participatory space, where all the students, both those with more knowledge and those with doubts, interacted in the classroom and shared experiences in the construction of learning in an active and autonomous way.

Corroborating this reflection, Silvestre and Barbosa (2022) point out that the use of games in the teaching-learning process can enhance learning, especially because it reflects the social interactions of the environment in which they live and favors interaction in the school environment.

That said, it is important to note that there needs to be an intentionality with a specific objective that guides the game in the classroom, with practices that involve the

students and challenge them in search of answers, solutions or conclusions from the games, facilitating and enhancing learning (Silvestre; Barbosa, 2022).

It should be noted that the GeoBingo game also enabled students to familiarize themselves with geographical terms they had already studied and with others that will be covered over the course of the school year, which will boost their learning potential. The students learned to identify and understand geographical terms, such as directions (north, south, east, west), cardinal points, geographical coordinates, among others, while playing.

In addition, the game encouraged healthy competition, as its competitive aspect motivated the students to get actively involved in the activity and develop their skills in a playful way, promoting healthy competition between them and encouraging socialization in the school environment.

Another activity with a psycho-pedagogical bias developed in Geography classes sought to work on the students' notions of laterality, which refers to the ability to differentiate and name right and left, as well as other senses of direction, through problem solving. For this activity, after GeoBingo, which provided the basis for discussions on geographical elements of orientation in space, the teacher worked with the students on the spatial notions of right/left, front/back/side, and cardinal points, with the aim of developing the students' laterality skills.

Activities were proposed to encourage the students to solve problems by simulating movement in a given space, using commands such as “turn left” and “turn right”, as can be seen in the representation of one of these activities applied to the students in Figure 3.

Figure 3 - Activity applied in the classroom.

O croqui abaixo mostra um mapa que fornece as indicações do caminho até a Escola nele representada. Para chegar até a escola, Ana saindo de sua casa, após passar pela rotatória deve:

(A) Virar à direita, virar à esquerda, entrar na rua 2.
 (B) Virar à esquerda, virar à direita, entrar na rua 3.
 (C) Virar à direita, virar à esquerda, entrar na rua 3.
 (D) Virar à esquerda, virar à esquerda, entrar na rua 2.

Source: Seccatto, 2024.

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From the analysis of the feedback on the activities and their development in the classroom, it was possible to see that the students have some difficulties with spatial notions, some even know in theory, but in practice, in the development of the activities, many feel insecure and have various doubts when answering the proposed problems.

However, the problems posed aroused the students' curiosity and motivation to learn. At various times while solving the activities, students got up from their chairs and tried to simulate the scenarios indicated in the questions, as a way of better understanding the proposed directions. These attitudes promoted the sharing of experiences and knowledge with colleagues, encouraging socialization and teamwork among students.

By understanding right and left in the context of their own bodies and the space around them, students will better understand geographical concepts such as geographical coordinates, helping them to locate and understand the position of places on the map. In addition, the notion of laterality will help students interpret maps, especially when it comes to understanding directions and orientation, making it easier

for students to understand the elements of a map and how to move around a geographical environment.

In this sense, the development of laterality is an important life skill, useful not only in the classroom, but also in everyday situations, such as getting around in an unfamiliar city or following directions in a new environment. In addition, this skill contributes to students' cognitive development, stimulating motor coordination, visual perception and understanding of space.

Encouraging the development of geographical reasoning and an understanding of the world around them is also fundamental, helping to improve laterality skills.

It's important to note that the teacher didn't use the activities with a psycho-pedagogical bias only for students with ID, ADHD or learning difficulties, but with all the students in the class. She took a close look at the particularities and needs of each student, seeking to include everyone in the teaching-learning process. In this way, she enhanced the learning of students who found certain content easier and stimulated the construction of knowledge for students who had more difficulty, taking into account the different ways of learning.

Considering the target audience of this study, the psycho-pedagogical strategies allowed the teacher to adopt an inclusive approach, taking into account the different ways of learning and the specific needs of each student, promoting the inclusion and participation of all in the teaching process. This meant making teaching strategies more flexible, rethinking pedagogical planning to include strategies following the results of the diagnostic assessment, in order to cater for the different ways students learn, valuing their previous knowledge and offering support to overcome difficulties, as well as valuing students' multiple intelligences.

The strategies used together provided a rich and comprehensive learning experience in Geography classes, helping students to better understand the world around them, as well as stimulating their creativity, criticality and autonomy in the teaching-learning process.

4 Conclusions

Throughout the text, we reflect that psychopedagogy helps to identify learning difficulties, detecting possible problems in students early on and enabling appropriate interventions to prevent or reduce future problems, as well as improving the teaching-learning process.

Through the contributions of the scholars Cavalcanti (2007) and Kaercher (1998), we discussed that Geography is part of people's daily lives and is of paramount importance in enabling the development of students' geographical thinking. In addition, the teaching of Geography plays a fundamental role in the formation of critical, aware citizens who understand the world around them.

Teachers need to understand that geography teaching must go hand in hand with the perspective of inclusive education, seeking to ensure that all students have access to a quality and meaningful education, preparing them to understand and actively participate in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world. By recognizing and valuing diversity, educators can help create a richer and more stimulating learning environment for all.

In this context, we reflect that, through the psycho-pedagogical strategies used in Geography classes, there was a significant promotion of students' geographical learning, stimulating them to learn in a playful and interactive way. Initially, the diagnostic assessment played a crucial role in understanding the students' level of prior knowledge and identifying the gaps that needed to be filled. This helped the teacher to identify the students' greatest difficulties and to adopt pedagogical strategies so that the students could progress in their learning, meeting both the general needs of the class and the specific needs of each student, contributing to the promotion of a more inclusive education.

Through the sketching activities, the students developed spatial and cartographic representation skills. By representing their route to school, they became aware of spatial relationships such as distance, direction, orientation, proximity and

points of reference, which contributed to their understanding of geographical space. In addition, the activities value local culture, as the students highlighted cultural and social aspects of the place where they live, valuing their own identity and that of the community in which they live.

GeoBingo encouraged students to participate and interact in class, helping them to understand various elements of orientation and spatial location in a playful, interactive and creative way. Students were also encouraged to develop a sense of collaboration and socialization in the school environment, enabling them to exchange knowledge and promoting a practical and versatile approach to teaching orientation and location in geographical space.

Working with laterality through problem-solving stimulated the development of students' spatial reasoning, helping to resolve doubts related to understanding directions and orientation. These pedagogical strategies helped to prevent learning difficulties that the students might have when studying geographical content and understanding the categories of analysis in Geography, preparing them for more complex activities in the subject.

The experience developed in the research enhanced the students' skills. Especially considering the target audience of the AJA-MS Project, which is mostly made up of young people who are unmotivated, uninterested in school content and have a history of failing and dropping out of school, the use of psycho-pedagogical strategies encouraged the active participation of students in the construction of their learning.

In addition, these strategies strengthened the perception of belonging to the local area, providing a collaborative learning environment that promoted interaction in the school environment. This also contributed to a better relationship between teacher-student, student-student, student-school and student-community.

By involving the students in carrying out the activities, an inclusive learning environment was created, promoting collaboration between the students, providing opportunities for everyone to participate and establishing clear expectations of mutual

respect and acceptance. In this way, all the students felt valued and supported. Therefore, psycho-pedagogical approaches played a crucial role in the school environment, contributing to the promotion of a more effective and inclusive education.

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