

# Geography in the early years of Elementary School: Looking Far to See More, Getting Closer to See Better<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

The text presents reflections on the importance of teaching Geography in schools in the early years of elementary school and the need for qualified teacher training. It presents assumptions that highlight the inseparability of humanization in the production of geographic space, and the challenge placed to teachers in the search for the constitution of a pedagogical space that dialogues, listens and proposes geographies with children, in the context of informational abundance, hyperconnectivity and complex socio-political relationships. It assumes the epistemic commitment of pedagogical proposals that suggest different readings and visions of the world, contributing for the school to be a space for more capable reflection. Mobilized by the theme, bibliographic research and documentary research were carried out in the Catalog of Theses and Dissertations on the Capes Portal, based on *stricto sensu* academic production (master's and doctorate), in federal public institutions, published from 2010 to 2020. The investigation reiterated the urgency of new readings of school, research and the world.

**KEYWORDS:** School geography. Early years. Teaching.

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*A Geografia nos anos iniciais: olhando longe para ver mais, chegando perto para ver melhor*

### RESUMO

O texto apresenta reflexões sobre a importância do ensino de Geografia escolar nos anos iniciais do Ensino Fundamental e a necessidade da formação qualificada dos professores. Apresenta pressupostos que destacam a indissociabilidade da humanização na produção do espaço geográfico, e o desafio que se coloca aos docentes na busca pela constituição de um espaço pedagógico que dialogue, ouça e proponha geografias com as crianças, no contexto de abundância informacional, hiperconectividade e complexas relações sócio-políticas. Assume o compromisso epistêmico de propostas pedagógicas que avertam leituras e visões de mundo diversas, contribuindo para que a escola seja um espaço de reflexão mais capacitada. Mobilizados pela temática, foi desenvolvida a pesquisa bibliográfica e levantamento documental no Catálogo de Teses e Dissertações no Portal da Capes, a partir da produção acadêmica *stricto sensu* (mestrado e doutorado), em instituições públicas federais, publicadas no período de 2010 até 2020. A investigação reiterou a premência de novas leituras da escola, das pesquisas e do mundo.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Geografia escolar. Anos iniciais. Docência.

*Geografía en los primeros años: mirar lejos para ver más, acercarse para ver mejor*

### RESUMEN

El texto presenta reflexiones sobre la importancia de la enseñanza de la Geografía en las escuelas en los primeros años de la Enseñanza Fundamental y la necesidad de una formación docente calificada. Presenta supuestos que resaltan la inseparabilidad de la humanización en la producción del espacio geográfico, y el desafío que se le plantea a los docentes en la búsqueda de la constitución de un espacio pedagógico que dialogue, escucha y propone geografías con los niños, en el contexto de la abundancia informativa, hiperconectividad y complejidades de las relaciones sociopolíticas. Asume el compromiso epistémico de propuestas pedagógicas que sugieran diferentes lecturas y visiones del mundo, contribuyendo a que la escuela sea un espacio de reflexión más capaz. Movilizados por el tema, se realizaron pesquisas bibliográficas e

pesquisas documentales en el Catálogo de Tesis y Disertaciones del Portal de la Capes, a partir de la producción académica stricto sensu (maestría y doctorado), en instituciones públicas federales, publicadas entre 2010 y 2020. pesquisa reiterada la urgencia de nuevas lecturas de la escuela, la investigación y el mundo.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Geografía escolar. Primeros años. Enseñando.

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## Introduction

This text aims to be a device of reflection and action in defense of the teaching of Geography in the in the early years of elementary school that is based on the spatiality and authorship of children and committed to pedagogical proposals that dialogue with their lives, with others, with the things of the world. Such a political-epistemic commitment is supported on the premise that “children are beings that change and the important thing is to create conditions for them to change” (LOPES, PAULA, 2022, p. 137). Thus, it is considered that at school, “it is necessary to give space, to give time for the child to materialize their own existence, to allow and trust the transformation that these new beings will bring to the collective existence, to the world” (LOPES, PAULA, 2022, p. 137).

These assumptions encourage us to revisit the initial and continuing education of teachers, dialoguing with these prerogatives, stressing certainties and truths, proposing other interpretations of educational thinking and ways of teaching and learning Geography.

Thus, we basically propose two analytical-reflexive movements. To begin, considerations are made about humanization and the geographic space linked to teaching and learning in the in the early years of elementary school, highlighting the importance of the proposals developed with school Geography, committed to children. We suggest looking at children with more epistemic curiosity, as we believe that they can offer us many practices and reflections for the classroom. Next, some

research titles are presented, through which we can identify the investigations carried out on the teaching of Geography in the early years. The data collected demonstrate a trend of the most studied themes and also the gaps in themes and amounts of studies in the area.

We believe that we must avoid polarizations and absolute certainties that limit more than expand Geography's ability to help students to read the world 'out there', so apparently chaotic due to the overdose of information that bombards children (not only them). Thus, in the final section of the text, we present considerations that seek to stimulate teaching, studies and research, in the context of information abundance, hyperconnectivity and complex socio-political relationships, ingredients that make up our troubled world.

### **Teaching and Learning Geography in Elementary School: Looking Far and Getting Closer**

Geography is made by human beings and the process of humanization throughout the history of our species has materialized in space. Geography focuses its study interests precisely on the spatial arrangements that are produced and give conditions to our existence in society. It is an ongoing process in which:

The new generations at birth find a history of humanity from the spaces built on the earth's surface, they are among the first processes of mediation. The erected “forms” (understood here in their material and symbolic character) are fruits of human history, but at the same time they are places where human history constantly begins; it is end, it is beginning, it is genesis, they form human spatial relationships, they are not empty. (LOPES, 2013, p. 130).

Therefore, humanization and the production of geographic space are inseparable and, “if geographic space is produced and produces history, it also

constitutes the human” (LOPES, 2013, p. 130). We are (being) and we are (space-time) situated. This makes us human.

Focusing on this aspect is important to highlight that children “are and they are in the world” (LOPES, 2009, p. 124), which highlights the need to take into account their historical-geographical conditions. Such a view does not indicate that we are joining the deterministic geographical theories, according to which the development of a group of people could be explained by the interferences of the environment, through better or worse forms of access to resources. On the contrary, we seek to recognize the constant creation and transformation of space carried out through human experiences. Therefore, space is recognized as a “product of interrelationships [...] constituted through relationships, from the immensity of the global, to the intimately small” (MASSEY, 2008, p. 29).

Being and being in space constitutes the belonging and the identity, which is, the “geographicity” of existence” (KAERCHER, 2014, p. 22), that highlights the importance of Geography, and challenges to, with it, read the world, thinking about life, interacting with others, in teaching proposals that go beyond “passing” fragmented content through the mere transmission of isolated information. This perspective assumes teaching to think, to see things in their spatial dimension, proposing ways of understanding life, as suggested by Massey (2008, p. 29):

[...] a sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity, in the sense of contemporary plurality, as the sphere in which different trajectories coexist. [...] being (the space), always under construction [...]. It is a product of relations-between, relations that are necessarily embedded in material practices that must be carried out, it is always in the process of making itself.

Observing and reflecting on these material practices is the raw material (means) and objective (purpose) of our classes, whatever the age

groups of the students is. However, our highlight here is for children, as it is a common mistake, when they enter the school system, to be considered 'blank pages' in regarding their spatial experiences. We want to emphasize exactly the opposite: being a child is closely linked to their spatial practices, which are always loaded with symbolism and creative activities.

Taking these assumptions into account, the challenge faced by the school is the search for the constitution of a pedagogical space that dialogues, listens and proposes geographies with the children in which, with the teacher's referrals, they produce significant knowledge, expand the geographical thinking- existential that runs through different scales of analysis, which expands in a movement in the spiral of knowledge (REGO, 2006). Summing up, to explain that our existence has always been and it is geography - purposely written in lowercase to differentiate from Geography (with a capital G) that we use to particularize science/academic discipline learned in Higher Education, and taught in Basic Education. We start from a simple question: we need to show our students that geography is earlier – and more significant – than academic geography. The challenge is old and still stands: to bring reflexivity and liveliness to our classes. To this end, theoretical reflections that go beyond mere content based on information that speak, often hastily, of 'everything' are fundamental because, after all, everything happens in the world, and Geography speaks of the ... world. Circular reasoning.

In the case of the early years of elementary school, it is necessary to emphasize that children establish relationships with the materiality of space, which is the lived and imagined space, building its spatiality in interactions and experiences. Think, for example, of games. It is easy to see that they are – of course there are similarities – different, including, or because, they occur in different places. A child living in São Paulo, most likely, plays in different ways and places than someone who lives in a city with, for example, 5,000 inhabitants. Here is a possible starting point for thinking about the everyday geography of a child.

From this perspective, it is essential for teachers in school situations to develop didactic proposals in which this spatiality can be revealed and taken into account, in order to provoke creative activity, as suggested by Vygotsky (2009); or, even, moving in the direction of broad thinking, as Kaercher and Tonini (2017) invite – with which we seek to expand students' worldviews. An indigenous girl will have a different view of nature than an urban infant. They are distinct spatial experiences. In July, in Rio Grande do Sul, our circulation through the streets is less inviting than in the summer. Think of your examples! Can girls walk as freely on the street as boys, especially at dusk? Through examples and questions directed to students, the teaching action in didactic mediation assumes a fundamental role. It approaches life, in fact, it comes alive. In this way, it is understood that the function of Geography at school is to enable children to learn the reading and writing of the world due to their geographical condition, having the opportunity to dialogue with the world and with others, producing knowledge based on their authorship and expressed in the several languages.

The mediation and the proposals developed by the teacher from theoretical and methodological references of geographic science, Didactics and Education, become, then, fundamental in the constitution of a pedagogical space based on the ways of seeing, understanding and acting with the children and with their geographies. These theoretical frameworks will enable us, for example, to face the often-chaotic flow of information to which students are subjected. We think that it is the school's task to filter, select, propose readings that, at least, fight dogmatism, prejudice and overly simplistic visions of the world and of groups that are different from ours. Plurality and democracy are not synonymous with everything can or everything goes, as this would corroborate common sense, often riddled with prejudices of all kinds. We think that the school, the classroom is the space-time (a place, therefore), to fight intolerance, especially racial, gender, social class and religiosity. Enormous are our challenges. Only with a lot of study and the search for partnerships among colleagues, we will advance with property in the direction of a more fraternal and socially just society.

Through observation and monitoring of teaching activities, the importance of qualified training has been verified. This formative process requires patience, listening and proposals that (re)build knowledge with academics and teachers, considering that many of them, when referring to the Geography with which they had contact at school, characterize it as a heap of information that was transmitted by the teacher, to be memorized by them. A lot of rush to 'beat content', which seemed more like an escape from reflection. They recall the questionnaires through which they reproduced information from textbooks or texts that the teacher transcribed onto the board and which were copied in their notebooks; they also remember the maps to color without reflecting. Mechanical occupations where children were considered blank pages.

There is a risk that the teacher will reproduce what was done when he was a student. Tardif (2014, p. 73) warns: "Previous school experiences and decisive relationships with teachers also contribute to shaping the personal identity of teachers and their practical knowledge [...]". This requires reconstructing knowledge in proposals with which they can be instigated to propose other senses and meanings for the movement of learning and teaching with Geography.

With the same concern, researchers of Geography teaching in the early years of elementary school have found that there are epistemological and didactic problems involving its teaching. The main reasons given for this situation, according to Callai, permeate issues such as the lack of adequate initial training, ineffective continuing education for only teaching actions and activities to be applied as techniques, without concern for developing reflections and studies on their pedagogical practice, and the exclusive use of textbooks as the most important resource in teaching practice.

If initial and continuing education in Geography has deficiencies, can one think that the central problem is associated with teacher education and the little interaction between academic studies and school

experiences? It seems that the university and the Basic Education schools are still distant. This is more than a problem of distance (kilometric), it is an epistemological problem. We stop learning from each other. Mistakenly, we think that in one institution only 'theory' is done, viewed with disdain by many educators, and in the other one does 'merely' practical work, as if our activities were not also grounded in theoretical visions. With this distance, the necessary oxygenation in which both institutions could feed back is interrupted. How to break through these walls that are so effective precisely because they are not necessarily 'physical'?

This question disturbs and sets in motion the search for knowledge, especially about the carried out research and the possibilities of effective dialogue, between teachers, academics, children and school Geography.

### **To get closer and see better: research on Geography in the early years**

Mobilized by the questions, the research project was developed “When I look from afar, I see more. When I get closer, I see better the things there are – School Geography in the early years of Elementary School: problematizations.”<sup>4</sup>

The project combines research movements inserted in the fields of Geography and Education, involving teaching and learning in the early years, as well as teacher training, and seeks to map and categorize the academic production linked to the theme.

The initial stage of the research was fundamental to support the next interventions, composing the “state of knowledge” (FERREIRA, 2002) on the qualitative and quantitative devices that deal with School Geography in the early years of Elementary School.

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<sup>4</sup> The sentence “When I look from afar I see more. When I get closer, I see better” that makes up the title of the project is a speech by a 5th year elementary school student, expressed during activities proposed in class. Research project approved by the Research Commission of the Faculty of Education of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), on 07/16/2020. Research development period: 06/28/2020 to 12/09/2022.

For this purpose, data collection was carried out through bibliographic research and documental survey in the Catalog of Theses and Dissertations on Capes Portal, based on *stricto sensu* academic production (master's and doctorate) in federal public institutions, published in the period of 2010 to 2020. In this article, we limit ourselves to emphasizing the titles, authors and institutions of the research, in order to highlight the research themes related to Geography in the early years.

The limits of the time frame of this research are based on considerations in relation to the historical trajectory of school Geography in the early years. From the Law of Directives and Bases (LDB) of 1996, n.º 9394, the country's education was restructured and Geography conquered its legal space as a school subject in the curriculum of the early years. In this regard, we highlight the approval of Resolution CEB No. 2 of 1998, which established the National Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary Education in which Geography was configured as an area of knowledge.

Years later, the CNE/CEB Opinion No. 11 of 2010 highlighted the National Curriculum Guidelines for nine-year Elementary Education. In addition to the perspective of change related to teaching, anticipating the 1st year, due to the content of the opinion, the mandatory curricular components of Elementary School began to be organized in relation to areas of knowledge, differently from the previous resolution. Thus, Geography, together with History, became part of the area of Human Sciences.

The legal changes demanded the revision of the pedagogical political projects, seeking to incorporate the normative prerogatives, and these had a direct impact on the curricula, and with that, on the school Geography. Thus, the analysis proposed in this research has its starting point in 2010, having as reference the date of the CNE/CEB Opinion No. 11 of 2010.

The source of the research was the Capes<sup>5</sup> theses and dissertations catalog, which has twelve filters to guide the search on the platform,

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<sup>5</sup> “Platform that aims to facilitate access to information on theses and dissertations defended by postgraduate programs in the country, and is part of the Institution's Periodicals Portal” CAPES. Brazil - Catalog of Capes

namely: type (master's or doctorate); year (from 1987 to 2020); author (in relation to who wrote the thesis or dissertation); advisor (in relation to the professor who guided the work); panel (components of the work evaluation panel); large knowledge area (with study area options); knowledge area (with options for areas); assessment area (Capes assessment areas to which the works are linked); concentration area (research lines options); program name (name of the graduate program to which the work is linked); institution (linked, public or private university); and library (website of the university where the work is hosted).<sup>6</sup>

In this search, the following filters were selected<sup>7</sup>

- a) type: master's and doctorate;
- b) year: cut from 2010 to 2020;
- c) large area of knowledge: Human Sciences;
- d) area of knowledge: education; teaching and geography;
- e) assessment area: education and geography;
- f) area of concentration: education and geography;
- g) program name: education and geography;
- h) institution: federal universities.

In the development of the research, five keywords were used, namely: “teaching of geography”, “early years”, “education”, “teacher training” and “initial teacher training”<sup>8</sup>.

The total number of academic works found, using the keywords described, was 94,441, without applying the filters described. After applying the filters, the number of coursework was reduced to 296. It is

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Theses and Dissertations, Data from Postgraduate Theses and Dissertations 2017 to 2020. Brasília: Capes, [2020]. Available at: <https://metadados.capes.gov.br/index.php/catalog/203>. Accessed on: 14 March. 2021.

<sup>6</sup> CAPES Catalog of theses and dissertations. Brasília, Capes, [2021]. Available at: <https://catalogodeteses.capes.gov.br/catalogo-teses#!/>

<sup>7</sup> Other filters such as: author, advisor, examining board and library were indicated by the expression: without definition.

<sup>8</sup> Academic works published up to 2010 do not have a direct link on the Capes platform, because as described on the website “these courseworks predate the construction of the Sucupira Platform”. Thus, the courseworks that did not have a direct link were searched on the websites of the respective universities.

worth mentioning that from this number, not all coursework is about the teaching of Geography, no matter how much filters are applied, the platform also suggested academic works in Mathematics and Biological Sciences, and to refine the search, it was necessary to analyze it on a case-by-case basis, considering the filters already described.

In the end, the database comprised 7 theses and 53 dissertations. From the analysis of the database originated, the dissertations and theses were read and the material content was categorized. We emphasize that 2 dissertations were not available for access and those that were not related to the early years of education were not analyzed. At the end, the database was composed of: 2 theses and 17 dissertations, whose titles, institutions and authors are as follows.

**Table 1:** Dissertations from the research database – Elementary school - Early years.

O ensino-aprendizagem das categorias geográficas nas séries iniciais do ensino fundamental no município de Riacho das Almas – PE. PPG Geography – Federal University of Paraíba (PB). Author: Maria Rejane da Silva.
Geografar, alfabetizar com fantoches, é só começar! PPG Geography – Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (RS). Autora: Karen Roberta Soares da Silva.
A Representação Social de Geografia pelas Professoras e Professores dos Anos Iniciais do Ensino Fundamental. PPG Geography - Federal University of Piauí (PI). Author: Raimundo Nunes Pimentel Neto.
O conceito de lugar no livro didático e o processo de ensino aprendizagem. PPG Geography - Federal University of Goiás (GO). Author: Luan do Carmo da Silva.
Geografia nos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental: um olhar a partir da formação e da prática pedagógica dos professores do município de Alagoa Grande – PB. PPG Geography - Federal University of Paraíba (PB). Author: Jonathas Eduardo Domingos Moraes.
A Formação Continuada do Professor dos Anos Iniciais e o Ensino de Geografia: o conceito de lugar em uma perspectiva do ensino desenvolvimental. PPG Geography - Federal University of Goiás (GO). Author: Ismael Donizete Cardoso de Moraes.
A educação geográfica com crianças nos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental: as bases conceituais humanistas no estudo do lugar. PPG Geography - Federal University of Piauí (PI). Author: Maria do Socorro Pereira de Sousa Andrade.
O Ensino da Cartografia a partir das propostas de Alfabetização Cartográfica nos Livros Didáticos de Geografia para os Anos Iniciais. PPG Geography - Federal University of Pelotas (RS). Author: Suelen Ramos Novack.
O ensino de Geografia nos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental: uma perspectiva a partir da análise dos livros didáticos aprovados pelo PNLD 2013. PPG Education - Federal University of São Paulo (SP). Author: Guilherme Macedo Pascal.
O significado da leitura do espaço por intermédio de proposta de letramento cartográfico nos anos iniciais. PPG Geography - Federal University of Santa Maria (RS). Author: Viviane Regina Pires.
O ensino de Geografia e a mobilização de conceitos nos anos iniciais: uma leitura da paisagem a partir dos conteúdos relevo-solo-rocha. PPG Geography - Federal University of Goiás (GO). Author: Malu Itala Araujo Souza.
A questão agrária e o ensino de geografia nos anos iniciais em Ilha Solteira (SP): relação campo-cidade e novas práticas. PPG Geography - Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (MS). Author: Mariana Vasconcelos da Silva.
Geografia monstro: um currículo assombroso nos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental. PPG Education - Federal University of Minas Gerais (MG). Author: Maira Freitas de Araújo Rodrigues.
A presença dos conceitos estruturadores do conhecimento geográfico nos cursos de pedagogia em Minas Gerais. PPG Geography - Federal University of São João Del-Rei (MG). Author: Samara Mirelly da Silva.
O estudo do meio nos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental como possibilidade de entrelaçar a geografia e a educação ambiental. PPG Environmental Education - Federal University of Rio Grande (RS). Author: Ana Paula Borges Ramos.
O ensino de Geografia nos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental: uma experiência no quinto ano. PPG Geography - Federal University of Santa Catarina (SC). Author: Aline Beatriz Ludwig.
No folhear das páginas, um estudo das práticas pedagógicas geográficas nos anos iniciais da EMEF Bento Gonçalves - São Leopoldo. PPG Geography - Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (RS). Author: Cláudia Aparecida da Silva Galimbert.

**Source:** CAPES. Brazil - Catalog of Capes Theses and Dissertations, Data from Postgraduate Theses and Dissertations 2017 to 2020. Brasília: Capes, [2020]. Available in: <https://metadados.capes.gov.br/index.php/catalog/203>. Accessed on: 14 March. 2021.

**Table 2:** Research Database Theses – Elementary school – Early years.

Geografia nos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental: entre a realidade e as possibilidades. PPG Geography - Federal University of Goiás (GO). Author: Marcia Virginia Pinto Bomfim.
O olhar interdisciplinar na prática docente em geografia nos anos iniciais do ensino fundamental: linguagem simbólica em fenomenologia. PPG Education - Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (MS). Author: Care Cristiane Hammes.

**Source:** CAPES. Catalog of theses and dissertations. Brasília, Capes, [2021]. Available in: <https://catalogodeteses.capes.gov.br/catalogo-teses/#/>.

The previous tables with the titles, institutions and authors of the researches, configure a panorama that demonstrates, on the one hand, the diversity of themes that involve the researches; on the other hand, how much it is still necessary to develop investigations in the field of geography in the early years of schooling. There is a vast field of topics to be revisited and deepened in order to bring the university and the school of Basic Education closer together and understand the field of geographic education carried out and still to be carried out with children. Furthermore, the analysis of contemporary realities is fundamental, because the hyperconnectivity that increasingly puts teachers and students in contact with the world and places. We know that in the informational field there is inappropriate content (fake news, gossip, merely curiosities or trivia sites) - and that, or precisely because of this, greatly attract the attention of all age groups of students. This will 'demand' from teachers a filtering, choosing and curation effort. We do not want to defend censorship or imagine that the teacher is the only and undoubted source of knowledge – so that the school can be a better space for reflection.

A debate arises that we cannot delve into here: what should or should not be included in school, in the classroom? Where are the boundaries of 'educational' and 'diversionism', which often not only do not qualify students' reading of the world, but also emphasizes prejudices and dogmas? Elitism is not advocated here, nor is the idea that the school can be at the mercy of the quantitative, the popular. It is common for famous personalities, almost instant 'celebrities' to have thousands (millions?) of 'likes' or 'followers'. Are these

personalities and contents that will guide the work in the classroom? We believe not. This debate, which we are just announcing here, is essential for the faculty to carry out – and it is up to the students to also participate – because the school is an arena where disputes and different visions of society and 'models' to be taught and followed reign.

It is necessary for the teacher to be suspicious of his ability to 'see reality', 'teach to be critical' and to know the 'correct paths and values' that children should have. Finally, the mediation of teachers is increasingly necessary in view of the need for treatment and analysis of information. Never before has access to so much information been available and, at the same time, there is an increasing need to develop didactic proposals that provide opportunities for dialogue and confrontation of what is heard and seen, as well as working in a systematized way in teaching-learning supported by technologies. Studying is necessary, because the master who does not practice studying (they are etymologically linked words), risks running a lot, without having a destiny in which, even with the threat of making a mistake, it was and is a reflexive choice of its own.

In another survey, the following stood out:

I learn with children that, although contemporary society is structured in technology, its use is not automatically useful to Education. With this, I am not denying the need to incorporate the use of technology into pedagogical practices, on the contrary, I reaffirm the need to do so from a perspective that incorporates technology into pedagogical actions with Geography (THEVES, 2018, p. 141).

This challenge that moves us in research, training and teaching proposes “to put in motion new ways of acting, thinking and communicating brought by digital information and communication technologies, in which we are all inserted in these times of change”

(TONINI, 2013, p. 50). Thus, we want to highlight technologies as well as applications and the great domains of the internet as inescapable sources of our classes. The textbook will obviously continue to be (we hope) an instrument present in classrooms. It should be noted that the Covid-19 Pandemic has clearly shown the gap in access to information obtained by different social classes. Terribly, the Pandemic has further increased the discrepancies in the literacy of our children, to the detriment, of course, of the socially poorer strata. It has also shown the importance of the public power to invest in the qualification of public schools, under the more than likely risk of having a generation of semi-literates, even with Elementary School (or even High School) completed. How to approach this problem without, as is common, just overloading the professors?

It is conceived that the processes of teaching and learning, at school, should contribute to the development of human beings in their multiple facets, which are not restricted to the cognitive. Therefore, situations that mobilize the formation of new categories of thought must be provided, so that the concepts presented in class are, in fact, understood and reflected by the students. To give examples that make the students' lives interact with the school world (from the textbook, yes), but also from the digital environment. These sources are neither opposite nor antagonistic. They can and should communicate so that the school is a space for opening new questions and visions. The school, and our classes, can change. Not to appear 'nice' or 'modern', but to be committed to a school that is attentive to inequalities and injustices and is, therefore, a possible space for transformation. Either this country will be for everyone, or increasingly, we will build fences, walls and we will be trapped in them, afraid of the violence that plagues, especially the large urban centers.

In other words, it is necessary to study, research and question: what knowledge, teacher, do you build with your students? What part do they have in your classes? Knowledge – and school – are for what / who? This process

makes it possible for children to form new knowledge and new ways of thinking, instigated precisely by the way in which their relationship of knowledge with them was proposed.

### **Final considerations**

The contemporary context demands from the school postures that rethink the role of school Geography and the performance of teachers since the early years. It should be noted that it is necessary to prioritize the appropriation of concepts related to spatiality and forward pedagogical practices loaded with meaning, which value the daily life, the students' knowledge, investing in the construction of knowledge that expands the reading of the world with children. In this perspective, the importance of studying Education, Didactics and Geography stands out, which can foster proposals and strengthen teaching and learning in the context of intensifying political clashes. For years we have lived in a polarized and even hostile environment, without being able to gently listen to those who think differently from us. The school is not immune to this. Faced with very closed positions (certainties often inhabit our children, sometimes so conservative), how about the educator NOT giving his 'opinion' right away? How about giving the floor back to the students: what do you think of what Fulano said? Sicrano, better develop your argument! Thus, valuing a precious space-time, even so that the teacher can avoid pitfalls and reductionism. We do not advocate that educating is neutral – impossible – but the debates do not need to have your opinion as a central focus. Let the differences be brought to the table with respect and tolerance – that is, an uncompromising defense on our part – of respect for the other. Listening is the first step. And, of course, we don't need, at the end of each class, to have a consensus on the most varied topics. They will live on in the next chapters. Life pulsates, thank goodness!

What we want to emphasize, from now on, is the need for a commitment to qualify initial academic training (educational training) and to encourage its articulation with continuing education. The teacher is either a student or a teacher who runs the risk of graying out in the profession. There are plenty of reasons for this, but what can we do to not give up?

It appears that these are the basic pillars so that it is possible to develop the teaching of Geography with more meaning for children, and also for their teachers. It is not enough for this subject to be part of the school curriculum; it is essential that the learning subjects make sense of their potential by contributing to the formation of autonomous, reflective and active subjects in their socio-spatial reality. The work proposals developed with Geography in the early years can constitute possibilities for the development of a daily social practice, for the formation of a spatial awareness, for an ethical and aesthetic relationship with space, expanding worldviews, understanding what happens to students and their experiences. After all, with Geography and with students, we can read the world in a plural, contradictory and dynamic way, so that we can better understand ourselves and others; and, who knows, contribute to actions in the construction of a dignified world for all.

The theoretical references concerning teacher education show that initial and continuing education has weaknesses when it is characterized by a fragmented and specialized education, by a compartmentalized and disconnected knowledge from the complex social reality in which we are inserted, as well as by the disarticulation between theory and practice. Diagnosis done. It remains for us to think about our forms of teaching action, which keep us alive in a profession that is undoubtedly very exhausting. Where can you get energy to continue? Our impression, in decades of involvement with education, is that the answer is evident: in the students. They are capable. They want to be heard. They want to speak.

This text is an invitation for teachers to strengthen their partnership with students, children, youth and adults. They carry a lot of knowledge, their

experiences are what constitute their existence, which takes place in space. The 'raw material' is them, even more than any curricula, databases, books, websites, platforms or handouts.

It is also a trail indicating the need for new readings of school, research and the world. It is a utopia – even though rational educators can hope, believe – that the dialogue between the university and the school, between the teacher and the student, between Geography and teaching, can be enriching. We invite readers to travel with us to make our way, looking far to see more, getting closer to see better.

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