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## Perception of the landscape in teaching geography: designing the “our everyday” landscape

La percepción del paisaje en la enseñanza de la geografía: diseñando el paisaje “nuestro cotidiano”

Percepção da paisagem no ensino da geografia: desenhando a paisagem “nossa de cada dia”

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### Abstract

This article presents results of the application of the workshop “Drawing our daily landscape”, through the representation of the landscape through art, more specifically, through drawings, for students of Basic Education, specifically, Elementary School II, in the municipality of Meruoca, Ceará. We aim to demonstrate the playful capacity that the artistic tool can promote a better assimilation about the reality lived in the Semi-Arid environment, through representation of the landscape. We adopted the insertion of drawing workshops using phenomenology as a methodological tool. It is worth emphasizing the question of the applicability of such alternatives in the practice of teaching in Geography, especially Physical Geography, it can cause an involvement of the participants, under the influence of a playful perspective, aiming at a lighter strategy.

**Keywords:** Perception; Semiarid; Teaching Geography.

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### Resumen

Este artículo presenta resultados de la aplicación del taller “Dibujando nuestro paisaje cotidiano”, a través de la representación del paisaje a través del arte, a través del dibujo, para alumnos de la Escuela Primaria - Últimos Años en la ciudad de Meruoca, Ceará. Nuestro objetivo es demostrar la capacidad lúdica que la herramienta artística puede promover en la asimilación de la realidad vivida en el medio semiárido, a través de la representación del paisaje. Adoptamos la inclusión de

talleres de dibujo utilizando la Fenomenología como marco teórico-metodológico. Cabe resaltar que el tema de la aplicabilidad de tales alternativas en la práctica de la docencia en Geografía, especialmente en los aspectos físicos y naturales, puede llevar a una implicación de los participantes, bajo la influencia de una perspectiva lúdica, con miras a un enfoque más interactivo, estrategia.

**Palabras clave:** Percepción Semiárido: enseñanza de la geografía

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### Resumo

Este artigo apresenta resultados da aplicação da oficina "Desenhando a paisagem nossa de cada dia", através da representação da paisagem por meio da arte, através de desenhos, para alunos do Ensino Fundamental - Anos finais do município de Meruoca, Ceará. Objetivamos demonstrar a capacidade lúdica que a ferramenta artística pode promover na assimilação da realidade vivida no ambiente Semiárido, mediante representação da paisagem. Adotamos a inserção de oficinas de desenho utilizando a Fenomenologia como referencial teórico-metodológico. É válido enfatizar que a questão da aplicabilidade de tais alternativas na prática do ensino em Geografia, sobretudo, em aspectos físico-naturais, pode ocasionar um envolvimento dos participantes, sob a influência de uma perspectiva lúdica, visando uma estratégia mais interativa.

**Palavras-chave:** Percepção; Semiárido: Ensino de Geografia.

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### Introduction

The idea of producing this project comes from the need to reflect on the perception of the semiarid landscape of Ceará, in a more specific way, through art, through drawings, for elementary school students II, in the municipality of Meruoca, State of Ceará, Brazil.

It is known, at least for the vast majority of the academic society, the problem of teaching about the Semiarid region is only tied to the textbook as an exclusive tool for teaching curricular disciplines, in this case, we also refer to the other disciplines. However, Saviani (2008) recommends that instead of totally repudiating the use of the textbook, we should rethink them and "take them as a starting point for the reformulation of pedagogy courses and other undergraduate courses."

It is added, under the influence of official documents relating to education, such as:

The cartographic concepts (scale, legend, cartographic alphabet) and geographical concepts (location, nature, society, landscape, region, territory and place) can be perfectly constructed from everyday practices. In fact, it is a question of reading the experience of the place in relation to a set of concepts that structure geographic knowledge, including the categories space and time. (BRAZIL, 2006, p. 50).

At the moment when we analyze the curricular proposal of this document, we perceive the suggestion of the landscape that is important as a support for the understanding of spatial organization, consisting of a category of analysis.

As noted, the landscape for this document brings directions to landscapes of America and other continents (discussed at the time when we will analyze the results and discussions). In the National Curricular Parameters (1998) there is an allusion to address the concept of landscape, suggesting activities that awaken the reading of the landscape through previous research, either through the presentation of text images, as well as descriptions of daily observations.

Through the BNCC - Common National Curriculum Base, we can highlight the suggestion to develop practices that stimulate the observation of situations that reproduce social and environmental dynamics. Thus, the awakening to the most accurate observations will develop in a manner proportional to their development; thus, the perception arises that we ourselves can modify the landscapes, stimulating the student to elaborate the geographical reasoning, which deals with the distribution and connection of phenomena in space. Hence, the first questions about social relations involving the actions of institutions are manifested, for example (BRASIL, 2018).

The discussion about nature was directed precisely because of the discussion about landscape reverberate also in the concept of nature, because the students drew only dams, trees and the shapes of the relief, to the detriment of artificial landscapes (buildings, houses, shops, etc.).

The municipality of Meruoca is located in the Residual Massif of Meruoca, according to the Ministry of the Environment Brazil (2017), part of the semiarid region (FALCÃO SOBRINHO, 2020). The choice of the studied area occurred because it contemplated the view of students not yet verified, because in general, in textbooks there is too much privilege of landscapes from other places. In addition, in previous research, we worked with students living on the backcountry surface.

## **Landscape and Teaching**

The foundation that involves the relationship landscape and teaching reflects precisely on the instigating way that both the landscape and other geographical concepts can be treated in a didactic way in the classroom. Thus, most of the time, there is a lack of articulation between what geography graduates assimilate in their education and the consequent application of knowledge in relation to a contextualization with the geographical phenomena experienced by the students.

Therefore, Suertegaray (2000) recommends an introductory notion about the teaching of geographical concepts around the concept of space, incorporating in an evolutionary and integrated way: landscape and/or territory, and/or place, and/or environment, thus, one would attribute a conception that all these concepts are understood in the other, as Suertegaray (2000, p. 31) affirms, "landscapes contain territories that contain places that contain environments worth, for each, all possible connections". "Teaching" about landscape is important, based, at first, that it enables the perception of heterogeneity present in it, and then reverberates the social and natural processes. As Ab'Sáber (2003) points out:

The landscape is always an inheritance. In fact, it is an inheritance in the whole sense of the word: inheritance of physiographic and biological processes, and collective heritage of the peoples who historically inherited them as the territory of action of their communities. (AB'SÁBER, 2003, p. 9).

Professor Ab'Saber's words reinforce even more about the act of educating, through the teaching of the landscape, taking into account, according to Puntel (2007, p. 286) "is the landscape that reveals the imbrications, the relationship between the social, the cultural, the intellectual, the patrimonial and the civic, and it is these relationships that motivate and justify the presence of geography and landscape in schools."

The author mentioned above, still reveals the limited treatment of the landscape in school geography, parallel to its approach as a concept in Geographical Science. When studies involving the landscape return, they simultaneously resume it as relevant for geography teaching, especially since the 1970s (PUNTEL, 2007).

Geography PCNs suggest initially addressing the concept of landscape according to the students' previous knowledge, including various forms of reporting, photographs, texts or systematization of ideas. Based on this, "teachers and students can problematizes, ask questions and raise hypotheses that imply further investigations that require new knowledge" (BRASIL, 1998, p. 137).

Therefore, it is also necessary to clarify that, despite involving the landscape theme, usually attributed "immovable" and "framed", one should also instigate in the educating the observations about the living landscape. It is emphasized that when talking about landscape in educational bias, it is advisable to overcome the limits of only one perspective of study of images, in this case, there is to consider cinema, photographs, television, graffiti (art on walls) and other landscape manifestations.

Also remembering about the possibility of a single landscape being interpreted in various ways within the same group. This indication, opportunistized the pedagogical debate around the decision-making processes which conceived the image as: It is. It was. And it could be.

Cavalcanti (2004) considers landscape studies, through its multiple expressions, capable of showing "different levels of productive forces", behind the "pictures" there will be social actors interested in what suits them best. In this way:

[...] one landscape is one written over another, it is a set of objects that have different ages, it is a heritage of many moments; it is not given forever, it is the object of change, it is the result of successive additions and subtractions, it is a kind of mark of the history of work, of techniques; it does not show all the data, which are not always visible, the landscape is a palimpsest, a mosaic. (CAVALCANTI, 2004, p. 99).

In the interpretation that the aforementioned author performs, the primordial character of promoting the idea of teaching about landscape is conceived, tied to the relational perspective, as well as the clarification about the existence of landscapes "rewritten" from other landscapes. Moreover, Cavalcanti (2004) also believes as important, teaching about landscape, forward contextualized discussions. Introducing that your landscape connects, in some way, with other landscapes. On this, PCNs similarly understand that:

[...] When we talk about the landscape of a city, its relief, the orientation of the rivers and streams of the region, on which its expressways have been implanted, the set of human constructions, the distribution of its population, the record of the tensions, successes and failures of the history of the individuals and groups that are in it. It is in it that the marks of the history of a society are expressed, thus making the landscape an accumulation of unequal times. (BRASIL, 1998, p. 28).

The same document also makes reservations as to whether the landscape category remains imbricate with the place category, offering the observation that both categories can reverberate a local identity.

We point out as crucial the teaching of the landscape, especially with regard to its teaching as a primordial reflection of natural, cultural and social dynamics (FALCÃO SOBRINHO, 2007), highlighting them in constant interaction. The greatest challenge is the fact of "adapting" all studies involving integrated landscape in Sauer (1925) and Bertrand (1968) for example, by didactic means, for

this to be accomplished, it is necessary to think about methodological aspects about the teaching of the landscape from the general to the place.

### **Nature and society brushing and producing landscapes**

We will start from the theoretical assumption based on Sauer (1998) due to the relevance of the discussion that the author presents the landscape seen under the aegis of interaction and is also part of a set of scenes, and visualizes it in a generic way. Soon according to Sauer (1998, p.24) "the geographer can describe the individual landscape as a type or probably a variant of a type, but he always has in mind the generic and proceeds by comparison".

Considering, at first, the existence of a natural landscape, serving as the basis for the promotion of the cultural landscape, it has been circumscribed that, for Sauer (1998) such association, should not be analyzed under the bias of the idea that for the existence of one, it is necessary to annul the other. Alerting, already, about his dissatisfaction with what is currently understood as "physical" and "human" dichotomy. Because:

Geography is based, in reality, on the union of the physical and cultural elements of the landscape. The content of the landscape is found, therefore, in the physical qualities of the area that are important to man and in the forms of his use of the area, in physical basic facts and facts of human culture. (SAUER, 1998, p. 29).

In view of this, Sauer (1998) reinforces the aspect of interdependence, of the so-called "natural" and "cultural" landscapes, and there is a need to exemplify about the first landscape (natural landscape) called "site", an area with a predominance of vegetation and other natural resources in abundance, and, therefore, a landscape that is subject to the human being who "can develop it, ignore it, partly and/or explore it" (SAUER, 1998, p. 30).

In this way, one can understand a cultural landscape tied to its natural half in harmony. However, Sauer (1998) attentive to these cultural "traits" be analyzed within a perspective to which the geographer observes, humans also belonging to the natural, stating that "there is no place for a dualism of the landscape" (SAUER, 1998, p. 30).

Consequently, Ribeiro (1989) highlights this interaction natural/cultural landscape indicated by Carl Sauer, emphasizing as the final product of the relationship between society/nature and the production of landscapes. Also highlighting, about the studies that can evidence society, through its historical dynamics, as "transforming nature" (RIBEIRO, 1989, p. 38). However, the author continues:

[...] nature is not understood here only as the stage where social relations take place, but as a set of elements that have a behavior governed by their own laws and that react dialectically to the pressures exerted by society, which seeks to carry out its material basis (RIBEIRO, 1989, p. 39).

Ribeiro, therefore, understands this association, at the moment when, it lists field studies as paramount in the aspect of observing the outer elements of the landscape, providing the perception about totality, thus, Ribeiro (1989) understood the need to seek a more in-depth orientation on the rationalization of the landscape. In view of this, the landscape reflects the way in which society is organized, being the result of social dynamism employed according with the "productive needs or purposes defined by society itself" (RIBEIRO, 1989, p. 39).

## **Methodology**

With theoretical-methodological references in previous studies, but in different regions, we can highlight the studies of Mastrangelo (2001) and Myanaki (2003; 2008); presenting, respectively, the construction of mental maps of the landscape lived and representation of the landscape through art.



Myanaki (2008) places the visual issue on the same level as other perspectives. Thus, the author emphasizes that if the notion of landscape is polysemic, the description about it should also be. Thus, we justify the mixed choice of descriptions in drawing and textual.

Based on Mastrangelo (2001) it reports on the reception of previous perceptions of students about concepts. It also suggests impartiality and self-criticism in the face of their work, hence asking students for evaluation of the activity developed.

For the development of the research, we started with the problematization and contextualization of the object of study (FALCÃO SOBRINHO, et al., 2019). For this, we chose an educational institution inserted in the landscape context of the Residual Massif in the municipality of Meruoca, precisely in the School Rosinha Bastos. The selection by Elementary School II (8 Year) occurred due to the concept of landscape being worked in previous years (6th and 7th year) so we worked with a content already seen.

We determine as theoretical reflection and conceptual definition, the dialogue between the concepts of landscape in geographical science. To acquire perceptions, we use the principles of phenomenology, because when it comes to the reception of perceptions, it is necessary to understand previous knowledge, also taking into account the affective descriptions related to living in the landscape.

We established as methodological elements the use of questionnaires to know the students' perception of landscape and nature, later presenting the workshop.

### **Workshop operating path**

**Stage 1** – The investigation started with the questions: 1. What is landscape? And 2. What is nature? Questions asked before the workshop, with the aim of diagnosing the students' level of learning about landscape and nature. Subsequently, using

Merleau-Ponty's (1999) phenomenology, we sought to analyze perception so that, there is observation of the phenomenon and later, the description occurs through sensory and existential perception.

Stage 2 – For the research, the workshop was used as a basis: Our daily landscape, in April 2019, at Rosinha Bastos Sampaio School. Students were able to express their own concepts about landscape and then draw their landscapes. Workshop held in two classes, as this is the time available for Geography classes in Basic Education.

Step 3 – Practice was carried out, with students encouraged to draw their landscapes using bond paper, brushes, brush pen, colored pencils, soil pigments (we even used Red Argisol, found near the school, facilitating a brief clarification on the importance of this natural element for the dynamics of the local landscape).

Stage 4 – The phenomenological perception was defined as the main instrument of analysis. We prefer not to directly assess student learning about a “right” concept of landscape, precisely because of our conviction in recommending referrals aimed at building a notion of contextualized landscape.

### **Results and discussions**

At the beginning, we asked the students to answer the following questions: what is landscape? and What is nature? We observed the little interest of students in writing. They justified that they were not curious to expose their thoughts, despite the fact that there was no delimitation of the number of lines. Below we highlight some transcripts and drawings by several students from Escola Rosinha Bastos Sampaio.

We emphasize the speech of student B (13 years old), where he associates the notion of landscape repressed in a “frame”. However, different opinions are also evident, as reported by student A, recognizing the interdependence between the landscapes.

Student A

What is landscape? “Landscape is the vision and identity of a place, that is, the view. Taking into account relief and vegetation, that is, it is an identity of a certain place.”

What is nature? “It's the set of everything that exists in the universe, or in the world like the planet itself, animals and human beings.” (VERBAL INFORMATION)<sup>4</sup>

Student B

What is landscape? “Landscape is everything we see, formed from point to point.” What is nature? “Nature is a set of animal things, rivers, trees, etc.” (VERBAL INFORMATION)<sup>5</sup>

Analyzing the descriptions of most students, landscape is exclusively related to the natural, as described by student C (13 years old): What is landscape? “It's a very elegant landscape. From the world of landscape.” What is nature? “It is a very beautiful nature and the land.” (VERBAL INFORMATION)<sup>6</sup>

#### **Painel 1 - Alunos participando de atividade de desenho – Oficina – Geografia**



**Source:** Workshop at Rosinha Bastos Sampaio School, photo José Marcelo Soares de Oliveira (2019)

<sup>4</sup>Interview 1, student A (Escola Rosinha Bastos, Meruoca) Interview conducted by José Marcelo Soares de Oliveira (2019)

<sup>5</sup> Interview 2, student A (Escola Rosinha Bastos, Meruoca) Interview conducted by José Marcelo Soares de Oliveira (2019))

<sup>6</sup> Interview 3, student A (Escola Rosinha Bastos, Meruoca) Interview conducted by José Marcelo Soares de Oliveira (2019)

Therefore, we will analyze the drawings and descriptions of landscape and nature, in a qualitative way, as recommended by phenomenological principles. Thus, we see from the outset that there is a lack of showing local examples. This fact becomes contradictory, because as the BNCC advises, in the 6th and 7th year of elementary school, the student must have seized a conception of identification with his landscape, recognizing them as important.

In this perspective, the explanation, during previous years, deserved to be better understood. Through the research, we can realize that the notion that students have of landscape is very similar to the descriptions found in dictionaries, for example, in this scenario, landscape is: "Territorial extension that the view reaches; panorama", this event makes us reason that the concept of landscape is little worked, in the most profound geographic bias, without taking into account all the variables that transform a natural or cultural landscape, and its connections.

And when we talk about the connection between landscapes, it makes us reflect on the writings of Sauer (1998) as well as (BRASIL, 2017, p. 359) where it says: "in cultural identity; and in the awareness that we are subjects of history, distinct from each other and, therefore, convinced of our differences. Explanations about connections. And differentiations with other areas."

In the second stage of the workshop, we verified an association of the idea of drawing as an act of freedom in the exhibition of their conceptions about landscape. When they were advised to write, we realized their concern to accurately describe the term landscape. And, In addition, in the drawings, we deduce the presence of larger records linking landscape to affective phenomena.

In general, the landscape that the students drew, brings natural particularities, disregarding the existence of residences, for example. This fact may be linked to the tendency to represent the landscape, linked to the natural aspects

In the drawings, there is a predisposition of students to portray rounded features, although scientifically the theory is scientifically proven signaling crest-shaped contours. However, the students' view of the Meruoca mountain range is

only observed from a top perspective of the municipality, so a more complete view would not be possible for them. Through Pereira (2006), this idealized conception of landscape is oriented by students in describing a desirable scenario, there are strong intentions to imagine living in their drawings.

The perception of student D (Panel 2) exposes the perspective of those who travel from Sobral-CE to Meruoca-CE, so the same reports the constant trips he makes with his mother between these two municipalities. It is evident that these visions reflect a lived world (NOGUEIRA, 2005).

Some students represented scenarios containing Babaçu and cactus, which for them may be something natural from the mountain landscape, becomes bioindicators of accelerated degradation processes, indicating an indifference to native vegetation as well as in the drawing of student A, which contains elements representing pollution in several rivers and streams (Panel 2).

**Panel 2 - Drawings representing the Sobral/Meruoca road and the Meruoca Relief - Ceará - 2019**

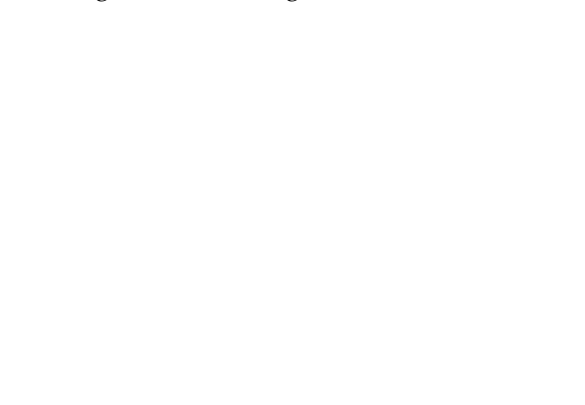
**Drawing 1** Sobral/Meruoca road



**Drawing 2-** Relief representation - Student D



**Drawing 3-** Meruoca degraded area – Student F





Source: Workshop at Rosinha Bastos Sampaio School, photo José Marcelo Soares de Oliveira (2019)

According to Oliveira (2011), it is noted the positive dimension that studies involving some artistic element within the school environment are noted, as they can offer help for students to understand the differences between landscapes, as well as encourage students to self-affirmative capacity as possessors of a unique identity and, through dialogue with others, produce broader reflections.

Many students chose to draw trees similar to what is observed as a European standard, presenting rounded canopy and with red apples. However, it is known that this fruit is not yet well spread in our environment. Thus, we analyze that this fact is linked to the student's desire to draw something more representative of other landscapes (European, rainy regions) as is commonly the case in textbooks (Drawing 4).

During the presentation of the workshop "landscape of ours every day" and in view of the need for more didactic explanation possible about the integration of landscapes, the Acaraú watershed was approached as an example. The explanation of the most perceptible natural elements, such as vegetation and relief forms, was not prioritized.

Drawing 4- Representation of the Meruoca relief - Student C



**Source:** Workshop at Rosinha Bastos Sampaio School, photo José Marcelo Soares de Oliveira (2019)

And not only to privilege the explanation about the interaction of natural elements, there was talk about the presence of artificial objects present in the river route, among them the dams, which, even though they are works of human beings, are constituted by a natural element, besides, they are relevant to industrial processes and also serve as a model for reflection on what is natural and artificial. In this way, there was talk about landscape and nature. In fact, the geography produced in the academy is in little dialogue with the school.

### **Final considerations**

In view of the preliminary results obtained in an educational institution located in the residual massif of Meruoca, it is noteworthy that, although important, the recommendations of the official documents should not always be strictly followed. We realize that the textbook follows precisely, the guidelines of the BNCC, however, through textual descriptions, we observed absence of local landscape examples, but, on the other hand, in the activity of paintings, they had the freedom to answer what is landscape in the form of drawing.

With this, they were able to associate the artistic form with freedom. However, it is observed that, in the textual description, students relate the act of writing with the "right", there is, in this way, a "care", on their part, in conceiving a concept about phenomena that is, let us say acceptable, for those who are analyzed. In addition, in the drawings, we infer the existence of a greater load of feelings connected to the landscape lived.

For further investigations we would need more workshop time, as well as the monitoring of the class for a longer period, for the elaboration, for example, of systemic readings of the landscape, which may come from the work developed in other municipalities, we would, thus, in the first moment, host the perceptions of distinct reliefs, for later interconnection, even with some natural differentiations, they are interconnected through other aspects, we can mention the hydrological dynamics.

We understand that, there is still no way to indicate a better way to teach about landscape, so we are dealing only with the perception of a school. Nevertheless, we emphasize how important, in this first moment, in view of the establishment of indicators that will serve as a basis for the improvement of activities in other schools. Because it is not technical analysis, in which we could simply acquire data and suggest immediate solutions.

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Author 1 ; Elaboration, discussion of results, bibliographic research, text review

Author 2: Supervision, final analysis of results and text review

Author 3 Assistance in theoretical discussions, textual production and data collection