

# Analysis of the educational potential of environmental documentaries for teaching<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to analyze seven documentaries: The 11th Hour (2007); The Age of Stupid (2009); Home (2009), Cowspiracy- The Sustainability Secret (2014), The Water Law – New Forest Code (2015), A Plastic Ocean (2016) and Before the Flood (2016), observing the presence of environmental issues and analyzing the potential of these documentaries as didactic support tools for working in the classroom. Qualitative methods in education were used to carry out the research, focusing on Content Analysis. Thus, from the analysis, the seven selected documentaries have great potential to subsidize the work of teachers in the classroom, in the approach of several themes related to Environmental Education, as they allow the articulation of the teaching of scientific contests with debates and experiences in Environmental Education.

**KEYWORDS:** Educational practices. Environment. Teacher training.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Concern over environmental issues is not new - for decades the subject has gained space and has been the point of discussion between civil society and government officials. We face several strange events and unusual facts in relation to the environment, mainly of a climatic nature. Such problems refer to the way of life that humanity follows, consuming a large part of the natural resources available in nature.

In this scenario, we collaborate with Greter and Uhmman's (2014, p. 82) understanding that "to account for the importance of EE, society and educational institutions need to provide and mediate discussions on this theme through school because the environmental issue is inherent to everyone". In this sense, De Rosa, Bianchi and De Araújo (2015, p. 1082) express that "the school must problematize the relationship with the environment so that environmental education encourages the student to understand their attitudes towards other living beings, considered correct or not".

It is important to highlight that EE has been questioned for a long time by researchers such as Loureiro (2012), Reigota (2012), among many others and, mainly, by militants from less industrialized countries and with high population density, which makes the subject broad, diverse and complex, because every day we witness the worsening of the environmental crisis due to anthropic action. The increase in environmental problems brings out the need for educational work in non-formal spaces and in schools with greater emphasis on EE.

In view of this, thinking about the school environment, the use of documentaries and movies in the classroom becomes fundamental in the teaching and learning process, as it can help the teacher in pedagogical practice pedagógica De Oliveira and De Figueiredo (2011). Corroborating this, Kurtz (2015) cites that, in the school context, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) cannot be used as a hobby during the activity. For the author, "the fact that individuals consciously and critically use these new instruments has proven to provide unique educational opportunities when it comes to teaching [...]" (KURTZ, 2015, p 23).

According to Friedrich (2012, p. 16) "Cinema, films, and television - audiovisual media - have a relevant educational role, even if indirectly", since the films, "we are continually passed on interpreted information; they show us models of behavior, teach us colloquial and multimedia languages [...]. It is necessary to educate with new technologies". The use of films in the classroom becomes a friendly support teaching tool, allied to the teacher due to the variety of topics that this media addresses. It is also important to work on EE in schools, as it is a space destined to learn, understand and promote awareness between man and nature.

Based on this premise, we understand that one of the ways that lead to the students' awareness can be the pedagogical work based on documentaries that address environmental issues, because for Friedrich (2012, p. 7) the "cinema and education have been related for a long time, and many commercial films bring, between the lines, concepts of Environmental Education, the teacher being able to use the films for their classes". We understand from the author that the use of documentaries in pedagogical practice provides moments in class for discussion and reflection on different understandings and perceptions about environmental issues and their impacts on the lives of all species on the planet.

In that regard, this research aims to present the use of documentaries as a didactic support tool in the classroom to address different themes, in this case, EE. Seven documentaries were analyzed, namely: *The 11th Hour* (2007); *The Age of Stupid* (2009); *Home* (2009), *Cowspiracy- The Sustainability Secret* (2014), *The Water Law – New Forest Code* (2015), *A Plastic Ocean* (2016) and *Before the Flood* (2016), observing the presence of environmental issues in them.

## **2 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: DOCUMENTARIES AS A TEACHING SUPPORT TOOL TO APPROACH THE SUBJECT IN SCHOOL**

To Reigota (2012, p. 12), “environmental education should not only be related to the biological aspects of life”, but with socio-environmental issues that affect the planet, such as deforestation, burning, land grabbing and polluting actions that contaminate the air, water and soil. This more complex understanding of EE enables debate and reflection on the subject, based on socio-environmental issues and their damage to nature. Therefore, when approaching EE, one must think of it in relation to politics; thus, in EE, the analysis of political, social, economic, and cultural relations between humanity and nature and the relationship between human beings can be considered (REIGOTA, 2012).

According to Brasil (1999), EE can be considered as a new way of educating, aiming to raise awareness, value, awaken understanding and ecological awareness in each one to conserve the environment, and can remodel the relationship between man and nature. Based on this knowledge, it is extremely important that the topic is widely discussed in schools and classrooms, in order to encourage students to develop critical thinking, as well as the sensitivity to understand the impacts caused by society and minimize them with activism actions in favor of nature and environmental protection.

To this end, the school is the space responsible for promoting the education of citizens and raising the awareness of students on the most varied issues (MOURA; SANTOS, 2021), one of which is the themes considered interdisciplinary, such as EE. Given this perspective, the use of ICT can contribute to debates and reflections on EE in the school space. Thus, cinema, which is an educational technology, can be considered a learning instrument, enabling the construction of knowledge (FRIEDRICH, 2012). The didactic work with documentaries and/or films in the classroom, allows the student to being able to elaborate hypotheses, reflect on their actions, relate facts, examine concepts that are related and contribute to the development of knowledge and provide an exchange of knowledge between the teacher and the students. In this sense, it is understood that, from the awareness of the subject, students start to develop skills, attitudes, and changes in habits consistent with the exercise of citizenship, seeking measures that can improve their quality of life, and perhaps the relationship between society and the environment (JACOBI, 2005).

The use of methodologies that involve videos and images can illustrate, guide, motivate and demonstrate possibilities to involve students about a subject. For Santos (2011), aspects of science and scientific knowledge presented in films and documentaries contribute to debates and reflections in the classroom on the representations of Science presented by these media. So, the use of

documentaries in teaching makes it possible to instigate and present different subjects in a dynamic way, with another look.

According to Sousa (2020, p. 4), documentaries present themselves “as a 'point of view' of the documentary filmmaker on raw reality, although this production can, however, counting on 'elements of fiction' in the face of the author's need to reconstruct a fact that they had not witnessed”. For, Nichols (2005, p. 73) “documentaries [...] represent the historical world by shaping the photographic record of some aspect of the world from a different perspective or point of view”. Thus, when proposing pedagogical work with documentaries, we seek to present students a plot with facts and situations that inform and present reality, exposing the pros and cons of a given subject.

Collaborating with this understanding, Nichols (2005), emphasizes that documentaries gather evidence that they use to build a perspective on the world, either in a poetic or rhetorical way.

Through the ideas presented on the use of this resource as a tool in the classroom, as it provides opportunities for discussions on a certain subject based on its plot, and with possibilities for the teacher to use the documentary in its entirety or clippings of it, thus sharing, which we share Duarte, Leite and Migliora understanding (2006, p. 71), but adapting for the use of documentaries, when he says that “[...] the film has no value for itself or for what it represents in the context of production [...], it is worth the use we can or cannot make of it in our pedagogical practice”. Based on this understanding, we bring throughout the text an analysis of seven documentaries that address environmental issues, which were selected for presenting potential for didactic work in the classroom and promoting reflections and debates about EE.

In this text, we initially present the theoretical discussion on EE and the use of documentaries for teaching, and, subsequently, the methodological process used to analyze the seven documentaries and discuss their potential to address EE issues in the school environment.

### **3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGICAL JOURNEY**

For Lüdke and André (2011), qualitative documentary research in Education is a natural environment of a direct source of data, and the researcher is its main instrument. The data collected from the analysis of the documentaries will be predominantly descriptive, therefore, we will seek to identify in seven documentaries (Figure 1) its potential as a support tool in the classroom to address the different themes of EE.

The methodological course consisted of watching the documentaries five times, and identifying some important issues to score the EE in the classroom. The analysis will be based on the Content Analysis (AC), by Bardin (2011, p. 121), which understands the processes as “1. Pre-analysis; 2. Exploration of the material; and, finally, 3. The treatment of results: inference and interpretation”. The documentaries will be analyzed from categories, presented in Chart 1.

Chart 1: Definition of the categories chosen.

Environmental Education from Political Education	Critical Environmental Education
To Reigota (2012), EE can be directly committed to Political Education, thus considering EE with the political, social, economic and cultural relations between humanity and nature and their relationship with the human being	Loureiro (2012, p. 88) understands Critical Environmental Education "for historically situating social relations in nature in the context of each socioeconomic formation and establishing as a premise the permanent possibility of negating and overcoming established truths and existing conditions, through the organized action of social groups and knowledge produced in praxis"

Source: Adapted from Reigota (2012) and Loureiro (2012, p. 88).

For the development of this research, seven documentaries were selected: From the categories of analysis, EAEP and EAC, themes will be indicated (CHART 2) that can be addressed in the classroom to encourage discussions and reflections on EE.

Figure 1: Images of the documentaries selected for analysis.



Source: Adoro Cinema (2020), Netflix (2020) and Cinema 10 (2020).<sup>2-8</sup>

### 3.1 Documentaries synopsis

The synopses of the documentaries were prepared by the authors after watching them.

The 11th Hour (2007)<sup>9</sup>: Directed by Nadia Connors and Leila Connors, the documentary shows us how as the documentaries, it addresses topics such as rampant consumerism, depletion of natural resources, climate change, global warming, among many subjects that can be cited that end our planet, considering that we must make decisions that will reverse the current situation.

The Age of Stupi10<sup>10</sup>: A documentary from 2009, directed by Franny Armstrong. It deals with an archivist of the future who analyses audiovisuals from the past, that is, the documentary begins in the year 2055, in which natural catastrophes caused by climate change, followed by wars, led to the collapse of civilization and the near extinction of humanity. The documentary signals why humanity has failed in the fight against climate change and global warming. It highlights environmental destruction worldwide. It brings important issues present in world society, in addition to suggesting that the cause of environmental degradation is man.

The Water Law - New Forest Code<sup>11</sup>: The 2015 documentary, directed by André D'Elia, has the goal of alerting us about the importance of forests for the conservation of water resources in Brazil, and problematizes the impact of the new Forest Code approved by the in Congress in 2012, regarding these ecosystems and the lives of Brazilians. At the beginning, it is highlighted that the new code is not an agricultural or rural problem, but a national one, which involves the economic model of the Brazilian exporter, agrarian policy and biodiversity. The code that previously existed was from 1965 and had been created by people who realized that deforestation was continuous. The documentary tells how the old code was and how it was after the reformulation in 2012. It addresses topics such as legal reserve, water crisis and deforestation. The new forest code was put to vote, and about 85% of people were not in favor of the change.

Cowspiracy: The Secret of Sustainability<sup>12</sup>: It was released in 2014, directed by Kip Andersen and Keegan Kuhn, and executive produced by Leonardo DiCaprio. It addresses the importance of veganism and the impacts of the agricultural industry. It attacks renowned environmental organizations for their failure to address the consequences of meat consumption. Animal production is one of the main causes of deforestation, pollution and water consumption in the world. It is responsible for more greenhouse gases than the transportation industry and is a major cause of rainforest destruction, species extinction, habitat loss, soil erosion, oceanic "dead zones" and virtually every other environmental damage. The documentary also emphasizes that, per day, a person who eats a vegan diet saves 1,100 liters of water, 45 kilograms of cereals, and 2.79 m<sup>2</sup> of forest land.

Home<sup>13</sup>: The documentary released in 2009, directed by Yann Arthus-Bertrand, focuses on topics such as loss of biodiversity, globalization of agriculture, population growth and poverty. It emphasizes how the planet was and how it is now, and how we benefit from a 4 billion-year legacy. It reports how the first cyanobacteria arose until they reached everything that we can observe today, including Homo sapiens sapiens. It shows how humanity was able to extract resources from agriculture, which is the most widespread occupation in the world and is a prerequisite for survival. Through agriculture and weary physical strength, humanity has found a way to tap into the energy from the depths of the Earth - Coal, Gas and Oil. The documentary, in addition to bringing various themes, shows the beauty of planet Earth, and clearly brings out the main factors that cause



environmental destruction, showing that human beings have a high impact on Earth and, due to consumption in excess, natural resources are being affected.

A Plastic Ocean<sup>14</sup>: It was released in 2016, under the direction of Craig Leeson. It shows plastic pollution of the oceans and its impact on animals, people and ecosystems. The journalist Craig Leeson and the diver Tanya Streeter interview experts from different fields, travel to places directly impacted by plastics and reveal the dangers of our conflicted relation with this material. Throughout the documentary, there are dialogues with eight scientists and researchers about the consequences of incorrect disposal of plastics at various levels, from microplastics to whole objects floating in the water.

Before the Flood<sup>15</sup>: In this documentary, actor Leonardo DiCaprio, appointed in 2014 as Messenger of Peace by the United Nations, as a result of his activities as an environmentalist, travels around the world for two years, witnessing the catastrophes that are occurring due to climate change. Premiering in 2016, directed by Fisher Stevens, the documentary Before the Flood seeks to alert the public about the critical situation associated with climate change. As well as in the documentary Home, it addresses the discussion regarding the changes that occur each year in the world and the waste of natural resources. It also emphasizes that some decisions depend on the government, while others depend only on the individual decision.

#### **4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

Environmental issues are an emerging concern in society, as the future of humanity depends on the relationship that is established between nature and man's use of available natural resources. As individuals increase their ability to intervene in the environment, tensions and conflicts arise regarding the use of space and resources as a function of available technology. According to Assunção Oliveira (2016, p. 18) the mechanization of agriculture and the industrial revolution that occurred in the 20th century “caused imbalances in the environment due to man's intervention in nature. Intervention that changed the ecosystem as well as biodiversity”.

Such actions, in addition to negatively impacting the fauna and flora, entail, as expressed by Barbosa *et al.* (2019), changes in geographic space as a result of human being intervention, which for its development, takes from nature what it needs. In this sense, it is worth noting that discussions on environmental sustainability are increasing. The 147 Heads of State and Government<sup>16</sup> who have a seat in the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN), in 2000, together with leaders of 191 countries gathered at the Headquarters of the United Nations the adoption of the “UN Millennium Declaration<sup>17</sup>”, which has a series of eight global goals to reduce extreme poverty by the year 2015 (BARBOSA *et al.*, 2019). Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were defined.

From the signing of the Declaration, eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were defined, the UN signatory countries (countries that signed the declaration) gathered in New York in 2015, committed to the new millennium for the reduction of extreme poverty and sustainable development, establishing 17 SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) and 169 goals to be achieved by the year 2030, which are constituted by global actions that cover social, environmental,

economic and institutional areas, aiming at reducing poverty, access to health and education, a world with more peace, equality, right to differences, protection of all forms of life and a sustainable planet, once, since the industrial revolution, we have experienced a vertiginous growth of (neo)capitalism, and, as a consequence, we have intense degradation of nature and natural resources.

Figure 2: Image that presents the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.



Source: United Nations Brazil (2020)<sup>18</sup>.

An emerging topic of interest to everyone, the discussion of the SDGs has already reached the school community, and initiatives have been developed around this issue. From this, we understand the importance of the transversality of the EE theme in school curricula (GRETER; UHMANN, 2014), “consolidating pedagogical practices that encourage interdisciplinarity, in its diversity” (JACOBI, 2005, p. 246). According to the National Curricular Parameters (BRASIL, 1997), one of the objectives is to make the student realize that he is an integral being and transforming agent of the environment in which he is inserted, so that he can, from his actions, contribute to the improvement of the environment.

Regarding that, when observing EE as an active part in teaching, we can mention the National Common Curricular Common Base - BNCC (BRAZIL, 2017), which had its first version made available between October 2015 and March 2016, the second in May 2016 and, the third and last, in April 2017. According to Branco, Royer and De Godoy Branco (2018), the BNCC, in its three versions, presents different approaches to EE. In the first version, the term “Environmental Education” does not appear, but it appears and reinforces the idea that concepts such as environmental preservation, consumerism and sustainability are worked on as transversal themes at school. The second version is presented as a dimension of school education, an intentional activity of social practice that must imprint, in individual development, a social character in its relationship with nature and with other human beings and, in the last version, directs the work in schools with a greater emphasis on sustainability, related to the environment and the use of its natural resources, with EE not appearing, as in the first version.



Therefore, developing activities on EE in the school community is necessary so that all users of this space are aware of matters related to the theme, in order to generate changes in the organization and other school procedures.

To this end, it is important to present ways of collaborating to raise the awareness of subjects in the school environment about EE. Thus, with this research, we seek to highlight the potential of documentaries as a teaching tool to address the themes of EE in the school environment.

Documentaries in the classroom are socializing elements of learning, they have a transformative potential, which allows their use in a didactic way, becoming an integral part of teaching, as they always present possibilities of dialogue and interaction between the subjects (NAPOLITAN, 2005). According to Da Silva and Da Silva (2018, p. 2), "to make the class even more interactive and reinforce the work with the content, it is interesting to use other didactic resources such as films and documentaries."

Then, it is essential to work with EE inside the classroom, even more with visual resources such as documentaries, because from these it is possible for the student to visualize the real situation in which the planet is, in view of situations such as the depletion of natural resources, climate change and global warming.

Thus, when signaling the potential of documentaries for pedagogical work in the classroom, we present Chart 2, which contains the themes listed from the categories.

Chart 2 – Documentary, categories of analysis and topics covered.

Documentary	Category of analysis a priori	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home</li> <li>- Before the Flood</li> </ul>	Critical Environmental Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relationship between man and the environment in which he lives.</li> <li>- Sustainability.</li> <li>- Proposals to reverse the most serious cases.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Age of Stupid</li> <li>- Cowspiracy</li> <li>- The 11th Hour</li> <li>- The Water Law</li> <li>- A Plastic Ocean</li> <li>- Home</li> <li>- Before the Flood</li> </ul>	Political Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The cause of environmental degradation is man.</li> <li>- Impacts of the agricultural industry.</li> <li>- Environmental changes that human beings have caused since we appeared on the planet.</li> <li>- Policy of the new forest code.</li> <li>- Incorrect disposal of garbage, pollution in the oceans.</li> </ul>

Source: Search Data (2021).

Thinking about the use of media such as documentaries and/or films in the classroom generates several debates about how they should be used and what will

be their influence from the didactic proposed by the teacher, namely, how students and teachers have appropriated such available resource. According to Duarte, Leite and Migliora (2006) it is important that the dissemination of knowledge, based on the use of texts in sound-image, and its consequent dissemination can be legitimate and reliable, like the other sources used in the classroom. For Moura and Santos (2021, p. 200):

[...] The use of films in teaching [...] provides the student with: understanding, debating and reflecting, giving them the opportunity to understand the contents or phenomena, thus contributing to learning.

Therefore, we envision the potential of documentaries to work in the classroom, since the current environmental issue that affects the world requires changes which point out new ideas in relation to the behavior of each subject, and discuss new ways of thinking and acting in relation to nature.

In this circumstances, as proposed in the present work, after analyzing the documentaries according to the categories established a priori, some themes were identified that allow the perception of the relationship with the categories and that can be used by teachers in the classroom, to address several themes and thus develop a good discussion about EE.

#### **4.1 Critical Environmental Education**

The Critical Environmental Education (CEA) emerged in the mid-1980s and 1990s, with the process of redemocratization of Brazilian society, which favored the resumption of emancipatory social movements and the strengthening of critical perspectives in education and popular education (LOUREIRO; LAYRARGUES, 2013). Loureiro (2012, p. 88) understands the CEA,

[...] for historically situating social relations in nature in the context of each socioeconomic formation and establishing as a premise the permanent possibility of negating and overcoming established truths and existing conditions, through the organized action of social groups and the knowledge produced in praxis.

The CEA aims at three pedagogical situations, namely:

a) to carry out a consistent analysis of the complex conjuncture of reality, in order to have the necessary foundations to question the historically produced social conditions that imply social reproduction and generate inequality and environmental conflicts; b) working on the autonomy and freedom of social agents in the face of relations of expropriation, oppression and domination typical of capitalist modernity; c) implement the most radical possible transformation of the dominant societal pattern, in which the situation of intensive degradation of nature and, within it, of the human condition are defined (LOUREIRO, LAYRARGUES, 2013, p. 64).

Rocha, Da Rocha and Hammes (2016) express that EE cannot be limited to criticisms about the process of occupation or degradation of nature, seeking to understand the complex web of social relations in which pedagogical practice is developed, both at school and in society, with its formal or non-formal sectors of education, highlighting ideological interests. In other words, it is suggested that EE be seen as an educational and cultural process in which it is inserted.

However, it is important to clarify that we are talking about an EE that overcomes the limits imposed historically and that reduce the actions and conservationist attitudes of the physical/natural environment, or one that intends to "transform" reality from the sum of individual behaviors becoming, therefore, "limited to the field of learning, in the behavioral sense of the term, which restricts it to the field of conditioning, stimulating, and training" (CARVALHO, 1992, p. 33). From this, we believe that EE is truly critical if it gives us the opportunity to build values and attitudes closely associated with everyday experiences, which, in turn, are a reality of the past and the future.

Therefore, through the analysis of documentaries, we classify that: *Home and Before the Flood* fall into the category of Critical Environmental Education (CAE), proposed by Loureiro (2012), in which we can highlight themes such as the relationship between man and the environment in which he lives and proposals to reverse the most serious cases, such as air pollution, uncontrolled deforestation and consequently the extinction of species, climate problems, among others that have emerged over the years and that can be seen in documentaries.

From these two documentaries, teachers can approach the issue of EE guiding discussions with students about physical and human behavior so that they can understand "how man/man and man/environment relationships interfere in the environment," in order to provide a collective reflection on what possible educational actions are necessary to enable change in behavior, values, attitudes towards socio-environmental issues" (OLIVEIRA; DA SILVA, 2018, p. 90).

Indeed, changes must begin with the individuals themselves. For this to happen, a review of values, habits and needs is necessary, so that, from the adoption of new behaviors, they contribute to reversing the situation and promoting quality of life. In this sense, the execution of activities that permeate the EE makes it important to know the local reality, a better perception of people of the environment in which they are inserted, making them feel part of the place. It is not enough to know, it is essential to include values to sensitize students in order to stimulate creativity, offering means for them to develop their skills and abilities to engage in processes of change and to solve problems (PADUA; TABANEZ; SOUZA, 2003).

According to that, documentaries contribute to the presentation of EE, as well as makes it possible to think about teaching strategies to spread EE in the school environment, as well as to seek the intervention and transformation of human actions. In addition, they contribute to creating awareness that the current environmental crisis is everyone's responsibility, and the commitment of each one of us, billions of inhabitants of this planet, so the implementation of radical changes is essential and irreplaceable.

The collective work of thinking about proposals to reverse the current situation of degradation of natural resources is something to be developed outside and inside the classroom, that means in the formal and non-formal environment, from educational practices aimed at collectively raising awareness about the environmental issues and their organization and participation in the defense of environmental quality (REIS; SEMÊDO; GOMES, 2012). In that respect, voluntary actions are proposed to solve problems, such as preserving natural resources, reducing air contamination, producing less fossil fuels, controlling water pollution, controlling transgenic foods, reusing, recycling utensils, among other actions.

So, we believe it is extremely important to work with the CAE in the classroom as a way of making students aware of the construction of a society committed to tomorrow and to today, as it depends on a better tomorrow and for this it is necessary to commit to today.

#### 4.2 Political Education

Regarding the second category of analysis, Political Education, in which the selected documentaries were “The Age of Stupid; Cowsspiracy; The 11th Hour; The Water Law; A Plastic Ocean; Home; Before the Flood”, we understand that it is focused on social, economic and cultural policies, between humanity/nature and their relationship together, promoting citizenship. For Reigota (2012, p. 13),

[...] EE, as political education, is committed to the expansion of citizenship, freedom, autonomy and the direct intervention of citizens in the search for solutions and alternatives that allow a dignified coexistence focused on the good common.

In this vein, the environmental educator, in addition to promoting the development of knowledge, prepares others to exercise their citizenship, so that each one understands not only their role in society, but also becomes able to promote the transformation of the current context.

Environmental education as political education emphasizes the question 'why' rather than 'how'. Considering that environmental education emerges and consolidates a historical moment of great changes in the world, it tends to question current political options and the very concept of current education, demanding it, in principle, creative, innovative and critical. Ethics plays a fundamental role in environmental education (REIGOTA, 2012, p. 10).

Through the analysis of the documentaries, we understand that the seven selected media address, in their plots, issues that cover Political Education, based on questions such as: the relationship between environmental degradation and human action; the impact of agricultural industry; policy of the new Forest Code, the incorrect disposal of garbage and the pollution of oceans.

The themes listed above, which comprise the Political Education, reveal a vast list of subjects to be discussed in the classroom, as today's society reveals an increasingly unsustainable way of producing, which seeks profit without measuring consequences in mass excess, after all, air pollution, extinct species, excessive consumption of water and natural resources, as well as the huge number of diseases related to environmental problems, are not happening naturally, without any interference from human activity.

The documentaries have assumed a fundamental role in the mediation of knowledge, which gives them an important role in the process of popularizing scientific knowledge (LASARA, 2013) and in alerting the population to socio-scientific issues. The use of this tool at school allows the student to have new understanding and knowledge about socio-environmental aspects and to be concerned about the future of the planet and the appreciation of nature as a whole.

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aimed to analyze the documentaries in order to identify whether EE issues are present in this didactic support tool and whether they can serve as a subsidy to the teacher's pedagogical practice. It was possible to identify that the documentaries bring environmental issues and that these can be discussed by teachers within the classroom, making the identified issues result in discussions about the environment and the changes that have been occurring.

The use of documentaries in the classroom depends a lot on the time that the teacher has, but, as the documentaries are long, it is recommended to shorten them, using only the parts that you really want to work on, resulting in a better result. If you use them in full, guiding questions can be applied to guide what you want students to identify.

Addressing and reflecting on EE constitutes an educational process capable of making each individual rethink their way of acting, being directed towards the construction of an active citizenship based on the making of sustainability and social interaction with the environment.

In view of the research results, we conclude that the use of documentaries in teaching is a viable alternative that becomes possible as a mediating instrument for the teacher to approach EE. When working with documentaries in the context of the classroom, the resource helps to raise students' critical awareness of environmental issues. We understand that the use of media enables innovation in practice and in the student's teaching and learning process, by mediating information and stimulating learning in an attractive way.

# ANÁLISE DO POTENCIAL EDUCACIONAL DE DOCUMENTÁRIOS AMBIENTAIS PARA O ENSINO

## RESUMO

A presente pesquisa teve por finalidade analisar sete documentários: *A última hora* (2007); *A era da estupidez* (2009), *Home – Nosso Planeta, Nossa Casa* (2009), *COWSPIRACY- o Segredo da Sustentabilidade* (2014), *A lei da água* (2015), *Oceanos de plástico* (2016) e *Seremos História* (2016), observando a presença de questões ambientais e analisando o potencial destes documentários como ferramentas de apoio didático para o trabalho em sala de aula. Para a realização da pesquisa, foram utilizados métodos qualitativos em Educação, com foco na Análise de Conteúdo. Assim, a partir das análises, os sete documentários selecionados têm grande potencial para subsidiar o trabalho do professor em sala de aula, na abordagem de diversos temas relacionados com a Educação Ambiental (EA), pois permitem a articulação do ensino de conteúdos científicos com debates e vivências em EA.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Práticas educativas. Meio ambiente. Formação de professores.



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- 1 This text is part of a Course Completion Work research.
- 2 Available at: <https://www.adorocinema.com/filmes/filme-236867/>. Access on: Jan. 20th, 2023.
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