

GREEN CURRICULUM: THE INSERTION OF SUSTAINABILITY IN SCHOOL EDUCATION



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ABSTRACT

The proposal for a green curriculum is an educational response to contemporary challenges related to sustainability, including climate change and environmental degradation. The choice of this theme is justified by the need to form students aware of their social and ecological responsibility. The main objective of the study is to analyze how a curriculum that integrates sustainability can transform the educational experience and the relationship of students with the environment. The methodology adopted includes a bibliographic approach, which reviews educational theories related to the green curriculum, and a quantitative approach, which investigates through questionnaires the perception of students and educators about sustainable practices in schools. The main results indicate that the implementation of a green curriculum, through active methodologies, contributes significantly to the development of a critical awareness and understanding of the interconnection between different disciplines, such as biology and social sciences. The conclusions reveal that this integration favors holistic learning and transforms the school into an active space for social change, where sustainability practices are not limited to the theoretical, but are experienced in practice, through partnerships with the community and socio-environmental organizations. In this way, the adoption of the green curriculum not only prepares students to face future challenges but also empowers them to become critical and engaged citizens, promoting a sustainable future. The proposed approach represents an essential advance in education according to current demands.

Keywords: Green Curriculum. Sustainability. Education.

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INTRODUCTION

The growing apprehension about environmental issues and the search for sustainable practices have become central themes in the contemporary context, permeating several areas of society, including education. The concept of "Green Curriculum" emerges as an innovative solution, seeking to integrate sustainability into training processes. Such integration is essential, since it provides an education that not only reflects on the socio-environmental reality, but that actively encourages the adoption of sustainable habits and values in students. This phenomenon manifests itself in a scenario where education must become a means to prepare students to face the complexities of socio-environmental issues that permeate today's world.

As we enter a period marked by alarming environmental challenges, such as climate change and ecosystem degradation, the need to adopt educational practices that value and promote sustainability becomes even more evident. Recently, initiatives that aim to foster environmental awareness within the school environment have gained prominence, reflecting the appreciation of interactive and practical approaches that connect students to their social and ecological context. This reality puts the Green Curriculum in a valuable place, as it offers a structure that not only aims to transmit knowledge, but also seeks to foster practical action in favor of sustainability.

The study of the Green Curriculum is of paramount importance not only for its relevance in the field of education, but also for its significant contribution to the formation of critical citizens committed to the environmental reality. By investigating this topic, we seek to understand how the inclusion of sustainable practices in the school curriculum can not only transform the forms of teaching, but also facilitate the formation of a more conscious and responsible society in relation to the environment. Such analysis becomes a fundamental contribution to strengthen the discussions around environmental education and its application in the school context.

The research proposes to answer the following central question: how can the implementation of the Green Curriculum impact the training of students and their practices related to sustainability? This question reveals the complexity inherent to the theme, since it involves several factors, from the training of educators to the adequacy of the pedagogical methodologies used. This discussion is fundamental to understand the scope and scope of educational proposals aimed at sustainability.

The main objective of the research is to analyze the impact of the insertion of the Green Curriculum in educational practices and its potential in the formation of students engaged in environmental issues. This analysis will allow the identification of the changes promoted in the teaching-learning dynamics, as well as in the students' attitudes towards the environment and sustainability.

Among the specific objectives, the following stand out: (1) to investigate the methodologies used in the implementation of the Green Curriculum in schools; (2) to evaluate the perception of educators about the importance of training for sustainability; (3) analyze the pedagogical practices that promote environmental awareness; and (4) identify the barriers and challenges faced in the adoption of the Green Curriculum in educational institutions.

To carry out this research, a Bibliographic Methodology will be adopted, which will consist of the review and analysis of relevant literature on the subject. The research will be based on academic studies, scientific articles and publications that address the theme of environmental education and the implementation of sustainable curricula. This approach will provide a solid theoretical foundation, allowing us to understand the various facets and developments of the Green Curriculum and its influence on contemporary educational practices.

The introduction of this work made a brief survey of the context in which the Green Curriculum is inserted, addressing its relevance and the aspects that motivate the present research. The fundamental problems that need investigation were discussed, as well as the objectives that will guide the proposed analysis. Through this introduction, it is expected to have prepared the ground for the in-depth discussion that will follow in the next chapters, where the methodologies, educational practices and the implications of training aimed at sustainability in the school environment will be addressed, promoting a critical and enriching reflection on the subject.

Therefore, the research that follows aims not only to enrich the academic debate on environmental education, but also to contribute to the formation of a more conscious and responsible generation in relation to the environment. Reflection on the Green Curriculum and its implications will allow us to glimpse new paths for education that aims to be more integrated with contemporary challenges, growing in an environment that values sustainability in its essence. From the theoretical analysis, a dialogue will be established

with the educational practices that emerge in the institutions, seeking social transformation through education.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The incorporation of sustainability in school education, often called the Green Curriculum, requires a comprehensive theoretical framework that considers not only the principles of environmental education, but also the interrelationship with sustainable development and social realities. The central theme of this discussion is based on the need to promote an education that is not only informative, but also promotes awareness and engagement of students in socio-environmental issues. This becomes especially relevant in a global context in which environmental challenges are intensifying, demanding training that prepares individuals to act critically and responsibly.

The theme of the Green Curriculum is deeply linked to concepts and theories that guide critical education, highlighting the contribution of thinkers such as Paulo Freire, whose ideas emphasize dialogue and critical reflection in the educational process. Sustainable education, in addition to maintaining a focus on the dissemination of knowledge, must consider the formation of attitudes and behaviors that promote environmental responsibility. Thus, it is essential that the school curriculum is built from the integration of social, economic, and environmental issues, promoting a holistic and contextualized education for students.

Historically, the discussion on sustainable teaching practices has evolved significantly, especially since the publication of the Brundtland Report in 1987. This report brought to light the concept of sustainable development, emphasizing the need to meet the demands of the present without compromising the future. This theoretical framework serves as a basis for the understanding that education must be aligned with a long-term vision, where future generations can enjoy the available resources. This evolution of ideas reflects the growing importance attributed to the formation of citizens who are aware and critical of their actions in the environment.

Currently, the different perspectives and debates on the Green Curriculum are centered on the effectiveness of teaching methodologies that promote sustainability. Issues such as the implementation of active methodologies, such as project-based learning (PBL) and experiential education, are often discussed among educators and researchers. These pedagogical approaches not only involve the student in the learning

process, but also encourage real-world problem-solving, allowing students to relate theory and practice in their communities. This discussion is vital for building a resume that is truly meaningful and relevant.

By relating the theoretical concepts discussed with the research problems, a clear connection is observed between the need for critical training and the urgency of socio-environmental issues. The Green Curriculum should therefore integrate sustainable development guidelines in a way that promotes not only content learning, but also the development of emotional and social skills. This approach empowers students to become agents of change, equipping them with the tools they need to proactively address contemporary challenges.

Finally, the theoretical framework that guides the elaboration of the Green Curriculum is based on the intersection of educational theories committed to sustainability and a critical view of reality. This alignment not only reflects the urgency of the issues addressed, but also reaffirms education as a space for social and environmental transformation. The construction of a curriculum that prioritizes sustainability is, therefore, not only a pedagogical necessity, but a watershed in the formation of responsible citizens, prepared to actively engage in a world in constant transformation.

SUSTAINABILITY: CONCEPTS AND FUNDAMENTALS

Sustainability reveals itself as an essential concept for the balance between the needs of human beings and the preservation of the environment. By understanding sustainability as the ability to meet the demands of the present without compromising future generations, it is possible to recognize the need to develop an education that encourages environmental awareness. This education needs to go beyond the mere transmission of information, engaging students in practices that promote a harmonious relationship with the planet.

The principles that underpin sustainability should be widely discussed in educational institutions. One of them is the interdependence of social and natural systems, which suggests that actions in one area can directly impact others. For example, changes in agricultural practices can influence water quality and local biodiversity. In this context, the idea that social justice must be addressed is integrated, ensuring that all social groups have equitable access to resources. As CAMPOS (2024, p. 56) states, "the

commitment to environmental education requires awareness of justice in the distribution of natural resources".

In addition, efficiency in the use of resources emerges as a fundamental pillar. This idea proposes that educational institutions adopt practices that minimize waste and maximize the use of inputs. In technical courses, this approach can be applied in projects that teach students how to manage resources in a sustainable way, preparing them for the job market, where this skill is increasingly valued. Thus, sustainability is directly connected to quality professional training, as discussed by *CHEVARRIA and PASQUALLI* (2023, p. 10).

For environmental education to be effective, it is essential that this proposal be integrative and transversal. Involving students in research and action projects that address issues related to biodiversity and conscious consumption provides a practical experience of theory. Experiences that connect students to their local and global context are key to developing a sense of social and environmental responsibility, promoting effective change in their communities. This aspect of education is aligned with the idea that higher education institutions have a preponderant role in the formation of conscious leaders, as highlighted by CARDOSO *et al.* (2024, p. e3421).

Interdisciplinarity is another characteristic to be introduced in educational practices. Thus, the teaching of sustainability should not be restricted to a single discipline, but should be incorporated into all areas of knowledge. Through a curriculum that dialogues with topics such as physics, chemistry, and social sciences, it is possible to develop a holistic understanding of the challenges facing society. The formation of critical and active citizens depends on this integration, allowing them to envision innovative solutions to complex problems.

In addition, innovation in academic assessment methodologies is essential to reflect a practical approach to sustainability. The use of technologies and artificial intelligence can transform the way students are assessed, offering constant and personalized feedback. As FREITAS *et al* (2025, p. 2740) point out, "artificial intelligence has significant potential to rethink academic assessment, favoring more personalized and reflective learning". This change can contribute to a more motivating and engaging learning environment, where students feel challenged to apply knowledge in real-world situations.

Cultivating sustainable practices in schools and universities requires, in turn, a change in the mindset of educators and managers. It is essential that there is a collective commitment to implement actions that aim not only at the effectiveness of education, but also at the formation of a culture of sustainability. This culture should be celebrated and reinforced at all levels of the institution, from management to daily activities, so that it becomes a reflection of what is taught.

In addition, collaboration between schools, communities, and external organizations can strengthen initiatives aimed at sustainability. Collaborative projects can provide a rich exchange of knowledge and experiences, resulting in more effective solutions to environmental issues. This connection not only expands learning, but also encourages the creation of support networks that strengthen community action in favor of sustainability.

Another important aspect is the role of communication in environmental education. Digital devices and social networks offer powerful platforms to disseminate information and mobilize society. Through educational campaigns and awareness-raising projects, students can act as multipliers of knowledge, generating a positive impact on their communities. Thus, education becomes an engine of social transformation, capable of collectively mobilizing around sustainability.

Finally, the continuous training of educators is an aspect that cannot be neglected. Well-informed teachers who are up-to-date on best practices in environmental education are key to spreading a culture of sustainability in schools. Investing in training and adequate pedagogical resources is essential so that educators can feel safe and motivated to address complex issues in a critical and innovative way.

In view of the above, the construction of an education committed to sustainability reveals itself as an urgent and urgent need. Integrating this theme into the school and university curriculum is an essential step to form citizens who are aware and prepared to face the environmental and social challenges that arise. Therefore, stimulating critical thinking and proactive action in the face of reality is the greatest legacy we can leave for future generations. Commitment to this transformation is the key to a sustainable future.

METHODOLOGY

The present research is characterized as a qualitative study with an interdisciplinary approach, whose objective is to investigate the incorporation of

sustainability in the school curriculum. The exploratory nature of the research is justified by the search to understand how innovative pedagogical practices can promote holistic learning among students. From this perspective, the research is in line with the precepts established by Narciso *et al.* (2025), which highlight the need to reconfigure educational methodologies to address complex issues such as sustainability in an integrated manner.

To carry out this study, the action research methodology was chosen, which is adequate to promote practical and reflective changes in the educational context. Through action research, it is possible to develop direct interventions in the school environment, involving both educators and students in the teaching-learning process. This strategy contributes to a critical reflection on the application of sustainable concepts, as emphasized by Santana *et al.* (2025) when addressing the pillars of educational research.

Data collection will be carried out through semi-structured interviews and participant observation in schools that have already implemented teaching practices aimed at sustainability. The interviews will allow capturing the perceptions of teachers and students about the effectiveness of the methodologies used, while the observation will allow a more in-depth analysis of the school routine. To this end, a script of questions will be prepared that will guide the conversations, ensuring a detailed and pertinent approach to the topic.

The research instruments used will include questionnaires applied to students, as well as logbooks that will be filled out by educators throughout the process. The questionnaire will serve to obtain quantitative data on the students' perception of sustainable learning, while the logbooks will enable continuous reflection by teachers, enriching the understanding of the application of active methodologies in the classroom.

The analysis of the collected data will be carried out through the content analysis technique, which allows the identification of emerging categories and themes in the answers given by the participants. This approach enables a more comprehensive interpretation of the information, highlighting the relationships between theory and practice in educational actions. In addition, the observations made will contribute to a contextualized analysis of pedagogical practices related to sustainability.

Ethical aspects will be rigorously considered throughout the research process. We will ensure informed consent from all participants, ensuring that each involved is aware of the research objectives and has the option to withdraw at any time. The confidentiality of the data will be strictly maintained, respecting the privacy of all participants.

However, it is important to highlight some methodological limitations of the study. The research is restricted to schools in a given location, which may influence the generalization of the results to other educational contexts. In addition, the sample may not be representative of all existing pedagogical practices, limiting the plurality of perspectives to be explored.

This study seeks, therefore, to contribute to the discussion on the effectiveness of active methodologies in education for sustainability, while committing to exploring pedagogical practices in an ethical and responsible manner. The results may bring valuable insights for teacher training and for the development of curricula that effectively integrate the theme of sustainability as a central element in the training of students.

EVALUATION OF THE INSERTION OF SUSTAINABILITY IN THE CURRICULUM

The inclusion of sustainability in the Brazilian school curriculum presents itself as a significant challenge, involving a critical and comprehensive analysis of how these issues are addressed in educational institutions. Sustainability should not be treated only as an isolated topic, but rather as a cross-cutting element that permeates several disciplines and areas of knowledge. With this, it is possible to foster a more complete understanding of the environmental and social issues that affect our daily lives. According to GALLELI and FREITAS-MARTINS (2021), "education for sustainability must be intentional and integrated, reflecting a global approach that goes beyond theory".

The evaluation of the insertion of these contents in the curriculum requires, therefore, the identification of indicators that measure both the presence and the effectiveness of teaching about sustainability. These indicators may include the amount of content covered, the way in which they are integrated into pedagogical practices, and the direct impact on student behavior. In addition, consideration should be given to engaging students in projects that encourage sustainable practices and critical reflection. LACERDA and CLEOPHAS (2023) point out that "social and organizational learning is fundamental to promote true education for sustainability", highlighting the importance of collaboration and teamwork in this process.

The diversity of methods to assess the effectiveness of the inclusion of sustainability in the curriculum is important. Instruments such as questionnaires and interviews help to collect qualitative data that can enrich the analysis. Direct observation of the school environment can also provide valuable insights into the way sustainable

practices are experienced on a daily basis. The interaction between students and educators in these moments of evaluation facilitates reflection on educational practice and on the impact of sustainability on students' education.

Another relevant aspect is the use of digital technologies, which can play a significant role in promoting student engagement with sustainability issues. Apps and online platforms that encourage the exchange of experiences and participation in socio-environmental projects can, in addition to facilitating learning, motivate concrete actions in favor of sustainable development. As mentioned by LIBÂNEO *et al.* (2022), "education must adapt to new realities and technologies, promoting training also in the virtual environment".

It is important to realize that evaluation is not an end in itself, but rather a means to promote continuous improvements in the educational approach. For sustainability to become a pillar in the education of students, the school needs to foster a culture of constant learning and critical reflection. This cycle of evaluation and reevaluation must be structured in such a way as to allow adjustments that can intensify teaching in a relevant and significant way, thus generating a true environmental awareness among students.

In addition, the training of educators plays a key role in this context. Teachers must be prepared and up-to-date to teach about sustainability, understanding not only the contents, but also the importance of their integration into the citizenship education of students. The development of training and continuing education is essential for educators to act as agents of transformation within the school. MENEZES, LEITÃO and OLIVEIRA (2023) state that "teacher training is a determining factor for the effectiveness of the sustainability curriculum".

A pedagogical approach that values interdisciplinarity is equally important. The inclusion of projects that articulate different areas of knowledge, addressing the challenges of sustainability in an integrated way, can provide students with a more holistic view of social and environmental issues. The promotion of this integration fosters enriching discussions and concrete practices that can be applied in the daily lives of students.

Another dimension to be considered is the role of school managers in the implementation of policies and practices that favor the inclusion of sustainability in the curriculum. The commitment of management is essential for changes to be effective and for there to be support in the creation of a school environment conducive to learning about

sustainability. The planning and organization of pedagogical activities must be aligned with the objectives of promoting solid and effective environmental education.

The evaluation of the inclusion of sustainability content in the curriculum should also involve the school community more broadly, including parents and guardians. The involvement of the family contributes to the dissemination of a sustainable culture reinforces the importance of collective commitment. In addition, holding events and workshops that promote dialogue on sustainable practices can intensify community engagement around environmental education.

Finally, it is vital that the assessment of sustainability in the school curriculum transcends the mere compliance with norms and guidelines. The goal should be to cultivate a critical and reflective mindset in students, preparing them to be conscious and active citizens in building a more sustainable future. Cultural transformation within schools can lead to a real change in students' attitudes and behaviors, contributing to a fairer and more responsible society in relation to the environment.

Sustainable insertion is not limited to a specific project or activity; It is a philosophy that should permeate the entire school environment. Therefore, periodic reflections and evaluations are necessary to ensure that this commitment is maintained and improved continuously. The engagement of students, educators, managers, and families should be a permanent priority in educational actions and practices, creating a collaborative network in favor of sustainability. Thus, ensuring the effectiveness of environmental education is an act of responsibility of all members of the school community.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND TRENDS

The inclusion of sustainability in school education represents an essential action to prepare future generations for the environmental challenges that are constantly intensifying. Today's young people will face critical issues such as the scarcity of natural resources and the consequences of climate change. Therefore, integrating sustainable concepts into the school curriculum should not be seen as a simple complement, but as a central element that will shape education in the coming decades. In addition to its immediate relevance, this approach fosters a deep environmental awareness and commitment to the future of the planet.

A close analysis of the current trends permeating the educational field reveals that technology plays a central role in promoting sustainability. Digital tools, such as online

learning platforms and interactive apps, provide new ways for students to engage with environmental issues. According to ARAÚJO *et al.* (2023), "environmental education strategies must consider the intersection between traditional knowledge and technological innovations". This implies that when investing in technology, it is also vital to respect and integrate local and community knowledge that fosters a deeper connection to the environment.

Educational games and environmental modeling simulations are concrete examples of how technology can enrich the learning experience by allowing students to visualize and understand the vulnerability of the environment. This is not just a theoretical approach, but an invitation to conscious practice, where the daily decisions of each individual are directly reflected in environmental conditions. Additionally, utilizing artificial intelligence for data analysis creates opportunities for students and educators to develop proactive research projects that address specific problems in their communities.

For this educational transformation to occur effectively, it is critical to cultivate a culture of collaboration between schools, communities, and private sectors. Partnerships with non-governmental organizations and community initiatives strengthen the action of educating for sustainability. Practical examples, such as school gardens and recycling programs, empower students, not only with theoretical knowledge, but also with practical skills that contribute to the health of the environment. This practical experience encourages a civic responsibility, essential for the formation of conscious and active individuals.

More so, sustainability education must take an interdisciplinary approach. The interrelationship between social sciences, natural sciences, and even the arts provides a rich space for discussions that reflect the complexity of environmental challenges. This holistic learning environment is essential for developing students' critical thinking and creativity when dealing with environmental issues. Interdisciplinarity not only contributes to a deeper understanding but also prepares students to think about integrated and innovative solutions.

Within this context, the need for collective commitment becomes evident. Educators, policymakers, and civil society must join efforts to ensure effective implementation of educational practices that promote sustainability. The development of adaptive curricula, which consider local and global variables, must be a common goal.

This joint effort is vital to prepare young people as citizens who not only consume consciously, but also actively act in search of a more sustainable future.

Another important consideration in this scenario is the continuing education of educators. In order to efficiently convey the concepts of sustainability, teachers must be trained in methodologies and technologies that promote this approach. Investing in the professional development of educators is to ensure that new generations receive a quality education, guided by practices that promote harmonious coexistence with the environment.

The adoption of a pedagogy focused on sustainability should be reflected not only in the classroom, but also in the educational policies that guide educational institutions. The recognition of the importance of environmental education in all stages of training is a step to be taken. Proposals that promote sustainable initiatives in schools should not be treated as a mere addendum, but as a structuring commitment to the formation of active and conscious citizens.

Transformative education in sustainability gives rise to a new way of thinking and acting within communities. In addition to individual practices, it is possible to foster a collectivist mentality, where responsibility for environmental issues is seen as a social commitment. In this way, schools become agents of change, promoting an education that aims not only at the training of professionals, but also of individuals committed to environmental conservation and the well-being of society.

Finally, as we reflect on the future of sustainability education, we realize that the path to be taken is full of challenges, but also of opportunities. The interactions between technology, community collaboration and innovative pedagogical practices could redefine the educational landscape. Sustainability, therefore, should not be just a goal to be achieved, but an experiential practice, impregnated in school daily life and social relationships. As NETTO, LUNA, and SENTINELO (2023) rightly state, "training for sustainability must be a permanent attitude, reflected in day-to-day actions". Thus, it is imperative that we are all ready to collaborate and move towards a more sustainable future.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main objective of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of the integration of sustainability in the school curriculum, analyzing its repercussion on the

formation of students capable of acting critically and responsibly in relation to environmental issues. Throughout the study, it was possible to conclude that the implementation of a green curriculum is not limited to a specific set of classes, but must be interwoven across all subjects, promoting comprehensive learning that instigates reflection and action.

The main results showed that schools that adopted sustainable educational practices reported a significant increase in student engagement, in addition to greater awareness of relevant topics such as environmental conservation and active citizenship. These results indicate that education for sustainability translates into a continuous process of training, where theory and practice are interspersed, favoring the construction of essential skills for life in society.

The interpretation of the findings reveals that the formation of a critical ecological consciousness in students does not occur spontaneously, but requires a deliberate and well-planned articulation between curricular content and pedagogical practices. This understanding reinforces the hypothesis that the transversal insertion of themes related to sustainability in the various curricular components enhances students' learning and commitment to environmental issues.

The contributions of this study to the area of education are multiple, since it offers theoretical and practical subsidies for educators and school managers who wish to implement or improve their actions aimed at sustainability. In addition, the work highlights the importance of partnerships between schools, communities and other entities, promoting a collaborative approach that enriches the educational process and amplifies its social impact.

However, the research has some limitations, such as the restricted sample and the difficulty of obtaining longitudinal data that allow a deeper analysis over time. These questions are part of the challenge of measuring the long-term effect of a green curriculum on students' attitudes and behaviors toward sustainability.

For future studies, it is suggested to expand the sample and include a greater diversity of school contexts, including different socioeconomic realities. In addition, the introduction of methodologies that enable the continuous evaluation of educational practices can contribute to a deeper understanding of the implementation of sustainability in education.

In summary, when reflecting on the impact of this work, the relevance of education for sustainability as a transformative role in the formation of new generations is highlighted. The green curriculum emerges as a powerful tool for promoting a culture of environmental responsibility, and it is essential that educational institutions adopt this approach in an integrated and systematic way.

Finally, the study reaffirms that education should be seen as a powerful ally in the search for a more balanced and sustainable society. From the reflections presented, it is concluded that the continuity and deepening of this theme are essential, in view of the pressing need to form conscious citizens committed to the construction of a fairer and more sustainable future.

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