

# **Ecopedagogy and Pedagogy of Meaning: Possible Dialogues**

**PAGANI, Daniele Andrea**  
**AGUIAR, Denise Regina da Costa**  
**LIMA, Leonice Domingos dos Santos Cintra**  
**CAMPATO JR, João Adalberto**

## **Abstract**

*The main objective of this paper is to contribute to the realization of a critical Environmental Education for students and teachers of High School, through the studies of Logotherapy/Logoeducation. The research has a qualitative approach and was carried out with a literature review. This was based on works by the creator of Logotherapy, Viktor Frankl, authors who relate it to Education, as well as authors who support Ecopedagogy. We expect to reach the goals of reflection on pedagogical practices in relation to Environmental Education, thus being able to contribute, in fact, to the formation of political and ecological subjects prepared for the challenges of this millennium.*

**Keywords:** Environmental Education; High School; meaning of life.

## **1. Introduction**

The Brazilian educational model today presents a need to break paradigms, such as traditional pedagogies (still excluding and classifying) and, at the same time, a great opportunity for transformations, which will contribute to the reinterpretation that knowledge has been suffering, which is the raw material of education, in addition to the practice of an educational model, in fact, an inclusive education. As defined by Loureiro (2004):

Education is one of the human means that guarantee subjects, no matter the state of material and spiritual misery and the limits of options given by the conditions of life, the sense of accomplishment when acting in history, modifying it and being modified in the process of seeking to build alternatives to the way we organize and live in society. (p. 131)

When it comes to teacher training in Basic Education, an effective practice of critical reflections and changes is necessary, since, day by day, the classroom becomes a space for coexistence of differences, whether cultural, social, ethnic, religious, gender, among others.

This occurs because these same teachers were trained in a school model that fragmented knowledge and was (and still is) marked by division in all its aspects. As Morin (2011) warns:

How much suffering and disorientation have been caused by errors and illusions throughout human history, and in a terrifying way, in the 20th century! Therefore, the cognitive problem is of anthropological, political, social and historical importance. For

the existence of a base progress in the 21st century, men and women can no longer be playthings unaware not only of their ideas, but of the lies themselves. The main duty of education is to arm each one for the vital fight for lucidity. (p. 31)

Based on these concepts, we assume, in this work, that the traditional pedagogies based on competitiveness, selection, exclusion and classification are overcome, so that the formation of a citizen is not only more cooperative and active, but also individuals who are able to recognize themselves as a subject<sup>1</sup> part of the planet and see the world with all its potential and possibilities.

Thus, one way to achieve these much-needed changes is through teacher training. These professionals will have, after their individual transformation, the possibility of contributing to the transformation of society, through the implementation of new paradigms, thus promoting the formation of conscious citizens locally and globally.

These citizens will be able to create strategies that encourage solidarity, equality and inclusion for all. Based on the principles that guide human rights, as basic elements for the construction of society, in a democratic and intercultural manner, providing advances in the search for a sustainable society.

Thus, the research problem is based on the hypothesis that Environmental Education has occurred in a superficial and/or conservative way, since it has not sought to address the main point, which is the transformation of human beings. Such superficiality raises the following questions: How has Environmental Education been worked on in High School? What didactic resources have contributed so that teachers can deepen the theme, leaving behind the request for projects that are out of context with the reality and needs of young people? Considering these questions, the main objective of this research is to promote reflections on the possibility of a critical approach to Environmental Education, through the contributions of Logotherapy/Logoeducation.

An investigation with a qualitative approach was carried out and we opted for the elaboration of a bibliographic review, having as a means of theoretical foundation dissertations, theses, books and scientific papers.

## **2. Ecopedagogy as a path of transformation**

On the one hand, the 20th century was marked by the globalization of the economy, virtual reality, the breaking of borders, the Internet, in other words, the information age. On the other hand, this development generated what scholars present as an era of extermination, in which humanity passes from the mode of production to the mode of destruction, that is, economic issues are placed as a priority, regardless of the damage caused to the environment (Gadotti, 2000).

---

<sup>1</sup> Subject from the Marxian perspective is understood as the individual who participates in the process of historical construction of society.

The consequences for human life are already felt by everyone, but mainly by those who live in a situation of economic or social vulnerability. Since the 1990s, development models have been studied and bequeathed to humanity an unsustainable socio-environmental situation (Dias, 2001).

In Brazil, since the colonization of the country, there was, intentionally, the development of the idea that we are superior, regarding the grandeur of our nature. This construction of a boastful thought, which can even be considered naive, was carried out through not only important texts, but music as well, since the letter written by Pero Vaz de Caminha in 1500.<sup>2</sup>

It is worth highlighting, in addition, the importance of understanding how much this thought of alleged superiority (given by our nature) was something really built and planned by those who have always been interested in having its people accommodated with social and political weaknesses, since they live in a country where everything is grand and superior, when compared to the European Old World (Campato Jr., 2018).

One of the problems of this ideological strategy is due to the fact that such thoughts still interfere in the way we Brazilians deal with the issue of nationality, memory and identity and, mainly, how these distortions and exaggerations can affect the construction of the Brazilian citizen through Environmental Education.

In this context, environmental education is challenged, in the sense of forming citizens aware of the necessary intercultural relationship for a more solidary and democratic world. In this direction, the focus is on education, whether formal or not, based on a critical multicultural vision, whose basic presupposition is interactive multiculturalism in view of the construction of democratic and inclusive societies (Morales, 2012).

Gadotti (2000) states that pedagogy has become, today, the most important science, as its main objective is to promote learning. To meet the needs of this current pedagogy, a new teacher, mediator and problem-solving person is needed, always willing to research and learn, especially nowadays, when students increasingly carry a load of information that is transmitted mainly by technological means.

This teacher needs to be prepared for new students, who become the subject of their own learning, being, then, autonomous, citizens of the world and curious. The student who understands that what counts is not the accumulation of knowledge, but the ease in communicating, the provision of volunteer services, the ability to adapt to new situations and to deal with people (Gadotti, 2000).

In this regard, it should be noted that, in order to meet the needs of this *new* school, it is understood that pedagogy as a promotion of learning is the only way, with pedagogical mediation being “the treatment of

---

<sup>2</sup> Pero Vaz de Caminha's letter is the document in which he recorded his impressions of the land that later would be called Brazil.

the contents and forms of expression of different themes in order to make the educational act possible within the horizon of an education conceived as participation, creativity, expressiveness and relationality” (Gutiérrez and Prado, 2013, p. 64). Therefore, it is necessary to understand the concept of *ecopedagogy*, created by Francisco Gutiérrez, researcher of Paulo Freire’s thought in Costa Rica. It is a pedagogy aimed at learning the meaning of things from everyday life, with the objective of promoting sustainable societies.

Ecopedagogy is based on the idea of *planetary citizenship*, which gives meaning to the action of men and women as living beings who share the experience of planet Earth with other lives. Therefore, it is a true political and educational movement, whose project is to change current human, social and environmental relationships. The promotion of sustainable societies and the preservation of the environment depend, according to ecopedagogy, on an ecological awareness, and the formation of this awareness results from education.

Therefore, Gutiérrez and Prado (2013) suggest the question: “How to make the profile of human beings willing to promote environmental citizenship a reality, from the planetary dimension?” (p. 47). The author himself then emphasizes the need to start with a double emphasis, so that this question can be answered: not only from the ecology of the self but also from the socio-environmental ecology.

By deepening this understanding, Morin (2011) clarifies that “any conception of humankind means the joint development of individual autonomies, community participation and the sense of belonging to the human species” (p. 93). To which the author further reinforces that only from this triad (individual – society – species) a broad awareness of belonging can emerge.

(...) it is impossible to conceive the complex unity of the human being through disjunctive thinking, which conceives our humanity in an insular way, outside the surrounding cosmos, physical matter and the spirit of which we are constituted, as well as through reductive thinking, which restricts the human unit to a purely anatomical substrate. (Morin, 2011, p. 43)

Morin (2011) also emphasizes the role of education as responsible for understanding these concepts that can generate paradoxes, such as the fact that there is both unity and human diversity. The author also says that the understanding of the human passes through the two spheres, without ever separating them. According to Morin (2011): “At the anthropological level, society lives for the individual, who lives for society; society and the individual live for the species, which lives for the individual and for society” (p. 49). This relationship is triadic and allows for the understanding that we can only develop through our individual autonomies, community participation, as well as the feeling of belonging to the human species.

Another aspect in which there is a need for reflection and change is the generalization that can occur when talking about the human being as an individual and as a species. Loureiro (2004) alerts to the fact that although human beings are biologically equal as species, this cannot be all of them as social beings; the author also adds that the human is “a complex being built by the relationships between the biological, cultural, economic, political and historical” (p. 37).

In this context, to make possible this education, which Morin (2011) refers to as Education for the Future, it is not enough just Environmental Education with a view to conservationism, often superficial and even naive, but a critical Environmental Education, which we deal with in this research. This, according to Loureiro (2004),

promotes awareness and this takes place in the relationship between the 'I' and the 'other', through reflective social practice and theoretically grounded. The awareness-raising action is mutual, involves critical capacity, dialogue, the assimilation of different knowledge, and the active transformation of reality and living conditions. (p. 29)

For this to be possible, the importance of an Environmental Education that explores simplicity must be added. What is the use of grandiose projects that end up remaining only in theory when, in reality, it is through pedagogical work based on daily life that it is possible to achieve and meet the human need for harmony with natural reality (Gutierrez and Prado, 2013).

As Gadotti (2000, p. 86) reinforces: "We didn't learn to love the Earth by reading books about it, nor books on integral ecology. The experience itself is what counts". Simple experiences like planting a tree, a bird singing, the stars in a dark night etc.

Such reflection emphasizes that the human being is not only constituted by rationality, but also by other elements such as affectivity, imagination, poetry, since "in human beings, the development of rational-empirical-technical knowledge never nullified symbolic, mythical, magical or poetic knowledge" (Morin, 2011, p. 53).

Thus, in order to achieve such perspectives with regard to Environmental Education, it is necessary to understand that this

acts not only in terms of ideas and the transmission of information, but in terms of existence, in which the awareness process is characterized by action with knowledge, by the ability to make choices, by having a commitment to the other and to life. (Loureiro, 2004, p. 28)

Therefore, the school must provide students with projects, activities, events that, in fact, contribute to the development of awareness of responsibility and participation in the life of the planet, as part of it.

### **3. Viktor Emil Frankl and the emergence of Logotherapy**

Viktor Emil Frankl was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1905, into a family of Jewish origin. He studied Medicine at the University of Vienna. He specialized in Neurology and Psychiatry. He began to work at the Psychiatric Hospital in Vienna and practice psychiatry in a private practice. In addition, he organized Youth Counseling Centers. He was one of the most renowned psychiatrists of the 20th century.

He was married in December of 1941 to Tilly Grosser, but the following year he was taken, along with his wife and parents, to a concentration camp. He survived the holocaust, being released on April 27, 1945. His wife, parents and brother died in the concentration camps.

Still in 1945, Frankl wrote his masterpiece, the book *Man's search for meaning*, based on experiences lived in concentration camps and on the reflection that, despite being under extreme conditions of dehumanization and suffering, human beings must find, supported by their spiritual dimension, a reason to live.

He then founded his own therapeutic school, Logotherapy, called by some authors the Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy, which is centered on meaning, focused on what the patient can do in the future. The latter is confronted and reoriented towards the meaning of his life. The word logotherapy derives from the Greek "logos", which means meaning (Frankl, 2008, p. 124).

The success of *Man's search for meaning* is probably due to the fact that it gathers accounts of Frankl's personal experiences, as already mentioned, as well as a brief summary of his theory, which in total was described in twenty volumes in the German language, providing access, even if in such a summarized form, to such relevant knowledge. The work, which has been translated into 20 languages and has sold nearly 10 million copies, has been inscribed at the library of Washington DC Congress in the list of ten books that changed the course of humanity.

Frankl has dedicated his life to writing (there are 40 books of his authorship), to giving lectures around the world (at approximately 200 universities), to acting as a psychotherapist, to training logotherapists, thus conveying his message. He has earned 29 *honorary doctorates*, received numerous awards and a Nobel Peace Prize nomination.

He married Eleanore Shwindt in July 1947. They had a daughter, Gabriele, and two grandchildren, Alexander and Katharina. The whole family, including his son-in-law Franz, was involved with the mission of Logotherapy (to illuminate with the light of meaning). He died in September 1997 of a heart attack at the age of 92.

#### **4. Main concepts of Logotherapy**

One of the most important features of Logotherapy refers to the fact that it does not focus on introspection, but goes beyond the subject; in addition, it is less retrospective, if compared to Freudian psychoanalysis, for example, Frankl's theory looks to the future, so that, in this way, people can find and realize the meaning of their existence (Frankl, 2008).

The author reveals, in *Man's search for meaning*, that one of the great evils of the 20th century (which we can say, without fear of making mistakes, lasted and worsened in the 21st century) is the existential void.

Frankl says that, in a survey of his European students, 25% had marked levels of existential emptiness, whereas among American students, this percentage rose to 60% (Frankl, 2008).

When asked how the author can explain the advent of this huge existential void of our times, he explains:

(...) in contrast to the animal, instincts do not tell man what he has to do and, unlike the man of the past, the man of today no longer has tradition to tell him what to do. Not knowing what he has or what he should do, he often no longer knows what, deep down, he wants. So, you just want what others do – conformism! Or he just wants what others want him to do – totalitarianism. (Frankl, 2015, p. 11)

Still on the existential emptiness, Frankl explains that this tends to manifest itself when the person is in a state of boredom. Currently, the author adds, human beings do not even know what to do with their free time, therefore, situations of boredom tend to increase even more, generating more problems with existential emptiness (Frankl, 2008).

There is, in a large number of cases, the attempt to overcome the void through compensations, such as, for example, other desires: power (when the people end up basing their existence on the desire for money); or pleasure (through sexual compensation), among other situations, including those that lead to addictions.

A very relevant concept in Logotherapy is the desire for meaning. According to the author, the human beings' search for meaning in life is their primary motivation. Furthermore, this sense is something exclusive and specific, totally individual, and only that person will be able to fulfill it. Human beings are able to live and die for their ideas and values, as well as for the realization of their meaning in life. What drives this search is precisely the desire for meaning (Frankl, 2008).

When the will for meaning is frustrated, the person may then have the so-called *noogenic neuroses* (from the Greek term *noos*, which means mind). Such frustrations arise from existential problems, not from conflicts and impulses, as is the case with psychogenic neuroses.

At this point is one of the main differences between Logotherapy and Psychoanalysis. While the latter seeks to bring to consciousness issues of the unconscious related to instincts and seeks only mere gratification and satisfaction of these, the former is also concerned with existential issues, seeking to make the patients aware of what they really want deeply in their being (Frankl, 2008).

In addition, when comparing the theories of Freud and Frankl, it is understood that the latter added concepts to the theory of that, as Freitas (2018) explains: “the human person, in addition to the unconscious instinct that directs them to the pursuit of pleasure, in a deterministic way, it is also constituted by the unconscious spirituality that summons them to the realization of meaning, in a free and responsible way” (p. 30).

Another important concept is that of noodynamics, which, according to the author, is an indispensable prerequisite for having mental health. Such a concept refers to inner tension (and not an inner balance, as is so often proclaimed in our times), a reason to live.

Frankl uses his own example to explain this concept: When he was taken to the concentration camps at Auschwitz, a ready-made manuscript he had with him was confiscated. Given this, the desire to rewrite it certainly helped him survive. The tension between what has already been achieved and what has yet to be achieved provides a basis for mental health (Frankl, 2008).

It is necessary to reflect on the idea of noodynamics, as it is not understood, in today's society, how indispensable it is to challenge the people with a potential sense, which they can (and should) achieve. According to Frankl (2008):

The human being does not need homeostasis, but what I call 'noodynamics', that is, existential dynamics in a polarized field of tension, where one pole is represented by a sense to be realized and the other pole, by the person who must realize it. (p. 130)

About the meaning of life, which is the basis of Logotherapy, it is necessary to clarify that what matters is the meaning of a person's life at a given moment, being impossible to conceptualize or find it in a general way. Nor should one think in an abstract meaning, but rather in a concrete mission or vocation, making the person irreplaceable. Frankl adds that people will only be able to find the meaning of their life and overcome the existential emptiness when acting with responsibility, which is seen by Logotherapy as the essence of human existence. It is necessary to create a full awareness of responsibility, a contribution that can be given by the logotherapist (Frankl, 2008).

Only through the self-transcendence of human existence can this awareness be extended. This characteristic refers to the fact that the meaning of life is not found inside, but outside the person. "The more a person forgets about himself – dedicating himself to serving a cause or loving another person – the more human he will be and the more he will be fulfilled" (Frankl, 2008). Concept opposite to what has been disseminated in relation to self-love as a source of achievement and happiness.

## **5. Logoeducation or Pedagogy of Meaning**

Logotherapy studies reveal its proximity to Education; Viktor Frankl himself has done this several times in his books: "in our time – that is, in the era of existential vacuum – it seems that the role of education, more than transmitting traditions and knowledge, should be to refine the human capacity to find unique meanings" (Frankl, 2011, p. 84).

It is from the dialogue between logotherapy and education that the concept of Logoeducation emerges, as a set of strategies to "help the student to discover, in the concrete situation in which he/she finds him/herself, the perspective of realization of meaning that awaits him/her" (Freitas, 2018, p. 42).



Logoeducation does not apply only to the school context, but can be studied and applied by all those who wish to contribute to human formation.

According to Aquino (2015), an “authentic logoeducation is based on the principle of unconditional respect for the dignity of the student” (p. 23). This concept expands the educator’s vision, who will see the student not only as a person who is there to acquire knowledge, but also as a being who wants to find and realize meanings in his/her life.

Freitas (2018) summarizes the characteristics of Logoeducation and Pedagogy of Meaning, as follows:

- An existential education, anthropologically founded, as it includes the noetic dimension in education.
- Its objective is to order and guide people towards the purpose and concrete meaning of their personal existence; it intends that human beings discover and realize, by themselves, the meaning of their existence; it seeks that from their “being”, they can reach their “should-be”.
- It opens the students’ visual field of values so that they become aware, through their own conscience, of the countless possibilities of realization of values and meaning that are within their reach to achieve.
- It presupposes the desire for meaning, stimulating the students so that they want to accomplish what the conscience captured as an opportunity for meaning.
- It promotes the ability to make free decisions, to choose.
- It trains the students cognitively, technically and operationally, so that they are able to do well what they chose to do, because there is a meaning.
- It is not only aimed at the disability, what is lacking, at failure, but at a change in the student’s attitude, in the face of disability, of difficulty.
- What matters more than the techniques is the personal existential encounter, the human relationships between the educator and the student.
- It lets the students decide what concrete meaning they want to conclude and what personal value they want to achieve – and before what or who they want to be responsible for (Frankl, 1965).
- It reminds the students of their openness to the world and values and their unconscious spirituality.
- It integrates valuable elements from previous schools.

When Logoeducation is applied by education professionals, within the school context, we have the characterization of Pedagogy of Meaning, explained by Freitas (2018):

The Pedagogy of Meaning calls upon the student’s ability to respond to external demands, their power to overcome; its competence to overcome challenges and endure frustrations; its vocation for the realization of meaning. The student is called to be better than himself, to compete with himself and not with others. It brings a glimmer of hope, of optimism about reality; it does not emphasize the student’s difficulties, his deficiencies, what he lacks, but his possibilities, what he is good at, his coming-to-be. (p 88)

In addition to the teachers, the entire academic community benefits when applying Logoeducation:

School management focused on meaning favors the sense of belonging of employees, as everyone must work for a common meaning that goes far beyond the goals of the institution's directors. The dignity of the person is not given by the function he/she performs, but by him/herself; there is an unconditional value that every person, without exception, possesses. And this conviction is the starting point for establishing a harmonious work environment and for the serene resolution of conflicts and adversities. (Freitas, 2018, p. 89)

With regard to teacher education, the Pedagogy of Meaning and the concepts of Logotherapy can contribute to the recovery of the meaning of teaching work, of being an educator as a workmanship. Such rescue can protect against the stresses generated by work, as well as other diseases and disorders related to the educator's routine (Freitas, 2018).

It should be noted that the vision of Logoeducation, as well as Logotherapy, is always focused on the future, with a view to what life expects each one to do and not to the past and its traumas and conditioning. This vision provides a change in the attitude of the students facing the difficulties they may face, which contributes to a development of both learning and living with those around them and with themselves (Freitas, 2018).

It is possible to broaden the vision of an education necessary to achieve these goals. Freitas (2018, p. 35) points to one of the duties of education: "to promote uniqueness, to recognize oneself as unique and unrepeatable, and, at the same time, responsibility to the world, openness to the other, to society, nature and transcendence. There is no education without human encounter!" (p. 35). The author claims that training is one of the ultimate goals of education so that young people can perform work competently, as well as live in a community with solidarity.

Furthermore, Frankl (2018) alerts to the fact that, currently, it is visible that we live in a time of a feeling of lack of tangible meaning. Therefore, education cannot, in any way, be limited to the transmission of knowledge, but that it can also contribute to the refinement of people's awareness to the point of realizing the present challenges in concrete everyday situations and thus, overcome them. Freitas (2018) also highlights that, when education is centered on values: "the individuals' resistance and resilience are strengthened, enabling them to take a stand against society and group pressure, against hedonism, immediacy and consumerism, against isolating egocentrism and massifying collectivism" (p. 40).

Regarding this aspect of values, Aquino (2015) declares that "an education for a 'better' humanity would only be possible to the extent that the school could include the issue of the meaning of life and the values that encompass unconditional dignity of the inhabitants of this dwelling" (p. 15).

According to Frankl (as cited in Miguez, 2019), values, "the source of the should-be and of all moral norms" (p. 152), are divided into three categories:

- a. The creation values: refer to the originality of individuals, not only to their essence, but also to everything they can become. These values are updated when the individuals offer something to the world, something that only they, in their uniqueness, could offer. It is noteworthy that only when there are actions oriented beyond oneself does the human being, in fact, demonstrate their human specificity.
- b. Experience values: they happen when the person experiences the beautiful, the good, the true and the fair. This can happen when in contact with nature, when moved by a work of art or when meeting other people and there are exchanges. Such values are always related to something external, which will have a certain subjective effect, depending on the form each one receives. What materializes the experience values is love, which allows the person to perceive in the other what is peculiar and unrepeatably.
- c. Attitude values: refer to the attitude that someone adopts in the face of difficult or adverse situations, which cannot be changed, leaving only the attitude of finding meaning, even if it is in suffering. Something that has been happening a lot is the attempt to eliminate or deny the existence of suffering in human reality. This fact ends up preventing people from growing beyond themselves and transforming themselves; they end up missing out on the great opportunity to humanize themselves and give meaning to their own life and finitude.

The author also adds that such values cannot be taught, but must be lived (Frankl, 2011). Therefore, it is up to all those responsible for education, take ownership of them and live them, so that young people can learn and live them too.

Regarding the concepts of Logotherapy applied to education, one of the most important is Frankl's anthropological vision, since this will have a direct impact on the way the educator works. First, there is the concept of the three-dimensionality of being, which is explained by Freitas (2018, p. 67):

We are three-dimensional beings: body, mind and spirit (or *noos*-spirit in Greek), a unity and a biological, psychological and noological totality, indivisible because it is a unity, and complete because it is a totality. We are a unit in three dimensions: the body, mind and spirit, which need to develop harmoniously. (p. 67)

This concept brings us to the idea of harmonious valuation that one should have both by human beings and by the nature that surrounds them. The understanding of who the human being is seems essential to reaching an understanding of his/her participation in the whole, in the universe, as well as allowing the construction of responsibility with oneself, with others and with the planet.

Frankl also emphasizes, within the anthropological vision of his theory, the importance of not limiting people, often preventing them from developing. On this issue, Freitas (2018) explains:

This is not to say that we are not influenced by heritage and environment, but we reinforce the thought that we are not determined by these factors. With determinism, we exclude the human capacity to act on external influences and modify them, it does not

consider the freedom of the human will that is capable of taking a position in face of the conditions in which it is inserted. (p. 91)

Still on the three-dimensionality, care must be taken not to fall into reductionism as well, since “reductionism only undermines and weakens the natural enthusiasm of youth” (Frankl, 2011, p. 110). As Aquino (2015) points out:

The danger of a reductionist education lies in placing greater emphasis on one of the dimensions. For example, reducing everything to the corporeal can result in excessive narcissism; reducing only the psychic processes of learning can lead to a mechanistic education; and, finally, reducing it only to the noological or spiritual dimension could lead to a unilateral view of education. (Aquino, 2015, p. 21)

According to Freitas (2018): “When we believe that children cannot suffer any type of trauma, we are actually raising fragile young people, unable to bear the slightest frustration and lacking the courage to face challenges” (p. 33).

There is what Frankl calls the tension between what we are and what we can be, a tension that is extremely healthy and important for the integral development of the being. Frankl calls this tension *noodynamics*. The consequences of the absence of this tension are disastrous, such as depression and other disorders that are unfortunately leading young people to extreme attitudes. “And the result is a youth with boredom and apathy, who often suffer without knowing why, with little joy in living and almost no ability to suffer for something worthwhile, that is significant” (Freitas, 2018, p. 48). The author also affirms:

An education for meaning should awaken in the person of the student the progressive differentiation that leads to self-knowledge and recognition of his/her identity: what I am and what I am not; what I feel and what I don't feel; what I think and what I don't think, without confusion or fear of limitations and abilities. (p. 55)

Currently, the concept of empathy is used when one wants to mention the importance of putting oneself in the other's shoes and thus being able to act in a more coherent and respectful manner. This concept could be replaced, with an extreme expansion of both meaning and attitudes, by the idea of self-transcendence, explained by Freitas (2018):

Self-transcendence, a centrifugal, expansive movement, is a specifically human attribute that no animal possesses. Meaning-oriented education must promote this movement of openness to the other, to the world, the movement of leaving oneself and going towards a task, an action, a specific mission and in accordance with the potential of each one, to be carried out for the common good. (p. 64)

The author further states that the attitude of the school, through the teachers, of awakening in young people their capacity for self-transcendence, in addition to their abilities to perceive their place in the world, is something fundamental for them to achieve development and maturity, so that they can have an integrated and happy life (Freitas, 2018).

When it comes to the objectives of Environmental Education, self-transcendence gains relevance if we take Frankl's theses as a reference when he reveals that "self-transcendence constitutes the essence of existence. To be human is to be directed towards something other than oneself" (Frankl, 2011, p. 67).

Still on self-transcendence, Freitas (2018) adds that in self-transcendence, the human beings configure their personality, increasing their self-knowledge and increasingly assuming their true identity; the more they meet their task and perform it, the more they surrender to the one they love, the more they become human, the more they become "themselves" (p. 82).

Freitas (2018) complements this idea when he states that: "A complete education should not only educate with love, but educate for the ability to love, to feel useful, indispensable and valuable to something or someone, at some time or place" (p. 47). It is perceived that education has been the opposite of this, so it is possible to understand the consequences that are seen in our society today.

Miguez (2019) explains the idea that a person "in search of meaning" is "someone who is always oriented and ordered to something that is not him/herself, be it a task to perform, a cause to defend, a meeting to consummate" (p. 15). Therefore, it is understood that the search (and practice) of the meaning of life contributes greatly to the reduction of relationships in which selfishness is predominant.

Freitas (2018) explains, through the concepts of Logotherapy, a way for young people to reflect and transform their attitudes, spontaneously: As soon as the student becomes aware of their own responsibility as an essential characteristic of their existence, they are able, freely and spontaneously, without imposition by the educator or society, to choose coherently with themselves, with their unique personality and with their own and unrepeatable history (p. 76).

With regard to responsibility, Frankl (2018) is also categorical when he says: "More than ever education must be education for responsibility. Being responsible is being selective, having the ability to choose" (p. 21). When an attempt is made to "protect" young people, taking from them the due responsibility, appropriate to each age, it ends up depriving them of acquiring this capacity.

Still on responsibility, Freitas (2018) clarifies that education centered on meaning, which overcomes dehumanization and favors free and responsible choice is a tool for the construction of a more humane, fraternal, peaceful and solidary society.

When faced with difficult situations, young people (human beings, in general) tend to become paralyzed and start to ask themselves "why?". "Why is this happening to me?" or "Why did this person act this way and not another?". According to the concepts of Logoeducation, it is necessary to teach children, from an early age, to change the question "why?" to a more effective one: "what for?". The consequences of this change, which may seem small, can be seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1: From the “why?” to the “what for?”

<b>Why?</b>	<b>What For?</b>
Past	Future
Blame	Responsibility
Revolt	New meaning
Discouragement	Courage
Closure	Openness
Victimization	Pro-action
Complaint	Gratitude
Defense	Confrontation
Resentment	Forgiveness
Abandonment	Purpose
Fight with life	Respond to life
Fight with God	Respond to God
...	...

Source: Freitas (2018, p. 78).

Such intervention has already been applied, both in public and private schools, and has obtained significant results, as it enables awareness not only of responsibility, but also of the child/young person’s freedom of choice in how to act in adverse situations (Freitas, 2018).

Lukas (1990, p. 75), when analyzing education and reflecting on its relationship with Logotherapy, states that “there is only one solution: to encourage in young people the courage to make meaningful investments in life and, ourselves, accept the risk of believing in its meaning!” (p. 75). The author completes:

Those who are unable or unwilling to dedicate themselves to a cause, which means making previous achievements for a meaning content to be discovered, are tied to superficialities, to the passive reception of stimuli, to the consumption of what is offered, this only results in an inner feeling of emptiness, which gradually undermines the joy of living. (p. 75)

The school’s responsibility also resides in the development of values brought by Logoeducation, since these can contribute to the attitude and response of young people to life and its challenges.

## **6. Literature in Dialogue**

When understanding the need for real transformations in human beings so that they actually begin to understand their place and role in the environment, there is the question: How can such changes be achieved? How would the humanization process take place?

One of the possible paths was sought in this work: the transformation through reading (and reflection based on the principles of Logoeducation) of classic literary texts, such as poems, chronicles and short stories.

Regarding the concept of classics, this one is quite diverse. Calvino (2007) affirms, among several definitions, that they are

books that have been passed down to us bringing with them the marks of the readings that preceded ours and behind them the traces they left in the culture or cultures they crossed (...); a classic can still be considered a book that never finished saying what it had to say. (...) a classic is a work that incessantly provokes a cloud of critical discourses about itself, but continually pushes it away. (...) classics are books that, the more we think we know by hearing them say, when they are actually read, the more they are revealed as new, unexpected, unpublished. (pp. 11-12)

According to Machado (2002), there are some reasons why we cannot miss reading the classics. The author claims that these are a real treasure, to which we are entitled. Furthermore, as reading historically would be for few people, reading becomes a form of resistance. Finally, and perhaps the most important reason, would be the pleasure that reading gives us.

Bloom (2001) states that “one of the functions of literature is to prepare us for a transformation, and the final transformation has a universal character” (p. 17). Therefore, it can be said that, through the reading of texts selected and mediated reflections, this transformation can take place. On the other hand, Ouaknin (1996) reinforces: “The function of the narrative is to open up the possibility of the being’s perpetual rebirth” (p. 60).

Despite the above reasons, literary reading at school has been a source of great misunderstanding, since what exists are teachers who believe they invested themselves in the sacred role of guardian of the temple: inside, the literary text; outside, the students; at the door, he/she, the master, not knowing whether to enter or leave, or if it’s even better for the crowd to disperse (Lajolo, 2000, p. 12).

Thus, literature, so neglected and placed as a mere boring task of memorizing authors and their works in a given historical context, most of the time, in order to obtain grades or pass certain tests, in the case of High School, the National Secondary Education Examination (called ENEM), needs to be rescued as it “first, awakens emotions in us—it affects us—reminds us that we are alive and that we are not mere zombies locked up in a vicious cycle of production and consumption” (Gallian, 2017, p. 82).

Not only literature, but art in general has been left behind in education. This is because it was forgotten that “Art manifests a reality that is not mediated, at least primarily; it is not a means to a utilitarian end, but the result of a sensitive, intimate and universal experience. It returns the feeling of unity and totality” (Miguez, 2019, p. 163).

The distancing from art, as it should be treated, ends up having consequences and one of them may be the fact that “Curiously, we forget our own human reality, we empty it, or we will end up emptying it, of what redeems or elevates it, that gives it an identity as a human. We empty it of values” (Pintos, 1999, p. 7).

Such values manifest themselves in the form of permanent realities, stable, even eternal, despite the fact that human life is considered a dynamic reality. Therefore, human feelings, for example, will always be the same (love, solidarity, respect) and are represented in literary texts. When reflecting on these, there is the identification of such feelings (existing in every human being) (Pintos, 1999). Then comes the idea of bibliotherapy, proposed by Viktor E. Frankl himself at a conference in 1977, in which he even cited cases in which he, himself, recommended certain readings for his patients, defending the book as a therapeutic resource.

It is noteworthy that the objective of this work is not to use bibliotherapy as clinical therapy, but as a strategy for reflection and personal development, using previously selected texts aiming at possible interpretations aimed at the concepts dealt with by Logotherapy/Logoeducation. Pintos (1999) points out some of the benefits in the use of literary expressions in relation to their therapeutic function, among which the following stand out: they allow one to enter the person's interior, reducing the reader's level of resistance; they allow the flexibility of mental schemas in the search for problem solving and provide autonomy for the person when considering personal conclusions and interpretations.

Lukas (2002) states that popular narratives have two characteristics: a teaching and a promise. According to the author:

The teaching is simply a lesson in the art of living. It speaks of some aspects of human attitudes and behaviors that promote or inhibit life satisfaction. Regarding the promise, things are more difficult. On the one hand, it is related to the positive pole of the teaching, precisely the premonition that everything will be all right. Through subtle allusions, the promise goes beyond the fundamentally good teaching, that even a limited life still ends. (p. 80)

The author emphasizes that the healing power of reading has a certain charm, since its results cannot be predicted and its prescription does not work like a medicine, whose effects are predictable. She also warns that, for any transformation to occur the "person needs to be open to the message at a moment of particular receptivity. (...). And in this case, surprising things can happen: sources of a life full of meaning begin to sprout" (p. 76).

Finally, one cannot fall into the error of seeing art (and literature) as something merely utilitarian, as Scruton (2013) warns, but rather with its aesthetic value and as a strategy to rescue the Beauty.

## **7. Conclusion**

When considering the current educational context, there is a need for change, especially with regard to Environmental Education. There are a lot of projects, activities, commemorative dates related to the theme, as a means of bringing the discussion to the classroom.



As discussed, what has been done has not generated enough changes in behavior to promote a significant impact on a planetary level. The works studied show that children and young people need to live an Environmental Education that brings real changes to personal values, including the valuing of life (of each one, of the other, of nature).

The concepts of Logotherapy/Logoeducation can contribute to this process of change, through reflections on its main concepts, such as: self-transcendence, the development of values, the search for human dignity (based on the idea of the three-dimensionality of the being), among others. In this sense, literature presents itself as a rich source for the development of strategies within logoeducation that can promote significant changes in human behavior based on a critical reflection on reality.

It can be concluded that the theme and the possibilities of application of theories related to logotherapy in education point to the need to expand studies and debates on this interlocution and that they serve to highlight Ecopedagogy as a way of contributing to the awareness of the meaning of life in young students.

## 8. References

- Aquino, T. A. A. (2015). *Sentido da vida e valores no contexto da educação – Uma proposta de intervenção à luz do pensamento de Viktor Frankl*. Paulinas.
- Bloom, H. (2001). *Como e Por Que Ler*. Objetiva.
- Calvino, I. (2007). *Por que ler os Clássicos*. Companhia das Letras.
- Campato Jr., J. A. (2018). Natureza e Identidade da Literatura Brasileira: Um Ensaio de Ecocrítica. *Revista Científica ANAP Brasil*, 11(22), 29-38. <https://doi.org/10.17271/19843240112220181856>
- Dias, G. F. (2001). *Educação Ambiental – Princípios e Práticas*. Gaia.
- Frankl, V. E. (2008). *Em busca de sentido*. Sinodal, Vozes.
- Frankl, V. E. (2011). *A vontade de sentido – Fundamentos e Aplicações da Logoterapia*. Paulus.
- Frankl, V. E. (2015). *O sofrimento de uma vida sem sentido: caminhos para encontrar a razão de viver*. É Realizações.
- Frankl, V. E. (2018). *Psicoterapia para todos: uma psicoterapia coletiva para contrapor-se à neurose coletiva*. Vozes.
- Freitas, M. L. S. (2018). *Pedagogia do Sentido – Contribuições de Viktor Frankl para a Educação*. Instituto de Educação e Cultura Viktor Frankl.
- Gadotti, M. (2000). *Pedagogia da Terra*. Peirópolis.
- Gallian, D. (2017). *A literatura como remédio – Os clássicos e a saúde da alma*. Martin Claret
- Gutiérrez, F., and Prado, C. (2013). *Ecopedagogia e Cidadania Planetária*. Cortez.
- Lajolo, M. (2000). *Do mundo da leitura para a leitura de mundo*. Ática.
- Loureiro, F. B. (2004). *Trajatória e Fundamentos da Educação Ambiental*. Cortez.
- Lukas, E. (1990). *Mentalização e Saúde – A Arte de Viver e Logoterapia*. Vozes.
- Lukas, E. (2002). *Psicologia Espiritual*. Paulus.
- Machado, A. M. (2002). *Como e Por que Ler os Clássicos Universais desde cedo*. Objetiva.

Miguez, E. M. (2019). *Educação em Viktor Frankl – Entre o vazio existencial e o sentido da vida*. Brazil Publishing.

Morales, A. G. (2012). *A formação do profissional educador ambiental – reflexões, possibilidades e constatações*. Editora da UEPG.

Morin, E. (2011). *Os sete saberes necessários à educação do futuro*. Cortez, UNESCO.

Ouaknin, M.-A-. (1996). *Biblioterapia*. Loyola.

Pintos, C. G. (1999). *A Logoterapia em Contos – O livro como recurso terapêutico*. Paulus.

Scruton, R. (2013). *Beleza. É Realizações*.