



## AGROECOLOGY AND TEXTUAL GENRES IN THE TRAINING OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

### *AGROECOLOGIA E GÊNEROS TEXTUAIS NA FORMAÇÃO DE ESTUDANTES DO ENSINO MÉDIO*

### *AGROECOLOGÍA Y GÊNEROS TEXTUALES EN LA FORMACIÓN DE ESTUDIANTES DE BACHILLERATO*

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**ABSTRACT:** The present article brings a reflection on the introduction of the principles and concepts of Agroecology in the education of high school youth using the gender methodology in the Portuguese language discipline. Analyzing the importance of Agroecology and its dimensions for the construction of models of sustainable development and education as a factor for the construction and transformation of reality, it was discussed, from the educational model of the urban school in front of the rural school, the proposal of a field education, and the principles proposed by environmental education, the role of education and educator, as agents in the construction of references in culture and behaviors, for transformations and new social practices. Finally, from the analysis of the fundamentals of theories of language and gender conception, to propose their use as instruments for the introduction of agroecology themes in youth education.

**KEYWORDS:** Environmental education. Textual genres. Sustainability.

**RESUMO:** O presente artigo traz uma reflexão sobre a introdução dos princípios e conceitos da Agroecologia na formação de jovens do ensino médio utilizando-se da metodologia de gêneros, na disciplina de Língua Portuguesa. Ao analisar a importância da Agroecologia e suas dimensões para a construção de modelos de desenvolvimento sustentáveis e da educação como fator de construção e transformação da realidade, discutiu-se, a partir do modelo educacional da escola urbana frente à escola rural, da proposta de uma educação do campo, e dos princípios propostos pela educação ambiental, o papel da educação e do educador, como agentes na construção de referenciais na cultura e comportamentos, para transformações e novas práticas sociais. Por fim, a partir da análise dos fundamentos das teorias de concepção de linguagem e de gêneros, propor sua utilização como instrumentos para a introdução dos temas da Agroecologia na educação de jovens.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Educação ambiental. Gêneros textuais. Sustentabilidade.

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**RESUMEN:** *Este artículo presenta una reflexión sobre la introducción de los principios y conceptos de la Agroecología en la educación de los jóvenes de secundaria utilizando la metodología de género en la disciplina de la lengua portuguesa. Analizando la importancia de la Agroecología y sus dimensiones para la construcción de modelos de desarrollo sostenible y la educación como factor para la construcción y transformación de la realidad, se discutió, desde el modelo educativo de la escuela urbana frente a la escuela rural, la propuesta de una educación de campo, y los principios propuestos por la educación ambiental, el papel de la educación y el educador, como agentes en la construcción de referencias en cultura y comportamientos, para transformaciones y nuevas prácticas sociales. Finalmente, desde el análisis de los fundamentos de las teorías del lenguaje y la concepción de género, para proponer su uso como instrumentos para la introducción de temas de agroecología en la educación juvenil.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Educación ambiental. Géneros textuales. Sostenibilidad.*

## Introduction

This article aims to discuss the introduction of the concepts and principles of Agroecology in the education of high school youth, in the context of the Portuguese language discipline.

In an attempt to bring to the educational process topics such as the relationship between food production and the environment, healthy eating, food security and sustainability, we sought to evaluate how the theory of language and gender conception could become instruments for discussing aspects of the current environmental, economic and social crisis in contemporary society.

Thus, starting from an analysis of the principles of Agroecology and sustainability, the educational model of the urban school in the face of rural reality, and the precepts proposed by environmental education, we sought to promote a reflection on how, through the theory of language conception and textual genres, agroecology could be introduced in the Discipline of Portuguese language, education of young people in the context of high school.

## Agroecology, Sustainability and Education.

To understand Agroecology, it is necessary to understand its principles and concepts in a look that goes beyond agriculture.

Historically, the emergence of Agroecology is linked to the studies of tropical ecosystems carried out in the 1970s and 1980s, when it was detected that the expansion of monocultural agricultural systems had serious ecological and social impacts on traditional or





indigenous production systems, where a great complexity and biological biodiversity predominated (EHLERS, 1996, p. 76).

According to Altieri (2012, p. 105, our translation), Agroecology "provides the basic ecological principles on how to study, design and manage agroecosystems", from a "holistic" approach,<sup>3</sup> in which aspects related to production are also linked to the conservation of natural resources, and are "culturally adapted and socially and economically viable", extrapolating the "one-dimensional view of agroecosystems (genetics, among others) to understand the ecological and social levels of co-evolution, structure and functioning."

Caporal and Costabeber (2004, p. 11, our translation) define Agroecology as a "scientific approach aimed at supporting the transition from current models of rural development and conventional agriculture to sustainable rural development and agriculture styles", which through "various scientific disciplines, intends to study agrarian activity from an ecological perspective".

According to Jesus (2005, p. 45, our translation), Agroecology is an emerging paradigm, which differs from conventional agriculture, because it has a "holistic approach", which goes from environmental issues to human issues, emphasizing that while industrial agriculture<sup>4</sup> is based on a production model whose inputs and practices have been causing strong environmental degradation, threats to human health, erosion and soil contamination, commitment of water reserves, deforestation, etc., agroecology, "is related to an ecological approach to agriculture, including biointeractions that occur in agricultural systems and the impacts of agriculture on ecosystems" (JESUS, 2005, p. 40, our translation).

For Gliessman (2001, p. 53, 54, our translation) Agroecology deals with a new approach to agriculture and agricultural development, based on the "conservation of resources of traditional local agriculture, and at the same time, "explore modern ecological knowledge and methods", promoting "the application of ecological concepts and principles in the design and management of sustainable agroecosystems".

For Caporal and Costabeber (2007, p. 16, our translation) Agroecology, "because it has an epistemological basis that recognizes the existence of a structural relationship of interdependence between the social system and the ecological system", and the fact that the

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<sup>3</sup>Agroecosystems are communities of plants and animals interacting with their physical and chemical environment that has been modified to produce food, fibers, fuels and other products for consumption and human use (ALTIERI, 2012, p. 105).

<sup>4</sup>Industrial agriculture, agrochemical, conventional or modern, are denominations for agriculture based on the model that has three fundamental pillars, agrochemistry, motomechanization and genetic manipulation (JESUS, 2005, p. 24)



practice of agriculture is a "social process, that is, depending on human intervention", the transition to agriculture from the principles of Agroecology would imply "not only a greater economic-productive rationalization [...], but also in a change in attitudes and values of social actors in relation to the conservation of natural resources" that "go far beyond technological and agronomic aspects, and incorporate broader and more complex dimensions, including economic, social and environmental variables, as well as cultural, political and ethical aspects of sustainability" (CAPORAL; COSTABEBER, 2004, p. 13, our translation)

According to Caporal and Costabeber (2002, p. 75, our translation), sustainability is a basic concept for Agroecology, which has the role of being a "balancing factor" within the "concrete reality", and can be defined as "the factor that keeps the agroecosystem socio-environmentally productive over time", and sustainable rural development occurs from increasing sustainability, based on its basic dimensions.

### **Urban education, field education and agroecology**

Educational education in Brazil was directly associated, for centuries, with the model of urban education, and the values of the field were considered outdated and, above all, irrelevant within the dominant political context and the urbanization process promoted by industrialization.

For Souza (2009), since the end of the 19th century and much of the 20th century, the lack of financial resources and little investment in education in Brazil have had consequences for the expansion and scope of education, making education restricted to classes that had material conditions to attend the few schools available, focusing on residents of urban areas.

Thus, education was directed to the process of division of labor, offered to those who needed it to integrate with the urbanization process based on industrialization, while rural workers, considered as less specialized labor, were not considered priority for education (SOUZA, 2009).

With the 1988 Constitution (BRASIL, 1988) and the country's redemocratization process, with the discussion on the social rights of the rural population, it was that the educational rights of the rural populations were considered, as well as the state's commitment to society and education for all, respecting cultural and regional differences. Conceptions that were effective in the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (BRASIL, 1996).





Thus, the rural environment was linked to an education within an urban-centric vision (SECAD, 2007), in which the rural was seen as a place of disinformation, receiving an education designed only to meet the needs of cities, in which policies that proposed a pedagogy with the objective of urban-industrial development predominated.

In this context, in the mid-1980s, civil society organizations linked to popular education, claiming "a model of education attuned to cultural particularities, social rights and the needs specific to the lives of peasants" (SECAD, 2007, p. 11, our translation), present a proposal for a "field education", a term that aims to build an education that is really in tune with the knowledge of rural populations.

In this paradigm, of Country Education, it was recommended the "overcoming of the antagonism between the city and the countryside, which are now seen as complementary and of equal value" (SECAD, 2007, p. 11, our translation).

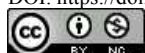
According to Caldart (2012), the term "in the field" is related to the "place in which one lives" and the term "of the countryside", in addition to proposing the valorization of the place in which one lives, considers the "culture and human and social needs" of the population of the field (KOLLING; CERIOLI; CALDART, 2002 apud CALDART, 2012, p. 26, our translation).

Thus, Fernandes (2011, p. 136) proposes that the school should be an "essential space for human development", which in addition to considering the field and city dichotomy as complementary, should understand the school space as "singular and plural geographical spaces, autonomous and interactive, with its cultural identities and different organizational modes", contributing to an education for all.

Thus, it becomes necessary a reflection, thinking of an education that has as parameters the construction of a pedagogical collective that aims at transformations in the behavioral context, from a social view that considers the field-city relationship as a form of interaction.

In 2000, with the objective of building a "field education", the Landless Workers' Movement began to adopt Agroecology as the basis for "the planning and implementation of human working and life modes that enable the ecological reconstruction of agriculture and life in society" (ARAÚJO *et al.*, 2010 apud CALDART, 2017, p. 59, our translation). Thus, Agroecology comes to be seen, not only as "a way of cultivating the land, and producing food, but a way of life" (CALDART, 2017, p. 59, our translation).

In this context, for Caldart (2017, p. 60, our translation) the school of the field takes on the challenge of understanding Agroecology to create the possibility of building "organic relationships between schools and agricultural production processes".





According to Caldart (2016, p. 8 apud CALDART, 2017, p. 60) the relationship between school and Agroecology is a great challenge, when seeking to combine theory and practice, and in the face of the need to create a study program that is based on an interface between Agroecology and the programs of the different disciplines of the school curriculum, having, the construction of this process as a proposal a collective pedagogical work, characterized by the search for new answers to advance the path of transformation of the school, in its form and content.

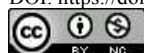
### **Education for sustainability**

The school is directly involved with the sociocultural, political and economic development of a country. Whether in the urban environment or in rural areas, education is a factor directly responsible for transformations, when we think of its role as a space for the construction of knowledge and behavior modification.

As proposed by Tamaio (2000 apud JACOBI, 2003, p. 193, our translation), "becomes another necessary mediation tool between cultures, differentiated behaviors and interests of social groups for the construction of the desired transformations", and the educator, in view of this perspective, assumes the role of "mediator in the construction of environmental references and should know how to use them as instruments for the development of a social practice centered on the concept of nature". However, the forms of action should be based on "interactive and dialogical practices, aiming at the creation of new attitudes and behaviors towards society".

According to Vigotsky (2007, p. 3, our translation), the process of learning and developing the human being proposes the following question: "What is the relationship between human beings and their physical and social environment?". In this context, the process of perception and behavior of children, young people and adults happens through interaction with the environment, developing speech, sensory-motor operations and attention. Thus, in this perspective, man is influenced by the environment in which he acts, modifying it and creating possibilities and conditions for its existence (VIGOTSKY, 2007, p. 21).

These relationships occur when they are internalized by their external experiences, that is, when the subjects integrate meanings and develop their social experiences.





School education thus assumes "an active part of an intellectual process, constantly at the service of communication, understanding and problem solving" (VYGOTSKY, 1991, p. 56, our translation).

In this perspective, in which learning is seen in a social way and interaction provides intellectual development, it is observed that it is in school, especially in the classroom, that learning, through signs, can contribute to the process of recreating, transforming information, concepts, meanings, to a growing change of behavior (VIGOSTKY, 2007).

The school can, therefore, contribute to the transformation of the young person and their social practices, providing new experiences for the student. According to Vigostki (2007, p. 49, our translation) "throughout development there is a transformation, especially in adolescence" in which "man himself influences his relationship with the environment".

Also, relations with the world are directly linked to aspects in which language, environment and experience reflect a personal process, and, at the same time, a social process, providing reflections on human activities to the extent that they transform both nature and society (VIGOSTKI, 2007).

According to Jacobi (2003, p. 191, our translation), there is a need to approach and reflect on issues of environmental complexity, boosting an educational process that stimulates the "gestation of new social actors" so that a commitment to nature, sustainability and participation is created, based on a logic that privileges dialogue and interdependence of different areas of knowledge, creating an education that allows to reflect environmental issues in the search for the transformation of social practices, based on the responsibility of individuals, within a conception that integrates everyone.

Understanding Environmental Education, in this context, implies seeing reality widely, allowing students to engage beyond the limitations of disciplines, which, according to Dias (2004 apud GUEDES *et al.*, 2013, p. 71, our translation), should not be seen as a "simplistic concept, focused only on physical issues of the Earth, but involved with social, economic and cultural issues, considered as Education for Sustainability".

In this sense, environmental education or sustainability is understood, as the possibility not only of information transfer, but as an instrument to create capacities to build subjects that identify, act and overcome challenges in all their social relations (JACOBI, 2003).

According to Dias (2004 apud GUEDES, 2013, p. 91), education for sustainability can be understood as a learning process that, through experiences and lived situations, generates





new concepts and meanings, and the educator mediates these relationships, coordinating actions, research and reflections, enabling new learning.

Thus, the school has the challenges of discussing and easing positions, starting to establish a more plural dialogue between the areas of education, in relation to education for sustainability.

### **Language and genders in the educational process**

A proposal for interdisciplinary educational action that works on the principles and dimensions of sustainability necessarily passes through oral and written productions, generating the need to have an understanding about language actions, textual genres, as a way to mobilize young people for knowledge, through their human communicative practice.

In to understand the importance of language and genres in the context of the teaching-learning process, to which language is known, at first, as a means of interaction, because language is present throughout our lives and it is through it that we interact with the world and constitute ourselves as subjects and sociable beings in the environment in which we are inserted. In this sense, the work with the Portuguese language and its teaching-learning are directly linked to language, because they are manifested through language, texts and their senses, reading, textual production, orality, linguistic variety and norm, among others, thus becoming one of the main advisors of teaching work, which allows us to consider that the "object of work and study of this discipline is precisely language, in its most varied possibilities of communication" (PERFEITO, 2010, p. 13, our translation).

Geraldi (1984, p. 42, our translation) proposes, on teaching-learning, three conceptions of languages: "language as an expression of thought, language as an instrument of communication and language as a form of social interaction".

Therefore, the introduction of agroecology themes through the discipline of Portuguese language in high school can be based on the conception of interactionist language, based on the propositions of Bakhtin (1988, 2003, 2010) and the so-called Bakhtin Circle<sup>5</sup> (BAKHTIN; VOLOSHINOVA, 1992, 2012) that comprise "the use of language as a form of utterances" through discursive genres, which materialize in texts, produced in a certain social and historical situation (BAKHTIN, 2003, p. 261, our translation). Thus, knowing language as a form of

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<sup>5</sup> The expression Bakhtin Circle is used because, in addition to the thinker Mikhail Bakhtin, the formulations and works are the product of reflection of a group that had the participation of other intellectuals, among them Voloshinov and Medvediev.







interaction means understanding it as a collective work, therefore, in its socio-historical nature and, consequently, "as an action oriented to a specific purpose [...] that takes place in existing social practices, in different social groups, in the different moments of history" (BRASIL, 1998, p. 20, our translation).

Bakhtin (1988, p. 86) proposes a dialogical perspective in relation to discursive genres, in which he considers "language as a form of verbal interaction established by language, between subjects and texts, gaining different meanings according to context".

According to Bakhtin and Voloshinov (2012, p. 128, our translation), the use of language consolidates a process of verbal interaction between announcer and interlocutor in which "any enunciation, however significant and complete, constitutes only a fraction of a current of uninterrupted verbal communication". The authors emphasize dialogism as constitutive of language and advocate it as an essential characteristic of the interactions that are established with the other and with the other utterances.

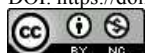
According to the authors, the forms of verbal interaction are influenced, in a dialogical way, by the conditions of how they are produced, because all text goes through dialogues, either in the strict sense, or in the broad sense, in a produced context (BAKHTIN; VOLOSHINOV, 2012).

In this perspective, the dialogical nature of language understands that relationships are established between discourses and are constructed by several other discourses, and when they mix, they form a historical moment, by the voice of another subject and for other communicative purposes, forming another enunciation (BAKHTIN, 2003).

From this perspective, Brait (2007, p. 69, our translation), understands that these dialogical relationships occur from the "interdiscursive nature of language".

Dialogism, in this proposal, is understood as the relations between linguistic and extralinguistic elements, belonging to the field of discourse. According to Bakhtin (2010, p. 209), dialogical relations "cannot be separated from the field of discourse, that is, from language as a concrete integral phenomenon. Language only lives in the dialogical communication of those who use it".

Thus, based on Bakhtinian precepts, dialogism is consolidated in relations with life, explicitly or implicitly, consciously or not, implied in communication, starting from possibilities offered by the language and being realized through discursive genres.





Therefore, when teaching a discursive genre, in addition to the conditions of production and its basic characteristics, it is also necessary to consider the communicative sphere, because it will determine the social spaces to which it belongs (PERFEITO, 2010).

In this context, the interactive conception of language establishes discourse as an effect of meaning (BAKHTIN, 1992 apud PERFEITO, 2010, p. 24) between interlocutors who combine social, historical and language values as a concrete representation of these relationships.

For Bakhtin (1992, p. 262), the "speaker and listener are social, historical subjects, inserted in a culture and constitute their social relations through the language and the utterances they produce".

Anchored in these precepts, it is perceived that Bakhtinian concepts assume a relevant role for studies focused on language, because, according to Brait (2006, p. 10) "it is possible to explain the relationship between language, languages, history and subjects". For the author, this is the basis of a conception of language, in which the subjects are historically situated, constructing and producing meanings, supported through their discursive relations.

We understand, therefore, that the specific conditions and purposes of communication are determined by circumstances, influenced according to Bakhtin (2003, p. 332, our translation), "by three elements, thematic content, style, compositional construction, which are indissoluble to the whole of the utterance and are also determined by the specificity of a given field of communication".

The dialogical perspective of language considers the broad relations between the context in which the enunciated texts are included, according to each sphere of human communication in which they circulate, and their reflections in the constitution of genders, are closely linked to a sphere of discursive communication, which are constituted both by a social dimension and by a verbal dimension.

### **Discursive genres and textual genres for the introduction of Agroecology in Portuguese language teaching**

Discursive genres and textual genres, despite being understood as teaching unit and teaching object, respectively, in relation to the orientation of texts, have distinct concepts based on Bakhtin's studies.

The textual genres were established in the National Curricular Parameters in 1998 (BRASIL, 1998), with several changes, among them, that of Portuguese language teaching in





an interactionist proposal, which begins to be considered as the practice of the teacher's work in the classroom (ANTONIO; NAVARRO, 2017).

For the discipline of Portuguese, the Curricular Guidelines of Paraná define discourse as structuring content for work in the classroom, which should be manifested through discursive genres, which, in turn, are presented in the form of texts (MENEGASSI, 2017).

Therefore, it should be considered that "textual genres are social constructions inserted in sociodiscursive practices, governed by dynamic devices for textual organization, and may change with time and with the situational context" (DELL'ISOLA, 2010, p. 7 apud ANTONIO; NAVARRO, 2017).

In this sense, the genres are in two aspects, on the one hand, providing the participation of the action of language, and, on the other, they are delimited by conditions of production, circulation and reception related to the form of construction of the text.

Dell'Isola (2010, p. 8 apud ANTONIO; NAVARRO, 2017) reinforces that, "the text is linked to the use of language for objectives to be achieved, determining the situation of human experience, structural regularities and other characteristics such as communicative support".

Marcuschi (2008, p. 154, our translation) stresses that the mastery of a textual genre does not mean the mastery of "a linguistic form but a way of linguistically achieving specific objectives in particular social situations".

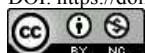
It is perceived that genres can be understood as models that correspond to social forms, communication situations that are expressed in teaching, manifested through social actions in the language of textual genres.

Based on these considerations, Bronckart (2003, p. 75, our translation) dialogues with Bakhtin about "the relationship of interdependence between mastery of language productions and the mastery of human actions, and adopts the text as an object of analysis".

For the author, the texts are concrete products of language actions, constitute different linguistic sequences (such as exhibition, report, dialogue, etc.) and are organized by the linguistic statements, regularities and marking (BRONCKART, 2003).

Thus, it claims to be the text

every unit of verbal production that conveys a linguistically organized message and tends to produce a coherence effect on its recipient. [...] to the extent that every text necessarily is inscribed in a set of texts or in a genre, we adopted the expression text genre instead of discourse genre (BRONCKART, 2003, p. 75, our translation).





Thus, it is understood that texts are products of a human nature and are articulated with our needs, interests and conditions of the social contexts in which we are inserted and in which we produce our sayings, whether oral or written.

According to Dolz and Schneuwly (1999) there are three dimensions to characterize a genre: the contents and knowledge themselves, the elements of the communicative structures shared by the texts and the specific configurations of language units.

In this sense, the activities proposed with language are carried out through genres, "and genders are the practical realization of what is language" (DOLZ; SCHNEUWLY, 1999, p. 6, our translation).

The relationship between school and gender is seen not only as an instrument of communication, but as an object of teaching-learning, enabling the student to perceive social actions and the context of the production conditions of each gender (DOLZ; SCHNEUWLY, 1999).

Genders, therefore, are present in school in educational practices regularly, and are taught and reformulated through activities that support learning, providing studies of structural, stylistic and thematic characteristics.

When analyzing a gender according to Bakhtin's methodological guidelines, we must start from the social context in which the text is inserted, from the relations of meaning that establish with the other texts, the intention and purposes of a given situation and sphere of interaction, thus reflecting in the production of another text.

From the search for understanding the dialogical constitution of the texts-enunciated, according to Bakhtin (2003, p. 319, our translation) "we are primarily interested in the concrete forms of the texts and in the concrete conditions of the life of the texts, in their interrelation and interaction". For Costa-Hübes (2012, p. 114, our translation) "language is interpreted and recognized not only as a cognitive and linguistic structure, but as a socio-symbol historically constructed from the real needs of human interaction".

It is worth noting, in this perspective, that the genres, according to Marcuschi (2003, p. 22, our translation), "constitute several textual typologies, which are defined by the predominant linguistic nature of their composition (modality, syntactic, lexical aspects, verbal tenses, logical relations, style, content organization)", in which they are organized in the structure and in the elements that make up the textual genre.





Thus, the approach from textual genres is an opportunity to deal with the social practice of the language in its most diverse uses, in daily life, providing the teacher to work with different textual, oral and written modalities.

The use of textual genres, therefore, can be an important instrument in a proposal of education for sustainability, through the introduction of agroecology themes.

### **Final considerations**

In recent decades, Agroecology has consolidated itself as a multidisciplinary and integrating science, constituting a new paradigm by proposing a society based on sustainable processes of food production.

When analyzing the role of education in this process, it is verified that the urban school has historically distanced itself from the reality of the rural environment, creating an educational model that considers little the relationship of man with nature and food production.

Even though Agroecology still has its origins in the rural context, it brings with it an integrative and interactionist proposal that promotes dialogue between rural and urban cultures, proposing the construction of a new historical-cultural process based on the principles of sustainability.

Understanding the role of education in the construction of society, and that the educational process is processed through forms of action based on interactive and dialogical practices, the school begins to have the mission of articulating a learning process that discusses concepts and meanings where the educator, while exercising his role in socio-educational relationships, coordinating actions, research and reflections, enables new learning processes.

In this context, language and textual genres, as a theoretical-methodological practice, play an important role in bringing to the classroom the possibility of introducing the themes of Agroecology.

Used as a strategy for understanding and producing texts beyond the socio-discursive functioning of the genre - textual production itself - allows interpretations of the student for new experiences, questions, events and reactions pertinent to their positioning as an individual.

In a context, the production of textual genres with themes related to Agroecology in the context of high school in the discipline of Portuguese language could contribute for young people to develop a vision of reality based on the principles of sustainability, thus enabling the creation of a new relationship between man and nature.





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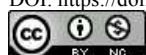
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