

Aziz Nacib Ab'sáber Didactic Proposal for Professor Degree Enclosed in the “Brazilian Project for Geography Teaching” (1975)

Thiago José de Oliveira, and Márcia Cristina de Oliveira Mello

Geography Teaching Laboratory, Campus of Ourinhos, São Paulo State University (UNESP), Brazil

Abstract: In the 1920s a debate started in Brazil on education and the insertion of a new model of education called New School. Concerning geography teaching, there were the contributions of Carlos Miguel Delgado de Carvalho, Antônio Firmino Proença, João Augusto de Toledo among other professors who expressed their scholastic perspectives, through teaching manuals. The New School movement brought repercussions on the approach of geography teaching at schools. This thought influenced a generation of renowned professors who graduated in Geography and History course at the Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Sciences (FPSC) at University of São Paulo (USP), among them Aziz Nacib Ab'Sáber. It is highlighted the contribution of Aziz to the geography teaching. The renowned professor graduated in Bachelor's Degree in geography in 1944, he was a teacher at the then secondary school, before becoming a professor at the Pontifical Catholic University (PUC-SP) and been entitled professor of Physical Geography at USP. In 1975 Aziz produced the didactic collection entitled “Forms of Relief”, whose analysis we endeavor to do. The research is in progress since 2017 from the participation as a technical training fellow, in the project Methodological Guidelines for Geography teachers for the secondary school at São Paulo School (1934-1960). During the research it was possible to contact documentary sources in interviews format granted by the alumni of the course of Geography and History of USP, Aziz Ab'Sáber. Thus, the objective is to understand the didactic proposition of Aziz Nacib Ab'Sáber, on geography teaching in the second degree as it was known at that time, enclosed in the “Brazilian Project for the teaching of geography (1975)”; analyze the set of didactic texts Forms of relief: basic text, teacher's guide and practical work; and to identify the didactic orientations proposed by the author regarding the selection of contents and teaching methodology of geography.

Key words: geography teaching, Aziz Ab'Sáber, didactics of geography

1. Introduction

In the 1920s a debate came out in Brazil about education and the insertion of a new model of education called New School. This model involves a critique of traditional teaching in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Having been formed at private schools in Europe in 1880, he focused on democratic teaching, valuing children natural instinct. The New School was a pulverized movement, formed by theorists from

different parts of the world who defended a set of ideas opposed to the traditional teaching [1]

Regarding to geography teaching, we had the contributions of Carlos Miguel Delgado de Carvalho, Antonio Firmino Proença and João Augusto de Toledo among other teachers who expressed their scholastic perspectives through teaching manuals [2].

Thus, Delgado de Carvalho started to worry on which destination of Geography in primary and secondary school would be, since teaching should enable the transition from primary to secondary school

with necessary knowledge of taught content to continue the study. Since Delgado de Carvalho was a secondary school teacher at D. Pedro II School, he did not see the primary school as the end of studies period, which was common at that time. The renowned author was already concerned with the importance of continuing the studies on the part of the students.

As pointed out by Santos (2005) [2] the *New School* transition period, as explained by Firmino Proença in his book *How to Teach Geography*, published as part of the Education Library, organized by Lourenço Filho, criticized the way geography was being taught at schools. According to Firmino, this discipline had been focused only on nomenclatures and a mechanized cartographic reading.

Thus, in his manual, Firmino presented not a way to reproduce geography mechanically, as it was being taught, but a practical application of the subject, rising this way, the spirit of the teacher, from a total vision on the importance of geography, understanding its practical purpose. Lourenço Filho stated that the manual was inserted in the ideas of renovation of the geography teaching.

[...] preached and held in Brazil, in the secondary course by Delgado de Carvalho, and announced for the primary course in several works of Professor Renato Jardim, in the Society of Education, in São Paulo, and in the First National Congress of Education [3].

Been assigned the importance of Proença's work on the renovation of geography teaching, his work was intended for teachers, with theories and lesson plans and examples aimed directly at them.

The renovation proposed by Delgado de Carvalho brought numerous changes in the way geography was being taught in primary and secondary schools in the 1920s, especially those contained in the teaching manual named "Methodology on Geographical Teaching" (1925). His reviews on mnemonic geography led the author to question the way the studies were focused on the memorization of contents did not allow them to be associated with reality, making

them mere fantasy. The author highlighted that the studies of Physical Geography were in fact inserting the human being more and more, showing the interaction between nature and human life, according to its geographic location and the transformations that the human being performs in nature, so geography would become quite different from the one previously taught [4].

This research is under development, being elaborated from the participation as a technical scholarship training 1 in the project *Methodological Guidelines for Geography teachers for the secondary school of São Paulo School* (1934-1960). Geography and History course alumni made it possible to get in touch with documentary sources in the format of interviews of FFLC of USP. Among the documentary sources we selected those directly related to Aziz Ab'Sáber.

From the documentary sources we selected for research the ones published by Gauttieri et al. (2010) [5], which gather the entire work of Professor Ab'Sáber. From this dense bibliographical material, we selected the set composed by the three didactic texts called *Forms of relief*.

2. The Research General Objective

Analyze Aziz Nacib Ab'Sáber didactic proposal for the teaching of geography at the time known as second degree, enclosed in the "Brazilian Project for teaching Geography" (1975).

3. Research Methodology

The research consisted of bibliographical and documentary study. The documentary study was carried out through the identification, location and retrieval of primary and secondary sources obtained especially at FFCL collections of USP, including periodicals of the time and other documentary sources such as university reports.

Electronic databases such as <http://dedalus.usp.br>, <http://cutter.unicamp.br>, and <http://www.athena>.

biblioteca.unesp.br were also considered.

The bibliographical research was articulated to the themes connected to the teaching of geography from the beginning of the 20th century until the 1970s. The aspects related to the contents and teaching methodology of geography were emphasized.

In the New School context, Aziz Nacib Ab'Sáber began his studies at the age of 17, in the Geography and History course at FFLC of USP, where he got in touch with the bibliography of the New School related to geography teaching, which can be minimally represented by Lourenço Filho, Delgado de Carvalho and Proença [6].

The collected data were analyzed in the light of this specialized bibliography and the results will be systematized in the format of academic article and/or full texts for presentation at scientific events.

4. Results

In secondary education, he studied at Grupo Escolar Rui Barbosa in Caçapava-SP. From that period on he came across the competition existing in the school he stated not to know before starting his studies, later he transferred himself to the Ginásio Estadual de Caçapava where he finished high school.

He was a student of USP newly graduated professors, paying close attention to the training difference compared to the others. He then became interested in studying Geography and History, his main influence being Professor Hilton Friedericki who had great dominance in geography.

At that time, Geography and History were part of the same course. The renowned professor decided for geography and graduated in Bachelor Degree in 1944. He was a high school teacher and later taught at the Pontifical Catholic University (PUC-SP), in 1968 he became a full professor of Physical Geography at USP [6].

The graduation at USP and the proximity to the defenders of the new school made Aziz express concerns about geography contents taught at schools.

Regarding the New School geography teaching, Aziz embodied it to his reading of the nature, as connected to the human being. Being a great observer and reader of Brazilian landscape physiognomy, his concepts became a landmark for geography teaching, for bringing the student new perspective, while observer of the landscape that seeks to understand its dynamics and not just memorize its characteristics.

Anyone having the habit of observing the landscape along any route watches a series of relief forms, sometimes greatly varied and sometimes very monotonous and repetitive. Whatever our route the relief is varied, be it a lot or very little, from space to space. Before the observer eyes now and then, pass flat and fertile lands, sometimes ripples in the form of high or low hills. Beyond we can see rugged and mountainous land, silhouettes of plateaus and true mountains, one or another prominent peak [7].

Aziz ideas encouraged the inclusion in the curriculum of the schools the interpretation and the comprehension of the forms of the relief, according to what is proposed by Delgado de Carvalho in his critic of the mnemonic geography, where the author also emphasized the importance for the man to know his habitat.

Azis makes In his work *Ecosystems of Brazil*, a thorough reading of the Brazilian landscape pointing out the diverse ecosystems which made Brazil the way it is. The author highlights the importance of studies being developed in an integrated way, since the junction of all ecosystem components are primordial for their understanding and not with the use of abstract theoretical models [8].

Described in his work according to his views, *The nature domains in Brazil*, the different situations in which human beings find themselves considering the available resources.

In a second approach, it is essential to emphasize that the nations have inherited larger or smaller slices of those same complexes of long and complicated elaboration of physiography and ecology. More than simple territory spaces, peoples have inherited landscapes and ecologies, for which they are truly

responsible, or should be. From the highest position in the government and administration to the simplest citizen, everyone has a permanent portion of responsibility in the sense of non-predatory use of this unique heritage, the earth landscape [9]. So, the specific use limitations of each type of landscape must be better understood [9].

Aziz had the view that as observer the student could also use scientific knowledge, not only to comprehend forms, but also object to human interventions in unfavorable approaches, pointing with scientific arguments to the identified problems, contributing to an adequate management of the environment.

When an area is chosen to build a railway, a road, to build an airport, placing a village or a condominium unit, plan a maneuver or reconnaissance of the land what is at stake are the relief forms and the soil and rocks, as well as indispensable knowledge about water [7].

So, it was showed by the author, his worries with the usefulness of geography teaching to understand the human interventions.

Numberless were Aziz contributions to geography as well as to the education. His works, published from 1948, bore upon didactic book collections on all school levels. He also dedicated himself to the production of a set of didactic texts, published in 1975.

Professor Aziz also devoted himself to publishing textbooks for high school, since there were no teaching practices within existing books. Thus, in 1975, he ended up preparing a better textbook, *Forms of Relief*, within the project of an old entity called "Funbec". It was a kind of structural geomorphology, especially with three directions: a student book, a teacher's guide and an exercise book. [...]. Aziz felt that the books presented to students did not have much mastery of geographical knowledge, or were directed more to graduates than students [5].

The didactic collection published by Aziz in 1975 was named *Relief Forms*. It is a three books collection. The first one was consisted of a basic text addressed to teachers. The content of the second one included guidelines addressed to the application by the teachers, corresponding to a Teacher's Guidelines. The third was

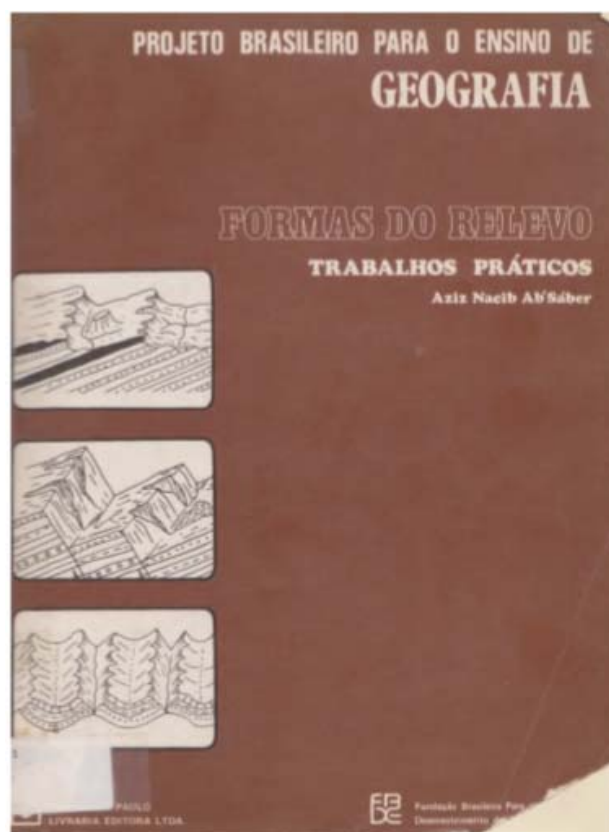


Fig. 1 The book cover *Forms of relief: functional work*, published in 1975, by Aziz Nacib Ab'Sáber, integrating the Brazilian Project on Geography Teaching-Fonte [7].

a book of exercises (practice exercises) addressed to students and composed by forty tablets of exercises.

From this bibliographical material we realized what the pedagogical guidelines were as proposed in that period by the Brazilian Foundation for the Development of Science Teaching (FUNBEC) with the support of the Ford Foundation.

Being the Geography Institute director at USP at that time, Aziz Nacib Ab'Sáber, coordinated the "Brazilian Project of Geography Teaching", supported by the team of professors composed by Adilson Avansi de Abreu, Antonio Christofolletti, Antonio Olívio Ceron, Augusto Humberto Vairo Titarelli, Carlos Augusto Figueiredo Monteiro, Desna Celoria, Eliana Ermel de Araújo, Eva Markus, Helena Mirabelli, José Alexandre Felizola Diniz, José Bueno Conti, José Roberto Tarifa, Livia de Oliveira, Lúcia Helena de Oliveira Gerardi, Mariantonia Chippari, Nidia Nacib Pontuschka,

Raimundo Henrique Barbosa, Regina Marta Barbosa Faria, Silvia Maria Manfredi and Teluko Yonemoto.

Among them it is highlighted the names of, Nídia Nacib Pontuschka and Livia de Oliveira who distinguished themselves in the field of Geography Teaching. As Aziz worried about the way Geography was taught in schools, his proposition considered the applicability of Geography to the classroom.

Aziz criticized the didactic materials of the time, since the books used in the schools presented very technical content. According to him the books presented a scientific language similar to that used in the university. Thus, he stressed the importance of using a specific language aimed at secondary school students [6].

The author's concerns with the teaching of geographic contents involved the fact that they were selected based on the geographic science produced at the university, which presented a great problem for him, mainly because it was away from the students reality and sometimes away from the mastery of the teachers themselves. Then he pointed out the need for pedagogical formation of teachers, who according to him should have most of his training in fieldwork.

From didactic point of view, present days elements are found in Aziz proposal, when approaching to what is called nowadays Freirean Pedagogy.

There is no teaching without research and no research without teaching. These what to do are in each other's body. While teaching I keep on seeking, looking for. I teach because I search, because I questioned, because I question and question myself. I search to know what I still do not know, then announce the news [10].

So, it is possible to come across in Aziz and Freire opinion, elements of teaching while being a practice-theorician process. So, they value a praxis as necessary to construct knowledge.

The teaching practical-theorist aspect, highlighted from the *new school* ideas and pointed out by Santos (2005) [2], values the importance of the teaching geography *in loco*, pointing out that such way of

teaching would be more feasible in excursions, when the students could visit the school surroundings, to understand the conditioning factors of space modification.

Aziz technique formation together with his docent experience made it possible for him to arrange the guidelines addressed to geography teachers at that time. Such guidelines envisioned the use of pictures which were frequently used by the author, both in his work and in his didactic books, aimed at strengthening in the students the possibility to form a landscape reader, through the Geomorphology [7].

Aziz depictions in draft format were elaborated during his field work, where he also got in touch with the need of systematize his researches in the format of several texts. Among them books addressed to geography graduation courses.

On that production the focus was in the application of the teaching using the relief drafts together with a colloquial and informal language in a simple and direct form, being applied according to the authors, to any social group, in any place, working on problems caused by the impact of inadequate handling, within the several localities of our country.

Taking this point of view, it is possible to state that for Aziz the teaching and the discussion of problems related to how to handle the soil are not feasible without a positive material for reading and understanding. It is indispensable for Aziz, the presence of the teacher on implementing the practical exercises in order that the students may learn the concepts and foster the objectives to be achieved in the classroom. The proposal of the exercises was work in groups of two and four students.

It is highlighted herewith some steps of work according to what is proposed in the didactic material as follows [7].

- 1) Organize students in groups for the implementation of the activities.
- 2) Set once in a while a group for organization, a committee for evaluation, an evaluation board,

counselors, etc.

- 3) Apportioning the material among groups of students, quickly presenting the "*core*" work of the day. Provide students a short time for an exploratory examination of materials that will support the session. Encourage discussions within the groups aiming at the exchange of knowledge.
- 4) Define the objectives of the section of the day, from the simplest to the most complex, using the previous indications, selecting them and making an effort to add other goals, judged viable and useful.
- 5) Listen to the students about their suggestions on the exercises, welcome their suggestions when feasible, following a criterious base.
- 6) Present ideas which are considered importants to the right implementation of the exercises, presenting the typology of the facts under study.
- 7) Turn to the analysis of facts presented in the exercises for the link with the previous theoretical reports.
- 8) professor deve seguir a grosso modo o roteiro preestabelecido no guia do professor, também introduzir inovações criativas, durante o desenvolvimento dos exercícios. Buscar "tipologias".
- 9) The teachers must follow roughly the pre-set script in the Teacher's Guide, introducing creative innovations as well, as long as the exercises go on. Search for "typologies".
- 10) Provide to the students a time for mediation, drawing operations, written outlines and proposing related issues.
- 11) Set a time for oral manifestations for each representative of groups of students.
- 12) The teacher working as a mediator, both reading and exploring related facts and entailment.
- 13) Perform a final evaluation for teachers and students.

14) Enlist conclusions e results.

Aziz sought this way, articulate theory and practice in the teaching of Geography, as a former student of the Course of Geography and History at USP, a course that began a tradition in the process of training teachers of Geography in Brazil.

5. Final Considerations

It was highlighted in the textual analysis the Geography concepts proposed by Aziz to be implemented in schools. It can be realized that these concepts became teaching contents which up to the present days are enclosed in Brazilian schools curriculum to the geography teaching.

USP docent formation process in the early 20th century valued the constitution of Brazilian scientific geography, which in turn influenced the curriculum and the accomplishment of the subject in school.

Aziz theorist production dialogue with nature sciences, whose influence on teaching is noticed in the production of geography textbooks which is still used in schools nowadays. Aziz also contributed to the teaching of environmental education as an interdisciplinary practice, fomenting in the students the interest for science based on our country landscape attributes.

Aziz's proposal contained in the Relief Forms collection is current, bringing teaching practices that for many have emerged only in critical geography. The proposed format for the exercises application had at the time promoted group work and provided time for students to explore the materials and discuss them with their colleagues. It still allowed the students' suggestions to the teachers about the exercises, allowing a less vertical teaching format fostering the dialogue between the student and the teacher.

References

- [1] Cavalleiro Caroline Battistello and Teive, Gladys Mary Ghizoni, Movimento escolanovista - três olhares, in: *Congresso Nacional De Educação*, Curitiba, Anais. Curitiba: PUC, 2013, pp. 21775-21776.

- [2] Santos, Fátima Aparecida dos Santos, *A escola nova e a prescrição destinadas ao ensino da disciplina de Geografia da escola primária de São Paulo no início do século XX*. Dissertação (Mestrado em Educação) - Pontifícia Universidade Católica, São Paulo, 2005, p. 181.
- [3] Lourenço Filho, Prefácio, in: Proença Antonio Firmino (s.d.), *Como se ensina Geographia*, São Paulo: Melhoramentos.
- [4] Carvalho Carlos Miguel Delgado de., *Methodologia do ensino geographico*: introdução aos estudos de Geographia moderna, Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1925.
- [5] Gauttieri May Christiane Modenesi et al. (Org.), *A obra de Aziz Nacib Ab'Saber*, São Paulo: Beca-Ball, 2010.
- [6] Costa Vera Rita and Weingrill Carmen, Entrevista com Aziz Nacib Ab'saber, *Revista Ciência Hoje*, 1992, accessed on 19/12/2017, available online at: http://www.canalciencia.ibict.br/notaveis/livros/aziz_nacib_absaber_7.html.
- [7] Ab'Sáber Aziz Nacib, *Formas de relevo*: trabalhos práticos, São Paulo: Edart, 1975.
- [8] Ab'Sáber Aziz Nacib, *Ecossistemas do Brasil*, São Paulo: Metalivros, 2006.
- [9] Ab'Sáber Aziz Nacib, *Os domínios de natureza no Brasil*, São Paulo: Ateliê editorial, 2003.
- [10] Freire Paulo, *Pedagogia da autonomia*: saberes necessários à prática educativa, São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1996.