

THE FIELD EXIT AS A TEACHING RESOURCE TO KNOW THE GEOGRAPHICAL SPACE: THE CASE OF THE CITY OF VALLADOLID AND SORIA

Julio Fernández Portela

ABSTRACT:

The study of the city and the elements that exist in it, are some of the most representative contents that refer to the knowledge of the geographic space in the second cycle of Early Childhood Education. From an early age, children have to begin to manage spatial notions, so that the city, and through the organization of field trips, becomes a key concept that will help students to acquire. In this paper, a series of didactic itineraries are proposed by two castellanoleonesas cities, Valladolid and Soria, which mix aspects of heritage, art, society, the natural environment, etc., and which aim to make known their elements more representative for this age.

KEYWORDS:

City, geographical space, Valladolid, Soria, didactic itinerary

1. INTRODUCTION: THE ROLE OF THE CITY IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

The concept of city involves working at the same time various aspects such as closeness and distance, the determination of scales of analysis, and assume the discontinuity between the experience of space and the space thought, elements that will allow to acquire these notions (Alderoqui, 2002).

In the first stage from 0 to 6 years, the school, but especially the neighborhood, are the components of the city that most children will work for, so it is not necessary to venture into distant cities, exotic landscapes or the bright stars for the students to acquire the contents of the geographical space. The children have to return to be part of the city,

because they are a key piece of it and should not be forgotten. The concept of street and square, of hospital and market, of the professions and jobs that are developed in it, or the norms of coexistence established to be able to live, are essential elements that must be worked in the stage of infantile education (Tonucci, 1997). A similar situation also posed by Acale et al. (2008), in this case using the senses as touch, taste or smell, and using the game as a main tool, and that will allow you to know the places that make up your neighborhood such as the square, the market, or the park among others.

Relative to the geographic space are those contents that mention their characteristics, the relationship between man and the environment, the meaning of densities, rural and urban spaces, population, economic activities, physical environment or types of organization of the geographical space. However, it is more interesting to establish the relationships that man presents with the environment in which he lives (Dolfuss, 1982), how the elements present in the territory influence society, and is that everything that happens develops in a concrete time, temporal framework, and in a specific place, spatial framework, so it is necessary to begin to work spatial notions from early ages, because they are concepts that students will find in their day to day.

The knowledge of space is an important aspect that students must acquire and in which they must work over the years going through a series of phases as they mature and are able to assimilate more complex spatial conceptions “It seems that we should consider the medium as an adequate resource to work on it in a continuous way, and choosing situations that may be more in line with the age and interests of the students” (Berges, 2002, p.27).

It is in this context that the city is framed as one of the most representative contents, together with the landscape, that the students of child education have to work between 3 and 6 years within the area of the area of knowledge of the environment. In this initial process, one starts from the closest thing, such as the family and the school environment where their first and most significant experiences take place, and then change to more complex and distant aspects, both in space and in time. As it grows, a greater knowledge of the geographical space takes place, as it moves from its home and school, to other more spacious and complex places such as the neighborhood, the city or its town, that is to say, it is growing more and more The space radio in which they move, which will allow them to discover new territories farther from the original being able to organize and relate different spatial concepts.

For this, in addition to classroom classes, it is essential to make field trips to acquire the knowledge of the geographical space. Excursions through the natural or urban environment, visits to museums and monuments, or the itineraries through a city or mountain, contribute to the assimilation of the contents themselves, while helping the student to have a wider vision of everything that which encompasses the territory, as well as the relations that are established between the different elements of the environment and the human being.

2. TRAINING TRIPS: FROM THE INSTITUTION FREE OF TEACHING TO CURRENTLY

As it has been anticipated, the departure of the field, by a town, a mountain or the city, is an important resource to explain what is in the territory, a space in which are going to converge geomorphological, biogeographical, economic or cultural aspects .

The excursion or field trip is a common practice in schools and institutes, among other things, to assimilate a series of contents in a different way to the methodology used in the classroom. It is defined itinerary as “a journey or way to follow with different stops of interest in certain elements of cultural or patrimonial value” (Insa 2002, p.89). A field trip, previously organized in the classroom by teachers, and that aims to make a series of stops in those places that want to make known to the students.

This type of activity has its origin in the Free Teaching Institution, a pedagogical project that was developed in Spain in 1879 and was in operation since the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by a group of teachers to whom had retired their university chairs because they not to share certain politicians with the existing government in this period. The most representative person of this movement was Francisco Giner de los Ríos, and next to him other partners, all professors of university and institute, who had suffered the same destiny emphasizing to Eugenio Montero Ríos, Nicolás Salmerón, Augusto González de Linares, Segismundo Moret, or Gumersindo Azcárate, among others, who initiated a cultural, educational and social renewal, whose objective was to create a renovating educational center, which was interested in educating and not only instructing (Ortega, 2016).

The field trips, through didactic itineraries, play an important role in the teaching - learning process. The importance of taking students to the outside to see in the first person the characteristics and processes that take place in the territory, since the itineraries contribute to awaken the interest of the students by the environment in which they live and that surrounds them, teaches them to observe and look beyond what they have before them, allows the acquisition of new concepts present in their daily life, contribute to reflect on the society in which they live, etc. (García, 1994).

3. THE CITY: COMPONENTS AND FUNCTIONS IN THE OFFICIAL CURRICULUM OF SECOND CYCLE OF CHILDREN EDUCATION

The integration of the different areas of the curriculum and of the different contents is one of the most significant aspects that a teacher has to carry out in his classroom of childhood education. In this way, contents related to vegetation, animals, buildings characteristic of a city, crafts, colors and even geometric shapes can be integrated into an activity.

This work tries to design a series of itineraries or didactic walks, in total seven, four by the city of Valladolid and three by the one of Soria, since both, in spite of their demographic differences, present similarities in their morphology. This will allow the students of the second cycle of early childhood education to know and identify the most representative elements and functions of the artistic, cultural and natural heritage existing in the urban environment in which they live.

They have to be short-distance itineraries that allow the students to do them without any difficulty. The itineraries pretend to be models that can be applied in those localities that present similar characteristics to Valladolid and Soria, that is to say, presence of historical-artistic-cultural elements, parks, rivers..., and that serve the teacher as a didactic resource in their teaching practice.

The legislation in force at this stage of education is regulated at the state level by *Real Decreto 1630/2006, de 29 de diciembre, por el que se establecen las enseñanzas mínimas del segundo ciclo de Educación infantil*, and at regional level by *Decreto 122/2007, de 27 de diciembre, por el que se establece el currículo de segundo ciclo de la Educación Infantil en la Comunidad de Castilla y León*.

4. VALLADOLID AND SORIA THROUGH THE DIDACTIC ITINERARIES: THE STUDY OF THE CITY, THE RIVERS AND THE PARKS

Valladolid and Soria are two cities of Castilla y León that present a diverse geographical dynamic in many aspects, mainly by its size and its location. Nevertheless, they also have similarities in their structure, as they both have a historical center with numerous patrimonial elements, a river bank (the Pisuerga in Valladolid and the Duero in Soria), and historic gardens. These will be the three elements of confluence that will be used to design the didactic itineraries that will allow to know some of the most representative elements of each of the cities.

The itineraries that are proposed have the purpose that the students of second cycle of Childhood education know the more immediate space that surrounds them, that is to say, that they know which elements conform it, what characteristics they possess, the existing typology... By the urban center will take place those of historical and cultural character, including the professions that can be developed in him; by the banks of the rivers the contents that present more natural components, as well as elements present in its surroundings that deserve to be highlighted; and gardens and parks with an important historical component and also, as in the case of rivers, elements of their surroundings such as train stations, post offices, or other facilities and services.

In the first place a general visit of the whole tour will be realized to observe what will be studied later in the classroom. From each of the elements will be carried out an activity, so in total there will be eight activities per course, and will last for two weeks each of them distributed as the teacher sees the course of classes.

4.1. The didactic itinerary in the city of Valladolid

For the case of Valladolid, the proposal of didactic itineraries is divided in four; two historic by the center of the city; one for the Campo Grande park, and one for the banks of the Pisuerga river.

Historical itinerary 1	Historical itinerary 2	Campo Grande	The Pisuerga riverside
Calle Santiago	Instituto Zorrilla	Entrada del Príncipe	Pistas deportivas
Plaza Mayor	Iglesia de San Pablo	Estanque	Playa
Casa Consistorial	Palacio Real	Fuente de la Fama	Río Pisuerga
Correos	Catedral	Estatuas	Leyenda del Pisuerga
San Benito	Museo de Escultura	Fauna y flora	Animales
Mercado del Val	Juzgados	Escudo de Valladolid	Vegetación
Patio Herreriano	Teatro Calderón	Plaza de Colón	Puente Mayor
Archivo San Agustín	Universidad	Estación de tren	Harinera

Suggested itineraries for departures from Valladolid. Source: own elaboration.

4.2. The didactic itinerary in the city of Soria

In the case of the city of Soria, being a smaller space, the proposal of didactic itineraries is divided in three; one historic by the center of the city; one for the park of the Alameda de Cervantes, and one for the banks of the Douro River.

Historical itinerary	La Alameda de Cervantes	The Duero riverside
Plaza Mayor	Entrada a la Dehesa	Río Duero
Ayuntamiento	Fuentes	Iglesia de San Saturio
Edificio de la Audiencia	Flora y fauna	Animales
Archivo municipal	El árbol de la música	Vegetación
Palacio de los Condes de Gómara	Palomar	San Juan de Duero
Calle Collado	Museo Numantino	Paraje Natural Soto Playa
Banco de España	Oficina de correos	Molino
Iglesia de San Juan	Plaza de Mariano granados	Puente de Piedra

Suggested itineraries for departures from Soria. Source: own elaboration.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The city is a concept present in the curriculum of childhood education, and therefore, the students must know the different aspects that revolve around this term. In the city, besides recognizing the buildings and the most emblematic places that compose it, it is necessary to understand the functions and offices in these spaces are realized, a series of questions that will allow the students to know, not only the structure of these urban territories, but also their operation.

For this, the didactic itinerary becomes a useful resource that contributes to explain the geographic space and the elements that are in it. Through the design of this type of course, curriculum content can be acquired in a more dynamic, inductive, creative and more playful way for students complementing the theoretical-practical classes taught in the classroom, and allowing them to design sessions and activities More dynamic that capture the attention and motivation of learners reinforcing learning. It allows a change in the usual dynamics of the classroom, and field trips are very useful at all educational levels, from children to university.

With this work, and given the role of didactic itineraries in education, two itinerary proposals are proposed by two castellanoleonesas cities, Valladolid and Soria, two apparently different cities, especially in size, but with a structure very similar in its urban morphology. A total of seven routes of eight stops each have been designed. Two urban spaces different from each other, but which allow the development of such proposals in a similar way, which could be applied to other territories. In the case of Valladolid two are urban, one on the banks of the river Pisuerga and another for the historic garden of Campo Grande, and in the city of Soria one urban, another along the banks of the river Duero and finally a third in the historic park of the Alameda de Cervantes, which will allow to know a part of the cultural and artistic, natural and historical heritage that there is in these cities, as well as the functions that in her develop.

This proposal is set as an example so that future teachers can address the subject of knowledge of the territory and see the possibilities of field trips in teaching practice, as they allow the direct interaction of the student with the environment, and facilitates the learning of the contents, not only conceptual, but also attitudes directly showing what surrounds them in their day to day, while working the basic skills.