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FIELD CLASS AS A FACILITATING INSTRUMENT FOR LEARNING: AN EXPERIENCE WITH STUDENTS OF THE VETERINARY MEDICINE COURSE IN CASTANHAL-PA

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ABSTRACT: The present study aimed to investigate the effect of the field class on the learning process of the Social Sciences I discipline. The investigated public consisted of 33 students from the 5th period of veterinary medicine at the Federal University of Pará (UFPA) - Castanhal campus. The students participated in two days of field classes, where the class visited two properties, one considered a model of family farming (Tomé Açu-PA) and the other the Benedito Alves Bandeira settlement (Acará-PA). Previously, the teacher responsible for the discipline sensitized the class about what the activity would be. In the next class of the trip, a conversation circle was held and later a questionnaire related to the experience was applied. 60% of the students reported that they liked the visit to the family farmer's property more than the settlement. Regarding the efficiency of the teaching method technical visit, 65% of the students considered the teaching method efficient. 70% of respondents indicated the need for the activity to be extended. In view of the above, it is worth mentioning the positive effect that the field class activity has on the learning process, and it is important to raise awareness on the part of the teacher through theory so that the student understands the role and importance of the rural man in the social context.

Keywords: Learning, Teaching Strategies, Rural Extension.

INTRODUCTION

The use of tools that facilitate the teaching and learning process requires the delivery of teachers and students, making it necessary to harmonize both, adding to this the commitment of those involved.

Currently, there are several difficulties faced in the academic environment, among which we can highlight the lack of resources and materials for practical classes. In this sense, it is observed the lack of motivation of many

students in the educational environment. Therefore, it is up to the teacher to transform this problem into didactic strategies that are attractive to students.

In this context, the field class is evident as an important ally, a facilitator of learning, with a view to improving the teaching-learning process. It is worth noting that students are heterogeneous in the way they learn.

Gardner (1995) states in his studies that there are eight types of intelligence that the individual has to learn: Corporal-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical and naturalistic. The skills for each individual vary. In this scenario, it is up to the teacher to observe which methods to use, seeking greater diversity, to meet the needs of each subject.

METHODOLOGY

This study was developed with students of the 5th academic year of the veterinary medicine course at the Federal University of Pará (UFPA), Castanhal campus. A priori awareness was made with the students about the objectives of the technical trip (field class), the trip was chosen as a learning tool by the teachers involved in the Social Sciences I discipline, with the main focus of providing students with experiences in two main environments: An agrarian reform settlement project and a family farming production unit considered a model in the region.

Before carrying out the trip, there was work in the classroom in an expository way and dialogue with the themes: Family farming, Landless Movement and Rural Extension. Theoretical discussions were based on analysis of texts, videos and lectures in power point format.

The class participating in the discipline consisted of 40 students regularly enrolled, where a pre-registration was carried out for those who were interested in participating in

the trip, of which 33 participated. The same took place on April 22 and 23, 2018, leaving Castanhal for the municipalities of Tomé açu and Acará, all in the state of Pará.

In order for the trip to become possible, UFPA issued a letter to the Federal Institute of Pará (IFPA) – Campus Castanhal, asking for the loan of a bus and driver for the field class, given that the UFPA campus did not have buses that could accommodate all students. In addition, the course management issued a memorandum asking for financial support for the participating teachers and students.

The team involved in this activity consisted of: 3 professors: 2 from UFPA and 1 from IFPA, 1 driver and 33 students.

Regarding the field trip script, the students were previously informed that it would consist of two stages, which were carried out in two mornings.

The field trip itinerary was composed as follows: 1. Departure from the Municipality of Castanhal to Tomé açu, where the property of researcher Osvaldo Riohey Kato would be discovered, which has facilities and accommodation to receive researchers and students from various institutions Of region. Since he stayed overnight on this property, on the first day in the municipality of Tome Açú, he visited the property of the family farmer known as Mr. Orleans, where the students were divided into groups and were able to learn about the activities carried out on the property. 2. On the morning of the following day, a trip to the municipality of Acará followed, with the main objective of experiencing how the settlers of agrarian reform live and organize in the Benedito Alves Bandeira settlement. At the end of the afternoon of the second day we returned to the municipality of Castanhal.

In the class following the trip (after the field) there was a conversation circle about the experiences lived by the participants, later to carry out the data collection, the

teacher responsible for the discipline who promoted the activity, prepared and applied a questionnaire with 4 (four) discursive questions focused on experience, whose data are exposed in the results of this research.

The application of the questionnaires to the students had the support of two student-researchers who are under my guidance, one being a scholarship holder (Programa Navega Saberes) and the other a volunteer intern.

The results of the collected data are shown below in two ways: quantitatively (briefly, since the size of this text does not allow much discussion) qualitatively, that is, an also brief explanation of the responses of the investigated subjects with a brief interpretive analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For a better understanding, the practical activity took place as follows: We arrived in Tomé Açú-PA on the morning of 04/22/18, we had lunch at the researcher Kato's accommodation, we got to know his property; at 1:00 pm we went for the technical visit to the property of the family farmer Mr. Orleans, where the students could learn about the integrated agroforestry management system, as well as the creation of beef cattle, dairy cattle and artificial insemination practiced on that model property. The day's activities ended at 18:00, we slept in Tomé-Açú.

On 04/23/2018 we left Tomé-Açú at 07:00 for the João Batista settlement project (PA) in the municipality of Acará (Figure 2), in the settlement the students were able to experience the practices of the local association, as well as met several projects installed in that settlement, we returned to Castanhal at 18:00 h.

In general, the students investigated are residents of the urban area, approximately 65% (sixty-five percent) of the students come from the capital Belém, having to move to

the municipality of Castanhal, which is 60 (sixty) kilometers from the capital, to attend college. Approximately 75% of this audience are women.

Several participants revealed some resistance to the rural environment, in our understanding this aversion is enhanced by the fact that many have little knowledge about the rural environment. Among the students surveyed, 90% stated that their expectations regarding what they expected from the activity had been achieved. Some stated that the topics discussed in the classroom, such as family farming, associativism, and agrarian reform settlement, were better clarified after the trip.

The teacher responsible for the activity observed that many students had a distorted view of the settlement environments and productive unit of family agriculture. Some students even claimed to imagine the settlers as dangerous people, armed and with a very backward way of life. An approach was needed to show that agriculture in Brazil is quite dynamic and not at all homogeneous, it varies a lot in its nuances between Brazilian regions.

About this Prim in his studies states that:

Another resistance in the way the academy understands the rural man is the consideration that the rural population is reduced to a homogeneous category. (PRIM, 2004, p. 24).

It is important that students understand the rural environment as quite diverse and complex, requiring a close look at its specificities.

Another question raised was which of the places visited most caught the attention of the students and what was the justification? 60% of the students answered that they liked the visit to the property of the family farmer Mr. Orleans (Figure 1).

The property of the family farmer Mr. Orleans in the municipality of Tomé açu - PA, stands out for its diversity and entrepreneurship, the property has two employees with a formal contract and another 30 employees in the daily system. Mr. Orleans, responsible for the property, learned agriculture from his parents, inherited from his father some head of beef cattle, after studying the technical course in agriculture,

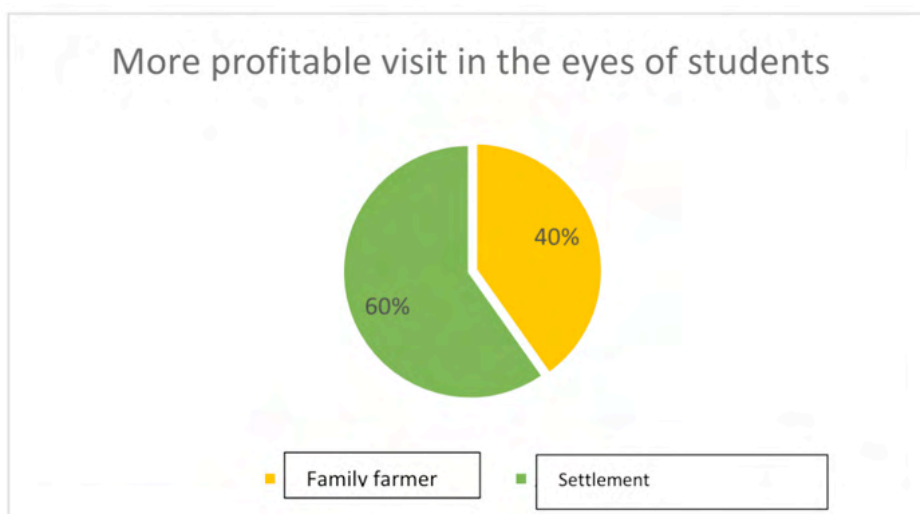


Figure 1: Preference of students in relation to places visited

Source: Research data

Orleans improved the techniques on his property, invested in diversification. Currently, the family works with an agroforestry system (SAF), growing cocoa (*Theobroma Cacao*), Black pepper (*Piper nigrum*), Açai (*Euterpe oleracea*), Banana prata (*Musa acuminata*), among other species (Figure 2), it raises beef and dairy cattle, free-range chickens, in addition the family works with artificial insemination in its bovine herd.

The 22-year-old son of Mr. Orleans also holds a degree in agriculture technician from IFPA, Castanhal campus. The young man on the occasion of the visit explained to the students the techniques he learned during the course in agriculture and which he now applies on the family's property. Today, he is responsible for managing the family's cattle herd (Figure 3), which is semi-intensive and has shown satisfactory results.

The students were very impressed by the way the family unit is managed, as the family is able to "connect" the different activities of the property, such as the use of cattle manure in the fertilization of fruit trees and other plants on the property.

In their comments, the students also stated that they were surprised that the family

producer's son had studied and wanted to return to the property to help his father "run" the family business.

Until the beginning of the 1980s, the continuity of the farming profession by the children was seen as an obligation, and the young person acquired knowledge from the family and the community, which was considered sufficient to manage the family's property (MELLO, 2003). Currently, family farming is a very dynamic activity, so it is necessary for young farmers to also take ownership of academic knowledge, while still having continuing education.

On the second day of the activity, the class went to the Benedito Alves Bandeira settlement project (PA) in the municipality of Acará, Pará. in one of the lots, in addition to getting to know the association of fruit and forest seedling producers (Figure 4) which produces seedlings with the objective of reforesting the PA, in order to enrich the flora and, consequently, the surrounding fauna.

When asked if they thought the teaching methodology was efficient. We obtained the following responses (Figure 5).

In addition to the answers about the degree of efficiency, several students made



Figure 2: Agroforestry system in a family farm

Source: Research data



Figure 3: Cattle in a family production unit in Tomé açu - PA.

Source: Research data



Figure 4: Fruit and forest seedling nursery in P.A. Benedito Alves Bandeira, in Acará-PA

Source: Research Data



Efficiency of the technical visit in the view of the students

Figure 5: Assessment of students about the efficiency of the Technical Visit.

Source: Research data

important comments, below are some of them:

“The experience and experience of practice are marked and help to better assimilate theoretical knowledge.”

“Practice fixes and teaches much more, by having direct contact with reality and not just words in theory”.

“The teaching method in the classroom is quite tiring and stressful, in the technical visit we can understand how the performance will be in professional practice”

The field class in the technical visit model is a didactic tool that brings theory closer to reality. Linking actions, observations and situations that, associated with everyday life, will contribute to the construction of student knowledge (GROFF, et al. 2009).

These possibilities will allow the experience and development of other intelligences that are sometimes forgotten in the classroom. It is worth mentioning the observation made by the teachers participating in the activity where an intense participation and relaxation of the class was noticed, many in an informal moment reported having had the opportunity to even get to know their colleagues better in an environment that was not the classroom. Among the advantages of the field class, we can list the following: It encourages students to observe and compare, associates theory and practice, favors the contextualization of content, encourages students to interdisciplinary analysis, contributes to the quality of the bond between professors and students (ZORATTO and HORNES, 2014).

As this is the first class to carry out this type of activity in this discipline in the veterinary medicine course, the students were asked what suggestions they would give for the next trips with subsequent classes?

More than 70% of those interviewed indicated the need for the activity to be longer, for example a week. It is also stressed

that it would be a great learning experience for students to spend a week at the residence of family farmers and families settled in the agrarian reform. For Cruciol et al., (2007) it is essential that students of agricultural science courses participate in internships with the aim of intensifying the university's relationship with society, in order to prepare these students to work in Social and Environmental Technical Assistance (ATES) programs.) and Technical Assistance in Rural Extension (ATER) linked to family farming, aiming to contribute to improving the quality of life of these actors and to the process of sustainable rural development.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In view of the above, it is worth mentioning the positive effect that the field class activity has on the learning process, and it is important to raise awareness on the part of the teacher through theory so that the student understands the role and importance of the rural man in the social context.

Activities that bring students closer to the daily reality they will face as professionals are fundamental for breaking some prejudices, because mainly in the agrarian area, the greatest opportunity for jobs is found in non-urban areas.

The students participating in the practical activity and interviewed, made it clear that carrying out activities such as class in the field are fundamental for the consolidation of the teaching started in the classroom. A change was observed in those who previously had a negative view of the way of life, the activities developed and the importance of the rural man.

Therefore, it is up to the educational institution and the professor to plan and execute activities that collaborate with the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process developed by them.

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