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*Propuesta de acciones para el enaltecimiento de la labor  
del maestro desde el Centro Universitario*  
*Proposal of actions for validating the work of the teacher  
at the University Municipal Center*

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**Resumen:** La temática que se aborda cobra gran importancia al ser considerada como una necesidad el reconocimiento social del maestro tanto en su esfera laboral como social. En función de lo expresado, se aporta una propuesta de acciones, que está sustentada por referentes teóricos relacionados con la evolución histórica y concepciones sobre la identidad social de este profesional, más los aportes de prestigiosos maestros de la localidad en el contexto del Centro Universitario de Baracoa, y contribuye al perfeccionamiento del programa de Historia de la Educación en las diferentes carreras pedagógicas.

**Palabras claves:** Identidad del maestro; Ética pedagógica; Actividad pedagógica; Historia de la Educación

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**Abstract:** The subject addressed in this paper becomes very important because it is about the necessity of social recognition of the teacher both in his work and in the social sphere. Based on it, a proposal of actions supported by theoretical referents related to the historical evolution and conceptions about the social identity of these professionals is provided, plus the contributions of prestigious teachers of the locality in the University Center of Baracoa; it contributes, besides, to the improvement of the History of Education program in the different pedagogical majors.

**Keywords:** Teacher identity; Pedagogical ethics; Pedagogical activity; History of Education

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## **Introduction**

The accelerated advances of science and technology at present have generated large volumes of information and knowledge that distinguish the current society. It demands that the individuals become increasingly prepared to take on the challenges that the development poses; achieving the preparation of humans has become a necessity in this era, and that is only possible through the implementation of educational policies and projects that guarantee the right of all persons to access quality education throughout life. Universities as

institutions and the professors as socializing agents face the challenge of opening new doors characteristic of the 21st century, introducing changes in their organization, in their work, and ensuring that they are not only operative in their discourse but in the daily actions they perform.

The global changes occurring make the future uncertain for many people. The demands of society and individuals change. Educational systems do not remain inert: processes of reforms and transformations have begun, arising from the awareness of the exhaustion of a traditional model, which has not reconciled quantitative growth with satisfactory levels of quality and equity, or satisfaction of new social demands. In this framework, the school emerges as an institution open to the demands of its context and with increasing degrees of autonomy.

In response to these transformations, the reconceptualization of the role of the teacher is a requirement of the processes of decentralization, of autonomy in the management of schools and of the changes occurring in the processes of teaching and learning, for which the Committee of Ministers of Education of Latin America recommended that the professionalization of the educational activity be the central concept that should characterize the activities of the new stage of educational development.

According to the previously expressed, in the conjugation of requirements and necessities of the ideal society, taking into account the potentialities, modes of action and professional performance of each, a figure that transcends individuality is defended in order to configure a professional and social identity, an idea declared in the Cuban educational policy, when the transcendental importance of this noble profession was officially recognized, among other reasons due to the nature of its function, the continuous contact with students, and the prestige of knowledge and experience. However, it is essential to keep strengthening the professional identity of educators, even though in the country it is recognized that the teacher is the first and essential factor in the struggle for the development of the present and the future of society.

On the other hand, with the educational transformations assumed since the beginning of this century, a substantial shift has been observed, both in the university model that is required for the initial and continuing training of professionals, and in the demands, follow-up and

preparation they must receive at the school where the image they perceive must become a paradigm to follow in their future educational work.

Hence, it is of great importance at present to enhance the work of the teacher, as a social recognition for the role it plays in the comprehensive training of current and future generations of Cuban patriots and revolutionaries, aspects taken into account and strengthened in this work in the context of the Municipal University Center.

### **Development**

The concept of professional identity is not an easy subject to address, since in itself identity is a polysemic term, which implies different philosophical, anthropological and pedagogical conceptions; nevertheless, it is a crucial element in the way the people and the teaching profession shape, construct and signify their identity.

Other aspect to consider is that professional identity does not arise spontaneously or is obtained automatically; instead, it is built through a complex, dynamic and sustained process over time, which results from the generation of critical collectives that articulate, starting by the mix of reflection, symbolic systems, experiences and subjective representations, in the context of the reality built in the school. In addition, this construction process begins in the initial training programs and continues throughout the professional life of a person.

Thus, the term identity can only be achieved by taking into consideration that personal and professional identity is both a subjective construction and a social one. Taking into account the criteria proposed, two dimensions are clearly distinguished, one for themselves (perceptions and beliefs) and the other for others (students, parents, colleagues); this constitutive duality is configured daily in the reciprocal play of the actors in their spaces of representation or practice, that is, this process fluctuates between the recognition of their own personal stamp as a professional and the construction of a professional identification project directly related to the specific knowledge of the profession and the pedagogical practices of teaching. (Bolívar, 2005)

In this imbricated context, the teacher must respond to various job demands aimed at educating people, establishing links with the diverse knowledge that come together in their

personal knowledge, and or building relationships between the different actors involved in the common task of forming people; the teacher must, likewise, be constituted as a professional with interdisciplinary knowledge and specialized techniques, which promotes and facilitates learning, which includes the local culture and reality, who detects social, affective and learning problems among students; that manages groups of students of high density and complex diversity, and appropriately masters and uses the new information and communication technologies, among other attributes and tasks that the teacher must fulfill.

The aforementioned, obviously, demands a dialectical attitude in teachers. In this context deep and serious effects that are translated into constant dilemmas, threats, external pressures and organizational requirements that demand the teachers' attention from one task to another, all important and urgent, take place. Because of this fluctuating condition, usually the teaching work is spoiled, the professional identity is disturbed, and teachers feel increasingly insecure and lonely. (Torres, 1999)

It seems extremely urgent to reverse this situation; but the teachers are the main ones called to respond to the difficult, but necessary task of resignifying their specific task and socially constructing their identity, given that it would allow them to reach a more specific and comprehensive vision of their professional work and, consequently, develop a greater autonomy, collegiality and commitment.

According to the criteria previously expressed, we consider that the professional pedagogical identity constitutes a mechanism through which teachers recognize themselves and are recognized by others (organisms, institutions, community, family, and students) as members of a certain social category; hence it can be summarized that regardless of their specialty, teachers must demonstrate wide knowledge, pluralism of ideas, and vast culture.

In order to achieve so it is necessary and indispensable a greater recognition, by the organizations and competent institutions, of the educative work they carry, in order to render cult to the virtue based on results and contributions to the society, aspects that have had limitations in the educational sector and that situation causes that many teachers are not identified with their profession, and it also affects the motivation for this noble profession in students of both upper secondary education and initial training for different careers of pedagogical profile. It is our criterion that the professional identity of the teacher is

constructed in that negotiation game between the identities attributed and assumed, between the inherited social demands and those that produced ruptures with the previous, from changes that take place in the educational system also based on economic, political and social transformations and demands.

The aforementioned facts reaffirm the need to look for alternatives that strengthen the professional pedagogical identity of the teacher and thereby favor the image that society has of them (Ravelo, 2010), aspects addressed in this research to evaluate that they are in obvious decline.

Also important are the contributions and criteria of different authors which specify the historical-concrete and socio-classist conditioning of the professional activity of educating such as: Meier A. (1984), Kúzmina N. (1987) and Blanco A. (2000), among others.

These authors refer to the problems addressed in this work and in fact it is worth highlighting what Contreras (2008) has referred to regarding the social image of those who have the virtue of connecting the concepts of personal and social identity, a reflection that provides a valuable argument to the understanding of the dialectic relation between the individual and the society in relation to the professional identity of the teacher.

Other relevant references are those stated by Ibarra (2001, 2008), as well as Ravelo (2010) that address the social image of the teacher from essential aspects such as the teacher's role, the social expectations that weight on them, incidental stereotypes, satisfaction and the discomfort of the teacher, as well as the reconstruction of the social image in Basic Secondary Education. The investigations carried out, among others, by Kúzmina (1987), Pisarienko (1987), Berrum, Martínez, (1995), and particularly in Cuba by Del Pino (1998), Pérez (2000), Chirino (2001), Ponce (2001), Parra (2002), Chacón (2002), Cotorruelo (2002), González (2002), Matos (2003), García and Addine (2004), Recarey (2004), Acosta (2007), Fajardo (2008), Fariñas (2009) and Ravelo (2010), provide important elements for this research related to the teacher's functions, professionalism, ethics and pedagogical profession, the pedagogical activity, as well as the social image of them, aspects taken into account because of their timeless relevance, but it is necessary to highlight its theoretical - practical limitations in view of the need to strengthen the professional identity of the teacher or university professor.

We also considered the contributions on university professional identity by Gewerc (2001), Argemí (2011), who conceptualize aspects related to this topic, and offer criteria on the elements that typify the role of the teacher or university professor. Other important elements are the objectives of Higher Education 2013 - 2014, 2014 - 2015 and the school year 2015 - 2016, where the growth of the teaching staff, the competent training of professionals and their relevance for local development from the integration of education with the production substantive processes are core elements to achieve the quality of the university training process, which have shown their improvement through superior results in the efficiency indicators. However, it remains an aspect with notable shortcomings related to the motivation for pedagogical careers, love for this profession, the enhancement of the work of the teacher and other elements that are unavoidable in their treatment and contribute to the strengthening of the professional identity of the university teacher.

### **The strengthening of the professional identity of the teacher in the context of the Municipal University Center**

In order to favorably affect the strengthening of the professional identity of the teacher, a system of actions was structured; it is conditioned by three stages which organization favors the objective proposed. The stages are:

#### **First stage: Verification and awareness.**

Actions:

1. Diagnosis of the current state of the problem being investigated.
2. Verification of the knowledge of the teachers with experiences to introduce the actions in the educative process of the teachers in training of the Primary Education major.

#### **Second stage: Execution of the action.**

1. To execute and assess within the process, in the Primary Education major, the feasibility of this system of actions, it is necessary that teachers in training understand the role they have to play and what are the ethical and moral values that characterize an educator so that they highlight the teachers' image in society. Among them we can mention.

- Professional identity of the teacher.

- Objective and subjective conditions that make the premises more general, favorable or unfavorable for it.
- Family bosom, socio-economic conditions of life, class conditions, community conditions, among others.
- Conditions of communication and its tone, within the framework of the interpersonal relationships in which the personality develops, the need to confront their points of view, the comparison of their self-image with the valuation of others.
- Formation of self-consciousness, self-knowledge, reaffirmation of the self-image in relation to others, exercising assessment and self-assessment.
- Attention to the spiritual world, affective-volitional sphere, display of feelings, emotions, tenacity, perseverance, will.
- Formation of aspirations, interests, in the form of personal and social objectives, where professional and vocational guidance have an important space.

Some of the actions are exemplified below

Action # 1: Teaching - methodological workshop "The ideal teacher"

Objective: To prepare the students of the first year of the Primary Education course through a methodological teaching workshop about some essential contents that approach principles and concepts on how to enhance the pedagogical ethics of the teacher to strengthen his professional identity as the society expects.

Contents proposed to develop during the workshop: About the professional role of the teacher; interaction of the teacher and students in different contexts. Principles of moral and pedagogical ethics; the ideal image of a teacher: professionalism, understanding and authenticity. Educational figures of the locality with relevant contributions in different historical periods.

Implementation:

- Assign it in the third week of September at the group level by a team of five students.

- Development: second week of October, this will take place in the class and will lead to debates among the students.
- When the work objective is assigned, the recommended bibliography will be assigned.
- Plan a system of questions that lead students to reflect on their qualities as teachers in training, from the review of articles and interviews contained in the multimedia "Honoring the teacher".

The leader is compelled to ask the following questions:

What do you know by ethics?

How would you characterize morality?

What are the principles that support ethics and pedagogical morality?

Do you know the functions of the teacher? Mention them.

Why is the educational process characterized by being multifactorial, prolonged and staggered?

What are your considerations about the identity and exemplarity of the teacher of our days?

Why is the teacher's performance so important in the current transformations Higher Education is facing?

Mention some personalities that through the history of our country and the territory have been highlighted as teachers. Comment the qualities you know about them. (Consult the multimedia "Teacher and Creator")

Explain the importance of everything analyzed above for the teacher's performance and the influence on their professional identity with emphasis on the performance of professors in Higher Education.

It is suggested that other activities may work.

Control and evaluation:

- At the end of the workshops, students must complete a written report that will be assessed as the final evaluation.



- It is proposed that this written work can be presented at a Scientific Conference at the level of the Municipal University Center.

- The leader can search for fragments of educational videos related to the topics that will be oriented, as a complement to the content of the educational multimedia.

Action # 2: Workshop: The importance of my profession through local history.

Objective: Analyze phrases or fragments of speeches of different personalities where the role of the teacher and his love to the profession is remarked. Authors can be of any epoch from the colonization of the Americas to the present day, as long as their ideas enhance the professional identity of the teachers.

Implementation:

It is recommended to be assigned in the second week of October and be held in the second week of November, in tribute to the Educator's Day in Cuba.

It will be guided at the major level by the group's guide teacher.

It is recommended to guide the observation of the videos *From woman to woman with Charity* and *In company with José*, contained in the multimedia "Honoring the teacher".

Key points on which the student will emphasize.

- Love of the profession. Motivations for choosing the teaching profession. Main teachers who contributed to their education. Qualities that distinguish their professional identity.

It is also recommended to invite outstanding teachers from the territory, including professors Caridad Espalter Paján and José de la Cruz Cardero.

It is recommended to guide the study of bibliography containing different topics related to the importance of the teacher such as: professional identity of teachers, ethics and professionalism, admiring the teacher is a duty of the entire society, among others, content that can be found in the above mentioned multimedia. It is suggested to carry out the analysis of phrases or fragments of speeches of some personalities, where the role of the teacher and their love for the profession stand out. The active, respectful exchange between the students must prevail.

The following activities are proposed to develop the workshop.

- Mention historical personalities of our revolutionary process who exercised the profession of teaching.
- List the teacher's qualities that have been disseminated from colonial times to the present day (a table that summarizes these qualities in stages: colonial, pseudo-republic and triumph of the Revolution can be used)
- How would you characterize the teacher of the future?

Students will be guided to choose the personalities of the locality studied in class and analyze their qualities and actions as teachers, make a presentation and discuss the analysis in the Event "Master and Creator" of the Municipal University Center.

Control and Evaluation.

- It is suggested that the technique of brainstorming be used, or any other that the guide considers useful for the activity.
- Students will be assigned to make a report on the aspects addressed in the workshop.
- It is proposed that the teachers of each group select the best works and stimulate the students through the program of University News on the Radio program "La Voz del Toa"

Action # 3: Event "Master and Creator"

Objective: Systematize the best experiences regarding the work of the teacher and his social image strengthening the love towards his profession.

Implementation:

- It will be assigned in the month of September and will be held in the month of December at the municipal level.
- The tutors of each student will be responsible for the advice of the research work supported by the teachers of the subject Introduction to the Methodology of Educational Research.
- Up to two authors will be admitted per work.

Themes and lines of research that are proposed to develop at the event:

1. The role of the teacher in the education of values and the appraisal of their work.
2. The quality of the educational teaching process, transformations, challenges and perspectives.
3. The didactics of the teaching-learning process in the different subjects.
4. The school institution for sustainable development.
5. Cuban education in different stages of its historical development.
6. Illustrious Pedagogues of the locality. Contributions

Control and Evaluation.

The best works will be awarded.

The participation of Circles of Interest and Scientific Societies of the different teaching levels will be guaranteed.

Action # 5: Intergenerational Encounter.

Objective: Recognize relevant aspects of the educational trajectory of workers of the sector of different generations.

Implementation:

- The activity is developed with the participation of executives and outstanding workers of the Municipal Directorate of Education and the Municipal University Center.
- Teachers in training and recent graduates with outstanding career.
- Sports workers and teachers of the Medical Sciences Branch.
- Retirees of high social recognition (literacy teachers, macarenkos, normalistas), with excellent results in their work trajectory in the education of students in different teachings.
- Also inviting to participate the students of circles of pedagogical interest and scientific societies of different levels of education.
- Workers of the television and local radio are invited to record the event.

Some activities to do:

1- Interventions by some of the guests highlighting the importance of this noble profession in the formation of the previous, present and future generations, as well as some results that enhance the work of the teacher that the municipality has.

2- Visualization and debate of an educational film that can be, among others, *A special boy*, which can be found in the multimedia.

3- Students' criteria and evaluations of the profession of teaching are heard, as well as the importance of it for the current historical moment.

Control and evaluation:

At the end of the activity the evaluation will be carried out taking into consideration the criteria of: argumentation, level of participation, externalization of criteria.

Third stage: Control of the action.

Actions:

To measure the scope of the system of actions and to verify the effectiveness of the same through the results of the integral diagnosis, it is recommended to start with parameters that allow measuring this possibility as: interest in study and career making, ideological and political preparation, communication possibilities and favorable family environment.

The proposal was made known in the following way: a meeting was held with the board of directors of the Municipal University Center, the results of the applied diagnosis were presented, opinions and suggestions of the participants involved were collected according to the degree of experience they possess. In the activity, the actions that would be implemented in the educational practice during the whole period of the investigation were analyzed, as well, the students and the rest of the teachers were asked for suggestions, sharing concerns and each aspect was discussed. The opinions that arose were taken into consideration and the information collected was crossed with the criteria expressed by the interviewees.

In order to socialize the actions, a group of teachers in the first year of the Primary Education major was taken as a sample, the 22 students of the group were selected; the interviews carried out with them and the executives allowed to corroborate the level of acceptance of the students. The methods and techniques used were carried out in shifts that

were implemented in the teaching schedule for the activities programmed in the educational strategy of the major.

For example, 77.27% valued that they learned what it is to be a true teacher, 86.36% claimed to know better the characteristics of children and to have acquired skills for the profession, as well as feeling useful and recognized by the rest of the classmates. In the family setting, the experiences related to the teachers who were learning the trades of the work in a primary school, relatives were satisfied to know that their children could appreciate better the noble task of educating and teaching. Another aspect to emphasize was that the visualization of films and videos contained in the multimedia allowed students to recognize the work done by prestigious teachers of the locality and of the center in a particular way, with a meritorious trajectory.

From this reality it was possible to observe the favorable behavior and impact of the actions in terms of the enthusiasm shown by students and teachers, expressing the need to carry out activities that contribute to strengthen their motivation for the profession, demonstrate their identity as educators and communicate with others, as well as losing scenic fear, among others.

Other important element is that the students involved in the research were able to determine the qualities that distinguish and identify a teacher, through different elements, so as to highlight, for example: being responsible, having a good behavior anywhere they go, having good vocabulary, being an example to others. 100% of the interviewees considered that the work carried out was necessary and favorable since objective reality demonstrates the existence of limitations that undermine exemplariness.

## **Conclusions**

The theoretical referents addressed as well as the pedagogical practice show that despite the valuable contributions that have been made, referring to the strengthening of the teacher's professional identity in the different educational sectors, it is still a current problem the enhancement of his work to satisfy the demands of society.

The recommended actions provide an educational model for the consolidation of the professional identity of teachers and assume in a conscious way the role that society requires in the integral education of children and young people.

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