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# *Estrategia curricular de atención educativa al talento en la carrera Licenciatura en Educación Primaria*

## *Curricular strategy for providing educational attention to talented students in the Primary Education major*

**Oscar Ovidio Calzadilla-Pérez**

**Idalmis Ortiz-Sánchez**

Universidad de Holguín

**Correo(s) electrónico(s):**

oovidio@uho.edu.cu

idalmiso@uho.edu.cu

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**Resumen:** El artículo surge de la sistematización al estudio longitudinal realizado en la provincia Holguín respecto a la estimulación del talento verbal en una muestra única de escolares en la carrera Licenciatura en Educación Primaria. Ello condujo a la elaboración de una estrategia curricular. A tales efectos se emplean como métodos la observación participante, el análisis de documentos, la encuesta y la entrevista, cuyos resultados se triangulan para una mejor comprensión mediante procedimientos hermenéuticos. El principal resultado radica en las contribuciones de la estrategia al perfeccionamiento del currículo de carrera y el modo de actuación de este profesional.

**Palabras clave:** Aprendizaje desarrollador; Formación de profesores; Talento; Educación Primaria

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**Abstract:** The paper resulted of the systematization of a study carried out in Holguin province, regarding the stimulation of the verbal talent in a unique sample of students in the primary education major. This led to the elaboration of a curricular strategy. For these purposes, participant observation, document analysis, survey and interview are used as methods; the results were triangulated for a better understanding through hermeneutical procedures. The main result lies in the contributions of the strategy to the improvement of the major curriculum and the mode of action of these professional.

**Keywords:** Learning development; Teacher training; Talent; Primary education

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## **Introduction**

Continuous improvement in teacher training is one of the most relevant and challenging social and epistemological problems in the current context of higher Education. In this connection, goal 14 of the Incheon Declaration prescribes the need for "[...] Relevant teaching and learning methods and contents that meet the needs of all learners, educated by trained and well-qualified teachers" (Unesco, 2015, p. 2).

In most countries teacher training is the responsibility of the university senates, yet they still

access the professional magisterium without the proper pedagogical qualification and scientific updating (Organization of Inter-American States, 2010). The aforementioned is among the causes that generate traditional and stereotyped pedagogical performances in the educational care of children, adolescents and young people in the school context. This aspect limits the enrichment of the mode of action of the teacher in one of the most demanded aspects to the education from the preschool childhood and the school life, it is about the stimulation of the talent.

The educational stimulation of talent must be set among the pedagogical actions of attention to the diversity that the teacher and other educational agents exert from the functions inherent in their professional role. The pedagogical value of this affirmation is reflected in the model of the professional of the major in Primary Education (Ministry of Cuban Higher Education, 2016a), in which it is conceived among the theoretical nuclei that support the conception of a common trunk in the children education: 1) The historical-cultural approach to the interpretation of human development, ontogenetic, for the diagnosis and integral educational care, and 2) the approach of education in and for the diversity of children, adolescents and young people, in order to achieve more inclusive practices.

In relation to what has been stated in this document, it is considered that the common aspect of child education lies in the basic link concretised in the educational process for the integral care of children, adolescents and young people in different contexts. Hence the need to improve the initial training in the major in Primary Education in regard to the theoretical and methodological tools required by the teacher for the educational attention to talent. This claim is consistent with the work objective of that major, seen in terms of educational process, as it delimits its mission to the achievement of integral attention to the development of the personality of the primary school student from the direction of the educational process in general and teaching –learning processes in particular (MHE, 2016).

The pedagogical vision of educational attention to the diversity of potentialities and needs generated by the talent in the subject achieves sustainable changes as a result of the policies drawn up at the World Conference on Special Educational Needs (Mese, 1995), where guidelines were proposed for updating programs for teacher training. In contradiction with the

exposed treatment in the investigation of this problem denotes the predominance of a psychological approach. Contributions to its pedagogical foundation are limited as long as the theoretical analysis of talent as a generic category prevails, not always in specific areas, still with inconsistencies in the comprehension of the dialectic between the biological and the social in their stimulation (Calzadilla, 2014, 2017). The works consulted base the educational attention to the children with manifestations of talent in specific areas from the first ages.

The analysis of the research generated in the Cuban context over the last three decades is directed towards prioritized lines of study in R + D + I projects or postgraduate programs, among which are: the identification of talented schoolchildren (Castellanos and Vera, 1991; Vera, 2001), its characterization (Castellanos, 1997), differentiated attention (Lorenzo, 1996; Torres, 2001; Lozano, 2013), Family Guidance (Morales, 1997; Medina, 2008), The development of social skills in academically talented schoolchildren (Vera, 2011) and the identification of student talent in vocational training (Pérez, 2005).

The research consulted found references to the study of talent in specific areas in the works of Castellanos (1997), Vera (2008), vera (2011), Lozano (2013) and Calzadilla (2009, 2014). The content of these works although it contributes to the construction of the theoretical referential platform, does not transcend towards the comprehension of its peculiarities in regard to the stimulation in specific areas, a question that is reflected in the programs for teacher training (Calzadilla, 2009, 2014).

The above argues the need to transform the current state of integration of content in regard to the educational attention of talent from the initial training of the teacher. So this article aims to socialize the conception of the curricular strategy of educational attention to talent in the major in Primary Education, which becomes the research initiated in an R + D + I Project regarding the stimulation of talent verbal, and its consequent systematization in the initial education programs after the defense of a doctoral thesis by the author in the year 2014. The content of the article contributes to enrich the theoretical framework of research and pedagogical practices.

## **Development**

This article has as a background the teaching and scientific management deployed in the R + D + I research centre for the stimulation of verbal talent (CesTalVer in Spanish) (Calzadilla, et al.,

2007-2013) of the José de la Luz and Caballero Pedagogical University, which became the current Faculty of Education Sciences at the University of Holguín. The interpretation of the studies carried out (Calzadilla, 2009, 2014) lead to determine the following theoretical inconsistencies regarding the pedagogical foundations for the stimulation of manifestations of the talent in specific areas, depending on the interiorization of knowledge and assessment orientations in primary schoolchildren.

The aforementioned confirmed that, while the efforts made in the context of the educational attention of talent are increasingly productive, the pedagogical foundation for its stimulation in specific areas, as is the verbal talent, is still an epistemological problem of pedagogy that is in the process of solution. The behavior of this conclusion takes specific nuances in the training of teachers, this led to the systematization of results in the major in Primary Education in the years 2014 and 2018, which took as fundamental scenarios:

- The teaching of the curriculum related to stimulation of the talent in the school, (study plan D), and lectures in the subject Psychology of the base curriculum (study plan E).
- The implementation of research works as part of the the student scientific group: Studies on talent.
- The execution of internalization actions by means of the teaching of postgraduate programmes in workshops, specialized conferences and diplomas from the management senate in the universities of Holguín (Cuba) and the Catholic U. of Temuco (Chile).
- Improvement of the major curriculum through the elaboration of the virtual classroom: stimulation of the talent, the production of teaching materials, the publication of scientific articles and books in journals or magazines indexed in databases of great impact and visibility.
- Validation of discipline programs and subjects of study plans D and E.

The interpretation of the systematization of these results made possible to analyse the most recurrent limitations that affect the integration of the educational attention to the talent as formative content of the major in Primary Education, among them:

- The fragmented didactic treatment between the essential knowledge and the professional skills on talent that students receive in the disciplines General Pedagogical Education (MHE, 2016b) and Didactics of The Primary Education (current integrative discipline) (MHE, 2016c).
- The essential knowledge of talent, declared in the discipline general program for pedagogical training do not fully reflect the pedagogical requirements for stimulating manifestations of talent in specific areas.

These limitations are addressed in the modeling of the curricular strategy presented in this article, and for which it was necessary the use of research methods and techniques.

The research is based on the materialistic dialectical method, with a predominantly qualitative methodology. Among the theoretical methods were used analysis-synthesis, induction-deduction, transit from the abstract to the concrete and modeling. The Hermeneutic method allowed to establish logical relations and theoretical generalizations, to process the information and to confirm the hypothesis formulated. Modeling allowed structuring the curricular strategy.

From the empirical level, the participant observation of curricular and extracurricular activities was used, the survey of students and professors, the analysis of documents (normative documents, validation reports, methodological plans and working reports), and research-action techniques (journal, field annotation and anecdotal record). In addition, workshops of reflection and critical opinion were developed at the level of major, discipline and academic year in order to obtain evidence regarding the relevance and formative value of the curricular strategy.

The proposed curricular strategy synthesizes good practices and theoretical constructions systematized in the Cuban primary school for more than a decade of research and university teaching of pre and postgraduate studies. The scientific ideas of its content are shown in this work, only in the form of synthesis, while defending the pretension that the integration of these criteria in the initial education should contribute to the quality of the teacher and the improvement of the quality of the primary education in the current process of improvement of the national education system.

The modeling of the curricular strategy is contentiva of fundamentals, definitions, actions that are integrated to the components of the initial education process, seen in its integrality and

systemic approach. Its general objective is to contribute to the education of the pedagogical mode of action of the primary teacher focused on the educational attention to talent through the internalization of knowledge, skills and professional values conducive to inclusive pedagogical practices and respecting diversity.

The specific objectives are:

- Determine the potential for the essential knowledge and professional skills of the disciplines and subjects programs for the didactic treatment of the educational attention to the talent as formative content in the curriculum of the major.
- Direct research work of students on relevant topics regarding the educational attention of talent.
- Enrich the objectives of the year and the actions of educational strategies with respect to contents on the educational attention of the talent.
- Develop methodological actions with the teachers staff that will contribute to the integrative treatment of the professional skills involved in the educational care of talent.
- Enrich the work of the specialized directives of child education through extensionist actions regarding the educational attention of talent.
- Develop activities in the investigative work practice that contribute to the systematization of professional skills for the educational attention of talent.

In correspondence with the objectives of the strategy and those of the academic year, defined in the model of the professional, it is presented as a requirement the formative route to be followed by the students in the interiorization of the educational attention as formative component:

- Base the intervention strategies of stimulation (modalities and forms of organization) of the manifestations of the talent in specific areas of the development of schoolchildren.
- Diagnose the manifestations of talent in specific areas of the development of the school.
- Modeling intervention strategies for the educational attention to talent in teaching, extracurricular and extra curriculum spaces, for educational attention to talent in educational spaces, extracurricular and extra, that integrate the agents closest to the school.

- Direct actions of diagnosis, intervention and evaluation of the educational attention of the talent from pedagogical actions of stimulation that combine different modalities and forms of organization.
- Evaluate the transformations that occur in the educational practice in terms of the educational attention of the talent in the educational and teaching-learning processes.

The strategy is designed based on the epistemological foundations that nurture the pedagogical approach of the educational care of talent, which is summarized below.

On the philosophical level, it is based on a dialectic materialistic position of Marxist-Leninist orientation. This allows to explain the scientific vision of the attention of talent as a social phenomenon by understanding the regularities of the psychic development of the primary school.

The positions of the Cultural historical approach are taken as psychological foundations, which is constructed from a dialectic materialistic view of human psychic development (Vygostky, 1982, 1987, 1989; Luria, 1982; Leontiev, 1968; Bozhovich, 1976; Talízina, 1988). This approach offers a vision of the individual, social and cultural processes that underpin the educational attention to talent, based on the uniqueness of its formation in primary schoolchildren, such as:

- The relationship between education and development, and its link to learning as a mechanism that allows the appropriation of culture transmitted in interaction with other subjects.
- The mediating role of the signs and means in the learning process. The relationship of man with the objects of culture is established by instrumental mediation (signs and tools) and social mediation (relationship with others), hence that "culture creates special forms of behavior, modifies psychic functions, builds new strata in the human behavior development system" (Vygotsky, 1989, p. 19). The signs and tools as mediators in the process of educational attention allow to design and improve pedagogical actions of stimulation.
- The bond of the individual with the collective. Learning is a social activity and not just a process of individual realization, where communication with others contributes to the

assimilation of a culture that, according to Vygotsky (1987), in its development appears twice: first, at the social level (interpsychological) and then at the individual level (intrapsychological). The foregoing is the general genetic law of cultural development, which argues the dialectic between the individual and the social in the process of personality development, which is manifested throughout the process of stimulating talent.

The concepts of zone of proximal development and Social situation of the development are assumed (Bozhovich, 1976).

From the pedagogical point of view it is based on the system of principles for the direction of the pedagogical process of Addine, et al. (2002), which are in correspondence with the policies of Cuban education. Attuned with the essence of the primary school model, the didactic principles systematized by La Barrero and Valdivia (1988) are assumed. It is based on the pedagogy of diversity, which considers the uniqueness of human development as an intrinsic characteristic of reality, so it has to promote to the maximum the different developments through strategies that favor the self-regulation of the school and the educational process. They also conceive of special educational needs and resources to be used in the stimulation of talent.

The principles of educational intervention for the development of talent in the school context of Castellanos and Vera are assumed (2009) also the conceptions about the modalities and forms of organization of the stimulation of talent (Castellanos, 2005; Calzadilla, 2017) in the principle of the pedagogical combination of acceleration and enrichment (Calzadilla, 2014). The theoretical models that connote the manifestations of the talent in specific areas, among which are meant the model of Cohn (1981), the Theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983) and the model of the development of the talent (Feldhusen, 1998).

Definitions of the strategy's structuring concepts include: human development, educational diversity, educational attention, talent, creativity, talent stimulation, skills and developing learning.

### **Essential contents of the strategy for its systematization based on academic, laboral and reserch aspects:**

Study and historical characterization of talent. Explanatory models of talent development. Conception of talent as an expression of human development and diversity. Conceptual



relationships of talent with associated terms: genius, prematurity, prodigy, creativity and capacity. Particularities of the educational attention to the talent field by high capacity. Foreign programs for the study of talent. The diagnosis of the manifestations of talent in the school context. Modalities and forms of organization of pedagogical stimulation of talent. The primary school educational process for talent educational care. Modeling of interventive strategies and their evaluation.

On the other hand, the formative aspect is reflected in the didactic treatment based in the educative content of the strategy, to the professional values: dignity, responsibility, industriousness, humanism, creativity, professional identity, authority and exactness.

In relation to this strategy, in its concretion, it must contribute to the development of the following professional skills: to base, diagnose, model, direct and evaluate; these aspects, in turn, reveal the formative route that the student undergoes in the undergraduate studies with respect to the objectives of academic years and of the programs of the different disciplines.

#### **Indicators for the evaluation of the Strategy:**

- Mastery of the theoretical foundations and concepts that support the educational attention of talent in the school context.
- Motivation for the study of talent and the solution of professional pedagogical problems related to their education.
- Development of professional skills to identify manifestations of talent in schoolchildren, in specific areas (talented potentials).
- Development of professional skills for modeling, intervention and evaluation of interventive strategies.

In addition, among the structuring components of the curricular strategy are: the resignification of the mode of professional action reached with the implementation of the proposed objectives and the suggestion of actions for academic years to integrate them to the components of the initial training from the diagnosis of the students and the work object of the profession. In addition, the bibliography to be consulted mostly corresponds to that aim.

Among the added values of the curricular strategy is the participatory character that generates its integration in practice. Once the relevance of the strategy has been valued, its transference has resulted in the following transformation manifestations:

- Improvement of methodological work in the identification and use of the potentialities of the curriculum for the integration of training contents in the form of curricular strategies.
- Enrichment of the curriculum of the major through the transfer of results of applied pedagogical researches and the scientific production (teaching materials, virtual classrooms, websites, guides for the studies, among others) derived.
- Opening and consolidation of research lines, and their integration to the research work of the students through scientific groups.
- Publication of scientific articles in indexed journals in international high visibility databases.
- Development of attitudes and professional skills in the students, favorable for the educational attention to the talent.

Among the most valuable aspects is the resignification of components of the professional model of the major in Primary Education, which are synthesized in the mode of pedagogical action.

In the plans for the training of the education professional it is a requirement to transcend the explicit curriculum through the intra-, inter-, and transdisciplinary relationships that combine the hidden and implicit curriculum. To this end, the ways of designing the transversality in the curricular design of the study plans have adopted different denominations: transversal axes, principal programs and curricular strategies. In the specific case of Cuba, in the curriculum D, from its reference framework, the term of curricular strategy is the one used.

Contradictorily, the definition of curricular strategy is not one of the most recurrent in the scientific literature, fundamentally because it constitutes a relatively recent term in the field of the didactics of the higher education. Nevertheless, authors such as Guerra (2007) define it in terms of "[...] Innovative alternative that allows educators to transform the traditional way of teaching and the student a meaningful way to learn" (p. 53).

The criteria of Sierra et al. (2009) are congruent with the previous; however, they delve into the content of this type of strategy and the ways to integrate it by considering that they constitute

"[...]Curricular line or axis in a particular major, it constitutes a pedagogical approximation to the teaching process that is carried out with the purpose of achieving general objectives related to certain knowledge, skills and modes of professional action that are key in their training and it is not possible to achieve them with due depth from the perspective of a single discipline or academic subject, even with partially integrated curricula and therefore require the participation of more than one, sometimes all the curricular units" (p. 97).

Batista (1999) defines these strategies in terms of "[...] System of cultural knowledge of great social repercussion that complements the integral training of the professionals and contribute to the development of the professional competencies in the different modes of action and fields of work of the professional" (p. 25). Also, Fundora et al. (2009) argue that curricular strategies are classified into three groups: the first, represented by the main strategy, in which all disciplines and subjects of the curriculum must participate. It focuses on the holistic approach to educational and politico-ideological work in universities. The second group corresponds to those of basic training, those that inevitably need a professional of any branch to live up to the time in which he lives. The third group of strategies represents those that respond to the particular interests of the profession.

From this perspective, the integration of curricular strategies responds to the purpose of training a competent, educated and committed professional. This constitutes *sine qua non* the methodological work of the university senate (MES, 2009; Batista, 1999; Horruitiner, 2006; Salazar, 2012; Calzadilla, 2017). It will have a valuable impact on the quality of the training of the professional as they conceive from the design of the curriculum to its concretion in university teaching, extension work, labor practice and scientific work of the student. All this will depend on the organization of the levels of the methodological work, become functional academic structures that direct the formative process. In addition, of the integration that achieves the guiding or coordinating subject of each curricular strategy with the remaining ones, according to an adequate achievement in the scope of its objectives and actions.

It follows that the curricular strategies are characterized by transcending the objectives of the disciplines and to contribute to the formation of a professional who acts in consequence with

the social exigencies and the content of his profession. From this perspective, the educational attention to talent, first, is based on the principles of passivity-quality and unity-diversity that support the Cuban educational policy; second, it retakes the results of pedagogical research that serves as a base for the teacher training model.

With regard to the training model in use since the year 2015 in the work object of the primary education professional, the relevance and feasibility of educational attention to talent are highlighted as a formative content for the direction of the educational and teaching-learning processes, which must lead to more and more inclusive pedagogical practices. In this context of analysis, educational attention is concretised through the modalities and forms of stimulating organization.

The latter encompasses the diversity of initiatives in which its integration is feasible and implies the use of aid and support for the development of potentialities, possibilities and manifestations of talent in specific areas. The stimulation of talent is organized in modalities (Calzadilla, 2014, 2017; Castellanos, et al., 2007), conceived as a general strategy integrating the psycho-pedagogical and sociological resources introduced into specific processes and contexts (Calzadilla, 2014, 2017; Castellanos, *et al.*, 2005, 2007, 2009).

## **Conclusions**

The integration of curricular strategies in the initial formation constitutes a process of structuring pedagogical actions that cannot be limited by improvisation, because their concretion requires the correct direction of the methodological work in the major levels (vertical conception) and academic years (horizontal conception). The disciplines of the exercise of the profession are called to occupy an articulatory role and evaluator of the actions of education.

The curricular strategy of educational attention to talent synthesizes good practices and theoretical constructions systematized in the Cuban primary school for more than a decade of research and university teaching of pre and postgraduate studies. The modeling of the strategy comprises fundamentals, definitions, among other components, all of which must contribute to the resignification of the mode of pedagogical action of the primary teacher focused on the educational attention to the talent through the internalization of knowledge, skills and professional values conducive to inclusive pedagogical practices and respect for diversity.

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