

The professional orientation: challenge of the current Cuban society

La orientación profesional: reto de la sociedad cubana actual

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Abstract: The topic of professional guidance responds to the need to train professionals identified with their work in society. To fulfill this purpose, the precise professional orientation of a scientific base and that is carried out in a consistent manner through a system in which the educational agents involved in the training of children, adolescents and young people concur. It is my purpose to offer an assessment of aspects that I consider to be professional orientation challenges in Cuba.

Keywords: Professional orientation; Training of professionals; Professional reasons; Pedagogical careers

Resumen: El tema de la orientación profesional responde a la necesidad de formar profesionales identificados con su labor en función de la sociedad. Para cumplir con este propósito la orientación profesional precisa de un fundamentado científico, y que se realice de manera consecuente a través de un sistema en el que concurran los agentes educativos que intervienen en la formación de niños, adolescentes y jóvenes. Es mi propósito ofrecer una valoración de aspectos que considero retos de la orientación profesional en Cuba.

Palabras clave: Orientación profesional; Formación de profesionales; Motivos profesionales; Carreras pedagógicas

Introduction

Due to the difficult conditions that face the current world and Cuban society in particular, professional orientation becomes a huge challenge that should be given special attention to ensure the training of professionals committed to the economic and social development of their country. Because it is aimed not only to solve an individual problem of the students, but goes beyond the personal by projecting from the social point of view a work aimed at finding the balance between the categories of the individual and the social, has monopolized the attention of researchers around the world.

Numerous are the investigations on this subject carried out in different parts of the world, including that of Cuban authors, among which are: González, F. (1983, 1991); Domínguez (1987, 1990); González V. (1989,1995, 1998, 2003); Pine (2006); Matos (2003), among others. In

addition, research led by the Directorate of Teacher Training of the Ministry of Education stands out; the Central Institute of Pedagogical Sciences, and different universities.

In Cuba, since the 19th century, actions were carried out aimed at the professional orientation of young people. “The eminent pedagogue José de la Luz y Caballero proposed in 1833 the creation of the Cuban Institute, which was to be the General School of Arts and Crafts, and a Normal School for teacher training” (Chavez, 1996, p. 29).

With the triumph of the Revolution in 1959, specific tasks related to the professional orientation are established that are consolidated since 1963. In the Thesis on Educational Policy drawn up by the Communist Party in 1975, this work was given capital importance and assigned to school the leading role.

The 1980s -1990s marked a higher stage from the implementation of Decree Law No. 63 of the Council of Ministers, and currently the work of vocational training and vocational guidance (PV and OP) is regulated by Ministerial Resolution 170/2000.

In spite of the advances that have been made in this area during all these years, the professional orientation of the new generations constitutes a challenge for educational planning due to the complexity of this psychopedagogical phenomenon.

Hence, in the International Pedagogy Congress 2015, the former Minister of Higher Education of Cuba, Dr. C Rodolfo Alarcón Ortiz, questioned the ability to provide adequate answers to this challenge without changes in traditional models.

To carry out a detailed analysis of the main problems facing professional orientation in Cuba at present is not our purpose, but to reflect on this issue that has not achieved the expected results that our society needs.

In order to comply with the career guidance strategy, a systematic work in the pedagogical order is required that begins with the formation of interests from pre-school education to the development of professional motives, and the process of preparation for professional choice at the level medium, all of which must be reaffirmed once the student enters the vocational training

center. In this order, there are several factors that must be taken into account and those that have not always been given due attention.

In the first place, it should be recognized that the professional orientation is a process and not a moment, as is well posed in the different studies carried out, and that, therefore, the concern for this should not only be evidenced at the time of the selection of the future profession, as it happens in the majority of students who finish 9th and 12th grade, and their families.

It is common to observe in the professional guidance strategies of the educational centers (basic secondary and Pre-University) the marked predominance of actions with students of the terminal degree and their families, while the systematicity of actions in previous grades is poor. Similarly, surveys of students of these teachings reveal dissatisfaction with the quality of a process that should be considered as the result of previous actions, and not as a climax.

This is associated with the fact that professional orientation is rarely carried out on scientific theoretical and methodological bases, and that in the daily practice of management and civil servants of all levels there is a marked tendency to demand and evaluate results in figures, but without properly paying attention to the quality of the processes that should lead us to the final moment.

Another aspect of great value has to do with the subjects involved in a process that has a multifactorial nature and that, as the results of diagnoses made in different investigations show, educational agencies and agents do not always have the necessary preparation to exercise with coherence and scientific educational influences in children, adolescents and youth.

Very important in this process, in addition to the educators, is the influence of the family, who with their example and educational work is the first to professionally guide the children, and who influences decisively in the selection stage. Therefore, you must be prepared to recognize the potential and weaknesses of your children to access certain professions that require a true vocation and skills to execute it.

In this sense, the school must play an important role in the orientation to the family in order to achieve their preparation to accompany their children during the time of the selection of their future profession, and thereby avoid one of the parent-child conflicts that today manifests itself in

Cuban society when the former try to impose their criteria by demanding from the latter the selection of the career they want.

This violates the principle that career selection must be an act of true self-determination, because: “The choice of profession is not simply the choice of one or another activity, but that of a certain path of life (...)” Vigotsky (cited in Bozhovich, 1978, p. 247).

Determinant in the selection of the career are also the economic needs of the student who chooses those where there is a better salary such as those related to public health, and the community or territory where he lives that does not favor the selection of careers considered social priorities.

In this order, the approval of the economic and social model, and the guidelines of the approved economic and social policy of the Party have opened to new forms of management that to some extent generate the demotivation for the continuity of studies to both Higher Education and in other teachings by allowing young people to access working life, and find the solution from the salary point of view to their needs and tastes.

However, access to some of these positions requires more and more to show an adequate level of preparation for performance, so young people must necessarily overcome. This implies improving professional guidance work with young people so that access to careers is not produced solely by the mere fact of economic satisfaction.

Careers such as pedagogical and agricultural, so necessary for the development of Cuban society, are today among the least favored as a future profession, an issue that has its antecedents in the exodus of teachers to more attractive jobs, and a decrease in income to the pedagogical universities during the 90s with the Special Period.

This could be verified in the Guantanamo province, because according to data obtained in the Department of Statistics of the former University of Pedagogical Sciences, when comparing the enrollment reached in the 1990-1991 course of 3230 students with that of the 1995-1996 course of 1856 students the decrease produced is evidenced.

For the pedagogical profession, the preparation with quality of the educators has as its starting point the entrance to the University of young people convinced of the success of their selection,

bearers of professional interests and pedagogical vocation promoted throughout the school life. However, students who enter this career are not always motivated enough and many access it as a last option to enter the University or subsequently change to another career, as it happened in the finished 2018-2019 school year in the University of Guantanamo where this right was granted to around 30 students, even though there were more who requested it. Other consequences of demotivation have been in the definitive abandonment of the career, and the non-exercise of it, once graduated, when exercising other professions more economically and socially favored.

In this sense, it is good to ask ourselves if we really do everything that is possible in the area of pedagogical professional guidance. Let us keep in mind that, as the outstanding pedagogue Paulo Freyre expressed, quoted by Ravelo (2002):

No one is born an educator on a particular Tuesday at four in the afternoon. No one is born educator or designated to be an educator. People become educators; people are trained as educators, permanently, in practice and in reflection on practice. (p. 15)

On the other hand, in the process of professional orientation, the particularities of each stage of the evolutionary development of the personality are not always taken into account, nor the attention to individual differences, since in most cases the actions that are planned have a general nature and are limited to the treatment of problems without taking advantage of the potential identified in the diagnosis of students.

On the other hand, in order to achieve quality in the professional orientation process, it is helpful to introduce the valuable scientific results obtained that, in many cases, do not achieve the socialization necessary for its application under conditions similar to those proposed or systematized despite the fact that They are part of the bibliographic collections of the centers. Therefore, it is considered that the effectiveness that is achieved in this order is still limited; the reason for this in most cases is associated with inadequacies in the preparation and unity of educational influences.

The analysis presented here allows us to affirm that achieving changes in the current Cuban society requires the commitment and responsibility of teachers and managers, and the family. Therefore, the following are still challenges in the career guidance process:

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- Achieve a systematic approach that encompasses the students' significant action contexts: school, family, community.
 - The specialized theoretical and methodological preparation of cadres and teachers.
 - Study from a more social, political and integrative perspective the training of teachers and their permanence in the profession.
 - The introduction of the scientific results obtained in this area.
 - Achieve entry to careers declared social priorities, especially pedagogical.

These reflections confirm the social need to transform the methods and ways that are currently used to achieve the preparation of all educational agents based on a participatory action during the career guidance process; and that to reach an impact on the quantity and quality of the entrance to the races implies to overcome with creativity and responsibility each one of the declared challenges.

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