

***Las competencias profesionales del Especialista en
Atención Integral al Becario de la Universidad de
Granma***
***The professional skills of the Specialist in Integral
Attention to the Scholar of the University of Granma***

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Resumen: La investigación tuvo como objetivo la implementación de una estrategia para incrementar las competencias profesionales de los Especialistas en Atención Integral al Becario de la Residencia Estudiantil en la Universidad de Granma. Se utilizaron métodos empíricos, teóricos y estadísticos, y técnicas como la entrevista, observación y revisión documental. El diagnóstico arrojó deficiencias en las competencias técnico-profesionales y sociopersonales. Se aprovecharon las potencialidades del trabajo metodológico para perfeccionar la gestión de la labor educativa. La evaluación arrojó un incremento de las competencias profesionales, materializado en un perfeccionamiento de la planeación, organización, control y evaluación de la gestión de la labor educativa.

Palabras clave: Trabajo educativo; Residencia estudiantil; Competencia profesional

Abstract: The objective of the research was to implement a strategy to increase the professional competences of the Specialists in Integral Attention to the Scholar of the Student Residence at the University of Granma. Empirical, theoretical and statistical methods and techniques such as interview, observation and documentary review were used. The diagnosis revealed deficiencies in technical-professional and socio-personal competencies. The potential of methodological work was used to improve the management of educational work. The evaluation showed an increase in professional skills, materialized in an improvement of the planning, organization, control and evaluation of the management of educational work.

Keywords: Educational work; Student residence; Professional competence

Introduction

The Cuban university, as an educational institution, generates training processes that ensure an adequate response to the problems that arise from the current context. This requires management that ensures the development of solid professional skills, and high social commitment in students. This important challenge requires that all actors (students, teachers and non-teachers) fulfill their role. In a similar way Horruitiner (2006) refers to it, recognizing the humanistic character of the current Cuban university, and stating that “the entire university

must live a climate of influences of this type, encompassing not only professors and students but the entire university community, with a comprehensive approach to this work ”(p. 12). The foregoing enhances the idea that the training of the university student is not exhausted in the teaching scenario, nor is it limited to the educational influence exercised by the group of teachers. It is just then, to look at scenarios, practices and people little researched, but whose influence is decisive for the formation of the university student.

Student residences, in keeping with the provisions of Resolution 34/2000 of the Ministry of Higher Education (MES), constitute the facilities presented by higher education centers to facilitate the course of a career for those students whose homes are far away. There are multiple elements that can be used to support that it is a key scenario in the training process of the university student, we only start from considering that the scholar spends more than 60% of the day in his facilities. In keeping with the above, the student residence is recognized, like any other space in the university, as an educational setting; It breaks with the vision of guarantor of student accommodation and food, and requires that a training process is managed consciously (from residence) that contributes to the development of knowledge, know-how, being and living together, which complement the university education. The above is endorsed by Trujillo, Negrón and Lavandero (2015) who affirm that the student residence is an active training space.

Given this scenario, Lazo, García and García (2017) agree on the need for personalized attention from their workers with the grant holder, which imposes on the former, demands regarding professional skills. In the evaluated study center, there is the figure of the Specialist in Comprehensive Care for the Scholarship holder who, according to the profile of the position, has among its functions to contribute to the comprehensive training of new generations, organizing, executing and controlling activities related to care scholarship students.

Investigations referred to by Lazo (2015), Trujillo, Negrón and Lavandero (2015), certified that there are difficulties in the management carried out in areas of student residence in Cuban university institutions. When Lazo (2015, p. 2) referred to workers and their educational management, he pointed out that “they have limitations in their performance... they lack

knowledge, skills that allow them to undertake educational work with relevance, due to the lack of scientific elements in the order pedagogical and psychological that are considered necessary". In such circumstances, and once the positive relationship between professional skills and job performance is known, the need to transform the state of the former becomes important. At the Peralejo headquarters of the student residence at the University of Granma, an evaluation of the educational activities revealed difficulties whose bases were poor management, which in turn pointed towards insufficient development of the professional skills of the Specialists in Comprehensive Care to the Scholarship holder to manage the educational work:

- a) There was ignorance of the theoretical, conceptual and methodological bases that support the educational talk (and other types of activity) for the educational work.
- b) It was recognized that the training process should be consciously planned, but there was no documentary evidence of its concretion, but rather that it occurred spontaneously.
- c) Although they knew the need to establish the educational talk as a basic educational technique for the educational work, they were approved with spontaneous conversations with the students in the condition of scholarship holder.

The aforementioned revealed fissures, as the professional praxis of the Specialist in Comprehensive Care for the Scholarship holder did not coincide with that required for the training of a professional, denoting insufficient tools for its achievement. From which a research problem is derived, how to enhance the professional competences of the Specialists in Comprehensive Care for the Scholarship student at the University of Granma?

The objective of the study is to implement a strategy to increase the professional skills of the Specialists in Comprehensive Care for the Student Residence Scholarship holder at the University of Granma. The application of this study starts from a real social need: to improve the management of educational work by modifying the professional competences that support the exercise of the functions of the post of Specialist in Comprehensive Care for the Scholarship holder. In the evaluated institution, there are no antecedents of similar studies, so this is an initial and incipient approach from the theoretical, methodological and practical point of view. For the managers of the area it constitutes a working tool that can be generalized

to other scenarios with similar problems, and even to other study centers. The scientific novelty lies in the fact that the potentialities of methodological work, applied to a non-teaching setting and to activities for educational work (educational talk, video debate or film debate, workshops, conferences) were exploited, in order to continuously improve the process. The study is carried out under the precepts of the quantitative research paradigm.

During the process, theoretical level methods such as analysis-synthesis, induction-deduction, and historical-logical are used. Methods are also applied at the empirical level (measurement), and at the statistical level, through descriptive statistics with the use of frequency (absolute, relative). Techniques such as the interview (to managers) are used in order to characterize the management of educational work in the student residence, and the professional competencies of the Specialist in Comprehensive Care for the Scholarship holder. The potentialities of the documentary review are used to gather information that the educational institution has, and its objective is to acquire information on the area, professional competences and the management of educational work. Observation is used as a technique, mainly using perception, shaping a vision of the current state of educational work management, through participation in educational activities carried out.

Development

The educational work in the student residence of the University of Granma is marked by the need to harmonize the educational influence of teaching, non-teaching, support and student workers. Lazo (2015, p. 12), quotes Collazo (2006, p. 83) who states that for the Ministry of Education, educational work is “the set of all activities, without exception, that are carried out at school, both teachers as a continuity of that process, aimed at achieving the objectives that, in an integral way, converge in the multilateral and harmonious formation of the personality”. This statement recognizes the educational institution as a whole, and all the activities that are carried out in it, placing the responsibility for the training process on each of the workers (regardless of position and area). This enhances the recognition of the University of Granma as an education center with clearly identified spaces, with their particularities, and the student residence is one of them. For this reason, and in line with the institution's policies, the aim is to train a competent professional identified with the society in which he lives.

The student residence of the University of Granma is a university community, mostly student (Cubans and foreigners) with common goals and objectives, which coexist in a limited geographical space, where they receive diverse services, establish long-lasting and stable relationships. The maximum aspiration is that its members, with a high sense of belonging and commitment, participate in the material and spiritual transformation of that community, in each of the educational units. The educational work in the area is aimed at reinforcing the habits of coexistence, formal education, care for collective property, habits of order, hygiene and cleanliness, discipline, sense of belonging, and student leadership in solving collective problems, that contribute favorably to the integral formation of the students. Currently the organizational structure has 10 Specialists in Comprehensive Care for the Scholarship holder, who must carry out the educational work with a scientific, systematic, integrated character, which considers the particularities of the scholarship student and points to the model of professional that is intended, recognizing the characteristics of the environment where it will work.

Training professionals in a comprehensive way requires the preparation of the entities that influence it, transcending the need to improve the professional skills of those responsible for the training of students as scholarship holders. The latter, fundamentally points to the figure of the Specialist in Comprehensive Care for the Scholarship holder. In order to draw up a strategy that facilitates raising the state of people's competences, it is essential to clarify the theoretical bases of the nuclei evaluated: competence and strategy.

There is diversity in terms of the conceptual definition of the term competence, increased by the epistemological positions of the authors who address it, and complicated by being a concept adjusted to a specific social historical context. One could start from the genesis of the word to understand the different approaches, where there is dissent. In accordance with what Parra, Ramayo and Santiesteban (2017) refer to, Machado Ramírez (2008) cited by Montes de Oca and Machado (2014) the word competence comes from the Latin verb “competere” (to meet one thing of another, to meet); and Aguirre (2005) affirms that it comes from the Greek *agón*, which derives in *agonistes*, who is the person who competed in the Olympic games in order to win.

Authors such as Díaz and Arancibia (2002), Capuano (2004), González and Ortiz (2011), Cejudo (2017) collect the statement that the first occurrences of the term "competition" are associated with the psychologist David McClelland around the 1970s of the last century. The conceptual definitions have been changing over time, with a tendency towards complexity, however, there is consensus in considering the positive relationship that exists between competence and personal performance (in any of the areas of the subject's life).

For González (2002, p. 4) a competence is “a complex psychological configuration that integrates in its structure and functioning motivational, cognitive formations and personological resources that are manifested in the quality of the subject's professional performance, and that guarantee professional performance responsible and efficient”. Rodríguez, Navarrete and Holguín (2018, p.165) cite Perrenoud (2008), who recognizes that the term competence “has enriched its meaning in the educational field where it is understood as know-how in specific situations that require creative application. , flexible and responsible for knowledge, skills and attitudes ”. At a higher level, Tejada and Ruiz (2016, p. 20) reported that "to be competent it is necessary to put the repertoire of resources into play". The aforementioned authors emphasized the use of resources to carry out the activity, and they transcend knowledge and know-how. It is consistent with the vision of competition as a psychological configuration, which refers not only to the existence in the subject of the resources to act, but to their implementation under certain conditions; it is a dynamic, situational view of the competition category.

In the current research situation, it is considered that the construction of competition is individual, even if it is always carried out in social conditions. It starts from the leading character of the Specialists in Integral Attention to the Scholarship holder in the process of construction of the competences, and for this the strategy that is followed must have a developer character, sustained in a participative methodology, and a dialogical communication. It also requires recognizing the differences between the Specialists in Comprehensive Care for the Scholarship holder, identifying in each one their potentialities, their strengths and weaknesses, in order to visualize the ways to achieve optimal performance

The classification of competences referred to by Bisquerra and Pérez (2007) is assumed for the research exercise when considering them in two dimensions: professional technical development competences and socio-personal development competencies. According to the aforementioned authors, technical-professional development competencies, “also called functional, are circumscribed around knowledge and procedures in relation to a certain professional field or specialization. It is related to the knowledge and know-how necessary for the expert performance of a work activity” (p. 64); and sociopersonal development competencies, include personal and interpersonal competencies.

The claim to enhance the professional competencies of the Specialists in Comprehensive Care for the Scholarship holder is based on the epistemological contributions of the Vygotsky Historical-Cultural Approach. In keeping with this, it is considered that the development of competences is valid if there is an intentional, conscious, and directed educational process. It means considering external influences, and internal conditions, in order to guarantee a synergy that facilitates training, and enhances efficient and responsible professional performance. It implies attending to the capacities and abilities manifested in the performance of the Specialist in Comprehensive Care for the Scholarship holder, and to the potential capacities and abilities that are updated in light of the new demands imposed by the medium. Proper management of the difference between what the worker does and what he can do, is the way to move him from an initial condition to a desired end: a professional with the skills to take on the challenge of managing educational work for new generations.

It is also important to approach the strategy category as the core of this research. There is a coincidence in recognizing that the term strategy comes from the military scene. It is a term, which according to Contreras (2013), has its origin in the Greek words *Stratos*, which refers to the army, and again, which means guide. The foregoing indicates that the strategy will guide the development of the professional competencies of the Specialists in Comprehensive Care for the Student Residence Fellow. The design of the strategy will be considered from its phases or stages: diagnosis, planning, implementation and evaluation. The present strategy is seen as the projection of a system of actions in the short, medium and long term, which allows the transformation of the current state of the professional competences of the Specialists in

Comprehensive Care for the Fellows oriented to the management of the student's educational work as a fellow, based on the methods and procedures for achieving the determined objectives in a specific time.

Diagnostic stage.

To carry out the initial diagnosis of educational work management, the techniques described above were applied, namely: observation, interview, documentary review. The analysis of the results of observation of educational activities allowed us to assert that:

- In 100% of the cases, there was a deficient process of preparing the educational activity.
- In 100% of the cases, there was insufficient treatment of the subject, associated with the previous result, and a low participation of the students was visualized.
- There was a diversity of structure in educational activities, and a model to guide implementation cannot be recognized.

The documentary review of the preparation of the educational activities carried out by the Specialist in Comprehensive Care for the Fellow showed that:

- In 100% of cases, the preparation of the educational activity is not based on the theoretical, conceptual and methodological bases of the type of activity used.
- In 100% of cases, the treatment given to the subject presented does not demonstrate a previous process of preparing the activity.

The interview with the Specialists in Comprehensive Care for the Fellow confirmed the results presented above, and in all the cases, they recognized that there were insufficiencies in the management of educational work. A diagnosis of training needs was made in the Specialists for Comprehensive Care for the Fellow, and by integrating with the rest of the applied techniques, it is concluded that the main difficulties in professional skills are in the order of:

Professional technical development competences:

- Insufficient knowledge about educational activities for training: conceptual definition, characteristics, phases or stages, advantages and disadvantages.

- Deficiencies in the organization of the educational activity, according to the previous difficulty.
- Insufficient command of teaching methods, with an emphasis on problems.
- Difficulties in promoting student participation in educational activities.
- Deficiencies in the management of educational work, with an emphasis on planning and organizing the process.
- Difficulties in guaranteeing a systemic conception of the training process, based on a detailed analysis of the training needs of the scholarship student, and strategically conceived. Personal partner development skills:
 - Emotional (empathy, resilience, ability to restructure actions)
 - Social (assertive communication, public speaking skills, conflict management and resolution)

In accordance with the above, and considering the criteria of managers, experienced workers, and Specialist in Comprehensive Care for the Scholarship holder with favorable results in office, planning was carried out. However, it was recognized that the problem was not solved with actions aimed at the cognitive dimension of competence (knowledge, knowledge), but that the development of skills (know-how) was essential. In practice, there was no background at the University of Granma to guide how to do it. Improvement and improvement of processes were fundamentally linked to the educational teaching process. This raised the question: could the tools that perfect the educational teaching process contribute to the improvement and improvement of educational work in the non-teaching setting? The response was positive, and the actions listed below conditioned the improvement of professional skills, and were organized following the practice-theory-practice cycle. The continuation of the actions leads to a process of continuous improvement.

Planning stage:

In the professional technical dimension:

A cycle of activities aimed at improving skills for educational management was carried out from different typologies (educational talks, conference, and film debate), taking advantage

of the potentialities of the methodological teaching work cycle, and tempering them to the management of the process in a scenario non-teaching. The format proposed below facilitated not only the understanding of the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological bases of educational activities (knowing), but also their concretion in practice, enabling the development of skills (knowing how).

Activity no. 1: Business meeting

Objective: To analyze the results of the management of educational work in the previous year, with emphasis on the exercise of educational activities, promoting the debate on the main limitations that arose in its execution, and decision-making.

Participants: Specialists in Comprehensive Care for the scholarship holder

Activity no. 2: Business meeting

Objective: Explain the theoretical, conceptual, methodological and practical foundations of educational talk, as a type of activity for educational work.

Participants: Specialists in Comprehensive Care for the scholarship holder

Activity no. 3: Educational activity for instructional purposes

Objective: To guide the Specialists in Integral Attention to the Scholar, by arguing the theoretical, conceptual, methodological and practical foundations of the educational talk, as a type of activity for educational work.

Participants: Specialists in Comprehensive Care for the scholarship holder

Activity no. 4: Educational activity for demonstration purposes

Objective: To guide the Specialists in Integral Attention to the Scholar, through the development of an educational talk, about the theoretical-conceptual, methodological and practical foundations of the educational talk, as a type of activity for educational work.

Participants: Specialists in Comprehensive Care for the scholarship holder

Activity no. 5: Open educational activity

Objective: To guide the Specialists in Integral Attention to the Scholar, through the analysis of a visited educational talk, on the theoretical-conceptual, methodological and practical foundations of the educational talk, as a type of activity for educational work.

Participants: Specialists in Integral Attention to the Scholar and students

Activity no. 6: Methodological workshop

Objective: To debate about the results of the implementation of educational talks as a type of activity for educational work, based on its theoretical, conceptual, methodological and practical foundations.

Participants: Specialists in Comprehensive Care for the scholarship holder.

In a second moment, a similar work cycle was carried out, but based on the essential nature of the content related to the film debate and the conference as typologies of educational activities. Currently, work is being done to continue the training process of the Specialist in Comprehensive Care for the Fellow, aimed at improving the management of educational work following the practice-theory-practice cycle, but with new content. At the same time, a system of actions was developed in order to train Specialists in Comprehensive Care for the Scholarship holder in subjects related to educational management that complemented the provisions in the previous section such as: psychological development of youth and adolescents, leadership, communication, conflict management, teamwork skills.

Implementation stage

Preparation of the group of Specialists in Comprehensive Care for the Fellow, as well as for the directors of the student residence.

Gradual introduction in the management of the educational work of the proposed transformations.

Creation of spaces for the socialization of the results of the implemented transformations (Workshop on Good Practices for the Management of Educational Work at the University of Granma).

Evaluation stage

At this stage, the systematic control of the management of the educational work is significant, with an emphasis on its planning, organization and control of the process, as well as the on-site verification of the activities carried out:

- Controls to the preparation of the educational activities, through the revision of the planning of the activities of the month.
- Controls on the execution of educational activities, to evaluate the strict compliance with their theoretical-conceptual, methodological and practical budgets.
- Application of surveys to students to assess the degree of satisfaction with the training process from educational activities, and its contribution to the comprehensive training of the university student.
- Evaluation of the behavioral modifications expressed by the students in their student performance as well as in the different spaces of coexistence.
- A partial evaluation of the results of the application of the strategy showed expected changes in the professional skills of the Specialist in Comprehensive Care for the Fellow. For the analysis of the new situation, techniques similar to those carried out during the diagnosis were applied: documentary analysis, interviews with students in the condition of a fellow, Specialist in Comprehensive Care of the Grant and managers, as well as observation during educational activities. It was found that:
 - There is documentary evidence of the process of preparing the educational activity, of the control of the students and their interventions.
 - The preparation of the educational activities is based on the theoretical, conceptual and methodological foundations, and an in-depth expression of the contents is expressed, as well as the participation of the students.
 - The participation of the students is promoted, through the use of problem methods, which includes the proposal of topics to be dealt with in future activities.
 - Higher satisfaction rates of students and workers with the management of educational work carried out in the student residence.

Conclusions

The development of professional competences in the Specialist for Comprehensive Care for the Scholarship holder constituted an urgent challenge of the training practice of the new Cuban university in accordance with what contemporary society poses to university professional training.

The methodological strategy for the development of competencies in the Specialist for the Integral Attention to the Fellow for the training process of university professionals is a tool that favored professionalism in the exercise of educational work.

The proposed methodological strategy contributed significantly to streamlining the management of the student training process, from the improvement of the subjective premises of performance of the Specialist in Comprehensive Care to the Scholar as an actor in the pedagogical process.

Attention to technical-professional and socio-personal skills, from the strategy, facilitated the start of a process of continuous transformation, and influenced the results of work shown by the Specialist in Comprehensive Care for the Scholarship holder.

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