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*El tratamiento al contenido personalidades históricas en  
la educación preescolar*  
*Addressing historical personalities in pre-school  
education*

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**Resumen:** La práctica pedagógica sistemática en la educación preescolar ha evidenciado un trabajo insuficiente con el contenido Personalidades Históricas al no existir una metodología que oriente al docente cómo implementarlo en el proceso educativo. Por tal motivo este trabajo tiene como objetivo proponer orientaciones metodológicas generales para dar tratamiento a este contenido en el proceso educativo de la primera infancia en las modalidades institucional y no institucional.

**Palabras clave:** Personalidades históricas; Proceso docente educativo; Modalidades educativas; Educación preescolar

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**Abstract:** The systematic pedagogical practice in preschool education has evidenced an insufficient work with the content *Historical Personalities* as there is no methodology that guides the teacher to implement it in the educational process. For this reason, this work aims to propose general methodological guidelines to treat this content in the educational process of early childhood in institutional and non-institutional modalities.

**Keywords:** Historical personalities; Educational teaching process; Educational modalities; Preschool education

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## **Introduction**

According to Perera (2012)

In Cuba, preschool education is a lawful right; every child has access to it either through the institutional or the non-institutional way, from birth to admission to school. This level of education should be guided towards developing the personality and abilities of the child in order to prepare them for active adult life (p. 64).

Consistent with this idea, the educational process developed in pre-school education is directed to achieve the integral development of each child through an educational process of increasingly higher quality.

Because this is the first stage where the infant begins to receive the influences coming from the new environment where he lives, this process acquires the particularity of being essentially educational, since attention is focused on aspects aimed at the achievement of skills, habits, abilities, and norms of behavior necessary for further development.

In the world today, results from numerous interdisciplinary studies have favored a progressive process of awareness of the crucial importance of the first six years of life, and of the factors that condition or favor growth and a healthy personality development at this stage of ontogeny. Thus, it is necessary to guarantee quality educational attention to children of these ages (García, Duarte, Urbay and Cruz, 2007, p.4).

From the pedagogical point of view, the educational process in preschool education is conceived to influence the child, according to the evolutionary stage where they are, intellectually, socio-affectively, attitudinally, motivationally and evaluatively.

The different areas of development that make up the educational programs have specific contents and objectives aimed at achieving the goals established for each age group. Within these areas there is one dedicated to knowing the elements of the social world, where contents are placed on the family, the countryside, the city, places of the locality and of Cuba in general, the patriotic symbols, the Cuban revolutionaries, among others, which enable the child to expand his knowledge about the world that surrounds him and the society he lives in.

Systematic pedagogical practice has evidenced an insufficient work, specifically with the Cuban Revolutionaries content, as there is no methodology that guides the teacher to implement it in the educational process. In addition, the term Cuban revolutionaries is limited to the study of the men and women who fought for the independence of Cuba, which limits the scope of the content and the examination of other personalities with a significant trajectory in other social spheres.

These shortcomings have a direct impact on the development of the educational process, taking into account the parameters that measure the quality of the educational process and the preparation of the teaching staff to carrying activities related to this content.

For the reasons stated above, this paper aims to offer methodological guidelines to teach the content of Historical Personalities in the early childhood education process, which will improve the quality

of the educational process itself, and the preparation of teachers who plan and carry out activities related to this content.

## **Development**

### **Importance of the content about the Cuban Revolution in the curriculum of preschool education**

History is an important component within the transformative processes of every society; it explains facts, stages, moments, periods and important events that determine the existence of peoples in particular.

Undoubtedly history is the memory of society, it is the result of a process of transformations, so the educational reality of today can be better understood and explained if one ponders about the different historical processes that have intervened in its conception and development (Cruz, 2007, p.1).

To these ideas it can be added other important aspect without which history does not exist: the participation of the men and women who determined with their protagonism and participation the thousands of facts that make up the historical memories of the past, that are reflected in the present.

Cuban educational policy, and specifically the curricular designs of each teaching, work with history, because it occupies a special place in teaching. The pre-school education curriculum has a development area called Knowledge of the Social World that has specific objectives and contents related to the study of Cuban revolutionaries. For each year of life, the objectives and contents related to this content are established. In 4th and 5th years, children should recognize some symbols, heroes and defenders of the homeland, and express feelings of love and respect for them. In the 6th year of life they must recognize the patriotic symbols, and develop feelings of love and respect for them; they must be able to regulate their conduct according to the particularities of the patriotic activities; they are expected also to know the reason of the principal local and national commemorations, and the most important characteristics and qualities of the Cuban revolutionaries, as well as explaining some simple facts of social life and the representations they have about them. These contents encourage the child to approach different facts and personalities of history that are the basis for the study of Cuba's history in primary education.

It is important to recognize that historical facts do not represent anything by themselves, since they reach their true meaning when the role played by the men involved is revealed. For this reason, the

study of Cuban Revolution content should bring children as close as possible to the ideas, values and revolutionary trajectory of these men and women, to contribute to the development of behavior patterns, behavioral norms, values, feelings and attitudes.

Finding the right ways to transmit the past facts that made history, establishing relationships with the present and taking advantage of that content in the education of future generations is one of the most complex problems in the direction of the educational process of any teaching.

Research developed by Pérez (2004), Lara (2006), Ochoa (2015) have been directed towards different historical personalities. Specifically in preschool education, González (2008), Duardo (2009), Peña (2009), Hernández (2009), Martínez (2010), Toppe (2010), have investigated the subject, offering ways for the Cuban Revolutionaries content to be taught as close as possible to history, highlighting the life and work of the men who fought for the independence of the country.

The approach to this content is registered with the term historical personalities in several levels of education, the reason why it is proposed by the authors of this paper to use it in the preschool education for the study of men and women who have stood out not only as fighters for the independence of their country, but also in areas of culture, education, science and sports.

The proposal presented recommends the change of the term Cuban revolutionaries by historical personalities, as well as its definition, is a result that belongs to the National Investigative Project: Improvement of the Cuban pre-school curriculum.

### **Methodological guidelines for the treatment of the content Historical Personalities in the dimension Relationship with the Environment**

The dimension Relation with the Environment establishes that:

Knowledge of the environment must be structured on the basis of the relationships that can be established by children in different stages, the possibility of knowing the world around them and their personal space, the possibility of feeling, acting, being affected by the world, which favors the development of moral skills, habits, feelings and qualities. (Cárdenas, 2015, p.59)

Throughout Cuba's history, brave men have been known because of their revolutionary ideas. Their contributions to political, social and cultural development, their attitude towards injustice, their unconditional commitment to the struggle for freedom and their professed love for the country, have earned a high place and great recognition by their people, which has turned them into personalities known by many generations.

The thought of these symbolic figures of past and present history and their legacy allow, in the educational order, to notice their contributions and ideas in different spheres of society, and their moral values, in order to work with children in early childhood.

The Historical Personality content present in the Relationship with the Environment dimension has been conceived so that its treatment in the educational process is in correspondence with the new requirements of the curriculum in perfection and acquire a more integrating, flexible and contextualized character. Having this in mind, the objectives projected for the child are aimed at developing the abilities to observe, identify, discuss, narrate, and be able to create their own stories based on the knowledge of the personalities analyzed.

In the different educational activities where this content is taught, children should observe the image of each of the personalities to identify them by name or epithet in correspondence with their physical characteristics and qualities, which do not limit the treatment of other intellectual abilities such as: comparing, classifying, modeling, serializing and planning. It greatly favors the intra-dimension relationship, and the integral and systemic character of the educational process.

Among the methods to be used to teach the content Historical Personalities we propose to include observation, description, conversation, narration and modeling, and among verbal methodological procedures, as it makes possible the knowledge of the world, the development of different ways of thinking, the expression of their experiences, and interpersonal relationships. Related to this procedure is the conversation, which facilitates the development of listening skills, dialogue, and understanding about the world and the contemporaries.

Observation guided towards recognition favors children to seize the knowledge they need to identify the image of the different historical personalities and the main characteristics that typify them. This procedure is distinguished not only by the characteristics of the cognitive tasks that it enables but also by the combination it allows between the perceived experience and the past experiences to be learned.

Learning by playing as a method is used for the proposed activities; in turn, it will achieve in children a state of mind that favors their attention and interest in the activities to be developed, always prevailing the respect for the historical figures under study.

Storytelling, a procedure that allows the child to approach, in a pleasant way, the fact happened in reality with accurate experiences, influences the improvement of his communicative skills, and the intellectual, moral and aesthetic development, stimulating creative imagination and the processes of

abstraction, synthesis and memorization, as well as the expression of emotions and impressions. Before proceeding to the story, both the educator and the child must make a detailed study of the event or historical event that allows them to revive it in their mind and to create images that will later acquire external expression through the proper use of voice, rhythm, gesture, mimicry, language.

The proper use of teaching aids is determinant in the treatment of the content Historical Personalities. The use of pictures, posters and images bring the child closer to events and personalities that are distant in time, making the content more objective, and a more efficient process of assimilation. Using the sensory system allows more information, activates the intellectual functions, and the child becomes an active subject of his own learning.

At present, technological development imposes a necessary approach to the use of multiple possibilities in order to make activities with children more attractive and novel, always under the guidance of the educator. Thus, to use different software and educational television is seductive, specifically for children from three to six years, for the visualization of historical facts.

Among the teaching means that favor the treatment to the Historical Personalities content is the map. This can be designed by educational agents so that the child can identify the region where an event happened associated with the personality, his birthplace, or the place where there is a monument dedicated to it. The child establishes qualitative, quantitative, and spatial relationships.

This means also allow the preparation of the child for their school activity in the work with worksheets, their aesthetic training and the development of motor skills.

Because of the characteristics of 6th-year-old children, the location on a map of Cuba of the birthplace of each historical personality studied or of the place where a historical event occurred, is a very emotional activity. This map must remain in the classroom until the end of the school year with all locations made. This means also facilitates the work with the family and they must be oriented to create their own maps at home, to locate aspects of interest for them and also for the rest of their families.

This and other means allow working with temporal relationships as there are historical personalities who are not physically present and others who are still alive. This is why it is important for children to be able to identify which personalities lived first, and which ones lived until our days and are still with us. To achieve this goal it is essential to show the children what historical facts occurred before and after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.

To work with those personalities who are still alive, it is important to project images or TV educative programs where the children can visualize in the institution or in family life conditions facts about the personality, and about his /her participation in recent events.

Taking into account the level of development of children and the school year, learners (especially from five to six years old) can spot on a map of Latin America the countries where the personalities were born or developed their political, sports, cultural or scientific important actions in favor of these regions; for content selection teachers must take into consideration the personalities' closeness to Cuba and the bonds of friendship and brotherhood established.

The study of historical personalities is linked to commemorative dates that, because of their importance and transcendence for the Cuban people or the world, are celebrated every year. The curriculum needs those that should not be overlooked and are mandatory, although others may be selected according to the province or territory.

The family is an educational agent of great value to continue the treatment of historical personalities. The educational agents who direct the process must orient it taking into account the methodological steps to follow to treat a historical personality and the specific methodological orientations for each year of life so that, using their own tools, they carry out activities to systematize the study carried out in the classroom, such activities are visiting historical sites, watching videos about history, reading and commenting articles published in magazines and newspapers, creating posts or albums with images of historical personalities, and talking about aspects of their lives and work.

The content Historical Personalities encourages the child to get acquainted with aspects of the life of persons that are traditionally studied in the levels following pre-school education such as: José Julián Martí Pérez, Ernesto Guevara de la Serna, Camilo Cienfuegos Gorriarán, Antonio Maceo Grajales, Mariana Grajales Coello, Celia Sánchez Manduley, Vilma Espín Guillois, Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz, Raúl Modesto Castro Ruz and Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías.

The life and work of José Martí Pérez should be studied throughout the school year taking advantage of each of the spaces available for this, bringing children to the stories and poems of the "Golden Age" book in correspondence with the particularities of the students. In addition, it is very important that the student recognizes the personalities that are representative of their locality because they are people with a history closer to their environment.

The following is an example of the treatment of historical personalities in an activity scheduled for the 4th year of life.

**Title of the programmed activity-** Camilo's hat

**Objective:** to observe the picture showing the image of Camilo Cienfuegos Gorriarán

**Method:** observation.

**Procedure:** conversation about the characteristics of Camilo Cienfuegos Gorriarán.

**Teaching aid:** photo of Camilo Cienfuegos Gorriarán.

**Development:** The activity is motivated by a visit to the play area. The teacher invites the children to discover an object that is inside a box located in the classroom using words like these:

- Good Morning. Now let's look for a closed box in the living room and I want to know what's inside. Does any child want to help me find out what's hidden there?

Before searching for the box, they can study a photo of Camilo Cienfuegos Gorriarán hanging on the wall.

The educator might say to the children: - Look what a big picture we have found! Do any of you know the name of this personality in the history of Cuba?

After listening to the children's answers, the educator mentions Camilo's full name, and asks how Camilo was also called, and reaffirms the epithets: Lord of the vanguard, Hero of Yaguajay.

The educator reminds children that in the months of October and November a period of celebrations pays homage to Camilo and Che, and asks: what can you tell me about Camilo? How was he like? Why did he fight? What other revolutionaries fought with him?

The educator must expand the responses of the children emphasizing in Camilo's characteristics as a revolutionary, a brave man, expeditionary of the Granma yacht, and inseparable friend of Ernesto Guevara. The teacher can refer to his attitudes when he was a kid playing ball, and his will to defend small children. The educator has to intervene again:

- How happy I am! All of you children have talked to me about Camilo. But there is something I want to know still, what does Camilo always wore in his head? And there comes an opportunity to insist that a big hat identified Camilo because he liked his hat a lot and always wore it.

Invite all the children to look for the closed box in the living room and ask: what child knows what is inside this box? Do you want to know? The teacher can ask the help of a child to open it.

Once opened the box the teacher asks: what did we find inside? Who's hat this one looks like? Now we have a hat just like Camilo's, do they like it? Why?

The educator can explain that the hat is a garment that men and women can use to protect us from the sun. She then thanks her for helping her discover what was in the box, recalls everything done in the activity and highlights the children who talked the most, who best behaved, and exhorts those who had less protagonism to participate in the next activities plus.

To finish the educator invites the children to paint a hat just like the one Camilo wore. The pupils are asked to seat and the teacher can handle them white paper and crayons. In the development of this final activity he or she can continue talking about this important figure of national history.

## **Conclusions**

The study of different historical personalities is an aspect of great importance that promotes the establishment of correct behavioral patterns, behavioral norms, values, feelings, and the development of attitudes in children from zero to six years; these purposes are consistent with the end of pre-school education.

The methodological orientations presented allow the work with historical personalities in both educational modalities, suggest the incorporation of others that are not present in the educational programs for preschool children, and allow the adequate planning and dosage of the activities related to this content in the educational process.

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