
La caracterización psicopedagógica como herramienta para la atención a educandos con necesidades educativas especiales

Psychopedagogical characterization as a tool for the care of students with special educational needs.

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Resumen: La caracterización psicopedagógica de los educandos con Necesidades Educativas Especiales atendidos en el contexto regular precisa de transformaciones, dirigidas con mayor énfasis a sus potencialidades, la recursividad y la de la familia para enfrentar las exigencias del modelo educativo cubano. El objetivo del presente artículo es sistematizar algunos aspectos teórico – metodológicos relacionados con este importante documento. Por lo que se realizó una investigación de tipo documental, con un carácter descriptivo para lo cual se emplearon métodos del nivel teórico como análisis, síntesis, inducción – deducción que conllevaron a una profunda revisión bibliográfica y permitieron concluir la necesidad de la misma.

Palabras clave: Caracterización psicopedagógica; Inclusión educativa; Diagnóstico, Diversidad.

Abstract: The psycho-pedagogical characterization of students with Special Educational Needs attended in the regular context requires transformations, directed with greater emphasis to their potentialities, recursion and that of the family to face the demands of the Cuban educational model. The objective of this article is to systematize some theoretical and methodological aspects related to this important document. Therefore, a documentary research was carried out, with a descriptive character for which theoretical level methods such as analysis, synthesis, induction - deduction were used, which led to a deep bibliographic review and allowed concluding the need for it.

Keywords: Psychopedagogical characterization; Educational inclusion; Diagnosis, Diversity.

Introduction

In the educational context, the idea of human diversity is increasingly accepted. It is undeniable that there are peculiar traits that distinguish us and identify people from others, since each one is different in many aspects, even though there are common characteristics that reveal our human essence according to the category of unity.

Diversity and its educational response is a challenge that educational systems, far from avoiding it, have to assume and face it so that the offer is of quality for all. Diversity should be conceived not as a hindrance, but as a positive value, a bearer of progress.

The above approach finds a space in the current process of improvement in the Cuban educational system, which has a practical expression in the experimental centers, where the institutional educational project enables all the opportunities for the attention to the diversity of expressions of development, the involvement of the family and other community agents in an active way in the expansion of opportunities for all.

In this sense, it is of special interest the preparation of the teacher in an education for diversity understood as:

...that which guarantees differentiated and personalized attention in response to the educational needs of each individual, group and/or population segment. It is the one that ensures the conditions and means for everyone to learn and develop with relevance and equity, facilitating to each one, through different ways, the possibility of reaching the more general objectives stated by the educational system for the level they are going through and according to their individual specificities. (Nieves Rivero, 2015, p. 5).

Achieving the integration into society of children, adolescents and young people with special educational needs associated or not with disabilities in increasingly inclusive contexts depends on educators' knowledge of the potential and needs of their students, awareness, sensitization and change of attitudes of all members of the community as a whole, a transformation that implies a change of conception within society, which must occur gradually.

Development

Education should provide people with knowledge, skills, development of abilities and values to forge an adequate quality of life. The challenge to achieve this quality education in any context is to provide each child, adolescent and young person with what he/she needs according to the psycho-pedagogical diagnosis. The teacher is

required to know the needs, potentialities and possibilities of his students so that teaching leads to development.

This new conception should consider as an inclusive context the one that, due to its characteristics, allows, based on knowledge, the identification of needs and potentialities, using the psycho-pedagogical diagnosis as a way to develop all the possibilities of the human organism to achieve the fullest possible participation and integration of children, adolescents and young people in all social activities.

In the working document related to the End, principles and objectives of Special Education (MINED, CELAEE, UNICEF, 2016) and as part of the resizing of Special Education, it is expressed:

The objective of an education under these conditions goes beyond the concept of traditional special education and in the current historical, economic, political and social circumstances is defined as: to achieve the maximum possible integral development of people with Special Educational Needs, in any context, allowing them to face their social inclusion with different levels of independence. (Page 4). Esa independencia e inclusión social, demanda de los agentes educativos una labor consciente, con acciones encaminadas a la búsqueda continua y permanente de los elementos que caracterizan las manifestaciones distintivas de cada educando y los diversos factores que están en su base u origen. La herramienta más completa con la cuentan los agentes educativos en la actualidad es precisamente el diagnóstico psicopedagógico como proceso, el cual constituye el punto de partida para la labor educativa, la enseñanza-aprendizaje y el proceso correctivo- compensador desarrollador y la caracterización psicopedagógica como una de las etapas fundamentales.

When we return to the purpose of Special Education, the phrase "in any context" is of special interest, which indicates that students with special educational needs, whether or not associated with a disability, can study in any school of the National Education System. This constitutes a challenge for teachers in the attention to educational diversity, individual differences of these in the light of the inclusive approach to education at the present time.

In Cuba, educational inclusion is:

...a conception that recognizes the right of everyone to a quality education, regardless of their particularities and characteristics that condition the variabilities in their development and that propitiates their integration into society as full individuals in conditions to enjoy the possibilities it offers and contribute to its improvement. (Borges, 2014, p.14).

Therefore, educational inclusion does not justify the presence of students in a specific type of school, special or regular, but responds to the school that best responds to the socio-educational objectives and ensures their full, active and transformative participation in society.

It is considered that educational inclusion is an educational approach based on the valuation of diversity as an enriching element of the teaching-learning process and, consequently, as an element that favors human development. Attention to diversity represents the demand for quality education for all. Inclusive education possibly symbolizes the framework that allows the most complete interpretation of the concept of attention to diversity.

The understanding of the variability of development, as the essence of inclusive practices, makes it necessary for the teacher to assume as a basis the mastery of the psycho-pedagogical characteristics of the students served in the regular context in order to achieve the maximum objective of their comprehensive development.

In order to be consistent with the idea that regular schools are becoming more and more special and special schools more normalizing (Machín, 2011), it is necessary to provide all the knowledge to the regular school teacher in order to meet the diversity of students served in their schools.

One of these important skills is related to psycho-pedagogical characterization.

The authors agree that the learners with Special Educational Needs attended in the regular context are those who present some variability in their development, associated or not to a disability and who receive educational attention in an institution belonging to general education in the National Education System; that is, that does not

correspond to Special Education and adapts the educational environment to all and in all curricular areas. (Cala Leyva, 2018, p. 5)

This definition includes Early Childhood with its three components of educational care, primary education, basic secondary education, pre-university education and professional Technical education.

Taking these ideas as the foundation of professional pedagogical work, teaching, educating and working for the integral personal development of learners constitutes, therefore, a process of permanent search and research of methods, procedures and means that can guarantee maximum efficiency and quality in the fulfillment of missions, objectives or general purposes, without relegating or segregating anyone.

It is an urgent need for teachers to know all their students in an exhaustive and integral way, to be permanently attentive to the evolution of their needs and demands, to have available or to look for and appropriate the didactic resources required by their group - class, specific groups of students or some of them in a particular way.

At present, an important theoretical support can be added for the approach of the psycho-pedagogical characterization and what is expressed in the Special Education Conception regarding the changes that are made today in this educational level, specifically with children, adolescents and young people with special educational needs, associated or not to disability, who need professionals who can accept, assume and attend to diversity.

This is seen from their own biological, psychological and social manifestations to guarantee the educational response in correspondence with their needs that allows their inclusion in different modalities of care and educational contexts characterized by equity and equality for their complete social integration.

In order to offer adequate educational attention, it is necessary to start, as previously expressed, from the knowledge of the individual characteristics of each one of them. For this reason, we will now reflect on the psycho-pedagogical characterization of the students served in the regular context, although these elements can be used for other students.

The psycho-pedagogical characterization as a tool for the teaching-educational process has been approached by different authors. It is important to know the criteria that have been used in this regard.

The following definitions can be found in the scientific literature on this subject:

Castillo del Risco; Gómez Cardoso; Núñez Rodríguez et al, define it as:

...the process that makes it possible to define the individual particularities of the child, with emphasis on the assessment of the school, family and community environment and the forms of relationship established between the child and his or her environment with a view to attending to and satisfying the needs that the child presents from different angles. Page 2

According to the methodological document of Preventive Work for Special Education (2015):

"Characterization is considered as the process, study or procedure that allows describing the qualities, traits, properties, that distinguish the object that is characterized; it can be performed inductively or deductively and requires starting from a theoretical model". Page 7

A more recent definition of psycho-pedagogical characterization was addressed by Zurita Cruz; Leyva Fuentes and Fernández Silva, (2016) where they express that "it implies the description and explanation of the distinctive aspects of the psychological, pedagogical and socio-familial particularities of the learners. It constitutes the reference for the elaboration of the educational attention strategy". P. 32

These definitions contain in themselves a change of approach, which emerged as a consequence of the expiration of other precedents, used in a still recent epoch.

In these, the psycho-pedagogical characterization was seen as a document to describe only the difficulties of the learners, with a focus on difficulties and not on potentialities and recursion for their progress.

No contradictions were found between these definitions, but according to the current inclusive approach to education, it is necessary to delve deeper into this instrument as

a starting point for designing and implementing educational strategies emphasizing recursion.

From the different points of view of the referred authors, the author agrees that characterization is a process that it is important to take into account not only the child but also the educational contexts in which he/she develops in order to design a personalized educational attention strategy that responds to a particular student.

In correspondence with this vision, it is worth asking: What is the purpose of the Psycho-pedagogical Characterization of students with Special Educational Needs in the regular context?

In order to answer the previous question, it is necessary to point out that the educational work must guarantee a developmental education and teaching based on a fine psycho-pedagogical diagnosis in all educational contexts.

A starting point for the fulfillment of the aspirations of educational inclusion and the implementation of an educational practice that takes diversity into account is the process of deepening the knowledge of children, as well as the particularities of their environment.

Personalizing teaching means adapting it to the educational needs of each and every student with a view to achieving common goals through diverse contexts. The personalization of teaching requires, in the first instance, knowledge on the part of teachers of the educational needs of each and every one of their students.

This knowledge can only be achieved through an adequate school diagnosis.

In this sense, the authors consider the definition of school diagnosis provided by Álvarez Cruz (1998) to be appropriate:

...is a systematic process of identification, prognosis and treatment of the school situation, as a continuous feedback and subsequent improvement that has the following objectives: to determine the level of progress achieved by the student in accordance with the instructional-educational objectives; to identify the factors that hinder, delay or accelerate learning; to characterize which of the children's needs are met during the process and which are not. And finally, to determine the intervention program according to the above.

At present, the pedagogical practice aimed at stimulating to the maximum the potentialities of students with Special Educational Needs served in the regular context must be based on the objective knowledge of the peculiarities of the students' development; this is possible with the knowledge related to the psychological formations, their content, the conditions that produce them and the dynamics of their formation, which favors the process of characterization of the students that should be systematically carried out by teachers as a fundamental condition to achieve a quality education.

For the teacher, characterization plays a significant role in the direction of the teaching-educational process.

It constitutes the starting point for the pedagogical intervention, since it serves as a guiding basis for the projection of pedagogical strategies elaborated from the knowledge of the subject's needs, his intellectual development, his family relationships, his peers, as well as the preceding childhood history, etc.

The fundamental purpose of the psycho-pedagogical characterization is to determine the individual particularities of the student and his environment and in correspondence his needs and potentialities, as well as to serve as a basis for the elaboration and application of a personalized, differentiated attention strategy, which in addition to correcting and compensating the difficulties that he presents, can avoid or prevent the appearance of others that aggravate his situation.

It allows the teacher to have valuable information about important general aspects of these children, their potential for development and those resources that need to be used for a better evolution and the actual level of education achieved.

In the scientific literature, there are several criteria referring to the dimensions and indicators that allow educational agents to elaborate the methods and instruments to be applied and subsequently. The author adheres to the suggestions for the elaboration of the psycho-pedagogical characterization report addressed by Zurita Cruz (2016) as she considers that they are contextualized to the problem under study in this article.

The suggestions for the preparation of the report do not constitute a recipe to be followed tacitly, but they do constitute a guide for educational agents.

1.-General data

a) Physical development: pre- and postnatal history, illnesses, motor development, language, wakefulness, sleep for those who sleep in the institution. Its action to the new conditions.

b) Teaching aspect: school achievement, rhythm, speed, their emotional strength, fluency, flexibility, the way they are combined, etc. Learning style, elements of knowledge mastered interests to study and perform tasks, intellectual skills, ability to perform teaching activities, family support in the tasks, interests and motivations. Academic skills are included; functional for those children, adolescents and young people with SEN associated with more severe disabilities.

For early childhood children with special educational needs in conditions of educational inclusion, the assimilation of the objectives of the programs designed in this subsystem is included in this dimension; highlighting how the age, that is, the levels of assistance, are fulfilled or not.

It is necessary to highlight in this dimension the evaluation of the zone of proximal development, since no quality teaching activity is carried out without enhancing development. In this aspect in the report it is necessary to point out if children, adolescents and youngsters with special educational needs in conditions of educational inclusion require help to carry out teaching or extracurricular activities, it is suggested to take into account the levels of help and if it transfers the same to similar situations.

Psychological aspect: his character, temperament, development of cognitive processes: memory, thinking, perception and imagination. Attention: whether he concentrates or not. Language: its pathology and description.

Development of their affective processes: includes their emotions, feelings and, in general, the affective experiences that condition their behavior and performance in learning, or that result from it, influencing their attitudes and orientation in the context. The diversity of needs, motivations, interests and goals that mobilize, sustain and direct the learning processes and actions.

Include the particularities of the types of interaction established between educational entities and their peers. Diversity of the representations and expectations they have about themselves and others. Influence of relationships and group environment.

This dimension takes up the contributions of the Health Organization, which points out the adaptive skills in the areas of communication, self-care, domestic life, social, interpersonal, use of community resources, self-control, work, leisure, health and safety.

Family composition: level of schooling, educational attitude of parents towards their children, help with homework, values, risk factors in the family, among other aspects.

-Characteristics of the institutional context: specifically the regime of school life and organization (if considered necessary because it affects the person being characterized to some extent). Pedagogical work carried out (specify the potentialities and causes of the problems).

-Characterization of the neighborhood community: habits, customs, traditions, norms, needs, community identity, feelings of belonging at the individual and collective level, whether it belongs to a social organization, role of the leader(s). Role of the agencies and socializing agents that intervene or promote their social inclusion. Existing network of production and service centers that can facilitate their job preparation.

The report should end with a strategy of educational attention understood as: "the system of sequential and interrelated actions that, starting from an initial state and considering the proposed objectives, allows directing and organizing in a conscious and intentional way the educational process of integral formation of the new generations".

These actions should be based on the needs and potentialities of children, adolescents and young people with SEN in conditions of educational inclusion, seeking in the community context the necessary ways and supports towards their social inclusion. These actions must be directed to the child, adolescent or youngster, the family, teachers, educators, executors, directors, specialists and the community.

The structure of the Educational Care Strategy includes the following elements:

1. - Needs

2.-Actions

3.-Date of compliance

4.-Responsibles

An approach to this conception of an educational care strategy can be reflected in this example, which can be refined, taking into account the individual characteristics of the learners. It is basically designed for an early childhood learner.

Of course, it is not the only action, it is just an example of how from the Special Educational Needs can arise actions aimed at solving the problem.

Special Educational Needs

1. Attention to her health condition and follow-up by:

Child Psychiatrist: For hyperkinesis, anxiety and distractibility disorder.

Actions

- ❖ Guarantee their attendance to psychiatric consultations, as well as the treatment oriented by the physician.
- ❖ Monitoring the outcome of the consultations

Compliance date: December 2023

Responsible parties: Educator, nurse of the institution and family.

Zurita (2016) systematizes the following aspects of the psycho-pedagogical characterization of learners served in the regular context:

- The characterization should be based on the process of interaction that occurs during the activity and communication between the educational agents and the children, adolescents and young people with special educational needs in conditions of educational inclusion.
- In this interaction both assume an active and consistent role, which favors the identification and determination of the psychological, pedagogical and socio-familial particularities of children, adolescents and young people with special educational needs in conditions of educational inclusion, specifying their positive and negative qualities.

- The characterization requires an exhaustive analysis of the activity and social participation of the characterized person, aimed at finding the limitations in the activity and restrictions in social participation in order to select plan and guarantee the implementation of resources, supports and ions for the sake of their social inclusion.
- The characterization should culminate with a report that is differentiated, empowering, explanatory and evaluative, guiding educational practice through a strategy, towards doing from the educational, family and community context.
- This report should collect the life history of children, adolescents and young people with SEN in conditions of educational inclusion that they can do with the help of adults or other children, that is, in a social activity of interrelation, and what they have already assimilated and can do alone independently, because it constitutes an achievement in their development.
- The information should be recorded in the files designed for these purposes: the child's file (children's institution or the "Educate your child" Program), cumulative file and psycho-pedagogical file.

The information recorded will or will not be extensive depending on the diverse characteristics, developmental variability, potentialities and educational needs, which may or may not be special, of the child, adolescent or young person in conditions of educational inclusion.

- The educational agent must be able to select the necessary and essential elements that contribute to the individual differences of each person, i.e. the singular.

The ideas expressed highlight not only the need but also the importance of the psycho-pedagogical characterization in the pedagogical practice that aims to stimulate the maximum potential of learners, but for the success of this work, teachers must rely on the objective knowledge of the general particularities of development to identify and determine the singular, psychological, pedagogical and socio-familial particularities of children, adolescents and young people with SEN in the regular context.

Conclusions

A starting point for the fulfillment of the aspirations of educational inclusion is the process of deepening the knowledge of children, as well as the particularities of their environment through the psycho-pedagogical characterization of children with Special Educational Needs in conditions of Educational Inclusion.

As the psycho-pedagogical characterization is a valuable instrument for the teacher's work and not a formal document, it becomes a necessity in the pedagogical process of the current Cuban school, with emphasis on those that offer educational attention to students with special educational needs associated or not to disability, hence it demands from teachers the development of pedagogical-professional skills necessary and sufficient for the realization of the same.

In correspondence with what has been stated, the psycho-pedagogical characterization should reflect the physical, cognitive and affective development, highlighting not only the weaknesses but also the potentialities of development. It is important to specify the dynamics by which the achieved development has been produced, under the influence of teaching and education in the most diverse situations in which the child interacts.

The ideas referred to should be taken into account in the elaboration of such an important document for the direction of the development and formation of the new generations in which the history of the ontogenetic development of each one of the educated is summarized.

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