

Representaciones del profesorado de la educación básica araucana multigrado sobre las nuevas bases curriculares

Representations of teachers of the basic education araucanain conditions of multigrade on the new curricular bases

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Resumen: La tensión entre las bases curriculares en la educación básica chilena y su implementación consciente en escuelas rurales multigrado constituyó la problemática objeto de estudio. Esto generó un análisis mediante métodos cualitativos sobre las representaciones del profesorado de las nuevas bases curriculares en el contexto rural mapuche connotando a la educación en condiciones de vulnerabilidad y diversidad cultural. De ahí la necesidad de superar a los docentes en dichas bases y su contextualización a la realidad rural mapuche en las que el mayor reto radica en potenciar una atención educativa inclusiva y diversificada en relación con el nuevo currículum.

Palabras clave: Plan de estudios; Escuela rural multigrado; Bases curriculares; Estrategias de enseñanza

Abstract: The tension among the curricular bases in the Chilean Basic Education and its implementation in rural multigrade schools, constituted the study object problem. This generated a study by means of qualitative methods on the representations of the faculty of the new curricular bases, in the mapuche rural context connoting to the education in vulnerability conditions and cultural diversity. Hence the necessity to overcome educational teachers in such bases and their contextualization to the rural mapuche reality, in those that the biggest challenge resides in powered an inclusive educational attention and diversified in relation with the new curriculum.

Keywords: Curriculum; Rural multigrade school; Curricular bases; Teaching strategies

Introduction

The analysis of this article has as context the Chilean rural school in multigrade conditions. In these institutions the educational process is directed by one or more teachers, hence any change in the curricular bases implies modifications in which the teaching staff can develop a quality work. In this professional

context, implementation in the current education system is more complex, to the point of not being able to develop effective teaching strategies due to system inconsistencies.

The foregoing led to the systematization of theoretical references regarding multigrade in Ibero-America. Such is the case of Bustos (2006), who studied teachers in training from the pedagogical development in multigrade classroom groups of primary education in the rural context. Colbert (1999), emphasizes the improvement of access and quality of education in rural areas of high poverty. Cruz (2010), exposes characteristics of teaching practice in rural contexts. On the other hand, Cabello, Cuervo, Estrada, Hernández, Popoca, and Reyess (2004), deepened in the organization of multigrade classroom work. Pridmore (2007), adapted the curriculum of primary for multigrade in developing countries since the teacher update. Vargas (2003) made a characterization of these establishments and their operation. On the other hand, Rodríguez, Matzer, & Estrada (2004), investigated the methodological scientific work in the rural sector of Cuba.

These authors offer guidance on the training of teachers for their professional performance in multigrade groups, the development of texts and educational materials, adaptations in the curriculum and teaching strategies. However, in the systematization constructed for the purposes of the research that precedes this article, the study and conscious participation of the teachers in updating the curriculum was identified as a problem.

On the other hand, in the analysis of the definition of multigrade rural school the weighting among its features was verified as that institution in which the teacher teaches in one or more courses within the same classroom. In addition, two classifications are derived in the theory: complete multigrade school (combine two courses from 1st to 6th grade, attaining independence in 7th and 8th grade) and incomplete multigrade school (where instruction is taught from 1st to 6th grade, and combined from 1st to 4th years, 5th and 6th, or from 1st to 6th in the same classroom or in another room).

There are studies that analyze social and educational conditions, in this regard are Durin (2007), Pereyra (2008), Vera, Ossesand Schiefelbein (2012), with the following characteristics: high levels of vulnerability, inadequate facilities, scarcity of pedagogical materials, difficult accessibility, difficult conditions for teachers, and low level of achievement of learning. Nonetheless, the opportunities presented are rich in the aforementioned context.

The study of statistics of La Araucanía represents it as the region with the largest rural population in the country; therefore, it concentrates the bulk of rural schools. According to the information obtained from the

XVII National and VI Housing Census (2002) in the IX Region, the density is 27.30 inhabitants / km², and its rural population is 281.227 inhabitants (National Statistics Institute, 2002). From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the curricular option in rural sectors is fundamentally multigrade education.

This research takes as a research scenario educational establishments (schools) of the Foundation of the Teaching of La Araucanía (hereinafter, Foundation). It is a non-profit organization that works as a supporter of 105 schools, 65 of them are multi-grade basic schools in rural sectors that represent 61% of all the schools of the Foundation (Foundation of the Teaching of La Araucanía, 2016). Another peculiarity of the multigrade school in the rural sector of the IX Region is the rate of indigenous population of Mapuche origin, which amounts to 35.5% of the population of students of the Foundation, which is 18,602 (FDMA, 2016). This particularity demonstrates diversity, and in this lies one of the greatest challenges for teachers.

At present the teachers of multigrade rural schools face the process of implementation of the curricular bases whose fundamental change lies in the nomenclature, structure, complexity and depth of contents that must be taught from the skills and attitudes through new teaching strategies. Therefore, the technical pedagogical work of the Foundation focuses its actions on the clarification of these changes from the understanding of the terms curriculum, skills, knowledge, attitudes, experience, methodological knowledge, management and leadership.

Consequently, the objective of this work is to determine the representations of teachers on the updating of the curricular bases of Chilean basic education in multigrade schools of the rural Mapuche sector in establishments of the Foundation. The main impact of the study lies in generating improvement actions for quality management in rural education in conditions of high vulnerability and cultural diversity of these sectors, while promoting an inclusive and personalized educational attention, with respect to the new curriculum.

The social significance of the study is information of high value for the decision making regarding the priorities of the Educational Improvement Plans (hereinafter, PME), which are conceived by the Chilean State as a tool that places the establishments in a work logic that points to the continuous improvement of the learning of all students. The SMEs are regulated by the Law of Preferential School Subsidy. These accompany the teaching task as a support to their management inside and outside the classroom. In this context, these representations cross-cut the areas of pedagogical management, school leadership, coexistence and resource management.

Development

Background

In rural multigrade Mapuche schools there is the highest vulnerability index of the students that make up their enrollment. These schools receive more resources from the Chilean State per student through a differentiated education policy. The vulnerability index of educational establishments is calculated annually by the National Board of School Aid and Scholarships (JUNAEB), its value reflects the percentage of students with low socioeconomic and educational level of the parents of an establishment. These conditions generate that the student requires more support in a society increasingly demanding with the skills for a successful emotional and professional performance.

The teaching strategies in vulnerable multigrade rural schools, public and private, subsidized by the Chilean State in the region of La Araucanía are still, for the most part, outdated in terms of the demands referred to the treatment of knowledge, skills and attitudes worked by the teacher framed in the current curricular bases. This is due to the fact that the teachers were trained in a curriculum based mainly on content, and that since 2013 with the curricular update began to improve under new approaches.

So far progress has been made in a first phase, from 1st to 6th grade, in the second instance it has been updated from 7th grade to 2nd year of secondary education, the latter entered into force since 2016. Currently these policies are established from the General Law of Education (Law No. 20370, 2009), as they promote the learning of skills and generate skills advancing towards the formation of an integral student, with a curriculum that fosters the development of skills, attitudes and knowledge. Hence the congruence between the aim and the means to achieve quality learning, for which it is necessary to transform the educational practices at a classroom level.

The current educational reform returns the protagonism to the teacher from the improvement of the conditions that influence teaching (salary, non-teaching hours), and the creation of opportunities for university education. This role is realized through the PME and the Institutional Educational Project in which families interact in the construction of an inclusive and virtuous school to which all aspire, and in which the teacher directs processes and facilitates that students are protagonists of their integral formation, regardless of the level of vulnerability they face.

Such demands point to the necessary training of a teacher who in his professional role meets specific characteristics within the effectiveness model. This implies indirect factors (work condition, job satisfaction, and professional commitment, among others) and direct factors (positive reinforcement,

evaluation, discipline management, among others); all of which is part of the journey initiated since 2000 to manage the quality of education (Arancibia and Alvarez, 2011).

The transformation of the multigrade rural school requires the joint work of each faculty member with dedication, motivation, knowledge and skills to achieve this goal. This explains the need to transform the rural school from the training of teachers capable of using teaching strategies with procedures and resources that promote meaningful and formative learning, where students are the center of the educational process. However, the effectiveness of this position will be determined by the direction of the teachers, the accompaniment of the family, and other educational agents outside the school.

Another aspect of value in the concretion of the curricular bases constitutes the leadership that is manifested, among other aspects, in the use of teaching strategies, the organization of the educational process, the evaluation of learning, and the mastery of time in the classroom of classes. In some researches and in the performance standards of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC, 2014), it is pointed out that the time in the classroom that the teacher uses for learning is one of the fundamental factors for the achievement of learning by the students.

The above is based on evidence obtained in research as: learning environments in rural contexts: tensions and challenges (Hincapié and Mondragón, 2012), challenges for the management of multigrade schools (Ezpeleta, 1997), teacher teaching strategies in schools multigrade (Rodríguez, 2003) and multigrade schools in the current educational context: challenges and possibilities (Ames, 2015). In these the positive relationship between the time in which the students receive teachings by the professors and the educational results stands out, however, it is not addressed how the curricular offer and the updating of its bases contributes to the quality of education in the context of the multigrade rural school.

In these schools the vulnerability of students becomes more visible and, therefore, education requires more specific teaching strategies. It is complex to structure a teaching according to the needs of the person receiving it, as long as the understanding of the curricular bases is superficial. Hence, in this context of analysis, it is pertinent to investigate the level of updating of teachers' representations on the bases and how this modifies the quality and pedagogical practices.

Contradictorily, the reality of the Araucana multigrade rural school is the low academic performance expressed in the limited response to the current demands of the new curricular bases. It is also observed that the change in pedagogical practices is necessary to be able to respond to the curriculum, and that it takes on life, meaning, sense and synergy in the students. All this associated with the fact that parents or tutors do not

assume as a solution to take their children to urban sectors, to see and appreciate a school that can provide the necessary support to achieve learning and adequate training.

Although the aforementioned research evidences the scientific news of multigrade studies, no research was found regarding the role of teachers in the application of the curricular bases in the multigrade classroom. The most significant contribution of the exposed criteria lies in the accompaniment of teachers, and with it the improvement of academic-formative results. In this context, it should be noted that the criteria presented are systematized in the training offer, and as an example it is connoted in the application of neuropedagogical strategies and their applications in teaching and learning processes (Calzadilla, 2017).

Methodology

The research is based on the methodological resources offered by the qualitative approach that evaluates the natural development of events. This limits the manipulation of the research object with respect to reality as it is defined as a set of interpretive practices that become a series of representations in the form of observations, annotations, recordings and documents (Hernandez, Fernandez and Baptista, 2006).

Its epistemological basis seeks to know the meanings that individuals give to their experience, where the most important thing is to apprehend the process of interpretation because people define their world and act accordingly. The scope of the study is descriptive; it seeks to specify the properties, characteristics and profiles of people, groups, communities, processes, objects or any other phenomenon that is subject to analysis (Hernandez, Fernandez and Baptista, 2006).

This research is based on an ethnographic multiple case study, the data analysis will focus on a phenomenon. According to Gutierrez (2002) in multiple case studies a phenomenon is investigated based on the intensive study of several cases related to it. In ethnography, the data is generated from what the participants contribute through successive approaches to a constructive position by emphasizing the phenomena and making a deep interpretation of them. The research carried out is located in the context of 15 multigrade rural schools of the Foundation, of which 20 teachers from nine communes from mountain range to the coast participate, as expressed in Table 1.

Educational establishment	Teachers per establishment	Commune
Padre Bernabé school	2	Cunco
Llaima school	1	Cunco
Rosario Vásquez school	1	Freire
Entre Ríos school	1	Imperial
Hermano Pascual school	2	Padre las Casas
El Tesoro school	2	Padre las Casas

Cruz de Mayo school	1	Padre las Casas
Ernesto Wilhelm school	1	Puerto Domínguez
Juan Wevering school	1	Puerto Domínguez
Piedra Alta school	1	Puerto Saavedra
Huapi school	1	Puerto Saavedra
Villa Boldo school	1	Tolten
San Miguel de Quintrilpe school	2	Vilcún
Santa Teresita de Codinhue school	1	Vilcún
Santa Filomena school	1	Villarrica

Table 1. Establishments participating in the research.

Source: self-elaboration

The inclusion and exclusion criteria are: basic education teachers with a professional degree, with two or more years of experience in teaching; professionals who practice with more than eight pedagogical hours belonging to the Foundation and residents in the IX Region of La Araucanía. The applied techniques and instruments, and the objectives are shown in Figure 1. In addition, triangulation (methodological and inter-methodological) was applied as a research procedure for the hermeneutic understanding of the results.

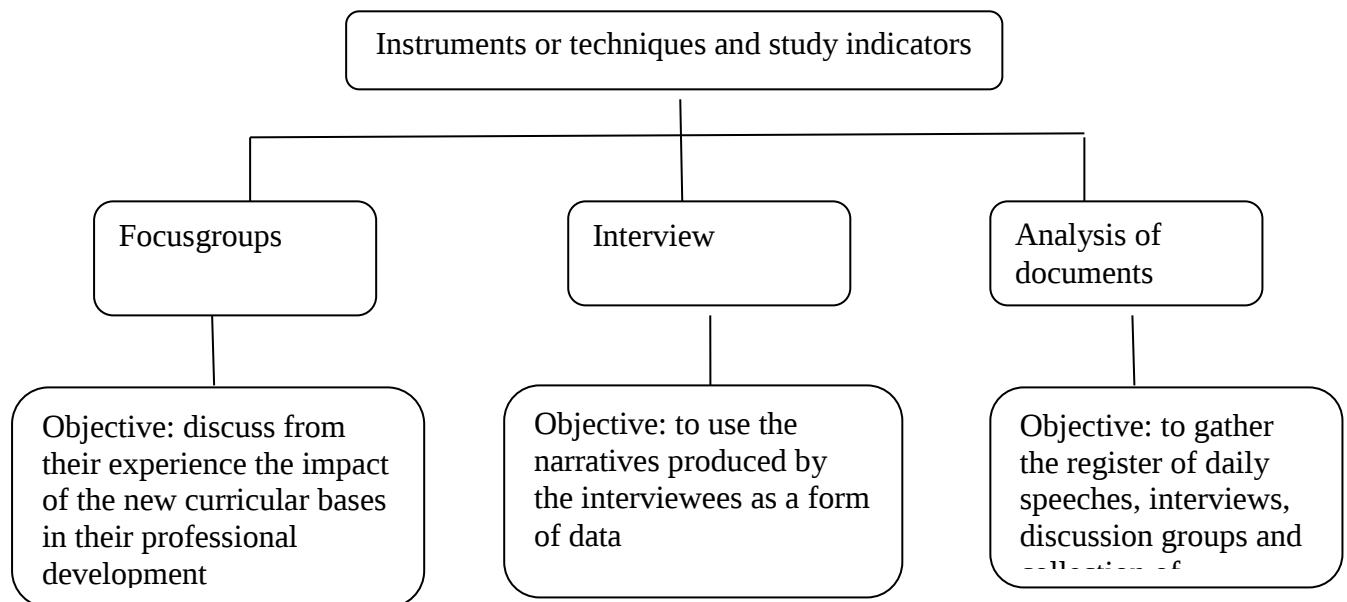


Figure 1- Instruments or techniques applied in the study

Source: self-elaboration

The representations of the teachers of the curricular bases arise from the discursive-collective construction of their pedagogical experiences constructed from the fulfillment of their professional functions in multigrade rural schools. During the research the teachers who made up the socio-critical community of the

study actively participated in the interviews and focus groups, reconstructed their experiences, and allowed to observe their representations about the skills, attitudes and knowledge of their students in a context of implementation of the current curricular bases.

This allowed to reconstructing teachers conceptions about the teaching-learning process, the contextual factors that hinder or optimize the implementation of the curricular bases, the existence of problems in the field of teaching performance. All this revealed the possibilities for the change of teaching styles, from that focused on the discourse of the teacher to another focused on the potentialities of the students and their educational needs.

However, teachers agree in the lack of time to perform PME, while recognizing its usefulness from the economic resources it provides to meet the needs of the establishment and to bring greater support to students in different areas (pedagogical management, leadership, school coexistence and resources). Teachers point out the need to search for mechanisms that support the development of improvement plans to optimize school time and provide more time for student support in the classroom. These difficulties occur because in these uni-, bi- or tri-teacher schools, they must diagnose, plan, implement and evaluate the PME, as well as in the complete basic schools that differ in having management teams and a sufficient teaching staff to unfold said plan.

Teachers distinguish between the most effective strategies when teaching multigrade courses and the difficulties they have to teach classes based on current curricular bases. They refer that they have greater mastery in the contents than in the skills, insufficient knowledge of the new methodological tools proposed by the MINEDUC and the lack of updating in effective didactics, coherent with the current curriculum.

There is a positive assessment in relation to the current curricular bases that is evident in the discourse of the professors, who manifest the need for support in the new ministerial curricular proposal. In short, it is necessary to link the new proposals with active teaching strategies and assessments according to the curricular learning objectives.

Therefore, it is affirmed that the collective representation of the curricular bases promotes the education of a student who is more aware of their learning processes, able to work in groups and master learning strategies, according to the context and the subjects. In addition, as in other studies (Jonanaert, Barrette, Masciotra and Yaya, 2008), the rhythm of learning is consistent with an effective didactic planning of the subjects of the curriculum and teaching strategies aimed at the development of skills in students and positive attitudes.

It is understood that the skills, attitudes and knowledge should be integrated in the development of the class, but in the discourse of the teachers this does not happen effectively; there is thus an appreciation for the types of knowledge, most teachers manage to work one or two of the knowledge (knowledge, skills and attitudes). This allows us to observe how in the Delors Report of UNESCO the knowledge is present in the representations of the teachers, although there are situations that affect the development of more complex plans that manage to integrate knowledge, skills and attitudes.

On the other hand, in the curricular investigations the mental representation or conception of knowledge, competences and performances is polysemic and imprecise. Teachers represent the work of competencies with the following meanings: mastery of the discipline, skill activities, or perfectly structured schedules. However, what is found in this study coincides with the assessment of didactic strategies that serve to stimulate the thinking of children by allowing content that was previously very broad to be delimited, and by granting clarity of the expected learning as evidenced by the Cañizales study (2004), who observed positive changes in children's thinking when using stimulating teaching strategies.

In first place, the articulation of factors of the study of Bogoya, Vinent, Sarmiento, Ortiz, Jurado, Castillo, Guzman (2001), seen from the conscious appropriation of knowledge and development of cognitive abilities appears in the representations of this study. This is expressed in the discourse in the form of need for professional teacher development through training that gives depth in the new curricular proposal, which allows a paradigmatic change in the mental maps of teachers.

Secondly, at the beginning of the study of the representations, it highlights the alignment between the curricular bases (2012) and the complex-changing realities, in which the teachers participating in the study are situated (Barquero, Méndez, Torres, and Cerda, 2007). Hence, the results obtained reveal some problems related to two associated criteria that intervene in collective representation: the conformation of the multigrade present in rural schools, and the time factor. Both criteria admit that there are challenges at the rural level related to the adaptation of curricular proposals and methodologies that allow different knowledge to make sense in the lives of students in these contexts.

The work of Crahay and Delhaxhe (2004) highlights the need to consider that official curricular proposals are applied by teachers in different educational subsystems of a multicultural national educational system. This should focus future research on the attitude towards change by teachers and curricular managers, and the relationship between the official curriculum and what really applies in the classroom.

Thirdly, the representations in the form of shared images and concepts allow us to observe an importance attributed as a positive evaluation of the new curricular proposals. There is an evident enthusiasm when asking about teaching in a competency-based approach, the positive evaluations about the elaboration of new programs guided by this approach seems somewhat excessive. On the one hand, the assessment of the curricular bases is central, but a gap is perceived between the discourse or the mental representation and the application of the teaching strategies. However, the contribution in innovation of teaching methodologies, the centrality of the student, and the epistemological vigilance of the teacher are representations about the curricular development that are present in the current discourse of the teachers participating in the study. This can be a fundamental achievement when considering that the evidence of a discourse with clear representations in the teachers about the criteria studied is a *sine qua non* condition to promote a change of didactic culture.

Regarding the challenges, the constructive alignment and curricular architecture are represented as factors worthy of improvement. The above is one of the points that in research by Biggs (2005) requires work and development. In the study that precedes this article, we observed the need to align evaluation with learning outcomes and types of evaluation as a way to strengthen student learning and the effectiveness of new curricular proposals. In fact, the skills, attitudes and knowledge of the students require the teacher to relate theory and practice, aligning each knowledge or learning outcome with the characteristics of the students and the context.

Fourth, the teaching strategies deployed by teachers allow observing, according to the statement by Biggs (2005), five elements for a deep learning, the curriculum, teaching methods and evaluation procedures are aligned to the "search" of compatibility ", while the climate of the class is subject to the control of the teacher and, therefore, to the type of atmosphere that is generated (authoritarian, friendly or warm), and the institutional climate. For this reason, what López (2009) investigates makes clear that the presence of a commitment to the institutional educational project is a decisive factor in the training of a competitive teacher.

Finally, the study of teachers' representations was based on the in situ recording of emotions, beliefs and judgments expressed in the discourse. This allows to consider that there is a collective representation of teachers valued as positive about the new curricular bases, in which it is necessary to deepen through continuous education and technical pedagogical management for the improvement of teaching strategies.

Conclusions

From the study of the representations of teachers with regard to the new curricular bases, it was concluded that the implementation of these should be integrated as a guideline of the work of the Foundation to promote the professional development of teachers at the educational establishment level. The criticisms made by the teachers and their identification in the professional discourse contributed to reanalyzing the teaching practices acting, the continuing education programs, and the search for contents and forms of organization for their systematization at the establishment level, as a space for research and improvement from the school.

Regarding the content of the curricular bases, analyzes were made on the skills, attitudes and knowledge (performances and / or competences) that persist in the discourse, and that show states of curricular tension between the types of knowledge and knowledge that the teacher teaches in the classes taught. The teachers participating in the study assess the relevance of the new curricular proposal, although they consider that the teacher should be accompanied to deepen the current education approaches and allow the paradigmatic change of the centrality of the contents, to the centrality of the development of skills and attitudes in their students, and with these form citizens with a greater adaptability to the social demands of the XXI century.

The implementation of the curricular bases in the multigrade rural school is considered an opportunity for didactic innovation and collaborative teaching work for quality management focused on best pedagogical practices in the direction of the teaching-learning process. For this, the Foundation's technical efforts must be aligned with the educational reform, so as to ensure the continuous improvement of the establishments and the achievement of medium-term goals of the institution and the educational establishments.

The supports and didactic demonstrations on the teaching of classes in the different subjects from the contents of the new bases are still insufficient. Still the learning situations and the didactic variants do not manage to adjust to the particularities of the rural Mapuche context in which children of La Araucanía are educated in conditions of vulnerability. The dissatisfaction with education in the aforementioned context is, in turn, one of the factors that cause emigration to the city, which affects the loss of cultural identity.

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