

Epistemological Obstacles and Pedagogical Imaginaries Within the Professional Activities of Teachers

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Abstract

The research focuses on the pedagogical practices that teachers develop in learning scenarios and the theoretical assumptions they support; Based on the work objective, the epistemological obstacles and pedagogical beliefs that teachers maintain are determined, through an investigation of their daily practices, to establish parameters that promote quality services.

Through a quantitative study, a survey was applied to teachers from District 03D01, Azogues-Biblián-Déleg, where perceptions of daily practices within learning environments were visualized.

Through pedagogical support, managers and teachers were monitored through workshops.

As results, the forms of interaction that they develop with students to address pedagogical practices and their influence on professional performance and the factors that determine the expertise to serve students are considered.

Finally, the educational service must be the fundamental pillar of the State for social, cultural, political and economic development; since it allows us to reinvent and innovate processes that can only occur from the educational field, through the implementation of effective methodological strategies where students are the protagonists in the construction of knowledge.

Keywords: quality; imaginaries; obstacles

Introduction

The issue of the educational tasks carried out by teachers must be addressed from the theoretical part of pedagogical science and from the practices they develop in the classrooms of educational institutions; Hence, pedagogical activities, being an accumulation of complexities, are prone to certain beliefs, obstacles or imaginaries, which in many cases have negative consequences when trying to demonstrate learning results.

Regarding the assumptions that teachers maintain, Bachelard (2000) states that: "An educator does not have the sense of failure, precisely because he believes himself to be a teacher" (p. 21), this paradigmatic thought makes the review of new ways of doing education, have been relegated for a long time and certain customs are maintained inside the classrooms; On this topic, it is very appropriate to carry out an epistemological reflection and establish reference points for improvement.

The Ecuadorian educational system, over the last few years, has managed to establish very valuable educational reforms, with the purpose of

improving the quality and status of life of all citizens; as an essential and strategic axis to overcome the underdevelopment in which Ecuadorian and Latin American society is mired. The government's purposes have been framed to strengthen education, with the aim of guaranteeing quality service.

The educational service becomes the fundamental pillar of the State for social, cultural, economic and political development; since it allows us to reinvent and innovate processes that can only occur from the educational field, through the implementation of effective strategies, resources and types of evaluation established by the Ministry of Education MinEduc (2021a), where the student is the protagonist of their own learnings; To achieve this, educational institutions must seek to provide quality service from all areas. The support that students receive must be a constant, where everyone can achieve significant learning framed in the postulates of current pedagogical currents, where involvement and participation is equitable, preserving the principles of true educational inclusion.

The MinEduc guidelines (2021b) aim for teachers to ensure that students have comprehensive training, considering essential aspects that they must apply within the teaching and learning processes, focusing on:

valuing diversity, respecting learning rhythms, facilitating dialogue, relationships and interaction of the educational community, promoting inclusion as an opportunity to train citizens of the world capable of facing coexistence based on respect and evaluation of others . (p. 4).

Normatively, the prescription in the Organic Law of Intercultural Education, National Assembly (2021), states that: “ Education is an instrument for the transformation of society; contributes to the construction of the country, the life projects and the freedom of its inhabitants, peoples and nationalities ” (Art. 2.3); The progress of people, as well as the achievement of freedom, has a logical basis, which can only be obtained through the implementation of a quality educational system and which, naturally, has to be reflected in the classrooms or learning environments of the institutions. educational.

The articulation of the national curriculum with the daily educational practices they execute are the central axis to talk about educational quality. This aspiration cannot be realized, since traditional practices are still observed in many classrooms, which do not allow the implementation of new proposals focused on serving everyone. It must be considered that the imaginaries that support the educational model are deeply rooted in the idiosyncrasies of many managers, teachers and parents.

Teachers must be the mediators in the construction of knowledge; Through the use of various resources and the implementation of dynamic , innovative, motivating methodologies and capable of involving and involving students in the learning processes, in this sense, teachers decide what to do within the classrooms, thereby The system grants a certain power and they must take advantage of it to be the true facilitators of the learning processes, they must be the agents who use a range of tools necessary for teaching; that is, a human being invested with a dose of vocation and conviction, capable of inserting himself into the rationality of the current proposals for educational change and innovation.

The attitudinal part of the teacher is of vital importance within this pedagogical renewal that is promoted with the new trends of attention to diversity; implementing good pedagogical practices from the knowledge of the barriers that hinder student learning is the immediate challenge; since, it is not enough to provide knowledge isolated from its true reality; but to look for alternatives to eradicate the obstacles that prevent students from learning.

The quality of education becomes a reality, when the teachers within their pedagogical activities express in a very convincing way the purposes in their microcurricular planning , when they are clear about the final results they pursue within the curricular approach, the implementation of a varied set of methodological strategies; in such a way that all students are consciously inserted into the learning process and the results are related to the real performances that they can perform in daily life, so that they are certain that this knowledge will be able to use at any time and in any context.

The quality of educational services has to be seen from the implementation of the diversity paradigm, where old pedagogical practices undergo a radical transformation. Following Bachelard (2000), pedagogical science is limited by epistemological obstacles; The scientific spirit must free itself from these impediments to understand

reality and overcome the provisional vulgar knowledge that many teachers maintain as a standard of conduct.

Hence, the tasks they perform, in many cases, because they are subjective contributions, do not help to obtain promising results; Therefore, the pedagogical practices that we find within certain groups of teachers constitute a spectrum of imaginaries and are far from the reality with which the current problems of education must be faced , from our context.

Aim

Determine epistemological obstacles and pedagogical beliefs that teachers maintain, through an investigation of their daily professional practices, to establish parameters that promote quality services.

Methodology used

To highlight the epistemological and pedagogical imaginary obstacles within the Ecuadorian educational system, which gains a lot of influence when reviewing results of pedagogical work, hermeneutics has been used on the theoretical conceptualizations provided by some authors, from the paradigmatic analysis offered by their authors. pedagogical postulates.

Through a quantitative study, a survey was applied to 356 teachers from District 03D01, Azogues-Biblián-Déleg, where the results of daily practices within the learning environments were obtained. Each teacher expressed their thinking and actions when addressing the teaching and learning processes; beliefs, realities and power that are found in all educational institutions and that mark the quality and results of learning.

On the other hand, the daily work of educational consulting in the accompaniment and monitoring of directors and teachers in person; through workshops, conversations, individualized and group orientations on pedagogical topics; They issued very important quantitative and qualitative data on the actions carried out by the teaching staff and which were essential for reflections and decision-making.

Also, the documentary review of files from the Planning and Human Talent departments of District 03D01 was very important to collect accurate information on the number of educational institutions, as well as the number of teaching staff working in the Azogues, Biblián and Déleg cantons.

Most relevant results:

District 03D01, Azogues-Biblián-Déleg, is made up of 130 educational institutions, of which 118 are public, 5 trustees and 7 private, which serve as Initial Education Centers, Basic General Education and Educational Units. At the moment there are 1,233 tax teachers working, divided into 948 women and 285 men; Of this amount, 131 women and 56 men work under contract. Within private education, 220 teachers work, distributed among 163 women and 57 men.

The temporal perception of teachers ensures that, the more years they work in a grade or a subject, the more effective their approach to the topics is, because they have acquired a lot of expertise; leaving in second place the professionalization and training that they should develop. 70.2% are convinced that the more they repeat knowledge, the better the care.

Regarding professional work, 60.1% of teachers consider that all their actions respond to the approaches of the institutional pedagogical proposal, which is a document where the MinEduc (2022e) considers that: “it constitutes a pillar that generates improvement, change and transformation of the community will therefore guide and promote the

correlation between educational development and community development” (p. 5), although this document has not been updated, it is the one that directs the curricular tasks; However, 18.8% of teachers continue to work individually according to their own criteria. Only 21.1% of teachers apply collaborative work, through study circles, where they plan according to the reality and context of the educational institution.

Regarding the diagnostic evaluations they carried out in this academic period, 45.2% of the teachers applied to gather basic knowledge that the students retain and that will be used for the curricular approach of the following academic period. 44.1% use this type of activities to establish starting points in the teaching processes. Only 10.7% carry out a comprehensive diagnosis, where they collect information on cognitive knowledge, socio-emotional, cultural, economic aspects, etc.

64.6% of teachers believe that students with specific educational needs (SEN) should be attended to by including them in the entire class group; while 19.1% consider that care should be personalized. 15.2% expect that organizations such as the student counseling department (DECE), since not all institutions have these professionals, and the district inclusion support unit (UDAI), will provide them with guidelines for action with these students. .

91.6% of teachers affirm that they use active methodologies in their classes; However, when identifying these methodological strategies, only 50.3% consider it as “an attractive alternative to traditional education, by placing more emphasis on what the student learns than on what the teacher teaches” (Defaz, 2020, p. 3), where the student takes center stage and autonomy when constructing knowledge. 34.3% believe that certain methodologies are considered active, such as the flipped classroom, project- and problem-based learning, and gamification.

Regarding the DUA, as a learning model, the MinEduc (2021b) considers that “it addresses the obstacles to promoting flexible curricula allowing all students to progress” (p. 7), with this strategy it seeks to give attention to everyone because it is universal, through the implementation of a series of resources and planned methodologies. In this regard, 74.7% of teachers are very clear about the approach; However, there is 15.2% who are unaware of this option to discuss in the classroom; 10.1% think that it should be applied only to students with SEN, ignoring the characteristic of universality.

Regarding the curricular approach, 44.4% state that they work through interdisciplinary projects, as a strategy of the MinEduc (2021c), which is a “means to develop competencies anchored to the current curriculum, it is based on the PBL (Project-Based Learning) methodology.), which is addressed from different subjects” (p. 6); 22.5% consider that their classes are covered by educational innovations; On the other hand, 16.6% work in a disciplinary manner. 16.6% use the school textbook provided by MinEduc as their essential tool.

About the class observations carried out by the managers; 58.1% are very aware that these practices help a lot to improve the quality of educational services; but there are 29.8% who state that these practices help little; Even 6.7% believe that they should not make this type of observations, probably due to resistance from some teachers entrenched in traditional educational practices.

Regarding academic and professional performance, 83.7% of teachers are clear that attitude is the watchword for improving the quality of education; This means that each teacher has the responsibility of implementing

strategies to provide quality care. Only 9.3% think that financial remuneration and salaries determine the quality of services and 7% consider that coercion that must be carried out by the competent authority is the alternative for teachers to comply with their obligations.

With the evaluation of learning, a very critical issue, in educational institutions 70.5% of teachers evaluate through the MinEduc proposal (2022d), a meta-reflective evaluation “that allows students to analyze what they have learned from the experiences developed. and transfer it to everyday life situations” (p. 5), therefore, they leave traditional evaluation in the background, which only values knowledge. 29.5% still imagine that students must respond to topics where they must present the content taught by rote.

The curricular guidelines that teachers must implement; 77.4% consider that they need advice for their understanding and execution, this proves the importance of support, despite the small number of educational advisors, it is observed that their presence is of vital importance, since they are the direct spokespersons between the MinEduc and educational institutions. The 20.1% of teachers who carry out their actions out of habit are still worrying, because this is how it has always been done; these attitudes generally lead to making mistakes due to teachers being out of date. A scant 2.5% have the autonomy to understand the curricular guidelines, this shows the poor communicative competence, especially the reading habits that teachers manage.

Interrelationships and collaborative work are a substantial part within educational institutions, since they mark the effectiveness of the quality of services and the prestige of the establishment. In this sense, 79.5% think that their actions are based on collaboration and teamwork, this means that educational tasks have their foundation within learning communities; although in reality the opposite is experienced.

The distribution of teaching work, a document that records the allocation of jobs either by grades or courses, 67.4% of teachers state that they are willing to face challenges through rotation and not parking in the same place. work scenario. While 32.6% consider that teachers should not move from their assignments, since it unbalances the established parameters and they are not willing to face new work activities, which implies working with new topics and, above all, making new plans. .

Professional practice, seen from the imagination of the teachers themselves, is far from the perceptions of managers, students, educational advisors, parents and the results obtained when applying knowledge in real scenarios. Education, assumed as a task of academic and social service, must be understood from the epistemological reconstruction and the improvement of educational quality, in these moments where the knowledge society provides a large amount of information; It must be an urgent condition for teachers to enter into a process of reflection, as a methodology, to tune in to the interests and needs of students and society in general.

Hence, we can deduce the existence of two types of teachers, on the one hand those who carry out their daily activities in a monotonous manner, since they have always done so, with the danger that by introducing some change, they may alter their status and They are not willing to fail as professionals, filled with vast expertise. On the other hand, there are those who seek to change reality, they know that this new era demands constant challenges in the face of the rapid development of science and technology; They are the ones who investigate, update, experiment, innovate and seek

to provide solutions so that students learn and put the acquired knowledge into practice.

Conclusions:

Within the teaching profession there are epistemological obstacles and pedagogical imaginaries, which hinder the usual professional teaching tasks focused on pedagogy and didactics in accordance with the advancement and development of science.

The interests and needs of the students are not related to the practices that teachers develop inside and outside the classrooms; The transformative intentions and practices of a small percentage of teachers are not enough to lay the foundations for a flexible and contextualized education in accordance with the advancement of current pedagogy and didactics.

The implementation of active methodological strategies by teachers is very limited; Although a high percentage affirms that it develops within learning environments, this dichotomy occurs due to the semantic confusion of the terminology and in others due to the comfort they find in their comfort zone, it is evident that traditional pedagogy, With its routines, beliefs, paradigms and imaginaries, it resists abandoning the top-down scenarios of teaching and learning processes.

It is entrenched, in a high percentage of teachers, the imagination that the experience acquired over the years of their professional practice within the same grade or subject, sets the tone for establishing safe strategies and offering quality education; without considering that knowledge advances progressively and accelerated at the pace of the social, economic and technological development of society.

Classrooms and all spaces considered learning environments are populated by a diversity of students, with different needs, rhythms and learning styles; Therefore, the flexibility and contextualization of the curriculum has to be an urgent and unavoidable reality.

The MinEduc has issued guidelines of all kinds for the implementation of the curriculum, so much so that the approach to the teaching and learning processes has suggested parameters and that each educational institution, aware of its autonomy, must contextualize; However, a considerable percentage of teachers believe that timely advice is essential; Hence, the support of the educational advisor has become important, because he is considered as a counselor and above all who establishes the links between the central organizations and the meso and micro instances of curricular implementation.

The leadership implemented by managers in educational institutions, after the return of the COVID-19 pandemic, has suffered a considerable weakening, therefore, the relationships of harmonious coexistence between members of the educational community mark a tension, accentuated socio-emotional, which harms the fulfillment of academic and administrative responsibilities.

Mass awareness and training of teachers is necessary, through spaces for cognitive, procedural and attitudinal reflections, so that their professional practices are filled with activities where students are considered protagonists in the teaching and learning processes.

Pedagogical practices must focus on research processes about the cognitive, procedural and attitudinal conditions of students, so that they can detect in time the barriers that prevent students' learning, in such a way that the act of educating is not the simple transmission of prescribed

system instructions ; Rather, the teacher must put all his professional skills into play.

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