

## **Design of the Preparation stage for employment of the Bachelor in Preschool Education**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The stage of preparation for employment ensures the further development and improvement of specific professional modes of action, related to the new graduate's job. With the application of scientific methods, shortcomings in the conception of this stage were found. In this sense, it is proposed as an objective the design of preparation actions for employment in the Bachelor's Degree in Education. This resulted in the diagnosis, modeling, structuring and organization for the implementation of the actions. According to experts, these actions contribute to the solution of professional problematical problems in the career.

**Keywords:** Preparation for employment; Recent graduate; Professional modes of action; professional problems.

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## **Introduction**

The profound economic, scientific-technical and socio-political transformations that have occurred in the world in recent decades and their relationship with the new forms of knowledge production, demand from universities the ability not only to respond to new challenges but also to anticipate them, and consequently, to be able to train professionals capable of adapting to changes and generating new knowledge to respond to the increasingly complex demands of society (Horruitiner, 1999).

The studies carried out on current trends in the world and their comparison with the Cuban reality, the follow-up of the performance of graduates, the vertiginous advances in science and technology, the computerization of society on a global scale, together with the current process of implementation of the Economic and Social Policy Guidelines of the Party and the Revolution, lead us to think about the way in which the current training model responds to the demands of this.

That is why the pressing educational needs of the present and the future cannot be satisfied except through the conception of continuous education, based on the idea that man is educated throughout his life and the recognition of all the educational possibilities offered by life in society. Hence the need to devise a system of continuing education for professionals that is effectively linked to society and consists of three stages: undergraduate training in careers with a broad profile, preparation for employment and postgraduate training. (Ministry of Higher Education [Mes], 2016).

The Bachelor's Degree in Education. Preschool is one of the careers for the training of Education professionals that is studied in Universities and is responsible for the continuous training of Early Childhood professionals. The Marta Abreu de las Villas University is the governing center of this career, which is certified by the National Accreditation Board.

The design of the Study Plan "E" of this career conceives the continuous training of the professional from the undergraduate with solidity in the aspects that are at the base of all its performance, which ensures the mastery of the modes of action with the required breadth. The research work training is a discipline that plays a fundamental role in the basic training of the profession, which guarantees its relevance and provides greater possibilities of performance in its different spheres of action.

In the basic document for the development of "E" curricula in Cuban higher education, it is stated that continuing education is a process of training and professional development, in which the interaction between universities and employers plays a fundamental role, and in which students and professionals assume a leading role in this process. The document itself states that despite the clarity regarding the necessary lifelong learning, a harmonious and coherent linkage between these three elements has not been achieved to promote continuous training of professionals, which has limited the essential specialized performance required in production and services, and has stagnated the potential development of the highly skilled workforce. (MES, 2016).

From the above emanates the need to conceive in Curriculum E the continuity between the different stages of continuing education in close interaction with the employer organizations. Precisely, this article offers an approach to the design of actions of the stage preparation for employment of the Bachelor's Degree in Preschool Education.

## **Development**

The Study Plan "E" of the Bachelor's Degree in Education. Preschool specifies as the object of work of the Preschool Education professional the integral educational attention to Early Childhood. The mode of action is directed to the education and stimulation of integral development in early childhood in the two modalities of educational care and consequently the orientation to the family, the community, and the educational agents and agencies of the environment; with a system of actions for the direction of the educational process and increasingly inclusive practices.

The spheres of action of this graduate are: Educator from first to sixth year of life in children's circles, educator of sixth year of life in elementary school in different urban and rural contexts, promoter of the non-institutional curricular modality and as Teachers in Pedagogical Schools in the careers of Early Childhood Education. Considering all of the above and the current needs and perspectives of Cuban social development, the professional problems, objectives and professional pedagogical skills of the early childhood educator are determined, which will allow him/her to perform teaching-methodological, guiding and research functions in correspondence with his/her basic link.

In the model of the Study Plan of this career, Labor Research Training was considered as the main integrating discipline in order to guarantee the development and mastery of the modes of action foreseen in the professional's model, and to take advantage of the educational potential of the labor research activity for the integral formation of the students.

The Integrating Main discipline is part of the basic curriculum of the Teaching Process Plan (PPD) of the Preschool career. It is one of the disciplines that favor the exercise of the profession and integrate the contents of labor research training. Its fundamental purpose is the integral development of the professional's modes of action in the different spheres of action, where the relationship between theory and practice is concretized and theoretical and practical knowledge and the development of professional pedagogical skills are consolidated.

The discipline is based on the study-work principle, the practical educational and research activity as a source of motivational stimulation, the theory-practice link as an expression of the instrumental and metacognitive domain, the system character of the educational process management and the characteristics of preschool education. This favors ideopolitical formation, education in values, as well as their professional pedagogical performance in the different contexts of action, which contributes to their personal and professional development.

The discipline integrates the academic, labor, research and extension components as substantive processes of their university education. Its contents favor the exercise of the profession and have incidence in all the years of undergraduate education and prepare them for the stage of preparation for employment. Its design guarantees the successful fulfillment of the general objectives, professional pedagogical skills, functions and qualities foreseen in the professional's model. It therefore plays a fundamental role.

Job training in the Bachelor's Degree in Education. Preschool, from the different curricular changes occurred in Higher Pedagogical Education with the E Study Plan described above, occurs in three fundamental scenarios: the central headquarters, the municipal university centers and the teaching units; as stated in Resolution 2/2018 of the Minister of Higher Education: Regulations of teaching and methodological work in Higher Education. It guarantees the exercise of the profession and the introduction of the student in the investigative activity as an essential way to solve problems inherent to it.

This discipline integrates all the contents of the study plan received by the student in such a way that it offers possibilities to provide an outlet for curricular strategies.

The discipline proposes the development of professional pedagogical skills in the students that allow them to base from the educational sciences the solution to professional problems, communicate with the children, the family and community agents depending on the needs and potentialities detected in the modalities of Early Childhood Education and the different contexts of action, diagnose the child, the group, the institution, the family and the community in the modalities of Early Childhood Education and the different contexts of action, direct the educational process in the modalities of Early Childhood Education and in the different spheres of action of the preschool educator, investigate professional problems for their solution by scientific means.

The execution of this discipline in the different years of the career in close link with the teaching units and labor entities will contribute to students being prepared in the stage of preparation for employment for; the understanding of the philosophical, sociological, psychological, pedagogical and didactic foundations of the work in Preschool Education in the different contexts of action that enhances the integral development of children of different ages; the application of methods and techniques for the diagnosis and characterization of the child, the family and the community and the investigation of the problems they may face in their pedagogical practice; the development of skills to develop an educational communication in the different contexts of professional performance of the preschool educator and the understanding of the psychological and pedagogical foundations of educational guidance, based on the comprehensive diagnosis of children and educational agents.

The Plan of Study "E" determines as principles that constitute the foundations of this model and that stand as guiding ideas of the training process: The indissoluble unity between education and instruction and the link between study and work, which acquire a particular concreteness in each of the stages of continuing education.

The work-study principle extends to the graduate, since the second stage in his or her integral education is preparation for employment or job training.

In Decree No. 364 on the training and development of the skilled workforce in Article 3 regulates that the training and development of the skilled workforce at the higher level

is a process that takes place mainly in institutions of higher education and involving entities based on the Martian principle of the link between study and work, which means that this process takes place in close contact with social reality and contributes significantly to the formation and reaffirmation of ideological, political, ethical and aesthetic values, responsibility in the face of work, as well as the development of professional skills with scientific, technological and innovative thinking.

This decree itself regulates in articles 55, 56 and 57 that the preparation for employment is conceived and executed in the entities with the purpose of developing in the recent graduate the specific professional modes of action related to his job, both in the careers and in the training programs of short-cycle higher education level. During this stage, the major responsibility falls on the entities in coordination with the higher education institutions.

According to this decree, preparation for employment includes job training, which can be considered as postgraduate professional development. The entity assigns a tutor to the new graduate to guide and advise him/her professionally with the best practices based on the broad profile training of the university career. During the stage of preparation for employment, the entity develops actions with the objective of achieving positive attitudes towards work in recent graduates, based on a systematic policy of preparation, attention and stimulation.

In the different sources reviewed, the terms job training and preparation for employment are used interchangeably to refer to this stage of continuing education of the graduate, which, in the opinion of the authors of this article, do not differ in their meaning or functions. Authors such as (Espinosa and Alonso, 2011) consider that the general objective of job training for recent graduates is to complement technical and labor training, offering them all the possibilities for better professional performance and integration into the work group.

The researcher (Piñón, 1998), referring to this stage, states that labor training is a continuity of the study plan of the recent graduate and during the time it lasts, the trainee receives improvement, training and/or specialization, as needed in order to overcome inefficiencies and become a competent professional, with good development of the modes of professional performance in correspondence with his sphere of action, it is a space that favors that the employer centers contribute to complete the comprehensive training of recent graduates, arguments with which the authors agree.

According to (Añorga, 1994), the period of work training is the decisive stage of professional consolidation and reaffirmation of every subject, since he/she must be inserted in the labor context in a totally different way than when he/she was a teacher in training, and also initiates for him/her a process of postgraduate improvement that will enable him/her to enhance and increase his/her intellectual and human development linked to practice, in correspondence with the demands of his/her time.

The authors agree with the previous reflections that reaffirm the need for the design of actions to be undertaken by graduates in the stage of preparation for employment.

The researcher (Addine, 2006) states that curriculum design is seen as a dimension of the curriculum that reveals the methodology, actions and results of the diagnosis, modeling, structuring and organization of curriculum projects. On the other hand (Álvarez, 1997) specifies the tasks for the design dimension and integrates phases that more clearly guide the tasks and the result that should result from them; she specifies the denomination of the tasks and the content of each one, which makes it possible to be applied to any educational level and of concretion of the curriculum design.

The authors of this article assume three of the curriculum design tasks proposed by Álvarez: diagnosis of problems and needs, modeling and structuring, and organization for implementation, and particularize them in the design of the preparation stage for the use of the Bachelor's Degree in Preschool Education.

For the diagnosis of problems and needs, methods of the theoretical, empirical and mathematical levels were combined. The theoretical methods used were analysis, synthesis, deduction and induction, and therefore include other methods that operate at this level, such as the systemic-structural method, which made it possible to achieve systematicity in the research and to follow a logical structure during its development and in the general organization of the elements that will make up the design of actions in the preparation for employment stage.

The empirical methods were used in the stage of accumulation of empirical information and in the stage of evaluation of the actions designed, among them the documentary review, group interview and the triangulation technique, for the contrast of the methods mentioned above.

Documentary review played a fundamental role in the elaboration of the design. Documents such as the "E" Study Plan, the base document for the elaboration of the "E"

Study Plans, documents elaborated by the national teaching coordination of the course, the Educational Strategy, resolutions and methodological guidelines of the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Labor and Social Security were analyzed.

The user criteria method was used for the evaluation of the actions elaborated. Eighteen professors from the National Career Commission were selected. The evaluators met the requirements of: having the academic category of Master and/or Doctorate degree in Pedagogical Sciences or other branches of science, with teaching experience in Higher Education and/or Preschool, mastery of the Early Childhood educational level. The mathematical methods used were the percentage analysis to process and quantify the data.

The triangulation of the methods applied made it possible to determine regularities:

- The Plan of Study "E" of the Bachelor's Degree in Education. Preschool in its conception specifies the basic link, the problemical problems, object of the profession, fields of action, spheres of action, general objectives and functions of the early childhood educator in his/her continuous education.
- The documents consulted do not specify how to comply with the problemical issues in the three stages of continuing education.
- The career collectives have conceived the design of the three components (academic, work, research) for the undergraduate stage, but not for the job preparation stage.

The results of the diagnosis made possible the modeling and structuring of the stage of preparation for employment to be developed in labor entities.

The modeling is based on the professional problems, since the authors agree with (Horruitiner, 2006) when he emphasizes that in Cuban higher education, based on the professional problems, and as a result of a generalization process, the modes of professional performance are specified.

This is carried out with the participation of the Early Childhood Directorate of the province and the labor entities where the students were located in their pre-professional practices. The actions correspond to the sphere of action Educator of the sixth year of life in elementary school in the different urban and rural contexts, where the students of the 2019-2020 graduation are located.

The professional problematical and actions for each of them are presented below.

1-The education in values, attitudes and behavioral norms in the university and social context, in particular, the understanding of the role and social importance of the early childhood educator.

Actions

- Study of documents that regulate the work of values formation in the institution, among them: The Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, the director program for the reinforcement of the formation of values and citizen behaviors, brochure for the formation of moral qualities and cultural hygienic habits and the methodology for its application, ephemeris that are worked with the Early Childhood children, the work with the Martian notebooks, the work and organization of the historical site in the institution, the Martian chair and its importance in the work of values formation in the institution.
- Theoretical study of the nine components of the content of Cuban education, to achieve the integral formation of the Early Childhood child that appears in the curriculum under improvement. These are patriotic, citizenship and legal, scientific-technological, health and sexuality education with a gender approach, aesthetics, polytechnic, labor, economic and professional, communication, environmental education for sustainable development, orientation and social projection.
- Execution of activities with teachers of the institution and the children of the year of life where they work to give treatment to the nine components of the content of the Cuban education, to achieve the integral formation of the child of the Early Childhood.
- Direction of educational activities for the formation of emotions, feelings, norms of behavior, positive qualities of the personality and the patriotic, citizen formation of the children, from the own pedagogical activity and with the personal example.

2. The use of different language resources for educational communication that allows for effective interaction in the different contexts of action, in accordance with the purpose and objectives of early childhood education.

## Actions

- Study of educational programs and methodological orientations of the Communication dimension of the Early Childhood curriculum.
- Deepening in the methodological treatment of the different contents of the Communication dimension in the year of life where she works.

3. The diagnosis of the integral development of the child, the group, the institution, the family and community environment where the child develops, which allows its characterization and the need to creatively design pedagogical and intersectorial strategies or alternatives for orientation with increasingly inclusive practices.

## Actions

- Study of Ministerial Resolution 111/1-which regulates the procedures for the design, execution and control of preventive work, Ministerial Resolution 238/2014 Regulation of the Evaluation System covering Early Childhood, Ministerial Resolution 216/2008. On the functioning of the School and Children's Circles Councils, R/M139/11-Program for Sexuality Education with a Gender and Sexual Rights Approach, R/M125/85-Principal directions for the detection, evaluation and care of minors from 0 to 6 years of age with special educational needs.

4. Study of the psychological and pedagogical characteristics of the children in the group where she is working.

5. Diagnosis of the children in the group, the children's families and the community context where the institution is located. The group and individual management of the educational, creative and developmental process in the two modalities of Early Childhood Education with a playful, environmental, humanistic, preventive, gender equality approach, to achieve the maximum integral development of each child, the orientation to his family, and to the social group to which he belongs, expressed in educational strategies and inclusive practices that favor the increase of quality and healthy lifestyles.

- Study of the documents that regulate the improvement of the National Education System with emphasis on Early Childhood, including the Education Plan, the Education Programs for the different years of life and the

Methodological Guidelines. The affective and pedagogical articulation of Early Childhood education within the educational level itself, with Special Education and Primary Education.

- Study of the Ministerial Resolution 200/2017 that regulates the methodological work of MINED. Delve into what particularizes the Early Childhood educational level. Functioning of the different levels of methodological work such as, cycle collective, territorial and group collective, the forms of methodological work and its particularities in the educational level.
- Realization of the methodological preparation of the dimension and open activities as ways of preparation.
- To deepen in the organization and direction of the Children's Institution, in the life and teaching schedule of the institution and the age groups, as well as the interrelations of work with the teaching and non-teaching personnel.
- Conducting activities in all the moments of the educational process in the group where she works and with the children's families.

5- The systematic evaluation of the results of their training process and the projection of solutions for continuous professional improvement and self-improvement, through educational research and the application of scientific-technological advances.

- Application of the action-research methodology from the educational practice, for the solution of problems of the group where he/she works.
- Use of information and communication technologies as a means of teaching and education, for the search of information, permanent updating and communication in social networks, development of computer skills and mastery of techniques for the creation of teaching materials and media.

After concluding the modeling, the authors carried out the third task of the design, which consisted of organizing the implementation of the actions of the employment preparation stage in the labor entities. For this purpose, the following tasks were carried out.

- Determination of training needs of the tutors of the labor entities for the implementation of the actions of the employment preparation stage.

- Planning and design of a training course for the preparation of tutors of labor entities.
- Execution of the differentiated training of the tutors of the labor entities for the implementation of the actions of the employment preparation stage.
- Monitoring, follow-up and evaluation of the differentiated training of the tutors of the labor entities for the implementation of the actions of the employment preparation stage.

The design of actions for the stage of preparation for employment was subjected to evaluation by users. For this purpose, the methodological proposal presented by Hernández, Fernández & Baptista (2014) was used, which, due to its flexibility, was adequate.

100% of the interviewed valued the system of actions designed highly, since it offers a solution to core problems of the continuing education of the Bachelor in Preschool Education. They expressed that the actions are aimed at achieving the development of the professional performance modes seen as conceived by Horruitiner Silva as a quality superior to the one found in the problematics, by integrally characterizing the professional's performance. They constitute the professional's knowing, doing and being; they are expressed in his or her performance and involve the integration of knowledge, skills and values that ensure this performance. Their mastery allows the professional to face all the professional problems previously identified, and even new ones that do not exist, arising as a consequence of the development of the professional activity. They correspond to the regulations of the resolutions of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security and respond to the needs of the students. 100% of the experts consider that it promotes motivation and can be generalized due to its relevance and some of the suggestions were already included in the design presented.

Universities are in charge in society not only of undergraduate training but also of providing for its continuity; therefore the forms proposed by the authors for the organization of the implementation of the actions in the stage of preparation for employment are of value because of the role played by the labor entities and within them the tutor. The tutor is considered as someone experienced who directly supports the development of the graduate's work, providing him/her with the indispensable tools to assume his/her mission with quality.

89% of the experts consider that the guiding documents of the degree program should include actions aimed at training graduates in the employment preparation stage.

## **Conclusions**

The preparation for employment stage is conceived and executed in the entities with the purpose of developing in the recent graduate the specific professional modes of action related to his/her job position; during this stage, the major responsibility falls on the entities in coordination with the higher education institutions.

From the methods applied, shortcomings were found in the conception of the preparation for employment stage due to the fact that in the guiding documents of the career both in the Study Plan "E" and those elaborated in the universities, the design of this stage is not clear.

The system of actions designed follows the logic of the tasks of curricular design, diagnosis, modeling, structuring of the curriculum and organization for the implementation in the work entities, contributing to the continuous training of the graduate, in the solution of professional problems in the career, positively influencing the performance modes of the professionals.