

Improvement strategy to achieve the teaching categorization of university professionals

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ABSTRACT

The teacher categorization process is part of the scientific-investigative and teaching-methodological work acquired by the practicing professional, and is interrelated with the components of the scientific activity, but the preparation and individual commitment to improve their performance is insufficient; this requires transformations that are directed to its continuous improvement. The objective of the article refers to the elaboration of a strategy to increase the professional improvement of teachers for the change of category; using for this the systemic-structural-functional method. The results obtained show the feasibility of the proposal and with it the quality of its improvement.

Keywords: Teacher categorization; Professional improvement; Strategy; Teacher category.

Introduction

In Cuba, the policy of prioritizing education has allowed an accumulation of knowledge that has granted the formation of competent professionals with the necessary conditions to face great challenges in terms of knowledge. For all these reasons, Higher Education has been called upon to satisfy the needs of professional improvement from the theoretical-methodological, economic-social and scientific point of view.

At the present time, changes have arisen that have allowed the adoption of measures that bring professionals closer to what happens in the performance scenarios and actions have been implemented that provide the necessary tools to organize the improvement in correspondence with their needs and the categories they hold; but undoubtedly finding a way out of this problem today constitutes a colossal challenge, but it can be assured that the short-term solution could be the use of the potentialities of self-preparation to face the exercises of teaching categorization, according to Brito Marrero et al. (2016, p. 3), a term defined as:

A pedagogical process consciously oriented and executed by the higher education institution, which evaluates the result of the scientific-research and teaching-methodological work developed by university professors in the fulfillment of their functions and as part of their professional and human life project.

The authors of this research agree with this definition, as it contains among its parts all the elements that characterize this process and the components to be taken into account for its optimal development.

In this sense, the prioritized attention and constant follow-up to the processes of teaching categories constitutes an essential aspect for the improvement of the university and its impact on society, in correspondence with the results and contributions that it provides in the academic, scientific and methodological order.

Several authors have studied the subject of teacher improvement and categorization with great attention, and have made important notes; in this regard are the works of authors such as: Gonzáles-Agüero (2017), Bernaza Rodríguez, Troitiño Díaz, and López Collazo (2018), Santacana Palencia, Álvarez Moya and García Ondarza (2019) and López Rodríguez (2020), among others; aimed at the systematization of pedagogical experiences on the training of the university professor.

In general, they all agree on permanent improvement as a fundamental basis to guarantee the teaching category process, providing didactic actions, strategies to improve the management of the teaching categorization process and pedagogical training linked to the teaching categories.

Therefore, orienting the work in this direction requires a rigorous organization and selection of all the activities to be carried out by this professional, and always bearing in mind that all the potentialities offered by the postgraduate training system should be used

to contribute to the organization of the training of the Higher Education professional according to the teaching category process.

Hence, the objective is to elaborate a strategy for the organization of postgraduate training according to the changes in the teaching category of university professionals in the Guantanamo territory.

Development

The Revolution has been gradually transforming the needs for professional development, having a great impact on the scientific-methodological preparation, since for their training it is necessary to broaden their profile and raise the quality of their functions as university professionals. Taking into account the functions they perform, strategies are drawn up for the improvement of professionals in the different entities served by the university, strategies that are elaborated based on the different teaching categories through which these professionals pass.

The studies carried out by authors who have approached this subject from the scientific point of view, show that the preparation and individual commitment of the professionals of the entities is insufficient, so it is up to them and to the university the search and application of different alternatives and conceptions that promote the quality of the same.

The teaching categorization process guarantees the excellence of the processes that take place in the entities. That is why the dynamics and work approaches established in the university and the Guantanamo entities constitute a weakness, which has led to the lack of knowledge of the professionals and their managers about the regulations and norms of the teaching categories, professional improvement and others, which are established in the ministerial resolutions 85/16, 47/22 and 75/15.

The above was corroborated in the empirical inquiries carried out during this research, as well as by the author's experience as a teaching category specialist who attends to the processes of categorization and ratification of teaching categories at the University of Guantánamo. As a result of the research experience sustained by the work team of the Human Resources Attention and Training Group (RRHH) on the postgraduate training process of professionals of the territory such as the Ministry of Science, Technology

and Environment (CITMA), the Basic Electric Organization (OBE) and Culture, for a period of more than 15 years, it has been possible to establish some regularities of the training process, which in one way or another have to do with the limitations that are evident in the categorization process.

The categorization process carried out in these companies is still slow and does not meet the needs of the institutions, an aspect that is currently very depressed. Hence, the fundamental problem is related to the low categorical composition of the professionals of these entities, which limits their professional performance and the management of science for local development.

It is important to emphasize that the strategy is designed to solve problems of teaching practice and, consequently, to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process. It establishes actions oriented to the achievement of those changes that are intended to be established, and that therefore imply changes in the direction of the organization of the improvement and changes in the category of the professionals of the territory; and it is made from techniques and methods that favor a favorable environment and takes into account the diagnosis of the needs of the professionals, their level of knowledge, interests, motivations and needs.

The authors adopt the materialistic dialectical conception of the world, which provides the necessary and sufficient theoretical instrument, being able to operate with the categorical system, and which is supported by the Marxist-Leninist theory. The historical-cultural approach of L. S. Vigotski and his collaborators is assumed, taking into account the integral development of the personality and conceiving the individual as a social being, without ignoring the biological component, whose development will be determined by the assimilation of the spiritual and material culture created by the previous generations, in this case related to the instrumentation of actions aimed at the organization of the improvement of the professionals of the entities such as the CITMA system, the OBE and Culture.

In order to ensure that the strategy for the organization of the improvement and teaching categorization of the professionals of the territory is effective, it is necessary to include in the projection of its actions the basic courses and high-level postgraduate courses:

- Social Problems of Science and Technology and English, in order to successfully pass the requirements exercises established for the changes of teaching category.

- Spanish and Scientific Writing, which will allow a correct elaboration of the reports that are presented for the changes of teaching category, spelling and presentation of these. In addition to the preparation of articles.
- Informatics, for the presentation of the exercises for the changes of categories where he/she will show his/her skills in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).
- Research Methodology, which will allow you to present the results of your scientific work showing theoretical and practical mastery of the field of knowledge in question and the results achieved.
- Pedagogy, which provides the necessary tools for the development of the methodological class in any of its variants and to be able to make a critical exposition on the study plan or discipline.
- Specialization postgraduate courses that will allow them to be updated in the preparation of the subject they teach.

All these actions should be reflected in the individual development plan of professionals and officials, which gives it an alternative didactic character based on cooperative activities between teachers, professionals, officials and specialists; and the systematic study of the regulations for the application of teaching categories as indispensable material in this process, without disregarding Resolution 47/22, Methodological Teaching Regulations for Higher Education (HE).

The proposed strategy consists of four stages, where objectives, actions and activities to be carried out for its practical implementation are established. Figure 1 shows the graphic representation.

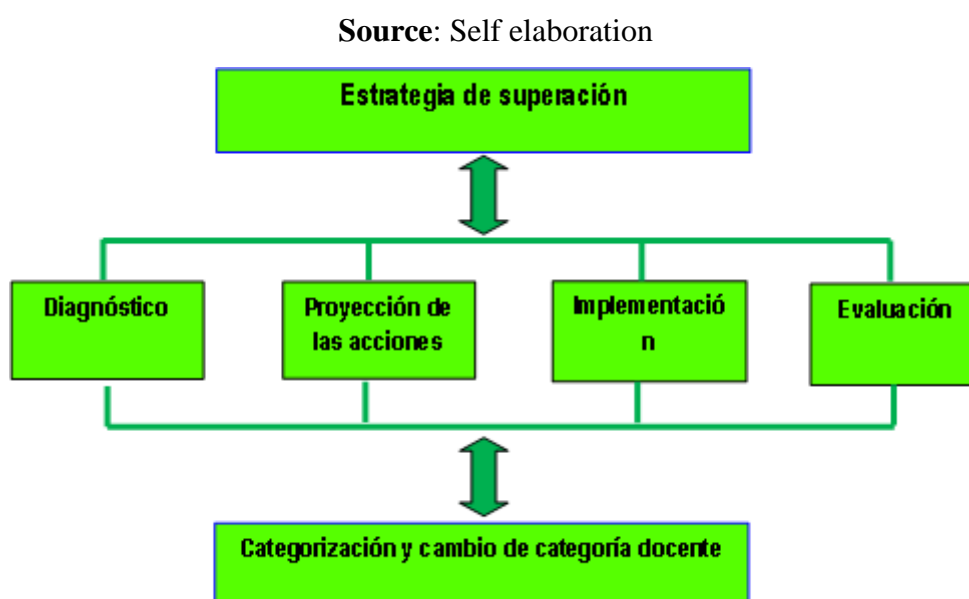


Figure 1. Strategy for overcoming.

The objective of the strategy: to enable managers, professionals and teachers for continuous improvement in the process of teacher categorization.

The strategy consists of four stages:

Stage 1: Diagnosis: its objective is to diagnose the needs for improvement and training of university professionals in the territory in terms of teaching categorization and changes in teaching category, based on incentives, with the following indicators:

- ✓ Importance given by the organization to their professional development in order to face the category process.
- ✓ Activities carried out in this direction.
- ✓ Directions in which the organization of professional development in their entities is directed.
- ✓ Documents that regulate the organization of professional development in the HE.
- ✓ Preparation carried out by professionals to achieve a correct professional development based on the teaching category they hold.
- ✓ Implementation of ICTs as a teaching tool for the professional development of higher education professionals.

Actions:

1. Selection and development of instruments to test the level of knowledge of the professionals in the territory.
2. Identification of the specific needs for improvement and training of the professionals of the territory.
3. Identification of the main difficulties and potentialities.

Recommendations: take into account the characterization of professionals in the territory. It is necessary to verify the knowledge of the documents that rule and regulate the process of categories, as well as to forecast the tendencies of change, as guarantees of the transformation of the current state of the object. Likewise, it is necessary to know the disposition of the professionals of the territory to face the improvement of the same, its perspectives and its methodological conditioning.

It is convenient to use as instruments the results of the exercises of teaching categories, the inspection to the files and plans of results.

Stage 2: Design of actions that will allow, in an articulated manner, the organization of professional development.

Its objective is: to design the planning and organization of the strategy for the continuous improvement in function of the teaching categorization in the concrete conditions of the entities of the territory that request the service to the University, all this in function of the cooperative environments.

In the planning, it is praiseworthy to check the level of preparation acquired by the professionals of the territory, which is imbricated with the components proposed for the development of the strategy. The design will specify in its organization the activities and workshops to be implemented. Taking into account the following indicators:

- ✓ Elaboration of a self-reflection about which are the needs and interests in which he/she should improve him/herself.
- ✓ Elaboration of teaching support materials based on the forms of self-improvement previously established.
- ✓ Conducting workshops.
- ✓ Methodological work activities.
- ✓ Postgraduate course.
- ✓ Conferences.
- ✓ Workshops.
- ✓ Diplomas.
- ✓ Presentation of papers at scientific events.
- ✓ Preparation of methodological activities, such as demonstrative, instructive or open classes according to changes in the teaching category.

These actions must have the following characteristics: Open and dynamic, Flexible, Comprehensive, Enriching and transforming, Participatory, Multidisciplinary, Integral and Systemic.

Actions:

1. Analysis of the intentions of the strategy with the main managers and teachers.
2. Planning and organization of the improvement and training plan for the professionals of the territory involved.
3. Analysis of the results obtained in the diagnosis.
4. Planning of the scientific-methodological work sessions and workshops with the professionals of the territory.

Recommendations: conceive the content of the workshops, through a postgraduate program for their implementation. It is necessary to determine the spaces for dialogue, polemic and discussion as cooperative environments.

An example of how the strategy could be planned within the system of training for professionals in the territory is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Continuous improvement actions for university professionals.

Acciones a Desarrollar	Participantes	Fecha	Dirige
Curso de informática básica para cambio de categoría	Docentes de la UG y profesionales del territorio	Abril	M. Sc. Yeminey Romero Semanat
Pedagogía básica para cambio de categoría	Interesados de la UG y del territorio	Marzo	M. Sc. Iliana Jañez Reyes
Acciones didácticas sobre los componentes del PEA	Interesados de la UG y del territorio	Abril y Sept	Dr. C. Ivón Rojas Lamorú
Didáctica de la ES	Interesados de la UG y profesionales del territorio	Enero- Feb.	Dr. C. Xiomara Catalina Ravelo Gainza
Metodología de la investigación básica para cambio de categoría	Interesados de la UG y del territorio	Marzo y Mayo	Dr. C. Eudis Milán Leyva
Inglés superior	Docentes de la UG e interesados del territorio	Marzo y Octubre	Dr. C. Silvia Miriam Morgan Scott
Curso básico de portugués	Interesados de la UG y profesionales del territorio	Según plan	Dr. C. Francisco Bayeux Guevara
Curso de Ortografía y Redacción científica	Interesados de la UG y del territorio	Febrero y Noviembre	Dr. C. Odalis Lorié González
Curso de PSCT para cambio de categoría	Interesados de la UG y del territorio	Marzo y octubre	M. Sc. Yeny Sánchez Matos
Reglamento docente metodológico	Docentes de la UG e interesados del territorio	Según plan	Dr. C. Francisco Bayeux Guevara
Reglamento para la aplicación de la categoría docente	Interesados de la UG y profesionales del territorio	Según plan	M. Sc. Nayiber Rodríguez Martínez
Conferencia sobre procesos jurídicos en el proceso de actualización del modelo económico	Interesados	Según plan	M. Sc. Alexei Berenguer Sánchez

Source: Self elaboration

Stage 3: Implementation of the planned actions: addresses the form of application of the strategy, the conditions for its application, the time in which it will be carried out, the participants, those responsible, the objectives of each action and its evaluation.

Its objective is: to describe the methodological instrumentation to guide the professionals of the territory in the implementation of the strategy, its follow-up and partial evaluation of the teacher categorization from a systemic approach.

Action:

1. Detailing of each planned activity with its respective methodological instrumentation.

Recommendations: to detail each planned activity, to be consistent with the purposes of the research. Consider the anticipated, mobilizing and transforming vision of the topics to be approached in certain learning circumstances. In this, it is necessary to create a favorable climate of suggestions, invitation and commitment, to consider the needs for help, personal and professional growth. It is suggested that before applying the strategy, the teacher takes into account its essence, indications for its application and usefulness, as well as reflecting on its successes and failures.

Stage 4: Evaluation of the actions planned in terms of the professional's improvement. This stage is carried out from the management of the improvement strategy, since from the beginning the implementation process of each of its actions is evaluated with an integrating character, because not only the final result is evaluated, but also the partial results that are obtained in each of its actions.

The objective is to evaluate the strategy for continuous improvement in terms of teacher categorization, based on contextualized monitoring.

It contributes to the basis of the changes and modifications to be introduced in the strategy, in order to improve it. It is important to know the previous stages, this allows a better organization and development of all the work to be carried out with the professionals of the territory, and for its successful control, the criteria of measures to evaluate and assess the impact generated are proposed. It has the function of collecting, analyzing and synthesizing the information, to evaluate the effect of the strategy; it also has access to the updating of needs, as well as the redesign of its content.

The following premises were taken into account:

- ✓ Raise the awareness of the professionals who will participate in the process and result of the strategy proposed to provide a solution to the organization of the improvement of the entities under study.
- ✓ Guarantee the existence of resources and conditions for the implementation of the proposal.
- ✓ Will instruct all those teachers and specialists who will have a leading role in the implementation of the proposal, based on the objectives to be achieved.

- ✓ Provide a general overview of the actions to be developed by these professionals, taking into account that the pertinent material assurance measures must be taken for the implementation of the strategy in the selected entities.

Actions:

1. Submission of the improvement and categorization of teachers to evaluation and control from the moment of its conception.
2. Elaboration of the necessary clarifications for the improvement of the strategy and its coherent application in the educational reality.
3. Comparison of the results achieved with the application of the strategy.
4. Evaluation of the continuous improvement in terms of teacher categorization in the professionals of the territory, based on the changes that have taken place.

Recommendations: it is advisable to take into account qualitative aspects combined with quantitative ones. Therefore, it is necessary to establish what, when and how to evaluate in order to be able to assess, in addition to the evaluation design adopted. For its evaluation, it is considered the assessment of the fulfillment of the objectives foreseen for each stage of the strategy, and the analysis of the relationships established between each of its parts, other teaching resolutions and regulations that fit the purpose of the strategy, taking into account its attention in each context.

In order to corroborate the feasibility of the improvement strategy in terms of teacher categorization, the user criteria method was applied.

This method was applied taking into account that they must be immersed in the context in which the study is carried out, in this case managers and professionals of the territory, as well as university teachers, who are users of the proposed strategy.

The user consultation was developed from a methodological activity in which the components of the strategy and the phases were presented and discussed with 35 teachers intentionally selected for the study, who made up the initial sample.

These professionals have an average experience of 15 years, ranging from 3 to 25 years. The stages and their content were explained to the users in this activity, the group work technique "Storage reservoir of ideas", Carnota, (1991), was used, which allowed the following opinions to be collected:

- ✓ The relationships between the components of the strategy favor the basis for continuous improvement in terms of teacher categorization, based on their

individual and collective needs and potential, and considering the phases in which it is implemented.

- ✓ El contenido de las etapas de la estrategia es preciso, la aplicación de la misma es una necesidad y favorece la mejora continua en cuanto a la categorización docente.
- ✓ La metodología que implementa la estrategia es funcional, aplicable y ajustada a las características y transformaciones en la Educación Superior.

All this allows affirming that the strategy is feasible, as a solution to the problem posed in the research and as a contribution to the demands of higher education.

The Vice-rectors, Deans, Vice-Deans, three methodologists of the Teaching Vice-Deanship, 30 professors, ten doctors, four in Pedagogical Sciences, three in Physical Culture Sciences, three in Education Sciences, all with the teaching category of Full Professor, and with more than 15 years of experience as teachers, as well as members of tribunals, participated in the study.

In general, it is considered very positive that professionals are prepared intensively, based on what is proposed in the strategy, in which the usefulness of the workshops is highlighted, given the contribution to such a sensitive and necessary topic as this one, and that the actions of managers in this type of work are taken advantage of. The answers and evaluations offered by the teachers and specialists show that the strategy is not unwise, since the workshops and methodological activities implemented with the professionals of the territory have a high level of usefulness, since they clearly express the logical way to carry out continuous improvement in terms of teacher categorization. It also provides guidelines for its materialization in all the entities of the territory and in the university itself, in close unity with the components of scientific activity.

It was possible to appreciate the correspondence of the criteria obtained in the aforementioned method by the respondents within the points of coincidence or articulation are:

- ✓ Methodological value and importance were given to the structure of the improvement strategy as a function of teacher categorization.
- ✓ They agree that the relationship between continuous improvement and the process of teacher categorization is very appropriate.
- ✓ It was found that the strategy constitutes a tool for the integration of teacher categorization and the components of scientific activity.

However, the feasibility of the strategy should be taken into account as a suggestion, since it is related to the fact that the actions to be executed should be much more explicit.

This facilitates its generalization, because, although the experience was carried out with a small sample, the changes operated in the professionals of the territory and managers reveal the importance of its materialization in all the entities of the territory and even in the university itself.

In a general sense, the implemented strategy is considered feasible to be applied in social practice and to improve the process of continuous improvement in terms of the teaching categorization process in the professionals of the Guantanamo territory.

Conclusions

As a result of the diagnosis, the limitations presented by the organization of training and changes in the teaching category of the professionals of the entities under study became evident. This shows the need to establish an improvement strategy to solve the problem. The actions planned in the strategy will favor the organization of training in function of the changes in the teaching category of the professionals of the territory, thus guaranteeing that the educational change is the result of an endogenous process, where a positive socio-affective climate prevails, allowing the participation of the different actors.

In the different spaces of socialization of the scientific contributions, favorable criteria, recommendations and points that made possible the improvement of the proposal were expressed.