

## **The permanent training of pedagogical school directors. Some historical antecedents in Cuba**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The article aims to characterize the historical evolution of the permanent training of the directors of the pedagogical schools in Cuba and their management. For this, the following stages were established. The first from 1959-1974, the second from 1975-2009 and the third from 2010 to the present. In addition, for the analysis of the aforementioned process, homogeneous indicators are proposed that allow describing its behavior in each of the established stages.

**Keywords:** Management; Permanent training; Directors of pedagogical schools

### **Introduction**

The permanent training of managers and the management of this process, constitutes a strategic factor for the development of educational systems, hence the topic has been addressed in different research experiences by several authors, nationally and internationally, among these: Martín (2011) and O'Donoghue (2015); among others. At the national level, the following stand out: González (2009); Santisteban (2011); Planes (2018); Valiente, Del Toro and González (2021).

The aforementioned authors have investigated essential aspects of the management process of continuing education of managers, related to its design, dynamics and evaluation, and their work shows that there are still areas in which it is necessary to venture into the continuing education of managers, to devise proposals aimed at enhancing knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, in line with the demands of the professional activity of the object of management of the institutions they manage, as is the case of pedagogical schools as an educational institution in the Cuban context.

The ongoing training of managers of pedagogical schools in Cuba and the management of this process is in line with the requirements of the Third Improvement of the National Education System, which states as a policy “the need to strengthen the training, improvement and care of managers and teachers in the period 2022-2030” (p. 1).

In accordance with the above, the article presented here is a partial result of the author's doctoral research, which exposes the historical background of the continuing education of pedagogical school principals and their management. For this evolutionary analysis, the following stages were established: the first from 1959-1974, the second from 1975-2009 and the third from 2010 to the present. In addition, for the analysis of this process, homogeneous indicators were used to describe its behavior in each of the established stages.

## **Development**

The documentary sources taken as referents for the evolutionary analysis of the permanent training of pedagogical school directors and the management of this process, has among one of its bases the historical evolution of the regular training of teachers in Cuba, which constitutes a primary component of the preceding training of pedagogical school directors in the country and which has gone through different training models with qualitative leaps.

On the above, the research of the authors were consulted: Conesa and Enebral (2017); Cabezas (2017); Basto and Basto (2017); these provide important and specific studies related to pedagogical schools and the studies conducted by important and specific studies related to pedagogical training and the studies conducted by Bonilla, Breijo and

Cruz (2017); which provide a comprehensive view on teacher training in Cuba, highlighting its historical relevance and its impact on Cuban society.

The first stage (1959-1974) is called: gestation of the training of pedagogical school principals. The second stage (1975-2009) consolidation of the training of pedagogical school principals, and the third stage (from 2010 to the present), reorientation of the training of pedagogical school principals from the reopening and the III Improvement process of the National Education System.

To approach the content of the stages, the following indicators were considered: a) context conditions, b) the content of continuing education, based on the requirements of the management of the pedagogical school processes, and c) characteristics of the management of continuing education of pedagogical school principals.

The historical evolution of pedagogical schools in Cuba and the process of continuing education of their directors are presented below:

First stage: gestation of the training of pedagogical school principals (1959- 1974).

a)- Context conditions. In this stage, several educational transformations were carried out by the revolutionary government, when the triumph of the revolution came to power on January 1, 1959. It begins with the First Educational Revolution with the Literacy Campaign (1961). The objectives of the educational policy during these years were to solve the great problems of the neocolonial past, reorganization and technification of the Ministry of Education and the taking of immediate measures to eliminate illiteracy, in addition to guaranteeing the extension of educational services to the whole country, thus achieving the policy of mass education. Faced with this new situation, there was a lack of teaching personnel, which made it necessary to create a new policy for the training of teachers and directors.

The enactment of the Ministerial Resolution 557 dated February 28, 1961, marked a significant milestone in the development of professional training as an essential element for the performance of management tasks in educational institutions at different levels. From these moments, new teacher training plans and paths were implemented that empowered the future managers of pedagogical schools, among them: Emerging courses, vanguard teacher brigade "Frank País", degree plans, primary teacher concentrates were created in different regions, and regular teacher training in the

institutions Minas de Frío-Topes de Collantes-Tarará), which laid the groundwork for greater professionalization of teachers in the educational system of the moment and the creation of the potential of those who would be responsible for leading the training of future teachers in pedagogical schools.

Another aspect of great significance that influenced the training of pedagogical school directors was the creation of the Institute for Educational Improvement (IEI), on April 20, 1960 by Ministerial Resolution 349, which later became the Institute for Educational Improvement (IEI), both of which had the function of offering training courses to teaching and technical personnel, as well as to administrative personnel in the exercise of managerial functions. This makes it possible to affirm that these two institutions represented the most transcendental stability for the improvement and requalification and for raising the scientific-pedagogical and methodological levels of the managers, although it is not yet possible to speak of pedagogical schools as educational institutions.

A significant event occurred in 1968, with the creation of the Primary Teacher Training Schools in each province, with new curricula and with the objective of ensuring the training of efficient and revolutionary teachers with a high academic and professional level. This also constitutes a challenge to the training of the directors of these schools, which, by its nature, requires the management of processes that make new demands on their professional management activity.

b) - The content of continuing education. Based on the demands of process management in teacher training schools as a prelude to pedagogical schools, the selection of the content of the training of these directors was centered on the elementary knowledge and skills that in the practical order would allow them to face the managerial activity in these institutions, with emphasis on content to direct the administrative work and the control of the fulfillment of the study plans and programs. Progressively, training was incorporated for technical-methodological work with teachers and direct attention to the problems of the teaching-learning process with a professional approach, considering the mission of the pedagogical schools. The permanent training of these directors had as predominant organizational forms the courses and seminars.

c) - The particularities of the management of the continuing education of the pedagogical schools' directors. The management process of continuing education of pedagogical school principals was characterized by asystematicity, spontaneity, and

lack of objectivity in the differentiated attention to their learning needs and the lack of application of a systemic approach in the planning, organization, execution and control of actions aimed at training, since it was not based on the diagnosis of their educational needs and the consequent application of the functional content of their management activity.

Spontaneity and empiricism in individual and collective projection are characteristic features of the previous training of the directors of these educational institutions at that stage, which limited the possibility of acting consciously in guidance and action to achieve this purpose.

The elaborated analysis allows identifying, as a fundamental regularity in the stage, the limited development of formative actions towards the managers of pedagogical schools, in correspondence with incipient development of this type of educational institution, where elementary contents prevail for the performance of their management activity and a spontaneous management, in which systematicity and systemic character in the application of the functional approach to management is not evidenced.

**The second stage (1975-2009): Consolidation of the training of pedagogical school managers.**

a)-Contextual conditions. In this context, transcendental events in the political life of the country took place, such as the celebration of the first three congresses of the Communist Party of Cuba in 1975, 1980 and 1986, as well as the promulgation of the Constitution of the Republic in 1976, The first Improvement Plan of the National Education System and the creation of the Ministry of Higher Education (1976) and the network of Higher Pedagogical Institutes consolidated the educational policy, in which the lines of training of teachers and managers, the objectives and contents of education were specified, the latter were directed to the ideological, pedagogical, research and educational orientation.

In this same year, the Primary Teacher Training Schools were consolidated in several cities of the country, as evidenced in: the entrance requirements were raised from sixth to ninth grade, by means of R/M 658/76 the modifications to the curriculum were approved and these centers became Pedagogical Schools, through R/M 393/75, which also approved modifications to the curriculum for the training of primary teachers. That same year, the RM 439/75, organized the methodological work in the pedagogical

schools, based on the following functional organizational levels: Director's Council, Technical Council, technical collective of the heads of chairs.

During these years, the fundamental guidelines of the Educational Policy of the Revolution were defined, such as: the nature and purpose of socialist education, the directions of communist education...and the principles of the National Education System (SNE). Likewise, as part of this institutionalization process, the System of Work with managers (SWM) of the State and the Government was established, Decree Law 82, of September 12, 1984, which defined among its subsystems the preparation and improvement of managers and the work with the quarry and the reserve of cadres, a document that broadens the training spectrum of educational managers, including those of the pedagogical schools.

In 1990, as part of the new Improvement of the Ministry of Education, the Pedagogical Schools and the Institutes of Educational Improvement were integrated to the Higher Pedagogical Institutes, forming the Subsystem of Teacher Training, which also includes the training of educational managers.

From 1993 to 1998, the plans for the liquidation of the pedagogical schools were developed, and the last graduation of the Pedagogical Schools took place in 1998. This decision and as a consequence of the economic reality and the worsening of the blockade in the last decade, the teaching profession was seriously affected. During this period, the career underwent several changes and adjustments in order to meet the needs of educational institutions, which were suffering from a critical shortage of teaching staff.

To address this situation, starting in the 2000-2001 academic year, emerging variants of teacher preparation were used. First, programs were implemented for primary school teachers and later for lower secondary school teachers, with different entry levels and training models. These included intensive one-year preparation and incorporation to work from the following year, while participants continued their studies through face-to-face meetings.

With the closure of the emerging primary teacher training curriculum in 2009, the 2010-2011 academic year saw the reopening of pedagogical schools for the regular training of primary teachers, preschool educators and special education teachers. In the 2013-2014 academic year, the specialty of primary English teachers was incorporated.

These emergency measures, although they made it possible to maintain teacher coverage in Cuba as a result of the economic and social crisis in the country in the last decade, implemented significant changes in teacher training.

b)- The content of continuing education. The demands of process management in pedagogical schools, which at this stage have acquired a higher level of development, presupposes that the content of training is oriented to the achievement of a better professional performance in accordance with the demands posed to the training of a more comprehensive teacher to strengthen pedagogical competencies, strategies aligned to the demands of school management have been implemented.

The content of the training actions was focused on the treatment of topics related to the planning and organization of work; the general organization of school life; the management of the teaching-educational process, the projection, organization and implementation of methodological work with the teaching staff according to their political-ideological, scientific-pedagogical preparation, which includes the updating of curricula, the incorporation of new methodologies. It was also incorporated as content and pedagogical leadership, resource management and attention to diversity.

As of 1985, the provincial courses began to be developed, which marked the beginning of the decentralization of permanent training, where the pedagogical schools, together with the then higher pedagogical institutes, designed programs adapted to the needs of the directors of these institutions, complying as part of the content with the centralized guidelines of including three fundamental disciplines: Marxism-Leninism, Pedagogy and Scientific Management.

c)-The characteristics of the management of the permanent formation of the directors in the pedagogical schools. It is distinguished by the decentralization of the management of the formative actions, with a leading role of the higher pedagogical institutes in each territory, which through the departments of improvement and in coordination with the Provincial Direction of Education, project and concretize the realization of formative actions oriented to the directors of pedagogical schools.

From the previous analysis, it can be synthesized as a regularity of this stage, that the number and variety of ongoing training actions planned is higher, but their conception remains systemic. The actions have been characterized by the lack of specificity and differentiation according to the particularities of the professional management activity

of the management functions performed in the institution. The monitoring and evaluation of the results of ongoing training are still limited, which does not allow us to know precisely what effect the training actions are having on the performance of pedagogical school principals and on the results of their educational institution.

Third stage: the training of school principals since the reopening and the III Improvement of the National System (from 2010 to the present).

a)-Contextual conditions. This stage is characterized by the profound changes and transformations taking place in the country, based on the postulates of the main documents of the political-legal-normative framework of the educational policy guided by VI the Congress of the Program of the Communist Party of Cuba (2011) and the Guidelines of the Economic and Social Policy of the Party and the Revolution for the period 2021-2026.

Based on the Basic Principles of the National Education System of 2011, that of the massive and equitable character of education; of the combination and integration of study and work. Among the priorities of the educational policy is the improvement of quality and rigor in the training and improvement of teachers and managers.

In accordance with these premises, the III Improvement of the National Education System, which proposes several transformations and changes in the curricula and programs in the different educational levels and modalities, as well as flexible management styles and new ways of working, was approved.

At this stage, new resolutions are issued among them, RM 200/2014 Regulation of the Methodological Work of the Ministry of Education, RM 238/2014 Regulation of the School Evaluation System, Resolution 186/2014 Adjustments and modifications of the school organization, as well as RM 111/2017 Procedure for Preventive Work to raise the political-ideological, pedagogical-methodological and scientific-technical preparation of managers.

In this context, through Ministerial Resolution No 151/ 2010, which approves the opening of pedagogical schools in the specialties, Primary and Preschool including English and special later based on the experiences of the decades of the 70s and 80s.

In the current context of continuing education, the directors of the pedagogical schools have the social task of integrally training primary teachers with higher secondary level,



which are needed in each territory of the country in correspondence with the demands of society that are expressed in the profile of the graduate.

The object of the profession is the educational process in the primary school age, for being the concrete expression of the professional educational work that the educator develops in the integral formation of his students, in the educational institution, with the family and the community. Consequently, with the formative process in the pedagogical school is oriented to the formation of the professional mode of action, assumed by it the generalization of the behaviors through which, the educator acts on the object of work (Torres, 2017, p. 11).

b)- The content of continuing education, based on the requirements of the management of the processes in the pedagogical schools and the content of the training of the directors, includes with prioritized character the topics associated with the Educational Project 2030, the Continuous Improvement of the National System of the Pedagogical Training of the upper secondary level, which establishes the commitments and actions to be performed by the director of the pedagogical school for the attention to the training of students coming from the upper secondary level from the strategic direction and management of the following processes:

(a) management of direction of pedagogical training at the upper intermediate level; (b) improvement of political-ideological work and the teaching of Cuban History as the essence of the training of teachers and professors; (c) Vocational Orientation and Pedagogical Professional Reaffirmation Process; (d) direction of the methodological work system, improvement and scientific activity with a pedagogical professional approach; (f) developmental educational process in correspondence with the graduate's profile; (g) management of computerization and institutional communication oriented to digital education.

In the last stage, the content of the continuing education of managers has had as basic priorities their preparation for performance in the spheres of action, especially for the direction of methodological, political and ideological work and the conduction of the process of transformations that take place in the different subsystems; strategic planning and the process of direction and the direction of processes; as well as aspects of the national and international political situation.

In this sense, it is evident the need to update the contents and dynamize the forms of methodological preparation and improvement, that propitiates to raise the efficiency of the pedagogical formation of upper secondary level and the quality of its graduates with an evident commitment in the development of the pedagogical professional abilities that must characterize the educators in the XXI century to contribute from this worthy employment to the development of their students and for life.

c)-The characteristics of the management of the continuing education of managers in pedagogical schools. The management of the continuing education of school principals in pedagogical schools is limited to the traditional projection of centralized courses and provincial and national seminars, which were carried out based on the results of the visits to the territories by the different instances. There is a level of decentralization of the responsibility for its direction and development (planning, organization, execution, control and evaluation) in the provincial structures.

From the previous analysis, it can be synthesized as a regularity of this stage that, although the management of continuing education for pedagogical school directors has achieved greater systematization in the training actions of these directors, it still presents limitations in terms of its articulation and coherence. In spite of the progress made in training actions, they are not structured in a systemic, gradual, systematic and specific way oriented to satisfy the individual and collective educational needs of these principals, derived from the demands of their performance. This is due, in part, to the lack of an ideal model of managerial performance to serve as a reference for planning and managing the ongoing training of pedagogical school principals.

## **Conclusions**

The analysis of the regularities of the historical evolution of in-service training of school principals leads to the conclusion that: the conditions of the social and educational context have had an impact on the progression of training, driven by political and educational events that have generated general policies with a particular effect on this process. The content of continuing education for pedagogical school principals has been expanding, in correspondence with the demands placed on the

professional activity of these principals in the management of processes in these educational institutions, at each historical moment of the country's educational development. However, limitations persist in terms of the correspondence between the content of the training and the social demands on the performance of these managers, in accordance with the particularities of their management object.