

Towards an integral training in curriculum management for future teachers

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ABSTRACT

One of the problems that limit a more comprehensive training of future teachers of the Pedagogy faculty are the insufficiencies in the curricular management of this training process. For this reason, this article aims to identify some challenges that teachers and managers must face in order to contribute to such integrality. Methods such as analysis-synthesis, content analysis and document review were used. The results point to a consensus on a set of challenges for the curriculum management process which, if addressed in a timely manner, can make the fulfillment of the University's mission more pertinent to its society.

Keywords: Education; Comprehensive education; Management; Curriculum management

Introduction

The “Report of the International Commission on the Futures of Education” states that “Teachers are the most significant factor in educational quality, provided they have sufficient recognition, preparation, support, resources, autonomy and opportunities for continuous development” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization, UNESCO, 2022, p. 22). Hence the need of universities, and within them the faculties of pedagogy, to bet on a training that increasingly tends to the comprehensiveness of future teachers.

Ecuadorian higher education, which is committed to the changes necessary to achieve this goal, has in this context the responsibility to "...contribute to the development and improvement of education at all levels, particularly through teacher training", as stated in the World Declaration on Higher Education (World Conference on Higher Education, 1998, p. 101).

Among the purposes and contents to be included in such training, the mastery of theoretical and methodological assumptions to deal with curriculum management is a priority if one aspires to achieve a comprehensive training of future educators. Such management is a complex process, since it involves the development of a set of actions that make the training process more pertinent. Therefore, a problem related to insufficiencies in curriculum management was identified in the Pedagogy faculty of the University "Luis Vargas Torres" of Esmeraldas, Ecuador, which limit the comprehensive training of future teachers.

This problem can be addressed by identifying some of the challenges that must be faced in the curriculum management process of the Faculty of Education, as a fundamental condition to contribute to the comprehensive training of their students, which is the objective of this article.

In line with the objective of the work, materials were selected that address the background of the object of research related to curriculum management in university careers, as well as others related to the comprehensive training of students of pedagogical careers, which appear in texts published in scientific journals indexed in SciELO and other relevant databases, as a premise for the use of documentary review and the theoretical methods of analysis-synthesis, induction-deduction and content analysis. Together, they made it possible to delimit the features that define the fundamental concepts of the work, its importance, and some challenges for an adequate curricular management, with the participation of teachers and directors, in order to contribute to the pertinence of the training of future teachers of the pedagogical careers of this prestigious University.

Development

A conceptual analysis of the integral formation in the curricular management of the future teachers of the Pedagogy faculty demands the systematization of more general categories, from the formal logic, associated to the object of research of this work, such as: formation, integral formation of the educator, management and curricular management. The considerations derived from this study made possible the adoption of theoretical-methodological references and the proposal of some challenges for an adequate curriculum management, as guidelines that direct it towards the training of future teachers of the Pedagogy faculty.

In the case of the definition of the training concept that is assumed, it is the one that establishes:

As a process and as a result, which is distinguished by its systematic (continuous) character, which is oriented to the acquisition, structuring and restructuring of behaviors from knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, under the guidance of previously set objectives and involves all dimensions of human development. (Del Toro, 2016, pp. 12 and 13)

Con relación a la formación integral en la Tercera Conferencia Mundial de Educación Superior (Barcelona, 2022) se destaca que “Las instituciones de educación superior deben hacer hincapié en los valores y comportamientos éticos (...). Los valores positivos deben impregnar todos los programas académicos e instalarse en el ADN de la cultura institucional de todas las IES.” (UNESCO, 3rd World Conference on Higher Education, 2022, p. 25). Asimismo, se resalta la necesidad de evolucionar “De un enfoque restrictivo en la formación disciplinaria o profesional a una experiencia de aprendizaje integral del estudiante” (p. 28), entre los cambios que deben producirse en la educación superior contemporánea.

Accordingly, integral formation is assumed as a “...quality in the current conceptions of the university as a social institution” that:

It expresses the pretension of focusing the work of universities on the formation of values in professionals in a fuller way, providing them with qualities of high human significance, capable of understanding the need to put their knowledge at the service of society instead of using it only for their personal benefit. It also implies the need to achieve a creative,

independent professional, prepared to assume his or her self-education throughout life (Horruitiner, 2008, pp. 3 and 4).

In the case of the concept of management, it is assumed by the authors of this article as a social process of influences, of a strategic nature, to lead processes and people towards the achievement of objectives agreed upon by all participants. To achieve this, it is necessary to fulfill functions such as planning, organization, decision making, control and evaluation.

Likewise, curriculum management, which is a limited concept of the concept of management, from the formal logic, has been defined by researchers such as Bedoya *et al.* (2021); Crespo-Cabuto, *et al.* (2021); Villegas & Valderrama (2021); among others.

Bedoya *et al.* (2021), who equates this term with pedagogical management, concludes in their studies with the assertion that it is impossible to speak of educational quality without addressing the necessary curricular changes aimed at greater comprehensiveness in the training of professionals.

For their part, Villegas & Valderrama (2021) emphasize management in curricular teaching activity, which they assume as

...a concept that integrates a set of commitments and actions that take place both inside and outside the classroom. It is intended to promote student learning in terms of achieving the learning outcomes and competencies defined in the graduate profile, in a given institutional context. Thus, it is possible to indicate that the teaching-curricular activity involves, among other aspects: 1) the coordination, management and planning of teaching; 2) the deployment of teaching methods; 3) learning and assessment activities; 4) the subsequent review and improvement of the actions carried out; 5) the quality of what is offered to the students, and 6) the involvement of curricular orientation, which assumes its value for what it contributes to good university teaching. (pp. 160 and 161)

In the opinion of the authors of this paper, curriculum management in the specific case of the Faculty of Education of the University “Luis Vargas Torres” of Esmeraldas, Ecuador, should have a general impact on the study plans, the strategic project of the faculty, the methods and techniques defined for the achievement of the objectives, the professional model, the teaching process plan, the programs of the disciplines and subjects, and the institutional policies.

Likewise, attention must be paid to the adequate management of the components of the organizational culture, such as: traditions, customs, values, beliefs, relationships between the different factors that influence the training process and make life in the Faculty, rules and regulations. Likewise, it cannot disregard the ongoing training of the faculty, as an indispensable condition to achieve the comprehensive training to which we aspire.

It is also necessary to consider the existence of two types of curricula, the implicit or hidden and the explicit. The explicit curriculum contains what is intentionally declared in a planned manner for the achievement of objectives; the hidden curriculum encompasses everything that influences the achievement of these objectives, spontaneously and more or less decisively. Therefore, it is necessary, in the process of curriculum management, to improve the system of control and evaluation of the different processes that take place in the School of Pedagogy and their impact on the integral formation of its future teachers.

As a culmination of the study carried out, the following is a synthesis of the contributions of the researchers, which reflect a consensus on some of the challenges that should be considered by a curricular management that bets on the educational quality and tends towards an integral formation of the future teachers of the Faculty of Pedagogy at the University “Luis Vargas Torres”, namely:

- To achieve coherence in the identification of the professional problems addressed in the curriculum, leading to the development of competencies that will enable future teachers to meet the real needs of the institutions where they will work. This would be close to a true social relevance of the curriculum (Crespo-Cabuto, *et al.*, 2021). As Bedoya *et al.* (2021) state, universities “...must design and implement curricula that are in line with their reality.” (p. 212)
- Systematically monitor, through evaluation mechanisms, the results of curriculum management, as an expression of continuous improvement and of a proactive and non-conforming management with the results achieved, in addition to serving as a reference for the changes to be made in the development of the substantive processes of training, research and linkage with society (Crespo-Cabuto, *et al.*, 2021).
- Also, in the process of redesigning the curricula of pedagogical careers, consider, among its contents, preparation for management in educational institutions (without the premature intention of believing that once graduated, the teacher could perform as a school principal), but as a curricular strategy that helps to favor

the training of future educators for the management of the educational process and other processes that they will have to lead, whether or not they assume a managerial responsibility. These contents would drive the formative process towards a more comprehensive training, for life (Del Toro and Valiente, 2019).

- Promote the design of integrating tasks that converge in a main discipline of the curriculum, directly linked to the work practice of future teachers in the institutions where they will develop their professional pedagogical activity. To achieve this, it will be essential to carry out a methodological teaching work that holistically guides what the student is expected to do in that training scenario (Del Toro, 2016; Del Toro and Valiente, 2019 and Horruitiner, 2008).
- The main integrating discipline constitutes the backbone of the training process, it responds to the logic of the profession, its fundamental content is labor research and “...it relies on the contributions of the remaining disciplines of the career and assumes them in their integration to respond to the demands of professional work, ensuring the mastery of the essential modes of action of that professional” (Horruitiner, 2008).
- Betting on the design and methodological management of other curricular strategies, in the case of “...certain knowledge, skills, values and modes of professional performance (...) that are key in the comprehensive training of students. These are contents that it is not possible to address them with due depth from a single discipline and require the competition of several.” (MES, 2016, as cited in Del Toro, 2016, p. 16). Among these contents, the mastery of a foreign language, the use of information and communication technologies, work with the mother tongue, among others, stand out.

Ensuring also the social relevance of the Pedagogy faculty, in order to contribute to the integrality in the training of teachers, implies considering demands associated with the fulfillment of the goals of Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aim to include within its contents: (a) global citizenship education (GCED), (b) education for sustainable development (ESD); (c) addressing gender equality; (d) inclusive education; (e) comprehensive sexual education; (f) climate change, and; (g) human rights (Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action, 2015).

Conclusions

The Ecuadorian society demands from its higher education institutions a training system that progressively tends towards the integrality of its professionals, which allows them to provide solutions to the most frequent problems of the centers where they will work. In the case of the Pedagogy faculty, the challenge is greater, since it guarantees the formation of trainers of human beings, who cannot be reprocessed as an inanimate raw material, so that each step taken by the teacher or professor leaves a mark that is difficult to erase in their students.

Curriculum management must be an uninterrupted process that can align the educational model it builds with the ever-increasing quality standards, in line with the needs of future teachers and society. The challenges to face such management are linked to the strategic, key and support processes of the Faculty of Pedagogy of the University “Luis Vargas Torres”, as an expression of the mission established for such high house of studies.

The adjustments in the curricular management to be carried out in this prestigious institution in Esmeraldas, will constitute a valuable contribution to the efforts made by its directors, in terms of the necessary transformation of the training process of future teachers, by modifying a curriculum that is characterized by its flexibility, comprehensiveness and relevance to social demands. Among these challenges, priority is given to the identification of the professional problems that education professionals will have to face, the systematic monitoring of results through the evaluation of their processes, the inclusion of contents such as preparation for management in educational institutions and other curricular strategies, the design of integrating tasks linked to the work scenario and the demands associated with the fulfillment of the goals associated with the sustainable development objectives up to 2030.