

Virtuality in the formation of the professional pedagogical mode of action

Milagros Gutiérrez Sánchez^{1*} <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7146-250X>

Maribel Rodríguez Núñez¹ <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4921-7115>

María M. Santiesteban Labañino¹ <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1930-7726>

¹Universidad de Oriente. Cuba

*Autor para la correspondencia: milagros.gutierrez@uo.edu.cu

ABSTRACT

The formation of the professional performance mode requires updating in the undergraduate university processes. The objective is to reflect on the use of virtuality for the improvement of the student's performance mode in pedagogical careers. Characteristics of the teacher are offered for the exercise of the profession in relation to the use of technology. Methods such as analysis-synthesis, induction-deduction, document analysis and observation were applied. Emphasis is placed on the importance of the study of outstanding figures of the local teaching profession through the use of tools and methods offered by virtuality.

Keywords: Training; Mode of action; Virtuality; Notable figures

Introduction

Today's world is characterized by a context in which economic, political and social transformations and contradictions prevail, marked by the development of science and technology. We are living in an era of unprecedented technological innovation, with the rapid development of artificial intelligence, robotics, biotechnology, nanotechnology and

information technology. The dynamics of this situation pose a series of challenges that require urgent responses to the demands of society.

These and other phenomena must logically have an impact on the necessary transformations in the educational sphere, given its importance as a human right, essential for social progress and for the survival of humanity. Being prepared for this scenario requires the teaching staff to update their knowledge, methodological, pedagogical and didactic strategies that respond to the specific needs of the social fabric.

The university has the responsibility to establish the synthesis of scientific advances, the production of knowledge and the generation of solutions to the problems of society, from the integration of its substantive processes and to form an attitude that reveals the commitment of its graduates in transformation and sustainable development.

It is also responsible for preparing students with deep knowledge in the area of knowledge related to them, sensitivity and ability to understand the surrounding world and independence to intervene in the sphere of professional performance accurately, using the ethical and aesthetic potential of the content of the profession they learn, all of which requires a mode of action that favors the achievement of its objective as this is related to the practice that the person performs in a given context.

Thus, a challenge for teachers is the conception of a different pedagogy, which leads to the transformation of school institutions, where information and communication technologies have a positive impact on educational processes, since these media are able to enhance teaching, motivate students to be more active and thus facilitate learning.

Hence, the purpose of this article is to reflect on aspects related to the use of virtuality in the formation of the pedagogical professional mode of action from the study of outstanding figures of the local teaching profession.

Development

Educating generations is one of the primary objectives of today's society, and imposes on the Educational Sciences the formation of a competent professional, built on the basis of

the search for knowledge, know-how, know-how to be and know how to live together, as prescribed by UNESCO.

The training process that takes place in universities is one of the aspects that occupies a relevant place, especially if one takes into consideration the global conflicts that affect all social spheres, where the preparation of a professional who can respond to the demands that society poses in the various spheres of his performance is required, which translates into having a mode of action that is an expression of a professional culture.

That is why the University is responsible for the preparation of students with deep knowledge in the area of knowledge that is related to them, sensitivity and ability to understand the surrounding world and independence to intervene in the sphere of professional performance properly, using the ethical and aesthetic potential of the content of the profession they learn, all of which requires a mode of action that favors the achievement of its objective as this is related to the practice that the person performs in a given context.

The training of professionals at the higher level is the process that, consciously and on a scientific basis, is developed in institutions of higher education to ensure the comprehensive preparation of university students, which takes the form of a solid scientific-technical, humanistic and high ideological, political, ethical and aesthetic values, in order to achieve revolutionary, educated, competent, independent and creative professionals, so that they can perform successfully in various sectors of the economy and society in general. (Ministry of Higher Education (MES), 2018, p. 1)

These ideas are evident in the formative process that is developed in pedagogical careers, since this is established from the mastery of the contents, the development of skills and values that are useful to students in solving problems of the social and professional context they face in their pedagogical practice. For this reason, Higher Education faces the challenge of fulfilling the social task that corresponds to it in professional pedagogical training: to train and consolidate the mode of action.

In this sense, the curriculum in these careers connotes the three types of fundamental processes, which in their organization and internal dynamics, contribute to the appropriation of the professional mode of action: training, research and university extension, hence, it is necessary to preserve, develop and promote the culture, by

guaranteeing the comprehensive training of university professionals from the constant search for excellence and continuous improvement of pedagogical professional training, in correspondence with the demands and requirements of the social context.

These approaches are an expression of the demands made by the governing body regarding the training of an educator who responds to the new conceptions and demands of society, is currently a challenge, especially if we take into account the situation of global crisis we are living, therefore, the willingness to recognize and prioritize professional training is not only expressed in Cuban educational policy but also in different Latin American countries.

We agree with Zaldívar (2023), when he states that:

Training is a complex process of active construction of meanings and senses of subjectivity in relation to external influences; it occurs as an integral system by having a scientific and technical preparation, reinforced in the formation of ethical and professional values throughout the training process. (p. 15)

This definition is assumed because it highlights the relationship through which pedagogical professional training is to be favored and produced, based on scientific and technical advances, where information and communication technologies are included. In addition, as a procedure that contributes to the acquisition of ethical and professional values, it enables the transformation of students and the improvement of the way of professional performance.

It should be noted that the use of technologies in professional training, in general, and in pedagogical training, in particular, is significant because it energizes the training processes and facilitates the comparison of models of human existence. Likewise, it achieves a higher level of learning, culture, facilitates educational communication, the quality of the educational teaching process, the development of the teaching-learning process and the management of the University, this determines a greater performance of the individual in society by having a greater possibility of expressing ideas and feelings.

Conventional teaching and learning methods have been transformed with the advent of new information and communication technologies towards a student-centered training within an interactive learning environment. The wide possibilities granted to these media have shown that with an adequate use by the teacher, they favor the educational process in the school.

The interactive process that is established between computers enhanced with software, attractive programs, instructive games, sounds, images with animation that make possible the exchange, either digital or with sound, favor the educational process and implicitly leads to motivation, oral communication, learning of the mother tongue, knowledge of the world around us in its two main aspects: comprehension and expression.

However, this process should be developed from an integrative perspective, based on the potential that the various disciplines can offer, linked to the use of information and communication technologies, as an invaluable tool for the development of teaching and learning processes, but without underestimating the physical presence of the teacher, since they are irreplaceable.

In this sense, the curriculum in these careers connotes the three types of fundamental processes, which in their organization and internal dynamics, contribute to the appropriation of the professional mode of action: training, research and university extension, hence, it is necessary to preserve, develop and promote culture, by ensuring the comprehensive training of university professionals from the constant search for excellence and continuous improvement of pedagogical professional training, in correspondence with the demands and requirements of the social context.

These approaches are an expression of the demands made by the governing body regarding the training of an educator who responds to the new conceptions and demands of society, is currently a challenge, especially if we take into account the global crisis situation we are living, therefore, the willingness to recognize and prioritize professional training is not only expressed in the Cuban educational policy but also in different Latin American countries.

It should be taken into account that the use of technologies in vocational training, in general, and in pedagogical training, in particular, is significant because it makes training processes more dynamic and facilitates the comparison of models of human existence. Likewise, it achieves a higher level of learning, culture, facilitates educational communication, the quality of the educational teaching process, the development of the teaching-learning process and the management of the University, this determines a greater performance of the individual in society by having a greater possibility of expressing ideas and feelings.

Hence, the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) is increasingly necessary in the context of rapidly changing societies in which the increase of knowledge, high-level training and continuous updating become a permanent requirement. Such a condition is a premise for professional pedagogical training to assume as a support the integral training in the use of ICT, where information management allows the use of tools that facilitate access to new and varied sources of information. (Rodríguez, Gutiérrez and Jerez, 2020, p. 16)

These aspects reflect the constantly evolving dynamics that the educational sphere has to experience, given the continuous development of technology and it is precisely for this reason that education, not only provides knowledge, but also fosters curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, resilience, empathy and especially spirituality marked in a deep humanism.

In this sense, it requires a teacher capable of using virtuality to optimize learning in his or her professional work, who is willing and able to change, to work in a different way; with other methods and new resources, that can offer alternative ways of teaching and learning successfully that lead their students, that is, to provide the teacher with a mode of action that is a manifestation of values, qualities, skills, attitudes, and appropriate behaviors.

The way of acting has been alluded to in order to refer to the way a person behaves or acts in different situations. Could we ask what are some of the characteristics that are included in the way of acting? One can, then, take into consideration:

- Consistency, referring to the person acting consistently and predictably in various situations.
- Flexibility, such as the ability to adapt and change one's behavior according to circumstances.
- Responsibility, to make decisions and assume the consequences of their actions.
- Empathy, as the ability to understand and empathize with others.
- Assertiveness, to express their opinions and needs in a clear and respectful manner.
- Self-control, which is nothing more than the ability to regulate your emotions and reactions in challenging situations.
- Effective communication, as the ability to express ideas and feelings in a clear and understandable way.

Now, in the theoretical sphere of Pedagogical Sciences, the mode of action is a concept that has evolved with the passage of time and its contextualization. There are authors who have analyzed it as general methods when relating them to the ways of performing from their link with the object of work, since it guides and regulates the conduct of the professional.

Other authors have characterized it from the point of view of its relationship with the activity developed by teachers and that it represents a pedagogical activity integrated by a system and a sequence of generalized actions that reveal the particular way in which the teacher performs, and manifest a certain level of mastery of the contents, skills, and more general values of the object of the profession, where the teacher adequately self-assesses the way in which he/she acts professionally and identifies with the functions of the education professional.

For authors such as Pla (2005), Fuxá (2004), Remedios, Hernández & Concepción (2004), Addine, (2013), Salas and Salas (2014), Santiesteban & Parra (2015), Suárez (2016), Del Cristo, Rodríguez, & Sobrino (2020), it constitutes a system of actions determined by the particularities of the professional activity, so the term refers to reveal the mastery of skills, abilities, constructs, qualities, models, schemes, methods, system of generalizing actions, ways of performing, general methods, which allow the exercise of the profession to perform its pedagogical work.

The authors agree with what is stated by Rojas (2016), when she refers that:

The mode of performance of the education professional acquires particularities in the different levels of education, which correspond to the distinctive elements of the pedagogical process; a process that in Higher Education allows the gradual approach of the student to the object, content and methods of the profession through the system of influences that takes shape in the academic, labor, research and extension activities. (p. 66)

From the above elements, an analysis is made of some of the qualities and capacities of the teacher that are the object of study in the subject Pedagogy taught at the University. What are these qualities?

Love for children and young people and for the profession.

- To possess convictions that allows them to determine the orientation and their professional role.

- Respect and love for the country.
- The exemplarity of the teacher, a role model.
- Adequate personal appearance.
- To be enthusiastic and creative.
- Characterized by perseverance, simplicity, decisiveness, self-control and firmness.
- Responsibility.
- Empathy and sensitivity.

Thus, a teacher possessing these qualities not only transmits knowledge, but also inspires, guides, transmits values, feelings and motivates students to learn and grow.

The following is an analysis of some of the skills that distinguish teachers in their work performance, these refer to the skills and competencies they must possess to teach effectively and facilitate student learning, here we find:

Academic ability. The teacher has broad and deep knowledge of the discipline, subject or subject he/she teaches.

Didactic capacity. It is nothing more than the teacher's ability to elaborate the methods through which they will transmit knowledge and for the formation and development of habits and skills. In addition, it refers to the teacher's ability to make the teaching material comprehensible and to convert the most difficult problems into clearly accessible ones.

Perceptive ability. It consists of the adequate observation and understanding of all the psychic phenomena of the student, that is, to know his personality to be able to favorably influence the process of his formation.

Expressive or language capacity. This refers to the clear, precise and exact expression of ideas, knowledge and feelings through language, mimicry and gestures. The teacher must be a model in the correct use of language in order to demand adequate expression from the students.

Organizational skills. It allows cohesion in the group and instills encouragement in the solution of tasks. The teacher must be an example of personal organization, planning, executing, controlling and self-controlling his management, distributing time and work rationally.

The communicative capacity makes it possible to relate with the students and to know how to establish an adequate communication with them in different situations and moments.

The ability to maintain authority. The teacher has prestige and authority when they exert, a favorable emotional influence, when possesses solid ideological convictions and dominates knowledge. These three factors achieve true authority together with being consistent, fair, demanding and capable of self-control.

Creative capacity. It constitutes a condition for planning and guiding the process of formation of the students' personality. It refers to the ability to innovate in the teaching-learning process, designing and implementing creative teaching aids, resources and educational activities that encourage participation and critical thinking among students. This ability overcomes obstacles and barriers to learning, creates a stimulating classroom environment, employs technology and teaches students to use them in resourceful and productive ways.

As you can see, this capacity adjusts to the new times for the transformation of the ways of conceiving and developing the teaching-learning process in today's educational institutions.

And finally, the technological capacity is analyzed, which is not less important because it is the last one, on the contrary. This refers to the ability to integrate and use information and communication technologies effectively in the teaching and learning process, this does not imply the simple use of technological devices but the application of a pedagogical approach based on the ability to learn and adapt to new technologies from the use of didactic learning strategies which includes the use of videos, smartphones, tablets, inverted classroom, virtual platforms.

In addition, the design of digital content that enrich the curriculum and enhance student learning, manage online learning platforms and encourage digital interaction and collaboration, digital assessments using tools such as online tests and digital portfolios, promote online practices and teach students how to be responsible digital citizens, explore and adopt emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, as well as keep updated on the latest trends and educational technology tools.

The technological capacity of teachers contributes significantly to their pedagogical effectiveness, enabling interactive, relevant and attractive teaching that prepares students

for an increasingly digitized world. It is evident that these qualities and capabilities, indeed, characterize the teacher's mode of action, whether is called a teacher or a professor.

In summary, the mode of action constitutes a complex and dynamic organization that determines a peculiar way of doing in the exercise of the profession, it must be characterized by the marked intention of the formation of pedagogical work methods, in the case of teachers, where reflection, cooperation, sense of belonging and favorable communication relationships are the priority.

Through the mode of action, learning situations and tasks should be designed to enhance both the development of knowledge and skills and the dimensions of the student's moral personality that allow for ethical learning and an integrated education. It can be affirmed that the mode of action, from an epistemological, gnoseological, axiological and ontological point of view, contains the determination of the “educator” being before the commitment to create, transform, undo and remake; all this, in the search for educational excellence.

To a certain extent, the way teachers act has been analyzed, which, of course, must be reflected in the way students act. This is manifested in how they interact among themselves, in the group, in the school institution, with the family and in the community. In addition, in how they respond and behave in the educational environment under the influence of the combination of personal, environmental and contextual factors, which cause the following manifestations in the way students, act:

- Learning Styles: students show preferences towards certain ways of acquiring knowledge, such as visual, auditory or kinesthetic, and this affects their mode of performance in the classroom and when studying.
- Motivation: Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can lead to different forms of performance as they tend to perform better and better.
- Class participation: Some students are more participative while others may be more reserved or reflective.
- Social Interaction: This is evident in their social skills and the way they collaborate, compete or communicate with peers and teachers.
- Study Strategies: they develop and apply different study strategies, including time management, organization, and focus on specific areas of knowledge.

- Response to failure and feedback: Some students may take failure and negative feedback as an opportunity to learn and grow while others may become discouraged.
- Self-efficacy: belief in their own ability to succeed influences how students deal with academic challenges and tasks.
- Stress management and resilience: they will exhibit different levels of resilience in the face of academic pressure and stress; some may handle it effectively, while others may find themselves overwhelmed.
- Technology Integration: familiarity with and ability to integrate technology into learning is another way modern learners can be observed to perform.
- Initiative and Autonomy: they show independence in their learning by actively seeking knowledge and resources beyond what is offered in the classroom.
- Adaptability: ability to adapt to different learning environments and academic challenges.
- Behavior and discipline: behavior in terms of discipline, respect for rules and self-regulation.
- Commitment to learning: the level of commitment and effort dedicated to their education, which is reflected in their performance and participation.

As shown, these aspects constitute the students' mode of action, which are key to understanding both their personal development and their academic performance. Thus, identifying the students' mode of action helps teachers to design effective pedagogical interventions and inclusive learning environments.

In keeping with the above idea, the authors of this article conceive - being consistent with the intention stated in the proposed objective - the study of outstanding figures of the local teaching profession in the use of their contributions, legacy, their theoretical and practical contributions in the formation of the professional pedagogical mode of action from the virtuality.

Historical memory has been responsible for recognizing and perpetuating the work of the teaching profession, and various authors have contributed theoretical proposals for approaching an educational phenomenon, an event, a process, a pedagogical conception, a school institution or the study of an educator. These scientific results are established by means of strategies, methodologies and general procedures leading to reveal pedagogical traditions from different fields.

There are educators who have transcended the spatial and temporal frontiers of their lives due to the contributions of their pedagogical activity and thinking. In Cuba, efforts have been devoted in the last three decades to the study of Cuban educators, basically from research initiatives exposed in doctoral theses, research projects, scientific-study works that enrich the scientific literature in correspondence with the development of pedagogical sciences and social demands.

The contributions of Buenavilla (2004) stand out, who in the text entitled Investigation of the life and pedagogical work of outstanding educators, points out: “These educators deserve to be studied in the light of the new conceptions that are currently being developed about the role of pedagogical personalities in (...), the formation of a new man” (p. 1).

From the conception of these authors until today, there is a tendency to identify the term outstanding educators in different ways, thus the author himself refers to “pedagogical personalities”, “educational personalities”, “outstanding teachers of the locality”; other authors refer in general to “figures”, “leading figures”, “transcendent figures” to allude to outstanding figures in different professions, including the teaching profession.

Thus, the definition provided by Buenavilla (2002) stands out for its orientation value and practical usefulness, with respect to outstanding teachers of the locality as follows:

Those very simple men and women, good neighbors, with a modest life, integrated to the tasks of their town, of their community environment who consider them as one of their own. These are distinguished in turn by their professional role, by their pedagogical practice of excellence and the level of empathy they establish with their students, more than by having a published written work. (p. 5)

These ideas are assumed to identify outstanding figures of the local teaching profession, since the characteristics provided by this definition allow us to base the condition of outstanding figure of the local teaching profession on those who have been a model of professional, motivated in their professional and social commitment, humanist, dedicated to the formation of students in the different educational levels.

It is then recurrent to ask: how to use virtuality to improve the way of acting from the study of outstanding figures?

Virtuality refers to the existence and interactions in an environment generated by computers or in a digital environment. It is associated with the creation of a simulated

environment, often accessible through the Internet, where people can interact, perform activities, learn, work and socialize.

Virtuality offers teachers methods for the study of prominent figures in the local teaching profession by taking advantage of digital technology and online interactions. Therefore, if the teacher possesses technological capacity and ability, they can resort to various ways, since virtuality provides access to a wide range of resources and information that allow an exploration of their lives, theory, contributions and in particular the manifestation of a way of acting that can serve as a model, pattern, guide that favors the improvement of the students' way of acting.

What then are the tools and methods that can be used?

Some of the most common include:

- Online research to search for documents and biographies on prominent figures.
- Digital interviews with experts or disciples to obtain information about relevant pedagogical practices.
- Reviewing virtual conferences where specialists discuss and analyze the contributions of leading figures.
- Fostering exchange in networks and forums where other educators and academics discuss the leading figure in teaching, which provides new perspectives and study materials.

Use collaborative platforms to work with other teacher researchers and students to share findings, discuss theories and take positions.

Conclusions

These arguments show the need to reveal ways and methods that benefit the teaching-learning process and the importance of recognizing outstanding figures of the local teaching profession as a model of professionalism, recognizing the values, commitment, dedication and humanism, for acquiring a social and individual professional significance.