

Educational inclusion and conception from the professional training of the speech therapist

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ABSTRACT

The article offers a theoretical argumentation on inclusion, an important topic in the educational context, seen from the work with communication and language disorders, essential elements to achieve the equalization of possibilities, for which the preparation must be guaranteed from the initial training of speech therapists. From the use of various methods, it is possible to see the need to make clarifications focused on educational inclusion and the mastery of the speech therapist's role in it, from the understanding of the necessary environments to promote the essential objective of creating efficient communicators.

Keywords: Educational inclusion; Initial training; Speech therapy; Collaborative speech therapy; Communication and language

Introduction

With an important role in the attention to disorders that affect communication and language, the training of the school speech therapist in Cuba has evolved significantly, assuming an approach in which the clinical and the psycho-pedagogical are articulated,

giving it a more pedagogical character and emphasizing a preventive and community speech therapy.

The process assumed in this speech therapy, gives attention to the requirements demanded by people with disorders in this area, favoring the stimulation of their potential and the action in the various contexts in which they develop, which contributes to consolidate it as a science, in terms of prevention, correction and compensation of the various disorders in communication and language, with or without the presence of special educational needs (SEN).

According to Bell (1999), one of the most important approaches in this sense is the one related to social and educational inclusion, which states that the idea that many children with different types of difficulties could acquire a quality education in the system of regular institutions, if these institutions facilitate the means and conditions for each child to advance to the extent of his/her possibilities and with the support they needs, has been gaining strength.

Providing an education focused on the needs and demands constitutes a challenge for the future, where infants and students with language and communication disorders have a place. In this sense, it is a requirement to fulfill the achievement of a Speech Therapy with an inclusive projection, in which the school institution, the family and the community adjust their actions in an adequate way, to favor the social task that corresponds to each one of them.

The development of an inclusive school speech therapy becomes the objective to be fulfilled in all contexts in which the speech therapist has an impact, being evident therefore the need for its preparation, which must be achieved from the undergraduate training.

On the subject there have been several writings, in the international field it is recognized the work done in Spain by de Miguel (2016) and other authors, in Chile, Ponce (2019), all of them from the space of the school. In Cuba authors such as Fernandez (2008) and Rodriguez (2013), among others, have dealt with it from the initial university training, addressing its essence in the texts elaborated by them, although we consider that the existing bibliography is still not so abundant, so it is necessary to deepen the subject, to continue exposing in a clear and precise way the role that corresponds to the speech

therapist in the process, in correspondence with the changes that from the educational and social point of view occur,

The social mission of higher education is to train suitable professionals, who demonstrate their abilities in their work performance, in correspondence with the conditions of the social and economic context in which they perform this, supported by scientific and technological development and possessing a high human value, which allows to comply with the UNESCO objective “Education for all throughout life” and to realize in educational practice the goal # 4 of Agenda 2030 related to ensuring inclusive, equitable, quality education and promote lifelong learning for all.

Speech therapy is considered from the educational and health point of view, as a science that has been developing along with the advances that frequently occur in various areas of knowledge, hence the multi and interdisciplinary character that enables it to achieve compliance with its social task; From this position, it is necessary to consider as an essential condition, the need to obtain from the initial training the knowledge related to the actuality of educational inclusion and the response to diversity, as a confirmation of the equity and equal opportunities to which we aspire, in order to provide the necessary tools to learn and develop throughout life in society.

UNESCO, in 2000, defined educational inclusion as a dynamic process of educating everyone equally, with respect, without discrimination, segregation, interacting with each other, so that they can access a quality education with equal opportunities to learn and participate in all contexts.

The constant improvements in education have made it possible to expand the role played by Speech Therapy professionals in the implementation of educational inclusion for social development, not only from a corrective-compensatory position, but also with a preventive conception.

From what has been said above, it is unquestionable that achieving the purpose already stated is the responsibility of the educational training and the practices to be carried out, which must favor a favorable professional performance of the students in the fulfillment of the function that they have to assume.

The updated management of knowledge should benefit an effective educational inclusion, in which communication and language are evidenced as a center that favors the appropriation of human experience, as well as its contribution to it, which should be

reverted both in social and educational practice, hence the focus of this work towards the argumentation of educational inclusion and its conception from the initial training of the speech therapist.

For the development of the work, the materialistic dialectic is assumed as the general method of science, which allows the transformation of scientific knowledge in its development, also using other methods to form the criteria that are supported, among them are observation, survey, and interview and document analysis.

Development

With a genesis determined by the needs of society at a given historical moment, the University is an institution in which diverse knowledge converges and which constitutes a guarantee of the development to be achieved in all spheres.

Assuming all the above, it is not difficult to understand that, in Higher Education institutions, the training of professionals must be carried out in a harmonious, scientifically organized way, in order to achieve a professional with a broad profile, whose way of acting corresponds to the progress and characteristics of the society in which they will work, that is to say, that makes it possible to achieve the men and women that it requires.

The training must be established on the basis of transforming scientific thinking, which will lead to a consistent competence. In this regard, García (2010) states “.... The quality of education requires committed professionals, protagonists of their practice, capable of determining and solving problems related to the performance of their professional role...”

The above approach is of extraordinary importance when contextualizing the initial training of the speech-language pathologist teacher, focusing this on the process of educational inclusion and its contribution from the speech-language care to the achievement of equal opportunities both pedagogical and social.

Addressing everything related to initial training requires an analysis of the term that sustains it and therefore to go through the definitions given from different perspectives

by various authors and institutions, both foreign and national. Among those that stand out in the international scenario are those proposed by:

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (1961), its definitions have been evolving until today, they state that it is a set of educational and training activities designed to prepare individuals for employment and specific occupations. These may be in specific institutions, in the workplace or through a combination of both. The OECD highlights initial training in promoting employability and social inclusion.

The European Union (2020) considers it as a key element for economic and social development. It defines it as a process that combines education and training with the aim of preparing individuals for the labor market, fostering the acquisition of professional and personal skills that are essential in the European context.

On the other hand, Alvarez de Zayas (1996) defines it as an educational process that integrates theoretical and practical knowledge, as well as the development of skills and competencies that enable effective performance. He also stresses the importance of continuous training and permanent updating in a world of work that is being perfected through the scientific, innovative and technical advances of the 21st century.

The mastery of theoretical and practical knowledge will not be fully valid if it is not directed towards the development of a society capable of satisfying and promoting social inclusion and access to education for all, under equal conditions, with the purpose of achieving quality coexistence; hence the professional preparation to achieve this assumes an important role.

In fulfilling the social role assigned to it, today's University, as a knowledge management center, must promote an inclusive culture, which generates transformations in the thinking and modes of action of the students it trains, which by force must lead to the achievement of a developed society suitable for all, which requires conceiving from the initial preparation of students, the knowledge that will enable them in their future performance to assume the inclusion process, not only as an educational alternative, but also as a necessity that develops real, fair and equitable possibilities and for this it must:

1. Generate a climate of understanding and acceptance of human diversity.
2. Articulate the interdisciplinary relationship, in terms of diversity, social and educational inclusion.

3. Promote the development of communication as a basis for effective inclusion.
4. To create environments that allows the equitable participation of all students.
5. Provide tools that guarantee, through collaborative work, the acquisition of knowledge related to their specialty and general culture.

Given that initial training is a comprehensive educational and instructional process that prepares the student according to the model that is aspired to achieve, in which are integrated, from all components, theoretical and practical knowledge, which certify the acquisition of skills for the exercise of the profession, it is evident the need to perform it, in the case of the future speech therapist teacher, in such a way that guarantees the social inclusion of students with communication and language disorders in any context in which they develop.

Since communication is an essential component of progress, a fundamental means of socialization, necessary to achieve the satisfaction of needs and access to knowledge and information, it is not difficult to understand its influence on adaptation to the environment, so that its attention in cases of disorders should be addressed from the school environment and with an inclusive vision, in which collaboration is the essence of the work to be done.

Dr. C. López Machín enunciates the object and functions of the speech therapist, which are collected in the text *Logopedia*. First part, by the authors Fernández and Rodríguez (2012), which implicitly carry the inclusive nature that the work of the future speech therapist acquires and which, in the opinion of the authors, require a new look, which allows to expand much more its sphere of action, taking into account the current demands of society.

The curricular design to be used to comply with all the above, will be made having as its center the subjects that make up the Speech Therapy discipline, joining others that complement the initial comprehensive training of the speech therapist, who must master the theoretical and practical elements that support the inclusion process, which according to Booth and Ainscow (2002) is conceived as a set of processes aimed at minimizing or eliminating barriers that limit the learning and participation of all learners.

The inclusion approach, according to Borges and Orozco (2014), should not only focus on achieving access to common institutions for students with disabilities, this requires a thorough analysis aimed at determining what type of school will achieve greater efficiency in the process of care for such students, what is clear is that, in any of them,

quality must prevail as an aspect that proves access to a comprehensive education and the equalization of communicative possibilities, in which the speech therapist has a decisive influence.

For Booth and Ainscow (2002), inclusion has several meanings, among which stand out as a social movement, since it is at the center of society, as well as being an ethical decision, in which everyone works to build fairer, more equitable and respectful of diversity societies.

Derived from the above, it is explicit the importance of the treatment of inclusion from the initial training of the speech therapist, in order to meet the main shortcomings in the process of educational inclusion of infants and learners with communication and language disorders, which are specified in:

1. To propitiate spaces of socialization for the active participation of learners with communication disorders.
2. To organize the curriculum taking into accounts the characteristics of the learners.
3. Articulate the work of the educational agents that have an impact on the integral development of the student.

In order to achieve efficient results, inclusive speech therapy should harmonize the individual work done on the student with the collective work, starting from the development of actions that promote optimal conditions of communication in all environments in which they live, focusing on its ultimate goal, which is to achieve efficient communicators, for which it must adapt to reality and become a collaborative speech therapy. From this adaptation arises the demand to develop a model of school speech therapy intervention, with a strong pedagogical support, without discarding the need for support in clinical intervention.

A model in which all are considered competent for the development of communication and language, is the basis of this work, which involves asking the speech therapist, help, advice and guidance when necessary, to address difficulties that some students present.

Fulfilling the above makes it possible to act directly on the most serious situation or need and to guide and help the teacher and the family to improve their daily work, with the aim of facilitating the development of oral language and communication linked to the curriculum of the different levels of the educational system.

Throughout the work, the term collaboration is reiterated, which clearly expresses the importance of the articulation of the agents and agencies that have an impact on the development of infants, schoolchildren, students and adults with communication and language disorders, showing how the participation of all is crucial to achieve educational and social inclusion, which translates into personal, social and school improvements, as a consequence of raising the quality of life.

It is necessary for the speech therapist in training to know that intervention and collaboration go hand in hand in an inclusive school, so that attention to language difficulties should be guided by the following principles:

1. Of contextualization: it implies being carried out in environments in which the learners, in a natural way can relate to their peers.
2. Respect for communication: in which opportunities to communicate should be given, respecting the initiative of the learners, giving value to their attempts, encouraging joint activity.
3. Stimulation: part of stimulating oral interaction with peers and adults.
4. Observation: involves encouraging learners with language and communication difficulties to observe the appropriate use of language by some of their classmates.
5. From the curricular approach: it should be considered throughout the curriculum, placing language within the contents taught in the classroom.

Associated with the above, from the undergraduate level, the tendency should be analyzed with the students that the speech therapy intervention should be articulated on the contexts and natural learning processes, initially oriented towards the development of communication through the use of language rather than its rehabilitation and focused on the regular classroom, hence from the functions of the speech therapist, which are contained in the model of the professional, these are raised more explicitly, when approaching it from the inclusive speech therapy care and consist of:

- 1) To work collaboratively with the teacher and the family in the identification and treatment of difficulties in the language development of infants and learners, providing guidance and materials to teachers and support staff.
- 2) Participate in the elaboration of the corresponding Action Plan and Curricular Adaptation.
- 3) Development of activities for the prevention and treatment of communication and language difficulties through counseling to teachers.

Ariza de Valera (2016) proposes a set of competencies to be developed by the teacher for a successful educational inclusion, which the authors consider relevant in the training process of speech therapists and which are assumed in the present work, based on their adequacy, considering the possibility of being part of the contents to be taught and which are summarized in competencies for:

1. Tutoring: helping and energizing learners from the point of view of their educational and social actions, guiding the problems and solutions that should be considered.
2. Communicate: to encourage communication and the development of their competence in all contexts, to listen actively and empathetically.
3. Manage active communicative methodologies that promote the achievement of efficient communicators.
4. To attend to families, establishing a relationship of trust and effectiveness in communication with them.

The study developed generated a direct action in the initial training process of future specialists, from the improvement of the curriculum of the career itself and the implementation of specific contents related to the preparation of the speech therapist in the Educational Inclusion program, an aspect that has been positively valued by the specialists consulted.

Conclusions

The process of educational inclusion is an always current topic, which generates dissimilar research and requires the participation of various agents and agencies with direct impact on its development, among them is the speech therapist, with a particular action in communication and language, which are necessary to facilitate the exchange in various contexts and this, of course, has an adequate impact on learning and interpersonal relationships.

All of the above leads to the recognition of the work to be done from the initial training so that the speech therapist masters the role they have to assume in such an important process.