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Original article

The improvement of the Physical Culture teacher who serves workers with disabilities

La superación del profesor de Cultura Física que atiende a trabajadores con discapacidad

O aprimoramento do professor de Cultura Física que atende trabalhadores com deficiência

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ABSTRACT

Promoting spaces for improvement, for Physical Culture teachers who work in special workshops, constitutes a primary condition for appropriating theoretical-practical knowledge aimed at providing quality service in caring for workers with disabilities. The objective of the article was to diagnose the improvement of Physical Culture teachers who



direct professional gymnastics applied to workers with disabilities who attend special workshops in Havana. A non-experimental cross-sectional descriptive study was carried out that favored the identification of the pedagogical and scientific problems of the study process, based on the application of empirical methods such as document review, survey, interview and observation; this allowed to determine the causes of the phenomenon, for its characterization and prognosis. The research made evident the main difficulties in caring for these workers and the need for specialized improvement to expand and improve the knowledge and skills of this professional.

Keywords: Physical Culture, disability, improvement, workers.

RESUMEN

Fomentar espacios de superación, para los profesores de Cultura Física que laboran en talleres especiales, constituye una condición primordial para apropiarse de conocimientos teórico-prácticos dirigidos a brindar un servicio de calidad, en la atención a los trabajadores con discapacidad. El objetivo del artículo consistió en diagnosticar la superación de los profesores de Cultura Física que dirigen la gimnasia profesional aplicada en trabajadores con discapacidad que asisten a los talleres especiales, en La Habana. Se realizó un estudio descriptivo de corte transversal no experimental que favoreció la identificación de la problemática pedagógica y científica del proceso de estudio, a partir de la aplicación de métodos empíricos como la revisión de documentos, la encuesta, la entrevista y la observación; esto permitió determinar las causas del fenómeno, para su caracterización y pronóstico. La investigación hizo evidente las principales dificultades en la atención a estos trabajadores y la necesidad de una superación especializada para la ampliación y perfeccionamiento de los conocimientos y habilidades de este profesional.

Palabras clave: Cultura Física, discapacidad, superación, trabajadores.



RESUMO

Promover espaços de aperfeiçoamento, para professores de Cultura Física que atuam em oficinas especiais, constitui condição primordial para a apropriação de conhecimentos teórico-práticos voltados à prestação de serviço de qualidade no atendimento ao trabalhador com deficiência. O objetivo do artigo foi diagnosticar o aperfeiçoamento dos professores de Cultura Física que dirigem a ginástica profissional aplicada aos trabalhadores com deficiência que frequentam oficinas especiais em Havana. Foi realizado um estudo descritivo transversal não experimental que favoreceu a identificação dos problemas pedagógicos e científicos do processo de estudo, baseado na aplicação de métodos empíricos como revisão documental, levantamento, entrevista e observação; Isto permitiu determinar as causas do fenômeno, para sua caracterização e prognóstico. A pesquisa evidenciou as principais dificuldades no atendimento a esses trabalhadores e a necessidade de formação especializada para ampliar e aprimorar os conhecimentos e habilidades desse profissional.

Palavras-chave: Cultura Física, deficiência, aperfeiçoamento, trabalhadores.

INTRODUCTION

Professional improvement is of great importance and a constant to follow at all times, since the expansion and improvement of the knowledge and skills appropriated by professionals depends on it, which is why it is addressed by various authors in the scientific literature, including those that stand out Jiménez and Calderón (2017), Bernaza *et al.* (2018), Escalona *et al.* (2021) and Pérez *et al.* (2022).

These authors accentuate the importance of the leading role of the teacher, in reference to the context where they carry out their work, hence the priority of updating and systematically improving knowledge; improvement becomes necessary when it is had the responsibility of working on Applied Professional Gymnastics (GPA in Spanish) with people who have disabilities, in special workshops where to achieve a quality service,



individual needs and sociocultural and ideological aspects must be taken into account, among others.

Professional improvement is considered by Jiménez and Calderón (2017) as:

(...) a process of social construction and reconstruction, where everyone learns with a high degree of autonomy and creativity, with the best experiences in a forum open to dialogue, where they actively participate in interesting and demanding situations of professional pedagogical practice, which favors renewal, the resizing of knowledge, they learn to identify and solve new problems of educational practice. (p.13)

In this article, the definition of professional improvement presented above is assumed by considering the dialogue that is established between the Physical Culture teacher and workers with disabilities in special workshops important because it positively influences participation in the planned activity where both learn to identify and solve problems that may arise.

In general, in the aforementioned conception, professional improvement is specified as a systematic process which purpose is aimed at the appropriation of knowledge, the development of skills, cultural training and enabling better performance, aspects that Bernaza *et al.* (2018) deepen when referring to the main characteristics of professional improvement that constitutes:

(...) a systematic succession of learning activities in a specific historical-cultural context, of social construction and reconstruction of knowledge through activity and communication, where the experience and professional experience of those who participate generally have an important place in the multiple exchanges that occur in it, which must be considered to organize and develop professional improvement as a way of organizing that education throughout life during the working period; as well as other aspects of the postgraduate learning activity. (p.33)



On the other hand, and contextualized to the topic under study, Escalona *et al.* (2021) refer to the necessary professional physical preparation, from the rehabilitative technological procedures that promote health, where the correlation between physical education and professional physical preparation is manifested, which confirms the transition from the general to the particular in the development of comprehensive training.

The aforementioned aspects must be taken into account in the Physical Culture professional who, once graduated, demands systematic attention due to the diversity of modes of action, based on the requirements of the Study Plan "E" that requires the need to conceive a system of continuous training for professionals effectively linked to society and includes three stages: undergraduate training in broad-profile careers, preparation for employment and postgraduate training (Study Plan "E", 2016).

Physical Culture professionals, who attend to the GPA, in the special workshops where workers with disabilities attend, must have a preparation consistent with the needs demanded by the study population.

Disability as a concept emerged in the 20th century, when the principles of medical rehabilitation began to be established. Starting in the 1990s, a movement in favor of inclusive education arose, under the motto *Education for All*. This right is materialized through labor access for people with disabilities, whose purpose is internationally supported by the World Health Organization, when it states that "(...) including people with disabilities generates costs, which are offset by the benefits." that in the long term positively impact individuals and society as a whole" (WHO, 2007, p .13).

This organization defines that "(...) disability is a complex phenomenon that reflects a close and extreme relationship between the characteristics of the human being and the environment in which he or she lives" (WHO. 2011 p.12). In relation to this conception of disability, there are several studies that define it, such as those by Asís (2019), Ayuso *et al.* (2020), Díaz (2021), Hernández (2021), Gómez *et al.* (2021) and González and Mercado (2019) and constituted a support point in the research carried out by the authors of this work.



The aforementioned research has in common: the treatment of people with disabilities from the inclusion process, based on humanitarian actions; socio-labor integration and perspectives of intervention from social and legal work, all defining aspects for the development of the harmonious personality of this type of people.

In this regard, Cuba complies with and applies the agreements of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which highlights the state's concern for equal rights; in them, the need to develop policies aimed at the professional improvement of Physical Culture specialists who serve the GPA is highlighted, to care for this type of people. This work is organized and directed by the National Institute of Sports and Recreation (INDER), which recognizes, for its development, the Labor Gymnastics Program.

Within the modalities of Gymnastics, there is Labor Gymnastics and Applied Professional Gymnastics, which have the purpose of developing physical activities in the working population of enterprises, factories and production and service centers as a compensatory activity. However, in these documents, personalized guidance for the disabled is insufficient, so this proposal defines as a priority a resized analysis of the Physical Culture teacher's improvement process to know and predict a possible transformation, from special workshops.

The recognized importance of physical activity in improving health is based on qualified personnel that dignifies the meaning of incorporation into the productive work life of people with disabilities, which is why the objective of the research is established to diagnose the improvement of Physical Culture teachers who direct applied professional gymnastics, in workers with disabilities who attend special workshops, in Havana.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodological design of the research was based on a descriptive, cross-sectional, non-experimental study which purpose was to carry out a diagnosis of the state of improvement of the 15 Physical Culture teachers of Havana, who belong to the sports complexes of their



municipalities, responsible for directing the GPA and who allowed the identification of the main difficulties in this process (Table 1).

Table 1. - Characteristics of the teachers surveyed and interviewed

Teachers	Sex		Average of	Experience Labor	Teaching category	
	F	M			Graduate	Master
15	11	4	49	22	10	5
100%	73.3	26.6	-	-	66.6	33.3

These teachers represent 100% of the population. Of them, 11 were female for 73.3% and four were male for 26.6 %, 10 graduated for 66.6% and five with the scientific category of Master of Science for 33.3%, with an average age of 49 years and work experience of 22 years.

In the diagnosis of the current state of teachers' improvement, based on the methodological work, it has been considered necessary to rely on two dimensions to verify the preparation they have received both in undergraduate and graduate degrees, the orientations offered by the Labor Gymnastics and GPA programs, as well as the work carried out in practice by teachers.

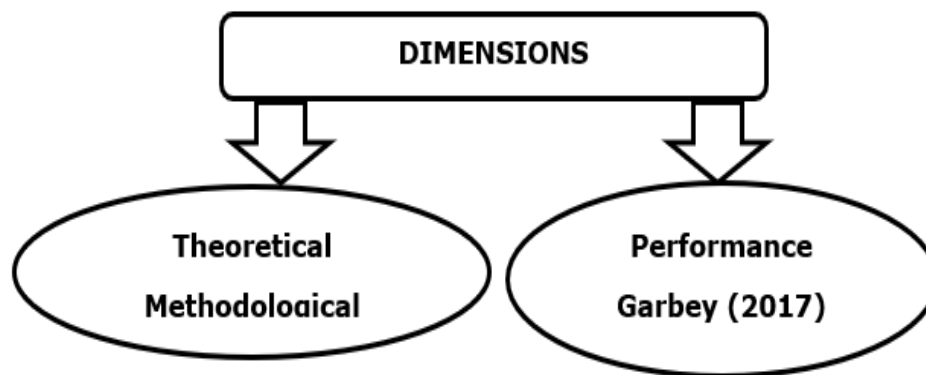


Fig. 1. - Diagnosis dimensions for teachers



In the study, the documentary review was used as empirical methods, which allowed the analysis of the documents that regulate the improvement of GPA teachers, as well as the programs and methodological guidelines, in the same way, observation techniques were used that made it possible to assess the current state of improvement of Physical Culture teachers who attend special workshops in their professional performance; the survey allowed to know the needs and importance of the object studied, and the interview facilitated obtaining information on different personal and organizational aspects of physical and work activity, related to workers with disabilities and managers related to the special workshops (Figure 1).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Document review results

In the Labor Gymnastics Program and the GPA, the objectives are aimed at workers in general, without taking into account the degree and characteristics of disabled workers; furthermore, the methodological guidelines include insufficient provisions for attention to this type of worker.

Among the INDER improvement offers during the period from 2015 to 2019, deficiencies were found in the improvement offers on disability issues and that the methodological preparations are aimed at topics of physical education, sports and recreation without establish links with adapted physical activities, necessary for workers with disabilities, in special workshops.

In the Adapted Physical Education (EFA in Spanish) Subject Program that is included in the "E" Study Plan of the "Manuel Fajardo" University of Physical Culture and Sports Sciences, the interpretation of the concept is specified as a means to developing the GPA in special workshops and methodological preparation for Physical Culture teachers is insufficient in the work plan, in relation to the offer of improvement on issues of workers with disabilities.



The regulatory documents of the Physical Culture teacher verify the control, compliance and quality of the service that the teacher provides to the GPA in the special workshops, in addition to analyzing the objectives, contents, means and procedures of the different activities, assert the need to adapt them, based on the use of methods and means of an inclusive environment. The review of medical records allowed information on the disabled, health status and medication consumption.

Interview results

The interview, as mentioned above, was applied to the group of 22 workers with disabilities, from workshop 611, with the objective of obtaining information about personal aspects, the development of physical activities and work life.

As results, 18 workers considered physical activity in the workshop beneficial, for 81.8 %, and four of them, for 18.1 %, did not consider it beneficial; the arguments were:

- a- They consider it beneficial because they stimulate production and change activities.
- b- They do not consider it beneficial because it delays compliance with production standards.

They thought that they would like to include, in the physical activities they carry out in the workshop in the pre-sports games, seven workers with disabilities who represent 31.8%; six (27.2%) proposed including traditional games; five (22.7%) chose the board game option and four (18.1 %) preferred walking. (Figure 2)



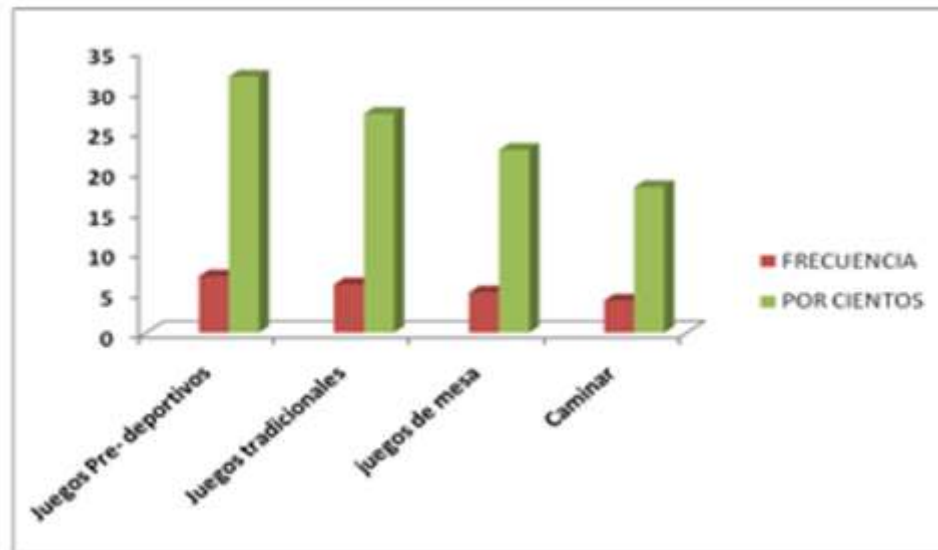


Fig. 2. - Proposal of activities to include

All disabled workers in the workshop use medications, caused by discomfort in the workplace and by the treatment of associated diseases, which affects their health status.

Interview with the administrator of the special workshop 611

The interview was carried out with the purpose of obtaining information on organizational aspects. The carrying out of sports activities was agreed upon with the management of the sports complex and the teacher, starting at ten in the morning and they were carried out efficiently, although sometimes production regulations hindered it.

The main factor for the disabled workers in the workshop was productivity and attention to man was acceptable, although the adaptation of work standards was necessary, in order to guarantee and facilitate the performance of physical exercise.

Results of the survey of Physical Culture teachers who attend the special workshops

The survey of Physical Culture teachers who attend the special workshops aimed to know the development of self-improvement and the needs of Physical Culture teachers.

It was revealed that ten teachers, (66.6%), did not have adequate preparation and knowledge to care for workers with disabilities in special workshops; in two teachers (13.3 %) the



achievement of this indicator was not very adequate and in three teachers (20 %) it was adequate.

In relation to the current GPA program and the indications and methodological guidelines that contain it, 12 teachers (80 %) considered it inadequate and three teachers (20 %) considered it inappropriate, they alleged that physical exercise was used as a means to increase interest in health and participation in Paralympic competitions.

All the teachers expressed that the EFA is necessary to plan the physical activities aimed at workers with disabilities in the special workshops, although the majority of them, 12 (80 %), stated that they had insufficient knowledge of the program; this deficiency was reflected in the planning of the methodological activities and in the orientation of improvement and postgraduate courses.

Considering the time allocated for physical activities in the special workshops, five teachers (33.3 %) considered it adequate, six (40 %) considered it inadequate, and four (26.6%) considered it inadequate; therefore, the need for compensatory exercises that address the work regime and the long hours spent in the same position is evident (Figure 3).

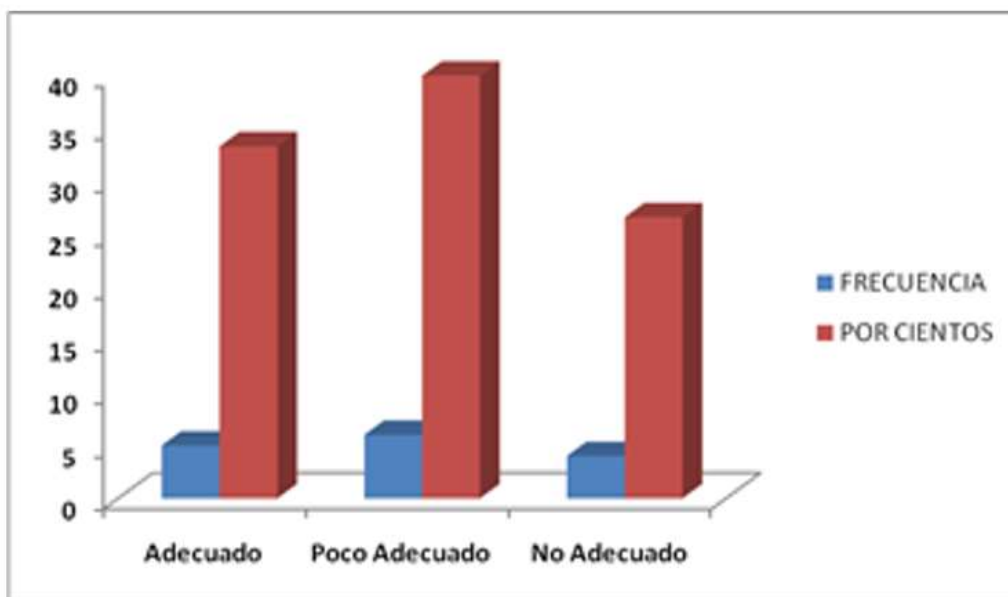


Fig. 3. - Time allocated for GPA in special workshops



Observation results

Five managers who serve the Physical Culture area of the sports complex where workshop 611 is placed, selected for the study, participate in the observations. Of them, three have a master's degree in science and two have a bachelor's degree, with an average age of 50 years and work experience of more than 30 years; to guarantee the results, a preparatory meeting was held to implement the application routine and the same observation guide was used for all those involved. The authors carried out a reciprocal observation to verify the proper care of the tool. Each observer had to inspect three classes to complete a total of 15.

The regularities were aimed at the difficulties in formulating objectives and the insufficient use of teaching aids, according to the characteristics of the observed subjects; to the poor selection of organizational methods and procedures that causes disorganization and poor use of the time assigned for the activity and the work space and to the irregularity in the assigned work time, according to individual and collective characteristics of the workers, these elements affected:

- In motor disability, balance, coordination and body expression exercises are insufficient. It is necessary to insist on the application of assisted mobility exercises to the injured limb, following the instructions.
- In hearing disabilities, the teacher moves while explaining, uses a high tone of voice, insufficient use of media that can serve as codes (objects, cards or signs), the organization of work in formations and obstructs greater visibility.
- In visual disabilities, verbal support is scarce, there is little clarity in guiding the intention of the activity and the teacher's location in the area is poor, and the amount of materials for the development of the activity is insufficient.
- In intellectual disability, there is a lack of understanding of the limitations without considering the capabilities, potentials and participation on an equal basis with their peers.



In general sense, the following difficulties that affect the professional performance of Physical Culture teachers could be observed in the application of the different instruments:

- Insufficient management for the specialized improvement of Physical Culture teachers, in special workshops.
- In the contents of the Labor Gymnastics and GPA programs, there is insufficient differentiated attention to workers with disabilities in special workshops.
- Lack of knowledge to effectively develop care for workers with disabilities, in special workshops.
- Insufficiencies in the preparation of the methodological work plan in sports complexes, which do not objectively identify the needs of Physical Culture teachers who serve workers with disabilities, in special workshops.

The previous arguments show that there is a need for work related to the improvement of Physical Culture teachers that the EFA considers in the contextualization of the contents in the programs established for this activity, where the particularities of the study group are taken into account and contribute to the improvement of professional performance, to care for workers with disabilities in special workshops.

DISCUSSION

It is necessary to address the background studies of Muñoz and Martínez (2022) that outline ideas in favor of rehabilitation and social inclusion and highlight the role of the professional, based on the research process that converts adapted physical activity into a vital tool for the comprehensive development under a human rights approach.

In Cuba, this idea is materialized through the practice of physical activities in workers with disabilities who attend special workshops, where work activity and physical activity are compensated, to improve their state of health, based on what allows them to provide quality



care for these workers and enhance the formation of social values, links with the group, society and the unity between the instructive, educational and developer.

A significant trend today is labor inclusion referred to by Díaz (2021) as an effective way for the incorporation of people with disabilities into society, enrolled in multiple policies, programs and projects that aim to advance towards a more equitable for those who inhabit it. However, in the last decade, social research revealed inequalities due to the disability condition that places them in disadvantaged situations.

The studies consulted on the nature of the article include work with disabled people from the field of health, from therapeutic Physical Culture, through physical exercises for rehabilitation and gyms, only venturing into one aspect of the problem, without taking into account the particularities of disabled workers in their work environment (Núñez, 2020; Saldarraga and Quintero, 2021; Sánchez, *et al.*, 2020; Zeca, *et al.*, 2023).

The authors of the work present the difficulties encountered in the diagnosis made, which main conflict results in the specialized preparation of these Physical Culture professionals for the care of workers with disabilities, in special workshops and remains open as a future line of research, based on of proposals that provide a solution to this problem, to improve the preparation process of said professionals in theoretical and methodological aspects and exercises for their practice, related to working conditions, among others.

CONCLUSIONS

The diagnosis carried out allowed to reveal the methodological and practical insufficiencies in the improvement of Physical Culture teachers, expressed in the insufficient orientation and preparation of these professionals who attend the special workshops, where workers with disabilities work; which allowed the identification of the main difficulties that should generate investigative suggestions, aimed at solving this problem to guarantee the quality of this process.



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The authors declare not to have any interest conflicts.

Authors' contribution:

The authors have participated in the writing of the work and analysis of the documents



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