

El desarrollo de competencias para el trabajo docente en escuelas multigrado

The development of competencies for teaching work in multigrade schools

*O desenvolvimento de competências para o trabalho de ensino em escolas
multigrado*

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Resumen

Algunos estudios relevantes para comprender la diversidad y la diferenciación de las prácticas de enseñanza han sido resultado de investigaciones que van desde el orden psicopedagógico, hasta una perspectiva más sociológica de la práctica docente (Schmelkes, 2004; Ezpeleta y Weiss, 1994). Investigar sobre estrategias diversificadas para la atención de escuelas multigrado en forma sistemática es un planteamiento que urge seguir considerando, especialmente en las escuelas normalistas encargadas de preparar y habilitar para la docencia a sus egresados, de los cuales al menos cinco o seis de cada diez irán a estos contextos escolares. Este trabajo pretende describir algunos aportes teóricos producto del curso optativo que se ha desarrollado durante dos cursos con el alumnado de 6.º y 7.º semestres de la Licenciatura en Educación Primaria del plan de estudios 2012. Dicho curso atiende categorías con relevancia académica que le permiten al alumnado identificar y analizar aspectos sustantivos de cómo abordar la docencia en más de un grado escolar, la planeación con una mirada integradora y las estrategias metodológicas que posibilitan abordar el tema común y las actividades diferenciadas, matizadas con trabajo colaborativo y la ayuda mutua. Esta visión reconoce los esfuerzos que la escuela primaria multigrado ha tenido como un importante servicio, ya que por medio de ella se ofrece educación a un estudiantado muy reducido

que, por lo general, residen en localidades rurales pequeñas, indígenas y aisladas, con altos índices de marginación social y económica.

Palabras clave: competencias, diversidad cultural, escuela multigrado, propuesta integradora, transversalidad.

Abstract

Some relevant studies to understand the diversity and differentiation of teaching practices have been the subject of research ranging from the psychopedagogical order, to a more sociological perspective of teaching practice (Schmelkes, 2004, Ezpeleta, De Weiss, 1994). Investigating the study of diversified strategies for the care of multigrade schools in a systematic way, are some of the approaches that urgently need to be considered, especially in the normal schools in charge of enabling for teaching graduates where at least 5 or 6 out of 10 will go to these school contexts. This paper intends to describe some theoretical contributions of the optional course that has been developed during two courses with the sixth and seventh semesters of the Bachelor in Primary Education of the 2012 curriculum. This course covers categories with academic relevance that allow students identify and analyze substantive aspects of how to approach teaching in more than one grade level, planning with an integrating perspective and the methodological strategies that make it possible to address the common theme and differentiated activities, nuanced with collaborative work and mutual help. This vision recognizes the efforts that the multigrade elementary school has had as an important service, since through it education is offered to a very small student body that, in general, resides in small rural, indigenous and isolated localities; with high rates of social and economic marginalization.

Keywords: competences, cultural diversity, multigrade school, integrative proposal, transversality.

Resumo

Alguns estudos relevantes para compreender a diversidade e a diferenciação das práticas docentes têm sido o resultado de pesquisas que vão desde a ordem psicopedagógica até uma perspectiva mais sociológica da prática docente (Schmelkes, 2004, Ezpeleta e Weiss, 1994). Investigar estratégias diversificadas para o atendimento de escolas multigrades de forma sistemática é uma abordagem que precisa ser urgentemente considerada, especialmente nas escolas normalistas encarregadas de preparar e habilitar seus graduados a ensinar, dos quais pelo menos cinco ou seis em dez irão para esses contextos escolares. Este artigo tem como objetivo descrever algumas contribuições teóricas do curso eletivo que foi desenvolvido durante dois cursos com alunos do 6º e 7º semestres do Bachelor of Primary Education do currículo de 2012. Este curso abrange categorias com relevância acadêmica que eles permitem que os alunos identifiquem e analisem aspectos substantivos de como abordar o ensino em mais de um nível escolar, planejando com uma perspectiva integradora e as estratégias metodológicas que permitem abordar o tema comum e as atividades diferenciadas, matizadas com o trabalho colaborativo e a ajuda mútua. Esta visão reconhece os esforços que a escola primária multigrado teve como um serviço importante, uma vez que oferece educação para um corpo estudantil muito pequeno que, em geral, reside em pequenas localidades rurais, indígenas e isoladas, com taxas elevadas de marginalização social e econômica.

Palavras-chave: competências, diversidade cultural, escola multigrado, proposta integrativa, transversalidade.

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Introduction

The multigrade school, the one in which a teacher teaches two or more grades at the same time, constitutes the predominant educational reality of the primary school in rural areas in many developing countries (Montero, 2001). In Mexico, 44% of all primary schools are of this type, that is, 43 673 primary schools are multigrade school organization, while 11.3% belong to community service, a figure that includes a total of 11 231 schools, according to the Institute National for the Evaluation of Education [INEE] (2013).

Even more, if it is reviewed by type of service, it is observed that the multigrade general primaries represent a high percentage that we must not make invisible, since in the words of Castro (2014) the multigrade general primary schools are estimated that 11.3 percent are unitary ; 12.1 percent, bidocentes; 8.1 percent, tridocentes; and only 0.4 and 0.2 percent are of four and five teachers respectively. On the other hand, in multigrade indigenous elementary schools, 26.2 percent are unitary; 22.1 percent, bidocentes; 14.5 percent, tridocentes; 0.7 and 0.3 percent, with four and five teachers, respectively.

With the above referents it could be said that for every 100 graduates of normal schools in the country, 43 will provide their service in a multi-grade school: 16 of them in general primary schools and 27 in indigenous primary schools.

If broken down by state, on average there are 14 states in the country in which half of the primary schools operate with a multigrade organization. The four entities that operate with the largest number of primaries of this modality are Chiapas with 69.6%, Durango with 63.3%, San Luis Potosí with 60.9% and Zacatecas with 57.4%.

Following the types of service, it is striking that in the states of Durango and Zacatecas half of the general primary schools are multigrade; Chiapas and Tabasco are practically similar with 48% of their general primaries; San Luis Potosí with 47.5%, Veracruz with 46.2% and Sinaloa with 43.1% (INEE, 2013).

According to Héctor Rojas (2014), who recovers outstanding data from the Educational Panorama of Mexico in 2013 and considering INEE's same year reports, it is worth considering two things of utmost importance. The first one is that, due to the changes of the Educational Reform, the State by law must guarantee a quality education. The second is that, given the

conditions in which these educational centers operate, this constitutional mandate is far from being realized.

The rural school is, then, eminently multigrade, similar to what happens in other countries of the region and other parts of the world, where multigrade schools are located in the most remote areas of the territory and serve, mainly, the populations rural, indigenous and poor. It is very likely that the expansion of school coverage of rural primary school reached in the past decade has been sustained by the increase in schools attended by one or two teachers. In spite of its extension, the multigrade school has not deserved the due attention in the educational policy, which has as reference the opposite model, the monograde of the primary school. As in other countries, in Mexico neither teacher training programs nor proposals for curricular development programs have taken this educational reality into account (Rodríguez, 2004). In countries like ours, the multigrade school results from the confluence of a small and dispersed school population, budget constraints and the unavailability of teachers.

The multigrade educational project, an example of empowering an intercultural education for all

It is of fundamental importance to ensure that the actors of the educational process, in particular the faculty and the student body, recognize themselves as part of the educational problem that permeates the professional service of basic education. For this reason, it is worthwhile to recognize the social impact that our country demands in the level of primary education, in particular, which for several decades is not very encouraging. Due to this, it is necessary to point out that while community primary schools and some private schools have been constituted taking advantage of the pedagogical organization of the multigrade model, in the general and indigenous primary schools the application of this model, not considering the fundamental aspects that characterize it, continue to cause multiple shortcomings, as mentioned by Darling-Hammond (2002). Undoubtedly, this is influenced by their own distance and the lack of collegial work to rescue self-learning and promotion of multiculturalism.

Regarding the challenges posed to educational systems, in terms of socioprofessional competences with a certain approach to integration, Roegiers (2010) points out:

[It is necessary] to raise and resolve questions about the link between the development of competencies for teacher work in multigrade schools as a strategy for attention to diversity and their performance in professional service in the rural environment of multigrade schools, in reason for the imperatives related to the application of the acquired to the socio-professional field (p. 45).

That is, not to lose sight of the fact that the students receive an education that satisfies their basic learning needs in the noblest and fullest sense of the term; To receive a quality education where they are directed to learn to learn, to do, to be and to live for and for life according to Delors (1998), it is necessary that this same education is facilitated and prepared to reflect on the practice teacher; know the teaching strategies consistent with the approaches of the subjects of the curriculum and with the forms of work in multigrade groups; Emphasize the knowledge of the management and optimal use of the study programs and of the didactic materials at your disposal; receive clear and precise guidance about issues related to self-learning, teaching, planning and evaluation of the entire process carried out inside and outside the classroom, including its organization and the school context itself.

According to data provided by the same Secretariat of Public Education (SEP), which are supported in the Multi-year Educational Proposal document 2005 and accredited by Ezpeleta, Weiss (1994), in its external evaluation, the general primary schools, multi-grade indigenous and community they find themselves in serious limitations (Ezpeleta, 1997) like the following: of the 200 days of the official calendar, classes are not taught in 50 or more; in many cases and for various reasons, the school day is reduced to three or less hours of work per day; the study programs are not fully met; the high mobility of teachers during a school year interrupts the continuity in teaching methods; teachers face problems to work simultaneously with students of different grades; the waiting time for children to be served by the teacher in multi-grade classrooms makes it necessary to address it as a priority, developing competencies that give them the security to apply diversified instruments and actions to face the reality they will face once they join to the professional teaching service.

Consequently, after having raised a brief diagnosis of the problems surrounding the multi-grade school, it is worth highlighting a series of concepts that will allow attracting a pedagogical proposal from a transversal perspective, which favors the development of teaching competencies with an integrating perspective, without losing sight of the development of teaching strategies.

The central concept, around which this work is articulated, is that of teaching strategies. The literature reviewed, mainly from pedagogy, emphasizes the conscious and intentional nature of the strategy, aimed at a learning objective established by the teacher.

For Montero (2002), techniques and procedures, two concepts usually taken as synonyms of strategies, are differentiated by their rather mechanical nature, since their use is not necessarily linked to a learning purpose by those who use them. They are, or may be, elements subordinate to the strategy that precedes them; in that sense, they will be understood as a guide of actions that must be followed. For this author, they are always conscious and intentional and are aimed at a learning objective. In this sense, the strategy guides actions and precedes the choice of any procedure. Although other authors do not establish this conceptual differentiation regarding procedures, for example, they emphasize the intentional and conscious nature of the strategy.

For Diaz Barriga (2007), teaching strategies are thus defined as procedures or resources used by the teaching agent to promote meaningful learning.

For the present analysis, this conception is fundamental because it places the teacher as an agent who is constantly making decisions about the courses of action to be followed in the multigrade classroom. Strategies are one of the three components of the essential skills to teach (Eggen and Kauchak, 2000), whose combination and adaptation in the classroom context are decisive in the promotion of student learning. Aspects that we will rescue, given that from our perspective they contribute in the development of competences and that they are linked substantively with the nine essential teaching skills that these authors point out. These are the following:

1. The characteristics of the teacher; While they are not skills, they are essential to foster the learning climate and motivation.

2. The teacher's communication has a strong connection with the student's achievements. A clear communication has four elements:

- a. Accurate terminology.
 - b. Transitional signs: verbal affirmations by which an idea is communicated (beginning and end).
 - c. Emphasis: alerts students to important information, focusing the student's attention on it.
 - d. The organization has direct effects on the use of time. Good indicators of the organization are the beginning on time, the materials (p. 42).
3. The alignment of teaching refers to the coherence between the objectives and the learning activities.
4. The focus, which attracts and maintains the attention of the students throughout the learning activity.
5. Feedback consists of information about current behavior that can be used to improve future performance.
6. Monitoring is the process of permanent verification of evidence of progress in learning.
7. The review and closure summarizes, structures and completes the topic discussed in class and establishes a connection and a continuity between the learning, emphasizing the important points.
8. Inquiry, which consists of the frequency of questions, in an equitable manner and propping up to help the production of answers, with a reasonable waiting time.

Based on these references, here are some key aspects that are addressed during the implementation of these courses in the primary education degree, from a pedagogical perspective that we consider allows the student to mobilize this knowledge and develop skills for teaching work in multigrade school under differentiated contexts:

Tabla 1. Planteamiento del curso optativo “La escuela multigrado: una propuesta integradora”

| Competencias | Estrategias para el trabajo docente | Mirada transversal | Temáticas |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Reconozca el contexto social, histórico y educativo del profesado de educación básica en México y la contribución de la escuela multigrado como un espacio que favorece el desarrollo de oportunidades para crear un trabajo centrado en la cooperación, la ayuda mutua y el trabajo autónomo. Identifica metodologías situadas para el aprendizaje significativo, considerando estrategias que favorecen la atención simultánea a diferentes grados de la educación primaria. Construye recursos y materiales educativos que faciliten su labor docente en el contexto del multigrado, en congruencia con la metodología de este, los enfoques de cada asignatura del plan de estudios de la escuela primaria y el contexto escolar multigrado. Diseña y aplica situaciones didácticas significativas de acuerdo con la organización curricular y los enfoques pedagógicos del plan y los programas educativos vigentes en el contexto específico de los grupos multigrado. Realiza un proceso de evaluación auténtica y congruente con la metodología de trabajo en la escuela</p> | <p>El trabajo colaborativo.</p> <p>El trabajo a partir de un tema común.</p> <p>La ayuda mutua.</p> <p>Materiales para el trabajo autónomo.</p> <p>La asamblea.</p> <p>Proyectos</p> <p>Los rincones de trabajo en la escuela multigrado.</p> | <p>Genera la vinculación sustantiva con los cuatro trayectos formativos de la licenciatura en educación primaria, especialmente con planeación educativa, adecuación curricular, ambientes de aprendizaje, evaluación para el aprendizaje, diagnóstico e intervención socioeducativa, atención a la diversidad, prácticas sociales del lenguaje, procesos de alfabetización inicial, estrategias didácticas con propósitos comunicativos, la tecnología informática aplicada a los centros escolares, y de manera precisa con todos y cada uno de los cursos de trayecto</p> | <p>Contextos de la escuela multigrado en los últimos 100 años (análisis de la ruta crítica por la que ha transitado la escuela rural: retos y tensiones).</p> <p>Reconocimiento de los enfoques y metodologías sugeridas en los programas de estudio de la RIEB 2011.</p> <p>Analizar la diversidad metodológica de los programas de educación básica y atender, así como analizar, una mirada periférica y transversal de los temas comunes y de relevancia social.</p> <p>Hacia una planeación didáctica centrada en el aprendizaje de la Escuela Multigrado, incluyendo metodologías diversificadas.</p> |

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|---|--|--------------------------|--|
| multigrado, utiliza la información para mejorar su práctica y elevar el desempeño de sus alumnos. | | de práctica profesional. | |
|---|--|--------------------------|--|

Fuente: Síntesis del curso optativo autorizado para la Licenciatura en Educación Primaria y la Licenciatura Intercultural Bilingüe del plan de estudios 2011 en escuelas normalistas públicas y privadas

The attention to multigrade groups from a curricular space as the optional course, the reason for this analysis, also provides a broader educational vision, supports correlating content, strengthens the personal and group vision in a classroom and directs the student when:

- Use your critical and creative thinking to solve problems and make decisions.
- Apply their knowledge to transform their practices in a responsible manner.
- Learn permanently.
- Learn autonomously, and show initiative to self-regulate and strengthen your personal development.
- Collaborate with others to generate innovative projects with social impact.
- Participates collaboratively in different groups and in different environments.
- Acts with an ethical sense.
- Respects cultural, ethnic, linguistic and gender diversity.

Multiple definitions of competencies have been established, discussed with experts in various seminars, publications and congresses, but all of them have problems due to their reductionism or lack of specificity with other concepts. In the words of Tobón (2006), competencies are complex processes of performance with suitability in a given context, with responsibility.

So to deal with substantive aspects related to the development of competences for the qualification for teaching in multigrade schools of our students, is always a challenge for those who lead these processes. Analyzing transversality from different perspectives as an axis that goes beyond the correlation of subjects, themes or competences in the treatment of this optional course, is a challenge that is usually accompanied by multiple tensions, despite the degree of experience or expertise that possess

Therefore, it is worth noting that some strategies allow students to link some knowledge of the rest of their training paths, approaches and methodologies proposed in the study programs of each subject, although they study them in several undergraduate courses. Here some substantive elements are crowned, so that your gaze does not focus on a single focus or degree. The main idea is to broaden his peripheral vision when dealing with the different topics, especially when we talk about multigrade school.

Methodology

We have already talked about the contextual characteristics of multi-grade schools, but now we will dwell a little on the methodological strategies employed within a multigrade classroom. Therefore, it is important to define what is a methodological strategy, since it is one of the most important terms within this contribution. In the words of Díaz Barriga (2007), who takes up Valle et al. (1999), recognizes that these strategies are executive processes through which the skills are chosen, coordinated and applied. They are linked to meaningful learning and learning to learn.

Because of the pressing nature of today's theoretical contribution, we will address more explicitly the importance of planning by common theme with differentiated activities, as a methodological strategy that favors such competencies in multigrade schools. However, it is worth mentioning that some experiences, such as mutual help, collaborative work, the use of the museum, the timeline and didactic scripts, as self-conducting materials among the students, are just some methodological strategies that also favor the transversality, in which each teacher, from his context, experience, domain or performance, will be able to favor in his schools.

It is essential to be clear about the importance of methodological strategies, since they can serve as a guiding principle in the teaching-learning process of students, so we consider it necessary to mention Díaz Barriga (2007) when he says that "these strategies constitute the sequence of activities planned and organized systematically, allowing the construction of a school knowledge and, in particular, articulating with the communities "(page 8). The methodological strategies employed within each classroom, whether multigrade or not, will depend basically on the particular characteristics of each group in order to achieve the optimal learning of the students.

One of the important characteristics of a multigrade group is heterogeneity. While it is true that in all schools we can find heterogeneous groups, in multigrade schools this becomes more evident, causing the teacher to put into play their abilities to develop a good work dynamic in the classroom, which is supported by the methodological strategy used. It is also important to mention what it is that identifies these strategies, which, according to Díaz Barriga (2007), are responsible for detecting principles, criteria and procedures that shape the teacher's way of acting in relation to programming, implementation and evaluation of the teaching-learning process.

Working by degrees or cycles through the common theme and differentiated activities, implies that the teacher puts different skills into practice from their own planning, since it involves mobilizing curricular knowledge and content management needed to develop a session. The aim is to find a relationship between both degrees in order to address a common theme, but there are differences between the activities that students of different grades must perform:

The task is the elaboration of a curricular organization appropriate to multigrade, which requires a reorganization of the contents proposed in the study programs so that for each subject the common themes or projects are located, from which the teacher develop the planning, from a cross-cutting perspective, without losing sight of their own particularities and remember that it is a process that teachers have been transiting from the empirical to science and in which it is not possible to ignore the theoretical-didactic effort of rural teachers, writers and researchers, who have contributed and made successful experiences in this regard (Castro, 2014, p.7).

This work dynamic helps students from different grades to establish a closer link and possibly a better organization when working:

Organize and plan classes in such a way that shared tasks are promoted in groups or teams of different grades, as well as differentiated activities for the cycle and / or grade. In this way, while collaboration between students is encouraged, their specific needs and interests are addressed, through the constant creation of better opportunities to learn from the results obtained in each of the evaluations presented. during a certain period or product (Castro, 2014, p.8).

One of the benefits of this topic is that of working collaboratively, since in this way the constructivist approach is being put into practice, which draws attention to the natural diversity existing among the students. Constructivism considers this diversity as an opportunity for learning, because students in interaction increase their own understanding.

Conclusions

It is difficult to conclude a topic of this nature, since there are multiple factors to unravel, especially when we refer to the development of competencies for teaching work in multigrade schools.

Next, I will specify some aspects that impact from our perspective in this training of our students, who upon graduation will join the professional teaching service, at least three to five years in a school, attending two or more grades simultaneously.

We must recognize the efforts that the normal schools make on the study of the didactic approaches and the methodological analysis to approach each subject that contemplates the 2011 curriculum, in force for the Degree in Primary Education. However, there is a lack of teaching practices in schools in this rural environment with multigrade organization, where they put in motion certain skills that envision an integrating perspective, which hinders many training processes in the development of competencies that address cultural diversity.

There are efforts to incorporate them to make visits and practices in multigrade schools, however, the students express frustration by not observing appropriate strategies and methodologies, identifying homogenized care as in the ungraded school of the city.

In reference to the implementation of the optional course, the reason for this theoretical contribution, I refer as a substantive contribution two aspects that positively impact the development of competencies for teaching work in multigrade schools as a strategy for attention to diversity from an integrative perspective:

1. The design and analysis of planning by common theme with differentiated activities, where we observed that students develop certain skills to address various issues with a transversal perspective, quickly identifying how these favor autonomy, mutual aid and cooperative work among their students, it addresses the intercultural diversity that underlies each context and the

constant interdependence relationships with peers of different ages, cultural levels, realities and degrees of learning.

2. Know, analyze and apply methodological strategies, such as the scientific dictionary, collaborative work, the use of the museum, the timeline and some self-conducting materials, such as didactic scripts, are just some methodological strategies that favor, in addition to transversality, cooperative work. However, it is recognized that there are others in which each teacher from their context, experience, domain or performance may favor in their schools.

Take into account the diversity that exists in the classroom and reorient it towards the students involved, so that it obtains a better benefit when building their learning, without losing sight of the mutual help among their peers, but at the same time towards a better socialization among the students. group members, allowing closer interaction, compared to a school that is not multigrade organization, sometimes it is more difficult to achieve. For this reason, as Uttech (2001) states, when teachers work on a common theme with all the students in the classroom, a greater deepening of the topic is generated, since students of different degrees contribute their opinions and experiences, collectively build their knowledge and, therefore, learning through social interaction in the multigrade classroom requires a sense of community, recovering the essential components to achieve it. In the words of Bertely (2003), respect for opinions, positive reinforcement and collaborative work are essential aspects for the classroom to become a community space of diversity of opinions and ideas that contribute to a common goal.

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