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## THE PREPARATION IN THE DIRECTION OF LEARNING IN A MULTIGRADE GROUP IN STUDENTS OF THE BACHELOR OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** The objective of the article is to provide a content system structured in a program that modifies the study plan incorporating the subject “Work in multigrades”, which is located in the Own Curriculum of the 3rd year of the Bachelor of Primary Education career, its methodological orientations, as well as actions to be developed in the groups of years, disciplines and subjects for the preparation of teachers. Definitions and principles are systematized, extracted from research by other Cuban authors, themes are grouped according to the characteristics of the teaching practice, which are: multigrade group or unitary school, work variants in a multigrade group, methodological preparation for multigrade, the plan of single class, the control and evaluation of learning in a multigrade group and the direction of learning in a multigrade group is defined.

**Keywords:** Multigrade groups, direction of learning, student in initial training and Primary Education.

## INTRODUCTION

For the preparation of the student of the Bachelor of Primary Education in Cuba for the direction of learning in a multigrade group, it is based on ideas, points of view and pedagogical conceptions of the primary school model and the demands of the third improvement of the national system of education, as well as didactic-methodological elements that, according to the advancement of science and technology, must favor the existence of documents, doctoral theses and master's degrees that constitute appropriate references for the consultations of professors and students.

Aspect that from the bibliographic review and systematization corroborates that the subject has been studied in European countries, such as the Netherlands, Spain, England and Portugal, revealing that even

in the 21st century the preparation that the future teacher receives is aimed at groups pure without taking into account the generalities and specificities of the direction of learning in a multigrade group; In the same way, it is observed in research in Latin America in countries such as Colombia, Chile, the Dominican Republic and Mexico, which have a large number of schools with multi-grade groups and the preparation of the future teacher is also focused on their performance in a pure group.

In Cuba, although the professional model and the guidelines of the national commission of the Primary Education career, for the preparation of the student, do not allude to the multigrade group, however there are several investigations on the direction of the teaching-learning process in this subject, among which Rodríguez J. et al, (2012) Guilarte H.; (2009); Labrada G., (2009); Lawns A., (2009); Lissabeth, J. L., (2009) and Miyares (2009, who have contributed important aspects for the direction of the decent educational process in schools with multigrade groups, their proposals or make up a study material for students in the Bachelor of Primary Education career, specifically about direction of learning in a multigrade group.

In this regard, the contributions of Peña, D. (2013); Martinez, M. (2010); Cruz, E. (2019), who provide examples of how to prepare the unique class plan and exercises to integrate content in a subject, which are compiled and assumed to form a bibliographic material that is a reference for the preparation of the future teacher, also, propose a group of topics that, although they are objective, according to the criteria of the authors of this research, are still not sufficient for the solution of the problem that occurs in the Guantanamo province, Cuba, because it is a territory with more than 75% of its mountainous geographical area and difficult access, in which the highest

percentage of its school groups are multigrade.

The foregoing has made it easier for Guantanamo authors such as Navarro, (2012) to provide examples of guidance systems for practicing teachers on how to plan Spanish Language, Cuban History, Civic Education and Geography classes, leave a set of actions for the complex multigrade, assumed in this research, for constituting appropriate contents for consultation before, during and after the student's preparation for the Bachelor's degree in Primary Education, because it is one of the ways to face the problem.

For a better understanding of the problem, a review of the study plans A, B, C, and D was carried out from 1979 in which the career emerged, until 2017, as well as surveys and interviews with professors of the Bachelor of Education career. Primary, methodologists, zone directors and tutor teachers of 3rd year teaching practice students; with which the existence of insufficiencies in the theoretical-methodological preparation from the groups of careers, years and disciplines was verified, to guide the students in their teaching practice in a multigrade group.

In consequence with the research and the experiences accumulated by the main author of this research, with more than 30 years of experience working in Primary Education, as well as the application of scientific methods, among which interviews, surveys, bibliographic review and the criteria stand out. of specialists, in a population and sample intentionally chosen from (21) professors and (16) methodologists, (11) tutor teachers for a total of (48) subjects, all with more than 10 years of experience in university teaching, has allowed determine the following limitations that are exposed below.

- 1) Theoretical-methodological deficiencies of students of the Primary Education Bachelor's degree during the teaching practice period in a multi-grade

group caused by the inexperience of the group of teachers, as well as the non-existence of a structured and organized content system coherently in a subject program or throughout the career, which guarantees preparation in the direction of learning in multigrade groups.

- 2) The insufficient integration of contents by thematic axes, as well as the inadequate elaboration of guides that guide students to carry out the direction of learning in a multigrade group during the period of teaching practice in the 3rd year of the degree.

- 3) Lack of harmonious integration between the teaching-methodological and scientific-investigative work in the different groups of years, disciplines and subjects, on the common links that allow a professional, logical and coherent output to be given to the contents of the curriculum of the career of degree in elementary education.

The foregoing corroborates the existence of a contradiction between the insufficient theoretical-methodological preparation of the teaching practice students and graduates of the Bachelor's degree in Primary Education to face the direction of learning in a multigrade group and the demands posed by the primary school model, according to the adaptations of the 3rd improvement of the National Education System in Cuba, carried out by the Ministry of Education (MINIED).

It is considered that this assertion is caused by the insufficient contextualization of some didactic and methodological aspects that indicate how to prepare the student for the Bachelor's degree in Primary Education, putting him in a position to direct learning in a multigrade group, and its modeling from practice. teacher, so the objective of this research is to propose a theoretical model of preparation in the direction of learning in a

multigrade group, containing a structured content system in a program introduced in the own curriculum or in the different subjects of the study plan. of the different years of the bachelor's degree in Primary Education.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

The preparation of the student of the Bachelor's degree in Primary Education for their professional pedagogical performance of learning management in a multigrade group, requires a faculty with psychopedagogical, didactic and methodological expertise or the ability to investigate, analyze and adapt to characteristics and demands of the rural and mountain environment with difficult access, a context in which most of the groups are complex multigrade.

An aspect that is considered very important to guide the preparation of the student from a correct planning in year groups, disciplines and subjects, providing the contents, modes of action and work style that allow them to comply with the different ways and variants of work for the management. of learning in a multigrade group, its demands and complexity.

It is thus that, from the application of the initial diagnosis to the different actions of content integration by thematic axes through the application of investigative techniques and methods, it allows revealing the most appropriate methodology to lead students to plan, guide and develop the Actions to address the learning of schoolchildren individually or in groups, for the fulfillment of the objectives of each simultaneously in a single class.

This generality of the direction of learning in a multi-grade group concentrates its specificity in the concrete actions for each type of combination of grades that make up the group, as well as in didactic, theoretical and methodological procedures that support the actions in this type of learning scenario.

pedagogical performance.

For this reason, it is necessary to understand with greater coherence the scientific problem that is faced and that is defined as the initial training of the student of the bachelor's degree in primary education for the direction of learning in a multigrade group, constitutes the set of contents, methods procedures and knowledge, to put them in a position to plan, guide and develop intentional, conscious, systematic and differentiated learning tasks, oriented towards the understanding by schoolchildren of knowledge and curricular knowledge, which are transmitted through the single class, for the achievement of the objectives of each grade simultaneously. Well, according to (Rico, P. 2002, p. 3):

“Learning is the process of appropriation by the child of culture, under conditions of orientation and social interaction, making that culture his own, requires an active, reflective, regulated process, through which he gradually learns about objects, procedures, the ways of acting, the ways of social interaction, of thinking, of the social historical context in which it develops and on whose process its own development will depend”.

The fact that there is learning does not only imply that the information arrives, but that the subject who learns is capable of operating with it, incorporating modes of action to regulate their behavior or understanding of the environment.

Therefore, for the preparation of the student of the degree in Primary Education in the direction of learning in a multi-grade group, it is very useful that they know the characteristics of the rural environment and the different variants of work in a multi-grade group that are already established and who are fully aware in the rural school.

This last aspect, related to the work variants in the multigrade group, is considered by pedagogues and researchers to be the most

important, according to L. S. Vigotski (1982) children develop their learning gradually through social interaction, as well as logical processes of their immersion in a world routine and family life.

Another of the characteristics that must be assumed in the preparation of the student for the Bachelor's degree in Primary Education is to make them understand that there are learning styles that according to Kolb (1984) "are the abilities to learn that stand out above others, consequently of hereditary factors, previous experiences and demands of the current environment".

All of the above provides valuable information to plan the preparation of the student for the Bachelor's degree in Primary Education, putting them in a position to plan coherent actions for the direction of learning in a multigrade group from the moment they interact in a group during the development of the teaching practice in the 3rd year.

In accordance with the above, the development and implementation of a structured content system is revealed in a subject program for the preparation of the student for the Bachelor's degree in Primary Education in the direction of learning in a multigrade group, according to the generalities of this scenario and its specificities found in the different combinations, more than 57, according to the bibliography consulted, as well as the work variants and the use of media such as worksheets, video and educational television in relation to the coherence of objective entities, contents, methods and procedures. According to the requirements of the preparation that this requires, a theoretical model of preparation in the direction of learning in a multi-grade group is proposed for the student of the Bachelor's degree in Primary Education, which is defined as:

"A set of categories, principles, requirements, guiding ideas and criteria

based on pedagogical sciences, which guide a content system, its theoretical-methodological treatment for the direction of learning in a multi-grade group, contextualizing learning theories and systematizing styles of learning of schoolchildren, through the implementation of curricular, extracurricular and investigative actions, to meet the objectives of each grade simultaneously ". (J. Rojas Leguen, 2022, page 9)

The theoretical model in its internal configuration has three nuclei: theoretical, pedagogical, and methodological, which are systemically interrelated to achieve the preparation in the direction of learning in a multigrade group of the student of the degree in Primary Education. In the theoretical model, it integrates the theoretical from its foundations, with the pedagogical and the didactic seen in the curricular contents that are offered, to guarantee its effectiveness from the methodological improvement in the career, the group of year and subject. This model is illustrated in graph 1 on the structure that it assumes.

The foregoing is specified in the application of the three nuclei integrating the theoretical and methodological aspects coherently in the content system that is proposed for the preparation of the 3rd year student of the Bachelor's degree in Primary Education in the direction of learning in a multigrade group, which are set forth below.

1. Definition of multigrade group; their classification into simple or complex, according to their most common combinations. 2 hours/class
2. Elaborate the diagnosis of a multigrade group, as the essential aspects for the direction of learning. 2 hours / class
3. Solve didactic problems for the integration of contents as a teaching activity in simple and complex multigrade groups, determining their intra and



interdisciplinary relationship, examples according to the diagnosis. 4 hours / class

4. Model a unique lesson plan for a multi-grade group according to the combination that make it up, types of group and individual teaching tasks, research work to be carried out by schoolchildren in their environment. 9 a.m. / class

5. Develop teaching activities with examples of different variants of teaching work for the direction of learning in multigrade groups, execution or evaluation of the performance of schoolchildren; treatment for students with special educational needs. 9 a.m. / class

6. Solve exercises and learning management problems through audiovisual media and the use of software in a multigrade group. 6 hours / class

7. Explain the limitations of the methodological work and propose activities to favor the direction of learning of schoolchildren in a multigrade group. 6 hours / class

8. Give examples of the main relationships that are established with the community, institutions and community leaders that favor the direction of schoolchildren's learning in a multigrade group 2 h / class

9. The planning and execution of the evaluation system to control learning in a multigrade group, types of open and closed questions. 2 hours / class

A set of professional skills are conceived, which must be part of the professional competences, that the student of the Bachelor of Primary Education career at the end of each period of his teaching practice must demonstrate in the exercise of completion of studies, with topics of direction of the learning in a multigrade group and are the following.

a). Define what a multigrade group is, classify it into multigrade types by their combinations

b. Base the elaboration of the diagnosis of a multigrade group from the use of logic and diversity, as well as the complexity of the type of multigrade group in question.

c. Demonstrate from methodological didactic problems for the integration of content in teaching activity, of a specific subject their intra and interdisciplinary relationship, according to the diagnosis.

d. Elaborate learning tasks with different work variants for the direction of learning in a multigrade group, the forms of control and evaluation of the performance of schoolchildren

e. Plan and organize their study (individual and collective), in order to achieve productive and inclusive learning using educational research methods.

f. Model exercises and problems of learning direction through audiovisual media in a multigrade group

g. Model a unique lesson plan for a multi-grade group of a specific combination with group and individual learning tasks.

h. Give examples of teaching tasks that demonstrate the type of work variant for the direction of learning in the multigrade group.

The methodological core contains a set of actions aimed at training teachers, if they are not trained it will be difficult to influence positively and quickly in the training process of students of the degree in Primary Education, illustrated in the following scheme prepared by this author.

The previous graph represents the sequence in which the methodological actions of the career are developed on the basis of the integration of the objectives of

the professional model, in the academic year, the disciplines and the ways to integrate them when preparing the student for the career specifically. in the third and fourth year to plan the direction of learning in a multigrade group based on the theoretical foundations received in the different subjects and their planning of teaching practice activities.

This same problem is planned in an instructive methodological class so that all the teachers of the year group have the greatest possible clarity on how to actually fulfill the requirements of the professional model in correspondence with the school model for which the student is trained and the specificities of the multigrade scenario.

In the demonstrative methodological class, it is also based on how in which all these theories and methodologies of planning the direction of learning are fulfilled from a specific subject or content in which a list of bibliographies must finally be left for the teacher's self-preparation. and the student as those that have been used for the construction of these documents that are cited at the end.

In addition, theoretical references are proposed in the preparation of the student of the Bachelor's degree in Primary Education for the direction of learning in a multigrade group, such as the list of bibliography that served to systematize the theoretical references to address the planning of the direction of learning. focused on the experiences and contributions of researchers on the subject, which concludes that everything indicates that it be done in an integral way among all the teachers of the group of years, issuing a peculiar way to adopt in the initial training preparing the student for his performance in a multigrade group.

## RESULTS OBTAINED

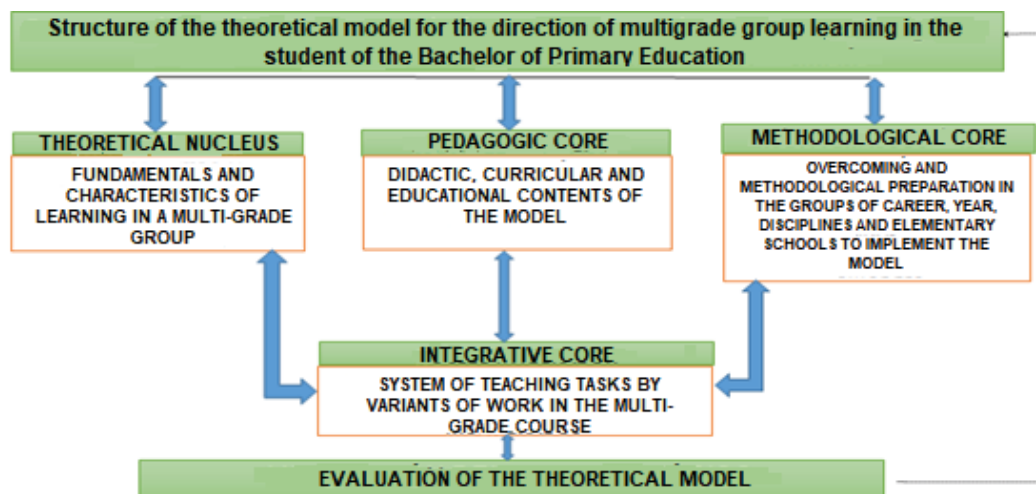
When summarizing the survey applied to the professors of the career regarding the relevance of the theoretical model of student preparation for the direction of learning in a multigrade group

1. Determine the current state of the problem of the initial training of the student of the bachelor's degree in primary education Through interviews and surveys that allowed determining among (21) teachers that (19) considered the content system adequate, representing 90.4 % of the total, as well as 11 (100%) third-year students were surveyed and for 10 (90.09%) it was satisfactory.

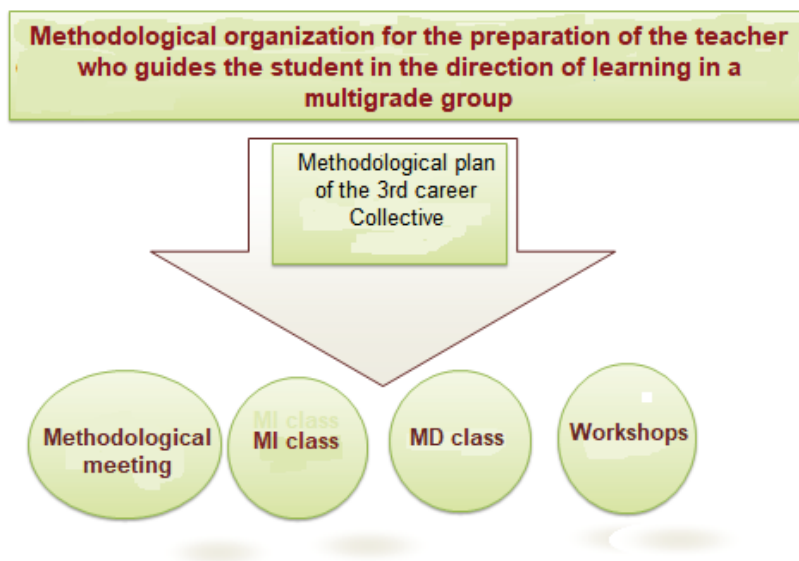
2. The content system that makes up the program was presented to the scientific council and meeting of the career group, where approval was given to apply it in the third year of the Bachelor of Primary Education career as a subject called Multigrade Work, of the Own Curriculum, as a response to the problem of non-existence of a program, constituting an important curricular modification for initial training

3. It was submitted to the criteria of specialists (4 methodologists from the provincial education office in Guantánamo), and (4) considering 100% adequate, as well as (6 municipal education methodologists who consider the content system adequate to impart in initial training which develops the following skills before being graduated.

4. A definition of preparation of the student of the Bachelor's degree in Primary Education for the direction of learning in a multigrade group is provided.



Source: Own elaboration of J. Rojas Leguen, (2022).



Source: Own elaboration of J. Rojas Leguen, 2022.

Positive	Negative	Interesting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They learn how to diagnose a multigrade group including the regularities of the rural environment.</li> <li>• To how the contents are integrated by thematic axes in the subjects.</li> <li>• How to organize teaching hours and classes according to multigrade confinements, according to the work variant used.</li> <li>• The preparation of the teacher in the group of year and discipline to integrate the contents in the guide to guide the teaching practice.</li> <li>• The interdisciplinary work achieved for the presentation of the teaching practice report and its evaluation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The time of the theoretical-practical activity during the teaching of the program must increase because it is necessary to exercise more this form of integration of the contents for the direction of learning in a multigrade group.</li> <li>• Lack of basic and complementary bibliography in plain support to access the literature and methodological guidelines.</li> </ul>	<p>The positive attitude of students and teachers in the integration of the contents in a unique lesson plan in each subject are not forced, but rather, they adjust to the variant of work in a multigrade group.</p> <p>The way in which it is methodologically demonstrated how to do it</p> <p>These contents merit a postgraduate course</p>



5. Greater coherence is appreciated in the actions of the year groups when preparing the teaching practice guides applying the knowledge that the students have acquired once they have received the content system that makes up the program.

This study made it possible to compile information on the development of teaching practice from its planning by teachers in the collective year and disciplines to the evaluation of the summaries and reports presented by the 11 (100%) third-year students in the practice assets. Once this period has concluded, those that are exposed in the following table where the results obtained are offered according to the Positive, Negative, Interesting (PNI) technique.

All of the above validates that the content system improves the preparation of the student for the Bachelor's degree in Primary Education in the direction of learning in a multigrade group.

## CONCLUSIONS

- It is considered that the content system proposed in the theoretical model for the preparation of students in the 3rd year of the Bachelor of Primary Education career in the direction of learning in a multigrade group constitutes an alternative solution, giving an answer to the problem in regarding the theoretical-methodological deficiencies of the students and entities carrying out the teaching practice.
- With the practical implementation of the theoretical model, coherence is achieved between the training that teachers receive in the groups of year, discipline and subject in correspondence with the requirements of the professional model for the completion of studies, as well as that of the primary school model. and the adaptations of the 3rd improvement of the national education system in Cuba.

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