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The quality management in the Special Education career: a path to excellence

La gestión de la calidad en la carrera Educación Especial: una vía para la excelencia

Gestão de qualidade na carreira da Educação Especial: um caminho para a excelência

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ABSTRACT

The scientific-technical development at present and its impact on Cuban society demands from the universities the constant concern to evaluate the quality of their services; for which calls for strategic planning in correspondence with changes

and social demands. The evaluation of the National Accreditation Board granted the category of Certificate to the Special Education career. Este work aims to propose a strategy for obtaining the category of Excellence in Special Education career University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saiz Montes de Oca". Theoretical methods were applied: historical-logical, analysis-synthesis, modeling; Empirical: documentary analysis, the survey, the Ishikawa Diagram, the SWOT Matrix and the interview; as well as statistics related to descriptive statistics. Three sample groups were intentionally selected (95 students, 31 teachers and 14 employers). This allowed the strategic planning of a group of variables to achieve superior quality results in five years (2016-2021). For which it developed the strategy with action in the short, medium and long term involving not only the university but to employers, associations, communities, and the realization of schedules of implementation and the establishment of individual development plans of students and teachers. The continuous improvement of quality allows the evaluation culture to be considered as a long-term sustainable process, whose impact is not the evaluation itself but the system of improvement and sustainable development.

Keywords: accreditation; quality; Special Education career; strategic planning.

RESUMEN

El desarrollo científico-técnico en la actualidad y su impacto en la sociedad cubana exige de las universidades la preocupación constante por evaluar la calidad de sus servicios; lo cual reclama una planificación estratégica en correspondencia con los cambios y las demandas sociales. La evaluación de la

Junta de Acreditación Nacional otorgó la categoría de Certificada a la carrera Educación Especial. Este trabajo tiene como objetivo proponer una estrategia para la obtención de la categoría de Excelencia en la carrera Educación Especial de la Universidad de Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca". Se aplicaron métodos teóricos: histórico-lógico, análisis-síntesis, modelación; empíricos: análisis documental, la encuesta, el Diagrama de Ishikawa, la Matriz DAFO y la entrevista; así como estadísticos relacionados con la estadística descriptiva. Se seleccionaron intencionalmente tres grupos de muestra (95 estudiantes, 31 profesores y 14 empleadores). Lo que permitió realizar la planeación estratégica de un grupo de variables para alcanzar en cinco años (2016-2021) resultados superiores de calidad. Para lo cual se elaboró la estrategia con acciones a corto, mediano y largo plazo que involucran no solo a la universidad sino a empleadores, asociaciones, comunidades, así como, la concreción de cronogramas de realización y el establecimiento de los planes individuales de desarrollo de estudiantes y profesores. La mejora continua de la calidad permite considerar la cultura de evaluación como un proceso sostenible a largo plazo, cuyo impacto no sea la evaluación en sí misma sino el sistema de mejoramiento y desarrollo sostenible.

Palabras clave: acreditación; calidad; carrera Educación Especial; planeación estratégica.

RESUMO

O desenvolvimento científico e técnico atual e seu impacto na sociedade cubana exige que as universidades estejam constantemente preocupadas em avaliar a qualidade de seus serviços; isto exige um planejamento estratégico de acordo com as mudanças e demandas sociais. A

avaliação do Conselho Nacional de Acreditação concedeu a categoria de Certificado para a carreira de Educação Especial. O objetivo deste trabalho é propor uma estratégia para obter a categoria de Excelência na carreira de Educação Especial da Universidade de Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca". Foram aplicados métodos teóricos: histórico-lógico, análise-síntese, modelagem; empíricos: análise documental, o inquérito, o Diagrama de Ishikawa, a Matriz SWOT e a entrevista; bem como estatísticas relacionadas com a estatística descritiva. Três grupos de amostra foram selecionados intencionalmente (95 alunos, 31 professores e 14 empregadores), permitindo o planejamento estratégico de um grupo de variáveis para alcançar resultados de qualidade superior em cinco anos (2016-2021). A estratégia foi desenvolvida com ações de curto, médio e longo prazo envolvendo não só a universidade, mas também empregadores, associações e comunidades, assim como o estabelecimento de cronogramas de implementação e planos de desenvolvimento individual para estudantes e professores. A melhoria contínua da qualidade permite-nos considerar a cultura da avaliação como um processo sustentável a longo prazo, cujo impacto não é a avaliação em si, mas o sistema de melhoria e desenvolvimento sustentável.

Palavras-chave: acreditação; qualidade; Carreira em Educação Especial; planejamento estratégico.

INTRODUCTION

It is an international consensus that receiving quality education is a fundamental right of human beings; at the

same time, being evaluated and informed about the quality of that education also constitutes it. From this analysis, the evaluation can confirm compliance with the law. Theoretical conceptions about quality are transformed according to the historical-social and economic development that humanity acquires, so what in one era, country or area is assumed as quality, in another, may be different or require adjustments.

To ensure the quality of education at the university level and the continuous improvement of careers at this level, accreditation is an effective and voluntary process to which an educational institution is subjected (Martinez, López & Pacheco, 2019). At present, it constitutes a requirement in Higher Education, in which the quality of what is done in a university is evaluated, to seek the excellence that the institution exercises in the professions. So to be able to certify by means of a document that the institution has the necessary powers to perform its task.

With respect to Cuba, in different regions accreditation is assumed differently. Although the approaches and methods vary, so far there is no formal model with international standards and indicators; however, most developed countries apply an internationally recognized quality assurance model (Scheele & Brunner, 2009).

In search of patterns to homogenize this process, some international institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the Council of the European Union, among others, promote the introduction of an international accreditation system. As part of its social function, universities in the accreditation process should assess training in correspondence to the processes therein

are carried out, the you do not need to focus on programs exclusively study, because the curricula are diverse and complex to subject them to a single evaluation model with fixed standards, especially internationally.

From these analyzes some general criteria are suggested as the minimum conditions for tuition, terms of graduation (thesis research laboratory), mentoring of students, preparing appropriate for a job and the minimum duration of the program of study.

The study of the background regarding the accreditation process highlights that sometimes there is a relationship between the results obtained as a certification of the quality of the services and the financing that the university will obtain from the government, as in the case of States United and Australia. Countries such as Japan and others belonging to the European Union make a difference in the prestige generated by the satisfactory results in the process, visibility and impact on the development of the institution (Scheele and Brunner, 2009). For McPherson (2013), in Panama the evaluation of quality through accreditation has found a way to raise the standards of universities that sometimes have not met the minimum requirements for its operation, both in the public sector and in private.

For its part in Cuba, teacher accreditation is a continuous and systematic process of self-evaluation and external evaluation, which is governed by criteria based on the judgment that is issued on an institution, in the light of the proposed objectives, and that guarantees the quality and integrity of the processes of training and improvement of human resources in their teaching scenario (Oramas, Cunill, Márquez and Jordán, 2015). The process of teacher accreditation of a Cuban

institution, as a rule, starts from the self-evaluation that it carries out on the conditions that it meets to develop a teaching program according to the general and specific requirements established for each Career. If the opinion is favorable, the University submits the accreditation request, with all the required documentation, to the National Accreditation Board (MES, 2018).

The accreditation for the Special Education career constitutes an important element of judgment that certifies the quality according to its stated purposes and the criteria established by the respective academic and professional communities. Students are the first beneficiaries, because they would develop generic and specific skills that will guarantee their insertion not only in the labor field, but also in the socio-economic field, they will be prepared to develop citizen, personal and professional activities with the demands of competitiveness that the context of our century demands.

This article of the materialized experience during the process of external evaluation in the course 2016-2018, the application of theoretical methods, empirical and allowed statistical or the preparation of this work is to propose a strategy for obtaining the category of Excellence in the Special Education career of the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca".

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study was carried out in the Special Education career, from the period between 2016 and 2018. The research was philosophically based on the dialectical-materialist conception, from which the methods and techniques of investigation.

In the theoretical level the methods were used: analysis-synthesis and induction-deduction, for the processing of the information, the interpretation of the results and the determination of the structural components of the strategy to obtain the category of Excellence in the career Special education University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saiz Montes de Oca", and also the systemic-structural method to achieve methodological consistency between the components of the proposed outcome.

Methods and techniques of the empirical level were used to verify the reality of the process under investigation; among them are observation, interview, the survey, the documentary analysis, Ishikawa Diagram and Matrix DAFO to I to sample selected.

To carry out this study, three sample groups were intentionally selected.

The first sample group was made up of 95 students representing all academic years and 34 graduates at Special Education Career, 6 of them (17.6 %) work as managers in the provincial special schools and the rest teach students in the special educational needs associated or not with disability.

The second group composed of the 31 professors of the career, 18 of them with higher categories of Professor and Assistant Professor (58 %), 6 with a scientific degree of Doctor on Pedagogical Sciences (19.3 %) and 7 with an academic category of Master (22.5 %). 100 % have professional experience in the area of career awareness with an average of 17.8 years of work in higher education and 16.4 years teaching the same subjects in the race.

The third group consists of 14 employers, who work as directors of special schools in the province of Pinar del Río.

The research was carried out following the ethical principles of respect for people; those involved were informed of the objectives of the research, the characteristics, the meaning of the results and their scientific purposes with respect to their identities.

RESULTS

During the external evaluation process carried out in the Special Education career in the 2016-2017 academic year, the status and development of this in the following variables was established according to what is established by the System of Evaluation and Accreditation of University Careers (Ministry of Higher Education Cuba, 2018), highlighting the following: relevance and social impact, teachers and auxiliary staff, students, infrastructure and curriculum.

Strategic planning deals with the future of current decisions. This means that strategic planning observes the chain of consequences of causes and effects for a time, related to a real or intentional decision that the career coordinator and/or department head will make.

Mission

Raise the quality of the training of a specialized teacher with a broad profile, capable of offering comprehensive educational attention to children, adolescents, youth and adults with special educational needs associated or not with disabilities, with a humanistic, ide political, differentiated, corrective approach - compensatory and preventive, that can successfully face the current and

prospective challenges posed by the development of Special Education in Cuba and in the contemporary world.

View

The Special Education career of the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca" will be more relevant and strengthened, in initial and ongoing training, responding to the challenges of the universities of the 21st century.

Issue

How to raise the quality of initial and ongoing training in the Special Education career to obtain the category of Excellence in 2021?

Objective

To train professionals in Special Education from an integral approach through the implementation of a strategy that is efficient, effective, effective and relevant, which leads to an increase in the quality of the mode of action and the different substantive processes of the Universidad Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca".

Stages of strategic planning

Stage 1

The first stage is to **raise awareness** where everyone involved: teachers, students, employers, associations, communities, among others, develop higher levels of readiness, commitment and responsibility to face the new challenges of re-accreditation in achieving superior quality results. , taking into account the variables evaluated.

Stage 2

This stage is related to the diagnosis of strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats (SWOT matrix) resulting from the prior accreditation process and the application of theoretical, empirical and statistical methods.

Strengths

1. The link of students and teachers in the scientific solution of the problems of the territory, through community projects and in tasks of social impact of the educational practice.
2. Social recognition, high valuation of students, graduates, employers and relatives at the cloister of the career.
3. The integration of the career with associations for people with disabilities that contribute to the professional training process while strengthening the functioning of these associations (ANSOC, ANCI and ACLIFIM).
4. Obtaining provincial CITMA awards to teachers of the cloister and in the National Forum of Pedagogical Sciences to students.
5. Teachers highest qualification and professional experience directing the substantive processes of career and educational groups that guarantees the sustainability of the cloister, with a professional experience Manifest to an average of 17.8 years of work in higher education and 16.4 imparting same subject in the race.
6. Stability in the entrance of students in the career and continuity in professional performance.

Opportunities

1. Use of resources (documentation center, classrooms, furniture, computer laboratories, specialized and educational centers in the territories) that favor the training process.
2. Existence of close links with the teaching units, which guarantee the integral formation of the students and the use of educational spaces.
3. Results of methodological work, professional development and scientific - research work of teachers that guarantee the relevance of the career curriculum.
4. The system of extracurricular activities is harmonized in the department and contributes significantly to the training process. Its impacts are recognized by respondents (community, employers, cloister and students)

Weaknesses

1. The development of English language communication skills (graduation of the E plan with an A2 + level) to meet the requirements of the evaluation of the "Common European Framework of References for Language Learning" (Council of Europe, 2001)
2. S or what 21.4% of students are incorporated into research projects, which is not conducive to sustained growth of the scientific pyramid.
3. Insufficient index of publications in indexed journals of groups 1 and 2 (0.76) and the total of publications is 1.70).
4. There is no own academic program corresponding to the potential of the cloister.

5. Insufficient teacher participation rate in national and international events (1,70).

6. The number of students who take the prize exams is still insufficient.

7. Insufficiencies in the interaction of students with virtual platforms.

Threats

1. The operation of Information Technology and Communications in a way that guarantees the interaction of teachers and students.

2. Development of English language communication skills of students in the career below level A1.

Stage 3

This stage includes the planning of the strategy that has actions in the short, medium and long term, allowing the continuous improvement of the quality in the training of future career professionals.

Short-term actions: they are aimed at the work of teachers, students, employers in a short period, allowing changes in the training process in the career.

These actions include:

- Hold a meeting with teachers, students, managers of the teaching units, presidents of the disabled associations with the purpose of analyzing the structural components of strategic planning, their purposes, characteristics, time, etc., for the development of the work teaching, methodological and research of the career.

- Conduct a t allergy with teachers , where the analysis of the main strengths,

opportunities, weaknesses and threats will be made, which will lead to the establishment of levels of commitment, preparation and competitiveness to face the action with the strategy.

- Analyze from the group of career, discipline and year the actions to be developed in their contribution to the elevation of the quality of the race for each variable.

- Prepare the registry for the assessment and control of the collection of information on the process of carrying out the planned activities.

- Establish a link with different institutions that have reviewed journals.

- Develop methodological activities on high impact publications.

- To agree in the results plan of the professors their participation in national and international events and publications in scientific journals taking into account their teaching and scientific category.

- Disseminate the plan of national and international events.

- Promote the realization of scientific-methodological events that respond to the continuous improvement of Special Education of national and international character.

- Stimulate from the subjects the student scientific work linked to the activities for the creation of computer products.

- Design optional course to deepen the English language in the specialty and incorporation of the technical vocabulary of each discipline and subjects in English.

- Ensure compliance with the actions foreseen in the doctoral training strategy; from the selection of the teachers of the cloister for this process and its concretion in the results plan of these.

Medium-term actions: they are aimed at consolidating the methodological teaching work of teachers, leading to changes in the development of their educational work, both in the academic, labor, research and extension activities that are developed.

It includes:

- Guarantee from the preparation of the subjects the treatment that teachers offer to the identified weaknesses and the evaluation of the results in the different components of the training.

- Carrying out interdisciplinary and interdisciplinary activities that guarantee the fulfillment of the objectives in each academic year and the solution of the problems of pre professional practice.

- Promote the publications of scientific results and experiences derived from research projects, master's thesis and doctorate.

- Present research projects to calls for National and International Programs.

- Link to the students of the Special Education and Computer Engineering careers for the development of computer products for the purpose of the specialty.

- Promote self - management of knowledge according to the needs of the English Language with access to language school Andres Bello and actions of the Language Center of the University of Pinar de Rio.

- Presentation of research designs and integrative exams in English.

Long - term actions: They are aimed at achieving higher levels in the career, which must be manifested through the results of the efficiency indicators of students and teachers as trainers of Special Education professionals.

It includes:

- Enrich the training process in the career according to the objectives of the professional model and the continuous improvement of its quality.

- Raise the level of development of professional pedagogical skills of students in educational care for schoolchildren with special educational needs associated or not with disability.

- Publish three or more articles on average per teacher in indexed journals of groups 1 and 2; as well as its correspondence in the same number of national and international events.

- Evaluate the development of communication skills to reach an A2 + level according to the "Common European Framework of References for Language Learning".

Stage 3

The execution is underway from the 2017-2018 course itself. In this period of time, adjustments have been made to certain actions, other short-term actions have been added, such as training for the writing of scientific articles in high-impact journals, the socialization of partial results in events at different levels and the enrollment of the students with the greatest difficulties in English in particular

courses offered in different places of the province.

Stage 4

The constant evaluation of the actions, the culture of self-evaluation on the knowledge of the standards for each of the indicators constitute basic premises for the achievement of the proposed objective to be evaluated in the 2020-2021 academic year during the re-accreditation process.

From the implementation of this strategic plan, and the planning of theoretical and empirical methods, the following lessons learned can be summarized:

- The process of Accreditation of the careers is a priority of the universities; its relation with the improvement of the quality of the Higher Education constitutes a subject of relevance in the councils and meetings of the different levels.
- The collaborative attitude of the university community is an indispensable condition for raising the culture of constant improvement and the success of the process.
- A systematization of evidence of everything that is done is raised. Work reports are carefully planned and collected through documents, photos, graphic evidence, among others.
- The contributions are increasing when there is participation and commitment by the entire university community (teachers, students, support staff, family members, and community) and employers (associations, teaching units, graduates, beneficiaries: students, families, communities, teachers, managers at different levels).

- The process of conscious self-assessment improves institutional communication, while observing greater knowledge of what is done based on higher standards of excellence, which will drive development.

DISCUSSION

Coinciding with the criteria of Guillén, Almuiñas, Galarza, Alarcón, Loo & Gallegos (2018), the institutional self-assessment for accreditation purposes is recognized as an important element, the possibilities offered by the strategies for quality management in the university field and the possibility to face the current challenges of higher education as it happens in the Higher Education Institutions of Latin America.

The works published on the accreditation process at the University of Pinar del Río at different historical moments are recognized (Meléndez, Páez and Miranda, 2017). All authors agree on the importance of the topic and the need for the management of each career in achieving continuous improvement and its impact on the training process.

It coincides with Meléndez, Páez and Miranda (2017) to the consideration that the accreditation of the race is a way for social recognition and, consequently, people who are or work in these institutions and therefore constitutes a necessity, that guarantee the quality and credibility of the educational process and its results; However, sometimes the dissemination of the results obtained in the evaluation process focuses more on the category achieved and the improvement plan for the achievement of a superior result than on the strengths achieved by the career and the cloister that composes it .

At present the assessment of impact, also has become an intrinsic part of the accreditation

process of the institutions educational and its key figures, which makes it a recurring theme in all instances of analysis. Although, as policy work of the universities, there is clarity on the issue, still insufficient and scattered theoretical positions around the same and studies carried out have, by generally reductionist character (Bravo Fernández and Mainegra, 2017).

To ensure that special education career show higher levels in quality management and continuous improvement of initial and ongoing training of its professionals is necessary to have proper planning strategy that is sustained by the use of a matrix SWOT, elaboration of the short, medium and long term strategy that involves not only the university but also employers, associations, communities, among others; the realization of the completion schedules and the establishment of individual development plans for students and teachers.

The culture of evaluation must be visualized as a long-term sustainable process, whose impact is not the evaluation itself but the system of improvement and sustainable development.

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Conflict of interest:

Authors declare not to have any conflict of interest.

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Authors participated in the writing process of this article and in the analysis of documents.



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