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Olga Álvarez Cruz: A revolution in the context of the Pinar del Río education

Olga Álvarez Cruz: una revolución en el contexto de la educación pinareña

Olga Álvarez Cruz: uma revolução no contexto da educação de Pinar del Río

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The maxim that says "Educate is, above all, a work of infinite love" finds in the Pinar del Río educator Olga Álvarez Cruz the most vivid example of concreteness. This figure, born on September 16, 1937 and died on April 23, 2018, constitutes for his contemporaries the greatest exponent in the field of Special Education and Psycho pedagogy in Pinar del Río.

When the work in Special Education began in this province during the 1980s, Olga was assigned the responsibility of directing the teaching. His actions mark guidelines in the history of education in the territory. During the stage, and under his leadership, the province occupies the place of honor at the national level for the work carried out in Special Education. So meritorious is the work of the professionals in this area in the period that, in 1990, when the Special Olympics was held in Cuba for the first time, Pinar de Río was granted the venue for the event.

The high management capacity that this teacher demonstrates is manifested from the beginning of her work activity. This is evidenced by the fact that, even without being a Special Education graduate, it is determined that she is the one who channels the first steps of this noble and complex branch of the teaching profession in the province. In unison the studies and graduated Bachelor of Pedagogy-Psychology career at the "Rafael María de Mendive Pedagogical School", to the absence of the degree in Defect logy in the form of course for workers.

This work aims to analyze the figure of Olga Álvarez Cruz based on her

performance in the field of educational practice in the province of Pinar del Río.

About her personality

In the memory of the people who shared a stage in their life with Olga, coinciding elements persist that allow a partial approach to her personality. With the image formed from the testimony offered is established, clearly, the presence of integral aspects of their emotional motivational sphere, of prevailing values and of psychological training.

In Olga, what González (2008) calls personally significant social needs are palpably identified. Thus, needs and motives are manifested in it, in a marked way, such as: sense of duty, manifested in the dedication to educational practice to contribute to the development of the personality of students with intellectual disabilities, as well as in the commitment to work that she makes while "any sacrifice was little to achieve favorable results in Special Education" (Salabarría, 2020).

Another obvious need is the duty to work; she encounters satisfaction in his consecration and perseverance to practice with education, as well as in the actions without rest so to pay tribute to the development of the Special Education. It is present equally the fellowship, manifested in their social behavior and relationships of mutual aid established with colleagues, "although she was very demanding in relation to work, she was always aware of the problems of their workers and how to help them" (Hernández, 2020).

In addition, it stand out other needs and motives as political duties assumed; her vocational orientation, evidenced in her performance as an educator and head of Special Education, in her dedication to the work she does and in the high

humanism that characterizes her are interrelated. These behavioral manifestations demonstrate commitment to the educational policy of the Cuban Revolution, and emotional orientation toward the professional role of the teacher, specifically the Special Education and psycho pedagogy.

Perez Bermudez, Acosta and Barrera (2004) conceive to values as content and that are expression of significance acquired by different objects, situations and ideas for a subject. In Olga's case, her disciples agree on the predominant values in her personality. Especially numerous manifestations evoke responsibility, humanism, patriotism, honesty and industry, manifesting the psychological sense that this have for this educator: educational work, people with whom she relates, her nation, the political system represented by the revolutionary government and the truth.

Both in the needs and motives and in the values enunciated, features of the character of this eminent figure of Cuban education are evident. The references of individuals close to Olga reflect the direct allusion to traits such as: altruism, kindness and optimism. It is seen as someone who puts all its resources personalogical available to children, of their learning and their behavior. In unison, she stands out for her great demand towards those who work with her and especially with herself, always in terms of contributing to the educational practice while "she went out of her way to work in education" (Rodríguez, 2020).

Her optimistic view of life is in close connection with the perseverance, which constitutes one of the volitional qualities more transcendent. One of the features to that is often credited is relates to the perseverance and persistence in the work given in the educational context. These qualities, interacting with the needs,

motives, attitudes and traits of character evidence in a high degree, the integrity of the personality of the educator.

The characteristics of interpersonal relationships established, demonstrate the possession of social skills as: empathy, assertiveness and teamwork. She is described as respectful, considerate and personable with the interlocutors. Also, as someone who offers security and trust for interaction and has the "gift of guessing your thinking" (Fabé, 2020). This last criterion shows the ability to understand the position of the interlocutor.

In unison, their effectiveness in resolving conflicts is made visible in their social interaction skills and relates, from the testimony offered, to its high humanism and sense of justice. "When there was a conflict between his subordinates, she tried to understand the arguments of the parties before making a decision. In this sense, she was very careful" (Álvarez, op. Cit.).

A teacher must be creative, depending on the effective performance of his work. In general, the creative process manifests itself in Olga in different aspects that she integrates into her actions as an educator. In this direction, her colleagues characterize her as a person with great creativity. The process of discovery or production of the new, in accordance with social demands, according Mitjás (1995), stands out in the testimony offered on this educator.

The founding of the Psycho pedagogical Laboratory in 1992 constitutes another example of his creativity. This center is conceived to contribute to the solution of several problems of educational practice. Within the lines worked on in the Laboratory, the following stand out: the attention to children with intellectual disabilities and

their families, as well as the identification and stimulation of the potentialities in schoolchildren with high academic performance.

Associated with the laboratory it was born the House of the child, the child and adolescent, with offices in several towns in the province. On the other hand, it is the laboratory the center chosen to implement the pilot test of the "For Life" program. From there, community actions are planned, organized, and implemented aimed at protecting health and caring for the environment in intricate areas of Pinar del Río.

Under his direction, the laboratory reaches interdisciplinary and international dimensions. This is possible because Olga is in favor of the link with professionals from different sciences and performs actions based on establishing such a connection. On the other hand, investigations are carried out with professionals from Germany, Italy, Canada, Colombia, Argentina and Mexico.

This creativity, based on their intelligence, is also manifested in the ability to offer solutions to the difficulties presented during their daily work in the complex reality of the 1990s. Under his direction, workers in the Psycho pedagogic Laboratory take advantage on the opportunities offered in different activities developed by them, in which they made objects and food aimed at raising funds for work in the center.

A characteristic aspect of creativity is the discovery of the new things. In Olga's case, this extends to different areas of educational practice such as individual orientation to the school and orientation to the family. Similarly, this educator is in charge of identifying and stimulating creative manifestations in her colleagues.

Other elements that show her creativity is the dissimilar skills that possess and

she puts in function of the educational work. She masters skills to knit, to draw, to make papier-mâché, to make food and sweets. These results of his creative activity puts them at the service of individuals with whom it relates as children whose families have financial difficulties and their co-workers, with whom she organizes recreational activities in Extra work hours.

Management dimension

Another edge that deserves special attention is the management aspect of Olga. Her Analysis requires the support in elements from theories of leadership in organizations. Her behavior from the administrative role, actions that favor of the effectiveness of the group within the context of work are presented. Thus, based on the criteria of Peiró (2005), it can be affirmed that this educator constitutes an exponent of the dimension of leadership called: initiation of structure, since it assigns specific tasks to the members of her work group, emphasizes the fulfillment of deadlines and expects them to maintain defined standards of performance.

A faithful follower of Vygostky, she applies the concept of the zone of proximal development in professional relationships with her subordinates. She is able to identify the potential of his colleagues and promote the movement of their level of real development to their level of potential development, because its "requirement pulled from your development," says Salabarría (op. Cit.). In this sense, several colleagues today acknowledge appreciation for the results they have achieved in the professional area, since Olga organizes her improvement plans in correspondence with individual needs.

Under his direction, monthly meetings with the directors of special schools are planned and developed. They show the most relevant results achieved in these schools and the respective recognitions

are carried out. During this period, the educational schools reached a high level of productivity and the Marti conception of the link between education and work was put into practice with the children, manifested in the school gardens.

There is a shared criterion that in each visit made by her to an institution the educational process is revolutionized. At the end of their visits, dissimilar transformations are evident in the schools, which contribute to the improvement of the quality in the process that takes place in them. This stems from his conception of the school as a social institution that should be an example for the community in which it is located.

On the other hand, the influence exerted on his subordinates shows a manifest balance between different classifications that are exposed about leadership in the literature. An example of these results, in the first instance, the positive contribution towards the task developed in the Psycho pedagogical Laboratory. Second, constituting a guide for his companions that "dragged people along, he was a leader, an example of dedication, consecration, tenacity, he did not have work hours" (Rodríguez, op.cit.). Therefore, their actions in management positions denote the presence of a leader rather than that of a manager himself.

Performance from the professional functions of the Bachelor of Education. Pedagogy-Psychology

The efficient exercise of the professional role of the Bachelor of Education. Pedagogy-Psychology requires articulating each of its functions (Ravelo, Bonilla, Martell and Toledo, 2019). The references collected coincide that Olga plays fully and articulated the functions: educational orientation, overcoming research, educational psychology

counseling and methodological teaching.

Its guiding activity manifests the mastery of what Collazo and Puentes (1992)

call the preparation process for the individual to effectively carry out the tasks to be fulfilled in each period of their development, providing levels of help for this and to be a participant in their own growth. Correspondingly, his research in the Psycho pedagogical Laboratory is directed, among other directions, to the stimulation of child development in children identified with high academic performance.

The work is done according to validation and creation of psychological instruments, like corresponds to the guiding role of the psychologist. It also coincides with this function, its contribution to the stimulation of work with individual and group differences. In this sense, it is considered a pioneer in the development of actions aimed at diagnosis, its improvement and attention to special educational needs, as well as in the implementation of work by subgroups according to Camargo (2020).

Among the actions developed by the team of the Psycho pedagogic Laboratory there is the stimulation of mental development of children with Down syndrome and link programs are created with the school to help their learning. Another contribution is the design of a program aimed at stimulating mental processes, including working with the family, for whom it organizes workshops and prints materials to prepare them for the education of their children.

The work carried out in the educational context by this educator extends to the role of psycho pedagogical counseling. Consequently, Olga influences the formation of values in her subordinates with attitudes manifested in the visits to the teaching schools that she

directs, in which many times, before starting the visit, she leads the cleaning and organization of the school and the repair- updating of the murals (Vázquez, 2020). In this way, it contributes to the transformation of modes of action in Special Education teachers.

The advisory function is developed, according to the criteria of his contemporaries, in a systematic way. Most used roads are methodological classes, open classes and methodology support where creativity, science and excellence prevail (Sotolongo, 2020). These activities are oriented towards the instructive, educational and development dimensions, an aspect that shows the formative nature of their broad vision. In this sense, "from her work as a methodologist, director, specialist or researcher, the task of guiding, suggesting, discussing and promoting the development of others always prevailed in her " (Camargo, op.cit.).

An example of her work as a psycho pedagogical advisor is the systematic exchanges organized under her direction in the province's behavioral schools. It establishes roles and responsibilities in the members of its work team in order to investigate in certain areas of psycho pedagogy to contribute to the preparation of the teachers under its responsibility.

Another example of his advisory activity is manifested in the beginning of school integration in the 1990s. Under Olga's direction, the laboratory provides advice to the personnel destined to work with the children included. In this direction, programs are developed and workshops are held to train teachers based on the differentiated work with these children and their families.

Olga also stands as a tutor, both the students directed at education as professionals who develop a work on educational

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psychology. The criteria in which this educator offers help in different areas coincide: for the profession, for personal life, for managing with the family. It is considered as a person with a vision such that it allows the union of different edges at the time of offering personal, family, social help, etc.

From the role of tutor, she demands from her students and subordinates the socialization of their research results in different scientific events, both at the provincial and national levels (Hernández, 2020). At the same time, it encourages and requires personnel working with her a high preparation from the literature search and the subsequent preparation of materials (Vázquez, 2020). In this way, it creates its work team, contributes to its continuous preparation and guarantees a trained workforce for the development of the educational task, both in special schools and in the Psycho pedagogical Laboratory.

In fulfilling the teaching-methodological function, it offers examples on how to organize the teaching - learning process in a more appropriate way. It emphasizes the preparation of teachers to carry out the treatments, in correspondence with the individual differences of the students and for the elaboration of the educational strategy of the institution (Salabarría, op.cit.). From this position it is seen how this function is integrated into psycho pedagogical counseling.

The research and improvement function is made visible by a wide scientific activity - research. This teacher directs various investigations, while promoting the application of the results obtained in educational practice. In addition, the multiple recognitions that he obtains constitute sufficient endorsement that reaffirms the fulfillment of this function as his work is awarded by the Cuban Academy of Sciences at the provincial and national level. For that reason he

was awarded the, "October 8" stamp and she was selected National Vanguard on eight occasions during the period covering the years 1990-2005.

The work of the one, who for many people is the greatest exponent of Special Education in Pinar de Rio and the soul of that teaching in the decades of 1980- 1990 requires further deepening and spreading. Such is the dimension achieved in carrying out its work; the professionals of Psychology and Special Education in this province exclusivity of his legacy are fighting today healthily. By thus, this work serve as a humble contribution to give honor to which honor is due.

Aknowlegments

This work was carried out thanks to the testimonies offered through an interview by the teachers:

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Conflict of interest:

Authors declare not to have any conflict of interest.



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