

Training toward the life projects configuration: a psych pedagogical experience using teaching and learning situations

La formación para la configuración de proyectos de vida: una experiencia mediante situaciones de enseñanza-aprendizaje

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ABSTRACT

Specialized support for the development of life projects during university education is an essential need. In addition, specialized psycho-pedagogical attention, besides representing an indicator of quality, should facilitate the development of strategies to support the comprehensive development of the person. The research was carried out within the framework of the Psychology course for future educators in the Biology program at the University of Ciego de Ávila Máximo Gómez Báez. The objective was to explore, through participant observation, a semi-structured interview and a focus group, the psycho-pedagogical attention for the development of life projects in the teaching process. It was based on a mixed approach, consisting of an embedded model (QUAL-quant), composed of a phenomenological design (QUAL) and a descriptive exploratory study (quant). The main results suggest that specialized psycho-pedagogical attention, as a process, allows for the improvement of teaching, as it promotes the integration of other socio-educational agents. Additionally, there was an identified strengthening of attention to the professional model; professional

RESUMEN

El acompañamiento especializado a la configuración de proyectos de vida durante el proceso formativo universitario, constituye una necesidad elemental. Asimismo, la atención psicopedagógica especializada, además de representar un indicador de calidad, debe facilitar el desarrollo de estrategias de ayuda y acompañamiento al desarrollo integral de la persona. Así, la investigación se desarrolló en los marcos de impartición de la asignatura Psicología para los futuros educadores de la carrera Licenciatura Mención Biología en la Universidad de Ciego de Ávila Máximo Gómez Báez. El objetivo fue explorar, a partir de la implementación de la observación participante, una entrevista semiestructurada y un grupo focal, la atención psicopedagógica para la configuración de proyectos de vida en el proceso docente. La misma se sustentó en un enfoque mixto, de modelo incrustado (QUAL-cuan), compuesto por un diseño fenomenológico (QUAL) y un estudio exploratorio descriptivo (cuan). Los principales resultados apuntan a que la atención psicopedagógica especializada, como proceso, permite el

problems, tasks, and functions; the construction of personal identity and the development of desired modes of action.

Keywords: Higher Education, training and teaching, educational guidance, university students

perfeccionamiento de la docencia en tanto favorece la integración de otros agentes socioeducativos. Además, se identificó un fortalecimiento de la atención al modelo de profesional; los problemas, tareas y funciones profesionales; la construcción de la identidad personal y el desarrollo de modos de actuación deseados.

Palabras clave: Educación Superior, enseñanza y formación, orientación, estudiante universitario

Introduction

Criteria of (Ibáñez Martínez and Alonso Larza, 2022) about starting and pursuing university studies indicate that both constitute two extremely complex processes today. Issues related to the massiveness of enrollment, the new models that regulate the roles of students and professors, the complex experiences associated with the demands and new substantive processes, among others, condition the experience of the educational agents involved (Pérez Gamboa, 2022).

The characteristics of Higher Education, the implementation of new models such as blended learning, the multiplicity of vital and formative trajectories that young people produce and reproduce, have increased the difficulty of achieving the necessary educational supports to provide the necessary assistance required (Pérez Egües et al., 2022; Pérez Gamboa, 2022). Since university orientation has been constituted as an element that contributes to the quality of the processes (Ibáñez Martínez and Alonso Larza, 2022), it is fundamental for the social purpose of Higher Education institutions to attend to its realization and contribution to integral formation, both as an institutional process and as an internal or ontological development process (Pérez Gamboa et al., 2022).

This very division, which has been proposed by Pérez Gamboa et al. (2022), implies a new look at training as a general category. First, because it incorporates the *bildung* concept, which, despite its importance, has not been worked with sufficient precision and the approaches are usually made from the humanistic perspective, but without a correct integration to the institutional process (Sjöström et al., 2017; Vollmer, 2021; Zatti & Pagotto-Euzebio, 2021).

Therefore, Higher Education must promote not only the integral development of the professional, for which it organizes all its resources and grounds a curriculum, but it must also promote the development of the person (Ibáñez Martínez & Alonso Larza, 2022; Pérez Gamboa et al., 2022; Pérez Gamboa et al., 2023). That is to say, in addition to composing an extensive network of processes, institutions, educational agents and resources to guarantee an integrally trained professional (in his or her science or discipline), it must also ensure that this network favors development "from within", mediated by the needs of the subjects involved.

Pérez Gamboa et al. (2023), have stated that this vision of integral development of the person implies that human welfare is recognized as the ultimate goal and that this development to be promoted goes beyond the narrow limits of the professional area.

However, it should be clarified that this perspective, although theoretically attractive, is not free of significant risks for the training process, educational guidance as a professional process-practice and the educational agents involved in it.

These threats, although they have been described in a wide spectrum, both theoretically and practically, are conditioned by conceptual aspects that are easy to define but difficult to solve. The first of these has to do with the very conception of what educational guidance is, what its models are and what relationship it has with educational policies and institutional processes (Ormaza-Mejía, 2019; Pérez Gamboa, 2022).

This problem of definition is projected in different ways. Some of them are summarized below based on a review of the arguments put forward by various authors (Garbizo et al., 2021; Pérez Gamboa, 2022; Sánchez Núñez et al., 2019):

- Training goes beyond education in that, in addition to cultural transfer, it promotes the development of the individual and the individual's own awareness of how both processes take place.
- Guidance, as a general category, is a human process and a form of self-help in everyday life, but as a professional helping relationship it is a complex process that requires specialized training.
- Educational guidance, as a process that mediates between training and education, comprises several areas of attention and models, both theoretical and organizational, that guide its implementation, however, there is a movement towards continuous and systematic accompaniment over direct intervention.

The guidance function of the professor (teacher or teacher also appears) should not be confused with the educational guidance process, to which it is theoretically subordinated, but which is much broader and more complex in its disciplinary relationships, scope and resulting processes.

This last problem is perhaps one of the most complex in the Ibero-American Higher Education scenario, since it is associated with categories that have been used to categorize teaching practices, such as tutoring and mentoring, but which in themselves do not capture the complexity of their integration. These processes, more recently conceptualized as integral strategies of help and accompaniment (Pérez Gamboa et al., 2023), point towards a different understanding of tutoring, mentoring (or other processes labeled as contributing to integral development), which is not based on the individual and isolated action of the tutoring teacher, but as part of the educational orientation designed at the level of the institution.

This perspective constitutes an important step to unseat conceptions of tutoring based on academic aspects or a theoretical elevation that "flesh and blood" tutoring teachers cannot achieve, this, because they are not trained for it (Pérez Gamboa, 2022). The same happens with the areas of educational guidance and the professional problems to which it must attend, because under this confusion of categorical hierarchies (educational guidance appears as a subprocess or component of tutoring), teachers are asked to take care of aspects of the integral formation of the person that are beyond the scope of their competences.

A fundamental example and central category in this research is the study and categorical management of the life project as part of the aforementioned processes. Authors such as Ceniz et al. (2020), Garbizo et al. (2021); del Río Marichal and Cuenca Arbella (2019),

defend the idea that the shortcomings of this training, which are expressed in their diagnoses and are associated with the initial training of teachers, reveal two fundamental directions for the resolution of this problem.

The first direction has to do with evaluating university teachers who did not have training (basic or advanced) in the key disciplines for carrying out educational guidance. Since the role of the professional educational counselor has recently become more complex, those teachers who do not have the necessary knowledge in the areas of psychology and pedagogy that converge in the discipline of educational guidance will be diagnosed as deficient in achieving the objectives that are theoretically assigned to them (Pérez Gamboa, 2022).

Therefore, it is assumed that in order to promote the configuration of developmental life projects, rather than joining fundamentally remedial intentions, it is necessary that the construct becomes part of the Pedagogy of Higher Education (Pérez Gamboa et al., 2021). In this way, the teaching process will be conducted according to the professional aspirations of each student.

The second direction has to do with the alternatives proposed to provide a solution to these deficiencies, which are based on training courses, training, programs or other forms of organization of improvement, aimed at incorporating a posteriori these professional competencies that are required of them and for which they were not trained (Pérez Gamboa 2022). From this second direction, two fundamental ones emerge:

- More than training university professors to carry out a process as complex and broad as educational guidance, they should be prepared, preferably from initial training, to be aware of their guidance function.
- It is necessary to integrate the guidance function of the teacher into the services or departments prepared to carry out educational guidance in a professional manner.

Although the teacher/professional educational counselor dichotomy does not appear exclusively in the Cuban context (Pérez Gamboa, 2022; Sánchez Núñez et al., 2019), there is an important tendency to make university professors and educators in training responsible for carrying out educational guidance (Pérez Gamboa, 2022). In the case of the latter, the degree programs accredited under the denomination "Bachelor's Degree in Education", have in their curricula a discipline called "General Pedagogical Training" which is responsible for structuring the preparation of future educators to solve professional problems related to psycho-pedagogical diagnosis, training in values, the use of technological resources and research.

It is precisely in this context that the research whose results are presented here was dedicated to the study of the specialized psycho-pedagogical attention offered to the students of the Bachelor's Degree in Education, major in Biology. From this process, the life project category was approached from a double dimensionality, as an integral configuration and as a category that sustains the performance of the future educator.

This approach made it possible to study the configuration of the students' life project, while preparing them to incorporate the construct as a category of their own in their professional practices. For this purpose, a complex design was implemented with a mixed multimethod approach, of a predominantly qualitative type, based on the execution of teaching-learning situations.

The study was carried out based on the theoretical conceptual framework offered by the Mixed Guidance Figure for the implementation of university educational guidance (Pérez Gamboa et al., 2023). The main interest of this text is to show the importance of the implementation of new schemes and models to ensure adequate educational guidance that contributes, in an integrated manner, to the development of substantive processes. For this purpose, the integrated action of a professional educational guidance counselor, the subject group and the guidance function itself of future educators were pursued.

In addition, the results of the evaluation of the experience are presented to senior professors (full professors), under the design of a focus group. The discussion of the main data obtained should contribute to the development of teaching, the integral attention to the development of the person and, in a general sense, to the training processes themselves, so it is considered that the research may be of interest to educational counselors, university professors, managers, educators in training and university students.

In this way, the present study was carried out, which was developed during the teaching of the subject Psychology, in the future educators of the Bachelor's Degree in Biology at the University of Ciego de Avila Máximo Gómez Báez. Therefore, it was declared as an objective to explore, from the implementation of participant observation, a semi-structured interview and a focus group, the psycho-pedagogical attention for the configuration of life projects in the teaching process.

Materials and Methods

The study was carried out using a multi-method approach, based on a mixed design of the nested or embedded concurrent dominant model (DIAC) type, qualitatively and quantitatively. The recommendations on the rigor of mixed studies were taken into account for this design.

The qualitative route had an interpretative analytical phenomenological design based on a priori selected theoretical categories. This decision was made because pure phenomenological studies usually start from non-theoretically mediated approaches to avoid distortion of the results based on a prior theoretical construction or positioning. The unit of analysis was the psycho-pedagogical attention for the configuration of projects based on the Mixed Guiding Figure.

The quantitative route had an exploratory descriptive design based on the distribution of frequencies. This decision is due to the fact that the conceptual framework provided by the mixed guiding figure is in the process of study and the aim is not to achieve its generalization, but rather the transferability of the results through procedures that allow guaranteeing the reliability of the research.

For this purpose, the triangulation of methods (participant observation, semi-structured interview, focus group), perspectives and sources (the perspectives of students, researchers, tenured professors and previous research results were contrasted) was used.

The study requires the precision of the context and the description of the sample. It was developed during the second term of the 2022 academic year, in students of the Bachelor's degree course majoring Biology of the University of Ciego de Avila Máximo Gómez Báez. Thus, the first stage of the fieldwork was carried out from September to December, while the data processing, triangulation and the focus group with the professors took place from January to April 2023. The complexity of fieldwork in qualitative research, which involves

matching the researcher's purposes and needs with a changing reality, was assumed, hence in this research two samples were designed to meet its objectives.

The first sample was composed of nine students, of an intentional type, which corresponded to the students enrolled in the subject Psychology, belonging to the aforementioned discipline of General Pedagogical Formation.

This sample allowed the study of the implementation of the psycho-pedagogical care process from the perspective of the educators in training and the essential categories of didactics used for the design of learning situations.

The second sample, also intentional, was composed of five professors from the University of Ciego de Avila Máximo Gómez Báez, with whom the didactic design of the learning situations and the results of their implementation were discussed through the design of a focus group. Although it was a second stage of the field work in procedural terms, it was carried out under a similar design, since the same unit of analysis was studied. This exercise made it possible to evaluate the process of psycho-pedagogical attention implemented from the point of view of a multidisciplinary team of psycho-pedagogues, as well as their impressions on its importance for the configuration of life projects.

The conceptual and methodological aspects of the study were based on dimensions and indicators designed to operationalize the fundamental unit of analysis. The research was based on previous proposed conceptualizations in which the mixed guidance figure is conceived as the ideal framework for the integral and integrated realization of educational guidance in the career (as a system).

Results

Due to the logic followed in the study, the results will be presented in sections. In this way we hope to facilitate the description of the main findings. Although pure data are presented and importance is given to the EMIC perspective, it is vital to emphasize that the ETIC approach predominates, a decision taken according to the system of objectives and its methodological framework. The verbalizations will be accompanied, in parentheses, by necessary notes on the context of the communication.

First, the variable is operationalized through its dimensions and indicators as shown in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Dimensions and Indicators of the Multimethod Design

Dimension	Research indicators
Current state of the configuration of the life project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Objectives and action seriation for the satisfaction of needs by spheres. - Conscious elaboration of plans and affective valence. - Real conditions and possibilities of transformation of the environment for the configuration of the life project.

<p>Guidance needs of educators in training and of the students they serve in professional practice.</p>	<p>- Typology of the psychological structure according to the degree of development reached.</p>
<p>Transformations to provide support to psycho-pedagogical care as an integral process.</p>	<p>- Help and accompaniment for the elaboration of conscious goals, evaluation of personal resources and the environment.</p> <p>- Requirements for the organization of the different forms of counseling action (psychological counseling, family counseling, professional counseling).</p> <p>Training of the subject group for the psycho-pedagogical attention to the configuration of the life project.</p> <p>Diagnosis and improvement of the processes that condition the configuration of the life project.</p>

Source: Adapted from Pérez Gamboa et al. (2023).

Table 2. Conceptualizations of the Psycho-pedagogical Care Meta-Model and its Operationalization

Conceptualization	Dimensions	Indicators
Mixed guidance figure	<p>Relationship structure based on guidance roles.</p> <p>Guidance action integrated in the career processes.</p>	<p>Guidance action of the subject and discipline group, career coordination and professional educational guidance counselor.</p> <p>- Use of the teaching process, extra-teaching spaces and pre-professional practice.</p> <p>-Implementation of personalized counseling to pedagogical groups, comprehensive consultation for applicants</p>

<p>Configuration of the developer's life project</p>	<p>Realistic life project aimed at transforming the environment and overcoming barriers. Integrated behavior and adequate to the expected socio-psychological characteristics.</p>	<p>(professors and students) and group accompaniment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation of goals and objectives by spheres of the life project and their relationship with manifest and latent vital needs. - Diagnosis of the concreteness of the life project from the seriation of goals in daily life. - Evaluation of the affective response to the awareness of the current configuration of the life project (both at the psychological level and in activity). - Diagnosis and clarification of latent and manifest needs in the research context.
<p>Psycho-pedagogical attention to the configuration of the developmental life project</p>	<p>Organization and achievements of the process of systemic and systematic assistance and accompaniment aimed at all the educational agents involved.</p>	<p>Assessment of the current state of the teaching process, the methodological preparation for its improvement and the specific forms of guidance action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint elaboration of the processes of needs satisfaction (teachers, educational counselor and students). - Evaluation of the proposal and the possibilities of transferability. .
<p>Programmatic combination of guiding modalities</p>	<p>Integration of the epistemic models that support the research (humanism, constructivism and post-positivism). Integration of the areas of guidance in the execution of integral strategies of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resignification and redesign of tutoring. - Implementation of educational guidance through a service model acting by programs.

assistance and accompaniment.

- Execution of actions for the psycho-pedagogical attention of the life project where the non-professional guidance function of the students is the guide of the activities.

Source: Adapted from Pérez Gamboa et al. (2023, pp. 7-11).

The analysis of the results and the discussion are based on the dimensions and indicators, fundamentally from the EICT perspective. In addition, the design of the preparation of the subject group and the design of the specialized psycho-pedagogical attention are presented.

In a second part, the contributions of the study about the main cores and the results of the methods are specified:

Life project and psycho-pedagogical care, a study with future educators.

The study of the configuration of the students' life project yielded results similar to those of previous research. In terms of definition, the future educators had difficulties in defining what the life project is, both as a psychological category and as a category that is part of their professional object.

E3: "Teacher, it makes no sense (to raise awareness of the life project), I don't ask myself what I want to be tomorrow or what I am going to do, I come and do it, the important thing is to study."

E8: "I am interested in (understanding the construct and incorporating the category), in the end one arrives here without being prepared, I myself entered directly, without taking entrance exams, because I had pre-selected the career, so it would be good for me to think about that future, even if it is a little scary. What I don't understand is what my life project has to do with my work, neither now in the school internships nor later when we graduate."

These difficulties were expressed in the inability to define the concept of life project, to identify its importance for the integral development of the person and for the development of the professional functions and tasks of the educator. Similarly, in the ontological dimension, there were difficulties in identifying medium and long-term life goals, with frequent occurrence of actions associated with the recreational and sentimental-loving cultural spheres, without integration with the professional sphere.

E1: "I don't see it badly, look (speaking to her colleagues), I don't know how to do it myself, my training is military, following orders, it's not that I don't know how to think, but thinking about what I am going to do and how, it seems quite intelligent, ah, it must be difficult to do it... I would appreciate it (with respect to the seriation of actions and goals), because then I would not be always so rushed for everything, you know that I am in construction and that steals a lot of time".

The affective relationship of the students with respect to the career was evaluated as positive and this appeared with a high hierarchy in the discourse. However, the distribution of actions for the fulfillment of the intermediate goals was deficient. Although the students consciously emphasized their interest in university studies, they failed to describe their professional

profile, possible roles and assignments, among other essential aspects in the configuration of professional identity.

In this regard, they expressed confusion, on several occasions, with respect to the objective of their training, claiming that they were being trained as biologists, so that subjects such as psychology were of lesser importance. In spite of the detailed explanation by the professors of the subject group and the activities conducted by the educational counselor regarding the professional tasks of the graduate, this identity conflict generated discomfort and several students even stated that they wanted to be biologists.

E1: "teacher, don't take this the wrong way, what happens is that we want to ask you to lower the demands of the subject a little, it is not that psychology is not important, but we are not going to be psychologists, we are going to be biologists and it is not clear to us why the subject is so complicated".

E6: I understood the explanation you gave, but I like biology, that's why I chose this career, well, because of that and because there was no entrance exam (laughs), that's why the other pedagogical subjects bore me so much".

In general, life projects are not very structured, with a tendency to immobility and presentism. The discourse shows goals that are part of the imaginary associated with what it means to be a university student, but lack motivational tension to constitute real purposes, with a tendency to predominance of apathy and ephemeral enthusiasm.

E5: If you ask me, I am happy and I am really having a good time (in relation to university life), but the demands are very strong, the constant tasks, besides, always many things at the same time, the career, the FEU, the university, it is very difficult to concentrate on everything.

With regards to the main orientation needs, a clear distinction was made between manifest and latent needs. As previously reported, there were severe difficulties for the analysis of the professional model, the structure of the formative process and the future of future educators in the professional sphere; however, and despite the use of inducers, this system of needs associated with the vocational-professional did not manifestly appear.

The manifest needs were directed fundamentally to aspects of the adolescence-youth transition stage, family and personal situations that required individual orientation, as well as others related to topics that the students considered to be specific to the subject and were not addressed. In general, no reference was made to needs diagnosed jointly with the group, such as the improvement of learning styles, the improvement of interpersonal relationships and group functioning, attention to identity development in the professional sphere, and other similar issues.

Nor was a clear awareness of the structure of the formative process and its implications for the life project identified. In this dimension, an insufficient integration of the services provided by the psycho-pedagogical office of the institution to the operation of the career was evaluated. Tutoring was found to be limited to teaching and research aspects, but not as a process that contributes to the integral development of the person from an intentional design.

The external transformation was evaluated as necessary for the configuration of life projects that tend to point towards development. Even so, the prevailing conditions during the application of the study limited the scope of the proposals. For this purpose, a methodological

plan was designed for the preparation of the subject group and the conduction of the psycho-pedagogical attention for the configuration of life projects.

The improvement of the psycho-pedagogical attention to the configuration of the life project: the methodological work for its improvement

This study was directed to the preparation for the adequate realization of the teacher's guiding function as part of the teaching-learning process of Psychology in the formation of the Bachelor in Education in Biology. Its main objective was aimed at modeling the teaching-learning process in its link with the professional function of educational guidance of future educators.

The main interest of this modeling was to prepare the teachers of the subject group to help and accompany the future educators in the conscious configuration of their life projects. Within this framework, the aim was to make them aware of the needs expressed and to incorporate the life project category into the students' identity development in relation to the other technical elements of the subject (content system, skills and values).

Consequently, an important dimension to incorporate was the self-referentiality of the students and, therefore, the preparation of the teachers to promote it. This decision was aimed at ensuring that their ability to guide as peers in the framework of processes such as tutoring and mentoring would serve as a basis for the conscious construction of their guiding function. For this process, the learning situations were designed in two main directions:

- Highlight the characteristics of practice, its importance in professional practice and the contribution of each organizational form to training.
- To encourage students to consciously analyze the objectives of each space, the methods used by the subject group and their relationship with the content system, so that experiential learning and metacognition must be traversed in each planned activity.

The methodological procedure was organized in the following phases:

Design of the teaching and learning situations: it was dedicated to the clear presentation of the objectives and their relationship with the professional function educational orientation, as well as of the relationship between learning as a support of the preparation for the professional function and self-referentiality as a support of the integral formation.

Critical discussion of the design: it was devoted to the collective analysis of the teaching-learning situations, the determination of the professional problems worked in the situations and the analysis of the professional problem-professional function relationship educational guidance. In addition, requirements for its implementation and the coordination of the subject group with the educational agents involved were evaluated.

Implementation of the teaching and learning situations designed: the components of the teaching-learning process were selected and operationalized, and the relationship between the educational guidance function and the students' performance was established. In addition, feedback was designed for the assessment of the answers offered to the learning situations and general assessment of the procedure for its systematization.

The design concluded with the elaboration of the learning situations, which are presented as follows

Learning situation 1.

The teachers' staff from "José Martí" pre-university is concerned about the complex situation that group 3, corresponding to the eleventh grade, is going through. This is due to the fact that a new student recently joined the group, who identifies with the female gender although his biological sex is male. Although part of the student body has accepted the new student without difficulty, another part refuses to relate to him and there have been situations of bullying in the school context.

The scenario has been aggravated by the faculty's own inadequacies in dealing with the situation in an educational manner, who recognizeS that they have difficulties in including the particularities of the case in their professional performance. The proposed solution is that the subject Biology should address the differences between biological sex and gender, as well as their socio-psychological implications for the teaching-learning process. In addition, it is requested that the psychopedagogue of the institution joins the proposal.

Evaluate the potential and limitations of the educational agents involved and the possible causes of the situation. For this purpose, the following indicators should be taken into account.

- a) State of the preparation of the management and the teaching staff for the attention to problems related to new gender identities.
 - Potentialities and limitations of this school group and the possible causes of the situation presented.
 - Guidance needs of the student for the accompaniment to the configuration of her life project in relation to the real conditions of existence.
- b) Design an activity with the group of students for the treatment of the problem where individual and collective attention to diversity is required, based on the integral diagnosis of the group and the students.
- c) The proposed solution must contain the following elements:
 - Tasks that compose the professional function: educational guidance.
 - Professional problems to be solved as part of the exercise of the profession.
 - Presentation of the didactic, sociological, pedagogical and psychological foundations of the design presented.
 - Strategy to ensure the integrity of the performance of the educational agents involved (including the student group).

Learning situation 2.

José Martí pre-university, as part of its strategy to strengthen the preparation for entrance to Higher Education, professional vocational orientation and its link with pedagogical careers, has formed a group of students who wish to study "Biology". However, this decision has generated two fundamental problems. The first problem has to do with the incorporation of students who are not sure they want to study the Bachelor's Degree in Education in Biology, but took advantage of the opportunity to avoid taking the entrance examinations to Higher Education.

The second problem was diagnosed by the Biology subject group and is due to an inadequate representation of the Bachelor's Degree in Education in Biology, its professional profile, functions and tasks. This is due to the fact that students affirm that in the future they will be biologists and describe professional scenarios that do not correspond to the current design of the curriculum, according to the aforementioned elements.

- a) Evaluate the potential and limitations of the educational agents involved and the possible causes of the situation. To this end, the following indicators should be taken into account.
 - Process of professional vocational orientation and link with the institution of Higher Education that is in charge of the pedagogical formation and specifically the career of Bachelor in Education in Biology.
 - Potentialities and limitations of this school group and their implications in the configuration of life projects.
 - Group-school-family-community link in the selection of the continuity of studies.
- b) Design an activity with the group of students where the fulfillment of the tasks that compose the professional function of educational guidance is evidenced, based on the integral diagnosis of the group and the students.
- c) The solution proposal must contain the following elements:
 - Professional problems to be solved as part of the exercise of the profession.
 - Presentation of the didactic, sociological, pedagogical and psychological foundations of the design presented.

The results achieved through the application of the learning situations were positive. All the students ($n = 9$) were able to define the life project as a psychological structure, although 2 (22%) had difficulties in understanding the concept of a developmental life project. In these cases, the difficulty was related to the external transformation, since these students did not achieve an adequate understanding of the relationship between internal and external factors.

However, 100% ($n = 9$) stated that they had improved their ability to plan, serialize actions and what was consensually referred to as "thinking ahead". This result, although positive, suggested that skills or performance in one sphere of life should not be extrapolated mechanically to another, as only 2 students (22%) agreed that this improvement could have a significant impact on life outside the professional sphere. In no case did it appear that these procedures were consciously applied voluntarily to transform the configuration of their life projects.

Regarding the content of the learning situations, the students revealed the difficulties experienced in their performance. In case 1 due to the complexities of comprehensively addressing educational inclusion and the impact of iatrogenies in the students' lives.

This result, which can be partly explained by the outdated curriculum, also pointed to severe deficiencies in the way the training process is planned and conducted.

The most notable ones are based on a growing gap between the socio-professional context, its demands and requirements, and the content (as a didactic category) and design of the substantive processes. The fact that the new gender identities, educational policies and inclusive experiences are not part of the subject design, support concerns discussed in the framework of the mixed guiding figure, such as the need to promote research and extension

processes more closely linked in design and execution to the real practices and needs of the contexts.

Similarly, aggravated deficiencies were identified with respect to collaborative work; the inclusion of others in the design of actions and their execution; epistemic and implementation models of educational guidance that prioritize democratic decision-making and the distribution of leadership, as well as the social participation of various educational agents. These shortcomings reinforced the representation assumed in the theoretical and conceptual methodological framework, manifested in the categories selected a priori, on the necessary distinction between educational guidance and the guidance function of teachers.

In the second case, this was due to the confrontation with the initial state of their representation of the career, in which the professional profile, its tasks and future professional functions were not fully clarified. These inadequacies can be detected as part of the design of the adaptation of the students, as well as the pedagogical, institutional and specialized support offered by various services of the university. Since the professional profile is presented in a single activity and does not constitute a traversal, it is difficult for it to function as a guide for the identity configuration.

100% (n = 9) of the students expressed difficulties in understanding how to become the professionals that this profile demands, as well as 100% stated that they could not find ways to integrate this image of professional with the current representation of themselves. These results call attention to a complex problem in the configuration of the life project, since its basis, the unity between identity (personal and professional) and the demands and possibilities of the external context, is fractured.

It is vital to understand that it is not enough to "didactically" prepare students, but that they must be given opportunities to construct meanings that support this emerging identity. In this regard, both in the exploration of the current state of the configuration of the life project and its psycho-pedagogical attention and in the application of the learning situations, an insufficient professional vocational orientation was evaluated. Through the representations, experiences and narratives of the students, this process showed weaknesses in preparing students to enter Higher Education based on an adequate balance between real possibilities and demands.

In terms of learning, 89% of the students (n = 8) were able to incorporate the categories OF educational guidance, guidance function and psycho-pedagogical care. Only one student had difficulty, which was related to the overlap induced by the normative documents. However, this student achieved the best performance in the design of an activity for psycho-pedagogical attention to the configuration of life projects through the Mixed Guidance Figure.

The main limitation of the design, in terms of expected results, was the poor development of peer tutoring and mentoring processes. These were preconceived as ideal for the development of the non-professional guidance function of the student body, however, the experience did not have a clear background in the career and its subjects, so the necessary coordination, the preparation of professors and students for the design of a Tutorial Action Plan and the determination of the necessary time fund were difficult.

Regarding the evaluation of the full professors, they appreciated the proposal as positive, although they pointed out that its design was extensive and that the complexity of the theoretical support and the triangulation of the presented empirical results could make it difficult to be understood by novice professors and teaching categories such as instructors

and assistants, who are commonly part of the groups of this subject. Nevertheless, they stressed the importance of the exposed problematic and its actuality in the context of Higher Education.

In this regard, insufficient efforts were made to establish a solid line for the study of life projects from a psycho-pedagogical perspective, as well as the integration of this line into the functioning of the psycho-pedagogical office. This was considered the most appropriate structure to bring together the alternatives to be designed and the vast experience of its members was pointed out. However, no mention was made in the discourse (100 %, n = 5) of university educational guidance models or of the need to overcome the theoretical and methodological overlaps generated by the confusion between educational guidance and pedagogical guidance.

In the judgments of the tenured professors, categorical overlapping was not considered a serious problem. The notion of educational guidance persists as a particular form of teaching action, which would express a particular form of assistance. This notion is reproduced on the basis of arguments related to normativity and on the basis of limited agency. Contradictorily, even though in the specialized literature and in the supports identified by them as complex, life project orientation appears as an important objective, the teachers recognized in them and in teachers of lower categories the difficulty to achieve this performance in an intentionally designed way.

Likewise, difficulties were noted in the understanding of the proposal with regard to the transformation of the external context as a requirement to promote developmental life projects. Although in the proposal this transformation is marked by the implementation of changes and the flexibilization of the curriculum, the substantive processes and even the distribution of time funds, the participating teachers insisted on the internal, psychological changes and the necessary interventions to achieve them.

Another aspect that was difficult to understand was the non-professional guidance role of the student body. A slight resistance to this position was assessed, since it implies the acceptance of an extremely complex idea for the older generations, referring to the fact that in certain situations or processes, university students may be the best prepared subjects. The complexity inferred from this notion is based on the fact of considering this preparation outside academic aspects, since it could be identified as related to communicative aspects (codes, channels, affective polarity), use of technologies and worldview differences (social representations, values, needs).

In this regard, the debate was led to the importance of autonomous development, flattened educational communication and the importance of the students' experiences for the regulation of the teacher's performance, which favored the course of the focus group. In spite of this, when inducements were offered to integrate these assessments to the psycho-pedagogical attention of the life project, the result was unsatisfactory and the same resistances emerged.

In general, the experience was evaluated as positive and its systematization and incorporation into the career's acquis was considered adequate. However, it should be noted that the content of the learning situations was not properly analyzed, a limitation of this study, since case 1 represents a set of problems inherent to the practice of the profession in the current context, while case 2 refers to a problem specific to the career.

Discussion

The exploratory process around the thematic for the verification of the problem in practice, required assuming the assumptions of Hernández Sampieri and Mendoza Torres (2018), Harrison et al. (2020), MacLeod (2019), Yin (2016), Pérez Gamboa et al. (2023) and Taylor et al. (2016).

The main results achieved suggest the need to reconceptualize the guidance role of teachers and to make new positions, approaches and models visible, which coincides with results of previous studies (Pérez Gamboa, 2022; del Río Marichal and Cuenca Arbella, 2019). The importance of conceptualizing the difference between training, education and guidance was also appreciated as a necessity, since both in the practice of teachers and students, overlaps and attribution of functions without a broad basis were appreciated. It is necessary to recognize that this is largely due to a considerable gap between the documents that regulate the university training process and the concrete practice in which the processes are developed (Pérez Gamboa, 2022).

When analyzing the functions of the future graduate, number two is called educational orientation and is composed of eight tasks. These include elements that do correspond to the conception of educational guidance as a specialized scientific-professional discipline, but also include elements related to the guidance function and didactic-pedagogical guidance.

In the first case, they are related to attention to diversity, attention to life projects and, to a lesser extent, two particular forms or areas of guidance, for sexual and reproductive health, as well as the implementation of vocational strategies. In the second case, the professional tasks arising from this function refer to aspects proper to the role of professional educator, such as the promotion of learning; the improvement of educational communication and links with other educational agents; the strengthening of comprehensive general culture and the appropriate use of regulatory documents, with emphasis on the student record.

These analyses reveal the overlap that exists between pedagogical and didactic guidance as an act of providing guiding bases or non-specialized help (either remedial or with developmental pretensions) and educational orientation as a professionalized and complex activity that includes multiple models and modalities. These results coincide with those identified by Pérez Gamboa (2022) and Pérez Gamboa et al. (2023), however, these authors conducted their studies in careers outside the faculties of education or pedagogy, as it is commonly known in the Cuban context.

The main difference studied by the authors of this article refers to the fact that the theoretical bodies that converge in the curriculum of the education careers reinforce the overlapping, since having some content elements, not intentionally or organized, of the knowledge system of the professional educational guidance counselor profile, may transmit the conception that, in effect, an educator can be trained to occupy such a role, which is questionable. Contradictorily, when reviewing the syllabus of the subject, the analysis showed that its contents cover general topics of an introductory nature; the discipline of educational guidance or the category of life project are not addressed in depth.

In the first case, the national program of the General Pedagogical Training discipline mentions guidance as a helping relationship and the types of guidance. This is far from the contents identified by Pérez Gamboa (2022), del Río Marichal and Cuenca Arbella (2019),

since, although both studies are based on different conceptions of guidance and attention to life projects, they refer prominently to the complexity of exercising guidance professionally.

In the second case, the problem becomes more complex, since it is a priori acceptable and convenient that educators can participate in even guiding, when pertinent, the psycho-pedagogical attention to the configuration of life projects. However, in the national program of the discipline it only appears as individual life projects, while in the program of the subject it does not appear.

In this sense, it is necessary to emphasize that the diagnoses made in studies on the life project commonly point out the difficulties that affect teachers (in their different roles) to use the category. According to Pérez Gamboa et al. (2021, 2023), this is expressed in two essential aspects. The first has to do with the processes from which this attention will be provided (e.g., tutoring, mentoring, research, psychological counseling in educational contexts). The second has to do with the categorical management of the life project construct itself, which implies not only incorporating complex knowledge (as identified in this study), but also requires performances that go beyond the possibilities of a single role.

In this study, this was appreciated both in the design of the subject's program and in the focus group. To this should be added the differences between educational contexts, the stages of psychic development, the epistemic models that support such attention and other elements that, in short, seem to show that this aspiration, which is included in educational policies and academic programs, requires a scaffolding and a preparation that far exceeds what can be achieved from a subject if it is only a point in the syllabus.

As already mentioned, this difficulty is not typically a problem exclusive to the Cuban context. In the case of Sánchez Núñez et al. (2019), they recognize the problem, but suggest that they should be specialists at least in a first stage, while preparing teachers to meet guidance needs from tutoring. These authors argue that the clinical medical model should be overcome (Sánchez Núñez et al., 2019), however, this should not imply elimination, but rather not dependence.

Likewise, the results of this study suggest the importance of incorporating, in an organized and intentionally designed manner, other processes and educational agents that allow the transformation of external factors that may deteriorate the configuration of the life project. This, in turn, coincides with the results achieved by Pérez Gamboa et al. (2023).

The triangulation carried out suggests that teaching constitutes a vital process for psycho-pedagogical care for the configuration of life projects, while allowing the basic learning to operate with the category. Likewise, research and outreach favor this intention, as they allow enhancing knowledge and skills to establish helping relationships (professional and non-professional), strengthen metacognition, achieve transformations in the environment and the construction of social and academic networks, always in relation to professional practice and future professional and daily scenarios.

However, a look at the conceptual and methodological foundations reaffirms the importance of broadening the approach, reviewing conceptions and acting aspirations, as well as reviewing thegnoseological bases themselves behind the attention, specialized or not, to the configuration of life projects. Elements such as the concept of life project, the socio-psychological diagnosis necessary to understand its configuration (internal and external) in the stage of human development and generational cohort, the relationships between

objectives and goals (within and between vital spheres), the processes for its study and transformation, are some of the most pressing (Pérez Gamboa et al, 2021).

The main limitations of the study were evaluated by the authors of this article in three sections. In the methodological section, these were due to the small samples, the specificity of the proposal in terms of a specific career and the need to go deeper into the EMIC dimension. In the theoretical section, the study showed the need to systematize in depth the concepts explored, mainly tutoring, mentoring, guidance function and methodological work.

Finally, limitations in practice were assessed, mainly related to the improvement of the actions of the mixed guidance counselor and its stability, the use of the Moodle platform and other virtual teaching-learning environments. In addition, through research and outreach, it is necessary to better link the blended guidance counselor figure to professional practice in schools, so that its agents can have first-hand knowledge of the processes that take place there.

In a general sense, it is necessary to continue deepening the experiences aimed at the study and transformation of the configuration of the life project. This social responsibility, due to the complexity of the system of knowledge and professional competencies required, should not be handed over uncritically to a single professional role, but should be designed as a process involving multiple educational agents and their agencies.

The life project, as a complex configuration, is far from the potentialities identified in the psycho-pedagogical care process, since it is considered with tendencies to internal conflict, lack of sufficient motivational tensions and a scarce external support for its realization. In this sense, it is necessary to prepare professional educational counselors, as well as teachers and other agents related to the career, to adequately manage the category and not to make it a fashionable term. Likewise, it is a vital task to prepare students to help others, to provide their own learning as a basis for the development of peers and adults with whom they relate. Therefore, it is considered that psycho-pedagogical attention to the configuration of life projects constitutes a central process in the promotion of the integral development of the person.

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