Optimizing comprehensive care: current approaches in pedagogical didactics for students with special educational needs

Optimizando la atención integral: enfoques actuales de la didáctica pedagógica para estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales

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**Abstract**

Pedagogical didactics is considered an integrating element within the teaching-learning process, whose objective is to implement in the teacher a linkage of strategies for the education of students with special educational needs (SEN) from a social, educational, and pedagogical perspective, in an organized manner to achieve short, medium, and long-term objectives. It is imparted in various educational tasks by the teacher through a globalizing didactics that ensures the application of specific attention techniques, resulting in the real diagnosis corresponding to the functioning of the psychofunctions according to the interests and needs of each student, through technocratic education based on experience. This will facilitate the acquisition of competencies guided by the execution of educational programs that allow the application of strategies to maximize the development of skills and abilities within the different levels or modalities of the Venezuelan educational system.

**Keywords:** Didactics, special educational needs, psychofunctions, globalizing didactics, technocratic education.

**Optimizing Comprehensive Attention: Current Approaches in Pedagogical Didactics for Students with Special Educational Needs**

Currently, education has undergone a series of changes where the teacher must be at the forefront of the transformation, driving them to continue researching and innovating to offer educational alternatives to students with special educational needs. This is due to the need for implementation of strategies that can foster meaningful learning in students, aimed at the full development of cognitive and socio-emotional functions, which will strengthen their academic
skills. This is achieved through programs that, at the curricular level, the teacher ensures adjustments and adaptations aimed at fostering abilities and skills within the educational institution.

**Hernández (2014)** highlights the following:

Didactics must be assumed as the discipline that responds to teaching processes, which implies addressing the why, what, and how of teaching. It also attends to the structuring of the teaching processes of each teacher, who is subject to adapting their methodology to the educational organization, the conditions of the context, the socio-cultural conditions, and any kind of conditioning that integrates the environment and the formation of each student. (p.100)

It is worth noting, the author refers that didactics prompts teachers to face the challenge of responding correctly to Special Educational Needs (SEN), amidst concerns about how to implement inclusion or which strategies and tools are appropriate, which may result in unresolved questions (in some cases) becoming barriers that hinder the pedagogical development of the student, highlighting the need for research and ongoing training to be able to generate learning situations and positively impact processes.

Subsequently, the review of the concepts of Pedagogy and Didactics, which allows delving into their definitions and objectives, taking into account the aspects that coincide and make a difference, impacting from the clarification of notions, in optimizing pedagogical didactics aimed at addressing Special Educational Needs. To define Pedagogy as a science focused on understanding the principles, fundamentals, and theories of learning, and Didactics as a branch of the former, based on the fact that it directly refers to the methodology and means used by the teacher during the teaching and evaluation of learning, it is necessary to have practical aspects which will provide methodologies, techniques, and specific activities, guiding the selection of materials and determining the appropriateness when selecting the form of evaluating knowledge.

On the other hand, pedagogy, on the one hand, is a broad discipline that seeks to understand the foundations of education, focusing on philosophical, sociological, psychological, and anthropological aspects, among others, to address not only cognitive but also affective, social, and ethical elements, pursuing the development not only academic but integral of the individual. Likewise, didactics is considered a discipline that relates the values, resources, and training of the teacher at the time of executing their educational practice since, in an operational way, it designs and formulates strategies aimed at facilitating and evaluating learning, through adaptations concerning the interests and needs of their students in order to minimize interferences, this is achieved through teamwork for integral education.

It is worth mentioning that the construction of knowledge arises from the experiences of the learners, this construction allows them to understand the information transmitted by the teacher when diversifying their resources and creating bridges to a diversity of strategies or methodo-
logies to access more efficiently and relevantly the learnings derived from educational practice. For Abreu, Gallegos et al. (2017) express:

Didactics has been defined interchangeably as the art of teaching, artifice, treatise, normative, learning scientific study, intellectual education study of man and systematic knowledge, auxiliary science, incentive technique, instruction theory, speculative science, general doctrine, method, technique, procedure, particular discipline, branch of Pedagogy, pedagogical discipline, normative practical pedagogical discipline, reflective applied discipline. (p.84)

Therefore, the authors present didactics applied to the reality that the teacher experiences within the learning spaces because they themselves generate a practice aimed at providing an intervention with a psychopedagogical approach, being an experience mediated by the resources obtained during their training. For this reason, it is possible to promote together with their students a set of knowledge that will lead to building a baggage for the acquisition of knowledge that will provide them with resources for decision-making in solving a certain problem within and outside the learning space, with this preparation framed in Socratic processes (which gives it a dialectical character) that allows stimulating and promoting both critical thinking (an aptitude considered one of the four basic skills for learning) as well as otherness, which supports the culture of inclusion. Following this, UNESCO (2021), in its report on inclusion and education reflects: "Developing inclusive teaching and learning strategies and practices and ensuring that they are suitable for all, particularly for those most excluded from ECI and AEPI programs and schools." (p.5)

Taking as a reference what is stipulated by UNESCO, education is a dynamic and unpredictable activity, timely of modern societies, which requires continuous review and progress, hence part of the teaching role which plays an irreplaceable role. At the same time, being able to autonomously use the knowledge and distinctive techniques for the benefit of their students, the teacher must deploy very special characteristics of technical, scientific, and why not, social and cultural techniques.

Exactly, educational quality concerns the experience of everything that dignifies the student’s life, through a school environment rich in experiences and possibilities that encourage students with Special Educational Needs to examine theory and practice in a continuous innovation process, which strengthens overcoming failures and highlighting the achievements of teaching performance, circumscribed within the realm of quality and assimilated with professionalism. This generates a positive and supportive school climate, to develop actions aimed at achieving its noblest objective, efficiently promoting student learning.

The teacher is a professional who relates technical experience and whose social function is in daily tasks such as assessing knowledge, pedagogical and didactic action, whose level of development of intercultural competences as corresponds, the teacher’s autonomy starts from evolving effectively and efficiently every learning process, such as assessing and acting. In addition to understanding and proceeding with educational practice, which are fundamental when per-
Optimizing comprehensive care: current approaches in pedagogical didactics for students with special educational needs

forming teaching, as a promoter of educational experiences, with the capacity to monopolize strategies and resources that lead to the improvement of creativity in students, good use of knowledge, skills and abilities for real-life situations and the development of attitudes and values.

Therefore, teaching as a socializing practice forms a dimension that is directed towards the socialization of students with Special Educational Needs, guiding them through the learning process. Specifying an action originated through knowledge, where teaching as an institutional and community practice is organized by explicit and implicit cultural mandates, contained within the designated institutional culture. With all this, the dimension of the teaching exercise is sought, through institutional and community insertion, according to the complexity of this social skill, as well as the multidimensionality of the profession, requiring a systemic understanding that every decision made, whether it be from work contexts, school organization, curriculum policy, is managed in the profession as a whole.

In this way, the objectives of didactics are to favor the adequate teacher-student relationship, and this adequate relationship is based on the fact that the teacher must know their students in order to then develop a didactics adjusted to both their interests and needs, as well as the educational curriculum and context. This form of knowledge is directly associated with understanding their abilities, talents, and skills, as well as socio-cultural, family, and clinical realities.

Now, Rojas (2022) infers:

With the passing of the years, didactics has been manifesting various changes or contributions due to new knowledge in education. There are several definitions of didactics such as: the art of teaching, study of intellectual and intelligent education, erudition, technique, discipline of pedagogy, teaching theory, practice, among others, but it mainly focuses on science. (p.34)

That is to say, the author reflects the importance of didactics as the means that allows the teacher to transmit effective teaching through a positive climate where the student with Special Educational Needs strengthens their desire to learn based on the imparted dynamics, in this way developing their cognitive processes according to their interests and needs.

Therefore, it is clear that didactics as a branch of pedagogy allows for a clear vision of the teacher's profile, defined as the grouping of knowledge, skills, and personal, occupational, specialized, or prospective abilities that an educator must have or obtain to carry out their work. Some of its functions are to facilitate, guide, and motivate in the learning process, allowing the teacher, a researcher by nature, to create their own hypotheses by reflecting on their pedagogical work and the adaptation of their practice, acting as a mediator in the dynamics developed in the learning space, which, it is worth saying, is not limited to the classroom but encompasses the school as a living, changing, and dynamic entity.

In this way, didactics guides the pedagogical action of teachers and facilitates student learning,
in an educational context that seeks social inclusion and attention to diversity. Didactics must be flexible, innovative, and adapted to the needs of each student, especially those with special educational needs. In this way, the role it plays in the classroom reflects the educational reality, with strengths and weaknesses, and where improvements can be made to enrich the teaching practice and experience for all stakeholders involved.

At the same time, optimizing didactics involves expanding, diversifying, and improving the didactic resources that teachers use when designing and planning their activities, allowing them to offer a more effective and personalized educational response. This optimization benefits not only students but also teachers, as it enhances their role and professional prestige, as well as their self-confidence and ability to face educational challenges.

Adding to the above, educational didactics is directed towards meeting the needs of students with special educational needs, where it is vital to emphasize encouraging assertive and efficient communication that will, first and foremost, allow access to a fundamental right: being part of a learning space, and subsequently, responding to positive stimuli for the development of skills that will facilitate the appropriation of the range of knowledge provided by the teacher and, therefore, consolidate the competencies required by the curriculum of the grade being pursued.

To this end, didactics manifests a set of pedagogical knowledge implemented by teachers to set objectives that, through diagnoses, neuropsychological characterizations, and knowledge of the student's socio-family and cultural context, establish a comprehensive vision by developing academic and pedagogical objectives. This is part of the development of psychoeducational programs and attention aimed at both minimizing interference and developing skills, which is carried out through family support, exchange with specialists, review of clinical reports and educational backgrounds, interviews with previous teachers and family members, as well as evaluations aimed at observing their academic performance during different situations presented in educational practice, so that their performance can be assessed.

In light of the above, as expressed by Pila et al. (2023): "Didactics is a discipline of the educational sciences committed to teaching-learning processes, in order to achieve the integral formation of the student. There are many definitions and what teachers expect from this discipline to guide their work with students." (p.375)

It is essential to highlight that the authors emphasized that building a more comprehensive vision of students with special educational needs exponentially improves the chances of intervention success. It is also fundamental to set goals and develop objectives related to personal growth and coexistence, situated within the four pillars of educational inclusion.

It is worth considering the impossibility for teachers to develop tailored care plans if the student is not present; necessary actions must be taken to ensure the student's presence not only in the classroom but in every class. Participation refers to the fact that the student is involved in
Optimizing comprehensive care: current approaches in pedagogical didactics for students with special educational needs

activities, and in a way, these pillars are staggered, where one must be achieved to move on to the next.

Once the student with special educational needs is present, it is time to encourage their participation through strategies and techniques tailored to their physical and cognitive profile. The educator's contribution, through knowledge of the student's abilities, skills, and needs, generates avenues for them to contribute to the development of activities, as well as being part of the educational process. Thus, the student must contribute, and it is the teacher who, through the design of the action plan, will seek ways for this to happen. This contribution should, as far as possible, be visible to their peers, which impacts the recognition and appreciation of the student's abilities, thereby granting them a place in the social universe of their peers.

In the case of relationships, the student's relationship with the teaching staff prevails, linking the student's relationship with their peers and the student's relationship with a natural peer. The development of pedagogical didactics designed for the student should allow, first and foremost, and by virtue of the teacher's holistic understanding of the student, the establishment of a bond with them, which will then facilitate appropriate interaction with the rest of their peers and, in turn, the encounter with a natural peer who accompanies the student with Special Educational Needs in their journey through the institution through the bond of friendship.

Teachers in the different modalities of the Venezuelan educational system create didactic strategies that provide the teaching and learning process for students with special educational needs. In these strategies, they must consider work that enhances social skills as a cross-cutting element, seeking to train a student capable of solving problems according to their level of development. This work is aimed at stimulating individual and social thinking that enables them to navigate the educational social environment and grasp the relevant contents of the curriculum, extrapolating this experience to their immediate family and social environment.

To this end, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches play a significant role in optimizing educational didactics for the attention of Special Educational Needs in schools, carried out by the teacher and interdisciplinary team to build, from a comprehensive and holistic vision, the cognitive profile of the learner, a didactic proposal that allows them to navigate the school while respecting their individuality.

In all educational planning, it starts with the teacher's creativity as well as the resources available. Teachers innovate to tailor curricular adjustments and adaptations to the student's interests and needs so that they can grasp the objective corresponding to each presented content. The construction and consolidation of this content should facilitate the subsequent evaluation of the didactics used through the student's performance and their acquisition of knowledge, allowing for the reevaluation or maintenance of teaching methods, techniques, activities, resources, and time frames that favor the development of the school day and thus positively impact school inclusion.

With each planning, the teacher must bear in mind the guidelines for breaking down content
that is flexible and dynamic, easily understandable for the student, where the educator must be able to recognize and empathize with them without expecting the student to adjust to the teacher’s perspective. This is to achieve tailored planning and improve the acquisition of competencies in line with the objectives set within the learning space. In the development of a strategy, it is essential to start with a purpose based on the existing reality, as adaptations arise based on the interests and needs of the population, where the teacher implements techniques, activities, and resources that will be beneficial for students to discover learning originating from their context within which they are immersed.

It is pertinent to note that the committed teacher must maintain a positive, critical, and reflective attitude towards teaching situations, based on their role as a manager, where they acquire efficient management in educational planning by organizing a class and maintaining a balanced control of the situations that arise. They should also be a guide for the entire process assertively when necessary, manifesting a climate of trust and security among all participants, leading to the establishment of open communication channels and also assuming their role as an evaluator of teaching to determine the performance of students within the teaching and learning process.

Within this framework, Dainese (2016) reveals:

Learning is generated through a participatory and shared construction within the components of the classroom group, and the eventual special resources (human and material) necessary to meet the needs of students with disabilities must be reintegrated into a framework of plurality and become part of the learning activity intended for all. (p.22)

While it is true that the author highlights the role that schools and teachers must play in addressing holistic development through individual educational needs and training cognitive skills, always considering the student’s profile, this allows for the proposal of content associated with their abilities, skills, and needs through updated strategies that ensure their successful academic progress. This attentional paradigm is focused on cognitive and constructivist pedagogical models that conceive learning as a mental phenomenon involving cognitive processes, with a succession of elements and phases that imply students actively create knowledge and understanding through their experiences, cognitive schemes, and interactions with the respective context.

Among the objectives set forth in the Agenda (2023) for Sustainable Development:

By 2030, ensure that all students acquire the theoretical and practical knowledge needed to promote sustainable development, including through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development. (p.29)

In this perspective, the agenda explains the function of education as it employs models that conceive strategies, methods, and techniques that will improve the administration and mana-
Optimizing comprehensive care: current approaches in pedagogical didactics for students with special educational needs

gement of time within the teaching process, valuable not only for the daily work of the teacher but for the projection of the processes that the student must develop in the educational institution. Time in addressing students with Special Educational Needs must be measured both in the short, medium, and long term. The construction of an educational intervention program should not be based on immediacy or urgency, but rather include overarching goals or general objectives to then build specific short and medium-term objectives from there. This does not mean that pressing needs should not be addressed, but rather that in balance, the perspective of what is to be achieved in the long term as a result of the intervention program and care plans, both in the classroom, small groups, or individually, should be maintained.

According to Pila et al. (2023), they state: The role of didactics is to design motivating tasks for students, starting from real-life problem situations and adapting to the different rhythms and learning styles of each student, fostering the ability to learn by themselves, and promoting teamwork. (p.385)

This approach related by the authors is aimed at developing an effective and efficient work, united and indispensable with the family and the institutional technical team, which provides the creation of reasonable adjustments and adaptations aimed at enhancing learning skills within their corresponding cognitive, emotional, and social abilities, resulting in the integral development of the individual and the consolidation of the competencies established in the curriculum mesh always based on the characteristics of the learner.

In light of the exposition by Clavijo & Bautista (2020), "inclusion in the educational sphere entails attitudes of deep respect for differences and a responsibility to make them an opportunity for development, participation, and learning." (p.1)

It is worth noting that for the authors, the inclusion of various strategies and techniques aimed at guiding the teaching and learning process allows for the acquisition of academic competencies. Some of these strategies are traditional but remain relevant; their innovation lies in how they are developed in contexts, the inclusion of novel elements, and how they are tailored to modern generations. Examples of these strategies and techniques include exposition, demonstration, simulation, debate, group work, concept mapping, mind mapping, summarization, paraphrasing, and self-assessment. Other more contemporary strategies and techniques may involve the use of technological resources, formative assessment, cooperative work, constructive feedback, and the application of active methodologies such as gamification, project-based learning, problem-based learning, collaborative projects, service learning, and flipped classroom.

For example, the choice of the most suitable strategies and techniques depends on various factors such as content, context, student profile (especially that of students with Special Educational Needs), and available resources. The purpose of these strategies and techniques is to provide the development of competencies, skills, and attitudes that enable students to learn meaningfully, autonomously, and critically, thereby fostering the development of academic skills (reading, writing, and mathematics).
There are techniques specifically developed for working with certain populations that should (and must) be included in educational didactics: sign language, braille language, social stories, pictograms, sign language, bimodal language, and visual thinking are some of the most well-known. Teachers’ knowledge of the cause or root of the Special Educational Needs of their students and their knowledge of their neuropsychological profile (mediated by research and study) guide the inclusion of these techniques to enhance the achievement of the objectives set out in planning, in addition to complying with the creation of reasonable adjustments and curricular adaptations, as established in international conventions.

According to Unesco’s guidelines for inclusion (2008), it:

...can be conceived as a process that allows addressing and responding to the diversity of the needs of all learners through increased participation in learning, cultural and community activities and reducing exclusion within and outside the educational system. The above implies changes and modifications of contents, approaches, structures, and strategies based on a common vision that encompasses all school-aged children and the conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular education system to educate all children. The goal of inclusion is to provide appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in both formal and non-formal education environments. (p.8)

Regarding this topic, the inclusion of students with special educational needs begins with the relationship established by the teacher with the teaching dynamics, adapting resources that are favorable according to the interests and needs of students with particular conditions that require a mediator teacher capable of instructing and guiding their learning process by innovating and adapting activities that allow strengthening their skills and abilities in line with the theme used by the teacher within the learning space, thus fostering psychofunctions in the different tasks developed within the learning space.

Play as a didactic tool, previously reviewed these related concepts; as mentioned earlier, didactics is the art and science of teaching, based on principles, methods, and techniques to facilitate learning. Play is the set of activities carried out for fun, to stimulate creativity, and develop skills. Likewise, didactics has an explicit pedagogical intention, is based on prior planning, requires evaluation of results, and is oriented towards knowledge transmission, while play may or may not have a pedagogical intention, may arise spontaneously or improvised, focuses on the development of attitudes and values, and does not necessarily require being structured or evaluated due to its free and flexible nature.

Many pedagogical and academic objectives can be achieved through playful techniques and games applied in the classroom environment. Playfulness and games as elements associated with the development of attitudes, values, skills, flexibility, enjoyment, and voluntariness are widely incorporated by teachers in the application of didactics.

Didactic resources are seen as the means that facilitate the development of ideas, the cons-
Construction of models, and the use of materials that will be the link to develop the objectives established by the teacher in the exercise of their work with students with SEN within learning spaces. They also constitute a means that fosters in the student the development of attitudes to construct meaningful learning, giving sense and significance to the object of learning. Playfulness and games have historically and transversally been the best vehicle for the acquisition of competencies.

According to Lindao (2015), the term Special Educational Need is used to identify the difficulty of a student's acceptance towards a specific learning, that is, when a student's learning capacities are presented with greater difficulty (p.6). It is necessary to be clear about the differences of each student with special educational needs, considering them as biopsychosocial beings who respond at their own pace and interests, observing interferences in their teaching process, which requires a psychoeducational program to minimize the deficiencies presented in the learning space.

In other words, school (and thus education) ultimately becomes a central axis within society because it finds its purpose in the process of humanization and integration of the individual into society (socialization), starting from an understanding of their abilities, potentials, limitations, and desires (individualization) amidst a cyclical process and as a distinct cultural element of our community (Sarramona, 2000). This defining presence prompts questions such as: Is the didactics currently used in classrooms aligned with the interests and needs of the student population? Is research and continuous, updated training of the teaching staff encouraged? Is there a teacher performance evaluation process that reinforces and acknowledges the commitment to ensuring comprehensive attention? And most importantly, does the educational didactics currently predominantly used in various modalities of the educational system aim to guarantee educational inclusion and comprehensive attention while also reducing the expulsion of students with Special Educational Needs from education?

Ultimately, educational quality undoubtedly has a significant influence on educational health. Education is a dynamic and flexible activity that requires continuous review and progress. Hence, the role of the current teacher emerges, who plays an irreplaceable role. It is the teacher who must autonomously employ knowledge and distinctive techniques in favor of their students but must also deploy very special peculiarities of approaches, methods, techniques, scientific elements, combined with psychological and emotional aspects, equally in favor of their students. Therefore, the educational didactics developed by the teacher allow each student with special educational needs to acquire knowledge from a wide variety of factors aimed at guiding their process, not only educational but also integral development, seeking to provide the tools that enable them to be an active element not only in the community but also in their own life project.

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