

**Academic planning, a valuable tool for the quality
of the teaching and learning processes in Torremar
Bilingual School (UEBT)**

**La planificación académica, herramienta valiosa para
la calidad del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje en
la Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torremar (UEBT)**

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RESUMEN

La planificación académica, pedagógica y didáctica es una de las herramientas fundamentales dentro del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje, debido a la influencia y el impacto que tiene en los resultados del aprendizaje de los alumnos. A partir de las características de la nueva escuela y los aspectos que envuelven la reforma educativa para dar respuesta a las necesidades de desarrollo de los estudiantes en el actual mundo contemporáneo, se exige del docente que evite las prácticas tradicionales, y por ende una enseñanza de contenidos basada en la improvisación a la hora del desarrollo de las actividades en el proceso áulico. Por ello, es imprescindible que el docente no vea la planificación didáctica como un simple requisito administrativo basado en un formato que presente una descripción innecesaria para la Dirección Académica, sino como un instrumento valioso para la calidad del sistema de clases, en donde el estudiante sea quien produzca y aporte, como parte del Marco Conceptual de la Enseñanza para la Comprensión (EpC) que aplicamos en nuestra Institución Educativa desde hace tres años. A continuación, se examinará detalladamente lo que implica la realización y puesta en práctica de la planificación didáctica en función de la calidad del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje en la UEBT.

Palabras clave: planificación, resultados de aprendizaje, enseñanza para la comprensión

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ABSTRACT

Academic planning is a critical tool in teaching and learning processes. It includes higher education processes that ensure that an educational institution follows a designated plan and meets vital objectives. The importance of academic planning is due to the influence and impact it has on students' learning results, besides being the basis and central axis of the educational teaching process.

Based on the characteristics of the new school and the aspects that involve the educational reform required to respond to the developmental needs of students in the current contemporary world, teachers need to avoid traditional practices and not teach content based on the improvisation of activities.

For educators, it is critical that academic planning is viewed as more than a simple administrative requirement needed by the Academic Coordination. It is a valuable instrument for the quality of the classes, where the students contribute to their learning as part of the Conceptual Framework of Teaching for Understanding [EpC acronym in Spanish], which we have applied in our Educational Institution for the past three years.

To provide a more throughout review of the benefits and relevance of academic planning for education, an investigation is provided in the following sections regarding the implementation within quality teaching and learning processes at Torremar Bilingual School [UEBT acronym in Spanish]. As such, the purpose of this study is to explore the sequences that lead to steps for academic planning to meet final goals. For this purpose, a review of relevant literature and a presentation of the critical stages of academic planning are presented.

Key words: planning, learning outcomes, teaching for understanding

Introduction

Academic planning is a set of ideas and activities that allow teachers to develop an educational process with meaning continuity (Imrie, 2016). Thus, designing a work plan incorporates elements that intervene in the process of teaching and learning. In this process, cognitive structures, acquisition of skills, changed behaviors, and student attitudes are realized through the curriculum design (Brave, 2019). Thus, academic planning is considered a model or pattern that allows teachers to face his practice in an orderly and consistent format (Brave, 2019; Imrie, 2016). However, previous research regarding academic planning in terms of quality teaching and learning processes at the UEBT is absent in academic literature. As such, this paper provides a qualitative assessment of the techniques, sources, and methods that could be used for the purpose of improving academic planning purposes.

Academic planning at UEBT is conceptualized through plans (e.g., annual, monthly, and individual) containing objectives and processes to prioritize and correspond with available activities and resources. Furthermore, academic planning requires significant time for design, implementation, monitoring, control, and evaluation. The implementation of this planning is one of the objectives of the classroom visits that, with consistency, has been achieved in our institution, reaching 98% of the annual and micro-curricular planning of our teachers presented, reviewed, and accepted.

The development of the planning must be considered as an aspect of academic quality assurance on the part of educational institutions. In this model, the utmost importance is the instrument count and associated requirements needed to give validity and meet the needs and expectations of teaching and learning processes (Cohen et al., 2018; Giroux, 2019). However, for the UEBT, this model has yet to be presented.

Purpose of the Study

Academic planning preparation entails analyzing

and organizing educational content, determine the generative topics, the goals of understanding, the preliminary performances and guided research (Cohen, Spillane, & Peurach, 2018; Giroux, 2019; Hanushek, Ruhose, & Woessman, 2017; Nguyen & Bui, 2016). For this study, we applied at UEBT, to include the instructional basis within the Conceptual Framework of EpC. Further, the intentions and educational purposes, the ideal sequence of activities in time and space for academic planning are considered within this examination.

Academic Planning through EpC at UEBT

The advantages of academic planning involve facilitating teacher realization regarding their teaching duties, providing guidelines for educators with little pedagogical expertise, providing standardized training for students, and creating a reference guide for staff training and resources acquisition (Cohen, Spillane, & Peurach, 2018; Giroux, 2019; Hanushek, Ruhose, & Woessman, 2017; Nguyen & Bui, 2016). In these models, academic planning serves as the reference to choose and use teaching resources and guides the course planning process (Nguyen & Bui, 2016).

In particular importance to academic planning is micro-curricular planning. Micro-curricular planning is specific to a course for educational institutions (Paciotto & Delany-Barmann, 2011). Micro-curricular planning integrates the processes of meeting, detailing activities, and providing resources (Paciotto & Delany-Barmann, 2011). Ideally, a document is prepared for each session that illustrates the key components of a course or subject. The information in an annual plan or a micro-curricular plan allows teachers to give clarity, styles, methods, and contents that will guide the teaching-learning process throughout a school year (Burbano-Collazos, 2016; Cammarata & Haley, 2018). An annual plan or a micro-curricular plan is usually formed by a preset format that allows the homogenization of documents between teachers and directors of the same educational institution, to comply with the guidelines emanating from the Ministry of Education (Burbano-Collazos, 2016; Cammarata

& Haley, 2018).

Teacher education structure, distribution of time in the classroom, activities assigned to students, educational resources, strategies, and evaluation mechanisms, are considered as part of effective planning (Murillo, 2011). Further, it is necessary to build knowledge appropriation of the contents, ensure the ability to practice, and apply skills are critical for students (Cohen et al., 2018). Further, teachers must act as facilitators to transform students and further their characteristics, knowledge, and values (Cohen et al., 2018; Magana, 2016; Murillo, 2011). Thus, excellence in teaching work must be reflected inside and outside the classroom by planning their subject systematically (Cohen et al., 2018; Magana, 2016; Murillo, 2011).

The program guides or plans should be developed based on the analytical program and educational purposes of the institution that seeks to build (Castillo-Condo et al., 2017). Thus, the teacher is supported through the micro-planning process, and the Conceptual Framework of EpC applied for three consecutive years at UEBT.

The essential components of an academic plan are:

The objectives or purposes that are embodied in the Annual Plan.

The goals of understanding that are reflected in the Micro-curricular Plan.

The generative topics that are developed in the Micro-curricular Plan.

The preliminary performances or research guided that are embodied in the Micro-curricular Plan.

The continuous assessment that develops in the Micro-curricular Plan.

These elements are arranged according to the conception that teachers have about learning, as well as the Conceptual Framework EpC applied at the UEBT.

The planning must not be carried out only as a

technical activity limited to fill formats. However, it must be translated into educational intentions that are the result of the analysis of several components, including contextual elements such as culture and socio-economic conditions of the environment where students play the cognitive skills and prior learning that have developed in previous school stages.

Further, it is assumed in the present scientific article the contributions of (Casanova, 2012) to advocate for a curriculum that includes what is essential, this provides comprehensive basic training, which favors the transfer of programming in the context of real-life, which will allow the student to emerge as a specialist in being a person (as life demands) and specialist in being professional (as society demands).

For this reason, the emphasis is placed on the use of educational methodologies that allow approximate learning for each subject, following their characteristics, using multiple teaching resources. The teacher is the one who must discover which is the most appropriate methodology for each person who is educating, as well as the evaluation system that truly reflects their performance throughout the subject and not just the knowledge that is written once a month in a lesson or exam.

Conceptual Framework

Academic planning is a process of sequences through which establishes a series of steps leading to a final goal. In the face of this concept, the planning of the work of teachers in the classroom is critical to achieving the objectives of learning in all academic subjects, as it organizes and ranks the what and how to teach. It is for this reason that involves a set of decisions and actions that will be taken throughout the school day. So, the teacher defines the activities to be undertaken during the class with specific content.

Planning relates to defining what will be learned, and how; and knowing how to use the time and space, the materials selected for support and complement the learning, as well as the interactions in the classroom.

For a teacher, planning allows integrating the contents (theory) with practice. Teachers can make use of the contents of the way they want within the process. In this way, proper planning implies that the teacher can use different tools and methodologies for that content as the practice to reach students in the best possible way in the process of teaching and learning.

This allows us to sequence the content, making it coherent and functional, which influences the ability of students to appropriate and assimilate the lessons of global and personal way. Planning is one of the most critical steps to achieve the full and active learning of the contents that require students. To achieve proper planning, the results will be more predictable and, therefore, a satisfactory evaluation.

When planning, the teacher must know the pedagogical principles; in our case, the conceptual framework of the EpC; the characteristics of students; and the school environment and social context in which they operate. These are elements that should be considered for planning:

Recognize that students learn throughout life and are involved in the learning process.

Select instructional strategies that promote the mobilization of knowledge and evaluation of the programming consistent with the programming is expected.

Recognize that the referents for their design are the expected programming.

Generate collaborative learning environments conducive to meaningful experiences.

Consider evidence of performance that provides information to the teacher for decision-making and continue to promote student learning.

Also, it is necessary to know the specific elements that planning must contain:

The skills, competencies and the didactic approach, serving as a guide and context for the programming is expected.

The expected programming because they help to establish what students should learn in each period.

The content identified in the study programs because it will enable the achievement of the expected programming.

The methodology for the job determines the activities that students will carry out, the organization, the delimitation of space, and the distribution of the time needed.

The resources and teaching materials that will be used to support the development of activities.

The most appropriate techniques and assessment tools that will be used to evaluate students' learning.

It is advisable to question whether all points are covering and what is being done well or badly, if teachers are achieving the goals and objectives through the activities, what needs to be changed, and what tools work improperly and adequately.

Methodology

The methodology for this paper is a qualitative overview that provides a review of academic planning through the case study at UEBT. The case study approach involved exploring academic planning through the conceptual framework of EpC in the contextual setting of the UEBT. For this purpose, integration with theory was provided to explore the best possible techniques for academic planning to increase student outcomes and teacher supports. Each of these are discussed in the following sections.

Results

In this section, the recommendations regarding improving academic planning are presented as viewed through the case study information and the EpC conceptual framework.

First, it is recommended to generate collaborative learning environments conducive to meaningful experiences. Taking as reference the classroom

observations made during the last three years, we can cite the existence of teachers who do not take into account this point. This aspect is of vital importance because students learn when teachers relate what students are learning with their realities. This is why it is pertinent to perform at the start of the school cycle, a diagnosis that allows the teacher to define the characteristics and needs of the group, resulting in a proposal of strategies for achieving better learning in students. In this way:

It is recognized that students learn throughout life and are actively involved in the process of teaching and learning.

Teaching strategies are selected to promote knowledge acquisition and the evaluation of the school program.

Ideally, teachers will decide the educational needs to address. It will provide a guideline for knowing ideal activities. Further, teachers should be aware of students' opinions and what activities interest them the most. Further, teachers should ensure that the full learning process is engaging and that technological tools are used in line with the tools and possibilities provided in the academic plan.

Next, we recommend that teachers structure the application of planned resources, budget and discuss for unforeseen events, and assess how goals and objectives can be altered in the case of changes. In this way, the activities will be developed in a concise manner achieving the objectives and goals of understanding. Shall be deemed to be evidence of performance that provides information to the teacher for decision-making and continue to promote student learning.

Finally, ongoing assessments are critical to advanced and traditional grade students. Constant and systematic evaluations will allow the student to the achievement of full learning, which is permanent and can apply to different situations of practical life.

Conclusions

Planning is one of the most valuable

strategies to improve the quality of education and foster teamwork through excellent communication between teachers and students. Further, the model leverages knowledge and resources properly, puts into practice skills and abilities, and allows for innovation. Thus, through this approach, the added application of creativity was illustrated in this case study to engage students and increase student outcomes.

Further, we believe that they are fundamental tools for the Academic Coordination at UEBT, allowed for improved guidance of teachings and learning processes and for organizing work within all the teaching staff.

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