

Chapter 5 Theoretical reflections on curricular evaluation from a critical perspective

Capítulo 5 Reflexiones teóricas sobre la evaluación curricular desde una mirada crítica

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Abstract

It present the analysis and reflection on evaluation processes in higher education programs, postgraduate-doctoral level, sharpens the position regarding how research is constituted and formalized in and from the educational fact and curricular action within the training of professionals of education in the state of Chihuahua, promoting the improvement of the curriculum not only in initial training but for academic improvement whit a critical vision that guides evaluation in, from and with the design of postgraduate programs aimed at new researchers as generators of knowledge in the curriculum field. Theme object of analysis from the last century and the present. The work consists of an empirical analysis based on the content analysis methodology focused on research training and academic performance during the last year of the Doctorate in Education, based on the review, critical argumentation to enhance prospects for improvement for the next generation or generations.

Evaluation, Processes, Doctorate

Resumen

Presenta el análisis y la reflexión sobre procesos de evaluación en programas de educación superior, nivel de posgrado-doctorado, agudiza posicionarse respecto a cómo se constituye y formaliza la investigación en y desde el hecho educativo y acción curricular al interior de la formación de profesionales de la educación en el estado de Chihuahua, promoviéndose la mejora del currículo no sólo en la formación inicial sino para la superación académica con visión crítica orientadora de evaluación en, desde y con el diseño de programas de posgrado dirigido a nuevos investigadores como generadores de conocimiento en el campo del currículo. Tema objeto de análisis desde el siglo pasado y el presente. El trabajo consiste en un análisis empírico basado en la metodología de análisis de contenido centrado en formación investigativa y desempeño académico durante el último año de Doctorado en Educación, a partir de la revisión, la argumentación crítica para potenciar perspectivas de mejora para la próxima generación o generaciones.

Evaluación, Procesos, Doctorado

Introduction

The research evidences in a theoretical-practical and argumentative way the evaluation of the curriculum on: training and action to investigate processes that refer to and provide bases for questioning, analyzing and reflecting on challenges, difficulties, setbacks and vicissitudes to consolidate the conceptual structure that trains the researcher. This work is carried out by the 90th Academic Body of the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional (UPN) of Curriculum and Educational Innovation to assess the Doctorate in Education program and submit it to possible academic reorientation.

To activate research based on epistemological support, implies consolidating the gnoseological, ontological and teleological, to focus the investigative act on reality towards the search and creation of knowledge, through logical-reflexive and coherent explanation, which implies critically reasoned activities. So then, how to promote the link between the newcomer researcher and the researcher who generates knowledge in training institutions for this scientific activity, by contributing to the generation and application of new knowledge?

The product of this research is aimed at clarifying those difficulties and/or potentialities that students face when proposing, developing and explaining the research project with the support and tutorial accompaniment that later becomes the knowledge product to be socialized as a thesis.

The evidence produced in this object of inquiry provides details on the theoretical-methodological process for research training given its systematic complexity. The evidence reports concretize the references of experiences arisen and provided by each student during their transit and journey in the training of the Doctorate in Education program during the last year of curricular training.

The exercise is based on the argumentation of each individual case, the work of each student understood as an object of research that orientates, constitutes, organizes, validates, disposes, and builds based on the criticality of plans and programs generated and developed by the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional del Estado de Chihuahua, in the different units that offer said program. The logic exposed in previous paragraphs makes explicit the theoretical and reasoning support throughout the methodological evolution to obtain an academic degree in the doctoral program. Also, elucidates the necessary improvements for the student's academic reorientation.

Development

Theoretical foundations

The epistemological position registered in the doctorate program, contributes to the review, analysis, critique and assessment of both, the processes and products that the newcomer researcher has been producing as a student in training for the investigation of phenomena, situations, themes and problems of attention, solution and/or educational resolution. This is the vision of the emancipation of knowledge and science from the critical-social point of view.

Based on this epistemic position, the researcher in training decides on the gnoseological approaches and tools to explain the object to be investigated, which it is critical-dialectical when rescuing the vision of the other, the otherness for the constitution of the self and the individual that is mediated by the curriculum.

This evolution that sustains the act of theorizing and inquiring, binded in a parallel way, perceives reality as a concretion of totality, exposed through a holistic worldview at the same time that enables to generate knowledge through an essential path of scientific research.

Melchor's position (2003) before the knowledge and recognition of epistemology, allows having a reason based on the construction and building of knowledge where knowing the theory, its categories, the concepts involved, the elaborate scaffolding and its frameworks, facilitates the newcomer researcher to position oneself for the appropriation of the real. Reality is not only the mental representations that the person elaborates, but also the awareness of reflection on the concrete in mutant and dialectical time and space.

Every investigative act undertaken by the program under review, originates from the interest and motivation of the doctoral student. Due to the above, it is a priority to speed up knowing and recognizing which are the lines of generation and application of knowledge (LGAC) that are investigated and in which scientific activity is produced by the academics responsible for the program to train new researchers. The purpose is not to promote false expectations, fallacies and unreal imagination that disable the research apprentice.

Methodology

From the theoretical assumption of Díaz (2018), the implementation of content analysis is potentiated as a method for the review, analysis and reflection of the empirical evidence provided by the participating students with their information, all of them are students who are in the last semester of the Doctorate in Education program, located between the fifth and sixth semester of their academic training.

The students show qualities and patterns from their academic training prior to this program, as well as the professional profile from the educational level where they work, finding teachers of basic, secondary and higher education, therefore, their cultural wealth is multifaceted.

Among their training profile, supposed truths are coined from the peculiarity of their professional training characteristics that differentiate them and that emerge in the course of the in-depth interview carried out with each one. Each student decides to participate voluntarily and openly to provide information about their life experiences to train as researchers in the field of education.

This research approach is reported as a theoretical and methodological support for the analysis of the situational and contextual reality from the coherent explanation of the discourse expressed and experienced by each of the seven students. What is relevant and central to this methodology is that reality emerges from the text expressed by the participant, which is latent in each empirical contribution, since it is part of their life and professional training for both empirical and analytical inquiry.

To complement the methodological space, a focus group is implemented in which eight other students participate, to complement the phenomenon of investigating the reality that was being investigated, by assessing each of them their level of progress with reference to the curricular structure, the established contents, the sequence, progress and development achieved at the end of each semester, as well as the accompaniment in tutorials for the completion of the titling process. Here, the performance, endorsement and recognition of the curricular processes and products, in the course of the investigation, is experienced.

It is essential and important to rescue the narrative sense provided by the students in, during and closing the shared stories to demonstrate an expeditious analysis when narrating what has already been narrated, what happened within the context and from the context as a source and richness for their own formation in the field of the constitution of a real object to be investigated and specified in a knowledge product.

The participants are eight men, all of them work in higher education and seven women, one of them works in basic education, one in upper secondary education and the rest in higher education, who participate with interest to provide explicit information as evidence that allows substantial improvement of the current program and thereby, activating the titling process and professional training and that of subsequent generations. His age fluctuates between 43 and 55 years old.

Results

The construction of the results is presented in three categories whose analysis facilitates reflection based on the arguments expressed by the participants, in addition to the conceptual support that promotes the constitution and evaluation of the evidence, based on: *The epistemological formation infrastructure of the process of investigation; Investigative action in light of the construction of theoretical-practical tools; The capitalization of the time and the effort allocated to the training processes within the tutorial.*

The epistemological formation infrastructure of the research process

Training for research obliges to seek a building and/or constitution of basic education or secondary education and higher education professionals committed to the educational act, with a solid comprehensive training to model, plan and develop scientific and social knowledge, questioning, How is the scientific nature of knowledge generated and promoted? It is necessary an explanatory and conceptual action with theoretical flow as valid before scientific knowledge.

The constitutive role of theory cannot be ignored as the articulating axis in the formation of research, in the same way, the construction of categories and concepts in addition to the possible scaffolding that enables the logical and coherent explanation of the doing of science. The students report having these epistemological precisions about the generation of knowledge. Then, consolidating that clear epistemological and conceptual formation on knowledge makes it possible to discriminate between what happens, between what is thought and felt in reality itself and reality in the other or for the other.

The doctoral program that is being evaluated exemplifies the research training process, observing and identifying two versions to generate scientific activity, one as a methodological option based on an ontological and epistemological orientation under an implicit assumption, as indicated by De Miguel (2000), since from each methodological version there is a theoretical substratum that clearly emerges as a basis. On the other hand, when it is recognized paradigmatically that there is no paradigm that is superior to another, as the simple fact of conceiving reality in a different way, makes the way of investigating be located or positioned differently.

The program that is being evaluated exemplifies, in the research training process, two versions of generating scientific action; one as a methodological option based on an ontological and epistemological orientation in an implicit assumption, as indicated by De Miguel (2000), that based on each methodological version, there is a theoretical substratum that clearly emerges.

It is relevant in the work and space to promote research when it is recognized that paradigmatically there is no paradigm as superior to another, simply the fact of conceiving reality in a different way makes the way of investigating be located or positioned differently. No paradigm is more important than another, only the way in which science is carried out and knowledge is constructed or generated matters.

According to Verdú (2020), it has been argued that both the support of philosophy and methodology are essential in the training of every person who has learned to appropriate reality. Hence, the epistemological review during the first phase of the doctoral program favors the act of discerning, reasoning, reflecting as a philosophical act of the relationship with knowledge.

In this sense, Verdú (2020), states that a doctoral training must be consolidated based on the interference of scientific training in the matter of doing science, therefore, the generation between the new and the investigated is essential for the coexistence between the accepted and demanded.

The empowerment of investigative action guides towards a search for education that incubates the modification of reality. Hence the motto of UPN and UPNECH *Educación para transformar*. This explanatory logic demands a dialectical position, in which the differences between paradigms must be shared and allow delineating versions and/or promoting inter-games, alliances, orientations with different ontological and gnoseological positions of various theories for the transdisciplinary proposal that enables training to any investigator.

In the interviews, it appears that every student tends or is oriented to review the lines that require the implementation of a certain paradigm and the corresponding methods to outline the investigative work, they assure that a segregation or omission causes a detachment of the epistemological endorsement to be developed and complemented to provide meaning and originality to the process of investigation and construction of the object that is being known, or, to discover reality as a whole and, above all, to concretize that construction of knowledge, not only learning the construction of its investigation.

Both in the in-depth interviews and in the focus group, the students report that in-depth research training on the epistemological foundation guides the professionalization of researchers who prioritize their research activity based on complementarity and on the object of research the student decides to investigate.

Verdú (2020), refers to joint activity, such as the use of trust and teamwork for collaboration within the work teams session after session, among the students of each research object, since the team regroups and solves or guides in the resolution of doubts, raises concerns and generates possible solutions.

De la Cruz & Abreú (2017), declare the high level of demand experienced by doctoral students who are subjected to a high degree of ambivalence for and due to their training at the top of the educational pyramid to which they now belong, as well, each one manifests a differentiated degree of uncertainty due to the projects that are demanded of it.

The investigative action in light of the construction of tools for the capture of information

90 percent of the interviewees suppose that they have chosen a conceptual support referring to their research object since the very moment of inquiring, posing the question or questions that generate research or, at the moment of structuring the accurate approaches in the design of their protocol for the gather of information, without leaving aside the elements that forge the explanatory logic as a theoretical support of what is generated in the investigation.

Knowledge and learning are not the same, they are not synonymous, to the doctoral students, therefore, it is necessary to appropriate the research object and make it the object of their knowledge since every researcher is the one who needs the paradigm with which he performs and generates his object of knowledge. 100 percent of the students endorse that the link between the Academic Bodies and the knowledge production of new researchers provides tools for research training.

For the participants in the research, the act and effect of appropriating and feeling their research is no other feeling than appropriating reality through the construction of the object that is being known, therefore, each student demands a related formative action with skills and tools that combine the work of their tutor with him or her as an apprentice to investigate, or between pairs of newcomers researchers. The learning that is elaborated with the ideas of others and from the ideas of others generates a range of positions and decision-making where the integrality of thought is respected and critical thinking attached to analysis, reflection, argumentation is encouraged and the staging of what has been acquired.

The relevant in the generation of tools to process information, favors among students the implied use of the theoretical-conceptual and methodological domain that permeates the tutelary action of their thesis directors, therefore, an absence in this training results in an investigative fallacy.

The students in the focus group specify and ponder that the permanent and pressing activity for the training of students in and for research is established with the communication between the disciplinary knowledge of various computer programs for the process of analysis and systematization of the information that coins the construction of scaffolding, concepts and categories which are constructors of scientific knowledge.

The students in the focus group clarify that they are not used to self-training, self-learning; On the contrary, they find themselves hoping that whoever supposedly possesses knowledge will communicate it, in such a way that they generally wait for instructions to see and do as they are entrusted and assure what they are going to do, without promoting self-knowledge.

Capitalize the time and effort in the training processes within the tutoring

More than 75% of the students participating both in the in-depth interviews and in the focus group argue that the possibilities to increase investigative work require the constitution of academic networks in order to promote processes of inquiry and generation of knowledge for individual, personal and professional growth as students. This goal can be achieved by promoting work teams with national and international expert researchers, a condition that increases tools and access to national and international research, through groups and networks that favor the integration of formal work teams for the benefit of each student as a researcher.

Covarrubias (1995), expresses that every subject is constituted as a person through the multiple referents that permeate their consciousness from the planes of social and cultural reality. The human being is built from what lives in its context, becoming the sum and more than the sum of phenomena, because the person never stops changing, always remains in constant transformation, is an endless being forming and reforming in a day to day basis; so then, its process of building the object of knowledge is also in real and constant modification.

De la Cruz & Abreú (2017), point out that the training of any doctorate that seeks to generate a researcher profile for its students must rescue the research work as a generator of ambivalence and uncertainty during the preparation of the research project in which it is carried out whenever it is constituted in the space to direct and promote research autonomously.

For more than 85 percent of the students, this is the most weighty challenge, since they are not interested in generating discomfort and discontent by leaving their comfort zone and remaining in crisis and uncertainty that promotes inquiry and criticism.

Melchor (2003), De la Cruz (2017) reaffirm that the newcomer researcher requires competencies, skills and abilities, but above all, knowledge of an epistemological, ontological and paradigmatic nature that constitutes science and scientific knowledge. As for them, almost 100 percent of the participants reaffirm this position, but do not see it translated into their work to obtain the academic degree.

Financing

The researchers received no funding sources

Conclusions

This evaluative action obeyed the evaluation criteria, therefore, this research product is linked to the act of exercising the claim to improve the doctoral program in education focused on the curricular position, acting within the research practice that is shaping the doctoral candidate based on the progress of his research project, enabling the insertion of epistemological scaffolding that enriches the graduate profile of the Doctor in Education, through the implementation of complementary methodological processes with necessary agreements for its streamlining, likewise, to be able to restructure and provide feedback for the activation of tools of all kinds for the capture of information that focuses the role of the tutoring exercise. It is urgent to expand the accompaniment processes to expand the feedback in search of enrichment and professional improvement in research processes and products, which come together in a desired terminal efficiency. Since there is not a high degree rate, it is barely close to 30 percent.

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