



EduSol

ISSN: 1789-8091

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Centro Universitario de Guantánamo

Cuba

Castillo Fuentes, Bisolkis; Sánchez Matos, Pedro Antonio; Sol Rodríguez, Noelia  
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EduSol, vol. 17, no. 60, 2017, -March, pp. 14-25

Centro Universitario de Guantánamo

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***El enfoque político ideológico como eje transversal del  
proceso pedagógico en la escuela municipal del Partido en  
Guantánamo***

***The political and ideological perspective, a transversal axis  
for the pedagogical process at the Municipal School of the  
Communist Party in Guantánamo***

**Bisolkis Castillo Fuentes**

**Pedro Antonio Sánchez Matos**

**Noelia Sol Rodríguez**

Universidad de Guantánamo, Cuba

**Correo electrónico:**

[escuela@gu.cc.cu](mailto:escuela@gu.cc.cu)

[escuela@gu.cc.cu](mailto:escuela@gu.cc.cu)

[noeliasolr@cug.co.cu](mailto:noeliasolr@cug.co.cu)

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Recibido: 21 de septiembre de 2016

Aceptado: 12 de enero de 2017

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**Resumen:** En el presente trabajo se atiende el problema del enfoque político ideológico de las clases que se imparten en la Escuela municipal del Partido de Guantánamo, Cuba, con el objetivo de analizar algunos fundamentos didáctico-metodológicos que aseguran dicho enfoque en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje. Para su realización se emplearon como métodos teóricos el análisis y la síntesis, la inducción y la deducción, la hermenéutica y el análisis documental; y como empíricos la entrevista y la observación.

**Palabras clave:** Enfoque político-ideológico; Enseñanza-aprendizaje; Trabajo Metodológico; Escuela municipal del Partido

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**Abstract:** This paper discusses the issues related to the political and ideological perspective in the lessons taught at the Municipal School of the Communist Party in Guantánamo, Cuba, focusing on the analysis of some of the didactic and methodological grounds of the process of teaching and learning there. For the research several investigative methods were employed, such as the theoretic induction- deduction, analysis –synthesis, hermeneutical and documents' analysis; the empirical methods interview and observation were used as well.

**Keywords:** Political and ideological perspective; Teaching and learning; Methodological work; Municipal School of the Communist Party.

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## **Introduction**

The system of Schools of the Communist Party in Cuba has its antecedents. Before 1959, there were the schools of the Popular Socialist Party, the ideological academy lead by Abel Santamaria in the prison of Isla de Pinos, and the experience of the Movement July 26 in the Sierra Maestra,

which confirms the concern of the revolutionaries to maintain a constant political and ideological preparation of those who militate in Cuba.

On December 2, 1960, at the initiative of Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro, the School of Revolutionary Instruction (EIR in Spanish) was created to disseminate the foundations of the Marxist-Leninist ideology among directors and activists of all revolutionary organizations from the country. The place selected was a large mansion on a recreational estate west of the capital, now the Museum of Revolutionary Instruction.

Thus arose the National School of the Communist Party Níco López, and united and subordinated to this appear the Basic Schools of Revolutionary Education (EBIR in Spanish) that emerged from an initiative of the workers of the company "Rayonera" in Matanzas. Accordingly, the National System of Revolutionary Instruction (SIR) also started.

In December 1978, the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee agreed to convert provincial schools into university affiliates and the national school into a Special Higher Education Center in order to graduate in Social Sciences.

In several municipalities in the country, centers for political education and training (CESPI in Spanish) were created, and later extended to the rest. At the end of 1972, several of them already existed. These came to receive, years later, the name of Municipal School of the Party (EMP) that today identifies them. These centers direct their activity to the "ideological political education of directors and their vice- directors, militants and workers selected according to the political, economic, social and ideological demands of the nation and especially of the territory" (ESPÑL, 2015, p. 1), According to the needs that the country has before the changing world today (Palacio, Mariscal and Salomón, 2005, ESPÑL, 2014, Góngora and Fernández 2015).

This mission is in correspondence with the documents issued at the last two congresses - VI and VII - of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC), especially with the working objectives approved at the First National Conference, which reaffirms the need for political education, ideology and the role of the Party's school system in this work (PCC, 2012- 2016).

The above has stimulated that the documents issued by the High School of the Party Níco López offer to the subject of the political-ideological approach in the class a preponderant place. However, the observation of 36 classes and 12 other ideological and political training activities, the analysis of three reports issued by the Provincial Party School and four issued by the municipal bureau during the years 2014, 2015, 2016, interviews with 18 of the 24 activist teachers and six specialists in the field, the participation in six events, 14 meetings with teachers of the Provincial School of the Party and directors who teach, and 16 exchange spaces with a methodological character that have been carried out by the authors of this work, have shown that this approach does not count with the required quality, corroborated in 100 of the classes observed during these three courses.

From the above, the problem dealt with in this work refers to the treatment given to the ideological and political approach in the classes that are taught in the Municipal School of the Party, with the aim of analyzing some didactic-methodological foundations that ensure this approach in the teaching-learning process.

## **Development**

In the municipal schools of the Party an active Socialist pedagogy must be achieved, which fosters the development of knowledge and skills in students to successfully undertake a systematic and uninterrupted work of transformation, to defend the politics of partisan organization and to mobilize the masses in their fulfillment, consolidating at the same time values and convictions as faithful watchers of the principles of the nation.

This requires that the activist teachers who teach in these centers are politically, ideologically and methodologically prepared to ensure an adequate political and ideological approach to the contents of teaching, in accordance with the current conditions. Therefore, it is very important for the teaching-learning process the didactic-methodological assurance of this.

According to the authors of this study, the ideological and political characterization, the diagnosis of the teachers' learning needs, visits to classes by the principal and other members of the auxiliary leadership team of the municipal school of the Party contribute to determining the needs that teachers and students have both from the theoretical and the practical point of view.

The approach so far has provided elements that allow us to think about theoretical and methodological actions to achieve an appropriate political and ideological approach in the classes of the municipal school of the Party.

### **Ideological and political approach, transversal axis of the pedagogical process in the municipal school of the Party.**

The pillars of the ideological and political approach in the classes of the municipal school of the Party have been in the quality of the teaching discourse and in the political and ideological intentions of the same to the extent that it estimates the politics outlined and the use of the Party documents (ESPÑL, 2014, Góngora and Fernández, 2015). To this we add the introduction of essential aspects of the thinking of the heroes of the country's history and main leaders of the Cuban revolution, and the study and methodological use of the Marxist-Leninist theory.

On the other hand, it can be added to the above mentioned the education in values that has been referred to by dissimilar authors in Cuba, such as Fabelo (2003), López (2006), Vitier (2006), and the permanent stimulation to the link with the partisan and daily practice that is generated in this teaching.

The foregoing arguments constitute elements that reinforce the meaning of the ideological political approach of the class in the municipal school of the Party, which should not be left to spontaneity, but must be reinforced through collective and individual didactic and methodological work. The teacher should be an example and his speech should be aimed at converting the politics of the Party and the Cuban State into a way of thinking and acting.

In this sense, the didactic-methodological assurance of the political and ideological approach of the teaching-learning process presupposes the orientation of the methodological conception of all its activities towards the development of knowledge, skills and values that favor the social order it seeks, through the proper understanding of the defined policy and the active stimulus to a coherent behavior with the same by the group and of each of the groups and individuals involved in this activity (ESPÑL, 2014; Góngora and Fernandez, 2015).

It is, therefore, a question of methodologically thinking in terms of this approach, the internal relationship among all the components of the teaching-learning process (ESPÑL, 2014, Góngora

and Fernández 2015) and the didactic construction of each of them from the intentionality contained in formulation of objectives, the treatment of the knowledge system, how to use skills development, education in values, the transmission of ideological and political messages, the use of methods and means, in a way that is consistent with the developments demanded by politics, associated, for example, with the promotion of a change of mentality and attitudes, the decision on the organizational forms of teaching, and the educational function of learning assessment. (EPIL, 2014; 2015)

The preceding paragraph shows the elements that characterize an operative definition of the concept *ideological political approach* that should characterize the classes in the municipal schools of the Party, where the dialectical relation lies in:

-A political-ideological characterization that assumes in an integral way all the spheres of the development of the territory to the centers where it acts with teaching; The proper contextualization to the territory, sector and center where the teaching is given, of the teaching programs in response to the previous element; The creation of favorable conditions for meaningful learning as characterized by González (2002), using properly the diagnosis of learning needs and other frequent diagnostic routes that inquire about the perception, understanding and application of the policy in progress in each sector and work center where the content of each program is taught.

-A holistic approach to reality and political strategy in agreement with EPÑL (2014, 2015), the responsible use of Marxism-Leninism and the strategic thinking of the Cuban revolution in teaching approaches, which is subordinated to a orientation of the teaching activity whose content systematically tribute implicitly and explicitly to the theoretically informed understanding and with a sense of the historical moment of the policy defined and embodied in the documents of the Party in an active and reflexive way that favors the strengthening of the revolutionary commitment based in a correlation between the individual, the collective and the society.

- An explicit identification, intentional and based on the theoretical, political and ideological mentality and behaviors that are to be left behind (Castro, 2011) and those corresponding to the

new mentality that must be stimulated from the correlation between the individual, the collective and the society in the participatory dialogical character of partisan teaching.

- A correct articulation of theory with practice that adequately considers the learning needs of students that have been adequately localized from the correlation between the individual, the collective and the social, and which contributes to reinforcing the ideological and political messages from the content of teaching, favored also by the correct and creative use of the documents of the Party through several methodological variants. (EPIL, 2014, 2015)

- Conversion into learning situations of the events of partisan life, of the daily work center, and of the school in question; a methodological conception of the development of the coherent teaching-learning process (dialectical relation between all the components of the teaching-learning process) with the purposes of the defined partisan politics and the role of the students in the revolutionary practice areas in which they are involved, where the general and the singular of the policy are properly correlated (EPÑL, 2014, 2015).

### **Aspects that should be prepared by teachers**

In this work, it is considered that the previous presuppositions involve not only the system of knowledge to transmit from them, in a sufficiently well-founded way, the knowledge and ideological and political messages, but also the reinforcement of the work with skills that are substantial to the political work and ideology of the revolutionary directors in general, such as: explaining, arguing, interpreting, refuting, analyzing, synthesizing, exercising criticism and self-criticism, encouraging controversy, dialogue and productive listening, working in organized and truly cooperative groups, and all that properly using the documents of the Party. (Krapivin, 1983; PCC, 2012; ESPÑ, 2014; 2015)

From each of the organizational ways chosen and the different components of the teaching-learning process, especially the selected methods, we must contribute to:

- Visualizing participation, place and dialogic ways in educational processes: debate, reflection, problem- solving, etc.

- Foster democratic and free participation of students, and the development of collective intelligence from the right perspective.
- Update students on the progress of implementation and results of the implementation of the policy agreed in each territory, sector and center, as well as institutionally favor the systematic feedback of the corresponding structures of the Party from what taxes the process of teaching-learning in terms of perception and assessment of reality, as well as other issues of importance to the current practical political work of the organization referred to by ESPÑL (2014, 2015).
- The construction of modes of action from what is taught and learned according to the competencies of the Party school system and especially the municipal schools.

Class is the essential moment for political and ideological work, and must be optimally exploited. In order to evaluate its quality, there are indicators established by ESPÑL (2014) and analyzed in the methodological activities of the Party Provincial School, especially by the Board of Directors of the Provincial Party School "Israel Reyes Zayas" (2014, 2015, 2016).

Among these aspects:

- Demonstrate mastery of the content in relation to the objective (s) of the class and program, in particular as regards the Party's policy set forth in the relevant documents, the theoretical and practical, historical and current. Help students to explain these processes and ideals, and the states of practice that exist in this regard in the nation and the territory.
- Ensure that students learn as expected in class and program objectives through the relevant use of critical thinking.
- To achieve a correct political and ideological focus of the class whose visible result is the generation of revolutionary optimism on objective bases.

To achieve this, it is necessary that the teacher takes into account a solid methodological and didactic assurance.

The previous indicators have a close dialectical relationship, since they are emitted as elements that appreciate the essential aspects of the class and when evaluating them, we must consider how they complement each other.



For all the above, the director of the Municipal School of the Party, as part of his work content, is entrusted to prepare fully the activist teachers who will be part of the teaching Board of Directors of the Provincial School of the Party "Israel Reyes Zayas" ( 2014, 2015, 2016). This implies that these teachers are diagnosed and characterized and, in accordance with the results, plan actions to allow them to enhance their preparation.

**Proposal of actions and methodological considerations to be taken into account in the process of learning management, taking into account the political and ideological approach**

- Systematic updating of the political-ideological characterization in order to fully assume all spheres of development of the territory where it operates, the situation of teachers and collaborators of the Municipal School, and other aspects that the Municipal Bureau of the Party considered as prioritized.
- To bring to the teachers the systematic updating of the learning needs of directors, potential students, activist teachers, and work and study centers, which contribute to the contextualization of the different modalities of political-ideological training. This implies the timely contextualization of the teaching programs in line with the preceding elements.
- Creation of favorable conditions for meaningful learning as addressed by González (2002), using properly the diagnosis of learning needs (DNA in Spanish) determined by EPÑL and other frequent diagnostic routes, which inquire about knowledge, interpretation, perception, understanding and application of the policy in progress for each context and / or person. For that it is necessary to work on the preparation of the activist teacher with respect to the conduction of the classes from the holistic and integral approach of reality, and the political strategy, and its related problems.
- Application in debates and reflections of the Martian, Marxist-Leninist, and strategic thinking of the Cuban Revolution. Orientation of teaching activities, which content systematically tribute explicitly to the understanding of the historical moment with a theoretical base and the policy defined and embodied in the Party documents, in an active and reflexive way that favors the strengthening of the Revolutionary commitment, from the correlation between the individual, the collective and the society.

- Explicit and intentional identification in groups of people and individuals, and based on the theoretical, political and ideological, assess the mentality and behaviors that are necessary to stop doing, and those according to the new mentality that must be stimulated from the correlation between the individual, the collective and the social, from the labor of students and other social groups.
- Correct articulation of theory with practice that adequately assesses the learning needs of students that have been adequately localized from the correlation between the individual, the collective and the society, which contributes to reinforcing the ideological and political messages from the content of teaching. This should also be favored by the correct and creative use of the Party documents through various methodological routes and variants.
- Conversion into learning situations of the events of life in schools, work and study centers, in daily practice and partisanship within the groups of students who receive training. A methodological conception of the development of the coherent teaching-learning process (dialectical relation between all the components of the teaching-learning process) with the purposes of defined partisan politics and the role of students in the areas of revolutionary practice in which they are involved, where the general and the singular of politics are properly correlated (Krapivin, 1983).
- Development of information sessions for the updating of teachers on the life of the territory, particularly with regard to the progress of their political strategy, coordinated with the municipal bureaus of the Party, taking into account the interests of the educational programs and the Political and ideological work developed by these activists.
- Implementation of consultations for the preparation of students in processes of investigation in function of the reality with which they coexist, to transform it according to the politics of the Party and the Revolution.
- Development of meetings with teachers for discussion and reflection on selected issues related to the dynamics of national, provincial and municipal life, local history, patriotic and anti-imperialist traditions.

- Exchanges of experiences between activists in which the ways and means of giving treatment in teaching are exposed to the problems of their scope of action, difficulties that are presented and their causes, and how to solve them from the pedagogy.
- Study, in workshops and seminars, of different documents and articles by Marx, Engels and Lenin, José Martí, Fidel Castro, Ernesto Guevara, and texts such as the bulletin "Thinking and acting in Revolution".
- Development of practical workshops to demonstrate how to insert politics theory and ideology of the Cuban Revolution in the classroom or other organizational ways of teaching, with the aid of a political and ideological characterization of the territory as a tool for work.

It is recognized, then, that the objective of the municipal schools of the party is closely related to the change of mentality. This issue is deeply ideological and on it depend the practical realization of the transformations that have begun. For this reason Castro (2011) stated "... the first thing we are forced to change in the life of the Party is mentality, that as a psychological barrier, in my opinion, is what most work will take us overcome, being tied for long years to the same obsolete dogmas and criteria "(pp. 2-3).

Being in the classroom every day, hundreds of militants and political directors have a unique opportunity to realize the necessary change of mindset opportunity, which can be brought to them by activist teachers who engage consciously and reject dogmas, schemes, formalism, mediocrity and lack of creativity.

The efficacy, effectiveness and efficiency of an adequate political and ideological approach is measured first of all by the attitude that people assume, by their performance, but also by their criteria, their opinions, their conceptions, their capacity to assume combative behavior to fight corruption, crime and illegality.

The municipal schools of the party must contribute to the formation of a man capable of adopting an ethical and cooperative attitude towards life. Such a goal is not possible if there are no solidly prepared activist teachers. The ideological political approach is a tribute to this need.

## **Conclusions**

The analysis carried out on the criteria adopted by various authors contribute to enriching the foundations on the meaning of the ideological political approach in the party school system in Cuba and specifically in the municipal school.

The methodological actions proposed in this work constitute an incentive for the constant search for ways to favor the development of the process at this level of education, according to the learning needs of the subjects, and the purposes of the Party and the Revolution.

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