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# ***Redefinición de los conceptos método de enseñanza y método de aprendizaje***

## ***Redefinition of the concepts of teaching method and learning method.***

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**Resumen:** El propósito de este artículo es analizar diferentes definiciones de método de enseñanza y de aprendizaje aceptadas por la comunidad científica a partir del análisis de 17 fuentes documentales, con el objetivo de redefinir dichos términos. Esto permite distinguir el método de enseñanza de otros componentes operacionales del proceso de enseñanza con los cuales se confunde en algunas fuentes.

**Palabras clave:** Componentes operacionales; Método de enseñanza; Método de aprendizaje; Medios de enseñanza

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to analyze different definitions of both the teaching method and the learning method, accepted by the scientific community, based on the analysis of 17 documentary sources, with the objective of redefining the terms. The research allowed us to distinguish the teaching method from other operational components of the teaching process, a troublesome aspect which is misunderstood in some sources.

**Keywords:** Operational components; Teaching method; Learning method; Teaching means

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## **Introduction**

In the scientific literature on teaching methods it is common to find lists of methods that each author lists according to his experience and knowledge, which generates a great dispersion in their enumeration and classification. Here are some examples:

- Some authors do not use the same terms to refer to methods that look similar.
- Some denominations used for certain methods are similar to those used by others for different methods.
- There are authors who join some methods to others as a sample of their similarity, but these similarities are not shared by other authors.

- Some authors consider the academic forms of organizing the process as teaching methods.
- Most pedagogical positions consider the teaching method as a method of learning; even some authors use the dichotomous term teaching-learning method.

In view of these problems, the purpose of this article is to analyze and evaluate definitions of teaching method and learning method accepted by the scientific community describing the shortcomings that they present, with their subsequent redefinition. This made possible to distinguish the teaching method from other operational components of the teaching process with which some sources are confused, including learning methods.

## **Development**

In Cuba, the methods proposed by the German pedagogue Lothar Klingberg (1972) are emphasized in terms of the relation between teacher and student activity: expository, cooperative construction and independent work, which are cited by other authors who succeed him as Savin (1979), Álvarez (1996, 1999), Silvestre (2002), García (2002), Addine (2004), Caballero (2012), and used by teachers of all levels of education.

Labarrere and Valdivia (1991), Reyes and Pairot (2009), Alcoba (2012) add other classifications: inductive- deductive, analytic-synthetic, oral (discussion, conversation, narration, story), of sensory perception (showing and demonstrating), practical (use of written exercises and graphs, laboratory work, in the garden or plot, in the workshops, individual work), reproductive (explanatory-illustrative), productive (problem exposure, heuristic conversation, partial search or heuristics, research), among others.

Some authors do not use the same terms to refer to methods that look similar. For example, Savin (1979), according to the source of acquisition of knowledge, classified teaching methods in oral, visual and practical. However, Baránov, Rodríguez and López expressed that they are classified as oral, sensory perception and practical; Labarrere (1988), based on this same classification criterion, considers them to be oral, work with the textbook, intuitive and practical.

Something similar happens with the methods taking into account the peculiarities of the cognitive activity of the student. Neuner (1981) classifies them into reproductive (explicative-illustrative), and productive (problematic exposure, heuristic conversation, partial search and investigative), however, Labarrere and Valdivia (1991), on the other hand, classify them in explanatory- reproductive, problem exposure, partial or heuristic search, investigative.

On the other hand, some names used by Neuner (1981), Labarrere and Valdivia (1991), González (2012) for certain methods are similar to those used by Savin (1979), Álvarez (1999), Reyes and Pairot. Different methods (conversation, dialogue, cooperative construction, heuristic conversation, storytelling, use of written and graphic exercises, practical tasks, oral and practical exercises, laboratory work and graphics), or some methods seem to cover others, for example, exhibition seems to encompass narration, explanation, illustration, demonstration, argumentation, grounding.

Labarrere and Valdivia (1991), Silvestre (2002), Caballero (2012) join some methods with others as a sample of their similarity (analytic-synthetic, explicative-illustrative), but these similarities are not shared by Garcia (2002), and Addine (2004), who consider each method separately.

Ortega Loubon and César Franco (2010) consider the academic forms of organizing the process as teaching methods, namely lecture, workshop.

According to the studies carried out, the reasons for the diversity of these positions, the dichotomy teaching-learning method, and the inclusion of the academic forms of organizing the process as teaching methods are based on some misunderstandings that are presented in the definitions or concepts universally accepted of methods of teaching.

In analyzing the definition given by Klingberg (1972), when he expressed that the teaching method is "the main route taken by the teacher and the student to achieve the objectives set in the teaching plan, to teach or assimilate the content of that plan (...) "(p. 275), an error of conception is explicit. This emphasizes that the student uses to assimilate the content the ways used by the teacher to teach that content; and not in all cases it happens exactly, as it will be discussed below.

After Klingberg, Skatkin and Danilov (1974), cited by Reyes and Pairot, (2009), considered that: The teaching method involves the indispensable interrelation of teacher and student, during which the teacher organizes the student's activity on the object of study, and as a result of this activity, the pupil produces the process of assimilation of the content of the teaching. (p. 104). In this sense, Skatkin and Danilov explained two results that are achieved with the teaching method: the student master interrelation and assimilate the content. However, they do not accurately specify the routes that the student uses to achieve this assimilation.

According to Neuner (1981), the teaching method is "a system of teacher actions aimed at organizing the student's practical and cognitive activity with the objective of solidly assimilating the contents of education" (p. 320). Similarly to Skatkin, Neuner does not accurately state the routes used by the student

for the solid assimilation of the contents. The problems presented by these definitions, for the consideration of the authors of this work, can be generators of the dichotomous teaching-learning method used by later authors.

Gonzalez (2012) expressed:

A teaching method is the set of techniques and activities that a teacher uses in order to achieve one or more educational objectives, which makes sense as a whole and responds to a name known and shared by the scientific community.

The conditions implicit in this definition can also cause confusion, as there are other components of the process in which a set of activities is articulated in order to achieve educational objectives. Although it should be noted that in this definition one does not infer that the teaching method accrues in the learning method.

Finally, the universally standardized definitions of teaching methods have led to confusion among students of the subject. As illustrated by the examples discussed above, they have not been able to elucidate accurately the necessary and sufficient conditions for differentiating the teaching method from the learning method and other components such as teaching methods and academic forms of organization, which some authors mistake.

According to Álvarez de Zayas (1999)

(...) the form is dialectically related to the method, while the form addresses the external organization of the process, the method addresses the internal organization. The method is the essence of the form, this (the form) is the phenomenon of that (of the method); both are operational components of the process that express its dynamics (...). (p. 23)

The previous idea clarify the epistemological gap in the definitions on method of teaching, and to determine the necessary and sufficient conditions that conform the definitions of teaching method and method of learning.

On the one hand, the teaching method is the way or path to reach the goal, on the other hand, the method expresses the sequence of actions, activities and operations of the teacher to convey a content of teaching. Also, the teaching method attends to the internal organization of the teaching process, so it is inferred that this internal organization is expressed within a certain academic form of organization, which in turn address to the external organization of the process.

The method is not in any measure the academic form of organization of the teaching process, it is the essence of this, as Álvarez de Zayas stated in 1999. The nature of the academic form of organization is expressed through teaching methods that constitute the sequence of actions, operations or activities that distinguish it from other operational components of the teaching process.

Therefore, according to the considerations of the authors of this article, the teaching method is the sequence of actions, activities or operations of which it teaches that express the nature of the academic forms of organization of the process for the achievement of teaching objectives.

On the basis of this definition, classifications of teaching methods will be made taking into account different scientific criteria and avoiding confusion.

From these considerations it is also possible to redefine the concept of learning method as the sequence of actions, activities or operations of the learner for the acquisition and assimilation of teaching content with consequent changes in their system of knowledge and behavior.

Like the teaching method, the learning method addresses the internal structure of the academic form of organization but expresses itself inside and outside of it. For, according to Loubon and Franco (2010), "learning is the process by which organisms modify their behavior to adapt to the changing conditions of the environment that surrounds them. It is the main mode of adaptation of living beings (...) ". (p.1)

Therefore, school learning can be considered as a change in the nervous system that results from the student's experience inside and outside the educational context, and that causes lasting changes in his behavior and in his system of knowledge.

So, in an educational setting, the person who teaches can use oral methods, but the learner uses other methods to add, select, integrate, or retain and fix the content that is being transmitted. Thus the teaching method has one intention, and the learning method has another; the teaching method is projected towards one result, and the learning method is projected towards others.

Through the teaching method, the teacher transmits information; through the learning method, the learner processes and integrates that information or part of it that is useful or meaningful to him. In the teaching method, processes of externalization are expressed; and in the learning process internalization processes associated with the appearance of new synopses or reorganization of the existing ones, connections are added, others are modified or the useless are eliminated, combinations are tested and the best are selected, processes of addition and subtraction generate content.

So, to the extent that a teacher uses a system of teaching methods to transmit content, the student uses another system of learning methods to internalize what is useful and meaningful of this content of teaching.

For example, a teacher explains a teaching content, which implies that it relies on other methods such as explanation, illustration, demonstration, argumentation, grounding, narrative, description; and in the same measure that the teacher's actions take place, the student uses other methods that allow him to internalize those contents that impress him, are useful and significant. In that case, it can support in the notes taking, the creation of schemes, conceptual maps, models, summaries, among others.

Finally, when the teacher exposes, explains, illustrates, demonstrates, argues, grounds, the student summarizes, models, adds, selects, associates, integrates, eliminates, combines.

In this situation, it is wrong to also consider the dichotomy teaching-learning method, since in different documentary sources (Klingberg, 1972; Savin, 1979; Neuner, 1981; Labarrere and Valdivia, 1991; García, 2002; Addine, 2004; Caballero, 2012) this term refers to the methods used by the teacher for the achievement of teaching objectives, teaching methods are considered as teaching-learning methods. They have an intention, with a perspective and are projected to an outcome; and that of learning has other intentions, other perspectives, and is projected to obtain other results.

For the previously analyzed, pedagogical conceptions should be corrected regarding teaching and learning methods; because the teaching-learning process is a complex process, it poses an important challenge for the teacher due to the presence of convergent and divergent mechanisms used by the different actors of the process to transmit teaching contents on the one hand and assimilate that content on the other.

## **Conclusions**

The definitions of teaching methods that have hitherto been universally standardized have not been able to elucidate precisely the conditions necessary and sufficient to differentiate the teaching method from the learning method.

The teaching method is the sequence of actions, activities or operations of the teacher, which expresses the nature of the academic forms of organization of the teaching process.

The learning method is also a sequence of actions, activities or operations of the learners that allow them to process and integrate the information or part of it that is useful or meaningful to them, to acquire and assimilate the teaching content with consequent changes in their system of knowledge and behavior;

regarding the internal structure of the academic form of organization, but expressing itself inside and outside of it.

Teaching methods and learning methods have different intentions, different perspectives and are projected towards different results.

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