

Evolución e importancia de la educación cívica en Cuba

Evolution and importance of civic education in Cuba

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Resumen: La educación cívica constituye una de las prioridades de la Revolución y del sistema de educación en Cuba, pues tiene su basamento en las normas de conducta y convivencia de las nuevas generaciones. Es propósito de este ensayo abordar la importancia de la educación cívica en la formación ciudadana de los educandos y del pueblo en general.

Palabras clave: Civismo; Educación cívica; Formación ciudadana; Formación de valores

Abstract: Civic education is one of the priorities of the Revolution and the educational system in Cuba, since it is based on norms of conduct and coexistence for the new generations. The objective of this essay is to analyze aspects related to the importance of civic education in citizen education for students and the Cuban people in general.

Keywords: Civism; Civic education; Citizen Education; Education of values

In the current conditions of development of the pedagogical profession, the mode of action implies the formation of qualities linked to independence, the tolerant spirit in the face of divergences and viewpoints, the capacity for dialogue and reflection, the awareness of educational problems, which should be the result of adequate vocational training based on the combination of individual and social interests.

These considerations regarding the relationship between the professional role of the teacher and the demands of his training process, highlight the importance of the formation and development of a system of citizen values that contribute to form a man who not only aspires as professional to the conscious domain of his specialty but to feel love for the pedagogical work, ie, by the formation of the new generations.

This human dimension of professionalism is manifested in the commitment to society in the spirit of cooperation, solidarity and fellowship, courtesy, respect, loyalty to principles,

optimism and willingness to face the tasks, responsibility, common sense, own criteria and proper formal education habits.

In this way, the relationships between the mode of pedagogical action and the citizen formation in the process of professionalization concrete in an important plane the relations individual society, that not only have political and juridical implications, but also social, economic and cultural.

Thus, to form young people with correct manners of education, courtesy, who know how to behave in every moment and place, who know the Constitution, the national symbols, the homeland history, the ideology of the Cuban revolution, acquires special significance for Cuban educators to face the challenges that the 21st century poses. The main goal is to achieve the formation of the new generations as faithful followers of the work of the Revolution.

For the Cuban school, educate in civics means to develop in the learners the capacity to capture or perceive social problems as their own and to join their solution with efficiency and awareness of their duties and citizens ' rights in a historical concrete community, which acts as a regulator of citizen coexistence, morally and legally based.

Civic is a creation of the advanced bourgeois social thought of the eighteenth century which took care of making it universal, but Marxism, when demystifying Capitalism discovered the fallacy of the bourgeois conception of the education of man and of the citizen posing a humanist educational alternative, diametrically opposed to pedagogical reformism because in revealing the inhuman essence of the system, the education of man acquires other dimension.

Understanding the essence of civic knowledge leads to addressing some essential theoretical budgets for analysis, within which there is ethics, in which object we find morality, moral values and civic values in general.

Since ancient times, man thought about his place and role in the world and the necessity of education. This was dedicated to ethics that was transformed into a branch of philosophy or a philosophical science that studies morality in its integrity and human behavior in different

areas of action. In spiritual life morality constitutes an integrating element that penetrates the remaining ideological and evaluative forms of human consciousness, which manifests itself as a fundamental premise, the end of the attitude and the conduct that men assume before the world in which they live.

An expression that characterizes the act of moral behavior is the relationship that the individual establishes between his ends and the means he employs to achieve them. The attitude to be assumed has a certain meaning, good or bad, harmful or beneficial, which in turn will provoke a reaction of acceptance or rejection, which constitutes an external mechanism of control and moral regulation.

The deepest essence of the existence of morality is in the need to match the individual interest with the interest of the group or with the social interest, so that each one does not interfere in the achievement of common aims and objectives, that or other correct behavior involved, adding to an interior satisfaction (sociological aspect).

Morality as a complex phenomenon plays an important role in the process of developing citizen consciousness. Within the structure and functions of morality, values occupy a central place as elements of consciousness. These values are always presented in a dichotomy and counterposition with the antivalues, conforming a scale of values at social level (with objective character) and in the individual (with subjective character).

The resulting value of moral activity encompasses a broad field of men's attitudes, actions and behaviour, as well as the process of moral education of individuals that occurs in the context of moral relations.

It is in the moral activity where moral values are conformed or developed at the level of the moral conscience of the individuals and, in turn, it is in it where the values built internally by the expression of feelings and actions are objective or concretely done.

In relation to man, values constitute the objects of his interest, and as far as his conscience is concerned, he plays the role of daily reference points in material and spiritual activity. Therefore, the subjective production or assimilation by individuals of the values of a

particular society is produced on the basis of the following interrelated components, according to Regina Venet:

- Affective-volitional: It covers the psychological sphere of feelings, emotions, intuition, motives, tenacity, firmness and especially the will, which is subdued under the control of the individual moral conscience.
- Cognitive: from its conception of the world, from the knowledge of the culture of the time, from the current morality, indispensable premise but not enough for the construction of a scale of values.
- Ideological orientation: It is expressed in the living conditions, the character of the individual-society relations and the interests of the different classes.
- The experiences and moral experience accumulated in practice: it occurs in the course of life, and as a result of attitudes and behaviors in the context of human relationships. (Venet, 2003, p. 56)

Morality and values transcend the sphere of emotional and affective to get into the ideological sphere, only in its close unity, the psychological and the ideological can generate attitudes of understanding of the facts and phenomena (the cognitive), of motivation, feeling and meaning (in the affective volitional) and commitment to the practical demands of our society and the epoch (the ideological).

The development of values and citizen formation constitute the central nucleus of civic education, a process that begins when the need for proper conduct is understood on the basis of a system of prevailing values.

Educating in civics, in the context of civil education, means:

- Discovering the need for behavior in and for the collectivity.
- Assimilate knowledge, values and practical skills that allow to act in the legal and moral limits of the time.
- Offer alternative means and spaces for the deployment of this capacity.

There are three values that, because of their status as invariants of citizen behavior, act as integrators of the system of values that characterize civics: social identity, civic responsibility, and citizen participation.

"Identity as a support structure reaffirms the sense of belonging to a group, implying commitment, motivation, participation in collective projects as their own" (Silva, 1999, p. 46). The formation of a strong identity constitutes the nucleus of civicism, so it develops values such as modesty, dignity, simplicity, solidarity, patriotism, as well as habits of social coexistence such as courtesy, respect and tolerance.

The responsibility is hereby defined as:

The attitude assumed before the work that is done and by which we answer to the others. It is expressed from the moment that we assume the obligation to achieve results, including the moral and legal content of the consequences of actions. (Silva, 1999, p. 20)

The foundation of identity and responsibility shows how civic attitudes in the present conditions must be accompanied by the competence of the individual to participate actively in the tasks of society. It follows that citizen participation is a process of active participation in the different phases of decision-making processes in a systematic and effective way.

The civic formation of the learners constitutes a necessity because of the impact that in the personal and social life of the man have the civic obligations, which are a reflection of the very complexity of the relations between men in the tangible world.

The process of citizen formation begins when one understands the necessity of a correct citizen conduct from the formation of interests and motivations that move the citizen behavior on the basis of a system of values that, in quality of integral regulators of the behavior, characterize the behavior and the citizen activity in a given society.

The components of civility as synthetic values of civic activity integrate the fundamental directions of the process of citizenship formation that develops in the school and in the society. In each of them the system of values that regulates the coexistence and the citizen action in a conscious way is reflected.

In the central theses of Marxism in relation to the education of man not only are the methodological elements for the critical analysis of the education in general and the teaching of the civic in particular stated, but also the bases of a revolutionary conception of the civic education.

Civic education in Cuba dates back to the late nineteenth century, and its conception in this period responded to the annexationist interests of the United States. The interests of the bourgeoisie and the ethical principles of that class were expressed in the programmes, textbooks, workbooks and other school materials. However, there was no shortage of attempts to achieve an application-based teaching to specific life situations, despite the adverse conditions that existed.

Although not with the same dynamism as in the old world, in the eighteenth century Cuban important cultural events occurred, and that reflect the process of differentiation of the colony with respect to the metropolis. The cultural and ideological expressions through which the creole ideology was materialized demonstrates the existence of a way of thinking of patriotic and deeply ethical content.

Maximum exponents of the development achieved in this direction are Félix Varela (1788 – 1853) and José Martí (1853 – 1895) who, with their personal and intellectual dedication, laid the foundations for an educational conception of the Cuban man. Varela, from the duty of Cubanism, drew up the first essay of civic instruction made by a Cuban pedagogue, which enabled the dissemination of the theoretical foundations of the political practice of young creoles and the instrument for the interpretation of the reality of the colonial society.

Martí, on the other hand, acted with a political strategy for obtaining of the independence that contemplates a more finished and integral social project than that of the previous thinkers, in particular their ideas on the education of the man. He fought for a recognized republican- democratic education, deeply ethical, with democratic methods that guaranteed the preparation of man for life. In this democratic education and for democracy, the knowledge and the observance of the legal order of the representative institutions of the Republic and its functioning by the future citizens of the moral republic, goes beyond what

was observed at the time; for him education was to be integral, propitiating the full emancipation of the citizen.

Both intellectuals are forerunners of a civic education based on the vital interests of the Cuban Nation. The introduction of the teaching of civic instruction (1899) by the American military occupants aimed to promote the admiration of the model of modernity and progress that offered to the detriment of the patriotic feelings cultivated by the most distinguished Cubans. It establishes the civic education for the elementary level and the second teaching by the military Order No. 267 of June 30, 1900 according to the pedagogical criteria of the Doctor Enrique José Varona.

Since then, it has been attempted to explain the "democratic life" in which citizens should be educated. Civic instruction should give continuity to the patriotic ideas of Varela and Martí, and it was a challenge to the nascent Cuban pedagogy that had to be argued didactically from the reality of a mediated republic.

During the decade of the 50s the progressive intelligentsia retook the central positions of reaffirmation of the national antimperialist values, a popular movement led by Fidel Castro Ruz vindicated the utopia of Martí marking the birth of a new conception of morality and civicism characterized by its humanist, popular, democratic content generating new values. Civic was used by progressive pedagogical thinking to interpret the Cuban reality with a Martí's approach, turning the classrooms into tribunes of denunciation of the social ills and sowing in the youth the purest ethical and civic feelings that germinated with force in the generation of the Centenary. The history of Cuba and the Martí thought become one of the fundamental supports of the civic education in Cuba.

The Cuban revolution, the most important political, economic and social event in the American twentieth century, created the objective conditions for initiating profound reforms in the educational sector, aimed at raising the quality of education and education at all levels of teaching.

The aforementioned educational revolution was founded on the advanced pedagogical thought developed so far. On this basis arose and prospered a conception of citizen

education of a social nature where they participate, in addition to family and educational institutions, social and mass organizations, and the state.

In the new national system of education does not appear civic as a subject, but the ethical values based on the ideas of Martí according to the interests of the working class were retained as educational objectives in all subjects.

During these years the Formal Education Manual was first edited in 1976, prepared by the working group created by Ministerial resolution No. 277/24 of April 1976 and approved in September that same year. Aimed at educators, learners, parents and mass organizations, it contained the norms of conduct indispensable for better social coexistence and the formation of values, with emphasis on the strength of the example to instill behavioral habits in children and young people, and a greater demand and proper school organization.

It was a document that should be socialized at all times and spaces of interaction with learners. In the first moments it played an important role, it became a reference document for the teachers and was reimpressed three times, updating their content depending on the demands of the social development of the country. In its content were conjugated aspects that had been treated in civic programs in former times, but were not systematized.

In the national education seminars (1984 and 1986) and in the interventions of the then Minister of Education, José Ramón Fernández, there were assessments of compliance with the objectives of the handbook in daily practice. Later, to materialize the contents derived from the theoretical interpretation of the Cuban reality, several subjects were created and included in what was called the political-ideological cycle.

The political life of a country (fourth grade, primary education), Fundamentals of political Knowledge (in 9th grade, basic secondary education), Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism (11th and 12th, pre-university education), aimed to strengthen the educational work of the school, but the density of contents and the non-adequacy to the interests and needs of the students caused that the stated objectives were not fulfilled.

The formation of habits of behavior, good manners and norms of social coexistence were declared among the educational objectives of the different programs, it was ground of all and did not receive in practice the due attention, therefore its weakening over time.

In several interventions, Fidel drew attention to one of the most complex problems of the school's educational work, and evaluated formal education as part of the ideology of the Revolution.

The third Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba completed the analysis initiated in the first Congress valuing the role of education in citizen training, and the XII National Seminar (1989) criticized the work developed by the subjects of the politic-ideological cycle, seriously committed to the formative aspect of the students.

During the 90s the issue was the subject of debate between different researchers and education professionals, as well as the need for an educational change in the Cuban school. Its genesis is found in the transformations that at the world level were presented in all orders, with a profound economic and social impact in our country that was reflected in education and its levels of quality.

Change is recognized as a necessity, which was part of the continuous improvement process initiated by the Ministry of Education since previous decades. It was established the need to solve three fundamental contradictions: massiveness-quality, unity-diversity, centralization-decentralization, in function of achieving increase the levels of educational quality.

The analysis of these contradictions led to clarify their solution from the decentralization of the educational policy in order to attend the diversity that imposes on the system the different realities of each school from the community where it inserts, the characteristics of the students and school groups and the professional level of their pedagogical community. The essence of the change projected and applied lies in the transformation of the socio-pedagogical process directed from the school, to change the styles and conceptions of the teaching work within the educational system.

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