



## ARTÍCULO ORIGINAL

### Collective of Speech Therapists: a view from the initial and permanent training of these specialists

### El colectivo logopédico. Una mirada desde la formación inicial y permanente del logopeda

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** the implementation of the teaching staff of speech therapists is a necessity in order to take actions to the opening of the courses of studies and continuing training of professionals in the Logopedics studies.

**Objective:** to analyze the significance of the teaching staff of speech therapist for the opening of the study courses and continuing training of these specialists.

**Methods:** a pedagogical study in which theoretical, empirical and statistical methods were used to collect, interpret and process information related to the subject.

**Results:** the study revealed the significance of the teaching staff of speech-language therapists for the initial and permanent training of the speech-language specialists through the accomplishment of the following functions: organizational, teaching-methodological, development and research, which favors the improvement of the mother tongue, prevention, diagnosis and comprehensive speech-language along with communication disorders.

**Conclusions:** a didactic-methodological strategy was implemented that identifies the staff of speech therapists as a subsystem or basic organizational level of the specialty.



**MeSH:** COMMUNICATION; STRATEGIES; LANGUAGE; PROFESSIONAL TRAINING; DISORDERS; STUDENTS.

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## RESUMEN

**Introducción:** el funcionamiento del colectivo logopédico constituye una necesidad para dar respuesta a la formación inicial y permanente de los profesionales de la carrera Logopedia.

**Objetivo:** analizar la pertinencia del colectivo logopédico para la formación inicial y permanente del logopeda.

**Métodos:** estudio de corte pedagógico donde se utilizaron métodos del nivel teórico, empírico y estadístico que permitieron recopilar, interpretar y procesar la información relacionada con la temática.

**Resultados:** el estudio reveló la pertinencia que presenta el colectivo logopédico para la formación inicial y permanente del logopeda mediante el cumplimiento de las funciones: organizativa, docente-metodológica, superación e investigación, lo que favorece el desarrollo de la lengua materna, la prevención, el diagnóstico y la atención logopédica integral de los trastornos del lenguaje y la comunicación.

**Conclusiones:** se implementó una estrategia didáctico-metodológica que identifica el colectivo logopédico como subsistema o nivel organizativo de base de la especialidad de Logopedia.

**DeCS:** COMUNICACIÓN; ESTRATEGIA; LENGUAJE; CAPACITACIÓN PROFESIONAL; TRASTORNOS; ESTUDIANTES.

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## INTRODUCTION

Advances in science enforce the university to be in constant improvement, committed to solving professional problems. This reality has impacted educational policies, cultures, practices and goals for 2021, according to the program "*Education for All*", a movement promoted by UNESCO, ratified to 2030, which addresses problems related to education.

For this reason, governments and international associations include in their legislation the Ninth General Goal. Strengthen the teaching profession that reflects the specific goal No. 22: improve the initial training of the teaching staff and the specific goal No. 23: promote the continuous training and development of the professional teaching career. <sup>(1)</sup>

Initial and permanent training has been the issue of study of many authors, who consider that this imposes new challenges on professional pedagogical activity from and for educational practice, through scientific research into the solution of the existing problems and the interest in emerging priorities. <sup>(2,3)</sup>

This training in the profession of speech-therapist is carried out as a continuous system that begins at the undergraduate level, it is complemented from the first to fifth academic year with the main integrating subject: Working and Research Training, through the working practice: (systematic, and concentrated), which favors the articulation of the theoretical and practical foundations as well as the development of professional skills in educational institutions, in the performance of the systemic actions to the accomplishment of the staff of speech therapy and reaches its greatest development in the postgraduate training.

The success of the development of the students' mother tongue and the prevention of language and communication disorders depends on the adequate initial and continuing training of speech-therapist, which favors an inclusive quality of education for all.

This situation requires the grounding of professors not only in the order of academic knowledge but also in the order of didactic approach. <sup>(4)</sup> This allows professional performance to be expressed in scientific-technological, ethical, humanist and social commitment training.

It is for this reason that the teaching staff, as the one in charge of carrying out the methodological work inherent to its substantive processes, has as one of its essential features, a conception with a systemic approach and its implementation in the different organizational levels of the teaching-learning process.<sup>(5)</sup>

For the achievement of this objective it is indispensable the creation and the functioning of the staff of speech-therapist, this constitutes a necessity to give answer to the initial and permanent training of the professionals of Logopedics that as a process, it is in charge of that the logopedic assistance which is carried out in the different levels of educations, that is materialized when fulfilling its object of work, the way and sphere of action, the field of action and its functions. <sup>(6)</sup>

It is for these reasons that this research is aimed at analyzing the relevance of the speech therapist collective for the initial and continuing training of speech therapists.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

The collective term comes from the Latin *collectivus*, it is that which belongs or is relative to a group of individuals, a social group where its members share certain characteristics or work together for the accomplishment of a common objective. <sup>(7)</sup>

How did the Teaching staff/collective of Speech Therapists come about?

The logopedic collective has its foundations in the work of Professor Carriles, (1975-1976) who had graduated as a master therapist in Deaf-pedagogy. The work arises as a response to a social problem in the province of Pinar del Río, due to the need of counseling to the speech-therapy work, by means of methodological planning.

It is in the academic year 1989-1990 that the Director of Special Education, during a visit of methodological help to the Carlos Marx Special School, established that the speech therapist professor in Logopedics will support the specialized visits to Minas de Matahambre, San Juan y Martínez and Consolación del Sur Municipalities.

In 1990, the Department of Special Education was created in Pinar del Río Municipality, from then on, the Special Education methodologists attended, the first specialty of Deaf-pedagogy and the second one, Speech-therapy; both strengthened the interdisciplinary and intersectorial relationships with the Ministry of Public Health, the National Association for Deaf People (ANSOC), National Association for the Blind (ANCI) and the Cuban Association for People with Disabilities (ACLIFIM).

This year an intensive preparation of all of the speech therapists at the municipal level is carried out, and on the basis of the diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses, it is decided to create the Teaching staff of Speech Therapists by levels of educations: preschool, primary and special, but this first idea fragments the comprehensive vision of the preventive work system, so its members are unified not by levels of education but by a community approach.



Initially, two collectives were created, guided by speech therapists with extensive experience of work into the specialty, according to the people's councils in which the educational institutions were located: a first collective and a second collective. It is significant that, from their creation to the present day, those responsible for both groups carry out their functions with excellent results.

In 2010, the third speech and language group of specialists was created and nowadays is still in existence.

It is considered that the Teaching staff of Speech Therapists: it is the basic organizational level of the speech-language professionals who, by means of a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach, contributes, supported by the categories, principles and laws of didactics, to the quality of the initial and permanent training process of the teaching staff in the accomplishment of the following functions: organizational, teaching-methodological, training and research for the development of the mother tongue, prevention, diagnosis and comprehensive speech-language pathology care of special educational needs associated or not with language and communication disorders.

The main objective of this group is to guarantee the preparation of the graduate speech therapist and who is in training in the linguistic, medical, psychological, pedagogical and didactic basics for the process of comprehensive speech therapies for children, adolescents and young people in educational, health and environmental institutions. (Fig. 1)



**Fig.1** Methodological group during the accreditation process of Speech Therapist studies

## **Laws that rule the conception of the work of the Teaching staff of Speech Therapists**

Basic law of communication

Law on the unity between stimulation of the development of the mother tongue, prevention, diagnosis and comprehensive speech and language therapy for special educational needs whether or not they are associated with language and communication disorders.

Law on the Unity of Language and Communication

## **Principles that rule the conception of the work of the Teaching staff of Speech Therapists.**

Principle of interdisciplinary and intersectorial work: it favors the relationship established among the Teaching staff of Speech Therapists and the specialists from the Diagnostic and Orientation Centre (DOC) and the teachers of the different preschool (promoters of the program "Educate your child"), primary, secondary (psycho-pedagogues, computer teachers, physical education teachers, art instructors, etc.) for comprehensive speech-language care.

It coincides with other researches <sup>(8)</sup> that relate the term interdisciplinary work with the teaching-learning process, in that it does not constitute a spontaneous fact where the orderly and conscious action of those who are going to participate is essential and in a systemic way that addresses all areas of development.

Intersectorial work is assumed as the participation of specialists in the health area (family doctors, logo-phoniatricians, orthodontists, maxillofacial specialists, psychologists, psychiatrists, neurologists, physical-therapists and others), in the area of physical culture and sports, as well as in the area of culture in general and other community personnel.

The work of the speech-language pathologist group leads to the establishment of a dialectic unit between interdisciplinary and intersectorial works, since the levels of specialization are so diverse and complex that they determine the relations of interdependence and complementarities among the subjects needed for the comprehensive speech-language pathology care for children and their families and specialists from different sectors (MINSAP, MINED, INDER, among others), i.e., between interdisciplinary and intersectorial work.<sup>(9)</sup>

Principle of personalized and comprehensive character: it presupposes knowing the individual characteristics of each speech therapist professor, their strengths and weaknesses in the development of knowledge, habits, and professional pedagogical skills related to the professional model of the speech therapist studies, such as characterizing, diagnosing, modeling and directing, among others.

Principle of contextualized character: it lies in the design of a strategy in connection with reality, with the regularities of the collection of the identified problems of the collective and the design of a system of coherent actions for speech therapists in training and graduates, which allows an integral speech therapist attention to language and communication disorders and transforms each one of the teaching units.

Principle of the developing character: it consists of knowing the current level of development of each speech therapist and providing them knowledge and application of social and instrumental mediation instruments: strategies, communication systems, options, resources, supports, aids, instruments and signs; in order to promote their subsequent level of development, which favors the passage from the cultural development of psychic functions superior to the inter-psychological to the intra-psychological levels.

The Teaching staff of Speech Therapists is made up of graduate speech-language pathologists who act as university tutors for the speech-language pathologists in training, who work in the different levels of education and teaching units belonging to associate areas.

The head of the teaching staff of speech-language pathologist works as a teacher tutor of the students in training, who is also a leader in scientific, didactic-pedagogical experience, and a bearer of human qualities and attitudes that allow him/her to carry out this responsibility. The head of this teaching staff is the main authority of the logopedic collective. This person is subordinated to the director of the teaching unit where he/she works and coordinates the

actions with the head of the department or Methodologist at the Municipal level. His/her work is essential for the achievement of the objectives established for the speech-language pathologist who teaches in initial and ongoing training, through organization, teaching-methodological work, development and research, as well as the systematic control of the actions designed in the strategy.

It is essential that the university and the Municipal Direction of Education guarantee the stability of the head of the Teaching staff of Speech Therapists and offer to them, diverse ways of improvement, tutorials that allow them to apply the scientific method in the solution of the general and specific problems of Logopedics, for the development of the awareness to those disorders related to language and the communication when using information and communication technologies, the use of bibliography in English language and the publication of those research-works that respond to the solution of the territorial problems.

### **Functions that demonstrate the relevance of the Teaching staff of Speech Therapists** **Organizational function:**

- Organizes and plans the work of the speech and language therapists, to have personal and professional documents of speech and language therapists who are graduate and those in training, in their link with the university and the context for the design of a comprehensive speech and language therapies for special educational needs whether or not they are associated with language disorders and communication through the different modalities of care.

Characterization of speech therapists: general data, academic rank, graduation year, interest modality, scientific degree, teaching rank.

Characterization of students in training: general data, academic year, teaching unit, special pedagogical reserve, teaching-assistant student, teaching tutor, research topic.

- Compilation of information.
- Reports of logopedic study and assessment of the periods.
- Pre-professional practice agreements between the Special Education. The Department and the teaching unit.
- Notifies the reception of the database with the documents received on the part of the university.
- Guarantees the rotation of the students according to the academic year by the Centers of Diagnosis and Orientation.
- Facilitates the exchange with the management structure, tutors, students and directors of the teaching unit.
- Signs the characterization of the students who attend the teaching units.
- Together with the university, draws up the student's individual development plan in which, according to their individual needs, the actions, deadlines, responsible persons and ways of controlling the activity in practice are defined.
- Supervises the grounding of the practice records or diary.
- Guarantees the documentation in support of the Teaching-Learning Accreditation Process.
- Performs the survey of the problem collection and designs the actions of the methodological plan.
- Monthly meeting of the staff heads for the different professional problems and the design of the intervention actions.

**Teaching-methodological function:** for the development of professional pedagogical skills supported in the categories, principles and laws of didactics.

- Supports the program of visits to the teaching units.
- Arranges the methodological work plan.
- Guarantees the didactic-methodological grounding of its members with emphasis on graduate follow-up.
- Participates in the pedagogical delivery process.
- Intervenes in the process of diagnosis of the preschool grade.
- Collaborates in carrying out methodological assistance and inspection visits.
- Participates in teaching practice assets at the studies level.
- Participates in Speech Therapy meetings and Scientific Methodological Seminars.
- Plans methodological meetings.
- Tutoring of students in training.
- Models together with the speech therapists and students in training the searching and the system of speech therapy classes.
- Advises speech therapists and students for the design and redesign of speech therapy strategies, according to the results of the diagnosis and its continuous monitoring of children, adolescents, young people and / or adults who are trained in different modalities of care.
- It provides guidance to the family and teachers on the basis of comprehensive speech therapy.
- Facilitates interdisciplinary relationships: (psycho-pedagogic, physical education teachers, art instructor, computer teacher, specialists from the Diagnostic and Orientation Center) and intersectorial: (family doctor, speech therapists, gastroenterologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, neurologists, geneticists, social worker and associations, among others).

Teaching staff of Speech Therapists gives advice to the Associations of people with disabilities:

- Association of Physically Handicapped Motors (ACLIFIM), Association of the Deaf (ANSOC), and Association of the Blind (ANCI) for comprehensive educational care.
- It advises the promoters of the National Program "Educate your child" (NPECH).
- It prepares the students in the bases for the comprehensive exam.
- Builds up moral values as a premise of Child Education.
- Encourages through personal example the use and mastery of the mother tongue.
- Uses information and communication technologies for speech therapy.
- Provides professionals with the theoretical and methodological foundations of educational inclusion as a way of equalizing people with disabilities.
- Presents books of the specialty and those that enrich the development of a comprehensive cultural level.
- Transmits to the recent graduate the specific professional approaches of action related to his or her job.
- Supports the use of didactic resources and increases communication strategies regarding the assistance of children, adolescents and young people with language and communication disorders.

### **Research and development function:**

- Promotes the development of scientific research in the solution of the problems of the territory and to improve the grounding of specialists in the knowledge of science.

- Selects, accomplishes, controls and gives specialized follow-up to the case studies to be evaluated by the Diagnostic and Orientation Center as well as different specialties of the Ministry of Public Health.
- Advising scientific groups according to lines and research projects.
- Tutoring of Courses and Diploma works, along with the support of awarded works in scientific meetings, Forum of Science and Technology.
- Determines the needs to instruct the speech therapists supported by the collection of problems and proposes possible ways of solution.
- Participates in the researches that are carried out in the community.
- Guarantees the celebration of Speech Therapy Day in the territory and other significant dates related to the specialty (autism awareness week, world day of voice, day of the disabled, day of speech impediment, world day of Mother Language, among others)
- Ensures the participation of its members in tasks of high social impact. (Genetic and Psychosocial Study)

Introduction and generalization of the results, development and research, as well as advanced pedagogical experiences in the teaching practice and in the promotion of the educational process.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The Teaching staff of Speech Therapists constitutes a necessity of the university-society link as a response to the initial and permanent training of the professionals of Logopedics committed to the solution of professional problems by means of the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach and of the functions: organizational, teaching-methodological, development and research.

The article constitutes a guide to support the work of the National Commission for the studies of speech therapy specialty, speech therapist professors, pedagogues, medical personnel, family and community; in the knowledge of the history of the materialization of the Teaching staff of Speech Therapists, definition, laws, principles and functions, which favors the development of the mother tongue, prevention, diagnosis and comprehensive speech therapies for special educational needs associated or not with language disorders and communication.

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## **Conflict of interest**

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest.

## **Authors' contribution**

The authors contributed equally to the design of the study.

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