

Didactic Guide of Curricular Adaptation Aimed to Students with Mild Cognitive Impairments

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Abstract

The main objective of the current proposal is the implementation of interactive strategies in the English subject through curricular adaptations in the micro planning aimed to students with mild cognitive disabilities included in the regular education at La Providencia Primary School. A quantitative-qualitative research was carried out with the techniques of observation, interview and survey aimed to a population of 21 students with mild cognitive impairments, the principal of the Institution, the psychologist and 2 English Teachers of fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and ninth grade. The results revealed that the English teachers do not identify learners with cognitive disabilities, they do not know the age difference among a regular student and a student with this type of difficulties; Besides, the teachers do not know what components must be adjusted in the micro-curricular planning. The principal and the psychologist of the Primary school were interviewed, and an observation form was applied for two weeks. After obtaining the results, the researcher proposed to the English teachers two groups of interactive strategies. The first group belongs to twelve general strategies with objectives and specific details through lesson plans with the curricular adaptation in the performance skills criteria and success indicators of evaluation. Furthermore, specific strategies were introduced through worksheets with the purpose of developing some content of the school year. Finally, it can conclude that the impact of the interactive strategies in students with mild cognitive impairments were meaningful in different fields such as Pedagogical, social, psycholinguistics and economic.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Curricular Adaptation, Strategies, Linguistics skills.

Resumen

El principal objetivo de la actual investigación es la implementación de estrategias interactivas en la asignatura de inglés a través de adaptaciones curriculares a la planificación micro dirigido a estudiantes con discapacidad cognitiva leve incluidos a la educación regular en la Unidad Educativa de Educación Básica “La Providencia”. Se llevó a cabo una investigación cuantitativa-cualitativa con la aplicación de las técnicas de la observación, entrevista y encuesta. La encuesta se aplicó a dos docentes de inglés de cuarto, quinto, sexto, séptimo y noveno año de educación general básica y 19 tutores. Los resultados revelaron que los profesores de inglés no identificar a estudiantes con discapacidad cognitiva, los maestros no conocen la diferencia de edad cronológica entre un estudiante con discapacidad cognitiva y un estudiante regular. Además, los docentes no tienen conocimientos de los componentes que deben adaptarse en la planificación micro curricular. Después de obtener los resultados, la investigadora propuso a los docentes de inglés dos grupos de estrategias interactivas. El primer grupo corresponde a doce estrategias generales con objetivos y detalles específicos a través de planes de lección adaptando las destrezas con criterio de desempeño y los indicadores de evaluación. Por otra parte, las estrategias específicas se aplicaron a través de hojas de trabajo con el propósito de desarrollar los contenidos durante el año escolar. Por último, se concluye que el impacto de las estrategias interactivas en estudiantes con discapacidad cognitiva leve resultó significativo en las áreas pedagógica, social, psicolingüística y económica.

Palabras Clave: educación inclusiva; adaptación curricular; estrategias; destrezas lingüísticas.

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Introduction

Curricular Adaptation is an important topic which motivated the researcher because inclusive education provides better opportunities to students with special needs, particularly learners with mild cognitive impairments. Professional experience in educational institutions allowed the investigator to start working in this investigation and contribute with a different pedagogical project. It is necessary to mention that the current project has as main objective to introduce interactive strategies to be developed by English teachers in the micro-curricular planning. It is considering that accommodation and inclusion take an important role in the educational community, to be specific La Providencia Educational Institution as part of Esmeraldas' society has the responsibility to support learners with special needs and allow teachers to be training with appropriate information with the purpose of working and improving learning linguistics skills through adaptations. Browning (2003) argued "curricular adaptations are changes permissible in educational environments which allow the student equal opportunity to obtain access, results, benefits, and levels of achievement. These adaptations consist of both accommodations and modifications." Learners with mild cognitive impairments have rights to be assisted with opportunities in different areas of their lives to contribute in the society. In the scientific field experts argue students learning will depend on psychological processes and the pedagogical support that the teacher could provide, as stated by Beech (2010).

It reflects how the experts monitor those learners' psychological elements. The process is planned by phases; students interact in their environment and achieve complexity in actions and movement, thinking, language, emotions, feelings and relationships with others. Before learner's born, the brain starts developing by quantity and quality stimuli he/she receives. Of course, students with mild cognitive impairments will improve their abilities working and facing the challenges in their surroundings, it means, a physical and cognitive development (Allen, 2003).

It is valuable experts' point of view, studies and programs to students with special needs. It was established a comparison between decrees and laws from two countries of South America. Thereby, the research focuses a case of an inclusive program developed in Jerusalem. Otherwise, it is relevant to mention the empowered of this process thanks to representatives of the Ministry of Education of Ecuador.

Furthermore, Interactive strategies are introduced in this research through twelve lesson plans (general strategies) distributed in different topics for students of *Educación General Básica* and the specific strategies include eleven activities to work carefully and students can enjoy and learn through games and meaningful exercises.

Method

The participants in the research are students from EGB at "La Providencia" Primary School, it was useful to determine 12 males, it means 57,14% and 9 females who represent 42,86% and all of them represent 2,87% of 807 students in the whole Institution. The ages of students are among seven-year-old and 13-year-old. They were observed by the researcher before introducing interactive strategies to adapt the micro curricular planning. This investigation was based on the quantitative method because of the data analysis

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Didactic Guide of Curricular Adaptation

related to the survey aimed to Tutors and English Teachers. Qualitative, to analyze and interpret the information of direct observation in the English classes, these helped to determine the participation of students with mild cognitive disabilities once interactive strategies were applied in the curricular adaptation.

The inductive method was applied from the specific facts to register students who present special cognitive needs in EGB. A descriptive method was introduced in the current research, through the interactive strategies to adapt the micro curricular planning to develop the description, analysis and the interpretation of real situations in the teaching learning process which is directed to improve the linguistics competences in students with cognitive impairment and teachers can evaluate their performance according to the complexity level of the competence. The didactic method showed the relevance orientation from simple activities to complex activities, which allowed to improve students' interaction.

Techniques

Interview

The interview was aimed to the Principal at "La Providencia" School, to the Psychologist, and to the Orientator. This interview enabled to establish a real concept of what the responsibility of the authorities, teachers, and experts is on accomplish a correct process to include students with special needs into regular classes. *MSc. Palacios* mentioned that "La Providencia" Institution success students with mild cognitive impairment, she emphasized that it is important to include students, but it is not an easy task because of the lack of cooperation of some family parent. It means, it is necessary to motivate parents' work with their children at home and internalize the importance of helping to complete the process to include learners with special needs in regular classes. On the other hand, the representative of *Departamento de Consejería Estudiantil* argued that all people have rights to Education, children and adolescents with mild cognitive impairment or any type of special needs must be included in regular classes without seeing their social condition or economic condition. The Psychologist said that students with cognitive disabilities do not catch complex information related to any topic or subject. To identify learners with cognitive impairment, the representative of DCE applies a test through didactic games or other techniques then, they report the results to the District of Education in Esmeraldas Canton with the purpose of working on correct strategies to care learners with special needs.

Survey

To collect information from teachers a survey with nine questions was aimed to English Teachers and Tutors at "La Providencia" School on March 2016. It was presented in English for English teachers and in Spanish for tutors. It facilitated the researcher to establish specific information which determine if teachers have a previous knowledge about the basic components of inclusive Education directed to students with mild cognitive disabilities and confirm if teachers adapt the micro curricular planning. Two English teachers answered the survey and 19 tutors from the whole Institution were respondent of the survey. It is also important to state that the survey and interview were written in English and Spanish to avoid misunderstanding and facilitate correct information. Otherwise, to get a better comprehension of authentic results and amount of matching answers the results were quantified and analyze.

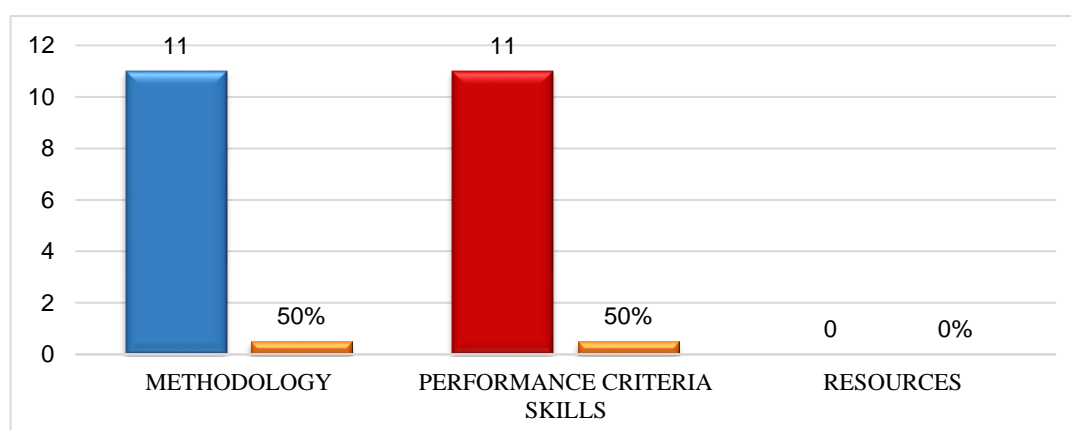
To present complete information it is important to argue that bibliography was obtained from internet, books and articles in Spanish and English.

Observation

An observation form was applied in English classes from May 17th to May 31st, 2016. The researcher observed different students' level of Educación Básica Media 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th grade. Educación Básica Superior 9th grade. The form helped to determine how much English Teachers know about the current curriculum and the standard process to do curricular adaptations and what strategies or techniques teachers use to improve learners' linguistics skills.

Results

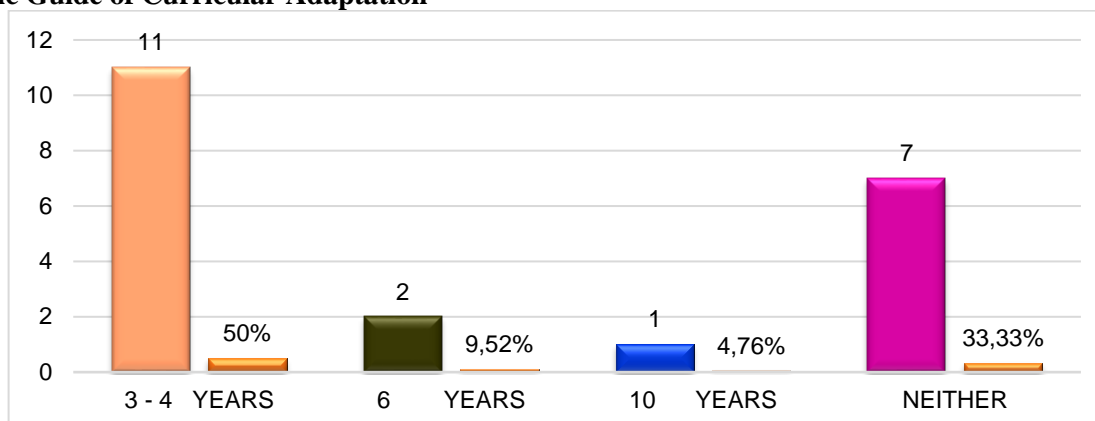
The results of the investigation were distributed in nine questions, which were directed to English Teachers and Tutors from La Providencia Educational Institution. To summarize the impact of the results it is important to focus the attention on some questions as follows:



Graphic 1. Adapting the Micro Curriculum

Sources: Survey Applied to English Teachers and Tutors

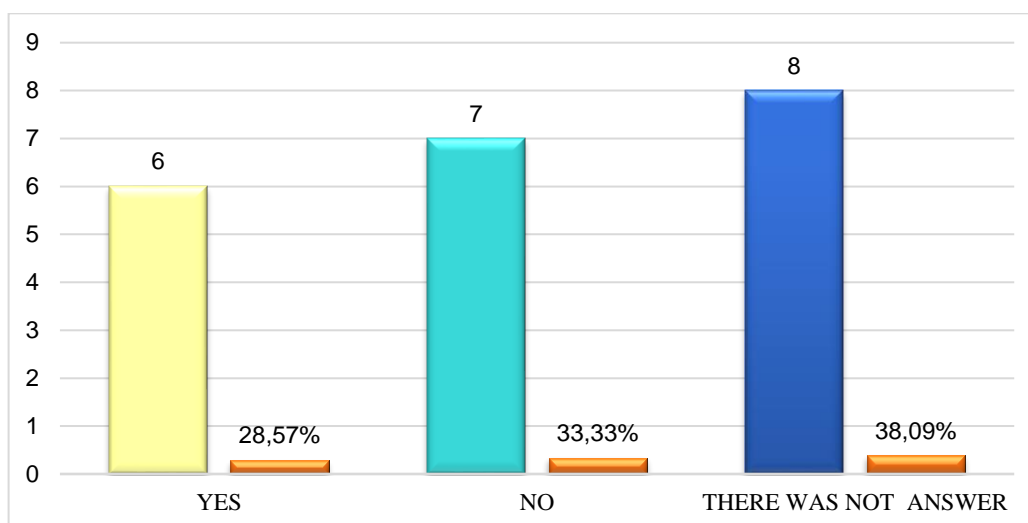
Three micro curricular components were chosen for this question, 50% of the teachers selected methodology such as the feature which will reduce its complexity allow learners with cognitive disabilities to improve their linguistics skills. Meanwhile, the another 50% considers that performance criteria skills must reduce their complexity in any lesson of English classes. By the way, nobody chose resources.



Graphic 2. Difference in chronological age

Sources: Survey Applied to English Teachers and Tutors

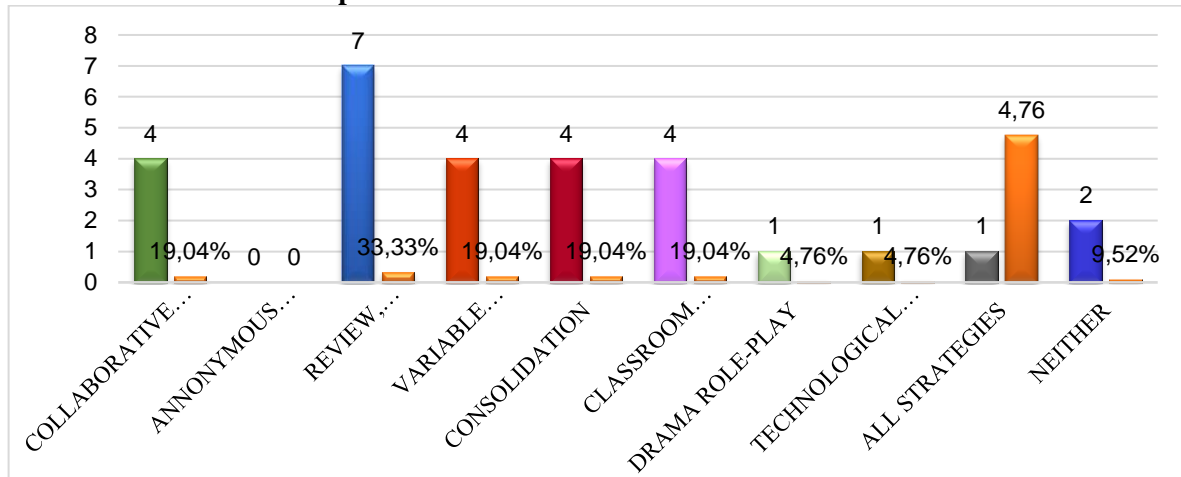
The results in graphic two determine that 50% of the teachers' state that the difference in chronological age between students with cognitive disabilities and regular students is among 3 – 4 years. On the other hand, the 33, 33% did not choose any alternative, it is seven teachers. Furthermore, two teachers the 9, 52% decided that 6 years is the difference and finally only one teacher thinks that ten years in chronological age establish difference among regular learners and learners with special cognitive needs.



Graphic 3. Identifying students with Mild Cognitive Impairments

Sources: Survey Applied to English Teachers and Tutors

This question was structured with two alternatives the 28,57% of the teachers answer that they identified students with special needs in their classes, the 33,33% of the teachers have not identified learners with cognitive disabilities in their classrooms. In the contrast, 38, 09%, it means that eight teachers did not choose any alternative.



Graphic 4. Strategies to Adapt the Micro-Planning.

Sources: Survey Applied to English Teachers and Tutors

The results in graphic four shows that teachers agree with different strategies to adapt the micro curricular planning. Nine strategies were chosen to introduce the current question. First, 33, 33% of the teachers consider that Review, revision, and support is one of the best strategies. Meanwhile, the 19, 04% of Educators selected Collaborative work, consolidation, and classroom projects. Also, the 4, 76% establish that drama, role play, and Technological tools can be applied to improve adaptation. On the contrary, just one teacher chose all the strategies and the 9, 52% did not select any alternative.

Discussion

The results of this research determine the relevance to contrast English Teachers and Tutors' knowledge about inclusive education and micro-curricular adaptation. In question number one it can be notice that not all the staff has a basic idea about inclusive education definition, it means; be training to manage different terms which help teachers to support their work in inclusion. On the other hand, question two relates the possibility of people with cognitive impairments have to live independently or take them a long time to produce orally; it confirms the information provided by (Laurence, 2014) who cited Chomsky "Specific Language Impairment has to say about language organization and development in general" to talk about the way to diagnose cognitive disabilities. Besides, the Peruvian Manual to teach students with cognitive impairment establishes four components to focus the adaptation, they are: low level complexity in skills or content, divide one skill into two sub-skills, taking more time to achieve a specific competence and prioritize students' skills by the importance they have according to the individual guide planning. Those coincide with the fifty percent of the teachers whose selected performance criteria skills to reduce the complexity while Adapting the micro curricular planning.

Otherwise, differentiate the types of curriculum accommodations contrast with teachers' view, because no one chose level support as accommodation; in other words, professors do not know that supporting learners' level motivate them to be active, use specific skills, improve the relationship with others and appropriate use of physical space where they develop the learning process. (Wright, 2011). It is not easy to know the difference

Didactic Guide of Curricular Adaptation

of chronological age between regular learners and learners with mild cognitive impairment, it evidences that most of teachers need training to identify basic characteristics on students with this type of difficulty. On the contrary, most teachers adapt the micro-curricular planning on their own experience in the classrooms, but the strategies or methodology do not engage students with English classes or feel comfortable of using this foreign language.

English Teachers and Tutors at La Providencia Educational Institution think that most of the interactive strategies listed in the survey are necessary to improve students' linguistics skills and adapt the micro-planning. After observing English classes; in which teachers have the responsibility to manage learners' needs, it let me reflect on the importance of developing this type of pedagogical projects to contribute our society and include students with mild cognitive impairment in regular classes. In summary, training English teachers with the twelve strategies proposed in this research project and eleven specific activities enrich our professional field in different areas such as social, Psycholinguistic, economic and pedagogical. It is meaningful supporting and establishing evaluation, feedback, and support to open possibilities for new investigations related with the current proposal.

Conclusions

The research was originally based on the interest to provide English Teachers interactive strategies (general and specific) to adapt the micro-curricular planning in students with mild cognitive disabilities at La Providencia Educational Institution due to the necessity of improving the teaching learning process in inclusive classes.

Not all the educational community has been empowered in the curricular adaptation process. Some family parents do not accept that their children need a special support. Moreover, DCE staff has not been trained with specific information to orientate parents and teachers about adaptations.

English teachers were trained, and they had the opportunity to know important stages related to the micro-curricular planning, they learned that it is necessary to identify the components, which must be adapted and support students with mild cognitive impairments during the school year through different activities that allow them to practice topics engaged to real life situations.

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