

Pedagogical documentation, establishing routines and creating learning spaces

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Abstract

The LIBERTEC Project focuses on pedagogical documentation, which is crucial for socialisation, learning and interactions in early childhood education. This documentation is essential for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the educational process, assessing both the final outcome and the learning process. LIBERTEC proposes to integrate ICT into pedagogical documentation, digitising these records to systematise practices and improve educational quality. Digitised documentation enables educators to make informed decisions, facilitate online collaboration and make teaching more inclusive. In addition, other important activities are highlighted, based on the analysis of the practices of the participating organisations: the management of daily routines and the creation of learning spaces. Some examples are presented for illustrative purposes.

The central axis of the LIBERTEC Project is pedagogical documentation. Why was it decided to focus on pedagogical documentation with the intention of making it more and more effective? Because socialisation, learning and interactions between educators, children and families are considered pillars that support early childhood pedagogy and all of them pass - and are valued - through the documentation process.

Pedagogical documentation is fundamental to the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the educational process, so that both the end result or product and the learning process leading to that result are of utmost importance. In other words, it is not only necessary to record what children do, but also how they do it and what learning they are acquiring in the process (Hoyuelos and Riera, 2015) [1].

The LIBERTEC methodological proposal aims to go a step further by considering the key role attributed to the application of ICT within the educational process. Therefore, digitalised pedagogical documentation is addressed, with the aim of systematising these practices and highlighting the related useful skills to be addressed, thus making them transferable and used by teaching staff in their daily work.

With respect to digitised pedagogical documentation, it enables educators to make informed decisions about how to improve the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms through a detailed record of what has been done and what remains to be done, while creating new opportunities for collaboration and teamwork. Teachers can work together online, share resources and collaborate on common projects, making teaching more accessible and inclusive.

While keeping in mind that documenting should be a core activity in a 0-6 school, the analysis of daily practices in the participating organisations highlights two other relevant activities: the management of daily routines and the definition of learning spaces.

1. Daily routines

Time in nursery school is an important element of educational action. The organization of school time goes beyond the timing of activities or the elaboration of schedules. Time must be understood, at this stage, as an instrument or useful tool for the organization of school life but also as an element that contributes to the process of personal construction of children. Hence its importance. Despite this, it is a task does not exempt from difficulties in which multiple variables come into play: school context, perceptions of the participants, regulations that must result in a rational planning of the activities that take place in the educational center (García y Olivares, 2017)[2].

The organization of time is therefore a fundamental aspect to be fixed based on the needs of the protagonists, in their physiological, social, economic, and cultural dimensions, the evolutionary moment, their needs and interests, as well as in the general objectives of the stage and the contents (Figure 1). Therefore, it will be necessary to make a prior analysis of those context variables on which the educational event will be planned and considering the needs described above. Thus, all teachers of the stage must agree on basic principles for the preparation of schedules, always in close relation to the methodology adopted. Starting from the school reality in terms of characteristics of the students, conditions of the center and characteristics of the sociocultural environment in which it is inserted. That is, it must do the opposite of what Nair (2016) identifies in current schools: "disconnect between learning objectives and education" (p. 25). Each routine can be characterized in a welcoming way and evolve over the year, in relation to the achievements of children, to allow new learning and autonomy (Butturini, 2012)[4].

Figure 1. Examples of routines from LIBERTEC project schools



All members of the educational community - children, families and professionals - must find spaces for personal and professional growth, where personal contact, participation, reflection and debate are possible.

1.2 Learning spaces

Educators must envision the school space as a "third educator", the first two educational figures being families and educators. This entails considering it of vital importance to allow children the opportunity to live the multiple experiences that space can offer them and, therefore, that the teaching team is concerned with the design, organization

and preparation of spaces. Although, they should be understood as living spaces, that is, they are modified, de-structured and restructured according to the capacities and autonomy of children. The space becomes one of the most relevant pillars within the teaching-learning process, so every detail must be taken care of, according to the needs and interests of the students. That is why everything must be thought out and arranged to make it a pleasant and beautiful place, where they feel good and safe. In addition, spaces should be offered for the group, small groups, couples or individuals (Figure 2).

Figura 2. Indoor spaces of LIBERTEC project schools



When it comes to the distribution of spaces in nursery schools, it is interesting to consider some assessments proposed by Díez (2013) [5]:

- Spaces wide enough to be able to move without feeling invaded by others and so that the gaze of the teachers can reach each child without obstacles.
- That there are secluded or more intimate spaces where they can play, be calm, rest or hide.
- That there is comfort and safety both in the spaces and in the routes of displacement between them.
- That the spaces have a concentric configuration or connected areas that lend themselves to meeting and collaboration.
- That all sites are susceptible to be exploited, that they can have several uses, that stability is combined with change.
- That children's spaces be prioritized over those of teachers, although without forgetting them.

- May the overall aesthetic that predominates is simplicity, clarity and beauty.
- That the spaces conform to the law in the sizes of the classrooms and other places, in the safety regulations and in the adaptability of the accesses.
- That there is also an outdoor space as wide as possible, with trees, sand, plants, cabins, fountains, benches, tables, houses, wheelbarrows, installations of ropes, stones or wood to climb or balance.
- And that each teacher, each team of teachers, each group of parents or each group of children feels entitled and strong to value their spaces and to plan to enrich or change them if they see fit.

On the other hand, we cannot forget the **outdoor school spaces** that must be lived and organized as a continuum with the interior space, in the sense that it responds to the usual educational needs and has the same objectives. But through a different organization and the use of materials more related to the structural opportunities offered by the exterior (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Outdoor spaces of LIBERTEC Project schools



The following aspects must be considered:

- With direct access from the classrooms and with a transition or semi-covered area to protect from the heat or rain.
- Find a balance between overly structured or unstructured spaces that can be confusing and stressful.
- Distribute the spaces creating zones for different activities and with passage areas to go from one to another.

- Adapt the outdoor space considering the wishes of children that are conflicting desires: movement / rest, safety / adventure, socialization / autonomy, imitation / creation, fiction / reality.
- Provide more intimate spaces where the child can be calm and feel safe.
- Provide spaces that are in the sun and others in the shade.
- The presence of symbolic-affective objects: castles, bridges, animals.
- The equipment of natural materials for sensory and manipulative play: sand, water, earth.
- That the soil is varied: sand, earth, cement, to provoke different reactions in children. Some reliefs on the ground also give more possibilities to the game.
- Objects, materials and facilities that put the child in open situations will be preferred. Equipment outlined, but not fully finished or fully defined because they give greater opportunities for creation and imagination.
- There is no need for games and sophisticated materials, natural materials and other materials can be harnessed that can be easily recovered. The maintenance and cleaning of these spaces must be provided, as well as a place to store the materials (Madrid and Mayorga, 2012, p.44)[6].

Likewise, the materials must be of low environmental impact, promoting a "green" attitude so it is interesting that we can count, for example, with a permanent exhibition of materials from nature (acorns, stones, shells, seeds, fruits, vegetables, cereals, insect collections, herbs); plastic molds depicting animals or birds; a place for live animals (aquarium with fish or turtles, glass stand for hamster or guinea pig, cage for parrots or parakeets); a pedagogical garden or orchard that provides a greater connection with the knowledge of the world; spaces with water and water, which should be placed in a more isolated place because they may have sand in their shoes, or they may slip due to water. For this reason, cleaning materials should be within reach of children and, more than that, they are taught to use them.

References

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