ACADEMIC TUTORING AS A SUPPORT STRATEGY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Celia del Pilar Garrido Vargas, María Eugenia Senties Santos, Haydee Zizumbo Ramírez, Gabriel Ruiz Blanco, Zoila Luz de los Angeles Fernández Arrazola, Celina Ruiz Garrido

Universidad Veracruzana (MEXICO)

Abstract

Higher Education Institutions make greater efforts to form a tutorial system able to contribute to the solution of some of the problems that constantly affect them, so tutorials have been incorporated as a central concept in the last programs of higher education, seeking to ensure their integration into the university culture.

Since the change of the curriculum from a rigid model to an Integral and Flexible Educational Model (MEIF) at the University of Veracruz, the tutoring program was initiated for students, as an academic work strategy, in order to give a punctual and effective follow-up to their school curriculum, as well as intervening in those situations where they require special support, to improve the terminal efficiency levels of their degree.

Therefore, it is important to know the perception among the students about the efficiency and support provided by this program to obtain their university degree.

Objective:

The objective of the present study is to know the opinion of the students about the support and follow-up that the tutors give them to make the best academic decisions during their stay in the University, in order to evaluate the importance of this program as a support strategy to complete their school curriculum in the expected time frames.

Development:

For the development of the work, a quantitative methodology was used, which allowed the analysis of the results obtained from a survey applied to students of the Faculty of Accounting in the University of Veracruz, Mexico. The results are mainly based on students’ opinions about the tutoring program and the support that the academic tutor represents during their school curriculum.

Conclusion:

The results show that students accept and feel supported when receiving the guidance of their tutors, considering also that for them it would be hard to decide the educational experiences to study, because although some curriculum show very clearly which educational experiences are required, the choice of others needs the guidance of the tutor to have a better use of the knowledge (theoretical, heuristic and axiological) that make up the educational experiences. They also think that some important aspects that are reinforced in the tutorials, are the strengthening of their attitudes and values, as well as the great support they receive in special situations such as problems with some educational experiences, personal situations in their social and family environment and mainly to achieve the assurance of a successful trajectory.

Keywords: Higher Education Institutions, tutorial system, MEIF, students, school curriculum, support.

1 INTRODUCTION

The tutoring program at the University of Veracruz has a relevant role from the implementation of the Integral and Flexible Educational Model (MEIF) and from that moment, a new academic work strategy was needed, since it is part of the innovations of the teaching practice and the new forms of teaching promoted by this model. Its application requires a large number of new coordination, organizational and training activities, among others, to be able to develop it properly.

Academic tutoring is conceived as a support of the students trajectory, that is to say, the tutorial strategy deals with the multiple problems of academic type that are appearing in the path of the
students during their stay in school. Thus, the main task of the tutors is to be responsible for tracking
the students from admission to graduation, guiding them in decisions related to the construction of
their individual professional profile, according to their expectations, abilities and interests.

In order to fulfill the task described with greater margins of efficiency, tutors must be able to perform
another basic activity that is the reconstruction of the previous trajectory of the students until the
educational moment in which they are, in order to know some features related to their social life, their
socioeconomic level and, of course, their school performance. With this, tutors will have a clearer idea
of what kind of students need to support and how to give continuity to their curriculum or, if necessary,
modify it, using the tools available for this work; that is to say, tutors need to support the students, the
must know them in such a way that, even if the students have not detected the deficiencies that
influence their performance, the tutors become an important reference for self-knowledge in the
academic context [1].

2 BACKGROUND
The theoretical aspects that are part of the study object of this work are:

2.1 Tutoring
Tutoring is the activity of providing students with the tools and help they need to successfully meet the
academic, personal, and professional goals they had when they enrolled college. It is also a
pedagogical action that tries to favor educational situations to generate an educational model that
helps the teaching-learning process individually and in groups. In addition, it is an inherent part of the
curriculum where it integrates knowledge, procedures, values and attitudes directed towards students
with concrete skills and interests and provides them with the information and support needed in
academic decision making.

Concepción Monge defines mentoring as:

*The inherent function of teaching, as an eminently pedagogical action addressed to each
of the students individually, in addition to the group in general, presenting a very specific
purpose: to improve the educational process through actions aimed at facilitating the
school life of students, at all levels of education, taking into account both academic and
personal factors or emotional, all of them interacting in their learning process and in their
professional and social development.* [2]

From this perspective, tutoring plays a fundamental role in the teaching-learning process, as it is part
of the teaching activities of any institution of higher education concerned with its students and their
quality. Then, the tutorial action encourages the development of skills that allow learning in
professional training and can also influence the personal development of students. This fact, is of
great importance in their personal and academic life and promotes a good professional performance in
the future.

2.2 Tutorial Action
The tutorial action is a tool that accompanies and guides the students, because it implies that they
must receive positive contributions from their tutor, also promotes listening to the words, feelings,
thoughts and moods of the person to facilitate the process of self-knowledge. In this relationship the
students are not advised, imposed, judged corrected, interrogated or controlled. "The student is
always the protagonist of his own growth and personal maturation" [3]. This implies that the tutorial
keeps track of the individual and group processes to ensure a true attention and personalized action.
In order for tutoring to be effective, it must be done in a planned way, based on the particular needs of
the students, since the objectives of these programs are to prevent difficulties in learning and
adaptation to the school environment, as well as to develop study habits and interests in the student.

2.3 Tutorial programs in Institutions of Higher Education
It is important to know that the educational purpose of the Higher Education Institutions is to
complement the training of the students, ensuring an adequate insertion in the academic environment
and to promote their satisfactory progress in their studies, so that they can develop the values, habits
and attitudes that society demands of them as citizens and professionals; and they also increase the
probability of success in their studies and of supporting education in values, since all professors have the responsibility to do so and more in tutorial action programs.[4]

3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the work is eminently descriptive, a transversal research was carried out, consisting of the design and application of a survey at a given time. The population comprised the students of the Faculty of Accountancy of the University of Veracruz, Mexico. The instrument was applied to 120 students who participated in the tutoring program. The instrument was designed through a self-administered questionnaire consisting of twelve questions. This paper analyzes the perception of students participating in the tutoring program about the support they receive from their tutors during their studies.

4 RESULTS

Derived from the applied instrument, an analysis of the indicators of the dimension of the support of the tutors to the students was carried out, obtaining the following results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GUIDANCE SUPPORT INDICATORS FOR GUARDIANS</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide information and clarify doubts for the choice of Educational Experience</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide information and clarify doubts about academic-administrative aspects</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize skills and abilities around your program</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote attendance and participation in academic events</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broaden the vision of the professional and work environment</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen positive values and attitudes</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support personal situations in the social and family environment</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting the assurance of a successful trajectory</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration based on student survey results.

The previous analysis shows that the students received greater support from the tutor to clarify doubts for the choice of educational experiences and receive information on academic-administrative aspects; as well as to broaden the vision about the professional and labor scope; strengthen positive values and attitudes; support personal situations in the social and family environment and support the assurance of a successful career. In contrast, they perceived less support from tutors in recognizing their abilities and skills around the program and in promoting their participation in academic events.

5 CONCLUSIONS

As a result of this work, it is concluded that for a program to work efficiently, it is necessary for all the actors involved to participate actively, that is to say, that tutors, students, program coordination and university authorities coordinate and pursue the same objective: to guide and advise the students in the selection of their educational experiences each semester, counting with the support and resources necessary to develop them, such as: academic information regarding each student, responsible participation of the tutors, information of the authorities in matter of scholarships, student mobility, job market, favorable areas to develop social service and professional practices, among the most important.
The tutorial will fulfill its purpose by helping the students to achieve a comprehensive training and contribute to improve knowledge, school environment, promote vocational maturity, as well as develop skills and learning strategies. This implies that the aim of tutoring is to influence their values, norms and attitudes; and to stimulate the students to conclude their school trajectory in the established terms.

REFERENCES


