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Experience of a teaching tutoring program for the title examination of fifth year nursing students.

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Summary. Tutoring is a teaching-learning process that seeks to improve the academic results of students, in addition to improving the quality of education provided by educational institutions, as evidenced by the retention rate and timely graduation. The objective of this work is to present an experience of a tutorial program applied to fifth year nursing students, who had failed up to three times the degree exam. A series of tutoring sessions were carried out with seven students that included applied work, with the purpose of developing a process of review, resolution of doubts, and application of what was learned; in addition to promoting self-control, study routines and self-care. The tutorial program presented achieved that the seven students took their degree exams in a positive way, so it is concluded that it was an effective strategy for the student to reach the necessary competencies for their level, as well as it can also help with the quality assurance of the education delivered by the institutions.

Key words: Tutoring, Final Exam, Nursing.

1   Introduction

A tutorial program is considered as a teaching-learning strategy where the student is accompanied in his academic training and, in addition, allows the teacher to monitor quality standards, being the tutoring by itself a factor of teaching quality (Gonzalez, 2020). For this reason, the tutoring function on the part of the teacher is constantly changing, according to the demands of the higher education system, in this sense it is a challenge for the teacher to adapt to new teaching methods and deal with the weaknesses that the student brings, so that the student achieves the cognitive, attitudinal and procedural competencies required as a future professional (Martín, Berrios & Pantoja, 2020; Angulo & Urbina, 2021). It is also a challenge for institutions to adapt to the changes, since although there has been a substantial increase in enrollments in higher education in recent years in Chile, it is of utmost importance to keep these students within the system and to ensure that they graduate within the established period, thus improving retention and timely graduation rates (Castro, Contreras, Aguirre & Morales, 2023).

The objective of this work is to present an experience of tutorial support for nursing students who must take their degree exams for the second and third time, a

teaching and learning strategy that served to improve retention and timely graduation rates during the year 2023. It should be noted that this generation of students studied two years of the course in Pandemic COVID-19, in this context the teaching methodology changed from face-to-face classes and clinical practices to virtual mode, where although the achievement of competencies at each level was ensured, there were undoubtedly gaps that needed to be filled.

2   Theoretical Framework

In the history of education, turoria has been positioning and becoming an increasingly used strategy, since it achieves in the student to solve problems such as adaptation in the educational climate and improve academic results (García, Cuevas, Vales & Cruz, 2012). It is also seen as a method to achieve quality learning, which is reflected in the attainment of professional and generic competencies (Angulo & Urbina, 2021).

A preponderant actor in this strategy is the academic tutor who becomes a companion with specific functions within the formative itinerary, in whom the students deposit desires and wishes related to their academic training, for this reason it is necessary that the teacher assumes this role and maintains a continuous training where he/she develops the necessary skills to face the challenge and tutorial work (Martín, Berrios & Pantoja, 2020; Ocampo-Gómez, Rodríguez-Orozco & Aguilar-Tamayo, 2021; Olvera-Guevara, Guerra-Corrales & Gómez-Flores, 2023). Pantoja, 2020; Ocampo-Gómez, Rodríguez-Orozco & Aguilar-Tamayo, 2021; Olvera-Guevara, Guerra-Corrales & Gómez-Flores, 2023).

In this context, Merino, González & Sáez (2023) concluded that communication with the student and support from other teachers contribute to the systematization of tutoring, in addition to being essential to understand the student and his or her environment in order to facilitate communication channels. The study by Olvera-Guevara, Guerra-Corrales & Gómez-Flores (2023) also concluded that tutoring is a significant and effective strategy to avoid student desertion, thus preventing an increase in the failure rate.

3   Method

In the School of Nursing UCM Curicó, during the first semester of the year 2023, seven students failed their degree exam, in one, two and even three opportunities, therefore, a process of teacher accompaniment and applied work was started, with the purpose of developing a review program, resolution of doubts, and application of what was learned; in addition to promoting self-control, study routines and self-care. This tutorial program was carried out by teachers who did not participate in the student's final evaluation.

The work carried out was based on the Integral Model of tutoring, which "seeks the comprehensive development of students at personal, academic, social and professional levels" (Alvarez & Álvarez, 2015, p. 130), it was organized in 6 days of 2 hours each, which are presented below:

Day 1: Organizational meeting between teachers and students. The development of each day is explained, redefining the leading role of the student in this process.

Recommendations for self-care, organization of study hours, and the necessary dynamics for the study month are given. In addition, they are given study material to begin to apply in the next session.

Day 2: Face-to-face meeting to learn about the changes adopted by each one in terms of self-care and study method, in addition to a didactic review of the application of the nursing process, doubts are solved and the importance of self-care to prevent stress associated with taking the degree exam is reinforced.

Day 3: Face-to-face meeting, reinforcing the importance of self-care, in addition to talking with each of the students about the feelings associated with this period and deepening on the safety of what has been learned and its application. A clinical case is worked as a group, detailing physiopathology and associated nursing process.

Day 4: Face-to-face meeting, listening to each of the students about how they have experienced the process, the advantages and disadvantages of the tutorial process and the state of progress. A clinical case is worked as a group, including: physiopathology, pharmacology, epidemiology, and the complete nursing process.

Day 5: Face-to-face meeting, on this day each student shows significant progress in terms of the security of their knowledge, therefore, a clinical case is worked individually, which is then analyzed as a group, reaching a group consensus of the results, guided and moderated at all times by the tutor teacher.

Day 6: Face-to-face meeting, a title exam essay is developed, with time, questions related to the prioritization of care and formative evaluation. The development of the case is done individually, to later present the answers to their peers, who, based on the information they have and the teacher's guidance, assign a score, which is later translated into a formative grade.

4   Results and discussion

Of the total number of participants, 6 students passed the degree exam, and 1 requested a new date for personal and family reasons. This shows a 100% of positive results applying the strategy of a tutorial program. In addition, the students qualitatively evaluate this intervention in a positive way, referring to feeling accompanied and supported by the tutor. These results are reinforced by the literature (Olvera-Guevara, Guerra-Corrales & Gómez-Flores, 2023; Angulo & Urbina, 2021; Ocampo-Gómez, Rodríguez-Orozco & Aguilar-Tamayo, 2021; Gazca, Garizurieta & Muñoz, 2023).

As for the faculty who evaluated these students in their degree exams, they report that, although they were still quite nervous when they took the exam, their answers were more concrete, more knowledgeable and less doubtful at the time of the defense.

5   Conclusions

It is concluded that tutoring is an effective and quality learning strategy for students to achieve the necessary competencies for their level, accompanied by the tutoring teacher. It is also a factor that ensures the quality of the education provided by the institutions, positively influencing the retention rate and timely graduation.

It is also necessary for educational institutions to train their teachers in various strategies to improve the academic follow-up of students, such as the tutorial program described above; in the same way, committed teachers with the necessary skills are required to achieve effective tutoring.

6   Limitations and Future Research

For future research, it is suggested to conduct studies that evaluate tutoring programs, with quantitative and qualitative research that contemplates the analysis and understanding of student and teacher perspectives.

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