One-On-One Support For Students With Special Educational Needs Through Tutoring In The First Year Of University Studies

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Abstract

The one-on-one accompaniment of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) was systematized in a private university in Lima during the 2023-II term. Twenty-six students enrolled in the first year took part. Students go through an initial interview, to collect academic information and to offer recommendations. These are informed to the course coordinators and submitted to the Integrated Psychological Counselling to offer socioemotional accompaniment. A biweekly follow-up is conducted through the Risk Identification Tool (HIR, for its acronym in Spanish), guidance is provided on academic issues and one-on-one thematic tutorials are organized for the courses with the highest academic demand. The results obtained were positive since 85% of the enrolled courses were approved, and 77% (20) of the students achieved a weighted average with grades between 11 and 16 at the end of the academic term. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the tutorial strategies in the term accompaniment of students with SEN.

KEYWORDS: ONE-ON-ONE TUTORING, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS, FIRST-YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Introduction

Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia promotes, as part of its educational model, a safe space offering quality, equitable, and inclusive education. In turn, the Comprehensive Basic Training Unit accompanies students in the first year of university and focuses its guidelines on the UPCH Educational Model (2017) and the 2022 - 2026 Institutional Strategic Plan.

This paper presents the systematization of the One-on-One Accompaniment Plan (PAP) for students belonging to the SEN protocol in the 2023 – II academic term in the first year of studies, those who, according to the UPCH Regulations of Undergraduate Academic Activity, have "one or more physical, sensory, mental or intellectual deficiencies of a temporary or permanent nature". The goal of the educational proposal is to respond to the needs of integral training from the one-on-one tutorial accompaniment to help students to adapt to the university and to face the academic requirements of this stage.

Theoretical Framework

In 2005, UNESCO developed its Guidelines for Inclusion, ensuring access to education for all. Thus, accompanying students through tutoring responds to this provision, since it abandons the idea of a massive education and personalizes attention, in order to promote and facilitate integral training.

According to García (2015), tutoring is a training activity that includes cognitive, intellectual, personal, and professional aspects. Therefore, it is important that it is a systematic, intentional, and dynamic process that is part of the curriculum and the pedagogical proposal. In turn, Pérez-Moneo (2017) points out that the tutoring sessions "... facilitate the individualized academic follow-up of the students in the planning and development of their academic itinerary and allow the active integration of the student in the institution..." (p. 7)

Attention to neurodiversity is promoted from a perspective focused on their capabilities and strengths, where the biological or neurophysiological diagnosis of its condition (García et al., 2016) guides the strategy to be applied. Therefore, from the pedagogical approach, the role of the tutor is focused on facilitating and mediating strategies according to the rhythms of their learning, assuming methodological and pedagogical diversity as the norm. The use of technological communication tools and psychoeducational workshops are also emphasized.

Method

The systematization of one-on-one accompaniment to the 26 students belonging to the SEN Protocol of the 2023 - II term was approached from a qualitative approach. The follow-up starts with an interview to the student in order to look into academic aspects. In the case of a minor, his or her guardians are present. With this information, a report with academic recommendations is prepared for the coordinator of each course.

Based on this identification, by-weekly follow-up meetings are held to analyze academic performance through the Risk Identification Tool (HIR), to provide organization and learning strategies, as well as to manage one-on-one thematic tutorials of the most demanding academic courses. This accompaniment is integral and therefore, students are derived to the Integrated Psychological Counseling Area for socioemotional care. To manage academic progress, the tutor keeps a record of attendance to general tutorials and customized topics to monitor academic performance, make decisions based on evidence, and make necessary adjustments to emerging needs.

Table 1 shows the number of students according to the type of SEN, identifying that the largest percentage (50%) corresponds to mental disorders.

Type of SEN	Number of Students	%
Mental Disorders	13	50%
Neurodevelopment Disorders	7	27%
Epilepsy	2	7%
Dysphonia due to oral vestibule abnormalities	1	4%
Deep bilateral sensorineural hearing loss	1	4%
Papillomatosis of the larynx	1	4%
Obesity	1	4%
Total	26	100%

Results

Table 2. Total of courses approved and failed in the 2023-2 term by students with SEN.

Condition	Number of courses	Percentage
Approved	88	85%
Failed	15	15%
Total	103	100%

In Table 2, the results of 2023 - II term showed that the follow-up is effective, as 85% of the courses were approved.

Fig. 1. Number of students according to weighted average of the 2023 - II academic term
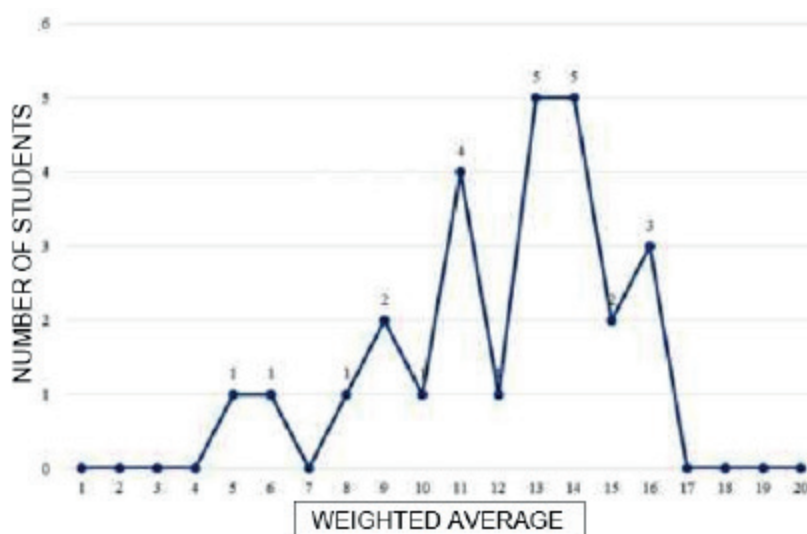

Figure 1 shows that 77% (20) of students had a weighted passing average with grades between 11 and 16.

Discussion

As mentioned by García (2015), to achieve results in tutoring it is important to rely on a systematic process; therefore, the tutors accompany the student on a weekly basis through the HIR, to meet the emerging needs of the students, which may be personal and/or academic.

As noted by Pérez-Moneo (2017) and García et. al (2016); when the tutor accompanies students, from their strengths, in developing their study plan, he/she contributes to their full integration into university life and therefore to their motivation and personal empowerment.

Mediation and one-on-one framework in tutoring make it possible to develop and strengthen their capacities and to focus on opportunities for improvement, in order to build support mechanisms that allow students to learn to learn and achieve autonomy in learning and in university life.

Lessons Learnt

One-on-one, systematic, and multidisciplinary accompaniment to SEN students generates a favorable academic learning space to build new study strategies and provide tools to students to perform properly and successfully in the university.

Limitations and Future Investigations

Having data and information on the performance of SEN students in the following years of university studies.

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