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Review article

Formation of tutorial competence in university teachers from the point of view of preparation for employment

Formación de la competencia tutorial en el docente universitario desde la preparación para el empleo

Formação de competência tutorial em professores universitários a partir da preparação para o emprego

Rosa Yusnely Pérez Guerra[1]

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3061-9600

Jorge García Ruiz[1]

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2183-6099

Jesús de Farit Rubio Méndez[1]

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8078-9026

[1]University of Camagüey "Ignacio Agramonte y Loynaz". Camagüey, Cuba.

yusnely1980@gmail.com;
jorge.ggarcia@reduc.edu.cu;
jesus.farit@reduc.edu.cu

ABSTRACT

Currently, competence-based training responds to the demands of society, so it is important that every educational institution in general, and the university in particular, requires teachers with the necessary knowledge for better performance. The purpose of this article was to analyze the need for training of tutorial competence in university teachers from the Preparation for Employment, based on the review of bibliographic sources related to the topic. For this purpose, bibliographic analysis and documentary review were used as essential methods. Its results are found in the theoretical order from the analysis of the definition of tutorial competence addressed by different authors and its formation in the analyzed stage. It was possible to conclude that the training of *tutorial competence is necessary* in the stage of Preparation for Employment, due to the importance it has in achieving better performance by university professors, taking into account the methodological, guiding and investigative teaching functions, and the improvement functions performed by the tutor of recent graduates.

Keywords: tutorial competence; preparation for employment; university tutoring.

RESUMEN

Actualmente, la formación por competencias responde a las demandas de la sociedad, por lo que es importante que toda institución educativa en general, y la universidad en particular, requiera de docentes con los saberes necesarios para mejores desempeños. El presente artículo tuvo como objetivo analizar la necesidad de formación de la competencia tutorial en el docente universitario desde la Preparación para el Empleo, a partir de la revisión de fuentes bibliográficas relacionadas con el tema. Para ello se empleó el análisis bibliográfico y la revisión documental como métodos esenciales. Sus resultados se encuentran en el orden teórico desde el análisis de la definición de competencia

tutorial abordada por diferentes autores y de su formación en la etapa tratada. Se pudo concluir que es necesaria la formación de la *competencia tutorial* en la etapa de Preparación para el Empleo, por la importancia que reviste en el logro de mejores desempeños del docente universitario, teniendo en cuenta las funciones docente metodológica, orientadora e investigativa, y de superación que cumple el tutor de recién graduados.

Palabras clave: competencia tutorial; preparación para el empleo; tutoría universitaria.

RESUMO

Atualmente, a formação por competências responde às exigências da sociedade, pelo que é importante que cada instituição de ensino em geral, e a universidade em particular, exija professores com os conhecimentos necessários para um melhor desempenho. O objetivo deste artigo foi analisar a necessidade de formação de competência tutorial em professores universitários de Preparação para o Emprego, a partir da revisão de fontes bibliográficas relacionadas ao tema. Para tanto, utilizou-se a análise bibliográfica e a revisão documental como métodos essenciais. Seus resultados encontram-se na ordem teórica a partir da análise da definição de competência tutorial abordada por diferentes autores e do seu treinamento na etapa tratada. Concluiu-se que a formação da competência tutorial é necessária na fase de Preparação para o Emprego, pela importância que tem na obtenção de um melhor desempenho do professor universitário, tendo em conta as funções metodológicas, orientadoras e investigativas do ensino, e o aperfeiçoamento que o tutor desempenha. dos recém-licenciados cumpre.

Palavras-chave: competência tutorial; preparação para o emprego; aulas particulares universitárias.

INTRODUCTION

At the Cuban University, the tutor is, without any doubt, fundamental in the process of continuous training, being recognized as the teacher who guides and accompanies the recent graduate to ensure that his preparation in the labor entity is satisfactorily executed, the development of learning and the consolidation of professional performance modes related to their job; as well as contributing to the development and consolidation of competencies through the integration of professional knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Among the functions of the university professor, university tutoring stands out. In this context, tutoring integrates the methodological, guiding, investigative and improvement teaching functions. Therefore, the systematic updating of the tutor of recent graduates, supported by the training of competencies for the detection and solution of professional problems, guarantees a better methodological, guiding, investigative and improvement teaching performance, in response to the transformation of the recent graduate.

Some authors in their research classify the tutor as a mentor, guide, advisor and facilitator in the educational teaching process; among them: García *et al.* (2018); Cruz *et al.* (2019); Freire *et al.* (2019); Ceniz *et al.* (2020); Sesento (2021). The theoretical analysis carried out allows us to identify the relationships between the tutor and the tutee in the continuing education process, taking into account that it is a priority of educational policy throughout the world.

The university teachers´ performance, according to Puig *et al.* (2016), is in most cases linked to the functions that the professional performs in the activity he or she carries out and his or her improvement is assumed as a way that the teacher has to achieve satisfactory results in his or her job.

Several authors, including: Puig *et al.* (2016), Salomón *et al.* (2016), Pastora *et al.* (2018), Portillo (2019); Delgado *et al.* (2020); Ceballos

et al. (2020), refer to the university teachers´ performance as: teaching function, teaching capacity, teaching profile, teaching competencies, teacher professional development, teaching practice, teaching role, among others. In the present study, it is assumed as a process of change linked to their preparation and the way in which they develop certain teaching competencies.

In relation to the above, the theory is limited to dealing with the tutor´s guiding performance from the transmission of capacities, skills and attitudes in the comprehensive training of the student, not from the integration of the functions of the university professor for the accompaniment, both professional and personal, of the recent graduate.

Although there is a consensus that tutoring is part of the functions performed by university professors, the understanding of how professors perform their tutoring function varies depending on the university model and the conception of the teaching-learning process. Therefore, the aim is to consolidate the university professors `performance in the development of knowledge, abilities, values and professional skills to solve problems in professional life, in accordance with the social challenges that are currently imposed.

In this research, the term Preparation for Employment is assumed through job training, taking into account Resolution 138 (2019), which details the components and particularities that make up the continuous training model of Cuban Higher Education: Undergraduate Training in broad-profile careers; Preparation for Employment and Postgraduate Education. In the case of Preparation for Employment, "it ensures to continue the development and improvement of specific professional modes of action related to the recent graduate's job" (p. 1).

Authors such as López *et al.* (2019); Mena, J. A. and Mena, J. L. (2020); Aranda *et al.* (2020), refer to Preparation for Employment with various terms, such as: job training, social service, professional induction, professional insertion of

the beginner or novice and professional socialization. They agree in recognizing it as a process that enables the evolution of the individual's work and identify professional training and adaptation to the job as conditions that favor or hinder the recent graduate´s performance.

Although they highlight the importance of the tutor's performance, there is no evidence from the theory of follow-up on this issue, specifically in the stage of Preparation for Employment. These are limited, to a large extent, to dealing with the tutor's guiding performance in Undergraduate Training; not so from the follow-up of the recent graduate to fulfill with his continuous training, with a proper theoretical, methodological and human orientation, taking into account both, his professional and personal needs and interests.

The authors mentioned above, from a theoretical perspective, contextualize their studies of the performance of university tutors in Undergraduate Education and/or Postgraduate Education, but not from the perspective of Preparation for Employment. The theory is limited to dealing with the tutor's guiding performance from the transmission of capacities, skills and attitudes for the student´s comprehensive training, but not from the integration of the functions: methodological teaching, guidance and research and improvement, according to their needs in the contexts of performance of Preparation for Employment.

In this sense, there is a need to increase the university teachers `competence in their role as tutors, due to the fact that they assume their responsibility and professional commitment in the guidance and support of recent graduates. In the meantime, it is considered that this university tutor must be committed in his performance to identify their needs and thus achieve the development of the tutorial competence within the framework of their professionalization.

In relation to the ideas mentioned above, this article aims to analyze the need for training in tutorial competence in university teachers from the Preparation for Employment, based on the review of bibliographic sources related to the subject.

DEVELOPMENT

Since its inception up to the present, preparation for employment in Cuba is related to the practical activity of the individual, thus, it encourages the acquisition and appropriation of knowledge from the study-work link. Higher Education institutions, in recent times, have had a favorable evolution with respect to this issue, not only in the structure and organization, but also in the inclusion of the training of their recent graduates, which is taken into account from the training model.

Tutoring is of great importance in the ongoing training of recent graduates, because it enables them to consolidate their knowledge, skills and attitudes through job adaptation and develop practical skills that allow them to perform better professionally in the stage of preparation for employment.

For Sanchez and Cáceres (2022):

> tutoring is presented as an alternative to support new teachers in their insertion into teaching practice, so the tutor must act as a guide, moderator, advisor or organizer, rather than as a transmitter of knowledge, promoter of interactive spaces for guidance and support that promote a high degree of motivation, creativity and a sufficiently active attitude, so that the tutor becomes the true protagonist of his or her teaching practice (p. 47).

Morales *et al.* (2023), referring to the main characteristics of university teachers in the Ecuadorian context, highlight:

- They have generally only received initial training prior to carrying out their profession, and have not had basic training to carry out teaching work.
- They have a professional profile linked to the science they teach.
- Their main shortcomings when starting out as teachers are related to didactic and pedagogical knowledge (p. 404).

In this regard, it is worth highlighting that Cuban university teachers have the peculiarity of working in a study center in which they were not prepared from their initial training to practice professionally, since there is no specialized center for the training of teachers who will carry out their work at the university. They become university professors with a professional profile related to the science they teach, but without teaching and methodological preparation for the exercise of this work, which brings with it performances that sometimes make it difficult to fulfill their functions: methodological teacher, guide and researcher, and improvement as a tutor for recent graduates. The development of competencies in the field of pedagogical research has been addressed by Tobón (2013); Espinosa and Campuzano (2019); Piña and Ponce (2020); Belgrave (2020); Garzón (2021); Corral (2021); Quiroz and Díaz (2021); Vera and Moreno (2022); García and García (2022); Arévalo and Juanes (2022) which show the following essential aspects in the concept: processes, complexity, performance, suitability, metacognition and ethics.

For Belgrave (2020):

> it is the ability to carry out a specific action, by simultaneously having the set of knowledge necessary for its development (knowing), the skills or abilities required to carry it out (know-how) and the attitude oriented towards its realization and obtaining an efficient result (wanting to do and doing efficiently) (p. 186).

The author refers to competencies as "capacity", and although it is one of the components that integrates it as affective, cognitive and/or general psychomotor performances, it is equivalent to possibility, so having them does not imply that the subject acts appropriately.

Tobón (2013) stands out, as he conceptualizes competencies as "comprehensive actions to identify, interpret, argue and solve problems in the context, developing and applying in an articulated manner different knowledge (knowing how to be, knowing how to live together, knowing how to do and knowing how to know), with suitability, continuous improvement and ethics" (p. 93). In the present research, the ideas referred to by this author are assumed, taking into account that competencies are comprehensive actions while facing certain problems in the context with suitability and ethical commitment, which imply an action of oneself for others and/or the context.

Tutorial competence is an important part of the professional profile of university teachers and has been the subject of study by several authors, including: de la Cruz and Abreu (2016); López and Pérez (2018); Piña and Ponce (2020); Martínez *et al.* (2022); Sánchez and Cáceres (2022), Albitres and Sánchez (2022); Jácome *et al.* (2022).

In this sense, the authors refer to the term, indistinctly, as: competences for tutorial action, competences for the tutor, teaching competences for tutoring, tutorial competence. Although they recognize and address the formation of tutorial competence, in most cases, there is still a limited theoretical-methodological support in the logic of its formation.

According to Albitres and Sánchez (2022), tutorial competencies can be defined as "the set of technical-academic, scientific, communicational and professional actions, mediated by cognitive, metacognitive and affective-motivational factors of the tutor, which he puts into practice, after agreement with the student, for the expected achievement" (p. 30).

In this regard, de la Cruz and Abreu (2016) recognize that they are aimed at promoting the comprehensive training of those under tutelage, in the cognitive aspects (knowledge mastery, transfer of knowledge to different scenarios, development of metacognitive skills); affective-emotional (raising self-esteem and self-control) and interaction (standards of coexistence, negotiation, collaborative work).

The authors agree with the ideas referred to by recognizing the tutorial competence as an integration of knowledge aimed at the tutor´s comprehensive training. It is also considered important to take into account that this is acquired from the tutor- tutee's own experience and interaction, because it mobilizes a set of cognitive and affective processes that not only include capacities, but also knowledge, skills and attitudes.

For Piña and Ponce (2020), the process of developing tutorial skills has at its roots both the training and the professional career of the tutor, and importantly the experience in his or her educational practice, in his or her interaction with those under tutelage.

It is highlighted that there are training needs for university teachers to adequately carry out their tutoring work. In this sense, Delgado *et al*. (2020) refer to a human profile and a professional profile. In relation to the human profile, it is important to take into account the human aspect, which implies not only the cognitive training of this professional but also the affective training from the social, ethical commitment and moral values before the profession.

Regarding the professional profile, it is necessary to have knowledge of the technical and professional content that implies being competent in the area being taught, as well as experience and methodological didactic mastery of what is being taught. For Espín and Alpízar (2020), this implies that the person has the knowledge, skills and aptitudes necessary to practice a profession, that he can solve

professional problems independently and is that he is able to collaborate in his professional environment. This reaffirms what Jácome *et al.* (2022) said when they say that "tutoring skills are based on the dialogue between teaching and guidance in the learning processes of tutoring" (p. 90).

The ideas referred are considered important when taking into account that the university tutor in the stage of Preparation for Employment must be characterized by being a responsible teacher in the fulfillment of his functions and in achieving the comprehensive formation of the personality of the recent graduate; seen throughout the process of continuous training and professional development, willing to provide the necessary guidance, according to the needs in the context where he interacts.

Regarding tutorial knowledge, it is highlighted, according to Delgado *et al.* (2020), that the university teacher who works as such must possess:

a. Scientific knowledge that allows him to competently explain the subjects he teaches.
b. Theoretical knowledge of education and related sciences. In particular, it is desirable to have in-depth knowledge of the general aspects of the university system and, in turn, the particularities of the scientific fields that comprise it (psychology, didactics, etc.).
c. Theoretical and practical knowledge of interpersonal relationships, group leadership and animation, so that they can identify structures, roles, factors or forces that interfere with the development of the student group.
d. Knowledge of diagnostic techniques and educational intervention for more personalized care; fostering motivation or promoting diversity-focused initiatives and programs (p. 124).

Therefore, the university tutor in the stage of preparation for employment must delve into certain knowledge related to theoretical knowledge on Higher Education, taking into account that many of these university teachers are recent graduates of courses that do not have a pedagogical training profile; as well as in theoretical-practical knowledge, which allows interpersonal interaction with the recent graduate, in response to their needs and interests of guidance for better professional performance and integration into the working mates.

It is considered necessary to take into account the theoretical assumptions of Tobón (2013, 2018); de la Cruz and Abreu (2016); Piña and Ponce (2020) aimed at the formation of comprehensive knowledge, which are contextualized, by the authors, to the university tutor of recent graduates in the stage of preparation for employment. These are:

Knowing how to be (based on responsibility for one's performance as a tutor, ethical, professional and social commitment)

- Satisfaction in support: meta-knowledge in helping and supporting recent graduates, on a professional, social and human level. State of well-being from obtaining internal compensation.
- Knowing how to know (based on knowledge of his tutorial functions)
- Methodological teaching function: meta-knowledge in the formation and development of professional pedagogical skills in recent graduates, contemplated in the mastery of pedagogical and didactic foundations to direct the teaching-learning process, linked to the needs of the job position; methodological preparation from the different organizational levels of methodological work, aimed at finding answers to scientific problems raised around tutoring.
- Guiding function: meta-knowledge in the process of helping and supporting recent graduates in each context of action in preparing for employment, from

knowledge of themselves and their work environment for their professional and personal growth.

- Investigative and improvement function: meta-knowledge on the basic needs of tutoring the recent graduate, the identification and prioritization of problems that hinder the tutoring process, the problematization and reconstruction of the tutoring theory and practice, which implies an activity that assesses reality.

Know-how (based on tutorial management skills and problem identification and resolution)

- Treatment of the tutorial action plan: meta-knowledge in the development and implementation of actions for the planning and continuous monitoring of the recent graduate, in correspondence with the methodological, guiding, investigative and improvement teaching functions that must be developed in the contexts of preparation for employment.

According to Jácome *et al.* (2022), teacher support also implies a communicative relationship between the tutor and the tutee, a permanent exchange between both that favors personalized, purposeful, autonomous learning, in a way that allows the possibility of acquiring various study, research, and problem-solving strategies and habits that can be found in practice and even in personal life.

Hence, the historical-cultural approach of Vygotsky (1988) is assumed when understanding the formation and development of competencies as part of social activity, where the link between activity and communication is highlighted as a complex process, the result of lifelong learning that occurs within the sociocultural and professional framework.

The above corroborates that the tutorial competence is formed and developed through activity, communication and interaction between tutor and tutee, as social constructions that are carried out through educational practice in a sociocultural context. It is developed and constructed from internal motivations; therefore, its formation and development are a consequence of the process of assimilation of accumulated historical-social experience, as an interactive process, influenced by both the culture and the activity of the subjects.

Meanwhile, the university tutor, in preparing for employment, must be committed to transforming his or her performance and identifying his or her professional growth needs for updating in the tutoring exercise, given the ethical, professional and social commitment he or she has in fulfilling his or her duties as tutor of the recent graduate in the referred stage.

Training a university tutor who is responsible for his or her performance and the recent graduate's work performance means assuming a more comprehensive vision in the training of the tutor, so that both are capable of efficiently responding to the problems and demands that may arise in the exercise of their profession and in life, willing to constantly learn for the benefit of society, acting in an autonomous, responsible and committed manner.

CONCLUSIONS

The theoretical analysis carried out allowed us to identify the relationships between the university tutor and the recent graduate in the process of continuing education, taking into account that it is a priority of educational policy in Cuba, based on the fulfillment of social commitments.

There are many definitions about the formation of tutorial competence in Higher Education, so the authors of this study draw on them to define it as the integration of knowledge: knowing how to be, knowing how to know and knowing how to do, to efficiently fulfill the methodological, guiding, investigative and improvement teaching functions.

The formation of *tutorial competence* is necessary in the stage of Preparation for Employment, due to the importance it has in achieving a better performance of the university tutor, which results in the transmission of knowledge, practical skills and professional attitudes in the recent graduate to take on university teaching.

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The authors participated in the design and writing of the article, in the search and analysis of the information contained in the consulted bibliography.