Memòries del Programa de XARXES-1³CE de qualitat, innovació i investigació en docència universitària. Convocatòria 2018-19

Memorias del Programa de REDES-1³CE de calidad, innovación e investigación en docencia universitaria. Convocatoria 2018-19

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93. Investigación docente en los grupos de Alto Rendimiento Académico II

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ABSTRACT

To promote teaching in English, the Conselleria d’Educació, Cultura i Esport of the Generalitat Valenciana, in collaboration with public universities, created the High Academic Performance (Alto Rendimiento Académico; ARA) groups in the academic year 2010/2011. This program aims to enhance the performance of outstanding students via small groups and teaching in English since the beginning of their university studies. The main objective of the present study is to know the opinions of both students and professors, as well as the degree of diffusion of ARA groups and the English level considering respondents related and unrelated to these groups. To do so, we conducted surveys at the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Alicante, which has an ARA group in the Biology degree. Respondents unrelated to these groups showed a considerable lack of knowledge about them, although Biology students are getting more aware of them. As expected, the English level is higher in ARA groups compared to non-ARA groups, but the level is increasing in both cases. It is still necessary to work on improving the dissemination of ARA groups so students are aware of their existence and can take advantage of their benefits.

Key words: English, high academic performance, ARA group, teaching research, surveys.
1. INTRODUCTION

ARA groups are meant to increase the learning ability by reducing the number of students and by implementing lectures in English. The objectives of teaching and learning languages have not changed much through time; however, the scenario in which teaching and discourse takes place is subject to changes, related to sociolinguistic, sociological and pedagogical aspects (Sánchez, 2009). Several institutions of the European Union are adapting their higher education systems through these groups to improve their teaching quality and their academic performance. This is the reason why it is fundamental to study the perception of the implantation of ARA groups in students and teachers, as well as its evolution over time. The original aim of ARA groups was to enhance the performance of outstanding students through small groups and teaching in English since the beginning of their university studies. However, so far the performance of this group in comparison with others, and the suitability of teaching in English and smaller groups as the sole tools to ensure academic success and access to the job market have been rarely addressed.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the level of satisfaction of both students and professors using surveys obtained in the last three academic years to be able to quantify changes in their perception across time. Through these questionnaires it is possible to know more about their English level, as well as about the opinion of students and professors about ARA groups. Our hypothesis is that this program shows a positive feedback from both professors and students fulfilling the objectives of its implementation.

3. METHODS

3.1. Description of context and participants

The professors and students of the different Science careers of the Science Faculty of the University of Alicante (Marine Sciences, Mathematics and Biology) were surveyed during the last three academic years about the only ARA group of this faculty, which belongs to the
Biology degree.

3.2. Tools
Virtual surveys were carried out using Google Forms. Their dissemination was made through email and WhatsApp to students and professors of the University of Alicante, reaching 133 respondents. The answers of surveys were collected and analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

3.3. Process
Once we had a minimum number of respondents of 133, the answers of surveys were collected and analyzed.

4. RESULTS

Figure 1. Survey of the degree of awareness of the ARA group in all.
Figure 2. Survey on the level of English in the degree of Marine Science (A), Non-ARA Biology (B), Mathematics (C) and ARA Biology (D).
5. CONCLUSION

In general, it appears that ARA groups satisfies both teachers and students. Most of the shortcomings of these groups has been due to the lack of knowledge from external professors and students about what they imply. Therefore, it is very important to explain the existence and aim of this program for students, especially for those who start undergraduate programmes so they know all the possibilities they have to maximize their opportunities in their professional future. Thus, the continuation of this study in the coming years is recommended to monitor if the degree of awareness about the ARA group increases and how oriented measures to this aim are effective.

6. DEVELOPED WORK

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Sánz-Lazaro, Carlos | Coordination of the network, supervision of the work and edition of the manuscript.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES


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