

Pandemic times, health, emotions and online work with students of the Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education at the Universidad Autónoma de Nayarit**Tiempos de pandemia, la salud, las emociones y el trabajo en línea con estudiantes de la Licenciatura en Educación Infantil de la Universidad Autónoma de Nayarit**

TORRES-HERNÁNDEZ, Rosa Virginia*, PINEDA-GUERRERO, María Guadalupe and RAMOS-MURILLO, Teresa de Jesús

ID 1st Author: *Rosa Virginia, Torres-Hernández* / ORC ID: 0000-0003-2931-3388

ID 1st Co-author: *María Guadalupe, Pineda-Guerrero* / ORC ID: 0000-0002-2861-9599

ID 2nd Co-author: *Teresa De Jesús, Ramos-Murillo* / ORC ID: 0000-0002- 4170-6478

DOI: 10.35429/JP.2022.15.6.22.28

Received March 12, 2022; Accepted June 15, 2022

Citation: TORRES-HERNÁNDEZ, Rosa Virginia, PINEDA-GUERRERO, María Guadalupe and RAMOS-MURILLO, Teresa de Jesús. Pandemic times, health, emotions and online work with students of the Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education at the Universidad Autónoma de Nayarit. *Journal of Physiotherapy and Medical Technology*. 2022. 6-16: 22-28

* Correspondence to Author (e-mail: rosa.torres@uan.edu.mx)

† Researcher contributing first author

Introduction

This paper describes the situation in which the Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education (LEI) programme at the Autonomous University of Nayarit (UAN), under the circumstances and conditions experienced due to Covid-19 has given follow-up and attention to the students. The confinement and online work has had significant repercussions in the area of health and emotions of our students that must be considered. There are many challenges they have faced due to lack of connectivity, time for online work, lack of working equipment, and lack of products for their learning units.

The research presents qualitative results that made it possible, through observation, the application of forms and video calls among others, to obtain and record relevant information and especially to maintain contact with the students, making the necessary adjustments for their academic accompaniment. The experience of the Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education during the pandemic situation caused by Covid-19 is presented.

Being in contact with the environment and social coexistence strengthens and favours certain aspects in the development of skills in human beings, as well as their state of health. From March 2020 to date, the whole world has once again experienced in its history a critical situation that affects its inhabitants equally, a pandemic, which, although not the only epidemic that has affected human beings, is different from others due to the circumstances in which we live.

On the one hand, there is the mobilisation of people and the speed at which they move between multiple regions, and on the other, the amount of information - highly variable in veracity and relevance - that circulates almost immediately and can reach the most remote places. This, together with the easy transmissibility of the SARS-CoV2 virus (COVID-19), has caused it to spread rapidly and widely, affecting a large number of people, and has generated uncertainty in various aspects of our lives. (Huerta Ochoa, 2020).

The health risk that this type of epidemic represents requires a prompt response from the corresponding authorities, in this case the federal government and the general health council, so that each of the local authorities of each of the communities, municipalities and federal entities act in benefit of preserving the health of the population, which is why they have to adopt various measures that help us and above all that help to safeguard the health of each of their inhabitants.

The Autonomous University of Nayarit, as well as all the educational institutions, followed the indications to cancel all types of face-to-face activities, designing a guide for public attention that will be valid until July 2020. The Early Childhood Education programme has been fostering communication with students and teachers in order to attend to any need that may arise on the part of the young people and to provide in each case, the best follow-up to their academic training.

For this reason, the following paragraphs describe the way in which this follow-up has been carried out in order to be able to generate strategies in the academy that allow work to continue from home. We will also describe more precisely the mental and emotional health implications that quarantine brings with it and some of the conclusions that have been reached as a collegiate group.

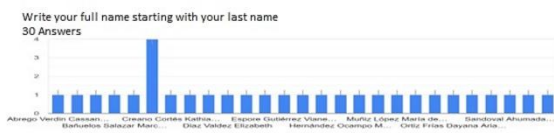
Content

The research that has been carried out has allowed for qualitative results through observation and the recording of information that has been obtained in this case by means of forms that allowed for direct contact with the students. The perception of the academic work carried out in online mode has changed and impacted our students in a significant way, and knowing the opinions and feelings of each teacher allows the necessary adjustments to be made for the benefit of the students. Since March 2020, an extraordinary situation has arisen in the field of education, and adjustments have had to be made in order to complete the school year at all levels of education. "In an extraordinary situation, such as the current one, educational agents have been forced to apply strategies that allow them to continue teaching-learning events remotely. However, such strategies are not the same as what a formal distance education project requires to be structured". Mendoza (2020)

Thus, it is necessary to pay attention and attend to the health of the students in this degree in a comprehensive manner; all of them should be offered the various alternatives and not leave aside health education through the various tools provided by technology, to prevent each of them from an overload of work that may lead them at some point to consider or think about dropping out or in more drastic cases to seek a false exit and make the mistake of committing suicide.

It is here that the work of the teacher should not only be to place tasks or academic activities and worry about complying with the class programme, but should think of the student as if he were himself, show interest in what is happening to him, offer words of encouragement and show that he is not alone, despite the confinement in which he lives, motivate and encourage him to continue learning; as well as the task board of any of the digital platforms to be used should contain images and phrases that encourage and motivate each and every one of the students to move forward.

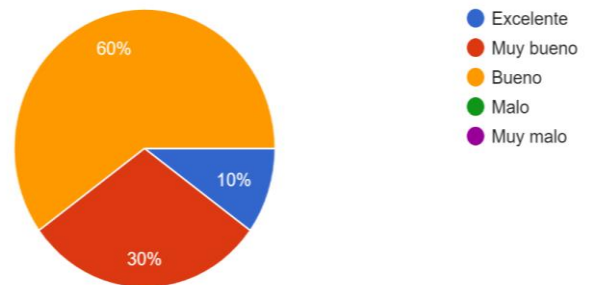
In the Early Childhood Education programme in 2020 there were 154 students and they were invited to voluntarily answer a form to find out how are they doing in their academic activities and how is the impact it is having on their formative and personal life? Thirty responses were received, as can be seen in graph 1, where 2 of the students belong to the 5th period and the remaining 28 to the 1st period. Of the 30 students, 60% stated that they liked the platform work and 40% did not like it, as shown in graph 2.



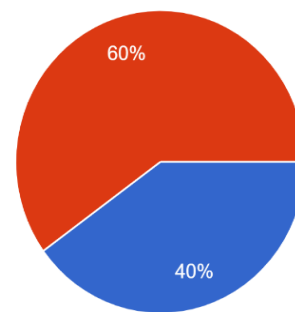
Graph 1 Name of students

In some answers to open-ended questions, they state that they have difficulties in connecting to the internet, which could be expected, given the fact that in all areas they are resorting to this medium to continue with specific functions within society.

However, there were those who said they did not learn in the same way, did not understand the use of the classroom platform, and felt saturated with the tasks. It is important, as we can see in graph 3, that the teacher's effort to teach their classes online is valued, where 60% of the students consider the teachers' work to be good, 30% very good and 10% considered it to be excellent.



Graph 2 Pleasure with platform work



Graph 3 Teacher effort

Although distance education has been managed in speciality groups, master's, doctoral and diploma courses and courses in general, platforms have been used exclusively for the delivery of remote work. Some courses recorded in videos or audios were implemented without the contact and personalised attention or the accompaniment of each student. Therefore, it had to be considered that this emergency situation that has become a normality of virtual education is worthy of being observed, investigated and recorded because of its historical relevance in the field of academic training.

It is important to mention that this way of working does not require light work since "Achieving best practice in online education requires a lot of time and resources. It takes hundreds of hours to properly design and implement an online course.

Institutions and teachers do not have hundreds of hours in this crisis. Globally declared states of emergency have required a rapid response. However, even within the crisis, one of the primary goals is to create the best possible student experience in the midst of an incredibly turbulent time." (Abreu, 2020)

It is identified that the main challenge to achieve is for students to understand the importance and significance of their learning units, knowing that all educational agents have had to improvise without training and invest more time than they are used to working online. The wear and tear and stress damages and affects the student's health causing headaches, eyestrain, discomfort due to physical posture from spending too many hours doing academic activities. In addition to experiencing stress due to lack of resources by requiring the use of internet and work equipment.

Confinement has been one of the international public health strategies to stop the spread of Covid-19, which consists of the social isolation and seclusion of people in their homes, implying a drastic change in activities and behaviours in daily life, including work and online education, as well as restrictions in the practice of activities outside the home, forcing citizens to implement new ways of living at home in the face of this contingency (World Health Organization, 2020).

The health risk that this type of epidemic represents requires a prompt response from the corresponding authorities, in this case the federal government and the general health council, so that each of the local authorities, communities, municipalities and federal entities act to preserve the health of the population, which is why they have to adopt various measures to help us and above all to help safeguard the health of each of their inhabitants. The LEI programme has responded to the indications of the UAN to take care of the integrity of teachers, administrative staff and students.

Article 3 of the General Health Law describes the importance and the right of each of the inhabitants of the Mexican state to safeguard their physical, mental and emotional health through various support programmes. T

he work that has been carried out since March of this year in our country in a state of health contingency and as a consequence of this to a social isolation of children, young people and adults, has required them to modify their daily lifestyles, as well as their study habits, involving the permanent use of technologies to keep in touch with the outside world and the fulfilment of school work.

According to Dennis (2014), socialisation is the means by which the humanisation of the human being is allowed, this contact also allows the strengthening of cognitive skills from an early age and forms new perceptions in adulthood, at this time that the link with others is not allowed, various biopsychosocial aspects deteriorate in those involved. It is worth mentioning that isolation or confinement at home is, so to speak, partial isolation, since nowadays there are different media and digital tools to be in contact with the outside world.

This is a situation that is fundamental for students, due to the coexistence and construction of knowledge that is generated in the classroom and especially for those who are ready to carry out internships and social service in educational and cultural centres and institutions with children in the infant stage. Although it is true that various digital tools have been used for some years now, there has been a considerable increase in their use, where health and education have been impacted by the changes brought about by the emergence of internet use and ICTs, changes identified as characteristics of the digital era.

In the case of health, these associations have given rise to novel fields and areas of development, enabling the improvement of living conditions and medical and health care in our communities. (World Health Organization, 2010) Despite the use of telephony and technologies, home confinement has left some disruptions in psychological and emotional health, as well as behavioural. The growing concern about what to do if there is a shortage of basic foodstuffs, work or economic problems, or perhaps the realisation that a family member has died, leads to a state of anguish, worry and depression.

Something similar happens with students; the fact that some of them express the lack of connectivity to have access to the various platforms or means to take classes has led some of them to put aside their university studies; in some others, anxiety, stress, or so many negative emotions and thoughts have come to invade university students where their academic performance is diminished. For many of them it causes exhaustion and fatigue due to the amount of activities and time they dedicate to their sessions and the extra time they invest in carrying out their work and research.

It is well known that emotions are psychophysiological responses to very relevant situations and that they lead to a new adaptive modality, these types of reactions are universal, but they are mainly influenced by culture; the basic emotions from the psychological point of view are joy, fear, anxiety or anger as basic emotions that occur in all individuals. These emotions should be worked on and addressed with each and every one of the undergraduate students (Plutchik, 1980 cited in Piqueras Rodríguez, et al, 2009).

In the LEI programme, an important effort is made to be attentive to the students and it has been a constant concern to know how they feel. It will be interesting to know at the end of this school period August - December 2020, how many of the students have had cases of family members infected by Covid-19, deaths, or other illnesses caused by chronic stress such as blood pressure, heart failure, diabetes, obesity, depression, anxiety, skin problems, to mention a few. This will allow for a comparative exercise with students' academic performance and health.

On the other hand, Izar (1993, quoted by Piqueras Rodríguez, *et al* 2009) the need for emotions that are shown in students in the different situations they face is thought that "one of the most important functions of emotion is to prepare the organism to effectively execute the conduct required by the environmental conditions, mobilising the energy necessary for it, as well as directing the conduct (approaching or moving away) towards a specific objective" who also tells us that emotions have a social function as they are:

- a) Facilitate social interaction,
- b) To control the behaviour of others,
- c) Enable the communication of affective states, and promote prosocial behaviour.

In the same way, emotions have a motivational charge, since, as mentioned in previous paragraphs, emotion energises motivated behaviour. Emotionally "charged" behaviour is performed more vigorously, so that emotion has the adaptive function of facilitating the efficient execution of the necessary behaviour in each requirement. This is why it is claimed that emotions influence health-illness through their relationship with various physiological systems that make up the "health-illness" process, especially when they become clinical disorders. Vindel & Tobal (2001). It is also considered that its motivational properties can be used to modify "healthy" (moderate physical exercise, balanced diet, rest, leisure, etc.) and "unhealthy" (alcohol abuse, smoking, sedentary lifestyle) behaviours. In the LEI programme, in the period August-December 2020, a learning unit called Emotional Intelligence is included, which promotes self-control, the ability to motivate oneself, self-knowledge, and the relationship of the emotional aspect with academic performance. This enables students to know and identify their emotions in order to be able to recognise them in any other context.

The Early Childhood Education programme deals with health in an integral way in the students of the degree, it must provide them with various alternatives on health education through the various tools that technology provides, to prevent them from an overload of work that causes them to think about dropping out or in more drastic cases to seek the wrong way out and make the mistake of taking their own lives. Some of the challenges faced by the students in continuing to work online have to do with getting an internet signal in rural areas, equipment failures, as well as developing critical thinking. It is also noted that they need to understand teachers' instructions, be patient and tolerant in order to understand and learn. This lends itself to redirect the work of the teacher, one must think of the student as if he were himself, show interest in what happens to him, provide words of encouragement and show that he is not alone despite the confinement, to honour the phrase so emblematic of our university "Por lo nuestro a los Universales" (For what is ours to the Universal).

Conclusions

It is important for the teachers of this degree in Early Childhood Education to develop not only work skills in the student but also in the development of skills that strengthen their personal and social life, which is why emphasis is placed on distance tutorial work, which has allowed us to realise the socio-emotional conditions that the students are going through, leading us to be more empathetic and maintain a better collaboration between teachers and managers so that together we can find solutions to the various problems of the students.

By carrying out this type of enquiry among students, it is concluded that emotions are important for health and life; in addition to the benefit provided to the teaching and learning process inside and outside the classroom, the mental and emotional health of the student body is also considered to be a basic aspect. The work with young undergraduates lends itself to inquiry into the circumstances of the environment, for while there are moments of tension and fear, discouragement and irritability, there is also a need to consider the difficulties and limitations of distance education that have become compulsory and massive.

As a collective, it is certain and considered that this online work is here to stay, which represents a huge and profound educational and technological change, and it is a great effort to add the state of mind, emotions, feelings and mental health that the pandemic and confinement is causing among children and young students in every part of the planet. In this small investigation, it becomes evident how the mental and emotional health of university students exclusively from the Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education is, under their own perspective and expression.

The importance of emotional management should be taken into account at a higher level; this type of strategy should be included in future study plans within the curricular structure, as it is important to develop skills so that young people learn to manage and self-regulate their emotions, as well as to generate a level of empathy with their peers;

Although there is a psycho-pedagogical department that helps to cope with certain emotional situations with young people, it should also help to understand the emotional exhaustion and saturation that is being experienced by both students and teaching staff. In this work it has been expressed and suggested to blur a negative or pessimistic outlook, it should be remembered that one comes out of crises stronger, and that in the midst of painful moments positive emotions of empathy, solidarity, gratitude and love are reborn. It should also be recognised that it is possible to think about how to deal with the fear that one had to live through, how to manage stress, as well as the introspection that sadness provided to get to know oneself better and to reflect on one's existence. The students have had a year of introspection that has had positive consequences, and when we return to the classroom they will be noticed.

When we return from this confinement, we will surely have to take stock of the human and material losses, and an analysis of the economic and social changes in our country. Surely the education system will consider this online modality as a product of the agony experienced. Although this is considered uncertain, it is possibly safe to assume that in the midst of this pandemic and confinement, mental health has suffered greatly, and there is still no knowledge of the pandemic and the mental and emotional toll it will take in the future as a result. For the time being, education should focus on what truly unites, builds and is important for every university student.

References

Abreu, J.L. (2020). *Tiempos de Coronavirus: La Educación en Línea como Respuesta a la Crisis*. Daena: International Journal of Good Conscience. [http://www.spentamexico.org/v15-n1/A1.15\(1\)1-15.pdf](http://www.spentamexico.org/v15-n1/A1.15(1)1-15.pdf)

Universidad Autónoma de Nayarit, (2020). *Comunicado Oficial de la Universidad Autónoma de Nayarit de fecha 13 de febrero 2020* <http://www.uan.edu.mx/es/comunicados>

Fernández Silano, Mariano (2013). *La Salud 2.0 y la atención de la salud en la era digital*. Revista médica Risaralda vol.20 no.1 Pereira Jan./June 2014. Artículo de Reflexión octubre 2020]. http://www.scielo.org.co/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0122-06672014000100009

Huerta Ochoa, Carla (2020). Emergencia Sanitaria por COVID-19. Emergencia sanitaria y la distribución de competencias en el Estado Federal Mexicano. Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas. Universidad Autónoma de México. ISBN Serie Opiniones Técnicas sobre Temas de Relevancia Nacional. https://archivos.juridicas.unam.mx/www/site/publicaciones/153Emergencia_sanitaria_del_COVID_19_Federalismo.pdf

Linconao, Alejandro José. (2020). El confinamiento ante el covid- 19, sus efectos vinculares y psicológicos. Fenómenos y prácticas recomendadas. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340595520>

Mendoza Castillo, Lucía (2020). Lo que la pandemia nos enseñó sobre la educación a distancia. Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Educativos (México), vol. L, núm. Esp.-, pp. 343-352, 2020 Lo que la pandemia nos enseñó sobre la educación a distancia (redalyc.org)

Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS). Cibersalud [Internet]. 58a Asamblea Mundial de la Salud; 2005 may 16 - 25; Ginebra (Suiza). Ginebra: OMS; 2005 (resolución WHA58.28) http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA58/WHA58_28-sp.pdf.

Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS). Campañas mundiales de la salud pública de la OMS. ·Sanos en casa. https://www.who.int/es/campaigns/connecting-the-world-to-combat-coronavirus/healthyathome?gclid=Cj0KCQjwkZiFBhD9ARIsAGxFX8C3o75NEWqcJn2gxVE4vyEOtGVKhGK0BFuykgesHXwR6o7jYz9lmb0aAn7eEALw_wcB

Programa eHealth OPS. [Internet]. Washington: OPS; 2012 [consultado el 25 de octubre 2020]. Componentes eSalud. <http://new.paho.org/ict4health/images/stories/ict4health/ehealth-program-spa.pdf>

Piqueras Rodríguez, José *et al* (2009). EMOCIONES NEGATIVAS Y SU IMPACTO EN LA SALUD MENTAL Y FÍSICA. Suma Psicológica, 16 (2), 85-112. ISSN: 0121-4381. <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=1342/134213131007>

Quecedo, Rosario, & Castaño, Carlos (2002). Introducción a la metodología de investigación cualitativa. Revista de Psicodidáctica, (14),5-39. ISSN: 1136-1034. Disponible en: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=175/17501402>

Secretaria de Salud. Ley General de Salud. [Consultado el 25 de octubre 2020]. Disponible en: http://www.salud.gob.mx/cnts/pdfs/LEY_GENERAL_DE_SALUD.pdf

Universidad Autónoma de Nayarit (2020) “Programa TU y el acompañamiento de estudiantes desde la virtualidad” [Material audiovisual] <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=361538121519962&extid=yf0lAdZpo5pdfsZp>