

# Perceptions of teaching and faculty academic development at the University of Chile

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Objective: To analyze and interpret perceptions about teaching and academic faculty development based on the MDAD Framework (Paricio et al., 2019).

Methods: Qualitative design with an interpretative phenomenological approach. Twenty-two interviews were conducted within three groups: physical therapy teachers, academic authorities, and the coordinators of faculty development in teaching from the University of Chile and the Faculty of Medicine. Data analysis was conducted using NVivo 12 Pro.

Results: Three dimensions and categories based on the MDAD Framework were adopted: 1) competency-based curriculum planning, 2) conceptions about teaching and learning centered on student-centered learning as well as teacher-centered approach 3) Conceptions about faculty academic development, emphasizing the meaning of teacher improvement/ change; teaching effectiveness; and research.

Conclusions: The significance of transforming teaching methods, strengthening competency-based curriculum planning, and advocating for student-centered approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment is highlighted. In future research, the exploration of innovation for enhancing the faculty academic development in different institutional settings with the goal of improving the quality of learning is recommended.

Keywords: higher education, teaching quality, university.

## **1 Introduction**

In order to address challenging educational situations effectively, university faculty members must engage in continuous self-reflection on their personal skills and arrangements, which promotes their professional growth and teaching performance.

This research adopts the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, (SoTL) approach, which involves understanding and engaging in a progression of quality, strengthening both their disciplinary and pedagogical expertise domain within a specific social, cultural, and values context (Fernández & Madinabeitia, 2017). This perspective contributes to enhancing the quality of learning outcomes in university students.

## **2 Theoretical Framework**

In good teaching, multiple factors from the university faculty's knowledge, preparation, and experience are identified. They also depend on the degree of professionalism and teaching quality, representing a progressive, long-term, and potentially infinite trajectory (Paricio et al., 2019).

Knowledge of the discipline is necessary to teach at the university, but it is not enough to be a good teacher. From the academic approach to teaching and learning (SoTL), excellence is expressed in a teacher who collaborates and shares the improvements of the teaching and learning processes with his/her peers, has a capacity for self-criticism about his/her experiences and educational intentions, and also incorporates the educational assumptions of his/her professional identity. The aforementioned allows him to progress in deepening and building new grounded and validated knowledge about how learning is generated in students (Chocarro de Luis et al., 2013; Kreber, 2000, 2002, 2013). This also implies a change in their conceptions and teaching practices (Kreber 2013; Geertsema, 2016).

Based on the preceding, the objective of the research is to analyze and interpret perceptions of teaching and faculty academic development using the Faculty Academic Development Framework (MDAD) (Paricio et al., 2019).

## **3 Methods**

A qualitative study and interpretative phenomenological approach was carried out. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 teachers of physical therapy program, 6 academic authorities, and 4 coordinators of faculty development in teaching at the University of Chile. The analysis and management of qualitative data was performed with NVivo©12 pro software.

## 4 Results and discussion

Three dimensions and their respective categories were identified and are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Dimensions, categories and quotes  
Physical Therapy Teachers , (PT); Academic Authorities (AA) and Coordinators of Faculty Development in Teaching (CFD)

Dimensions	Categories	Quotes
Competency-based curriculum planning	a. Efficiency-centered	<i>"Training in our healthcare programs has always been competency-based, which includes knowledge, knowing what to be, knowing how to act, knowing how to relate in order to make decisions and to argue, which is what you are doing because there's a patient, because there's a situation." (AA05)</i>
	b. Difficulties in curriculum planning	<i>"We must increase the education in values, we have lost that..., the humanistic aspects of practicing the profession." (PT09)</i>
Conceptions about teaching and learning	a. student-centered learning	<i>"The best way to learn something is when you do it and is able to explain what you are doing to someone else. That's the highest level in learning." (PT04)</i>
	b. Teaching and learning strategies	<i>"Reflecting on how to incorporate the analysis about the way of thinking that a physiotherapist should have, and that's why it should involve the sphere of clinical reasoning." (AA02)</i>
	c. Interaction with students	<i>"There are principles associated with the process itself, of the teacher-student relationship, where there must obviously be a sense of equality and being equitable with others, of being respectful." (PT04)</i>
	d. Student assessment	<i>"We should move toward evaluations that could actually account for what one is trying or intending to assess." (AA03)</i>
Conceptions about faculty academic development,	a. Teaching foundations	<i>"I believe that there is a duality, a relationship, an interaction of how your profession transforms yourself and how you as a subject can transform your profession too. That's how I see this transformative phenomenon in teaching."(PT09)</i>
	b. Collaboration between teaching stakeholders	<i>"...first it is collaborative, the second thing is that it communicates, shares what it does and looks that others to do the same, and looks for networks, and they work collaboratively." (CFD4)</i>
	c. Challenging teaching	<i>"I am more and more convinced that we should not only change methodologies, what we have to change are cultures, the way we face teaching and learning, and that is the paradigm shift we have to reach." (CFD4)</i>

#### **4.1 Competency-based curriculum planning**

Difficulties were identified in three areas: a) The large number of students, the overload of contents and the lack of updating of the teaching staff in teaching strategies and poor coordination among teachers; b) The lack of evaluation and support in the process of competency-based curricular innovation approach; c) The poor incorporation of humanistic and social competencies in training in Health Sciences.

#### **4.2 Conceptions about teaching and learning**

Competency-based training frames and focuses teaching with an emphasis on student learning. Some interviewees still maintain a teaching-centered approach, emphasizing the technical and clinical professional competence of the teaching staff, but recognize the essential role of the student and his/her learning. Others highlight the relevance of active and reflective learning strategies, clinical skills, and reasoning, promoting the active participation of students, teamwork, and reflection on real experiences. The importance of encouraging intellectual independence in students and optimizing the use of technology in teaching is recognized.

In terms of assessment, emphasis is placed on the evaluation of competencies through different methods and the need for continuous, formative, and authentic evaluation. It is proposed that teachers must have training in suitable assessment instruments and the need for supervised quality of the performance of the evaluations.

#### **4.3 Conceptions about faculty academic development,**

The three groups interviewed perceive faculty academic development as a process of personal growth and improvement in the field of teaching. The trainers focus on teaching effectiveness, which implies the connection between teaching purposes and their implementation in practice. On the other hand, directors emphasize the importance of teaching research as a form of professional improvement.

The change in the teaching role from a SoTL approach should be focused, according to the participants, on a) understanding teaching and humanized health care as an action based on scientific, technical, ethical, and value-based principles, consistent with the declarations of the University of Chile and the Faculty of Medicine; b) the need for collaboration among teachers and with students, promoting spaces for debate to improve the quality of the teaching-learning processes; c) encouraging challenging and problematizing teaching to stimulate reflection, critical thinking and analysis of complex scenarios. The development of teaching competencies is necessary to question one's practice and advance in the generation of knowledge, in addition to making innovative proposals in Health Sciences education.

## **5 Conclusions**

The perceptions of the groups interviewed reflect an approach focused on competency-based curricular planning as well as a need for collaboration, reflection, and assessment of the processes to improve the quality of Health Sciences Education. The ideas identified allow directing a faculty academic development that impacts the quality of learning, establishing lines of work to guide academic development from the SoTL approach.

## **6 Limitations and Future Research**

This research focused on the perception of three academic groups of the University of Chile, which limits the generalization of the results to other institutions. It would be interesting to explore the implementation of innovation to encourage faculty academic development in Health Sciences Education, and follow up on improvement actions based on the results of this research.

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