

Fostering Faculty Collaboration through Co-Teaching: A Professional Development Initiative at the Universidad Católica de Temuco, Chile
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Rationale

This paper presents the analysis of data collected from a professional development program designed for university faculty members. The initiative is framed within the “Principles and Guidelines for Co-training at the Catholic University of Temuco” (Universidad Católica de Temuco, 2021) and aligns with the Strategic Faculty Projects. It is part of the Continuous Professional Development program aimed at promoting collaborative teaching practices among faculty members in the Faculty of Education, in accordance with the guidelines for Initial Teacher Training (FID) set forth by the Chilean Ministry of Education (MINEDUC, 2016).

In this context, co-teaching—understood as the collaboration of two or more instructors who jointly plan, implement, and evaluate the educational process for a group of students (Lock et al., 2016; Zach & Avugos, 2024)—is presented as a key strategy to achieve these goals. Its implementation not only fosters inclusive and high-quality education but also promotes professional growth by encouraging pedagogical innovation and shared reflection on teaching practices (Scherer et al., 2020).

The professional development program, conducted from October 2024 to January 2025, aimed to provide participants with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills to design co-teaching practices in their classrooms. The training comprised three synchronous online sessions, asynchronous activities through a Moodle platform, and personalized feedback.

Method

The study is framed within a Design-Based Research approach, which seeks to generate knowledge through contextualized educational interventions that bridge theory and practice (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012). The professional development program methodology adopted an active, collaborative, and reflective approach (Miquel & Duran, 2017), enabling participants to integrate co-teaching theory and practice into their professional contexts. Pedagogical strategies were designed to foster engagement, knowledge sharing, and the co-creation of innovative teaching solutions.

A qualitative method design was employed (Creswell, 2013). Data sources included a pre-training exploratory questionnaire completed by 14 participating faculty members; observation records with participant reflections collected during the training sessions; planning documents created by faculties outlining detailed co-teaching class designs; and in-depth interviews with selected participants (three teaching pairs and one trio).

Results

Key findings highlight that participants developed a structured understanding of various co-teaching models, including parallel teaching, team teaching, and reciprocal peer observation, the latter being particularly valued for its reflective nature and potential for fostering professional development. Furthermore, participants enhanced essential skills such as collaborative lesson planning through the design of a co-teaching practice. However, challenges related to scheduling coordination and institutional support were identified, emphasizing the need for logistical adjustments to ensure the sustainable implementation of co-teaching practices.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, key recommendations include providing scheduled planning time and spaces for collaboration, and fostering a supportive institutional culture that documents and disseminates successful co-teaching experiences. These measures are crucial for consolidating co-teaching as a sustainable and transformative methodology in higher education contexts.