

Research articles

Pedagogical didactic training of university faculty in Argentina: (dis)articulation with research?

La formación pedagógica-didáctica del docente universitario en la Argentina: ¿(des)articulación con la investigación?

Ariadna Guaglianone^{1*} , Marcelo Rabossi² , Adriana Accinelli¹ 

¹Universidad Abierta Interamericana (UIA), Centro de Altos Estudios en Educación, Buenos Aires, Argentina

²Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, Área de Educación, Escuela de Gobierno, Buenos Aires, Argentina

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Abstract

This article analyzes the pedagogical-didactic training of university faculty in Argentina, focusing on its articulation with research through a study of four postgraduate specializations in university teaching accredited by the National Commission for University Evaluation and Accreditation (CONEAU). Using a qualitative case study approach, the research combines document analysis and interviews with program directors to examine the underlying conceptions, scope, and tensions of these training initiatives. The findings show that these specializations lead to significant pedagogical transformations in teaching practices, particularly in course design, assessment, and critical reflection on teaching. However, these changes tend to occur mainly at the individual level and have limited institutional impact, constrained by academic career policies, incentive structures, and working conditions. Furthermore, the articulation between teaching and research is uneven and, in many cases, largely confined to the capstone project. The study concludes that these programs are valuable mechanisms for the professionalization of university teaching, although their effectiveness depends on their integration into broader institutional policies.

Keywords: higher education; educational research; teacher education; professional development.

Resumen

El artículo analiza la formación pedagógico-didáctica del docente universitario en la Argentina, focalizando en su articulación con la investigación a partir del estudio de cuatro especializaciones en docencia universitaria acreditadas por la Comisión Nacional de Evaluación y Acreditación Universitaria (CONEAU). Desde un enfoque cualitativo basado en estudios de caso, se combinan análisis documental y entrevistas a directoras de carrera para indagar concepciones, alcances y tensiones de estos dispositivos formativos. Los resultados evidencian que las especializaciones generan transformaciones pedagógicas relevantes en las prácticas docentes, especialmente en la planificación, la evaluación y la reflexión sobre la enseñanza. No obstante, dichos cambios se manifiestan principalmente a nivel individual y presentan un impacto institucional limitado, condicionado por políticas de carrera docente, incentivos académicos y condiciones laborales. Asimismo, la articulación entre docencia e investigación se presenta de manera heterogénea y, en muchos casos, se concentra en el trabajo final integrador. Se concluye que estas propuestas constituyen dispositivos valiosos para la profesionalización docente, aunque su efectividad depende de su inserción en políticas institucionales más amplias.

Palabras clave: educación superior; investigación educativa; formación de docentes; desarrollo profesional.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the education of university faculty has become a central pillar in efforts to strengthen educational quality and professionalize teaching in higher education. Within this field, pedagogical-didactic training is recognized as a continuous and necessary process that articulates practice and research, and supports the improvement of learning and educational innovation.

*Corresponding author:

ariadna.guaglianone@uai.edu.ar

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Various studies point to the persistence of an academicist tradition that privileges disciplinary expertise over pedagogical training (Rodera; Walker, 2023; Finkelstein et al., 2022; Collazo Siqués et al., 2021). In the Argentine university system, this conception continues to legitimize faculty primarily on the basis of their trajectory or research output, although policies have been promoted to reverse this trend (Montes; Suárez, 2016).

In this context, postgraduate programs and specializations in university teaching constitute key mechanisms for strengthening the pedagogical dimension, promoting reflection on practice, and consolidating academic communities aimed at innovation (Loughran; Menter, 2019). However, a central problem persists regarding the real scope of these initiatives. Although the literature recognizes the value of specializations in university teaching as mechanisms for professionalization, there is less empirical evidence of their capacity to produce sustained transformations in teaching practices and, especially, to consolidate an effective articulation between teaching and research in institutional contexts shaped by strong academicist traditions. In particular, the literature has tended to highlight their formative value but has paid less attention to the institutional conditions that mediate their impact and limit their effective incorporation into the university system (Peña-Vicuña; Acosta-Peña, 2023). In this sense, this study examines the extent to which these initiatives generate effects that go beyond individual faculty transformation and the institutional conditions that mediate -and often constrain- such impact.

The original contribution of this study lies in offering a comparative analysis of recent cases accredited by CONEAU, making it possible to examine not only the educational effects of these specializations but also the structural tensions that shape the integration of teaching and research in the Argentine university system.

Within this framework, the present study analyzes the pedagogical-didactic training of university faculty in Argentina through four institutional cases offering the CONEAU-accredited specialization in university teaching. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research combines document analysis and interviews with program directors to examine the conceptions, scope, and tensions that frame these training processes. The findings aim to provide evidence to support rethinking teacher education in higher education as part of academic policies oriented not only toward strengthening educational quality but also toward promoting a university culture that articulates teaching, pedagogical inquiry, and continuous improvement.

EDUCATION FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

Teacher education in the university context is structured around intentional professional development processes aimed at strengthening pedagogical and didactic competencies that complement mastery of disciplinary content (Montes; Suárez, 2016). At the higher education level, it has historically been assumed that holding an undergraduate or postgraduate degree is sufficient to practice teaching (Law 24.521, art. 36), without formal requirements in didactics (Rodera; Walker, 2023). This view consolidated an academicist tradition in higher education, in which the legitimacy of faculty members is based primarily on professional trajectory or research rather than on pedagogical training (Finkelstein et al., 2022).

However, this perspective faces new demands and realities stemming from the profound transformations that both society and the university have undergone in recent years. Among the main training needs of university faculty are strengthening their command of didactics and assessment (Montes; Suárez, 2016), preparation for the pedagogical use of digital technologies (Zabalza, 2022), and training to address student diversity resulting from the growing massification of higher education (Fernández Lamarra et al., 2018). With regard to the first identified deficit, recent studies show the persistence of traditional lecture-based practices, the absence of active methodologies, and difficulties in implementing of formative and authentic assessment (Finkelstein et al., 2022; Rodera; Walker, 2023). These limitations have led universities to deploy various strategies for teacher training and support.

In particular, institutional responses have been diverse and have varied in their degrees of formalization: ranging from pedagogical advising, short courses, and communities of practice to postgraduate programs that include specializations in university teaching (Peña-Vicuña; Acosta-Peña, 2023). The latter have become established as strategic mechanisms for the professionalization of teaching and for overcoming the instrumental view of the faculty member as a mere transmitter of knowledge (Collazo Siqués et al., 2021). These initiatives also promote the integration of didactic practice and research, fostering critical reflection and educational innovation (Loughran; Menter, 2019).

Beyond the diversity of initiatives, a central challenge lies in evaluating their quality and real impact. In the Argentine context, the National Commission for University Evaluation and Accreditation (CONEAU) establishes accreditation criteria for postgraduate programs that include pedagogical and research dimensions. These external evaluation processes have promoted improvements in curricula and academic management, although a gap between disciplinary teaching and pedagogical training is still observed (Argentina, 2022).

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The relationship between research and teaching has been the subject of debate in higher education since the mid-twentieth century, within broader discussions about the meaning and functions of the modern university. From an organizational perspective, Clark (1983) noted that academic cultures may either facilitate or limit the integration of these two dimensions. Hattie and Marsh (1996) showed that the correlation between research productivity and teaching performance is not necessarily positive or direct, while Brew (1999, 2003) proposed understanding this link as a process of shared inquiry that enriches teaching when it is oriented toward the joint construction of knowledge by faculty and students.

Subsequent studies have deepened this discussion with ambivalent results. Palali et al. (2018) identified positive associations between high-impact publications and the performance of postgraduate students, although not with teaching evaluations. In contrast, Maisano, Mastrogiacomio and Franceschini (2023) concluded that research and teaching operate largely independently. Zaman's (2004) systematic review reinforces this perspective by showing negative, null, or weak positive correlations and by indicating that the link is perceived as more significant at the postgraduate level than at the undergraduate level. Within this

framework, the pedagogical training of faculty assumes a central role in articulating teaching and inquiry. Mogro Viteri et al. (2025) highlight that training programs integrating theory and practice, feedback, and active student-centered methodologies contribute significantly to improving teaching practices, encouraging a more reflective integration between teaching and research. Complementarily, Cardoza Sernaqué et al. (2023) affirm that the development of research competencies strengthens the faculty's professional profile, improves teaching conditions, and increases knowledge production, also impacting students' research skills.

From an epistemological perspective, Barnett (1997, 2000) argues that teaching and research do not constitute separate functions, but rather interdependent dimensions of the same formative experience focused on the construction of meaning and the development of critical judgment. This view implies training faculty capable of teaching through research and researching through teaching. At the international level, particularly in Europe, this shift toward reflective and research-based approaches responds to a recommendations by the Council and the European Commission (2007, 2015) and is reflected in postgraduate proposals that seek to overcome the traditional separation between theory and practice (Schön, 1987; Zeichner, 2010; Loughran; Menter, 2019). Research-based teaching is thus conceived as an opportunity to generate contextualized pedagogical knowledge and to informed innovative decisions centered on the improvement of learning (Vieira et al., 2021).

Despite this, in the Argentine case, the systematic incorporation of research into the training of university faculty remains incipient and weakly articulated in the curricula of specializations in university teaching. In this regard, promoting its integration through active methodologies, collaborative projects, and links with research centers could help consolidate an academic culture centered on inquiry and the critical construction of knowledge (Collazo, 2022; Hirsch Adler; Navia Antezana, 2019).

Within this framework, it is pertinent to examine the extent to which specializations in university teaching succeed in institutionalizing reflective pedagogical practices and integrating educational research as a constitutive dimension of the teaching role.

BRIEF CHARACTERIZATION OF UNIVERSITIES IN ARGENTINA

In quantitative terms, the university system comprises 142 institutions (64 national, 8 provincial, and 70 private) enrolling 2,567,251 undergraduate students (78% in public universities). Postgraduate programs enroll 179,517 students (66% in the public sector) in specialization, master's, and doctoral programs (Argentina, 2025). With regard to funding, all public undergraduate programs are tuition-free. At the postgraduate level, universities charge differentiated fees according to program characteristics. On the other hand, on average, more than 90% of the income of private institutions comes from tuition fees (del Bello; Barsky; Giménez, 2007).

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

For this study on the pedagogical-didactic training of university faculty in Argentina, the postgraduate offerings of four universities were selected: three public (Universidad del Sur, Universidad del Centro, and Universidad del Norte) and one private (Instituto Universitario CABA), all of which offer the specialization in university teaching. It should be clarified that, for reasons of confidentiality, fictitious names are used to refer to the universities.

Out of the total of 142 universities in the system (72 public and 70 private), 43 offer this specialization (31 public and 12 private). Within this set, purposive sampling was carried out, considering only those institutions that obtained a favorable accreditation decision from CONEAU during the period 2022-2023, in order to analyze study programs that reflect recent evaluated criteria of curricular updating and quality standards. The geographical location of the institutions was also considered to broadly represent the national territory. It is important to note that the purpose of the study was to deepen the analysis of four particular cases, without intending to extrapolate the results to the entire Argentine university system.

The methodology used is exploratory and interpretive. Institutional websites and accreditation reports issued by CONEAU in 2022 (two cases) and 2023 (the remaining two cases) were consulted. In addition, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with the program directors of the four universities, as they are the key actors with regard to knowledge of faculty didactic needs as well as the organizational decisions that govern training programs. The interviews were structured into three categories:

The first category, *Needs and Results of University Teacher Training*, aimed to identify the specific didactic shortcomings of each university's faculty, the empirical evidence that justifies the offering of the specialization, and its perceived impact on faculty training.

The second category, *Articulation between Teaching, Research, and Curriculum Design*, sought to determine whether the specialization is conceived solely as a means of didactic improvement or, on the contrary, whether it promotes the figure of the teacher-researcher. Specifically, it examined whether the teacher training policy adopts an integrative approach or maintains a separation between teaching tasks and knowledge production.

The last category, *Challenges and Future Perspectives*, sought to capture the dynamics of organizational change and the strategies projected for program development. It examines, for example, the influence of the national accreditation body (CONEAU) on the curricular design of the specialization, and whether the directors are operating with a reactive vision (complying with requirements) or a proactive one (anticipating the future of university education). At the same time, it analyzes how the program is preparing to face the technological and social disruptions that shape the present and outline future scenarios.

CASE STUDIES

Instituto Universitario CABA (IUC)

The Specialization in University Teaching in Health Sciences was formalized in 2016 after a lack of pedagogical training was identified among a large part of the academic staff, especially in the Nursing and Nutrition undergraduate programs. Between 2016 and 2021, 91 students enrolled; however, by the latter date, only five had completed the program (CONEAU), which reflects institutional difficulties in ensuring the continuity and completion of the training trajectories.

The IUC emphasized that its creation responded primarily to the lack of pedagogical training among a significant number of faculty members, as well as to the need to reform the curriculum in accordance with a competency-based approach. As Ana, the program director, explained, *"We had to design a new curriculum based on graduate competencies, and we needed to incorporate another way of teaching"*, emphasizing that the objective was to adapt teaching methodologies to the current educational context.

The institutional experience showed that many faculty members faced difficulties teaching under this new paradigm, maintaining traditional practices centered on the unidirectional transmission of knowledge. This gap became evident during the design of the new curriculum, when it was acknowledged that *"[...] as physicians we believe we know how to teach because of our experience with patients, but students are not patients"*, which reveals the distance between clinical training and contemporary pedagogical demands.

To tackle these shortcomings, the IUC Department of Pedagogy implemented short courses which, although useful, were not sufficient to comprehensively address the identified deficiencies. However, surveys conducted with graduates showed significant transformations: teaching shifted from a lecture-based model to active methodologies that promote student participation and the incorporation of research as a substantive component of training. According to the academic team, this process implied *"[...] a profound change in classroom dynamics, with greater student protagonism, increased preparation of topics by the teaching staff, and a growing integration of research into educational practice"*.

Research training constitutes a structural axis of the program. The curriculum includes a specific course devoted to this area, as well as integrative seminars in which students apply research approaches and tools to the development of their final projects. In the words of the program leadership, *"[...] we have a full course on research that concludes with the presentation of a project, and three integrative seminars aimed at working in depth on different topics related to research"*. This structure has encouraged the development of applied academic work on problems of teaching in the health sciences.

Likewise, the proposal promotes participation in ongoing projects linked to teaching practice. In this regard, it was noted that twelve students developed applied final projects, including studies situated in hospital contexts, showing that the specialization goes beyond theoretical training to generate concrete instances of applied research.

CONEAU's observations on the program were mainly formal in nature; however, the IUC has chosen to periodically update the curriculum in response to changes in teaching and technological advances. The pandemic accelerated internal debates between pedagogical perspectives and views more closely aligned with the medical field. In this respect, the program coordinator noted, *"We developed a new curriculum two years ago, and we have already realized that we need to change it again. We are thinking of one that is much more digital and technology-based, because teaching changes faster than we can update curricula"*.

Along these lines, a teaching model is conceived in which the role of the professor is reconfigured as a facilitator of the training process, responsible for prioritizing content and fostering student participation in the construction of knowledge. As the program director noted, *"We will have to start from what the student does, and the teacher will coordinate how it would be most useful to apply it"*, even envisioning scenarios of virtual classrooms with heterogeneous levels in which the challenge is to reduce learning gaps. In this context, the need to incorporate emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, is recognized, although their adoption remains uneven among faculty and students.

Finally, it is proposed that research training should be understood as a continuous process beyond the final project; however, in health-related programs, teaching still predominates over research, a challenge that must be overcome to advance the effective integration.

Universidad del Centro (UC)

At the Universidad del Centro (UC), the creation of the specialization and the master's degree in university teaching responded to an institutional policy intended to enhance faculty pedagogical competencies alongside their disciplinary training. During the period 2011–2019, 155 students enrolled, of whom 90 completed the coursework and only 14 graduated (Argentina, 2022).

Victoria, the program coordinator, states that “[...] *to teach, it is not enough to know the subject*”, referring to the need to reinforce faculty didactic competencies. This concern led the university to guarantee the tuition-free status of both programs, primarily aimed at its teaching staff.

The lack of pedagogical training among faculty was recognized as a longstanding concern within the institution. The interviewee noted that, although progress has been made, challenges persist in this area, even with regard to inadequate teaching practices. In this regard, in addition to the postgraduate programs, the Center for Education and Technology at UC offers multiple short courses and workshops designed to develop pedagogical competencies.

Although the university does not have systematic studies that measure the impact of these policies, improvements in teaching practices are observed based on qualitative evidence, such as students' final projects, reflection on their own practice, and the incorporation of innovations in assessment and teaching materials. According to the interviewee, in these integrative projects, whose requirement is to recover and integrate the contents of different seminars, “[...] *genuine and specific concerns and responses in relation to their teaching practices*” have been recorded, demonstrating a process of appropriation of pedagogical knowledge.

Particularly noteworthy is the integration of students into research projects to prevent the final projects of the specialization from remaining isolated. According to the academic coordinator, this initiative seeks to ensure that cohorts in training connect with previous ones and with ongoing research teams, participating in joint activities and conceiving their work as part of a collective endeavor. Likewise, meetings are organized between students and project directors, the exchange of theoretical frameworks and common problematics is promoted, and a support system throughout the entire process is implemented.

This dynamic of incorporating the research function into the training process is expressed not only in the integrative final project but also in specific workshops. Although there are still no empirical evaluations that allow precise measurement of whether graduates effectively incorporate this component into their teaching, indications of transformation are evident, such as greater attention to the theoretical-epistemological context of the content. Broader effects are also observed, such as the participation of graduates in academic positions or scientific publications. In this regard, the interviewee emphasized that the invitation for students to join research projects responds to “an initial concern” that the university has managed to institutionalize, promoting the inclusion of final projects within existing research lines and their contribution to them.

CONEAU's recommendations led to significant curricular changes at UC, such as the incorporation of thesis workshops and the reinforcement of academic monitoring mechanisms. The interviewee explained that, following CONEAU Resolution 160/11—which established among the standards for specialization programs that “[...] *there must be an integrative final project*”, study plans were modified and adjustments were introduced in response to the low number of graduates. These modifications included closer student support and stronger links with research teams.

Finally, the institution explicitly states that the incorporation of digital technologies is transforming teaching and learning processes. The teaching role is now oriented more toward guidance and support than toward the mere transmission of content. In this regard, the interviewee warned that “[...] *the use of technology should serve to enrich training, not to replace critical thinking or collaborative work*”, insisting that digital resources must be linked to real problems and rather than reduced to merely instrumental use.

Universidad del Sur (US)

During the period 2019–2020, 72 students enrolled in the specialization in university teaching at Universidad del Sur (US); 52 completed the coursework, and only 3 graduated (Argentina, 2022).

The creation of the program stemmed from an institutional diagnosis that revealed insufficient pedagogical and didactic training among part of the faculty. The initial analysis showed that, although disciplinary training was strong, there was a marked lack of didactic tools. According to Cecilia, the program's academic coordinator at the Andean Campus, "[...] *we have four engineering programs with excellent training, but the faculty is reluctant toward didactics and pedagogy*". This diagnosis, documented during the 2017 institutional evaluation, highlighted the need for a specific program aimed at strengthening pedagogical competencies and improving the quality of university teaching.

The advances derived from the specialization were observed mainly in the development of course syllabi and in academic organization. According to the program coordinator, faculty who participated in the program between 2019 and 2021 demonstrated substantial improvements in planning and curriculum design. As the interviewee noted, seminars such as didactics oriented toward university teaching made it possible to develop new syllabi and didactic approaches, representing significant progress in professional practice. These initiatives are complemented by courses and workshops organized by the Research Laboratory on Teacher Educator Training at US, which expand the specialization's offerings.

The research component in teacher training is centered on the integrative final project, which may consist of a study of one's own practice with intervention proposals or of educational research aligned with institutional research lines. This approach, as explained by the interviewee, is developed primarily in the seminar on final project methodology, although there are intermediate stages to guide the topic selection. Likewise, the disciplinary diversity of the student body represents an additional challenge, since not all students have prior research experience and, in many cases, research activity is not sustained once the training has been completed.

The integration of research into teaching is also promoted through curricular spaces such as the workshop on inquiry into teaching practices, which fosters a critical perspective oriented toward the analysis of teaching processes while incorporating elements of socio-anthropological research. The objective, according to the program coordination, is "[...] *to glimpse where the implicit mechanisms of teaching practice are located and to think of oneself in terms of inquiry*", rather than to formulate explicit research problems. This perspective contributes to establishing a reflective and analytical approach to teaching practice.

At the same time, through projects linked to the final projects, some students contribute to applied research or even join already established research teams. This task reinforces the relationship between training, research, and professional practice.

With regard to external evaluation, CONEAU accreditation processes did not entail substantial curricular modifications, although they did promote the program's reaccreditation and the strengthening of the faculty. Nevertheless, despite adjustments to content and pedagogical approaches, the main challenge identified by the program coordination continues to be increasing the number of graduates. The move toward a hybrid modality has also posed new challenges, particularly for faculty who experience difficulties organizing virtual classes. As the interviewee acknowledged, "*We have faculty who, faced with this option, do not want to teach because it is more complex for them to organize the virtual platform*". In response to this situation, the university has begun to develop training initiatives.

Universidad del Norte (UN)

The specialization in university teaching at Universidad del Norte (UN) was created in 2002 within the Faculty of Health Sciences, following a self-evaluation that revealed that the majority of the faculty lacked pedagogical training. In quantitative terms, between 2011 and 2021, 134 students enrolled, 94 completed the coursework, and of these, 41 obtained the degree (Argentina, 2022).

Initially, the program was exclusively aimed at health professionals, although over time it was opened to faculty from other disciplines and institutions. As María Julia, the program director, explained, “[...] *the results of the self-evaluation provided important evidence that faculty teaching in this faculty lacked pedagogical training, and in both institutional and external evaluations, the pedagogical training of university teachers was expected to gain significant relevance*”.

The identified weaknesses were confirmed both in the self-evaluation processes and in internal reflections. In this regard, Gabriela, the program’s co-director, noted that “[...] *they enroll in the program because of the need for pedagogical and didactic training, and to reflect on their teaching practice*”, also highlighting the prestige conferred by the specialization, although this recognition did not always translate into structural change within the academic units.

With regard to impacts on practice, although there are no systematic evaluations, changes are perceived in conceptions of teaching, assessment, and attention to students. The program coordination acknowledged that, in many cases, specialists do not have decision-making power within course structures, but they have managed to transform their ways of understanding teaching and relating to students. In addition, the Academic Secretariat and the Faculty of Health Sciences develop complementary training, which has been further consolidated since the pandemic.

Research on teaching practice constitutes one of the three central axes of the program. Through seminars on educational research and teaching practice, critical analysis is promoted from the early stages of the coursework, encouraging students to develop drafts of their final project. As one of the academic coordinators, María Julia, stated, “[...] *teaching practice, the analysis of practice, the conditions of teaching practice, and research on teaching practices are among the main axes*”. The research component is also incorporated transversally in various courses, whether through assessment activities, practical assignments, or exploratory tasks. In many cases, faculty in the specialization themselves invite students to join established research projects, which enhances their competencies and contributes to generational renewal within research teams.

Curricular and regulatory adjustments have also accompanied the program’s evolution, especially in response to CONEAU’s recommendations. Implemented modifications include the revision of regulations, the adaptation of study plans, and the incorporation of thesis workshops to promote graduation.

Finally, the UN has been a pioneer in the incorporation of technologies into university teaching. The Faculty of Health Sciences already had institutionalized virtual environments and its own server prior to the pandemic, which facilitated the transition to remote instruction. Gabriela emphasized that “[...] *the challenge is to train ourselves so that technology becomes a tool that supports teaching rather than an obstacle*”. Overall, the UN stands out for its early incorporation of virtual environments and pedagogically meaningful technological training strategies.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

While in Europe a trend toward models that integrate research and teaching practice has become consolidated, favoring critical reflection and pedagogical innovation, in Argentina, the relative disconnection between pedagogical preparation and research training has limited the capacity of university faculty to renew their didactic approaches, update curricula, and advance other substantive dimensions of higher education teaching (Guaglianone; Rabossi; Accinelli, 2025).

From the comparative analysis of the four cases, a series of structural tensions emerges that enables an interpretive reading of the process of university teacher education beyond institutional particularities. In particular, the study shows that specializations in university teaching are situated within a field marked by a persistent tension between a strongly disciplinary academic tradition and contemporary demands for the pedagogical professionalization of teaching. This tension is not expressed as an individual deficit among faculty but rather as a structural feature of academic culture, historically oriented toward legitimizing teaching on the basis of professional or research expertise rather than pedagogical training.

Within this framework, the analyzed specializations emerge as mechanisms aimed at problematizing this matrix, although their effects are uneven and conditioned by broader organizational factors.

The interviews make it possible to gauge the depth of this gap between disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical competencies, which becomes particularly visibly in certain organizational contexts. At the IUC, for example, the program director noted that some faculty assume that "teaching" is a natural extension of their clinical practice, stating that "[...] *as physicians we believe we know how to teach because of our experience with patients, but students are not patients*". This assessment not only illustrates an individual representation but also reveals a conception that is widespread in certain professional fields, where teaching is understood as an activity derived from expert practice rather than as one requiring specific knowledge. A similar situation is observed in the US, where the academic coordinator reported that even faculty with excellent disciplinary training "were reluctant toward didactics and pedagogy" reinforcing the idea that resistance to pedagogical training does not stem exclusively from personal trajectories but from cultural and structural frameworks that tend to undervalue this type of knowledge.

These findings help explain why specializations in university teaching emerge, in this context, as institutional responses aimed at problematizing these deeply rooted conceptions, promoting processes of systematic reflection on practice, and strengthening the pedagogical organization of courses. However, the comparative analysis shows that their capacity to produce sustained transformations does not depend solely on the quality of their curricular proposals but also on their articulation with broader structural conditions that enable the collective appropriation of the promoted changes.

A second relevant interpretative axis of the comparative analysis refers to the persistent distance between formative effects at the individual level and their limited formalization. In the four cases, significant transformations are observed in faculty conceptions and pedagogical practices, particularly in curriculum planning, the incorporation of active methodologies, and the valuation of formative assessment. However, these advances tend to be expressed predominantly at the individual level -through a greater capacity to analyze one's own practice, problematize teaching processes, and design situated interventions- without being systematically translated into broader organizational transformations. The limited formalization of these changes, which affects not only the four universities evaluated but the system as a whole, is closely associated with structural conditions of academic work, such as the lack of incentives for pedagogical training, the high proportion of faculty with part-time appointments (frequently ten hours per week), and the scarcity of protected institutional time for reflection and professional development. These conditions provide a partial explanation for the low graduation rates recorded in several of the analyzed universities, such as the five graduates out of 91 enrolled at the IUC or the 14 out of 155 at the UC, which reflect not only interrupted individual trajectories but also the difficulties in sustaining medium and long-term training processes. In this sense, pedagogical training, although necessary to promote processes of reflection and improvement, does not operate in isolation, nor does it automatically produce transformations in teaching practices if it is not accompanied by favorable regulatory conditions, such as academic career policies, academic recognition of the pedagogical knowledge produced, and protected time for training and reflection.

In this line, one of the central contributions of the study lies in showing that the impact of the specializations does not manifest itself in a homogeneous or linear manner but rather varies according to the level of analysis considered. While, at the subjective level, a reconfiguration of teaching identity is observed-characterized by greater pedagogical awareness and an increasing disposition to review one's own practices-at the practical level the effects are more limited and dependent on structural factors that go beyond the curricular design of the programs. This gap between individual change and organizational transformation constitutes one of the central tensions that traverse university teacher education and conditions the sustainability of the promoted improvement processes.

A second set of findings is related to the articulation between teaching, research, and curriculum design. The comparative analysis makes it possible to identify differentiated organizational configurations in the ways teaching is articulated with inquiry in the analyzed specializations. While in some universities research constitutes a structuring axis of the training process, promoting the insertion of students into institutional lines and collective projects, in others its integration appears more limited, concentrated mainly in the integrative final project and in specific curricular instances. In this way, highly heterogeneous levels of integration are observed across the four analyzed cases. Although research is formally integrated into all study plans-either as a specific course, as transversal content through methodological seminars, or through the integrative final project- its effective role in teacher training varies significantly among the cases.

In this regard, at the UC and the UN, research is a structuring axis of the training proposal that promotes the insertion of students into research lines, participation in ongoing projects, and the collective construction of pedagogical knowledge. At the UC, this process avoids isolated projects and favors formative continuity, while at the UN, *"research on teaching practice is one of the main axes"*, which encourages students to develop reflective research from the early stages of the program. In contrast, in the two remaining universities analyzed, the articulation is concentrated in the integrative final project or in specific research seminars, without necessarily leading to a sustained practice of pedagogical inquiry. This difference makes it possible to distinguish between training models that favor research continuity and others that tend to generate more isolated productions, highly dependent on the individual initiative of the faculty members. Even so, in those cases, an emerging tendency is observed whereby faculty begin to recognize themselves as producers of pedagogical knowledge rather than only as disciplinary transmitters, in line with the perspectives of Barnett (2004) and Brew (2003), who conceive teaching as a practice of inquiry and collective construction of meaning. This identity transformation, although incipient, constitutes an important step toward a more reflective and epistemologically aware university teaching.

Although research is present in all the analyzed proposals, its integration into everyday teaching is usually limited, highly dependent on the individual initiative of the faculty member, and in many cases circumscribed to the final project. To some extent, a persistent gap is observed between the research-teaching articulation declared in curricular designs and that which is effectively materialized in training practices. This situation suggests that, rather than forming teacher-researchers in the full sense, the specializations tend toward the development of profiles of reflective teachers, with basic methodological competencies to analyze their practice and produce situated pedagogical knowledge. This orientation is consistent with the reflective practice approaches developed by Schön (1987) and Zeichner (2010), in which research is not necessarily conceived as traditional academic production but as a systematic process of inquiry into teaching. Therefore, the consolidation of a university teaching that sustainably integrates research and teaching continues to be an open challenge, conditioned by the structure of academic work and the limited legitimization of pedagogical knowledge.

These challenges are compounded by the accelerated transformations derived from digitalization, the expansion of hybrid modalities, and the incorporation of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, which place pressure on organizations to continuously review their teaching practices and curricula, and to develop new teaching competencies. The interviews show growing awareness of this need, although the capacity for institutional anticipation is uneven. At the IUC, for example, it is recognized that *"[...] we developed a new curriculum two years ago and we have already realized that we need to change it again"*, which reflects the difficulty of sustaining curricular updating in contexts of rapid transformation. In contrast, the UN shows a more consolidated trajectory, having early developed formalized virtual environments, training in digital resources, and strategies for a critical pedagogical use of technology. Likewise, it is observed that in some cases responses appear more associated with reactive processes linked to accreditation requirements, while in others a more proactive planning oriented toward pedagogical innovation and the critical use of technology is observed.

Based on the study of these four cases, it is possible to conclude that specializations in university teaching constitute valuable mechanisms for promoting the professionalization of teaching and strengthening the pedagogical reflection of faculty. However, their scope is conditioned by structural tensions that hinder the formalization of changes and the effective integration of teaching and research. Far from invalidating their relevance, these results underscore the need to conceive university teacher education as part of a broader framework of academic policies that ensure continuity, recognition, and incentives for professional development.

At the same time, it was observed that CONEAU plays a relevant role in improvement processes. Its recommendations have promoted curricular improvements, the incorporation of final project workshops, and the strengthening of academic support mechanisms, although their impact is insufficient if not articulated with sustained policies for continuing education, educational research, and professional development that transcend external evaluation cycles.

In summary, the analyzed specializations show, in all cases, the capacity to generate relevant changes in teaching practices and in faculty pedagogical understanding, particularly at the level of reflection on teaching; however, their impact is mediated by the availability of institutional policies that ensure formative continuity, adequate working conditions, and incentives for educational research. Within this framework, the findings of the study not only describe particular experiences but also make it possible to problematize the conditions under which university teacher education can effectively contribute to stronger articulation between teaching and research in the Argentine university system. Consequently, they open lines of inquiry aimed at deepening the analysis of the organizational conditions that favor or hinder the articulation between teaching and research, evaluating the sustainability of pedagogical changes over time, and examining the impact of these transformations on student learning and the production of pedagogical knowledge. Approaches based on comparative and broader-scope studies will make it possible to advance toward a deeper and more systematic understanding of teacher professionalization processes in higher education.

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Authors contribution

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