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*Artículos científicos*

## **“¡Fue mi peor clase!” Análisis de experiencias estudiantiles con docentes deficientes**

***“It was my worst course!” Analysis of student’s experiences with deficient teachers***

***“Foi a minha pior aula!” Análise de experiências de alunos com professores deficientes***

**Jesús Carlos - Guzmán<sup>1</sup>**

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Facultad de Psicología, México

[jcarlosguzman@mac.com](mailto:jcarlosguzman@mac.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7700-5158>

### **Resumen**

El propósito de la investigación fue describir y analizar la docencia deficiente basada en las respuestas que 193 estudiantes de psicología de una universidad pública ofrecieron a la pregunta: ¿Cuál fue tu peor clase? Se obtuvieron 374 experiencias analizadas cualitativamente utilizando el programa *Hyper Research* (versión 4.0.3). Para estudiar las experiencias, se utilizaron dos categorías: una denominada didáctica y otra actitudinal. Para la primera, se construyeron 13 subcategorías y 11 para la segunda. Se describe lo sucedido cuando la enseñanza va en sentido opuesto al deseable. Los resultados indican que las seis principales características de una clase deficiente son: no favorecer el aprendizaje, no explicar adecuadamente los contenidos enseñados, la irresponsabilidad docente, la ausencia o deficiente retroalimentación, las formas inadecuadas de evaluación y que los alumnos imparten la clase. En un número menor, se encontraron casos de maltrato hacia los estudiantes. Se explican los hallazgos utilizando los factores que favorecen el aprendizaje y

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las aportaciones de las buenas prácticas de enseñanza. Se sugiere capacitar a los maestros en los aspectos detectados como deficientes, contar con políticas institucionales que verifiquen el cumplimiento de las funciones docentes y con mecanismos para identificar cómo viven los alumnos el trato de los maestros.

**Palabras clave:** calidad de la enseñanza, alumnos, didáctica, actitudes del docente, investigación cualitativa

### **Abstract**

The goal of the research was to describe and analyze deficient teaching based on the answers 193 university students gave to the question “What was your worst course?”, from which we obtained 374 experiences which were analyzed qualitatively using the Hyper Research (version 4.0.3). It employed two categories: one called teaching practices and the other teaching attitudes, from which it was constructed 13 subcategories for the former and 11 for the latter. It describes what happens when teaching is not done in the desired manner. The main results were that the six actions most frequently demonstrated by bad professor were: not fostering learning, not explaining adequately, irresponsibility, the lack of or poor quality of feedback, inadequate forms of evaluation and the students giving the class. It was found some amount of mistreatment of students. The findings are explained using factors that it is knowing fostering learning along with contributions from teaching best practices. It recommends training professors in the aspects we identified as being deficient and designing institutional policies that verify the compliance of teaching functions, with mechanisms by which to identify how students experience their treatment by professors.

**Keywords:** Teaching quality, didacticism, students, teacher attitudes, qualitative research.

## Resumo

O objetivo da pesquisa foi descrever e analisar o ensino deficiente a partir das respostas que 193 estudantes de psicologia de uma universidade pública ofereceram à pergunta: Qual foi a sua pior aula? Foram obtidas 374 experiências analisadas qualitativamente por meio do programa Hyper Research (versão 4.0.3). Para estudar as experiências, foram utilizadas duas categorias: uma denominada didática e outra atitudinal. Para a primeira foram construídas 13 subcategorias e 11 para a segunda. Descreve o que aconteceu quando o ensino vai na direção oposta ao que é desejável. Os resultados indicam que as seis principais características de uma aula deficiente são: não favorecer o aprendizado, não explicar adequadamente o conteúdo ministrado, irresponsabilidade do professor, ausência ou feedback deficiente, formas inadequadas de avaliação e que os alunos ministram a aula. Em menor número, foram encontrados casos de maus-tratos a estudantes. Os achados são explicados a partir dos fatores que favorecem a aprendizagem e as contribuições das boas práticas pedagógicas. Sugere-se capacitar os professores nos aspectos detectados como deficientes, ter políticas institucionais que verifiquem o cumprimento das funções docentes e mecanismos para identificar como os alunos vivenciam o tratamento dos professores.

**Palavras-chave:** qualidade do ensino, alunos, didática, atitudes docentes, pesquisa qualitativa.

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## Introduction

What was your worst class? That was the question asked to a group of psychology students from a Mexican public university so that they could relate their experiences with deficient teachers, also called toxic (Rawlins, 2017) or demotivating (García and Rugarcia, 1985). The objective of the research is to describe and analyze inefficient teaching, which is when students go to school but do not learn, which is such a serious and widespread problem that the World Bank (2017) calls it a "world learning crisis ". Naim (2018) calls it an "educational scam", since 1,500 million children and young people go to school every day in the world, governments spend 5% of world production on education, much of that money is wasted because the students do not learn or what they have acquired is irrelevant to their lives. The author regrets that, despite this enormous investment, the teaching results are disappointing, for this reason he affirms that schooling is not synonymous with learning and

obtaining degrees does not mean having learned something useful at school. Hattie (2012) sarcastically illustrates the problem by saying that for many students the experience of going to school is going to see their teachers work.

It is in basic education where students' academic deficiencies are best diagnosed, because massive learning assessment instruments are applied to them periodically, such as the PISA test. However, this problem also exists in higher education (Lara et al., 2014), but its magnitude is unknown because there are no mechanisms to identify low academic performance of students, such as those for basic education. .

However, to show the deficiencies in the learning of university students, some examples obtained from different careers and countries are offered. In a psychology degree in Mexico, the level of elementary knowledge that 479 students had in the fourth semester of that career was evaluated, it was found that 76% did not remember the main concepts reviewed in two subjects related to previous semesters the topic (Carlos et al., 2015). In a pedagogy course at the University of Murcia, a series of problems from their professional field was applied to 47 students in their last year, finding in most of them a superficial knowledge and the use of simple strategies to solve these problems. For this reason, they predict that they will have difficulties to adequately face the complex situations that they will encounter in their professional practice (Torres and Vallejo, 2018). In another study carried out in Chile on teachers graduated from their higher education system, 60% of them had deficiencies to practice as teachers by showing little pedagogical and disciplinary mastery, especially in mathematics (Rodríguez and Castillo, 2014 ).

Apparently, the learning situation of higher education students is similar to that described by Hernández (2019): "Many go through the educational system, including the university, without appropriating the fundamental knowledge studied during thousands of class hours; universities A high percentage of professionals who are ignorant of their own profession graduate" (p. 19).

In summary, what has been described above shows that student learning is deficient and a problem of this magnitude is the result of multiple factors. Some of the most important are discussed below.

The lack of student achievement in school has been widely studied since the 1960's with the famous Coleman Report (Quiroz et al., 2020), and since then it has become clear that it is a multidimensional problem derived from extracurricular factors. such as the socio-economic context where the students live, but also those inherent to the school (Ornelas,

1995). Without underestimating the influence of socioeconomic aspects or those related to student needs, in this research priority is given to the properly didactic dimensions, to the "micro" or what happens in the classroom, to identify practices of teaching ineffective for learning. This is done given the crucial role of the teacher as it is the most important factor in the school performance of students according to different authors (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Mcber, 2010 and Oppenheimer, 2010) and is an essential component of quality teaching ( Rutledge et al., 2015 and Torres-Zapata et al., 2022). A teaching practice is effective when it achieves learning and deficient when it does not (Hattie, 2012). Teaching is divided into two crucial components: the teacher's didactic mastery or knowing how to teach and, secondly, the emotional climate created in the classroom by the teacher, the commitment with which he assumes his role, the treatment he gives to students and their attitudes towards teaching. It is clear that the interest of this research was focused on analyzing teaching practices and not particular behaviors of certain teachers. These two factors are described below.

Regarding the didactic, there are different actions recommended by the authors to achieve the acquisition of school content by students, such as: teaching is favored if clear learning goals are established and achievement criteria are specified (Hattie, 2012). According to Mcber (2010), the three qualities of teachers that explain 30% of student learning are: establishing and communicating high expectations, planning the class, and using different teaching strategies and methods. Other crucial features are fully mastering the topics taught and teaching clearly using language understandable to the student (Azureen et al., 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2000, Hativa, 2000 and Torres-Zapata et al., 2022).

Likewise, educational research has identified the active role of the student in the knowledge acquisition process as important (Del Val, 1997; Rutledge et al., 2015). For this reason, it is recommended to pose challenges that imply a challenge but are achievable, considering the level of mastery of the students, as well as requesting the completion of tasks, jobs, products and modeling what you want them to do (Reigeluth , 2013). This author exemplifies it this way: "Instruction is facilitated if the teacher tells students how to do it, shows them how to do it in different situations and gives them practice with immediate feedback, once again in different situations" (p. 11). It is also necessary to arouse interest and motivation in students, since they are an important element for learning (Kember and Kwan, 2002; Martín and Solé, 2001; Santrock, 2002). That is, if the student only receives the knowledge passively and is not encouraged to use it in situations where it is required, it is unlikely that they will acquire the content taught.

Teaching, according to Hattie (2012), consists of going from what the student knows to reaching the goals of the course. For this reason, after the instruction, it is necessary to promote the practice of what has been learned (Reigeluth, 2013) and provide feedback on the student's achievements (Hattie, 2012; Moreno, 2021 and Shute, 2008). To ensure that the student understood, she/he needs to generalize what she has learned in a situation that is different but similar to where she/he learned it. This is achieved through independent practice to increase the probability that what has been taught becomes part of their knowledge base (Hattie & Yates, 2014). Likewise, it is important to give priority to formative evaluation (Moreno, 2021; Torres-Zapata et al., 2022) and that the evaluation instruments are well designed.

Other qualities of teachers that positively impact learning are: being organized, adapting their teaching to the level of knowledge of their students, taking their interests and needs into account (Carlos-Guzmán, 2018). Likewise, explicitly link the different types of knowledge (Meirieu, 2005), dose what is taught and, above all, relate it to real or applied situations (Carlos-Guzmán, 2021; Ibarra, 1999; Rutledge, 2015; Yañez and Soria, 2017).

It is only until recently when the crucial role played by affective factors in teaching has been recognized, such as teacher attitudes and the emotional climate created in the classroom. They facilitate or hinder learning. The latter happens when fear, boredom, anxiety, discouragement or annoyance prevail in the classroom. On the other hand, learning is favored if it occurs in an atmosphere of trust, recognition, support and respect (Carlos-Guzmán, 2018; Bolívar and Domingo, 2007), where errors and misconceptions are welcome and not punished. (Hattie, 2012).

Rutledge et al. (2015) They highlight that the characteristics that distinguish quality schools are those that address both the academic and the socio-emotional. They seek that students not only acquire school content, but are concerned about their psychological well-being and provide, to the best of their ability, personalized teaching.

Based on the results of good teaching practices, effective teachers are characterized by transmitting enthusiasm and showing passion for knowledge (Aguirre and De Laurentis, 2016; Chiatti and Sordelli, 2019); they are kind and treat students well (Sgreccia and Cirelli, 2015), they are inspiring (Coudannes, 2016; Patiño, 2015), self-critical and continuously monitor their actions to improve them (Bain, 2004). Likewise, they have positive attitudes

towards teaching, they enjoy teaching, they encourage discussion, dialogue, their main interest is to achieve the learning of their students and to train them comprehensively (Carlos-Guzmán, 2021; Coudannes, 2016).

As established by Hattie and Yates (2014), teaching is basically an interpersonal relationship facilitated if there is empathy and an adequate emotional connection between the teacher and his students. These authors describe it this way: “The benefits of a positive teacher-student relationship are persistent and deep... a main reason to establish personal closeness and reduce conflicts is the need to develop trust, which is required in all learning” (p. 21). Aspects that coincide with what was established by Entwistle and Waters (2002), for whom one of the main qualities of the teacher is to achieve an adequate interrelationship with their students, since they appreciate that the teacher is treated with justice, dignity and respect (Garcia and Rugarcia, 1985). The teaching work improves if he/she is open to criticism and suggestions from your students; this feedback is crucial to avoid complacency and routine (Carlos, 2011). In other words, what has been described shows that learning is better when the teacher creates a favorable climate, encourages creativity and the imagination of the students, and makes an adequate management of emotional factors in the classroom.

The commitment and responsibility with which the teacher faces his work is also important, such as not missing or arriving late, preparing his courses and dedicating most of the class time to academic activities, which, as a whole, improves academic performance .

Some of the didactic and attitudinal aspects of teachers that contribute to student learning have been described, but what happens when this was not the case, but the opposite, and what the students experienced was unpleasant, frustrating, aversive?, did it scare them and, above all, was it useless since it was a waste of time because they didn't learn? What happens when teaching goes wrong and in the opposite direction to what is stated here? The results reported by the students for having experienced this type of teaching are presented.

## **Method**

### **Objectives:**

- 1) Analyzing student experiences with poor teachers
- 2) Describe the characteristics of inadequate teaching

## Participants

193 students from different semesters of a psychology undergraduate and postgraduate course at a Mexican public university were asked to describe their worst classes, regardless of the educational level where they occurred. 96% of the participants were between the ages of 19 and 21, with a predominance of the female gender. They were asked not to write down the names of the teachers involved. They narrated their experiences in a proportionate format to be described as broadly as possible and thus facilitate classification into categories and subcategories. The students were free to choose what type of experience to relate and the educational level of it. They could, if they wanted to, offer up to three examples, which is why 374 cases were obtained. The experiences were collected over five years. At all times the confidentiality of both students and teachers was taken care of.

## Categories and subcategories

The cases were qualitatively analyzed using the Hyper Research program (version 4.0.3). Two purpose-designed categories were used: 1) Didactic aspects and 2) Attitudinal aspects. The didactics included the ways of teaching and evaluating the aforementioned teachers, as well as the management and organization of the class, noncompliance with the actions that are known to help learning described in the previous section was identified. This category basically refers to knowing how to teach, of which there were 13 subcategories.

Regarding the attitudinal, the elements related to the commitment and responsibility of the teacher, the way of treating students, the emotional climate created in the classroom, ethical factors and the use of power in the classroom were grouped. 11 subcategories were identified, so their total number was 24.

The categorization was made from the review of the cases, seeking to reflect the richness and diversity of the reported experiences, incorporating only the most mentioned, in addition to being exclusive, although some of them may seem similar. The categories and subcategories were validated by two experts, and changes were made based on their observations.



## Procedure

Two researchers independently read the cases, categorized, tallied the responses, and then collated their results. What is presented here is the agreement obtained by them. To avoid over-representation of the subcategories, it was decided that once one of them was registered in the reviewed case, it would no longer be marked even if it were presented again.

## Results

The Education level of the reported cases appears in Table 1.

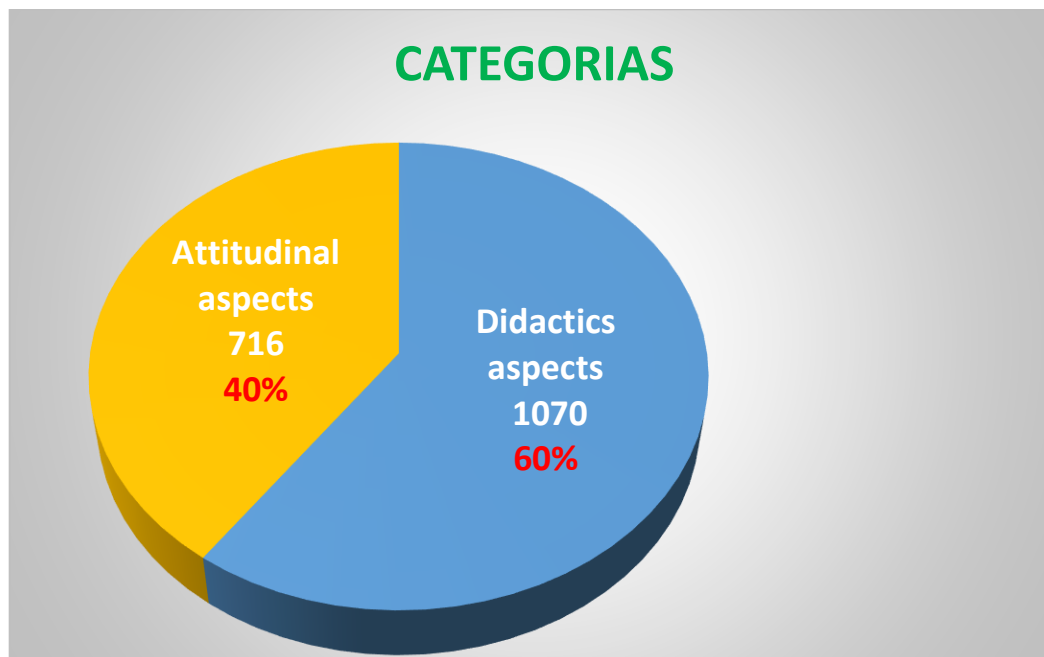
**Table 1.** Education level of the experiences

Educational level	Frecuency	Porcentaje
Primary	6	1.60%
Secondary	14	4%
High school	63	17%
High education	276	74%
Posgraduate	3	0.8%
Unspecified	12	3%
Total	374	100%

Source: Own Elaboration

As can be seen, the level of higher education was where most of the experiences (74%) were located in an outstanding way. Regarding the categories found, their frequency was as follows: 1070 (60%) correspond to didactic aspects and 716 (40%) to attitudinal ones. See Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Frecuency and porcentaje distribution of the categorias: didactics and attitudinal aspects



Source: Own Elaboration

To illustrate the type of experiences related by the students, 3 examples of their narratives of what was for them a poor class are offered. Based on their reports, the categories and subcategories that are defined and exemplified at the conclusion of the presentation of the cases were built.

## Case Examples

### Case 1

“In a subject of the Degree in Psychology, the students gave the topics that had to be seen during the course. Since my group was small (15 students), we divided into teams of 5 people and the teacher assigned the topics that each team had to present to the group.

For the exhibitions, she never provided us with references to any book where we could get useful information, so the quality of our work suffered. In addition, for the research papers that she asked us to do, she did not give us the guidelines that our research paper should contain. In the event that we asked for some kind of recommendation or support to make corrections, the teacher justified herself by telling us that in that case she would be doing our job. Most of the time, he didn't even take the time to review them and read the information

we had put in, since he only evaluated our work by the number of pages, that the titles and subtitles were different within the text, and that the pages had a frame. Due to this, our works always turned out poorly elaborated.

The material that was used in the classes were copies that the teacher provided us, but in most cases they were too long readings of which they were not even fully reviewed and even had themes that did not go according to the theme. When we, as students, questioned certain points of view or raised our doubts with the teacher, she only limited herself to saying "they should have already investigated that on their own" or "they should have already seen that topic in another subject": Due to this, we were always left with doubts about the readings.

For all these reasons, the whole group stopped showing interest in the class, we did not pay attention to the little that was exposed and the majority did not read the readings that were left to work in class, for this very reason our knowledge about this matter were very vague.

## Case 2

"This class became one of the most tedious of all, as it could be said that we practically did not know what we were doing. At first, the class seemed interesting after the teacher administered an exam that consisted of simple but difficult questions to answer. When we saw the results, we realized that the way we had been taught in school had not been optimal. With this "revelation", we thought that the class would cover interesting topics.

But it was not like that. The teacher gave us several readings during the first classes, and everything was going well because she explained what we didn't understand from the readings and gave us videos to have a better understanding.

However, as the semester wore on, things got worse. The teacher asked us to do various jobs in which we used various techniques. For example, we replicated Piaget's experiments without any explanation. Thus, we made a large cube with graph paper that required the participation of several people. When we finished building it without knowing what the goal was, the teacher just watched it for a moment, she asked some questions and asked us to take it apart. We never knew what the purpose of that job was.

In the case of the exams, there were three: two written and one "practical". In the case of the writings, we never knew the marks obtained. In the case of the practical exam, it was quite strange because it involved doing operations with an abacus, addition and subtraction, which we had been practicing for several classes ago, and doing operations with rulers. This

would not seem so bad, it could even be seen as something "innovative", but everything changed when the teacher took more than a month to complete this exam. Each student had to spend with her to take the exam, and the time it took the whole group to pass was more than a month. In addition, the teacher often came to class an hour late."

### Case 3

"In the first semester of my degree, I had an experience with a class that from my opinion I think is bad. One of them corresponds to the fact that the professor in charge of teaching the subject did not seem to be very interested in the students' learning, since that she used to give us the bibliography corresponding to the topics that we reviewed each class and our task consisted of looking for it and reading it; however, during the classes, instead of reviewing the content of the reading and solving doubts, the teacher limited herself to talking from her experience as a clinical psychologist in the labor field. She did not answer our questions, she did not resolve our doubts and many times what she spoke in class was not related to the content that we should have reviewed, and if it were, It didn't show us elements to link them. At the end of reviewing each topic, he used to give us an exam in which we had to reproduce rote learning. But in reality, it affected me a lot for the following semesters, since I didn't learn, much less understood the basic processes and neither the concepts corresponding to the area".

Now two tables appear with the results of each category, showing the mentions obtained in the subcategories. They are listed in order from highest to lowest frequency. See Table 2 and 3.

**Table 2.** Results of the category didactics aspects

Subcategory	Frecuency
Did not learn	191
He/She does not explain well	179
Absence or deficient feedback	157
Defective instruments to assess learning	118
Boring classes	91
Excessively complex and difficult activities	57
She/He does not encourage student participation, nor does she/he check their understanding	50
She/He does not master the contents taught or they are not updated	50
Disorganized class and without didactic sequence	40
Deficient materials and didactic supports	37
Lack of academic authority	35
Communication problems	33
He/She doesn't finish the program on time	32
Total	1070

Source: Own Elaboration

**Table 3 .** Results of the category attitudinal aspects

Subcategory	Frecuency
Teacher irresponsibility	161
The students teach the class	114
Uncertainty and arbitrariness in the evaluation criteria	91
Mistreats students	81
He/She talks about topics outside of class	78
Unmotivated and with a negative attitude	47
He/she does not follow the course program	46
He/She abuses his power	34
Intolerant and arrogant	33
Lack of ethics	28
Sexual harasser	8
Total	716

Source: Own Elaboration

Next, each subcategory is defined, in parentheses is the number of mentions received and there are extracts of what was expressed by the students to illustrate it. First, the results of the category of didactic aspects appear, and later the attitudinal.

**Definition and examples of the subcategories corresponding to didactic aspects**

Did not learn (191).

There was no learning because the activities, exercises or forms of teaching did not favor him as they were repetitive, rote or inconsequential for learning.

"He made us copy out DSM IV, ten pages per class."

"He never used a diagram or the blackboard, which made it difficult to incorporate the information, since it was totally theoretical and sometimes it was difficult to imagine some physiological processes of human systems."

"To date I don't know what we were supposed to learn."

"His classes of him were reduced to copying a bunch of exercises on the blackboard."

"The truth was a very big disappointment, which did not meet the minimum academically, we learned almost nothing."

"He let us go to a place, take a picture and make a summary of what we heard or saw; We never understood why."

He does not explain well (179).

Confused and contradictory explanations, he uses complicated language. He only reads his presentation and does not explain the topic, he leaves the students with doubts.

"Method that involves only a power point presentation and that "literally" only recite the lines as they are written in it."

"He gave contradictory explanations."

"He didn't explain himself, he almost always left us more confused, only he understood himself."

"We didn't handle the conceptual terms that he used and it was hard for him to try to get out of his language."

Absence or deficient feedback (157).

The teacher did not correct the tasks requested or the presentations of the students. He did not point out to them what was right or wrong about their accomplishments.

"He left jobs and there was no feedback."

"He did not support us by clarifying doubts in jobs, we did not know if we were doing it well."

"He never intervened in the exhibitions."

"We never knew what the goal of that job was."

Defective instruments to assess learning (118).

Difficult exams, poorly designed instruments, requests rote or literal answers. Ask about content not reviewed in class.

"The final exam consisted of solving questions on topics that had not been seen."

"In his exams he asked very precise questions and they were very long, not to mention that many times the options he gave could all be valid, in others they could not be answered with the given sections and the questions were poorly written".

"An exam had a maximum of 70 questions which you had to memorize with almost half a page of answers, because if you do not answer as they gave you the guide (word for word) they crossed it out and thus you end up failing the exam" .

Boring classes (91).

Unattractive, annoying and monotonous classes that make them sleepy.

"It was always getting to do the same thing."

"Just entering the room was boredom for sure, after 5 minutes of listening to it, it made me sleepy".

"It was difficult for me to stay awake, his class made me sleepy."

"He wins the Oscar for boredom."

Excessively complex and difficult activities (57).

Request assignments or assignments that are far beyond the student's current level of knowledge.

"He made us read several sheets of texts in English when most of us don't understand it."

"He asked us questions or left exercises on topics that we obviously didn't know because they were of a more advanced level."

"The teacher ignores the difficulties of the reconstruction of the students' knowledge so that the articles that she presents are mostly or in their entirety of a very high intellectual level, compared to the current level of the students."

She/He does not encourage student participation, nor does she check their understanding (50).

The teacher exposes the class but does not ask the students questions, nor encourages them to participate, does not check if they are understanding him.

"She gave monologues on the subject and did not involve the students."

"There were many questions to be answered and she never asked us if we had understood."

"She took it for granted that we understood what she said, she didn't give us time to ask questions."

"The teacher never involves her students in the class."

She/He does not master the contents taught or they are not updated (50).

The teacher is unaware of several of the topics he teaches. He imparts obsolete content.

"She told us that she didn't know what the subject was about, that it was the first time she had given it."

"She asked us to investigate on our own because she only knew about a certain author."

"When the teacher was asked personally, she limited herself to giving a bibliography where we could find the answer, they were usually very old articles."

"Only two times did we see statistics exercises, both times the teacher made a mistake in the procedure".

Disorganized class and without didactic sequence (40).

The class does not have a clear sequence, order or didactic presentation of the contents. It is scattered. The teacher does not keep track of the jobs or tasks that he requests. He does not resume the course contents with those previously reviewed.

"The way he was giving his class and showing his slides was disorganized."

"She asked us what topic we were going on or what we needed to see, she was lost in the topics we had to see."

"He lost the jobs we handed in or didn't have them on his list" .

"Neither did I have a systematized plan of the contents of each session, which was quite confusing."

"Dispersion was the common denominator."

Deficient materials and didactic supports (37).

The materials used by the teacher were loaded with texts, they were confusing and unclear. He did not know how to handle the didactic resources.

"For technical reasons it could not be seen (the film) since I was looking for it on the internet, it wasted almost an hour trying to get it to be seen, everyone tried to help and in the end we only saw the beginning of the film with a very bad visual quality and of sound".

"That was not the bad thing, it was that the slides were full of letters, in colors that we could not distinguish."



"He would set up his projector, his speakers and all his equipment to give a nice presentation that was actually full of text."

Lack of academic authority (35).

He does not exercise his authority over the group causing disorder in the classroom, the students do activities different from those of the class, he lets things go, there is indiscipline and he does not take corrective measures.

"It does not control the time of the exhibitions, some took 20 minutes and other groups two classes."

"Everyone did what they wanted, some didn't pay attention and started talking."

"There was no order, they ignored it and each one of us in her role did homework on another subject."

Communication problems (33).

She has a low monotonous tone of voice, does not emphasize; he talks very fast or very slow; his diction is not good and he does not understand what he says. He has bad handwriting and what he writes on the blackboard is illegible.

"He spoke so softly that we didn't hear when he called roll."

"He had such a linear tone of voice that at a certain point we stopped paying attention."

"He did not understand what he said or what he put on the blackboard."

He doesn't finish the program on time (32).

It is delayed, the planned contents are not covered in the stipulated time.

"We did not manage to see even 50% of the topics on the program."

"We were delayed in the topics to see and we ended up going when the classes had already finished".

"He failed to cover all designated classes."

"In addition to the fact that we had to attend after the end of the semester to make up classes and try to cover some topics."

## Definition and examples of the subcategories corresponding to the attitudinal aspects

Teacher irresponsibility (161)

Lack of teacher commitment, teaching as little as possible, continuous absences or delays. Most of the course is taught by adjuncts. He does activities just to pass the time or outside the topic of the course, such as showing movies not related to the class.

"The teacher in charge of the subject never attended the classes, her assistant was the one who taught them and apparently did not prepare the sessions."

"She didn't come to the third class, she sent us emails the night before letting us know, she missed many more classes and almost at the end of the semester she showed up."

"During the entire semester the professor only showed up 5 times to give a class, which lasted 2 hours"

"The days that we had practice, he was dedicated to showing us movies."

"He let us do what we wanted or go out and play on the courts."

The students teach the class (114).

He asks the students to present the topics of the course, he does not intervene; distribute the topics to their students, let them prepare the class and the activities. He does not advise them, most of the course is like that.

"Basically the course consisted of presentations by our fellows."

"She assigned the contents, the students exposed all the topics without her giving us any guidance".

"We investigated the topics, we gave them, we put activities and we solved doubts".

Uncertainty and arbitrariness in the evaluation criteria (91).

Does not inform them about the evaluation mechanisms and criteria or changes them unexpectedly and arbitrarily. Does not respect its own guidelines. Students don't know why they got the grade.

"She never told us how she was going to evaluate her, nor the criteria."

"She not gave us guidelines for the work and everyone did it as they could."

"... In the end we did not know why we got that grade or with what criteria she evaluated us."

"She did what she asked for, but at the time of evaluating, according to her, things were missing, videos, maps, in short, things that she never asked for."

"I did not like her way of evaluating him since at the beginning she had provided us with a way to evaluate and at the end of the course she did not respect what he had said."

"We get good grades without knowing anything about the subject."

"... She failed most of us despite our efforts, work or participation."

Mistreats students (81).

It does not create an affective climate, constant disrespect and humiliation. He comes to disqualify and denigrate the students and/or their participation, makes sarcastic comments and scolds them. His criticisms are destructive, he shows disinterest or annoyance with what the students say.

"We receive constant humiliation and insults."

"In the exhibitions he complained about the performance of the students and ridiculed them."

"Her comments about him went from derogatory to offensive."

"He took a super rude and very arrogant attitude in a way that he was offended because supposedly we were not paying attention to him, he began to tell us that we were the future losers of the country because it is the only thing we could access with so much ignorance".

"The corrections he made to us were generally accompanied by scolding."

"In almost all of them he interrupted but very rarely to contribute something, most of them were to scold us and criticize the work in an almost demeaning way."

He talks about topics outside of class (78).

Instead of exposing the topic of the class, he talks about aspects outside the class, such as his/her life or situations that are not related to the course content.

"Many times what he talked about in class was not related to the content that we should have reviewed."

"Sometimes instead of formally teaching, he only tells anecdotes from his life that have nothing to do with the subject."

"He began to talk about topics that he thought were related to the class. These topics ranged from the construction of the Sistine Chapel, Jesus Christ, the president, etc."

"... Also easy, 12 of the 16 classes he spent telling about 3 anecdotes interspersed or not about his granddaughter, always the same three; her favorite the fairies that the girl invented and about which she wrote a tale".

Unmotivated and with a negative attitude (47).

The teacher gives the impression that he does not like to teach, mentions that he is with the group out of obligation or for some other circumstance beyond his wishes. He usually complains about everything (contents, program, curriculum, academic situations, salary, students, etc).

"He complained to us that he was not paid enough and that he should be retired by now."

"He told us that he didn't want to be there, that he was doing us a favor."

"You could tell clearly that he didn't like teaching."

"The teacher lacked the essence of what it is to teach in a school and his interest was totally zero."

"You could tell he hated teaching."

"The teacher had a terrible attitude towards us in the sense that she was reluctant to teach us".

He does not follow the course program (46).

He teaches different topics than those stipulated in the program, others are given in their place.

"He teaches topics outside the course syllabus"

"There was no follow-up to the agenda since the teacher gave the class what she wanted and when she wanted"

He abuses his power (34).

He exercises his power in an imposing and despotic way, he does what he says because he is the master. He threatens them if they don't do what he wants.

"He told us that if they didn't turn in the exercises correctly, he wouldn't let us go out for recess."

"The following classes, he was in charge of letting us see through his comments that he had enough power to prevent us from leaving high school."

"He can arbitrarily issue any disagreement towards any aspect within the performance that he does not think so and thus fail the student in question."

Intolerant and arrogant (33).

He believes he is always right and possesses absolute knowledge o truth, he does not allow contributions from students that go against his ideas. He imposes his ideology, does not accept new positions or opinions disqualifying them, nor is he open to suggestions or criticism. He wants his students to believe what he believes.

"He imposed his point of view and made those who had another opinion participate less."

"Critical thinking and creativity were punished and repressed."

"The professor came to devalue any opinion that was not his own."

"I feel that he cared little what we thought, because he only cared about imparting his philosophy of life and that all of us adopted it and made it our own."

"The class was very square, since if you expressed opinions opposed to the feminist ideology of the teacher and her reading, she would respond aggressively."

"The few classes she attended were pseudo-debates where if you didn't agree with him he was "excommunicated" from her class; Although he sounds funny, there were classes in which he came to take boys out because they refuted him a lot".

"In the classroom, her word has greater authority."

Lack of ethics (28).

Students work for their investigations. He asks for activities or the purchase of material not related to the course but from which he obtains a personal benefit, otherwise he retaliates.

"He made us buy his book."

"To his lack of ethics as a teaching professional, since he only hoped to take advantage of his students so that they would do free work for their own investigations."

"The teacher always carried a little bag full of sweets that he sold to all of his groups and he found some pretext to fail the children who did not buy him many sweets in each of the classes."

"On one occasion the teacher sent us to visit a sensorama, which was almost obligatory, it turned out to be somewhat expensive for what that activity offered, it seemed that the teacher earned money by sending us there because we also couldn't find him connection with the subject matter.

Sexual harasser (8)

He makes sexual advances. He sexually harasses his students.

"His comments about him were rising in tone and he began to make allusions to some colleagues (at first he went to the men and later also to the women). This caused some of the classmates to stop going to their classes."

He "made comments of a sexual tone to our companions."

"The students' complaints towards him focused on the way he treats women, since in various situations he uses his figure as an authority to harass them."

To conclude the presentation of the results, it is highlighted that the six subcategories that received the most mentions were: Not favoring learning, not explaining adequately, irresponsible teaching, absence or deficient feedback, defective instruments to assess learning, and the students teaching the class. They group 51% of all subcategories.

## Discussion

With the investigation, we sought to answer the following questions: Why do students consider that they have not learned despite receiving teaching? And why not only did they not learn, but it was an experience from which they retain a bitter memory? To analyze the reported teaching practices, two categories were used: one for the didactic aspects and the other for the attitudinal aspects, which together help to understand the lack of learning and be rated by the students as the worst class received. Next, the results obtained are explained.

Although all the subcategories contribute to the negative assessment of teaching, some have greater weight than others and for this reason it is worth noting that six of the most mentioned, four referred to the didactic. In other words, the most cited characteristic of deficient classes was because the teachers do not know how to teach. Within it, the subcategory that had the most mentions was that they did not learn because the teaching stimulated only elementary cognitive processes such as repetition and memorization, where what was reviewed during the course did not exceed that level without favoring complex cognitive processes ( Hattie and Yeats, 2014). That is, there was no significant learning because what was done in the classroom did not stimulate it, on the contrary, students were asked to make arbitrary relationships, which is an example of rote learning (Ausubel et al, 1976 ). Copying regulations is not exactly something that enriches learning, new knowledge is not formed, but something is done with the stimulus received and one is not an active participant in this process (Del Val, 1997 and Hativa, 2000). What was presented was not linked to pre-existing knowledge (Ausubel, et al, 1976) nor was it reviewed (Meirieu, 2005), and since it was superficial, it made the students consider that they had not learned.

In addition, they complain about poorly prepared exams, with little clarity of the evaluation criteria, an aspect that Torres-Zapata et al. (2022) also mention, where the repetition of what was stated by the teacher or in the textbook was evaluated, but the understanding of

the knowledge was not evaluated. For this reason, what was taught was only retained until the moment of the exam and then it was forgotten. This shows that the grade thus obtained does not matter if the student reports little knowledge of what has been reviewed in the subject.

It is learned when new knowledge is given meaning, for which it is necessary that it be presented in an organized and clear manner (Carlos - Guzmán, 2021; Darling-Hammond, 2000 and Kember Kwan, 2002); On the other hand, what the students reported is that the teaching received was confusing and dispersed. Novak defines the teaching act as the process of internalizing the meanings until the students and the teacher share them (Moreira, 2000). of the teacher. Nor did the teachers carry out actions to favor the adequate assimilation of the contents presented, such as: evocation and continuous linking with other themes and concepts (Hativa, 2000; Meirieu, 2005).

Students request from their teachers that classes be attractive (Azureen et al., 2014), dynamic and not boring (García and Rugarcia, 1985), in such a way that teaching involves challenges and the solution of real problems (Coudannes , 2016 and Torres-Zapata et al., 2022). Facts that did not happen in the classes described by the students.

There were other anomalies that did not help to consolidate learning, such as the lack of adequate feedback on the actions or presentations of the students, who, not knowing if what was done was correct or incorrect, did not learn (Hattie, 2012, Moreno, 2021 and Schutte, 2008). It is also not reported that the teacher has practiced what he taught, many of them were unclear verbal classes, where the slides were read but without any explanation and without verifying that the students were understanding what was exposed.

In summary, the students indicate that they have not learned due to the elementary and superficial aspects of the classes, because the teacher did not explain well, nor did he clarify their doubts, there were no practices or feedback, the topics were not linked or the participation of the students was encouraged. and the forms of evaluation were deficient.

There were also teachers who went to the other extreme, asking students for difficult tasks or exercises that they were unable to do due to a lack of necessary knowledge (Hativa, 2000). They report communication problems by teachers in fewer numbers, disorganized and chaotic classes, where there was excessive permissiveness since students did what they wanted and the teacher did not impose an academic order (Tuckman and Monetti, 2011) or that they also gave account of their lack of mastery and updating of the content taught.

Regarding the attitudinal part, the most mentioned subcategory was teaching irresponsibility, which is not teaching classes due to absenteeism or tardiness, with minimal teaching activities, little commitment to their work, as well as using class time for other activities. It seems obvious, but there will be no learning if the student does not receive the teaching (Brophy, 2006). It is fully proven that one of the most harmful acts that can be committed against students is not teaching them (Carnoy, 2005). Nor does it help that they carry out the work of the teacher, expose without supervision or advice on their part. As one student said: “we are one exposition away from becoming teachers of this university”. Making students present can be a formative process as long as it is not abused, students need to be advised before giving the exhibition, receive feedback to refine and correct their achievements (Shutte, 2008 and Moreno, 2021), but leaving them alone is not going to favor learning.

Learning will not occur if the teacher does not clearly specify the aims of the teaching or does not inform them of the criteria that he will use to evaluate them (Hattie, 2012) or if he modifies them arbitrarily in such a way that the students do not know why they obtained the assigned grade.

Likewise, students learn better if most of the available time is devoted to the academic activities specified in the curriculum (Brophy, 2006) and there is proper classroom management (Tuckman & Monetti, 2011). For this reason, when class days are lost or class time is dedicated to matters other than teaching, there is a regressive effect on student learning and if the situation is repeated, it puts them at a clear disadvantage compared to students receiving the service as prescribed (Oppenheimer, 2010).

Regarding the creation of a climate that stimulates learning, of respect and support for the student who seeks his emotional well-being, it simply did not happen, but rather the other way around, they were environments where fear, anguish and subordination to the caprichos of the teacher. What was worrisome about what was found in this investigation was the complaint by the students of having been mistreated by their teachers, so for them it was a very unpleasant experience that marked them because in some cases they still remember it despite the years that have passed. They were university students reporting experiences that occurred in primary or secondary school. It is outrageous that students report this because they do not go to school to be humiliated.

Weiner (2000) says that teaching implies a power relationship that is supposed to be used for the benefit of the student, but here it was not, since there were teachers who misused



it, in addition to using it to indoctrinate and impose their ideology, where there was only one truth: that of the teacher. This contradicts what was proposed by great pedagogues such as Alain, for whom "to educate is to make known to man his power of self-government so as not to believe without proof" (Alain, 2002, p.12) or the goals of teaching university, which are to train students to think critically and turn them into autonomous learners (Carlos, 2011 and Ramsden, 2007).

In short, there was no affective atmosphere that is so important to stimulate learning (Gautier, 1997). Therefore, the students did not feel confident and comfortable to learn, on the contrary, it was a totally unpleasant experience.

Students mention having had unmotivated and apathetic teachers who obviously were not going to transmit a taste for knowledge, as good teachers do (Carlos-Guzmán, 2021, García and Rugarcia, 1985 and Patiño, 2015). Having teachers like this does not make teaching a pleasant event as it should be.

The subcategories that obtained the lowest frequencies were the unethical behavior of the teacher and that of sexual harassment, which was the one with the least mention. This last result is still surprising because more mentions would have been expected. Perhaps it was due to the type of question asked: recount your worst class. Perhaps some interpreted it as referring only to academic situations. Another is that they probably did not mention it out of embarrassment, this because it is striking that most of the reports of sexual harassment were reported by men referring to their partners and not by them. It may be because some women experience it: "as something that is lived with guilt and kept secret" (Mingo, 2020, p.23). However, the results found indicate that there are more reports of mistreatment than abuse.

## Conclusions

Based on the results presented, it can be concluded that it was not learned due to teaching failures, both in didactic and attitudinal aspects. Thus, the class received was qualified by the students as the worst, since it did not comply with the aspects that are known to favor learning. The teacher did not teach, he was irresponsible and also exercised his power in an authoritarian manner and mistreated the students. With this, it was prevented from creating an atmosphere conducive to learning, but quite the opposite, it was an unpleasant, aversive, boring experience where fear prevailed.

Examples were offered of when teaching is not provided as it should be, which do not refer only to the teacher's lack of mastery of didactic and evaluative strategies and techniques, but affective aspects were also important, such as the bad emotional climate created in the classroom and, above all, the treatment given to the students, which was not adequate. The deficiencies in these two aspects explain the lack of learning and the bad memory that students have of the course received.

### **Future lines of research**

One of the reasons for separating the didactic and attitudinal categories was also for the remedies to be differential, since to combat the problems exposed here requires the application of different policies and strategies.

Thus, didactic deficiencies are faced by improving the processes of updating and teacher training. Specific behaviors of the teachers were identified, which can be remedied if they are helped to teach better, to use different teaching strategies and not only the expository one, as well as to know how to design exams and apply other forms of evaluation. Also to have a more efficient class management and master the different ways of offering feedback (Hattie, 2012 and Moreno, 2021). Teach them to give better classes so that their teaching is a stimulating, challenging and pleasant activity for both the teacher and their students. In summary, the training processes must be specific so that teachers correct actions that they do not do well, are accompanied in the process of modifying their ways of teaching, and evaluate whether there are desirable changes in their teaching.

Therefore, it is suggested that teacher training programs take into account the categories and subcategories used and help the teacher to improve their teaching to contribute to student learning.

The attitudinal part is more complex because it requires different activities at different levels, starting with the personal, in which the teacher himself reflects if teaching is satisfactory for him, if it is what he/she wants to do for the rest of his/her life or for on the contrary, he/she should abandon it because it may be harming others and leave a bitter memory. He/she requires reviewing what he/she does, being self-critical and seeking help.

At the institutional level, it is necessary to have mechanisms to verify compliance with teaching tasks, the periodic application of teacher evaluation questionnaires where not only the didactic or the academic part is investigated, but also the treatment given to students;

In general, having instruments to detect and correct problems such as those mentioned here so that they do not grow, go unpunished and could cause problems for the institution.

The strengths and weaknesses of what is presented in some aspects are the same, since on the one hand it is an original investigation, since there are few examples that are studied in this way in teaching; Difficulties have been found to be understood because it does not conform to the traditional parameters of how teaching practice is investigated. In particular, it is highlighted that real examples of how teaching occurs in classrooms were offered.

The strength of having described and exemplified deficient teaching at different educational levels is highlighted, finding many points in common, which indicates that teaching problems in general that are not specific to an educational level. Likewise, elements are offered to explain why receiving a teaching is not synonymous of learning.

This opens up lines of research to validate and deepen what was found here, but the novelty of the study implies that there is no assurance that it has faithfully reflected all the richness found in the cases reported by the students, so it is suggested that it be carried out. of replicas of this study, so that what was done could be corrected and improved.

One limitation is that there are no massive tests to assess the learning of higher education students, there is no equivalent to the PISA test, so there is little information about their real academic performance, apart from grades, which are not a source reliable for this purpose.

Another difficulty was that teaching practice is usually studied from its "positive" side, which "should be", and here an opposite path was taken, since it was investigated when teaching does not occur as expected, for that little literature was found on the matter. However, it is considered equally valuable that showing its negative aspects can also be an incentive to correct it.

Finally, it is reiterated that choosing as the object of research what happens in the classroom to find out why students do not learn does not rule out the influence of other factors that affect it, such as socioeconomic, institutional and those of their own of the students. The fact that teaching has been prioritized does not imply detracting from its influence, which also explains the deficiencies in school learning. However, focusing on teaching practice is a valid and valuable way, given the importance of the teacher's actions to ensure that students have full mastery of the content taught. The purpose of what is presented is to contribute to making teaching an effective, pleasant and stimulating experience, and to prevent what is reported here from happening.

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