

# Dimensions of Good University Teaching: Faculty and department chairs' perspectives

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## Abstract

Good university teaching is considered to be a major requisite for student learning. However, its representation in the literature is often related to presage factors such as personal skills and subject matter knowledge of professors rather than to activities and processes related to student learning. It is also studied only from faculty and student perspectives not from academic leaders such as department chairs. This study examines good teaching as it relates to activities and outcomes of student learning and captures the perspectives of faculty and department chairs. We obtained interview data from 42 faculty members and nine department chairs from six universities in Pakistan. Results show that faculty characterized good teaching in relation to processes and outcomes of student learning. Department chairs' description focused on general concern for students. An integrated framework that is related to student learning and that represents both faculty and chairs' perspectives is suggested.

## Key words

dimensions of good teaching, effective teaching, university teaching

## Introduction

The literature on good university teaching promotes two arguments. One is that effective teaching is a requisite for student learning, academic success, and students' contribution to society once they graduate (Cohen, 1981; Koon & Murray, 1995; Ramsden & Martin, 1996). The other is that effective teaching can be better realized with active leadership (Gibbs, Knapper, & Piccinin, 2008; Green, 1990; Ramsden & Martin, 1996).

Together, these assertions imply a link between leadership, teaching, and learning. In other words, supportive academic leadership can foster effective teaching, which in turn is a condition for student learning. These assertions require an unambiguous and concrete understanding about the concept of "effective teaching", shared between members of an academic unit and more specifically faculty and chairs. Both of these requirements appear to be inadequate. What we can glean from the literature about the concept of effective teaching is incomplete (Young & Shaw, 1999) as it is either narrow characterizations described as a set of specific teaching skills applied in specific contexts or general definitions that loosely associate effectiveness with teaching that is oriented toward student learning (Carpenter & Tait, 2001; Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010). Neither is sufficient to engender

an understanding of what good teaching entails and how it can be achieved by individual professors or promoted and supported by academic leaders including department chairs.

Moreover, any insight that the literature on good teaching provides can be considered limited in scope as it represents the perspective of professors and/or students and seldom, if ever, the view of academic leaders. This leads to an important question of whether the view of effective teaching is shared between faculty and academic leaders in general and department chairs in particular. We contend that a shared and unambiguous vision of effective teaching is necessary for mobilizing resources in support of good teaching and for an outcome that will have a positive effect on student learning.

This study is a step to address the above issue. Taking into account the literature on good teaching and the literature on academic leadership, its objectives were to: (a) characterize good teaching from both faculty and department chairs' perspectives, (b) delineate the match and mismatch between these characterizations, and (c) identify ways in which faculty manifest their valuing of good teaching.

## Good teaching or effective teaching?

"Good teaching" and "effective teaching" are terms that have been used both differently and synonymously in the literature (Bartram & Bailey, 2009; Biggs, 1989; Ramsden & Martin, 1996; Yates, 2005). Bartram and Bailey (2009), for instance, have made a distinction between these terms. They relate effective teaching to the teacher's ability to attain intended student learning and good teaching to the teacher's ability to arouse "positive affective reactions in students" (Bartram & Bailey, 2009, p. 173). In the literature on university teaching, these two terms are typically used interchangeably and frequently in reference to the broader concept of student learning rather than the limited association with student achievement scores (Biggs, 1989; Carnell, 2007; Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010; Gibbs, et al., 2008; Reid & Johnston, 1999)

In this paper, we contend that the term "good teaching" has a qualitative connotation. It represents professors' intentions, efforts, and interactions with students to facilitate student learning and to bring about qualitative change in student thinking. We concur with Biggs (1999) that "good teaching is getting most students to use the higher cognitive level processes" (p. 9) as opposed to

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enabling them to score high on tests. We also share the assertion that good teaching is more complex and contextual because it takes into account the idiosyncrasies present in any teaching and learning environment (Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010). The view that good teaching has a quality dimension converges with the view of those professors who consider their discipline as one that fosters thinking and problem solving. Similarly, it is in line with those institutions which frame their educational goals and practices in "qualitative terms, emphasizing the changed perceptions and competencies resulting from learning" (Biggs, 1989, p. 9).

Accordingly, in this paper, we use the phrase "good teaching" to denote the qualities of complex, goal-oriented activities that professors carry out in their interactions with students in order to promote student learning. Research on good university teaching and academic leadership

### Good university teaching

The empirical literature on effective university teaching represents an amalgam of various lines of investigation including research on professors' conceptions about effective teaching (Carnell, 2007; Kember & Kwan, 2000), beliefs and practices of exemplary/award-winning professors (Dunkin & Precians, 1992; Hativa, Barak, & Simhi, 2001; Kane, Sandretto, & Heath, 2004), and conceptions of good teaching and profiles of effective instructors as perceived by students (Bartram & Bailey, 2009; Brown, 2009; Entwistle, Skinner, Entwistle, & Orr, 2000; Reid & Johnston, 1999; Young & Shaw, 1999). Taken together, findings have not had a clear cumulative value and for the most part, have been inconsistent.

Notwithstanding the shortcomings, we can still formulate the generalization from the empirical literature that good teaching has been characterized in three ways. The first is defining good teaching as being student-centered and involving innovative pedagogical approaches. The second is defining it in terms of possessing a set of prerequisite skills. The third is defining it as having extended awareness about students' needs and expectations. Each of these characterizations of good teaching are briefly discussed below.

### Good teaching as a student-centered approach.

Kember and Kwan (2000) studied conceptions of good teaching and the relationship of these conceptions with approaches to teaching. Based on interview data gathered from 17 lecturers and consistent with the general literature on conceptions of teaching (Kember, 1997; Samuelowicz, 1999; Samuelowicz & Bain, 1992, 2001; Trigwell, Prosser,

& Taylor, 1994), they reported that professors' conceptions of good teaching can be represented in a continuum involving teaching as transmission of knowledge and teaching as learning facilitation. In a similar study, Carnell (2007) explored the conception of effective teaching of eight professors and reported that in all cases, good teaching generally focused on student learning. Her specific conclusions were that good teaching considers learning to be a transparent process, involves a dialogue that results in learning, and leads to the creation of a community of learners.

This view of good teaching—using a student-centered approach—seems to be an attribute that has influenced policy makers at different levels. For instance, Carpenter and Tait (2001) note that university policies, faculty development units, and criteria for faculty promotion demand student-centeredness and innovative pedagogical approaches, irrespective of disciplinary or other contextual demands.

### Good teaching as possessing exemplary skills and practices

This view has emerged from studies that have looked at what exemplary, award-winning, excellent university professors think about good teaching and what they do in practice. Dunkin and Precians (1992) interviewed 12 Australian award winning lecturers about their teaching and identified four aspects of teaching effectiveness as perceived by the interviewees: structuring learning, motivating learners, encouraging students to become independent and self-regulated learners, and being sociable in interactions with students. Hativa, Barak, and Simhi (2001) reported similar findings. Their study was based on four exemplary professors. They identified the ability to organize lectures, be clear in communication, be enthusiastic about the subject matter, and be able to achieve a positive classroom environment as defining features of effective university teaching.

In an in-depth study of excellent university professors, Kane, et al. (2004) investigated the conceptions and practices of 17 university science professors, identified as being excellent by their respective department heads. The researchers used interviews, classroom observations, and repertory grid interviews as sources of data and concluded that five interrelated attributes and one cross cutting capability characterized excellent university teaching.

The first was *subject knowledge* and the need to keep oneself up-to-date in the domain. The second related to *skills* of organizing and communicating course content and expectations clearly, inspiring and stimulating students,

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facilitating student learning, and being a lifelong learner. The third was *interpersonal relationship*: respecting students, acting as a mentor, and caring for students needs. The fourth was *integration* of research and teaching such that they are complementary and provide professors with the opportunity to continuously update their knowledge. The final was *personality*, a dimension that pertained to enjoying the teaching experience, having enthusiasm and a sense of humour, and being accessible to students. Kane, et al. (2004) identified *reflective practice* as the thread that connected the five dimensions together.

## Good teaching as extended awareness

This view of good teaching has emerged from studies that have used different methodologies to obtain students' perspectives on good teaching. For example, some studies identified, *a priori*, possible characteristics of good teaching and asked students to rate them (e.g., Brown, 2009; Young & Shaw, 1999). Others asked students to define or describe good teaching without providing any input (e.g., Bartram & Bailey, 2009). Still others used both qualitative procedures such as interview or repertory grid and quantitative procedures such as surveys (e.g., Reid & Johnston, 1999) to generate attributes of effectiveness.

While some of the studies have been carried out with the purpose of comparing students' perceptions of good teaching to those of the professors', others have focused only on capturing students' perceptions. Results of these studies generally characterize good teaching in term of professors' awareness about students' expectations, and their ability to have pleasant interactions with students. Similar to studies of exemplary professors, these studies also refer to skills and personal attributes. Young and Shaw (1999) administered a 25-item survey to graduate and undergraduate students and identified six characteristics of good teaching including value of the course, effort to motivate students, comfortable learning atmosphere, course organisation, effective communication, and concern for student learning as attributes of good teaching.

Reid and Johnston (1999) arrived at the same conclusion about dimensions of good teaching even though they used descriptions of good teaching generated by professors and students separately. Their identified dimensions included interest of the professor, depth of knowledge and explanation, clarity, organization, interaction, and approachability. While students and professors identified similar attributes, their ranking of the attributes was different. Interest was the top ranked dimension for professors followed by depth and clarity. For students, clarity was ranked first, followed by interest and depth.

The above three lenses on good university teaching provide helpful insights into ways of characterising good teaching even though they are based on input from professors and students only. However, they lack specificity: none provide concrete and operational recommendations as to what it means to be, for example, "student-centered" in applying pedagogies (Carpenter & Tait, 2001; Salomon & Almog, 1998). Descriptions emerging from the performance of exemplary university teachers identify a set of required skills and personal qualities for good teaching that presumably have a positive impact on student learning. Again, these largely focus on inputs or what professors do rather than outputs linking activities and processes to an outcome, namely student learning.

In summary, it is worth reminding ourselves of Shulman's (1987) suggestion, also echoed by others (e.g., Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010), that teaching is a learned profession which extends beyond personal styles and qualities. It involves informed and "grounded" design of learning environments (Hannafin, Hannafin, Land, & Oliver, 1997) and necessitates making adjustments in real time. Teaching in higher education requires the additional ability to understand and address the requirements of the context. As Carnell (2007) has asserted, complex conceptions of teaching lead to having more complex views of learning which in turn, may enhance the use of diversified approaches to teaching.

## Good teaching and academic leadership

The notion that teaching and learning conceptions need to be extended beyond the teacher-student dyad is not new. Green (1990) argued that good teaching requires active leadership. Gibbs, et al. (2008) suggested that faculty perceptions of their teaching environment can be related to the department head's conceptions of leadership for teaching. Others have found that the teaching approaches embraced by faculty are also related to faculty perceptions of leadership for teaching in the department (Martin, Trigwell, Prosser, & Ramsden, 2003; Ramsden, Prosser, Trigwell, & Martin, 2007). These findings suggest that when academic leaders in general and department chairs in particular consider student learning and effective teaching to be central to the mission of the institution and provide support for it, faculty not only tend to give more attention to teaching and show concern about students' learning but may also find it easier to adopt learner-centered teaching strategies.

The literature suggests that the influence of departmental chairs in enhancing teaching can be varied. In their case study of teaching excellence in 19 departments from 11 universities around the world, Gibbs et al. (2008) found,

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that in departments where teaching was found to be outstanding, department chairs played a "pivotal" role in terms of "establishing credibility and thrust", using teaching problems as opportunities to improve, distributing leadership to department members, and producing convincing argument for change. This is more likely to happen if there is a clear and mutually shared understanding of good teaching. Whether it is practical and even possible to have an agreement on this matter or whether a single definition of good teaching can exist given different contexts and stakeholders are empirical questions waiting to be explored. Similarly, given the transient role of most academic chairs, there is very little research that traces any potential change in conceptions of good teaching when a faculty member becomes a department chair. Brown (2009) has argued that a match or mismatch between professors' and students' perceptions of effective teaching significantly influences student learning. We assert that it is equally important to take stock of the match or mismatch between faculty and department chairs' perceptions of good teaching because of the connection between good leadership, good teaching, and student learning.

To this end and as a starting point, the present study addressed three questions concerning (a) faculty and department chairs' characterize good teaching, (b) the convergence between these characterizations, and (c) the way in which faculty demonstrate that they value teaching.

## Materials and methods

### Participants and data collection

This study is part of a larger project that attempts to understand departmental leadership for improving teaching and learning. The design of the larger project necessitated a sample stratified by discipline (physics and history), by university type (research intensive, comprehensive) and by province (Sindh, Punjab, and Baluchistan). Data were collected from department chairs, faculty members, and undergraduate students.

In this paper, we report the results pertaining to faculty and department chairs' conceptions of good teaching, using qualitative data obtained from nine department chairs and 42 faculty generated through semi-structured interviews. Once consent was obtained, face-to-face interviews were conducted with both faculty and chairs. Interview questions addressed to department chairs centered on their characterization of good teaching and their efforts to improve teaching and learning in their respective departments. Questions addressed to faculty pertained to their perceptions of good teaching and ways in which they demonstrate that they value teaching.

### Data analysis

Interviews lasted about 40 minutes on average and were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were coded, using an inductive approach involving open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Qualitative data analysis software, NVIVO 8, was used for this purpose. Initially, two research assistants coded nine transcripts independently. A codebook was then developed and the remaining transcripts were coded subsequently. There was 87% agreement on the coding. Codes were then organized into categories.

## Results

### Dimensions of good teaching

#### Faculty perspectives

Overall, faculty expressed their views with a caveat that there is no one way of describing good teaching nor is it the same for all professors, students and contexts. They viewed good teaching to be context dependent where context included the nature of the course, the level of the students, class size, and whether or not students were majoring in the discipline. Considering their more specific responses, faculty characterizations of good teaching were grouped into five themes: transmitting information, supporting students, developing skills, motivating learners, and personalizing the learning experiences (See Table 1). These themes are described below and elaborated by excerpts from the interviews.

#### Good teaching as transmitting information

Good teaching, according to the information transmission view, deals with communicating the subject matter content to learners effectively. Faculty who subscribe to this view essentially believe that there is a syllabus that students need to master and good teaching is making sure that students have properly understood the material corresponding to the specific course. They elaborate their views by three descriptors: organization and presentation, subject matter understanding, and clarity of communication and rapport with students. The following are representative excerpts of this theme.

Good teaching is process of transmitting knowledge to the student. A good teacher is the one that achieves that – be able to transmit knowledge. (003).

Good teaching is the ability to convey knowledge to the students. ...I do like to think of myself as a conduit through which knowledge flows to the students, so I disseminate it to them. (009)

...in my opinion, a good teacher, will be helping them to absorb necessary material...I think depending on the

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subject, actually, learning the material is important. (002)  
Um, communicating well, and a whole lot of etiquette but generally someone or a climate in which there is good communication, knowledge, openness, and safety (011)  
I think it's certainly very important to have a good rapport with the class (005)

## Supporting students

This view emphasises that students make the effort to learn and the role of the professor is to support the students in their efforts. The professor establishes close relationship with students and gives them the opportunity to ask freely, express their views, and discuss their progress. Professors holding this view provide feedback frequently and consult and encourage students. In summary, this view of good teaching involves creating an open and unthreatening learning environment.

I would start by saying that good teaching assists people in learning (020)

Good teaching is when you have basically good one-to-one relationship with the students and they do not come and hesitate to ask you a question. (011)

I require a lot of kind of face to face time, I encourage them to come see me sort of student-teacher consultations and interviews (022)

## Developing skills

The third way that academics characterize good teaching is considering it as a process of developing skills. This focuses on providing students with necessary tools for use in daily life or in learning that happens in other courses and circumstances. It generally emphasizes three aspects: a) knowledge and skills of using tools in the course or discipline; for example, technological and mathematical tools, b) skills of transferring and applying gained knowledge to practical situations—this is developed by creating opportunities for students to practice and apply their learning, c) and ability to engage in and invoke complex cognitive processes such as critical thinking, reasoning, and problem solving.

...not really the knowledge, but how to use the spreadsheet...and mathematical tools...it's a set of skills that they can use.... They can transfer these skills to use them in other settings (001)

...history is not just a bunch of facts, but [means of] understanding debates and conflicts in the present. So that they...see historical narratives as a window into current debates (003)

...my main goal and what I think teaching is, is that students hopefully get the tools to be able to develop their critical thinking; so I focus on introducing them to a lot of primary sources. I want them also as historians

...to start basically shedding their modern assumptions about behaviour and looking at the past from its own point of view...that allows them to develop the basic tools for critical thinking (014)  
...half of what they learn is...skill of critical thinking, the more broad skills (018)

## Motivating learners

Motivating is about making students appreciate the importance of their learning and the relevance of the topic they are exploring. It is about actively involving students in the process and helping them see the applicability of the topic to their lives. Motivation also involves inspiring students to pursue further studies.

I would characterize good teaching [as] inspiring students to want to learn, ...to see students more involved in the course (008)

...the ability to not only communicate material but spark students interest and to ...push [them] at various levels (015)

...if you can inspire a student to be interested in the subject, and to take something from that subject with him or her into their lives after they leave university, I think that's fantastic (023)

## Personalising the learning experience

This dimension deals with making the learning experience relevant to students and understanding their motivation, background, and abilities in the course. It also involves recognizing individual differences, understanding who students want to become, and how the course relates to their lives and to targeted professional careers.

...providing something for the really sharp students that challenges them without losing the students that ...have less background or are less advanced; ...to be able to make them feel like there's something they can get out of the class (015)

...teaching that personalizes the topic to the student, [but also] definitely setting a standard of achievement, both in terms of competency and skills ...teaching that acknowledges students' strengths and weaknesses, lets them gain the confidence from their strengths but also work on their weaknesses throughout the courses (027)

## Department chairs' perspectives

Chairs' views of good teaching were categorized into two themes: concern for students and motivating learners.

### Concern for students

For department chairs, good teaching is primarily an expression of concern or demonstration of care for students. This may take different forms including addressing students' needs at a personal level, treating



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them fairly or equally, being willing to listen to their complaints, giving them enough time, respecting them, and avoiding actions that could result in their dissatisfaction. The following excerpts represent this attribute:

A major component is the degree to which they are concerned about the students on a personal sort of level.... When teachers are talking to me and they are talking in a way that expresses concern about the students then probably, they either are good teachers or they are on their way to becoming good teachers (001) ...some people are good teachers because they devote an awful lot of time to their students...the whole day talking about their research projects and so forth (004)

First of all, good teaching requires that students are not unhappy in their classes, and by unhappy I mean people who come to the chair with complaints about a course (005)

### Motivating Learners

Motivating learners, according to department chairs, involves "inspiring [students] to work hard in their subject" (002), "[being] very energetic [and] inspiring; having infectious personality; and influencing the [students]" (005). A good teacher will "stimulate, encourage, and involve [students] in the learning process (008)".

### Convergence/divergence in characterization of good teaching

Faculty and department chairs' characterization of good teaching reveals two points of interest. The first is that, overall, both groups consider good teaching in terms of its impact on student learning and development rather than in terms of what professors do per se. Central to the responses of faculty and chairs are ways in which students benefit from the learning experience—being treated fairly or equally, understanding the learning material, being motivated to make greater effort, or getting personalized learning experience. The second point is that despite the fact that chairs have been faculty members with teaching responsibilities or have even been teaching in addition to their administrative duties, the way the two groups characterize good teaching is somewhat different, depending on which hat the chairs are wearing when they express their opinion about good teaching. The response of one department chair is particularly illuminating in this regard:

"...from a purely administrative point of view, [good teaching] is teaching in which the professor involved ...treats students equally and fairly, and is willing to listen to complaints.... As a professor, there're all sorts of elements—actual content of the course that must be put across, associated skills, methodological issue,...ability to

communicate clearly and effectively" (003).

Department chairs underscore general concern for students as the major dimension of good teaching. Faculty characterizations are relatively more specific and related both to processes (e.g., personalising, developing, and supporting) and outcomes (e.g., tool use and thinking skills) of teaching and learning. Implicit in faculty characterizations are teaching strategies related to student learning. Even in cases when both groups consider motivating students to be an aspect of good teaching, faculty believe motivation is achieved by making the learning materials relevant to students, engaging them in the process, and helping them see possible application of the learning experience. For chairs, however, motivating is related to the personal attributes of the professor: having an "infectious personality" and being energetic, inspiring, and influential.

Conceptualisation	Frequency of occurrence	
	Faculty	Chairs
Transmitting information	14	
Personalising experience	14	
Developing skills	9	
Motivating learners	9	3
Helping students	7	
Concern for Students		5

*Table 1. Characteristics of good university teaching*

### Ways of valuing good teaching

Faculty were also asked to specify what they did to show that they valued good teaching. The question was meant to serve two purposes. The first was to see whether or not academics value good teaching and consider it an activity that has merit especially in relation to research. The second purpose was to validate whether what they valued related to student learning and resonated with their description of good teaching. Responses were grouped into four themes (see Table 2): accessibility to students, enthusiasm and commitment, linking teaching to research, and reflection and self-improvement.

### Accessibility

Accessibility is related to spending more time helping students, being approachable, making one available to them, and encouraging students to use office hours. It also involves following open door policy and establishing closer relationship with students.

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I have a very close relation with my students, on basically one to one and almost daily basis. ...they need a lot of guidance, help, motivation and that's what I provide those (O11)

I devote a lot of time to students, not just in the classroom. ...this afternoon, I've got a three hour stretch of office hours.... I see students on a regular basis, not just current students, but ex-students. We'll go up to the cafeteria and talk if they have an issue they want to talk about (O16)

## Enthusiasm and commitment for student learning

The second way by which academics demonstrate their value of good teaching is by showing commitment and passion for student learning and by being enthusiastic about their teaching. Professors considered that willingness and effort to provide feedback to students, to prepare for teaching sufficiently, and to consider teaching as a social commitment are important ways of showing that they value teaching. One professor expressed her commitment for teaching more comprehensively, defining it in terms of "leading by example", respecting class time, making sure that students get the necessary guidance, and "being enthusiastic about it" (O22).

Each day I reflect on the fact that it's a calling, a social commitment; it's a commitment to changing..., influencing the lives of students (O16)

## Linking teaching to research

Some professors believe valuing good teaching involves linking what they teach to their research; even letting their students participate in research activities. A history professor pointed out that

"...something else I try to do is bringing my personal experience and research into the class to share that aspect, so it's not a wall between research and teaching, and I found that actually students really like that, they find it kind of exciting" (O03).

In fact, the idea that teaching and research are "intertwined" and can support each other was a theme highlighted by eight other professors.

## Reflection and self improvement

The fourth way of valuing good teaching, according to faculty, is reflection. This includes activities such as continuously evaluating one's teaching performance, gathering feedback from students, considering evaluation results seriously, and attending workshops on teaching and learning.

I always read my evaluations and I try to learn from my mistakes (O04).

I'm very conscientious about keeping on top of the

scholarship so that what I bring to the classroom is not something that I learned 20 years ago but that they have a sense of the kinds of debates that historians engage in, where the state of the debate is right now (O21).

...if you value teaching, you can go to the interactive learning center (O23).

I do periodic evaluations of my own methods, personally within classes—not just waiting for the year-end or term-end evaluations. ...I also make time for professional development activities and for work on educational areas to ensure that I've become a better teacher (O27).

Ways of valuing	Frequency of occurrence
Accessibility	14
Enthusiasm and commitment	23
Linking with research and practice	9
Reflection and self improvement	5

Table 2. Ways of valuing good teaching

## Discussion and implications

The findings of this study reveal some important issues related to good university teaching. The most important finding and one that we believe is different from previous studies is that faculty characterise good teaching not in terms of their own skills and abilities but in terms of activities that are related to the processes and outcomes of student learning except for the transmitting knowledge category. Rather than describing good teaching in terms of preparing a lecture and presenting it with clarity, they talk about good teaching in terms of facilitating learning that is undertaken out by the learners themselves. The professors' role in the process is to support student efforts and design appropriate and supportive learning environments. It also involves helping, motivating, and challenging students as well as personalizing and contextualizing the learning experience. The outcome has to do with targeting the improvement of students' knowledge of subject matter, thinking skills, practical skills, and motivation.

The themes that have emerged as characterizations of good teaching also serve as a bridge between the theoretical or the broad conception of student centered teaching (Carpenter & Tait, 2001) and the more specific enactment in a classroom (Parpala & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2007). They present a more holistic view of good teaching, one that is in line with constructivist perspectives of teaching and can readily be implemented by professors and departments. It is holistic because it addresses different aspects of student learning including cognitive

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development (thinking and practical skills), motivation, context or personalization, and content acquisition.

A second important point is that description of good teaching varies depending on whether it reflects the view of department chairs or faculty. That chairs appear to emphasize concern for students and care for the moral dimension of teaching such as treating learners equally, respecting them, or listening to their complaints rather than dealing with instructional approaches supports the notion that department chairs often consider teaching related activities to be concerns of the professor and tend to be less involved in working toward teaching improvement unless there is a problem (Gmelch & Muskin, 1995). This also suggests that they expect professors to be able to undertake their teaching responsibilities by themselves, rather than with additional support from the department leadership.

However, chairs' concern for overall well-being and development of students introduces a new dimension to the concept of good teaching which has been referred to elsewhere, albeit in a different context. Waghid (2006) has suggested that if academics possess the virtue of caring and concern for students, it will enable them to cultivate in the learners the capacity to reach their own potentials. Similarly, Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs, and Robinson (2004) have opined that "effective teaching is underpinned by a framework of general moral values associated with educational systems, and specific values in relation to the nature of learning and the classroom climate" (p. 452). By combining the chairs' and faculty perspectives together, we begin to see a more comprehensive and meaningful account of good university teaching as this synthetic view encompasses both the teaching strategy dimension as well as the moral value of teaching.

The results of the present study can be depicted in integrated framework of good teaching, consisting of six dimensions and four prerequisites. The dimensions reflect actions pertaining to the teaching process: personalising the learning experience, transmitting information, motivating students, and demonstrating concern for students, supporting students, and developing skills. The prerequisites depict elements highlighted as ways in which faculty demonstrate they value good teaching.

The central tenet in this good teaching framework is that it takes into account a) student characteristics as well as individual, institutional, and societal expectations to bring about student learning, and b) considers both process and outcome aspects. This teaching process converts needs,

characteristics, and expectations into meaningful learning outcomes and involves activities that are directly related to student learning, i.e., the dimensions. These dimensions represent the "how" component of facilitating or supporting student learning.

Integrating the two sets of characterization of good teaching also requires and, at the same time, promotes a shared understanding of the concept among all stakeholders including chairs and faculty members. Chairs need to understand what it takes for the professors to be good teachers in order to be able to provide them with the necessary support. Faculty members also need to see the value dimension of good teaching as being concerned for student learning and catering for their development.

The ways in which faculty describe actions that they take as evidence of valuing good teaching is also useful in that these shed a light on the necessary conditions that need to be present for good teaching to happen. While these are skills that professors bring to the teaching and learning process, they are largely developed independent of learners. Aspects such as subject matter knowledge, reflective practice, and teaching-research nexus are often reported as dimensions of teaching excellence in the literature. We argue, however, that they fail to reflect enough what a professor does directly to facilitate learning while interacting with students in and out of classroom. In particular, considering the recent emphasis on qualitative aspects of both teaching and learning (Biggs, 1999; Tynjälä, 1999; Waghid, 2006), these requisite skills are less sufficient to describe or qualify good university teaching.

The findings of this study have both conceptual and practical implications. Conceptually, findings provide a more complete description of what good university teaching entails, especially as regards to facilitating student learning as opposed to identifying prerequisite skills of professors. Findings also fill the gap in our general understanding of good university teaching as being a student-centered approach and descriptions that have typically been limited to specific classroom, teacher-centered actions. Practically, given that the highlighted dimensions integrate activities that faculty perform in relation to students and their learning, it might be easier for faculty to implement them and for chairs to envision the spectrum of good teaching and be able to provide support for it. We believe that by combining the perspectives of faculty and chairs, we have been able to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of good teaching which can in turn help both faculty and chairs to plan for, implement, support, and value good teaching.



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The present study has its limitations not the least of which is relying on only interview data and retrospective accounts of good teaching rather than data that would capture the actual enactment of teaching. A logical extension of this research would be to empirically study the effectiveness of implementing and promoting the above mentioned dimensions of good teaching.

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