Development of a teaching team in the coordination of the teaching staff in the university environment

Desarrollo de un equipo docente en la coordinación del profesorado en el ámbito universitario

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Abstract

The teaching coordination in the university field has been established as one of the main elements for the good performance of teaching and good professional and organizational development. Before the identification of the low satisfaction of the students of the Marketing and Market Research Degree of the University of Cádiz with the teaching coordination, the creation of a teaching team made up of professors of said degree is proposed with the aim of creating common procedures to achieve better communication of the Title faculty and to solve the problems derived from the lack of coordination, generating greater student satisfaction. In this way, the teaching team was created and developed, establishing regular meetings throughout the 2016/2017 academic year and proposing a series of decisions or activities that would help to achieve greater and better teacher coordination. Once the activities were carried out, the results achieved during the 2016/2017 academic year were analyzed, demonstrating greater satisfaction both in the students and in the teaching staff of the degree, therefore the experience was really positive, however it is convenient that the development and This teaching team will continue studying for the subsequent academic courses to corroborate the effectiveness of its implementation.

Keywords: Coordination, teaching, team, faculty, university, students.

Resumen

La coordinación en la docencia universitaria se ha establecido como uno de los elementos relevantes para el buen desempeño de la docencia y el buen desarrollo profesional y organizativo. Ante la identificación de la baja satisfacción de los alumnos del Grado de Marketing e Investigación de Mercados de la Universidad de Cádiz

con la coordinación docente se plantea la creación de un equipo docente formado por profesores de dicho título con el objetivo de crear procedimientos comunes para conseguir una mejor comunicación del profesorado del Título y resolver así los inconvenientes derivados de la falta de coordinación generando una mayor satisfacción del alumnado. De esta manera se creó y desarrolló el equipo docente estableciéndose reuniones periódicas durante el curso académico 2016/2017 y proponiendo una serie de actividades que ayudasen a conseguir una mayor y mejor coordinación docente. Una vez realiza-

das las actividades se analizaron los resultados conseguidos durante el curso 2016/2017, comprobándose una mayor satisfacción por parte del alumnado y el profesorado del título. Por lo tanto, la experiencia fue realmente positiva, no obstante, es conveniente que el desarrollo y el estudio dicho equipo docente se siga realizando para los posteriores cursos académicos para corroborar así la eficacia de su implantación.

Descriptores: Coordinación, docencia, equipo, profesorado, universidad, alumnado.

1. Introduction

For Martínez and Yus (2015), the heads of educational institutions should design pedagogical models that feed a didactic within the classrooms aimed at stimulating autonomy, teamwork and student creativity. For this, it is necessary to cultivate cooperation among the different professors who are an active part of the learning process of future university graduates. Bearing in mind that currently there is a great reluctance of educators of higher education institutions to undertake teaching innovation projects aimed at promoting coordination work between the different subjects that make up the academic corpus of their students (Soldevilla *et al.*, 2012).

The documentation consulted for the development of this scientific production reveals, on the one hand, the positive link that exists in the university world between the collaborative actions carried out by teachers who share a certain subject with academic results and the subjective well-being of their students (Moreno, 2006; Lavié, 2009). And on the other hand, the fundamental role that plays in the implementation of a cooperative learning model the existence of an excellent coordination between the different teachers that make up its educational ecosystem (Santos *et al.*, 2009).

From this perspective, a group of professors from the faculty of social sciences and communication at the University of Cádiz considered the creation of a teaching team with the purpose of encouraging their coordination based on the

following two objectives. The first, encourage teacher satisfaction with teacher coordination, and the second, improve student satisfaction with teacher coordination. This article specifies the activities and decisions carried out by the teaching team, as well as the evaluation method that has been considered in each of the two objectives, to know if they have been reached.

2. Justification of the study

Each academic year the quality unit of the University of Cádiz to ensure that the organization of teaching works efficiently performs a series of studies to the interest groups of the careers, among which teachers and students stand out. Once the results were analyzed, low student satisfaction was identified with the teaching coordination of the Marketing and Market Research faculty. Faced with this fact, it was proposed to improve said teaching coordination through the creation of a teaching team formed by the coordinating professors of the subjects belonging to the Marketing and Market Research area, which are taught the Marketing and Market Research degree. This area is closely related to the Degree in Marketing and Market Research, currently having 38% of teaching credits for this Degree, with 15 subjects divided by course as follows:

1º Course: Introduction to Marketing.
2º Course: Marketing Management, consumer behavior and non-profit marketing.

3º Course: Product and Price, sectoral marketing, market research I and II, commercial distribution I and II and commercial communication I and II.

4º Course: Sales force, introduction to e-marketing, fundamentals of international marketing.

Therefore, it can be assured that these subjects have a very great importance in the development of the Degree itself and in enriching the subjective well-being of both educators and their educators is indispensable for the Degree to continue to improve and to continue moving forward. The Degree after its start in the 2010/2011 academic year has been consolidated, and there are already two promotions of students who have obtained it. Therefore, once the degree has been established it is considered appropriate to make an analysis of the most important subjects of the same by the coordinators and how some aspects of them could be improved.

In this way, it has been considered essential to create the aforementioned teaching team in which the seven coordinating professors from the area belonging to the Degree in Marketing and Market Research will participate voluntarily and will serve to improve teacher coordination among the teaching staff and facilitate the group work of them. The aim is that the coordinators can complement each other and help each other in the different subjects, contributing common ideas and facilitating the work. In this way it is possible to improve the content of the subjects and that the student is more satisfied in the different satisfaction surveys.

Both from the Department of Marketing and Communication and from the dean's team of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Communication, interest is given to the realization of new actions and improvements in the Degree, thus committing to continuous improvement in teaching.

In addition, the mention of teaching staff is also made in the Degree's own memory, which specifies the following:

The different professors who teach in the same module or subject will form a Teaching Team and will maintain a permanent coordination on the development of the training activities and the achieved objectives. This coordination will be done both within the same subject, if it has more than one teacher, as between the different courses of a subject, and for the different subjects of a module. The Teaching Teams of the different subjects will update their Teaching Guide annually, meeting the objectives established in this Report and the procedures contemplated in the Quality Assurance System. On an annual basis, in an ordinary manner, and at any time in the event of deviations from the planning carried out, the members of each Teaching Team are obliged to provide the Coordinator of the Degree and the Departments of the Departments involved with the following information:

- Anticipated contents not taught.
- Degree of achievement of the foreseen capacities and objectives.
- Main difficulties encountered.
- Tools and evaluation system followed.
- Particular relevant situations.
- Obtained academic results.

The Coordinator of the Degree will convey this information to the other teaching teams that may be involved so that they adapt their teaching proposals with respect to the planned, if applicable. The departments must send an annual report to the Quality Assurance Committee of the Center (or Subcommittee of the Degree where appropriate) indicating the measures taken to adapt to the dysfunctions that have appeared and ensure coordination between the department.

3. State of the issue

As it has been foreseen in the previous p.s, there is currently an extensive bibliographic production that reveals the absence in the curricular plans of the Spanish universities of didactic actions of coordination among the teachers in

the performance of their classes. For Cazorla *et al.* (2010), the implementation of this pedagogical activity would allow three things fundamentally. The first, to design a schedule that can be given in its entirety without stress due to lack of time. The second will enrich cross-disciplinary skills and social skills of educators, and the latter, to develop attractive teaching practices of interdisciplinary nature as long as it does not affect the dates of examinations, whose schedule is approved at the beginning of the academic year by the deans. Regarding this last issue, note that there is a large number of authors that show the need to establish in Spanish higher education institutions an education that gravitates around collaborative and constructive didactics. This fact is justified by multiple factors, including a didactic that significantly cultivates not only the emergence of teachers, but also the creation of learning or knowledge communities of a formative or virtual type (Armengol, 2009; Meirinhos and Osorio, 2009, Bozu and Muñoz, 2009, Elboj *et al.*, 2002, Rué and Lodeiro, 2010, Martínez, *et al.*, 2007, Imbernón, 2012). In line with these investigations, Soldevilla *et al.* (2012) and Torrego y Ruiz (2011) reveal that for universities to adapt to the new needs of the labor market, they must promote or establish normatively the teaching coordination as an innovative and effective quality tool of educational excellence in the digital age. To do this, they must be governed by the guiding principles of training planning, informal contacts and daily communication between peers, in order to gradually cushion the individualistic behavior of many educators when teaching lectures. (Zabalza, 2000).

In line with the comments, it is worth noting the existence of two levels of teacher coordination. One type vertical (is the one that occurs throughout the development of a particular university career), and another horizontal type (this originates in the same course or group). For Martínez and Yus (2015) the vertical teaching coordination facilitates the establishment of schedules, practices, exams, etc., existing in the different faculties that universities have. This requires a high level of communication and participation of teachers assigned to the same subject at a horizontal level. This fact will help the most responsible of the Academic Organization not only to be able to harmonize in a consensual way both levels of hierarchical organization, but also to become a key factor in the implementation of new projects of teaching innovation that aims to encourage learning models of a collaborative type that is in tune with the main topic of the present work (Torrego y Ruiz, 2011). In this sense, Parra *et al.* (2011) shows that if the universities want to achieve this specific objective, they need a solid educational culture, on the one hand, on the proactive and shared co-responsibility of their professors, and on the other, on the generation within the classrooms of an environment positive that stimulates disruptive thinking, teamwork, love to acquire knowledge … (Senge, 1992, Hernández, 2011, Lieberman, 1995, Hargreaves, 1996, Martinez *et al.*, 2013).

4. Methodology

Once the justification for the study has been established and given the importance and implications of the teaching coordination in the university environment, the creation, development and evaluation of the teaching team is specified below.

The teaching team materialized with a meeting at the beginning of the 2016/2017 course, in September before the classes began. In this meeting, each professor contributed the proposals or ideas on the marketing subjects in the 2016/2017 course that he considered appropriate, referring more specifically to the following topics:

- Evaluation.
- Requirements of the evaluation.
- Subjects with several professors.
- Behavior or discipline of the students.
- Practical part of the subject (group work).
- Activities.

- Complementary activities between subjects.
- (Another topic that the teacher can propose).

These proposals had to be concrete, achievable and not excessively complex, which would help a better teaching performance of both teachers and students. In addition, nothing could be done that went against what is specified in the regulations of the subjects. In this way, and under consensus, the proposals were carried out. Subsequently, the teaching team continued to meet periodically and communicate with each other through electronic means.

After the first academic course with the application of the teaching team it was possible to specify the results obtained through the activities and decisions carried out and the evaluation of the desired objectives to know if they have been reached. The following two charts specify the objectives to be achieved with the teaching team and the method used for their evaluation.

Objetive nº 1	Improve teacher satisfaction with teacher coordination		
Objective description:	*Assess whether the creation of the teaching team has led teachers to improve their satisfaction with their teaching coordination.*		
Evaluation method:	*A qualitative approach has been developed by conducting personal interviews with the 7 teachers involved in the teaching team to find out their opinion and satisfaction about the teaching coordination.*		
Evaluation date:	*July 2017*	Measuring date of the indicator:	*July 2017*

Objetive nº 2	Improve student satisfaction with teacher coordination		
Objective description:	*Check if there has been an improvement in student satisfaction with teacher coordination.*		
Evaluation method:	*The satisfaction survey of the students has been taken into account with the coordination of the teaching staff that carries out all the academic courses the guarantee and quality system of the University of Cádiz.*		
Evaluation date:	*September 2017*	Measuring date of the indicator:	*September 2017*

For the evaluation of objective 1, a qualitative approach based on a content analysis of the interviews conducted with the seven members of the teaching team was followed. A study acquires a qualitative approach when one wants to understand and deepen on the phenomena, exploring them from the perspective of the participants in a natural environment and in relation to the context (Hernández *et al.*, 2010). Thus, qualitative research enables the understanding of a concrete reality through the analysis of the perspectives of the representatives of a reality, in this case, the members of the teaching team.

For the collection of information, an unstructured interview has been used with the purpose of obtaining relevant information that will help to evaluate the objective. The unstructured interview does not follow a pre-established script and its sequence, as well as its formulation, may vary depending on the subject interviewed (Vargas, 2012). In this way, the interviewer asks an open question and the interviewee is free to delve into the subject. The question asked in this case was: "What has been your satisfaction with the teaching team to improve coordination among teachers?"

Once the answers of the seven professors involved in the teaching team were obtained, a categorization process was carried out to identify subjects through common patterns of the terms most used in the answers. In this study an inductive categorization is carried out, since the categories are obtained once the information has been collected, through the data based on the examination of the patterns and recurrences present in them (Chaves, 2005). Finally, the categories obtained are analyzed in order to know the opinion of the teaching staff about their satisfaction with the teaching team.

For the evaluation of objective 2, the student satisfaction survey on the coordination of the teaching staff, that takes place each academic year the guarantee and quality system of the University of Cádiz, was taken into account and compared with the data obtained in previous years (Manual of the guarantee and quality system of the University of Cádiz, 2018).

5. Obtained results

Once the teaching team has been created and developed during an academic year, the results obtained through the carried-out activities and decisions and the evaluation of the two objectives are specified.

5.1. Carried-out activities and decisions

Teaching team meetings have been held periodically to discuss different topics to improve teacher coordination and help improve teacher performance for both educators and students. To this end, three face-to-face meetings have been held and a continuous communication has been maintained via email between the involved teachers.

The activities and decisions that have been taken in the meetings with respect to the improvement of the teaching coordination of the teaching staff have been the following:

Coordination between teachers within the same subject: It is still considered essential in those subjects that are taught by several teachers that there is good coordination between them, working in common and making clear what are the objectives of the subject and what is the syllabus, thus preventing the student perceives inconsistencies or substantial differences between what is taught by each teacher.

In this sense, a meeting is recommended before the course begins, as well as a calendar of the subject about what is expected to be taught each day. (In the same email, a calendar model will be attached so that each coordinator can fill it in with their subject).

A model is also attached so that the teachers of the practical groups can comment on what practices they are going to carry out and share it with the theory teacher.

Midterm exams: There is debate about the suitability of midterm exams in marketing subjects. It is concluded that the partial exam may be good for students and although it is the coordinator of the subject's authority to establish what type of midterm exams are carried out in their subject, each teacher comments on the type of exam considered most suitable, opening the possibility that instead of performing two exams, only one is taken at the end of the subject and that the student can be exempt from the final exam. All this while not contradicting the 1B card of the subject and the modification of said card if it were the case.

Change of practical groups: The changes of students in the practical groups is the decision of the coordinator of the subject, being able to choose this by the criterion that considers appropriate. What everyone agrees is that students cannot be allowed to change groups without control to avoid a substantial gap between the number of students in one group and another. Since the coordination of the degree, the basic instructions on division of practical groups and group changes were given, a fact that can be

clearly verified in the minutes of the degree coordination meeting.

Conferences: All those present agree on the suitability of bringing speakers of interest, therefore, it was decided that anyone who knows any professional in the sector that may be interesting contact the coordinator of the degree to be able to form a conference. On this subject, we are currently working to bring alumni who are working to tell their experiences to the students, as well as professionals from the sector.

Behavior of students in class: A debate is opened on the suitability of common guidelines among teachers to deal with the behavior of students in class. Therefore, it is specified that ideally all teachers maintain at least some basic behavior guidelines that do not vary much between subjects. A PowerPoint file is attached to the email so that the teacher can post it on the Virtual Campus and communicate it to the student on the first day of class.

To verify if the objective of improving teacher coordination has been met, an interview has been conducted with the 6 teachers who have been more active in the teaching team.

In these interviews, teachers were asked for their opinion on what the teaching team has contributed as a help to the coordination among the teaching staff. The conclusions are as follows:

- Better communication between teachers was necessary.
- It was necessary to carry out common actions within the marketing and market research area within the marketing degree.
- It is appropriate to hold at least two coordination meetings each year, one at the beginning and the other at the end of it.
- After the proposals there must be a control to check the effectiveness and compliance of the same.

Overlapping of content: It is necessary to avoid on the part of the professorship the overlap of content with respect to another subject, as much in the theoretical part as in the practical part. The tabs of the subjects with the syllabus are available to all teachers, if anyone considers it appropriate to impart some specific content that matches another subject, it is recommended that they communicate it to the teacher of that subject so that they have knowledge.

Updating subjects' content and content in digital marketing: It is also advised that for each subject content is updated that the teacher considers appropriate to adapt to new marketing opportunities that arise, including digital marketing in which the teacher will have to consider when updating the content of the subject.

Practice for the subjects of the 3rd year of the degree: The idea of carrying out a practical part related to each one of these subjects is maintained for the 3rd year subjects. Specifically, it deals with the subjects Product and Price, Commercial Distribution I and Commercial Communication I, it is based on the realization of a food fair. The generic proposal that was made in this 2015/2016 course will be sent in the same mail of the minutes so that it is taken into account for the next course.

To ascertain whether the objective of improving teacher coordination has been met, a survey and an interview have been carried out with the 6 teachers who have participated more actively in the teaching team.

To check if the objective of improving teacher coordination has been met, an appointment has been made with the 6 teachers who have been more actively involved in the teaching team to obtain information.

In this way the faculty was asked if the participation in the teaching team has been useful to improve and solve problems in teaching and if they saw fit to continue doing it in the future.

The result was positive and, in general, the importance of making common decisions in teaching was highlighted to avoid duplications, improve the content of the subject and complement practical exercises between subjects.

5.2. Objective 1 evaluation

Then, as previously specified in the methodology, the responses of the seven professors are analyzed in order to know their satisfaction with the development of the teaching team for the coordination of the teaching staff. In the answers a total of 5 categories have been identified: Experience with the teaching team, carried out activities, goals achieved, communication between the teaching team and future perspectives.

About the experience with the teaching team: in general, the teachers have considered it very positive, highlighting that it should have been done previously and they have felt comfortable working together with their peers, even better than initially expected when the creation of the team was proposed.

Regarding the achievements of the teaching team, the teachers highlighted an improvement in motivation and commitment, being able to put their ideas and knowledge into practice with the other peers and verifying that the coordination situation between them was generating greater ease and improvement in teaching. Some professors have also highlighted the importance of the team in the proposal of decisions and in the resolution of problems, being able to share their experiences with colleagues and thus proposing joint and common proposals and solutions. Finally, some teachers also positively valued a more active contact and communication among teachers.

Regarding the activities carried out by the teaching team, most of the teachers have highlighted the proposal of common guidelines on the behavior of students in class, since it was a problem that had been occurring for years in the classrooms and it improved ostensibly with the proposal of common patterns of behavior among the involved teachers. The other two most mentioned activities have been the improvement of the coordination of the teaching staff within the same subject and the proposal to avoid the overlapping of contents between the different subjects.

On communication there has been a greater discrepancy among the teachers. As previously mentioned for the communication and the contact of the teaching team, three face-to-face meetings have been held along with the one made through the e-mail. For some teachers, communication has been adequate for the development and good functioning of the team. Others, however, consider the need for more face-to-face meetings to solve problems that arise during the course. Finally, others consider that there are too many meetings and that it would be enough to have only one meeting at the beginning of the course and that the rest can be done through electronic means or specific meetings with a member of the team.

Finally, on the future perspectives the answers have been very encouraging since the seven teachers have specified their commitment to continue belonging and participating in the teaching team for further courses. In addition to this, they have proposed to talk positively about the need to train teaching teams with other teachers from other areas.

Based on the responses and opinions issued by educators who are members of the teaching team, it can be said that the creation and development of the teaching team has led to greater teacher satisfaction with their coordination, the only point to develop the form and periodicity communication between the teaching team.

5.3. Objective 2 evaluation

It has also been considered pertinent to check whether, under the prism of the students, there has been an improvement in the coordination between the teaching staff.

The assessment of the students with the coordination of the teaching staff can be verified through the document manager of the guarantee and quality system of the University of Cádiz, specifically in the Procedure (P08) "Procedure for the evaluation of the satisfaction of the groups of interest". The data of this assessment of

the students of the coordination of the teaching staff was the lowest indicator that the degree had with a 2.08 out of 5 for the 2015/2016 course.

In the new academic year 2016/2017 we have verified that the assessment of the coordination of the teaching staff by the students is of 2.38 out of 5, 0.3 percentage points more than in the past year. This assessment is encouraging, but it is recommended that it continue to be tested throughout future courses as the teaching team consolidates itself.

6. Conclusions

Currently, if Spanish universities want to cultivate quality and excellent education, they must incorporate teacher coordination into their curricular plans. This innovative didactic tool is a very important instrument not only to stimulate personal relationships and teamwork among teachers, but also to promote cooperative learning of students, and therefore, their future insertion in the labor market. To achieve this goal, two things are fundamentally needed. The first is to establish normatively elements that encourage the coordination of educators in the development of their academic performance, and the second to design a collaborative teaching model that enriches the subjective well-being of teachers through the content of the subjects and the promotion of use of new technologies (ICT).

Regarding the case in this study, it can be confirmed that the experience with the teaching team has been really positive. Through the established procedures for its development, it has allowed the professors a greater and better coordination among them, being able to complement and help each other in the different subjects, contributing common ideas and thus facilitating the work. In this way they have been able to establish a better coordination between teachers of the same subject, establish common criteria based on midterm exams, changes of practical groups, conducting conferences and behavior of students in class. The teaching team has also allowed for a better teaching performance of the teaching staff, thus avoiding the overlapping of content in the different subjects, updating their contents and establishing practical activities common among the subjects. In addition to the improvements from the focus of the teaching staff, the teaching team has also allowed the students to have perceived a better teacher coordination of the teaching staff and a better performance in the teaching of the different subjects involved. The only section where there has been more discrepancies between the teachers and the one that should be taken into account in the future for their development is about the contact and communication between the teaching team, since some teachers consider the three face-to-face meetings carried out in the team during the course to be insufficient, while others consider it excessive, preferring more contact online or in specific situations.

In this way, it can be highlighted that the formation of the teaching team has increased the satisfaction in the coordination in the educators and in the future graduates. However, it should be noted that the teaching team is of scarce creation, performing the work for more than one academic year. Although the first evaluations are positive, it is still pending to examine how it evolves over time and check whether positive results are still achieved, both from the point of view of the teaching staff and the students.

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