



Social skills of college teachers: a systematic review of the literature

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ABSTRACT. The relationship between teacher and student is an important factor in the teaching-learning process and requires an educator with, among other competences, a developed repertoire of social skills (SS). This study is a systematic review that evaluates the scientific publications on the subject of SS related to the teaching performance in Higher Education, considering the face-to-face modality. We analyzed 23 articles, published until November 2015 in six different databases (SciELO Brasil, PEPSIC, LILACS, Index Psi, Corpus PHS and PsycArticles), that focused on SS and/or nonverbal and paralinguistic components presented by the teacher in the classroom and/or in his/her relation with the students. The SS were evaluated by students, teachers, and researchers and, in 47.9% of the articles, the use of validated instruments was involved. The most studied SS classes were communication (82.6%), work (52.1%) and expression of positive feelings (39.1%). While the first two classes seem to be more related to the traditional role of the professor as a transmitter of knowledge, the latter seems to be more related to the current concern that the teacher should take on the role of mediator between student and knowledge, pointing to a gradual process of changes in the SS set required for effective performance in higher education. New revisions could confirm or refute the data described here.

Keywords: higher education; college teachers; social skills; interpersonal relationships.

Habilidades sociais de docentes universitários: uma revisão sistemática da literatura

RESUMO. A relação professor-aluno é um fator importante no processo de ensino-aprendizagem e requer do professor, entre outras competências, um repertório elaborado de habilidades sociais (HS). Este estudo é uma revisão sistemática para avaliar a produção científica sobre HS relacionados à atuação docente no ensino superior na modalidade presencial. Foram analisados 23 artigos, publicados até novembro de 2015 em seis bases de dados distintas (SciELO Brasil, PEPSIC, LILACS, Index Psi, Corpus PHS e PsycArticles), que focavam as HS e/ou componentes não verbais e paralinguísticos apresentados pelo professor em sala de aula e/ou na relação com o aluno. As HS foram avaliadas por alunos, docentes e pesquisadores e, em 47,9% dos artigos, envolveram o emprego de instrumentos validados. As classes de HS mais abordadas foram comunicação (82,6%), trabalho (52,1%) e expressão de sentimentos positivos (39,1%). Enquanto as duas primeiras classes parecem estar mais relacionadas à postura tradicional do professor, como transmissor do conhecimento, a última parece estar mais ligada à preocupação atual de que ele assuma o papel de mediador entre aluno e conhecimento, o que aponta para um processo gradual de mudanças nas HS requeridas para a atuação no ensino superior. Novas revisões podem confirmar ou refutar os dados aqui descritos.

Palavras-chave: ensino superior; docentes universitários; habilidades sociais; relações interpessoais.

Habilidades sociales de docentes universitarios: una revisión sistemática de la literatura

RESUMEN. La relación profesor-alumno es un factor importante en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje y requiere del profesor, entre otras competencias, un repertorio elaborado de habilidades sociales (HS). El presente estudio es una revisión sistemática para evaluar la producción científica sobre HS relacionados a la actuación docente en la enseñanza superior en la modalidad presencial. Se analizaron 23 artículos, publicados hasta noviembre de 2015 en seis bases de datos distintas (SciELO Brasil, PEPSIC, LILACS, Index Psi, Corpus PHS y PsycArticles), que enfocaban las HS y/o componentes no verbales y paralinguísticos presentados por el profesor en sala de clase y / o en la relación con el alumno. El HS fueron evaluados por los estudiantes, profesores e investigadores, y el 47,9% de los artículos implicó el uso de instrumentos validados. Las clases de HS más abordadas fueron comunicación (82,6%), trabajo (52,1%) y expresión de sentimientos positivos (39,1%). Mientras que las dos primeras clases parecen estar más relacionadas con la postura tradicional del profesor, como transmisor del conocimiento, la última parece estar más ligada a la preocupación actual de que él asuma el papel de mediador entre alumno y conocimiento, lo que apunta a un proceso gradual de cambios en las HS requeridas

para la actuación en la enseñanza superior. Nuevas revisiones pueden confirmar o refutar los datos aquí descritos.

Palabras-clave: enseñanza superior; docentes universitarios; habilidades sociales; relaciones interpersonales.

Introduction

University has three basic functions: (a) to produce knowledge; (b) to prepare professionals capable of applying scientific knowledge and, (c) to provide technical and scientific support for the progress of society in cultural, social and, economic aspects (Pimenta & Anastasiou, 2005). These functions have been related to the university's social responsibility (Pinto, 2012; Ribeiro, 2013), leading it to align students' personal development with broader goals for the improvement of society, such as sustainable development, poverty reduction, peace and human rights, the promotion of appropriate skills and ethical behavior (Giuffré & Ratto, 2014). Therefore, the university must establish conditions for the student to expand knowledge, skills, proficiencies and, values that will allow the exercise of a profession and contribute significantly to the enhancement of society.

In part, the current concern with the social responsibility of the university could be tied to the sociopolitical changes unleashed in recent decades by the advance of neoliberal ideologies. According to Foster, Mallmann, Daudt, Fagundes and Rodrigues (2006), the pressure of these policies pushed the educational institutions to reproduce the logic of the organization of the business field, forcing them to produce "[...] 'functional knowledge' for the formation of the workforce required by industrial development" (Foster et al., 2006, p. 55, griffin of the author).

The concern with the social responsibility of the university directly affects the performance of its professors. In addition to specific scientific knowledge, teaching activities in higher education requires expertise of different natures, related to such activities (Cunha, 2006). In this line of reasoning, Masetto (2003) proposes, besides the domain in a certain area of knowledge, that the teacher exercises the political dimension of university teaching and presenting pedagogical proficiency. For this author, pedagogical skills refer to the understanding of the teaching and learning process and to the ability to relate their discipline to the rest of the curriculum, as well as to the professional practice. They also involve the understanding of the teacher-student and student-student relationship, plus the ability of the teacher to identify, use and evaluate the effects of different teaching strategies, using them according to the

needs and characteristics of their students and the content that is being approached.

The rupture with the traditional performance of the university professor (that is, of the transmitter of knowledge) and the advent of new manners of teaching performance have been referred to as "innovative" by some authors (Cunha, 2006, Foster et al., 2006; Lucarelli, 2007). According to Lucarelli (2007, p. 81, free translation):

[...] innovation is the key practice of teaching or the programming of teaching in which, based on the search of the solution of a problem of how to handle one or several didactic components, a rupture in the usual practices in the classroom takes place, affecting the set of relations of the didactic situation.

In this process, as the author proposes, the theory-practice articulation plays a central role in the dynamization of innovations, since it affects "[...] both the didactic-curricular components and those related to the formation and production of knowledge by the subjects involved" (Masetto, 2003, p. 82, free translation). Moreover, such changes make the teaching-learning process become student-centered, and it is therefore up to the teacher to take a position as a mediator of learning rather than simply the transmitter of content (Masetto, 2003).

Several other authors, such as Ferreira (2009), Torelló (2012) and Anastasiou (2015) share the view of the teacher as a mediator of learning and of the student, as an agent of his own learning. Actively learning requires from the student more than simply retaining orally exposed content by the teacher; it requires engagement in distinct activities such as searching, executing, producing and sharing knowledge to successfully cope with the world around himself or herself. This way of learning entails the development of skills and 'sociorelational behaviors' (Ferreira, 2009), under the essential premise that teacher and student act on knowledge (Anastasiou, 2015). Furthermore, considering that one of the goals of higher education is to prepare the future professional to operate in a society that changes constantly, actively learning will enable him or herself to deal with challenges faced during their professional life.

Oliveira and Silva (2012) suggest that, although the academic environment still heavily values the scientific competences of the university professor, there has been a growing attention on other important proficiencies in the teaching practice; among them, the establishment of relationships with

the students that contribute to their learning. In fact, the relationship between teacher and student is recognized as an important factor in the teaching-learning process. Polick, Cullen, and Buskist (2010) heard from interviewed students that the teachers who made a difference in their professional development were those who, in addition to their passion for what they taught, established relationships that provided meaningful personal transformation in their lives. Moreover, diverse aspects of the importance of this relationship in the student's academic life have been highlighted in the literature, such as: the impact of university dropout rates (Bardagi & Hutz, 2012); satisfaction with university experience and academic adaptation (Oliveira, Wiles, Fiorin, & Dias, 2014); interest and participation of students in the classroom (Bariani & Pavani, 2008); the undergraduate's quality of life (Oliveira & Ciampone, 2006); quality of the teaching-learning process (Cavaca, Esposti, Santos-Neto, & Gomes, 2010); student achievement and incorporation of values essential to the professional ethical practice (Zani & Nogueira, 2006), among others. Still in this line of reasoning, Schultz and Marchuk (2006) point out that the teacher-student relationship is important for several reasons: (a) as a condition for greater learning of academic content; (b) taking advantage of opportunities to engage in research, extension projects and non-academic activities (theater, music, sports, etc.); (c) positive influence on students' ethical posture and, (d) in addition to content, orientation towards life.

To establish an adequate relationship with the student that is effective in guiding them in the learning process, it is important that the teacher has, among other skills, an elaborated repertory of social skills. These skills have been mainly investigated by an area of psychology called the theoretical-practical field of social skills (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2010), which has been growing consistently and in the last decades, mainly in the United States, Brazil, the United Kingdom and Australia (Colepiccolo, 2015b), contributing significantly to the understanding of several variables involved in the interpersonal relationship. This field was developed around three core concepts, explicit and defined as follows: social performance, social skills, and social competence.

'Social performance' is defined by Del Prette and Del Prette (2017) as the set of behaviors involved in a certain task of social interaction, including both those who contribute and those who do not contribute to social competence. According to these authors, behaviors that do not contribute are highly likely to compromise the quality of interpersonal relationships, such as the aggressive and passive

ones. On the other hand, as the authors point out, the behaviors that contribute for social competence are referred to by the term 'social skills' and refer to behavioral classes with a high probability of generating positive consequences for the individual and their social group. In the view of these authors, social skills are behaviors socially accepted and valued by a culture or subculture and, when presented, favor the maintenance, effectiveness, and quality of the relationship. Social skills are learned throughout life; however, it is necessary for the individual to experience situations that allow them to be acquired and strengthened (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2010).

The authors (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2010) present a proposal for classifying social skills in seven broad groups: communication, civility, assertiveness and coping, empathy, employment, expression of positive feelings and self-monitoring. Each of these classes is composed of several subclasses. Among social employment skills are 'Educative Social Skills' (ESS), defined as "[...] those that are intentionally geared toward promoting the development and learning of others in a formal or informal situation" (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2010, p. 95, free translation).

According to the authors, the existence of social skills in an individual's repertoire is a necessary but not sufficient condition to guarantee social competence in dealing with different social demands that exist in the established interactions. The term 'social competence' is an evaluation construct of performance that

[...] qualifies [...] the proficiency of a performance and refers to the individual's ability to organize thoughts, feelings and actions in function of their goals and values, articulating them to the immediate and mediate demands of the environment (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2010, p. 31, free translation).

Social behavior, therefore, is considered competent when it reaches certain criteria of instrumental and ethical functionality (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2017), namely: achievement of the objectives of the social task; social approval of the verbal community; maintenance or improvement of the quality of the relationship; maximization of positive exchanges between the partners; respect and / or extension of the human rights of those involved.

According to Del Prette and Del Prette (2017), a socially competent performance, that meets all these criteria, entails values of coexistence, such as citizenship, cooperation, solidarity, social responsibility, and reciprocity. Therefore, socially competent teachers both develop good relations with their students, serving as a model for interaction with others, as they

contribute to their incorporation of values essential for professional practice and their role as citizens. Thus, if the teacher develops an adequate repertoire of social skills, it is assumed that they will be able to use them in an educational way in the interaction with their students, assisting the development of important values and skills for future professionals.

Given the relevance of the teacher-student interactions in the university and the social skills of the college teacher for this, the objective of the present study is to evaluate the scientific production on social skills related to the teaching performance in higher education in the face-to-face modality. Studies related to distance education and special education were excluded, since they may involve other nuances of the teacher-student relationship, which are beyond the scope of this research.

Method

This article is a systematic review of empirical studies that address the social skills of college teachers to answer some questions: What are the most published types of study? In what areas of knowledge and specific courses are there investigations on such skills? What social skills have been studied? How have they been assessed (data sources and instruments)? Are instruments with evidence of validity used? What knowledge was produced in relation to the social skills relevant to the college teacher?

Selection of manuscripts

The search for articles that allowed the evaluation of the scientific production of social skills related to the teaching performance in higher education was carried out in three distinct groups of databases: (a) Latin American databases (*Scielo Brasil*, *Periódicos Eletrônicos em Psicologia* (PEPSIC), *LILACS e Index Psi*); (b) specific database of social skills publications (*Corpus PHS*); (c) North-American database (*PsycArticles*). In each group, a distinct selection strategy was used to search for articles, given the specificities of each base group.

In both Latin American and North American bases, three sets of different terms were used to make the mapping very specific. The first refers to the social skills focus of the present analysis; the second, the teacher and the third, to the place of performance. For the choice of descriptors related to social skills, we searched, in the subject indexes of each database and in the Thesaurus (in the case of *PsycArticles*), the descriptors related with the theme, based on the taxonomy proposed by Del Prette and Del Prette (2010), and terms related to the expression 'social skills', such as social interaction and interpersonal relationship. Furthermore, in this

set of descriptors, terms were included in each database referring to the teacher-student relationship (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptors related to skills analyzed in this study.

Descriptors used in Latin American databases		
Afetividade	Habilidades de	Professor-aluno ¹
Amizade	comunicação ²	Professor-alunos ¹
Assertividade	Habilidades do bom	Professor-estudante ¹
Civilidade ³	professor ¹	Relação entre professor e
Comportamento	Habilidades na	aluno ¹
assertivo ¹	comunicação ¹	Relação interpessoal ²
Comunicação	Habilidades sociais	Relação professor-aluno ¹
Comunicação	Habilidades sociais	Relação professor-aluno ²
interpessoal ³	assertivas ¹	Relação social ²
Comunicação não	Habilidades sociais	Relações afetivas
verbal	educativas ²	Relações interpessoais ²
Comunicação não-	Interação interpessoal	Resolução de conflito ²
verbal ³	Interação pessoal ¹	Resolução de conflito
Comunicação oral ¹	Interação professor-	interpessoal ¹
Comunicação verbal ¹	aluno ³	Resolução de problemas ³
Empatia	Interação social	Resolução de problemas
Expressão emocional ¹	Interações sociais ²	interpessoais ¹
Expressividade ³	Práticas docentes ¹	Solidariedade
Expressões emocionais ¹	Práticas educativas ³	
Falar em público	Professor/aluno ¹	
Feedback	Professor/alunos ¹	
Habilidades		
comunicacionais ¹		
Habilidades		
comunicativas ²		
Habilidades		
conversacionais ¹		
Descriptors used in PsycArticles database		
Assertiveness	Interpersonal	Problem solving
Communication skills	communication	Social interaction
Conflict resolution	Interpersonal	Social skills
Empathic	interaction	Solidarity
Empathy	Interpersonal	Social behavior
Facial expressions	relationships	Verbal communication
Feedback	Interpersonal relation	
	Nonverbal ability	
	Nonverbal	
	communication	

Note: In the descriptors used in the Latin American databases, the numbers 1, 2 and 3 represent, respectively, the presence of the term in one, two or three bases, according to the subject indices of each database. Descriptors that are not accompanied by numbers were present in the subject indexes of the four databases

Regarding the selection of descriptors related to the teacher, we chose to use the words: 'professor', 'docente' and 'educador', in Latin American databases; and the words: 'college teachers', 'teacher characteristics', 'teacher attitudes' and, 'teacher effectiveness', in North-American database. Finally, to identify the place of performance, the terms used in Latin American database were 'ensino superior', 'educação superior' and 'universidade' and, in North-American database, were used 'higher education', 'college' and 'graduate education'. In each search, a descriptor of each of these sets of terms was used. The only exception to this rule occurred when the skill-related expression already referred to the teacher. In this case, the search was performed using only one descriptor related to social skills and one related to the place of performance (example: 'relação professor-aluno' AND 'universidade'). Searches were performed without restriction on fields or time periods and the expressions

were not used in quotation marks. The survey was conducted in November 2015, thus including articles published to date.

The Corpus PHS is a database that gathers all the bibliographical production of articles published in the field of social skills, retrieved from 24 databases in Psychology, in a study conducted by Colepicolo (2015a) and available on the website <http://www.phs.rihs.ufscar.br/>. Articles included in this base cover the period from 1912 to 2015; according to information made available on the PHS Corpus website, the database is regularly updated. At the time the search for the present study was conducted, the site reported that the last update had been made in June 2015. Since this database exclusively contained articles from the HS field, six searches were performed using the following descriptors: (1) professor, (2) docente, (3) educador, (4) college teacher, (5) teacher AND higher education e (6) teacher AND graduate education'.

For the selection of the articles, the inclusion criteria were: (a) to refer to empirical research on the performance of teachers working in higher education, regardless of the area of knowledge; (b) focus on the social skills and/or non-verbal and paralinguistic components of the teacher in the classroom and/or the relationship with the student. Studies were excluded: (a) dealing with distance or virtual education or special education; (b) theses, dissertations, reviews, obituaries, review of books, errata (unless they bring information regarding the data presented) and comments of articles; (c) articles whose titles explicitly refer to other levels of education (e.g., elementary education) and (d) theoretical studies. The criteria were applied initially on the titles; then on the abstracts; if both, considering the criteria, did not attest to the relevance of the article, the text was read.

Analysis of selected manuscripts

The selection process resulted in the identification of 37 articles. However, 13 of them were not available for access either free of charge or through an institutional account; therefore, were excluded from the sample of selected articles. The remaining 24 were read in its entirety. The material was examined from the following categories of analysis: (a) theoretical perspective adopted in the article; (b) type of study accomplished; (c) course in which the data were collected; (d) social skills studied and by whom they were evaluated; (e) a summary of the procedure adopted; (f) employed instrument with evidence of validity; (g) main results.

After the analysis of the selected articles, a new search, in the same format as the one described above, was carried out to verify if any papers were

left out of the mapping, but there were none.

Results

The oldest of the found articles is from 1954; from this date until 2000, only eight studies (33.3%) were published. The majority (66.7%) was published in the last 15 years. Table 2 summarizes the main data obtained from the categories of analysis adopted, and it can be observed that most of the studies were of the descriptive type (56.6%).

Table 2. Distribution of articles in each of the categories of analysis adopted.

	Focus of the analysis	Frequency	%
Type of study	Descriptive	13	56,6
	Instrument validation	5	21,7
	Experimental	3	13,0
	Correlational	2	8,7
	Total	23	100,0
Area of knowledge	Education	8	34,8
	Communication	6	26,1
	Psychology	5	21,7
	Speech Therapy	4	17,4
	Total	23	100,0
Course	Administration	2	8,7
	Nursing	4	17,5
	Speech Therapy	1	4,3
	Medical School	1	4,3
	Psychology	1	4,3
	Chemistry	1	4,3
	More than one graduation	4	17,5
	Different levels of education	2	8,7
	Not specified	7	30,4
	Total	23	100,0
Informant	Student	11	47,9
	Teacher	6	26,1
	Students and Teachers	3	13,0
	Researcher	2	8,7
	Student, teacher, and researcher	1	4,3
	Total	23	100,0
Validated instrument	Presence	11	47,9
	Absence	12	52,1
	Total	23	100,0

To determine the main area of knowledge adopted by the article, we analyzed the main concepts presented in the introduction of each of them. The areas of knowledge identified were: Education (8 articles), Communication (6), Psychology (5) and Speech Therapy (4).

Among those related to Education, six studies were found, which evaluated the teaching performance as part of institutional procedures (institutional evaluation of the teacher); one on teacher training and one on problem-based learning. In the articles on Communication, three evaluated non-verbal aspects; two described the evidences of the validity of an instrument designed to evaluate the communicational effectiveness of the teacher and a study verified the communication styles of the teacher and the student and the relationship of these styles with the evaluation that the student made of the teacher. In relation to the studies related to the

area of psychology, only one of them referred to the theoretical-practical field of social skills. Finally, the articles related to speech therapy addressed different aspects of the nonverbal and paralinguistic components that accompany communication from the perspective of speech therapy.

Data collection took place in several courses, most frequently in the biological sciences (26.1%), specifically in nursing, medical course and speech therapy. In human sciences, the data collection occurred only in the courses of administration and psychology, and in exact sciences, in the field of chemistry. Some studies involved (a) more than one undergraduate course (17.5%); (b) different levels of education (8.7%) or (c) did not specify the course in which data were collected (30.4%).

Social skills were evaluated by three distinct informants: students, teachers, and researchers (Table 2). In 11 studies, the teachers' abilities were evaluated exclusively by the students, predominating the employment of instruments with evidence of validity. In the six studies in which the teacher was the informant, either evaluating his own performance or evaluating the expected performance of an idealized teacher in the interaction with his students, three main types of procedure were used: interview, instrument application, and intervention. In the case of the study involving intervention - Sgariboldi, Puggina and Silva (2011) - this occurred in the form of a brief and individual explanatory presentation,

[...] containing the definition of types of communication (verbal and nonverbal), the functions of non-verbal communication, explanations about feelings with figures for better understanding, and examples of some signs that can be observed in the student in the classroom (Sgariboldi et al., 2011, p. 1.208, free translation).

In three studies, teacher performance was assessed by both teachers and students. In one, the teachers' assessment of their own performance was compared to the students' assessment (Schlee, 2005). The other two referred to the search for evidence of validity for the 'instrument of measurement of communicational effectiveness' of the teacher. However, although the procedure involved teachers, the latter did not evaluate their own performance in the classroom, but that of a well-known teacher of a discipline already studied (Rego 2001a; 2001b).

In two studies based on the theoretical presuppositions of speech therapy, the performance of the teacher was evaluated by the researcher in terms of prosody (characteristics of speech sounds). Barbosa, Cavalcanti, Neves, Chaves, Coutinho, and

Mortimer (2009) investigated, in laboratories, the non-verbal resources and speech and vocal resources of a group of university professors. Azevedo, Martins, Mortimer, Quadros, Sá, Moro and Pereira (2014) evaluated the quality of communication and the gestures of a college teacher in the classroom and the interaction of these resources as strategies of expressiveness.

Only in one study (Erdle, Murray, & Rushton, 1985), the teacher's performance was evaluated by the three informants: student, teacher, and researcher. In it, the authors were interested in examining the relationship between the behaviors presented in the classroom by the teacher and the influence of their personality on the effectiveness of teaching. To do so, they requested teachers to evaluate the personality traits of the department's teachers and used measures of observation of teachers' behavior and institutional evaluations of the students about the performance of these teachers.

Regarding the instruments used, 47.9% of the studies used instruments with evidence of validity (Table 2). The valid instruments identified were: (1) *Revised McKeachie-Lin student opinion questionnaire*; (2) *Oklahoma A. and M. Rating scale for instructor*; (3) *Microteaching rating scale*, employed in the institutional context to evaluate different aspects of teaching performance; (4) 'student evaluation questionnaire', adapted from the *Protocolo de Avaliação Fonoaudiológica* (PAF), with the objective of identifying students' judgments regarding verbal resources of their teachers, such as voice type, vocal attack, loudness, pitch, articulation, speech velocity and pneumono-articular coordination (Romano, Alves, Secco, Ricz, & Robazzi, 2011); (5) 'checklist of behavior in the classroom', to assess whether the teaching was centered on the teacher or student (Costin, 1971); (6) *Teacher behaviors inventory*, a standardized observation protocol containing a list of behaviors observed in teachers in the classroom; (7) 'communicational effectiveness measurement instrument' (Rego 2001a, 2001b) to identify communication patterns relevant to the effectiveness of higher education teachers and the effects of these standards on learners; (8) 'communication styles scale', to evaluate the respondent's communication style in relation to the traits of assertiveness and responsiveness; (9) 'social skills inventory' (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2001), self-report instrument that assesses the level of the respondent's social skills.

To identify the social skills addressed by the corpus of this research, the different aspects of teacher performance examined in each article were classified according to the social skills classes

proposed by Del Prette and Del Prette (2010; 2008). This identification was made based on the items of the instruments used or the data presented in the results (when they were studies that had not used instruments). Most of the researches (65.2%) evaluated several aspects of teacher performance and, among them, social skills.

Specifically assessing such skills, it was possible to identify both studies that addressed various classes of social skills, and researches that investigated a single class. This was the case of three of the four studies in the field of speech therapy that dealt exclusively with the nonverbal and/or vocal resources of teacher performance. These resources, in this specific field, refer to non-verbal and paralinguistic components that affect the quality of social performance (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2010). Table 3 shows the number of studies that addressed each social skill class.

Table 3. Classes of social skills and absolute and relative frequencies found in the analysis.

Classes of social skills		Frequency	%
Communication	Self-monitoring	5	21,7
	Assertiveness and coping	6	26,1
	Civility	2	8,7
	Verbal, nonverbal and paralinguistic	6	26,1
	Verbal	4	17,4
	Nonverbal and paralinguistic	7	30,4
	Not specified	2	8,7
	Empathy	4	17,4
	Expression of positive feelings	9	39,1
	Employment	12	52,1

Three classes are highlighted by the number of studies in which they were addressed: communication (82.6%), employment (52.1%) and expression of positive feelings (39.1%). Among the researches that dealt with social communication skills, four distinct situations were identified: (a) studies focusing only on nonverbal and paralinguistic components (30.4%); (b) studies dealing only with verbal components (17.4%); (c) studies that evaluated both components (26.1%) and (d) studies that referred to communication without specifying which of these components were examined (8.7%). Concerning the employment social skills, the frequency observed was closely related to the presence of the subclasses 'educative social skills' and 'public speaking' between the items of the used instruments or the data presented in the results of the studies. Furthermore, the class of positive feelings was always associated with items, or data, that pointed to the need for the teacher to establish a friendly and/or solidarity relationship with the students.

The ability of assertiveness and coping, when approached, was mainly related to the teacher's style of communication, and it was possible to observe different aspects. In item 12 of the 'instrument of

measurement of communicational effectiveness' used by Rego (2001a, 2001b), the focus is on assessing whether the teacher is aggressive while communicating with the students. In the 'communication styles scale', used by Schlee (2005), it refers to how one person influences others by exposing his opinions with expressiveness and security. In Voss's (2009) study, it was understood as the ability of asserting oneself, to defend one's own opinions before other people. Only in the studies of González-Hernando, Martín-Villamor and Martín-Duránte (2015) and of Soares, Naiff, Fonseca, Cardozo, and Baldez (2009) other aspects of assertiveness were reinforced. In the first, one of the items of the adopted instrument examines the behavior of admitting that one does not dominate certain subject; in the second, the use of the 'social skills inventory' (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2001) allows subclasses of this skill to be contemplated for the most part.

The less discussed social skills classes were empathy (17.4%) and civility (8.7%). The researches that referred to empathy highlighted the importance of the teacher being able to identify and understand the situation, the emotions, and the motives of the students. In terms of the studies that addressed the class of civility emphasized the behaviors of introducing oneself and greeting others.

It is relevant to highlight two aspects in relation to the identification of the social skills addressed: class coverage and overlap. The classification proposed by Del Prette and Del Prette (2010) organizes social skills into four levels of increasing complexity, "[...] but does not exclude some inevitable overlaps due to the variability and complexity of interpersonal relationships" (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2010, p. 60, free translation).

Thus, more complex classes, such as expression of positive feelings, will involve fewer complex classes such as communication and empathy. In addition, a given class is made up of several subclasses. Therefore, for the most part, the fact that a study deals with a class (or several) of social skills does not mean that all subclasses were contemplated. An illustrative case of this was what happened to self-monitoring ability. Whenever it was identified, it referred to the teacher's behavior of observing student behavior and/or changing teaching strategies or how to expose content to meet the student's need. However, other aspects of self-monitoring have not been addressed, such as introspection and reflection (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2010), possibly as a consequence of the difficulty in measuring such behaviors.

Since the corpus of this research involved articles

dealing directly and indirectly with the social skills classes of higher education teachers, some of the main results regarding the effect of these skills on the teacher-student relationship will be highlighted. First, it was evident that social skills can be measured, as demonstrated by the validation studies of instruments (Coffman, 1954; Isaacson, McKeachie, Milholland, Lin, Hofeller, & Zinn, 1964; Costin, 1971; Rego 2001a; 2001b).

The communication was valued by the teachers as one of the essential elements of the interaction with the students in the classroom (Sáenz-Lozada, Cárdenas-Muñoz, & Rojas-Soto, 2010; Castro & Silva, 2011). Teachers and students, in general, have convergent conceptions about behaviors that characterize the teacher's communicational effectiveness (Rego, 2010b). In addition, the non-verbal components of communication play an important role in this communication process (Kierstead, D'Agostino, & Dil, 1988; Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993; Silva, 2011).

To draw students' attention, teachers use resources related to nonverbal and paralinguistic components, technological resources (audiovisual equipment) and theory-practice relationship; However, when these resources do not function, they change the dynamics of the class (which would involve self-monitoring), talk to the students and interrupt speech to create a climate of expectation (Servilha & Monteiro, 2007). In addition, it was observed that vocal expressiveness and non-verbal resources can be positively affected by academic degree, experience, emotions and a more interactive and innovative approach to teaching (Barbosa et al., 2009). It was also observed that the more expressive the teacher, the better the students' evaluation of their explanations and the way in which they organized classes and contents (Meier & Feldhusen, 1979).

Empathy, joy, and solidarity were considered by the students as critical aspects for the good performance of the teacher (Voss, 2009). For the student, good teaching requires, among other aspects, that the teacher is aware of the student's difficulties and is patient with his limitations, showing himself able to understand the context in which he is inserted (Coffman, 1954).

It was also found that students can adequately assess aspects of the social performance of their teachers (Schlee, 2005; Romano et al., 2011) and that such evaluations can be effective in the feedback process of teaching performance. According to Pamboukian (1974), teachers who received moderately favorable assessments significantly improved their performance relative to their ability to teach and interact with students (when compared

to the best-evaluated teachers) and tended to decrease work overload for students (when compared to less favorably evaluated teachers). In addition, studies have pointed out that training and/or continuing education programs can improve aspects of the teacher's social performance (Sgariboldi et al., 2011; Amorim & Silva, 2014).

Discussion

Although there are some older studies evaluating the performance of university professors (Moore, 1935; 1937), the specific concern with their social skills is relatively recent. Until the mid-twentieth century, the prevailing - and practically exclusive - view of the university professor was that of the researcher who stands out in his area of practice and assumes teaching as a specialist, that is, as the holder of knowledge and professional experiences of an area, with the role of transmitting their knowledge to the student (Masetto, 2003; Cunha, 2006). In this model of 'banking education' (Freire, 1977), the teacher assumes the role of the exclusive driver of the teaching process. It is only because of the transformations that occurred during the XX century in the field of education that this posture was questioned (Masetto, 2003) and studies focused on the innovation of teaching practice and relational skills of the teacher intensified, gaining more attention of the academic community, especially in the late twentieth and early twentieth-first centuries.

Another aspect highlighted by the data refers to the areas of knowledge that have produced the most studies related to the social skills of the university professor. As expected, the area with the greatest number of studies was education, followed by communication, psychology and speech therapy. Only one of the 23 articles analyzed belonged to the theoretical-practical field of social skills and this analyzed the daily social skills of the teacher at different levels of education, not restricted to higher education alone (Soares et al., 2009). Notwithstanding the valuable contributions that this theoretical perspective can provide for the understanding and development of relational skills of college teachers and the existence of studies in the field of social skills with teachers from other levels of education (e.g., Del Prette, Del Prette, Garcia, Bolsoni-Silva, & Puntel, 1998; Rosin-Pinola & Del Prette, 2014), there is little research about the teaching performance in higher education.

The fact that most articles present descriptive studies seems to indicate that research on the relational skills of university teachers is still in the process of identifying and characterizing those that are considered

necessary for a socially competent performance among the students. This hypothesis seems strengthened when, in 65.2% of the analyzed articles, social skills represented only one of the assessed aspects of teacher performance.

In 26.1% of the studies, the data were collected in biological sciences courses, which may be related in part to the increasing attention in recent decades to a more humanized training of health professionals (Goulart & Chiari, 2010). It is possible that the emphasis on humanization emphasizes the need for college teachers capable of creating conditions for their students to develop social skills for their future professional life, which involves providing good models of social interaction. This need, however, is equally valid for courses in other areas of knowledge.

Only the students evaluated the performance of the teacher in almost half of the studies (47.9%), which seems to be in line with the current emphasis on their active participation in the teaching and learning process. As Masetto (2003) suggests, the teacher is expected to assume the role of pedagogical mediator between the learner and the object of knowledge; in this sense, the evaluation of the social skills of the teacher by his students can contribute to the recognition if in fact he has exercised such function and contributed effectively to the development of knowledge, skills, competencies, and values of the students.

The analysis of the instruments employed, with evidence of validity, allowed to observe that only one of them was elaborated within the perspective of the theoretical-practical field of social skills, describing the abilities as behaviors presented within specific contexts. The instrument used (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2001), however, evaluates daily social skills in interpersonal relations in general and is therefore not specific to the university teacher's acting context and to the nuances of the teacher-student relationship. Considering the situational nature of social skills (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2010, 2017), this suggests the lack of instruments that, from this theoretical perspective, specifically focus on the social interaction tasks inherent to the teacher-student relationship, particularly in the academic context.

Finally, the social skills classes most approached were those of communication, employment (especially the subclasses of social educational and public speaking skills) and expression of positive feelings. While the first two seem to be more related to the traditional role of the teacher as the transmitter of knowledge, the latter is more related to the mediating role of the teacher between the student and the object of knowledge, which includes

both technical and socioemotional aspects. According to Carvalho (1995, p. 61), university students pointed out "[...] mutual respect, friendship, courtesy between the two, the teacher being in a good mood, the teacher's charism" as factors that facilitate teacher-student interaction, thus emphasizing the importance of the emotional support provided by the teacher in the relationship with his students. The students emphasized the preference for the considerate teacher (who clarifies any doubts and shows interest in the student), gives the student freedom to self-expression and demonstrates agreeableness. In this way, the results of this literature review seem to confirm a process of gradual change, even in its initial stages, of the important requirements for the college teacher, in particular of the social skills required for their action in higher education.

Final considerations

The theoretical-practical field of social skills has contributed significantly to the comprehension of the diverse variables involved in the interpersonal relationship. Once the teacher-student relationship is identified as one of the central aspects of the teaching-learning process and of social skills as important elements for teachers and students to effectively establish solid interpersonal relationships, further research on higher education under the perspective of the theoretical-practical field of social skills seems necessary.

Allied to this, the focus on relational skills of higher education teachers seems to be in line with recent concerns about university social responsibility and innovation in teaching practice. Although such concerns have been driven by neoliberal policies (more concerned with marketing issues than with the training process itself), it cannot be denied that such policies also help teachers: (a) to rethink the effectiveness of the traditional stance of transmission of knowledge on the training of new professionals; (b) seek innovative teaching practices that enable better learning conditions for their students and, consequently, (c) assume, more often, the posture of learning leaders. This change in the teacher's posture towards the student, and in the teaching-learning process, is consistent with the current historical moment, in which the speed of production and the convenience of access to information widen the student's contact with knowledge and it requires that they learn how to use and produce it in a critical and responsible manner.

Researches that favor the understanding and/or development of intervention programs for the promotion of social skills in college teachers, besides being desirable, can contribute to the improvement

of the offered training and, consequently, to the development of society. After all, once a socially competent performance presupposes values of coexistence (Del Prette & Del Prette, 2017), a teacher with an elaborate repertoire of social skills will be better equipped to provide his students with the conditions to develop important values and skills for their future professional performance.

At last, it is important to emphasize that, given the recent interest in the social skills of college teachers, it is likely that there are thesis and dissertations that have not yet been converted into articles. Thus, a limitation of the present study was to restrict the analysis to scientific articles. It is suggested that future researches consider the analysis of dissertations, thesis and book chapters.

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NOTE:

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