

**PACHEM** 



# Computational Drug Design in Problem-Based Learning: A Pedagogical Experience in Pre-Service Chemistry Teachers

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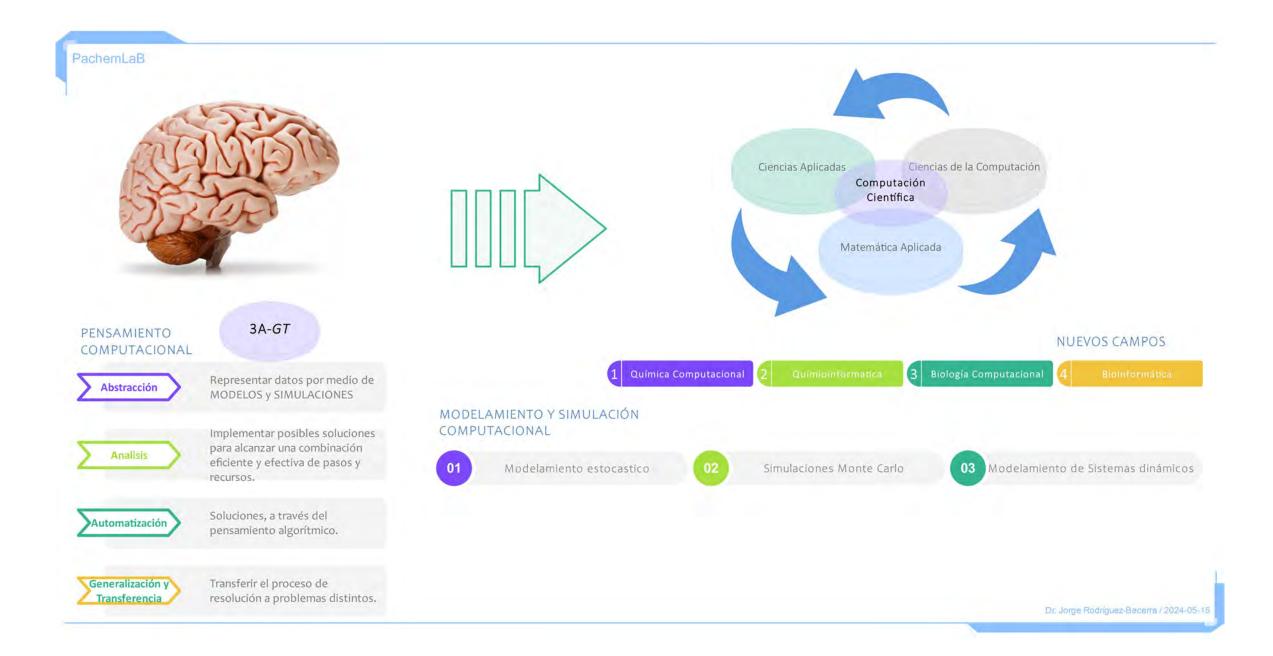
May 2025

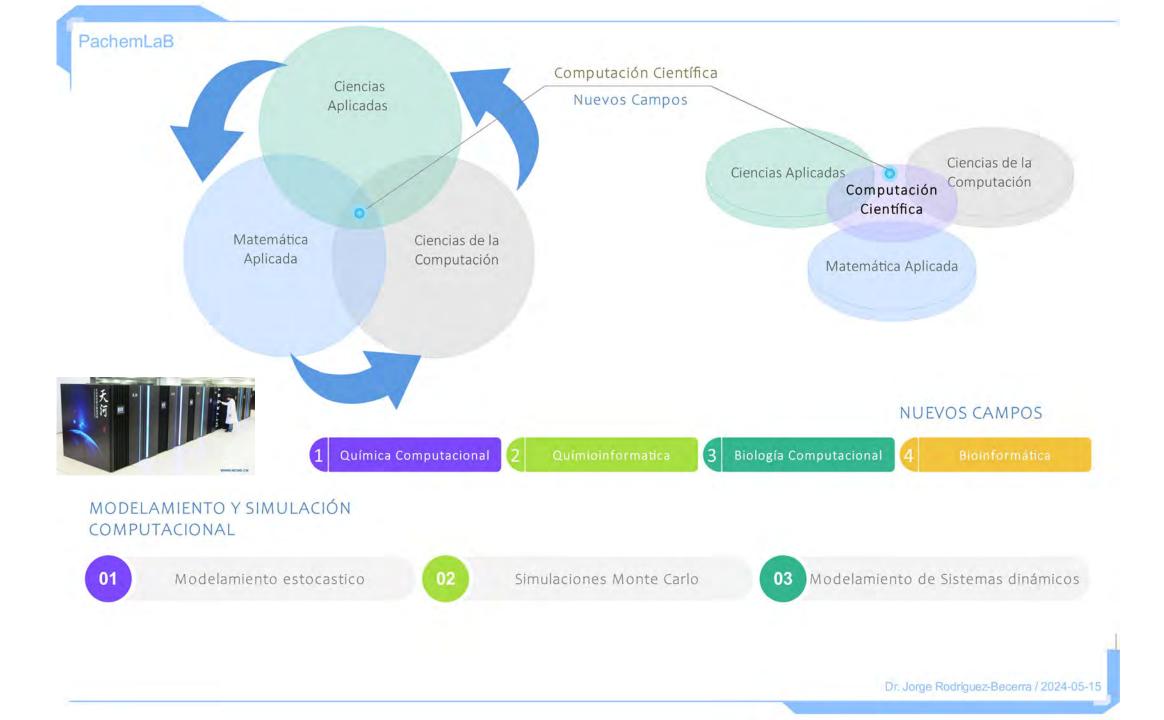
## PachemLaB



Discriminate Classify Decide Solve problems Reason Generalise Transfer Understand ideas Create Fmotion Conversation Common sense Practical sense Automation Initiative Learn Analysis Adapt Abstraction

Dr. Jorge Rodríguez-Becerra / 2024-05-15









# **Computational Science**

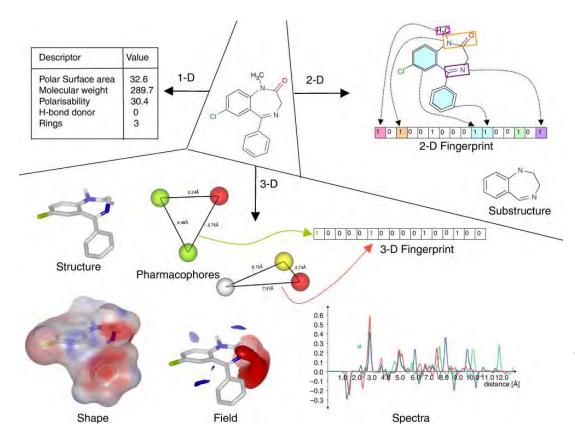
Computational Science serves as a learning tool or becomes a subject of learning. However, computational science in science classes requires not only devices and software in institutions and schools but also a good selection of concepts contextualized to authentic problems.



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# Molecular descriptors



Zero - dimensions (0D) One - dimensional (1D) Two - dimensional (2D) Three - dimensional (3D) Four - dimensions (4D)

"The final result of a logical and mathematical procedure, which transforms chemical information encoded within a symbolic representation of a molecule into a useful number or the result of some standardized experiment."

Todeschini R, Consonni V (2009) Molecular descriptors for chemoinformatics. Wiley-VCH, Weinheim





## **TPASK Framework**

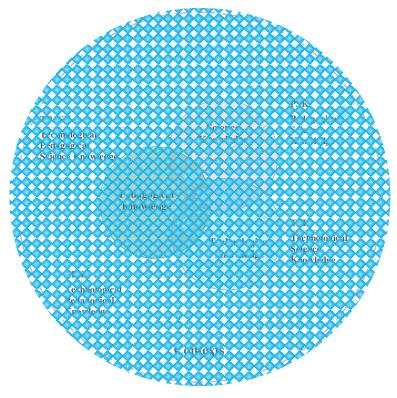


Figure. Venn diagrams representation for TPASK as an interdisciplinary endeavour connecting TK with PK and SK. ECC within technological pedagogical chemistry knowledge (TPAChK) adapted from the TPASK framework.

Chemistry Education Research and Practice



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Rodríguez-Becerra, J., Cáceres-Jensen, L., Díaz, T., Druker, S., Bahamonde Padilla, V., Pernaa, J., & Aksela, M. (2020). Developing technological pedagogical science knowledge through educational computational chemistry: a case study of pre-service chemistry teachers' perceptions. *Chemistry Education Research and Practice*, 21(2), 638-654.

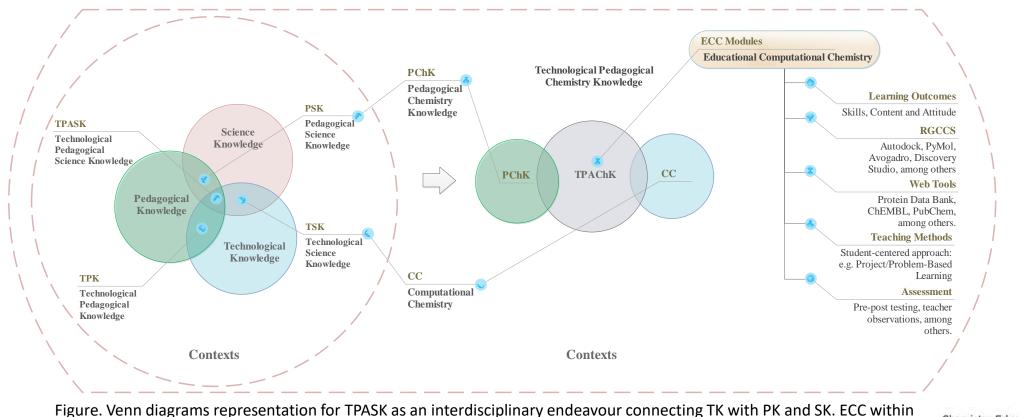
Jorge Rodriguez-Becerra, 💭 📲 Lizethly Caceres-Jensen, 💭 " Tatiana Diaz. Sofia Druker 🍈 Victor Bahamonde Padita, 🍈 ' Johannes Pernaa 🖗 and Maija Aksela 🚭



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# **TPASK Framework**



technological pedagogical chemistry knowledge (TPAChK) adapted from the TPASK framework.

Rodríguez-Becerra, J., Cáceres-Jensen, L., Díaz, T., Druker, S., Bahamonde Padilla, V., Pernaa, J., & Aksela, M. (2020). Developing technological pedagogical science knowledge through educational computational chemistry: a case study of pre-service chemistry teachers' perceptions. *Chemistry Education Research and Practice, 21*(2), 638-654.

Jorge Rodriguez-Becerra, 😎 +\*\* Lizethly Caceres-Jensen, 😎 \*\* Tatiana Diaz. Sofia Druker, 💿 \* Victor Bahamonde Padilta, 💿 \* Johannes Pernaa 💇 \* and Maija Aksela 🌍 \*



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# TPASK: seven constructs of knowledge

- TK is how to use emerging technologies in a specific scientific domain.
- SK represents understanding the scientific community's models, protocols, practices, and products in science (Cáceres-Jensen et al., 2021).
- PK is the general knowledge about learning and teaching.
- PSK represents the understanding of models, protocols, practices and products of the science fields included in science education and how they can be used to implement learning environments that promote student learning. In addition, it consists of an understanding of students' construction of scientific knowledge in teaching contexts (Cáceres-Jensen et al., 2021).
- TSK represents the knowledge of how to use models and simulations to illustrate and apply scientific concepts using emerging technology, e.g., that linked to scientific computing (Rodríguez-Becerra et al., 2020).
- TPK is the knowledge about the possibilities and challenges involved in different ways of teaching and learning.
- TPASK understands how to use emerging science technology to implement learning environments that promote science learning in students (Rodríguez-Becerra et al., 2020).

Cáceres-Jensen, L., Rodríguez-Becerra, J., Jorquera-Moreno, B., Escudey, M., Druker-Ibañez, S., Hernández-Ramos, J., et al. (2021). Learning Reaction Kinetics through Sustainable Chemistry of Herbicides: A Case Study of Preservice Chemistry Teachers' Perceptions of Problem-Based Technology Enhanced Learning. Journal of Chemical Education 98(5), 1571-1582. doi: 10.1021/acs.jchemed.0c00557.

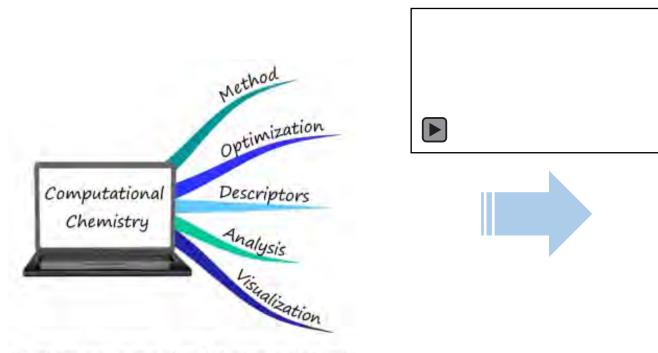
Rodríguez-Becerra, J., Cáceres-Jensen, L., Díaz, T., Druker, S., Bahamonde Padilla, V., Pernaa, J., et al. (2020). Developing technological pedagogical science knowledge through educational computational chemistry: a case study of pre-service chemistry teachers' perceptions. *Chemistry Education Research and Practice* 21(2), 638-654. doi: 10.1039/c9rp00273a.



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# Computational Chemistry: Teaching Challenges



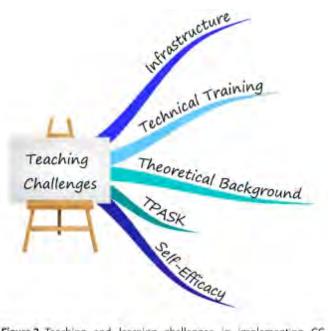


Figure 2. Teaching and learning challenges in implementing CC modules.

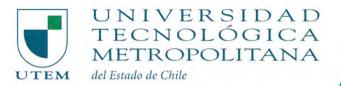
Figure 1, Five main aspects of problem solving with CC tools construct the CC literacy.





Aim & Objectives

This High-performance computing is transforming both scientific discovery and science education. To explore its pedagogical potential, we embedded an Educational Computational Chemistry module—focused on computer-aided drug design for SARS-CoV-2—into a first-semester Physical Chemistry course for 20 pre-service chemistry teachers.





## **METHODOLOGY**







Methodology

- This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional design to examine the integrated technological, pedagogical, and scientific knowledge (TPASK) of pre-service chemistry teachers. Participants were enrolled in a physicochemistry course that integrated computational chemistry tools at a Chilean university, in a program that prepares secondary science teachers (chemistry, biology, physics, mathematics).
- A total of 20 participants from various semesters (4th to 8th) completed the study. The survey was administered digitally during class time with informed consent, adhering to ethical research protocols.



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Methodology

- The instrument was designed based on the TPASK theoretical framework and consisted of 56 Likert-scale items. Each item was reviewed by field experts for content validity and piloted with a small sample (n = 5) for clarity and reliability prior to full deployment.
- Data analysis was performed using SPSS and Python. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha for each domain. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) were calculated for all constructs. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to assess construct validity. Regression analysis identified predictors of TPASK, while Baron and Kenny's mediation framework and Sobel tests were applied to test indirect effects. Interaction terms were examined to explore potential moderating relationships. Finally, cluster analysis using K-means and Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to identify learner profiles based on knowledge scores across constructs.





The UMCE pre-service Chemistry Teacher

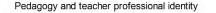
- During this course, students will learn to apply physicochemical knowledge (thermodynamic) and some of the tools of computational chemistry and chemoinformatics to understand current research topics in medical and environmental chemistry.
- After this course, students will gain experience in authentic practical research micro-projects in socioscientific problems from a perspective that integrates chemical and computational knowledge. Their proposals can be used as opportunities for developing chemical knowledge and scientific skills in the school context.

	PHYSICAL CHEMISTRY QUI6048	
Lectures	Mondays 16:15 – 17:45 and 18:00 -19:30.	
Periodic Labs	Tuesday and Thursday 9:45 - 11:15 AM and	11:30 - 13:00 AM.
Learning core	compounds for treating diseases.	to human health: introduction to Computational Methods in the discovery of ompounds of interest to human health and the environment.
Pedagogical Strategy	Direct Instruction; Hands-On Computationa	•
<b>Instruction Model</b>	Blended learning	
Module resources	Digital Resources	Websites of interest
	<ul> <li>WHO. Coronavirus disease outbreak 2019.</li> <li>Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University. COVID-19 Dashboard.</li> <li>Novel Coronavirus Resource Directory.</li> </ul>	https://www.who.int/es/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019 https://bit.ly/2PMY0eN https://www.elsevier.com/novel-coronavirus-covid-19
	<ul> <li>Databases</li> <li>DrugBank</li> <li>Pubchem</li> <li>ChEBML</li> <li>Protein Data Bank</li> <li>Research Grade Scientific Software</li> <li>Avogadro</li> <li>AutoDock</li> <li>MglTools</li> <li>Discovery Studio Visualizer</li> </ul>	https://go.drugbank.comhttps://pubchem.ncbi.nlm.nih.govhttps://www.ebi.ac.uk/chemblhttps://www.rcsb.orghttps://avogadro.cchttp://autodock.scripps.edu/downloads/autodock-registration/autodock-4-2-download- pagehttp://mgltools.scripps.eduhttps://discover.3ds.com/discovery-studio-visualizer-download









## Communicative skills

Sociocultural contexts of educational processes

Critical and philosophical reflection of educational processes

Psychology of learning and educational transformation

Public education policies

Paradigms, theories and contemporary approaches in education

### Educational curriculum

Pedagogical training

## Educational evaluation

Curriculum management and innovation

Didactic project

Orientation and educational coexistence

Learning communities

Practice I

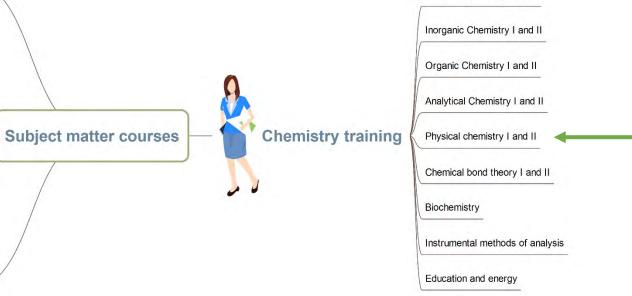
Practice II

Professional Practice

**Pedagogical Practice training** 

Practice III





Didactics of science

Math I, II and III

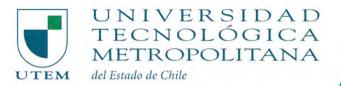
Physical I and II Biology

Second language I and II

Specialty I, II, III and IV Elective course I and II Applied computing

Didactics of chemistry

General Chemistry I and II





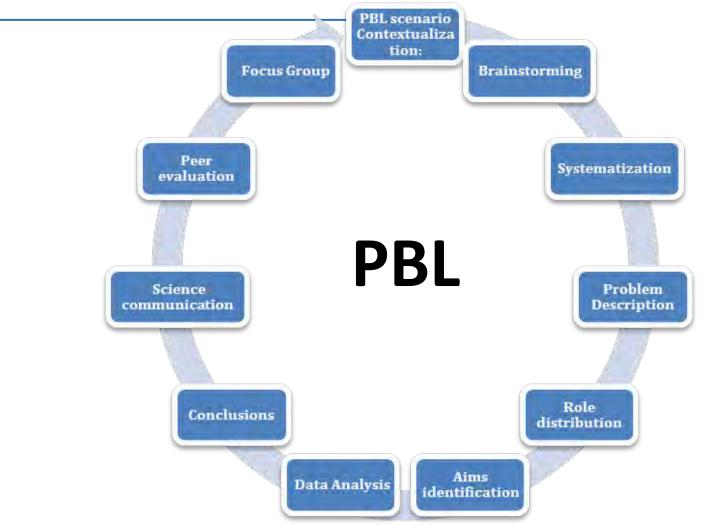
# PHYSICAL & ANALYTICAL CHEMISTRY GROUP

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



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# The PBL scenario propose to the students the challenge of:

"Can one or more of the FDA-approved compounds proposed by Singh and Florez (2020) be identified as plausible inhibitors of the SARS-CoV-2 main protease (PDB ID: 6LZE), and how can computational evidence support this hypothesis?"





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### SCENARIO: REQUIREMENT OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION ON COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, emerged in Wuhan, China in late 2019 and quickly became a global health crisis. Declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020, this disease has highlighted the urgent need for effective therapeutic solutions. The virus gains entry into human cells via the ACE2 receptor, which is expressed in several organs, including the lungs and gastrointestinal tract. A key viral enzyme, the main protease (Mpro)—specifically identified as PDB ID: 6LZE—has been recognized as a promising drug target due to its central role in viral replication and transcription. In this problem-based learning (PBL) scenario, pre-service chemistry teachers will take on the role of computational drug designers. Drawing on research by Dai et al. (2020), who identified potent Mpro inhibitors, and Singh and Florez (2020), who proposed 20 FDA-approved drugs as potential antivirals using PDB ID: 6M03, students are tasked with evaluating whether these same 20 compounds (see Table 1) might inhibit 6LZE. Students will access the PubChem database to retrieve compound data, apply Lipinski's Rule of Five (ROS) to filter for drug-likeness, and use molecular docking tools (e.g., AutoDock Vina) to simulate interactions between each compound and the Mpro active site. Students will then analyse docking scores, binding affinities, and key interactions, Integrating this with existing literature to construct a scientifically grounded argument.

### DRIVING QUESTION:

Can one or more of the FDA-approved compounds proposed by Singh and Florez (2020) be identified as plausible inhibitors of the SARS-CoV-2 main protease (PDB ID: 6LZE), and how can computational evidence support this hypothesis?

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

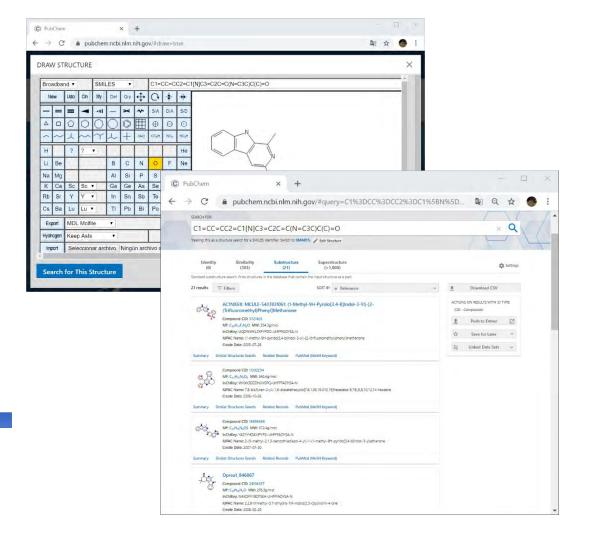
- · Develop inquiry and problem-solving skills using real-world, interdisciplinary contexts.
- Apply computational tools to evaluate molecular interactions in drug discovery.
- Interpret and critique docking simulations within the framework of medicinal chemistry.
- Reflect on the role of chemoinformatics in addressing global health challenges.

### STEM INTEGRATION:

This scenario merges core principles from chemistry, biology, informatics, and technology, reinforcing TPASK competencies through authentic scientific practice. The project culminates in the design of a digital scientific poster or video presentation summarizing each team's findings, supported by PubChem identifiers, 3D visualisations, and structure-activity arguments.



Figure 1. The crystal structure of COVID-19 main protease in complex with an inhibitor.





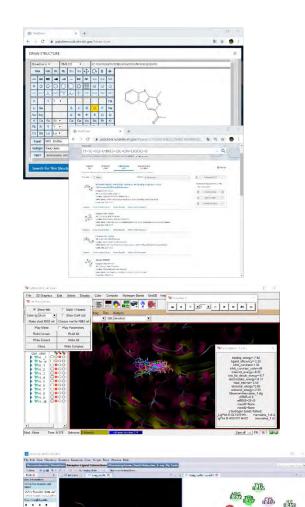


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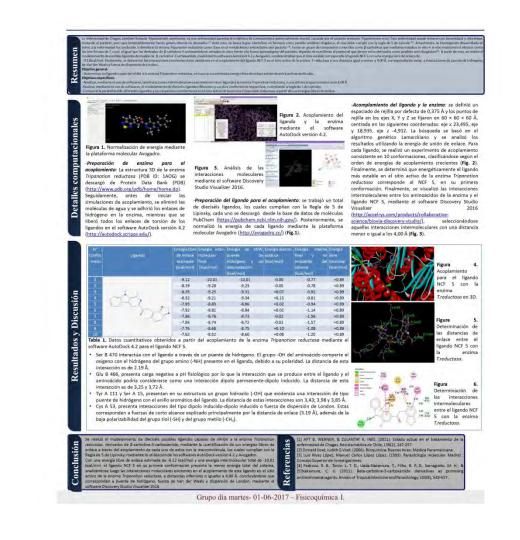
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- Descriptive statistics revealed moderately high self-perceptions across all TPASK domains.
- Technological Knowledge (TK) exhibited the highest mean (M = 3.97, SD = 0.30), followed by Scientific Knowledge (SK) and Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK). This trend suggests a student cohort that feels confident with digital tools and scientific content knowledge, though slightly less confident in integrating these into pedagogical strategies.
- Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha indicated excellent internal consistency across constructs, with all values exceeding α = 0.82, supporting the reliability of the instrument.



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- A multiple regression model predicting TPASK from PK, SK, TK, PSK, TSK, and TPK showed excellent model fit ( $R^2 = 0.934$ , p < .001).
- Significant predictors included:
  - *TPK* (*β* = 0.645, *p* < .001): the strongest predictor.
  - $TK (\beta = 0.254, p = .003)$ : a meaningful but smaller contributor.
  - $PK (\beta = -0.156, p = .049)$ : a small but negative association.



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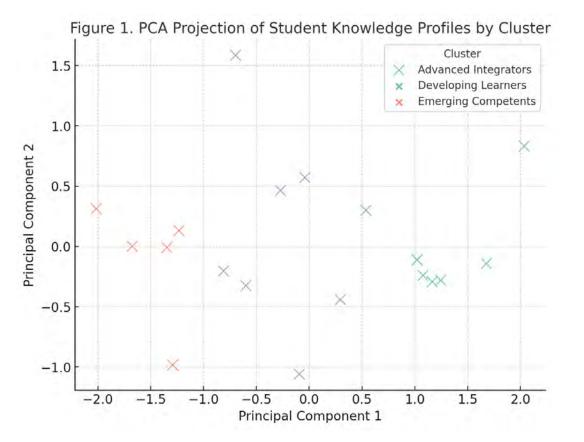
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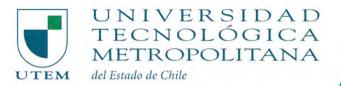


# **Cluster Analysis**

*K-means clustering and PCA dimensionality reduction revealed three distinct knowledge profiles among students:* 

- Profile 0: Advanced Integrators high across all domains (e.g., TK = 4.69, TPASK = 4.08).
- Profile 1: Developing Learners lowest in all domains (e.g., SK = 3.16, TPASK = 2.97).
- Profile 2: Emerging Competents moderate levels (e.g., TK = 3.75, TPASK = 3.63).







## **CONCLUSION**





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# Conclusion

- The Central Role of TPK
  - The finding that TPK is both the strongest predictor and a significant mediator in TPASK development reinforces the idea that pre-service teachers must go beyond acquiring tools or content knowledge. They must be explicitly taught how to design, adapt, and evaluate pedagogical strategies that leverage technology to teach science meaningfully.





# Conclusion

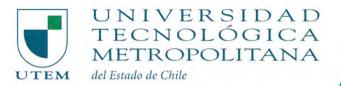
- Limited Influence of PK and SK
  - The weak or negative role of general *Pedagogical Knowledge (PK),* and the nonsignificant role of *Scientific Knowledge (SK),* suggest that competence in TPASK cannot be inferred from strength in these domains alone. Instead, what appears to matter most *is the degree to which pedagogical and technological skills* are blended—a call to restructure how we think about and design teacher preparation curricula.





# Conclusion

- *Implications for Chemistry Teacher Education* These findings suggest that teacher education programs should:
  - Explicitly teach **TPK and TPASK** through *scenario-based learning, interdisciplinary problem-solving, and computational tool immersion*.
  - Assess students not only on disciplinary understanding but on their ability to *design and justify technology-enhanced learning experiences*.
  - Use cluster-based profiling to adapt instruction in real time, ensuring *equity in readiness and opportunities for growth.*



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT



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# Acknowledgment

- The authors J.R.-B. and L.C.-J. thanks the Projects FONDECYT Regular–1221942 and FONDECYT Regular 1221634.
- The author S.D., thanks the Programa Extraordinario de Becas de Postgrado— Doctorado en Educación—UMCE.





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## Noticias Pachem



#### Participación destacada en curso avanzado de modelamiento de flujo de agua y transporte de contaminantes en medios porosos

La profesora Dra. Lizethly Cáceres Jensen, junto al profesor Mauricio Espinoza Villanueva, estudiante del programa dedoctorado en química de la universidad de Chile, y al estudiante tesista Mauricio Foquett, estudiante de Pedagogía en Química y Ciencias Naturales de...



#### Investigadores chilenos participan en foro sobre cambio climático en Finlandia

Los destacados académicos Dra. Lizethiy Cáceres Jensen y Dr. Jorge Rodriguez Becerra de la Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación (UMCE) han sido invitados a Finlandia para participar en el Séptimo Foro de Docentes sobre el Cambio Climático, organizado LEER MÁS

Ver todas las Noticias >

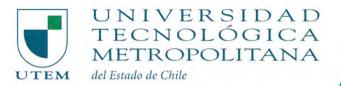


### Il Congreso VIVE la Investigación

El director de la Escuela de #Postgrado UTEM, Jorge Rodriguez, se presentó en el II Congreso Vive la #Investigación, que organiza la Dirección de Desarrolfo Estudiantil, con el apoyo de la Vicerrectoría de Investigación y Postgrado, la Dirección de Transferencia LEER MÁS



LEER MÁS





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# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION