

SNAPSHOTS TO RE-IMAGINE TEACHER QUALITY IN SOUTHERN CHILE

BY

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ABSTRACT

Considering the important role of teachers in improving learning outcomes, teacher evaluation is considered a priority for educational policy makers. This dissertation addresses three issues related with teacher quality and teacher evaluation in Chile. The first paper examines the political-educational discourse that underpinned the design of the National Teacher Evaluation System (NTES) and the conditions that could potentially favor the implementation of a new system. The second paper explores the levels of alignment and misalignment between teachers' understanding of quality and the criteria of teacher quality defined in the Framework for Good Teaching (FGT) and evaluated through NTES. The third paper is a methodological reflection on the process of contextualizing qualitative research on teachers and teaching. Together, these papers support rethinking the conceptual and methodological framework of the current teacher evaluation system currently used in Chile.

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INTRODUCTION

Most countries around the globe are experiencing a revolution in how educational policies are currently designed and implemented. If local governments were traditionally responsible for the design of educational policies, today the responsibility for determining global and national priorities and implementing strategies to improve the effectiveness of education systems lies mostly in international organizations. Along with those strategies, complex information systems for decision-making at local, national, and international levels have been developed. These systems monitor and control different aspects of policy implementation such as the use of resources, the achievement of results, and the level of impact, among others. Furthermore, the great amount of information contained in the information systems of organizations such as the OECD and the World Bank is considered an unquestionable source of evidence concerning “what works” in public policy.

In this scenario of challenges around the globe, accountability has become a meta-policy. Accountability systems are implemented at different levels in order to monitor and control individual and institutional achievements. Particularly in the case of the teaching profession, accountability policies have been reflected in the increasing number of teacher evaluation systems currently in use. In fact, as a key strategy for improving the effectiveness of teachers, the vast majority of OECD countries have created laws to regulate teacher evaluation. There are several approaches for evaluating teachers, however, performance based evaluation is widespread among countries currently implementing evaluation systems. One of the reasons behind the widespread use of this model is that performance based evaluation allows the combination of a formative purpose with accountability. In this way, evaluation provides information to teachers about their

practices, and this facilitates self-reflection on the part of teachers regarding their pedagogical practices. At the same time, using performance based evaluation brings in information that can be used to make decisions on the school or district levels. This mixed perspective of evaluation (formative and summative) has been criticized, particularly regarding the reduced impact of such evaluations on improving teachers' professional learning.

The case of Chile offers an interesting opportunity to analyze how the performance based evaluation approach works and what are the main consequences of its implementation. Chile implemented the Sistema Nacional de Evaluación del Desempeño Docente (National Teacher Evaluation System- NTES) in 2003 with the purpose of improving the teacher workforce by providing teachers with opportunities for learning. Based on the Framework for Teaching created in the USA by Charlotte Danielson, the NTES uses as a regulatory framework the Marco para la Buena Enseñanza (Framework for Good Teaching-FGT) that includes 20 criteria grouped in four dimensions: Teaching Preparation; Creating an environment conducive to learning; Teaching to promote learning to all students and; Professional responsibility.

After 12 years of implementation, the NTES has been questioned. According to Santiago, Benavides, Danielson, Goe, & Nusche (2013), despite the original formative purpose of the NTES, "the Accountability function of teacher evaluation is dominant and constrains the extent to which evaluation processes help teachers strengthen their practice" (p. 76). In fact, these authors point out that NTES does not provide opportunities for teacher discussion and reflection in any of the instruments designed to evaluate

teachers, therefore, the opportunities for learning are limited and teachers do not modify their practices as a result of their participation in NTES.

These and other criticisms raised by the academic community, teachers, and experts linked to the field of education have created a space for discussing teacher evaluation in Chile and have provided an opportunity to reflect upon the effectiveness of the system that seeks to improve the quality of Chilean teachers.

This dissertation aims to contribute to the current debate that exists today in Chile on the relevance and effectiveness of the current model of teacher evaluation. I take, as a starting point, the idea that the methodological dimension of the evaluation is essential to ensure the credibility of its results; however, the conceptual dimension of teacher evaluation should also be in permanent review. Furthermore, the analysis of the constructs, principles and values underpinning the teacher evaluation process allows us to understand the impact that evaluation has not only teachers but also in the whole education system.

Further, this dissertation aspires to incorporate in the discussion of teacher evaluation, the voices of the teachers working in the Araucania. Araucanía region is located in the southern region of Chile. Approximately one million people live in the Araucanía Region. 27, 7% of population are members of a Mapuche ethnic group. (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, 2012).

This dissertation was written with the deep conviction that teacher evaluation is a key mechanism to strengthen the teaching profession. However, to be effective, this evaluation must serve the needs of the teachers who ultimately have the responsibility to lead the educational process in schools. To achieve these objectives, this dissertation has been organized in three papers. Each paper is described below.

Paper 1, *“Tension, Contradictions, and Possibilities in Teacher Evaluation in Chile,”* offers a panoramic reflection on the political-educational discourse that underpinned the design of NTES. Furthermore, from the review of reports and documents, this paper argues that the criticisms made of the Sistema Nacional de Evaluación del Desempeño Profesional Docente (National Teacher Evaluation System -NTES) should not be understood as methodological flaws or errors in implementing the system, but rather they must be understood as expressions of the political tension dominating the educational agenda during that period known as Transición democrática (Transition to democracy). This period of post-military dictatorship was characterized by the coexistence of two political discourses in the educational arena: democratic discourse and technocratic discourse. Both discourses influenced policies aimed at strengthening the profession, generating strong contradictions in the way the teacher evaluation was initially designed. While the first part of this paper is a retrospective reflection of how the NTES was initially designed, the second part is a critical reflection on the current program and the conditions that could potentially favor the implementation of a new teacher evaluation system. Also, as conclusions, I offer a reflection on what are the principles that should guide the development of this new teacher evaluation model in Chile, so that it can respond effectively to the needs and demands of today's educational system.

Paper 2, *“Beyond the classroom: Teacher Quality in La Araucania, Southern Chile,”* explores the level of alignment (or misalignment) between teachers’ understanding of quality and the criteria of teacher quality defined in the Framework for Good Teaching (FGT), and evaluated through NTES. In order to explore the concept of teacher quality I conducted a study with teachers working in public schools in the region of La Araucania,

southern, Chile. Using photo elicitation as a data collection method, they answered the question: *What does teacher quality mean for you?* This method consists of using pictures to invoke responses during the course of an interview (Harper, 2002; Rose, 2012; Banks, 2001; Lapenta, 2015 Emmison et al, 2012; Collier, 1957; 1986).

Teachers' responses were analyzed and then contrasted with the criteria defined by the FGT. The results of this study show that teachers gave high significance to the aspects of teaching that are directly related to their performance during the teaching-learning process, including class preparation, teaching strategies and assessment of student learning. However, participants have a concept of teacher quality that integrates not only performance based criteria, but also other dimensions related to the cognitive and socio-emotional facets of being a teacher, including criteria such as professional skills, values, experience, training, and professional achievements. This result shows that the concept of teacher quality should not just be seen as a function of performance, but also as a holistic experience connected with the context where teachers work, and closely linked to their practical knowledge.

Paper 3, "*What does context mean anyway? Contextualizing Educational Research through Photo Elicitation,*" is a methodological reflection on the process of contextualizing qualitative research on teachers and teaching, based on my experience using Photo Elicitation.

Through this paper, I explore three advantages of using photo elicitation to contextualize research on teachers and teaching: (1) utilizing pictures provides rich descriptions of the spatial contexts where teachers work; (2) using pictures taken by participants facilitates the exploration of participants' interpretation of their contexts, and

(3) during interviews researchers and participants negotiate interpretations of pictures by contrasting participants' interpretations with researcher' perceptions about the context where teachers develop their practice. Finally, I conclude that the contextualization of research professors must not only be considered a methodological requirement to enhance the validity of research but also must be an ethical requirement of educational research with teachers.

This paper has not been restricted to the field of teacher evaluation, and does not refer explicitly to NTES, but its genesis is deeply tied to teacher evaluation process in Chile. In fact, this paper emerged as a way to address the criticisms of the Chilean teachers regarding the contextualization of evaluation in Chile and the lack of opportunities during the evaluation for reflection on how the context influences their teaching.

PAPER 1

TENSIONS, CONTRADICTIONS, AND POSSIBILITIES IN TEACHER EVALUATION IN CHILE¹

In order to ensure the effective use of financial resources, control and accountability became key concepts in the process of designing and implementing educational policies in Chile. Accountability has always been part of the educational management system (Lingard, Martino, & Rezai-Rashti, 2013). However, over the last decades, educational reforms worldwide, have promoted a shift away from accountability based on compliance with regulations and adherence to professional norms to an accountability based on achievements and results (Anderson, 2005). This shift has brought many challenges to the teaching profession. If before, the teaching profession was self-regulated by the its own internal educational community, today, external evaluation systems are put into place in order to identify levels of effectiveness in teachers' performance, generating rankings and promoting merit pay systems to incentivize successful practices (Anderson, 2005; Fabricant & Fine, 2013).

Among the strategies used to make teachers accountable, teacher evaluation is considered one of the most effective, which explains the increase in the number of countries reporting that they have policies and regulations for evaluating teachers (Murillo Torrecilla, Gonzalez de Alba, & Rizo Moreno, 2006; OECD, 2009).

This is particularly true in Chile, where teacher evaluation was initially installed in the educational discourse during the mid-90s, in the context of the design and implementation of a major educational reform. However, the first Sistema Nacional de

¹ Note. This paper aims to contribute to discussion of teacher evaluation in Chile; therefore it was originally written in Spanish. I re-wrote it to be presented to the dissertation committee.

Evaluación del Desempeño Docente (National Teachers Evaluation System- NTES) began operating in 2003, only after long negotiations among the Colegio de Profesores de Chile (Chilean Teachers' Union), the Asociación Chilena de Municipalidades (Chilean Association of Municipalities), and the Ministerio de Educación (Ministry of Education), which represented the Chilean Government. Since its initial implementation in 2003, thousands of teachers working in public schools throughout the country have been evaluated by this system, which establishes four different levels of performance: Outstanding, Competent, Basic, and Non-satisfactory (Flotts & Abarzua, 2011).

According to international evidence, the performance-based teacher evaluation approach allows for a combination of a formative or improvement-oriented evaluation purpose with an externally-driven accountability purpose (Darling-Hammond, Newton, & Chung Wei, 2013). In this way, evaluation provides information to teachers about teachers' practices, but also generates information that can be used to make decisions at school or district levels. In Chile, teachers who score as *competent* or *outstanding* can apply for economic benefits, bonuses, and opportunities to participate in professional development training, while teachers who score as *basic* or *non-satisfactory* may lose economic benefits or may be marginalized in the education system (after sequential failures). Furthermore, underperforming teachers are obligated to create plans to improve their performance (Bitar, 2011; Bonifaz, 2011; Santiago, Benavides, Danielson, Goe, & Nusche, 2013).

Regarding its formative purpose, the NTES' emphasis on defining and disseminating standards provides teachers the opportunity to understand the areas in which they will be evaluated, which facilitates self-reflection on their pedagogical practices (Coggshall &

Bassett, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Goe, 2007; Okhremtchouk, Newell, & Rebecca, 2013).

Also, the inclusion of different evaluation methods, such as observations and portfolios, allows teachers to show their professional competence in different ways, showing different aspects of their professional practice and increasing the potential to capture the complexity of the teaching-learning process (Flotts & Abarzua, 2011). Although these features of the performance-based evaluation are considered advantages of the model, some negative consequences of dissemination and standardization of criteria have been reported. These negative consequences include the excessive control that evaluation can exercise over teachers, reducing their pedagogical autonomy to make decisions regarding the content they teach, but also in relation to teaching strategies they use to achieve students' learning. In this sense, the standardization of teaching quality criteria becomes a mechanism that forces teachers to organize their practice based on these standards. Also, the excessive control over teachers has resulted in a systematic process of deprofessionalization (Ball, 2003, 2006, 2012; Hamilton, 2012; Hargreaves, 2002, 2003; R. M. Ingersoll & Perda, 2008; R. Ingersoll & Merrill, 2013; Jennings & Corcoran, 2012; Koretz, 2008; Vezub, 2007).

Some of the criticisms made above are consistent with the criticisms made about the impact of the NTES among Chilean teachers. Along with the criticism emanating from the Chilean Teachers Union, the criticisms made by Santiago, Benavides, Danielson, Goe, & Nusche (2013) in their *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Teacher Evaluation in Chile* have been particularly influential. This report warned about the emphasis of accountability over the formative purpose of NTES. Also, the report warns

about the danger of disconnecting the evaluation procedures from the reality of the classroom, the minimal place for teachers' own reflections, and the lack of participation of the school community, among many others. Given these, and other criticisms, various sectors of Chilean society, such as academia, NGOs, Teachers' Union, educational experts and policy decision makers, have insisted on changing the NTES to a model that effectively enhances the quality of Chilean teachers.

The arguments in favor of a change in NTES have been expressed in different settings (Universities, public debates, seminars, public media). I have grouped them in three clusters. A first set of arguments alludes to the low technical quality of the evaluation methods used in NTES (portfolio, structured interview conducted by a peer evaluator, performance appraisal questionnaires filled out by two supervisors, and a self-evaluation questionnaire). This argument is supported by recent research. For instance, according to Santiago, et al., (2013), NTES does not provide opportunities for teacher discussion and reflection in any of the evaluation instruments. Also, as Sun, Correa, Zapata, & Carrasco (2011) reported, the self-evaluation questionnaire is not really an instance to improve self-reflections about teacher practices.

A second set of arguments questions the effectiveness of NTES to meaningfully strengthen the quality of Chilean teachers. These criticisms are based on the low level of impact of NTES to improve the effectiveness of Chilean teachers. Although research results report that there is positive relationship between performance on the NTES and student scores on national standardized test (Taut, Santelices, & Manzi, 2011), educational results remain still low after 12 years of implementing NTES.

Finally, a third set of arguments alludes to the cumbersome implementation of NTES at all levels. Participating teachers constantly report that the construction of a teaching portfolio requires many hours of dedication and filming of a video is difficult to achieve in the context of their schools. At the system level, administrators criticized the excessive use of resources to evaluate teachers across the country (approximately ten thousand teachers in public schools every year). Implementing this massive evaluation requires the purchase and distribution of evaluation material, reviewing portfolios, and the training of teachers who participate as peer evaluators, among other activities.

While I agree with most of the arguments in favor of changing the current teacher evaluation system, in this paper I would like to propose a fourth argument in favor of moving to a different teacher evaluation system. This argument for change is based on the idea that the current teacher evaluation process is outdated because it was created in a particular political scenario in the Chilean history known as *Transición Democrática*² (Transition to Democracy). That transition was characterized by tension between democratic and technocratic political discourses. That tension was reproduced in every aspect of the educational reform regarding the improvement of the teaching workforce, and it generated contradictions in the ways that the teacher evaluation system was designed and implemented. Furthermore, I argue that the criticisms made of the NTES should not be understood as methodological flaws or errors in implementing the system, but rather they must be understood as expressions of the political tension dominating the educational agenda during that period. Finally, I argue that in the current historical-

² Transition to democracy was the period of political transition from a military regimen to a democratic government (1990-2006)

political scenario, we need to rethink a new teacher evaluation system for Chile, taking into account the lessons learned from these years implementing NTES.

This paper is divided into four sections. Section 1 describes the main features of the period of democratic transition. In section 2, I discuss how the characteristics of this period were reproduced in the current model of teacher evaluation, generating contradictions in the purpose of evaluation, the definition of teacher quality and participation during the evaluation process. In section 3, I briefly describe the current scenario and some of the conditions that could favor the creation of a new teacher evaluation system. Finally, in section 4, I reflect on the lessons learned after 12 years of implementation of NTES and I propose some principles that in my view should guide the design of a new teacher evaluation system for Chile.

Transition to democracy: the coexistence of two discourses

The period of democratic transition is vital to the recent history of Chile and to the construction of the current educational system. Initiated in the 1990's after a national plebiscite that ended 18 years of dictatorship, the transition to democracy represented the opportunity to rebuild a country politically divided by the military regime. Chile began that transition as the most unequal country in the world (OECD, 2011), with high rates of extreme poverty, irreconcilable political differences, and an outdated and heavily damaged educational system. Among the priorities of the period were to promote economic growth and internationalization, strengthen democracy and national reconciliation, and reduce extreme poverty by restoring social protection for the most vulnerable populations in the country. Rebuilding the educational system was also a priority; therefore, the government initiated an educational reform that affected the entire system and included: modifying the

curriculum, improving infrastructure and learning conditions, and strengthening the teaching profession, among other reforms (Arellano, 2001; Cox, Schiefelbein, Lemaitre, Hopenhayn, & Himmel, 1995; Donoso Diaz, 2004; UNESCO, 2004).

To achieve the objectives of the political transition, while maintaining social stability and political harmony, the government operated under a *consensus stand*, minimizing differences and promoting an *agreement policy* among different sectors of Chilean society. In the education field, the greatest expression of that consensus was the decision to maintain the neoliberal educational model implemented by the military regime (OECD, 2004; Picazo Verdejo, 2013). That model drove the creation of a voucher system, which increased competition among schools; and it handed the responsibility of school management from the state to private organizations and reduced the state's role in the supervision of the education system (Cornejo Chavez, 2006; Picazo Verdejo, 2013). According to Picazo Verdejo (2013), that decision created a tension between those who defended the role of the state in controlling the educational system as guarantor of the quality of education, and those who validated the neoliberal model of education with free competition and the autonomy of private institutions to advance the process of constructing and regulating their 'own' educational system. This tension not only represented two ways of managing the school system, but also represented two discourses (democratic and technocratic) and two different projects to achieve social and economic development (Dávila Avendaño, 2010). Each of these discourses influenced the design and implementation of the educational reform and their influence is still present today in the Chilean educational system.

A democratically oriented discourse concentrated on strengthening democracy and participation as a requirement to generate social and economic development. This discourse promoted the need to rethink the values reproduced inside the educational system. Needed were values that could help educate a new citizen to assume leadership in the social and cultural change that Chile needed to become a democratic nation (“Informe Primer Congreso Nacional de Educacion,” 1997). Under this logic, the beginning years of the educational reform aimed to increase the level of equity and strengthen the quality of the learning process of the more vulnerable sectors of Chilean society, including urban schools in areas with extreme poverty, rural schools, and schools with high concentrations of indigenous students (Cox, et al., 1995). In order to achieve that purpose, the government implemented a set of educational programs to improve equity and quality in Chilean education (MECE)³ oriented towards school curriculum reform, increased professional development, improvement of infrastructure to increase time for learning, better instructional materials and improved conditions for learning.

Along with these programs, the government initiated a reform to improve the teaching profession. Teachers were invited to regain their leadership in the teaching-learning process, but, they were also invited to be promoters of social change, as is stated in the Status of Professional Education) signed in 1991 (*Estatuto de los Profesionales de la Educacion*, 1991). Three issues were the focus of this document: first, the improvement of employment conditions and the remuneration of municipal teachers were required to optimize teachers’ work (OECD, 2004); second, the reinstatement of the autonomous nature of teaching was needed to allow teachers to manage their teaching and select

³ Original translation: Programa de Mejoramiento de la Calidad y Equidad en Educación (MECE)

appropriate textbooks and teaching materials; and third, the encouragement of teachers to build relationships and networks within the education community was also needed. Furthermore, due to the political role of teachers in the Chilean society, they were encouraged to participate in the process of planning school goals, proposing educational policies at different levels, and participating in collegiate organizations (*Estatuto de los Profesionales de la Educacion*, 1991).

On the other hand, a technocratic oriented discourse, inherited from the influence of Chilean economists trained in the Chicago School (popularly called *Chicago boys*), promoted the importance of advancing social development, while also strengthening the economic model, through the implementation of new public management strategies, under the principles of control and system effectiveness (Dávila Avendaño, 2010; Espinoza, 2014). The decision to improve learning outcomes involved the design of effective measurement systems to monitor students' learning progress. One of the factors that favored the consolidation of this discourse was Chile's interest in internationalization, which resulted in its early participation in international networks, and finally its incorporation as the first Latin American country to join the OECD later in 2010. Also, it is important to note that the educational reform was not funded by the Chilean government, but by international organizations including the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IBD), who, along with supporting the improvement of education, demanded the implementation of control measures to ensure proper use of financial resource as a requirement of the funding process. The incorporation of these international organizations, and later the OECD, in the process of the educational reform reinforced the need to establish regulatory mechanisms for measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of

two different levels of (a) educational input management and (b) learning outcome effectiveness. The impact of these agencies in the Latin American educational landscape has been well documented. In Chile, these organizations helped to consolidate the aspirations of modernization and economic development. Although these organizations maintained independence from the political processes of the country, the requirements of monetary loans favored the exercise of regulation and control, not only through financial resources, but also through human resources, with special emphasis on the control of teachers.

Contradictions in the Teacher Evaluation Model

As noted above, the democratic transition was stressed by two parallel and sometimes oppositional political discourses. These discourses influenced the way in which the education reform was designed and subsequently implemented and influenced the construction of the policy in regards to the strengthening of the teaching profession. In this section, I analyze how that tension was reproduced in the design and implementation of the teacher evaluation system in Chile. I analyze three key contradictions regarding the evaluation model: (1) the contradiction between a formative model versus an accountability centered model, (2) the contradiction in the definition of teacher quality as a function of teachers performances or as a function of teachers effectiveness focused on the achievement of learning outcomes, and (3) a contradiction between the effective participation versus symbolic participation of members of the school community during the evaluation process. Then these contradictions are analyzed below.

Accountability versus Formative Evaluation

As indicated in the introduction to this paper, the process of implementing the NTES meant a long process of negotiation between different sectors of Chilean society, including teachers, government officials and the Chilean Association of Municipalities, which is responsible for the administration of the public education system. One of the main agreements of this negotiation was the creation of a formative evaluation system (Avalos & Assael, 2006; Bonifaz, 2011; OECD, 2013; Peterson, 2000; Stronge & Tucker, 2003), as it is stated in the final report of the tripartite committee in charge of designing NTES:

This evaluation aims at sustained development and strengthening of the teaching profession, specifically professional performance, enhancing learning processes of teachers by recognizing their strengths and improving their weaknesses, in order to promote better learning of children and young people. In this sense, the evaluation system is fundamentally formative (“Informe Final Comision Tecnica tripartita. Evaluacion del Desempeño Profesional Docente,” 2003).

Teachers were in favor of creating a formative system that allowed them to reflect on their teaching practices. In fact, they argued that a non-formative purpose could “result in severe resistance and constitute a new and serious obstacle in a story of rejection and distrust of teacher evaluation” (“Criterios Fundantes de un sistema de Evaluacion de Profesionales de la Educacion,” 2000; p. 59). Contrary to what is commonly thought, teachers were active promoters of an evaluation process that could enhance their professional status, increase their commitment to education, and allow them to work as key actors in the system (“Informe Primer Congreso Nacional de Educacion,” 1997; p. 18). Policy makers, who favored the

protective role of the Chilean State over teachers, as a way to compensate for the legacy of abuse by the regime, supported this position⁴.

Following international guidance (Avalos & Assael, 2006; Avalos, 2004; Bonifaz, 2011) in order to ensure the beneficial learning of teachers during the evaluation process, NTES incorporated as a main evaluation method the portfolio in which teachers could demonstrate their performance through building pedagogical evidence. Also, NTES incorporated a self-evaluation questionnaire to give teachers the opportunity to reflect on their work.

Despite the emphasis given to the formative purpose of NTES, the proposed teacher evaluation also incorporated some features of a teacher evaluation model for accountability. In this part of the NTES, teachers' performances were associated with high stake consequences, such as *Asignación por Desempeño Individual* (Individual Performance Allowance), professional development opportunities (internships abroad, participation in seminars), but also *Planes de Superación Profesional* (Professional Improvement Plans) for teachers who obtained low performance in the evaluation. In addition, the NTES stipulated that teachers with low results in consecutive years should be excluded/removed from the public education system (Bonifaz, 2011). This definition of teacher evaluation with mixed purpose initially appeared to meet the demands of the union of teachers, and also the demands of the 'technocratic' sector, which emphasized the implementation of public management logic based on control and efficiency as a condition for improving the quality of teachers' workforce. This logic would force teachers to take

⁴ The regime had left teachers with precarious working conditions and the redefinition of teachers' professional status to a mechanistic role in the implementation of an autocratic educational model.

responsibility for their own results (Cox y González, 1997), but relegating the formative value of NTES to a lower target in the evaluation process.

Teacher Quality versus Teacher Effectiveness

As I have explained in this paper, schoolteachers had an important role in the consolidation of the democratic transition during the democratic restoration process in Chile. Teachers were invited to lead the process of democratic construction, which required them to first improve the education of children and youth in the country. Within this logic, qualified teachers should not only being able to teach the subjects in the curriculum, but also convey a strong moral and value-based commitment to the democratic project of the country. In addition, leadership and entrepreneurship were also supposed to be encouraged in order to achieve international standards of social and economic development. This discourse was promoting the development of teacher' leadership skills of critical reflection on their practice, and especially autonomy for making pedagogical decisions.

At the same time, a good teacher was encouraged to participate in the reconstruction of educational communities, implying enhanced social relations within the school, both among teachers themselves as well as with parents and guardians, and social organizations in the community surrounding the school. In addition, given the high levels of inequality of Chilean society, teachers should also be aware of these differences and generate all the necessary adjustments to adapt their teaching to the educational needs of different local contexts in which they worked and especially, suitable to the characteristics and peculiarities of each student.

Some of these teacher characteristics were portrayed in the Marco para la Buena Enseñanza (Framework for Good Teaching, FGT) (Ministry of Education, Chile, 2008), a regulatory document containing the evaluation criteria defined during the process of negotiation of the tripartite commission and approved by teachers through a massive consultation. For example, the FGT stated that teachers must create an environment dominated by values such as acceptance, equality, trust, solidarity and respect (B1); teachers must reflect systematically about their teaching skills (D1); and teachers must manage updated information relevant to the teaching profession, the educational system and current policies (D5)(MINEDUC, n.d.).

While the political discourse enhanced the role of the teacher in strengthening democracy in the country and emphasized the education of democratic values as a priority of the Chilean education system, the technocratic discourse emphasized the importance of increasing learning outcomes as the means to reach social and economic development. This discourse was reinforced by Chilean aspirations of becoming a competitive country. The emphasis on the effectiveness of learning outcomes was reflected in the decision to associate the performance of teachers with merit pay programs, which basically consisted of granting economic benefits to teachers who reached high scores in national and international standardized tests. The decision changed the conception of teaching quality from quality based on personal and professional characteristics towards quality as a function of learning outcomes (effectiveness). This change had a significant impact on teachers' professional practice and on the way teachers perceived the usefulness of NTES.

The teachers directed their activity to those areas of professional practice that favored increased learning achievement of students, leaving in the background areas

associated with the comprehensive education (value-based) of students. In order to achieve this, teachers have been systematically forced/pressured to emphasize subject areas that are measured through standardized tests, while those subjects not tested have been reduced or eliminated from the curriculum. In addition, the pedagogical practices of teachers were modified to encourage students to learn skills that were tested. For example, teaching strategies for group work were reduced systematically, so that collaboration between students, and between teachers with other teachers lost ground within the school context.

Effective participation versus symbolic participation

Finally, this tension between a democratic and technocratic discourse influenced the areas of participation of various actors in the evaluation process. For example, participation was one of the founding principles proposed by the Chilean Teachers Union and approved by the tripartite committee created to design NTES. Two dimensions reflected the emphasis on participation. First was the implementation of an evaluation system that incorporated national, regional and local offices responsible for overseeing the evaluation process. These offices were located in every region in Chile in order to adapt the evaluation to the particularities of each region (“Informe Final Comision Tecnica tripartita. Evaluacion del Desempeño Profesional Docente,” 2003). These adaptations to NTES at a regional level allowed teachers to show the diversity of cultural contexts where they worked, for example, teachers working in indigenous schools in La Araucania, teachers working in rural schools in the desert, or in Patagonia. Moreover, this participation meant recognizing the diversity of educational contexts throughout Chile, and therefore the importance of adapting teaching practices to that diversity.

Another aspect of the evaluation was the inclusion of various stakeholders in the process. This participation emphasized the importance of involving the school community in a deep discussion on teacher quality, fostering community engagement in improving student learning. In order to ensure effective participation, NTES incorporated two evaluation methods. The first was a structured interview conducted by a peer evaluator, the main purpose of which was to facilitate discussion and collaborative learning among teachers. Peer evaluators should be teachers of the same region and teach the same discipline and the same grade as the evaluated teacher. The second method was a performance appraisal questionnaire filled out by two supervisors, the main purpose of which was to collect information regarding teachers' behaviors inside and outside classroom from the perspective of the school principal and the head of the Unidad Técnico Pedagógica (Pedagogical Technical Unit). In addition, this document allowed collecting contextual information regarding teachers' performances.

These methods were intended to democratize the process and give voice to the regions. However, due to the emphasis on using evaluation results for accountability purposes, in practice, the participation of regions and municipalities was reduced to small administrative tasks, such as distributing evaluation materials among schools. The emphasis on comparison and analysis made it difficult to have collaborative and reflective processes during the evaluation. School administrators' and peers' involvement was limited to completing surveys and questionnaires, while the analysis of the collected data -- including surveys, portfolio analysis and video -- remained in the hands of specialized units at the national levels.

Current scenario: Same discourses, different mindset

As I stated in the introduction of this paper, the criticisms made about NTES not only represent the shortcomings in the process of implementation, but are also expressions of the contradictions two political discourses. After 12 years of implementation, criticisms of the evaluation system have been strong and there have been increasing pressures from various sectors for a change in the model. In fact, from the social movement to the 2015 public education teacher strike, teacher evaluation has been installed as a critical node in the relationship between teachers and the Ministry of Education. After a long period of negotiation (June- Oct 2015) teachers throughout the country have participated in 'demonstration acts' to demand a new teacher professional development policy, where the modification of the current evaluation system is a priority. According to teachers, a new policy would require a new evaluation that eliminates the punitive nature of the current system (Chilean Teachers Union, 2015). On the other hand, the Ministry of Education in Chile has proposed a Sistema de Reconocimiento del Desarrollo Profesional (System to Recognize Professional Development) that includes the implementation of different tests to measure teachers' knowledge in the discipline they teach, as well as the implementation of a new teacher portfolio as evidence of their teaching practices (Ministerio de Educacion, 2015).

Beyond the agreements and disagreements among these actors, the current Chilean context is conducive to the creation of a new evaluation model that would meet the requirements initially recommended about teacher evaluation: on the one hand, to strengthen the development of teachers and help improve teacher quality, but also to

provide valuable information for making individual and collective decisions that strengthen the pedagogical management of schools.

Three aspects of the current Chilean scenario are conducive to the development of a new model of teacher evaluation. First, there is now greater democratic awareness in Chile, which results in the generation of various opportunities for participation in society. Citizenship generates and requires greater opportunities for participation in decisions on education. Furthermore, the networks of citizen organizations have rearticulated fundamental rights, including the right to quality education.

Second, the working conditions of teachers have improved, and educational policies aimed at strengthening the teaching profession are articulated at different levels, including initial teacher training, professional development, and career teaching. Beyond the political agreements and disagreements generated in the recent elaboration of the Proyecto de Ley sobre Carrera Profesional Docente (Ministerio de Educacion, 2015), the design of this law is a sign of the importance attached to improving the quality of teaching in Chile and the awareness of all educational stakeholders of the critical role of teachers in improving the quality of education in the country.

Third, there is now a culture of teacher evaluation installed in the school community revealing the importance of teacher evaluation, which is expressed in the creation of institutions such as the Agencia de la Calidad de la Educación (Agency for the Quality of Education). In fact, this aspect has been recognized by the OECD in its report on teacher evaluation in Chile. According to this organization, this agency is fundamental in building a framework for evaluation and measurement that meets the measurement of achievement of student learning, teacher evaluation, evaluation of school leadership, evaluating schools

and the evaluation of the overall education system (Santiago et al., 2013). At the same time, they point out “the full potential of evaluation and measurement will not be fully appreciated until this framework is fully integrated and is perceived as an entity, which means achieving the necessary coordination among the various components of the evaluation” (p. 75).

While the scenario is favorable, there are some risks that must be considered. First, the distinction between measurement and evaluation has not been sufficiently examined within the teacher evaluation system (Santiago et al., 2013). Second, over-measurement and evaluation are risks, despite the intention of articulating measurement systems and evaluation. Third, the issue of limited use of evaluation is also a problem that can affect the credibility of the system and motivation of teachers for participating in this.

Despite these risks, this context is favorable for the creation of a new teacher evaluation system that effectively contributes to improving teaching quality of Chilean teachers. Taking into consideration the experience of these years of evaluation using NTES I next present some *lessons learned* that I believe should guide the creation of this new teacher evaluation model for Chile.

Lessons for a New Teacher Evaluation System for Chile

In this last section, I reflect on some lesson learned that, in my opinion, should become guiding principles for rethinking a new system of teacher evaluation. These guiding principles are explained below.

Principle 1. Teacher Evaluation as a Context-Dependent Process

A first principle is that teacher evaluations must be embedded within the organizational learning processes carried out by the school. The evaluation should not be

understood as a separate process and isolated from the classroom and the internal dynamics of the school, but as an integral part of the many social processes that occur at school. To do so, the evaluation must be developed within a supportive school climate, where the management team is supportive and participates in the evaluation guiding the teacher during evaluation processes (Davis, Ellet, & Annunziata, 2003; Delvaux et al., 2013). According to Davis et al., (2003), teacher evaluation has little meaning unless it is supported by school principals. In fact, lack of preparation and knowledge by principals is one of the main problems behind the limited use of evaluation results (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Principle 2. Teacher Evaluation as a Democratic Process

This learning process involves recognizing that the assessment must represent the needs and demands of various educational actors. The idea of teaching quality has different meanings, for this reason, a teacher evaluation model should be created using different perspectives. For example, from the perspective of the education system, teaching quality is associated with effectiveness, while from the school community's point of view; teaching quality is also associated with the formation of values and emotional development of students. Expanding the conception of teaching quality in a teacher evaluation model does not mean giving less attention to the achievement of learning outcomes, but seeks the inclusion of multiple perspectives present in school communities. For this to be possible, the evaluation should have a place for effective participation of different educational actors. Also, in the same evaluation process, the procedures must also represent those values. Finally, the teacher evaluation is itself a process of individual and collective reflection. Although teacher evaluation systems have emphasized the importance of reflection to

improve the practice of teaching, the truth is that the systems of traditional evaluation processes have failed to establish structured reflection (Jay & Johnson, 2002) where teachers have the opportunity (individual and collective) to identify questions that emerge as significant in the evaluation process, and analyze these personally and with other members of the school community (Jay & Johnson, 2002). An intentional reflection requires questioning the reality, comparing and establishing a dialogue that promotes greater understanding of the reality of teaching; and also it involves developing a 'critical attitude' about professional actions.

Principle 3. Teacher Evaluation as a Learning Process

We know that one of the main purposes of teacher evaluation is to provide information to help teachers to improve their teaching practice. This emphasis on the educational purpose of teacher evaluation is widely shared by international and national organizations in charge of generating evaluation processes. However, the educational potential of teacher evaluation has been questioned (Delvaux, et al., 2013). Some authors suggest the need to distinguish (when talking about evaluation) among professional growth and career development. These concepts are traditionally used interchangeably, but they have different implications for the evaluation process. Clarke & Hollingsworth (2002) define professional growth as a process of continuous and inevitable learning. This learning involves a planned and organized process where teachers are committed to a process of continuous and intentional learning about their own teaching practices. This is a collaborative learning and immersed in the daily work of teachers (Coggshall, 2012). Moreover, professional development is defined as a set of activities offered externally to promote teachers' learning.

Professional development involves the participation of teachers in activities outside their work to obtain qualifications (content management and skills development) that will help improve their teaching practice. This professional development does not necessarily take into consideration the characteristics and learning needs of teachers. Actually, teacher professional development may or may not help strengthen teachers' learning. This distinction between professional growth and professional development is essential for understanding the formative potential of teacher evaluation. Teacher evaluation is not per se a tool for strengthening the professional learning of teachers (Goe, Biggers, & Croft, 2012).

Teacher evaluation can effectively provide professional learning opportunities, but by itself, it does not necessarily change teachers' practices. In order for teacher evaluation to promote learning effectively, certain conditions must be given. There must be trust in the evaluation process. This involves knowing the evaluation process, but also giving legitimacy to the results (Goe, et al, 2012; Delvaux, et al, 2013). For this to happen, teachers must perceive that the assessment itself effectively provides inputs to improve their professional performance.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to contribute to this discussion about teacher evaluation in Chile from two different perspectives. First, I explored retrospectively the scenario wherein the NTES was designed, focusing on some contradictions in its purpose, the definition of teaching quality, and the participation in the evaluation process. Second, I reflected on the current scenario and the conditions that could potentially favor the implementation of a new teacher evaluation system. Finally, in the last section, I

highlighted some lessons learned that should guide the design of a new teacher evaluation model in Chile to respond effectively to the needs and demands of today's educational system.

To conclude this paper, I would stress three ideas that seem relevant to this text and I believe should be the axes of future work in this area. First is the idea that teacher evaluation is a social and political process taking place in a particular context, in this case, Chile. This recognition of teacher evaluation as a political-educational process involves assuming that beyond the methodological challenges of designing a model of teacher evaluation, there are some political challenges that cannot be neglected by policy makers. A first challenge is to assess, what are the characteristics of teachers that as a society we want to strengthen through teacher evaluation and what are the values of our society to be reproduced through it? The answer to these questions involves reviewing current educational discourses that influence the current educational scene and make explicit the principles that each installed on education policy. Second is the idea of participation as a central focus of the design process and implementation of teacher evaluation. Effective participation in teacher evaluation (as in other educational processes) can only be achieved if it is understood as a right, which in Chile is a challenge to be accomplished slowly. In this sense, understanding the teacher evaluation as a political process re-defines participation not only as an opportunity to engage in a particular educational process, but also as a right and a civic duty. Participation promotes the representation of the various sectors of Chilean society and also redistributes the power of educational decision-making.

Finally, third is the idea that evaluation is overall a process of learning. Teacher evaluation should be a learning opportunity for teachers, but also for educational

communities and society as a whole. In this regard, feedback processes should be maximized, whereas control procedures should be minimized. While control is important, the emphasis of the evaluation system must be in providing opportunities for reflection and action, of change and evolution both of the people involved in the evaluation, as well as the institutions involved, the school and the entire educational community.

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PAPER 2
BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: TEACHER QUALITY IN LA ARAUCANIA, SOUTHERN CHILE

Currently, there is no doubt about the impact that teachers have on improving educational quality (Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs, & Robinson, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 1999; OECD, 2009; Peterson, 2000). Students who have good teachers are at a comparative advantage compared to students who do not. In fact, teacher quality is the most important in-school factor in improving student learning outcomes. According to Hanushek (1992) the difference between effective and non-effective teachers equals almost a year in student learning. Also, the effects of effective teachers are additive and cumulative, which means that early access to a ‘poorly qualified teacher’ has repercussions for students beyond the school year. It can affect their learning potential in subsequent years (Sanders & Horn, 1998; Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

In order to improve the quality of teachers, researchers, educational experts and policy makers have traditionally focused on defining the criteria that best represent teacher quality. Depending on the nature of these criteria (for example, criteria based on performance, psychological attributes, or certification) different evaluation methods have been put in place in order to differentiate a qualified from an unqualified teacher (Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008; Goe, 2007; Howard & Gullickson, 2010; Howard et al., 2013; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2013; Kennedy, 2008).

In the US and the UK, for example, between 1940 - 1960, psychological attributes and personality traits were used as proxies of teacher quality (Campbell et al., 2003). A large number of attributes were analyzed experimentally or through self-reports (Barr, 1960; Tyler, 1960). In fact in the 1960s, the “New School Review” published a paper analyzing the relationship between teachers’ personalities and teacher effectiveness. In

that report, Getzels & Jackson (1960) described the lack of agreement on adequate criteria of good teaching and also the difficulties in defending proper methods to measure them. Later in the 1980's with the influence of behaviorism in education, researchers focused on determining the relation between teachers' behaviors and students' outcomes, as well as the relationship of cognitive and emotional skills to teacher effectiveness.

Currently, three approaches to understanding teacher quality dominate the educational arena (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Goe et al., 2008). Each emphasizes different dimensions of teachers' work and represents different conceptions of teaching as a social and cultural activity. The first approach, teachers' qualification-based model, focuses on teachers' personal and professional characteristics -- including teachers' credentials and certifications -- as means to determine teacher quality. This approach also focuses on attitudes and attributes that teachers bring with them when they enter the classroom (Goe et al., 2008). This approach has gained support in recent years. The U.S. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, for example, states that a highly qualified teacher "has obtained full State certification or passed the State teacher licensing examination, and holds a license to teach in such State" (Title IX, Part A, Section 9101, U.S. Department of Education, 2001). From this approach, teachers' characteristics and credentials, or teacher inputs, are assumed to be directly related to students' learning. These inputs include pre-service records, teachers' certification or credentials from professional development activities (Goe et al., 2008), and teachers' experiences, among others.

The second approach--performance based evaluation--focuses on identifying practices that teachers employ to accomplish specific teaching tasks. It assumes that teachers' actions in the classroom have a direct impact on student learning (Cantrell, Kane,

Staiger, & Fullerton, 2008; Coggshall & Bassett, 2008; Coggshall, 2012; Darling-hammond, Newton, & Chung Wei, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Goe, Biggers, & Croft, 2012; Hamilton et al., 2007; Howard & Gullickson, 2010; Howard, et al., 2013). This model involves establishing behaviors and professional skills that distinguish an effective teacher from one who is not. These behaviors and skills are operationalized in a set of criteria. The *Framework for Teaching* (Danielson, 2013) is an example of this approach. Created in the USA, but adapted in many countries (OECD, 2009; Santiago, Benavides, Danielson, Goe, & Nusche, 2013), this framework identifies a set of 23 criteria defining “what teachers should know and be able to do in the exercise of their profession”(Danielson, 1996, p. 3). These criteria are grouped into four domains: Planning and Preparation, The Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities.

Finally, the third approach, the value-added approach, is increasingly a major method for evaluating teacher quality. According to Fuhrman (1999) this accountability process is based on the idea that students should reach academic standards measured by standardized tests. The results of standardized test can be used to make decisions about school performance and especially about teachers. The term “value added models” refers “to the variety of sophisticated statistical techniques that use one or more years of prior student test scores, as well as other data, to adjust for preexisting differences among students when calculating [teacher] contributions to students test performance” (National Research Council and the National Academy of Education, 2010; p. 1). From this perspective, teacher quality is established as a function of teachers’ level of productivity defined as student achievement on standardized tests (Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs, & Robinson, 2003; Goe, 2007; Lewis & Young, 2013).

These three models of teaching quality are all based on the assumption that the determination of quality criteria increases transparency and credibility of the evaluation process. Therefore, identifying quality criteria is associated with the aspiration to build an objective and rigorous assessment, through the determination of observable, measurable, and comparable criteria.

In spite of this dominant stance in the teacher evaluation field, dissenting voices have recently called attention to the need to rethink teacher quality – not just as a set of criteria externally defined (by policymakers and educational researchers) but defined based on the voices, experiences and practical knowledge of teachers. This criticism has conceptual grounding in the distinction proposed by Stake and Schwandt (2006) on quality-as-measured and quality-as-experienced.

According to these authors, quality-as-measured involves determining criteria and standards, comparing the object with the standards, and finally summarizing the results in a judgment of value (Shadish, Cook, & Leviton, 1991).

From this perspective, quality-as-measured arises from a criterial thinking process in which the researchers rationally determine those aspects that will be considered as 'descriptors' of quality. Julnes (2012) proposes two methods of selecting criteria. The first is prescriptive, in which the selection criteria are determined by prescriptive values related to an ideal, a set of rules or standards. The second method is to select descriptive criteria, and to define criteria as a function of values expressed by stakeholders participating in the evaluation process. The second view, quality-as-experienced emphasizes the holistic and episodic nature of quality, and focus on “the subjective and inter- subjective meanings” people attach to their experiences in a given time and place (Stake and Schwandt, 2006).

According to Stake (2004), evaluation approaches that aim to understand quality holistically “have in common a high concern for understanding the nature of the evaluand and the context in which it exists, such as the historical, economic, political, aesthetic, sociological and cultural contexts” (p. 39). Moreover, Stake and Schwandt (2006) situate the importance of practical knowledge as an informational source for discerning quality. This practical knowledge is a characteristic of professional work that is not necessarily articulated. It allows quality judgments to be made regarding the everyday lives of professional workers such as nurses and teachers.

Rationale for this paper

This paper seeks to explore the level of alignment or misalignment between two ways of conceptualizing the quality of teaching in Chile. The first way is from the normative discourse proposed by the Ministry of Education of Chile, through the Marco para la Buena Enseñanza (Framework for Good Teaching). The second way is from the voices of teachers who have worked in La Araucanía, Southern Chile. Using photo elicitation as method of data collection, I explored the meanings teachers attribute to the concept of teacher quality, based on their practical experiences and knowledge.

Framework for Good Teaching

The Framework for Good Teaching was adapted in Chile from the Framework for Teaching created by Charlotte Danielson in the US (Danielson, 1996). While the Framework for Good Teaching (FGT) does not offer an explicit definition of what it means to be a good teacher it does specify the behaviors and skills teachers should develop in order to improve their pedagogical practices. Following Danielson’s Framework. These behaviors and skills are organized in four domains containing each a set of criteria. These dimensions are

described in Table 1.

During the last decades, this Framework has influenced the design of policies related to teachers and teaching. In fact, this framework is the basis for the Sistema Nacional de Evaluación del Desempeño Docente (National Teacher Evaluation System- NTES) (Bonifaz, 2011; Flotts & Abarzua, 2011; Santiago et al., 2013), but also influences the processes of initial teacher training and teachers' professional progression.

Teacher Quality in Southern Chile

In order to explore the concept of teacher quality as experienced by teachers, I conducted a study with teachers working in public schools of La Araucania, Chile. Using photo elicitation as data collection method, they answered the question: *What does teaching quality mean for you?* I analyzed teachers' responses identifying seven primary categories of teacher quality. In addition I analyzed the level of alignment or misalignment between teachers' understanding of quality and the quality criteria defined by the FGT. In the next section, I will introduce the methods I used in the study of teachers quality in La Araucania, including information regarding research purposes, participants, data collection methods and data analysis.

Methods

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' understanding of the concept of teacher quality, to analyze how teachers' meanings align (or misalign) with the criteria of teacher quality defined in the Marco para la Buena Enseñanza (Framework for Good Teaching- FGT)(Ministry of Education, Chile, 2008).

Three questions guided this study:

1. What does teacher quality mean for the teachers of La Araucania who participated in this study?
2. In what ways are teachers' understandings of teacher quality aligned with the criteria of FGT?
3. In what ways are teachers' understandings of teacher quality misaligned with the criteria of FGT?

Participants

Data were collected between September and November 2014 in the region of La Araucania in the South of Chile. I invited teachers working in public schools in both rural and urban areas as a way to include the cultural and geographic diversity of La Araucania⁵. In order to be eligible to participate in this study, teachers had to meet three initial criteria: (1) be teaching in educational institutions located La Araucania at the time that the study took place, (2) have at least one year of teaching experience, and (3) agree to participate voluntarily in the study. To recruit participants, I contacted a teacher-training program at the local university and also the Department of Education, the state office responsible for supervising the work of teachers working in public schools in the region. Participants were initially contacted via email. Teachers who showed an interest in participating in the study received a personal letter with detailed information about the research team, research purpose and procedures.

⁵ Note on Diversity: The region of Araucania is located in the center-south of the country, where two cultures coexist: the Chilean culture (heritage of European colonization, mainly Spanish colonization) and Mapuche indigenous culture (24% of the population of the region belongs to the group ethnic Mapuche). In addition, La Araucania has great geographic diversity (a mountainous area, a maritime area and a valley). This cultural and geographical diversity is expressed in the way the education system in the region is organized and also, it has implications for the way in which teaching and learning processes are developed.

In the end, from a total of twenty teachers who indicated some interest in the study, thirteen accepted my invitation to participate. The selection of teachers represented the diversity in the regional schools: five elementary school teachers and eight from high school. Eight teachers worked in schools located in the regional capital, Temuco, three teachers worked in urban medium-sized cities, and one teacher worked in a small town located in a rural area. Twelve teachers worked in public schools in the region of Araucania. One of the teachers worked in a private school serving mainly students from an indigenous community located near Temuco. Even though she taught in a private school, I decided to include her because of her experience as a teacher in this particular context. All teachers expressed their willingness to be part of this research and signed the consent documents.

Data Collection Method

I used photo elicitation as data collection method. Photo elicitation involves using visual material (photographs) to invoke responses during the course of an interview (Bell, 2010; Collier, 1957; Harper, 2002, 2005; Hurworth, 2003; Lapenta, 2004; Rose, 2012; Vila, 2013; Wang & Burris, 1997). I implemented a variant of traditional photo elicitation known as auto driving. Through auto driving, participants are invited to take their own pictures, which are then reviewed by the researcher who selects particular ones for a follow-up interview (Heisley & Levy, 1991; Hurworth, 2003; Shell, 2014).

To start this process, I gave each participant a disposable camera with a maximum of 25 pictures. The full process of the data collection included an initial meeting, a period of taking pictures, and a final interview. The initial meeting lasted 25-40 minutes and took place in a location defined by the participants. During that meeting I provided detailed

information to participants about the research purpose and procedures, including a description of tasks and estimated time that each teacher should spend on them. Oral and written instructions were provided. Here is an excerpt of instructions:

The concept of teacher quality is currently a hot topic in Chile... This research aims to explore the meaning of teacher quality from the perspective of the teachers who work daily in schools in La Araucanía. I invite you to tell me (in 25 pictures) what teacher quality means to you. You can take pictures of your everyday life at school or outside school that you think may help you to represent your idea of teacher quality, including images of objects, places, and activities that best represent your understanding of teacher quality. Considering that the work of teachers not only happens in the classroom, but also elsewhere, do not forget to have your camera with you during the coming weeks. You can take pictures of any aspect of your teaching work that represents the concept of teacher quality. The only restriction is that you cannot take pictures in which people can be recognized. This is an ethical regulation. Please do not take photographs where people and especially children can be identified (researcher journal).

I provided information regarding the ethical requirements of using pictures as part of the research process. I also gave a “Guide to the ethical and technical aspects of the research using photo elicitation.” I wrote this guide following IRB guidelines, specifically because maintaining privacy and confidentiality of participant data is a challenge in research using visual methods (Crow & Wiles, 2008; Lapenta, 2011; Wiles, Clark, & Prosser, 2013)

Participants had two weeks to take pictures. Throughout this time, I maintained telephone and email contact with them to check their progress, answer questions, and so forth. Ten of thirteen teachers requested an extension of the deadline to complete their task. I redefined an individual deadline with each of them according their agendas. After developing the pictures, a second meeting was held to conduct the interview. Each interview lasted between 50-100 minutes and it was recorded in mp3 format and stored on my computer.

The interview was divided in two different processes. First, each picture was described following a predefined guide with four main questions: (1) Where was this photograph taken? (2) When was this photograph taken? (3) What motivated you to take this photograph? and (4) What does this picture represent to you? In some cases, participants did not recall the reason why they took the picture so those pictures were not included in the analysis. In addition, duplicated pictures or pictures taken by mistake were also excluded from the analysis. Second, I asked teachers to select between 7-10 pictures. Using those pictures I conducted an in- depth interview to revisit teachers' motivations for taking each picture and their meanings.

Data Analysis

Each of the pictures was digitized and coded for identification purpose. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. Subsequently, using an Excel sheet, each picture was paired with the description teachers provided during their interviews. For the data analysis, I defined a unit of analysis (item) as an excerpt of the interview where the participant explicitly described the concept she/he meant to represent in each picture and its relationship to the concept of teacher quality (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Schilling, 2006). Here an example of an item (Figure 1)

This analysis included 261 items from 232 photographs (29 of these photographs were doubly coded because they contained double meaning).

For the first phase of analysis I performed a thematic analysis to address the meaning of teacher quality from the perspective of teachers in La Araucania (research question #1). To conduct this analysis, I reduced the raw data by condensing teachers' description of each picture into a sentence that captured its meaning and I assigned a first

level code. Then, I grouped items into preliminary categories (Shilling, 2006). Also, I did a second level coding that allowed me to define subcategories. The analysis was conducted iteratively using a method of comparing and contrasting codes. This method facilitated the organization of items according to their level of similarity or difference, maintaining the criteria of homogeneity and mutual exclusion that characterizes thematic analysis. Once items were organized in subcategories, I wrote an initial description of subcategories in order to facilitate the process of recoding. Subsequently, the raw items were read and recoded using defined categories and subcategories. I revisited and modified the code and reorganized the categories at different stages of the analysis. In addition, I quantified the frequency of occurrence of each category. This quantification process offered the possibility of knowing the frequency of occurrence of each of the emerging categories and to get some response patterns contributing to enhancing analytical honesty during the analysis process (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013).

The second phase of analysis addressed the level of alignment (or misalignment) between teachers' conceptions of teacher quality and the definition of teacher quality as portrayed in the FGT (questions #2 and #3). To determine the level of alignment (or misalignment) between teachers' understanding of quality and the conceptualization of quality defined in the FGT criteria, I compared each of the 261 items with a correspondent criterion from the FGT framework. This alignment was defined by the semantic similarity between the meaning conveyed by the teacher in each item and the content of the criteria of FGT. An example of this analysis is presented in Figure 2.

Results

I analyzed the meanings that teachers attributed to the concept of teacher quality and analyzed how teachers' meanings align (or misalign) with the criteria of teacher quality defined in the Marco para la Buena Enseñanza (Framework for Good Teaching-FGT). I organized the results into three sections corresponding to one of the three guiding questions.

What does teacher quality mean for the teachers of La Araucania who participated in this study?

The thematic analysis yielded seven categories representing different facets of teachers' work they perceived as central to the meaning of teacher quality. In Table 2, I present a description of each category, including the frequency of items and sample quotes from teachers' interviews. At the same time, I present a breakdown of subcategories that rose in each of the macro categories (Figure 3). From the analysis of the categories of teaching quality raised from the answers of the participants, three aspects of these results seem important to highlight.

First, teachers understand the concept of teaching quality from a holistic perspective, integrating dimensions of both models: the teachers' qualification model and the performance based model. In fact, the criteria relating to performance, such as classroom preparation and instructional activities in the classroom, appear as central to their definition of teaching quality. Furthermore, 37% of all items (97/261) referred to aspects related to the teaching-learning process (Category 1: teaching-learning process).

One of the surprising findings is that teachers made little mention of the effectiveness in achieving learning outcomes (associated with disciplinary contents measured through standardized national/international tests) as part of the concept of teacher quality (results based model). In fact, teachers emphasize the centrality of learning achievement, but do not associate it with disciplinary contents (math, reading comprehension, etc.), but rather associate it with the moral and value-based education of students. Thirteen percent of the items were related to the formation of values, civic education, and other areas of the personal development of students.

Second, personal values were central to the concept of teacher quality. These values were expressed in the commitment of teachers to fulfill their task of educating students. The motivation for teaching was part of this dimension, but this feature is also linked with the sense of social responsibility of teachers, sacrifice and dedication (a dimension of teachers' personal commitment).

Moreover, the results showed the centrality of the concept of teaching quality, the characteristics of flexibility and adaptability to the school context (21% of the items). These features, plus the professional reflection demonstrate that the ability of teachers to make instructional decisions is necessary to adjust and modify their practices to the context in which they work and especially to the characteristics of their students. Also, it is surprising that teachers make little reference to professional features such as professional experience, results on tests to measure competence and pedagogical discipline knowledge, and type of initial education they have, among other features. These results show that teachers do not give centrality to professional features associated with disciplinary skills or teachers' cognitive abilities.

Third, teachers' abilities to generate links with other actors in the education system are a central dimension in the concept of teaching quality (14% of the items). This reflects the importance given by teachers to the community in which they work and professional networks that they are able to build inside the school and outside too.

In what ways are teachers' understandings of teacher quality aligned with the criteria of FGT?

In order to conduct this analysis, I compared each item to the 20 criteria identified in the FGT and I analyzed the level of correspondence between them.

Out of a total of 261 items analyzed, 138 items had some level of correspondence with any of the criteria of FGT (Table 3). The dimension that brings together the largest number of items (53/138) is the dimension of *Teaching to Promote Learning for all students*. This category refers to the actions taken by the teacher in the classroom to ensure student learning. The focus of this dimension is the process of structuring the class, with emphasis on communication objectives, and developing meaningful teaching strategies and evaluation. Two of the criteria of this dimension 'Design challenging and consistent teaching strategies that are relevant for the students' (C2) and 'Evaluate and monitor the process of understanding and the appropriation of content by the students' (C6) displayed the highest correspondence with the empirically-derived items.

This result is not surprising and reveals the centrality that teachers give to the use of effective teaching strategies learning at the heart of the concept of teaching quality. Another dimension of FGT that has correspondence with the items analyzed is *Teaching Preparation*. This dimension emphasizes the importance of understanding the sociocultural characteristics of students when planning lessons. As in the previous result, this result

indicates the importance of giving teachers the ability to adapt to the context of school, more flexible teaching practice based on the characteristics of students. In the case of the Region of La Araucania, recognition of the characteristics of students in educational planning it is significant because of the cultural diversity of the region. Another criterion in correspondence with the FGT is the criterion D2 (Build a professional and team relationship With his/her peers), which corresponds to the dimension *Professional Responsibilities*.

In what ways are teachers' understandings of teacher quality aligned (or misaligned) with the criteria of FGT?

For this analysis, I determined the overall frequency of the items in each of the categories and subcategories and quantified the degree to which these items were included or excluded from the criteria of the FGT.

Out of a total of 261 items analyzed, 123 items did not have any level of correspondence with any of the criteria of FGT. As reported in Table 4, the seven categories raised in the thematic analysis were represented in the FGT in three different levels:

Categories with high level of representation

At this level are the categories where more than 70% of the items were contained in the FGT. Two categories were placed in this level. First, Teaching-Learning Process (89/97 items had correspondence with items in the FGT). Second, in the category *Professional Links* 26/36 items had correspondence with the FGT criteria. The remaining items not considered in the FGT refer to the participation of teachers in other areas of practice within the school, networking with other professionals, as well as engagement in school management. This result is interesting because it reflects that the quality of teachers, as

perceived by teachers, is not only strictly related to instructional activity, but also with their participation in other areas of professional development within the school.

Categories with moderate level of representation

Two categories raised in the thematic analysis have a moderate representation in the FGT. In the category *Instilling and Promoting Professional Values* 15/33 items are in correspondence with the FGT (45% of the total items in this category). The formation of values is important in any education system; however, given the emphasis on teachers' instructional activities, the FGT emphasizes those values associated with interpersonal relationships within the classroom. In contrast, teachers give greater emphasis to the formation of values 'for life,' which are not just restricted to school, including values such as caring for the environment, citizenship, among others, values that will serve students for the rest of their lives and not just while they are in school. The second category that has a moderate representation is the category *Professional training* alluding to teachers' participation in external training activities including workshops and seminars for training in skills related to pedagogy and knowledge of the discipline they teach.

Categories with low level of representation

Three categories have a low level of representation in the FGT. In the category *Professional Skills*, only 3 of the 56 items are included in the FGT (5.4%). This category refers mainly to personal characteristics that are attributed to a qualified organization, including staff, flexibility and adaptability to the environment, self-learning, and others. While this result is not surprising since the FGT focuses on behaviors and instructional skills of teachers, this result shows that the teacher not only considers the dimension of performance within their conception of teaching quality but also considers their personal characteristics as a constituent of the concept of

teaching quality. Another dimension with low level of correspondence was *Professional Commitment*. Only 1 of the 21 items had correspondence with any of the FGT criteria (4.8%). This category makes explicit reference to attitudes of teachers that are not necessarily related to instructional activities. The motivation for participating in student-related work outside the formal boundaries of teaching illustrate the sub-categories that do not correspond with any of the items of FGT.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to explore the meaning of teacher quality from the perspective of teachers working in public schools in La Araucania in the South of Chile and also to analyze the ways in which teachers' understandings of teacher quality aligned (or misaligned) with the criteria defined in Chile's Framework for Good Teaching (FGT), currently in use to evaluate teachers' performances. This discussion is organized in three main points.

Redefining Teacher Quality in La Araucania

Seven categories came up to explain teachers' understanding of teacher quality. These categories are: (1) Teaching Learning Process, (2) Professional Skills, (3) Professional Links, (4) Instilling and Promoting Student Values, (5) Teachers' Personal Commitment, (6) Professional Achievements, and (7) Professional Training. As shown in the results section, from these seven categories, teachers gave high significance to the aspects of teaching that are directly related to their performance during the teaching-learning process, including class preparation, teaching strategies and assessment of student learning (Dimension 1: Teaching learning process). This alignment between teachers' understandings of quality and the FGT criteria is not surprising and it could be

explained by the extensive influence of the FGT in the Chilean educational system, not only in the teacher evaluation process, but also in teacher education programs and in training for pre-service teachers. In fact, the risk of 'performative modeling' of such frameworks in the teaching profession has been reported by several authors (Ball, 2003, 2006; Hargreaves, 2003). For example, according to Ball (2003), the emphasis on behavioral aspects of teachers' work limits their exercise of judgment in determining the pedagogy most suitable for their student. As he noted, "teachers are no longer encouraged to have a rationale for practice, [to take] account of themselves in terms of a relationship to the meaningfulness of what they do" (p. 222), leading to progressive and consequential changes in teacher identity. Despite the emphasis on performance, the complex set of constructs that emerged from these categories shows that participants have a concept of teacher quality that integrates not only performance-based criteria, but also other dimensions related to the cognitive and socio-emotional facets of being a teacher, including criteria such as professional skills, values, experience, training, and professional achievements. Central to their understanding of teacher quality are teachers' own personal and professional capacities to suit the context in which they perform their work. These results support the idea that teacher quality should not just be seen as a function of performance, but also as a holistic experience connected with the context where teachers work, and closely linked to their practical knowledge (Stake & Schwandt, 2006; R. Stake, 2004).

Also of importance is the relationship between the understanding of teaching quality of teachers and professional identity. Teachers' identity as a multidimensional construct refers not only to the social representation of teachers, but also to what teachers

themselves find important in their professional work, based on their experiences and personal backgrounds and practices (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004).

In Chile, the teachers' professional identity is deeply rooted in the history of the construction of the nation state. For example, during the colonial period, education was a mechanism to instill Catholic principles and values in the population (mainly indigenous and mestizo). The missionaries were the first "teachers" in Chile, thus values such as "sacrifice" and "love for others" are embedded as a central feature of teaching. According to Núñez P. (2004, 2007) and Parra Prieto (2004), teachers' sacrifice is a trait that is repeated at various times in the history of Chile and is part of the collective imaginary of Chilean society. Also, the concept of vocation in Chile is still associated with a "divine call" to contribute and serve the country. This "vocational calling" is strongly reinforced by Chilean society and is constantly expressed in policies and programs to improve the quality of the teaching workforce. Other salient aspects of teachers' professional identity is are their moral responsibility and their commitment to the educational project of the country. This ethical dimension is related to the political role of teaching and education.

As shown in the results, the value dimension of being a teacher is central to teachers' understanding of the meaning of teacher quality, and so it is their professional commitment to help improve society through teaching; however, these dimensions of 'being a teacher' are not part of the criteria included in the FGT. This is the main area of misalignment between the FGT and teachers' responses. What causes this misalignment? Here, I outline two possible causes.

First, the FGT was adapted from a framework developed in a different Chilean context; therefore, its structure and content plays a different role in understanding the role

of teachers in the educational process and society cultural context. The Danielson framework emphasizes the actions and responsibilities of teachers who are directly linked to the achievement of the learning objectives of students (Danielson, 1996, 2013). However, by virtue of the results of this study, teacher effectiveness in achieving learning goals does not seem as relevant for the teachers in this study in this particular Chilean context, where teachers make little mention of the achievement of learning objectives as a central element of the definition of teaching quality. Rather, they favor the value dimension of teaching as a central objective of their teaching practice. In addition, it seems that, despite the centrality that learning objectives effectively have within the Chilean educational discourse, teachers maintain a strong concept of teacher quality, rooted in the traditional role that teachers have had in Chilean society. This role refers mainly to the formation of values among students, as well as the emotional dimension of the pedagogical activity.

Second, the FGT reduces teachers' educational activities only to those behaviors that lead to improved learning. But, from the perspective of the participants, teaching practices occur not only inside the classroom, but also in other physical and symbolic spaces (Korthagen, 2004).

As demonstrated in this study, teachers recognize that a quality teacher should be linked to other professionals involved in the teaching-learning process. In addition, a quality teacher should participate in activities within the school community that are not necessarily related to work inside the classroom, but rather to other activities, like school management. At the same time, teachers perceive that the effects of their work should not just be reflected in the classroom, but also in other dimensions of student life. Here again,

the idea of values appears, where it influences all aspects of students' lives, not just school.

Implications for Teacher Evaluation

The misalignment between the FGT and the concept of teaching quality, as understood by teachers has implications for the teacher evaluation process.

The legitimacy conferred by Chileans to the teachers' evaluation process has only been explored from a methodological point of view. These few studies indicate that teachers think their participation in teacher evaluation does not fit the context where they work and, therefore, the results of the evaluation do not help them improve their teaching practices (Taut, Santelices, Araya, & Manzi, 2010; Taut, Santelices, & Manzi, 2011). The main source of this criticism is the inadequacy of the evaluation methods used in teacher evaluation (portfolio, peer interview, interview with supervisor, and self-evaluation). However, a second explanation could be the misalignment between the criteria defined in the FGT, and the meanings of teacher quality as experienced by teachers. This misalignment could impact the degree of legitimacy that teachers give to the teacher evaluation process. It could mean that teachers are evaluated in areas of their pedagogical practices that are not of great importance to them, while those aspects that are central to their practices, such as the socio-emotional dimension of teaching should be incorporated into the evaluation process. This hypothesis is based on the existing evidence from the field of evaluation on the importance of developing quality criteria that are shared and agreed upon by the whole community involved in the evaluation, with particular emphasis on teacher participation, whose voices have not been heard enough in the teacher evaluation field (Charalambous, Komitis, Papacharalambous, & Stefanou, 2014; Muñoz et al., 2013). To verify this misalignment, transforming the model based on performance evaluation (which

is currently used in Chile) is required, towards an evaluation model that encompasses a concept of teaching quality in a holistic way. In addition, it involves the generation of teacher evaluation methods that capture the concept of teaching quality in its full complexity.

Limitations and Future Directions

This research has some limitations, such as a limited number of participants, so the results should not be generalized to other contexts. However, the results give a clear idea of what the concept of teacher quality means to teachers in the region of La Araucania. From the results obtained, some new directions for research have been opened. Specifically, the first line of research should be aimed at further exploration of each of the categories defined in this research, as well as the determination of their level of validity. A second line of research should be oriented to explore the concept of teacher quality, and not only from the perspective of teachers, but also including other actors in the school context, such as parents, students, and school administrators.

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FIGURES

Figure 1: Example of an Item (Picture MI00)


Picture	Text from interview
 A photograph of a small, square piece of white paper with a simple hand-drawn smiley face. The face consists of a circle for the head, two small circles for eyes, and a curved line for a smiling mouth. The drawing is done in a light brown or reddish-brown ink or paint. The paper is placed on a dark surface, possibly a table.	<p>“I did this drawing and took a picture because I find it extremely important that a teacher is happy, whether you earn more or less money ... a teacher is happy and projects their happiness to students. In addition, to develop humor in the classroom. I drew this to express happiness.” (Teacher Maria Isla)</p>

Figure 2: Alignment -between Item- FGT Criteria



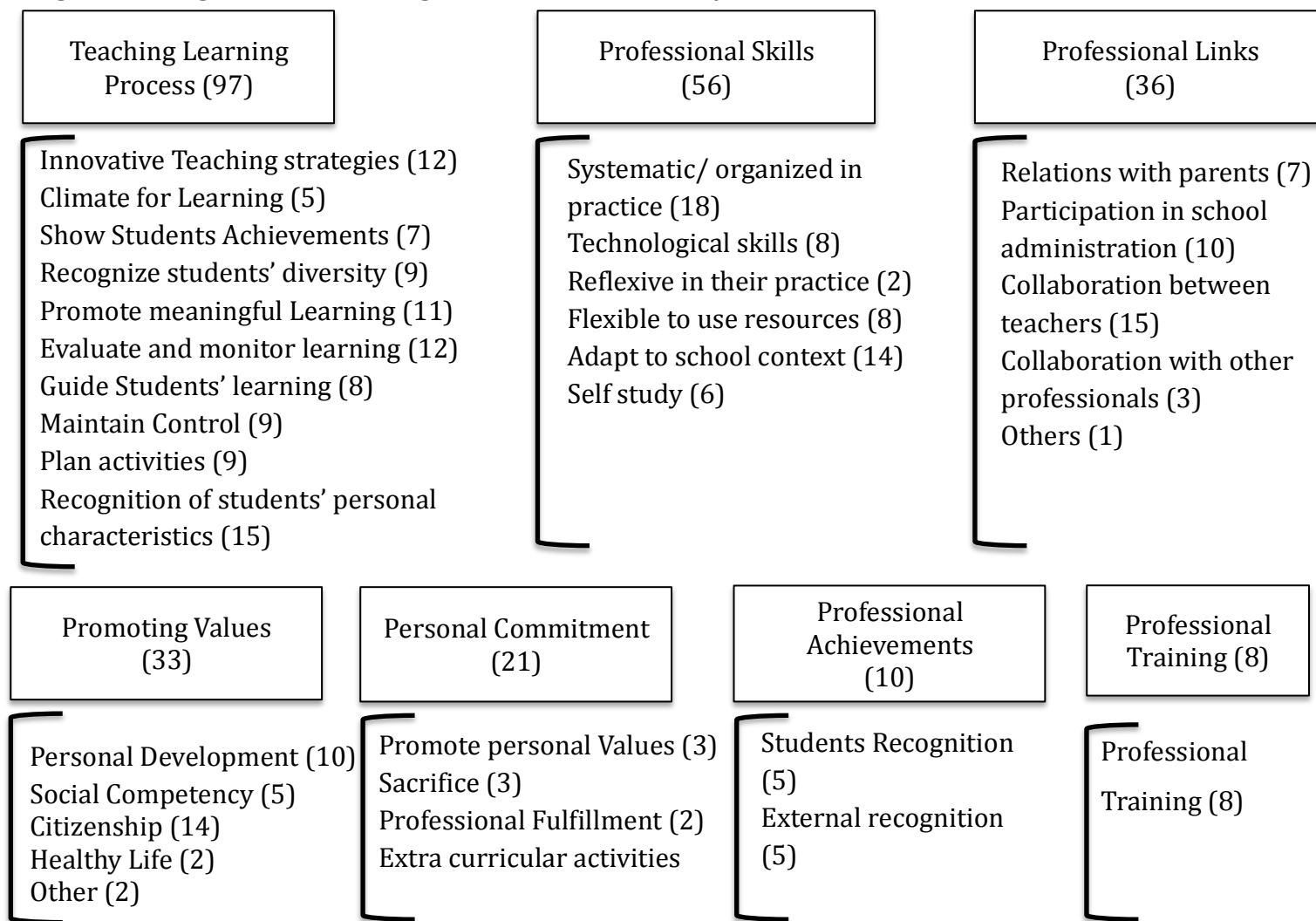
Picture	Item Description	Correspondent criterion
Alignment Item- FGT criteria		
	<p>“ This is a party for celebrating teachers day. I wanted to show you that have good relations between teachers is important. It is meaningful...” (Item VCa11)</p>	<p>CRITERIA D2: Building a professional and team relationship with his/her peers</p>
Misalignment Item- FGT Criteria		
	<p>“I feel nostalgic.... I do not know if the time I spend with my students was effective... but it was a time I abandoned my kids... that time is not going to come back.” (Item VCa11)</p>	<p>Item not related with any of the FGT Criteria</p>

Figure 3: Categories and subcategories of Teachers Quality



TABLES

Table 1: Framework for Good Teaching (FGT)

Dimension	Example of Criteria
<p>Dimension A: Teaching preparation (Criteria A1-A5) This dimension states that teachers must know the content and the didactics of the discipline taught. It also states that teachers must organize their pedagogical practice and evaluation based on a national curriculum-based learning framework and also considers the characteristics, knowledge, and experience of their students.</p>	<p>A2: Master the subjects taught and the national curricular framework.</p>
<p>Dimension B: Creating an environment conducive to learning (Criteria B1-B4) The second dimension Creating an Environment Conducive to Learning (L2) states those teachers must establish a climate of acceptance and trust in the classroom. In addition, the teacher provides an organized work environment.</p>	<p>B2: Show high expectations about the learning possibilities and development of all of his/her students.</p>
<p>Dimension C: Teaching to promote learning to all students (Criteria C1-C6) The third dimension states that teachers must clearly communicate the learning objectives to their students and develop teaching strategies challenging them. Moreover, they should address the contents of the class with conceptual rigor and consider the level of student achievement. In addition, teachers should optimize classroom time and promote student reflection.</p>	<p>C1: Communicate the learning objectives in a clear and accurate way.</p>
<p>Dimension D: Professional Responsibilities (Criteria D1-D5) Teachers should systematically reflect on their practices, build professional relationships taking responsibility in guiding their students. The teacher should foster collaboration and respect with parents and guardians. In this domain, the teacher should manage updated information about their profession, the education system, and current policies.</p>	<p>D5: Manage to update information relevant to the teaching profession, the educational system and current policies</p>

Table 2: Descriptions of categories of Teacher Quality and Frequency of items in each category

Category (# items)	Description	Example
1. Teaching learning process (97)	This category is related to the teacher's ability to conduct and lead the teaching-learning process. It includes knowledge of students, characteristics, planning and selection of innovative strategies, control of the class and monitoring of learning, among others. Also, this category shows the importance teachers attach to getting to know the students and it includes educational and pedagogical aspects of teaching.	<i>"This is a picture of a globe and a kultrun⁶. I used both in a class I was teaching about the process of America's discovery.... I used both to problematize the discovery process from the perspective of an indigenous worldview.... Since most of my students are indigenous (from Mapuche culture) I thought it was important to value their culture using the kultrun to explain global processes" (Picture CV18).</i>
2. Professional skills (56)	This category refers to the personal skills that teachers considered essential to teacher quality. This category includes flexibility to adapt to the characteristics of the school where teachers work and the community they serve, teachers' organizational skills, teachers' ability to incorporate technological tools in teaching practice, flexibility to use available resources and reflectiveness.	<i>"This picture reflects the spirit of my work... I use everything I have on hand in order to improve students' learning... in this case I used technology, right? but also flipchart, crayons, glue, ruler, and card games made to form working groups... In this way, I can create a better classroom environment... I use everything I have available and I make the most of it..." (Picture CV22).</i>

⁶ Kultrun is an indigenous artifact in the Mapuche culture. It represents the Mapuche worldview. The Kultrun has the shape of a semicircle in which you can observe the cardinal points. Also, this device is a sacred musical instrument of this indigenous group.

Table 2 (cont.)

3. Professional links (36)	This category refers to the ability of teachers to generate links and networks towards promoting learning opportunities for students. This category includes bonding with parents, other professionals	<i>"My colleague from the course of history and me, in my house,... I'm super happy, because it is the first time that I have a colleague with whom I can work really well ... (Picture MI24).</i>
4. Instilling and promoting values (33)	This category refers to the moral and value-based commitment of the teachers expressed in instilling and promoting values in students. It the traditional dimension of education in which teacher's mission is to promote values that transform students into better citizens.	<i>"This picture represents our national symbols... It is very important to highlight our national symbols in order to promote national values, patriotism in our students; they must recognize our symbols, our flag, our national badge..." (Picture RF13).</i>
5. Teachers' personal commitment (21)	This category refers to the moral and value-based commitment of the teachers, conveyed as professional dedication to provide quality education and teachers' sacrifices for the welfare of students.	<i>"... each month we work on a value that we would like to reinforce in our students... this month the value was 'self-confidence.' Our students do not have self-confidence because there is no confidence building in their homes, nobody motivates them to be better... therefore each month we work with a different values..." (Picture RF15).</i>
6. Professional achievements (10)	This category includes teachers receiving moral and economic support for good performance by the school and institutions that collaborate with them and also that teachers earn recognition from students for their professional dedication.	<i>"This is a wallet and a watch. Both are presents that my students gave me to celebrate Teachers' Day. That day, they prepared a celebration for me and they gave me many presents" (Picture JL7).</i>
7. Professional training (8)	This category includes teachers' participation in external training activities including workshops and seminars for training in skills related to pedagogy and knowledge of the discipline they teach.	<i>"I took this photo in the living room of my house ... It's a photo of the certificate that I received when I got my professional degree. Being a good teacher is for me is having a professional degree..." (Picture PI4).</i>

Table 3: Frequency of items in correspondence with each FGT criterion

Code	Dimensions and Criteria	Freq. items
Dimension A: Teaching preparation		
A1	Master the subjects taught and the national curricular framework.	2
A2	Know the characteristics, knowledge and experiences of his/her students.	14
A3	Master the didactics of the subjects or disciplines taught by him/her.	0
A4	Organize the objectives and contents consistent with the curricular framework and the characteristics of particular students.	13
A5	Use assessment strategies that are consistent with the learning objectives, the subject taught, and the national curricular framework...	2
	Total	31
Dimension B: Creating an environment conducive to learning		
B1	Create an environment dominated by values such as acceptance, equality, trust, solidarity and respect.	10
B2	Show high expectations about the learning possibilities and development of all of his/her students.	1
B3	Create and is consistent with the regulations about classroom coexistence.	10
B4	Create an organized working atmosphere and make available the spaces and resources required for the learning process.	4
	Total	25
Dimension C: Teaching to promote learning for all students		
C1	Communicate the learning objectives in a clear and accurate way.	2
C2	Design challenging, consistent strategies that are relevant for students	26
C3	Treat the classroom contents with the right conceptual focus and using terms that students are able to understand.	2
C4	Optimize the time available for teaching.	1
C5	Promote the development of thought.	9
C6	Evaluate and monitor the process of understanding and the appropriation of content by the students.	13
	Total	53

Table 3 (cont.)

Dimension D: Professional responsibilities		
D1	Reflect systematically about his/her teaching skills.	2
D2	Build a professional and team relationship with his/her peers.	19
D3	Take on responsibilities regarding student counseling.	1
D4	Promote respect and carry out co-operation actions with the parents and guardians of his/her students.	7
D5	Manage to update information relevant to the teaching profession, the educational system and current policies.	0
Total		29
Total Items A+B+C+D		138
Items no included in the FGT		123
TOTAL		261

Table 4: Frequency of items excluded from the FGT

Categories and subcategories	Total	Freq. items excluded from FGT
Categories with high level of representation in the FGT		
Category 1: Teaching-Learning Process		
Show students' achievements	7	6
Recognize students' diversity	9	2
Total	97	8
Category 3: Professional Links		
Participation in school administration	10	9
Other	1	1
Total	36	10
Categories with medium level of representation in the FGT		
Category 4: Instilling And Promoting Values in Students		
Personal development	10	5
Social competency	5	3
Citizen formation	14	7
Environment	2	1
Healthy Life	2	2
Total	33	18
Category 7: Professional Training		
Professional training	8	4
Total	8	4
Categories with low level of representation in the FGT		
Category 2: Professional Skills		
Systematic and methodical in their practice	18	17
Incorporate technology tools in Teaching practice	8	8
Flexibility to use available resources	8	8
Adaptability to school context	14	14

Table 4 (cont.)

	Self study	6	6
	Total	56	53
Category 5: Teachers' personal commitment			
	Promote personal values	3	2
	Participate in external learning		
activities		13	13
	Personal Sacrifice	3	3
	Demonstration of professional		
fulfillment		2	2
	Total	21	20
Category 6: Professional Achievement			
	Students' recognition	5	5
	External recognition	5	5
	Total	10	10
TOTAL (Categories 1+2+3+4+5+6+7)		261	123

PAPER 3

WHAT DOES CONTEXT MEAN ANYWAY?

CONTEXTUALIZING EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH THROUGH PHOTO ELICITATION

This paper is a methodological reflection on the process of contextualizing research on teachers and teaching in a study I conducted with teachers working in public schools in La Araucania in Southern Chile, using photo elicitation as a method of data collection. Photo elicitation is a visual research method (VRM) that uses pictures to invoke responses during the course of an interview (Markus Banks, 2001; Collier, 1957; Emmison, Smith, & Magery, 2012; Harper, 2002; Lapenta, 2011; G. Rose, 2012).

Specifically, in this study, I invited 13 teachers to take 25 pictures each in order to portray what teacher quality means. I implemented a variant of traditional photo elicitation known as auto driving (Heisley & Levy, 1991; Hurworth, 2003; Shell, 2014). Auto driving consists of asking participants to take their own pictures, which are then used as prompts for a follow-up interview. In my study, I first asked participants to take pictures of what teacher quality means to them, and then during the follow-up individual interview, I asked them to briefly describe the pictures, focusing on how each picture represented their understanding of teacher quality.

During the process of data analysis, I realized that the combination of having participants take pictures and then be interviewed about those pictures provided rich information not just about teachers' understandings of the concept of teacher quality, but also regarding the context(s) where teachers work. This goes beyond the traditional use of pictures as a stimulus to enrich the interview process. Based on that initial reflection, I conducted a second data analysis, this time focusing on the potential of the method to

better understand the context(s) in which teachers practice their craft. Using the results of this second analysis, this paper explores three advantages of using photo elicitation to contextualize research on teachers and teaching:

(1) Utilizing pictures provides rich descriptions of the spatial context where teachers work;

(2) Using pictures taken by participants facilitates the exploration of participants' interpretation of the context; and

(3) During interviews researchers and participants negotiate interpretations of pictures by contrasting participant interpretations with researcher perceptions about the context where teachers develop their practice.

In the first section I provide a brief review of visual research methods (VRM) in social research, particularly photo elicitation.⁷ In the second section, I provide a brief account of the photo-elicitation study I conducted with teachers in the region of La Araucania in Southern Chile, including information about participants, research process, and procedures. In the third section, I discuss the advantages of using photo elicitation in the process of contextualizing educational research on teachers and teaching, and finally, I provide examples to illustrate these advantages.

Visual Research Methods

Using visual materials has been a long-term practice in social science. Researchers in anthropology, sociology and psychology have developed this practice, and researchers

⁷ I thank Professor Susan Noffke who introduced the method of photo elicitation in her action research course at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (UIUC). I also thank Patricia Galvez Espinoza, researcher at the University of Chile and doctoral student in the Department of Kinesiology and Community Health at UIUC. She actively uses photo elicitation in her research on eating behaviors among Chilean women. She encouraged me to use this method and offered guidance during the entire process.

from various other fields have explored different uses of visual materials at different stages during the research process. Anthropologists, for example, have incorporated pictures as a complement to their writing process; research journals are often filled with pictures as part of an attempt to document ethnographic practices (Collier, 1957; Gubrium & Harper, 2013). Through images, documentary photography has allowed ethnographers to report different aspects of the cultures they studied by including pictures about places they visited, people they interviewed and artifacts they collected. A classic example in the field of social anthropology is the study conducted by Bateson and Mead. Using pictures they were able to show various aspects of Balinese culture “never successfully recorded by the scientist” (Collier & Collier, 1986, p. 5). From this perspective, images (captured by a camera) were perceived to be replicas of reality, and therefore accurate representations of the phenomenon being studied. This way of understanding the role of visuals in social research was challenged, following the emergence of postmodern and critical approaches in social science, and also due to the growth of visual studies as a discipline.

The core premise of the new approaches to visual materials is that images are not just an object of reproduction of a given reality, but an expression of constitutive, unseen dimensions of society (Marcus Banks, 2007; Mirzoeff, 1998; Pink, 2007b). Visual materials are now viewed as objects with implicit intention, objects of multiple meanings, and representations of representations of the world as experienced by visual-makers and observers (including researchers). Interpretation of visual materials during the research process is now regarded as a social and dialogical construction (Hall, 1997; Harper, 2005; Schwartz, 1989).

Over the last decades, the discussion about the role of visual materials in social science has grown rapidly while the technology to produce and share visual material has been increasing and diversifying (Ball & Gilligan, 2010; Pauwels, 2011; G. Rose, 2014). In the last 15 years a great diversity of handbooks and textbooks has been published on visual studies, visual methods or visual methods in social research, including *Visual Methods in Social Research* (Banks, 2001); *Visual Methodologies: An introduction to the interpretation of Visual Material* (Gillian, 2001, 2006); *Using Visual Data in Social Research* (Banks, 2007); *Advances in Visual Methodology* (Pink, 2007b); *Visual Research Methods*; *Visual Research Methods in the Social Science*; *Awaking Visions* (Spencer, 2011) and *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods* (Margolis & Pauwels, 2011), among many others.

VRM use different kinds of visual materials in the process of generating evidence in order to explore research questions (Bell, 2010; Gillian, 2006; Pink, 2007b; G. Rose, 2012). Researchers mostly refer to two-dimensional images such as pictures, diagrams, films, collages, memory books, and maps. However, other authors also include three-dimensional objects, such as buildings, artifacts or landscapes (Emmison et al., 2012). These materials are traditionally classified into two groups (Marcus Banks, 2007; Markus Banks, 2001; Emmison et al., 2012; Pink, 2007a).

The first group includes using "found visual material" in the research projects from collections, libraries and archives in the case of historical material, but also contemporary visual material available from television, cinema, and similar sources. Prosser (1998) distinguishes between researcher-found visual material and representation and visual research. In both, the researcher selects the visual material, but with different purposes. The first one has a narrow purpose related to a specific interest of the researcher, while

visual research operates in a macro context analyzing the meaning of discourses expressed through visual culture (Spencer, 2011).

The second group includes using visual material produced during the research process by researchers or participants. This category includes traditional methods that were described at the beginning of this section – for example, the use of images to complement the process of writing, recording and dissemination of results that characterize visual anthropology and visual sociology. Also, this group includes the use of visual material created by research participants. This option has been widely influenced by critical and participatory research methodologies in social research. An example of this category is the use of *photo-voice*. This method, initially described by Wang and Burries (1997), is a kind of participatory research in which a group of community members uses cameras to take pictures of a social phenomenon of interest or concern. Later, pictures are selected by the photographer and used to elicit comments in a group discussion (Pink, 2007a; Wang & Burris, 1997). Among the variety of visual research methods, photo elicitation has become especially popular (Rose, 2012; Emmison et al., 2012). This method involves using photographs (images) to invoke responses during the course of an interview (Harper, 2002; Lapenta, 2011; G. Rose, 2012). According to Rose (2012), using pictures in the research process allows participants to reflect on everyday activities, “exploring everyday, taken-for-granted things... it gives them a distance from what they are usually immersed in and allows them to articulate thoughts and feelings that usually remain implicit” (p. 306). Also, participants feel more involved and motivated during the research process because it is innovative and it breaks the monotony that can characterize traditional interviews

(Markus Banks, 2001; Creswell, 2013; Lapenta, 2011; G. Rose, 2012). There are three theoretical assumptions underlying the use of photo elicitation.

First, people attach different meanings to images (Harper, 2002). This principle implies understanding the polysemous quality of images, which means their multiple meanings (Barthes, 1981; Lapenta, 2004). While this feature offers immense possibilities of analysis, the polysemous nature of pictures has generated criticism among positivists due to the difficulties of analysis and lack of objectivity (Becker, 1998; Pink, 2001). Second, images have the potential to “evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than do words” (Harper, 2002; pp. 13), which can include different emotional and cognitive aspects of participants’ lives (Bolton, Pole, & Mizen, 2001; G. Rose, 2012) and different kinds of knowledge. There is a dimension of temporality associated with the use of images, which is that they can cause reminiscences, and can be used both as the basis for reflection on contemporary issues and for future projections (Byrne & Doyle, 2004). Third, in order to provoke responses, images must have some meaning for research participants. As Banks (2001) stated, “If one of the aims of photo elicitation is to increase the degree of intimacy between participants and subject, then arbitrary images, removed from one context and deployed in another, would seem unlikely to promote this” (p. 94). The value of photo elicitation is that it uses photos taken directly by participants and therefore is most likely to capture what they know about their context. This principle of intimacy is rooted in the idea that people talk about what they know (Byrne and Doyle, 2004; Harper, 1998). For this reason, the images used in the elicitation process must be somehow connected with the life of the participants. This requires the investigator to understand the context in which the research takes place and be familiar with the characteristics of the participants.

In the following section, I will briefly describe the procedures I followed and the decisions that took place over the course of the study with teachers in La Araucania.

Understanding Teacher Quality in La Araucania, Chile

I conducted this research as part of my doctoral training at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. My research explored the meaning of teacher quality, from the perspectives of teachers working in La Araucania in Southern Chile.

La Araucania is a bicultural region where a dominant Chilean culture coexists with the native Mapuche culture. This situation poses significant challenges in the education system because teachers, especially those working in rural areas, must adapt to the characteristics of students and the geographical and cultural conditions of schools. I feel personally committed to the challenge of improving the education in this region. I am faculty member in the Department of Education at the University of La Frontera, which is the major state university in this region. My academic career has been oriented to support the teacher education programs at the undergraduate level, but also to support in-service professional development for teachers of La Araucania.

This study was framed within an interpretive tradition (Creswell, 2013; Willis, 2007), because I assumed that teachers have their own particular and unique understanding of what teacher quality means, mediated by the cultural and political context of La Araucanía, and by the life experiences. In this sense, during the study, I attempted to recognize the richness and value of teachers' experiences, to appreciate their personal histories as well as their professional aspirations. Consistent with this framework, I decided to use a variant of photo elicitation consisting of asking research participants to take pictures of what teacher quality means to them in their teaching context. In addition to

the advantages described above, I decided to use photo elicitation with pictures taken by participants to promote teacher reflection during different stages in the research process. The process of taking pictures is in itself a process of reflection. In fact, teachers must reflect on what aspects of their practice they want to portray in each picture. Also, during the interview process, teachers are invited to reflect on the meaning of each picture, communicating ideas and thoughts regarding the selection of photographic objects. Furthermore, given their authorship of the images, teachers are treated as experts. The recognition of their expertise on the topic of discussion enhances their sense of empowerment and agency (Banks, 2001; Rose, 2012).

Participants and Research Procedure

In an attempt to recognize the geographical and cultural diversity that characterizes La Araucania, I invited teachers working in public schools in different areas of the region to participate. In order to take part in this study, participants had to meet three criteria: they were teaching in educational institutions located in La Araucania; they had at least one year of teaching experience; and they were willing to participate in this study.

Participants were initially contacted via email. Out of twenty teachers invited to take part in the study, thirteen accepted my invitation. Teachers who showed interest in the study received a personalized invitation in which I gave them more detailed information about the research team, research purpose and procedures. Twelve teachers were working in public schools, five were elementary school teachers and eight were from the high school. Recruitment of teachers aimed at diversity of school characteristics, therefore eight teachers worked in schools located in the regional capital, Temuco; three teachers worked in urban medium-sized cities near Temuco; and one teacher worked in a small town

located in a rural area. Although the public school system was the setting for this study, I made an exception to include one teacher working in a private school serving mainly students from an indigenous community located near Temuco. I decided to invite her because of her experience as a teacher in this particular context.

The fieldwork was organized in three different stages. During the first stage, I scheduled individual 25-40 minute meetings with each teacher. I offered them full flexibility to set the time and day and place for conducting our meetings. Most teachers chose to meet at school during their working hours, while other teachers preferred to meet me outside the school after school time or during a weekend. In these cases, I invited them to visit me in my office at the university of La Frontera. This meeting had two main purposes: first, to establish rapport with participants and second, to deliver information and materials to be used during the process. In regards to the first purpose, it was important for me to cultivate a good relationship and build trust with the participant in order to maintain their motivation and enthusiasm. Teachers are used to participating in studies using surveys or interviews as the primary method of data collection, but the photo elicitation requires greater dedication of time and commitment to the task of taking photographs, therefore this trust is imperative. In regards to the second purpose, I used the meeting to provide full information to teachers about the research purpose and procedures, including description of tasks and estimated time that each teacher should spend on them. Considering the workload of teachers, I was careful to explain the estimated times I set for each activity. I gave teachers a disposable camera and explained how to use it.

In addition, considering the relevance of addressing ethical issues when using pictures in research, I gave them a *Guide of Ethical and Technical Aspects of Research Using Photo Elicitation*, which I wrote to inform teachers about the ethical principles of the study following the guidelines of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign's Institutional Research Board.

Although disposable cameras have been in the market for a long time, they have not been extensively used in Chile; in fact, none of the participants had used a disposable camera before. Some teachers expressed concern for their 'lack of ability to take photographs' so I emphasized that the main purpose was to use pictures as prompts for our discussions; therefore technical expertise in pictures taking was not required. My purpose was not to judge the quality of the photos, but to use them to enrich our interviews.

In part because this method of data collection was new to the participants, delivering clear instructions to teachers about how to take the pictures was a challenge in this research. Below is an excerpt of these instructions from my interview script (translated from Spanish):

The concept of teacher quality is a hot topic currently in Chile. In newspapers and television, various sectors of Chilean society are now discussing the meaning of teacher quality. This research aims to explore this from the perspective of the teachers who work daily in schools in La Araucania. In order to achieve this purpose I invite you to tell me, in 25 pictures, what teacher quality means to you. Use the disposable camera I gave you to take pictures of your everyday life, at school or outside school, that you think may help you to represent your ideas about teacher quality, including images of objects, places, and activities that best represent your understanding of teacher

quality. Considering that the work of teachers not only happens in the classroom, but also elsewhere, do not forget to carry your camera wherever you go during the upcoming weeks. You can take pictures of any aspect of your work that you think represents the concept of teacher quality. The only restriction is that you cannot take pictures in which persons can be recognized. This is an ethical regulation. Please do not take photographs where people, and especially children, can be identified.

Considering that teaching is a social practice, which occurs mainly in the relation between teachers and students, many teachers did express their concern about the limitation of not including people (and especially students) in their pictures. Addressing that concern, I shared with participants an example to facilitate a better understanding of the task.

You are in the teachers' room reviewing your students' homework ...while you are working you realize that offering good feedback to your students is an important part of what teacher quality means to you ... then you take a photo of the room, or the test, or some object in the room that reminds you that offers good feedback is part of what teacher quality means to you. Remember that what matters is not the quality of the picture, but rather the discussion we will have during the interview, where you will tell me what motivated you to take this picture and how it relates to teacher quality (researcher journal).

During the second stage of the study I did not have personal contact with participants beyond a follow-up email to keep their motivation high and respond to possible questions. After the initial meeting, participants had a period of two weeks to take pictures. Ten of the fourteen teachers requested an extension of the deadline to complete

their task. The main reason for this extension was that the teachers were too overworked to complete the task. Two participants asked to extend the deadline because of a school trip or a leave of absence. I redefined an individual deadline with each of the teachers according to their agendas.

Finally, during the third stage, a second meeting was held to conduct the interview. Each meeting lasted between 50-100 minutes and took place in the teachers' workplace, their homes, or my university office. Each participant chose the interview location. Three main questions guided this interview: Where was this photograph taken? When was this photograph taken? And, what motivated you to take this photograph? Here is an example of how descriptions of pictures were elicited (Figure 4):

Researcher: This is a picture of a clock. Where was this photograph taken?

Teacher: In my living room, at home.

Researcher: What happened when this photograph was taken?

Teacher: I was in my house and it was late at night and I was correcting my students' work.

Researcher: What motivated you to take this picture?

Teacher: I think a good teacher works hard even outside of school hours... look at what time it is!! ... I'm at home and I am working extra to give my students adequate and timely feedback that enables them to prepare for their exam.

In some cases, participants did not recall the reason why they took the picture, so those pictures were excluded from the interview. Duplicate pictures or pictures taken by mistake were also excluded. In addition to the initial description of pictures, I asked teachers to choose about 10 photos that best represented their understanding of teacher

quality (the number varied according to total photographs of each participant). Those pictures were used as prompts to promote open discussion on teacher quality where they shared anecdotes, reflections or personal experiences related with pictures.

I collected 232 photographs, which were digitized and coded for identification purpose. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. Subsequently, using an Excel sheet, each picture was paired with the description teachers provided during the interviews. I conducted a thematic analysis considering the meanings attributed to the pictures by the participants (Boyatzis, 1998; Schilling, 2006) with the purpose of better understand the concept of teacher quality (the results of that analysis are not presented here (paper 2 in this dissertation).

During that analysis, I realized that some of the photographs not only provided rich information about teaching quality, but also about the context in which teachers worked. Following this idea, I reanalyzed each picture, focusing on the pictures' content. I then organized the pictures into three groups. The first group represented those photographs depicting a specific photographic object; for example, a computer, a sheet of paper, a book. The second group represented images that show a photographic object, but located in a particular space or place, for example, a computer located in a computer lab or a book on the desk of the teacher. The third group was for photographs where the photographic object itself was in a particular physical space or a landscape, for example, a classroom, a schoolyard, or the computer lab. Examples of the three groups are displayed in Figure 5.

As it shown in Figure 5, there is no contextual information in the pictures of Group 1. however, pictures in Groups 2 and 3 provide rich information regarding the context(s) where teachers developed their pedagogical practice. In the following section, I will analyze

how the contextual information provided by pictures can be utilized in educational research to better understand the experiences of teachers.

Contextualizing Research through Photo Elicitation.

Three aspects of the photo elicitation method contribute to the process of contextualizing research. First, the pictures by themselves offer details of context(s) difficult to access through other data collection methods (e.g., interviews or surveys). Second, using pictures to evoke teachers' responses during the interviews allows the researcher access to the meanings teachers attribute to their context. Third, pictures provoke responses in researchers for example they evoke memories of personal experiences, emotions and thoughts. In fact, pictures act as mediators, as a bridge between the meanings participants want to communicate and the researcher's interpretation of pictures.

Seeing is believing: Pictures as context descriptors

The first advantage of photo elicitation is the potential of photography to provide information about the context of the participants, as directly related to the focus of the research. This feature is not new, but it is an intrinsic function of photography as visual representation. Through pictures, it is possible to obtain rich information that would otherwise be impossible to obtain through non-observational data collection methods. Pictures *per se* contain a large amount of information "framed contextually in space and time in a flat surface and so all the bits of information produce, in combination with each other, a synergistic effect that generates even more information" (Grady, 2004; p. 20).

Particularly in the study of teacher quality, pictures were used to obtain detailed information on the context in which the teachers work. Four dimensions of context were

identified:

- 1) Spatial context. This dimension refers to physical places and spaces inside and outside of school. The spaces that appeared most frequently in the pictures were: classrooms, administrative offices, schoolyards, libraries, computer labs, school corridors and staff rooms (within the school), and also, places within the teachers' homes, offices, colleges or another school yard (out of school),
- 2) Geographical context. This dimension refers to landscapes that provided information about the geographical features of the place where the school was located. This dimension also includes pictures of the community surrounding the school.
- 3) Relational context. This dimension refers to pictures that portrayed the social dynamics and interactions defined in the institutional context of school. Following IRB requirements, participants were not allowed to portray people that were recognizable in the pictures; therefore, the photographic objects of these pictures were representations of social interactions. Pictures about cooperation between teachers and students, books of good practices and bulletin boards with messages regarding school life were examples of this dimension.
- 4) Material context. This dimension refers to school resources and services to which teachers had access. Examples of this dimension were pictures of food that the schools provided, and of books and supplies that were accessible to teachers.

Below, I present two pictures that illustrate in detail, the types of information I collected to analyze the content of the pictures.

Example 1. Rural Road (Figure 6)

Nola Huasco, an elementary school teacher who works in a rural school in an indigenous sector near the capital of La Araucania took this picture. The photographic object in this picture is a landscape portraying a rural road on an early morning day. As it is shown, the picture offers information about the state of the road (not paved). Also, it shows a traffic signal and a bus stop indicating there is a school nearby. Teachers and students used this road to get to the school.

Example 2. School Backyard (Figure 7)

Ana Matus, an elementary school teacher who works in an urban school in a low socio-economic class neighborhood in Temuco (capital of La Araucania), took this picture.

The photographic object in this picture is the school building; however, the picture also shows information regarding school infrastructure, sport facilities and the community surrounding the school. As it is shown, the maintenance of the space is poor (the paint is old, and the walls seem wet). This photo also shows the cloudy sky that characterizes the region of La Araucania.

In these examples, the pictures embody different elements of the school context(s) that are meaningful to these teachers; in fact, the images represent a selection of those aspects of the context(s) that are relevant to share during the research process, according to the participants. Not all schoolyards in La Araucania have the same infrastructure and not all rural roads look as they were depicted in this photograph. For these reasons and others, I avoided the natural tendency to generalize, which is especially common when using photographs during the research process. There is no point in making generalizations based on these pictures, because this factor is not what makes this method valuable for

qualitative inquirers in general or for my research in particular. On the contrary, what made this method valuable for my research were the opportunities to explore each participant's unique experiences represented through each picture.

One pictures, a thousand words: Pictures as representations of meanings.

The second advantage of photo elicitation is the process of contextualizing research and drawing meaning from that contextualization. This is related to the interpretive potential of pictures to convey the meaning teachers attribute to their context. Beyond the descriptive information provided by the 'internal narrative' of pictures (Banks, 2008), through the interview, the method of photo elicitation provides access to the meaning participants attributed to each picture. The process of interpretation is determined by our history, culture, and social and geographical context (Rose, 2012); therefore, different observers interpret the pictorial information differently. To illustrate this idea, I use the same pictures I already described above.

Example 1. Rural Road (Figure 6)

As I described, picture NH24 portrays a rural road in La Araucania. This picture offered descriptive information about the geographical landscape where *Nola Huasco* works as a teacher. However, during the interview, *Nola* discussed this photograph and explained the meaning she attributed to this picture. Here is an excerpt of *Nola's* interview:

This is the road is between my home and the school ... it is nearby. This is the main road called Llamuco Kintrilpe, and this place is called Llamuco Bajo ... Currently, I do not know how many indigenous families are in this community because there are many families who have come to live here ... beyond this road is another community... My family has always lived here, and I've always lived here ... well ... I recently got

married and I still live here. I stay here because I like the place and I cannot imagine my life living elsewhere (Nola Huasco, Intercultural Teacher, Community Llamuco Bajo).

As is evident in this photograph, beyond the geographical description of the context where the school is located, this photograph represents the emotional and moral bond that the teacher has with the school and the community, which is where she grew up and lives with her family. The photographic object in this picture is the rural road. However, from the perspective of Nola, this rural road represents her sense of belonging to this community.

Example 2. School backyard (Figure 7)

As I described in picture AM01, Ana portrayed the school building, but from the view of the school's backyard. By observing this picture, it is possible to recognize information regarding school facilities and the community surrounding the school. During the interview, Ana analyzed the content of the picture. Here is an excerpt of Ana's interview:

Here I want to show the neighbors ... In our school, our neighbors are lower-class ... middle-class families do not live here in this neighborhood ... We have parents of all kinds ... Parents with attitudes constantly complaining, using vulgar language; but we also have parents who are willing to work... They can/will? take over the cleaning of the school every day if you ask... In most of the cases, they are poor people who have no education... besides they have not had enough affection in their lives ... and I noticed this also in our students ... for them a sign of attention and love is important, because no one else other than us (teachers) pay attention to them...for example if they

(students) have something different, a different hairstyle, new clothes, we (teachers) pay attention to that ... teachers must know their students and love them. We (teachers) should also get to know students, families.

The photographic object in this image is the schoolyard; in fact, photography allows us to see the structural aspects such as the maintenance of the buildings, workspaces and recreation area of students. However, Ana makes an interpretation of the photograph that is strongly engaged with her experience and knowledge of the community surrounding the school. In her interpretation, Ana strongly emphasizes the emotional and affective bond with her students. Here the special context is linked to a relational and an affective context.

Facing the polysemous nature of pictures: A reflexive piece

In addition to the participants, the researcher also "reads" each picture and interprets meaning based on her/his knowledge of the context in which the photograph was taken. During the interviews, the pictures provoked responses in the researcher that were different from the responses participants described from their pictures. Recognizing and being aware of our own feelings as researchers is important to strengthen the rigor of the analysis process. Also, the discussion during the interview allows researchers to give as evidence our values and preconceptions, and lets us contrast those factors with what participants see in their own interpretation of the pictures.

This brief field note portrays my process of reflection during the analysis of the pictures. Here, I use the same two photographs that I have shared. I wrote this reflection in italics because I wanted to emphasize the self-reflexive nature of this text.

My 'reading' of photography is not neutral, but is influenced by my knowledge of the educational reality of La Araucania and my personal experience living there. I was born and

raised in La Araucania. My reading of those pictures is emotionally charged by the memory of my own experience as a student. I initiated/began my elementary education in a public school located in a middle-class neighborhood in Temuco, the capital of La Araucania. Also, I completed my secondary education in a high school very similar to some of the high schools I visited during this project. Due to my professional experience as a faculty member in the state university in La Araucania, I have a fair amount of knowledge of the educational and political scenario of the schools in La Araucania. I have had the honor of working with teachers from public schools over many years and I shared with them some of the best and worst of the public system in Chile.

I have visited indigenous communities and I have traveled many times by rural roads similar to the rural road shown in the teachers' photograph (Figure 6). I know this is a typical country road like many rural roads in the region of Araucania and I know that the school is isolated. I know the students in this school are indigenous... they do not have access to the advantages of the city, but they enjoy the quiet and 'wild' life in the countryside. I know students walk many kilometers to go to school using this road every day. I know this bus stop does not protect children from getting wet and cold during the long winter in southern Chile.

I know that the backyard that Ana portrayed in her picture (Figure 7) is an infrastructure that was constructed in the 70s, so the school is old, made of wood, it was probably constructed in the process of the privatization of schools during the military regime. The walls are dirty and the paint is faded... The infrastructure of the yard is precarious. The school has not been included in the process of public school renovation developed during the 90s. This is a sign that the municipality has not invested in improvement of the quality of this school... I know that Temuco is a rainy and cold city. The rain lasts about nine months, which

explains the moldy walls and the general infrastructure. I know that there is no roof in the schoolyard so students do not play outside the building when it is rainy... they play in hallways or classrooms. They have little space for recreation. I studied in a school just like this... so I know what it means to not have a place for students to play... I feel bad because students do not have a proper place to play, and I find this disrespectful. I feel bad because these students are from families of low socio-economic class and they accept, without complaint, what the schools can offer. In the winter it is cold and students are wet... Classrooms are wet and cold... I remember how loud classrooms can be during break with hundreds of kids playing, screaming, and laughing in a small place. Also, I feel sad for these teachers...teachers who probably do not have time or a place for taking a quiet break. That explains why teachers are always stressed and feel tired from being at school.

As shown in this reflective piece, the interpretations of the meanings I attributed to these photos are different from the meanings teachers attribute to them. My interpretation is strongly constructed from/influenced by my own experience as a student, as a teacher, and as a resident of the Araucania. Describing the position of the researcher in the interpretation of the photograph is an important advantage of this method and, from my perspective, lends credibility to the results; it forces the researcher to make explicit his/her prejudices and beliefs in relation to the context in which teachers work. Situating the researcher as an insider provides a richer understanding of the experiences of these La Araucania teachers who participated in this research and reveals the experiences of the researcher that have influenced and supported interpretations of the data.

Conclusion

Methodologies such as action research, auto-ethnography and narrative inquiry are getting attention from educational researchers due to their potential to enhance teachers' critical thinking skills, but also as methodological alternatives well suited for capturing the richness of teachers' experiences from the perspectives of teachers themselves. One of the reasons that have led to the emergence of these (and other methodologies) is the difficulty of traditional methods to capture the context(s) in which the educational phenomenon occurs.

This paper signifies the potential of photo elicitation to investigate teachers and teaching. Here, I proposed three concrete advantages of photo elicitation in the process of contextualizing research on teachers and teaching. The first advantage is related to the potential photo elicitation has to provide detailed information about context. I described geographic, spatial, relational information. The second advantage is related to the potential of photo elicitation to understand the interpretation made by the participants of the various aspects of context. This interpretation allows us to understand the individual and unique meanings that participants attributed the context(s). Finally, I analyze the potential of photo elicitation to promote reflection of the researcher about his/her own interpretation of the photographs.

Although the context is imperative in qualitative research, contextualization is a complex task. The first source of complexity is the multidimensional nature of context (Hammersley, 2008; Holstein & Gubrium, 2004). Depending on the topic, purpose and scope of our research, context could mean geographical features, cultural practices, political norms, or economic power. When talking about context we could be talking about

the characteristics of schools, the composition of families or the community where our university is located. This feature of context alludes to the distal and proximal conditions that influence the phenomenon of the study. The second source of complexity is that a given observer defines the conditions influencing a phenomenon of study. Different observers have different understandings of what elements of the context are important to be recognized as influencing the research process. Participants and researchers cognitively select aspects of the context that ‘make sense’ to their experiences, and that fit their expectations, motivations and cultural backgrounds; therefore, what is relevant for one participant could possibly not be that important for another. Finally, the third source of complexity in contextualizing research is related to the ways different people build different interpretations of the same elements/aspects of the research context. The subjectivity of human experience challenges researchers to not just pay attention to the conditions where a social phenomenon occurs, but also to carefully understand meanings people attribute to that phenomenon.

Indeed, this paper emphasizes the interpretive nature of context. Context does not just represent a set of material circumstances, but rather, it constitutes a “socially emergent constellation of contingent factors that are ‘worked up’ – not just encountered – in the course of everyday interaction” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004; p. 269). Context is understood as dynamic, multidimensional and socially constructed based on people’s experiences. Here, the process of contextualizing research entails not just the selection of variables or factors influencing an educational phenomenon, it also requires a systematic exploration of the meanings that research participants (and the researcher) attribute to these factors.

Here, participants and researchers confront different interpretations about context in a negotiated and collective process.

Why pay attention to context in research on teachers and teaching? Teaching as a social interaction is profoundly embedded in the context in which it takes place; therefore, contextualizing research is a requirement to improve the validity of our results and the soundness of our inferences (Cho & Trent, 2006; Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 1992; Patton, 1999). However, contextualizing research should not only be considered a methodological requirement, but it must also be considered as an ethical requirement in research on teachers and teaching.

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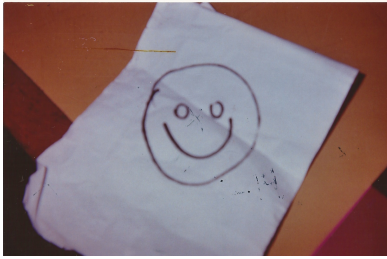
FIGURES

Figure 4: Picture P112



Figure 5: Information about context

Example Group 1.



Photographic object:
Sheet of paper
(Picture Mi00)

Example Group 2.



Photographic object:
Chilean decorations
placed in 1st Grade
classroom
(Picture FW22)

Example Group 3.



Photographic object:
School backyard
(Picture JL1)

Figure 6: Picture NH24



Figure 7: Picture AM01



CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation aimed to contribute to the current debate that exists today in Chile on the relevance and effectiveness of the current model of teacher evaluation. I took as a starting point, the idea that the methodological dimension of the evaluation is essential to ensure the credibility of its results; however, the conceptual dimension of teacher evaluation should also be in permanent review. For this reason, in 1 paper I offered a reflection on the conceptual basis that justified the creation of the system of teacher evaluation in Chile, emphasizing the political conditions that influenced the creation of the evaluation model. In this paper I argued that the current critiques of NTES should not be understood as methodological flaws or errors in implementing the system, but rather they must be understood as expressions of the political tension dominating the educational agenda during that period known as Transición democrática (Transition to democracy) due to the coexistence of two political discourses: democratic discourse and technocratic discourse. Later on paper 1, I reflected on the current scenario and the conditions that could potentially favor the implementation of a new teacher evaluation system. Finally, I stressed three contributions of the paper to the current discussion regarding Teacher Evaluation. First was the idea that teacher evaluation is a social and political process taking place in a particular social and historical context. Second, was the idea of participation as a central focus of the design process and implementation of teacher evaluation. Third was the idea that evaluation is overall a process of learning.

In Addition, I took as starting point the idea that any process of analysis and discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of teacher evaluation process in Chile requires incorporating

the voices of classroom teachers who actually participate in this evaluation. For this reason, in the second paper I invited teachers to discuss the concept of teacher quality from their daily experiences in the classroom. This second paper aimed to investigate the level of alignment (or misalignment) between teachers' understanding of quality and the criteria of teacher quality defined in the Framework for Good Teaching (FGT), and evaluated through NTES.

The concept of teacher quality has been extensively studied in the last years given the relevance of the teacher in the achievement of learning objectives (Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs, & Robinson, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 1999; OECD, 2009; Peterson, 2000). One contribution of this paper was to understand that teachers have a comprehensive conception of teacher quality that incorporates their personal and professional characteristics, performance and also students learning achievements. This comprehensive vision does not comply with the traditional models of teacher evaluation that focus on one dimension of quality, such as Performance or, learning outcomes (Cantrell, Kane, Staiger, & Fullerton, 2008; Coggshall & Bassett, 2008; Coggshall, 2012; Darling-hammond, Newton, & Chung Wei, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Goe, Biggers, & Croft, 2012; Hamilton et al., 2007; Howard & Gullickson, 2010; Howard, et al., 2013) . These results support the idea that teacher quality should not just be seen as a function of performance, but also as a holistic experience connected with the context where teachers work, and closely linked to their practical knowledge (Stake & Schwandt, 2006; R. Stake, 2004). Another contribution of this paper is related with the relationship between the understanding of teaching quality of teachers and professional identity. Particularly in Chile, teachers' understanding of teacher quality is closely connected with teachers'

identity and the historical role of teachers in Chilean society. In this regard, it seems relevant to teacher evaluation models (with their respective regulatory frameworks) incorporate those dimensions associated with the dimension of professional identity and professional role.

Finally, I took as starting point the idea that as evaluators and researchers we must challenge the methodological approaches currently used to research on teaching and teachers. For that reason, paper 3 was a methodological reflection on the process of contextualizing qualitative research on teachers and teaching, based on my experience using Photo Elicitation. Through that paper, I explored three advantages of using photo elicitation to contextualize research on teachers and teaching: (1) utilizing pictures provides rich descriptions of the spatial contexts where teachers work; (2) using pictures taken by participants facilitates the exploration of participants' interpretation of their contexts, and (3) during interviews researchers and participants negotiate interpretations of pictures by contrasting participants' interpretations with researcher' perceptions about the context where teachers develop their practice. Finally, I conclude that the contextualization of research professors must not only be considered a methodological requirement to enhance the validity of research but also must be an ethical requirement of educational research with teachers.