

**Multivoicedness as a tool for expanding school leaders' understandings  
and practices for school-based professional development**

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## **Multivoicedness as a tool for expanding school leaders' understandings and practices for school-based professional development**

The implementation of high-quality opportunities for teacher learning and development has been shown to be the instructional leadership practice that has the greatest impact on student learning outcomes (Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd, 2009). This finding has been taken on by recent legislation to strengthen the teaching profession in Chile (The National System for Teachers' Professional Development Law). Among other initiatives, it defines the provision of professional development as a key responsibility for public school principals. Providing school leaders with conceptual and practical tools to develop a local professional development plan is critical to the successful implementation of this mandate. This article presents findings from the implementation of a pilot study of a model of school leadership development, Schools Inquiring and Learning with Peers (SILP), that aims to address this need.

SILP is an adaptation of the Research-informed Peer Review (RiPR) professional development model that has shown to be a promising intervention in the UK. It involves leadership teams from three schools collaborating on school self-evaluation with the support of university-based facilitators (Godfrey, forthcoming). By examining the use of peer review in Chile, this study contributes to theory building and expands our understanding of the conditions under which policy and practices deemed auspicious in one country may be adapted to support school leaders in other educational contexts (Hallinger and Kulophas, 2019)

In the remainder of the article, firstly, we provide a succinct overview of the policy context for public school leadership in Chile. Next, we examine key principles of

sociocultural theories of learning that underpin SILP and introduce the components of the model. After presenting the approach to data analysis, results are reported separately for each of the three public schools participating in this pilot project. The discussion section focuses on commonalities as well as variability in what school teams learned from their participation in SILP. The final section addresses the use of peer review as a model for developing school leaders that brings multiple voices to the collaborative, reflective process aiming to identify the professional learning needs and opportunities most pertinent to their local circumstances.

### **Chilean public-school leaders' work in context**

School leadership is sensitive to cultural and policy contexts that place demands on education actors through the distinct modes of governance orienting the education sector (OECD, 2017). In Chile, over the last 40 years, the provision of education services has entailed a combination of hierarchical and market coordination mechanisms (Montecinos, Gonzalez and Ehrens, forthcoming; Burns and Köster, 2016). Hierarchical coordination entails a set of institutions comprising the Quality Assurance System (SAC). Within this system, the Ministry of Education is primarily responsible for developing policy, the national curriculum framework, school leaders' and teachers' professional frameworks, providing resources and support to schools and teachers. The Education Superintendence is responsible for ensuring schools operate in accordance with financial and administrative regulations and for defending consumers' rights (students and parents). The Education Quality Agency is responsible for assessing pupils through the SIMCE census testing program, inspecting schools and informing the public on the quality of each school as defined through these evaluation mechanisms. Additionally, the system includes the

National Education Council (CNED) that approves provisions stemming from the other SAC institutions, i.e., national curriculum, assessments and procedures for categorizing schools' performance levels, among others.

Chile's market-coordinated system meets consumers' (parents) preferences and requirements through the provision of school choice, funded via an attendance-based voucher subsidizing demand, and competition among schools to attract enrolment. Parents' right to choose is guaranteed in the constitution, opting between four types of schools: (a) municipal, administered by a municipality (public), financed through a state voucher; (b) private-subsidized, administered by a private provider, financed through the same state voucher; (c) municipal, administered by a private provider, financed through same state voucher; and (d) private, fully financed by families (about 7% of total enrolment).

Through a number of policies that have incentivized the participation of private providers, over the last 20 years public school enrolment has steadily declined- reaching just 36.8% by 2015 (OECD, 2017). These schools concentrate low-income pupils as well as pupils who are rejected by private providers due to their academic or behavioural challenges (Carrasco, Gutiérrez, and Flores, 2017). Public schools also tend to have the lowest average performance on the national achievement testing program (SIMCE). The results of these high-stakes tests are used to categorized schools into one of four levels: high, middle, middle low, and insufficient. After 4 consecutive years in the insufficient category, the school must close. In 2018, 8% of all schools were classified as insufficient, but this reaches 17% among schools serving low-income students<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Agency for Quality Education. Retrieved from <http://archivos.agenciaeducacion.cl/PolicybriefCD2018.pdf>

The lower performance of the public school sector has been traced to structural problems with the municipal administration as well as policies that have fostered a highly segregated system (Bellei, 2018). Municipal authorities administer public-schools' budgets and personnel but on all technical-pedagogical matters schools follow the Ministry of Education's directives. This division creates an educational system that lacks coherent planning, without a systemic approach to the improvement of public education. With few exceptions, municipalities have been an inefficient manager of educational services, with many facing financial problems due to low enrolment and insufficient technical capacities to support their school (Donoso-Díaz et al., 2015). Within the SAC accountability system each school, but not its municipal department of education, is subject to high-stakes consequences stemming from poor performance on the SIMCE testing program.

Three key structural reforms have been implemented between 2008 and 2017 to address some of the problems just outlined (Valenzuela and Montecinos, 2017). The Preferential School Subsidy Law (SEP, Law N° 20.248), passed in 2008, provided schools with greater resources per low-income student, thus creating an incentive for schools to enroll disadvantaged students. Schools must develop and implement of a four-year School Improvement Plan (PME) which affords principal some autonomy over financial matters. The Inclusion Law passed in 2015 (Law N° 20.845) increased funding per low-income student and also prohibited private-subsidized schools from charging tuition and from selecting students. These last two provisions aim to redress the high social segregation in Chile's education system stemming from marketization in education.

A third reform, the National System for Teachers' Professional Development Law (Law 20.903, passed in 2016) aims to strengthen the teaching profession. Among other

provisions, teachers are entitled to pay increases based on their performance on the teacher evaluation system and the student contact hours have been reduced to 65% of the contracted time. The expectation is that a substantive portion of the remaining contracted time (35%) will be spent on activities that promote a collaborative approach to school improvement and on on-site professional development. Principals, in collaboration with teachers, are now responsible for developing and implementing a four-year professional development plan linked to the School Improvement Plan. On a yearly basis, this plan must be revised to ensure pertinence to any changes in local conditions and national policies.

Public school principals are expected to become instructional leaders, orienting their work priorities through five dimensions of school processes and outcomes codified in the Good Leadership Framework (Ministry of Education, 2015): constructing and implementing a shared strategic vision; developing professional capacities; leading teaching and learning processes; developing the school community and encouraging participation; and developing and managing the organization. Once hired, public school principals sign a five-year contract, subject to annual evaluation, that specifies the attainment of performance targets that most often include raising scores in the national standardized testing system (SIMCE) and increasing school enrolment (Montecinos, Ahumada, Galdames, Campos, and Leiva, 2015). In addition, principals may remove up to 5% of teachers identified as underperforming through the national teacher assessment system.

### **Conceptual framework**

Sociocultural approaches posit professional learning as a situated process that is part and product of participation in cultural activities that cannot be separated from their experiential reference (Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989). These approaches recognize that knowledge

required for professional practice is distributed among people, social and symbolic environments, objects and artefacts; hence the importance of recognizing, legitimizing and bringing together the diverse perspectives at stake (Greeno, 1998). The availability and coordination of knowledge from multiple actors in a social context, however, is not enough to improve practice. The construction of learning settings, which allow for systematic and sustained collaboration, is needed to mobilize the knowledge of multiple actors as a shared resource for professional learning.

A learning setting refers to the actions, material and conceptual tools and infrastructure through which learning is enacted, new practices emerge and social interactions mediate how individuals make meaning (Saljö, 2009). Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) posits that learning entails an expansion, a reduction or a fragmentation of the object-motive of an activity (Engeström, 2008). The idea of object motive (what motivates the activity or the problem to be worked on) acknowledges that our actions respond to our interpretations of the object as well as to the set of socially and historically situated practices we can access (Edwards, 2011). Professional learning, therefore, entails conversations through which people make visible their values, priorities and personal theories embedded in their everyday practices (Tillema and Orland-Barak, 2006; MacBeath and Dempster, 2009).

### ***Schools Inquiring and Learning with Peers Professional Development Model***

Figure 1 depicts the key components of the SILP model, which consists of two distinct, albeit interrelated, learning settings (Cortez et al., forthcoming). The network setting involves a cluster of three schools supported by university partners that conduct peer reviews. The notions of joint practice development (Fielding et al., 2005) and multivoicedness in professional conversations are the essence of this process. In this pilot

project the peer review process focused on the quality of feedback with the aim of improving the use of formative feedback in the classrooms. The school setting involves meetings between the university facilitators and the participating team for deeper analysis and reflection of the self-evaluation data in order to plan professional learning around the use of feedback.

The use of a network structure aligns with evidence suggesting school leadership teams have a greater impact on student learning outcomes when they learn with other leadership teams committed to an improvement inquiry cycle (Chapman and Muijs, 2013). Participation in a network allows for the development of expansive learning, which may take place when the institutional boundaries of the school are transcended (Engeström, 2008). This learning begins when people question accepted practices and doubts arise as to whether old ideas or practices are viable or worthwhile. This learning creates new modes of behaviour that do not yet exist, expanding the object-motive of activity where the problem or the task itself is created from problematic, disturbing or uncertain situations.

University facilitators present information on the characteristics of effective feedback (academic research) and provide school teams with instruments for data collection through school visits (practitioner research). The review process involves lesson observations following a structured protocol focused on the learning goals of the lesson as well as on the different types of feedback provided (Hattie and Timperley, 2007). Interviews with teachers and students focus on conceptions of learning (i.e., what do good students do? what makes a good learner?), conceptions of teaching (i.e. characteristics of effective teachers) and conceptions of feedback (i.e., what is feedback? what types of feedback are provided by your teachers?). The day ends with a plenary session in which



visitors share findings and the host team addresses additional questions from visiting teams and shares their own analysis of the data.

The school-level setting is not part of RiPR and was developed for the Chilean context to assist teams in the transfer to leadership for learning practices. It provides an opportunity for the university team to model the use of reflective questions that provide challenges and supports for generating alternative explanations and envisioning new actions. In this setting teams provide context-relevant knowledge that reflects the professional journey of the school leadership team and the micropolitical culture.

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Insert Figure 1 about here

Schools Inquiring and Learning with Peers (SILP) Professional Development Model

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The cycle ends with a data-sharing workshop involving all teachers from the school, first working in groups of 5-6 to analyse a sample of the range of data produced in the peer review process. Next, in a plenary, groups share their interpretations of these data. This initial analysis is later followed by a presentation on effective feedback to students by the university facilitators. Groups then reconvene for a second round of analysis focusing on how and when the conceptual tools presented by the university team could be used if teachers were to modify their feedback to pupils. After identifying these leverage points for improvement, the session ends with a plenary where consensus is built for subsequent collective action.

Through the engagement with data, SILP makes possible the participation of multiple voices with potential to broaden mutual understanding of shared tasks and problems, and allows the development of expertise in the negotiation of meanings

(Konkola, 2001). This polyphony or multiplicity "of voices" (multivoicedness) relates to a concept that Bakhtin brings to the understanding of the dialogic nature of language. A person, he noted, is involved in an internal persuasive discourse when different ideas, which embody different voices, clash with each other in a dialogue that tests these ideas through questioning, imagining new alternatives, evaluating various discourses, and so on (Matusov, 2007). An interactive system is launched, based on the support structure built by other people and cultural tools, allowing those who participate to go beyond their current skills (Cole, 1984).

The participation of the university facilitators, familiar with these practitioners' inquiry, serves as a broker by putting school teams in touch with the voices of academic researchers. The facilitators' role throughout the various activities in both settings is to help participants unpack theories of action inherent in how they understand teaching and learning (Godfrey, forthcoming). Robinson and Timperley (2013) posit that theories of action have three components: (a) the values and cognitions "which explain (b) the observed actions and (c) the intended and unintended consequences of those actions" (p. 164). Participants collaborate in the development of new solutions, they request and offer information, they request and offer explanations, and develop local ideas of what good practice might mean and for what purposes.

## **Method**

For this paper we have selected three schools (one network) that participated in a larger pilot study aimed at examining the transferability of RiPR to a new context, what adaptations would be required as well as how it impacted participants' professional learning (Cortez et al., forthcoming). This interpretive case study design enabled us to examine in a naturalistic setting how interactions between and among principals and teachers afforded

opportunities to create zones of proximal development that could move forward the utilization of effective classroom feedback to pupils. By examining in detail how these participants' theories of action were disrupted, we make visible how knowledge is "in" the people and systems that use SILP (Engeström, 2008; Cannata, Cohen-Vogel and Sorum, 2017).

### ***School contexts and participants' job descriptions***

The three schools are a subset of 24 schools and 9 early childhood centres, serving close to 7000 pupils, managed by one municipal department of education (see Table 1). After agreeing to participate in this pilot, the municipal director of education selected the schools following our request to include at least one higher performing school. After the university team presented SILP to each of these school's principals, they and their school staff, accepted to participate on a voluntary basis. From each school a team was formed comprising the school principal and the Technical Pedagogical Head (TPH). The TPH is a member of the leadership team with a strong focus on working with teachers to support and monitor the implementation of the national curriculum. The third member was a teacher leader selected by each principal based on her reputation as an effective teacher and her level of influence among peers. The teacher leader's primary responsibility was classroom teaching. All professionals within each school expressed their decision to participate in the study through a signed informed consent.

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Insert Table 1 About here  
Table 1 School and Participants Characteristics<sup>2</sup>

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### ***Data sources and procedures***

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<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://datos.mineduc.cl/dashboards/19738/bases-de-datos-resumen-de-matricula-por-ue/>

In-depth qualitative data were produced through audio recordings and field notes during: workshops that brought the three school teams together (n= 3, 4-hour sessions); reflection sessions conducted with each school team (n=6, 2-hour sessions); and data-sharing workshops with teachers at each school (n=3, 3-hour sessions). These totalled 33 hours of field notes as well audio recordings that were transcribed for analysis.

### ***Data analysis***

This textual corpus was read by three of the authors, identifying those episodes in the professional conversations that allowed us to visualize the theories of action of the participants and the inflection points, that is, events in the conversation during which the participants begin to outline new understandings regarding teachers, instructional leadership and professional learning. These turning points were identified through the presence of questions to current practices, dilemmas (tensions presented in the voice of a participant, expressed through doubts and conflicting opinions), innovations (initiatives involving new idea or solution), and multivoicedness (bringing different perspectives or voices to the topic under discussion).

### **Results**

Next, we construct a narrative account of inflections and turning points that mobilized individual, collective and organizational learning at each school. Our analysis shows that these schools differed in terms where they started and ended following SILP. In the presentation of each case we focus on how the voices of various actors accumulated, expanded, and improved participants' understanding of the problems that needed to be addressed and the professional learning requirements to do so.

### ***School A: "We have done so much and nothing works"***

When we approached principal Violeta<sup>3</sup> to gauge her interest in participating in SILP she expressed some level of helplessness because they had implemented a number of initiatives that proved unsuccessful: “*with this project [SILP] we are trying to achieve something. If we continue stabbing around in the dark, will never manage [to improve SIMCE’s scores]*” (University Workshop 1). Although her school had remained at the Medium-low Education Quality Agency category, the leadership team was concerned it might drop its standing due to fluctuations in their standardized assessments scores. This, in turn, would have repercussions on her performance evaluation:

We must account to someone, in this case the department of education, which sets goals for the principals and for the schools. We must meet those goals because it shows that the principal is effective (Principal Violeta, School A, Workshop 1<sup>4</sup>)

Violeta’s initial belief was that to improve instructional practice teachers needed to attend externally driven professional development programs. Whereas the topic of the peer review process was on teachers’ feedback to students, the focus of this team’s analysis quickly changed to professional development that could lead to changes in instructional practices. Different perspectives emerged in explaining the lack of impact of repeated efforts to change instruction. Whereas Violeta insisted that teachers lacked motivation to change, the teacher leader gently disagreed:

Now we are [told] we are responsible for what children learn (...). I think we have had a breakthrough, that's why teachers are aware of the need to develop skills and are trying to teach in other ways (...) but it is challenging to start designing one’s own

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<sup>3</sup> Pseudonyms are given to all participants

<sup>4</sup> Data excerpts are identified by the position of the speaker (P= Principal; TPH= Technical Pedagogical Head; TL= Teacher Leader), the school (A, B, and C) and the data context (University Workshop, Plenary, Reflection Session at each school, Data Sharing Workshop)

strategies and move away from the front of the classroom (Cecilia, Teacher Leader, School A, Reflection Session 1)

This type of intervention prompted the team to examine alternative explanations as to why, despite so much professional development, teachers had not changed their instruction:

I think we have to analyse our own theories of action, to see what else can explain (...) I can have assumptions but I may be wrong (...) Maybe they [teachers] do not agree with what the school asks, so that may hinder [change] (Eloisa, TPH, School A, Reflection Session 1)

Not having common pedagogical criteria, not sharing a vision is a complication. It is an area to work on (...). Perhaps, it is difficult for us to rethink our theories, to address them, to study and engage in conversations about teaching (Cecilia, teacher leader, School A, Reflection Session 1)

During the first in-school reflection session a university facilitator brought teachers' voices into a conversation that until that moment had been about them rather than with them. When one of the facilitators mentioned the teachers interviewed reported a lack of spaces for collaboration, the principal went on to enumerate the weekly staff meetings that were intended to create opportunities for teachers to collaborate. The teacher leader, as well as the TPH, cautiously challenged their principal's claim:

We are in a meeting and suddenly we realise there are 15 minutes left to do collaborative work, but that is not collaboration, we work on an activity but not in-depth. (...) Therefore, I think we need to analyse our own beliefs [about collaboration] (Eloisa, TPH, School A, Reflection Session 1)

During the second in-school reflection session the team identified the need to create professional development opportunities that motivated teachers and challenged their beliefs. At the centre of this expanded object motive was Violeta's expanded understanding of what makes professional development effective:

Teacher Leader: I think that most teachers are interested in improving their practices. Why they would not be interested in doing better and having better results?

Principal Violeta: I don't know (...) what would have to happen for them to change. Have a workshop on effective feedback? I don't know [stands at the table, expresses fatigue with the subject]

Facilitator: What made you think it is important to change instructional practices?

Principal Violeta: Having gone to the classrooms and seeing what was happening, having heard students' opinions [refers data from the review process]  
[the principal changes her facial expression, smiles and raises her face].

Principal Violeta: Just as we experienced that, and that has changed our ideas, teachers need to experience the same so that their interest and need for change can emerge.

Eloisa, TPH: Yes, we could do something similar. Teachers can visit each other's classrooms, with a focus on types of feedback that allow for better student learning (Fieldnotes, School A, Reflection Session 2)

During the workshop to share the findings from the peer review process, the team was surprised that, in contrast to previous conversations reported at staff meetings where teachers mostly complained about students, teachers talked about their instructional practices. The leadership team and teachers found a common ground from which to develop

a shared understanding of what and why changes in practices were needed:

Teacher 1: We work a lot as islands and we must get ready to work collaboratively, trust our colleagues and accept criticism. We feel threatened by the opinion of others. It is difficult to look [at oneself] critically.

Teacher 3: We need to deepen, as a community, our understanding regarding feedback in the classroom, reach a consensus on criteria (...), raise awareness among our students, trust our students, they do not have a ceiling (...). All children can learn.”

(Fieldnote, School A, Data Sharing Workshop)

The inflection points at School A that we have illustrated through these interview excerpts and field notes show that by moving professional development away from workshops that provide teachers with information and towards creating opportunities for participation in decision-making, agency to work collaboratively on improvement was engendered. Moving away from an “us” versus “them” mentality and away from a will/skill dichotomy helped teachers and the school leadership team align values and create a sense of shared responsibility for teacher learning and development. A shared sense of purpose facilitates trust, a key ingredient for collaborative professional learning (Fielding et al., 2005).

***School B: Managing improvement through dichotomies***

When principal Margot arrived at this school two years ago, she prioritised the creation of a safe school climate and once that goal was achieved, she would then focus on teaching and learning. The invitation to join SILP coincided with her decision to focus her efforts on instructional leadership, thus it became an opportunity to address her new motive. The path she had pursued ignored the advice from school staff who has told her that the previous



principal had already focused on climate issues. This was a concern of the team as the school had remained on the Medium Low Education Quality Agency's category:

It is complex because one knows that [to have a behaviour management policy] is really valuable but then why isn't learning happening? (Teacher Leader School B, Peer Review Plenary at School B)

In addition to the learning/behaviour management division in her theory of action about leading school improvement, a second divide guided her actions. Margot noted that although school policies and expectations were clear on the need to implement assessment for learning and active learning, teachers continued to stand front and centre in the classroom, lecturing at students. When asked about this discrepancy, the principal explained that there were two distinct groups of teachers: those who had a progressive view on assessment (including the leadership team) and the vast majority of teachers who held onto a traditional perspective. The teacher leader challenged this dichotomy, explaining that some teachers continued with business as usual because they did not know how to implement the policy.

At the first in-school reflection session Margot shared a professional development activity designed to address the heterogeneous quality documented throughout the lessons observed during the peer review process. In this plan we observed an oversimplification of what it takes for teachers to change practices, as she posited that modelling and simulation should be enough:

Starting this Wednesday, we start a professional development plan. We selected the teachers who will teach us, so their colleagues can observe them teach (...). We will see how they engage us, how they motivate us, how they challenge us. I think it will

be fun. (...) I think that a teacher who has never done [what is being modelled by the colleague] will reflect and, if it is meaningful, will, I suppose, make a commitment [to try-out the practice observed] (Principal Margot, School B, Plenary after the third peer review visit)

The above excerpt shows that the principal begins to move toward an instructional leadership model by creating a structure for peer learning among teachers (as opposed to her previous approach to focusing mostly on drafting policy and manuals related to school climate). In this design Margot creates a dichotomy in which some good teachers (those hand-picked to model good practices) will teach out-dated teachers (the recipients of these good practices). This approach is probably not very promising as learning to teach entails a developmental process that validates and acknowledges the practices of the learner who makes sense of, and recreates the practices shared by their colleagues (Fielding et al., 2005).

As university facilitators scaffolded the development of new ways for the team to lead professional learning, Margot requested that they facilitate the data-sharing workshop with teachers at her school. It seemed like she wanted to apply the same strategy, observe how a model engages, motivates and challenges teachers as they are asked to grapple with evidence showing a clear need for instructional improvement. During this workshop, teachers shared opinions, delved into their theories of action and expanded their knowledge about feedback. As all teachers engaged in identifying the challenges on which they need to work collectively, Margot, as well as the TPH, were surprised that the division between good teachers and out-dated teachers was invisible. Teachers positioned themselves as agents of change:

We need to internalize the concept of feedback in this school, incorporate it in a systematic way, practising strategies and the different types of feedback. Teachers

need to define these processes so we share a common language. We need to visit each other's classrooms and observe what is happening (Fieldnotes, School B, Data Sharing Workshop)

The inflection points at School B that we have illustrated through these interview excerpts and field notes showed to principal Margot that writing down what needs to happen (policies and procedure) was not enough to create alignment between the school leadership team and teachers. An alignment in purpose and actions required conversations about teaching and learning through which teachers could make sense of policies. The data-sharing workshop with teachers disproved the principal's assertion that she could count on only a few teachers to move the school forward. Whether this prompted her to change her mindset towards her role in building more trusting relations - a key ingredient of effective collaboration – was unclear at the time we left the school. Teachers' voices highlighted why viewing school improvement and teacher learning through the series of dichotomies that framed Margot's theories of action impoverished her analysis as well as the alternative paths she could envision to move forward.

***School C: "We really are not learner focused, as we claim to be"***

Over the last 10 years this school, under the leadership of principal Gabriela, had shown an improvement trajectory that had brought the school, and the principal, national recognition. In contrast to School A and B, at this school there was a strong focus on instructional leadership and according to the Education Quality Agency's categorization it held a Medium status. All school staff declared they were learner centred, sharing a commitment to improving students' learning through their engagement in continuous improvement. Considering its reputation as an effective school, the other schools' teams were eager to conduct the peer review process here.

From observing lessons, peers as well as the school team became aware that although students were engaged in hands-on learning, this had more of an entertaining purpose as opposed to engagement with rigorous content and the development of higher order skills. Assessment activities largely required students to employ rote repetition. During the plenary at the end of the school visit, Principal Gabriela recognized the challenge they need to work on:

We need higher levels of student engagement, to strengthen their self-regulation, self-monitoring and peer feedback. The challenge is co-responsibility; to restore their position, strengthen their autonomy and develop higher order cognitive skills.  
(Principal Gabriela, School C, Plenary in the peer review process at School C)

When the university facilitators arrived for the first in-school reflection session, the team presented their action plan to meet the challenges they had identified. Considering how impactful it would be to see lessons through the eyes of students, and how difficult it was for their students to talk about their learning and about feedback, the plan involved teachers interviewing students. In these interviews, teachers heard things such as: a good teacher “helps all students” and “explains in different ways”. Students stated that they knew they had learned “when I am told that my answer is correct” or “when I get a good grade”. By amplifying students’ voices teachers became aware that they were not as learner-centred as they proclaimed to be.

Teachers came to a conclusion similar to that which had been articulated by the principal in the plenary: students needed to be placed centre-stage in their learning process. This entailed developing metacognitive skills to exercise agency in learning. During the data-sharing workshop teachers spoke about students’ learning:

Students should be working on high challenge tasks. None should be excluded from extending their knowledge beyond what they know. Students should know how to learn and assess their progress (Fieldnotes, Teachers, School C, Data-sharing workshop)

We need to make feedback relevant for all students. Although all can show progress, there are students who we cannot always reach. We need to strengthen their commitment to learning, strengthen their self-efficacy, strengthen their creativity and guide them accordingly (Fieldnotes, Teachers, School C, Data-sharing workshop)

The inflection points at School C that we have illustrated through these interview excerpts and field notes show how by introducing students' voices into teachers' conversations about teaching and learning critical feedback was obtained. Charting a professional development plan that addresses inconsistencies between espoused beliefs and commitments and students' everyday classroom experiences was the main take away from this school's involvement in SILP. After the review process this team also switched staff meetings so that the focus of conversation was teaching and students' behaviours. They left the pilot committed to making learning visible during these meetings.

## **Discussion**

The overarching research aim was to examine how RiPR worked to support the professional development of school leaders in Chile. Our findings emphasize the importance of recognizing that professional learning comes from practitioners developing new tools that afford possibilities for the creation of new practices within existing school practices and culture (Fielding et al., 2005; Lewis, 2015). SILP involved adapting the RiPR model by adding a new learning setting that supported the transfer of knowledge developed in the

network setting into practice. Next, we highlight outcomes of participating in SILP that are common across schools as well variability in each team's understanding of the problems to be worked on as they envisioned new leadership for learning practices.

We identified four shared outcomes across these schools. First, all came to conclude that professional conversations needed to make learning visible to teachers and students and that a shared vision of learning should be developed. Attending to students' voices was particularly powerful in expanding participants' understanding of why making learning visible mattered. Participants recognized that if students do not know what is entailed in the activity of learning, then their meaningful participation in the lesson is constrained.

Second, all reconceptualized the purpose of classroom observation as a tool for school improvement that needed to focus on pupils in learning activities. Engaging teachers in peer observation would involve new work configurations such as arranging teachers' schedules to jointly plan data production (i.e., interview students), develop protocols to introduce rigor in the process and use these data to inform changes. Fostering ample opportunities for peer feedback, reflection, the development of trust and collaboration are key tasks of leadership for learning (Datnow, Park, and Kennedy-Lewis, 2013). Hamilton, 2013).

Third, the workshops designed for sharing with teachers the findings of the peer review process engaged them in making sense of these data, thus stimulating greater agency and ownership for their professional learning, which are characteristics of effective professional development models (Hallinger and Kulophas, 2019). The conceptual tools developed around the use of feedback as well as a recognition of the importance of changing theories of actions in order to change practices became part of a new vocabulary to identify leverage points for improvement.

Fourth, all teams expanded their understandings of how teachers learn and develop. To a greater or lesser extent, they sought to move away from externally driven mandated professional development towards modalities that incorporated inquiry, peer learning and mutual support. Notwithstanding this shared outcome across schools, important variability was observed in principals' understandings of the aim of professional development, how teachers learn and develop and their role in fostering this learning. Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, and LeMahieu (2015) have argued that responding to variability across contexts is critical to efforts aimed at systemic educational improvement.

Although the focus of SILP was to enhance teacher feedback to pupils, throughout the implementation at each school, teams worked on different problems. This finding shows the active role of learners in making sense of their participation in a professional development program, creating goals that are more meaningful than prescribed by the program designers as expected outcomes. In the school-level setting we harnessed our ability to address this variability.

In School A the motive or need that elicited participation in SILP was to ensure the school did not drop from its current standing on the Education Quality Agency's categorization. To address this need, the principal had hired external consultants to deliver professional development to teachers. The lack of impact of this strategy was explained by the principal as teachers' lacking the will to change, thus, they failed to take advantage of the professional opportunities created by the principal. This problem, or explanation, was brought into tension when she began listening to teachers' voices. For them, lack of change was attributed more to lack of skill than will. Her own experience as a learner in SILP as well as the questions raised by the facilitators provided for a turning point that enabled her to see how skill and will were interconnected. She realized that opportunities to learn had to

engage teachers' agency and create in them a need for change not just as an individual endeavour but also as a collective enterprise. We observed: (a) an expansion of her understanding of her role as a school leader in promoting teacher learning, (b) increased understanding of the complexities entailed in changing practices and (c) a wider repertoire of tools to design a local professional development plan to promote teacher agency and trust among colleagues. These are two essential qualities for collaboration.

In the case of School B, the principal intended to focus the conversation on improving teacher feedback to pupils but this goal was repeatedly challenged by the voices of peers, teachers and students. She was challenged on her theory regarding a sequential approach to improvement that separated students' (mis) behaviours from the quality of the opportunities to learn that teachers created in the classroom. She was challenged in her belief that the teaching staff could be clearly separated between those who had the skills and will from those who did not have the skills or will to provide quality instruction. Students voiced how this separation had seeped through into how teachers treated them by just attending to a few students and leaving the rest behind. In response to these challenges she began to consider the perspectives of others. She came to recognize that to improve learning she needed to have greater pedagogical expertise in her leadership team and to validate the contributions of the teacher leader. Her understanding of teacher learning moved slowly from an emphasis on writing policies to a focus on opportunities to learn. In doing so, however, she did not always acknowledge and recognize that all teachers can and are willing to contribute to instructional improvement.

In the case of School C, the principal entered SILP knowing that the core of leadership for learning was to develop a learner centred school culture, and this is what she believed staff were routinely doing. By amplifying students' voices, this certainty was



fractured as they learned that students did not know how to make their learning visible. At this school, the intended purpose of SILP, to improve teachers' use of quality feedback became the goal of their professional conversations. To get there, however, they acknowledged the need to: a) pay closer attention to how their students actually learnt, (b) develop teachers' skills to help students become self-regulated learners, and (c) monitor to what extent their instructional practices achieved these intended outcomes.

### **Conclusions**

The power of SILP as a professional development device is in the use of evidence understood not only as information but also as voices previously silenced in other professional conversations about leadership for learning. By listening to multiple voices leaders incorporate the perspectives, conceptual horizon, intentions and worldview of all actors who need to collaborate for teaching to produce learning as well as for leadership to produce school improvement (Wertsch, 1991).

In the voices of the school leadership team, leadership was often depicted as developing policy and monitoring its implementation. Teacher leaders contributed the voices of their everyday classroom experiences and the complexities they faced when implementing the policies defined by the leadership team. They voiced that working with students who experienced social exclusion due to poverty and high accountability pressures led to work intensification. The voices of students made visible their motivation to learn, and how some teachers fell short of students' expectations for support and challenge.

Metaphorically speaking, SILP served the function of an equaliser for the *acoustics* of the multiple voices that came into the professional conversations both in the network and school learning settings. In School A we observed an increase in the volume of teachers' voices, in School B we observed a decrease in the volume of the principal's voice, and in

School C the amplification of students' voices. Throughout the SILP process the volume of the university team's voices gradually diminished as school practitioners increasingly took an active role in challenging each other's theories of action and envisioning new possibilities. The confluence of these different voices (leadership team, teachers and students) helped all participants reconceptualize how co-responsibility is engendered by agency and trust and not through top-down policy mandates to improve instruction.

The findings of this small-scale multiple case study examining the pilot implementation of a peer review process provide evidence of a potentially promising innovation in the provision of professional development for school leaders in Chile. SILP highlighted that professional development programs are most powerful when they are embedded in the school's professional and institutional realities, and where participation acknowledges the specific contextual affordances and constraints participants see for their use of new actions, materials and conceptual tools (Datnow et al., 2013).

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Figure 1 Schools Inquiring and Learning with Peers (SILP) Professional Development Model

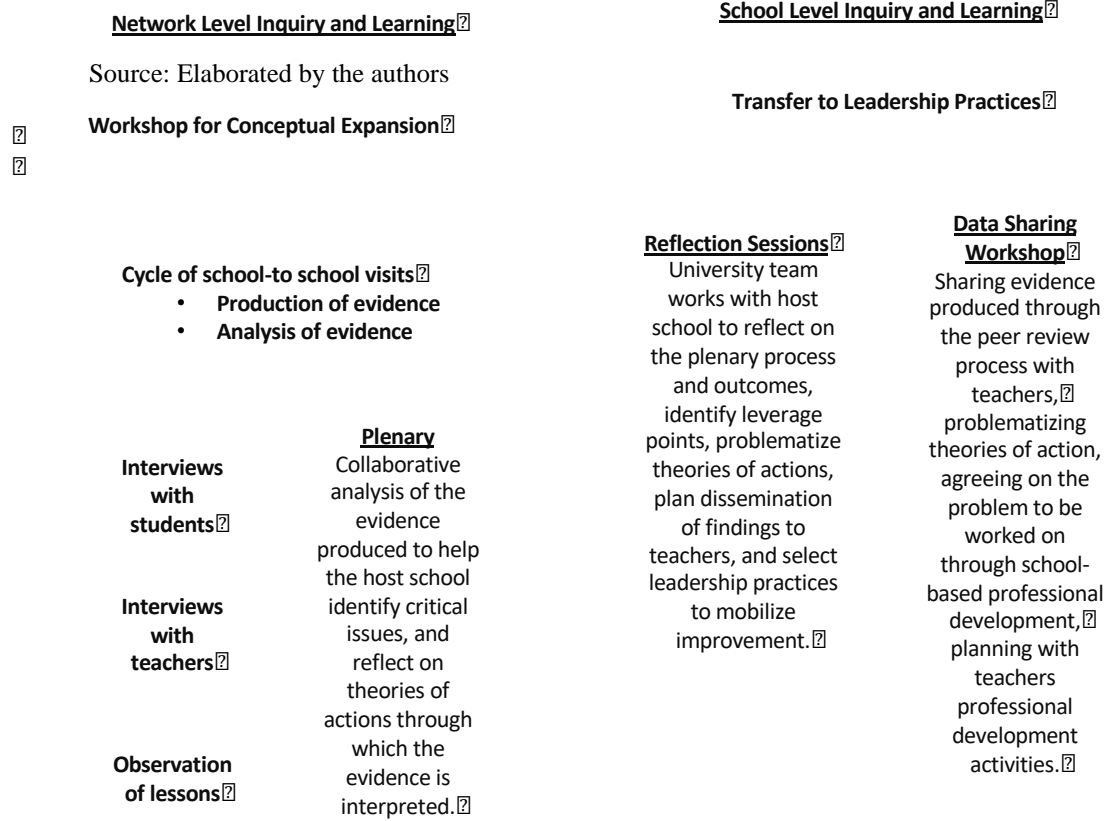


Table 1 Schools' and participants' characteristics<sup>5</sup>

School	Grades Served	Number of teachers	Enrollment 2018	IVE 2019 <sup>6</sup>		Pseudonyms and number of years in the role <sup>7</sup>		
				Elementary	Secondary	Principal	TPH	Teacher Leader
A	1-12	51	471	91%	100%	Violeta 1-5 years	Eloisa 30-40 years	Cecilia 5-10 years
B	1-12	66	654	90%	88%	Margot 1-5 years	Pablo 5-10 years	Miriam 10-20 years
C	1-12	53	533	89%	85%	Gabriel a 10-15 years	Monserat at 1-5 years	Francisca ca 1-5 years

<sup>5</sup> Source: <http://datos.mineduc.cl/dashboards/19738/bases-de-datos-resumen-de-matriculapor-ue/>

<sup>6</sup> IVE indicates the proportion of low-income students. Source <https://www.junaeb.cl/ive>

<sup>7</sup> To protect anonymity, the number of years have been reported as range.