

Meanings and problems using the concept of quality in Chilean new public education: A critical interpretation from a Biesta's theoretical framework

Policy Futures in Education

2026, Vol. 0(0) 1–19

© The Author(s) 2026

Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/14782103251413084

journals.sagepub.com/home/pfe

Carmelo Galioto¹ , Magdalena Tobar-Vargas² and Manolo Aranda Fredes²

Abstract

This report addresses two key issues in Chilean educational policies: the pursuit of educational quality and the development of a new institutional framework for public education. The central focus of the article is the exploration and critical interpretation of the meanings, purposes, and values of the concept of educational quality at the central level (the Public Education Directorate) of New Public Education. The reconstruction of this approach to educational quality is organized into three dimensions: axiological, ontological, and praxeological, which highlight aspects of educational quality linked to purposes and values, the conception of school, systemic work, and the consideration of knowledge. This allows us to recognize, as a potential, a way of understanding educational quality more comprehensively, rather than linking it to the standardized result evaluation. At the same time, the problematic dimension of a possible dissociation between this more integral notion of quality and its systemic operationalization, which continues to operate in public education, emerges.

Keywords

educational quality, public education, critical hermeneutic, educational policy

Introduction

The key focus of this international report is the exploration and critical interpretation of the meanings, purposes, and values of the concept of educational quality in Chile's New Public

¹Department of Theology, Universidad Católica del Maule, Talca, Chile

²Universidad de Chile, Santiago, Chile

Corresponding author:

Carmelo Galioto, Universidad Católica del Maule, Avenida San Miguel 3605, Talca 3466706, Chile.

Email: cgalioto@ucm.cl

Education (NEP) policy. The purpose of this report is to contribute to the problematization of the use of this concept in contemporary educational policies, based on a critical-philosophical interpretation of the way in which this Chilean educational policy addresses the notion of quality.

In 2004, UNESCO presented to educational systems a horizon of expectations toward which they should move in these terms: the imperative of quality (UNESCO, 2004, 2005, 2007). International educational agencies have played an important role in introducing the notion of quality into school education. A prominent example of this is the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda (United Nation Organization, 2015), which includes quality education as one of its key objectives (Saini et al., 2023; Sider et al., 2021).

However, some international research has shown how the concept of quality in educational policies implies a vague and poorly defined way of understanding it (Alexander, 2015; Anagnostopoulos et al., 2016; Wittek and Kvernbekk, 2011): its conceptual ambiguity is functional for moving towards a type of instrumental rationality in education with a strong emphasis in evaluations by measurements and standards (Fenech and Wilkins, 2018; Hunkin, 2019; Kauko et al., 2018; Skedsmo and Huber, 2017). These features of educational quality, raised by academic research, are problematic due to the narrow scope of the curriculum (Au, 2007) and also the debate about the type of school we can consider possible. The most recent research on educational quality in schools has focused on the role of teachers (Mizala and Schneider, 2019) in case studies of educational governance (López-Rupérez, 2022; Serrano et al., 2023) or how it relates to the search for inclusion (Pradhan, 2019; Rangarajan et al., 2023; Taneja-Johansson and Singal, 2021). From this academic literature, critical perspectives emerge regarding the fact that the concept of educational quality cannot be limited to only certain learning areas (primarily language and mathematics), nor can quality be reduced to and equated with the results of standardized tests.

In this sense, one contribution of this report is to document and interpret what happens when an educational policy declares a new approach to quality as its core (the first principle of its guiding principles), naming it “integral quality” and attempting to move away from a mechanistic and operationalized view of quality. Therefore, in what follows, we provide some guidelines that allow us to characterize Chilean educational policies regarding school quality as an illustrative case study.

Background on the concept of quality in Chilean educational policies and the new public education policy

The use of the concept of quality in Chilean educational policies has a long history (Falabella, 2019; Galioto and Henríquez Vásquez, 2021; Galioto and Pérez Navarro, 2023). This is a notion that has been shaped by a discourse shaped by a mechanistic and economic vision that precedes and justifies it. “Quality” is a concept that has entered this political field since its use in the world of industrial management and implies regular measurements for compliance with predefined standards or goals.

In Chile, one example of this (among others) is the implementation of a standardized system for measuring school quality: SIMCE (System for Measuring Educational Quality), established in 1988. This device for evaluation was promoted by the civic-military Dictatorship, as a sort of last component of its educational policies implemented during the decade of the 1980s, under market and competition logics. These policies included promoting a strong emphasis toward school privatization and the municipalization of public education: that is why the media and public debate has called the reform associated with the NEP with the term “*desmunicipalización*” (Bellei and Muñoz, 2020).

Between 1990 and 2000, yet in democracy regime, Chilean governments established several committees to promote improvements in the school system and educational quality (Advisory

Committee, 1995; Quality Council, 2006). These attempts reveal a desire for change, but they fail to break away from the underlying logic of quality as a rigidly established output that should be produced on the basis of a set of inputs.

This logic finds its legal consecration in the Law of Assurance of Educational Quality (Chile, 2010) which establishes a system of categorization of schools according to performance levels and institutes a new state entity called the Agency for Education Quality, in charge of managing this system and coordinating the standardized tests that articulate it.

Within the framework of this approach to educational quality, in November 2017, Law 21.040 of the State of Chile, which created a New Public Education system (hereinafter, NEP), established the gradual transfer of schools and high schools from 345 municipalities to 70 Local Public Education Services (SLEPs). This law signaled a break with the structural changes promoted by the civil-military dictatorship. Furthermore, the NEP is part of a broader set of reforms that included a law regulating access to and financing of the school system and reforming the teaching career (Bellei and Muñoz, 2020). The institutional framework of the NEP is fundamentally structured around three levels: the Public Education Department (DEP) at the national level, Local Public Education Services (SLEP) (decentralized territorial level), and educational institutions. To date, 28 active SLEPs administer 1,834 establishments (339 of which are rural), serving a total of 524,000 students, 27,461 of whom are enrolled in the technical-vocational modality (MINEDUC and DEP, 2024: p. 22).

Each SLEP has a Pedagogical Technical Support Unit (UATP) responsible for supporting educational institutions in the development of teaching and learning processes. This entire process involves a reconfiguration of public education, as the policies implemented between 2015 and 2017 sought to shift away from the neoliberal logic governing the Chilean education system. Consequently, this report addresses two key issues in educational policy in general and in the Chilean case in particular: the pursuit of educational quality and the development and strengthening of public education institutions. In relation to the notion of quality, there are three official NEP documents that explicitly address this concept: Article 5 of Law 21,040 establishes integral quality as the first of the guiding principles of this policy, introducing the novelty of adding the attribute “integral” to the term quality, an attribute absent in previous policy texts and for this reason, it would be interesting to know to what extent this insertion has been a response to the criticalities indicated above regarding the concept: technicalization, standardization, and emphasis on learning effectiveness. Furthermore, we assume that as the first of the nine guiding principles of this policy,¹ integral quality constitutes the core of this policy.

Furthermore, the document “First National Strategy for the New Public Education 2020-2028” states that “the purpose of the establishments dependent on Local Services is to provide quality education that contributes to the learning and integral development of their students at different stages of life” (MINEDUC and DEP, 2020: p. 18).

Finally, the document “New Public Education. Challenges 2024–2030” establishes the difference between educational quality and systemic quality (MINEDUC and DEP, 2024: p. 41): a distinction that is also novel and to which we will return later.

Following this historical streamline, on one hand, it is possible to observe a continuity in the logic of Chileans educational policies between the dictatorship age and the democratic regime (Falabella, 2020; Falabella and Ramos, 2019), and on the other hand, Chile’s NEP takes a relatively novel approach to the notion of educational quality, so it could be valuable to understand shifts, tensions, and possibilities in this treatment of the concept of quality. In this way, it contributes to the exploration of the novelties from a policy contextualized in the Global South of the world (Abebe et al., 2023).

Questions and objectives of this report

To understand how the NEP is addressing the concept of educational quality, this report focuses on the central level of the NEP, that is, the DEP, by asking the following question: What configurations of meanings, purposes, and values is the DEP elaborating regarding the concept of educational quality, and what potentialities and problematic aspects can be interpreted in these configurations of meanings, purposes, and values?.

In light of the above, the objectives of the report are to identify the configurations of meaning, purposes, and values that emerge around the concept of educational quality in the DEP and to recognize potentialities and problems in how the DEP is attempting to add substance to the concept of educational quality.

The report is organized as follows: the next section develops our theoretical framework based on some of Gert Biesta arguments, which provide the interpretive lens that will guide our exploration.

Subsequently, we state the methodology followed in this study. Then we describe the meanings we were able to reconstruct about educational quality according to the DEP, developing a critical interpretation of them in which potentialities and problems emerge. Finally, we present some conclusions and project implications of the Chilean case for the field of policy studies, as well as for future research.

Theoretical framework from a Gert Biesta's approach

[Biesta \(2016, 2019, 2021a, 2021b, 2022, 2024\)](#) argues that the use of the concept of quality in educational policies and public debate suffers from several problems. One of the main problems with using this notion lies in its approach from a technical perspective: focusing on the assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of education, which results in the quantification of quality: an obsessive search to generate evidence about what works. The main problem Biesta points out with this choice of values, such as effectiveness and efficiency, is that they are neutral with respect to what a process such as education should contribute. In practice, this results in the proliferation of quality indicators that are measured, which end up being considered the definitions of quality itself, thus reducing it to the production of a certain “performance.”

Biesta, then, develops some reflections on these issues in order to think about them differently. In particular, the problem of the performative emptiness of educational quality can be addressed (and perhaps overcome) only if we question the purpose of education (and public schooling); this would mean “moving from the soft language of learning to the question of the ends of learning, beginning to add substance to the discussion about educational quality” ([Biesta, 2019](#): p. 660). To continue in this process of adding substance to educational quality, Biesta considers the following ingredient necessary: we should not focus so much on the outcomes of education but rather on a “civilizing argument” that students deserve a valuable place like school, regardless of the effects or impact it may have, since it has value per se, it has something valuable intrinsically. We consider it relevant to interpret an educational policy such as that of Chile through these philosophical lenses because it is a way to concretize the exercise of a dialogue between south–north approaches in educational policies and its philosophical premises ([Biesta et al., 2021](#)), and we could interpretate if it is possible to recognize the development of a civilizing argument in Chilean context.

The research conducted focuses on the concept of quality as it being develop within the DEP, drawing on [Ball's \(1993\)](#) perspective, states that policy can be understood as a text. The research adopts this perspective and considers the notion of educational quality as a chapter within the “text” being produced by the Department of Public Education. According to [Ricoeur \(2000\)](#), texts are

composed of meanings, purposes, values, and symbols that express the relationship between human beings and the world, “as significantly oriented behavior” (p. 175). These elements are informed by both theoretical and historical contexts (the horizon of thought and history) and simultaneously open up future possibilities. This approach, as expressed by [Santoro \(2015\)](#), will allow “the critical interpretation carried out to serve as a sensitivity tool for empirical analysis and open discursive spaces where common understandings limit interpretive possibilities” (p. 178).

The reconstruction of the DEP text is based on a theoretical toolbox that contains dimensions proposed by the philosophy of education literature ([Biesta, 2015, 2016](#); [Burbules, 2004](#)) to approach the object of the research. Within the framework of this article, these dimensions become categories that organize the production of fieldwork data in the DEP. These are the categories of axiology, ontology, and praxeology, which we briefly describe below.

Axiology: This category refers to the fact that educational activity is linked to the aims and values (implicit or explicit) that guide it, and therefore educational quality is closely related to them. Due to the open and controversial nature of the axiological dimension, documenting these aims and values, as well as clarifying and elucidating them, contributes to understanding the educational quality being considered.

Ontology: This category refers to how the school is conceived as a social space. Public schools are institutions with certain qualities and characteristics that make them such; otherwise, they would be something else and would not fulfill their mission.

Praxeology: This category derives from the consideration that education is an activity; therefore, its quality is displayed in certain practices that are considered appropriate for educational development. The sphere of praxeology deals with the question of how education works and how to make the educational phenomenon function better in the everyday practice of teaching. This is also linked to the pedagogical ideas and practices at stake.

Methodological approach: Qualitative research and critical interpretation

In order to realize our critical interpretation of the DEP’s text on educational quality, we triangulated three sources of empirical data: a review of official DEP documents obtained from the official website, observations at specific events organized by the DEP, and individual and group interviews with professionals. Then, we developed a grounded theory-driven analysis focused on the conceptualization of educational quality based on official documents, using data constructed through interviews as our primary source of data.

The methodology adopted, therefore, combines elements of qualitative empirical research, inspired in its objectives, design, and analysis by the philosophical dimensions stated in the previous section, with a phase of critical hermeneutics of the reconstructed text, based on the confrontation with Biesta’s ideas about educational quality, mentioned above. The qualitative approach is understood as one in which the exchange of the researcher with the field and its members is considered the primary source for the production of knowledge ([Flick, 2007](#)). This exchange allows for the recovery of the subjective dimension of the subject/object of study, as the claim of objectivity is abandoned ([Canales, 2006](#)) in order to explore the meanings and values that are given to a basic concept such as educational quality.

As a strategy and technique for producing information, we conducted a bibliographic review of 10 official DEP texts² to gain an initial understanding of the conceptualization and use of the concept of educational quality. The documents were selected based on a prior content review and chosen based on their connection to the objectives established by the research, specifically, how and in what

contexts the concept of educational quality was used. Particular emphasis was placed on the explicit definition of the concept in the text of Law 21,040, the National Strategy 2020–2028, and the Challenges of the New Public Education 2024–2030. Secondly, through non-probabilistic and purposive sampling, six semi-structured interviews and two in-depth interviews were conducted with DEP managers and professionals to explore specific points and create spaces for reflection that allow for exploring how the concept of educational quality is understood in their work responsibilities.

These instruments provide the opportunity to open a dialogue on emerging issues, allowing for deeper exploration of specific topics, as well as establish direct interactions with professionals. The interviewees were agents whose work within the DEP was directly related to the implementation of educational programs, technical and pedagogical support, learning improvement, management, strategic development, among others. This approach was intended to ensure that the sample included information relevant to the objectives of our study. Similarly, a focus group was organized with one of the DEP teams to discuss specific elements by comparing two official texts.

Third, observations were conducted at five seminars and workshops in which the DEP participated and/or organized between July and November 2024. The interviews took place within the framework of informed consent, and all names and positions were anonymized (Table 1).

Once the information was collected, we established an analysis strategy through data triangulation, understood as a strategy that combines diverse theories, data sources, researchers, and methodologies to study a single phenomenon in an integrated way (Arias, 2000). For this research, methodological triangulation was applied not only by integrating several production techniques but also by using more than one data analysis technique.

The first analytical exercise focused on the systematization of the information collected from the documentary review. The conceptualization and use of the concept of educational quality were grounded in the three philosophical dimensions mentioned above. These, in turn, served as the categories that led to the second analytical exercise of coding the interviews. It is important to remember these categories: Axiology, Ontology, and Praxeology. Each category addresses crucial elements that guided the analyzed questions, so the subsequent analysis process was structured around responding to each definition of the dimension, thus collectively achieving the objective of this research. From a Grounded Theory perspective (Strauss and Corbin, 2022), which analyzes data and constructs theory from it, facilitating understanding and meaningful action, it is possible to capture people’s meanings, perceptions, and experiences regarding a phenomenon—in this case, educational quality. Thus, after open coding, axial coding was initiated, where each code was assigned to one of the three established philosophical categories, thus concluding the theory-building process in selective coding.

In this sense, the first codes are categorized as emergent or a priori; that is, they are constructed from textual elements within the transcriptions themselves. Thus, the initial coding exercise resulted

Table 1. Summary of data sources analyzed.

Source of data	Quantity
Documents	10
Semi-structured interviews	6
In-deep interviews	2
Focus group	1

Source: own elaboration.

in a large amount of emergent information, which was then incorporated into the axial coding, according to Straussian coding.

Furthermore, the focus group was analyzed using Content Analysis, due to its capacity for interpreting qualitative data (Andréu Abela, 2001). This analysis allows for the systematic examination of information that goes beyond the purely discursive, thus adapting to the context of the group discussion, where participants reviewed NEP texts, highlighting relevant sections, and sharing their interpretations. As with the analytical exercise for the individual interviews, coding was carried out; however, it was more straightforward and aimed at interpreting selected elements and then categorizing them into one of the three philosophical dimensions. So, the coding process identified emerging codes, but these were more “selective,” meaning that, from an initial reading, we identified the most relevant elements for the research. Furthermore, the first analytical exercise, guided by Grounded Theory, allowed us to establish certain permanent codes that were reused in the coding process for this type of interview.

Additionally, the field notes from the participant observations were key to understanding what was missing in the interviews, as well as identifying the institutional technical information that was missing to understand the functions and objectives of the DEP.

A possible text on educational quality

The text presented below is organized into three chapters: axiology, ontology, and praxeology. Furthermore, it will be interwoven with various tensions that, in our subsequent critical interpretation, could be summarized as a sort of fundamental dissociation between certain values linked to systemic quality and other values linked to educational quality.

Chapter I: Axiology

Toward what values and purposes is oriented the New Public Education quality?

The first finding emerges from an integral conception of education. Public education serves students who are also people and will be future citizens, in addition to involving their families and the school community itself. This approach is made explicit and articulated in the nine guiding principles of the NEP, as set forth in Law 21,040. This holistic approach is especially emphasized in relation to socio-emotional, artistic, and athletic dimensions. Quality education is holistic in nature; therefore, it cannot be conceived or implemented in a compartmentalized manner but must instead address all dimensions of the human person.

These fundamental guidelines regarding the comprehensiveness of education are increasingly being specified in aspects such as the care of students' educational and life trajectories, understood as a school experience that allows for the development of their life plans.

This value has two dimensions: the first is that students remain in the school system, and the second is that the school experience is meaningful to them. For this to happen, the focus of public education must go beyond academic learning, to include social development, skills, and citizenship training. This implies a commitment to the quality of life in school and attention to the emotional well-being of the educational community, as stated in several NEP documents. Along these lines, it was commented that:

“Another area where we are working is generating positive school coexistence as a responsibility of the entire educational community” (DEP Professional 3).

Another value that would guide the New Public Education would be sensitivity and attention to the diversity of students and territories. In particular, attention to the territorial diversity should be

channeled into Diverse Educational Projects according to the demands of territorial contexts. Furthermore, the interviews emphasized that it is the legislative framework that establishes educational quality as a duty of educational institutions. This latter is materialized in the achievement of the objectives outlined in the national strategy, which links quality with pedagogical management and capacity development. As one interviewee noted:

“The learning experience that public education should provide must respond to the needs and characteristics of the students who attend. To topics that are relevant to that territory” (DEP Professional 3).

Within this framework, the DEP identifies among its tasks the recovery of the “role of a more integrated and less segmented school” (DEP Directive 1), where members of the educational community develop a sense of belonging while pursuing their life plans. However, the value of diversity and its consideration by public education is reflected in the purpose of inclusion. Based on the fieldwork conducted, we have identified three meanings of the purpose/value of inclusion.

- (a) Public education is open to all: it does not select from the outset; it is accessible and welcoming.
- (b) Public education has a mission regarding social cohesion, facilitating the future recognition of different social classes, since it especially serves those with a low socioeconomic status.
- (c) Finally, public education is an institution that must be present in the most remote areas of the country (urban and rural or island), as well as fulfilling the role of providing a good education to all these sectors, even in schools with few students and teachers. The educational quality of public education is characterized by this responsibility, in the words of one interviewee: “The State has the obligation to offer a good educational service, regardless of where a student lives. And public education reaches places where others cannot” (DEP Professional 5).

These qualities are a core part, according to a press interview with the National Director of the NEP, of what he has defined as the epic and moral character of public education. The epic aspect relates to a task with which he feels fascinated: providing a good education to the entire country as part of a historical mission. On the other hand, the moral aspect is expressed in the importance of affirming the public sphere and its connection to education as something positive, fostering pride in being part of it: as one interviewee clarifies, “When you talk about restoring morality, deep down, the first idea one would like to see by 2030 is that, first, families, students, and teachers would feel proud of being part of public education” (DEP Director 1).

Now, these axiological dimensions have their main normative source in the laws (specifically the LGE and Law 21.040). The quality of the educational experience in public education would have its decisive source in this legal frame of reference.³

Chapter II ontology

The school is primarily configured as a meeting place for a specific community (the so-called “educational community”), as indicated during the interviews:

I believe that public education should offer diversity; it should be a meeting place (...) It should also be a space for more collaborative work, for learning from others, for reflection, for being enthusiastic about learning, for being exposed to significant experiences in terms of learning (DEP Professional 1).

This meeting place allows this community to develop and for its life to unfold. It is also a place that provides a first experience of shared citizenship. This experience is intergenerational since the school is one of the few institutional spaces explicitly designed for children and adolescents and for a meeting place between different generations and roles (administrators, teachers, parents, and children and adolescents). It also represents an intercultural meeting place linked to migration processes and belonging to different indigenous peoples. For all of this to happen, the school must also be established as a safe place. During the interviews, the following were mentioned:

“All these other things are about connecting you with the world, relating to others, learning to live as citizens, having spaces for citizenship within the school, and having spaces to meet with your community” (DEP Professional 5).

Secondly, and related to the above, the school is also presented as a place where social change can occur:

“We want changes to happen [in school], that is, we hope that everything we do is to reach the student and to equalize opportunities, so that the student has a future they choose, regardless of what it is, but with the possibility of choosing” (DEP Professional 5).

This is materialized in the fact that many social services reach the community at school, such as health services, food assistance, and emergency collection centers, among others. During the interviews, another social change expected from school emerged: the realization of social mobility: that is, school is a means to change students’ initial social situation and respond to the specific needs and demands of both students and their families.

Thirdly, school presents itself as a place of learning that allows for the full development of different areas and spheres of life. This development is not only individual but also involves collaboration with others. The latter is related to the benefits that a meeting of diverse people generates, such as a sense of tolerance, the creation of important bonds for one’s life trajectory, and also the value of diversity. An example mentioned during the interviews indicated that:

School is the space where one is constantly developing, whether through getting to know oneself as a person, acquiring skills, or demonstrating one’s interests. School is where one learns how society works, where one understands where one wants to go (DEP Professional 2).

Alongside these characterizations, there is a tense narrative in the DEP regarding school as a social institution: On the one hand, the school needs its own autonomy to develop its community life, and on the other hand, it is also portrayed as a school in need, a school in difficulty, often described as “lame” and overwhelmed with aids and crutches due to its lack of material resources or professionals.

Chapter III praxeology

The DEP’s praxeology regarding educational quality is a clear example of how its work is conceived in relation to the functioning of an administrative and technical-pedagogical system. To begin, the [MINEDUC and DEP \(2024\)](#) document establishes a distinction between systemic quality and educational quality.

Systemic quality is understood as a solid, capable, and committed system. In particular, the DEP believes that strengthening the intermediate level of this system (specifically SLEP and UATP) is a way to enhance and contribute to the quality of public education. In other words, the concept of quality includes the notion of a strong and committed system that possesses optimal conditions for

its proper functioning and is based on the legislative notions of the New Public Education. Thus, quality in education is conceived as a consequence of a well-functioning system.

At the same time, educational quality is also composed of what is referred to as “Integral Quality.” That is, in addition to a strong system, educational quality is expected to include an educational offering that “does not only address learning issues, but also personal or social development, emotional skills, and citizenship training. The law itself mentions these different dimensions” (Professional DEP 4). It is with respect to this dimension of the concept of quality that we find the pedagogical core proposed by the NEP and the challenges it faces when measured against the evaluations of the quality assurance system.

Regarding systemic quality, a specific praxis of the central level of this system (the DEP) in favor of quality is strengthening the intermediate level, especially in supporting the SLEPs. These institutions, in turn, provide support to the Technical Pedagogical Support Unit (this marks a difference from the municipal administration, since it did not provide this type of support) to the schools. This technical and pedagogical support is provided based on what schools indicate as their need for guidance and is materialized through their certifications, so that this entire service can be reflected in the classroom. One professional elaborated on this point:

Our division has this seal [of accompaniment]. I sit down with you, explain the form, and discuss whether you agree, whether it's appropriate for your area, etc. We have 15 local services distributed throughout the country, and the needs of a local service in the north are not the same as those in Santiago or the south. This accompaniment is localized; it's territorial (DEP Professional 2).

In this way, the system seeks to create significant territorial relevance, which is further justified by the fact that the SLEPs concentrate a significant number of rural schools.

Thus, a systemic praxis for educational quality is established, consisting of the articulation between the three levels of the NEP. Within this structure, the intermediate level acts as a fundamental mediating hinge between the national level (with its political and administrative demands), the territories administered by the SLEPs, and the specific educational communities. This practice involves a series of means (enabling conditions) that are primarily pedagogical management, leadership of principals, development of personal capacities, and infrastructure development.

These enabling resources and conditions for educational quality should be focused on achieving 10 key objectives of the National Education Strategy.⁴ However, according to several interviewees, these objectives are not necessarily synonymous with quality per se but rather represent a way of making explicit certain strategic objectives of the DEP and implementing them in a set of indicators for monitoring.

According to the interviewees, all of this translates into a reductionist approach to working toward educational quality within the system.

“For me, assessment permeates everything because assessment is measured with a much more cognitive focus, centered on language and math, and some other indicators, but only a little” (group interview participant).

In this systemic task related to quality assessment, the SIMCE is viewed as a thermometer that provides certain signals about the “health” of the system, based on the awareness that the core issue lies not so much in the score achieved but in the underlying forms and practices through which education is delivered. It is recognized that the categorizations of schools by the SAC (Quality Assurance System) discriminate between them. At the same time, it is argued that indicative quality standards are configured as frameworks that exert pressure and constraint on daily work.

Furthermore, regarding educational quality, the central level of the NEP emphasizes the importance of redefining the expected learning outcomes in public education based on the principle of Integral Quality declared in Article 2 of Law 21,040.

This principle assumes a broader notion than learning limited to the intellectual or academic dimension, that is, to the curricular achievements of the subjects. In this sense, the notion of *integral or fundamental learning*⁵ emerges from the interviews, as well as from several internal DEP documents, which are closely linked to learning that fosters intercultural citizenship in today's world.

According to our interviewees, this principle emphasizes the importance of not restricting the measurement of learning exclusively to officially established indicators.

This insight reveals several tensions that emerge during interviews and the focus group. One relates to the dependence of expected learning on other educational institutions at the macro level of the system, specifically the Ministry of Education and the Quality Agency.

Another tension relates to the emphasis on learning concentrated on language and mathematics, which raising concerns of whether the focus on these subjects may undermine the broader aim of integral quality. "Because today we see it, everything is centered on language and mathematics. Where is the comprehensiveness if that is the focus that commands us?" (focus group participant).

Specifically, learning linked to the aspects that confer greater comprehensiveness is conceived as complementary to mathematics or language subjects; therefore, this learning ends up confined to extracurricular activities.

In addition, the DEP proposes a pedagogical core around which quality education must unfold. This core is illustrated in Figure 1.

The two values, already mentioned in the axiology section (educational trajectories and learning linked to a concept of integral education), converge in students as the nerve center of the educational

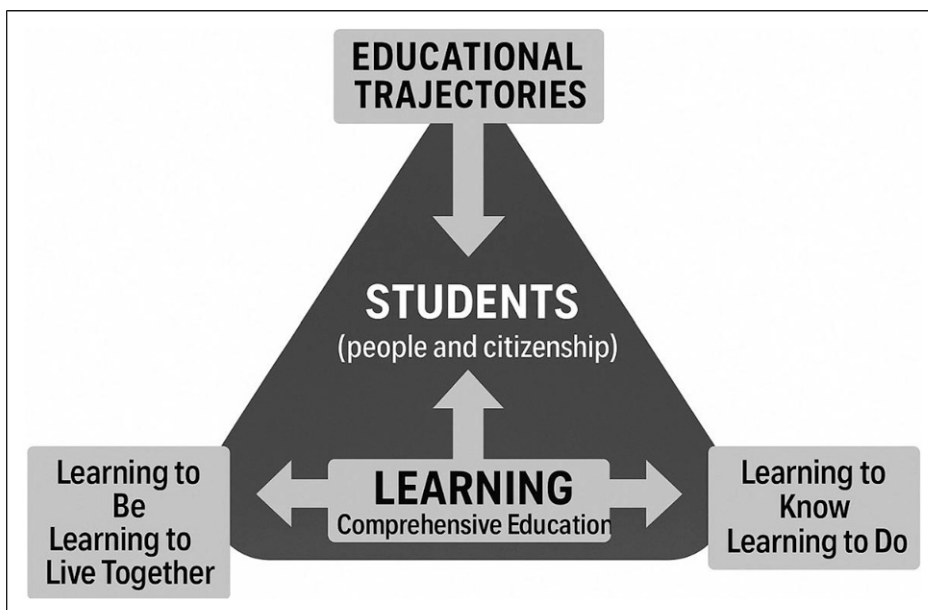


Figure 1 Pedagogical Core for Public Educational Quality (in original language: Núcleo Pedagógico para la Calidad de la educación pública).

Source: DEP MINEDUC and DEP, 2024 p. 43 (own translation).

proposal. Interestingly, this centrality unfolds in the recognition that students are people, as well as citizens. This triangulation implies acknowledging the complexity of the knowledge involved in quality education, since it must consider civic aspects, but also the cultural and formative aspects that can contribute to human development. This approach is grounded in the four types of knowledge outlined in the UNESCO report (Delors 1996): learning to be, learning to learn, learning to do, and learning to live together. These fundamental knowledges support the concept of integral educations. The goal, therefore, is to develop an educational offering that addresses different levels of personal development. Based on the interviews conducted, these are specified in certain contributions: the arts, sports, knowledge related to the ecological dimension, interpersonal relationships, and English as the main foreign language.

The above allows us to visualize a set of fundamental ideas around which to organize a proposal for quality public education. Once this core has been identified and assessed, the challenge lies in making certain choices that are coherent and consistent with this reference paradigm.

However, our interviews indicate that the public education system can focus on student development only if a sufficient number of resources are guaranteed to facilitate certain adequate conditions.

Critical-philosophical interpretation: Potentialities and problems in the DEP text

In this section, we will offer a critical-philosophical interpretation of the aforementioned DEP text on educational quality, proceeding chapter by chapter.

Regarding axiology, the DEP text is structured based on the purposes and values such as educational integrity and the contribution to students' life projects, as well as inclusion. These values reveal a substance of educational quality that goes beyond mere effectiveness and efficiency in obtaining certain educational results.

Furthermore, a civilizing argument emerges regarding the duty of public education to be present and provide education even in the most remote territories. This moral stance carries intrinsic value, regardless of measurable results to be achieved, and is related to the democratic dimension.

There is potential here for an approach to educational quality that gives it substance and value: it is something new that must be nurtured.

Precisely because these values warrant nurturing, these ideas merit further theoretical and educational exploration. For example, the DEP text states that public education must contribute to students' life plans.

Let us dwell on this intersection between integral education and students' life projects. This purpose is barely considered. The impression is that there is no substantive commitment regarding what it means to value and support these life projects. There seems to be an implicit assumption, something like all life projects have the same value. To address this point, we refer to the approach made by Biesta (2021a), when formulating the Eichman/Park paradox, in which he contrasts the life projects of Adolf Eichman and Rosa Parks: the former, after having successfully completed his schooling, worked for the Nazi bureaucratic apparatus, without asking questions about what was happening in his workplace. Rosa Parks, on the other hand, despite having incomplete schooling, was able, in the United States of apartheid, to question this phenomenon and take action. Both individuals were developing their life projects.

The following questions inevitably arise: Is public education obligated to maintain a stance of state neutrality regarding the values that inform student's life plans? Is neutrality even possible in the context of education? Perhaps, if the educational convictions that drive us are not made explicit, one

of the risks is that public schools are misunderstood as a place for satisfying individual demands or for other agencies that dictate the agenda. In general, the interviews conducted reveal a certain vagueness and disorientation regarding the “from where,” that is, the why and purpose of certain pedagogical emphases.

From an ontology perspective, the school emerges as a significant place in relation to education, certain social needs, and civic coexistence. These are important conceptions, formulated using language that does not reduce school to a learning environment (Biesta, 2022b). However, it is equally essential to recall that school is also that intermediate place between the private and public spheres of society, a place where time is afforded for sustained and meaningful engagement with the world. In this regard, the school holds a constitutive relationship with the three forms of temporality: the past (what previous generations have developed, constituting certain vital and cultural worlds), the present (current time and world), and the future (what we can and want to achieve in the future as humanity).

This grants public education an intrinsic value, linking it to the epic and moral character of its mission: the development of a public school system as a valuable component of a community of life and as a cultural resource worthy of being articulated. In this sense, the school cannot be understood merely as a place of training or instruction, nor simply a space for socialization. Such conceptions frame the school as an instrument to achieve purposes external to its own nature (for a philosophical debate about the issue of instrumentality in education, see Szkudlarek, 2020). As Biesta notes, the issue at stake is that the use of quality in the educational policy points out into a sort of transformation of school in device and instrument for external interests, goals, and pressures (Biesta, 2022b).

This line of argument allows us to move on to the chapter on the praxeology of quality. In that context, the decision to place the student at the center of the pedagogical core of the DEP can be interpreted as an option to satisfy their needs and for them to learn what they need to adapt and adjust to contemporary society. However, some of these intentions are restricted and simplistic, reducing education to a product that exists to serve private interests, whether those of individuals, groups, or society at large, but only, therefore, in terms of producing products that are useful for the functioning of society (Biesta, 2022b).

Within the pedagogical core of the DEP, which is strongly student-centered, what appears to be missing is the shared horizon of the world. It seems that the student was an isolated being with certain capacities to develop, as if they had no context or world, and as if the background constituted by the world had no place. In this regard, Biesta’s theoretical elaboration allows us to identify a vein to develop from the critique of perspectival reason in the philosophy of education and in the approaches of many contemporary educational policies and practices for searching other sources of inspiration (Biesta, 2024b).

A possible philosophical and political assessment of this DEP’ s text about educational quality

We now offer a general interpretation of the DEP text regarding educational quality.

In our reading, the framework of the DEP text reveals a conflict of values between, on the one hand, comprehensiveness, the contribution to life projects, inclusion, and the value of having schools throughout the country; and, on the other, the pursuit of effectiveness (obtaining measurable results as mandated by various institutions within the educational system) and efficiency (achieving results with the least possible expense). This dispute, in our interpretation, constitutes a double dissociation: one at the level of principles and the other at the level of practice.

The first dissociation is more subtle: the same educational values that we recognize as potential are distorted when they lack the necessary theoretical and conceptual roots to prevent them from being reduced merely to the production of learning.⁶ The risk is failing to understand that education cannot be properly understood if we approach it from a “technological” perspective (Biesta, 2015, 2016). This implies a quasi-causal conception, operating according to a model that works like this: through the correct interplay of a series of variables, the expected results established by the system would be guaranteed. The problem with this approach is that it makes it difficult to seriously consider the reflexive agency of the actors involved in education and overlooks the fact that education is, above all, an activity that involves the individual freedom.⁷

The second dissociation, by practice, can be summarized as follows: there is a split between, on the one hand, an emerging ideology that insists on the quality of what is offered in school education and, on the other, systemic demands (gathered around the notion of systemic quality). These demands come from two sources: the educational quality assurance apparatus (with considerable performative power) and the need to validate the NEP policy through very clear positive results. In this sense, a dissociation emerges between fundamental, integral options (which become rhetorical) and a set of institutional apparatuses that are articulated around the Quality Assurance System, as well as around the monitoring indicators of this NEP’s strategy. This would be a dissociation between what the NEP understands as integral quality and systemic quality. The following words from the focus group express it well it:

What we do—a large part of our work—is spent responding to performance agreements, management agreements, monitoring standards, and demonstrating, through reports, identifiers, indicators, and so on, what we’re improving. But the truth is, many of us know that improvement doesn’t come from doing these ten check-ins, but from the daily work of building trust, collaboration, and reflection with the teams we work with.

However, for quality to be defined as integral, it requires greater consistency with respect to the specific characteristics of education and coherence between means and ends. In this sense, systemic quality cannot be an end in itself; rather, it must be a means that functions to achieve quality appropriate to the educational reality.

From this perspective, it emerges that the novel narrative of educational quality requires a more robust theoretical root. For example, one could reflect more deeply on public schools as democratic places based on the following reflections by Biesta: public school education would carry out work for students that “helping them to gain a perspective on their desires, to come into a relationship with their desires so as to find out which desires are going to help with living one’s life well in the world with others” (Biesta, 2019: p. 665). This is the core of the democratic (and public) school according to Biesta, one in which it is taught “that I cannot get what you want” (Biesta, 2019: p. 666). From an institutional perspective, the above implies thinking of public-school education as an institutional place of the republic to fulfill certain moral duties, with an educational proposal not only based on individual satisfactions but also to think about the common good.

Conclusions

This report has examined the multiple meanings of educational quality that circulate within the framework of Chile’s NEP and has developed a critical interpretation of these meanings. From this exercise, it is possible to derive some general implications that are valid for the role and function of the notion of quality in educational policy. In particular, we have documented what happens, in the

Chilean case, when a specific policy (NEP) seeks to redefine the notion of quality. Since we have proposed that the fundamental guiding principle of this policy is integral quality, assuming it as its core, the question arises as to how the implementation of a policy maintains its focus on this core, and how it can nourish, deepen, and give it concrete form.

From the above, some possible guidelines emerge for educational policies in general and in Chile in particular, as well as for public debate and future research. To begin, the narrative of quality that presents a renewed educational perspective should be accompanied by an appropriate correlation, in terms of institutional scaffolding, to overcome the dissociations we have pointed out. The dissociation would be healed through political work of integration and harmonization that leads to an integral and integrated quality, in which systemic quality serves educational quality.

To this end, it is desirable to move toward harmonization among the components of the education governance system to streamline and support the educational task in a manner consistent with the desired ideal. It would be necessary to review the standardized approach to education and design a policy that invites teachers to join the narrative of the epic and moral dimension related to public education, giving them greater prominence.

The above would be possible if the policy asset would shift toward at least two ambitious steps: first, apply the SIMCE test to a representative sample of schools and not to all schools. Second and very relevant step is reforming the quality assurance law and system (SAC) in order to abolish the high-stakes approach. This would promote a policy based on trust in the actions of schools, rather than on control and punishment. This kind of change would be an important sign of coherence toward the axiological features of the integral quality proposed by NEP.

Regarding future academic research on this policy, studies that focus on the tense overlap between the various institutions of the education system in relation to quality assurance would be helpful. Also, conducting research on how SLEPs are working with their schools, beyond learning outcomes, would be a valuable contribution, focusing, for example, on how rural and technical-vocational education is being addressed.

Finally, a reflection that would be both pertinent and relevant to foster is linked to developing a self-critical attitude toward the assumptions that govern the educational policies and practices of a public school system. In more general terms, and valid in different educational contexts, to properly interpret a policy, it is necessary to focus on the relationship between school and society. In particular, it would involve, for example, questioning the quality of society and the type of public debate that fosters the school's specific work. As Biesta (2019) points out, the society of instant gratification and the anxiety to demonstrate results does not help a school institution that supposes a suspended time, of study and common experiences that are of another quality. Perhaps, this reflection would give fresh air to the approach to school education and its policies in Chile and in other contexts as well.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank to the staff of Dirección de Educación Pública (Ministry of Education-Chile) for its availability in order to join in this study. Many thanks to Manuel José Cheyre and José Miguel Fuentes (both PhD Candidate in Education at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile) for their comments on a previous version of this manuscript. Thanks to Maritza Davila (UCM) for her English edition of the text.

ORCID iD

Carmelo Galioto  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6951-8172>

Ethical consideration

This study was approved by the Ethical Scientific Committee of Universidad Católica del Maule, Act 80/2024.

Consent to participate

Written informed consents was obtained for this study. Personal data are not included.

Funding

The authors disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This report was supported by the National Research and Development Agency under the grants FONDECYT/INICIACIÓN/N 11240757 titled Significados de calida educativa en la Nueva Educación Pública: Hacia una interpretación filosófica.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Data Availability Statement

The data are in a repository according to the informed consent.

Notes

1. The other principles are continuous quality improvement; national coverage and guaranteed access; equitable development and equal opportunities; collaboration and networking; inclusive, secular, and civic educational projects; local relevance, diversity of educational projects, and community participation; civic education and republican values; integration with the environment and the community.
2. Documents available at the following link <https://educacionpublica.gob.cl/desarrolloeducativo/>.
3. Positive law as the ultimate source of public action raises the question, from the perspective of political philosophy, of its full legitimacy or sufficiency to support and justify public action.
4. (1) Improving learning in language and mathematics; (2) innovation in the classroom: technology and English; (3) strengthening vocational and technical education; (4) strengthening rural education; (5) protecting educational paths; (6) managing coexistence and educational inclusion; (7) relationship with the natural and cultural environment: interculturality, environmental education, sustainability, and sports; (8) managing educational offerings: enrollment; (9) midterm evaluation of the first National Strategy; (10) redesigning management tools to ensure consistency.
5. MINEDUC and DEP (2024 p. 53) defines fundamental learning as follows: “development of basic skills such as reading before second grade, as well as competencies in a second language upon graduation and digital citizenship skills.”
6. Biesta coined the concept of learnification (Biesta, 2021a). By this, he means the preeminence, in contemporary educational discourses and policies, of the production of learning as the only valuable horizon of educational activity, to the detriment of teaching itself (as something that shows and shares something with students) and of other purposes (e.g., existential) or cultural implications of education.
7. Therefore, education is not the same as phenomena and activities such as socialization, influence, and indoctrination, since it explicitly and necessarily questions the freedom of each of the people involved, as subjects and not objects of a more or less effective intervention (see Biesta, 2021b p. 668).

References

- Abebe T, Balagopalan S, Ansell N, et al. (2023) Teaching ‘global childhoods’ in childhood studies. *Childhood* 30(4): 360–379.
- Advisory Committee (1995) *Los desafíos de la educación chilena frente al siglo XXI. Informe de la Comisión Nacional para la Modernización de la Educación*. Edición Universitaria.
- Alexander RJ (2015) Teaching and learning for all? The quality imperative revisited. *International Journal of Educational Development* 40: 250–258.
- Anagnostopoulos Dorothea, Lingard Bob and Sellar Sam (2016) Argumentation in educational policy disputes: Competing visions of quality and equity. *Theory into Practice* 55: 342–351.
- Andréu Abela J (2001) *Las técnicas del Análisis de Contenido: una revisión actualizada*. Sevilla: Ediciones Centro de Estudios Andaluces.
- Arias MM (2000) La triangulación metodológica: sus principios, alcances y limitaciones. *Investigación y Educación en Enfermería* 18(1): 13–26.
- Au W (2007) High-stakes testing and curricular control: a qualitative metasynthesis. *Educational Researcher* 36(5): 258–267.
- Ball S (1993) What is policy? Texts, trajectories and toolboxes. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 13(2): 10–17.
- Bellei C and Muñoz (2020) Políticas educacionales en Chile: estado, Mercado y Rendición de Cuentas en Las llaves de la Educación. Estudio Comparado sobre la mejora de los sistemas educativos subnacionales de America Latina. Publisher: Instituto Natura, CIAESA Universidad de San Andrés ; CIAE Universidad de Chile.
- Biesta GJJ (2015) On the two cultures of educational research, and how we might move ahead: reconsidering the ontology, axiology and praxeology of education. *European Educational Research Journal* 14(1): 11–22.
- Biesta GJJ (2016) Improving education through research? From effectiveness, causality and technology to purpose, complexity and culture. *Policy Futures in Education* 14(1): 194–210.
- Biesta GJJ (2019) What kind of society does the school need? Redefining the democratic work of education in impatient times. *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 38(6): 657–668.
- Biesta GJJ (2021a) *World-Centred Education A View for the Present*. Londres: Routledge.
- Biesta G (2021b) Reclaiming a future that has not yet been: the faure report, UNESCO’s humanism, and the need for the emancipation of education. *International Review of Education* 68: 655–672.
- Biesta GJJ (2022a) School-as-institution of school-as-instrument? How to overcome instrumentalism without giving up on democracy. *Educational Theory* 72(3): 319–331.
- Biesta GJJ (2022b) The school is not a learning environment: how language matters for the practical study of educational practices. *Studies in Continuing Education* 44(2): 336–346.
- Biesta GJJ (2024) From the point where I stand to the place where I can be found: the critique of perspectival reason as philosophy for education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 57: 1–15.
- Biesta G, Heugh K, Cervinkova H, et al. (2021) Philosophy of education in a new key: publicness, social justice, and education; A south-north conversation. *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 54: 1216–1233.
- Burbules NC (2004) Ways of thinking about educational quality. *Educational Researcher* 33(6): 4–10.
- Canales M (ed) (2006) *Metodologías De Investigación Social. Introducción a Los Oficios*. Santiago: LOM.
- Chile (2010) *Ley de Aseguramiento de la calidad educativa*. Estado de Chile.
- Delors J (1996) *Learning: The Treasure Within; Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Falabella A (2019) La seducción por la hipervigilancia en la educación chilena: Simce, rendición de cuentas y Sistema de aseguramiento de la calidad (1979 a 2011). In: Ruiz C, Herrera F and Reyes L (eds) *La*

- Privatización De Lo Público En La Educación Escolar El Caso De Chile En Perspectiva Comparada*. Santiago: LOM, 163–187.
- Falabella A (2020) The seduction of hyper-surveillance: Standards, testing, and accountability. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 57(1): 113–142.
- Falabella A and Ramos C (2019) La larga historia de las evaluaciones nacionales a nivel escolar en Chile [The long history of national assessments at the school level in Chile]. *Cuadernos Chilenos de Historia de la Educación* 11: 66–98.
- Fenech M and Wilkins DP (2018) The representation of the national quality framework in the Australian print media: silences and slants in the mediatisation of early childhood education policy. *Journal of Education Policy* 34(6): 748–770.
- Flick U (2007) *Introducción a La Investigación Cualitativa*. Madrid: Ediciones Morata.
- Galioto C and Henríquez Vásquez R (2021) A historical perspective on the uses and meanings of the concept of quality in Chilean school policies. *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 29: 23.
- Galioto C and Pérez Navarro C (2023) Transformations in the concept of quality at the beginning of the educational privatisation process in Chile: a historical study (1985–1990). *Paedagogica Historica* 59(3): 528–545.
- Hunkin E (2019) If not quality, then what? The discursive risks in early childhood quality reform. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 40(6): 917–929.
- Kauko J, Rinne R and Takala T (eds) (2018) *Politics of Quality in Education A Comparative Study of Brazil, China and Russia*. Londres and Nueva York: Routledge.
- López-Rupérez F (2022) The quality of governance of the education system. The case of the LOMLOE. *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 80(281): 155–174.
- MINEDUC and DEP (2020) *Primera Estrategia Nacional De Educación Pública 2020-2028*. Herramienta central, junio Santiago: MINEDUC.
- MINEDUC and DEP (2024) *La Nueva Educación Pública. Desafíos 2024-2030*. Report, Dirección de Educación Pública, Chile, noviembre 2023.
- Mizala A and Schneider B (2019) Promoting quality education in Chile: the politics of reforming teacher careers. *Journal of Education Policy* 35(4): 529–555.
- Pradhan U (2019) Interrogating quality: minority language, education and imageries of competence in Nepal. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 50(6): 792–808.
- Quality Council (2006) *Informe final del consejo asesor presidencial para la calidad de la educación*. Estado de Chile.
- Rangarajan R, Sharma U and Grové C (2023) Inclusion and equity in India's new national education policy (NEP): an analysis using the context led model of education quality. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 29(6): 1–21.
- Ricoeur P (2000) *Del Texto a La Acción Ensayos De Hermenéutica II*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Saini M, Sengupta E, Singh M, et al. (2023) Sustainable development goal for quality education (SDG 4): a study on SDG 4 to extract the pattern of association among the indicators of SDG 4 employing a genetic algorithm. *Education and Information Technologies* 28: 2031–2069.
- Santorio D (2015) Philosophizing about teacher dissatisfaction: a multidisciplinary hermeneutic approach. *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 34(2): 171–180.
- Serrano R, Perez-Gracia E, Puno-Quispe L, et al. (2023) Quality and equity in the Peruvian education system: do they progress similarly? *International Journal of Educational Research* 119: 102183.
- Sider S, Morvan J and Börner M (2021) Partnerships to support quality education in Haiti: a case study addressing the sustainable development goals. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 53(4): 567–584.

- Skedsmo G and Huber SG (2017) Governing education Quality—challenges of perspective and methodology. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability* 29(2): 15–318.
- Strauss A and Corbin J (2022) *Bases de la investigación cualitativa. Técnicas y procedimientos para desarrollar la Teoría Fundamentada*. Antioquia: Editorial Universidad de Antioquia.
- Szkudlarek T (2020) What and what for? Theorizing ontology and instrumentality of education. Introduction to the special issue. *Policy Futures in Education* 18(7): 824–833.
- Taneja-Johansson S and Singal N (2021) Pathways to inclusive and equitable quality education for people with disabilities: cross-context conversations and mutual learning. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 29(1): 1–16.
- UNESCO (2004) *Education for all - The Quality Imperative*. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO (2005) Informe educación para todos el imperativo de la calidad. Retrieved from: <https://es.unesco.org/gem-report/node/511>
- UNESCO (2007) *Educación De Calidad Para Todos. Un Asunto De Derechos Humanos*. Buenos Aires: Oficina Regional de Educación para América Latina y el Caribe.
- United Nation Organization (2015) *La Asamblea general adopta la agenda 2030 para el desarrollo sostenible*. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/>. United Nation Organization.
- Wittek L and Kvernbekk T (2011) On the problems of asking for a definition of quality in education. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 55(6): 671–684.

Author biographies

Carmelo Galioto has a PhD in Education from Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. His interests focus on how the philosophy of education can think and interrogate the concept of quality in educational policies and its implications for the public education. Furthermore, he investigates about religious education. He has published papers in Educational Theory, Education Policy Analysis Archives, International Journal of Educational Development, among others journals. He currently works as a professor and researcher at the Faculty of Religious and Philosophical Sciences of the Catholic University of Maule (Talca, Chile).

Magdalena Tobar-Vargas has a degree in Sociology from Universidad de Chile. She is currently a student in a master on interdisciplinary studies in childhood (Universidad de Chile).

Manolo Aranda Fredes has a degree in Sociology from Universidad de Chile. He is currently a student in a postgraduate course on visual studies and anthropology (Universidad de Chile).