

# Teachers' professional development through university–school partnerships: theoretical standpoints and evidence from two pilot studies in Chile

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## ABSTRACT

This paper presents a teacher professional development programme, based on a university–schools partnership and a collective reflection model, addressing the needs of in-service teacher education in Chile. First, the main challenges faced by both teachers and teacher education in Chile are summarised. Then, the foundations of this model are presented. Finally, an illustration of the model is provided by presenting two pilot studies implemented in Chile. A qualitative analysis of interviews showed that the programme was successful in promoting teacher reflection, leading to reported changes in their practices. Finally, the advantages and the challenges arising from this study, and the educational possibilities of this model of professional development, are discussed.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

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## KEYWORDS

Teachers' professional development; classroom videos; community of learning

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Teacher quality indicators and continuous education in Chile

Chilean students have improved their performance over the last 14 years as measured by PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS (Hanushek, Peterson, & Woessmann, 2012). Nevertheless, these improvements are still lacking. For instance, Chilean PISA scores are significantly lower than the average score obtained by all countries participating in the study. Additionally, international studies show that Chile has one of the highest income-related educational inequalities (Organisation for Economic Co-operation & development [OECD], 2013; United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2012).

According to regional studies, weaknesses in teacher education are at the core of the problem of educational quality in Latin America. Indeed, disadvantaged students are less likely to be taught by quality teachers (Programa de Promoción de la Reforma Educativa en América Latina [PREAL], 2006). Chile is no exception to this rule (Cabezas, Gallego, Santelices, & Zarhi, 2011). Addressing these issues, the Chilean government implemented a national system of teacher evaluation named Docentemás (hereafter, DM), which is