

# Examining the Role of Curriculum Evaluation in Schools: A Challenge for Pedagogical Leadership

Carolina Villagra Bravo<sup>a\*</sup>, Omar Aravena Kenigs<sup>b</sup>, María Pía Torres Zamora<sup>c</sup>

Received : 14 October 2024  
Revised : 31 August 2025  
Accepted : 28 September 2025  
DOI : 10.26822/iejee.2025.413

<sup>a\*</sup> **Corresponding Author:** Carolina Villagra Bravo,  
Corresponding Author: Universidad Católica Silva  
Henríquez, Chile.  
E-mail: cvillagrab@ucsh.cl  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5428-2555>

<sup>b</sup> Omar Aravena Kenigs, Universidad Católica de  
Temuco, Chile.  
E-mail: oaravena@uct.cl  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0896-6657>

<sup>c</sup> María Pía Torres Zamora, Universidad Católica de  
Temuco, Chile.  
E-mail: mtorres@uct.cl  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8273-1744>

## Abstract

The challenge of leading learning in schools has shifted the role of school leadership teams towards a more pedagogical approach to managing and evaluating curriculum implementation. In this regard, the objective of this study is to examine the involvement of educational actors in the curriculum evaluation promoted by school leadership teams to enhance teaching and learning processes in schools. Along these lines, the research adopts an interpretative qualitative methodology with a multiple case study design comprising 12 schools in the La Araucanía region of Chile. The participants consist of 117 education professionals serving in managerial positions or as class teachers. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The findings reveal that curriculum evaluation in the schools studied is concentrated primarily within the leadership teams and heads of pedagogical-technical units (UTP), who guide most evaluative practices from a hierarchical standpoint. Classroom teachers are only marginally involved, while student participation is almost absent. The most widespread practices include the review of teacher-designed assessments and the administration of diagnostic tests, both present in all cases. Although teachers value the feedback they receive, many perceive it primarily as supervisory and controlling. The study concludes that pedagogical leadership in schools must advance towards more democratic and collaborative practices that acknowledge teachers and students as active agents in curriculum development, thereby fostering a school culture that is more reflective, inclusive, and oriented toward educational improvement.

## Keywords:

Democratisation Of Education, Curricular Evaluation, Internal Assessment, Assessor, Participation

## Introduction

The aim of enhancing the comprehensive development of children and young people in schools has given impetus to the approach of “pedagogical leadership” or “learning-centred leadership”, which focuses on the curriculum and pedagogy rather than on administration (Bolívar, 2019; Robinson et al., 2009). From this perspective, leadership refers to a social phenomenon that is manifested in practices based on social interactions, going beyond tasks associated with a management role (Maureira, 2018;



www.iejee.com  
ISSN: 1307-9298

2025 Published by KURA Education & Publishing.  
This is an open access article under the CC BY-  
NC- ND license. (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Sisson et al., 2021; Spillane & Ortiz, 2019). Along these lines, school culture is transformed through various practices involving each educational actor and influencing the implementation of the curriculum and the learning process (Elmore, 2010; Rincón-Gallardo et al., 2019).

The management of teaching and learning programmes, along with teacher professional development, are recognised as key practices in effective school leadership (Leithwood et al., 2019; Robinson et al., 2008). In this regard, it has been demonstrated that, in high-performing schools, school leaders engage in teaching and learning processes and encourage teachers to assess and make decisions regarding the implementation of the curriculum in the classroom (Robinson, 2019; Robinson & Gray, 2019). In other words, pedagogical leadership requires school leadership teams and teachers to act collectively and make decisions that are consistent with the educational purposes of learning and comprehensive development.

On the other hand, curriculum evaluation practices have been approached from various perspectives, some with a supportive and collaborative nature and others that have been limited to prescription and control (Aravena et al., 2019; Santos-Guerra, 2014). Similarly, in recent decades, different levels of participation of educational actors in the curriculum evaluation process have been observed (McCormick & James, 1996; Santos-Guerra, 2013). Along these lines, a meta-analysis conducted by Carrera-Hernández (2024) is particularly noteworthy. This study reviewed conference papers, journal articles, doctoral theses and books with the purpose of examining the theoretical and methodological perspectives from which curriculum evaluation has been addressed in the Mexican context. The findings indicated the predominance of a technical and quantitative approach, oriented towards accountability, the measurement of performance indicators and students' graduate profiles. This points to the need to broaden and diversify research by incorporating participatory and critical methodologies that transcend the logic of control and contribute more directly to the improvement of educational practices.

In the Brazilian context, a study by Freire-Sánchez et al. (2025) explores the challenges and perspectives surrounding curriculum evaluation in schools. The research was carried out through a critical analysis of scientific articles and education policies. The results indicate that there are significant obstacles in the evaluation process, including teacher resistance to change, limited resources, pressure from standardised external assessments and insufficient opportunities for continuous professional development. The study also identifies as pressing the integration of educational

technologies, the adaptation of the curriculum to labour market demands and the development of a more inclusive curriculum.

Leiva et al. (2024) conducted a qualitative study on school leaders' perceptions of curriculum management in 25 Chilean schools, using in-depth interviews. The findings indicate that these educational actors attribute the barriers in the process of curriculum implementation to low levels of teacher competence and student performance. The study concludes that it is necessary to strengthen pedagogical leadership and to foster the engagement of school leaders in curriculum management from a situated perspective that takes account of the contexts and requirements of schools. In turn, Rodríguez-Gallego et al. (2020) underline the need to study pedagogical leadership in relation to the level of teacher involvement in decision-making. Consequently, the challenge of leading learning in the 21st century requires curriculum assessment to be linked to the creation of a collaborative culture of learning and reflection on educational practice.

In a framework of pedagogical leadership, assessment is intrinsic to learning because it enables awareness of the quality of curriculum implementation (Jara et al., 2022). Similarly, the purpose of curriculum evaluation not only shapes the culture of learning (Sanmartí, 2007) but also has the power to maintain or subvert relationships of authority and control (Rincón-Gallardo, 2019). In this context, the following question arises: Who are the educational actors participating in curriculum evaluation processes? How is the participation of these actors expressed in curriculum evaluation depending on factors such as the performance category and type of financing of the school? What are the perceptions of educational actors regarding the process of curriculum evaluation? What is the nature of the relationships established among the educational actors who participate in the curriculum evaluation process? What challenges emerge for pedagogical leadership in the context of curriculum assessment in schools?

In response to these questions, the objective of this study is to examine the involvement of educational actors in the curriculum assessment that is promoted by school leadership teams to enhance teaching and learning processes in schools. The significance of this objective lies in the need to expand reflection on curriculum management as a socio-educational construction shaped within schools, which necessarily entails an interpretation of educational policy (Cox, 2018). Examining the degree of participation and engagement of educational actors in curriculum management is therefore crucial to understanding how pedagogical leadership is exercised.

### *Curriculum evaluation from a democratic and participatory perspective*

Assessment in schools is a genuine opportunity for learning through a shared understanding of educational practices, moving away from mere task checking or evaluation of performance by school authorities or management (Santos-Guerra, 2014; Villagra & Fritz, 2017). Therefore, curriculum evaluation should be approached from a democratic and participatory perspective to foster learning within the educational community (Ríos-Muñoz & Herrera-Araya, 2021; Santos-Guerra, 2013). That is, curriculum evaluation is essentially a collective practice that requires the involvement of various educational stakeholders through a shared responsibility for learning.

Despite efforts to position leadership in learning, curriculum management and assessment practices have focused particularly on instrumental and bureaucratic aspects at the expense of professional reflection (Bolívar, 2019; Mansilla & Beltrán, 2016; Mellado et al., 2017). In this regard, a study conducted by Ahtiainen et al. (2021) found that only a small number of headteachers include students and their families in assessment processes. Therefore, the bureaucratisation and centralisation of curriculum evaluation in schools are factors that weaken pedagogical leadership.

According to Santos-Guerra (2020), the perverse nature of assessment in schools manifests itself in organisational structures because evaluation increases as one descends the hierarchy. However, the power dynamics inherent in assessment can be mitigated through a willingness to engage in dialogue and foster participation (Del Pino, 2016; Venegas, 2023). In response to these challenges, Maureira (2018) explains the resurgence of more participatory and shared approaches to leadership, where influence is not confined to management teams as the sole agents capable of influencing the development of practices aimed at improving education.

The involvement of teachers in assessment intentionally promotes their leadership within the school and, therefore, their professional development (Bolívar, 2019; Maureira & Garay, 2019; Tuytens & Devos, 2014). From this perspective, teacher involvement in assessment processes could serve as a driver to encourage student and family involvement in curriculum design and evaluation, going beyond considering their opinions only at specific moments and blurring the hierarchical relationships between members of the educational community (Larsen & Hesby, 2023; Londoño, 2016). Therefore, assessment from the standpoint of pedagogical leadership requires authentic democratic practices that foster dialogue and reciprocal intergenerational learning in

the school (Aguirre & Schugurensky, 2017; Mayes et al., 2020).

The importance of democratic leadership that incorporates the participation of the school community in curriculum evaluation lies in the dynamic and deliberate co-construction of this process. Therefore, the assessment approach adopted should be aligned with the educational goals being pursued (Rojas, 2019; Gordon et al., 2022; Knight, 2022). According to McCormick and James (1996), curriculum evaluation "is concerned with questions about what should be taught as well as with finding out what happens in the classroom" (p. 15). Thus, curriculum evaluation that considers context, processes, and outcomes enables schools to become aware of the quality of their educational work.

Taking into account the concept of educational quality, several studies indicate that leadership practices and curriculum evaluation are more focused on teacher instruction than on student learning (Aravena et al., 2019; Maureira, 2018). This may be explained by the limited pedagogical knowledge possessed by management teams, which influences decision-making in managing teaching and learning processes, emphasising the prominent role of the teacher in the classroom (Mellado et al., 2017; Treviño et al., 2019). Specifically, those leading curriculum evaluation face the challenge of collaboratively building a shared vision of pedagogy with the educational community for decision-making from a democratic and participatory perspective.

In the context, various international educational policies have consistently aimed to guide the pedagogical role of school management teams, who are called upon to deploy collective leadership for the development of a more equitable future (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, OECD, 2016; 2017; Organization of Ibero-American States, OEI, 2022). In particular, emphasis has been placed on the teams leading teaching and learning processes by monitoring the comprehensive implementation of the curriculum, conducting classroom observation, and providing feedback to teachers, among other initiatives. Appropriate development of these practices requires reflection on the evaluative approach, as its essence can either promote or hinder the educational improvement of the school.

From an initial perspective, examining the participation of educational agents in curriculum evaluation provides an approach to understanding how pedagogical leadership can promote the involvement of students and teachers as key components of the pedagogical core.

## Methodology

This research is grounded in a qualitative-interpretative paradigm and adopts a multiple case study design (Smith, 2018), in which the research problem takes precedence over the particularities of each case (Stake, 2005). The selected cases are representative of the Chilean school system, specifically in the Araucanía region, and encompass the three types of school administration that receive state subsidies. In this sense, the sample corresponds to a group of cases that share a common problem (Canta & Quesada, 2021). From a qualitative-constructionist perspective, categories were developed from the contextual realities in which the participants construct, interpret and socialise their everyday activities within the chosen school settings (Torres & Villagra, 2021).

### Participants and context

For the selection of the case studies, 12 schools were deliberately chosen based on pertinent research criteria (Mallimaci & Giménez, 2006). These criteria included: a) schools funded by the Chilean State (public, municipal, or subsidised private); b) those offering primary education; c) those with enrolment of more than 100 students in primary education; and d) schools with performance categories determined by the Education Quality Agency (high, medium, medium-low, or insufficient). These performance categories are delineated within the Education Quality Measurement System (SIMCE), considering the weighting of student achievement levels on written tests (67%) and personal and social development indicators (33%) collected via questionnaires. Adjustments to this index are made in

accordance with the socioeconomic characteristics of the school. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the participants based on their professional roles and the characteristics of the schools.

With respect to the ethical considerations of the study, participants were invited to take part voluntarily and were informed about the purpose of the research. They signed an informed consent form detailing the scope of their participation and were briefed on the confidentiality and the measures for managing their data. All study protocols and procedures were approved by the Ethics Committee of the institution sponsoring the research.

### Procedures and instruments

The empirical production of information is grounded in the principles of participatory social research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) and the co-construction of situated knowledge (Haraway, 1995). Firstly, a semi-structured interview was conducted with each headteacher and the head of the pedagogical-technical unit (UTP) from the 12 schools. In total, 24 interviews were conducted to explore curriculum evaluation practices from the perspective of "self-narration" (Cruz et al., 2012). To carry out these interviews, a script of open-ended questions was created to reveal the curriculum evaluation practices implemented by the school leadership and to construct a narrative that enables the practice to be objectified. This script underwent a content validation process by three expert judges, who analysed the consistency, relevance, and clarity of the questions based on the study's objective. The detailed questions asked are the following:

**Table 1.**

*Characteristics of participants*

School	School funding	Performance category	Headteacher	Head of Pedagogical-Technical Unit	Other members of Management team or Pedagogical-Technical team	Class teachers	No. of participants
A	Public	High	1	1	4	5	11
B	Public	Medium	1	1	3	7	12
C	Public	Medium-low	1	1	1	6	09
D	Public	Medium-low	1	1	1	5	08
E	Municipal	High	1	1	4	6	12
F	Municipal	Medium	1	1	2	5	09
G	Municipal	Medium-low	1	1	2	6	10
H	Municipal	Insufficient	1	1	0	4	06
I	Subsidised private	High	1	1	0	5	07
J	Subsidised private	Medium	1	1	6	6	14
K	Subsidised private	Medium-low	1	1	3	5	10
L	Subsidised private	Insufficient	1	1	2	5	09
Total			12	12	51	66	117

**Table 2.***Question framework to guide data collection*

Research questions	Analytical Dimension	Questions
Who are the educational actors participating in curriculum evaluation processes? How is the participation of these actors expressed in curriculum evaluation depending on factors such as the performance category and type of financing of the school?	Participation and curriculum evaluation practices	How does the school management and leadership team evaluate the implementation of the curriculum and the achievement of learning objectives? What is the purpose of each practice mentioned? Who participates in the implementation of these practices? What tools do they use to evaluate the practices mentioned?
What are the perceptions of educational actors regarding the curriculum assessment process? What is the nature of the relationships established among educational actors participating in the curriculum assessment process? What challenges emerge for pedagogical leadership in the context of curriculum assessment in schools?	Perceptions and nature of relationships in curriculum evaluation	How do they integrate these practices with some of the management instruments of the institution, for example, the Institutional Educational Project (PEI) or Educational Improvement Plan (PME)? To what extent is a practice effective and sustainable in the long term? In what ways do the practices mentioned guide student development and institutional improvement? How do they perceive that these practices affect student learning?

Secondly, focus groups were conducted with the management team and with a group of classroom teachers from each participating school, with the aim of validating the accounts of curriculum evaluation practices that had been systematised from the interviews. In this process, the research team provided participants with feedback on their practices, and participants were responsible for verifying or refining the description of each practice to ensure alignment with the school's daily routines. This self-examination of practice enables reflection on the influence of curriculum evaluation and pedagogical leadership on student learning.

This approach to data collection emphasises the perspectives and subjectivities of educational actors through guiding questions that illuminate evaluative practices, fostering dialogic and contextually situated reflection. Moreover, it reinforces data triangulation as a mechanism for verification (Arias, 2022) in multiple case studies, where the richness of the data is derived from diverse sources of evidence (Smith, 2018).

**Figure 1.***Knowledge production process*

Fuente: Torres &amp; Villagra, 2021.

**Data analysis**

As a result of the knowledge production process, 13 curriculum evaluation practices were validated and categorised. Each practice was characterised according to the dimension "who evaluates?", referring to the person who, in their role in the school,

issues the value judgment regarding the object of evaluation. We used ATLAS.ti 8.0 software to facilitate and organise the analysis.

From a qualitative-hermeneutic standpoint, validity is ensured through the cultivation of trustful relationships, the opportunity to validate textualities, narratives, and practices with the participating collective, and the ability to observe the phenomenon under study in its entirety, rather than in isolated aspects. In this regard, data triangulation for verification (Arias, 2022) was essential. Accordingly, the analysis follows a symbolic-interactionist approach, whereby participants co-construct their situated knowledge through interaction in small groups.

## Results

This section presents the findings of the study in accordance with the research questions.

### *Educational actors involved in curriculum evaluation processes*

The results indicate the participation of six categories of evaluative actors, some operating collectively and others individually.

- Management Team (MT): Administration, technical leadership, responsible for school coexistence, and coordination of the school integration project (PIE).
- Head of pedagogical-technical unit (UTP): Teacher responsible for supporting the management of teaching and learning at the school.
- Pedagogical-Technical Team: UTP leadership and class teachers with management responsibilities, such as coordination of departments, school cycles, or grade levels.
- Teaching assistant: Class teacher without management responsibilities at the school.
- Class teacher.
- Student.

Table 3 presents the frequency with which these educational actors engage in the various practices employed by each school to evaluate the curriculum. Specifically, it enumerates the number of practices in which each actor is afforded the opportunity to contribute to decision-making concerning teaching and learning processes.

Table 3 indicates that, in the majority of cases, the management team, UTP leadership, and classroom teachers participate as educational agents in curriculum management. It should be noted that none of the practices involved the individual presence of the

headteacher as an evaluative agent, but their value judgments were instead always developed as part of a collective, specifically within the management team. In contrast, peer teachers were considered participants in curriculum evaluation in only 50% of the cases. Finally, only one school (F) allowed student participation in this process.

Table 4 summarises the involvement of these actors across a total of 13 curriculum assessment practices. It is important to mention that it is possible for more than one evaluative agent to participate in one practice. For example, in the practice "Pedagogical support for teachers", which is carried out by seven schools, all educational agents participate except for the students.

Table 4 shows that curriculum evaluation carried out in 100% of the participating schools involves the practices of "Review of and feedback on evaluations designed by teachers" and "Implementation of diagnostic evaluations". On the other hand, the practices carried out least frequently are "Application of an instrument that allows the student's viewpoint to be recorded" and "Review of records in class register."

Only two practices have been identified that involve a greater number of agents than value judgments, namely "Pedagogical support for teachers" and "Technical advice and professional pedagogical dialogues". The curriculum evaluation practices that concentrate the value judgments within the management team or UTP heads, and which do not include the participation of class teachers, are "Observation of teachers in the classroom", "Pedagogical evaluation meetings of the management team", and "Support and evaluation of new teachers". In contrast, the evaluation practices that show greater participation from class teachers in issuing judgments are "Implementation of diagnostic evaluations" and "Institutional evaluation and planning period".

Regarding the agents who have the greatest participation in the 13 systematised evaluation practices, a hierarchical perspective prevails in the assessments. The technical team is present in 77% of them, the management team in 70%, and the head of UTP in 61%. Agents with less presence are class teachers (38% participation) and students, who are present in only one practice (7%).

Participation of educational actors in curriculum evaluation according to school performance category and type of administration

With respect to the funding of the school, an analysis is presented on the level of participation of educational agents in curriculum evaluation (Figure 1). The level of participation is also described according to the categorisation of the schools (Figure 2).

**Table 3.***Participation of educational actors in curriculum evaluation practices within their respective schools*

School	School funding	Performance category	Management team	Head of UTP	Technical-pedagogical team	Teaching assistant	Teacher	Student
A	Public	High		X	X		X	
B	Public	Medium	X			X	X	
C	Public	Medium-low	X	X			X	
D	Public	Medium-low	X	X	X	X	X	
E	Municipal	High	X	X	X	X	X	
F	Municipal	Medium	X		X		X	X
G	Municipal	Medium-low	X	X	X	X	X	
H	Municipal	Insufficient	X	X		X	X	
I	Subsidised private	High	X	X	X		X	
J	Subsidised private	Medium	X		X		X	
K	Subsidised private	Medium-low	X	X		X	X	
L	Subsidised private	Insufficient	X	X			X	

**Table 4.***Agents evaluating the curriculum in schools*

Evaluative Practice	No. of schools that carry out the practice	Management team	Head of UTP	Technical-pedagogical team	Teaching assistant	Teacher	Student
1. Verification and monitoring of annual planning	6	1	3	2	0	0	0
2. Pedagogical support for teachers	7	3	2	2	2	1	0
3. Observation of teachers in the classroom	4	3	1	0	0	0	0
4. Pedagogical evaluation meetings of the management team	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
5. Review of and feedback on teacher-designed evaluations	12	0	9	2	2	1	0
6. Technical advice and professional pedagogical dialogues	10	3	1	5	4	1	0
7. Peer evaluation and planning	4	1	0	2	4	0	0
8. Implementation of diagnostic evaluations	12	5	2	1	0	12	0
9. Institutional evaluation and planning period	6	5	0	2	0	4	0
10. Application of an instrument that allows the student's viewpoint to be recorded	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
11. Review of records in class register	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
12. Triangulation of the Annual Plan, class register and student evaluations.	3	0	2	1	0	0	0
13. Support and evaluation of new teachers	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
Number of practices by agent		9 of 13	8 of 13	10 of 13	4 of 13	5 of 13	1 of 13

**Figure 2.**  
Number of practices and type of educational agents in curriculum evaluation according to type of school administration

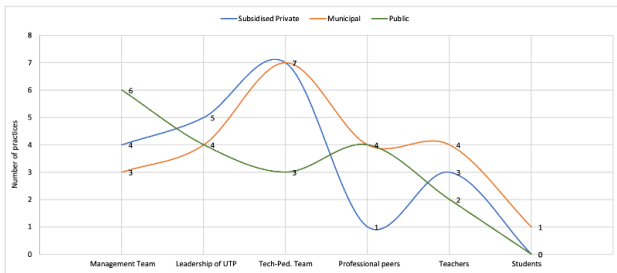


Figure 2 illustrates that the pedagogical-technical team exhibits the highest participation in curriculum evaluation, which is particularly prevalent in subsidised private and municipal schools. Notably, only one municipal school includes student participation in curriculum evaluation. It is also apparent that peer professionals are more actively engaged in municipal and public schools compared with subsidised private schools. Public schools demonstrate a balanced involvement of the UTP leadership, the pedagogical-technical team, and peer teachers; nevertheless, the participation of class teachers is comparatively lower. Moreover, public schools stand out due to the marked involvement of the management team in this evaluation process.

**Figure 3.**  
Number of practices and type of educational agents in curriculum evaluation according to school performance category

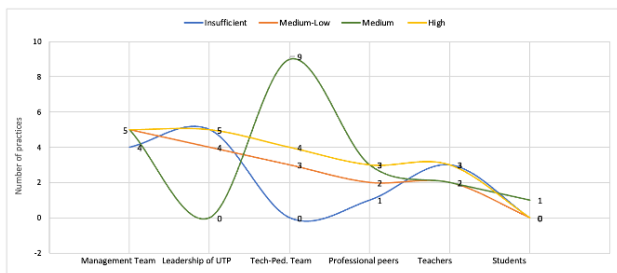


Figure 3 illustrates that schools categorised as High, Medium-low, and Insufficient concentrate curriculum evaluation in the management team and UTP leadership. It is evident that schools categorised as having Medium performance focus evaluation practices on the pedagogical-technical and management teams, while schools categorized as Insufficient centre evaluation on the UTP leadership and the management team because they lack a formal structure for the pedagogical-technical team. It is notable that the involvement of teachers is equally low. Finally, schools with High performance demonstrate more evenly distributed participation of the different agents.

**Nature of relationships established in the curriculum evaluation process**

To gain a deeper understanding of educational actors' involvement in curriculum evaluation, this section presents representative narratives drawn from focus groups, aimed at examining the relational dynamics underpinning decision-making. The analysis is structured around two emergent categories that shine light on the inherent tensions in evaluative practices within schools: (a) assessment linked to hierarchical roles, and (b) democratisation of evaluative practice.

a. Category "Evaluation linked to hierarchical roles"

The narratives reveal that curriculum evaluation practices are primarily carried out by agents who hold a management position at the school. In this respect, the participants believe that the assessment and feedback process must necessarily be conducted by individuals who have positions in the school's management teams:

*"The evaluative materials designed by the teachers need to be sent to the pedagogical coordinators for feedback. As a team, we approve these materials for use once they have been reviewed"* (Member of MT, Subsidised Private School in Medium performance category).

Regarding the justification for members of the management teams to review evaluative materials, these agents state that the purpose of this process is formative and associated with ensuring the validity of the instruments:

*"We don't carry out the review and feedback of lesson plans and evaluative instruments from a punitive perspective; on the contrary, it's an effective practice that contributes to the construct validity of the instruments, because, even though we're teachers, we make mistakes in the design of our pedagogical materials"* (Member of MT, Public School in Medium-low performance category).

This view is shared by a group of class teachers, who express the importance of the value judgments issued by school authorities:

*"Feedback from the management team is crucial because it enriches the review of all the materials we build and everything we do"* (Class teacher, Municipal School in High performance category).

Similarly, they emphasise the importance of receiving relevant feedback on teaching performance from a much more dialogical perspective:

*"They observed my class and told me everything was fine, that there was nothing to improve ... but I think they should have given me some suggestions. That's why there needs to be more conversation when providing feedback on the class, to calmly discuss what is being evaluated"* (Class teacher, Subsidised Private School in Medium-low performance category).

On the other hand, another group of teachers expresses the need for recognition and participation in curriculum evaluation processes. This perspective is related to the possibility of building a more profound understanding of both their professional practice and the purpose of assessment:

*"If we're not involved in the evaluation processes and the management teams make decisions behind closed doors only to tell us what to do afterwards, we don't really develop any learning. It's different when they consider you and invite you to think about how we can do it together" (Class teacher, Public School in Medium-low performance category).*

*"We perceive classroom support as supervision by the school management, but I believe it should be more enjoyable and led by teachers of the same subject. I've been observed once or twice this year, but it really makes you nervous" (Class teacher, Municipal School in High performance category).*

The results in this category reveal that the different educational actors involved in curriculum evaluation are aware of the vertical nature of this process. Similarly, they recognise the need for feedback from an external agent, which could be members of the management team and professional peers. Furthermore, the narratives show various stances regarding the evaluative role of members of the management team. While one group of teachers values and considers the feedback and constant monitoring of their work by these agents to be appropriate, another group of teachers explicitly expresses the need to move towards more participatory and democratic evaluation practices in their schools.

#### b. Category "Democratisation of evaluative practice"

In this category, narratives are provided that reveal processes of resignification regarding the meaning attributed to evaluation by different agents. Specifically, these narratives illustrate a process of reflection and awareness regarding the need to reassess the underlying rationale of the assessment of teacher performance, primarily conducted through classroom observation:

*"Classroom observation was focused on scrutinising the lesson using a somewhat secretive checklist. However, the practices didn't improve, so we realised there was a need to provide feedback with criteria constructed alongside the teachers .... Following that collaborative process, we realised that we should never conduct that type of classroom inspection again" (Member of MT, Public School in Medium performance category).*

From this transformative perspective, certain schools stand out for involving teachers in curriculum evaluation as a horizontal practice that is closely linked to teaching and learning processes:

*"We've come to realise that our role as the management team is to create an appropriate context and conditions for teachers and students to carry out their activities. However, it's primarily the professionals in the classroom who should make curriculum decisions" (Member of MT, Public School in Medium performance category).*

Likewise, some management teams stand out for making sustained efforts to shape democratic scenarios for curriculum management where professional learning is intertwined with evaluation processes:

*"In school, we work by subject ... all the teachers in the Maths department reach agreements on how to work on the curriculum, so feedback isn't solely the responsibility of the head of the UTP, but rather a responsibility shared by all the teachers" (Class teacher, Municipal School in High performance category).*

Along the same lines, teachers acknowledge the opportunities for peer collaboration they have during the teacher performance assessment process mediated by the classroom support practice:

*"Classroom support has been beneficial for me. Collaborating with my colleagues by observing their classes has allowed me to reflect on my own practice and identify areas for improvement. So, there is a connection between teachers and coherence in learning" (Class teacher, Municipal School in High performance category).*

The positive view of teachers regarding taking a leading role in curriculum evaluation provides clear guidance for pedagogical leadership, as it fosters professional learning environments within the school. In this regard, shared practices of curriculum evaluation are seen as an opportunity to reflect on teaching and learning processes, while also enabling teachers and school leadership teams to make timely decisions that address the everyday challenges encountered in the classroom.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The importance of pedagogical leadership has led to this research into curriculum evaluation practices, as they constitute a bridge between the actions of school management and teaching and learning processes (Villagra, 2020). In the same vein, it is evident that educational agents within school settings have varying levels of involvement in curriculum evaluation processes. It is particularly noteworthy that teachers and students, as key actors in the educational process, have fewer opportunities to express value judgments and make decisions about the educational process, resulting in a limited diversity of perspectives in the assessment practice. In this regard, Ríos-Muñoz and Herrera-Araya (2021) contend that assessment should aim to empower both teachers and students by fostering collaborative evaluation practices to

enhance learning. In other words, assessment in schools should adopt more collaborative perspectives (Elmore, 2010; Santos-Guerra, 2013, 2014). Therefore, the findings of this study do not aim to diminish the significance of the evaluative role of management teams, but rather contribute to reflection on the need to increase the participation of various stakeholders within the educational community. As argued by Barba-Martín and Hortigüela (2022), granting learners a voice and more control over the assessment process is intended to foster shared and dialogic assessment, without implying the transfer of all evaluative judgment from one party to another.

Viewed through the lens of assessment as a form of learning, it is clear that class teachers recognise the significance of their involvement in curriculum evaluation for their professional learning. Moreover, they broadly appreciate the opportunities for critical dialogue and collaborative work facilitated by instances of performance feedback. In this context, research by Tuytens and Devos (2014) suggests that teacher involvement in planning assessment fosters a deeper understanding of its purpose, thus perceiving it as a fairer and more beneficial process. Similarly, a study conducted by Aravena-Kenigs et al. (2023) finds that teacher participation in the design of assessment tools for their own performance leads to increased receptiveness to learning and contributes to the enhancement of professional confidence.

The results of this study reveal the existence of assessment practices that are led by professionals from the technical-pedagogical units (UTPs), who are considered expert teachers, with responsibilities for pedagogical management that sometimes manifest as control and monitoring of teaching and learning. According to a study by Aravena and Quiroga (2018), this practice is commonly established in the technical-pedagogical unit in the Chilean educational context because the management focuses on managerial tasks and delegates responsibilities related to learning to the leaders of the UTP. This research also found that headteachers and UTP heads have differing understandings of learning and teaching, a factor that hinders the construction of a learning culture. Consequently, a pedagogical leadership approach should create the conditions necessary to foster the ongoing co-construction of the curriculum within the school, grounded in the authentic and legitimate participation of all members of the educational community (Rojas, 2019; Bolívar, 2019; Villagra y Torres, 2023).

Within this framework, the findings of this study show that such assessments are usually carried out based on hierarchical logics and are generally implemented by individuals holding management positions within the school. From this perspective, the first challenge that emerges, as highlighted by

Santos-Guerra (2013), is how to foster democracy in schools that have a hierarchical structure where the most important decisions are taken by the authority. The democratisation of assessment in schools is a key challenge for pedagogical leadership, requiring a clear intention to involve all educational agents in decision-making to achieve a shared vision of learning and pedagogy.

In light of these findings, it is crucial for the analysis to consider the standpoint of educational policies, which in recent years have driven several initiatives aimed at reinforcing the pedagogical role of school leadership. In this regard, it is necessary to examine the coherence of curriculum evaluation practices with the guidelines of educational policy that emphasize the formative function of assessment. However, entrenched traditional beliefs within school culture shape the evolution of practices for guiding teaching and learning processes through an approach of assessment-as-learning. As Santos-Guerra (2020) warns, many assessment practices are developed based on a superficial understanding of the guiding principles of policy. Therefore, research is required on leadership practices in the Latin American educational context, as it has a social and political history that could explain the way schools are led (Seashore, 2017).

A superficial understanding of assessment can be counterproductive in leading teaching and learning processes, as the formative purpose is influenced by how the curriculum is assessed and by whom. In this regard, the results suggest that curriculum evaluation tends to be implicitly associated with hierarchical roles, thus highlighting the need to progress towards more democratic and participatory scenarios within the school. Considering these findings, the challenge for management teams lies in transitioning towards democratic evaluative practices that foster dialogue and question what is done to facilitate learning (Santos-Guerra, 2020), with a particular focus on providing teachers and students with real opportunities for participation as key agents in the educational process (Maureira & Garay, 2019).

Regarding the scope of this study, it is important to highlight the identification of critical issues that schools encounter in the curriculum evaluation process. These issues could potentially be addressed through educational policy, particularly by providing specific guidelines to foster the genuine involvement of all members of the educational community from a perspective of pedagogical leadership. It should be noted that the study has certain limitations, due to the small number of schools included in the case studies. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies expand both the quantity and variety of participating schools.

Similarly, future research is proposed to examine the meanings that teachers construct regarding the assessment experience in schools, linking evaluative agents (the individuals who evaluate), evaluative procedures (how evaluation is conducted), and the evaluative criteria (what is evaluated), with the aim of broadening understanding of curriculum evaluation practices and the factors that facilitate or hinder its development.

### Acknowledgements

This paper is part of the results of the Fondecyt project N°11200738 "Leadership for learning and evaluation practices in elementary education schools in the Araucanía Region", funded by the National Research and Development Agency of Chile (ANID).

### References

- Aguirre, A. & Schugurensky, D. (2017). La participación como elemento clave en las escuelas democráticas. *Revista Reflexão e Ação*, 25(2), 46-83. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17058/rea.v25i2.9884>
- Ahtiainen, R., Fonsén, E. & Kiuru, L. (2021). Finnish early childhood education and care leaders' perceptions of pedagogical leadership and assessment of the implementation of the National Core Curriculum in times of change. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 46(2), 126-138. <https://doi.org/10.1177/18369391211010971>
- Aravena, F. & Quiroga, M. (2018). Bicephalous leadership structure: an exploratory study in Chile. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 22(6), 670-684. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2018.1492022>
- Aravena, F., Cádiz, M., Peña, C., González, M. & Núñez, C. (2019). Liderazgo escolar: una mirada a los criterios de éxito pedagógico de los Jefes de Unidad Técnica en Chile. *Revista Calidad en la Educación*, 51, 252-280. <http://dx.doi.org/10.31619/caledu.n51.647>
- Aravena-Kenigs, O., Mellado, M. & Montanero, M. (2023). Incidencia del asesoramiento pedagógico con rúbricas formativas para el mejoramiento del desempeño docente. *Revista Colombiana de Educación*, (88), 324-348. <https://doi.org/10.17227/rce.num88-13737>
- Arias, M. (2022). Principles, Scope, and Limitations of the Methodological Triangulation. *Invest. Educ. Enferm.* 40(2), e03. <https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.iee.v40n2e03>
- Barba-Martín, R. & Hortigüela-Alcalá, D. (2022). Si la evaluación es aprendizaje, he de formar parte de la misma. Razones que justifican la implicación del alumnado. *Revista Iberoamericana de Evaluación Educativa*, 15(1), 9-22. <https://doi.org/10.15366/riee2022.15.1.001>
- Bolívar, A. (2019). *Una dirección escolar con capacidad de liderazgo pedagógico*. La Muralla.
- Canta, J. & Quesada L. J. (2021). El uso del enfoque del estudio de caso: Una revisión de la literatura. *Horizontes Revista de Investigación en Ciencias de la Educación*, 5(19), 775-786. Epub September 30, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.33996/revistahorizontes.v5i19.236>
- Carrera-Hernández C. (2024). La evaluación curricular como objeto de estudio en la investigación educativa. *Revista Iberoamericana de Investigación y Desarrollo Educativo*, 14(28), e637.
- Cox, C. (2018). Currículum: categorías de análisis, tendencias, gobernanza, in A. Arratia & L. Osandón (eds). *Políticas para el desarrollo del currículum. Reflexiones y propuestas* (pp. 1-22). Ministerio de Educación de Chile/Unesco.
- Cruz, M., Reyes, M. & Cornejo, M. (2012). Conocimiento situado y el problema de la subjetividad del investigador/a. *Cinta Moebio*, 45, 253-274. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0717-554X2012000300005>
- Del Pino, M. (2016). Comunidad de evaluación: protagonistas en las decisiones evaluativas. *Educere*, 20(65), 61-71.
- Elmore, R. (2010). *Mejorando la Escuela desde la sala de clases*. Fundación Chile.
- Freire-Sanches, M., Almeida, A., Cardoso, E., Alves, E., Gomes, H., Alves, M., Gomes, R. Pereira, R. & Oliveira, R. (2025). Evaluación y revisión curricular: retos y perspectivas en la práctica educativa. *Cuadernos de Educación y Desarrollo*, 17(4), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.55905/cuadv17n4-083>
- Gordon, R., Lumb, M., Bunn, M. & Burke, P. (2022). Evaluation for equity: reclaiming evaluation by striving towards counter-hegemonic democratic practices. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 54(3), 277-290. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2021.1931059>
- Guba, E. & Lincoln, Y. (1989). *Fourth Generation Evaluation*. Sage Publications.

- Haraway, D. (1995). *Ciencia, cyborgs y mujeres. La reinención de la naturaleza*. Cátedra.
- Knight, K. (2022). The school principal as democratic leader: a critique of the Wallace Foundation's vision of the principalship. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 25(1), 155-161. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2019.1637545>
- Larsen, E. & Hesby, N. (2023). Teachers' Perceptions of Their Schools' Democratic Character. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 67(2), 327-343. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2021.2021437>
- Leithwood, K., Harris, A. & Hopkins, D. (2019). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School Leadership & Management*, 40(1), 5-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2019.1596077>
- Leiva-Guerrero, M., Aravena Kenigs, O. & Sepúlveda-Egaña, B. (2024). Percepción de equipos directivos sobre la gestión del currículum en escuelas chilenas de bajo desempeño. *Revista mexicana de investigación educativa*, 29(103), 913-937.
- Londoño, L. (2016). Transformación de las relaciones de poder entre evaluación y educación. *Praxis & Saber*, 7(13), 153-175. <https://doi.org/10.19053/22160159.4170>
- Mallimaci, F. & Giménez, V. (2006). Historia de vida y métodos biográficos. In Irene Vasilachis (Coord.), *Estrategias de Investigación cualitativa* (pp. 175-212). Gedisa.
- Mansilla, J. & Beltrán, J. (2016). Racionalidad instrumental y prácticas de gestión en jefes técnicos de liceos de la Araucanía. *Revista de Investigación Educativa*, 34(1), 151-165. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6018/rie.34.1.218041>
- Maureira, Ó. (2018). Prácticas del liderazgo educativo: Una mirada evolutiva e ilustrativa a partir de sus principales marcos, dimensiones e indicadores más representativos. *Revista Educación*, 42(1), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.15517/revedu.v42il.22115>
- Maureira, Ó. & Garay, S. (2019). Liderazgo distribuido en escuelas primarias efectivas. In M. A. Díaz & A. Veloso (Coords.), *Modelos de investigación en liderazgo educativo: una revisión internacional* (pp. 147-156). Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones sobre la Universidad y la Educación.
- Mayes, E., Black, R. & Finneran, R. (2020). The possibilities and problematics of student voice for teacher professional learning: lessons from an evaluation study. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 51(2), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2020.1806988>
- Mccormick, R. & James, M. (1996). *Evaluación del currículum en los centros escolares*. Morata.
- Mellado, M., Chaucono, J. & Villagra, C. (2017). Creencias de directivos escolares: implicancias en el liderazgo pedagógico. *Psicología Escolar e Educativa*, 21(3), 541-548. <https://doi.org/10.1590/2175-353920170213111102>
- OECD (2016). *School Leadership for Learning. Insights from TALIS 2013*. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264258341-en>
- OEI (2022). *LIDEI 2022, Liderazgo Directivo en Iberoamérica*. OEI.
- Rincón-Gallardo, S. (2019). *Liberar el Aprendizaje: el cambio educativo como cambio social*. Grano de Sal.
- Ríos-Muñoz, D. & Herrera-Araya, D. (2022). Concepciones subyacentes a las racionalidades evaluativas de docentes escolares. *Revista de Investigación Educativa Latinoamericana*, 59(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.7764/PEL.59.1.2022.9>
- Robinson, V. (2019). Hacia un fuerte liderazgo centrado en el estudiante: afrontar el reto del cambio. *Revista Eletrônica de Educação*, 13(1), 123-145. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14244/198271993068>
- Robinson, V. & Gray, E. (2019). What difference does school leadership make to student outcomes? *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, 49(2), 171-187. <http://doi.org/10.1080/03036758.2019.1582075>
- Robinson, V., Lloyd, C. & Rowe, K. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(5), 635-674. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X08321509>
- Robinson, V., Hohepa, M. & Lloyd, C. (2009). *School leadership and student outcomes: Identifying what works and why. Best evidence synthesis iteration*. Ministry of Education New Zealand.
- Rodríguez-Gallego, M., Ordóñez-Sierra, R. & López-Martínez, A. (2020). La dirección escolar: Liderazgo pedagógico y mejora escolar. *Revista de Investigación Educativa*, 38(1), 275-292. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6018/rie.364581>

- Rojas, O. (2019). La evaluación curricular en el proceso de formación inicial en la carrera lenguas extranjeras. *Revista de Investigación, Formación y Desarrollo: Generando Productividad Institucional*, 7(2), 50-56. <https://doi.org/10.34070/rif.v7i1>
- Sanmartí, N. (2007). *10 ideas clave. Evaluar para aprender*. Graó.
- Santos-Guerra, M. (2013). *Las feromonas de la manzana. El valor educativo de la dirección escolar*. Homo Sapiens.
- Santos-Guerra, M. (2014). *La evaluación como aprendizaje. Cuando la flecha impacta en la diana*. Narcea.
- Santos-Guerra, M. (2020). *¿Para qué servimos los pedagogos? El valor de la Educación*. Catarata.
- Seashore, K. (2017). Implicancias del liderazgo escolar en la efectividad de las escuelas. In J. Weinstein & G. Muñoz (Eds.), *Cómo cultivar el liderazgo educativo: once miradas* (pp. 150-181). Universidad Diego Portales.
- Sisson, J., Lash, M., Shin, A. & Whittington, V. (2021). Co-constructed leadership in early childhood education. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*. 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2021.1914350>
- Smith, P. (2018). Collecting Sufficient Evidence When Conducting a Case Study. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(5), 1043-1048. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3188>
- Spillane, J. & Ortiz, M. (2019). Perspectiva distribuida del liderazgo y la gestión escolar: elementos e implicancias cruciales. *Revista Eletrônica de Educação*, 13(1), 169-181. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14244/198271993070>
- Stake, R. (2005). *Investigación con estudio de casos*. Morata.
- Torres, M. & Villagra, C. (2021). Propuesta metodológica para la investigación sobre liderazgo y evaluación curricular desde la epistemología de la articulación. In E. Serna (Ed.), *Revolución en la formación y la capacitación para el siglo XXI, Vol I*. (pp. 578-592). Instituto Antioqueño de Investigación. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5708704>
- Treviño, E., Varela, C., Rodríguez, M. & Straub, C. (2019). Transformar las aulas en Chile: superar la desconexión entre la enseñanza actual y los modos de aprender de los estudiantes. In A. Carrasco & M. Flores (Eds), *De la reforma a la transformación: capacidades, innovaciones y regulación de la educación chilena* (pp. 173-215). Universidad Católica de Chile.
- Tuytens, M. & Devos, G. (2014). How to activate teachers through teacher evaluation? School Effectiveness and School Improvement. *International Journal of Research, Policy and Practice*, 25(4), 509-530. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2013.842601>
- Venegas, C. (2023). Modelo de clasificación del agente evaluador según relaciones de poder: ¿Qué evalúa quién evalúa? *Revista Brasileira de Educação*, 28, e280011, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1413-24782023280011>
- Villagra, C. (2020). *Proyecto Fondecyt de Iniciación N°11200738 Liderazgo para el aprendizaje y prácticas de evaluación en Escuelas de Educación Básica de La Araucanía*. Manuscrito inédito.
- Villagra, C. & Fritz, M. (2017). La autoevaluación orientada al mejoramiento educativo: Una experiencia basada en la reflexión de la práctica docente. En V. Valdebenito y M. Mellado (Eds.), *Liderazgo Escolar y Gestión Pedagógica* (pp. 38-48). Universidad Católica de Temuco.
- Villagra, C. & Torres, M. (2023). Liderazgo y democratización evaluativa de la escuela. En K. Gajardo y J. Cáceres-Iglesias (Coords.) *Soñar grande es soñar juntas. En busca de una educación crítica e inclusiva* (pp. 514-525). Octaedro.