



**AN INSTITUTIONAL & INTERNATIONAL  
DIALOGUE ABOUT EDUCATION  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CHILE  
(JULY 2011)**

A report submitted

for the

*Proyecto Institucional de Educación*

*en la Universidad de Chile*

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## REPORT ON AN INSTITUTIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ABOUT EDUCATION IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CHILE

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### **Purpose**

To report on the visit to the University of Chile by Dr Graham Parr, senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia, July 2011.

#### **Background**

I was invited to visit the University of Chile for five days, between 11 and 15 July, as part of the '*Proyecto Institucional de Educación en la Universidad de Chile*'. This project aims to investigate research and development in education, initial training of teachers in pre- primary and secondary schools, as well as graduate programs and continuing/community education' in the University of Chile, across the country and across the world.

#### **Activities<sup>1</sup>**

Over the course of the week, I participated in scheduled meetings with a wide range of education stakeholders from the University of Chile, and with representatives from the Ministry of Education and the Australian Embassy. I also led two three-hour public workshops in the University of Chile.

#### **Critical points emerging from the dialogue**

##### **i. Teaching and learning in the University of Chile**

The quality of discourse around pedagogy, assessment practices and curriculum across the university is mixed. However, in all sectors I perceived evidence of small groups predisposed to develop and improve curriculum in response to the constantly evolving knowledge base within particular disciplines.

The work of the Higher Education Curriculum Reform Committee is to be applauded for helping to provide a framework for, and to facilitate and recognise, some positive innovations and reform being undertaken across the university.

*Recommendation 1:* Consider locating the Higher Education Curriculum Reform Committee as a unit within a centralised entity such as a Faculty/School/Institute of Education. As a unit in this entity, it could continue the valuable work it is already doing, supporting and coordinating internal projects for curriculum, pedagogical and assessment reform, but with the backing of a larger institutional infrastructure and funding base.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for details of activities over the course of the week

*Recommendation 2:* Develop structures for individual academics and (more crucially) groups of academics to rigorously self-evaluate their curriculum and teaching practice, and provide a regular forum for academics to celebrate and share knowledge of quality teaching. These structures could encourage and facilitate collaborative groups to engage in critical dialogue and innovation. Participation in this self-evaluation mechanism could become normalised through public recognition, inducements in terms of promotional possibilities, and even awards for demonstrably outstanding achievements.

## **ii. The nature and status of education as a discipline in the university**

At the current time, educational studies as a discipline in the University of Chile is located in piecemeal, disparate spaces.

Calls to promote and stimulate debate about education theory and practice are being made persuasively and assertively, but without the foundational basis of a Faculty of Education (or similar entity) to focus and ground these calls. In contrast, existing faculties have a strong power base and institutional and curriculum structures that leave education discourses marginalised, trying to ‘force their way’ into the mainstream debates.

*Recommendation 3:* That work begin to establish some formalised entity (a school, a faculty, perhaps even an institute) within the university, which defines and identifies itself through a focus on education as a discipline. The entity would operate in close partnership with schools, workplaces, governments and community-based education organisations. There would need to be strong emphasis from the outset on a teaching-research nexus between research and more practice-based programs. This entity could become the flagship for a movement across the university for advocating, promoting and demonstrating this teaching-research nexus. Ideally, this entity would have the equivalent institutional status as other faculties within the university.

## **iii. Standards, teacher education and partnerships**

There is evidence of intensive attention given to education studies as a discipline and as a set of practices within the university in ‘pockets’ around the university, but there is variation in epistemological and philosophical focus of this attention and in implementation of ideas or visions. The DEP, the one area which I was able to learn about in some detail, shows evidence of some rather traditional practices as well as some exciting prospects in terms of pilot projects with schools, with industry partners, and also in the plans for inquiry-based curriculum reform.

Questions remain, though, as to how well positioned the DEP is to build on the innovative pilot programs, or to implement the planned reforms, without significant funding or an institutional support base for this important work. Lacking, too, is any plan for building a research program into the implementation of these proposed innovations. The profile of most academics in the DEP suggests that, for whatever reason, rigorous research agendas are not central to their work.

The historical moment of the introduction of national standards for professional teachers and standards for teacher training institutions could be a prompt to bring disparate groups together under the auspices and administration of a single entity in a collegial, rigorous inquiry into current practices and structures. Collegial groups within the university, with different expertise and backgrounds, could use these sets of standards as foci for collaborative critical inquiry into their practice and programs, with a view to improving those practices and programs.

*Recommendation 4:* A new unifying vision and a cohesive set of structures for teacher education could provide a more comprehensive and coherent program for developing the next generation of teachers in Chile. This vision and these structures could be realised through embedding teacher education in a collective of education specialist scholarly communities, which draw from and feed each other.

*Recommendation 5:* One aspect that clearly distinguishes the Australian teaching profession and its Chilean counterpart is the existence of thriving professional associations in Australia. The professional associations are not union-based and they exist complementary to the professional lives of teachers in schools. One major research project that the new University of Chile Educational ‘entity’ (i.e., School or Faculty or Institute or ...?) might consider is an investigation into the ways in which professional associations or networks in different international settings can support and enrich the professional learning lives of their member teachers.

#### **iv. Research in education, and in education-related fields**

The committed work of high profile research centres and units in the university has earned for them both national and international recognition. The leaders of these centres and units and the individual academics who are their members have established an enviable research profile for their research, and for their contributions to educational projects with schools. They have helped the University of Chile develop and maintain its international profile.

One exciting dimension of the work being planned by these groups is various forms of capacity building research, where researchers with a strong knowledge and nuanced appreciation of schools and schooling cultures are working in genuinely participatory projects, and where teachers are positioned as co-inquirers.

The immediate future presents an exciting prospect for CIAE, CMM and similar groups in the University of Chile to work in collaborative teams to promote a stronger research culture in teacher education in the university, a culture enhanced by meaningful relationships with schools. It could show leadership in promoting and facilitating best-practice capacity building educational research within its own institution and with teachers in Chilean schools.

*Recommendation 6:* Investigate possible processes and structures to enable different scholarly and professional groups with interests in education to come together to make joint bids for capacity building research projects, especially those that involve working with needy and/or disadvantaged schools or communities.

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From my brief engagement in dialogue with education stakeholders in the University of Chile, it seems to me that there is already much for which it should be proud in its educational offerings and in the programs being currently pursued. However, these offerings and programs appear to lack coherence. There is great potential, and the timing is propitious, for the development of synergies and collaborations between groupings within the university. I see the four topics, above, as having particular significance in the University of Chile’s plans to develop education as a discipline, and so to better contribute to the national project to improve educational outcomes.



## REPORT ON AN INSTITUTIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ABOUT EDUCATION IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CHILE

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### DETAILED REPORT

#### **Purpose**

To report on the visit to the University of Chile by Dr Graham Parr, senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia, July 2011.

#### **Background**

I was invited to visit the University of Chile for five days, between 11 and 15 July, as part of the '*Proyecto institucional de Educación en la Universidad de Chile*'. This project is aligned with current Chilean government policy, described by Ministry of Education officials during my visit as a 'nationwide mobilisation' to improve the quality of education and in particular 'teacher training' in Chile.

The cross-disciplinary '*Proyecto institucional de Educación*' was first announced by Rector Victor Perez, in June 2010. The project would, he explained, investigate research and development in education, initial training of teachers in pre- primary and secondary schools, as well as graduate programs and continuing/community education' in the University of Chile, across the country and across the world.

Prorectora Rosa Deves has described the specific aims of the '*Proyecto institucional de Educación*' as: to contribute to human development in Chile (understood as the expansion of capabilities and freedoms); to facilitate proactive participation as stakeholders in 'one of the greatest challenges of the knowledge society'; and to contribute to the articulation of a 'fruitful dialogue' within the University of Chile and with the wider society.

Prior to my visit, the institutional educational project had already included face to face dialogue with a number of international partners, including The Institute of Education (London, England), Helsinki University and Oulu University (Finland), Uppsala University (Sweden), and Enrique Varona University of Pedagogical Sciences (Cuba), and visits to schools in these countries. Following my visit, I understand that further face to face consultations are planned with faculties of education in the USA, Canada and Australia.

I brought to this project an international research profile with publications that include national and international scholarly books and articles published in international educational journals. My research interests include teacher education, transnational educational studies, teacher professional knowledge and teacher professional learning/development. In addition, I have extensive professional development experience working with teachers and schools in a range of international settings, and I have more than twenty years of experience teaching in secondary and

tertiary educational programs. I locate my own contribution to the project as participating in, responding to, prompting and sometimes provoking the ‘fruitful dialogue’ mentioned above.

## **Activities**

Over the course of the week, I participated in scheduled meetings with a wide range of education stakeholders from the University of Chile, and with representatives from the Ministry of Education and the Australian Embassy.<sup>2</sup> I also led two three-hour public workshops in the University of Chile.<sup>3</sup>

The two public workshops were publicised on the University’s website. They were open to all education stakeholders in the University of Chile and other universities. The titles of the workshops were:

1. ‘Critical points in teacher education programs’ (Tuesday 12 July)
2. ‘Professional standards for teachers and Standards for initial teacher education programs’ (Wednesday 13 July)

Participants in the workshops hailed from a range of faculties within the university (including Philosophy and Humanities, Physical and Mathematical Sciences, and Social Sciences). There were teacher educators from the Department of Pedagogical Studies (DEP), educational researchers from the Centre for Advanced Educational Research (CIAE) and the Centre of Mathematical Modelling (CMM) and scholars from other universities including Universidad Diego Portales and Universidad de los Andes.

Just before the conclusion of my week in the University of Chile, I was interviewed for the university’s online newsletter, Uchile.online. An extended transcript of the interview has been published: see <http://www.uchile.cl/noticias/73458/graham-parr-educar-es-formar-ciudadanos-activos>

## **A note about my perspective**

I have written this report from the perspective of a visitor, albeit a visitor who was positioned as an active participant in an intense institutional dialogue. My schedule over that week reveals that I participated in diverse conversations with a range of education stakeholders from within and outside the University of Chile. This participation afforded me, an outsider to the country and the university, a unique opportunity to inquire into education and its possibilities within the University of Chile and beyond.

From the outset, I was warmly received by academics, administrators and professional staff alike. I was welcomed and encouraged to be a proactive interlocutor in all manner of conversations. Notwithstanding this professional and personal hospitality, in a sense, it was helpful for me to remind myself that I was, in significant respects, an outsider. This outsider perspective brought with it certain benefits: a ‘fresh’ set of eyes and ears, a different critical framework for evaluating current practices and imagining future possibilities, and some level of critical detachment not

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 2 for details of activities over the course of the week

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 3 for more detailed points of focus in these workshops

compromised by calcified knowledge of previous institutional practices, by existing relationships or by promises of future rewards.

For five days, via a network of dialogue and conversation, I was immersed in and entered into and an institutional culture that was previously unknown to me. The experience was intellectually absorbing, challenging, and enlightening, thanks to the superb planning and flexibility of Prorectora Rosa Deves and Manager of the Education Project Rodrigo Roco. I am very grateful to them and to the professionalism and the openness of the professors and administrators with whom I spoke. I am grateful, also, for the interest and candour of the education students with whom I met briefly, and for the time that people across the university were able to give to me. Unfortunately, the timing of my visit coincided with school holidays, in some places, and widespread strike action that was affecting the university calendar. For this reason, I was not able to observe teaching and learning in schools, and I was not able to speak to teachers in schools about their knowledge of, interest in, and ideas about university-based teacher education or educational research with university-based researchers. My knowledge of teaching and learning in the university itself was gleaned through meetings and seminars specially convened for my visit, and through workshops led by me. To some extent, then, my knowledge of education in the university and beyond, due to circumstances beyond the control of any of us, was developed through dialogue and conversation separate from classrooms or lecture theatres.

Nevertheless, the conversations I did participate in were dynamic, many-faceted and often robust. I learned about institutional and individual academic practices. I learned of the existing and emerging attitudes, aspirations and identities of individuals, of groups within the university, and of the university as a whole. I developed some knowledge of the *history* of education in the institution and its legacy. I generated some understanding of *current beliefs* held by individuals and groups within the institution, and a sense of *future scenarios and possibilities* (both bleak and optimistic). My eyes, ears and sensitivities were open to the voices and identities I encountered, and I tried to be conscious, too, of those with whom I did not get to speak, for one reason or another.

There were inherent dangers in rushing to judgement, of precipitately critiquing what I heard, read or observed while still ignorant or partially conscious of particular situational and historical factors that mediate practices and cultures. In my own research in transcultural spaces, I often see researchers rushing to neat but flawed judgements in the area of international comparative studies in education. One can see this sometimes in debates research surrounding international testing regimes like PISA or TIMMS. Often, there are methodological limitations in the collection and interpretation of data – e.g., the narrowness of the knowledge tested, and the use of test data to situate countries on league tables in terms of performance and equity. Such limitations are often overlooked or excused because the raw data look so compelling. It is true that data such as these and analysis of the data can sometimes prompt worthwhile action and change, where otherwise there might be stasis and/or complacency. It is important to acknowledge this. However, crude interpretation of these data can also have acutely damaging effects on institutional and national morale. It can provoke knee-jerk reactions based on flawed knowledge, such as whole communities (or whole countries) teaching to the test in order to improve a narrow range of performance outcomes only.

The critical points I propose below have been developed through a process of actively seeking to understand the culture, history and practices of the University of Chile as they relate to education.



This process was followed up by a period of reflection back in Australia. Since returning to Australia, I have consulted the extensive notes I had taken during my visit and consulted certain artefacts that are publicly available online, and I subjected my emerging understandings to critical scrutiny. Invariably, this report involves some comparative dimensions although I have tried to avoid crude single-indicator comparisons. I acknowledge that any comparisons I make are mediated by my experience of teacher education in Australia, and to some extent in South Africa, and by my participation in teacher education research communities that extend across all continents of the world.

## **Critical Points about Education (in and beyond the University of Chile)**

In framing this discussion of critical points about education in and beyond the University of Chile, I propose four main topics (and some focused recommendations). The topics are:

- v. Teaching and learning in the University of Chile
- vi. The nature and status of education as a discipline in the university
- vii. Standards, teacher education and partnerships
- viii. Research in education, and in education-related fields

### **i. Teaching and learning in the University of Chile**

The quality of discourse or conversation around pedagogy, assessment practices and curriculum in higher education offerings can be one indicator of the quality of the teaching and learning across a university. I observed mixed quality in this discourse, which is both potentially good news and disappointing news. In all sectors with which I had some interaction there was evidence of small groups developing and improving curriculum in response to the constantly evolving knowledge base within their discipline. I heard of curriculum and/or pedagogical reform in the faculties of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Physical and Mathematical Sciences and Engineering, and similar innovations were being undertaken or considered in the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities, specifically the Department of Pedagogical Studies (DEP). However, there was little or no evidence of any of these groups subjecting their innovations or reforms to critical scrutiny in peer reviewed journals with some methodical research to rigorously evaluate the effects or value of innovations. When groups within higher education *do* undertake such research, their innovation or reform is more likely to be legitimated in the eyes of academic colleagues. As important as this is the value that accrues from colleagues within an institution being drawn into rigorous and focused academic dialogue about these innovations and their applicability in different settings.

The work of the Higher Education Curriculum Reform Committee is to be applauded for facilitating and providing a framework for positive innovations and reform being in different areas across the university. However, as in all universities across the western world, the fundamental challenge is to increase the volume and quality of reform and innovation being undertaken. This too is more likely when groups or individuals are afforded more encouragement. By encouragement, I refer not so much to promises of financial rewards or promotion opportunities, although this might be part of a multi-faceted package. Rather, I am referring to a variety of ways in which an institution (or indeed government groups) could validate and recognise the intellectual work of educational reform (and, more fundamentally, of ongoing critical praxis) in Higher Education. Clearly, the University of Chile, through projects such as

MECESUP in association with the Ministry of Education (and other mooted projects), has the opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of this kind of strategic work.

It is evident that there are important debates within membership of the HE Curriculum Reform Committee involving some critical consideration of the value of outcomes-based curriculum, and the dangers of rigidly applying narrowly framed notions of student competencies. This conversation, however, needs to enter into more widespread currency, as part of the ongoing professional learning/development of academics who teach in the University of Chile.

*Recommendation 1:* Consider re-locating the Higher Education Curriculum Reform Committee to become a unit within a centralised entity such as a Faculty/School/Institute of Education. This committee could continue the valuable work it is already doing, supporting and coordinating internal projects for curriculum and pedagogical development and assessment reform. In this new institutional context, it would have the backing of a larger institutional infrastructure and thus greater bargaining power. Its work could be extended to include seeking out and enabling funding and partnerships with governments and other funding agencies that could help promote such work. It might also investigate the processes and means for enabling Recommendation 2 to be implemented.

*Recommendation 2:* Develop structures for individual academics and (more crucially) groups of academics to rigorously self-evaluate their curriculum and teaching practice, and provide a regular forum for academics to celebrate and share knowledge of quality teaching. Such a structure should avoid the temptation of single-measure indicators for quality (such as student learning outcomes or student evaluations, or other narrow measures of ‘performance’). Rather it could encourage and facilitate collaborative groups to engage in critical dialogue around innovation as a required dimension of their work. This might be project- or innovation-based, in the form of action research or other forms of practitioner inquiry. In the first instance, at least, this might be offered as an opt-in option, rather than a regime which is imposed and mandated from above for all academics irrespective of context and age of service.

## **ii. The nature and status of education as a discipline in the university**

A characteristic of many conversations within the university, not least in the Faculty of Philosophy and the Humanities, was the bifurcation and resulting tensions between, on the one hand, knowledge that is seen to be situated within (and therefore powerfully framed by) disciplines and, on the other hand, ‘other’ knowledge that is identified as educational knowledge (such as knowledge about pedagogy, or curriculum, or assessment). (In passing, I would observe that this bifurcation often seems to downplay contrasts and contestation between different knowledge traditions within a putative discipline. Does, for instance, Science or even physics speak as one voice with one set of discourses? The work of Patti Lather [2007] and Maggie MacLure [2003] has helped to expose mythologies in that respect. Do those who work in the Languages or even mother tongue language, speak through and with the same discourse? Even notions of pedagogical content knowledge [Shulman, 1986 etc], which are often advocated as offering a way forward in these debates, tend to assume a static and decontextualised body of discipline knowledge, which more sophisticated education research actively unsettles.)

In the University of Chile, as across the world, these tensions often manifest themselves in contests over academic territory as much as in questions about epistemology. Evidence of this territoriality emerged in stark relief in the first of the two workshops which I held (Tuesday 12 July). While debate about the issues was dynamic and passionate in that room, one wonders

whether (and if so, to where?) the conversation migrated or developed beyond this forum as participants moved back to their faculty structures, norms and ‘bases’.

At the current time, educational studies as a discipline in the University of Chile is located in piecemeal, disparate spaces. This means there is a certain power imbalance, it seems to me, with calls for educational reform and for promoting a more rigorous debate located in educational discourses. The calls to promote or stimulate active debate are being made persuasively and assertively, but without the foundational basis of a Faculty of Education (or similar) to focus and ground these calls. In contrast, existing faculties have a strong power base and institutional and curriculum structures that leave education discourses trying to force their way into the mainstream debates. It has to be said that in my experience of several universities in English speaking countries, the existence of a faculty of Education does not ensure, nor should it, that the discipline of education will exist as a single set of discourses where all who identify as education specialists all speak with one voice. However, the formalising of some institutional entity within the university is more likely to provide a strong basis for rigorous and politically savvy work in the area of educational reform. To achieve this, in the first instance, would mean calling for, negotiating and then articulating, a philosophical and strategic basis for educational action in the university. This would be best done in tandem with, rather than before, attempts to ‘mobilise’ educational reforms in public schools, workplaces, industry and in community settings.

*Recommendation 3:* That work begin to establish some formalised entity (a school, a faculty, perhaps even an institute) within the university, which defines and identifies itself through a focus on education as a discipline. The entity would operate in close partnership with schools, workplaces, governments and community-based education organisations. The entity would need to recognise a rich diversity of epistemological traditions and positions. This would be important, pragmatically, since the entity would need to accommodate a number of existing groups and centres within the university, some of which already have a strong sense of autonomous identity. It would also be important that the entity reflect at least some of the diversity and dynamism of the discipline of education, although one would not want it to be built upon some pale and un-theorised notion of eclecticism. There would need to be strong emphasis from the outset on a teaching-research nexus between research and more practice-based programs. Indeed, this could be the flagship of a movement across the university for advocating, promoting and demonstrating this teaching-research nexus. Ideally, this entity would have the equivalent institutional status as other faculties within the university. Its value to the university and the Chilean community as a whole would not necessarily be calculated solely in monetary terms. It should not be expected to generate the same level research funds as other faculties. Faculties of education across the world rarely if ever generate levels of funding to comparable to faculties like medicine, physical sciences or engineering. Having said that, I can report that at Monash University, where I come from, there are ongoing pressures for individual academics and for programs to find ways to demonstrate more and more productivity and ultimately to generate more and more income for the faculty.

### **iii. Standards, teacher education and partnerships**

I did not have the opportunity to speak with all of the ‘teacher training’ programs that operate within the University of Chile. This in itself is probably telling. My sense from speaking with representatives of the DEP is that the fragmentariness evident in the education programs scattered across the university is no less evident in any one space or course or department. That is, even where there is intensive attention given to education studies as a discipline and as a set of

practices, there is often wide variation in epistemological and philosophical focus and in the manner of implementing even philosophically coherent programs. Although I did not have the opportunity to observe any of the teaching or assessment practices in DEP, and although I was concerned about some very traditional practices, there was however positive evidence of meaningful curriculum renovation. I heard about, and was able to read about, some exciting programs featuring ongoing teaching and learning partnerships between one or two schools and the university that emerged from DEP. I heard of some very interesting university-industry educational partnerships. It was also encouraging to see progressive visions for inquiry-based curriculum and pedagogy, the use of critical narrative-based assessment practices, and a commitment to enabling the growth and development of complex and situated professional identities in teacher education students. All of that is very positive.

Questions remain, though, as to how well positioned the DEP and its academics are to build on the innovative pilot programs, or to implement the planned reforms, without significant funding or a significant institutional support base for this important work. Lacking, too, is any plan for building a research program into the implementation of these proposed innovations. Indeed, the profile of most academics in the DEP suggests that, for whatever reason, rigorous research agendas are not central to the work of the DEP. (In passing, I might observe that this lack of a research culture might have more to do with the teaching and learning load for individual academics than it has to do with any lack of desire to conduct such research. I was not able to determine this, one way or the other. So I merely raise the question, here.)

The current historical moment of the introduction of national standards for professional teachers and standards for teacher training institutions could be seen by the separate teacher programs within the university, and the academics who teach within them, as either a problem or an opportunity. They may pose a problem because the prescriptive nature of at least some of these centralised standards (something that is not particular to Chile, of course) could tie existing programs in knots, if they do not have a coherent and cohesive philosophy of teaching, learning and research. Without such a philosophy and policy, research across the world (e.g., Apple, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Doecke, 2005; Delandshere & Petrosky, 2001; Goodson, 2003) has documented how the work of educators (primary, secondary or tertiary) can become de-professionalised as they seek to demarcate each separate standard statement and demonstrate each and every achievement requirement.

Alternatively, this historical moment could be the spur or stimulus to bring disparate groups together under the auspices and administration of a single entity in a collegial, rigorous scrutiny of current practices and structures. Collegial groups could use these standards as a prompt for collaborative critical inquiry into their practice and programs. They could be a focus for renewal and improvement of practices and programs. Such inquiry could recognise the value of some existing programs; it might also identify gaps or deficits in the courses. And it might help groups to develop a more comprehensive, dynamic and rigorous program of teacher education. In this underpinning entity, teacher education courses would be feeding into and informed by other education-related courses or projects or programs. These might comprise: in-service teacher education projects (there might be a special program of project that nurtures and supports early career teachers), higher degree research/study programs (for individuals and collegial groups), specialised research centres (including but not only the CIAE), a university-based administrative entity for negotiating and developing professional partnerships with schools (locally and internationally), other universities, industries, governments and community-based organisations.

I do not wish to prescribe, here, exactly what should be, but rather to stress that the historical moment of the introduction of national standards in education can be seen as an exciting opportunity to develop a vision and an agenda for educational renewal and reform. The most profound and generative vision would embed teacher education within a more comprehensive and cohesive collective of scholarly communities, each with some autonomy and identify, but sharing a common focus on education and an agenda of meeting the educational needs of the whole nation.

*Recommendation 4:* A new unifying vision and a cohesive set of structures for teacher education could provide a more comprehensive and coherent program for developing the next generation of teachers in Chile. This vision and these structures could be realised through embedding teacher education in a collective of education specialist scholarly communities, which draw on and nurture each other. Such a collective could nurture and feed the potential for synergies in research projects, especially in larger-scale development projects with governments, networks of schools, and other universities nationally and internationally.

*Recommendation 5:* One aspect that clearly distinguishes the Australian teaching profession and its Chilean counterpart is the existence of thriving professional associations in Australia outside the institutional walls of schools. These professional associations are not union-based and they exist complementary to the professional lives of teachers in schools. One major research project that the new University of Chile Educational 'entity' (i.e., School or Faculty or Institute or ...?) might consider is an investigation into the ways in which professional associations in different international settings can support and enrich the professional learning lives of their member teachers. This might be part of long term vision of re-newing or re-establishing ongoing networks of professional teachers in Chile, networks that can provide ongoing practical support and advice, intellectual nourishment, different professional perspectives on day to day school-based challenges and dilemmas, as well as access to the latest developments in discipline-based and educational knowledge and practices.

#### **iv. Research in education, and in education-related fields, and its articulation with the above**

The sustained committed work of research centres such as the *Centro Modelamiento Matemático* (CMM) and the *Centro de Investigación Avanzada en Educación* (CIAE), and researchers working in units such as *Unidad de Diseño y Gestión de Proyectos Educativos*, surely deserves the excellent national and international recognition they have attracted. The leaders of these centres and the individual academics who are members in these centres have established an enviable research profile for their research, and for their contributions to educational projects in schools. They have helped the University of Chile sustain its international profile. It is this profile that has undoubtedly enabled the centres to take a central role, amongst other things, in the development of national standards for mathematics and for language in Chile. It has enabled them to win generous funding for international collaborative educational projects such as the collaboration between University of Helsinki and University of Chile that Leonor Varas and Salome Martinez reported on during my visit. Collectively, these achievements demonstrate successful strategic planning, robust and rigorous research practices, and an increasing disposition to work collaboratively with governments, agencies, schools and occasionally community-based organisations.

At its best, this research is not only inquiring into problems in schools or schooling, or formulating approaches to improving teaching or learning in schools, although this is no doubt an important dimension of their work. It makes a valuable contribution to the larger project of improving education in Chile. One exciting dimension of the work being planned for the future is various forms of capacity building research, where researchers with a strong knowledge and nuanced appreciation of schools and schooling cultures would conduct research in genuinely participatory projects, and where teachers are positioned as co-inquirers. It was pleasing to hear the CIAE indicating their interest in undertaking more of this research in the future, in projects they are calling ‘school-integrated research’.

This research is in line with best practice across the world. It acknowledges that teachers are perhaps the most valuable resource in education reform and that focusing on improving teacher professional learning is a “key policy lever” for improving student wellbeing and student learning outcomes in schools (OECD, 2005). This OECD claim has been picked up recently by two large-scale inquiries into teacher professional learning across the world: see Darling-Hammond et al, 2009; Doecke et al, 2008. Both these reports draw attention to the ways in which participatory research, conducted by university-based academics in partnership with schools and teachers in schools, is proving to be a powerful form of capacity building for educational communities. The report of a year-long *National Mapping of Teacher Professional Learning in Australia* project explains that

On every level, schools, professional organisations and systems [in Australia and across the world] are engaged in more widespread planning for, and support of, practitioner inquiry **including providing teachers with skills to read research, to synthesise and interpret data, and to conduct their own inquiries.** (Doecke et al., 2008, p. xv, emphasis added)

The immediate future presents an exciting prospect for CIAE, CMM and similar groups in the University of Chile to work in collaborative teams with academics from DEP. Academics from CIAE, CMM etc already have strong research track records but not necessarily strong connections with schools, whereas many from DEP have perhaps a better knowledge of schools, but not as strong research cultures or track records. Once again, the timing is propitious for disparate groups to join together in scholarly educational activity. This joining together would not only help to promote a stronger research culture in teacher education in the university, enhanced by meaningful relationships with schools. It could also show other members of CIAE, CMM etc from other universities that the University of Chile is taking the lead in promoting and facilitating best-practice capacity building educational research within its own institution and with teachers in Chilean schools. This reputation will position the university well in coming opportunities to bid for competitive funding for future capacity building projects. In turn, winning more funding for projects, with research embedded within them, such as those offered by the Chilean Ministry of Education and other projects such as AusTrade’s scholarships for school principals to study in partnerships between Chilean and Australian universities, will open up other as yet unimagined possibilities. Such is the nature of capacity building at its richest.

*Recommendation 6:* Investigate possible processes and structures to enable different scholarly and professional groups with interests in education to come together to make joint bids for capacity building research projects, especially those that involve working with needy and/or disadvantaged schools or communities. These collaborations would be generative and mutually rewarding for the individuals and the groups involved. In addition, foregrounding this work could

position University of Chile as a leader in this innovative form of educational work, work that combines rigorous professional learning and robust research across traditional educational boundaries.

\* \* \* \* \*

From my brief engagement in dialogue with education stakeholders in the University of Chile, it seems to me that there is already much to be proud of in the existing educational offerings and in the programs being currently pursued. And yet these offerings and programs appear to lack coherence. Nevertheless, there is great potential, and the timing is propitious, for better use of synergies and collaborations between groupings within the university. I see the four topics, above, as having great significance in the university's plans to develop education as a discipline. Through addressing these topics and examining my recommendations, I trust that University of Chile may build on the positive contributions it is already making to schooling and educational reform, and take them into a future that is, notwithstanding the considerable challenges ahead, still bright with possibilities.

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## Appendix 1: Participants in scheduled meetings

- Teacher educators from the *Departamento de Estudios en Educación* (DEP) (Department of Pedagogical Studies), led by Prof. Lino Cubillos
- Members of the *Proyecto Institucional del Comité de Educación*, chaired by Prof. Rosa Deves:
  - Pilar Barba (Directora de Pregrado, UCH),
  - Cristian Bellei (Sociología de la Educación, CIAE),
  - Rosa Devés (Educación en Ciencias, Prorectora);
  - Patricio Felmer (Pedagogía y Matemáticas, FCFM);
  - Alejandra Mizala (Economía de la Educación, FCFM y CIAE);
  - Rodrigo Roco (Sociología de la Educación, Prorectoría);
  - Carmen Sotomayor (Didáctica del Lenguaje, CIAE)
- Teacher education students enrolled in the *Departamento de Estudios en Educación* (DEP), at the University of Chile
- University researchers Leonor Varas and Salome Martinez (from the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, University of Chile) chief investigators on a large government-funded collaborative research project involving University of Chile and University of Helsinki, Finland. The project is promoting and researching the use of inquiry-based methods in primary school mathematics.
- Chilean Government officials, including Veronica Fernandez and Camila Gaete, from the Curriculum and Evaluation Unit in the Ministry of Education.
- Sofia Pereira, Education Commissioner, Americas, Australian Embassy, and Representative for Austrade in Chile
- Education researchers from the University of Chile's *Centro de Investigación Avanzada en Educación* (CIAE).
- Academics from the *Unidad para la reforma curricular en la educación superior*, University of Chile
- Prof. Víctor Pérez Vera, Rector (President) of the University of Chile, and Prof. Rosa Deves, Pro-Rector (Vice-President) of the University of Chile.



## Appendix 2: Details of the activities undertaken

University of Chile	Monday 11 July (09:30 to 10:30)
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Prorectoria</b>
<b>Participants</b>	Prof. Rosa Deves, Prorectora of University of Chile, & Rodrigo Roco, Manager of ‘Institutional Foundations for Education at the University of Chile’ project.
<b>Focus points for dialogue</b>	<b>Briefing</b> about the focus for the project and our work this week: focus on capacity building – for the cross-discipline of education in the university and for the teaching profession across the country.

University of Chile	Monday 11 July (11:30 to 13:30)
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>DEP</b>
<b>Participants</b>	Teacher educators from the <i>Departamento de Estudios en Educacion</i> (DEP), led by Prof. Lino Cubillos
<b>Focus points for dialogue</b>	<b>Presentation</b> by academics in DEP of ‘teacher training programs’ currently offered in DEP and some being developed for post-graduate pre-service teacher education students. Following this, <b>discussion</b> of these programs and comparisons with models of teacher education in Australia.

<b>University of Chile</b>	<b>Monday 11 July (17:00 to 19:00)</b>
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Prorectoria</b>
<b>Participants</b>	Members of the <i>Proyecto Institucional del Comité de Educación</i> (Institutional Project of Education Committee) at the University of Chile, chaired by Prof. Deves: Pilar Barba (Directora de Pregrado, UCH); Cristian Bellei (Sociología de la Educación, CIAE); Rosa Devés (Educación en Ciencias, Prorectora); Patricio Felmer (Pedagogía y Matemáticas, FCFM); Alejandra Mizala (Economía de la Educación, FCFM y CIAE); Rodrigo Roco (Sociología de la Educación, Prorectoría); Carmen Sotomayor (Didáctica del Lenguaje, CIAE)
<b>Focus points for dialogue</b>	Discussion of range of programs of teacher education currently offered through different faculties in University of Chile, and discussion of comparisons with ‘models’, programs and experiences of teacher education in Australia. There was further discussion of a wide range of research based education projects connected with my work in the Faculty of Education in Australia, connecting with both schools and various community-based settings.

<b>University of Chile</b>	<b>Tuesday 12 July (10:30 to 12:00)</b>
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>DEP</b>
<b>Participants</b>	Teacher education students enrolled in the <i>Departamento de Estudios en Educacion</i> (DEP)
<b>Focus points for dialogue</b>	The students requested this meeting. There was wide ranging discussion touching on teacher education in Chile and Australia, educational issues and policies in Australia and Chile. It sometimes appeared that the students felt despondant about the quality of education in Chile, and dissatisfied with the quality of their teacher education course. They felt under-prepared for entering into schools as full professionals. There may or may not be a solid basis for their dissatisfaction with their teacher education experience. I had to say to them, though, that I was impressed by the way in which they articulated their understanding of the work of teachers and the complex nature of teachers’ professional knowledge. In fact, their concerns about not being fully prepared are consistent with concerns held by students across the western world. It appears they derive their poor opinion of education standards in Chile largely on the basis of Chile’s ranking on PISA tables. We discussed how governments and other groups seek to measure the quality of education in national and international comparative projects. There was also interesting discussion about the experience of the teaching practicum in different settings and how this might be improved.

<b>University of Chile</b>	<b>Tuesday 12 July (12:30 to 14:00)</b>
<b>Meeting venue</b>	<b>Prorectoria</b>
<b>Participants</b>	University researchers Leonor Varas and Salome Martinez (from the Department of Mathematical Engineering, DIM, and the Centre for Mathematical Modelling, CMM) chief investigators on a government-funded collaborative research project involving teachers in Chilean and Finnish schools, and researchers from the University of Chile and University of Helsinki, Finland.
<b>Focus points for dialogue</b>	This innovative research project is both promoting and researching the use of inquiry-based methods in primary school mathematics across different international settings. The researchers began with a presentation describing and reporting on this generously funded collaborative research project between University of Chile and University of Helsinki, Finland. The project is innovative in its cross-national design capacity building, working with teachers to build knowledge and confidence in inquiry-based teaching and learning methods in primary school mathematics, and in some of the data gathering techniques. The teachers are included in the building of teacher knowledge and sharing of expertise, and in the developing of the data, but they do not take a significant or even active part in interpreting (or making meaning of) the data.

<b>University of Chile</b>	<b>Tuesday 12 July (15:00 to 18:00)</b>
<b>Workshop 1 venue</b>	<b>Headquarters of 1605</b>
<b>Participants</b>	Stakeholders in education from various faculties within University of Chile, as well as academics and researchers from neighbouring universities in Santiago.
<b>Focus points for dialogue</b>	‘Critical Points in teacher education’ The workshop explored international perspectives, experiences and research into teacher education, with particular attention given to three types of ‘points’: (1) critical perspectives and innovative ideas; (2) critical periods in a learner’s pathway through teacher education; and (3) critical issues in the international literature about teacher education. The workshop was well attended and participants were active and lively in their participation in the interactive activities.

<b>University of Chile</b>	<b>Wednesday 13 July (12:00 to 13:30)</b>
<b>Meeting venue</b>	<b>Prorectoria</b>
<b>Participants</b>	Prof. Rosa Deves, Prorectora, researcher, part of international team promoting and researching the use of inquiry-based teaching and learning in primary science classrooms
<b>Focus points for dialogue</b>	<b>Presentation</b> about a longitudinal international collaborative research project: <i>Programa de Educación en Ciencias basada en la Indagación</i> (ECBI), Inquiry-based teaching and learning in Science. This project is a collaboration between the Ministry of Education, University of Chile partner universities in Chile and the US, and schools. The research is distinguished by its framing of the investigators as researchers and learners, and its respectful positioning of teachers as professionals, learners and co-researchers, actively contributing to the development of the project and the knowledge produced in the project. Prof. Deves described and presented on this project; I responded with reports of similar projects in Australia, which worked with inquiry-based professional learning models. I shared some of the detail of own PhD research, which is now published in a book, <i>Inquiry-based professional learning</i> .

<b>University of Chile</b>	<b>Wednesday 13 July (15:00 to 18:00)</b>
<b>Workshop 2 venue</b>	<b><i>Centro de Investigación Avanzada en Educación (CIAE)</i></b>
<b>Participants</b>	Stakeholders in education from various faculties within University of Chile, as well as academics and researchers from neighbouring universities in Santiago.
<b>Focus points for dialogue</b>	<b><i>‘Professional teaching standards; Standards for accreditation of teacher training’</i></b>  The workshop explored international perspectives and the latest research literature vis-à-vis professional teaching standards. This topic is of particular interest to the educational communities in Chile as professional teaching standards for a range of subject-specific domains are about to be published in Chile. As in the previous workshop, participants came from a wide range of academic settings and the session was characterised by lively interaction and frank sharing of views, experiences and critical insights. Participants considered different critical perspectives on standards and standardisation, considering the value but also what Linda Darling-Hammond (2004) calls the “unintended consequences” of standards regimes and discourses.

<b>Ministry of Education</b>	<b>Thursday 14 July (09:30 to 11:00)</b>
<b>Meeting venue</b>	<b>Curriculum and Evaluation Unit, Ministry of Education</b>
<b>Participants</b>	Veronica Fernandez, Camila Gaete and other government officials from the Curriculum and Evaluation Unit in the Chilean Government's Ministry of Education; Prof. Rosa Deves and Rodrigo Roco from University of Chile.
<b>Focus points for dialogue</b>	<p>The President of Chile, Sebastián Piñera, has identified the improvement of education in Chile as a national priority, announcing a 'nationwide mobilisation to improve the quality of teacher training in Chile'. Government officials invited me and representatives from University of Chile to talk about this agenda and to seek ideas and experiences from Australia that might be relevant and helpful to the government's work. There was frank and open discussion about the need for balance between regulation and supported autonomy if governments and educational institutions are to achieve this kind of mobilisation.</p> <p>The government officials outlined a range of Government funded initiatives already underway (and some envisaged). One example is 'MECESUP 2: Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society', which the University of Chile is already involved in: This entails a set of government grants which 'seek to implement innovation in higher education, such as curricular development oriented towards the achievement of learning outcomes, the creation of new undergraduate and graduate programs, the strengthening of highly qualified faculty and the projection of PhD programs, among others.' The government officials also outlined the Ministry's plans to open up for competitive tendering a new round of funding for 'performance negotiated agreement' projects. Discussion of a number of capacity building projects that Monash has led, with government support projects that help to develop infrastructure, expertise and scaffolding for teacher learning and school development.</p>

<b>Australian Embassy</b>	<b>Thursday 14 July (12:30 to 13:00)</b>
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Phone interview</b>
<b>Participants</b>	Ms. Sofia Pereira, Education Commissioner, Americas, Australian Embassy, and Representative for Austrade in Chile.
<b>Focus points for dialogue</b>	Discussion of various Chilean Government educational funding initiatives, such as BECAS (series of postgraduate scholarships as part of long-term human capital formation policy for sending students to the best universities around the globe). The program aims to train approximately 30,000 students in the world's top universities by the year 2017) and new Austrade Endeavour Awards fellowships: "The Endeavour Awards is the Australian Government's internationally competitive, merit-based scholarship program providing opportunities for citizens of the Asia Pacific, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas to undertake study, research and professional development in Australia. Awards are also available for Australians to undertake study, research and professional development abroad. Discussion included suggestions from Ms Pereira as to how these initiatives might be relevant to the week's meetings in the University of Chile and possibilities that may emerge from these activities.

<b>University of Chile</b>	<b>Thursday 14 July (15:00 to 17:30)</b>
<b>Meeting venue</b>	<b>CIAE</b>
<b>Participants</b>	Academics / Researchers in University of Chile's <i>Centro de Investigación Avanzada en Educación</i> (CIAE)
<b>Focus points for dialogue</b>	The meeting began with a presentation by Prof. Alejandra Mizala and Prof. Rafael Correa about the full range of activities of CIAE's researchers. The Centre is moving to making 'school-integrated research' a priority, especially with low socio-economic status schools, and especially with schools showing some promise of reform in the areas of leadership, classroom practices and/or school 'climate'. The members of CIAE were interested in my experiences in this area, and any advice and strategies I might suggest for conducting school-integrated research, with and without government and/or institutional funding.

<b>University of Chile</b>	<b>Thursday 14 July (12:30 to 13:00)</b>
<b>Interview venue</b>	<b>CIAE</b>
<b>Participants</b>	With Ms. Zafiro Fleming, from the Communications Department of the Rectoria of the University of Chile
<b>Focus points for dialogue</b>	The <b>interview</b> is published in the University of Chile's web newsletter, UChile.online. See <a href="http://www.uchile.cl/noticias/73458/graham-parr-educar-es-formar-ciudadanos-activos">http://www.uchile.cl/noticias/73458/graham-parr-educar-es-formar-ciudadanos-activos</a>

<b>University of Chile</b>	<b>Friday 15 July (09:00 to 9:45)</b>
<b>Meeting venue</b>	<b>Rectoria</b>
<b>Participants</b>	Prof. Victor Perez, Rector; Prof. Rosa Deves, Proreктора
<b>Focus points for dialogue</b>	The meeting was called to discuss a range of matters that had arisen during the course of the week's dialogue and meetings. Amongst issues 'on the table' was the value and viability of a consolidated faculty of education, as opposed to teacher education programs dotted throughout the University of Chile. Would it be possible for different centres within a new faculty of education to retain their autonomy and current identity? How do academics in a faculty of education maintain their research productivity when they are part of a culture which is predisposed to value pedagogy and curriculum over research? The Rector invited me to share my views and perspectives on these questions as well as my views about the potentially productive interconnections between academics' research activity and their ongoing professional learning and development as academics.

<b>University of Chile</b>	<b>Friday 15 July (10:00 to 11:30)</b>
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Prorectoria</b>
<b>Participants</b>	Maracena Vio G. And colleague, commercial consultants from 'Ideaconsultora'
<b>Focus points for dialogue</b>	The consultants are working with the University of Chile to undertake a feasibility study, considering various academic and business models for a possible Faculty of Education at the University of Chile. The consultants <b>interviewed</b> me about a wide range of details relating to administrative structures, professional systems, pedagogical practices and partnerships that characterise Monash's Faculties of Education in its different campuses in Victoria.

<b>University of Chile</b>	<b>Friday 15 July (12:00 to 13:30)</b>
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Prorectoria</b>
<b>Participants</b>	Academics in the Higher Education Curriculum Reform Unit
<b>Focus points for dialogue</b>	<p>Members of the Higher Education Curriculum Reform Unit gave a presentation about of a range of projects currently underway to support curriculum development and reform of higher education across the University of Chile. Throughout and following the presentation there was broad ranging discussion about these programs, and about ways to extend the reach of such programs to encourage (and / force) academics to initiate or explore improvements and reform of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices.</p> <p>The members of the CR Unit were very interested to hear about Monash's approach to encouraging curriculum reform and pedagogy in HE. In particular, they were interested in Monash's HE teaching modules that all academics who will teach at Monash are required to attend. Also there was great interest in mandatory, online performance management regimes for all academics, and the now defunct Australian Learning and Teaching Council that offered a range of prestigious awards and cash prizes (for individuals and collegial groups) in recognition of demonstrable excellence in teaching, curriculum reform and innovation in program delivery. I described some developing academic cultures within faculties of education , in Australian universities, where academics regularly undertake structured and rigorous research into their practice. I also outlined my knowledge of innovative curriculum development in higher education, such as where undergraduate and postgraduate students undertook study in some research-based cross disciplinary 'depth units' that encourage the development of research skills and knowledge in HE. There was frank and open discussion about the value and dangers of prescribed outcomes-based or competency-based learning in HE.</p>



<b>University of Chile</b>	<b>Friday 15 July (13:30 to 15:00)</b>
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Prorectoria</b>
<b>Participants</b>	Prof. Rosa Deves; Dr Rodrigo Roco
<b>Focus points for dialogue</b>	Final meeting to <b>reflect</b> on the conversations and meetings from across the entire week. The <b>discussion</b> led to agreement on the form and structure of the final report on the week's meetings, workshops and conversations to be submitted by me to Prof. Deves following my return to Australia.

## Appendix 3: Details of the workshops

### Workshop 1: ‘Critical points in teacher education’

- A. The importance of building relationships based on trust and mutual respect ... in all educational settings!
- B. Critical ‘points’ in teacher education
  - 1. *Critical perspectives:*
    - a. connections between student learning and professional learning;
    - b. the value of the practicum in teacher education including community-based practicums
  - 2. *Critical periods in teacher education:*
    - a. Transitions into teacher education: building on existing knowledge
    - b. Negotiating transition from pre-service teacher to early career teacher
  - 3. *Critical issues in teacher education*
    - a. Teacher education as a “problematic” deserving ongoing inquiry at institutional and practitioner levels
    - b. Generating priorities in teacher education programs: negotiating the balance between discipline-based knowledge and educational knowledge and skill

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### Workshop 2: ‘Professional teaching standards; Standards for accreditation of teacher training’

- A. Professional learning and professional standards : exploring generative links
- B. Standards and standardisation in a neoliberal world
- C. Professional standards for ... accountability, professional renewal/professional learning: Getting the balance right
- D. Some ‘unintended consequences’ of professional standards (Darling-Hammond, 2004):
  - 1. *cautionary tales*
  - 2. *generating and reflexively scrutinising data and evidence:*