

# Moving from resistance to agreement: The case of the Chilean teacher performance evaluation

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## Abstract

The paper discusses the process whereby a system of teacher evaluation was established in Chile through a lengthy and complicated process of negotiations between the three main institutions concerned: the Teachers' Union, the Association of Chilean Municipalities (managers of the public school system) and the Ministry of Education. The process is examined in the light of discussions centred on teacher accountability and tensions between the concepts of formative and summative teacher performance evaluation. In order to understand the issues that arose along the process the article provides historical background information about conflicts surrounding teachers during the Military Government (1973–1990) as well as a discussion on how the different parties involved incorporated the different perspectives on teacher accountability and evaluation of teacher performance that are found in the literature and policy discussions in other geographical contexts. In its conclusion, it focuses on the importance of time, consultations and negotiations in order to reach the implementation of a system that is both appropriate and feasible for the agreed purposes. © 2007 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

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## 1. Introduction

The emergence of quality assurance policies in the Latin American region is largely a result of the globalisation discourse that increasingly, since the 1990s, has focused on the improvement of educational results through the targeting of teacher quality and

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performance.<sup>1</sup> These discussions suggest that combinations of controls and incentives (as a result of evaluation procedures) will act as carrots to improve teachers or serve as instruments to remove teachers who are judged as being incompetent. While it is recognised that teaching performance depends strongly on the quality of opportunities in initial teacher education and professional development, pressures to install teacher evaluation systems are in danger of moving ahead of needed reforms in teacher preparation. Teachers react to these trends both as individuals and as organised bodies (unions). From the individual standpoint, the possibility of being evaluated beyond what is their experience of routine supervision produces anxiety and feelings of victimisation among teachers, especially if publicly the process is presented as a strategy to deal with unsatisfactory student learning results. From the teacher unions' standpoint, often the reaction is defensive and interpreted as yet another case of "market forces" affecting education.

Different forms of routine teacher evaluation (linked or not to promotions) exist in several countries of Latin America as recorded in a recent study by Murillo, González de Alba, and Rizo Moreno (2006). However, a few countries have introduced more complex systems associated with a teacher career ladder (México, Colombia) or are in the process of approving a law in that direction as is the case of Peru (Gobierno del Perú, 2005). Chile has perhaps one of the more sophisticated systems of teacher performance evaluation in operation since 2004. This article examines how the system was constructed and how agreement was reached by all stakeholders concerned. In its first part, it refers to the historical context and its effect on teacher identity and self-perception, and discusses how international positions on teacher accountability coupled with humanistic views of teacher quality based on professional trust were defended by the different actors in the process. The article then goes on to present an account of the process of negotiations between teachers, the school employers and the Ministry of Education, and finally, it describes briefly the system of evaluation that emerged and the lessons learned from the process.

## 2. The national context and teacher identity

Until 1973, teachers in Chile were and saw themselves primarily as "public servants". With the exception of private schools, all teachers were employed by the Ministry of Education and deployed in schools according to needs. This status changed with the military government (1973–1990) when teachers became employees of the municipal authorities to whom the management of schools was transferred in 1980. Municipal authorities had the power not only to employ but also to dismiss teachers. Dismissals began to occur for reasons unrelated to teacher performance, such as being considered politically dangerous. The funding of schools was changed, following the recommendations of neo-liberal economists inspired in Milton Friedman and Rose Friedman's (1980) ideas, and a modified voucher scheme was introduced. Schools would have to compete for students as their funding was based on student numbers and attendance at the time of

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<sup>1</sup>For example, in gatherings of policy makers convened by UNESCO, in academic meetings on policy issues convened by governments, through dissemination of papers presented at regional meetings (see e.g., PREAL & BID, 2004), through papers disseminating discussions on issues such as salary structures and incentives (Morduchowicz, 2000) and at meetings of heads of states such as the Summit of the Americas occurring since the 1990s under the leadership of the USA. At all these venues, issues referred to evaluation, standards and incentives are discussed.

inspections. One of the consequences of this change of status was that teachers' salaries did not increase in line with public servants', and by the beginning of the 1990s teachers' salaries were considerably lower in relation to the early 1970s.

The impact of these measures on how teachers saw and valued themselves, as well as on public opinion, was enormous. Lomnitz and Melnick (1991) in their study of teachers during the military government, noted that any governmental attempt to improve working conditions was undermined by the effect over teacher morale of being managed by municipal authorities and by the erosion of their salaries. A final blow to teachers' professional status was the demotion of teacher's initial education from the university status down to the tertiary level, through conversion of public Faculties of Education into teacher education professional institutes. Although this decision was reversed towards the end of the military period, it had a dramatic effect on teachers' social status and on the quality of applicants to teaching that persisted way into the 1990s (Avalos, 2002).

It was no surprise then that with the return to democracy in 1990, the Teachers' Union would have as its main banner of struggle to improve teachers' conditions of employment and salaries. In 1991, a new Teacher Statute was approved that settled some of these issues. While teachers continued to be hired by the now-elected municipal authorities on the basis of public competition, they could no longer be fired by these authorities. Teachers now have tenure until retirement, and can only be dismissed if they fail to comply with contractual obligations or for other actions that are punishable by law. Also, salary negotiations have resulted in substantial increases compared to the situation in 1990 (approximately 150%). Currently, teachers earn a basic minimum salary of US\$13.52 per hour for secondary level teachers and US\$12.87 for primary level teachers. They may be employed up to a maximum of 44 chronological hours, of which 33 are to be used for classroom teaching.<sup>2</sup> However, teachers still consider that their salaries are insufficient and they are unhappy about working conditions: too many hours of teaching and too many pupils per classroom.<sup>3</sup>

From the mid-1990s, evidence of unsatisfactory student learning results<sup>4</sup> were moving government authorities to target teachers as partly responsible for these results and a strong pressure arose to implement the Teacher Statute clause that required a yearly evaluation of teachers. While teachers continued to state their case for improved working conditions, they rejected the implementation of the evaluation system as described in the Statute. Thus began what would become a long period of discussions and negotiations on whether and what kind of teacher evaluation system should be implemented.

### 3. International policies, discussions and practices

Pressures through the 1990s to implement the teacher evaluation system contained in the Teacher Statute and teachers' own reaction mirrors discussions held elsewhere on quality assurance, accountability and on payment by merit schemes. The key issues in both the international and domestic discussions centred on what should be the objectives or

<sup>2</sup>Ministry of Education, draft report on *Teachers for the Future. Meeting Teacher Shortages to Achieve Education for All* prepared for the ILO Meeting (Santiago, November 22–23, 2005).

<sup>3</sup>Up to 45 per classroom, but mostly around 30 in primary schools and 35 in secondary urban locations, and around 20 for primary and 30 for secondary in rural locations (Ministry of Education sources).

<sup>4</sup>Besides the SIMCE test, which is administered periodically to all 4th and 8th grade students, Chile has participated in TIMSS, PISA and the UNESCO Latin American assessments.

purposes of a teacher evaluation system, what kind of assessment criteria should be used and what evaluation procedures would be considered appropriate.

### 3.1. *Why and what should be the purpose of teacher evaluation?*

Most forms of evaluation are justified either because diagnostic information is needed or because they provide evidence for decision making. The same is true for teacher performance evaluation. Thus discussions, as shown in reports and in the literature on the topic (cf. Millman & Darling-Hammond, 1990), have focused on whether teacher performance evaluation should have a predominantly formative character (provide information to guide the provision of teacher professional development) or a predominantly summative character (serve as an instrument for promotion or dismissal). Student results are taken as a central element of the discussion, in relation to both of these purposes (Glass, 1990). Also related to what stand is taken is the extent to which proponents adhere to a professional view of teaching based on trust in teachers' responsibility (O'Neill in Elliott, 2004; Yinger, 2005), or to the economists and managers' support for accountability and "payment by merit". However, the assumption behind both these positions that evaluation will improve teacher performance does not seem to have enough supporting evidence (Peterson, 2000). More credible is the view that teachers will use the information provided for their own betterment if they judge it to be reliable and valid (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

### 3.2. *What kind of criteria?*

How to judge the performance of teachers depends on how teaching is conceptualised and the extent to which particular concepts of teaching are translated into evaluation criteria and standards. In the past, these criteria tended to be expressed as specific behavioural competences, but more recently broader and more comprehensive views of teaching are becoming the norm.<sup>5</sup> These describe teaching in relation to its main spheres of action: planning, creating an adequate classroom environment, teaching as directed to learning and professionalism. Examples of how standards and evaluation criteria can be embedded in a research-based concept of teaching are found in Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* (1996), in the framework of teaching competences used in the province of Quebec, Canada and in the standards now being proposed by the Training and Development Agency in England. This does not mean, however, that standards based on effective teaching descriptions do not oscillate between being highly prescriptive or excessively ambiguous (Peterson, 2000).

#### 3.2.1. *Procedures*

Agreement on a set of standards is only one of the important steps needed in the setting up of a teacher evaluation system. How judgements are made and what kind of evidence is used is an equally important factor. Traditionally, in many systems, impressionistic ratings or checklists by peers or authorities were the norm. But the need to be more precise and

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<sup>5</sup>A good example are the changes from the initial set of standards for teachers laid out by the Training and Development Agency in England to the most recent form that has been sent for consultation around the country (see [www.tda.gov.uk](http://www.tda.gov.uk)).

fair in evaluating teachers has led to the development of more complex procedures. Standards, benchmarks and appropriate rubrics to judge evidence are in use in several systems, and these in turn may be related to different stages in a teachers' career: new and experienced teachers as well as accomplished teachers bidding for promotion or increased salary.<sup>6</sup>

Evidence is collected in multiple ways: classroom observations or videos, teachers' work assembled in portfolios, head teacher and peer reports, and other evidence that may include student learning results. Certain types of evaluation, as for example in the case of new teachers, include tests on curricular knowledge. The key for a good evaluation scheme is how well the evaluation criteria match the kind of evidence that is brought to bear on the process. To a large extent, the long negotiations involved in designing and approving an evaluation system for Chilean teachers hinged on the three categories outlined above. What would be its purpose? Should it satisfy the political demands for an entirely summative system (reward of good teaching and dismissal of incompetent teachers) linked to student results? Or should it be, as the Teachers' Union wanted, mainly a formative process, with any summative purposes linked only to promotion opportunities within a career ladder structure? Who should be responsible for managing the system and for actually collecting the evidence? Who and how would the standards or assessment criteria be agreed upon? What kind of evidence would be valid in a context of inadequate teacher preparation, unsatisfactory working conditions and school authorities who were not necessarily trusted as adequate judges of their performance?<sup>7</sup> How these questions were addressed is discussed in the following sections of this article.

### 3.3. *The main actors and issues*

The Chilean school system includes three types of schools. The first two are subsidised by the State using the modified voucher scheme referred to earlier. The third group includes the private schools that cover about 9% of the school population. The subsidised system includes the strictly public schools that are entrusted to municipal management or, in the case of a very small group, to private corporations, and schools that are privately owned and managed. Most teachers,<sup>8</sup> by level of teaching, are distributed in these schools as shown in Table 1.

Only municipal teachers are subject to the system of teacher evaluation (that is just over half of the total teaching force). Their immediate authorities are municipal corporations and municipal departments under the Mayor. Teachers in subsidised private schools have different contractual conditions. Even though the funding source for these teachers' salaries and school expenses is the government, the Ministry of Education has no power to require that they be evaluated.

Thus, the three main actors in the discussion on municipal teacher evaluation have been the teachers themselves as represented by their Union (*Colegio de Profesores*), the Chilean

<sup>6</sup>In the English system, for example, standard is defined in terms of levels of performance expected of teachers at different stages of their career: Qualified Teacher Status, Successful Completion of Induction, Post threshold teachers, Excellent teachers and Advanced skills teachers.

<sup>7</sup>Many of the principals or head teachers in Municipal schools who were in office in the 1990s had been appointed on a tenured basis by the military authorities. Teachers did not trust them as fair judges of their performance and feared a repetition of the harassment they had experienced in the 1980s.

<sup>8</sup>Excluding those teachers in Special Education schools, and adult education.

Table 1  
Percentage of teachers by the type of school management and school level

Level	Municipal	Private subsidised	Private	<i>N</i>
Total <i>N</i>	82,239	51,933	20,015	154,187
Pre-school	45.9	31.7	22.4	15,037
Basic (primary)	56.5	32.8	10.7	94,085
Secondary	49.1	36.2	14.7	45,065

Source: Ministry of Education Statistics (2004).

Association of Municipalities as their employers and the Ministry of Education that pays their salaries. Municipal teachers have criticised the anomalies in the situation. Why should they be the only teachers to be subject to evaluation and not teachers in private subsidised schools who are also paid with public monies?

As indicated earlier, the discussion on a teacher evaluation system originated in a clause of the 1991 Teacher Statute that required all municipal teachers to be subject to an annual evaluation. Committees composed of the school principal or head teacher, an elected representative from the teaching body and a representative from the respective municipal authority should perform this evaluation. Evaluation criteria included professional responsibilities, in-service courses or professional development activities and classroom performance (including student results). Besides ratings by the evaluating committee, there were no other procedures specified on how to collect evidence. Teachers objected to the system mostly because of their mistrust of the evaluating committee, especially of the role of the head teacher in the decisions to be made. Thus, until 1997, efforts to implement the system by the municipal authorities were strongly opposed by the Teachers' Union. It was also not acted upon by the Ministry of Education because of its own doubts about how feasible it was as a system. Too much was expected from annual evaluations, using inadequate criteria and procedures.<sup>9</sup>

By the mid-1990s, as noted earlier, demands for teacher accountability regarding student results began to mount accompanied by pressures to implement some form of teacher performance evaluation. These pressures were particularly strong among neo-conservative (or neo-liberal) groups politically opposed to the centre-left governing coalitions.<sup>10</sup>

### 3.3.1. The beginning of concerted discussions

The first group to realise that teacher evaluation was an issue that would not easily disappear was the teachers themselves during the National Congress on Education organised by the *Colegio de Profesores* (*Colegio de Profesores*, 1997). The central focus of the Congress was a defence of public education and the public status of teachers. In this respect, it was agreed to do whatever possible to stop the privatisation of public education (ingrained in the voucher subsidy system) and to uphold the importance of teacher

<sup>9</sup>For example, using as criteria a mix of contractual obligations, effect of in-service courses, performance under ordinary and extraordinary conditions, all in one single process.

<sup>10</sup>These groups expressed opinions that were close to those found in similar groups in other contexts, especially among think-tanks in the United States; for example, the Hoover Institution and individuals such as Diane Ravitch (2002).

professionalism and the role of public teachers. The Union thus proposed to examine the possibility of developing a formative system of teacher performance evaluation centred on professional development. Its technical staff examined teacher evaluation experiences in Latin America and in selected Chilean schools, while the Union leaders commenced negotiations with the government with the purpose of framing a new and different proposal to which all relevant actors should concur.

Initially, only the Ministry and the Union agreed to meet. Their joint committee produced a first report in 1999, which foreshadowed some of the elements that would be contained in the final agreed system for a teacher evaluation system: a formative purpose, standards appropriate to school level and teaching experience, and the use of a wide array of evidence gathering procedures in order to discern which of these works best. The report also foreshadowed later disagreements on the concept of incentives and their role as “carrots or sticks” in the process of teacher evaluation, and on who should be covered by the system: both municipal and private subsidised school teachers or just municipal ones.<sup>11</sup> Most importantly, the committee recommended gradual implementation of any agreed system:

It is widely recognised that installing a national system of teacher performance evaluation will require gradual implementation and acknowledgment of the complexity of socio-cultural and political conditions and of the technical requirements for its implementation. Both an “evaluation culture” and a “culture of professional responsibility” must develop as both are inescapable conditions for the legal, political, administrative and technical building-up of the system. These processes require time as do also the learning, communication and negotiation of agreements (*Criterios Fundantes de un Sistema de Evaluación de los Profesionales de la Educación*, Committee Report, December 1999).

While both the Minister of Education and the President of the Teachers’ Union signed the report, the Association of Chilean Municipalities, an important actor in the process, was absent. Given that the Association had threatened to evaluate teachers using the Statute provisions, it was important to bring them into the conversations. This occurred with the new government that took office in 2000 and with the setting up of a committee to discuss a feasible proposal.

### 3.3.2. *Progress and critical issues*

The technical committee appointed by the Ministry of Education, the Chilean Association of Municipalities and the Teachers’ Union produced a report that was substantially the same as the former one, but with inclusion of the need for a new kind of teacher career ladder not based solely on years of experience and in-services course taken.<sup>12</sup> To bridge the old and the new system, the committee proposed two forms of evaluation. The first, a compulsory evaluation for all teachers to be performed every 2 years leading to salary increments. The second one a voluntary evaluation in the context of a career ladder with three or four key promotion stages linked to increased responsibilities in schools, and

<sup>11</sup>The government decided eventually that as it had no authority over teachers in private subsidised schools, the system would only cover municipal teachers.

<sup>12</sup>In this, the group used as a reference work by Lawrence Ingvarson who also had met personally with the Union. See Ingvarson and Chadbourne (1994).

with monetary increments to be added to the teachers' existing salary. Thus, the notion of incentives for highly accomplished teaching performance was accepted in the form of fixed salary increments, and not as salary bonuses subject to renewals. It was argued that such a system would: (a) stimulate the development of the profession and improve the education system (Ingvarson & Chadbourne, 1994); (b) replace the flatness of the existing career structure by providing challenging rewards in the form of school-related responsibilities and salary increase; and (c) be open to all teachers who wished to reach higher goals without the problems inherent in payment by merit systems (Bacharach, Conley, & Shedd, 1990).

While the Teachers' Union favoured most of the clauses in this Report, it took some time for both the Ministry of Education and the Association of Municipalities to react to the proposal. Eventually, the municipal authorities agreed, but the Ministry of Education had some disagreements. The most important ones referred to the concept of a career ladder and of permanent incentives for accomplished performance. The Ministry, in fact, had already embarked on a different scheme to reward high teacher accomplishment, which was similar to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)<sup>13</sup> system operating in many states of the USA. In fact, it was negotiating a law (later passed) to establish a voluntary system of teacher evaluation based on high accomplishment and salary bonuses and not linked to a career ladder. Another point of disagreement with the Ministry that was later overcome was the demand by the Union that the evaluation be conducted outside of the Municipalities and by an independent or Ministry body.

Despite these disagreements, the tripartite committee continued to refine and complete the proposal. This involved agreeing on procedures to develop standards and determine the form the evaluation would take. A turning point in all these discussions was the organisation by the Ministry of Education of an international seminar on teacher evaluation. A large number of teachers in the system were invited to hear about experiences elsewhere (Cuba, the United Kingdom and the USA). There were also study travels organised by the Ministry for a group of teachers, municipal representatives and subsidised private school authorities to learn about how evaluation systems worked in Ireland, England and Cuba. This international exposure led to a better understanding of all those concerned regarding the complexities of setting up a system that would be both meaningful and helpful for teachers as well as satisfy expectations of diverse stakeholders.

### 3.3.3. *Reaching a compromise*

An important element of the process that needed to be settled was to determine the assessment criteria. The Ministry of Education took a lead in this, producing a set of criteria based on work done earlier for the initial teacher education standards (MINEDUC, 2000) and on Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* (1996). The result was a framework for competent teaching (MINEDUC, 2003) formulated in 4 teaching domains and 20 criteria or standards. The framework was subjected to wide and successive consultation among teachers, until agreement was reached.

Regarding the conduct of the evaluation process, not everything was settled. All stakeholders (teachers, municipalities and Ministry) agreed that mainly it should have a formative character based on the agreed standards' framework, that peer evaluators should be trained and accredited and that the evaluation should take place every 4 years.

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<sup>13</sup>See [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).

But there were disagreements about whether: (a) the first application of the system be required for all teachers and should all teachers in the same school be evaluated at the same time; (b) how should evaluators be selected; (c) what effects would follow from teachers being evaluated as unsatisfactory; and (d) how much degree of decentralisation of the system should there be. Eventually, through many hours of negotiation, some of these disagreements were ironed out and the main structure of the new system was outlined, written into a draft law and sent out to teachers for consultation. The proposal was approved by 70% of the municipal teachers who responded to the consultation (65,846 or 80%).<sup>14</sup> Approval of the law in Parliament also required overcoming pressures from conservative sectors that wanted evaluation every 2 years and for it to be linked to student results. However, the law as originally introduced was passed and published on 14 August 2004, that is, some 7 years after discussions first began by the different parties concerned.

### 3.4. *The Chilean teacher performance evaluation system*

As formulated, it is a system directed to the improvement of teaching and consequently also of education results. It is designed to stimulate teachers to further their own improvement through learning about their strengths and weaknesses. It is based on explicit criteria of what will be evaluated, but without forcing a prescriptive model of teaching. It rests on the articulation of its different elements: criteria sanctioned by the teaching force, an independent management structure, specially prepared evaluators and a coordinated set of procedures to gather the kind of evidence required by the criteria.

In practice, the Centre for In-service Training located in the Ministry of Education (*Centro de Perfeccionamiento, Experimentación e Investigación Pedagógica*) has become the manager of the system. A consultative committee composed of representatives from the Teachers' Union, the Chilean Association of Municipalities, Ministry and academics monitor and provide advice on the process. A university centre is contracted to implement the process: production and revision of instruments, selection and preparation of evaluators and scorers, and analysis of the evidence gathered from each evaluation process. The application process itself is decentralised so that in every district there is a committee that is directly responsible for organising the evaluation procedures. The evidence gathered is processed at the district level and sent to the central processing unit at the university, together with contextual information that might help interpret results. This central form of processing the evidence was decided at the teachers' request for the purpose of greater objectiveness.

The evidence used to evaluate the teachers, structured around the Framework, include four sources: a portfolio with samples of teachers' work and a video of one their lessons, a structured self-evaluation form, a structured interview with a peer evaluator and a report from the school administrative and pedagogic authorities. The peer evaluators are specially prepared for the task and to be accredited they must pass a test. Although they should be knowledgeable about the context where the evaluated teacher is located (e.g., socio-economic and working conditions) they may not be teachers in the same school.

One of the biggest problems that needed to be addressed during the negotiation process referred to effects or consequences of the evaluation as far as the individual teacher is concerned. It was agreed eventually that teachers evaluated as performing at a "basic"

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<sup>14</sup>A number of the teachers who did not approve of the system also continue actively to reject evaluation.

level (with problems) should be provided with specific professional development opportunities in order to improve. Teachers evaluated as performing “unsatisfactorily” would also have professional development opportunities, but must be evaluated again in the next year. If he or she failed to perform satisfactorily in two evaluations, the teacher in question would be dismissed. On the other hand, teachers assessed as “competent” or “exceptionally competent” would be given priority in promotion opportunities and in professional development of their interest. They may also apply for a salary bonus on condition that they be tested on curricular and pedagogic knowledge.

The above set of procedures is the result of much give and take on all sides of the negotiating table during the process of setting up the system. Teachers are not evaluated by peers in their schools as originally proposed by the Ministry of Education, and the system is not only a formative system as proposed by the Union. It has both formative and summative elements. The formative aspect is highlighted in the opportunities for professional development that are provided to teachers following results of the evaluations.<sup>15</sup> The summative element on the other hand is not expressed as a cross between teacher performance and student results (something the Union strongly opposed and others pressed for) but is manifest in the dismissal of teachers who consistently perform below the competency level. An absent element in the resulting scheme is its linkage to a career ladder and the inclusion of other existing incentive schemes in the evaluation system.<sup>16</sup> The Union agreed to postpone this discussion, but it will have to be addressed in the near future by both the Ministry of Education and the Union.

### *3.4.1. The process to date and some assessments of the quality of its operation*

The implementation of the system is gradual, beginning with Basic School (primary) teachers. Each year the teachers who are to be evaluated are listed by the Ministry, and within a certain period of time they must present their portfolio at the district where their school is located.

Besides a pilot experience to try out the system and its procedures, there have been three evaluations. Only the most recent one in 2005 covered a large number of teachers (11,700). The others had much smaller numbers due to unresolved issues at the moment, one of which was the amount of compensation to be provided to dismissed teachers for their years of service. Also in the 2005 evaluation, which for the first time was compulsory for all teachers called, a group of 5000 teachers who opposed some formalities of the system refused to be evaluated by not presenting their portfolio. These teachers will be re-called to present portfolios in the next evaluation period, and may risk dismissal if they do not comply.

In general, the operation has functioned as planned with some isolated cases of teachers protesting about their ranking. Results show a normal distribution with a large concentration of teachers showing a “competent” performance, a smaller group described as “basic” and very few ranked either as “excellent” or “unsatisfactory” (Ministry of Education 2004, 2005 and 2006 reports). Analysis of the evidence shows that, in general,

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<sup>15</sup>Normally, teachers pay for the in-service courses they choose to take, and also they have very little time allocated in schools for professional development activities that may take place at that level.

<sup>16</sup>Besides the teacher evaluation scheme described here, there is the evaluation of content knowledge and pedagogy of accomplished teachers as indicated earlier, and a system of pay incentives linked to good school results as measured by the national assessment of learning (SIMCE).

teachers seem competent in creating appropriate classroom environments, but are lacking in good planning and assessment skills. This information is obviously a useful input for professional development activities.

An informal consultation with those involved for the purposes of this article<sup>17</sup> indicated general satisfaction with the formative aspects of the system as judged by effects on teachers' self-assessment and learning. However, there remains a certain degree of mistrust regarding the long-term effectiveness of the system when it covers all the teachers (it is costly and complicated to manage). Teachers also have misgivings about some of the instruments, for example, the structured interviews and self-reports, which they judge to be too dependent on the Framework for Competent Teaching. They feel that these instruments focus only on teaching competence and not on many of the other tasks that they also have to perform in schools. Although it is still unclear how effective the opportunities for professional development offered to teachers will be in improving their performance, the fact is that most of the first teachers who were rated as "unsatisfactory" in the first evaluation improved in the next one.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Agreeing on the system of teacher evaluation described in this article was not an easy process, as we have tried to show. Between the initial absolute rejection of the evaluation clauses in the Teacher Statute to the moment when a large number of teachers voted to accept the new system proposed, there was a long road paved with conflict, discussions, agreements and disagreements and finally, on some issues, agreement to disagree. Two key factors in reaching closure were important: the willingness of the negotiating authorities to talk to each other stating clearly their positions, and the quality of the professional teams at the Ministry, the Teachers' Union and the Association of Municipalities that mapped out the proposal.

The discussions reflected two opposite poles found in the literature on how teacher performance can be improved. One recognises accountability and incentives as a force for change and the other banks for trust in the strength of teacher professionalism. The Chilean system incorporates both perspectives in a tense form of agreement (as illustrated by the teachers who still resist being evaluated). It is defined as a formative system that rests on teachers' disposition to review and improve their practice, and so student results are not used as rating criteria. But, it also uses monetary incentives as temporary rewards for good teaching, not trusting or expecting that teachers will maintain competency throughout their career. The initial refusal to consider teacher evaluation in the context of a teacher career ladder illustrates this mistrust held by ministerial authorities and by other more conservative sectors of Chilean civil society. From the side of the individual teachers' perception, they still feel tense throughout the process. Given their prior history, they do not feel entirely sure that evaluation will always be fair, and they still experience anxiety in facing and undergoing evaluation.

What can be learned from the process of negotiation and agreement? The persistence of some misgivings among teachers and those responsible for the process is an indication of its complexity and also of the unresolved tensions embedded in it. This suggests that those

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<sup>17</sup>Interviews with responsible person from the university that conducts the process, the Head of the Managing Centre and teachers, members of the Teachers' Union.

responsible must monitor closely its operation and effects. Once it reaches its full operation, it may be necessary to make it simpler, especially in the use of evidence that does not provide much information on what is central to the question: how are teachers performing as teachers and how able are they to rate their performance. It is important not to expect teacher evaluation to improve student results, but rather to expect that it will make teachers question why their students are not learning more and what they might do to improve the situation.

Other countries in the Latin American region are looking to Chile for information on how to install similar systems. We think that the Chilean experience provides some indication of what to do or not to do. We suggest the need to:

- Insure that there is wide participation of all stakeholders, especially teachers, from the start of discussions.
- Formulate also in a participatory manner the criteria for rating teacher performance and if possible centre such criteria on what is known about competent teaching.
- Try out and use (learn from other experiences) a variety of procedures and instruments to consider improving teacher performance.
- Link proposals to other teacher policies (existing or needed) such as referred to professional development opportunities and incentives.
- Resist the temptation to hurry the design and implementation process. Rather, provide time for both, as well as for monitoring especially in the first years of implementation, and remain willing to make any needed adjustments.

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