

BICENTENNIAL SCHOOLS PROJECT IN CHILE. A CASE STUDY IN THE MAULE REGION

EL PROYECTO DE LICEOS BICENTENARIO EN CHILE: UN ESTUDIO DE CASO EN LA REGIÓN DEL MAULE

Pablo Castillo Armijo¹

Isabel Rodríguez Pincheira²

Education Department, Universidad de Santiago de Chile, Santiago, Chile; Facultad de Educación y Cultura, Universidad SEK, Providencia, Chile

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Bicentennial Schools are a group of educational establishments that surge as a project in 2011 whose objective was to provide answers to the ailing secondary education in the country that follows the model of emblematic schools which selected honour students to get academic achievements. However, that same year, the protest movement of undergraduate university students would start to form a new educational, politic and social scene that would insistently demand change in the system. Pushing forward a new free of charge, secular and public education. From a case study, we will present this transformational phenomenon

¹ pablo.castillo.a@usach.cl. Director of the Master in Education mention in Educational Management and Leadership, Academic of the Department of Education, Researcher of cathedra: Democracy and Inclusion for a New Public Education of the University of Santiago de Chile.

² Dirección de Administración de Educación Municipal de Linares rodriguez.isabel@liceovalentinletelier.cl <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0781-212X>

of a bicentennial school in the Maule Region in Chile that has been heading towards a different direction to the original selection project. This school has accomplished good educational outcomes by adhering to educational inclusion and equity, along with educational leadership, excellency, commitment and identity towards a common goal and a good learning environment

KEYWORDS: Bicentennial high schools project, secondary education, educational improvement.

RESUMEN:

Los Liceos Bicentenario son un grupo de establecimientos educacionales que surgieron como proyecto el año 2011 y que tenían por objetivo dar respuesta a la alicaída educación secundaria, siguiendo el modelo de los liceos emblemáticos, que seleccionaban a estudiantes

meritorios y conseguir logros académicos. Sin embargo, el movimiento de protesta universitario surgido ese mismo año 2011, iría configurando un nuevo escenario social, político y educativo que pugnará por un cambio de sistema, impulsando una nueva educación pública. Desde un estudio de caso, presentamos este fenómeno de transformación de un liceo bicentenario de la región del Maule, en Chile que ha tomado un derrotero diferente al proyecto original de selectividad y que ha logrado buenos resultados formativos adhiriendo al principio de inclusión y equidad educativa, de la mano de un liderazgo pedagógico, la excelencia, el compromiso e identidad hacia un proyecto en común y un buen clima para el aprendizaje.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Proyecto de liceos bicentenarios, estudio de caso, educación secundaria, cambio educativo, mejora educativa.

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, the Chilean educational system has gone through fast changes trying to improve educational equity and quality. Non the less, these changes have been unable to provide effective answers to the secondary school level, despite the economic help through educational reforms that these establishments have received. Furthermore, it has been encountered that the secondary education, more than any other level of education is under pressure trying to match principles that oppose. It intends to be meritocratic and compensatory, ultimate and preparatory, socialized and selective, sensitive to the interests of youngsters and aligned with social demands (Bellei C. et al., 2020).

In this context the project called Bicentennial Schools for Chile will be created during the first elected period of the president Sebastian Piñera. The 2010 initial project intended that a group of 60 educational establishments

nation-wide become or restructure to high-rank schools, following a quality educational model of emblematic schools located in the capital city.

Examining the origins and foundations of the Bicentennial Schools Project, we can find that among its principles it is declared that these establishments were made for the poor not the rich. As a second principle it is stated that they are destined to restore the “all-time greatest Chilean school”. The third principle stated that all this would follow a local, rich and traditional educational model hand in hand with successful and modern projects (Leiva, 2012a).

The awarding of the Bicentennial seal implicated the signing of a Performance Agreement that lasted 8 years, a frame of time in which the school members were committed in three working areas:

Firstly, to achieve the Bicentennial School Standards, which allowed to establish the expected quality levels that schools must reach, maintain and/or improve. Secondly, selected schools must execute an educational support system that seek to improve the learning of students. Lastly, during this time frame the establishments receive assessment from the National Coordination of Bicentennial School, with which they keep direct and regular contact where resources for education, evaluations and performance analysis are provided.

The original Bicentennial Schools Project would only apply during the first year, as the educative community of the Valentín Letelier Bicentennial School (teachers, students, administrative staff and families) would seek academic excellency through an alternative way, promoting inclusion, social mobility and reinforcing the ideal of a quality and public education for everyone. These are the findings to the question; What are the change factors and improvements experienced as an excellency school under this project?

THEORETICAL REFERENTIAL FRAMEWORK.

Secondary School Crisis in XXI Century Chile

Our country has moved forward in preschool and primary school level in terms of coverage. Since 2003, secondary school education is mandatory. However, the quality of this requirement and its correlation with quality results it is being discussed. From the educational politics field, the last in-depth reflection and reform process about Secondary school level education was made in the mid 90', a quarter of a century ago (Bellei C. et al., 2020).

This neglect by the government, as well as the lack of educational politics or substantial reforms, created discomfort, frustration and weariness amongst the population. Especially, younger people who in 2006, marched out with diverse and massive manifestations on the streets to demonstrate their discontent; pushing for an immediate answer from the government and thus provoking deep institutional changes. Chile has a great number of schools but of low quality (Bellei C. et al., 2020). What has been mentioned before can be systemized, schematically, by a set of referred topics to the national debate:

- The questioning of the quality of formative processes as other areas are being overlooked in the public system.
- The review of the voucher system that took place in the context of municipalisation and the expansion of the holders (propriety problem).
- The controversy about the SIMCE measuring, that showed the selective and differentiated funding of municipal schools in respect of those to the public and private schooling system.
- The direct correlation between scholar vulnerability and learning results measured by SIMCE. This means that the comprehensive processes reflected by the collection of standardized results are strongly conditioned

by the educational heritage of the educational patrimony of the parental inner circle.

In the context of several social movements between 2006 and 2011 other aspects arise to the surface. For example, 50% of the total amount of Secondary School graduates got a vacancy in higher education establishments. This evidence was the steppingstone to the changes demanded for those involved in the Secondary School Movement along with other youngsters' movements that directed their demands to the political class.

What has been mentioned before translated in some institutional responses by the government sometimes focused in an increase in funding oriented to reduce the gap of social equality. Following this point we can recognise elaborate programmatic proposals in the educational reform framework or previous initiatives such as the Full-time School Day which intended to include high-risk population groups, that seek through this mean, to improve equity in learning.

All these processes have provoked a specific effect, often contributory, in terms of the improvement and innovation through the Preferential Subsidisation System (SEP Law) oriented to enhance, among other things, the learning of a qualified student as preferred or priority.

As a consequence, the country went through social demands such as marches, strikes and manifestations in 2006 by people from some of the schools across the country.

Probably the students' movement with the greatest impact in the national discourse about education and the educational politics program was the 2006 uprising called "La Revolución de los Pingüinos" followed later by the students' movement of 2011 (Bellei C. et al., 2020). The 2006 Secondary School students' movement demanded deep changes to the Chilean

education that materialized in 2011 because of the second students' movement this time led by university students.

The most highlighted fact in the educational politics field in Chile during this century so far came from the Secondary School level students (Bellei & Cabalín, 2013). All this results in gradual changes the creation of the Presidential Advisory Council for the Quality of Education during the first administration of Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010). During this period the LOCE law, dictated during the Military Coup would be repeal and replaced by The General Law of Education. Furthermore, new reactive measures were added as a result of the students uprising like the creation of the SAC Law, the increase of resources for priority and vulnerable students by the Preferential and Special Subsidies Law or the support to students with Educational Special Needs through the Scholar Integration Program.

As stated before, the 2006 student revolution demanded deep institutional changes, most of which were linked to the neoliberal politics adopted during the Military Coup (1973-1990) and in the following presidential administrations from the Political Parties for Democracy (central-left alliance that would administrate Chile between 1990-2010). Amongst the changes that needed to be done was to terminate the Constitutional Organic Law (LOCE Law), to demand a quality, public and secular education, revive public education, end the profit on the part of the owners of private establishments financed by the State and combat social segregation. (Bellei C. et al., 2020).

In Michelle Bachelet's second presidential administration (2014-2018) Secondary School level students would cause the execution some of the changes demanded since her first presidential administration such as: Academic Integration Law (Ley de Inclusión Escolar N°20.845, 2015) that puts an end to the profit in education and to the student selection to apply

to state financed schools through the Scholar Admission System (Sistema de Admisión Escolar, SAE). Also, the academic selection for schools was gradually eliminated, which affected many historically selective public establishments, although there was a partial exception in the law for some emblematic schools. (Bellei C. et al., 2020).

BICENTENNIAL SCHOOLS PROJECT

The Bicentennial Schools Project has been a policy without precedents in the history of expansion of this type of schools Chile. This consisted of the formation of 60 schools, 56 public and 4 subside-private. In 2012, 40.000 students between 7th Primary grade level (students of 12 or 13 years old approx.) and 4th Secondary grade level (students of 16 or 17 years old approx.) of these 60 schools that the country had at that point. Six years later the program consisted of more than 160.000 students (MINEDUC, 2020). These schools could be new or pre-existent; modified to comply with the required conditions by MINEDUC (to provide minimum coverage from 7th primary school level to 4th secondary school level, to have an excellent administrative staff and to commit to high scores in recognized standardized academic evaluations in the country -SIMCE and PSU).

The creation of the Bicentennial Schools was the first measure that intended, through public politics, to provide answers to a set of demands to a particular deficit in the schooling system. Towards 2007 a 57% of Chilean students that were going through Secondary school level in a private school increased to a 67% in 2017. One of the many consequences of the institutionalized marketing design that enable this privatization is the high social segregation in Chilean schools that rank among the highest level of segregation in the world (Valenzuela et al., 2013).

One of the objectives from the program consisted of socially legitimize public schools. According to Bellei et al., 2018:

...In the last decades Chilean public education has been relative neglected by politics. It has been a partisan ideology confrontation motive, systematically undermined by communication media. Effectively, with the political partisan manipulation the public education has been submitted back and forward where, with a vindictive disposition, last agreements override previous ones, without taking into account the consequences that provoke the discontinuity of steady enforce of politic measurements in time (p.16).

The defence of public education has been stigmatized as a corporate demand by the Teachers Association, a general complaint of the mayors and a social problem of the poorest. It has also been a recurrent slogan for politic campaigns that are quickly forgotten after election day (Bellei C. et al., 2020). As a result of all things mentioned before the perception the country had of public education has been slowly damaged, especially, concerning the educational quality schools could offer that produce a negative impact in enrolments. Like so, most Chilean families, especially middle and high class, have lost the trust that public establishments can offer quality learning opportunities in a healthy environment for their children. Therefore, they enrol mostly in private or subside-private schools. This has provoked a decrease in enrolments in the public sector so recovering the trust of society in a just and good public education was the primary objective for the success of the Bicentennial Project.

Consequently, criticism to the project in academic terms increases. Thesis concerning the “Peer

Effect” are created which is understood as the positive influence that an honour student has over the ones with learning difficulties. So, as the Bicentennial Project aim to get the best students out of primary schools to another, this would trigger a “talent leak” with negative consequences for the classmates that remained in the original schools. It has also been said that due to the Peer Effect a more segmented schooling system in academic and socioeconomic terms can produce fewer added results than a more integrative system (Hsieh & Urquiola, 2003).

That is how Leiva (2012b) defended the idea that if today students learn 30% in their schools, we want them to learn an 80% in the new schools and for them to achieve similar academic achievements compared to the best funded private schools. The classroom of Bicentennial classes will be an incubator for social equality. As of now, the elite schools will be for the poor. In the first stage of the project this goal would be achieved as the Bicentennial Schools would show a notorious improvement in intermediate results: dropout, attendance, grade failure, SIMCE and PSU rate score (Carrasco et al., 2014).

On the other hand, we come across a normative that pretended to end the academic and socioeconomic selection in the schooling system. However, it legitimized the existing academic selection of elite schools. As endorsed in Law N°20.845 of the Schooling Inclusion:

In respect of those educational establishments, according to a regulation issued by the Ministry of Education, that comply with the historical characteristics (free of charge, outstanding academic performance in their Region, have a considerably greater demand than its vacancies and that they have established academic selection procedures by the time the bill

has been passed) will be able to initiate their admission processes, according to the jurisdictional gradually referred in previous clauses and corresponding to the following percentages (MINEDUC, 2015, p. 52).

Followed by:

Said educational establishments could admit students carrying out their admission tests as followed: (i) The first year to the 85% of their vacancies; (ii) The second year to the 70% of their vacancies; (iii) The third year for the 50% of their vacancies; (iv) The fourth year to the 30% of their vacancies; (v) The fifth year, admission tests cannot be carried out (MINEDUC, 2015, p. 52)

It has been criticized that the mission of the Bicentennial Schools promotes the academic improvement of just a selected group of students. A mission that would only be explained by a highly-selective strategy of the most gifted students, but without an added value of the own establishment. Furthermore, the selection processes wouldn't be necessary related to excess demand that it is present in some schools which is a frequently argued reason to promote and sustain selective processes inside the schooling system (Carrasco et al., 2014).

The Bicentennial Schools have kept going with their core mission, although it has been ignored so far, the impact of these new educational policies in the itinerary of internal administration and if actually their ambitious meritocracy and quality goals are achieved under the new system that seeks social justice and equality. Detractors point out that: Bicentennial Schools are created with a political objective that is discriminatory and therefore is not suited for everybody. An elite school model is being produced, where merit

students are capable to compete with Chilean elites that are educated in private schools (Bravo, 2016).

Under the Sebastian Piñera's administration in 2018, the project went through a second phase of expansion. So far in 2021, 140 Bicentennial Schools have been created throughout the country accounting for 300 added to this project.

METHODOLOGY

Approach and Design

It can be established from a quality perspective (Pérez Serrano, 2004) that research cannot be attained without values as the in-depth study of reality mainly needs the understanding of the individual that is "an interactive and communicative individual that shares meaning" (p.8). Therefore, the research design, its results and discussions are deeply linked to a concrete educational scene that contributes also to understand, analyse and to take action towards these findings (Ricoy, 2005).

The intended purpose is to understand the educational phenomenon through perceptions and interpretations of the subjects that intervene in the education. It is not generalization what is being pursued but the developments of concrete knowledge about already established communities (Ballester et al., 2014)

We turn to a case study of methodical design (Stake, 1999). The fundamental ground to begin the study of a case is that possesses meaning and relevance in itself as "The case is something specific, something complex, in function" (Stake, 1999, p.16) it requires a deep work to be understood and unveiled. The observation unit, a Bicentennial School of Excellency, was chosen by its uniqueness as it shows differentiating features from other ongoing projects. Following

the recommendations of Stake (1999) to select this case a few characteristics were presented:

- It was the first municipal school from the district of Linares to enter the Bicentennial Project in 2011.
- It shows outstanding results in external tests like SIMCE and PSU, which has led to make it an autonomous school and of academic excellence.
- It possesses a nationally well-known prestige which has drawn the interest higher education research institutions. It has been distinguished from 12 public schools with sustained improvement achievements in the last years (Bellei, Contreras, Valenzuela & Vanni, 2020, p. 14)

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CASE STUDY

The Valentin Leterlier Madariaga Bicentennial School is an establishment of academic excellence. A 146 years old landmark located in Linares, Chile. It is one in four of public secondary school campus and the first to reach the status of Bicentennial in the Maule Province. Maintaining municipal dependency and a scientific and humanist modality this school provides education from the 7th primary level to the 4th secondary level.

The Institutional Educative Project registered in 2021 a team of 65 teachers, 11 administrative staff, 5 professional assistants and 56 nonprofessional education assistants to educate 1427 students distributed in 44 classes in Full-time School Day. The average number of students per class is 33. The educational vulnerability index in Primary School level is 90, 64% reaching a 91,97% in Secondary School level. Almost a 60% of the total of students are in priority quality in the social profile sheet,

which means they belong to the most vulnerable families of Chilean population.

DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF KEY PARTICIPANTS

5 techniques for data collection were used:

a) Data review: The Institutional Educative Project, the Scholar Improvement Project and the Rules of Procedure were considered. It was also explored the history and research done in this educational establishment. The Content of Analysis (AC, acronyms in Spanish) was used to decipher relevant elements of the respective texts. According to Couceiro (2004), the AC allows to measure the frequency emersion of concepts that contribute to quality analysis.

b) In-depth interview: following the criteria of Pérez Serrano (2004) it has been found that the interview is a technique in which the interviewer suggests some subjects that encourage the interviewee to express his/her feelings and thoughts in a freely, fluid and not formal way, taking aside what is "right". In this case the participants were encourage to give their opinions and to freely express their thoughts about the operation of the Bicentennial School Project in terms of change factors and improvements. 9 in-depth interviews were performed in the following way:

- 6 interviews to current Administrative Staff members (individually and following the same interview guidelines)
- 1 interview the Head Mistress (individually and with a single script)
- 1 interview to a former Administrative Staff (individually and with a single script)
- 1 interview

c) Discussion group: one of the main characteristics is that it cannot be used to validate or contrast information, but to reveal

new evidences. The purpose therefore was the controlled production of a discourse inside a discussion group targeted to Head of Departments and guided by the main investigator.

The characteristics of the discussion group is the following:

- 7 Heads of Department, representing all areas of knowledge and with a minimum of 2 years working in the school.

d) Questionnaire: A questionnaire with various exploratory questions was sent by e-mail to find out the reality of the high school in relation to the Bicentennial Project. The questions were answered by several Heads of Department and the Administrative Staff of the school.

e) Follow up question: after the analysis of the collected data, it was necessary to ask the participants once again in order to gather new information, delve into a topic or to complement an answer. In total, clarification was requested from 4 Head of Department, 1 Administrative Staff member and 1 Former Administrative Staff member, which allowed a better analysis of the results.

Once the main information collection techniques were outlined in terms of distinguished characteristics, we proceed to highlight our particular way to apply these instruments in the present investigation:

Firstly, it was the questionnaire for Heads of Department and members of the Administrative Staff that serve as a verdict.

Secondly, internal documents were reviewed, extracting data to know the history of the conversion to a Bicentennial School and to establish the educational alignments created in the last years.

Thirdly, the in-depth interviews to the Administrative Staff, Head Mistress and former

Administrative Staff (in that same order) were designed and applied.

Fourthly, a discussion group was created for the Heads of Department. Finally, to complement the methods of primary data collection some follow up questions were directed to some of the participants.

SCIENTIFIC ACCURACY AND RESEARCH ETHICS

To ensure a qualitative authentication, we resort to Eisner perspective (1998) that points out the self as the main analysis instrument and qualitative authentication. This means the investigator is transformed as the main instrument to verify the quality and efficiency of the work. For this we value the intake about triangulation strategies and the criteria accuracy of qualitative methodologies of Stake (1999) and Denzin (1984 quoted in Stake, 1999):

- In the first place we entered the specific field (the school) searching for the knowledge and comprehension of the retrospective elements that built today the culture and history of this landmark. We constantly question ourselves in the action about the sense of the stories and tales; if they were consistent or not to the researched documentation and if coincidences or irrefutable arguments existed or not.

- In the second place, it was necessary to resort to a structural corroboration of the sources of collected information. The use of multiple sources of information or evidence helped us to substantiate the research case and thus reach a high degree of credibility of the obtained conclusions. In several analysis perspectives the coherence of the resulting information through triangulation was achieved by Denzin proposals (1984, quoted on Stake, 1999). We also performed method triangulation from several sources of information available (in-depth interviews, discussion group,

questionnaire, internal data sources from the school), plus the triangulation of the follow up questions to the participants. The Fundamental Utility of a qualitative study becomes the most important test in the search of scientific accuracy for Eisner (1998) and for that we establish the following utilities during the whole research process:

- Comprehension utility: when the study helped us to understand and reveal a situation than otherwise could have become confusing or less evident.
- Anticipation utility: when the study was designed with the aim to comprehend, discover and determine the characteristics of a specific case y therefore to provide guidelines for those who wish to further investigate and delve about experiences of this kind of Bicentennial School projects.

DATA ANALYSIS

The 7 obtained categories were analysed, in the light of the participant voices, and discussed with the theoretical aspects to complement the results. To arrive at these results, we have resorted to a process of categorization by recurrence of units of meanings using the ATLAS.ti Qualitative Data Analysis Software 8.0.

RESULTS

1st Result: resistances and support to initiate the Bicentennial School Project

For the Valentín Letelier School reconstruction to a Bicentennial Schools an intervention was necessary along with the support of many participants, local and national authorities. The Head Mistress and Administrative staff had to confront and overcome internal and external

resistances. A period of direct opposition of people and institutions.

The Project didn't count with the collaboration and good will of the Municipal Education Administrative Department (DAEM acronym in Spanish), nor the Provincial Administration of Education that viewed this application with indifference and with no mayor impact. (Head Mistress)

Both entities opposed to the implementation of a type of educational project, with a particular selection of students to be applied in Linares. Also, the teachers at the schools showed some levels of resistance by saying that no one asked them if they wanted to subscribe to the Bicentennial model.

Suddenly it was said that our school will become Bicentennial of Excellency. That frighten many people. Teachers thought that some will stay in the school while others would be transferred. There was a lot of concerns and fear amongst teachers. (Former Head of Department)

There was an understanding from the Administrative Staff that they could be chosen for the execution of this policy. However, motivation and compromise were needed from the teachers in relation with the new Bicentennial Project. Taking aside the obstacles, internal struggles and a lack of external support the conviction motivates the Head Mistress and Administrative staff to achieve the goal.

For me the idea of the Bicentennial Project was a dream come true, in the sense that, we were allowed for the first time and until this day to build our own

project. (Former Administrative Staff member)

The political component will finally play in favour to the reconstruction of the school in a Bicentennial Project as the communal authority was in favour of Piñera's Administration and therefore was very supportive of the application.

From that point forward all interactions were made through the municipal administrator without considering the Educational Department which was never on board with the selection and criteria. They focused on the inclusion by other means and were not well acquainted with what was going on in the school (Former Administrative Staff member)

This decision, along with the change in command of the communal director of education of the DAEM of Linares, accomplished to defuse the situation. From that point on mobilised by the leader of the Technical Pedagogical Unit things flowed with less bureaucracy under the determined attitude from the school Administrative Staff. The project had its complications, the main educational participants and their departments denied the broad support that was expected of them. A sort of dispute generated against the Municipal Education Administrative Department which restricted its management.

One time in a meeting the mayor all at once named the municipal administrator as the leader of the Bicentennial Project. Afterwards, the DAEM leadership is changed and internships in the Capital begin...it is a controversy, but true. No everyone was on board back in Linares ...more than an ideology we always saw this as an opportunity...to rectify the

fact...the provincial department did not join either...we were the first generation of Bicentennial Schools and it was complex (Former Administrative Staff member)

2ND RESULT: THE CHANGE IN TEACHING STRATEGIES

One of the distinctive aspects of this analysed Bicentennial Project is that its participants declare that only the first year they followed the instructions of the bicentennial standards, which required homogeneous classes and that they covered the curriculum in a traditionally way, with many standardized multiple-choice assessments, for the preparation of the national SIMCE and PSU tests.

The class methodologies were traditional, unattractive and monotonous. It became a routine without variation in language and math classes, because it consisted of passing and developing guide notes. In language classes, the practice of passing guide notes in mathematics was maintained, but little by little we began to get away from this; little by little we were freeing ourselves from passing so many guides notes and teachers designed their own material according to individual and not standardized progress (Former Head of Department)

Thus, in the second year, making use of the autonomy and academic freedom that the Bicentennial Project declared as principles, the management team decided to take its own path basing its decisions on pedagogical arguments.

It was detected that the elaboration of the evaluation instruments lacked reliability, validity and the technical-

pedagogical and ethical conviction. That it was not possible to advance at the pace, often lethargic, and style of other Bicentennial Schools in the country and that otherwise, the program did not allow the teacher to the responsibility for the results, because he/she did not design the materials, nor did he/she adapt them to the level of achievement of each of the students, it was only applied to them (Administrative Staff member 6)

A surprising fact that forced other technical, pedagogical and curricular decisions to be taken was the discovery by the technical team that confirmed that it would be very difficult to achieve the results proposed by the program. This occurred when the results of the diagnostic tests for the first cohort of admitted students to the program were released, which on average did not exceed 50% approval.

It was thought that the boys and girls who came to the classrooms were the most outstanding students, however, upon entering seventh grade level, some students seemed to be just in fourth or fifth grade level. It was necessary to start a process of re-teaching, making a leveling of basic skills. Meanwhile, there was pressure to advance in the results and the on-line application of the control tests (Administrative Staff member 6)

Based on these negative connotations of the suggested strategies based on learning guide notes, the Technical Teaching Unit designs a new curricular plan based on new methodologies. Such as collaborative work, Information and communications technology (ICT) support, implementation of Physics, Chemistry and Biology Laboratories; the inclusion of sports, artistic and cultural extracurricular activities that

have given the school a lot of notoriety and not only in academic achievements.

The school band, the women's futsal team and the orchestra are some of the extracurricular activities that have stood out locally and nationally, and it is a source of pride for all our students and Valentinian community (Heads of Department Discussion group)

3RD RESULT: EXCELLENCY AND HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Promoting excellence is equivalent to providing the necessary educational resources that allow each student to go as far, quickly, broadly and deeply as their ability and potential allow.

The fact of contributing, has allowed for everyone to give of the best of themselves in pursuit of a common goal-our students-. So, there is a demanding work environment and expressing high expectations about the employees in order to motivate them to take advantage of their potential (Heads of Department Discussion group)

Excellence is directly related to the high expectations that Administrative Staff members and teachers have about their own work and the institutional educational project.

The Head Mistress convinced us that excellence is not only reaching the highest score, it is more than that. Excellence is in all the process, excellence is in how I attend to a student's father, in the response I give, in the way I speak to them. Excellence is in all the work it must be done for

the establishment (Administrative Staff member 3)

There are also high expectations for the work carried out by students.

The participation of our students in Olympics in academic fields, where Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics stand out, fills us with pride. The triumphs of our students in sports Olympics, stands out above other schools (Administrative Staff member 5)

These teaching expectations highlight the success of students to reach higher education, it functions as a concrete indicator of educational achievements, and this becomes one of the main mobilizers of the teachers' daily work.

4TH RESULTS: POSITIVE AND COLLABORATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

Participants associate the positive organizational climate as a collective creation, which translates into good human relations as a result of professional trust. Therefore, this creates a good atmosphere of coexistence among the members of the educational community.

One feature that stands out is the concept of the Valentinian family, in honour of the educator Valentín Letelier Madariaga, as well as collaboration and autonomy in roles as installed essential elements for a good work environment.

We contribute to create a work environment characterized by good coexistence, professional trust, a sense of belonging to the institution, commitment, motivation and solidarity. This allowed us to have a true Valentinian family, where each one is concerned

about the other and so leads to develop our work in an environment of trust and permanent dialogue (Administrative Staff member 5)

It seems that the work environment is a variable dimension over time. As reflected by one of the Heads of Department, it would be an organizational characteristic observed in recent years.

Decisions made in recent years allowed a generally positive work environment. 6 years ago, my response would not have been the same (Leader of Technical Pedagogical Unit)

Positive work climates generate greater confidence, a good professional and personal disposition towards a quick commitment on the part of the people who join this educational project.

I think the concern for the social and emotional aspects of the staff members, of the students, helps to generate a good work environment (Administrative Staff member 4)

The mobilization of teachers towards the improvement of the institutional project is key within this Bicentennial School of Excellency Project and nurtured by this good climate of collaborative work.

It is important to recognize that this generates a good work environment, one of professionalism, of knowing that things can be and are done well, which leads those who join the establishment to quickly feel committed to the educational project proposed by the leadership team

from the school (Teacher 6 follow-up question)

The relationship between a good organizational climate and teaching commitment is evident in this type of project, where teachers feel recognized for their work and therefore initiate collective and individual improvements for the success of the Bicentennial School Project.

5TH RESULT: TRUST AND DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Trust appears repeatedly in the speeches as a key element to strengthen the work of the Administrative Staff and them with the teachers, as they are collectively involved in a shared project. Participants relate trust with credibility in the other, in their abilities to successfully carry out certain specific tasks.

I have credibility, this has led me to many requesting that I be the voice of our community, that I represent them, that I be a link between teachers, students and the educational management team (Heads of Department Discussion group)

When they are addressed in the interviews and discussion group, the participants consider trust essential as a fundamental belief to form cohesive work teams.

We need more training of instructional leaders from the role of coaching (training of people), instances of technical development from the role of their position profile, use of effective working time, tools for the development of collaborative work, the creation of cohesive work teams that builds trust (Heads of Department Discussion group)

For their part, teachers permanently share practices to solve problems together. This is particularly true among Departments but also in informal spaces.

The departments have their own agenda according to the needs they decide to address, in addition to the minimum guidelines that come from the Technical Pedagogic Unit, which shows confidence in them and in the autonomy they have (Administrative Staff member 2)

Leadership distribution emphasizes a school culture that promotes more collective and democratic participation where responsibility is shared.

A characteristic of leadership is that it is distributive, the Head Mistress has overseen the leadership distribution among different participants and groups, each one with specific functions. At the same time, this leadership has also been distributed to the Heads of Department (Administrative Staff member 4)

The fact of distributing leadership can be interpreted as a high degree of trust on the part of the Administrative Staff. As well as an assessment of the experience and expertise provided by the different teachers to achieve institutional goals, influencing the way in which power and authority are distributed and the micropolitics exercised by leading teachers to mobilize the rest towards purely pedagogical objectives.

6TH RESULT: THE LACK OF GREATER COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS

Professional Development for Teachers (PDT) implies that the Administrative Staff is bound to create the conditions for the school to naturally move towards a learning community, providing the time, spaces and training that promote PDT. While teachers recognize that there is a teacher training plan, it is considered insufficient. They perceive this deficiency realizing that there is indeed a line of improvement which encourages and calls them to take courses that allow them to improve their pedagogical practices. Although, that line of improvement is developed individually rather than collectively.

This professional teacher training plan has not been seen, because we are doing it individually, each one has taken one or we have been urged to take courses (Heads of Department Discussion group)

Thus, it arises the need to implement a collaborative Professional Development for Teachers plan under the logic of external support by other organizations. For example, universities with experts in their area who provide knowledge, since they already have extensive internal professional development for teachers, which according to them has reached its peak of pedagogical innovation possibilities.

I feel that there is a development plan at school, as my colleague said, but it is deficient. I can see the deficiency and analyse it from the perspective that, the establishment from their leadership logic and from their development plan logic, identified that growth as internal, from

within (Heads of Department Discussion group)

This need to consolidate a professional development program shows a genuine interest for expanding their knowledge and the fact of recognizing that improvement is urged. But being consider insufficient, could mean that teachers have a critical and purposeful vision and that they have high expectations about their own pedagogical capacities and knowledge to be developed, feeding on another knowledge source.

The Heads of Department point out that teachers could exercise their pedagogical leadership with greater ownership, if they had accredited improvement by MINEDUC, which continues to suggest that progress should be made towards external training.

Everything related to educational leadership that allows them to exercise their leadership with greater ownership, backed by an improvement certified by the Ministry of Education (Heads of Department Discussion group)

Another element that stands out, on the part of these participants, is the need to train pedagogical or instructional leaders with a focus on training people, through coaching. Teachers express this as a true possibility to strengthen the technical skills associated with the profile of the position and thereby make more productive use of work time.

I think there is a lack of training for instructional leaders from the role of coaching (training of people), instances of technical development from the role of their position profile, use of effective working time (Heads of Department Discussion group)

For collaborative work, participants maintain that it is necessary to provide them with tools that allow them an optimal development, which would be subject to the formation of new, more cohesive work teams and where trust among members is an indispensable requirement.

We need more tools for the development of collaborative work (formation of new cohesive work teams that generate trust) (Heads of Department Discussion group)

In this respect, the teachers say that it is necessary to expand the spaces for participation of teachers to comment on the reading of books, research and share successful educational experiences.

Give teachers more space to talk about education, through exhibitions, book commentaries, research and / or experiences of educational work (Heads of Department Discussion Group)

The last declared need for Professional Development for Teachers by the Heads of Department and Administrative Staff is to know and apply more and better methodologies to teach classes and increase knowledge in assessment strategies for learning. These self-demands speak to us of an educational community that has managed to diagnose its reality and from there build bridges of transformation hand in hand within its educational project and its imprint of a Bicentennial School of Excellency.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

As a whole, the goals of the Bicentennial Schools Project for Chile are especially ambitious in trying to reconcile meritocracy in the midst of social inequality. In relation to the first result on

the resistance generated by the Bicentennial School Project, a partisan struggle is established between the opposition and the government, which continuously intervenes in educational policies, slowing down certain processes and advancing in others depending on the political colour of the day. And even more struggle is seen within each municipality that must deal with internal and external fights to lead the education system that was passed on in the eighties and that was so badly administered by the vast majority of them.

The second results of the changes from rigid teaching strategies to others more adapted to the contextual realities of its students, is the great success of this learning community, which was visionary and anticipated in the process of educational inclusion that would be sanctioned years later. This pedagogical focus undoubtedly involved a leadership of teachers and that the school authorities will trust in this path to be undertaken.

This trust is related to the belief that there are capacities to achieve certain objectives, or it is trusted that these capacities can be developed through collaborative work (Ahumada et al., 2016; Ahumada et al., 2018). These researchers are blunt when they point out that without trust there is no team and shared purposes are not achieved.

The third result establishes a culture of high expectations in search of professional excellence and in learning results of students. Promoting excellency should be one of the priority goals in education. If the ultimate goal of education is to achieve the full development of people, excellency must be a necessary goal of any school to ensure.

The expectations that teachers have of their students' school performance are not innocuous in the educational process of children and young people. Self-concept and motivation can

be affected by the attitudes and treatment that teachers, consciously or unconsciously, reflect during class (Kuklinski, 2001). The expectations of teachers are very decisive factors for the success of students, but also the beliefs and attitudes of parents can also influence the self-concept of children and young people and affect their performance and academic achievements (Cortázar et al., 2015). In this sense, the training process should transmit clear expectations, challenges that motivate students -in accordance with their needs and abilities- and the transmission of the belief that intelligence and skills are not static, but expansive and modifiable.

A fourth result directly relates to the positive organizational climate and the high degree of collaboration that is achieved from all the participants, especially from the teaching staff. It is suggested, according to the understanding of the participants, that when leaders are capable of generate and taking care of a good work environment, with harmony within interpersonal relationships that it is expressed in a genuine psychosocial concern for the well-being of each member of the organization; collaboration flourishes and professional autonomy develops.

The most powerful strategy to improve both teaching and learning within the school is to create a collaborative and collectively responsible culture (Louis, 2011). Today, to achieve the challenges and increasingly ambitious goals, it is necessary for educational establishments to work as a team, all of which assumes a way of understanding and interpreting relationships, actions and the decision-making processes in which everyone has a liability fee. People who work collaboratively, implicitly and explicitly, understand learning as a social act.

The fifth result provides a fundamental aspect of distributed leadership, such as the distribution of power and trust that must exist and that is reinforced in the exercise of leadership in this

school, where teachers without a formal position can have a more prominent role and influence others and thereby help decision-making processes in the management and progress of the educational project, a situation that is not very common in Chilean schools.

In the different interpretations that distributed leadership has, Bolden (2011) refers to meanings such as; shared, collective, collaborative, co-leadership, dispersed, emerging or new leadership. Pont et al., (2009), defines it as delegated, dispersed, shared, in a team and democratic. For Harris (2014), the distributed leadership implies changes in the distribution of power, control and authority, so distributed leadership must be understood from a micropolitical perspective, with a focus on what really matters, which is management. More than bureaucratic administrative functions that can be tackled by other team members.

Last, but not least, the need for a collegiate plan that promotes Professional Development for Teachers (PDT) of high educational quality is necessary. In this regard and even though some teachers state that they need external expert training, this must be complementary to the work carried out by the departments within the school. The need to promote interdepartmental collaborative work with greater force is detected and to leave behind the Balkanized culture referred to by Hargreaves (2005, quoted in Queupil & Montecinos, 2020).

We believe that the structure of the departments favours the development of teaching leadership by granting opportunities to take responsibility, lead initiatives and contribute to managing the improvement of teachers within the department, so the work of Heads of Department should be strengthened as legitimized leadership roles in new learning organizations.

CONCLUSION

The participants of this educational community identify with the educational project of the Bicentennial School of Excellency. The sense of belonging would be reflected in the adequate implementation and feeling of triumph in cultural, sports and academic activities with a joint effort and collaborative work that aims to make the image of the school be recognized at a communal and national level, as the first element to be concluded. The educational community managed to evolve along the way and that, despite the initial resistance to adhere to the Bicentennial School Project, it managed to become aware that the educational improvement project corresponds to give them their stamp and conduct it in the best way, in this case with the pedagogical and inclusive focus.

The successes achieved are not due in itself to the Bicentennial School Project, but to the educational community that as a whole managed to shape an educational project consistent with its history, succeeding to believe in its abilities and that of its students. The teaching and learning achievements are due to a healthy work environment, an educational management focused on the learning of all participants, the development of a culture of high expectations and commitment, which creates teacher autonomy, trust in their leaders and a desire to achieve the educational goals proposed in its institutional educational project.

Teachers have high expectations regarding their leadership abilities and skills, which is an important finding since the scientific literature in recent years has wondered about the role of other leaderships, including that of teachers, both in their direct relationship on students and parents, as well as in other areas at the management level of the educational centres themselves. The faculty recognizes that their abilities are enhanced in order to contribute to

the improvement of institutional goals, especially those of an academic nature and the educational expectations of students. The aspect to continue improving is the consolidation of an incipient Professional Development for Teachers (PDT) that involves new improved actions. This task must be chartered and requires new external support to take another leap in educational quality. The new path that Chile is taking, of a new public education, is the beginning of that inclusion and the scope of this Bicentennial Project is yet to be seen. Despite being born with an ideological stigma, each educational community is providing the necessary counterpoints to adapt them to the multiple realities in which they are located.

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