

OVERVIEW

Issue number 36 of “Calidad en la Educación” has coincided with the establishment of the National Council of Education (CNED, by its Spanish acronym), formed by academics, researchers and practitioners distinguished in fields as school and higher education. From its creation, this new Council has confirmed the importance of promoting and disseminating research as part of its mission and new functions set by law. In this context –and after 18 years of life– this magazine is reaffirmed as an instance of priority contact with the academic world and a way to disseminate studies and debates about higher education subjects.

The first two articles of the chapter Studies present findings and outcomes of Council-supported researches. The work “Changes in institutional management in universities since the implementation of a quality assurance national system: the Chilean experience”, by authors María José Lemaitre, Mario Maturana, Elisa Zenteno and Andrea Alvarado details transformations and good practices aimed to improve the management of higher education institutions. After that, “Accreditation processes in pedagogies: study about the agencies’ performance”, by Macarena Domínguez, Martín Bascopé, Carlos Carrillo, Estibaliz Lorca, Gabriel Olave and María de los Ángeles Pozo presents the main approaches of an analysis about the agency accreditation process for pedagogies and points to the challenge of reaching an standard, reliable and valid accreditation system that really guaranties quality of initial training programs for teachers. Results show that although agencies adhere to present policies, there is too much room for discretion in procedures and decisions.

Another study included in this chapter is “Differences in learning outcomes between technical-professional education and scientific-humanistic education in Chile” by Mauricio Farías and

Rafael Carrasco, which compares performances of secondary school students using different econometric techniques. Main conclusions show that students who choose a technical professional education could limit their opportunities to enter into higher education. Then, the research “Socially-responsible values and attitudes in Chilean university students”, by Gracia Navarro, Paula Boero, Gladys Jiménez, Liliana Tapia, Reinier Hollander, Arturo Escobar, Margarita Baeza and Álvaro Espina, concludes on the necessity of promoting educative practices to activate less predominant values and developing positive attitudes to reach a full social responsible exercise. This section is closed by “Exploratory study about informal and non-formal learning in students and university graduates”, by authors Rosario Carrasco, Fabiola Jadue, Mario Letelier and Claudia Oliva, which presents several suggestions to improve university non-formal and informal learning.

The international article “Public policies on evaluation and accreditation of careers in Argentina”, by Ariadna Guaglianone, explores reforms applied in 80’s and 90’s, in implementation of evaluation and accreditation practices for grade careers and their impact after 15 years operating. As a supplement, the Essays section begins with “Profile of Arts bachelor’s degree in the Chilean university system”, by Ignacio Villegas, which represents an interesting input for designing policies oriented to this discipline in Chilean universities.

The chapter Experiences begins with the article “Elige Educar (Choose teaching), a meeting point for actors to improve the quality of education in Chile”, by María Paz Medeiros, Gabriel Gutiérrez, Hernán Hochschild and Rafael Lira, which details progresses and challenges of this initiative in relation to education faculties. Finally, the article “Academic requirements in university students: the experience of the Chilean Catholic University’s Center for supporting academic performance and vocational exploration”, by Ana M. Hojas, M. José Anais, Angélica Bustos, Cecilia Letelier and Soledad Zuzulich, shows the importance of addressing subjects as study and academic performance as a specialized task which needs a specialized working team.

In the beginning of this new phase for the National Council of Education, it is not casualty that articles included in this issue provide lights on the necessity of more equity in our school system, on the quality of teachers' training and learning processes and on the suitability and impartiality of accreditation agencies. These are priority matters for this new Council in its commitment to orientate, safeguard and promote the quality of Chilean education in the context of the National System of Quality Assurance.

Daniela Torre
Executive Secretary
National Council of Education