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## EDITED BY

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Chile

## REVIEWED BY

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CIEMEP, Argentina  
Stanton Wortham,  
Boston College, United States

## \*CORRESPONDENCE

Daniel Quilaqueo  
✉ dquilaq@uct.cl

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# School contextualization with indigenous group's socio-educational methods and pedagogies

Daniel Quilaqueo<sup>1\*</sup> and Héctor Torres<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Center for Intercultural and Indigenous Research in Education, Catholic University of Temuco, Temuco, Chile, <sup>2</sup>Department of Educational Sciences, University of Bio-Bio, Concepción, Chile

This article presents a method for contextualizing school education and initial teacher training, using the case of Mapuche in schools in central-southern Chile to change the ambivalence of teaching in an indigenous context. The analysis is based on a dispositionalist-contextualist theoretical framework and the results of empirical research projects on Mapuche socio-educational knowledge. It examines the co-construction of intercultural knowledge by researchers and parents. It concludes with a Mapuche educational knowledge base that can contextualize the school curriculum and teacher training plans.

## KEYWORDS

Mapuche, education, school education, co-construction, ambivalence

## Introduction

This article analyzes indigenous socio-educational knowledge as decolonial pedagogical content, using the Mapuche case for schools in central-southern Chile. On the one hand, it argues with the indigenous perspective of decolonizing the relationship between school knowledge and indigenous socio-educational knowledge, where decolonizing refers to the incorporation of indigenous socio-educational and socio-cultural practices in the schooling, with an ethical, political, and cultural reparation of the Indigenous peoples (Dussel, 2005; Quijano, 2000; Santos, 2014; Walsh, 2010; Rivera, 2010; Quidel, 2020; Quilaqueo et al., 2023). Previously, the European perspective of knowledge, according to Quijano (2000), had been imposed in schooling as a unique way of comprehending, seeing, and understanding humanity. On the other hand, it raises the main features of the school system showing the teacher ambivalence in the contextualization of indigenous socio-educational content (Olivé, 2009; Rivera, 2010; Kusch, 2009; Saavedra and Quilaqueo, 2021; Torres et al., 2024).

The analysis is based on epistemological pluralism, defined here as a methodological proposal that considers all the forms of building knowledge with socio-educational content, which, in the Mapuche case, can change the monocultural-monolingual nature of the school curriculum and initial teacher training (Olivé, 2009; Quintriqueo and Quilaqueo, 2019). In the case of pedagogical content, the analysis is based on (1) the dispositionalist-contextualist theoretical framework proposed by Lahire (2012) and (2) publications from empirical research projects on Mapuche socio-educational knowledge (Quilaqueo et al., 2016). This allows proposing the hypothesis of incorporating indigenous socio-educational and socio-cultural knowledge into the school curriculum and teacher training programs, supported by an intercultural socio-educational intervention (Quilaqueo and Torres, 2023), knowledge which, according to Quidel (2020), is contextualized with historical, linguistic, temporal, spatial, protocol, social, spiritual, and territorial elements.

The objective is to show that the education of children and young people in an indigenous context generally has a socio-educational nature, with socio-cultural aspects linked to territorial ancestry. This characteristic has been defined here as the relationship between person–nature–spirituality, with the idea of thinking about the school from a pedagogy argued with indigenous knowledge, which can support intercultural socio-educational intervention in schools with an indigenous context. The text includes the following points: (1) construction of socio-educational knowledge, with an intercultural approach, by researchers, teachers, and parents; (2) characteristics of the school system in an indigenous socio-educational context; and (3) teacher ambivalence.

## Construction of socio-educational knowledge

To understand the construction of socio-educational knowledge in the indigenous social environment, the dispositionalist-contextualist theoretical model of Bernard Lahire (2012), with the **incorporated past + context of present action = observable practices** equation, allows explaining the social characteristics of the actors and the qualities presented by socio-educational contexts. According to Lahire, understanding educational practices occurs through the reconstruction of mental and behavioral dispositions that the actors (teachers, students, and parents) bear, which in the case of indigenous schooling is ambivalent (Gasché, 2013). Likewise, the specific characteristics of indigenous contexts challenge empirical research, which, for the Mapuche, makes it possible to internalize socio-educational experiences extracted from social–territorial–family memory (Halbwachs, 1970; Quilaqueo, 2022).

However, from the methodological point of view, to achieve the base of socio-educational contents, the dispositionalist-contextualist and decolonial intercultural approaches, based on the research projects<sup>1</sup> conducted, consider the educational knowledge of the Mapuche case and the means of building knowledge as a legitimization process of the subjects, the result of knowledge dialog (Smith, 1999; Tubino, 2011; Walsh, 2010; Quilaqueo and Torres, 2023).

The empirical research of Quilaqueo and Quintriqueo (2017) reveals the concept of *inatuzugu* as one of the main components in the social construction of Mapuche educational knowledge. The *inatuzugu* is a method of inquiry that allows the search, co-construction, validation, and application of existing knowledge in

the family's and the community's social environment. There, the idea of one's thinking is discovered in the rationality of Mapuche educational knowledge, which today also includes school education. We have defined this as educational double rationality or double thinking (Quilaqueo et al., 2016). Although it is rational with its own thinking, including elements of school pedagogy, this fact remains unknown in initial teacher training and teaching work.

However, the *inatuzugu* method, in the *kimeltuwün* or socio-educational knowledge, implies a dialogical process from the perspective of a community's social–territorial–family memory between the person who has educational knowledge, recognized as a *kimche* (wise) in their community, and that investigated as procedural, value, or conceptual content according to Quilaqueo (2022). According to Quidel (2020), knowledge is generally found among families and people who provide the *Mapuche gijañmawün*, defined as Mapuche spirituality. In this way, the dialogical is explained based on the dimensions of being in a territory with family territorial ancestry (Kusch, 2009; Quidel, 2016). Thus, the emerging contents acquire meaning in family–community educational experiences provided through the *kimche* to construct socio-educational knowledge (Quidel, 2020).

Thus, from this perspective, the socio-educational and socio-cultural knowledge discovered is articulated to achieve an understanding of the education processes and the interpretation of their symbolism from Mapuche educational thinking and rationality (Ñanculef, 2016; Quidel, 2016; Quilaqueo et al., 2014; Quintriqueo and Quilaqueo, 2019). In this way, the *inatuzugu* expresses knowledge with an inductive-sequential quality with the actors of the Mapuche social environment. This implies assuming decolonial characteristics and socio-educational resistance facing the cultural and educational knowledge of the school since it differs in the social construction of knowledge in the context of indigenous peoples (Battiste, 2013; Santos, 2014; Pérez and Argueta, 2022). An example is found in Mexico with the Milpas Educativas project, which has a political-pedagogical proposal of the intercultural inductive method (MII, in Spanish) based on a political pillar related to the vindication of the Indigenous peoples' rights (Bertely et al., 2015).

The findings of the research here reveal educational content used in the education of children and young people with their own pedagogical knowledge and critical discourse regarding the decontextualization of school pedagogical knowledge (Quilaqueo and San Martín, 2008). Indeed, these educational contents are not related to school education but are found in the actors' arguments using inter-epistemic and inter-ontological dialog processes (Smith, 1999; Quidel, 2016). Similarly, a Chilean State-led project on indigenous pedagogy inclusion is seen, with the Bilingual Intercultural Education Program (PEIB, in Spanish) and historical reparation through a school education policy contextualized to the social and geographical reality where they live (Gobierno de Chile, 2008).

However, understanding historical reparation from an indigenous educational perspective presents, on the one hand, the argument for including socio-educational knowledge in the school curriculum to reduce socio-cultural decontextualization in the classroom and, on the other, considers economic and political compensation to resolve conflicts arising from the colonization of spaces occupied by family territorial ancestors (Gobierno de Chile, 2008; Foerster, 2002; Quidel, 2020). This means exercising the right

1 Projects: (1) FONDECYT N.º1,181,314 "Diálogo de saberes educativos mapuche y escolar: construcción de una base epistémica intercultural de conocimientos"; (2) FONDECYT N.º 1,140,562 "Construcción social del conocimiento educativo mapuche: doble racionalidad y desafíos para una escolarización intercultural"; (3) FONDECYT 1110677 "Tipificación de los métodos educativos mapuche: Bases para una educación intercultural"; (4) FONDECYT N.º 10,852,934 "Racionalidad del método educativo mapuche desde la memoria social de kimches: fundamentos para una educación intercultural"; (5) FONDECYT N.º 1,051,039 "Saberes mapuches y conocimientos educativos vernáculos transmitidos por kimches. Sistematización para una educación intercultural".

to be educated in school and indigenous socio-educational content (Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena, 1993; Organización Internacional del Trabajo, 2014; Torres et al., 2024). In this study, the cultural nature of the school, as a result of colonial school education, still underestimates the indigenous perspective of a more social nature with historical-geographical knowledge of its territorial ancestors.

This leads parents to educate their children first as a family, with a link between people-territory-spirituality and, later, to the social and cultural contexts needed for their relationship as a society and culture. In this way, the purpose indicated by the parents, considered as *kimche* (with whom we have co-built the epistemic base), is to change the stigma of monoculturalism and monolingualism of Spanish by including socio-educational knowledge in the school curriculum and teacher training programs (Quilaqueo and Quilaqueo, 2019). Similarly, as seen in studies on education with other Latin American Indigenous peoples, such as in Ecuador and Mexico, the stigma of Spanish monolingualism and Euro-occidental monoculturalism impacts the regulations of school systems to the detriment of indigenous socio-educational knowledge (Bertely et al., 2008; Guevara and Solano, 2017; Baronnet and Morales, 2018; Sartorello and Peña, 2018; Granda, 2020).

## Characteristics of the school system in an indigenous socio-educational context

To understand the proposal to include content in the school curriculum and teacher training programs, three main characteristics of the school system are distinguished: (1) the cultural-colonial nature of the school curriculum, (2) the monocultural-monolingual nature of Spanish, and (3) teacher training decontextualized from the social reality of students.

### The cultural-colonial nature of school education

As the first root of decontextualization, it is observed that the cultural-colonial nature of school knowledge was imposed under the context of indigenous peoples' political and economic domination. This resulted in the progressive weakening of the knowledge of new generations (Smith, 1999; Salaün, 2013; Briones, 2013). In this way, Chilean schooling, although it is part of the colonial past of the Spanish Crown, albeit under the political organization of the State, treated indigenous schooling as a colonial subject, denying their educational knowledge. Similarly, this has also been the primary strategy that has influenced the mindsets of indigenous people. At the same time, descendants of settlers got to know their reactions to assimilate them into the dominant social groups such as political parties and religions (Salaün, 2013).

From that moment on, the state-run school has built a culture that educates people who, from a socio-cultural perspective, disregard any knowledge different from school knowledge. This is the case of teachers trained solely in Western culture (Krieken, 1999; Kennedy, 2004; Wexler, 2006; Munroe et al., 2013). The same has occurred with schooled Indigenous peoples who are ambivalent about their own

knowledge. However, in contrast to the colonizing discourses, indigenous protest discourses and proposals are also revealed that denounce an excluding social and cultural hierarchization, and, as a means of survival, they are ambivalent toward indigenous socio-educational knowledge (Bonfil, 1977; Smith, 1999; Salaün, 2013; Sartorello and Peña, 2018).

Nevertheless, indigenous peoples in Chile outline the challenge of adjusting the meaning of school educational practices to their social and cultural diversity (Gobierno de Chile, 2008) with actions that change the student-school-family-community relationship. This is being questioned regarding the intercultural approach of the state educational institution, characterized as culturalist (Tubino, 2014) and evading the social aspects already recognized in the conventions of United Nations organizations (Organización Internacional del Trabajo, 2014). In this sense, the materialization evidences the lack of dialog between indigenous family socio-educational action and school education (Torres et al., 2024).

### The monocultural-monolingual nature of Spanish

According to Santos and Rios (2021), the monocultural-monolingual nature of school education is based on shared culture and language for the homogenization of indigenous peoples in colonial territories and national states. Its origin dates back to the creation of nation-states, European colonial expansion, and the installation of educational systems in the 19th century, supported by a Western culture with Eurocentric knowledge (Akkari and Fuentes, 2021). In this way, the school system in colonized countries, according to Akkari and Fuentes (2021) and Mampaey and Zanon (2015), as is the case of Chile, relies mainly on (1) the substitution of religious mission education for State-led literacy and schooling; (2) support for the ideal of the philosophical positivism and heritage of the Enlightenment; and (3) the consolidation of nationalism and the formation of a patriotic spirit of future citizens.

Since then, these three foundations have configured school education with monocultural-Western education practices, which have had in Chilean education the purpose that Indigenous students only acquire norms, values, and knowledge of the groups descended from European settlers (Smith, 1999; Quilaqueo et al., 2014). The hidden school curriculum also incorporates Eurocentric affective ideals that differ from the knowledge of Indigenous families and communities (Tubino, 2014; Cajete, 2019). From a psychological point of view, there is also currently a tendency to overdiagnose with special educational needs those who do not match the educational and emotional standards of the school monoculturalism (Riquelme et al., 2017).

### Decontextualized teacher training

In Chile, teacher training does not generally consider indigenous socio-educational knowledge (Quilaqueo et al., 2005). Thus, teachers not trained in social and cultural indigenous educational content can demonstrate their own prejudices through their comments and behaviors, creating a climate of intolerance and ethnocentrism in the classroom (Portera, 2014; Arias et al., 2019). This means that the

teacher's lack of knowledge of the socio-educational education of indigenous peoples creates socio-educational and socio-cultural tension expressed in ambivalence, both the teacher with their students and the parents and the students with the teacher (Tabboni, 2007; Tubino, 2007; Gasché, 2008). This is because the teacher does not have the training to get to know and communicate in indigenous social and cultural contexts and does not have conceptual or procedural tools to combat intolerance, monoculturalism, racism, and ethnocentrism (Scheurich and Young, 1997; Gay and Howard, 2000; Bishop et al., 2007; Gasché, 2008).

In the case of the Mapuche and other Indigenous peoples in Chile, the political-economic and educational context systematically impacts them, instilling knowledge, values, and procedures marked by a scorning of indigenous socio-cultural and socio-educational knowledge (Bishop, 2021; Saavedra and Quilaqueo, 2021). This results in social, cultural, ethical, political, economic, and educational conflicts. The effect is the social tension observed historically because their participation as an indigenous group has also been made invisible in political and economic aspects (Pinto, 2003; Comisión Económica para América Latina, 2014; Ramos and Vergara, 2018).

Nonetheless, including Indigenous peoples' education knowledge in teacher training, using the intercultural educational intervention approach based on epistemological pluralism, makes it possible for teachers and students to learn indigenous socio-educational knowledge (Olivé, 2009). This means recognizing processes in teacher training on the responsibility of civil society, respect for indigenous social and cultural diversity, and consolidating their civil, social, political, and economic rights (Burgess et al., 2022; Naidoo and Wagner, 2020). In this framework, a contextualized education, with a perspective of the intercultural educational policy of an Indigenous people, requires at least the following changes in teacher training: (1) training to understand the social and cultural relations of students from different Indigenous groups within the same country or region; (2) indigenous participation at all levels of educational programs; (3) preparation of educational programs aimed at overcoming the social, political, and economic prejudices derived from colonialism against Indigenous peoples; and (4) considering the relationship between the school, family, and the community of Indigenous peoples in the educational projects, following the demands of the regional, national, and international environment (Oliveira et al., 2005; Goulet and Goulet, 2014; Turpin-Samson, 2022).

In summary, contextualized education for the different Indigenous peoples, with a socio-educational and intercultural perspective, as stated above, requires changing teacher training regarding social and cultural knowledge, values, and cooperative learning with Indigenous peoples. This is because the intercultural implies a socio-educational and socio-cultural positioning of the teacher in a context where they act considering the social reality and the complexity of meanings they use in education. Thus, the central focus of intercultural education would be the reciprocity and co-construction of knowledge through the knowledge dialog between school-family-community agents (Gasché, 2013; Quilaqueo et al., 2020; Torres et al., 2024). By possessing the "knowledge of the other," the knowledge dialog allows the dismantling of the myth of school homogeneity, with knowledge about the concrete situation of students and not only a generic vision of the culture of their country built by the school (Akkari and Fuentes, 2021).

In this way, with the teacher's positioning, the intercultural forces them to consider learning delivered in the student's family-community and the flexibility of curricula where only the desirable is evaluated from the school culture. However, this also includes the relevant socio-cultural dimensions for the indigenous family and community (Quilaqueo and Torres, 2023). From this point of view, intercultural education must be considered an intervention that addresses indigenous pedagogies (Quilaqueo, 2019). Thus, school education places intercultural education as a cultural and social subject to know, understand, and respect indigenous people's ideas, beliefs, traditions, and language. Similarly, it recognizes the tensions that lead to social discrimination and explicit and implicit racism in school pedagogy (Ortega, 2001; Bishop, 2021). An example of teacher ignorance is found in the implementation of the PEIB, where the classroom teacher does not recognize the traditional educator for indigenous language and culture as a social and cultural subject to become a partner for pedagogical work (Arias et al., 2019). It is also seen that intercultural education, as in the Mapuche case, at both affective and cognitive levels, abstracts from the students' society and culture, relegating the subject and their socio-educational knowledge.

However, considering indigenous groups in school education means going beyond the tolerance of their culture since it implies acceptance and respect as a person and a social group with a different social organization and culture. This entails the teacher promoting respect for the person and the community to which they belong through at least three steps: (1) delimiting their frames of reference as a bearer of different cultures, to access the plurality of knowledge that they must establish regarding themselves and their students; (2) recognition of Indigenous peoples that allows them to understand and explain their social, political, and economic reality; and (3) intervening, to ensure pedagogical changes, to reach a negotiation based on a knowledge dialog between indigenous and school educational knowledge (Quilaqueo and Torres, 2023).

## Teacher ambivalence

Ambivalence means the coexistence of principles, demands, aspirations, and mixed feelings in the actor's personality, which demands to be satisfied with the same intensity since they have the same origin (Quilaqueo et al., 2023). This concept was proposed by Simmel (1971), Elias (1994), and Merton (1968), who highlighted the double standards of most behaviors between the defense of individual life and participation in collective life. This idea of ambivalence allows a theoretical reference to teachers' socio-educational and socio-cultural ambivalence. From an empirical perspective, Tabboni (2007) suggests that people are usually ambivalent about the demands of a social role, such as being a good professional, a scrupulous worker, or a good parent.

Currently, the socio-educational and socio-cultural ambivalence observed among teachers with their indigenous students, according to Gasché (2013), comes from a disregard for the indigenous family education in which they grow up, reflecting this as social and cultural domination (Torres et al., 2024). The teacher also lacks the social and cultural knowledge to establish a socio-educational relationship based on indigenous and school knowledge, developing an ambivalence that hinders their relationship with students and parents (Tabboni, 2007; Quilaqueo et al., 2022). Thus, the teacher

reproduces the dialog between indigenous educational knowledge and school knowledge as receiving monocultural–monolingual professional training in Spanish stresses the intra-family and community socio-cultural interaction and prevents educational knowledge dialog (Baronnet and Morales, 2018; Tubino, 2007; Gasché, 2013).

Regarding the perspective of *kimeltuwün*, Mapuche education revealed by Quilaqueo and Quintriqueo (2017), which seeks to know and explain what happens in ‘school life’, with contradictory facts experienced between the Mapuche student and the teacher, indicates that they actually strain the educational knowledge dialog. This is because the reproduction of the colonial domination of Chilean society, of the teacher, in the routine of professional thought and practice, does not focus on explaining the need to recognize the Mapuche socio-educational content on which the student relies for the social construction of school educational knowledge (Quilaqueo et al., 2023).

Similarly, the tension caused by teachers with their students and their parents is seen when they do not recognize the means of interculturality that Indigenous students bring to the classroom (Gasché, 2008). However, indigenous students today have an intercultural education built with their knowledge of the family environment of their communities and the school, with indigenous pedagogies and the influence of school pedagogy (Bertely et al., 2008; Novaro and Hecht, 2017; Novaro, 2012). In the Mapuche case, it is a question of self-knowledge, as the basis of indigenous identity, supported by the *Mapuche gijañmawün* (Quidel, 2020), or spirituality, that links the person to a particular territory, which teachers do not understand.

Nevertheless, in the understanding and explanation of the parents, recognized as *kimche*, the *gijañmawün* is a thought (similar to the Christian religion that the school provides) at the heart of the *inatuzugu* method, which would allow the validation of one’s knowledge and thinking in school education. Indigenous people also use Western and indigenous socio-religious knowledge to understand and explain their cultural logic, everyday life, and school knowledge (Ñanculef, 2016; Quidel, 2016). Therefore, by questioning the construction of meanings for words and the categories that serve as the basis for school educational knowledge, they allow the decolonization of socio-educational knowledge with indigenous socio-educational knowledge. In this way, recognizing the concepts of ambivalence and epistemological and methodological monism, within the framework of knowledge construction by the teacher, can change the understanding for the dialog of indigenous and school pedagogical knowledge.

## Conclusion

The aim is to show that the education of children and young people in an indigenous context, generally, has a socio-educational character, with socio-cultural aspects linked to territorial ancestry. The purpose is to notice teachers’ socio-educational and socio-cultural ambivalence when working in an indigenous context. Similarly, the dispositionalist-contextualist theoretical model allows explaining the social characteristics of the actors and the qualities

presented by the socio-educational contexts. This implies understanding indigenous knowledge in academic work within local educational contexts.

With the Mapuche, from epistemological pluralism, it is revealed that education is based on social–territorial–spiritual relations that consider the means of knowledge co-construction that are not supported only by Western scientific rationality. This means that indigenous knowledge is their knowledge based on social–territorial constructs of the geographical historical past, which, in turn, reflect the changes that have occurred with social and cultural relations from Western society. Unlike scientific knowledge, the basis of educational knowledge is found in the social memory of community members: parents and *kimche*.

Nonetheless, the distance between the logic of school knowledge and Mapuche educational knowledge shows the need to consider prior knowledge, particularly that of children and young people living in different geographical contexts (urban and rural). It can be hypothesized that the dialogical process of socio-educational and socio-cultural knowledge construction, in the logic of indigenous thought, is found in the ‘being’ of the person in their family territorial ascendant.

The educational contents and methods, identified in the cultural matrix of indigenous educational content, can be incorporated into the school curriculum and initial teacher training with an educational intervention process of participatory intercultural co-construction between the school, the university, and the family–community. This methodology should be induced by the school articulating the collaboration between parents, the *kimche*, teachers, and researchers to change pedagogical aspects in teacher–student relations and achieve a positive attitude in learning outcomes. It must also be contextualized within the Mapuche pedagogical perspective, which mainly refers to a social perspective of respect, valuation, and recognition of people from a territorial context.

However, the pedagogical-intercultural field of contextualization of school education implies a socio-educational challenge for the school in a process that includes not only the subject who lives in a condition of subordination, as is the case of Indigenous people, but also requires changes and recognition actions for non-indigenous people, mainly teachers, as members of the majority group of Chilean society. The critical value of an intercultural educational intervention is to change the teacher’s ambivalence to support the formation of a person’s dignity in the decolonization framework of the educational knowledge of indigenous peoples. Consequently, it should start from the first moments of schooling to overcome the values that adults have learned in our first experiences in the school setting.

## Ethics statement

The studies involving humans were approved by the Ethics Committee of the Catholic University of Temuco. The studies were conducted in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

## Author contributions

DQ: Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. HT: Investigation, Methodology, Writing – review & editing.

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## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted without any commercial or financial relationships that could potentially create a conflict of interest.

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