

International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research
Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 60-78, January 2026
<https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.25.1.3>
Received Sept 25, 2025; Revised Dec 2, 2025; Accepted Dec 5, 2025

Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Intercultural Education in the Discourse of Teacher Education Program Directors in Chile

María Loreto Mora-Olate* 

Department of Education
Universidad de Chile, Santiago, Chile

Abstract. This exploratory study addresses the understanding of the intercultural education approach from the perspective of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) among heads of teacher training programs in Chile. In a global context of increasing cultural diversity in classrooms, interculturally competent teacher training is becoming essential. The research, based on a qualitative case study, analyzes the discourses of two department heads, selected for convenience, who participated in semi-structured interviews. The information was analyzed through open coding and constant comparison, using Atlas.ti 24 software. The literature review highlights the relevance of Diversity Pedagogical Content Knowledge (DivePACK) and the need to strengthen teacher training from a critical intercultural approach. The results reveal an incipient multicultural understanding, with an emphasis on the relevance and contextualization of content. Limited integration of the intercultural approach in teaching and assessment methodologies was identified. It concludes that there is a limited presence of the intercultural approach in the PCK understandings of department heads, which underscores the need for training in this area. This study contributes to the field of teacher training and intercultural education, highlighting the importance of DivePACK and offering valuable information for university policy and initial teacher training.

Keywords: Pedagogical Content Knowledge; cultural diversity; career leadership; pedagogy

1. Introduction

In the context of increasing globalization and connectivity, universities face the challenge of preparing students to perform successfully in diverse, multicultural environments (Kuffuor et al. 2024). One such environment is schools, which are becoming increasingly characterized by cultural diversity worldwide. For this

*Corresponding author: María Loreto Mora-Olate; maria.mora.o@uchile.cl

reason, education systems across the globe need teachers who are equipped to meet the demand for inclusive education. This group bears not only a special responsibility as the primary source through which students develop an understanding of the academic subject matter (Schulman, 1987), but also the responsibility of fostering intercultural learning. Doing so requires interculturally competent teachers who are able to recognize and pedagogically mobilize the knowledge that students bring with them from their diverse backgrounds.

Therefore, high-quality intercultural education in teacher training is an important component (Schmelkes and Ballesteros, 2023), one that should include the development of Diversity Pedagogical Content Knowledge (DivePACK) (Dursun, 2024; Dursun et al., 2021). This knowledge enables teachers to understand the cultural realities and value the prior knowledge their students bring with them from their diverse backgrounds, and it equips them to make didactic use of this knowledge for learning within the respective school subjects.

In his doctoral study, Dursun (2024) develops this conceptual framework as applied to the analysis of teacher training programs from the perspective of preservice teachers in Flanders. The aim is to understand how they integrate diversity, equity, and social justice, how this integration shapes preservice teachers' knowledge and beliefs, and what implications these findings hold for teacher trainers. These results also reveal a research gap on this side of the world, which this work seeks to fill by incorporating the lens of the intercultural educational approach, under the premise that such a theoretical conjunction fosters inclusive and socially just educational environments.

However, one aspect common to education systems like those in Latin America is the limited number of teacher training offerings with an intercultural focus (Millán & González, 2024; Mora-Olate, 2025; Mora Ramos, 2025; Pavez et al., 2023). This is a critical issue in initial teacher education and undermines the way schools respond to students from diverse backgrounds. Chile is no exception to this lack of dynamism in teacher training, as pointed out in the report by the Commission for the Strengthening of Teacher Education of the Council of Chancellors of Chilean Universities (CRUCH) (2024) on strengthening both initial teacher education (ITE) and in-service teacher training. This report recommends incorporating a distinctive commitment within the ITA curricula to cultural diversity, inclusion, and interculturality.

With regard to the teacher education curriculum managed by university program directors, recent evidence (Dursun, 2024) reveals that, in addition to highlighting the key role and influence of teacher training on the development of knowledge, skills, and values that promote cultural diversity and equity, course plans incorporate these elements in three different ways. These are inclusive (diversity modules sprinkled throughout the entire program); superficial (elective courses); and integrated (a theoretical foundation combined with practical experience in diverse settings to enable critical self-reflection). In Chile, the study by Millán & González (2024), which analyzes the presence of migration-related content in the teacher education programs of 41% of universities offering a degree in elementary

education, concludes that among the various types of diversity, migration is the least addressed, with a single course focusing on this topic.

As mentioned above, teaching programs are managed by department heads, who, in addition to ensuring timely graduation (Moya Muñoz, 2019) and maintaining a direct relationship with students, constitute mid-level leadership within the university academic management structure (Lawrence et al., 2022; Maddock, 2023). There is a scarcity of studies on this type of leadership in Latin America (Maddock, 2023), with a predominance of European perspectives in this area. In Chile, the program head plays an essential role, as they are responsible for the mandatory accreditation process for teacher education programs (Mora-Olate & Sanhueza-Henríquez, 2025).

Therefore, those who hold department head positions also play a key role in teacher training, in general, and in the implementation of an intercultural approach and development of Pedagogical Content Knowledge of cultural diversity, in particular (Dursun, 2024). Specifically, in terms of department heads' understanding of intercultural education, recent findings from an exploratory study conducted at two Chilean universities (Mora-Olate & Sanhueza Henríquez, 2025) report that department heads have a monocultural understanding and lack a "deeper epistemological questioning of teacher education curricula" (p. 28) in aspects such as the development of Pedagogical Content Knowledge of cultural diversity. This reveals an emerging line of inquiry to explore, as there is insufficient evidence available at present.

In light of these considerations, the question guiding this inquiry is: How do teacher education program leaders understand the intercultural education approach from the perspective of Pedagogical Content Knowledge of cultural diversity? More specifically, regarding the curricular dimensions of the training programs they lead (conceptual, instructional, and evaluative), this study seeks to address the following questions: In what ways do they believe curricular content integrates or promotes engagement with cultural diversity and the intercultural education approach? How are teaching methodologies linked to the intercultural approach? And how is cultural diversity considered in the assessment processes?

Accordingly, the objective of this exploratory study is to describe program heads' understanding of the intercultural education approach from the perspective of declarative Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) as expressed in their discourse within Chilean teacher education programs. The following section develops theoretical aspects related to this study's area of focus.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Pedagogical Content Knowledge

In his effort to understand subject matter and pedagogical expertise, Shulman examined the beliefs, conceptions, and practical knowledge that enable a teacher to effectively instruct students. He explored the sources and overarching structures of the foundational knowledge required for teaching – what he termed Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). He defined PCK as "the amalgamation

of content and pedagogy within an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted (...) for instruction" (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). According to Shulman, this conceptual construct of PCK is what "distinguishes a teacher from a content specialist, as it represents the specific knowledge formed at the intersection of subject matter and pedagogy" (Vergara Díaz & Cofré Mardones, 2014, p. 324).

PCK is generally categorized into two types: declarative and procedural (Schmelzing et al., 2013). Declarative PCK refers to "the way a teacher prepares for instruction, organizing a sequence of tasks within the teaching process" (Larraín et al., 2022). It can be expressed in written texts or interviews and corresponds to the teacher's knowledge of specific didactics (Vergara Díaz & Cofré Mardones, 2014, p. 328). In contrast, procedural PCK "refers to the actions a teacher exhibits during instruction, within the classroom setting" (Larraín et al., 2022, p. 160203)

2.2 Updating PCK: Diversity Pedagogical Content Knowledge

In the absence of a theoretical framework that allows us to understand the complexity of teachers' knowledge of diversity, Dursun (2024) develops a conceptual framework for this concept in his aforementioned doctoral research.

Within the global imperative to teach in culturally diverse classrooms, the traditional framework of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) has evolved to incorporate the need for developing not only a general knowledge of diversity, but content-specific knowledge of diversity and a pedagogical knowledge of diversity within initial teacher education as well. This conceptual expansion is known as Diversity Pedagogical Content Knowledge (DivePACK) (Dursun et al., 2021; Dursun, 2024), which serves as the foundation for a dynamic body of knowledge essential for teaching effectively in multicultural classrooms.

To achieve this, teachers must "master multiple domains of knowledge and strive to develop constructive pedagogical methods and strategies to teach content while incorporating critical theories of race, ethnicity, culture, and society" (Dursun, 2024, p. 47). DivePACK emerges from the concrete interactions between "teachers' specific knowledge, whether it pertains to their own or others' heritage (gDK), a unique way of understanding subject specific content (DCK), and a grasp of pedagogical strategies related to ethnic and cultural diversity (DPK)" (Dursun, 2024, p. 47). The following is a brief description of these three components of DivePACK:

- a. General Diversity Knowledge (gDK): This includes knowledge of one's own culture and of others, in terms of similarities and differences, allowing teachers to challenge "the facts, concepts, and paradigms about their own and other cultures that teachers derive from personal experiences, popular media, or traditional Western-centered academic knowledge" (Dursun, 2024, p. 66).

- b. Diversity Content Knowledge (DCK): By valuing students' own culture, this component enables teachers to "bridge the gap between conventional school knowledge and students' diverse cultural resources" (Dursun, 2024, p. 46), creating a meaningful knowledge base that reflects students' lives and interests.
- c. Diversity Pedagogical Knowledge (DPK): This component aims to provide learning opportunities for all students, involving a broad repertoire of teaching strategies, studied throughout initial training, that allow teachers to connect their instructional practices with learners' cultural knowledge and characteristics. In doing so, teachers create a classroom of trust that seeks to "inspire all students, establish positive relationships, and facilitate culturally and ethnically inclusive interactions" (Dursun, 2024, p. 47), countering racism and creating high expectations for all learners.

In Dursun's words, teachers with high levels of DivePACK will have "a deeper understanding of diversity in general (gDK), extensive knowledge of pedagogical strategies and methods (DPK), and a high level of subject knowledge that is adapted to a diverse society (DCK)" (Dursun, 2024, p. 4).

Specifically, this concept, which refers to specific knowledge derived from a combination of general cultural knowledge, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge, can be applied to school teachers working in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms, to leaders responsible for designing public policies and curricula, and also to teacher trainers, who "play a fundamental role in shaping the knowledge, values, and attitudes of their learners about students, teaching, and education" (Dursun, 2024, p. 186).

In the context of this research, the framework offered by Dursun, in dialogue with the intercultural vision of cultural diversity, sheds light on the category of Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Intercultural Education, in this case, during teacher training.

2.3 Intercultural Education in Teacher Training

Global research findings show that teacher training does not provide learning opportunities that enable teachers to sufficiently address the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Millán and González, 2024; Mou et al., 2024). Therefore, it is important for higher education to offer "training that incorporates the broad and complex reality of cultural diversity" (Pavez et al., 2025, p. 4). In this regard, in European contexts, research shows that teacher trainers have emphasized a pedagogical approach of culturally sensitive teaching (Mou et al., 2024).

In Latin America, the results of a literature review covering the period between 2018-2023, and referring to practical experiences of teacher training delivered from an intercultural approach (Pavez et al., 2025), reveal that it is associated with various aspects of decoloniality, an approach to indigenous issues, interculturality as a device of power, the critical perspective of interculturality, and intercultural

competence. However, students consider themselves to be insufficiently competent to include this in their own teaching practices. In other words, the DIVEPACK (Dursun, 2024; Dursun et al., 2021) developed during their teacher training is considered to be insufficient.

In short, the body of evidence agrees on the need to strengthen teacher training from an intercultural educational approach. In this regard, it is important to specify that the intercultural vision of diversity (Walsh, 2005a, 2005b) emerged in the Andean regions of Latin America, conceiving interculturality not only as an educational issue, but as a broad social process, “playing a critical, central, and forward-looking role, acting as a verb, and being understood as a continuous process and activity” (Walsh, 2005b, p. 4).

Therefore, according to Walsh (2005b), a critical intercultural education approach requires “both pedagogical and curricular innovation based not only on different cultural content or experiences, but also on the processes of social interaction in the construction of knowledge, and requires the development of conceptual capacities, skills and abilities, and attitudes, values, and behavioral orientations” (p. 15). This questioning, from a critical perspective, requires constant intercultural dialogue and ongoing training (Mora-Olate, 2020).

Based on these approaches, the following section describes the methodological design used in the research.

3. Methodology

3.1 Method

The study was qualitative in nature (Creswell & Poth, 2018), choosing an exploratory case study design (Yin, 2018). This methodological choice aligns with the research scope, which aims to delve into a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context. Additionally, it is consistent with the research question that seeks to explore how teaching program directors understand the intercultural education approach from the perspective of declarative Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK).

3.2 Participants

In this study, the participants (Table 1) were selected using non-probability convenience sampling, based on criteria of theoretical relevance and accessibility in line with the study objectives. In accordance with the proposed design, two female teacher educators who serve as heads of education programs at public universities in Chile were selected. Their direct experience in curriculum management and leadership of teacher training teams makes them key informants, providing informative and meaningful cases (Patton, 2002). The limitation of the number of cases to two is based on the desire for comprehensive analysis, prioritizing the interpretive depth of the narratives and the consideration of ethical and practical feasibility in establishing relationships of trust to facilitate the collection of qualitatively meaningful information (Stake, 1995).

Table 1: Description of Participants

	<i>Program Director, Case 1-PEP University in the Metropolitan Region of Chile</i>	<i>Program Director, Case 2-PEB University in the Central- Southern Macrozone of Chile</i>
<i>Undergraduate degree(s)</i>	Early Childhood Education	Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy
<i>Graduate degree(s)</i>	PhD in Education	Master of Education PhD Candidate in Philosophy
<i>Primary area of responsibility</i>	Disciplinary Training	Pedagogical Training
<i>Years of university teaching</i>	6 years	21 years
<i>Years of teaching in the degree program</i>	3 years	2 years
<i>Years in office</i>	4 years	1 year
<i>Source: Own elaboration</i>		

The program director for the Early Childhood Education program (Case 1-PEP) holds a degree in Early Childhood Education and a Ph.D. in Education. She has six years of experience as a university lecturer in the field of disciplinary training (Sciences) and has served four years in her current leadership role. This program is offered at a university located in the Metropolitan Region of Chile.

In the case of the Elementary Education program (Case 2-PEB), the program director holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy, a Master's in Education, and is a Ph.D. candidate in Philosophy. She has 21 years of experience in higher education and has been in charge of her program for one year. This program is affiliated with a university in the Central-Southern Macrozone of Chile.

3.3 Strategies

Both department heads participated in a semi-structured interview designed for the purposes of the research project. The instrument addressed five topics, which were covered through ten questions. On this occasion, only the findings of the topic Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Intercultural Education were reported (Table 2), because the others have been reported elsewhere (Mora-Olate & Sanhueza-Henríquez, 2025). The following questions were asked regarding the topic of discussion:

Table 2: Selection of Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Topic	Guiding Questions
Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Intercultural Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Based on your knowledge of the program's training plan, how are the course contents related to cultural diversity and Intercultural Education? 2. Regarding the teaching methodologies implemented in the courses within the curriculum, how do you perceive their connection to the intercultural approach? 3. What would be the most effective strategy for teacher training students to learn how to teach from an intercultural education approach? 4. When assessing student learning in the program's courses, how is cultural diversity being incorporated?

Source: Own elaboration

3.4 Procedure

As an initial step, the program directors were contacted via email, they were informed about the research objectives, and they received an informed consent document requesting their participation. In the second stage, interviews were scheduled by mutual agreement. Third, following the signing of the informed consent forms, the interviews were conducted either in person or online, with an average duration of 60 minutes. These interviews were recorded using a digital recorder or a video file from a Zoom recording.

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Chile (No. 10-14/2023), which acts as the sponsoring institution. This Committee reviewed and authorized the interview protocol and informed consent forms for both the institution and the research participants.

To ensure the confidentiality of the data presented, the anonymity of both the universities and the program directors involved in the study was maintained, with references made through a coding system. Additionally, the transcription team signed a confidentiality agreement, and in the case of interviews conducted via Zoom, they only had access to the audio file. As an important ethical consideration, special attention was given to ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2005).

To ensure the quality of the study's results, scientific rigor criteria are applied to guarantee credibility by providing a sufficient description of the data (Albert, 2007), through the detailed presentation of excerpts from the participants' statements, which enable readers to ponder the interpretations presented in the article. Specifically, the criteria of density and transparency are adopted (Krause, 1995).

3.5 Data Analysis

The audio recordings were transcribed into a word processor grid and subsequently reviewed against the original recordings by the lead researcher to ensure completeness and accuracy. The transcriptions were then stored as a hermeneutic unit in Atlas.ti version 24 for analysis. Following the Grounded Theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 2002), inductive analysis techniques were applied, including open coding and constant comparison.

The open codes were refined in their labeling, some were merged, and ultimately, they were grouped into code families according to the themes outlined in the interview protocol, allowing for the construction of emerging categories (Table 3):

Table 3: Emerging Categories

Topic	Dimensions	Emerging Categories
Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Intercultural Education	Conceptual	- Relevance of content in diverse contexts - Contextualization of learning
	Instructional	- Active learning methodologies - Early engagement with the school environment
	Evaluative	- Contextualized assessments - Need for training in assessment practices

Source: Own elaboration

After applying the design described above, the main results obtained are presented below.

4. Results and Findings

The following section presents the results of the analysis, organized according to the dimensions of Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Intercultural Education to be studied (conceptual, instructional, and evaluative). Each section concludes by answering the specific research questions posed.

4.1 Conceptual Dimension

In Case 1-PEP, regarding the relationship between the content of teacher education curricula and cultural diversity and the intercultural approach, the participant stated that there are no specific courses dedicated to this topic. However, she identified certain courses where interculturality could be expected to be addressed. Nevertheless, she highlighted a key practice within her program: critical reflection on the relevance of curricular content. As an example, she mentioned discussions surrounding the celebration of certain national commemorations in educational institutions, such as Chile's Independence Day ("the 18th" of September), and the ways in which educators engage with families:

"The relevance of celebrating certain events in early childhood education, such as Father's Day or Independence Day (the 18). When this topic comes up, it is increasingly questioned – especially by first-year students,

who tend to be highly critical – whether these celebrations are truly inclusive and relevant for all families. However, the challenge then becomes: how would you approach it differently? The goal is to ensure that the proposed alternatives do not reinforce stereotypes.” (Case 1-PEP, 1:24 ¶ 84)

The statements of the program director in Case 2-PEB regarding this topic are structured around a comparison between the previous curriculum and the updated one. In the former, no specific course on the subject was included; however, in the latter, she notes the following:

“We offer a course on Citizenship, Diversity, and Interculturality, which is taught in the second year. Then, there is another course, Multiculturalism. After that, in the third year, students take the Practicum Workshop. Practicum three, in particular, is focused on rural education.” (Case 2-PEB, 2:23 ¶ 61)

One key aspect highlighted in Case 2-PEB is the relationship between interdisciplinary work and the intercultural approach to content, which was absent in the previous curriculum and presents challenges in its implementation:

“Intercultural education work inherently requires interdisciplinary collaboration, and this is where the previous curriculum encounters difficulties. It now includes multigrade teachers, which also aligns with the rural education approach. However, each teacher has traditionally worked within their own domain, and this year, our attempt to implement a multigrade approach has been extremely challenging – very, very difficult. Of course, some educators have been doing the same thing for 10 or even 20 years, so when you ask them, for example, to implement Project-Based Learning (PBL) – which requires collaborative work, addressing educational issues rather than just focusing on individual subjects – it becomes a significant challenge, a truly difficult one.” (Case 2-PEB, 2:25 ¶ 65)

In the opinion of the program director, the relevance of contextualizing learning has been highlighted by students in self-assessment exercises as a hallmark of the program:

“I teach Natural Environments in the fourth year, and by that stage, students already have a strong understanding that we are not going to follow the standard activities that all preschools do during Maritime Month. We will not be focusing on Maritime Month in May just because it is tradition – we will focus on what is relevant to that specific group of children, ideally based on their own interests. This often creates tension during practicum experiences, where students encounter more standardized approaches. However, they try to reflect on these issues and adjust what they can within their practicums.” (Case 1-PEP, 1:48 ¶ 137)

Thus, in the context of both department heads, the conceptual incorporation of cultural diversity into teacher training programs is not necessarily provided by the training curriculum as a cross-cutting approach, but rather from a vague

general framework (relevance and contextualization); and when it is incorporated, it is presented in a specific subject and, therefore, in isolation.

Through the discourses of these program leaders, in this first dimension, the results reveal both a disregard for general diversity knowledge (gDK) and diversity content knowledge (DCK). The ways in which curricular content integrates or promotes the relationship with cultural diversity and the approach to intercultural education is not necessarily given by the training curriculum as a cross-cutting approach, but rather from a vague general framework (relevance and contextualization); and when it is incorporated, it is presented in a specific subject and, therefore, in isolation. This contradicts the evidence that indicates that issues related to cultural and ethnic diversity should be integrated throughout the teacher training curriculum (Dursun, et al., 2023).

4.2 Instructional Dimension

From an ideal perspective, both program directors emphasize active methodologies—such as inquiry-based learning and the previously mentioned project-based learning (PBL)—as the most effective strategy for learning how to teach from an intercultural education approach:

“For me, inquiry-based learning is a cross-disciplinary approach.” (1:29 ¶ 143) “(...) I believe that inquiry-based methodology is the most commonly used today; it is also quite popular at the moment. Perhaps it is connected to project-based learning—it is related, though not the same—but it aligns with inclusion in general and with intercultural education.” (Case 1-PEP, 1:30 ¶ 145)

In Case 2-PEB, the program director once again differentiates between the previous and current curriculum. In the latest version, she believes that, methodologically speaking, cultural diversity is now being incorporated—albeit in an early stage—through an intercultural approach, specifically via Project-Based Learning (PBL): “Only now are we intentionally integrating it (...). In fact, we still need to conduct a full evaluation of what has been done so far, which is why we have made a strong effort to work with PBL.” (Case 2-PEB, 2:32 ¶ 100)

In this regard, the program director also acknowledges that implementing PBL has been a challenge for faculty, as many are still not fully proficient in the methodology. However, she notes that students have been patient with the process: “They have realized that the PBL approach allows them to view educational challenges from a different perspective, enabling them to use alternative didactic strategies and ultimately be better prepared for their teaching placements.” (Case 2-PEB, 2:33 ¶ 112)

Case 2 also considers early engagement with the school environment as a key strategy for teachers to learn how to teach from an intercultural perspective. This is achieved through bidirectional projects between the teacher education program and schools:

“One hopes to establish connections with schools from an early stage. We are already involved in some university-led projects that directly engage with educational institutions through coursework. Young students will

also come here to work in the mirror classroom. I believe this is a wonderful opportunity that allows for direct feedback, as it enables us to observe children's areas of interest and the intercultural work that also needs to be done". (Case 2-PEB, 2:30 ¶ 129)

Regarding the relationship between the teaching methodologies used in the teacher education curriculum and cultural diversity and the intercultural approach, the statements in Case 1-PEP reveal a certain lack of awareness on the part of the program director about how cultural diversity is addressed methodologically in the courses offered: "I can mainly speak about the methodology I use in my own teaching, but I wouldn't know at the program level—I believe they vary." (Case 1-PEP, 1:25 ¶ 134)

According to the program directors, the link between teaching methodologies and the intercultural approach, as well as the limited scope of their field of action in the implementation of the curriculum in classrooms by their respective teacher training teams, could explain their lack of knowledge about the instructional approach to cultural diversity.

In other words, in their discourse as those responsible for curriculum management in training programs, they do not demonstrate an appropriation of Diversity Pedagogical Knowledge (DPK), which is crucial for effective teaching in culturally diverse classrooms (Dursun, 2024). This is not a minor issue, because according to recent findings on teacher trainees' knowledge of gDK and DPK, such knowledge is shaped by "learning opportunities during teacher training" (Dursun et al., 2023, p. 3). Therefore, if teacher trainees do not receive the necessary pedagogical tools to work in culturally diverse classrooms, they will be perceived as lacking in competence to implement teaching methods based on an intercultural approach (Pavez et al., 2025).

4.3 Evaluative Dimension

Lastly, in the evaluative dimension, both program directors indicate that the inclusion of cultural diversity in course assessments within the teacher education curriculum is not explicitly intentional. However, in Case 1-PEP, the program director does highlight the presence of contextualized assessments.

"I believe that, in general, assessments within the program are contextualized. I haven't conducted a detailed inquiry into this, but we hold annual meetings where I gather all the first-year professors, then the second- and third-year professors, and they update me on how the semester is progressing. We discuss specific cases of students who need additional support, and during these meetings, they also share the types of assessments they are using. We explore ways to interconnect some of them, ensuring that assessments overlap across courses when relevant. In general, assessments tend to be reflective rather than focused on a specific content area that students simply reproduce." (Case 1-PEP, 1:31 ¶ 151)

Regarding the evaluative aspect, Case 2-PEB takes a more definitive stance and emphasizes the need for teacher training in this area:

“Honestly, I don’t think cultural diversity is significantly incorporated into assessments. No, we haven’t had that conversation. I’m not sure if everyone has the necessary tools to assess it properly. I believe we would need to implement training programs to achieve that.” (Case 2-PEB, 2:31 ¶ 134-138)

As in the previous dimension, program directors reveal limited knowledge about how educators manage assessment activities in general, and also, in particular, about the incorporation of an intercultural approach in this dimension. As can be inferred from the results of the previous dimensions, program directors show limited knowledge about how educators manage assessment activities in general, and also, in particular, about the incorporation of an intercultural approach in this dimension. In other words, if teaching does not follow an intercultural approach, with and through cultural diversity, assessment will consequently weigh hegemonic academic knowledge, thus moving further away from a critical intercultural approach (Walsh, 2005a & 2005b).

Based on the results presented, the following section discusses their significance in relation to existing literature.

5. Discussion

The declarative Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) expressed by the program directors regarding their respective curricula reflects different stages of development in relation to intercultural education. In Case 1-PEP, the integration of an intercultural approach is still an aspirational goal in the design phase. Meanwhile, in Case 2-PEB, two curricula coexist, with the program director highlighting the inclusion of courses on cultural diversity and intercultural education in the revised curriculum, which is currently in its third semester of implementation.

This raises the debate on whether intercultural education should be integrated through dedicated courses (subject-based approach) or embedded across the curriculum (transversal approach) in teacher education. The adoption of the first approach, which involves the introduction of specific courses, suggests a limited and isolated presence of intercultural education, primarily conceived in functional terms. As exemplified by Case 2-PEB, this method heavily relies on the instructor responsible for delivering the course.

This approach has been questioned by research on teacher preparation for inclusive education. Florian & Camedda (2020), referencing a study by Rouse & Florian (2012), suggest that “inclusive approaches to teaching should be a core component of general teacher preparation rather than a specialized topic”. (p. 6) Conversely, the second approach, which aligns more closely with Florian & Camedda (2020), advocates for a transversal integration of interculturality, positioning it as a fundamental educational approach that shapes the vision, mission, and graduate profiles of teacher education programs. Under this model,

interculturality is not confined to a few isolated courses but is embedded across content, teaching methodologies, and assessment strategies. This would contribute to the development of a distinctive educational framework that is collectively shaped by teacher educators rather than being the responsibility of a handful of courses. Achieving this would require a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to cultural diversity, a perspective supported by one of the findings of this study and consistent with the research of Carrete-Marín & Buscà-Donet (2023).

In both approaches – and particularly in the second – the tensions highlighted by the program directors remain relevant. These challenges can, at least in part, be attributed to the lack of training among teacher educators in intercultural education (Arias-Ortega et al., 2023; Ow & Madrid, 2018) and the weak stage of development of DivePACK (Dursun, 2024).

Based on the above discussion, the main conclusions, limitations, and projections of this research are presented below.

6. Conclusion

The objective of this case study was to describe how Teacher Education Program Directors in Chile understand the intercultural education approach from the perspective of declarative Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). The findings suggest that these understandings are predominantly multicultural, where there is also a weak development of Diversity Pedagogical Content Knowledge (DivePACK) situated at a stage of recognizing both cultural diversity in school classrooms and the importance of an intercultural approach in teacher education. This aligns with the global debate on whether intercultural education should be embedded across the curriculum (transversal approach) or addressed through dedicated courses (subject-based approach) (Carrete-Marín & Buscà-Donet, 2023; Florian & Camedda, 2020). However, this debate remains less prominent in Latin America, in general, and Chile, in particular.

Although the program directors associate intercultural teacher education with interdisciplinary work and early engagement with the school context, their discourse reflects a limited perspective, primarily based on personal impressions rather than concrete evidence. This limitation is largely due to the absence of monitoring and follow-up mechanisms for tracking the implementation of the teacher education curriculum. As a result, their role as curriculum managers within their respective programs is constrained. This issue must be addressed by higher education institutions as they work toward strengthening the strategic role of program directors, particularly given their responsibility for overseeing the mandatory accreditation of teacher education programs in Chile, which is assessed based on criteria and standards (National Accreditation Commission [CNA], 2023).

Considering the conceptual framework proposed by Dursun (2024), which integrates PCK with diversity, this study concludes that there is a limited presence of Diversity Pedagogical Content Knowledge (DivePACK) in the understanding

of teacher education program directors. The underlying cause of this restricted multicultural perspective appears to be the early-stage development of the concept in the field, highlighting the need for capacity-building initiatives for teacher educators in this area.

However, this exploratory case study has certain limitations that must be considered when interpreting its results and which, in turn, open up opportunities for future research. First, the representativeness of the findings is limited, as it considers two teaching program directors, selected through non-probabilistic convenience sampling. Although this type of selection is relevant for accessing key informants and obtaining rich narratives (Patton, 2002), it does not allow for the generalization of results, either in teacher education programs in Chile or in other university contexts. The qualitative design of exploratory case studies (Yin, 2018) focuses on a deep understanding of a contextualized phenomenon.

Consequently, the results reflect situated interpretations that depend on the institutional context, professional trajectories, and particular experiences of the participants. Therefore, the findings are not directly transferable to other universities or national settings, although they can serve as conceptual references for comparative or expanded studies. Another limitation relates to the data collection technique, based exclusively on semi-structured interviews, which capture the stated discourse of the department heads and not necessarily the actual practices in curriculum management. The incorporation of other sources of information, such as participant observation, document analysis, or longitudinal studies, could enrich the understanding of the phenomenon in future research.

Finally, the data analysis methods applied, open coding and constant comparison from Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 2002), although relevant for the inductive exploration of meanings, depend largely on the researcher's interpretation, which may introduce analytical biases inherent in all qualitative research. The use of triangulation of researchers, techniques, or sources could strengthen the credibility and consistency of the findings in subsequent studies. Despite its limitations, this study contributes significantly to the field of teacher training and intercultural education in the following ways.

First, it provides evidence of middle leadership within university governance in Latin America, which, despite playing a strategic role, has been scarcely studied in the Global South. Secondly, it seeks to expand DIVEPack studies in relation to cultural diversity and its intercultural approach. Finally, the findings offer valuable information for university policy and initial teacher training, revealing the tensions inherent in the curricular integration of the intercultural approach (both in its specific allocation and in its mainstreaming) and highlighting the need to strengthen the intercultural competencies of trainers.

The intersection of middle leadership in university governance in Latin America and the conceptual category of DIVEPack may open up new avenues for future research with greater territorial scope and mixed methodologies that account for

the functioning of DIVEPack (Dursun, 2024), both at the level of teacher trainers for different grades of schooling and specific subjects, as well as school teachers and ministerial curriculum administration.

Funding

This research and the APC was funded by the National Agency for Research and Development (ANID) of the Ministry of Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation of Chile: Fondecyt Postdoctoral Project N° 3230358: “Estudio sobre las prácticas docentes de los/as formadores/as de futuros/as profesores/as en contextos de enseñanza y aprendizaje de la educación intercultural.”

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the program directors who participated in this study for sharing their experiences.

7. References

- Albert, M. J. (2007). *La investigación educativa: claves teóricas*. McGraw-Hill.
- Arias-Ortega, K., Villarroel-Cárdenas, V., & Quintriqueo, S. (2023). Voces de personal docente universitario sobre necesidades de formación profesional intercultural en la Araucanía, Chile. *Revista Electrónica Educare*, 27(2), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.15359/ree.27-2.16296>
- Carrete-Marín, N., & Buscà Donet, F. (2023). Desafíos y perspectivas educativas para el tratamiento de la diversidad cultural y el desempeño de la competencia intercultural en la escuela del Siglo XXI. De la formación del profesorado al aula. En Instituto de Investigación y Capacitación Profesional del Pacífico. *Desafíos y perspectivas de la educación* (Tomo 2), (pp. 9-31). Editorial EDICAP Pacífico. <https://doi.org/10.53595/eip.008.2023.ch.1>
- Comisión de Fortalecimiento de Pedagogías CRUCH [Consejo de Rectoras y Rectores de las Universidades Chilenas] (2024). *La docencia cambia vidas. Propuestas del Consejo de Rectoras y Rectores de las Universidades Chilenas para el fortalecimiento de la Formación Inicial y Continua Docente en las universidades y el sistema educativo*. https://consejodirectores.cl/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Informe-CRUCH_La-Docencia-Cambia-Vidas.pdf
- Comisión Nacional de Acreditación [CNA] (2023). *Criterios y Estándares de Calidad para la Acreditación de Carreras y Programas de Pedagogía*. <https://www.cnachile.cl/noticias/SiteAssets/Paginas/Forms/AllItems/CyE%20CARRE RAS%20Y%20PROGRAMAS%20DE%20PEDAGOGÍA.pdf>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, Ch. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry research design. Choosing among five approaches*. Fourth edition. SAGE.
- Dursun, H., Claes, E., & Agirdag, O. (2021). Diversity in pedagogical content knowledge: A new conceptual framework and assessment across different teacher education programmes. *Multicultural Education Review*, 13(4) 303-322. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2005615X.2021.2006118>
- Dursun, H., Claes, E., & Agirdag, O. (2023). Coursework, field-based teaching practices, and multicultural experiences: Analyzing the determinants of preservice teachers' ethnocultural diversity knowledge. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 126,1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104077>

- Dursun, H. (2024). *Culturally Diverse Classrooms, Underprepared Teachers? A Mixed-Method Study of Teacher Education for Diversity in Flanders*. [PhD Tesis]. Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.
- Florian, L., & Camedda, D. (2020). Enhancing teacher education for inclusion, *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(1) 4-8. <http://hdl.handle.net/2262/97051>
- Krause, M. (1995). La investigación cualitativa: Un campo de posibilidades y desafíos. *Temas de Educación*, 7, 19-40. https://gc.scalahed.com/recursos/files/r161r/w24790w/La_investigacion_cualitativa_Un_campo_de_posibilidades_y_desafos_.pdf.
- Larraín, A., Gómez, M., Calderón, M., Fortes, G., Ramírez, F., Guzmán, V., & Cofré, H. (2022). Descripción del conocimiento pedagógico del contenido de la argumentación en docentes que enseñan ciencias naturales en educación pública en Chile. *Revista Eureka sobre Enseñanza y Divulgación de las Ciencias*, 19 (1), 1602. https://doi.org/10.25267/Rev_Eureka_ensen_divulg_cienc.2022.v19.i1.1602
- Lawrence, J., Morón-García, S., & Senior, R. (Eds.) (2022) *Supporting Course and Programme Leaders in Higher Education: Practical Wisdom for Leaders, Educational Developers and Programme Leaders*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003127413>
- Maddock, L. C. (2023). Academic middle leaders, middle leading and middle leadership of university learning and teaching: A systematic review of the higher education literature. *Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management*, 45(4), 357-392. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2022.2160888>
- McMillan, J., & Schumacher, S. (2005). *Investigación educativa*. Pearson.
- Millán, C. y González, G. (2024). Consideración de la migración en los programas de cursos de formación inicial de docentes de pedagogía básica, en Canales, J. y Stang, F. Niñeces, adolescencias y juventudes migrantes en Chile. Re-visiones, nuevas preguntas, nuevas mirada (pp.157-190), RIL editores/Universidad Autónoma de Chile.
- Mora-Olate, M. L., & Sanhueza-Henríquez, S. (2025). Comprensiones de la Educación Intercultural desde los discursos de jefas de carreras pedagógicas en Chile. *Interciencia*, 50 (1), 23-31. https://www.interciencia.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/03_7281_Com_Mora-Olate_v50n1_9.pdf
- Mora-Olate, M. L. (2025). Educación y migración: interpelaciones para la nueva Constitución, en María Loreto Mora Olate y Sara Joiko Mujica (Eds.). Educación y migración en Chile: saberes docentes pluriculturales desde las regiones (pp.31-41). Ariadna Ediciones. <https://doi.org/10.26448/ae9789566276470.123>
- Mora-Olate, M. L. (2020). *Currículum y diversidad cultural: Un estudio desde disciplinas escolares y discursos docentes en establecimientos educacionales con alumnado de origen migrante* [Tesis doctoral, Universidad del Bío-Bío].
- Mora Ramos, C. G., Gaibor Mendoza, J. S., & Rodríguez Estrella, S. S. (2025). Educación intercultural como eje formativo para el desarrollo sostenible y la equidad social. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Sciences, Discoveries, and Society*, 2(3), e-256. <https://doi.org/10.71068/wjf66562>
- Mou, Q., Dursun, H., & Agirdag, O. (2024). A Cross-National Examination of Teachers' Multicultural Self-Efficacy: Can Multicultural Education in Initial Teacher Education and Professional Development Make a Difference? *Education and Urban Society*, 57(1), 63-83. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00131245241278673>
- Moya Muñoz, P. (2019). La lingüística en la educación superior: percepciones de los directores de la carrera de Pedagogía en Lenguaje en Chile. *Revista ESPACIOS*. 40 (36), 1-16. <http://www.revistaespacios.com/a19v40n36/19403608.html>
- Ow, M., & Madrid, A. (2018). *Formación inicial docente en competencias para el siglo XXI y Pedagogías para la Inclusión en América Latina. Análisis comparativo de siete casos nacionales. Estrategia Regional sobre Docentes*. OREALC/UNESCO Santiago. <https://bibliotecadigital.mineduc.cl/bitstream/handle/20.500.12365/17604/For>

- macion%20Inicial%20Docente%20en%20competencias.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Pavez-Soto, I., Poblete-Godoy, D., Poblete-Melis, R., Alfaro-Contreras, C. y Domaica, A. (2023). Formación Inicial Docente (FID) y educación intercultural: cómo prevenir la violencia hacia la niñez migrante. *Apuntes*, 50(95), 5-35. <https://doi.org/10.21678/apuntes.95.1823>
- Pavez-Soto, I., Alfaro, C., Riedemann, A., Castillo, C., Ortiz, J. y Dufraix, I. 2025. Formación docente con enfoque intercultural: ¿qué dice la literatura reciente sobre experiencias en América Latina?. *Estudios Públicos*. 01 28. <https://doi.org/10.38178/07183089/2027240723>.
- Krause, M.(1995). La investigación cualitativa:Un campo de posibilidades y desafíos. *Temas de Educación*, 7, 19-40. https://gc.scalahed.com/recursos/files/r161r/w24790w/La_investigacion_cualitativa_Un_campo_de_posibilidades_y_desafos_.pdf
- Kuffuor, O., Aggrawal, S., Jaiswal, A., Smith, R. J., & Morris, P. V. (2024). Transformative Pathways: Implementing Intercultural Competence Development in Higher Education Using Kotter's Change Model. *Education Sciences*, 14(7), 686. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14070686>
- Rouse, M., & Florian, L. (2012). *Inclusive Practice Project: Final Report*. Universidad de Aberdeen https://www.academia.edu/4432038/The_Inclusive_Practice_Project_Final_Report
- Schmelkes, S., & Ballesteros, A. (2023). Intercultural Education: The Training of Teachers for Inclusion, cap 58, pp. 1313-1336. In Ian Menter. *The Palgrave Handbook of Teacher Education Research*. Springer Nature Switzerland AG. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-16193-3>
- Schmelzing, S., Van Driel, J. H., Jüttner, M., Brandenbusch, S., Sandmann, A., & Neuhaus, B. (2013). Development, evaluation, and validation of a paper-and-pencil test for measuring two components of biology teachers' pedagogical content knowledge concerning the "cardiovascular system". *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education*, 11(6), 1369-1390.
- Shulman, L. (1987). Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), 1-22. *Review*, 57(1), 1-22.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage Publications.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (2002). *Bases de la investigación cualitativa: técnicas y procedimientos para desarrollar la Teoría Fundamentada*. Universidad de Antioquía.
- Vergara Díaz, C., & Cofré Mardones, H (2014). Conocimiento Pedagógico del Contenido: ¿el paradigma perdido en la formación inicial y continua de profesores en Chile? *Estudios pedagógicos*, 40(n. especial), 323-338. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0718-07052014000200019>
- Walsh, C. (2005a). Interculturalidad, conocimientos y decolonialidad. *Signo y Pensamiento*, 24(46), 39-50. Recuperado de <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/860/86012245004.pdf>
- Walsh, C. (2005b). La interculturalidad en la educación. Perú: Ministerio de Educación de Perú/UNICEF. Recuperado de https://centroderecursos.cultura.pe/sites/default/files/rb/pdf/La%20interculturalidad%20en%20la%20educacion_0.pdf
- Yin, R. (2018). *Case Study: Research and Applications. Design and Methods*. SAGE Publications.

Appendix 1: Semi-Structured Interview Teacher Education Program Directors

Topic	Guiding Questions
Understanding Intercultural Education	1. In your own professional training (undergraduate or graduate), how were cultural diversities (indigenous peoples, rurality, migration) addressed?
	2. In your role as a teacher trainer, what do you understand by intercultural education?
The importance of intercultural education in teacher training (Early Childhood Education/Elementary Education)	3. In your opinion, why might it be important to train teachers from an intercultural educational perspective?
	4. In what aspects of your role as program director do you believe you are contributing to the intercultural education training of future teachers?
Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Intercultural Education	5. Based on your knowledge of the program's training plan, how are the course contents related to cultural diversity and Intercultural Education?
	6. Regarding the teaching methodologies implemented in the courses within the curriculum, how do you perceive their connection to the intercultural approach?
	7. What would be the most effective strategy for the program students, future teachers, to learn how to educate from an intercultural education approach?
	8. When assessing student learning in the program's courses, how is cultural diversity being incorporated?
Tensions	9. Based on your experience as a school principal, what would you say are the main difficulties faced by the teaching staff in training teachers from an intercultural educational perspective?
Possibilities	10. Finally, in your opinion, how might teacher training from an intercultural educational perspective contribute to the development of inclusive education in the educational contexts that your education students will face?
<i>Source: Own elaboration</i>	