

Erika Himmel König

Professor Himmel is noteworthy for her initial contribution to the construction of standardized assessment procedures that have been a key feature in the operation of the educational system in Chile for close to half a century, including the University Admission Test (PAA) and the Education Quality Measurement System (SIMCE). She has also pursued an extensive and fruitful career in research and teaching, and has contributed decisively in developing the capabilities of Chile in social and educational research and evaluation at Universidad de Chile, where she trained and to which she devoted the early decades of her professional activities. Also at Universidad Católica de Chile (Catholic University), she has taught social scientists and professors for over a quarter of a century, while also undertaking the highest management responsibilities. On her return to Chile after graduating as MA, Measurement and Evaluation in Psychology and Education at Columbia University (1959), she joined the group who designed the University Admission Test (PAA) at the Institute for Statistical Research, Universidad de Chile. The PAA is the first nationwide test for admission to higher education, a key element for massifying higher education. Another of her contributions to educational evaluation is the creation of a model for assessing performance in the Chilean school system. Creation and implementation of the Education Quality Measurement System (Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación SIMCE) enabled Chile to become one of the first Latin American nations to have solid, sectored, and unbundled information on school performance nationwide.

As researcher, she has designed and implemented dozens of projects that for many years set the standard for studies on factors affecting school and university performance, preschool learning, quality of secondary school education, and the effect of educational improvement programs implemented under public policies. As a teacher she has also formed generations of researchers in methodology and statistics, from the Statistics Institute of Universidad de Chile, the Latin American School for Social Sciences (FLACSO), and the schools of Sociology and Psychology of Universidad Católica. She has likewise trained generations of professors. As an educator she is recognized by hundreds of former students who can testify to her excellence and human qualities as teacher. The above contributions in the field of educational research and development of instruments for assessment have had a major effect in Chile as well as in the region, where Chile has been a leading country.