

**UNIVERSIDAD DE CONCEPCIÓN
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**DIFFERENTIATED ENGLISH CLASSROOMS IN CHILE:
UNDERSTANDING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF
HIGH AND LOW-ACHIEVING STUDENTS.**

SEMINARIO PARA OPTAR AL TÍTULO DE PROFESOR

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ABSTRACT

The aims of this study are: (A) to investigate whether the effects of tracking reported in studies across the world are also present inside a Chilean school and (B) to suggest ways of improving the school's method if deemed necessary. This thesis is centered on the following research questions: (1) Do the negative effects of tracking mentioned in previous research papers also happen in the Chilean context and, if so, in what ways?; (2) What are the intended goals of the school in applying this method, and to what extent are they being achieved in this particular context?; and (3) What are the coping mechanisms of each teacher when faced with their set's specific needs and, to what extent do they seem to adapt to their students' perceived difficulties?. The data for this study was collected in a private school in Concepción through lesson observations, a survey and interviews with students and teachers. In the first part, a review of the history, development and effects of tracking across three countries is presented together with a report of the observations of international experts on the matter. The results of my case study showed that some of the most worrisome effects of tracking can be found inside the Chilean classrooms but to a lesser degree than in international contexts. Its effects are not as pervasive as they could be, perhaps because teachers are making a conscious effort in order to negate them.