

TEACHING AND LEARNING ASSESSMENT FROM A HIGHER EDUCATION PERSPECTIVE

AVALIAÇÃO DE ENSINO-APRENDIZAGEM NA PERSPECTIVA DO ENSINO SUPERIOR

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Resumo: O presente estudo buscou discutir a avaliação de ensino-aprendizagem na perspectiva do ensino superior. Conduziu-se um estudo teórico-reflexivo, foram consultadas as bases da Biblioteca Eletrônica Científica Online (SciELO), da PsycINFO, do Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), da Web of Science (WoS), a Biblioteca Digital Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações (BDTD) e o banco de teses e dissertações da Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (Capes). Os resultados indicam que a avaliação no ensino superior é um processo multidimensional que integra as funções diagnóstica, formativa e somativa, sendo a percepção discente influenciada diretamente pela abordagem pedagógica docente. Observou-se que, embora as avaliações cognitivas sejam fundamentais para aferir a capacidade reflexiva e a organização de ideias, há uma crescente necessidade de diversificação instrumental para contemplar os domínios psicomotor e afetivo. A literatura evidencia que a observação direta, alinhada à pirâmide de Miller, proporciona uma

visão integrada da atuação prática, contudo, barreiras institucionais e o foco excessivo no caráter classificatório ainda limitam o potencial da avaliação como ferramenta de reforço da aprendizagem e de controle de qualidade instrucional. Concluiu-se que a eficácia avaliativa depende da transição para uma cultura dialógica e mediadora, capaz de superar a fragmentação do conhecimento e promover a autonomia do estudante.

Palavras chaves: avaliação; ensino-aprendizagem; discente; ensino superior; universidade.

Abstract: This study aimed to discuss the evaluation of teaching and learning from the perspective of higher education. A theoretical-reflective study was conducted, consulting the databases of the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), PsycINFO, the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), the Web of Science (WoS), the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD), and the database of theses and dissertations of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES). The results indicate that evaluation in higher education is a multidimensional process that integrates diagnostic, formative, and summative functions, with student perception being directly influenced by the teacher's pedagogical approach. It was observed that, although cognitive assessments are fundamental for measuring reflective capacity and the organization of ideas, there is a growing need for instrumental diversification to encompass the psychomotor and affective domains. The literature shows that direct observation, aligned with Miller's pyramid, provides an integrated view of practical performance; however, institutional barriers and an excessive focus on classification still limit the potential of assessment as a tool for reinforcing learning and controlling instructional quality. It was concluded that assessment effectiveness depends on the transition to a dialogical and mediating culture, capable of overcoming the fragmentation of knowledge and promoting student autonomy.

Keywords: evaluation; teaching and learning; student.

INTRODUCTION

Discussing assessment entails understanding and reflecting upon the breadth of education. In this sense, the idea one holds regarding assessment is directly linked to one's own conception of education (Rabelo, 1999). It is a necessary and ongoing pedagogical task within the teaching profession, one that must accompany the teaching-learning process at every step. Through assessment, the results achieved during the collaborative work of teacher and students are compared against the established objectives in order to identify progress and difficulties, and to redirect efforts toward necessary corrections (Libânio, 1994).

Viewing assessment as an integral part of the entire educational process means understanding it as a fundamentally important element in the student's learning development. This perspective implies recognizing that assessment serves a fundamental purpose: it must meet the requirements of the student's development in the broadest sense, committed to an education that fosters emancipation and active citizenship (Luckesi, 1997).

Assessment serves as a constant means of supporting the student in the process of assimilating content and in the process of self-formation as an existential subject and a citizen (Luckesi, 1997). When oriented toward this objective, assessment functions as a qualitative aspect and unfolds throughout the entire teaching-learning process. In this dimension, it demands greater commitment from the teacher and greater involvement from the student, thereby contributing to the construction and deeper understanding of the knowledge being presented (Rabelo, 1999).

On the other hand, assessment within the university setting also serves a purpose that aligns with bureaucratic and social demands. In formal education, teachers are required to verify and measure student learning, presenting results in quantitative terms. These results are typically derived from exams and tests that, more often than not, fail to contribute to the student's construction of knowledge. Consequently, students end up memorizing the material to be assessed rather than

developing the learning essential to their educational formation (Barbosa; Martins, 2016).

In other words, assessment loses its true meaning and is reduced to a final test that yields a mere number, thereby losing sight of the process's objective and subjective dimensions. The significance of this study lies in prompting reflection on the two aspects involved in assessment practice. Thus, assessment practices must take into account these two factors—both of which are supported by legislation itself: the quantitative aspect and the qualitative aspect. This study argues that these two aspects can complement each other throughout the teaching-learning process, fostering the construction of student knowledge; accordingly, this study sought to discuss teaching-learning assessment from the perspective of higher education.

METHODS

A theoretical-reflective study was conducted—that is, one that aims to consider the distinct dimensions constituting it. To this end, Therrien's (2014) proposal regarding the pillars that constitute a research phenomenon—ontology, epistemology, and methodology—was adopted.

The study was conducted by identifying the theme, guiding question, and research objective; establishing subject descriptors, databases, and inclusion and exclusion criteria; defining the information to be extracted and evaluating the included studies; and subsequently interpreting the results and presenting the review and synthesis of knowledge.

The search was conducted in the first half of 2026, guided by the question: What are the perspectives on teaching-learning assessment in higher education? The following descriptors were used—assessment, teaching-learning, student, higher education, and university—along with Boolean operators to refine the search for studies to be analyzed. The secondary databases used for the search were the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) and the Catalog of Theses and Dissertations of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), as well as the websites of agencies related to the subject of study.

The inclusion criteria were: publications addressing the analyzed topic, available online in full text, in Portuguese, English, or Spanish, with no time limit regarding publication date. The exclusion criteria were: duplicate publications and works published solely in conference proceedings.

Following data analysis based on the selection and reading of the retrieved publications, a thematic content analysis was conducted—following Minayo’s approach—which is carried out through three interdependent phases: pre-analysis, material exploration, and interpretation of results (Minayo, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Assessment is a process that seeks to identify, measure, investigate, and analyze changes in the behavior and performance of the student, the educator, and the system, confirming whether the construction of knowledge—whether theoretical (mental) or practical—has taken place (Sant’anna, 1998, pp. 29–30).

In this context, there is educational assessment, a complex process that begins with the formulation of objectives and requires devising means to obtain evidence of results, interpreting those results to determine the extent to which the objectives were achieved, and formulating a value judgment (Turra et al., 1989).

In the educational field, assessment can serve various functions—identified by Bloom (1993) as diagnostic (analytical), formative (monitoring), and summative (classificatory)—thereby prompting students to adopt new roles as they shift from passive individuals to dynamic participants in the construction of knowledge, while also encouraging teachers to rethink their teaching-learning techniques, revisit outdated concepts, and strive to keep pace with new technologies.

Assessment serves as a space for mediation, connection, and dialogue between teachers’ instructional methods and students’ learning trajectories, guiding the educator in adjusting their teaching practice. However, the practice of assessment and the way it is experienced do not depend

solely on the teacher's attitude; they are conditioned by the institutional culture (Silva et al., 2003).

According to Luckesi (1997), the assessment of learning is linked to investigating the quality of the learner's performance; based on this investigation, interventions should be made to achieve better results if necessary. This investigation aims to understand reality; like scientific inquiry, it should inform potential practical courses of action and entails two steps: describing the reality under investigation and qualifying it based on previously established criteria.

A systematic review found that higher education students' perceptions of written exams were strongly linked to the learning approaches employed by instructors. Exams that reflected a more surface-level approach to learning tended to be perceived negatively. Students also showed a preference for multiple-choice exams, viewing essay-style exams as more difficult, complex, and anxiety-inducing. The authors further note that students' perceptions of assessments are significant for final performance and that, if taken into account, they can offer a way to improve educational practice (Struyven; Dochy; Janssen, 2005).

Assessment cannot be geared toward verifying cognitive, psychomotor, and affective capabilities in a fragmented, disjointed, and decontextualized manner. Hence the need for assessment to combine different instruments. However, cognitive assessment is not considered an obsolete or "archaic" tool.

Troncon (1996) describes how cognitive assessments make it possible to evaluate not only a student's knowledge but also their capacity for reflection, the organization of their ideas, and their ability to express themselves. Zeferino and Passeri (2007) point out that for a student to adequately demonstrate the practical application of knowledge, it is assumed that the cognitive domain has also been mastered. These authors emphasize that recognizing competencies involves more than just identifying situations to be managed, problems to be solved, or decisions to be made; it also entails articulating the necessary knowledge, capabilities, thought processes, and ethical guidelines.

Therefore, the literature confirms that, despite the modernization of assessment structures, cognitive assessments should not lose their importance in student evaluation; rather, it reinforces the

proper use of these instruments at the appropriate time and in alignment with learning objectives (Zeferino; Passeri, 2007).

Practical and conceptual assessments of the psychomotor and affective domains are unanimously cited as often being the best type of assessment, despite students frequently discussing the tension associated with this evaluation method (Struyven; Dochy; Janssen, 2005).

It is also worth noting that, as well documented in the literature, daily assessment enables the direct observation of attitudes and skills essential to professional development. Undoubtedly, direct observation is a key method for assessing the “doing” level of Miller’s (1990) pyramid, as it provides a more realistic and integrated view of the student’s performance in practice.

Regarding the function of assessments, students believe that most evaluations are unidirectional, focusing solely on the assessment of the student. However, as described by Troncon (1996), the assessment process not only makes it possible to determine whether a student is ready to advance to subsequent stages of their training but also serves as an efficient means of reinforcing learning and identifying student limitations, while acting as a quality control tool for the instructional process from the teacher’s perspective. Troncon (1996) further notes that, unfortunately, the first function described has prevailed over the latter two, leading to drawbacks and distortions.

Learning assessment in the context of contemporary higher education transcends the mere assignment of grades, constituting a complex process of a political, pedagogical, and social nature. Historically grounded in a classificatory and punitive paradigm, assessment practice in universities has been the subject of intense debate aimed at reorienting it toward a formative perspective. In this sense, assessment should not be understood as a terminal act, but rather as a continuous mechanism of diagnosis and regulation capable of supporting both the instructor in adjusting teaching strategies and the student in the self-regulation of their educational journey (Fonseca, 2005).

In the academic sphere, the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process is intrinsically linked to overcoming the dichotomy between “teaching” and “assessing.” Specialized literature indicates that institutional barriers and curricular rigidity often limit assessment to the rote memorization of

content, neglecting the development of transversal competencies and critical thinking. For assessment to fulfill its emancipatory role, it is imperative that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) promote a diversity of assessment tools, integrating methods that encompass interdisciplinarity and the practical application of knowledge in real-world professional scenarios (Bzuneck, 2001).

Furthermore, assessment in higher education demands an ethical commitment to inclusion and diversity. Given the heterogeneity of the student body, the assessment process must act as a mediator of learning, identifying students' specific difficulties and proposing pedagogical interventions that ensure the right to knowledge. Therefore, the transition to a dialogic and process-oriented assessment culture is fundamental to consolidating a university education that not only certifies technical skills but also fosters intellectual autonomy and the full exercise of citizenship (Ramalho; Núñez, 2014).

CONCLUSION

In light of the reflections presented, it is concluded that assessment in higher education should be understood not as an isolated, punitive event, but as a dynamic process intrinsic to the teaching-learning cycle. Transitioning from a purely summative paradigm to an approach that prioritizes diagnostic and formative functions is essential for assessment to evolve from a mere classification tool into a mechanism for pedagogical mediation and regulation. As demonstrated, the effectiveness of this process lies in its ability to provide the necessary insights for instructors to adjust their teaching methods and for students to develop autonomy over their own learning journeys.

The analysis indicates that, while cognitive assessments and written exams remain relevant for gauging conceptual mastery and reflective capacity, they should not serve as the sole yardstick for evaluation. The complexity of professional training demands the integration of diverse instruments that encompass the psychomotor and affective domains, placing value on direct observation and contextualized practice—as advocated by Miller's pyramid. Linking theoretical knowledge with practical application fosters a holistic view of student competencies, overcoming the fragmentation of

knowledge that still prevails in many curricular structures.

Finally, it is worth noting that transforming the culture of assessment within Higher Education Institutions transcends the individual will of the educator, as it is deeply contingent upon institutional support and curricular flexibility. It is imperative that universities foster dialogic and inclusive practices capable of embracing student diversity and promoting meaningful learning. Only through an ethical, process-oriented, and emancipatory approach to assessment will it be possible to consolidate an academic education that combines technical excellence with critical thinking and the full exercise of citizenship.

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