Evaluation... More of the same, challenging formats and modalities without script

EVALUATION... MORE OF THE SAME, CHALLENGING FORMATS AND MODALITIES WITHOUT SCRIPT

Evaluación… más de lo mismo desafiando formatos y modalidades sin libreto

Avaliação… Mais do mesmo desafiando formatos e modalidades sem roteiro

Daiana Yamila Rigo (Argentina)
daianarigo@hotmail.com
Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto
Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones
Científicas
y Técnicas

Danilo Donolo (Argentina)
donolo@gmail.com
Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto
Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones
Científicas
y Técnicas

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to deepen the approach and discussion about the need for an evaluation in line with the new conceptions of the teaching and learning processes. The general purpose is to describe the most common evaluation modalities in the classroom, to generate alternative educational proposals, delimiting theoretical and practical criteria for their formulation and implementation. The research was carried out at the elementary level of education, together with sixth grade students and teachers. Two stages of the study were differentiated. First, the most common and frequent evaluation practices within the social sciences subject were observed, in order to register their typology and format. Second, taking the design study methodology into account, an evaluation proposal was carried out, defined and contextualized, authentic and formative. To collect the data, recordings were observed and registered, and a questionnaire with open and closed questions was administered to the students to collect their perspective on both modalities of evaluation. The results of the research show that the proposed evaluation modality offered a space to promote better

RESUMEN

El objetivo del trabajo es profundizar el planteamiento y la discusión sobre la necesidad de una evaluación más acorde con las nuevas concepciones del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje. El propósito general es describir las modalidades de evaluación más comunes en el aula, para generar propuestas educativas alternativas, delimitando criterios teóricos- -prácticos para su formulación y puesta en acción. La investigación se realizó en el nivel primario de educación, junto a docentes y alumnos de sexto grado. Se diferenciaron dos tapas del estudio llevado a cabo. Primero, se observaron las prácticas más comunes y frecuentes de evaluación dentro de la asignatura de ciencias sociales, a modo de registrar su ipología y formato. Segundo, considerando la metodología estudio de diseño, se llevó a cabo na propuesta de evaluación, definida como contextualizada, auténtica y formativa. Para recolectar los datos se usó la observación y registro de grabaciones, e igualmente se administró un cuestionario con preguntas abiertas y cerradas a los estudiantes para rescatar su perspectiva sobre ambas modalidades de evaluación. Los resultados de la investigación muestran que la

RESUMO

O objetivo do trabalho é aprofundar a abordagem e a discussão sobre a necessidade de uma avaliação mais acorde com as novas concepções do processo de ensino e aprendizado. O propósito geral é descrever as modalidades de avaliação mais comuns na aula, para gerar propostas educativas alternativas, delimitando critérios teórico-práticos para a sua formulação e posta em ação. A pesquisa realizou-se no nível primário de educação, junto a docentes e alunos da sexta série. Diferenciaram-se duas etapas do estudo levado a cabo. Primeiro, observaram-se as práticas mais comuns e frequentes de avaliação dentro da disciplina de ciencias sociais, a modo de registrar a sua tipologia e formato. Segundo, considerando a metodología estudo de desenho, levou-se a cabo uma proposta de avaliação, definida como contextualizada, autêntica e formativa. Para coletar os dados usou-se a observação e registro de gravações, e igualmente administrou-se um questionário com perguntas abertas e fechadas aos estudantes para resgatar a sua perspectiva sobre as duas modalidades de avaliação. Os resultados da pesquisa mostram que a modalidade de

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learning as it shows to be dynamic, progressive and linked to change in instructional practices that support good feedback and decision making by the students.

modalidad de evaluación propuesta ofreció un espacio para promover mejores aprendizajes en tanto es dinámica, progresiva y se encuentra ligada a un cambio en las prácticas de instrucción que soportan buenas instancias de feedback y la toma de decisiones por parte de los alumnos.

avaliação proposta ofereceu um espaço para promover melhores aprendizados em tanto é dinâmica, progressiva e encontra-se ligada a um câmbio nas práticas de instrução que suportam boas instâncias de feedback e a tomada de decisões da parte dos alunos.

Keywords: Evaluation, instruction, problematic situations, feedback, design studies.

Palabras clave: Evaluación, instrucción, situaciones problemáticas, retroalimentación, estudios de diseño

Palavras chave: Avaliação, instrução, situações problemáticas, retroalimentação, estudos de desenho.

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INTRODUCTION

Thinking about assessments is also about pondering on the new education we desire. We find it interesting and illustrative to start our research presenting a vignette that we found some time ago in social networks, so as to trigger thoughts.1 An assessment situation is presented, in which the teacher tells his pupils, a group of animals: "For the assessment to be fair, you will all take the same test: you are going to climb that tree".

Surely, you have already seen the scene and have had the opportunity to derive your own conclusions about what and how we evaluate. We do not believe that academic evidence differs much from the situation portrayed, on the contrary, we find a curious proximity, which at the same time is a cause for concern if we understand education and its consequent assessment as homogeneous and encapsulated.

On the contrary, the new theoretical developments motivate us to tread over other alternative assessment paths that resemble the story narrated by Blasco (2008), about the challenges of the snail and his rival, the king. The author shows the need to fairly challenge the students' abilities, which are diverse and different in terms of skills and competences, as proposed by Gardner (1983) in his theoretical and practical studies on the multiple intelligences.

We then carry out a brief theoretical tour about the definition and relevant characteristics of our proposed assessment and about formative feedback, and then we present an educational experience with the objective of generating formative evaluative scenarios, studies carried out with students and teachers at the primary level of Education.

ASSESSMENT… CHALLENGES IN ITS REDEFINITION

Rethinking education implies, among its fundamental elements, to rethink the assessment practices that are used within the teaching-learning processes.2 Theoretical advances have grown and in recent years have had a significant impact, however, there are fewer practical developments that present concrete examples of how to make a learning assessment, where dilemmas arise and there is a need to discuss and think about them.

In this regard, Trillo Alonso (2005) reflects that knowing how to evaluate becomes a complex and delicate matter, because it implies a series of questions that need to adopt new meanings in the theoretical-practical dialectical construction, for what, how, why, what, who and who evaluates. This requires a serious and informed, thoughtful, deliberate, intentional, systematic and, above all, justifiable professional performance.

In this discussion, the first thing to think about is the assessment's function and thereby delineate some classification. We can evaluate to examine

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1 We do not know who the author is. Image taken from https://es.pinterest.com/pin/559290847448529865/
2 The issue of the educating children and young people and the need to certify is not a minor issue in today's world. More extensive and customized training is needed to attend to jobs and professions that demand basic knowledge and then to be constantly up to date. A recent study shows that adults are the

ones who suffer most from unemployment, precisely because they are not up to date. And it is even more difficult for them, because they have already lost the incentive to seek work, and this has serious consequences and social implications. See: http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-36602737

and qualify, and we can opt for a normative, summative assessment, which is clearly directed towards the assessment of errors (Bahón, 2015). Or, you can choose to evaluate for learning, and you would be choosing a modality that prioritizes a reflective decision making process, which promotes autonomous and self-regulated learning and above all helps to redefine teaching. Certainly, we prefer this assessment modality, without ignoring the commitments that sometimes bind us to the knowledge accredited through a grade.

Thinking about assessment is essential, as it is considered very important in the learning process; In this regard, Boud (1998) considers that assessment modalities and requirements may have more weight in how and what students learn, than any other individual factor. It may even be more important than the impact the teaching materials have.

Many researchers study and define assessment from an innovative perspective. Alonso Tapia and de la Red Fadrique (2007) propose integrating assessment into the learning process instead of basically doing it at the end, accompanied regularly by feedback on how to overcome difficulties; all this in the context of a process oriented towards the acquisition of relevant competences, where the student has the possibility of self-regulating learning instead of having to rely on the regulation established by their teachers. For García-Jiménez (2015), what gives meaning to the assessment is the information that it returns in relation to the program, the institution, teaching or learning and fundamentally that, from it, people involved can make decisions about the merit and the value of the evaluated or improve their actions. Bennett (2011) understands that assessment is not a simple result,

but a process, from which emerges a qualitative vision of student understanding, used to adapt teaching to the needs of the student. An adaptation that occurs in short cycles, within the classroom and among those involved in the educational experience. Rochera and Mauri Majós (1997) considers assessment, from a socio-cultural orientation constructivist perspective, as a fundamental instrument for the teacher that helps him regulate teaching action throughout the process and helps the student manage his own learning process.

This approach shows a shift regarding the summative practice of assessment, reassessing it as continuous and in close connection with the instructional context -of contents, formats, tools and representations- in order to provide specific information and help in decision-making aimed at improving students' understanding, competences and teachings.

Ravela (2009) mentions that the tasks that teachers propose to their students in order to evaluate their learning, are one of the best indicators of the type of formulated assessment, as they present what teachers value and indicate to the students what is/are the important knowledge and performances to achieve. If the tasks mainly require the memorization of concepts and dates, students' efforts will be directed thereto. On the other hand, if the activities involve challenging the students, and they are contextualized, meaningful, and incite thought, they clearly motivate towards other more complex learning goals. That is, the assessment conditions classroom dynamics, and the learning occurs there.

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Proposing a new assessment model that is associated with the idea of teaching students to think, decide and act in the real world, involves the conjugation of three central concepts: authentic, contextualized and educational. Herman, Aschbacher and Winters (1992) explain that asking the students to actively solve complex and authentic tasks while using their previous knowledge, recent learning and relevant skills to solve real problems, enables them to move from a decontextualized assessment model, as are written exams at the end of the topic because they evaluate declarative knowledge, to a form of contextualized assessment, in order to evaluate a functional knowledge (Trillo Alonso, 2005).

Formative assessment, in addition to being situated and linked to daily life, must provide information in order to generate feedback and exchanges to modify the teaching and learning activities in which students and teachers participate (Black and Wiliam, 1998). The key, then, is to find, select and create activities that matter and that contribute to improving both the assessment and the instructional process.

Bennett (2011), understands that the main objective of the formative assessment is to promote learning in such a way that any modification to the teaching process is associated with an educational improvement, basically based on three pillars: 1. That students clearly understand the learning goal and proposed tasks, 2. students have a space that supports the monitoring of their learning process, and 3. they make goal oriented decisions (Osorio and López, 2014).

Assessment is also related to learning in relation to thinking about what is being learned, and in the comparison between what is tried and what is achieved, in the search for new ways to advance towards intended knowledge and performance achievements (Ravela, 2009). It is a space that provides information for understanding, knowing, interpreting and making different questions, and this allows not only correction but, fundamentally, improving both learning and teaching [3] .

In this assessment model, the idea of process becomes relevant, because we understand that there is a close relationship between assessment, teaching and learning, and such that the teacher uses assessment as an integral part of the educational process in order to identify difficulties and make decisions that tend to promote improvements (Trumbull and Lash, 2013). Instruction is intertwined until the assessment process itself takes the form of a new instruction, instead of informing the student only about errors or successes. In this regard, Celman (2007), from a didactic perspective, and from the contributions of Litwin (1998), mentions that assessment also means studying teaching and learning relationships and implications.

The question that arises in this context asks about the possibility of making integrated assessments of the learning process, and how to turn it into something concrete for the real classroom exercises. Assessment activities or situations can be very diverse in nature. Coll Salvador, Villara Rochera, Mayordomo Saíz and Naranjo Llanos (2007), propose to insert assessment tasks in teaching-

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[3] Teacher education is very important here. This point is also related to a social concern. The following reference marks this tendency with remarkable clarity in the procedures that institutions follow to have the best, the most qualified and the most updated teachers. Consult: http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-36591625

learning activities, organize and sequence assessment activities around broad thematic blocks, and make it easier for the teacher to monitor, support and tutor the students during the development of the task.

Several studies find that this assessment modality offers a new scenario in order to think about educational practices. In this regard, we note that evaluative practices are privileged moments in the teaching-learning process that teachers can use to fine-tune the aids that they give the students by making the knowledge they have built in teaching-learning situations visible (Colomina and Rochera, 2002). Coll Salvador *et al.* (2007), highlight that formative assessment activities are useful instruments in order to obtain multiple and diverse evidences of student learning and provide adjusted educational aids that favor the achievement of significant learning.

FEEDBACK *IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS*

In every teaching-learning process, feedback takes place among the party's involved. Its research has resulted in the possibility of distinguishing different ways of generating and promoting it. The first studies referred to *feedback* as a signal or information that is transmitted from an emitter to a receiver; whereas, at present, it is characterized as a dialogue that interweaves teachers and students around particular stages in the unfolding of learning tasks. In this regard, Rinaudo (2014) states that understanding feedback as a dialogue implies that students not only receive information about their performance, but also have the opportunity to participate in its reflection.

This new perspective is used in the definition of formative assessment as a cyclic process that guides instruction and learning, containing *feedback* as a fundamental and distinctive piece (Mandinach and Lash, 2016). Hattie and Timperley (2011) understand that feedback is conceptualized as information provided by an agent (teacher, classmate, book, parent, student, among others), in relation to performance or understanding aspects of the learning-teaching process. Specifically, formative *feedback* is understood as information given to the student and intended to modify his thinking or behavior in order to improve learning. In the same way, the teacher can also receive formative feedback and use it as the basis for modifying instruction. In order for feedback to be affective the information received by the student can be of two types: verification -whether a response is correct or not- or elaboration -a message that provides pertinent information in order to guide the student towards a correct answer. Researchers seem to be converging towards the view that effective *feedback* should include both elements (Shute, 2007).

These exchanges have the potential to make the students' thoughts explicit, and therefore open to review and revision. In this regard, Winne and Butler (1994) state that feedback is the information with which a student can confirm, complete, overwrite, tune, or restructure ideas in his memory, as it is metacognitive knowledge about the task and one's own learning, about motivational beliefs and cognitive strategies. With the ultimate goal of

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reducing the discrepancy between current knowledge and formulated goals.[4]

Wiggins (1998) points out that as an essential part of any learning process assessments to improve learning is to offer the students quality feedback, not only after the performance, but also during (concurrent with) the assessment activities. Note, that this point of view blurs the boundaries between instruction and assessment in a useful way. While *feedback* is thought of not only as assessments about the work being done or as guidance on how to improve it, but as feedback all a long the process it takes to complete a tasks, and it allows the student to compare what he tried to achieve with what he effectively did. The more self-evident the feedback, the better the feedback will be, because it will help the student to realize for himself what he has as yet achieved and not.

In this sense, the evaluative practices constitute privileged moments in which the teacher can help the student make the knowledge that was jointly constructed in the classroom, visible. However, as we noticed, many times the tasks used do not allow us to identify the origin of the students' difficulties, which is why they can not be helped to overcome the difficulties through accurate feedback. This scenario is particularly worrisome because it has been proven that frequent and accurate feedback is one of the factors that contributes the most to an improvement in motivation, commitment and learning (Alonso Tapia, *et al.,* 2007, Colomina, *et al.,* 2002).

Indeed, recent research shows the potential of formative *feedback* to promote the learning process, especially in face-to-face environments. This potentiality is achieved if the feedback is given under certain conditions, such as at the right time during the learning process and not only at the end of a task, and given in a precise and clear manner so that students can use it, add meaning to it and advance towards their goals (Rochera Villach, Mauri Majós and Ginesta Fontseré, 2012). Likewise, in a study by Alonso Tapia *et al.* (2007), they concluded that it would be enough to integrate class assessments into the learning process instead of leaving it to the end, and then regularly follow the assessments with feedback on how to overcome difficulties, in order to promote learning.

In short, proposing instances of formative assessment aims to generate changes in instructional practices, and place assessments in a broader educational context. And to generate academic tasks that are assessment activities that allow the teacher to collect information on the students reached level of comprehension related to the contents and, at the same time, their application for the development of comprehension.

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Six sixth-grade students from the primary level of education participated in the experience. In total there were 24 students and a social science teacher. The experience was developed in the framework of a design studies research (Rinaudo and Donolo,

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[4] The issue of quality education from schoolings' first grades has its correlate that society' expectations of young people and their role in the local community and expanded with reference to the future generations by the demands of society. In this sense, prospective studies point the way towards a greater educational formation and, above all, university education in

order to fulfill the labor and occupational requirements both independent and associated with companies and work groups. The graphics and explanations of the *link* below present a possible trend. Consult: http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1910320-el-futuro-de-la-educacion-mundial

2010), with the informed consent of all those involved.

The objective of this research was to describe and study the assessment practices in the primary education classroom and to propose assessment alternatives of a formative and contextualized nature. The research was developed in two stages, the first had the purpose of describing the assessment instances formulated within the framework of the class under study. Through recordings and observing the class, with a focus on assessment modality -type of questions in school assignments and tests- and the feedback that took place; the second, was aimed at developing an formative assessment experience, in order to investigate alternative spaces for assessment as a process, with *feedback* geared towards facilitating and monitoring student learning; using as data collection instruments, recordings and non-participant observations of the feedback moments between students-teachers-students. At the end of both stages, a short final questionnaire with open and closed questions was implemented in order to research the students perceptions about these practices, and then rescuing strengths and weaknesses, including questions that revealed the finality of each assessment modality, whether it was grade oriented or oriented towards the improvement of learning, and to describe what elements were perceived as positive or negative in each instance.

With the collected information, the feedback content obtained in the observations and records was analyzed and interpreted, in order to understand, on the one hand, each assessment modality and, on the other hand, the perceptions,

assessments and learnings linked to a format of summative or formative assessment.

DESCRIPTION OF THE 'FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT' EXPERIENCE

In order to generate a formative evaluative context, considering the central developments that sustain this type of practices, an academic task was designed that, within the framework of the subject, will function as a guiding thread between the instructive and evaluative learning process, based on the interactions between teachers, students and curricular contents.

Specifically, the elaborated assessment proposal responded in its formulation to the idea of context and at the same time was linked to daily life and integrated with the instructive process, that had diverse instances of *feedback* oriented towards the improvement of learning. The example we present and analyze, from the study's perspective, shows an assessment model that we call Problematic Situation -PS-, a proposal that rescues challenges that are interesting and related to daily life, and that cannot be solved in an hour, but imply a process that includes and is carried out along side instructional practices. They are problematic situations, because the students need, in order to solve it, not only their previous knowledge, but also includes the challenge of finding new information in order to complete the solution of the formulated problem, which at the same time, is associated with upcoming circumstances relative to his life outside of school. It does not evaluate content or data, but rather understanding when it uses the central concepts posited by the social sciences curriculum, in analyzing a daily situation.

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The presented problematic situation consisted in, *grosso modo*, choosing some place in the world while exploring the globe, with the purpose of writing a letter destined to an adolescent who would travel to that same place. The students had to investigate and guide the young traveler through suitcase packing and offer some *tips* so that the young traveler would not get lost and enjoy the culture and habits of the place. The task was developed over three months, while doubts were being discussed at the same time, and they were answered with new content or previous learning. Several instances of *feedback* were anticipated before, during and after the assessment task and two preliminary task, fundamentally oriented to reflect on aspects that will help managing and monitoring the task and its learning progress, such as: How have they directed the task and what is their proposed objective? What is the present state of the task? How are they performing it? What are the difficulties? What will be the steps to follow? Among others. In the same way, the students together with the teacher discussed essential aspects to plan and advance in the PS: What does the task ask them to do? What is the objective? What kind of information and strategies will they need to use? How much time and resources will they need? Do they understand what the task demands? Does the task make sense? Are they achieving the objective? Do they need to change something? Did they achieve the formulated objective? Did the used work method work? How do they know? If otherwise, what could be done next time to improve the work? Would they change anything? What? The answers were recorded in writing in the students' notebooks.

It is worth noting that the students had a notebook to keep track of their progress, their doubts, their queries, their searches and their preliminary

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progress in writing the letter, as a way to record the complete PS research solving process.

RESULTS

The following are analyzes and results found in three stages, namely: Stage I- Save, copy and paste... from book to notebook, from head to paper; Stage II- Problematic situations. Grouping instruction and assessment; and perceptions about assessment modalities.

STAGE I- SAVE, COPY AND PASTE ... FROM BOOK TO NOTEBOOK, FROM HEAD TO PAPER

From the observations carried out in the first research instance, we noticed that the assessment was more of the same, that is, questions with a single answer, as formulated in previous tasks that were part of the main teaching and learning strategy.

First, the copying and pasting action goes from the science book to the class notebook, and then there is a more or less faithful record in memory in order to write it on the assessment paper. The conception of assessment that underlies these actions is summative, in that it is used to issue a final judgment on student learning at the end of a learning period in order to assess the level of understanding or competence achieved (Jones, 2005).

Some of the questions recorded in this instance drive the students to supply data. We transcribe some examples of learning tasks below:

1. What are laws?
2. What is the National Constitution?
3. When was it issued? What was its latest reform?

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1. What are human rights?
2. What are their characteristics and how can they be classified?
3. What does social minority or vulnerable group mean? How do you attempt to protect these groups' rights?
4. What events gave rise to the UDHR?
5. When were universal human rights constitutionally recognized in Argentina?
6. Currently, what people and organizations fight for the defense of human rights?

1. We read and analyze some of the articles that establish the rights of people and citizens.
   Articles: 14, 14 bis and 20.
   Article: 37.

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Similar questions are found in the assessment records of the subject concepts, as can be seen in the following excerpts:

- In accordance with article 37 of the Argentine Constitution, voting is not mandatory.
- Article 14 bis of the Argentine Constitution establishes the rights of the worker.

In both instances, factual questions are those that prevail, where a knowledge that is more declarative than functional (Trillo Alonso, 2005), which motivates memorization, rather than reflection, analysis and understanding, is fundamentally emphasized and valued. Furman (2015) clarifies that the problem does not lie in these type of questions, but only those present in the blackboards. In this regard, Jones (2005) indicates that summative assessment can and should be useful both as a training framework and as part of the learning process; the goal is to achieve a positive working environment in relation to the answers, and not end with a note. Go beyond short answers, definitions, dates and data, and bet on a contextual analysis, on a comprehensive debate and on the generation of opinions.

Regarding feedback, during the first copy and paste action some exchanges about the task were recorded, as can be read in the following extract:

We revised, corrected and completed the task from the previous class.

The teacher asks the children to group together to evaluate the homework.

M. How did your homework go?

A1. Easy, sir, it was all in the book.

M. What did we see the previous class?

A2. That the provinces were separated from Buenos Aires.

M. What did they demand from the Province of Buenos Aires?

A3. Trade.

M. Good, now in a group, control the task.

Observation record: Within the groups, the students only read the answers based on the questions they had to answer as homework; those who do not read do not pay attention to the answer the partner reads or follow the answers with their eyes, there are no exchanges between them, they only read and if someone says that he spots a difference, he reads his answer. It is not mutually enriching nor are answers reformulated.

Out of all of them, 6 students did not complete the task, or only marked them in the science book. The teacher goes to the groups' if the students call, if not, the teacher stays away without supervising the groups that do not ask for consultation. If there is a disagreement between one student's and another's answers, they just leave it, they do not reach an agreement and they do not reflect upon the different written answers, looking for reasons ... they say: "We will ask the teacher latter". If a student does not have a part of the answer, another dictates it to him. And they move on to the next answer.

As can be seen, in the brief comment on feedback within the group, feedback is limited to a control function, of completing and adding information. There is no motivation to argue or debate beyond the answers.

During the second action of saving, to then paste on the paper, that is, the strictly evaluative instance, the interactions were reduced to specific questions in order to broaden the understanding of what each question solicited, or confirm what was believed to be correct to write, or queries unrelated to the subject under assessment, for example:

A1. Mr. here we have to put the definition of...

M: Yes.

A2. Can I go to the bathroom?

M. No.

A3. Lend me the eraser

A4. Here take it.

A5. Mr. is this how we learned it in class?

M. Yes, María.

M. You are quite lost, guys!

A6. I do not get 2b

M. What does article 14 bis say?

In this case, we agree with Hattie and Timperley (2007), that this class assessment fosters superficial and routine learning, concentrating on the memorization of isolated details, general data and definitions that the students soon forget, and most of the times it does not require feedback, while

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assessment questions are not reviewed *a posteriori* and the answers are not critically discussed. A context that does not invite reflection about what is being judged.

In synthesis, in this first stage it can be observed that instruction and assessment are two different instances, but similar. Different because they occur at different times, first they are taught and then what was learned is evaluated; and similar, in relation to the type of questions that are formulated in both processes. Regarding feedback, we observe that they are limited to delivering information or certifying knowledge or response. No instances that invite student to rethink their answers or improve the productions were registered. They were short answers, where yes or no adverbs predominated.

STAGE II- PROBLEMATIC SITUATIONS. GROUPING INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

From the records and analysis of the second research stage, we found that the questions prepared before, during and after the PS, and that were aimed at planning and advancing in their resolution, show that the students managed to formulate clear learning goals regarding the task to be developed. Likewise, there is evidence of a review process and continuous monitoring by the students in the answers they gave, facilitated both by the external *feedback* received in the process' orientation and review instances, as well as by the internal *feedback* achieved by each student when they evaluated their progress (Rigo, in press). As can be read in the following extracts:

The task asks us to help her plan a trip (TK).
The task asks us to help a girl and be like a guide on the trip (TC).
The task ... let's help a girl make her suitcase and write her a letter to teach her the customs, local foods, language ... (TL).
Write a letter with information of the place, so that she can make her trip ... guide her on her trip (TCS).
Although we had several obstacles, we were able to overcome them all and acheive a good job (TLC).
The material from the internet was sometimes confusing, but we solved it because we went to the library and found clear information (TKE).
I would change the way I distribute time and work (TCP).
I need to change the way I look for information and learn other tools and resources to access new knowledge and information (TM).

Students not only explain how they evaluated their level of understanding throughout the process, their efforts and the strategies they used, but also indicate the changes they plan to make. In this context, the teacher's role in formative assessment is not simply to use feedback to promote content learning, but also to help students understand the goal, help them develop the skills to judge their learning and establish a repertoire of strategies so they can regulate their own learning (Heritage, 2010). The ideas of Mandinach and Lash (2016), are propitious to understand formative assessment

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as an instance that facilitates the clarification of the objectives and learning goals, promoting knowing strategies and being aware of difficulties, resources to use and time management, as observed throughout the PS solution process that the students carried out. In this regard, Hattie and Timperley (2007) highlight the role of feedback aimed at promoting self-regulation processes, also highlighting the importance of questions such as "Where am I going? How am I doing? What are the next steps? They have to generate planned and cyclically adapted thoughts, actions and feelings to achieve the formulated learning goals (Zimmerman, 2000).

Likewise, the registered observations evidenced that as the students progressed in the research task, questions arose that had to be addressed from the conceptual aspects of the subject, intertwining, in an iterative cycle, instruction and assessment. Some of the questions were:

> Why is it summer in Europe in August and in South America its winter? Why is there a time difference between the place of departure and the various proposed trip destinations? Why are some places warm or tropical all of the year? How can you explain the type of climate in each region?

These questions opened an instructive space oriented towards new explanations and teacher presentations geared towards the achievement of a greater and better understanding of the information they found and that is necessary in order to continue searching and collecting data for the written letter. The questions asked by the

students offered evidence that, interpreted and used by the teacher, served to decide what steps to follow in the learning process, and enabled a learning cycle between teaching and assessment. In other words, the instructional process was redefined according to the feedback the teacher received from the students. In this sense, the contents were not supplied in an isolated way by means of guiding question, but they arose from the interaction between students facing the PS resolution, as a modality to broaden and clarify comprehension. In this order of ideas, *feedback* direction *is* not always from teacher to student. Here, the formative assessment is understood as one of the instruments to inform and improve instructional planning performed by the teacher (Heritage, 2010), characterized by being progressive and dynamic, where the instruction is not necessarily given first and then the student is evaluated, but they are thought of as moments in continuous movement of contraction and expansion forming an iterative cycle (Mandinach and Lash, 2016).

From the feedback recordings between students and teachers, some of the exchanges that took place in this research stage are shown below:

> M. How could you continue to proceed in the search for information?
> A1. Keep searching online. But to know if the time zones are fine ... mmmm.
> A2. We could ask in the forums, to those people that you write a question and then they answer it for you.
> M. I think it's a very good alternative.
> A3. Mr. the truth is that I am behind, I did not look for much information.

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M. Isabela, which could be the next searches?

A3. I thought about going to the library.

M. Good, and how will you organize the search?

A3. I will do as I did before, a list of questions to guide me about what I still need, as I did last time that helped me.

M. Very good Isabela, I believe that you will be able to make progress in writing the letter.

M. How could you reformulate the beginning of the letter? Thinking in the recipient, a 15-year-old teenager.

A4. Mmm yes, we think that, 'Dear lady' is a no go.

A5. It would have to be less formal.

A4. Something like ... 'Hi Constanza'.

M. I think it could be a good way to reformulate the initial greeting.

Observation registry: inside the groups, students are previously arranged in pairs and they record in a notebook the information they need to write the letter, some through questions - what is the climate like in Cuba in August? What could the girl visit? What sort of transport should she use? What clothes should she wear ? What season is it? - and others through criteria or dimensions, such as customs, habits, places to visit , type of currency exchange, food, weather, parties, among others.

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The formative assessment experience, evidences that the *feedback* that took place went beyond highlighting errors or simply correcting tasks, that

is, it was not a typical feedback oriented to the final result, but rather as mentioned by Ruiz-Primo and Li (2013), they were productive exchanges aimed at improving learning, involving the student in decision-making based on practical and accessible feedback that supports student productions.

In summary, instruction and assessment formed a cycle that was mutually enriching, with the purpose of monitoring, evaluating and improving teaching and enriching student learning. Similarly, feedback instances aimed at improving learning provided the student with suggestions to promote task achievement and provided the teachers with evidence necessary to modify their instruction; Students take an active participation during the process in order to improve their learning.

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ASSESSMENT MODALITIES

From the students' questionnaire answers, we registered diverse assessments about the assessment modalities under study. Of the first stage 89% agreed that it was an instance whose purpose was to approve the class and obtain a grade, highlighting, above all, the rote learning and the key factors to obtain a good grade such as: on the one hand, having a complete folder and, on the other hand, knowing the answers to the questions that were supplied as part of the task. Likewise, some students commented that always learning from a book is boring, especially highlighting the role of new technologies in the new generations' learning processes. Among the perceived advantages is the ease of this assessment modality, and among the complexities found was the difficulty memorizing the definitions.

On the second stage, the 92% of students perceived more possibilities to rethink their productions and learning, they recognized that assessment is transformed into an instance that enhanced through teacher-student exchanges throughout its production. The students mentioned the *feedback* instances received during the development of the experience, the teacher's accompaniment and the possibilities of rethinking their productions in the search for improved learning. They positively marked the freedom to define what to study and how with the use new technologies, such as Internet search, combined with more traditional methodologies, such as teacher explanations.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study presents two analyzes of different assessment modalities. First, a more traditional instance of valuing school content, which points to the assessment of what has been learned, and a second instance that shows a promising alternative to assessment that favors learning.

From the first stage, we conclude that the assessment is a final instance, which reproduces more or less what is requested in the academic tasks of copying, dictation, questions and answers, and emphasizes the memorization of definitions and precise data, with exchanges limited to verification and checking whether or not a certain response is correct. From the second stage, we consider that formative assessment enables a space for elaboration, reflection and feedback that improves and facilitates learning, as it offers instances to rethink the task and move towards better achievements, thus forming an instruction cycle.

The results of both instances allow some appreciations on assessment in education. In the first instance, the importance of integrating instruction and assessment; an aspect that the students highlighted in their perceptions about the designed proposal. It is also interesting to say that the thing of the performed process that motivated them, apparently, and according to the students, was to venture into new didactic resources, and it can be a good alternative to generate better learning, for example, the use of new information technologies seems to be something that interests them, as an alternative to the classic manuals. In the same manner, it is important to note their appreciations regarding the value that they give the teacher's support in various instances of the formative assessment, as a guide and through the teacher's oral presentations that help to promote better results in the academic tasks. Another aspect worthy of mentioning is the importance that students attribute to being able to rethink the tasks that are being performed, that is to say, it seems that learning accompanied by reflection is thought as a challenge compared to the tasks that only demand memorization of information. The same relevance is attributed to the fact of being able to choose and make decisions during the learning process, an aspect that they note as positive, both in the choices they were able to make about what to investigate, and in the autonomy that helped to generate a space where to use more than one supporting resource in order to move forward and search for information.

In second instance, we consider that the logic of copying and pasting is an instance to teach and evaluate specific themes of the subjects, but its value lies in the accompaniment of a logic of productive thinking about what is written and

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textually reproduced from the book to notebook. The results show that proposals such as those carried out, which are accompanied by instances of *feedback* that guide the student's task reflection and monitoring are key elements in order to configure educational contexts that tend to promote self-regulated thinking. Accompanying the planning, review and reflection process, generates teacher-student and student-student exchanges that help to generate a work modality that, as shown in the results, serves as models that move towards a greater control and management of the cognitive processes involved in the task of learning. In this sense, the formative assessment enables a space for reflection that moves away from the almost textual reproduction and memorization, insofar as it is defined as procedural and not located in a time and in a limited space. On the contrary, it offers the students quality feedback, not only after the performance, but also during the development of the assessment activities, placing it in a wider educational context.

Likewise, we rescue the value of design studies, as a methodology that allows reformulating and adjusting educational experiences, in order to redefine research, which is enriched not only by the theoretical contributions of educational psychology, but also by the natural teaching and learning contexts where study takes place.

In summary, the results allow us to suppose that, when instruction and assessment go hand in hand, not as instances or differentiated stages, it is possible to attend to a practical definition of formative assessment, an assessment to learn, not of what has been learned. These aspects are

reflected in the wealth of feedback and in the perceptions that students have about the experience developed.

NOTE. Many times the facts that get the most press coverage are those that present assessment failures. Each group of participants in the teaching and learning process - teachers, students, parents, school - tries in those cases to find justifications or deficiencies in the actions of others, with students generally being the most signaled out for their wrongs. However, the reviewed experience shows that the results are better if the interested parties are engaged in the task, and this is very good...

When a successful student was asked about the method he used to study, he said he had none. And then he added: "The important thing is to know how to organize yourself and know that when you have to study, you have to study". [5]

We, in these instructional experiences, integrating ourselves with teachers, students, contents and contexts, circumstances and theories, try to promote in everyone the efforts to make a better school so that the students have a positive attitude towards the knowledge, so they can later act responsibly and jointly in the increasingly complex communities in which they must act and present themselves.

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