

In this issue of Panorama Magazine, we are fortunate to include several articles dedicated to the subject of educational assessment; for this reason, I wrote this editorial on this interesting topic, with contributions from the academic and research thought herein consigned.

As mentioned by several of the authors in this edition, assessment has different functions: diagnostic, qualifying, preventive, prospective, normative, summative, formative, regulatory, justifying or accrediting. In a broad perspective, as Diaz explains in his article, international assessments enable the monitoring of the competences acquired by students, identifying achievements in universally accepted performance, in order to address society's requirements, in terms of quantifying social development. These results are also important because they guide national policy decisions, especially on issues pertaining coverage, permanence, repetition and practices in order to improve learning.

Therefore, assessment in education is a fundamental part of the entire educational process. It is linked to the quality expected from the education system, in its different levels: primary, secondary and tertiary; even, for some, it can be implemented at the initial education level. As mentioned by several of the authors in this issue, in addition to quality, assessment includes obtaining performance results, and the use of said results in order to provide feedback, which enables the teachers to regulate their teaching practices and the students to manage their own learning process. In general, this is considered a possibility that serves the improvement of teaching and learning in the classroom.

In the same way, assessment can be used to learn, to reflect or to make decisions. However, assessment depends on the skills and competences of the students, the abilities and knowledge of the teachers, and the environments and tools for its implementation. It is subjected, primarily, to the evaluative-intent, to the ways in which it is performed, to the instruments and scenarios used, to whom applies it and to whom it applied on.

For Rigo and Donolo, in their article included in this edition, assessment is related to the educational proposals, for which, adjustments or changes of said pedagogical proposals, such as those found in contemporary educational models with teacher decentration, should be reflected in changes in the classroom's assessment forms, and vice versa. These new forms must involve assessment's integration to the learning processes. An example of these transformations can be found in the impact last decade's assessments have had in the country. Their purpose is to identify the effectiveness of the programs, in order to improve the management and investment of educational resources. Some examples of the Colombian case can be found in the assessments of the educational programs that were promoted by foundations, governmental and non-governmental organizations, such as the Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar - ICBF, Genesis Foundation, Fundación Corona, Fundación Carvajal, Fundación Promigas, Fundación Gases de Occidente, Fundación Éxito, among others. These assessments have enabled important transformations and improvements to the programs, as well as serving as significant conducts for investments.

However, despite this somewhat positive perspective on assessment, in this edition, Nosiglia and Mulle review the evaluative scenario in the Argentinean historical-educational context, and state that assessment always generates resistance, particularly from the concept of institutional autonomy, from either teachers or students. Also, assessment is considered as a mechanism that responds to a market logic that focuses on the assessment of the educational institutions' "products", thus generating a strong competition between said institutions. The same happens in the Colombian case, with the Saber tests, which led to important competitive bouts around the national ranking, the generation of rankings for educational institutions, especially basic, secondary education.

The struggle for assessment's place in the educational context is not a simple one. However, as Nosiglia and Mulle point out, assessment should allow thinking about the formulation of institutional educational policies. We can see a case of this in the Politécnico Grancolombiano, where thinking about assessment has produced exercises and concrete actions to identify students characteristics upon admission, through literacy characterization tests, mathematics or English skills, psychological characterization tests, tests to evaluate desertion risk, or at the end of the career in the diagnosis of students generic competences for professional working life. Also included as research cases, the assessment of occupational risk for the administrative and teaching staff.

Therefore, regardless of any criticisms that may arise, it is important to recognize assessment's significance as an element that meaningfully contributes to institutional improvement. We hope that this edition will be of interest to readers pondering on assessment's place in education, on its international and national positioning, and on the need for new evaluative forms, that adjust to new teaching and learning scenarios, and new understandings of the student.

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