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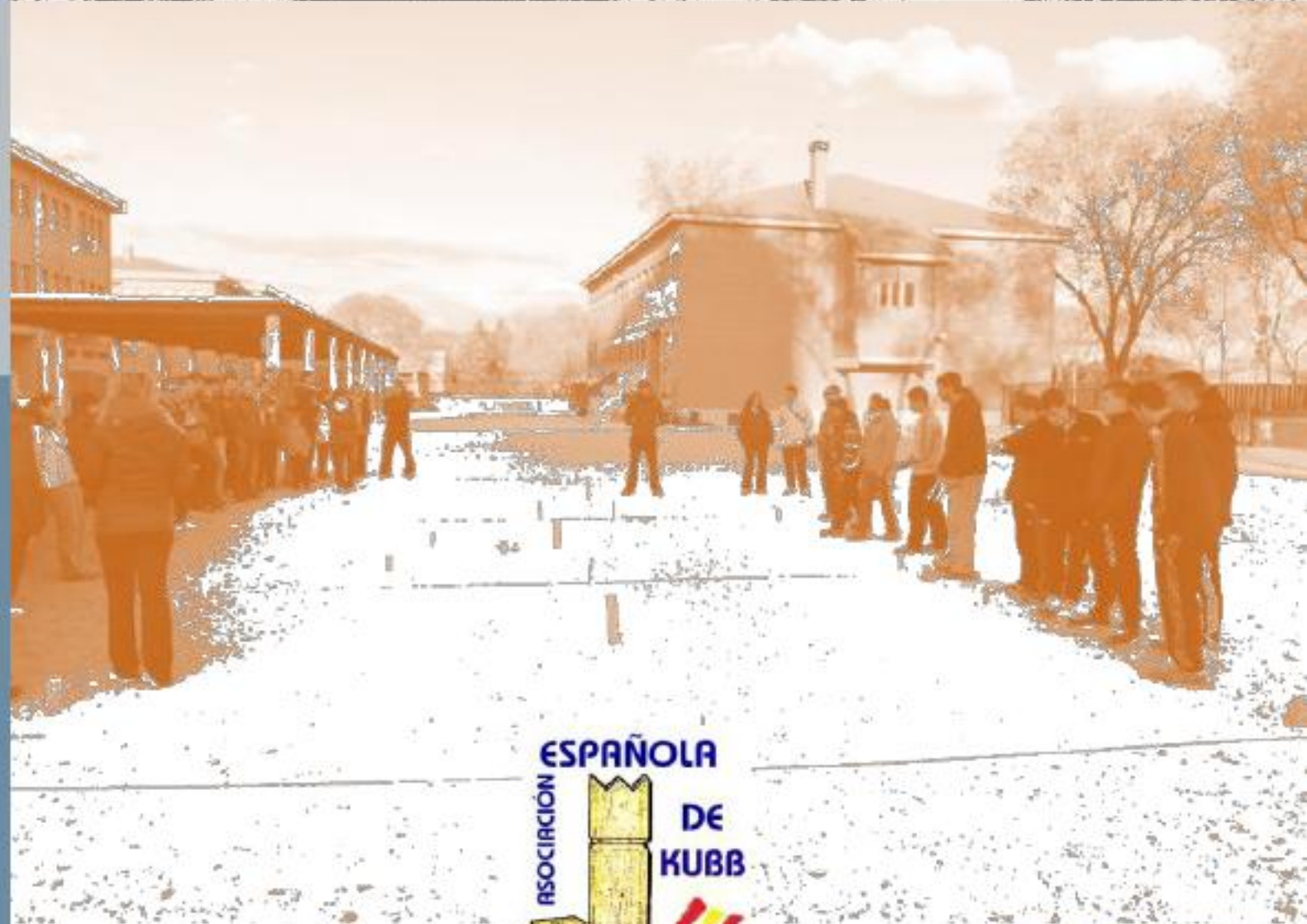
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FORMATIVE AND SHARED ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A REVIEW OF TERMINOLOGY

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Resumen:

El objetivo del presente estudio fue realizar una revisión de la terminología utilizada sobre el concepto de "evaluación formativa" junto con otras serie de conceptos que se han desarrollado en las últimas dos décadas (Evaluación formativa, evaluación para el aprendizaje, evaluación alternativa, evaluación auténtica, etc.) así como otros términos relacionados con los procesos de participación del alumnado en el aprendizaje. Asimismo, también se desarrolla la diferencia entre los conceptos "evaluación" y "calificación/ graduación", y explorar los criterios y procesos para llevarlos a cabo. La primera parte se centra en una introducción en el contacto del Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior (EHEA) y el papel que tiene la evaluación formativa. En la segunda parte se presentan los términos y conceptos relacionados con la evaluación formativa, incluyendo el término francés "*Evaluation Formative*" así como los conceptos ingleses de "*Assessment for Learning, Alternative Assessment, Authentic Assessment, Learning-oriented Assessment*". La tercera parte se centra en el análisis crítico de la realidad de las clases, donde el concepto de evaluación es un sinónimo de notas o referencias de promoción. Se realiza un especial énfasis en la importancia de reconocer que ambos conceptos son independientes y diferentes. Además, se realiza una diferenciación por las actividades, procesos, instrumentos y criterios de evaluación. Finalmente, la cuarta sección se centra en las relaciones entre evaluación y calificación, así como uno de los más importantes y tópicos comunes en la experiencia de los tutores universitarios, los cuales tienen que realizar la transición entre la evaluación y la calificación para cada estudiante mediante la evaluación formativa en cada semestre universitario.

Palabras clave:

Evaluación formativa, evaluación para el aprendizaje, evaluación alternativa, evaluación auténtica, implicación del estudiante en la evaluación.

EVALUACIÓN FORMATIVA Y COMPARTIDA EN LA EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR: UNA REVISIÓN DE LA TERMINOLOGÍA

Abstract

The aim of this article is to undertake a review of terminology that relates to the concept of "formative assessment" together with a range of associated concepts which have developed over the past two decades (*Assessment for Learning, Alternative Assessment, Authentic Assessment, Learning-oriented Assessment, etc.*) as well as those terms which relate to the involvement of students in the assessment process. It will also focus on both the difference and the relationship between the terms "assessment" and "marking/grading" and explore the criteria and processes for carrying them out.

The first section will provide an introduction to the context within which the article was written: The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the key role played by formative assessment within the convergence process.

The second section will present and analyse the various terms that are closely related to the concept of "formative assessment", including the French term *Evaluation Formative* as well as the more common English terms: *Assessment for Learning, Alternative Assessment, Authentic Assessment, Learning-oriented Assessment*.

The third section provides a critical analysis of the common reality within our classrooms, where the concept of "assessment" is often synonymous with *marks* or *grades*. Significant emphasis is placed on the importance of recognising that these concepts are independent and different even though they may be related to a greater or lesser extent. It also outlines the differences between the activities, processes, instruments and criteria for assessment and the instruments and criteria for marking/grading.

Finally, the fourth section focuses on the issue of the relationship between assessment and marking as well as on one of the most common concerns university tutors experience in their professional lives; that of how they can make the transition from a semester dedicated to learning and formative assessment to the obligation to provide a mark or grade for each student at the end of that semester.

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Key words

Formative Assessment, Assessment for learning; Alternative Assessment, Authentic Assessment, Student involvement in Assessment.

高校教育中的教学测评与共用式测评：专业术语回顾

摘要：

本文旨在回顾一系列在近20年内发展沿革并与“教学测评”相关的概念术语（学习测评，选择性测评，真实测评，学习导向测评等等），同时也回顾了评测过程中有学生参与的相关术语。文章关注了术语“评测”与“打分/分级”间的差异和关系，并探寻完成上述活动的标准及流程。

文章第一部分引入了正文背景，即：欧洲高等教育区（EHEA）及教学测评在教育一体化过程中扮演的重要角色。

文章第二部分将介绍和分析与“教学测评”这一概念密切相关的各种术语，包括法语中的“*Evaluation*

Formatrice”及英语中更为普遍的几种术语：以学习为目的的测评，选择性测评，真实测评，学习导向测评。

文章第三部分对教室中的实际场景进行了批评性分析，此处“测评”的概念通常是“打分”或“分级”的同义词。重点强调和指出上述几个术语虽然有时被视作有所关联，却是独立且相异的概念。文章也概述了不同测评与打分/分级活动，流程，评估工具及标准间的差异。

文末第四部分侧重阐释测评与作为大学导师最常见问题的期末打分模式之间的关系，即如何从学期内教学测评过渡到期末强制给每位学生打分。

关键词：教学测评，学习测评，选择性测评，真实测评，学生参与的测评

1- The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the importance of formative assessment.

Following the “Declaration of Sorbonne” on the 25 May 1998 a process of convergence towards the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was instigated throughout Europe. This European convergence process has generated a series of changes and modifications throughout the European Higher Education community. Some of these changes relate to legislation but the most significant changes relate to the roles of both staff and students within the assessment processes and the development of competences within Higher Education.

At the same time, current legislation covering Spanish universities provides for greater autonomy for universities to improve their efficiency in the use of public funds through the implementation of a modern regulatory framework which contributes to improving the quality of teaching, among other key aims of the European Higher Education Area (Organic Law on Universities, 2001, p. 49400-49401).

This is supported by the introduction of external quality assessment procedures, based on objective criteria and transparent processes, following the establishment of the National Agency for the Assessment of Quality and Accreditation. This body provides independent assessment of, among other things, all teaching and learning as well as research activity, with the aim of reinforcing quality, transparency, cooperation and competition within Higher Education in Spain.

The EHEA will produce a significant paradigm shift within Spanish Higher Education as it will focus attention on student learning, which will require a series of modifications. At a legal and administrative level the main change will be the introduction of a new model to measure the workload and duration of courses of

study: the ECTS system (*European Credit Transfer System*), which standardises the structure of all European university degrees, in a way that allows and facilitates the movement of students between different universities and countries. One ECTS credit represents 25-30 student learning hours. All modules must be structured by credits and every academic year must contain 60 ECTS credits. The effect of this will be to cease measuring the educational workload by the number of teaching hours students receive per module and academic year (which has been the tradition in the Spanish university system) and begin measuring it according to the number of teaching and learning hours required by an average student to undertake all the learning activities in a module, such as timetabled classes, groupwork, reading, individual study and practical work.

As a result of this new paradigm three areas of the curriculum gain specific importance: (a) all learning objectives must be designed to develop personal and professional competences rather than just the acquisition of knowledge or subject matter; (b) the methodology for learning must be much more diverse and, in particular, participative, to transcend traditional teaching methodologies which have been based exclusively on the transmission of knowledge through lectures; (c) assessment, unlike traditional models, must not be wholly focused on providing a mark or grade, normally as a result of a final test, but rather should be seen and used as a process that helps students to achieve more and better learning. Within this type of framework the involvement of students in the assessment process becomes particularly relevant in that they become active participants. Dochy, Segers y Dierick (2002) refer to this in terms of moving from an “exam culture” to an “assessment culture”.

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In relation to the notion of assessment a range of studies and proposals have appeared over the past decade which support and promote the use of formative assessment strategies as well as the introduction of various techniques and formats that involve students in the assessment of their performance through evaluating the quality of learning and teaching in a clear and explicit way (Biggs, 1999; Boud 1995, 2010; Boud y Falchikov, 2007; Brown y Glasner, 2003; Carless, Joughin y Mok, 2006; Dochy, Segers y Sluijsman, 1999; Falchikov, 2005; Ljungman y Silén, 2008).

The aim of this article is to define in the clearest possible way the concept of formative assessment and all related concepts including those that require the involvement of students in the assessment process.

2. Terminology related to formative assessment.

In this section a range of concepts which appear in international literature will be considered as the authors believe they are closely related to formative assessment either in French (*Evaluation Formative*) or in English (*Assessment for Learning: Alternative Assessment, Authentic Assessment, Learning-oriented Assessment*). These terms have appeared over time with the aim of providing substitutes to or further explanation of terms that already existed and to suggest alternatives to the predominant traditional assessment strategies and try to offer new ways to understand and undertake assessment in Higher Education. The authors believe these additional terms provide valuable alternatives although fundamentally their meaning is already covered by the over-arching term of formative assessment when taken in its widest sense (Pérez-Pueyo, Julián y López-Pastor, 2009).

The Network for Formative and Shared Assessment in Higher Education defines the term formative assessment as:

"This implies a system of assessment that evaluates students' work and arrives at decisions in a way that maximises the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process by providing constant and timely feedback. It recognises the specific context and needs of the individual student but is not graded, although after receiving the feedback students may re-submit it for grading" (López-Pastor, Castejón, Sicilia, Navarro, & Webb, 2011, p. 82).

The next section will discuss the meaning of each of these terms as used within the specialised literature relating to Higher Education.

Alternative Assessment. This term encompasses the various techniques and practices that provide alternatives to traditional assessment strategies which focus almost entirely on producing marks based on tests or exams by offering methodologies that are more formative in their nature.

Evaluación Formadora. This term derives from the French "*Evaluation Formative*" but goes beyond the term "formative assessment" in that the assessment is not only concerned with students learning more and more effectively about the content of their studies but that it is in itself formative to the extent that it encourages self-reflection, independent learning strategies and the development of metacognitive skills of value to the student. This strategy has been developed increasingly within Spain through the concept of "*evaluación formadora*" (López-Pastor, 2009; Moraza, 2007; Sanmartí, 2007). Through this strategy students should learn to assess themselves and others, with the aim of increasing their autonomy and, therefore, their capacity to learn. It is therefore closely linked to the basic competence referred to as "learning to learn". This process can be closely linked to the notions of self-regulation (Zimmerman, 1999) as well as to hypotheses in Boud (2000), Carless (2007) and Nicol (2009) about using assessment processes that are valuable to students in terms of developing their ability to learn throughout their lives (long-life learning).

Assessment for Learning. This concept focuses on the aim of assessment being to improve students' learning, with assessments clearly designed to achieve this, rather than their traditional aim of providing a means to deliver a final test to produce a mark or grade for the students (Brown & Glasner, 2003; Carless, Joughin, & Mok, 2006; Dochy & McDowell, 1997; Gibbs, 2003; Hargreaves, 2007; Knight, 1995; Taras, 2002).

Authentic Assessment. This refers to techniques, activities and situations where the assessment is strongly related to real learning experiences which are linked to professional practice as closely as possible as opposed to artificial or very specific assessment tasks that are unrelated to actual practice or the authentic application of what has been learned (Biggs, 1999; Dochy, Segers, & Dierik, 2002; Torrance, 2004).

Learning-oriented assessment. This concept extends the notion of *Assessment for Learning* by incorporating within it *Authentic Assessment*. According to Carless, Joughin y Mok (2006) this term combines

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three key characteristics: it places great importance on the use of authentic assessment tasks, on involving students in the assessment process and on giving them a lot of feedback to allow them to make real progress. The objective is to enable students to develop the ability to learn throughout their lives (Carless, 2007). It is therefore closely linked to the French term *Evaluation Formative*.

As indicated above, it is evident that the various terms are closely inter-related as evidenced by references to a large number of authors. As well as the previously mentioned terms *Evaluation Formative*, *Learning-oriented assessment*, *Assessment for Learning* y *Authentic Assessment*, it is clear that some authors consider the term *Assessment for Learning* to be synonymous with *Formative Assessment* (William, 2007); whilst others believe the term *Authentic Assessment* is synonymous with *Formative Assessment* (Dochy et al., 2002; Knight, 2002).



Why do we say "assessment" when we mean "marks" or "grades"?

Most university staff and students confuse the terms assessment and marking because of tradition and their own personal experiences. Many current academics have previously experienced forms of assessment that were really only final exams, occasionally including some additional tasks, whose main aim was to produce a final mark or grade for a module. This is one reason why it can be hard for some tutors to make a clear distinction between assessment and marking or to see them as two very different processes.

Assessment and marking are not synonymous, nor do they refer to the same process. The authors therefore suggest that whilst academic staff remain unclear in their own minds about the differences, it is

unlikely they will be able to separate them in their professional practice.

These terms are differentiated by their basic aims, by the processes they follow and by the type of information they provide and the way that information is used (Álvarez-Méndez, 2001; Santos, 1993; López-Pastor, 1998, 2011; López-Pastor et al, 2011). Assessment is a part of teaching and learning whilst marking or grading is primarily used for administrative purposes. The information provided by assessment can be used to guide learning whilst marking only serves to acknowledge the level that a student has achieved. It serves only to categorise the student for administrative purposes with the added complication of expressing the amount of learning achieved by a number (20%, 50% or 80%) or a letter (A, B, C, etc.) or a term (Excellent, Good, Average, Pass, etc.).

Central to the process of formative assessment is the provision of frequent and regular feedback. Feedback informs students of what they should be achieving through the activities and tasks they undertake and verifies the extent to which their learning coincides with the competencies they need to develop. If the tutor alone is aware of what the students have learnt, the students are unlikely to understand what is required of them and learning becomes a game of chance where some students win whilst others do not. When individuals know what is expected of them they are more likely to get things right than wrong and they more readily understand the information their tutor gives them (Rust, Price, & O'Donovan, 2003). Reflective processes are very positive for students because they enable them to analyse their own judgement, the ideas they generate, the competences they have and the tasks they carry out. (Nicol, 2009; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

The clarity of the assessment criteria and the marking criteria are fundamental aspects which define formative assessment. The following section will attempt to clarify some concepts which will help in understanding and differentiating the processes of assessment and marking. This terminology has recently been developed by the Network for Formative and Shared Assessment in Higher Education (Pérez-Pueyo, Julián & López-Pastor, 2009).

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3. Conditions and pre-requisites for continuous assessment.

These are things students must do in order to follow a process of continuous learning and assessment. They include: attending classes regularly, completing the required learning activities, submitting work on time and in the right format and incorporating the corrections suggested by their tutor in their subsequent submissions. These actions are not part of the marking process and should not affect the final mark or grade given.

Assessment Criteria. This refers to the articulation of objectives, competencies and knowledge in the most coherent and precise format to enable the assessment of student performance to be undertaken. It usually determines the type of learning that should be achieved by defining the output and its mark or grade in relation to the level or the development of the subject matter over time. It also needs specific assessment activities to be designed together with procedures by which they can be measured.

Assessment task: These are the activities or exercises designed by the tutor to identify and evaluate the students' performance. The format for recording the outcome of the activity is determined by the specific processes and schemes used for the assessment.

Assessment process and tools. These are the combination of steps, activities and tools used to enable the extent to which students achieve the required competencies to be measured and to provide information to both tutors and students to enable them to improve the teaching and learning process.

Marking process. This is the summative process which determines the final mark or grade achieved by students in relation to the activities they have undertaken. There are two basic alternatives but with different possible emphases: (a) a summary of all the results obtained from each marked exercise, using the percentages given to each activity to be marked and (b) a mark or grade arrived at through a process of discussion in relation to the pre-established criteria for the activities.

Marking schemes. This refers to the various tools used in the grading process and which are linked to a range of marking criteria which determine the extent to which those criteria have been achieved. In some systems each separately marked activity (with its associated criteria sheet) provides a specific percentage of the final grade.

Marking criteria. Every grading instrument needs to include levels by which the results of students' work can be determined. They can therefore be defined as the combination of rules, principles, measurements... relative to a marking scheme which determine the relative quality of any specific activity. The rubric, descriptive scale or matrix used to determine a grade is a perfect example of a marking scheme composed of specific marking criteria (Andrade, 2000; Mertler, 2001; Moskal, 2000).



4. The relationship between formative assessment processes and a final mark.

Assessment and marking are different but, nevertheless, there is a close relationship between them that must be borne in mind.

As mentioned above, rubrics can be a valuable tool (for grading according to a set of criteria) and for clarifying to students the different levels of quality of learning. However, it would be wrong to consider them exclusively in this way because they are also ideal mechanisms for formative assessment and for involving students in their assessment (self-assessment, peer assessment and shared assessment).

The fundamental question posed by many academics is "how can we make the transition from formative assessment processes used throughout a semester to the determination of a final mark or grade as required by the university system?" One simple option is to have agreed previously with students the weighting of the marks awarded to each of the tasks they have undertaken (practicals, tutor-led Project, essays, analytical reports, simulations, exams, etc.). In this

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system the mark awarded by the tutor and students for each task corresponds to the relative importance the task has in the overall learning process. As mentioned previously, there are other ways to arrive at a final mark or grade, using more qualitative criteria such as scales that use descriptors to differentiate marks (Castejón, 2009) or scales which use the extent to which students achieve the verbs relating to performance criteria (elaborate, analyse, hypothesise) to determine marks or grades (Biggs, 2005).

It is always preferable for all tasks, schemes, criteria and final marks or grades to be made public and for them to be explained, discussed and agreed with students so that they are aware of the criteria by which their work and learning will be marked. The authors believe this process should take place at the beginning of any module, although some colleagues prefer to do it after one or two months of classes, by which time students may have a greater capacity to make judgements.

5. Conclusions.

This work has focused on the role that formative assessment should play in the process of convergence within the EHEA. It also contains an analysis and examples of the meaning of various models of assessment, all closely linked to the term "formative assessment", in the sense that they aim to focus on assessment as a means of increasing learning and benefitting students, on the teaching and learning strategies we tutors implement and on the quality of our teaching. In most of these assessment models the involvement of students in their assessment is considered highly desirable due to the positive effects it has on their learning and on the development of autonomous learning skills. Finally, the article has exposed the widespread error of believing that "assessment" is synonymous with "marking" by explaining the differences between the procedures, schemes and criteria by which they are both carried out. At the same time the relationship between assessment and marking has been explored as have the various methods that can be used to arrive at a final mark or grade at the end of a semester in which formative assessment has been implemented and as required by university systems.

The authors hope this work will prove useful to university tutors who are interested in the issues of formative assessment and are involved in creating formative assessment strategies for their modules.

It is intended that a future article will analyse in greater depth the issues that relate to the involvement of students in university assessment methods.

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