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## ORIGINAL

### EVALUATION IN THE UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM: FROM TRADITIONAL EXAMINATION TO SELF- EVALUATION

### LA EVALUACIÓN EN EL AULA UNIVERSITARIA: DEL EXAMEN TRADICIONAL A LA AUTOEVALUACIÓN

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## **ABSTRACT**

The research presented here comes from the authors' perceptions on evaluation, built up throughout their experience as university professors. From auto-ethnography tempered by collective thinking that a model of action research provides, this article describes the transition from technical assessment models to one anchored in a socio-critical model based on the democratization of the university classroom and students' acceptance of responsibility for their learning, and logically, of their own evaluation. Our reflection concludes with an examination of five concepts that attempt to take a fresh look at a differentiated assessment of the final grade, embedded in a global, democratic, and of course, educational process.

**KEY-WORDS:** Formative Evaluation, Self-Evaluation, Shared Evaluation, Physical Education, Action-Research.

## RESUMEN

La investigación que se presenta nace desde las percepciones que los autores han ido construyendo de la evaluación a lo largo de su experiencia, como docentes universitarios. Desde la autoetnografía matizada por la reflexión colectiva que aportaría un modelo de investigación en la acción, se describe el tránsito, desde una evaluación anclada en modelos técnicos a un modelo sociocrítico basado en la democratización del aula universitaria y la asunción de la responsabilidad del aprendizaje y, lógicamente de la evaluación, por parte de los estudiantes. La reflexión se cierra exponiendo cinco tesis que tratan de abrir una nueva mirada hacia una evaluación diferenciada de la calificación, encajada en un proceso global, democrática, en manos de los estudiantes, y, por supuesto, educativa.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Evaluación Formativa, Autoevaluación, Evaluación Compartida, Educación Física, Investigación-Acción.

## INTRODUCTION

It is always easier to look out than to look inside yourself. University teachers, in general, tend to be great observers of the external, to scrutinize, analyze, evaluate and we even dare to offer suggestions for improvement of the reality of our study. The little research training we receive is primarily oriented toward this goal: the external view, forgetting that our own reality is probably an excellent field of study, especially if our ultimate goal, as is our case, is teacher training. The present article has chosen the second path and its goal is to enrich our own practice from self-reflection on one of the major issues in higher education: evaluation.

Recounting the history of the experience that has led to this article, we must go back to 2001, where we, a group of teachers linked to the area of Didactics of Corporal Expression, embarked on a teaching innovation project funded by our university: "Reflect to innovate." This was the starting point at which the evaluation of our students began to emerge as a major cause of teachers' dissatisfaction. Continuing in this line of work, the previous project was followed in 2004 with another funded by the Quality Unit for the Andalusian Universities (UCUA) under the name "Towards a model of collaborative teaching from the analysis of teaching tasks : an interdisciplinary experience". This maintained the previous line, enriching the vision of working collaboratively, not only among teachers, but broadening the approach to include students. But the turning point came in 2006, when the three teachers involved in this experiment decided to make a definitive turn in our classroom practices and focus on a critical democratic model, in which students are placed in the center of the teaching and learning process (Fernandez Balboa, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2004, Flecha, 1997; McLaren, 1999; Muros, 2004). This new departure was channeled in a teaching innovation project funded by our university, "From autonomy to collaboration in the learning processes of university students". From this, we began to think about the turn we have given our classroom practice, especially in deepening our perceptions of students who pass through the project "Training people, training teachers" (Rivera and de la Torre, 2005; Rivera, De la Torre and Trigueros, 2009; Trigueros, Rivera and De la Torre, 2006). For three years, this project was funded by the secretariat of the university teaching innovation project, to assess the changing perceptions of all who participated in it-students, research students and lecturers, generating critical debate that undertakes a constant revision and adaptation to emerging demands of each academic year that passes.

A decade after this change of view, we have the feeling that this endowment of sense is not innocent, and is preceded by the perceptions each of us has been building year by year, especially driven by the identification of some unconvincing experiences in the development of educational approaches that have been put into practice. It is now, from the repose offered by a decade of changes when we think we should look back and review the evolution of our implicit theories about a subject that has been key for us throughout this entire process: the transition from an evaluation model in the hands of the teacher to self-evaluation, in which all the power passes to the student (Fernandez Balboa, 2003, 2005 and 2006, Fraile, 2003; López Pastor, 2004 and López Pastor,

Gonzalez Pascual, and Barba Martin, 2005).

At this point we can clearly identify the two ends of the segment: grades and self-evaluation. Anchored in a technical model that reproduces what is established, our first experiment with what we called "evaluation" focused primarily on provoking a wealth of information, transformed into numerical values and percentages, which ultimately lead to giving a grade. We wanted to be able to compare something (criterion) or someone (standard), more usually someone. We are not naive, grading means finally, ordering, classifying, creating a hierarchy, and what is worse, perpetuating a system that favors individuality over collectivity, the vertical over the horizontal.

Once immersed in the process of reflection referred to above, ideas begin to take shape, that although not new, began to shake our foundations. Proposals that we had already assumed in our conceptual baggage, such as that to evaluate means to be aware of the process that has occurred (Santos Guerra, 2003), germinated key questions like: Who is responsible for generating this awareness? Is it possible for our students to assume that responsibility? Should it be a shared responsibility? Who should have the ultimate power of awarding the grade?

The initial response to these issues was made by identifying the meaning we attach to the other end of the segment. For us self-evaluation means enabling our students to make the invisible visible in the learning process experienced, to have a critical awareness of its evolution as a person and as a teacher. Regarding the grade, the self-rating score, in our case, we only ask that our students visualize it positively; they can use it to position themselves within the group with respect to the other.

The differences between these two extremes are evident. First, who exercises the power of evaluation; in the first case, the grade disguised as evaluation rests with the teacher, although sometimes it is masked with small spaces giving a little room to student participation, never decisive in the final grade so as to tip the balance from fail to pass. In self-evaluation, the decisions pass to the student, with the teacher and classmates remaining in the background. Secondly we have to observe its presence throughout the process. An evaluation focused on the teacher is especially visible at the end of it, but this does not mean that it does not emerge at specific moments. Self-evaluation runs through the entire process, being present consistently from start to finish. Finally, the assumption of ethical and moral responsibilities for the student is clearly superior in self-evaluation processes. It goes from *"they have failed me"* to *"I have not been able to achieve the minimum to value my work positively"* In short, the fundamental difference lies in democratizing the evaluation, leaving the final responsibility for decision-making to the student.

With the aim of being able to order our implicit theories, beliefs and perceptions consistently, we should note that this article moves away from the model of empirical research (review of the literature, material and methods, results, discussion and conclusions) to be approached from epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions that an interpretive approach brings (Denzin

and Lincoln 2000). Methodologically, we could be talking about research very close to the method of collaborative action-research; but producing the mixture between participants and researchers (coinciding in this case), we believe that membership of the social context that is going to be investigated and its actors, auto-ethnography as a method of work is best suited to the requirements of this research, since it will be the place where the researcher crosses with the researched, breaking the traditional logic of ethnographic studies (Alvesson, 1999; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000 and Reed-Danahay, 1997). This change in position will involve writing in the first person, giving a particular view of what is studied and not a mere representation of it (Fernández, 1994, Hammersley and Atkinson (1994)

All information produced on the subject under study was collected primarily from three sources: transcripts of the meetings held in each of the innovation projects carried out, participants' self-reports and researchers' reflective diaries. To systematize the information we have departed from substantive theories of the participants (the inductive process) following the guidelines set by Glaser & Strauss, (1967) in their Grounded Theory and the proposals of Ruiz de Olabuénaga, (2003) and Strauss and Corbin, (2002) for analysis, description and interpretation of information. The final result has been the emergence of four major metaphors:

- Evaluation called into question. Dissatisfaction as a starting point
- The examination: a strategic lifeline
- Self-evaluation: counter- evaluative action
- Involvement of students: their necessary participation

## **2. IN DEPTH STUDY OF EVALUATION. FOUR METAPHORS FOR THE CHANGE OF PARADIGM**

What is the problem of evaluation, and what disturbs us? Why are we not satisfied? The alarm is triggered when we begin to assess the evaluation as an inter relation-interaction space between students and faculty. This new look changes our perception and facilitates the discovery of an evaluation with a terrible lack of communication between the people who participate in it, simultaneously bringing about a manipulation. It is at this time when the first light is switched on and we begin to see what evaluation really hides: the naturalization of a grade from theoretical assumptions of objectivity and fairness usually based on the application of percentages semi-negotiated with students. They contribute to the promotion of "*meritocracy*", without concern for the means may be used, although sometimes these conflict with the ethical and moral principles that should govern the formation of a teacher. The examination is exalted as the main ceremony of the whole process, deserving of exclusive times and special measures (classrooms equipped specifically for the act, ritual placement of students, rules about the beginning and the end, etc). All this gives us that strange feeling that leads us as teachers to feel satisfaction at a

duty accomplished, after closing the final act of awarding grades (Fernandez Balboa, 2003).

No doubt one of the curricular elements that raises most difficulties in teacher development of a subject is evaluation. Its importance lies in its purpose: trying to evoke a judgment about the worth of something. The ways of doing this are open to many approaches: systems analysis, behavioral objectives, which dispenses with the objectives, the style of art criticism, professional review, the quasi-judicial, case studies, etc. (House, 1994), paradigms and models that come to be idealized when working on evaluation. Perhaps the evaluation is where it is easiest to be inconsistent in the teaching-learning process and where it is most difficult to sustain a position that does not *"pull down"* the work done. We must not forget that the ways of approaching evaluation influence the design and development of proposals for curriculum development, *"the evaluation is the central element in the sense that it focuses and guides the other elements, and it redirects them and tests their educational potential"* (Fernandez Sierra, 1994: 299).

Evaluation should not only be an act leading to giving the student a final grade but also a process to motivate and guide the learning of both teachers and students (evaluation linked to the formative nature of higher education and improving those who participate in it). *"As part of the training process, evaluation must be the 'big porthole' through which we go to update how the training process will develop and on the quality of our students' effective learning. As part of the accreditation process, evaluation is a necessary mechanism to make sure our students have the basic skills necessary for the proper exercise of the profession that they aspire to exercise"* (Zabalza, 2001: 266)

We cannot agree with these words that behind the curtain of understanding evaluation as a *"formative process"* hides the major problems that we believe have been unresolved for decades. A teacher-centered evaluation gives priority to *"quality"* and *"efficiency"*, thinking of *"accreditation"* and its ultimate goal is to ensure that students meet the requirements set by the market. In short, an evaluation in support of a non-critical, technical system, with of course, a high level of objectivity to ensure equal treatment for our students.

We agree, as has been suggested (Santos, 1999), that evaluation is a complex practice in which many factors and elements (organizational, emotional, ideological,) are involved, making it full of problems and paradoxes. Furthermore, it should be noted that every perspective of the curriculum defends the general principles of evaluation, (Fernandez Sierra, 1994) and, together with the term evaluation, we traditionally find others such as qualification, classification or control of the students (Angulo Rasco, 1994). An added element is that the university has its conditions and ways of understanding evaluation with which we have to *"live"*. Agreeing with Salinas (2002), evaluation can only be improved if teaching and learning improve, because the value of what is done or not done in the classroom is not determined by the quality, clarity and objectives we pursue, but the quality of learning that is generated:

*“... what, how, and when to evaluate - [are] questions that seem to enclose the quintessential evaluation, when in fact they are methodological resources that enable us to order the discourse on them-they lack sense if we do not know beforehand what, how, when to teach, what, how, when the student should learn and the broadest context in which these processes are produced”.* (Álvarez Méndez, 1994:315).

## **2.1. CHALLENGING EVALUATION. DISSATISFACTION AS A STARTING POINT**

The zero point of the process started from the first meeting of the project: To Reflect to Innovate. It was decided to start with the self-reflection of each of those involved on our teaching practice, especially with emphasis on two key issues: the methodology used and evaluation. Focusing on evaluation from the pooling of self-reflections, we began to notice a common denominator: all participants felt the need to overcome the traditional approaches to evaluation, especially one that places it as a mere tool for reliable and valid testing of the extent to which students achieved the objectives envisaged.

Despite having a clear direction to walk in, the agreement on the best route to the destination was not so clear. Comparisons appeared, there were doubts and divergent approaches among participants. What was evident in the group was the discontent that evaluation generated; Sting (the names of Sting, Stewart and Andy are fictitious names of participants in this research) testified to this in one of his first interventions, *“... for me evaluation is a pending subject, because in the four years I've been teaching at university it is a constant search and hits me one blow after another because I cannot find the formula”* (Sting, Faculty meeting, 20 May 2004). The first contradictions began to appear and Sting himself acknowledges that the examination is not the best solution if you want to do more than maintain control over the group; he recognizes that there is a clear divide between his intentions, methodology and the evaluation instrument:

*“At first I used the typical examination and that's normal, because it seems that people function better in class, but then I realized that what I do with the subject I'm teaching and the way I teach it, an examination does not allow me to appreciate certain things that I wanted students to develop.”* (Sting, faculty meeting 20 May 2004)

The split between evaluation and method is patent, but the cracks between the intentions of the teacher and the evaluation used also began to be evident. There is a clear interest in making the invisible visible, capacities that are far from the cognitive and procedural areas and venture into the field of emotional and social development. Andy makes this visible when he recognizes that his *“... problem is that the system [has] not been found to evaluate not only technical skills, but others related to knowing how to be and knowing how to behave that are so important in the figure of the teacher.”* (Self-reflection, Andy, 2004). It is this search for the "holy grail" that causes a constant feeling of

dissatisfaction and he recognizes that “... *whenever I start a new evaluation system, although I try to establish it clearly at first, then I have to tweak and shape it...*” (Self-reflection, Andy, 2004). Where is the problem? Basically, it is the lack of objective tools which would ensure a fair evaluation of competencies related to knowing how to be and knowing how to behave, as well as those which by their systemic nature, are more complex when providing them with objectivity.

Sting, Stewart and Andy perceived the situation of conflict in which we find ourselves, and despite declaring that our strategies were oriented towards the evaluation of knowledge on all three planes “... *instrumental, meta-cognitive and applied. And the attitudes in students that I value are active.*” (Self-reflection, Stewart 2004). He sees an empty discourse, declaratory, with good intentions, but without clear clarifications, especially with respect to attitudes, where the concept of "active" could apply to many situations that ultimately are diluted into mere appreciations of teaching linked to the presence or absence of the student, their level of participation in the classroom or the number of times they attend tutorials to imprint their image on our retinas.

## 2. 2. THE EXAMINATION: A STRATEGIC LIFELINE

Education in general has no better camouflage for concepts such as examination, grade, and qualification than the use of the term evaluation. A concept that comes with a renovating will, at the end is assimilated and transformed into yet one more synonym for the many that we use to order, classify and rank the students. This trend is gaining consistency as we move forward in the Educational System, finding its maximum expression in higher education, where, due to the existing tradition, the dominant *habitus* or lack of better resources on our part, has institutionalized the idea of understanding that “*evaluate*” becomes the action of giving a final grade to students (evaluation linked to the professionalized nature and accreditation required by the University), and not as a task whose objective is the evaluation of the teaching and learning taking place (Fernandez Sierra, 1996).

One of the ways in which this act usually materializes is the examination. This, though consisting of a written, verbal, theoretical or practical test, is an element that creates dissatisfaction because it is not a convincing tool that reflects the level of knowledge acquired; thus we look for a conjugation of the same with other evaluative tasks.

“... *This year I have given them three options in order to pass, the first took group work into account (practical exemplifications 10%, research, 20%), individual work (completion of a communication, 20%), self-evaluation (15%) and examination (35%); the second took an individual research project into account (40%) and examination (60%), and the third placed it all on the examination.*”

(Self-reflection. Sting 2004)

This gives some freedom to allow students the option to choose how they want to be evaluated; a participatory environment is introduced that promotes relaxation and de-dramatization of the final grade. We divide up the grade to make it more palatable to the student, looking at the evaluation of other skills besides those related to conceptual learning. From this innocent setting in motion of a wide range of instruments, what we are really hiding are “... *the remorse of conscience I had when I made an exam, which they passed, Christ be praised, but because your conscience does not feel comfortable with this system ...*” (Stewart, Faculty meeting, 10 September 2005). We have also gone through it, and we have graded- not evaluated -exclusively with that tool; but with the self-perceptions of unconvincing experiences: the technique of self-deception, masking the examination with the use of other strategies that protect us does not always achieve the purpose of lulling our ethical principles, especially that of equity, leaving a bittersweet sensation to the new model experienced.

*“... In the end, when translated into a grade, I still do not like it when I see people who are striving continuously and involving themselves in class and then if they weaken in any of the above aspects I feel bad. I review the work three hundred times and check to see if I was wrong. Of course, I realize that this has benefits for those who are most often in class, compared to others who may be more hard-working but pass unnoticed”*  
(Self-reflection, Sting 2004)

It is clear that the examination, in view of the dissatisfaction that it presents to actual performance of the evaluation, is a tool that works by sheer imposed inertia. That is why the cognitive dissonance it generates in the teacher is not powerful enough, does not cause it to transcend to other assumptions, so that ultimately, we just make combinations with other ways to add up the scores to help complete the evaluation process.

The evaluation has to be fair, which is to give everyone what they deserve. Involved in this conception is that one must differentiate and then apply different treatments. When this occurs we are entering into the game of evaluating skills and this means that we struggle to satisfy different interests. For teachers the aim is to give a grade as reliable as possible with regard to the scope of the requirements; for the students the goal is to pass the course regardless of the value of what is reliable, because this is to give, without further hesitation and transfer, what is demanded, establishing a strong character of domination / submission to the evaluation process.

.It is difficult to treat everyone equally. When trying to give different solutions we perceive traps that again indicate that there is an error in our approach. Offering different content in the examination leads to the perception of a degree of "treason" to the learning of the subject, since in theory all the enrolled students must complete knowing the same.

*“.. For those who did not attend a final examination of the theoretical and practical course, we prepared a dossier of documents that I thought that somehow could cover all the contents of the program so that they could be studied little by little.”*

(Andy, Faculty meeting, 10 September 2005)

When it comes to assessing knowledge, the grade and the examination are not particularly convincing in achieving a trained conscience toward "learning to learn" and especially when committed to a set of flexible principles on the comprehensive adjudication of knowledge. Now the examination is also a right of students and faculty are required to give it if required, for which, however, there are alternatives such as not considering it as the only measuring tool and it can be given as one more option to choose or add.

*"Usually people who stick to this kind of evaluation as they read the documents above, usually do a bad examination; the truth is, I do not think that it helps much, just to get the credits if they pass."*

(Andy, Faculty meeting 10 September 2005)

The instrumental conception of education is to continue repeating the existing guidelines, it seems there is no limit to the shelf life of knowledge or methodologies or pedagogical regimes about knowledge / truth. A mechanistic action is established that prevents any teaching transgression or eye-opening both at the transmission levels of teaching and in the judging of skills. We needed other strategies to focus evaluation because "... instrumental learning is increasingly has less point, any book, any website, or whatever, what they have to know is there, how to use it and what for, and more easily accessible" (Andy, Faculty meeting, 15 November 2005). It is at this point when you start to notice a significant change, to see the "why" of learning, together with the emergence of capabilities related to knowledge and know-how, which need to be taken into account in the evaluation process. The spreadsheet begins to give way to non-quantifiable assessments. The quantitative is compressed and starts to leave room for the qualitative. The person, rather than the subject, begins to gain space.

### **2.3. SELF-EVALUATION: COUNTER- EVALUATIVE ACTION**

Initially, when we began to recount the story of our experience, we commented that it would start from 2006, the year of the turning point. This does not mean that prior to this date we did not use self-evaluation as an evaluative tool (Rivera and de la Torre, 2003). It was from this point when we begin to experiment with a model of teaching and learning in partnership with our students. This also had to apply to evaluation and it became one of the cornerstones of the project consolidating it in a model of self-evaluation. This new understanding of evaluation is complex, risky and ambitious in the sense that the teacher gives up her/his role and ability to punish and control. Now it is students who assume the commitment and responsibility to assess their learning and finally to grade themselves.

Our starting point: to bring democracy into the classroom, with respect for basic principles of equality, freedom, justice and solidarity that will *"filter"... the development of the subject with all that that entails, i.e., what methodological strategies to use, how to set out the content, how we interact in class, how we evaluate, how we involve ourselves with the students, ..."* (Andy, Faculty meeting

25 September 2006). But we are not only going to be concerned that everything that happens in the classroom is filtered through these principles, we must also acquire the commitment to bring about "... *the incentive for people to feel free to express themselves and act freely; providing equal status and ensuring that there are no situations that erode people's dignity*" (Andy, personal diary). This is a process supervised from start to finish, rigorous in its approach to the extent that it is careful in its goals and aims to make evaluation democratic in the direction that Alvarez, (2001) indicates of including all participants, not as passive subjects who respond, but who react and participate in all decisions taken and that affect them.

At the beginning of the article we mentioned that self-evaluation must be a transversal axis throughout the whole process. That is, it starts on the first day of class and ends on the last. Our starting point begins literally the first day, when we ask them to identify "... *what clothes they are wearing, what experiences of physical education they bring, what is their own autobiography*" (Stewart, Faculty meeting, 25 September 2006). This first reflection seeks to lead students to consider their own path within the project and to grow in two ways: as individuals and as teachers.

*"... and after a margin of explaining the subject and consensus between them and us, we define what their commitments to the subject are, marking their own training schedule and shaping and suggesting what should be done in a not over-ambitious way, but with their feet on the ground, trying to correct those things that for them are gaps in their knowledge and issues that they need to learn about. "*  
(Stewart, personal diary)

It is from this time and with the tools that we make available to facilitate the monitoring of the personal process, when systematically, we asked them to make a criticism of their progress and to share it with us and their classmates. Having reached the end of the journey, it is time to take the minutes of the work done and of the learning acquired. To carry out this task, as an aid, we provide a script of self-reflection to help them to make "... *a review of what has been benefited from, what has been learned and what skills have been developed, and to make a personal evaluation of what their process has been*" (Andy, Faculty meeting 25 September 2006).

But the conclusion (evaluation) of collaborative work can only be made from the collective viewpoint. For this, we understand that each of us who has gone through the project remains indebted to the group, so it is necessary

*"...to make publicly a reflection of self evaluation of how he or she shows their peers what their training process has been and assesses the extent to which they have been co-learners"*  
(Sting, Faculty meeting 25 September 2006)

First, there is a self-evaluation; students speak of the path taken, the successes and failures, what has been imprinted in their memory both as a future teacher

and as a person. In the end it becomes self-ranking, but we do not believe in it as a strategy for creating a hierarchy, because "... *there are always rogue elements, some people who camouflage themselves, some people who overvalue themselves*" (Sting, personal diary). In our project we tried to put people's dignity to the test, while being able to recognize themselves compared to the others and to learn to respect their work. There is no possibility of a correction factor; the power rests with the students and their consciences to act on the principles which we have tried to make visible. Like the other participants, we only have the right to express our opinion, to make ourselves heard by the person concerned, but only he or she has in their hands the possibility of reconsidering their perceptions and accepting another truth or a truth different from theirs.

The self-evaluation that we propose requires people to be interested in themselves, so that much emphasis is put on trying to provide all possible resources in order to acquire the skills necessary to assist in the pedagogic training of citizens for the twenty-first century (Castell, 1997; Delors, 1996, Morin, 1999). We want democratic teachers, who believe in teaching based on dialogic approaches, marked by the lines defined by authors such as Freire, Beck, Giddens or Habermas cited by Flecha, (1999).

Within the development of an approach like this, inconveniences and difficulties have arisen because not all students show themselves to be equally willing to accept the method of evaluation designed:

*"... there are students who do not easily break the inertia that that ball is in our court, that it is we ourselves who have to put a number, to evaluate their process, but gradually I think it's a way for them to mature, to feel autonomous, feel independent, and to think that they are here primarily to learn and that the grade is a consequence and not the objective that conditions the process ... "* (Sting. Faculty Meeting 25 September 2006)

We have already mentioned that it was a risky process. In just one semester we cannot expect radical changes in our students, only a minority will succeed. What the vast majority tend to experience is the loss of opacity about evaluation, caused by years of poisonous pedagogy. They begin to be able to perceive critical hints that previously went unnoticed. Slowly they begin to realize that the learning process is fundamentally theirs and therefore the evaluation must likewise belong to them.

*"... generally what satisfies me is what is good about this approach, because in the worst case it improves the best traditional evaluation that I have carried out in my life. Then either the mistake is welcomed by those who want to improve and break the cycle of evaluation and poisonous pedagogy of a lifetime; if the error is in the desire for change, rather than in the desire not to repeat something that does not satisfy you, because every time we talk about this issue almost of us think about it saying 'I have a little doubt about this story, I don't control it, I'm not happy, I don't have the feeling that it is really just; I don't know how much I value it or have the right to value processes that are very*

*difficult to control' and then we understand that consistent evaluation must be within a project and furthermore, be in a place of honor, because it governs the process from the beginning to the end, although the obsession of all its development is not the only thing, but it plays a important part. "*  
(Stewart, Faculty meeting, 25 September 2006)

This shows us the strong views expressed in the discourse on self-evaluation as an alternative and open model to evaluate the teaching-learning process. Alternatives involving a radical change are worthwhile, especially when determined by unconvincing past experiences. Self-evaluation is conferred as an alternative model to the former counter-evaluative method to the extent that it is re-invented to try to demystify the traditional conception of evaluation, emphasizing learning more than passing an examination or succeeding by memorizing the subject's content.

#### **2.4. – THE STUDENTS' INVOLVEMENT: A PARTICIPATORY NEED**

Our aim is that students become involved in the teaching-learning process to confront a close, satisfying and educational evaluation. We need to get involved in that process. How do we do it? How do we convey that we agree with and consider suitable the ways to evaluate what they have learned? When do we have to intervene to prevent the evaluation from becoming a mere fleeting bureaucratic formality? Our reflection does not appear free from doubt: *"...they are working hard, it is not easy for them to attend class, is it? How do we solve that situation? Do we give the students another alternative?"* (Andy, Faculty meeting, 25 September 2006). In these cases the common sense that every teacher should have emerges, and within the diversity of situations that must be addressed in our classrooms, the reality is that to "live" a project one must be part of it, and not just virtually. The solution: help students to walk the path of learning at their own pace. This means there will be occasions to meet with the group and occasions to work alone, but we do not think that the opportunity to learn is exclusively the province of the university classroom. By choosing a different path it obliges us to ensure that what we see from day to day with the rest, we have to make visible with the application of an evaluation tool (in our case it is visualization, critical analysis and provision of alternatives to a sequence of a physical education class). When we verify that the minimums are covered, we give the opportunity for a self-evaluation process (in this case only with the teacher), which leads to a reasoned and negotiated self-qualification.

The above entails trying to be as flexible as possible, never giving only one way out or giving importance to attendance but rather to the contribution made. The strategy is to create a *"learning attitude"* or *"learning to learn"* that we proposed (Castell, 1997). In extreme cases, for those not wanting to be involved in any way, they have the right to be examined as the *"legal solution"* for a qualification for the course.

Involvement depends on freedom of choice and the continued development of an evaluation process consistent with the contributions made and resources offered. Being involved does not passing an examination on the subject but

instead for students to show that they have understood even the most instrumental; therefore, they are required to devote effort to the overall analysis of all that is known, to give a reasoned opinion, a convincing answer related to the general lines of the content taught and built up during the entire period of teaching and learning

#### 4. A CONCLUDING SUMMARY

In qualitative analysis we say that we never consider research complete; for this reason rather than conclude, what we are doing in this section is opening up new avenues of approach to a problem, whose complexity requires multiple points of view and has no single solution. Finally, we will open a space for reflection around five final concepts that seek to summarize the discussion in this article. These are theories that we hear at great length when talking about evaluation, but that are scarcely visible in the evaluation practice in university teaching.

**Evaluation and giving a grade are not synonyms for the same practice.** It is necessary to delineate the border between the meaning of evaluate and grade. Evaluation starts from the first minute of the learning process and extends throughout it transversally supporting the entire process. The grade is born and dies at specific moments, becoming especially visible at the end of the process. Evaluation means enabling our students to become aware of their learning process; to identify where their strengths are and what are their weaknesses; to indicate and facilitate strategies to address their shortcomings. In giving a grade the system requires us to minimize, even reverse, its perverse effects. From the collaborative model we practise, we focus on the legal approach of the grade. We believe in a qualification that enables the student to recognize her/himself in the group, to exercise responsibility and show respect for others from the idea-sharing sessions.

**Evaluation must be consistent with the training process.** Technological models in which we usually move tend to lead to the planning of an education parceled out in the style of the "cadavre exquis" of Magritte (a drawing made by several authors, usually of a human figure, from a sheet of paper folded like a fan that obscures the part drawn by the others). This Magritte-like drawing seems to show parts that seen separately have sense, but which, once seen together usually show a grotesque person. This same problem happens regularly with university training processes. We propose a teaching model that, trying to be innovative, facilitates student participation in collaborative work, the primacy of process over product, etc. But the last fold of the paper, in which we place evaluation, comes from the traditional models, where priority is given to the traditional examination, adorned with innovative sequins (participation, individual work, group work, self-evaluation, etc.). Our commitment to a process based on collaboration and the transfer of responsibility for learning to the student leads us to a final fold based on self-evaluation.

**Evaluation must be the responsibility of the student.** The methodological approach generated from the implementation of the European Higher Education Area hands priority to the student to take the main role in the learning process.

Is it possible to transfer it if the responsibility for evaluation remains in the hands of the teacher? We think not. If evaluation means being aware of the process experienced, it must be primarily in the hands of the main protagonist. The teacher and classmates must remain in a supporting role. To succeed in this endeavor, especially with students accustomed to being judged, criticized, guided, corrected, tested, graded, etc, one has to empower them from the first moment to be critical and reflective about their learning process and that of the others.

**Evaluation must be democratic.** Enlightened despotism: everything for the student, but without the student, which has been (and we think that largely it still is) the university teaching model; but this is no longer sustainable in a society that seeks to value the principles that should govern democratic coexistence. This idea, taken to the micro-context of a Faculty of Education, is, if anything, even more valuable. A despotic evaluation would render meaningless the whole discourse of participation, accountability and commitment to the learning process that we demand of the student. Self-evaluation is a true reflection of this belief and in it we seek all those involved to participate: teachers, students, colleagues, always leaving the final decision in the hands of the protagonist, but from an attitude of dialog open to all.

**Evaluation should be educational.** We must banish the image of evaluation as a sanction and promote the idea of an evaluation for improvement-- to learn from one's mistakes. Only with this change of heart can we banish from our students the perception of the teacher as "the enemy" who must be confronted. If our main function is to facilitate the training of teachers for Basic Education, perhaps we should be aware that theory is not enough, it is essential to have a practice guided by the same educational principles that we want our students to put into practice in their future professional development.

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