

Evaluation, feedback, equity: a challenge in education

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In recent years, educational research has explored new areas in the field of assessment, focusing on the relationship between assessment, instructional design, and learning concerning accountability, democracy, and equity (Ibarra-Sáiz et al., 2020).

While research has previously focused on more technical, process-related and evidence-related aspects, such as validity and reliability, more recent research pays more attention to the role and impact of evaluation on the subject and society.

By taking this perspective, we can see the evolution from assessment for learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Sambell et al., 2012) to learning-oriented assessment (Carless, 2015), sustainable assessment (Boud & Soler, 2016), and assessment as learning (Dann, 2014; Earl, 2013; Winstone & Boud, 2019; Winstone & Carless, 2019).

In those new approaches, students have a more responsible and participative role. Opportunities are provided to develop critical and creative strategies to activate the self-assessment process (Boud et al., 2018).

Reflection on assessment runs in parallel with reflection on feedback. The latter is no longer seen only as communication of the test outcome. Feedback is also considered as a reflective consideration of the process and the student's ability to build coherent strategies and responses.

If the purposes of evaluation and feedback change, practices should also be redesigned through experimentation of different synergies between ends and means and new modes of action that modify the contexts and the teaching action. At the same time, the support that technologies can provide also requires consideration. Often, the very possibility of assessing and providing feedback in real-time can be provided only by digital technology.

Based on these reflections and supported by the centrality of the topic in the current debate, the Call for Papers attracted a great deal of interest when

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launched. We received more than 40 contributions, all of which developed the red threads proposed in the Call. We will now list the papers published, highlighting the common line linking them.

One theme that has been dealt extensively with is the reflection on the formative role of assessment, especially in the university context. Authors addressing this topic are Ellerani & Barca (Valutazione narrativa e trasformativa: co-costruzione di comunità di apprendimento. Un caso di studio esplorativo), Albanese (La sfida neuro-docimologica: criticità e strumenti possibili), Patera & Grange (La valutazione formativa per sostenere lo sviluppo della dimensione profonda dell'agire competente. Un caso di studio), Scierri & Capperucci (La valutazione per promuovere l'apprendimento permanente), and Fedeli & Girotti (Testing for the future: a workshop hands-on experience for training in formative assessment).

The connection between evaluation, justice and equity is also addressed in the articles of Acquario (Through the lens of justice. A systematic review on equity and fairness in learning assessment), Ugolini (Concezioni di Open Education e istanze di equità. Questioni didattiche e approcci valutativi), and Bearzi & Tarantino (Co-evaluation processes and agentic equity in the transformative pandemic and post-pandemic education).

In the context of equity, some contributions analysed the issue of evaluation with a specific focus on inclusion: Dettori & Letteri (Valutare per includere gli studenti con disturbi dello spettro dell'autismo. Il supporto delle tecnologie per una valutazione di qualità), Sgambelluri (Valutare in ambito didattico. Dalla personalizzazione del curriculum alla progettazione universale), Arduini & Chiusaroli (Il contributo dei Disability Studies per una scuola più equa ed inclusiva), and Zappalà & Galdieri (Strumenti e approcci per la valutazione delle capacità comunicative di alunni con Disturbo dello Spettro Autistico).

A third theme that gathered much interest is the reflection on the relationship between evaluation and feedback. Articles addressing this topic are authored by Grion et al. (Ripensare il concetto di feedback: il ruolo della comparazione nei processi di valutazione per l'apprendimento), Bruni & Petti (Grande aula universitaria on-line e feedback: un connubio possibile?), La Rocca (Triangolo del feedback per una valutazione trasparente e condivisa, in ambienti digitali. Descrizione di una esperienza), Vinci (Peer review, feedback e nuovi modelli di valutazione partecipata nell'higher education: una sperimentazione presso l'Università Mediterranea di Reggio Calabria), D'angelo et al. (Emotional Feedback in evaluation processes: case studies in the University context), Lehmann & Svarny (Using a social robot for different types of feedback during university lectures), Storai & Pedani (Uno studio sul gradimento del feedback in due corsi universitari online), Pillera (Feedback docente e revisione tra pari su compiti di progettazione della ricerca: evidenze empiriche da un corso di

Pedagogia sperimentale), and Ferrari (Il questioning mediato digitalmente come alleato del feedback).

Focusing specifically on evaluation in the university context, in addition to many of the previous papers, we have the contributions by Miranda, Marzano & Trinchero (Deep Understanding. Control of student understanding in university during distance and face-to-face learning), Montalbetti (Innovare la valutazione all'università: si può, anzi si deve!), Anello (Validazione di uno strumento di etero- e auto-valutazione della competenza di organizzazione didattica a scuola), Pignalberi (Competenze strategiche e didattica universitaria. Nuovi percorsi di autoregolazione e valutazione dell'apprendimento nello studio e nel lavoro), and Ricchiardi (Utilizzo formativo di prove autentiche nel corso di laurea in Scienze della formazione primaria).

Finally, some papers analysed evaluation from the perspective of teacher training. In this direction we can read the articles of Gratani (Towards Assessment as Learning: findings from online courses for secondary school teachers), Sansone et al. (Il peer-assessment nella formazione insegnanti: accorgimenti e ricadute), Cappuccio & Compagno (Valutazione e feedback: la competenza docimologica come competenza comunicativa. Una ricerca con i docenti della scuola secondaria), and Tinterri et al. (Re-organization of assessment during the educational emergency in primary and secondary teaching: an Italian case).

From an overall view of the volume, we can highlight two emerging elements that show some of the trends prevailing today in educational research, in general, and on evaluation, in particular.

The first is the widespread interest in university didactics. The theme of university evaluation is analysed in detail. Still, attention to quality and learning and teaching processes in higher education seems to focus not only on research but also on policies, not only in Italy.

The second theme is feedback. The most recent research of Carless and Winston allowed focusing on the short-circuit that exists between didactics and training, certification and training purposes, and between the need to describe performances and link them to standards on individual subjects and personalised processes.

The previous reflections also suggest the choice for the last Week of Excellence of the Department of Education, Cultural Heritage and Tourism to be held in autumn 2022, which will be structured around the themes of evaluation and feedback in the perspective of university teaching.

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