

**ASSESSMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION AND THE DIALECT REALITY-  
POSSIBILITY**

**AVALIAÇÃO NA EDUCAÇÃO INFANTIL E A DIALÉTICA REALIDADE-  
POSSIBILIDADE**

**LA EVALUACIÓN EN EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL Y LA DIALÉCTICA REALIDAD-  
POSIBILIDAD**

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**ABSTRACT:** The Child Education has been historically marked with several conceptions of teaching and, consequently, of evaluation. Referring to the evaluation, there is still several discussions around the objectives and as well the necessity of some evaluation in the Child Education. Based on that, the present research was developed between the years of 2018 and 2020, with the goal of comprehending the conception of the faculty of the process of assessment in the Primary Education of the Municipal System of João Pessoa/PB. The study was developed based on a qualitative perspective, and had as methodology, the materialism, history and dialect. The results point out, referring to the reflex of a historical reality, the evaluation in the Child Education in João Pessoa, which is configured as a fragmented way. As they signal that Childhood Pedagogy, which bases the academic theoretical speeches and the papers of Child Education in CREI in João Pessoa, and the evaluation which bases Historical-Critical Pedagogy are the perspectives that have still been in the field of possibility.

**KEYWORDS:** Primary education. Assessment. Reality-possibility.

**RESUMO:** *A Educação Infantil tem sido historicamente marcada por diversas concepções de ensino e, conseqüentemente, de avaliação. No caso da avaliação, ainda há diversas discussões em torno dos objetivos e mesmo da necessidade de uma avaliação na Educação Infantil. É nesse sentido que desenvolvemos a presente pesquisa, entre os anos de 2018 e 2020, com o objetivo de compreender a concepção docente acerca do processo de avaliação na Educação Infantil na rede municipal de João Pessoa/PB. O estudo foi desenvolvido em uma perspectiva qualitativa, tendo como metodologia o materialismo histórico e dialético. Os resultados possibilitam apontar que, enquanto reflexo de uma realidade histórica, a avaliação na*

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*Educação Infantil em João Pessoa tem se configurado de forma fragmentada. Assim como sinalizam que a Pedagogia da Infância, que embasa os discursos teóricos acadêmicos e os documentos da Educação Infantil nos CREI em João Pessoa, e a avaliação que baseia a Pedagogia Histórico-Crítica, são perspectivas que ainda se encontram no campo da possibilidade.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Educação infantil. Avaliação. Realidade-possibilidade.*

**RESUMEN:** *La educación infantil ha estado históricamente marcada por diferentes concepciones de la enseñanza y, en consecuencia, de la evaluación. En el caso de la evaluación, aún existen varias discusiones en torno a los objetivos e incluso la necesidad de una evaluación en Educación Infantil. Es en este sentido que desarrollamos esta investigación, entre los años 2018 y 2020, con el objetivo de comprender la concepción docente sobre el proceso de evaluación en Educación Infantil en la red municipal de João Pessoa/PB. El estudio se desarrolló desde una perspectiva cualitativa, utilizando como metodología el materialismo histórico y dialéctico. Los resultados permiten señalar que, como reflejo de una realidad histórica, la evaluación en Educación Infantil en João Pessoa se ha configurado de manera fragmentada. Así como señalan que la Pedagogía de la Infancia, que sustenta los discursos y documentos teóricos académicos sobre Educación Infantil en el CREI en João Pessoa y la valoración que fundamenta la Pedagogía Histórico-Crítica son perspectivas que aún están en el campo de posibilidad.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Educación infantil. Evaluación. Realidad-posibilidad.*

## Introduction

The historical constructions on Early Childhood Education were marked by several conceptions over time. But it was from the nineteenth century on that there were more significant changes, especially with the emergence of new conceptions about childhood and the child in the social and school context. (2000), were the result of transformations triggered, on the one hand, by urbanization and expansion of capitalism and, on the other hand, by the advances in theories about childhood.

In Brazil, we observed that education for children from 0 to 5 years old was linked to two purposes: either as a tool of welfare and custody, or as a strategy to prevent school failure, preparation for elementary school or even its anticipation. In the 1930s, with the pedagogical theories for Early Childhood Education being disseminated by the New School, a conflicting context emerged between the renovating intellectuals, who defended learning centered on learning-by-doing activities, and the conservative Catholics, who held the monopoly on education since the Jesuit period.

This correlation of forces later aroused, from the 1970s on, an organized struggle of social movements, especially by working women, who claimed the right of children to quality education, and that day-care centers should take care of their children while they performed their work activities. Despite the achievements of these struggles, Early Childhood Education continued with a welfarist conception, lacking educational public policies and legislation to systematize the distribution of resources, teacher training, and a pedagogical and evaluative practice that would subsidize learning and guarantee the quality of pedagogical work.

In this context, the debate around the need for an evaluation in Early Childhood Education was defined more slowly than in other levels of education. According to Kramer (2006, p. 26-28), the assessment of learning in early childhood education is a very recent concept, whose premises go through the traditional, new, and technicist pedagogies.

After the Law of Directives and Bases (LDB/1996), a new look for Early Childhood Education was instituted, establishing that the evaluation should be based on observation and through concepts that valued the child's cognitive, psychomotor, and affective aspects. The advances in Early Childhood Education since the introduction of the LDB and, subsequently, of other documents that guide practices in this stage of education, as well as the development of specific theories for early childhood, are undeniable. However, numerous challenges persist, compromising both access to this educational level and its constitution as one of the stages of the educational process. What can be noticed is that currently, in Brazil, there is still a great taboo and several discussions around the goals of assessment in Early Childhood Education.

In this sense, it is worth asking some questions around the theme: Which theoretical elements do Kindergarten teachers use to evaluate children's learning? What tools do they use in this process?

It is in this scenario that the present work arises, developed in the years 2018 and 2020, whose research aimed to understand the conception of teachers about the process of learning assessment in Early Childhood Education in the Reference Centers for Early Childhood Education (CREI) of the municipal network of João Pessoa-PB.

The empirical research was developed in three CREI in the city of João Pessoa/PB. Considering the ethical commitment assumed in this research, we will not disclose the names of these institutions, we will use the nomenclature, CREI A, CREI B and CREI C. Regarding the research subjects, we selected six pre-school teachers, two from each unit. The choice of teachers was random, according to the interest expressed in participating in the research. In order to protect the identity of the teachers, we determined alphanumeric symbols to identify them, being presented as: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5 and P6. P2, P3, P5 and P6 have a degree in

Pedagogy, P1 is studying Pedagogy, while P4 has a Pedagogy course. As for experience in Early Childhood Education, P1, P2, P5 and P6 have between 10 and 20 years of practice, P3 has 3 years, while P4 has been teaching for 32 years. Regarding the employment relationship, all were hired as service providers for 40 hours a week.

The present study was developed in a qualitative approach. To produce the information collected from the subjects, we used semi-structured interviews and participant observation as research instruments.

Regarding the theoretical and methodological path, we refer our approach to the historical and dialectical materialism approach, which proposes a historicizing and problematizing understanding of the theme studied, situated in the practice and in the social relationship of men in a given reality and as a phenomenon of a totality (LESSA; TONET, 2011). Taking this approach implies considering we start from an understanding of the phenomenon to a systematized understanding, that is, the assessment is expressed first in appearance, chaotic, and subsequently, through a theoretical analysis, we define its essence in the teaching practice (TRIVIÑOS, 1987). Regarding the method of interpretation and analysis of the teachers' reports, we used the critical hermeneutics in Gamboa (1998).

In this path, we present the Marxist categories reality and possibility, as a support to understand how the empirical reality of the evaluation in Early Childhood Education in João Pessoa is configured, based on two theoretical approaches, the Pedagogy of Childhood, based on the Sociology of Childhood and New Pedagogy, and the Critical Historical Pedagogy, based on historical and dialectical materialism and Cultural Historical Psychology. In this work, we point out that, in pedagogical practice, both are still in the field of possibility.

### **The assessment in Early Childhood Education in João Pessoa: a reality**

Reality implies contradictions that are configured in practice, if the historical, cultural, and social conditions make it possible. For Cury (1986, p. 30-31), reality is not only "what has already been", it can incorporate elements of what is occurring. "It is also not only the 'not yet', although without this element the real becomes surmountable." Reality, in the movement that is intrinsic to it, is exactly "the dialectical tension always the surmountable of the already-been and the not-yet." The tension between these two dimensions enables the emergence and implementation of the new, because it penetrates the process, from beginning to end, in the development of all phenomena.

This means to say that phenomena have an unfinished character and this movement is what determines whether reality is set or is "the movement of possibility" (CHEPTULIN, 1982, p. 340). In the case of evaluation in the teaching conception in CREI, reality is in movement and this movement seeks to capture a possibility of change that does not develop in isolation. To situate only the evaluation itself would be a superficial and fragmented analysis, we would be restricted only to the appearance of this phenomenon, without perceiving the conditioning factors that constitute it, such as, for example, the political and pedagogical conditioning factors, the educational policies, the precarious work relations and the teachers' training process. Therefore, in the background of this process there is a series of moving, consensual and contradictory issues.

The pedagogical proposal and the evaluation process in Early Childhood Education in the CREI in João Pessoa are directed by the official national and municipal educational documents. In general aspects, the LDB (1996), National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (RCNEI/1998), the National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (DCNEI/2009) and the Common National Curricular Base (BNCC/2017). These national documents guide the municipal guidelines for Early Childhood Education, namely, the Pedagogical Guidance Manual (MOP/2018) and the Action Plan (2017).

In CREI, teachers use an evaluative sheet from the Class Diary to record attendance and monitor children's learning. In this document, a sheet is provided for each student's information, on the side of the sheet reserved for the child's personal information, attendance, and the skills they need to build during the school year. In this document, the teacher should follow the following legend: Competence under Construction (CEC); Presents Difficulty (AD); Competence Built (CC). On the back of the sheet, the descriptive record about the "Initial Diagnosis", which refers to the child's development level upon arrival at CREI. In addition to these aspects, teachers must make a brief bimonthly report on each child, pointing out the child's "psychological, social, physical, and pedagogical development" (JOÃO PESSOA, 2018).

In this sense, at the beginning of the school year, teachers must make a diagnosis of how each child arrived at the institution. According to the teachers, this diagnosis occurs on average 30 days after arrival at CREI, varying from child to child. About the purpose of this initial assessment, P2 states: "we have the initial diagnosis to know how the child arrived, if he or she arrived healthy, with physical, mental, or emotional health problems, all of this we put in the initial diagnosis. P1 highlights that in this first moment "it is difficult in everything, there are students who don't eat, don't sleep, until they get used to it, then we make this initial diagnosis.

On the other hand, P4 highlights: "I evaluate from the time they arrive at school until they leave".

We observed that in the reports of P1 and P2 there is a diagnosis focused on health issues, focusing mainly on care and adaptation to the CREI routine. It is noticeable that they do not point out activities, games, or games aimed at evaluating specific situations such as learning, motor coordination, etc. Thus, the diagnosis is based on the child's spontaneous behavior. On the other hand, P4 mentions that they evaluate, however, they do not present which aspects they evaluate in this first diagnosis.

When asked whether, in addition to this initial diagnosis, they make a diagnostic evaluation during the school year, one teacher replied that she makes a diagnosis, but did not specify how it is made: "I make it through this same evaluation that I mentioned before, observing on a daily basis" (P1). Other teachers confuse diagnostic evaluation with an evaluative tool used at the end of a process: "No, not that, because at CREI it's more about play, we can't have a crude school-type evaluation, no, daycare is different, they are in that phase of playing, getting to know each other" (P2). In the same vein, P5 states: "Any time we arrive in a classroom we have to evaluate the child, now we also have to know how to evaluate, there is no point in coming in and saying: I am going to do an activity and I will evaluate the child for this activity.

Luckesi (2000) is one of the proponents of diagnostic assessment. For him, the main function of evaluation, at any level of education, involves two articulated and inseparable processes: diagnose and decide. For the author, a decision is not possible without a diagnosis, and a diagnosis without a decision is a failed process, without success for the pedagogical practice. In this sense, the first step in the evaluative action is the process of diagnosis, which consists of two moments: the first is the verification, which provides the material basis for the second part of the act of diagnosis. The second moment, the qualification of the object of evaluation, assigns a quality, positive or negative, to the object being evaluated. This qualification does not happen in a vacuum, it is established from a certain standard, a quality criterion that we have established for this object.

In general aspects, we can analyze that the teachers highlight the importance of the initial diagnosis in their evaluative practices, however, they do not present how they make this diagnosis and what actions they develop based on it. Another important aspect that should help the teachers in the evaluation is the close observation of the children.

For Kramer (1999, p. 96), the assessment in Early Childhood Education should occur from "observations and systematic records made by teachers of the children's activities. The



BNCC also points out that "the monitoring of learning and development occurs by observing the trajectory of each child and the whole group - their achievements, progress, possibilities and learning" (BRAZIL, 2017).

Some teachers emphasize that they rely on observation to assess children's learning and development. However, what aspects are being considered by teachers when they say they evaluate through observation?

Teachers P3 and P5 point out that observation should occur on a daily basis so that they can identify the child's weaknesses. On the other hand, the discourse of some teachers indicates that observation is more focused on behavioral and health issues, and on care aspects. We can observe this situation in P1: "I observe them playing, eating, if they are not hitting, that kind of thing. While P4 highlights: "I observe, because a problem, a deficiency in a child, if we don't observe a lot we won't know that there is [...]. We detect here autistic problems, ophthalmologic problems, personal problems related to the family, nobody runs away from family problems.

Observation for pedagogical purposes should be used continuously, intentionally, and followed by recording, so that the information derived from the notes can help the teacher's work, with a view to improving the children's learning.

In addition to observation, when we asked the teachers about which evaluation tools they use in their practice, most of them hesitated, they did not know what it was about, but when explained, they pointed out that they use the following instruments: P1, P4 and P5 pointed out only "the class diary form"; "visual observation" was cited by P2 and P3; and "sketchbook" was highlighted by P6.

It is observed that teachers use some evaluative instruments in their practices, however, it is worth noting that the official documents guide that, in addition to observation, it is necessary to monitor children through "several records, made at different times by both teachers and children (such as reports, portfolios, photographs, drawings and texts) [...]" (BRASIL, 2017. p. 35). In addition to these instruments, Kramer (1999, p. 96-97) highlights that it is important that preschool units maintain the "memory dossier". These files help record the memory of the team's work and the progress of each child, offering essential consultation material for the pedagogical proposal of the school and teacher.

About the instruments, Luckesi (2000), states that, to be correct, they should be called "data collection instruments for evaluation. The instrument itself does not evaluate, but offers data on the child's performance. This performance can be qualified, supporting a decision on what to do based on this evaluation. Thus, the evaluation instruments in pre-school must be

used as pedagogical tools that allow the teacher to have a guidance on the evolution and/or weaknesses of each child.

The teachers' limitation in relation to the knowledge of specific concepts on evaluation, such as the evaluative tools, may be related to both the initial training in the Undergraduate Courses and the lack of systematization of content in continuing education, including by the municipal education system, as described by P2: "In the training courses there are more texts, but these theories, in practice it is more difficult. In practice I base myself on my own experience. In turn, P4 highlights: "I do not base myself on an author, I do not remember an author, I base myself only on my experience, everything is within my experience, [...]". Following the same understanding, P3 states: "I don't remember any author or document, I evaluate more based on my experience".

The teachers constitute their pedagogical and evaluative practice based, especially, on their own experiences at school, although there are theoretical fragments permeating their practices. With this, we don't want to discredit the knowledge developed in the teachers' practice, at all, but the lack of a theoretical and conceptual basis to guide the pedagogical work impoverishes the pedagogical practice, since school education must be an intentional action and responsible for the learning and development of the students. Without this, the child's schooling process is compromised.

Therefore, in the reality of CREI, the evaluation in Early Childhood Education is an amalgam, it is not explicit in teaching practice and not defined theoretically, however, there is a path traced, although confused in the teachers' speeches. In general terms, the teachers are close to an understanding of evaluation based on the observation of the child's spontaneous behavior, based on common sense and directed mainly to disciplinary, health, hygiene, and care notions.

This reality is the result of a conception of education historically constituted in Brazil. The teachers recognize the need to have a more objective learning evaluation model to follow the development of the young child. However, there are difficulties related to training and theoretical/practical systematization that make changes in the teachers' conception unfeasible.



## **The possibility of assessment in Early Childhood Education today**

According to Cheptulin (1982, p. 340), possibility is a "potential reality" that can produce itself, manifest itself, or transform itself into reality when certain conditions exist. In this way, knowing some possibilities can "interfere in the objective course of events and create the required conditions, speed up or slow down their transformation into reality".

For Cury (1986, p. 31), the unfinishedness of reality makes contradiction imply the discovery of latent tendencies in reality and that constitute the mediation between the possible and its realization. However, "the possibility existing in the movement of things, that is, the possibility of the new, of that which is not yet, but can be, immanent in that which is. And by embracing all reality, this new possible, conceived in a dialectical way, is inscribed, at the same time, in man and in the relations that he maintains with the world and with other men.

In this work, we point out that the evaluation based on two theoretical approaches, Pedagogy of Childhood and Critical-Historical Pedagogy, are not yet a reality in the pedagogical practice in CREI today, but are in the field of possibility, given the unfinishedness and contradictions in the material base of society that reflect in the empirical reality of Early Childhood Education: the first as a real abstract possibility and the second as a formal possibility.

The Pedagogy of Childhood has been presented in Brazil as a pedagogical current that understands children as active and protagonists of their own schooling process. This conception is based on the theoretical and pedagogical principles of the active school in Dewey and Piaget, pillars of the New School, and in the Sociology of Childhood. This approach presumes that the pedagogical relationship occurs horizontally. The intent of this field is focused on the young child, the defense of his or her protagonism, and the understanding of the child as a producer of culture.

The new Pedagogy, as one of the references for Early Childhood Education, has outlined practices that value the child's protagonism and spontaneity in the educational process. Regarding evaluation, the new schoolism did not develop a model particularly for Early Childhood Education, because there was a criticism of the use of evaluation in this educational stage. However, its assumptions presumed, according to Vasconcelos (2000, p. 71), an evaluation that consisted in the analysis of the individual abilities of learners to draw conclusions from their own experiences, in which "proposed self-evaluation as the great way out". This narrative was reflected in the assessment practices in Early Childhood Education,

since this theory advocates a subjective assessment based on spontaneity, curiosity, and the student's view of his own development and learning.

In line with active pedagogy, the Pedagogy of Childhood advocates breaking the ties with the school model of educational care and proposes to relocate teaching in second place, and learning would be configured as the beacon element of pedagogical practice. In this perspective, learning would occur from an autonomous and gradual construction of the child. Another aspect would be learning through play. This view is demonstrated in the studies by Kishimoto (2007, p. 270), who defends "a revolution in education by building pedagogies for childhood that value children's games and narratives".

In the reports of the CREI teachers, we observed that some assumptions of active education are part of their discourses. For example, P2 states: "At CREI they learn through play. [...]". Along the same line, P4 states, "You know that playfulness today is the important thing in early childhood education." P5 also states that "in the routine every day we will do activities that were chosen in the lesson plan, which is the activity of the day in the notebook, then there is a playful activity. It is also common to find in the teachers' speech that "the child has to build its own knowledge" (P3). In the same vein, P6 states: "I don't want to come to the children and say that's how it is, I want them to build their own knowledge [...]". The other teachers state that children learn "from their experiences" (P1); "the child is the protagonist" (P2); "today they want children to do everything by themselves, that they will build" (P4); "I am not working to make the child literate, they are being made literate naturally" (P5).

What can be noticed is that, although they do not mention them by name, the teachers point out elements of active pedagogies. However, their speeches are presented in a contradictory and fragmented way, since they say they use playfulness and that children learn by playing, but emphasize that there is a time to do "activities in the notebook. In short, play is disconnected from the learning process, with moments for playing and moments for "doing homework". They say that "the child learns by playing", but they separate the time for playing and the time for learning.

In relation to the teaching-learning and evaluation process, we noticed that it is disjointed with the theoretical basis, even the Pedagogy of Childhood itself, which endorses the teachers' speeches, appears confused and abstract. Thus, although they point out that they do not want a methodology centered on lecture classes to prevail, they are unable to develop their practice based on active theories. Duarte (2001) calls "educational fad" the superficial and uncritical understanding about some issues or concepts "in fashion", which denotes lack of

clarity about the theoretical-methodological line that guides their practice, making them hostages of a discourse based on stereotyped and emptied concepts.

For Baptista (2012, p. 224), "active education in Brazil is a possibility! It means that it has not become a reality" could not manifest itself in the conception and practice of the teachers because the "corresponding conditions" were not in place. In this scenario, although the teachers' speech makes reference to the Pedagogy of Childhood, this theory has not yet become a reality in the pedagogical practice in CREI. There is not yet an outlined path, since "possibility becomes reality not at any moment, but only under certain conditions" (CHEPTULIN, 1982, p. 341). Thus, the teaching-learning and evaluation processes based on Childhood Pedagogy are configured, today, as a possibility.

On the other hand, in democratic capitalist countries, as is the case of Brazil, an evaluation based on active pedagogy is a real possibility, because "it arises from the necessary connections and relations inherent to this democratic capitalist society, conditioned by the internal laws of the functioning and development of capitalist formation" (CHEPTULIN, 1982, p. 341).

The Pedagogy of Childhood is the basis for some documents in Early Childhood Education, which guide the proposals for teaching (or lack of it), learning, and assessment practices for young children. For this reason, besides being a theory discussed in the academic field, its propagation in the speeches and in preschool practices offer subsidy for a reality in adaptation.

Thus, it is possible to state that the Pedagogy of Childhood and its evaluative assumptions are an *abstract real possibility*, because, according to Cheptulin (1982, p. 341), "the abstract possibility is a possibility, whose realization does not have, at the present moment, necessary conditions". This means that, although real, the conditions necessary for the realization of the possibility could not be met so that the assumptions of this pedagogy could be realized in the pedagogical practice of the preschool.

To affirm that the evaluation based on the Pedagogy of Childhood in the municipality of João Pessoa is an *abstract real possibility*, and not a reality, means to say that, for the teachers, there are difficulties in understanding how the pedagogical practice occurs in this theory. Some factors that prevent the subjective evaluation, based on active pedagogies, from becoming a reality are based on weakened teacher training, precarious working conditions, 40-hour workload and job instability, since all 6 teachers in the research are service providers. These, among other factors, hinder theoretical and practical reflections that, through studies and

research, enable the confrontation of historical contradictions and an evaluation practice theoretically grounded and with clear objectives.

Critical Historical Pedagogy (CHP), anchored in the historical-dialectical materialism and in Cultural-Historical Psychology, has been presented as a theoretical/methodological alternative for Children Education. This critical conception of education is opposed to some fundamentals of Childhood Pedagogy, such as, for example, the defense of an anti-school conception. Arce (2004, p. 160) points out that in this active perspective "[...] the teacher suffers a violent process of decharacterization, ceasing to teach and reducing his/her interference in the classroom to a mere participation". In this scenario, instead of the teacher teaching, "relations of listening and reciprocity are established, because the teacher no longer directs, he follows: he follows the child, his wishes, interests and needs".

CHP presents foundations for teaching in Early Childhood Education that is based on a scientific and intentional character that enables the appropriation of the generic-human heritage and the child's psychic development. This understanding does not imply inhibiting the young child's spontaneity, but fostering pedagogical work directed by the teacher, as the conductor of human knowledge that guides the child's spontaneity to a systematized knowledge.

According to Vygotsky (1998, p. 174), the school education process is qualitatively different from the education process in a broad sense. At school, the child is faced with a particular task: "to understand the bases of scientific studies, that is, a system of scientific conceptions". As such, the initial concepts that were built throughout his life in the social context, that is, the spontaneous concepts, are now shifted to new process, to new especially cognitive relationship with the world, and so, "in this process, the child's concepts are transformed and their structure changes", in a qualitative way.

For CHP the educator who works with children from zero to five years old cannot be only someone who stimulates and accompanies the child's development, but rather one who directs the educational process. The teacher's role should be to expand the children's cognitive comprehension from a context that has real meaning for them. This process goes beyond an individual construction and must be built collectively.

The conception of teaching, learning, and development proposed by CHP, anchored in Vygotsky's writings, presents important elements to explain the evaluation of learning as a continuous process to be systematically carried out during the execution of school activities, in the interaction teacher - knowledge - child. This means that, through teacher mediation, we can know not only the processes of development and maturation that have taken place up to the present moment, but also the processes that are still maturing.

For Lunt (1997), school practices have developed a static evaluation, making it impossible to establish a relationship between teacher and student. To overcome this evaluation method, she suggests a dynamic evaluation based on the Vygotskian perspective. The teacher's action in the PDA enables a dynamic relationship that is more prospective than retrospective. In this sense, dynamic assessment involves

[...] a dynamic interaction between examiner and student (examined) with emphasis on the *process* rather than the *product* of learning. Common to all forms of dynamic assessment is the idea of prospective rather than retrospective assessment and the emphasis on an understanding of *how* the child learns rather than *what* he or she has already learned (LUNT, 1997, p. 232, emphasis added).

With this analysis, dynamic assessment procedures involve an interactional exploration of teaching-learning processes and the child's cognitive dimensions. For this, it is necessary that the teacher's collaborative activity develops in the PDA. Thus, "assessment that focuses only on a child's actual level of performance or development is incomplete and provides only a partial picture. To get a complete picture, assessment must also occur at the second level and focus on process, assessing what the child can accomplish with the help of the other, the teacher or more developed peers (LUNT, 1997, p. 238).

We note that CHP and its theoretical assumptions signal toward collaborative practice in its conception of teaching, learning and development, and assessment. What we realize is that the evaluation practices in early childhood education in the CREI in João Pessoa do not follow the conceptions proposed by CHP and the Vygotskian theory, because in the pedagogical practices there is no interventive action, a decision about what teachers should do with the data collected from a diagnosis, they only reinforce what the child already knows and do not project new goals to be achieved.

Duarte (2001, p. 19) points out that, in recent decades, especially since the 1980s, CHP has been outlined with consistent theoretical and methodological foundations, but there have been difficulties in implementing its foundations in educational practice. Facing and overcoming these gaps is a challenge to educational researchers from the Critical-Historical and Cultural-Historical perspectives. Although this critical conception has developed foundations in the theoretical field, in school practices the conception of dynamic evaluation has not yet traced concrete paths and, especially in Early Childhood Education, it is still presented as a possibility.

Paraphrasing Baptista (2012), we point out that if the theoretical and practical principles of the Pedagogy of Childhood, even grounding the educational documents aimed at Early Childhood Education, have not consolidated in the conception and practice of teachers, because the necessary conditions for its realization are not in place, what about the ideals of Critical-Historical Pedagogy and Cultural-Historical Psychology, whose theoretical and methodological foundations are based on the principles of historical and dialectical materialism?

Evaluation based on CHP is characterized as a formal possibility, because change "does not arise from the internal nature of capitalist society, it is not necessarily conditioned by the laws of its functioning and development, but depends on all kinds of circumstances, that is, on contingency" (CHEPTULIN, 1982, p. 341). For formal possibility, this or that phenomenon "is both possible and impossible, because the logic of contingency is such that it (contingency) can either produce itself or not" (CHEPTULIN, 1982, p. 341).

Therefore, "by not meeting the necessary conditions (objective and subjective) [...], the ideals of a critical education have not yet been possible to be realized in the Brazilian educational context" (BAPTISTA, 2012, p. 227), at least as a hegemonic theory, remaining, therefore, more restricted to certain academic circles and isolated practices.

According to Cheptulin (1982, p. 342), the importance of formal possibility for the practical activity of men is weak, "because practical activity is based entirely on connections and relations that are necessarily repeated and produced under given conditions, that is, on real possibilities. Therefore, for the formal possibility to become reality, "the material formation which contains it must pass through various stages of development" (CHEPTULIN, 1982, p. 343). In this sense, a critical proposal, as expressed by CHP, goes against the social relations of production and the bourgeois state, since it proposes a social transformation.

Therefore, dynamic evaluation and CHP have not yet become possible in the pedagogical practices in João Pessoa, since the economic, political and pedagogical conditions do not allow it to become an objective reality. In order for the evaluation to assume its function as a dialectical instrument, it will have to be situated and be at the service of an education concerned with transformation and not with social conservation, that is, when the pedagogical character of schools is based on praxis.



## **Final considerations**

The reflections developed throughout this research allow us to point out that there is a need for a systematization about the evaluation in Early Childhood Education. On the other hand, the analysis based on the Marxist categories, reality and possibility, allows us to understand that the teachers' conceptions are socially constituted, and are superimposed on a cultural-historical reality, crossed by contradictions and ambiguities.

We understand that the assumptions that guide the evaluation in Early Childhood Education are guided by parameters of traditional, new, and technicist pedagogies. However, pedagogical practice is contradictory and in permanent movement, depending on several social, cultural, and historical factors that, in turn, determine which theoretical, pedagogical, and methodological assumptions the teacher will identify with. It is also worth mentioning that no practice is neutral, on the contrary, it is always referenced in some political and social principle, and is directed to certain objectives, even if they are not explicitly formulated in the conceptions and pedagogical practices.

We identified that most of the teachers recognize the need to evaluate young children's learning and development. However, in the daily routine of Kindergarten, the educational process and, consequently, the concept of evaluation have not found a purpose in the pedagogical practice, since the latter is mainly related to control and discipline, such as observing health and hygiene issues and the notions of caring, guided by spontaneous conceptions according to which the child is free to learn by himself or in the interaction with his peers, which distances the evaluation from systematized educational actions.

We understand that the teachers' limitations to build their evaluative practice are grounded on a weakened training, both initial and continued. The fact that the teachers completed their training many years ago also distances them from the current discussions about evaluation in Early Childhood Education. Another factor that we can consider is the temporary employment relationship, in addition to the work overload and the low pay, which are discouraging for teachers to perform their activities; moreover, they make it difficult for teachers to maintain a practice of studies and research.

On the other hand, the Pedagogy of Childhood, which underlies the theoretical academic discourses and the documents of Early Childhood Education in the CREI in João Pessoa, is still an abstract real possibility, since its assumptions are understood in a fragmented way, therefore, they are not put into practice. Therefore, the teachers even mention elements of the theory, but do not know how to evaluate based on its assumptions.

The assessment based on Critical Historical Pedagogy, that is, dynamic, collaborative, dialectical, model that we defend in this study, is characterized as a *formal possibility* in Kindergarten Education in João Pessoa. This situation is configured as we find few elements of this theory in the teachers' statements. One of the factors that contributes to the theoretical and practical ignorance lies in the fact that this approach is characterized by its critical bias.

We understand that this scenario is the reflection of a historical reality, forged both in the struggles to ensure access to Early Childhood Education and in the fight to ensure the quality of education for young children. However, this movement is not static and unidirectional, but dynamic, contradictory, and in constant transformation; therefore, there is the possibility, even if sporadic and not dominant, of changes both in teaching practice and in evaluation methods, as well as in teachers' conceptions.

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### How to reference this article

BAPTÍSTA, M. G. A.; SILVA, V. V. S.; SILVA, G. J. Assessment of primary education and the dialect reality-possibility. **Revista Ibero-Americana de Estudos em Educação**, Araraquara, v. 17, n. esp. 1, p. 0919-0936, Mar. 2022. e-ISSN: 1982-5587. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21723/riaee.v17iesp.1.15819>

**Submitted:** 24/11/2021

**Revisions required:** 19/02/2022

**Approved:** 28/02/2022

**Published:** 01/03/2022

Management of translations and versions: Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação

Translator: Thiago Faquim Bittencourt

Translation reviewer: Alexander Vinícius Leite da Silva