

**QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION: EVALUATION OF THE UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR, AN APPROACH TO ITS DIMENSIONS AND MODELS**

***QUALIDADE DO ENSINO SUPERIOR: AVALIAÇÃO DO PROFESSOR UNIVERSITÁRIO, UMA ABORDAGEM DE SUAS DIMENSÕES E MODELOS***

***CALIDAD DE LA EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR: EVALUACIÓN DEL DOCENTE UNIVERSITARIO, UNA APROXIMACIÓN A SUS DIMENSIONES Y MODELOS***

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**ABSTRACT:** The evaluation of the university teacher is an issue in which there is increasing attention, given its relationship with the learning outcomes of students and the quality of programs and universities. There is no single model for teacher evaluation, as this will depend on the perspective from which this exercise will be carried out. This article presents a review of the literature on teacher evaluation in aspects such as the purpose of teacher evaluation, the actors involved, the types of evaluation and some models of countries and universities.

**KEYWORDS:** Teacher evaluation. Purpose of teacher evaluation. Criteria of teacher evaluation. Models of teacher evaluation.

**RESUMO:** *A avaliação do professor universitário é uma questão que recebe cada vez mais atenção, dada sua relação com os resultados da aprendizagem dos alunos e a qualidade dos programas e universidades. Não há um único modelo de avaliação de professores, uma vez que isso dependerá da perspectiva da qual esse exercício será realizado. Este artigo apresenta uma revisão da literatura sobre avaliação de professores em aspectos como o objetivo da avaliação, os atores envolvidos, os tipos de avaliação e alguns modelos de países e universidades.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Avaliação do professor. Finalidade da avaliação do professor. Critérios de avaliação do professor. Modelos de avaliação do professor.*

**RESUMEN:** *La evaluación del docente universitario es un tema en el que cada vez hay mayor atención, dada su relación con los resultados de aprendizaje de los estudiantes y la calidad de los programas y universidades. No existe un único modelo de evaluación docente, pues este dependerá de la perspectiva desde la que se quiera realizar este ejercicio. Este artículo presenta una revisión de la literatura sobre la evaluación docente en aspectos como el propósito de la evaluación docente, los actores que participan, los tipos de evaluación y algunos modelos de países y universidades.*

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**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Evaluación docente. Propósito de la evaluación docente. Criterios de evaluación docente. Modelos de evaluación docente.*

## **Introduction**

Assessment has become a permanent and present task in all areas, inherent and related to the quality of education. It is possible to assess, from different modes and moments, each and every one of the actors in a teaching and learning process. There is growing interest in this theme, which has brought with it the design of assessment systems as diverse as each country, region and university, with a common goal: to account for a part, an actor or even the entire formative process; which will depend on the evaluative perspective you have. Therefore, evaluation is an excellent mechanism for obtaining and disseminating accurate, contrasting and balanced information (TIANA; SANTÁNGELO, 1994), about students, programs, teachers, services and institutions, to name a few.

This literature review focuses on the evaluation of teaching at the university level and corresponds to an exercise in searching, reviewing and analyzing conceptual and theoretical studies, as well as empirical articles published in the last ten years. Given the multiplicity of information related to what is meant by teaching evaluation and quality, this exercise focuses on the review of aspects related to the purpose of teacher evaluation, the actors who participate, the types of evaluation and some models of countries and universities.

## **Objective, types, criteria and actors involved in the teacher evaluation process**

It is difficult to try to determine which aspects are taken into account to define a good teacher or even a quality teacher, so it is possible to find a multiplicity of approaches, definitions, criteria and dimensions, as well as a lack of agreement about them, as Ramírez and Montoya (2014) affirm there is a “lack of agreement regarding what successful teaching means” (p. 79, our translation), identifying three strong trends when it comes to assessing teacher quality: that which is linked to a teacher and style of class; the one that requires the teacher to do what the university asks and the one that seeks to show that the teacher makes his students learn.

Other authors wrote about the development of teacher evaluation at the university level, which would have to respond to an accurate representation of teaching performance (ORY, 2002). Shulman (1986), cited in Stake and Cisneros-Cohernour (2000); Ory (2002)

and Ramírez and Montoya (2014), suggest that the teacher assessment takes into account aspects such as: institutional goals, classroom environment, administration, curriculum content, student achievements, feedback and impact. That is, the evaluation of teaching seen as an internal improvement process for the teacher and the organization, in addition to an exercise in quality measurement.

Another aspect of teaching evaluation that can be identified is that related to the purpose of teaching. Among others, there are those identified by Ory (2002) which are: to meet the needs of students and those of an administrative scope, to improve education and to be accountable. On this same theme Stake and Cisneros-Cohernour (2000) mentioned in Ramírez and Montoya (2014) talk about how the purpose of the teaching evaluation exercise is to “promote information about merit and what should be improved, help in selection of qualified professionals, formation in a professional and continuing manner to teach and contribute to the understanding of the department in relation to the university as a whole” (p. 81, our translation).

For those who participate in the teacher evaluation process, Dressel (1971) mentioned in Stake, Contreras and Arbesú (2010) refers to how quality assessment in general is a shared responsibility, in which all interested parties must participate: directors, managers, students, teachers and society, as each of them evaluates permanently, although sometimes invisible due to the complexity and informality of the process, on some occasions. Assessing is a normal process and, in most cases, it happens informally and involuntarily, regardless of who performs it (STAKE; CISNEROS-COHERNOUR, 2000); in the case of teaching activity, although it is evaluated to improve quality, the exercise also offers the possibility of seeing teaching work as partial and repairing possible failures (LEHMAN, 1975 *apud* STAKE *et al.*, 2010).

As for the types of assessment, it is possible to speak of formal assessment when it is planned, routine, with pre-established and recorded criteria. Informal, based on the perceptions and experiences of those who participate and observe the educational processes. There is also the summative evaluation, which assigns a value that allows us to understand the quality of what is being evaluated; and formative evaluation, which considers the object being evaluated as something that changes. The evaluation of teachers implies the use of formal and informal methods, since the combination of the two forms allows the identification of achievements and problems, as well as summative and formative assessments, since they offer different criteria, informants and instruments (STAKE *et al.*, 2010).

Regarding the criteria that are taken into account to carry out the evaluation, they are diverse. The documentary review of the different proposals on evaluating the quality of teaching offers points of encounter and mismatch, as well as their purpose, used instruments. Ramírez and Motoya (2014) collect the dimensions, criteria or factors suggested by two of the most consulted authors on the topic Marczely (1992) and Stake (2011) (see table 1), which allow to see some common points of search for information and reflection.

**Table 1 - Factors associated with quality teaching**

Marczely (1992)	Stake (2011)
Features or factors	Personality
Skills	Teaching competence
Behavior manifested in the classroom	Teaching performance
Task development	Duties
Student results	Student's score
Professionalization	
	Interpretation of the curriculum
	Teamwork

Source: Ramírez and Montoya (2014). Teamwork Evaluation of teaching quality at the University: A literature review.

### Some approaches and models of teacher evaluation

As in the previous items, it is possible to find several approaches and models of evaluation. For example, Scriven (2011) quoted in Ory (2002) refers to the passionate collector (the one who collects information about teaching performance in an informal way), peer evaluation (class observation), student evaluation (the most common, through an instrument) and the one based on learning results (considering what students learn).

Perhaps the focus that is most recurrent is that of competency-based assessment, which is increasingly present in discussions at different educational levels with arguments such as the need to align the educational system with the productive sector or to form individuals to meet a set of needs defined by groups of experts. One of the experiences that contributed to the expansion of this focus is the Tuning Project in Europe and Latin America, which seeks to generate educational structures in different countries for their mutual understanding and recognition, in order to facilitate the mobility of students and teachers. This based on the assumptions according to Beneitone *et al.* (2007) quoted in Rueda (2009) that with all the issue of internationalization, the university will face challenges and responsibilities, regardless of the geographical location in which it is.

In this same article *Evaluation of Teaching Performance: Considerations from the Competency-Based Approach*, Rueda (2009) refers to the variety of definitions of

competence and, therefore, of teaching competences, which must, in addition, meet the context of each institutions. Regarding the advantages of this approach, it identifies the possibility of carrying out the analysis and redefinition of the activities of the teacher and the students and of adopting the same teaching model (by competences) for the students. The author suggests that one of the strategies to materialize the focus is to decide which competences are to be evaluated, to define them and define their indicators, to identify who will participate in the process and the techniques and instruments to be employed. In the article a table is presented that compiles the competence proposals of 5 different authors, which for this work was reorganized considering common aspects between them (see table 2).

**Table 2 – Teaching skills**

Common category	Comellas , M, J. (2002)	Perrenoud (2004)	Zabalza, M.A. (2005)	SEMS-México (2008b)	Cano.E. (2005)
<b>Identify obstacles and propose ways to overcome them</b>	Identify obstacles or problems	Address the ethical duties and dilemmas of the profession	Offer tutorials and tutoring to students		
<b>Define strategies, methodologies and processes to manage learning</b>	See different realistic strategies	Manage learning progression	Manage didactic work methodologies and learning tasks	Implement teaching and learning processes in an effective, creative and innovative way in their context	
	Choosing the best strategy considering the risks	Develop and devise differentiation devices		Master and structure knowledge to facilitate meaningful learning experiences	
<b>Plan and organize the teaching process</b>	Plan your implementation with all agents in mind.	Organize and encourage learning situations	Being able to plan the teaching and learning process (the ability to make your own programs, to plan your own discipline well)	Plan teaching and learning processes according to the competency-based approach, and place them in broad disciplinary, curricular and social contexts.	Plan and organize your own work
	Manage your application, modulating possible changes.		Select and present the disciplinary content		
<b>Working with others</b>	Cooperate with other professionals whenever necessary	Teamwork	Become institutionally involved (to feel part of the team, play as a member, participate in the definition of the institutional mission, the proposed objectives, the college formation plan)		Teamwork
<b>Taking an active part in institutional management</b>		Participate in school management.		Participate in your school's continuous improvement projects and support institutional management	
<b>Generate learning environments that support the process</b>		Involve students in their learning and work	Build constructive relationships with students	Build the generation of an environment that facilitates the healthy and integral development of students	Establish satisfactory interpersonal relationships and resolve conflicts

<b>Include the use of ICT</b>		Using new technologies	Be technologically literate and master the didactic handling of ICT.		Using new information and communication technologies
<b>Use appropriate forms of communication</b>		Inform and involve parents	Provide understandable information and explanations		Communication
<b>Evaluate and self-evaluate the process on an ongoing basis</b>	Draw conclusions and learn for a new situation		Reflect and research on teaching	Evaluate teaching and learning processes with a formative focus	Constantly evaluating our actions to improve quality
<b>Constantly formation and self-evaluating</b>		Organizing your own continuing education		Organize your own continuous formation throughout your professional career.	
<b>To know yourself</b>	Master your own emotions, values, sympathies, among others				Have a positive self-concept.

Source: Rueda (2009). La evaluación del desempeño docente: consideraciones desde el enfoque por competencias – adapted by the author

Regarding to all the models found, the product of the literature review exercise, it is possible to identify several. For example, what was accomplished through the 360° evaluation and the electronic portfolio widely explained by Obando-Freire *et al.* (2014) which includes student assessment, that carried out by academic authorities, self-assessment through the portfolio and peer review. It seeks to carry out a comprehensive evaluation process, and because it is systemic, based on international standards and universally accepted, it must be adjusted in its application, that is, it must be contextualized according to each country and institution. It is interesting to realize that the system seeks the development of the person, as it implies that the teacher knows and understands the performance indicators, reflects on the results and incorporates improvement plans.

Another example of how to realize teacher assessment is carried out in Spain, where special attention is paid to teaching qualifications and skills as a bet to improve the quality of higher education. For this, the DOCENTIA program was created, which seeks to support universities in the design of mechanisms to generate the quality of teaching activity, linked to the quality assurance system. The program serves as a guide for universities to plan their own assessment models on the following three dimensions: strategic, methodological and results, review and improvement. In this way, the model of each institution must account for what the evaluation process of teaching activity is carried out for, how it is carried out and what are the consequences that derive from it (ANECA, 2015).

This program appears as a response to the need to establish internal evaluation measures that ensure the quality of the formative processes that affect students, the university community and society as a result of the guidelines that carry the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). As a result of this merger, the European Association for

Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) defined that “institutions must have the means to ensure that teachers are qualified and competent for this work” (our translation), of procedures for incorporating the teaching staff and verifying that the selected people have a minimum level of competence, also providing opportunities for low-income teachers to improve their skills so that they reach an acceptable level and have the means to discharge their teaching functions if they continue to be ineffective (CARRERAS, 2010).

Based on the above, within the EHEA, autonomous learning and self-regulation are promoted as part of the teaching task, among other aspects, giving special importance to innovation and improvement (where teachers and students work and decide together) (COWAN, 2000, *apud* POZO *et al.*, 2011). In addition, it is expected that quality teaching will include: tutoring, innovative material design, teacher participation in management issues within the institution, updated academic guides that meet the needs of the student, context and professional profile, among other aspects (POZO *et al.*, 2011). All of this, with the objective that the evaluation exercise as such, becomes a strategy to improve the learning process and offer feedback to the faculty to guide their work, a process in which, in addition, students of active way (PADILLA-CARMONA; GIL, 2008).

Another change that the EHEA brought with it was the transformation of the teaching-learning binomial as it supposes a change in attitude both for teachers and students, as well as for the role of each one. The student has a leading role in the process, because of this, it acquires great relevance in autonomous learning where the teacher becomes an advisor or guide, favoring that students learn from “their mistakes and minimize their difficulties, if they are motivated and advised in the realization of their achievements and consolidate their learning” (POZO *et al.*, 2011, p. 148, our translation).

The formation of the EHEA also implied taking into account a series of variables linked to the quality of teaching, such as: the level of satisfaction of students with the process, that is, how they perceive that they are receiving quality education; and formation based on academic skills for the group of students, understood as the possibility of conquering the process so that students acquire skills of reflection and self-learning, strategies to resolve conflicts and a basis for fostering lifelong learning (POZO *et al.*, 2011).

In summary and contrary to what could happen in a traditional university education, current European educational programs focus on how academic content is taught and at the same time on how it is understood by students, based on their learning needs (LASLEY II; SIEDENTOP; YINGER, 2006 *apud* POZO *et al.*, 2011, p. 149).

These same authors Pozo *et al.* (2011) carry out a comparative exercise in five of the best known universities in Spain, identifying the evaluation dimensions used and indicating which are common among them: teaching quality, evaluation adequacy, study plan adequacy (load, teacher, program) (see table 3). Among the instruments used in the universities consulted, to collect information about the quality of teaching, the most common is the research aimed at students to know their opinion.

**Table 3** – Comparative analysis of assessment dimensions

Dimensions	University of Oxford	University of Oslo	University of Vienna	University of Bologna	University of Groningen
Teaching quality	X		X	X	X
Clarity of objectives	X	X			
Appropriateness of the evaluation	X	X	X		X
Adequacy of study plans (teaching load, program, etc.).	X		X	X	X
General skills	X	X			X
Motivation and learning climate	X			X	
Academic results	X		X		
Emergence of learning	X	X			X
Dissemination of the program		X			
Resources and infrastructure	X			X	
Overall satisfaction				X	X

Source: Pozo *et al.* (2011). Evaluación de la actividad docente en el Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior: un estudio comparativo de indicadores de calidad en universidades europeas.

At the University of Oxford, the evaluation process is carried out through an opinion poll which measures the student's experience and their level of satisfaction with teaching practice. Research is different for each level of education (undergraduate, postgraduate and research formation). For the undergraduate level, the dimensions that are consulted are: quality of teaching; clarity of goals and objectives; appropriate assessments; work load; general skills and motivation. For the postgraduate level, the questionnaire focuses on collecting students' opinions in view of the clarity of the course objectives, the evaluation systems used, the amount of work assigned versus the effort involved, motivation and resources used. Finally, for research formation, the dimensions are: supervision; follow-up; department infrastructure; intellectual climate and awareness about evaluation.



For its part, the University of Oslo has an integral and formative assessment program through which it collects information through meetings between students, the program director and administrative staff. The University of Bologna, like most universities, uses a questionnaire that collects students' opinions, within the dimensions on which it collects information through this instrument are: course organization, activities used, infrastructure, interest and satisfaction. Finally, the University of Groningen (the Netherlands) collects information on the opinions of its students in seven areas through institutional research. The areas are: program content, organization, teaching methods, assessment, assistance received, satisfaction and general skills.

Another of the models consulted was the Evaluation of Teaching Competences (ECD) for secondary and higher education developed in Mexico, which seeks to guide the activities of teachers and directors in order to highlight their work, to contribute with best practices and carry out fair and relevant evaluation processes. For this, the model defines what it is to be competent with their respective competencies, considering three moments of the teaching exercise: before, during and after (GARCÍA-CABRERO *et al.*, 2008).

Finally, Ramírez and Montoya (2014) present a model that is the product of a rigorous research exercise in which, after adopting a definition of teaching quality, they define a series of dimensions based on the 360° methodology, achieving a flexible evaluation system, which meets individuality, is contextualized and which, as they indicate, seeks to give life to the processes of evaluation, co-evaluation and hetero-evaluation that often remain with intention.

The two dimensions that the model meets are:

- **Dimension 1:** The teacher and the course that teaches: where aspects related to teacher performance in the classroom are considered, the relationship between student-teacher and the results obtained by students.
- **Dimension 2:** The teacher and the study program: Focuses on identifying curricular alienation, professionalization of teaching and teacher participation in the department.

Below, in table 4, the models consulted are presented in summary form, where it is possible to identify the way in which the model or system is called, the country, the year, the objective and characteristics.

**Table 4** – Summary of the Teaching Quality Assessment Models consulted

MODEL	COUNTRY	YEAR	OBJECTIVE	FEATURES
Teacher evaluation system using the 360° model and the electronic portfolio.	Different countries	2014	Assess teachers in a comprehensive manner that allows teacher development and student benefit.	It is a 360° assessment system that assesses teachers in four dimensions: assessment by students, peers and self-assessment through the teacher's electronic wallet.
DOCENTIA: Program to support the evaluation of teaching activity by university professors	European Union	2015	Contribute to improving the quality of teaching in order to obtain better learning outcomes for students.	It is a frame of reference for universities in the European Union to develop their own models for evaluating teaching activity, based on three dimensions: strategic, methodological and results, review and improvement. Through the dimensions, each institution must give an account of why, how and what the consequences of the evaluation process are.
Model of evaluation of teaching competences for secondary and higher education (ETC)	Mexico	2008	Guide the activities of teachers and managers in the evaluation processes, seeking to highlight the importance of the teaching function, contribute to the best teaching and learning practices and help to implement fair and relevant evaluation processes.	The model presents the definition of what a competency is, defines the teacher's competences, as well as the contextual conditions that must be considered to carry out the assessment. Competences are assessed in three major moments of teaching activity with their respective indicators. These moments are: before class, during and at the end of the impact assessment of the teaching-learning process.
Model designed by Montoya and Ramirez (2014)	Colombia	2014	Assess the quality of teaching, both in terms of its learning outcomes (what it has achieved), and in terms of the conditions or educational process that has enabled the achievement of results (how it has achieved them).	It resumes the 360° evaluation exercise, at the same time that it seeks to address equity, that is, the individuality and diversity of teaching styles, as well as flexibility and applicability to different contexts. In the model, self-evaluation, co-evaluation and hetero-evaluation are performed.

Source: Devised by the author

### Final considerations

Evaluation is a fundamental part of any formation process, everything is evaluated: resources, physical layout, curriculum, students and, of course, teachers. The latter bears an important weight, especially since their performance is associated with student performance and with the results of educational programs and institutions. Currently, there are as many models of teacher evaluation as there are educational and university systems, precisely because of the difficulty of reaching agreements in face of what it means to be a good teacher, which will be directly linked to the context, expectations and certainly the vision, mission and priorities of each educational institution or community conducting the assessment.

However, having a single model, reaching consensus on how to carry out the assessment of what it means to be a good teacher is difficult and, moreover, not necessary. What is important is to know what they do in order to plan an evaluation exercise that meets the needs of each institution, but above all that has a meaning and that enriches the teacher's knowledge, promoting a quality exercise in it. Evaluating, just by evaluating, regardless of the criterion or perspective used, without having a reflection and plans for further improvement behind it, becomes a system to mark the teacher. It is necessary to keep in mind that the teacher formation does not end at the end of his higher studies, it continues to be built, enriched and transformed day after day thanks to the experience and interaction with his colleagues and students. Evaluation is an important input in this construction.

Each of the models, types, purposes of teacher evaluation, proposals before the actors who should participate in it, competencies and criteria to have in mind presented as the product of this literature review, offer an overview of what is being done about this theme, and ideas of good practices, which can be revised when planning the evaluation model of our institutions.

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