




Pedagogical documentation from the assessment as learning approach in preschool classrooms

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Abstract

Pedagogical documentation is a method that evidences the progression of children's learning processes in early Education. This article discusses the benefits of pedagogical documentation and the most suitable approach for its practical implementation, based on an extensive review and analysis of literature. Key questions addressed include: What is pedagogical documentation? How can it be implemented in preschool Education? What approaches are being used in learning and assessment processes in early childhood? And how could pedagogical documentation transform preschool educational practices? The aim of this analysis is to contribute to the field of preschool Education and propose practices that promote children's learning and holistic development in their educational experiences, with an emphasis on pedagogical documentation from the assessment as learning perspective.

Keywords: Pedagogical Documentation. Assessment as Learning. Preschool. Early Childhood.

1 Introduction

Innovation and openness to transformations in pedagogical assessment represent a challenge for Education professionals, including early childhood educators. According to Zabalza (2018), this challenge is partly due to the lack of recognition and privilege afforded to this initial stage of Education. The situation is further

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aggravated by inadequate understanding of the role of assessment, which should not be separated from the learning itself. This adverse environment has perpetuated punitive and undemocratic practices in assessment, overlooking more formative and holistic approaches that center on children and their learning (Sanmartí, 2020). From this perspective, various views on assessment as a process emerge, particularly those that enrich teaching and learning (Barrientos, López Pastor, Pérez-Brunicardi, 2019) in more participatory and equitable educational settings.

In this context, it is important to recognize that there has been a growing demand for educational justice for several years (Rasooli *et al.*, 2021; Resh, Sabbagh, 2016). Consequently, multiple debates have arisen around assessment and equity. For example, Nisbet and Shaw (2019) develop the idea that, when it comes to equity in assessment, numerous factors are involved, including expectations, conceptual development, beliefs, and assumptions. It is essential to establish agreements and disagreements and define the scope of each approach within the framework of evaluative justice (Nisbet, Shaw, 2019).

There is undoubtedly debate about equitable assessment. However, it is crucial to focus on assessments that enhance social justice for children and their families and, as a result, help dismantle prejudices and discrimination (Nisbet, Shaw, 2019). In this context, it is valuable to analyze the various pedagogical tools that contribute to this goal and how early childhood¹ educators navigate challenges in designing educational scenarios where assessment is a crucial component of teaching and learning processes. This approach also aims to strengthen action cycles that emphasize the participation of the children themselves in fostering self-regulation of their own learning. This makes Assessment as Learning (AaL) a more equitable and fair evaluative process, understanding that it is oriented towards learning and involves a complex interaction between learning and the teaching process, with the primary focus on helping students understand their progress and learning goals through various cognitive processes (Dann, 2014). Additionally, AaL promotes the fundamental and central role of students in a process that involves ongoing interaction between content, context, and people (Dann, 2018).

¹ United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef) defines early childhood according to the framework provided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This period encompasses the human lifespan from gestation through birth and up to 8 years of age, although the exact age range may vary in different countries.

In this sense, feedback processes are highlighted as crucial, as they serve as a tool for improvement to adjust and make decisions regarding the pedagogical and learning practices of both teachers and students. It is understood as a reciprocal, interpersonal, and non-linear process, requiring active participation from all involved (Dann, 2018; Villagra Barro, Riquelme-Arredondo, 2023) in order for AaL to be a rich and effective process.

On the other hand, Zabalza (2003) makes a noteworthy call regarding assessment scenarios in early childhood, emphasizing the importance of having openness and adaptability in these processes, particularly due to the characteristics of children in these age ranges. Additionally, there must be openness and willingness to identify conflicts during the assessment processes, and a focus on finding solutions to overcome them; only in this way will learning occur (Sanmartí, 2020) in any educational setting.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the benefits of documentation as a tool that supports learning processes in preschoolers. The study will analyze the benefits of pedagogical documentation and its contributions to early childhood, following the AaL approach. The guiding questions of this article include: What is pedagogical documentation? How can it be implemented in preschool Education? What approaches are being used in learning and assessment processes in early childhood? And how could AaL transform educational practice?

2 The transformative character of pedagogical documentation: what is pedagogical documentation?

In early developmental stages, the perspective on assessment should have an ethical approach. In this sense, pedagogical documentation provides the tools for an unparalleled ethical journey. This means that, when designed as a relevant and integrative practice, it enables more equitable views in the formative process and lays the groundwork for analysis, reflection, and even adaptation of the environment to achieve curricular goals (Wylie, Fenning, 2012).

To ensure the equity and relevance of these processes, it is essential to clarify key concepts such as inclusion, ethics, and an ecological perspective. We define inclusion in assessment as the design and implementation of evaluation practices that are both accessible and meaningful for all children, regardless of their abilities or their cultural, linguistic, or socioeconomic backgrounds. Achieving this requires adapting assessment methodologies, considering multiple modes of expression,

and ensuring that findings are used to support each child's individual development, thereby fostering active and meaningful participation in learning processes.

Ethics, in this context, centers on respect for each child's dignity, rights, and well-being. It requires obtaining informed consent from parents or guardians, safeguarding confidentiality, employing fair and developmentally appropriate assessment methods, and avoiding any practice that could cause emotional or physical harm (British Educational Research Association, 2024).

From an ecological perspective, assessment is understood as a process that situated the child within their social, cultural, and environmental contexts, recognizing that development is shaped by interrelated systems such as family, school, community, and culture. Assessment, from this viewpoint, seeks to understand how these systems interact to support or constrain the child's development, and how environments can be strengthened to promote their well-being and learning.

Building on this, to speak of an ethical journey, it is necessary to include the participation of children in these processes. In other words, it is essential to recognize that the so-called rights of participation, as declared in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), are reflected in each child's individual right to be heard and to have the opportunity to express their opinion (Liebel, 2022). Indeed, the concept of agency refers to a type of domain that operates alongside the socio-structural order and is understood as a process of negotiation and seizing opportunities (Thoutenhoofd, Pirrie, 2015). Childhood actions are understood as positioning; that is, children can question how they experience life and actively define the social world in which they live. This understanding can certainly be applied to the assessment process, as children are capable of analyzing their own learning.

In pedagogical documentation, there is an open possibility to give children the opportunity to comment on their learning, self-assess, and describe the stages through which they have explored, investigated, and experienced a particular interest (Maldonado-Ruiz, Fernández García, Soto Gómez, 2020). In other words, children actively participate in constructing their own learning through co-assessment exercises, when work and learning are shared among peers. To address critiques concerning the limited applicability of this approach, it is necessary to provide concrete examples of how children's voices can be integrated into assessment processes within early childhood classrooms. This can be achieved through individual or group interviews, participatory observation, the collection of children's work, classroom meetings, and the use of adapted self-assessment

scales. These practical strategies make it possible to contextualize assessment within the daily life of the school (Alexander; 2017), ensuring that children's voices are heard and considered in decisions about their learning.

To some extent, the learning processes mediated through pedagogical documentation highlight the democratic dimension that should underlie evaluative practices. They also underscore the need for impartiality and the avoidance of potential biases that may arise within assessment designs (Rasooli *et al.*, 2021; Resh, Sabbagh, 2016). Similarly, as a pluralistic process, assessment invites educators to consider children's interests and motivations during planning, elements that are ultimately reflected in the construction of pedagogical documentation.

Within this context, we position ourselves to emphasize the transformative nature of pedagogical documentation, provided it is understood as a challenge to educate in both ethical and ecological way. This entails fostering in young children values and attitudes of empathy and responsibility towards the environment to which they belong (Riquelme *et al.*, 2022). Such aim can be realized when translated into formative, democratic, and empathetic educational settings. This is the call of Education that seeks to drive change in human development. It involves adapting and transforming pedagogical practices and embracing ecological learning, where social equity, collaboration, and a sense of the common good are firmly reinforced in early childhood classrooms. Essentially, children are capable of transforming practices within their families and immediate surroundings; by promoting these social values through equitable evaluative experiences and meaningful pedagogical encounters, we facilitate the social changes we both hope for and need.

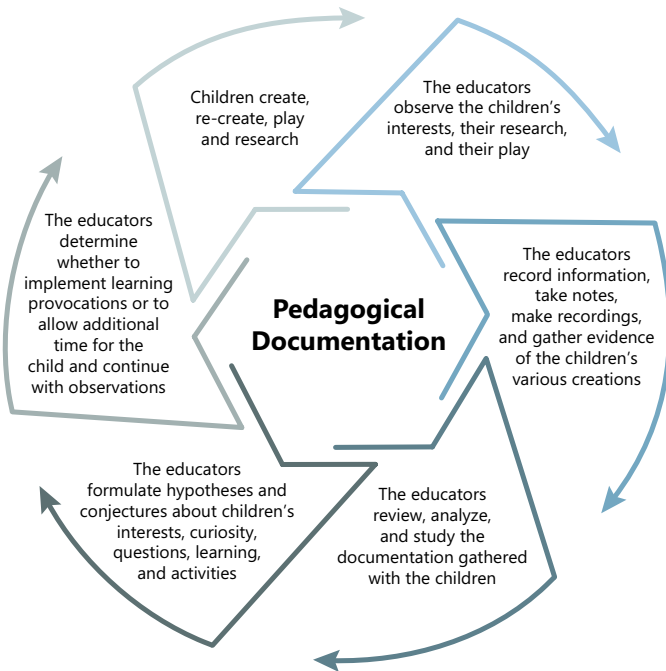
Pedagogical documentation can, without doubt, be regarded as an assessment tool from an ecological perspective, given its focus on the active participation of children throughout the learning process. As this discussion illustrates, the imperative to educate and assess fairly from the earliest ages to enhance learning calls for the design and implementation of more inclusive and integrative assessment methods. In fact, from this viewpoint, pedagogical documentation fundamentally conceives the assessment process as a new learning opportunity (Sanmartí, 2020).

3 Why do we document pedagogically?

An important issue is to clarify what pedagogical documentation is not. It does not involve observing children through preconceived categories (Merewether, 2018; Dahlberg, Pence, Moss, 1999). Documentation becomes a pedagogical tool only when reflection occurs and when its records and findings are considered in making decisions for future actions related to learning and teaching

(Lee-Hammond, Bjervås, 2021). Furthermore, the purposes and methods of documentation carry different nuances (Buldu, 2010; Merewether, 2018; TORGEIR; SHERIDAN, 2015); however, describing the learning child helps improve our practice. In fact, collecting and analyzing documented material through various methods allows educators to reflect on what children know and have learned, enabling systematic work through cyclical stages that include planning, recording, documenting, and assessing learning within context. Thus, pedagogical documentation can be understood as a practice constituted by an interrelated cycle (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Cycle of Pedagogical Documentation

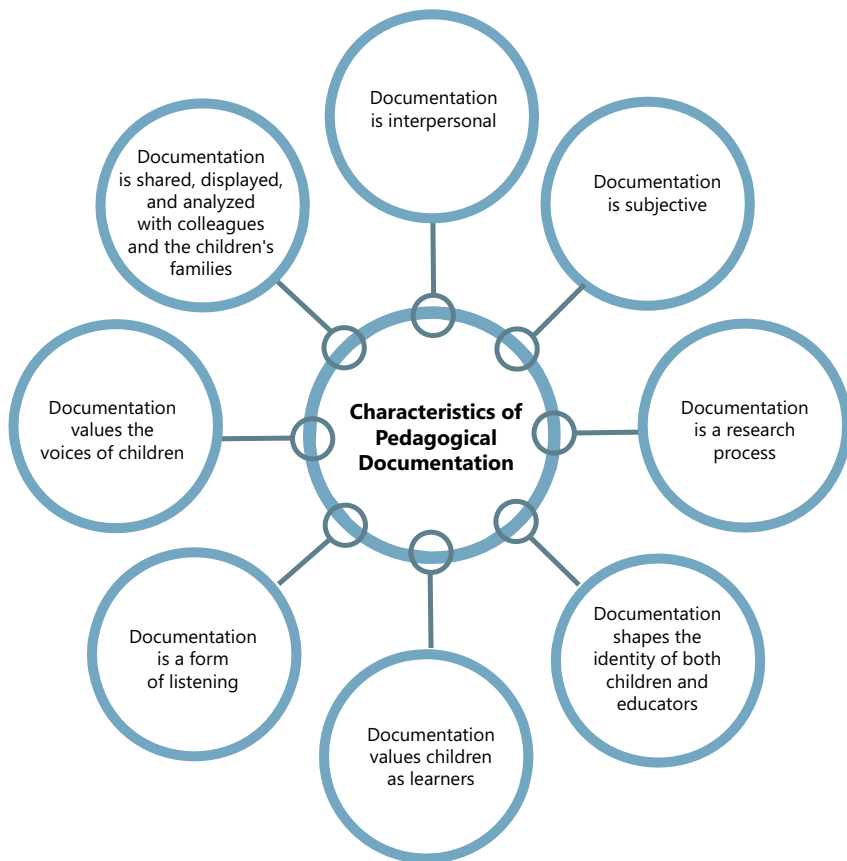


Source: Adapted from Oken-Wright and Gravett (2022)

In this way, classroom assessment in early childhood, which should emphasize practices of fair assessment, can be developed collaboratively within teams that critically analyze these practices. This becomes even more meaningful when it is recognized that documentation contributes to the improvement of teaching and learning processes (Barrientos, López Pastor, Pérez-Brunicardi, 2019).

Furthermore, it is not possible to discuss pedagogical documentation without acknowledging that its defining characteristics have been developed through practice and inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Characteristics of Pedagogical Documentation



Source: Adapted from Huff-Sisson and Whittington (2017)

Despite the above, it is important to acknowledge that pedagogical documentation, while presented as a valuable tool for making children's learning visible and promoting more formative and participatory assessment, faces significant challenges in its practical implementation. There is an inherent tension between the ideal of child-centered documentation—capturing children's voices and fostering their

autonomy—and the external pressures to comply with standards and standardized assessments (Hopfenbeck, Flórez-Petour, Tolo, 2014). This conflict can lead to documentation becoming a bureaucratic exercise, thereby losing its transformative potential and being reduced to a mere collection of superficial evidence.

To address these challenges, educators must understand pedagogical documentation not merely as a technique but as a reflective process that enables them to question their own practices and adapt them to the individual needs of each child. This requires sustained professional development and institutional support that promote collaboration among colleagues, critical reflection on the collected data, and the active participation of families in the assessment process. Only through such efforts can pedagogical documentation fulfil its promise of promoting meaningful and equitable learning for all children.

4 What is pedagogical documentation in early childhood?

Pedagogical documentation is an approach that has been developed over a long period in early childhood Education, adapting various perspectives and stages in the implementation of teaching practices worldwide (Zabalza, 2003; Nisbet, Shaw, 2019). It undoubtedly embodies principles of formative assessment, as it not only provides information that can support and mediate teaching and learning processes more effectively (López-Pastor, Molina Soria, Pascual Arias, Manrique Arribas, 2020) but also opens a scenario that invites reflection on pedagogical actions. In fact, even the professional development of early childhood educators can be enhanced through pedagogical documentation, as it allows them to observe their own classroom practices, reflect on their methods of mediating learning, and assess the quality of these processes (Lee-Hammond, Bjervås, 2021; Sousa, 2019).

In this context, as Stacey (2015) notes, it is intriguing how interest in documentation has grown among Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers worldwide. The adoption of this approach appears to transcend its technical dimension, as his research with numerous teachers demonstrates that pedagogical documentation can transform the learning process and how it elicits responses from others—particularly children and their families. These findings underscore the significant implications that documentation holds for pedagogical practice.

Recent literature has shown that pedagogical documentation is a tool that can enhance collaborative dialogue between families and educational centers





(Albin-Clark, 2021; Alasuutari, Markström, Vallberg-Roth, 2014; Hopfenbeck, Flórez-Petour, Tolo, 2020; Reynolds, Duf, 2016), offering viable advantages such as promoting the search for children's voices and agency (Sousa, 2019). The latter involves understanding children as subjects who influence and take charge of their own learning and even autonomously transform their environment (James, 2012), skills required by 21st-century Education.

Furthermore, pedagogical documentation undoubtedly serves multiple functions (Albin-Clark, 2019; Alasuutari, Markström, Vallberg-Roth, 2014), including providing early childhood educators with the opportunity to analyze their practices, reflect on the educational context in which they mediate, and generate pedagogical discussions with colleagues (Stacey, 2015). It is worth noting that pedagogical documentation diverges from assessment practices that still prevail and that Albin-Clark (2021) critically analyzes for their reductionism. These practices are primarily linked to perspectives focused on measurement and achievement, or worse, they become relational comparisons between children, overshadowing the opportunity for learning (Nisbet, Shaw, 2019).

In contrast, approaches such as the Reggio Emilia approach originating from Malaguzzi (Dahlberg, Moos, 2008), assert that pedagogical documentation (a term coined by Dahlberg and Moos [2008], to differentiate it from other documentary processes) describes processes and justifies experiences and events that occur in teaching and learning processes (Davoli, 2011). However, it is not limited to this; it emphasizes that for some early childhood educators, it can function as a mirror to their own practices, inviting them to reflect, analyze, and improve their pedagogical practices (Stacey, 2015). Below is an example of Pedagogical Documentation.

In a project about the universe, an educator might record children's questions, document their experiments, and then invite them to share their discoveries and reflections in a presentation for their families. *Example of Pedagogical Documentation: Educational Experiences on Celestial Phenomena* (Table).

Table – Pedagogical Documentation: Educational Experiences on Celestial Phenomena

<p>Practical Activity: Observing with a Telescope</p>  <p>Preschool Teacher with a 5-Year-Old Child Observing the Moon</p>	<p>Practical Activity: Representations of Lunar Craters</p>  <p>“The moon has craters; this is what the craters on the moon look like. We saw them with the monocular, and this is how they look. Look, look, can you see?” (Inti, 5 years 4 months).</p>	<p>Drawings of Lunar Craters by Preschoolers</p>  <p>“The moon and the craters I observed” (Rayen, 5 years).</p>
<p>Practical Activity: The Family Observes the Moon</p>  <p>Family Documenting Experience on Moon Observation</p>	<p>Pedagogical Feedback</p> <p>What have been our aims? With: Children Families</p> <p>What has been achieved? What can be improved?</p> <p>What did the children learn? How can I tell? What do the children say? What do their families say?</p> <p>What is the purpose of carrying out this activity with the children? And with the families? Why?</p> <p>How do we challenge ourselves to continue with these researched learnings?</p>	

Source: Adapted from Elfström (2018)

A range of strategies is available to educators seeking to ensure that pedagogical documentation authentically represents children’s experiences and perspectives. Individual or group journaling allows children to record their activities, learning processes, and challenges, both independently and collaboratively. Recorded

interviews and conversations provide opportunities for children to articulate their reflections in their own voices. By facilitating reflection on their learning and empowering children to make decisions about how it is documented, these approaches foster autonomy and agency, supporting their development as critical and engaged citizens (Ríos-Muñoz, Herrera-Araya, 2021).

By considering these strategies, it becomes clear that pedagogical documentation is not simply a technical act but a reflective and ethical process that requires intentional design. To further illustrate how such reflection can be translated into practice, the following conceptual framework outlines key phases for developing reflective documentation in early childhood settings. This proposal, grounded in the principles discussed above, is intended as a methodological suggestion rather than a prescriptive model.

5 Suggested Framework for Reflective Pedagogical Documentation

5.1 Awareness (Initial Phase)

Educators understand pedagogical documentation as a key tool for improving their practice rather than as an end in itself. This phase emphasizes connecting documentation with the existing curriculum.

5.2 Implementation (Field Phase)

- **Focus Areas:** Select one or two specific aspects of children’s learning or development (e.g., language in play, conflict resolution).
- **Simplified Tools:** Use quick notes, photographs, short videos (with consent), and samples of children’s work.
- **Dedicated Time:** Allocate 30–60 minutes weekly to review and reflect on the collected evidence.

5.3 Reflection and Dialogue (Analysis Phase)

- **Team Meetings:** Hold short sessions (15–30 minutes) for educators to share observations, analyze evidence, and plan new strategies.
- **Guiding Questions:** Use simple prompts to reflect on children’s learning, identify areas for improvement, and explore ways to involve families.

- **Shared Documentation:** Create a virtual space to organize the team's evidence and reflections.

5.4 Systematization (Synthesis Phase)

At the end of a cycle (e.g., term or project), select significant evidence and elaborate a narrative synthesis of learning *with and about* the child. Describe progress and challenges collaboratively, in a formative and participatory manner. Share this synthesis with families in an accessible format.

From an ecological and interpretive standpoint, pedagogical documentation can be understood as an exploration of alternative assessment languages that emerge from the contextualized interactions of everyday practices (Dahlber; Moos, 2008). This perspective highlights the openness of documentation as a means to strengthen Education that fosters eco-justice, promoting values and practices of social sustainability such as participation, agency, collaborative learning, and contextual analysis. In this sense, documentation becomes a shared construction of experiences within educational communities (Zabalza, 2020).

Reflecting on documentation also requires recognizing the principle that children possess powerful learning potential. Through this approach, their experiences are valued as legitimate representations of knowledge, incorporating their perspectives and interpretations into the learning process (Dann, 2018). Consequently, pedagogical documentation contributes not only to understanding the world of childhood but also to co-constructing that understanding among children themselves (Picher, 2019). Moreover, documentation supports in-depth observation, the discovery of insights, and the analysis of learning evidence through participatory and active approaches (Maldonado-Ruiz, Soto, 2022). This process centers on children's agency and reflects authentic, playful, and ethically grounded approaches to assessment (Lenz Taguchi, 2010).

Continuous engagement in this practice provides valuable opportunities for collaboration with families and children, enabling joint planning based on their interests and needs. In doing so, documentation makes the learning journey—and its corresponding challenges and achievements—visible and meaningful.

Another benefit of sustained and systematic documentation is its dual value: it enables preschoolers and their families to evaluate and reflect on learning progress while also serving as a powerful tool for teachers and educational communities to analyze and improve pedagogical practice. Scholars have long emphasized the importance of distinguishing documentation from mere

observation detached from context (Merewether, 2018; Dahlberg, Pence, Moss, 1999). Pedagogical documentation thus provides a framework to address the subjective dimensions inherent in assessment (Picher, 2019) and acknowledges that interpretation is an inevitable part of educational analysis (Huff-Sisson, Whittington, 2017). It offers spaces for collective, dialogic inquiry into teaching and learning processes.

Picher (2019) further argues that pedagogical documentation goes beyond recording events, serving as a means for educators to understand how children think and learn, and positioning teachers as co-learners alongside children and their families. This aligns with perspectives that call for moving beyond simple recording of progress toward more inclusive and holistic approaches to assessment (Peralta, 2017). Ultimately, assessment processes cannot be separated from the ethical and democratic-participatory values that guide them. Pedagogical documentation embodies this commitment by gathering evidence of children's learning trajectories through multimodal tools—such as photographs, collages, and drawings—to narrate the processes and stories of their development.

6 Assessment processes with preschoolers: how to implement pedagogical documentation in early childhood Education?

In Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), the ethical demands of assessment processes should possess the same characteristics expected at other educational levels. As previously mentioned, assessment significantly influences teaching and learning (Santos-Guerra, 2014), and it is desirable to mediate in various educational environments to transform them into democratic and collaborative spaces.

Although psychometric approaches still exist, which seek greater objectivity and comparative benchmarks for evaluation processes, there is a strong conviction in the early childhood field to design evaluative practices with a comprehensive and predominantly holistic perspective. Thus, through ongoing observations and information gathering centered on the needs and interests of young children, early childhood educators strive to preserve the unique characteristics of development during this critical stage of human life (Gözüm, Gungor, Altinkaynak, 2021) and invite parents and children to reflect on their learning journeys.

Of course, this task is challenging due to the persistent focus on standards and measurements (Nisbet, Shaw, 2019), along with institutional interests such as

preparation for school entry and relevant performance outcomes. The emphasis on achievement and effectiveness is not a new issue. In preschool Education, especially for children nearing school entry age, it has become more pronounced, revealing assessment practices that significantly deviate from the holistic approach sought in ECEC (Aroca *et al.*, 2022).

Fortunately, a significant part of ECE aims to emphasize the understanding that children develop better and more effectively in their learning when they have the opportunity to engage in active pedagogical practices within quality environments where assessment is an integral component of these learnings (Aroca *et al.*, 2022). This leads us to analyze what is currently occurring in the field of assessment and learning in early childhood.

7 What approaches are being used in learning and assessment processes in early childhood?

Despite the literature indicating that various issues persist in the initial training of early childhood educators and their development when facing learning and assessment processes in the classroom, such as the gap between theory and practice in their initial training (Figuroa-Céspedes *et al.*, 2022; Maldonado-Ruiz, Fernández García, Soto Gómez, 2020), as well as the prevalence of academic-oriented and standardized assessment in educational centers (Aroca *et al.*, 2022), there has been an observed increase in the adoption of formative learning and evaluation practices. This increase, driven either by government guidelines or by decisions within educational institutions, reveals a broad range of strategies and methodologies used in early childhood, aiming to replace adult-centered approaches with student-centered ones (Andrade, Brookhart, 2019).

In ECE, processes such as formative assessment are being implemented to promote active participation by children in constructing their own learning (Braund, Deluca, Panadero, Cheng, 2021). Additionally, approaches such as authentic assessment (García-Gamez, 2024), action research (Aroca *et al.*, 2022), learning portfolios (Yilmaz, Aras, Ülker, Şahin, 2023), and project-based learning (Ruiz Hidalgo, Ortega-Sánchez, 2022) have gained prominence and are increasingly being used in early childhood classrooms.

However, for the purposes of this article, it is the concept of AaL that we recommend studying and adopting as a transformative approach to assessment practice.

8 Assessment as learning: new approach to transform assessment practices

Assessment from the perspective of AaL values and gives voice to children and young people regarding their educational process. In this regard, Sanmartí (2020) distinguishes between formative assessment and AaL, explaining that in the former, the decisions involved in the assessment process are the responsibility of the learner. This conceptual differentiation broadens the often limited view of assessment as a practice rooted solely in the teacher's role.

Beyond the distinctions between different types or characteristics of assessment, it is essential to examine how assessment has evolved within educational practice. From this perspective, some authors such as Santos-Guerra (2014) emphasize that assessment is often reduced to functions of classification, control and measurement, which highlights the need for critical reflection on its underlying purposes. Therefore, analyzing assessment requires a profound questioning of how both learning and assessment are conceptualized.

Transitioning to a practice of AaL involves rethinking the pedagogical relationships between students and teachers (Jara Aguilera, Cáceres Cáceres, León Martínez, Villagra Bravo, 2022; Ríos-Muñoz, Herrera-Araya, 2021). Improving the assessment process in the classroom requires challenging activities with support and timely feedback that fosters self-confidence (Fullan, Langworthy, 2014). This view of learning inherently conceives assessment as an integrated practice that can either support or hinder the holistic development of the learner.

Muñoz Olivero, Villagra Bravo and Sepúlveda Silva (2016) argue that an academic-focused teaching approach centered on knowledge is related to conventional assessment based on the reproduction of knowledge. Thus, there is a need to broaden the vision of Education to understand that it transmits fundamental values that do not arise spontaneously from children (Levinson, Solomon, 2021). In other words, the type of assessment used in the classroom promotes certain values that go beyond situated learning and reach towards the ideal of the person that society expects.

One way in which assessment is expressed in the classroom is through the level of involvement of the learner in the process. According to this perspective, the United Nations Children's Fund (United Nations Children's Fund, 2013) emphasizes the need to listen to students' opinions about their learning, as they are subjects of rights. Similarly, Turra, Villagra Bravo, Mellado Hernández and

Aravena Kenigs (2022) encourage educators to democratize assessment practices from a perspective of shared responsibility, which involves collaboration among various educational agents.

From the standpoint of shared educational responsibility, assessment is an experience of learning that allows for the consensus of viewpoints and the making of joint decisions on how to improve the learner's developmental process. It also prompts teachers to reflect on their own evaluative practices (Brookhart, 2023). Consequently, pedagogical relationships are approached from a horizontal and dialogic perspective, inviting full and authentic participation of educational agents.

In ECE, shared assessment experiences demonstrate the capacity of young children to make decisions about their own learning (Pascual-Arias, García-Herranz, López-Pastor, 2019). Additionally, García (2017) encourages involving families in the assessment processes of young children. It should be assumed that, at younger ages, family involvement in assessment is essential for promoting the child's development.

In summary, to transform assessment practices and foster enriching learning environments, it is essential to reconfigure the dynamics of power and authority. In this way, the learning experiences constructed will be aligned with the ethical and moral principles aspired to by society (Ríos-Muñoz; Herrera-Araya, 2021). To achieve this, it is crucial to examine the initial training of teachers and how they face classroom assessment, considering also the educational reforms stemming from the Education system as a whole, as well as the tools available to implement what is truly needed to promote meaningful and enriching learning experiences and assessment processes for young children (Gutiérrez-Martinetti, Riquelme-Arredondo, 2024).

9 Final considerations

Following an extensive review and analysis of both national and international literature, this article has successfully met its objective of exploring the benefits of pedagogical documentation as a tool to enhance teaching and learning processes in ECE. It has also emphasized the significance of AaL as a guiding framework for these documentation processes.

The study's guiding questions reveal that AaL is the assessment approach that best complements pedagogical documentation. It enriches the teaching-learning process while fostering active participation from students, educators, and families, creating a more holistic and integrated learning experience in preschool.

Despite the adoption of new assessment strategies by early childhood educators, challenges remain. A gap between theory and practice, particularly in classroom assessment, persists due to institutional constraints or conflicts with teachers' training and personal beliefs. Acknowledging children's agency in the evaluation process is essential for moving beyond welfare-oriented, adult-centered models and fostering a more democratic and participatory approach.

Consequently, this article aims to contribute to future research on how educational institutions and public policies shape assessment processes, resource allocation, administrative demands on teachers, and curricula, all of which affect the use of pedagogical documentation within an AaL approach. It also calls for a deeper investigation into preschool assessment strategies, an area with limited research compared to primary and secondary Education.

Ultimately, moving beyond adult-centric assessment models that marginalize children's participation or reflect unconscious sociocultural biases is crucial. Leveraging documentation to support democratic assessment practices will help enhance children's learning. Although early years teachers are striving to shift from adult-centered to student-centered approaches, this transformation must be supported by policy changes that reflect national contexts and pedagogical realities. These efforts will equip future teachers to implement equitable and democratic assessment practices, addressing the social and ethical challenges in ECE.

Documentación pedagógica desde el enfoque de evaluación como aprendizaje en aulas de preescolares

Resumen

La documentación pedagógica es un método que evidencia la progresión de los procesos de aprendizaje de los niños en educación inicial. Este artículo discute los beneficios de la documentación pedagógica y el enfoque más adecuado para su implementación práctica, a partir de una extensa revisión y análisis de literatura. Se abordan preguntas clave, como ¿Qué es la documentación pedagógica?, ¿Cómo implementarla en educación preescolar?, ¿Qué enfoques se están utilizando en procesos de aprendizaje y evaluación en la primera infancia?, y ¿Cómo la documentación pedagógica podría transformar la práctica educativa preescolar? El objetivo de este análisis busca contribuir al campo de la educación preescolar y proponer prácticas que promuevan el aprendizaje y el desarrollo integral de los niños en sus experiencias educativas, con un énfasis en la documentación pedagógica desde el enfoque de la evaluación como aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: Documentación Pedagógica. Evaluación como Aprendizaje. Preescolares Primera Infancia.

Documentação pedagógica a partir da abordagem de avaliação como aprendizagem em salas de aula de Educação Infantil

Resumo

A documentação pedagógica é um método que evidencia a progressão dos processos de aprendizagem na Educação inicial. Este artigo discute os benefícios desse método e a abordagem mais adequada para sua implementação, com base em uma extensa revisão e análise da literatura. São abordadas questões-chave como: O que é documentação pedagógica? Como implementá-la na Educação Infantil? Quais abordagens estão sendo usadas em processos de aprendizagem e avaliação na primeira infância? E como a documentação pedagógica poderia transformar a prática educativa na Educação Infantil? O objetivo desta análise é contribuir para o campo da Educação Infantil ao propor práticas que promovam a aprendizagem e o desenvolvimento integral das crianças em suas experiências educacionais, com ênfase na documentação pedagógica sob a perspectiva da avaliação como aprendizagem.

Palavras-chave: Documentação Pedagógica. Avaliação como Aprendizagem. Educação Infantil. Primeira Infância.

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