

The Quality of Tasks in Learning Assessment: The Perspective of Law Students

“A Quality Evaluation Requires That in be Perceived by Students as a Rigorous Evaluation, A Credible, Useful and Interesting Evaluation”.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: One of the essential components of the learning evaluation dimension is the quality of the tasks used by teachers to evaluate and rate student performance. Some of their characteristics linked to their relevance to achieve the transfer of knowledge is that they are relevant, challenging, realistic and contextualized in such a way that they favor depth in knowledge and communication.

For Boud, D. (2020), assessment in higher education is undergoing a significant change, moving from an approach focused on comparison between students (norm-referenced assessment) towards a standards-based system that judges performance based on of pre-established criteria. This change is accompanied by an expansion of the purposes of evaluation, transcending the simple certification of students to encompass objectives such as the promotion of learning, the development of skills and the capacity for self-assessment.

OBJECTIVE: Evaluate the quality of learning evaluation tasks based on the dimensions: Challenge, Depth, Communication and Transfer; as well as determining whether the sex, semester and grade average of the students are factors associated with the evaluations that students make of the quality of the evaluation of the tasks assigned by the professors.

METHOD: An empirical investigation of an explanatory and transversal nature was carried out; through a non-probabilistic convenience sampling in which 177 students from the law school of a private university in Mexico participated. The dependent variable under study was: The quality of the learning evaluation tasks that teachers use to assign grades to their students and the independent variables were sex, progress in the degree, type of school year and grade point average qualifications in the race.

INSTRUMENT: The questionnaire called: Analysis of Evaluation and Learning Tasks (ATAE) developed by Ibarra-Saiz, M.S. and Rodríguez-Gómez, G. (2020 B) that evaluates the quality of the Assessment Tasks defined as an activity designed with the purpose of collecting information on the ability of students to apply and use their competencies, knowledge, abilities and skills when address the resolution of complex problems and be able to verify the degree of achievement of the expected learning results. The ATAE questionnaire is structured in four dimensions and consists of 16 items in a scale format from 0 to 10 distributed in each of the following dimensions: Challenge, refers to addressing open and complex problems that require divergent thinking, creativity and the establishing meaningful connections; Depth that involves demonstrating deep understanding through the use of methods of inquiry and reflective and critical thinking. Communication, this is using oral, written or symbolic communication strategies, through presentations, performances or products based on substantiated argumentation.

Transfer, involves relating knowledge and experience with other subjects and with social and professional reality.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS: (1) Students perceive the quality of the tasks for the evaluation of learning as Good (8).

(2) Among the students as a whole, it is identified that there is little homogeneity regarding the perception they have about the quality of the learning evaluation tasks ($D_s = 1.78$)

(3) Most of the students 112/177 consider that the quality is equal to or less than 7.

(4) Make the tasks to evaluate learning CHALLENGING, this is the dimension with the greatest opportunity for improvement

(5) Null hypothesis (H_0) is approved for sex, type of school year, career advancement and career grade average regarding the quality of the learning evaluation tasks and their dimensions: Depth, Communication, Challenging and Transfer, that is say there are no significant differences.

The Quality of Tasks in Learning Assessment: The Perspective of Law Students

IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS:

(1) Improve the quality of learning assessment tasks in relation to:

- Quality of tasks: Depth, challenging, communication and transfer of learning (See Table 2)
- Alignment with learning objectives.
- Homework must be fair and equitable for all students.
- Students should receive constructive and timely feedback on their performance on assignments.

To guide the design of the tasks, it is suggested to use an appropriate framework such as the Task Quality Assessment Framework (TQF), the Instructional Design Assessment Framework (IDD) or the Equity and Justice Framework Evaluation (EFA). These frameworks provide criteria and guidelines for designing assignments that are high quality, aligned with learning objectives, equitable, and that provide useful feedback to students.

(2) Systematize the teacher-student relationship in formative assessment by adopting the guidelines for providing feedback to students on their academic work (See Annex 1) and the guidelines on effective feedback (See Annex 2)

(3) Implement the case method using the guide proposed for this purpose (See Annex 3). This will contribute to defining a style of professional training and teaching based on the homologation of the teaching-learning activities carried out by teachers in the different dimensions of teaching competence: didactic planning, teaching and learning evaluation.

(4) Define didactic projects for the systematization of the preparation of legal documents, simulation of oral trials and training in values.

(5) Evaluate the law program in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and quality based on performance standards. For this purpose, it is pertinent to conceive the curriculum as an educational project in which the expected learning, contents, methodology and evaluation of learning were defined. This implies defining a program evaluation system.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Universities, as educational centers, have the fundamental responsibility of certifying that their graduates have satisfactorily completed the academic requirements of their study programs. However, it is crucial to avoid complacency and assume that evaluation methods used in the past are still appropriate for current needs. It is necessary to implement assessment strategies that do not hinder the learning process that is sought to be promoted, recognizing that expectations about assessment have a significant impact on the form and content of student learning.

Education shapes and perfects human development by taking care of the content in teaching, generating an environment conducive to learning and investigating the learner's interior knowledge. University professors, using the principle of academic freedom, daily make decisions about the different components related to the teaching-learning process. Teaching competence conceived by three dimensions, namely, didactic planning, teaching and learning evaluation, is essential for achieving the expected learning, so for the professionalization of teachers it is necessary to focus training on these dimensions (Lizasoain-Hernández L., Etxeberria-Murgiondo J. and Lukas-Mujika J. 2017).

University education is a shared responsibility between universities, families and students. Universities have a responsibility to provide quality education that prepares students for success in their careers and life. Families have a responsibility to support their children in their studies and encourage them to reach their full potential. Students have a responsibility to work hard and get the most out of their education.

University education is important not only for students, but also for society as a whole. Universities graduate professionals with the skills and knowledge they need to contribute to the common good. Higher education also helps promote social mobility and create a more just and equitable society. University education is an investment in the future. It is an investment in students, families and society as a whole.

For Boud, D. (2020), assessment in higher education is undergoing a significant change, moving from an approach focused on comparison between students (norm-referenced assessment) towards a standards-based system that judges performance based on pre-established criteria. This change is accompanied by an expansion of the purposes of the evaluation, transcending the simple certification of students to encompass objectives such as the promotion of learning, the development of skills and the capacity for self-assessment. In this perspective, the question to be answered is:

Can we be sure that assessment in higher education meets the need to develop and ensure high-quality learning outcomes?

In the evaluation dimension, one of the essential components is the quality of the tasks used by teachers to evaluate student learning and performance (ATAE). Some of the characteristics linked to the relevance of these to achieve the transfer of knowledge is that they are relevant, challenging, realistic and contextualized in such a way that they favor depth in knowledge and communication.

The evaluation of learning at the university is an indispensable tool for educational success. By using valid, relevant and appropriate assessment instruments and means, we can obtain accurate information about students' learning level and make informed decisions

The Quality of Tasks in Learning Assessment: The Perspective of Law Students

to improve the teaching-learning process. (Ibarra-Sáiz, M.S., Rodríguez-Gómez, G., Lukas-Mujika, J.F., & Santos-Berrondo, A. 2023).

The quality of the evaluation of the tasks that the teacher designs to evaluate student learning has effects on the validity and reliability of the grades assigned to student performance, on trust in the program and in the institution that offers it, in student satisfaction and in the generation of better conditions for successful job placement (See Figure 1). In this sense, assessing the characteristics of the tasks used in the evaluation of learning and their relationships constitutes an important source of information for their improvement, for the evaluation of learning and for the professionalization of teachers.

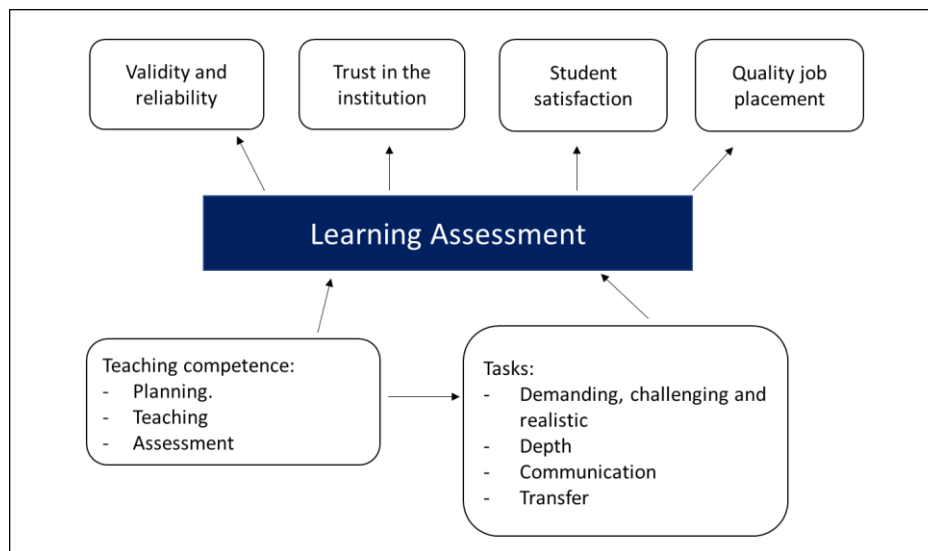


Figure 1: Location of the problem under study

Source: self-made

Much of the evaluation of teaching focuses on what teachers do in class and how they affect students' learning outside of class, since the tasks with which they evaluate their students' learning have an overwhelming influence on what they do, how and when students study, in this sense evaluate the quality of the evaluation, that is, the tasks used to assess student learning (ATAE) is relevant to propose a set of conditions under which assessment supports learning and offer a framework for teachers to review the effectiveness of their own practice evaluation (Gibb, G. & Simpson, C., 2004).

In universities, evaluations focus mainly on theoretical concepts, predominantly using hetero-assessment and a final evaluation that is more summative than formative. University students perceive evaluation as a means to verify and qualify their knowledge, instead of a tool to improve their learning (Lukas, J.F., Santiago, K., Lizasoain, L., and Etxeberria, J. 2017), with the common majority use of the final exam as the main source of assessment.

Quality assessment involves exposing students to intellectually demanding, challenging and realistic tasks, with the aim of encouraging student participation in the appropriation of knowledge through learning. This is how a quality evaluation requires that it be perceived by the student as a rigorous evaluation, a credible, fair, useful and interesting evaluation (Ibarra-Sáiz, M. S., & Rodríguez-Gómez, G. 2020-B).

Teaching as a situated activity is relevant and pertinent to the extent that it considers the learning needs of those it is addressed to, the training objectives and the congruence with which the expected learning is evaluated. However, students frequently complain about the timeliness, usefulness, and fairness of the assessment. Therefore, asking students about the quality of the evaluation tasks assigned to them by teachers is one of the resources to improve their design.

Students experience an increase in their motivation when assessment tasks are linked to a real experience and have a challenging nature, which contributes to more useful and meaningful learning and when systematic observation of professional practice is adopted, it is essential for the improvement in performance (Cubero-Ibáñez, J. & Ponce-González, N. 2020)

The main evaluation activities refer to tasks, exams, projects, problem solving, etc. designed by the teacher to assign a grade at the end of the course.

In this regard, they are essential attributes to evaluate the expected learning: (1) that the evaluation activities are challenging, that is, they address open and complex problems that require divergent thinking, creativity and establishing meaningful relationships and connections; (2) that allow for the demonstration of deep understanding through the use of methods of inquiry and reflective and critical thinking; (3) that encourages the use of communication strategies, oral, written or symbolic, through presentations, performances or products based on substantiated argumentation; these attributes favors, (4) transfer, that is, relating knowledge and experience with other subjects and with social and professional reality (Ibarra-Sáiz & Rodríguez-Gómez 2020-B) (See figure 2).

The Quality of Tasks in Learning Assessment: The Perspective of Law Students

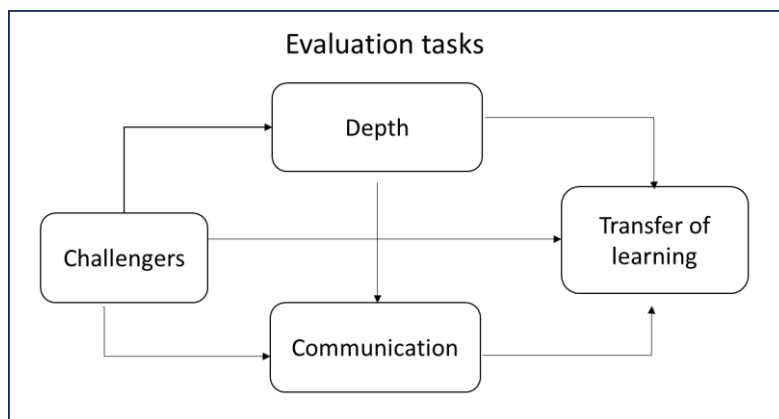


Figure 2.

Source: Ibarra-Sáiz, M.S. and Rodríguez-Gómez, G. (2020-A).

Based on the above, the study analyzes the evaluations that law degree students make on the learning evaluation tasks assigned to them by their professors, in relation to three essential attributes of an evaluation task: being a challenging stimulus, promote deep understanding, the use of communication strategies and the ability to transfer what was learned during the completion of the task.

In this direction, the study aims to evaluate the quality of learning evaluation tasks based on the dimensions: Challenge, Depth, Communication and Transfer; as well as determining whether the sex, semester and grade average of the students are factors associated with the evaluations that students make about the quality of the evaluation of the tasks assigned by the professors.

The design and specification of evaluation tasks is a necessary reform for the evaluation of learning in higher education, since the evaluation and qualification of students' performances imply establishing an inference based on the student's products and actions and logically, the quality of this inference is determined by the quality of the data (the student's products and actions) and the skill of the evaluator. This work is located in the second element: the ability of the Evaluator (Sadler, 2016).

Evaluation tasks are activities designed with the purpose of collecting information on the ability of students to apply and use their competencies, knowledge, abilities and skills when addressing the resolution of complex problems and to be able to verify the degree of achievement of the learning results expected.

Evaluation tasks must be facilitators of learning, encourage student involvement in learning and provide feedback for future learning, serving not only to analyze the degree of execution but also to understand potential future areas of improvement (Thomas et al 2019). In short, a quality evaluation requires that it be perceived by the student as a rigorous evaluation, a credible, useful and interesting evaluation.

The evaluation tasks used allow students to apply what they have learned in new situations and contexts, with the most commonly used means of evaluation being problem-solving tests, student participation in different activities and multimedia presentations (Muñoz-Cantero, J. M., Espiñeira-Bellón, E. M. and Pérez-Crego, M. C. 2023).

Higher education is going through a period of dynamic change. Enrollment has dropped significantly, driven by the pandemic, the job market and questions about the value of college. This has impacted the teaching staff and the finances of the institutions. Despite the challenges, such as the academic revolution generated by artificial intelligence, higher education also has the opportunity to renew and strengthen itself with new strategies and a renewed sense of purpose.

2. METHOD:

An empirical investigation of an explanatory and transversal nature was carried out; through a non-probabilistic convenience sampling in which 177 law degree students from a private university in Mexico participated. The dependent variable under study was: The quality of the learning evaluation tasks that teachers use to assign grades to their students and the independent variables were sex, progress in the degree, type of school year and grade point average qualifications in the race.

To obtain the information, the questionnaire called: Analysis of Evaluation and Learning Tasks (ATAE) prepared by Ibarra-Saiz, M.S. and Rodríguez-Gómez, G. (2020 B) that evaluates the quality of the Assessment Tasks defined as an activity designed with the purpose of collecting information on the ability of students to apply and use their competencies, knowledge, abilities and skills when address the resolution of complex problems and be able to verify the degree of achievement of the expected learning results. Table 1 specifies the definition of the constructs and the corresponding references. The ATAE questionnaire is structured in four dimensions and consists of 16 items in a scale format from 0 to 10 distributed in each of the dimensions.

The Quality of Tasks in Learning Assessment: The Perspective of Law Students

Table 1: Definition of constructs

CONSTRUCT	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Challenge	Address open-ended, complex problems that require divergent thinking, creativity, and establishing meaningful relationships and connections.	Ashford-Rowe et. al., 2014; Dochy & Gijbels, 2006; Gore et al., 2009; Sambell et al., 2013
Depth	Demonstrate deep understanding using inquiry methods and reflective and critical thinking	Dochy, 2009; Entwistle & Karagiannopoulou, 2014. Herrington & Herrington, 2006; O'Donovan, 2016
Communication	Use communication strategies, oral, written or symbolic, through presentations, performances or products based on substantiated argumentation	Gore et al., 2009; Gulikers et. al, 2004; Smith & Smith, 2014
Transfer	Relate knowledge and experience with other subjects and with social and professional reality	Ashwin et al. 2015; Glofcheski, 2017; Gulikers et al., 2004, 2006; Ibarra-Sáiz et al., 2020; Strijbos et al. 2015

Prepared by: Ibarra-Sáiz, M.S. and Rodríguez-Gómez, G. (2020-A).

To estimate the model, the authors used the PLS-SEM method, a multivariate analysis approach used to estimate models with latent variables whose objective was to calculate the prediction of the quality construct of the evaluation tasks. To check the adequacy of the measurement model, they used the Tetradic Confirmatory Analysis (CTA-PLS) according to its formative nature, for which a multicollinearity analysis and a weight analysis were carried out. Subsequently, they proceeded to analyze the predictive capacity of the model and the relationships between the constructs. To this end, the following analyzes have been carried out: a) evaluation of collinearity (VIF); b) path coefficients of the structural model; c) coefficient of determination (R²); d) effect size (f²); e) predictive relevance (Q²), f) effect size (q²) and g) analysis of predictive power using PLSpredict, the results of which were satisfactory. (Ibarra-Sáiz, M.S. and Rodríguez-Gómez, G. 2020-B).

For the present study, a pilot test was carried out with 24 university students in which a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.935 was obtained for the global questionnaire and a coefficient of 0.867 for the Challenge dimension, 0.768 for depth, 0.760 for Communication and 0.818 for the transfer dimension.

3. RESULTS

a) Descriptive analysis:

The law school students who participated in the study were 177, of which 64 were women, 80 were men, and 33 did not answer the question of type of sex; By type of school year, 33 students are enrolled in a four-month program and 144 in a semester program; Regarding advancement in the degree, 59 were at the beginning of the degree, 89 at the intermediate level and 31 at the terminal level; Considering the average of the students in career 2, they have an average of Sufficient, 28 Good, 99 Very Good and 48 Excellent.

Figure 3: The distribution of the scores assigned by the group of participants is identified. In this regard, it is worth highlighting that the highest concentration 59/177 is on the scale of seven, which means that quite often the tasks that used by teachers to evaluate learning are of quality. There are 40 students who assigned a grade of 8 and then 25 students who assigned a nine and 25 who assigned a grade of five.

The Quality of Tasks in Learning Assessment: The Perspective of Law Students

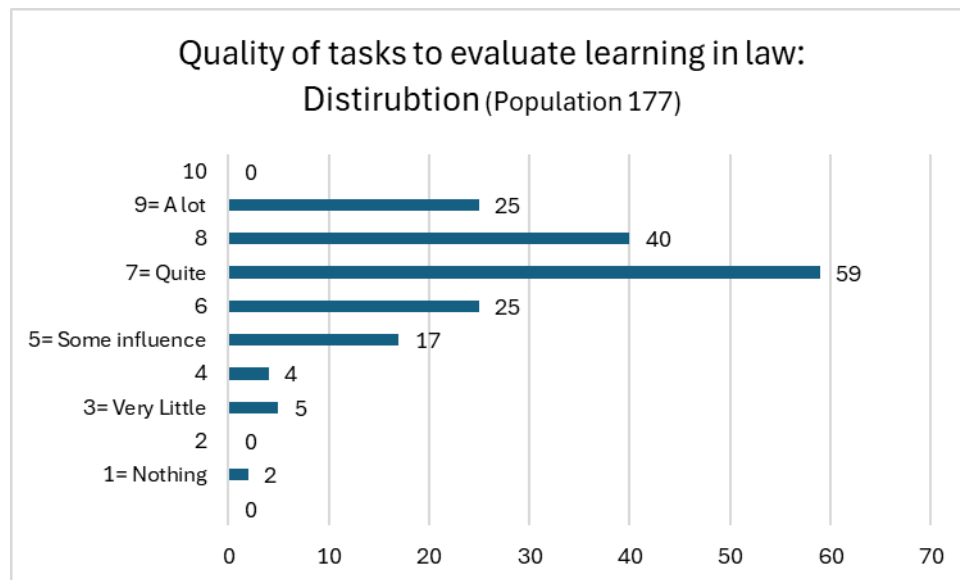


Figure 3

Source: self made

In Figure 4, it can be seen that law students assigned a score of 7.7 to the quality of the tasks their professors use to evaluate learning. In the depth dimension they assigned 8.1, followed by transfer with 7.9, then communication with 7.6 and finally that the tasks are challenging with an average rating of 7.5. It is relevant to note that there is little homogeneity in the evaluation of the quality of the tasks, but on the contrary heterogeneity of the scores assigned as reflected in the standard deviation.

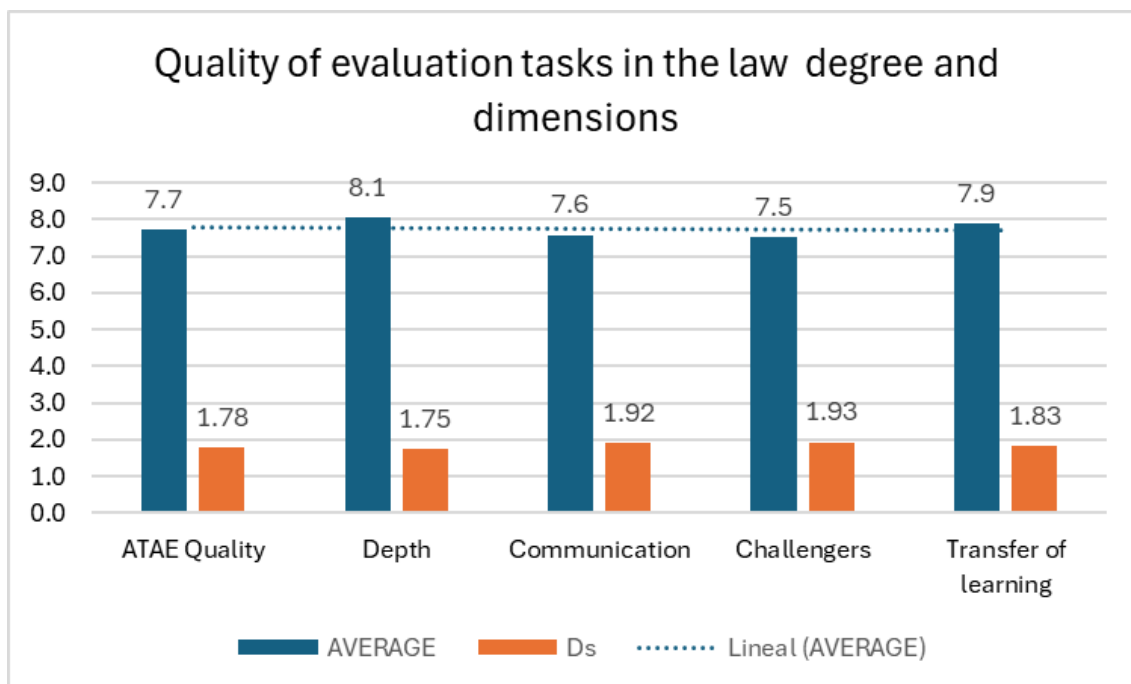


Figure 4

Source: self made

On the other hand, Table 2 shows the disaggregated averages and standard deviations for each of the dimensions and their indicators. The following indicators of the depth dimension stand out with the highest averages: identifying, articulating and relating fundamental concepts and topics of the subject and that related to developing reflective and critical thinking, both with an average of 8.2. In the communication dimension, arguing in a reasoned and founded manner stands out, also with an average of 8.2. On the other hand, the lowest average corresponded to the indicator presenting products to internal or external audiences with a score of 6.9.

The Quality of Tasks in Learning Assessment: The Perspective of Law Students

Table 2. Dimensions of the quality of teaching-learning tasks: Averages and standard deviation

Law degree ATAE dimensions	AVERAGE	Ds
DEPTH	8.1	1.75
1. Use inquiry and research methods.	8.0	1.90
6. Demonstrate a deep understanding of fundamental concepts and ideas.	7.9	2.12
11. Identify, articulate and relate the fundamental concepts and topics of the subject.	8.2	1.82
12. Develop reflective and critical thinking.	8.2	2.03
COMMUNICATION	7.6	1.92
2. Make use of oral or written communication strategies.	7.7	1.99
8. Argue in a reasoned and well-founded way.	8.2	2.01
16. Present products to internal or external audiences.	6.9	2.77
CHALLENGERS	7.5	1.93
3. Establish meaningful relationships and connections.	7.2	2.29
4. Coordinate the process and actions to respond to what is required in the task.	7.7	2.03
5. Take risks by opting for solutions that involve creativity, greater difficulty or uncertainty.	7.4	2.26
7. Look for alternative solutions or perspectives.	7.8	2.21
TRANSFER	7.9	1.83
9. Integrate and relate previous knowledge, skills and experiences with new ones, establishing meaningful and relevant connections.	7.9	1.97
10. Relate previous knowledge, skills and experiences with new ones.	8.0	1.97
13. Relate knowledge and experiences with other subjects.	7.8	2.10
14. Relate knowledge and experiences to social reality.	7.9	2.07
15. Create specific products (projects, essays, presentations, debates, executions, etc.).	7.8	2.34
Source: Self made		

b) Inferential analysis:

To determine the factors associated with the perception of the quality of the learning evaluation tasks, a multifactorial ANOVA was executed to identify the variables that have a statistically significant effect on the quality of the learning evaluation activities (QUALITY- ATAE), in this case the variables considered were sex, type of study cycle, progress in the degree and the students' grade average. This procedure also evaluates the significance of interactions between factors, if there is sufficient data.

Table 4 shows the results of the multifactorial ANOVA for the Quality of Learning Assessment Tasks (QUALITY-ATAE) and its attributes Depth, Communication, Challenging and transfer of learning. The results of the F-tests presented in the last columns of Table 4 allow the significant factors to be identified. In this case, since no P-Value is less than 0.05, none of the study variables have a statistically significant effect on QUALITY-ATAE and the aforementioned dimensions with a 95.0% confidence level.

The Quality of Tasks in Learning Assessment: The Perspective of Law Students

Table 3. Multifactor ANOVA for the quality of learning assessment tasks and dimensions.

QUALITY-ATAE - Sum of Squares Type III					
Source	Sum of Squares	Gl	Mean Square	F-Ratio	P-Value
MAIN EFFECTS					
A: SEX	6.41457	2	3.20729	1.04	0.3557
B: CYCLE-TYPE	1.27054	1	1.27054	0.41	0.5218
C: ADVANCE-LIC	8.48857	2	4.24429	1.38	0.2553
D: AVERAGE	6.06612	3	2.02204	0.66	0.5804
WASTE	518.077	168	3.08379		
TOTAL (CORRECTED)	554.416	176			
DEPTH-AVERAGE – Sum of Squares Type III					
Source	Sum of Squares	Gl	Mean Square	F-Ratio	P-Value
MAIN EFFECTS					
A: SEX	3.38341	2	1.6917	0.57	0.5687
B: CYCLE-TYPE	0.965733	1	0.965733	0.32	0.5704
C: ADVANCE-LIC	8.79302	2	4.39651	1.47	0.2325
D: AVERAGE	10.1752	3	3.39173	1.14	0.3364
WASTE	501.893	168	2.98746		
TOTAL (CORRECTED)	535.635	176			
COMMUNICATION-AVERAGE - Sum of Squares Type III					
Source	Sum of Squares	Gl	Mean Square	F-Ratio	P-Value
MAIN EFFECTS					
A: SEX	5.90395	2	2.95197	0.80	0.4490
B: CYCLE-TYPE	0.0100813	1	0.0100813	0.00	0.9583
C: ADVANCE-LIC	7.05797	2	3.52899	0.96	0.3843
D: AVERAGE	8.45084	3	2.81695	0.77	0.5136
WASTE	616.41	168	3.66911		
TOTAL (CORRECTED)	649.256	176			
CHALLENGERS-AVERAGE - Sum of Squares Type III					
Source	Sum of Squares	Gl	Mean Square	F-Ratio	P-Value
MAIN EFFECTS					
A: SEX	11.2697	2	5.63485	1.56	0.2127
B: CYCLE-TYPE	3.66423	1	3.66423	1.02	0.3149
C: ADVANCE-LIC	12.6594	2	6.32972	1.75	0.1761
D: AVERAGE	2.61637	3	0.872122	0.24	0.8671
WASTE	605.973	168	3.60698		
TOTAL (CORRECTED)	652.811	176			
TRANSFER-AVERAGE – Sum of Squares Type III					
Source	Sum of Squares	Gl	Mean Square	F-Ratio	P-Value
MAIN EFFECTS					
A: SEX	10.7622	2	5.38109	1.66	0.1933
B: CYCLE-TYPE	1.67887	1	1.67887	0.52	0.4728
C: ADVANCE-LIC	13.9264	2	6.96319	2.15	0.1200
D: AVERAGE	4.06588	3	1.35529	0.42	0.7403
WASTE	544.734	168	3.24246		
TOTAL (CORRECTED)	589.985	176			

All F-ratios are based on the mean square of the residual error

Source: Self made

The Quality of Tasks in Learning Assessment: The Perspective of Law Students

4. CONCLUSIONS

- (1) Students perceive the quality of the tasks for the evaluation of learning as Good (8).
- (2) Among the students as a whole, it is identified that there is little homogeneity regarding the perception they have about the quality of the learning evaluation tasks ($D_s = 1.78$)
- (3) Most of the students 112/177 consider that the quality is equal to or less than 7.
- (4) Make the tasks to evaluate learning CHALLENGING, this is the dimension with the greatest opportunity for improvement
- (5) Null hypothesis (H_0) is approved for sex, type of school year, career advancement and career grade average regarding the quality of the learning evaluation tasks and their dimensions: Depth, Communication, Challenging and Transfer, that is say there are no significant differences.

5. IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

(1) Improve the design of learning assessment tasks in relation to:

- Quality of tasks: Tasks must be clear, challenging and relevant to the expected learning. They must promote the transfer of knowledge, professional communication, critical thinking, problem solving and creativity in students; based on the results of the study (See Table 2)
- Alignment with learning objectives: The tasks must be directly related to the achievement of the learning that is intended to be evaluated. This means that assignments should measure what students should know or be able to do upon completing the course.
- Assignments must be fair and equitable for all students, regardless of their conditions, learning style or any other personal characteristics. This means that assignments should not favor one group of students over another.
- Students should receive constructive and timely feedback on their performance on assignments. This feedback should help students understand their strengths and weaknesses and improve their learning (See Annex 1: Guidelines for feedback).

To guide the design of tasks, it is suggested to use an appropriate framework, such as the Task Quality Assessment Framework (TQF), the Instructional Design Assessment Framework (IDD), or the Equity and Justice Framework in the Evaluation (EFA). These frameworks provide criteria and guidelines for designing assignments that are high quality, aligned with learning objectives, equitable, and that provide useful feedback to students.

- (2) Systematize the teacher-student relationship in formative assessment by adopting the guidelines for providing feedback to students on their academic work (See Annex 1) and the guidelines on effective feedback (See Annex 2)
- (3) Implement the case method using the guide proposed for this purpose (See Annex 3). This will contribute to defining a style of professional training and teaching based on the homologation of the teaching-learning activities carried out by teachers in the different dimensions of teaching competence: didactic planning, teaching and learning evaluation. In this direction, it is advisable to define projects for the systematization of the preparation of legal documents, simulation of oral trials and training in values.
- (4) Evaluate the law program in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and quality based on performance standards. For this purpose, it is pertinent to conceive the curriculum as an educational project in which the expected learning, contents, methodology and evaluation of learning were defined. This implies defining a program evaluation system.

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Appendix 1

Guidelines for providing feedback to students

about his academic work

The objective of these guidelines is to improve the relationship between teachers and students, thus promoting learning, academic performance and the integration of students in the educational environment at the secondary level. The relationship between teachers and students is crucial to creating optimal learning conditions, so it is important to define program expectations regarding feedback on students' academic work. This activity is essential, since it complements and contributes to complying with the evaluation principles in the professional training of students.

1. Students will receive feedback on their work; however, the nature of the feedback will depend on the purpose of the evaluation. (See Guidelines for effective feedback)

Feedback should always be provided on assessment which provides an opportunity for development within a unit. An exception would be those “final” summative assessments of learning where the feedback will not serve to inform or support future learning in the programme; However, it is still considered good practice to provide feedback to help students understand the grade obtained.

2. Students must be informed at the beginning of classes of the assessments on which they will receive feedback, the associated date(s) on which they will receive the feedback, and the form it will take. This information must be provided in the appropriate medium (for example, Platform Class Guide). Some forms of learning assessment can be devised and established during the course of a thematic unit.

3. Within a program, it is important for teachers to communicate to students the chosen approach to feedback, including ways in which they can best interact with and use feedback to develop their understanding of the topic and improve their future work.

4. The date will be set so that the feedback is returned both:

- In time to inform and support the next relevant event or activity, and
- Within 15 business days of the submission deadline

The 15 working day limit for the provision of feedback on final summative learning assessments does not need to apply, where it will not inform or support future learning within the programme.

5. If a set deadline is not going to be met, students should be informed as soon as possible and a new date set for when they will receive feedback on their work. The academic department chair should have a process to ensure that students are alerted in time when this is the case and ensure that all teaching staff are aware of their responsibilities if the feedback deadline is not met.

6. Academic Directors will work to oversee the provision of feedback as set out above, including establishing specific dates for returning feedback. Program directors are responsible for monitoring the entire program. The pedagogical objectives of a unit and the balance of student workload in relation to the delivery of the content should be taken into account when considering the sequence of dates for submission of the evaluation and return of comments.

7. Where tutors have been assigned they should consider the feedback when meeting with their students as a basis for discussing personal development planning (PDP), particularly at the start of an academic year or after an assessment period.

8. It is relevant that each academic program has a mechanism to monitor the operation of point 4 above, managed and updated by the academic directors.

9. School principals will monitor compliance after each evaluation period and provide a report to the appropriate department director, identifying the reasons for noncompliance, for those school-owned units. When necessary, the Academic Directors of the program will subsequently report the pertinent report to the Dean. It is necessary to reflect on the corresponding review point within the academy and the agreements must be monitored.

Students should be given the opportunity to raise and discuss the forms and timeliness of feedback they have received on their work as part of their learning experience at the relevant time in the school year through the program director in order to assist to refine this process in the future.

The Quality of Tasks in Learning Assessment: The Perspective of Law Students

Appendix 2

Guidelines for effective feedback to students about their academic work

Effective feedback is crucial to student learning as it provides them with valuable information about their performance and guides them in their academic development. Below are the key elements and characteristics of effective feedback:

Elements of Effective Feedback

- **Clarity:** Feedback should be understandable, avoiding ambiguities and technical terms that the student may not understand.
- **Specificity:** Instead of general comments, feedback should be specific and focus on particular aspects of the student's work.
- **Formative:** Feedback should focus on how the student can improve, offering practical and achievable suggestions.
- **Timeliness:** To be effective, feedback must be provided in a timely manner, that is, soon enough so that the student can apply the recommendations in their next work.
- **Balance:** It is important to balance positive and negative comments. Recognize student achievements while pointing out areas for improvement.
- **Personalized:** Feedback should be learner-centered, taking into account the individual needs and circumstances of each student.
- **Interactive:** Encourage a dialogue where the student can ask questions and discuss the feedback received.

Characteristics of Effective Feedback

- **Learning Oriented:** Feedback should focus on the learning process rather than the final result, promoting an awareness of growth.
 - **Descriptive and Non-Evaluative:** Instead of judging the student's work, feedback should describe what is observed and how it can be improved.
 - **Formative and Summative:** Ideally, feedback should include formative (to improve ongoing learning) and summative (evaluate learning at the end of a period) elements.
 - **Action-oriented:** It should provide concrete steps that the student can take to improve their performance.
 - **Ongoing:** Feedback should be a continuous process throughout the course, not just at the end of an assignment or exam.
 - **Engaged:** Involve the student in the feedback process, encouraging them to self-evaluate and reflect on their own learning.
- To provide feedback to students, it is convenient to do so based on a frame of reference that gives meaning and structure to the process. Three references and an example of how to use them are described below.

The AID Feedback Model focuses on three aspects: Action, Impact and Development:

- **Action:** Describe the student's specific action.
- **Impact:** Explain the impact of that action.
- **Development:** Suggest how it can improve or continue to develop.

The Pendleton Feedback Model includes a structured approach to feedback that is based on the following steps:

- (1) What they did well (Student): Ask the student what they think they did well.
- (2) What could be improved (Student): Ask the student what they think could have been improved.
- (3) What he did well (Teacher): The feedbacker says what he thinks went well.
- (4) What could be improved (Teacher): The feedbacker says what he or she thinks could be improved.

The SBI Model considers the Situation, Behavior and Impact:

- **Situation:** Describe the specific situation in which the behavior occurred.
- **Behavior:** Detail the student's observed behavior.
- **Impact:** Explain the impact of that behavior on learning or other aspects.

Example for using the Pendleton Feedback Model:

This model encourages structured and balanced feedback, promoting student participation in the process. Next, we will develop a preliminary scheme using this model to provide effective feedback to students on their academic work.

Feedback planning:

1. Feedback Preparation:

- **Work Review:** Carefully analyze the student's work, identifying strengths and areas for improvement.
- **Context and Objectives:** Define the context of the feedback and the specific objectives that you want to achieve with it.

2. Feedback Implementation:

- **Establishing a Positive Environment:** Create a safe and constructive environment for discussion.

Step 1: What went well (Student)

- **Initial Question:** "What do you think you did well in this job?"

- **Student Reflection:** Allow the student to identify and verbalize the positive aspects of their own work.

- **Recognition:** Affirm the positive points mentioned by the student, demonstrating that their self-perceptions are valued.

Step 2: What could be improved (Student)

The Quality of Tasks in Learning Assessment: The Perspective of Law Students

- Improvement Question: "What do you think you could improve in your job?"
- Critical Reflection: Facilitate the student to identify areas for improvement, promoting self-evaluation.
- Support: Listen carefully and provide support so that the student feels comfortable sharing their opinions.

Step 3: What went well (Feedback)

- Positive Observations: "I agree with what you said about [positive aspect]. Also, I think [another positive aspect] was particularly good because..."
- Specific Details: Offer concrete examples of what the student did well, reinforcing their strengths.

Step 4: What could be improved (Feedback)

- Constructive Feedback: "To improve your work, you might consider [specific suggestion]. For example, you might..."
- Explanation of Impact: Explain why the suggestions for improvement are important and how they can benefit the student.
- Actionable Suggestions: Provide clear and achievable recommendations that the student can implement in future work.

3. Conclusion of the Feedback:

- Summarize the key points discussed during the feedback session.
- Action Plan: Collaborate with the student to establish a concrete action plan based on the feedback received.
- Follow-up: Schedule a subsequent review to evaluate progress and continue the improvement process.

Feedback Example

Evaluated Work: **Essay on the Constitution of the Mexican State**

Step 1: What you did well (Student)

- Student: "I think I did a good job explaining the social, economic and political causes that the constituent considered for the approval of the Constitution that currently governs Mexico."
- Professor: "Yes, your explanation of the social, economic and political causes was clear and well-founded, it seems you captured the spirit that guided the decision of the deputies and senators"

Step 2: What could be improved (Student)

- Student: "I think I could have provided more specific examples of the social problems facing the country's development and the need for a state vision."
- Professor: "That is a good observation. Include the main social problems that faced and persist in the country to promote development and coexistence among Mexicans."

Step 3: What went well (Teacher)

- Professor: "In addition to your explanation of the economic causes, I really liked how you structured your introduction, it was very effective in capturing the reader's attention and focusing the core of your analysis on the Constitution of the Mexican state"

Step 4: What could be improved (Teacher)

- Professor: "To improve your work, I would suggest developing your arguments further in the section on the social effects that Magna Carta has on the freedoms and rights it protects. For example, you could include more data and contemporary testimonies that reinforce your points, based on international law."

Conclusion and Action Plan

- To conclude: "In summary, you did an excellent job with the social, economic and political causes that justify our Constitution. To improve, include principles and foundations of international law in your analysis."
- Action Plan: "For your next essay, you could focus on researching specific examples and data about the social, economic, and political effects that a Constitution has on the development of a country. We will schedule a review in two weeks to see your progress".

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Annex 3

Guide for the implementation of the case method in training of law graduates

The case method is a fundamental pedagogical tool in the training of lawyers. Through the analysis and discussion of real or hypothetical cases, students develop critical, analytical and legal argumentation skills, essential for the practice of law.

The case method is used in the law schools of the most prestigious universities in the world, such as: Harvard Law School, Yale Law School, Stanford Law School, University of Chicago Law School, Columbia Law School, among others.

Benefits of the case method:

- Develops critical and analytical skills: Students learn to carefully read the facts of the case, identify relevant legal issues, research applicable law, and develop sound arguments.
- Improves argumentation skills: Students learn to present their arguments clearly, concisely and persuasively, and to respond to the arguments of others.
- Promotes creative thinking: The case method encourages students to think creatively and find innovative solutions to legal problems.
- Encourages participation: Students actively participate in their own learning, which helps them be more motivated and engaged with the material.
- Prepares students for the practice of law: The case method exposes students to the real-world challenges of law and helps them develop the skills they need to be successful in practice.

How is the case method implemented?

- (1) **Selection of subjects:** The department's academy determines the subjects where the use of the case method is relevant.
- (2) **Didactic structure of cases:** The department's academy determines the didactic structure for the analysis of cases in class and defines the principles and elements that will guide its analysis.
- (3) **Case Selection:** The professor selects a case that is relevant to the topics being studied and that presents an intellectual challenge to the students. The cases can be real, such as judicial decisions, or hypothetical, created by the teacher or by the students themselves.
- (4) **Case Analysis:** Students are given the case in advance and asked to analyze it in depth. This involves carefully reading the facts of the case, identifying relevant legal issues, researching the applicable law, and developing arguments for each side of the case.
- (5) **Class Discussion:** In class, students discuss the case under the guidance of the teacher. Each student has the opportunity to present their arguments, debate with their peers, and receive feedback from the teacher.
- (6) **Reflection:** After class discussion, students reflect on what they have learned. This may involve writing an essay, creating a flow chart, or simply thinking about how the case has changed the way you view the law.

Criteria for selecting cases in the case method in lawyer training

Case selection is a crucial aspect in the effective implementation of the case method in lawyer training if we want to promote active learning of students. For this reason, it is relevant to consider the following key criteria.

- **Relevance to the subject:** The cases must be relevant to the topics being studied in the course. This means that the facts of the case must illustrate the legal principles being discussed and that the legal problems raised in the case must be representative of those that lawyers encounter in practice.
- **Learning objectives:** Cases should be chosen based on the learning objectives of the course. The cases should help students achieve the learning objectives of the course
- **Appropriate for level:** Cases must be appropriate for the level of the students. Freshman cases should be simpler than upperclassman cases.
- **Complexity:** Cases should be complex enough to challenge students and force them to think critically. However, they should not be so complex that they overwhelm students or make them feel lost.
- **Diversity:** Cases must be diverse in facts, legal issues, and outcomes. This will help students develop a broader understanding of law and see how legal principles apply in different contexts.
- **Current Events:** Cases must be current and reflect the current state of the law. This will help students develop legal skills that are relevant to current practice.

The Quality of Tasks in Learning Assessment: The Perspective of Law Students

- **Interest:** The cases should be interesting and attractive to students. This will help keep students motivated and engaged with the material.

- **Availability:** Cases should be easily available to students. This may mean making cases available online, in a library, or in a case collection.

Furthermore, there are specific factors that must be considered when selecting cases for different types of courses. For example, when selecting cases for a criminal law course, it is important to consider the severity of the crime, the age and history of the defendant, and the available evidence. When selecting cases for a civil law course, it is important to consider the type of contract or tort involved the amount of damages, and the relationship between the parties.

It is important to note that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to case selection. Instructors should use their own judgment and experience to select cases that are appropriate for their students and their courses.



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