

## **La enseñanza y sus prácticas como catalizador del aprendizaje significativo**

*Teaching and its practices as a catalyst for significant learning*

*O ensino e suas práticas como catalisadores de uma aprendizagem significativa*

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### **Resumen**

La enseñanza y el aprendizaje son procesos que, aunque distintos, son complementarios y convergentes, su coexistencia garantiza la generación y construcción del conocimiento. La función docente, la relación recíproca entre los contenidos y las estrategias de enseñanza, la enseñanza memorable y la implicación del estudiante en el proceso, son principios rectores para la generación de un aprendizaje perdurable, de uno que no se olvida. El propósito de este ensayo es por tanto analizar, por un lado, la relación simbiótica entre la enseñanza y el aprendizaje bajo la perspectiva de Edith Litwin y por otro, su contribución hacia el desarrollo de prácticas educativas que potencien la labor educadora, resaltando la importancia de una enseñanza poderosa, relevante y memorable, con miras a fomentar en el alumnado un aprendizaje significativo a través de la comprensión profunda de los saberes y de su anclaje y conexión a los contextos sociales de su propia realidad, de tal manera que sea asimilable, entendible y transferible y que de este modo, se fortalezca a la creación de nuevos constructos que aporten a la comunidad educativa y a la sociedad.

**Palabras clave:** aprendizaje activo, educación, enseñanza comprensiva, enseñanza poderosa, estrategias de enseñanza, métodos de enseñanza.

## Abstract

Teaching and learning are processes that, although different, are complementary and convergent; their coexistence guarantees the generation and construction of knowledge. The teaching function, the reciprocal relationship between content and teaching strategies, memorable teaching, and student involvement in the process, are guiding principles for the generation of lasting learning, one that is not forgotten. The purpose of this essay is therefore to analyze, on the one hand, the symbiotic relationship between teaching and learning from the perspective of Edith Litwin and, on the other hand, her contribution to the development of educational practices that enhance the work of educators, highlighting the importance of powerful, relevant and memorable teaching, with a view to fostering meaningful learning in students through a deep understanding of knowledge and its anchoring and connection to the social contexts of their own reality, in such a way that it is assimilable, understandable and transferable, thus strengthening the creation of new constructs that contribute to the educational community and society.

**Keywords:** active learning, education, comprehensive teaching, powerful teaching, teaching strategies, teaching methods.

## Resumo

Ensinar e aprender são processos que, embora diferentes, são complementares e convergentes; sua coexistência garante a geração e construção de conhecimento. A função docente, a relação recíproca entre conteúdos e estratégias de ensino, o ensino memorável e o envolvimento do aluno no processo, são princípios norteadores para gerar uma aprendizagem duradoura e que não seja esquecida. O objetivo deste ensaio é, portanto, analisar, por um lado, a relação simbiótica entre ensinar e aprender na perspectiva de Edith Litwin e, por outro, o seu contributo para o desenvolvimento de práticas educativas que potenciem o trabalho educativo, destacando a importância de um ensino poderoso, relevante e memorável, com vista a promover uma aprendizagem significativa nos alunos através de uma compreensão profunda do conhecimento e da sua ancoragem e ligação aos contextos sociais da sua própria realidade, de tal forma que seja assimilável, compreensível e transferível e desta forma, fortalece a criação de novos construtos que contribuam para a comunidade educativa e a sociedade.

**Palavras-chave:** aprendizagem ativa, educação, ensino integral, ensino potente, estratégias de ensino, métodos de ensino.

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## Introduction

This essay attempts to analyze elements that influence the teaching and learning processes based on the perspective of Edith Litwin, a renowned Argentine writer and educator who has been engaged in researching teaching and its practices in order to educate both students and teachers with a creative, comprehensive and meaningful approach. First, the relationship and syntax between teaching and learning are analyzed under an articulated and coordinated scheme, and the different performance of their processes is argued, but at the same time complementary and binding, since the success of one lies in the quality of the other. The teacher's learning is also analyzed and its importance in the quality of the transmission of knowledge to the student and in the joint construction of knowledge is highlighted.

Then, the correspondence between what is taught and how it is taught, between the contents and the strategies seen as the central design of the teaching process, fundamental elements that impact and involve the student in the way of learning, in the way of accepting and, as a consequence, transforming concepts and knowledge, is explored. Later, the importance of the thematic and disciplinary structuring is highlighted with respect to the communion between good teaching and comprehensive teaching. Understanding what is taught and why it is taught is considered the central axis in the profession of teaching, where the implementation of innovative strategies plays an essential role for the assimilation and application of knowledge.

Finally, meaningful learning and the appropriation of content by students are addressed. Understanding what is learned, how it is learned and why it is learned is essential and, therefore, should be the goal of education, its processes and its system.

## Teaching and learning: reciprocal antonyms ?

Teaching and learning are closely related in a dynamic process in which teachers and students interact to construct new knowledge. However, in this process, teaching and learning are situated in different spheres, complementary but distinct, despite the fact that over the years they have been viewed within the same common space, as if they were synonyms (Litwin, 1997).

For Litwin (1998), the relationship between teaching and learning is based on a socio-constructivist foundation. Teaching involves the important work of teachers in planning, organizing and executing educational activities to facilitate and contribute to student learning. From this perspective, teaching constitutes a structured process that focuses on the transmission of knowledge and the creation of learning opportunities, where the teacher acts as a mediator. Regarding learning, Litwin considers it to be a personal and social, active and constructive process that encompasses the student, where he or she acquires, assimilates, understands and transforms content through interaction with them, but also with other individuals, jointly constructing new meanings.

Perkins (2017) also highlights the importance of generative learning, which involves students being able to generate knowledge through exploration and connecting ideas. According to him, students should actively participate in the learning process, asking questions, investigating, experimenting, and reflecting on what they learn. However, for Perkins, knowledge transfer is the foundation of true learning, that is, when students are able to transfer, use, and share in different contexts what they have learned in the classroom, applying concepts and skills in diverse situations. To promote effective transfer, Perkins suggests that teachers design teaching situations that simulate real contexts and provide opportunities to practice and apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

On the other hand, Litwin (1998) questions the biased view of learning theories that lean towards analyzing students' ways of learning, looking away from the teachers' learning process, thus ignoring the importance for teachers of appropriating knowledge and its constructs, updating knowledge, and delving into relevant topics aligned with current social contexts and problems. Jackson (2002) shares this vision and indicates that learning is a continuous process that demands the participation of teachers in order to update content and skills, seeking improvements in teaching to students. In addition, he indicates that teaching

being a social activity, the values and beliefs of both teachers and students influence the way in which teaching is done and also the way in which learning is done.

In this sense, teacher training, referred to as the educator's capacity to carry out educational practice (Lucarelli, 2003), is vital to enrich the teaching process, from the beginning of the work and while it continues to be done, since the adaptation of the contents and the didactic strategies must be consistent with the historical-social context in which the educational process is developed. Maggio (2022) also raises the importance of teacher training, as well as the collaboration between teachers, so that they share their own experiences, generating experience banks to contribute to the initial and continuous training of teachers, recognizing the importance of preparing educators with the necessary skills to face the current challenges of education. Maggio (2018) then emphasizes the need for teacher training based on reflection, collaboration and updating, providing teachers with the tools and knowledge necessary to face the demands of a constantly changing educational environment.

If teacher learning is fundamental to the quality of teaching, the transmission of knowledge and the generation of pedagogical strategies to facilitate student involvement in their educational journey, why is the educator not accompanied, analyzed and encouraged in their own learning process?

This questioning goes beyond mere training provided by the educational institution in which the teacher works, or the presentation of his/her performance evaluation based on the achievement of objectives, and even less so the incorporation of innovative systems that help the operational management of the teacher. It is essential to recognize and make visible the efforts of the teacher regarding research, understanding, assimilation, transformation and construction of knowledge that will then be replicated to the students in a practical, creative and significant way within the classrooms, "learning to teach better" (Antelo, 2011, p. 33) is therefore essential in teacher training.

On the other hand, the importance of teaching and learning in the educational field has been explained, understanding that they are different but related processes that involve both educators and students. However, do they depend on each other? That is, does teaching result in learning? Are they opposite but dependent processes? Are they reciprocal antonyms?

The discussion about whether teaching is always learning is a relevant topic in the educational field. Litwin (2012) believes that learning is not an automatic result of teaching,

since the fact that a teacher imparts knowledge and presents information effectively does not necessarily guarantee that students achieve significant learning, since in order to do so, the active participation and commitment of students in their own knowledge construction process is essential. However, effective teaching can facilitate and enhance learning, providing the conditions for students to achieve adequate learning.

Other authors such as Perkins, Maggio and Jackson agree with this perspective by maintaining that teaching does not always lead to learning. For Perkins, (2017) for example, the success of teaching depends on the implementation of effective pedagogical strategies that stimulate the active commitment of students and promote the meaningful construction of knowledge. Maggio (2018) argues that teaching is a necessary condition for learning, but is not sufficient in itself to guarantee it, since it requires that teachers promote the active participation of students by designing meaningful learning situations. Finally, for Jackson, (2002) teaching can be considered an intentional act that seeks to promote student learning. However, he questions the notion that learning is a direct and guaranteed consequence of teaching, since being an individual and complex process, it is influenced by a series of factors such as the set of experiences, skills, motivations and learning styles of each student, as well as the socio-emotional contexts, culture and learning conditions.

Based on what has been described above, in the field of teaching, there is a widespread belief that learning is not an automatic consequence of teaching. However, the quality of the latter influences the success of the other, so the relationship between the two is very close and important. Both the work of the teacher to encourage the active participation of the students, and the process of building the knowledge of the students around their interests, motivations, styles and learning conditions, are vital to ensure that the students acquire new knowledge aligned with the reality in which they live. Are teaching and learning then reciprocal antonyms?

Yes, in the sense that they are two different but complementary processes, that is, when teaching, someone is expected to learn (Antelo, 2011), just as when asking a question, an answer is expected, or as when innovation means moving away from a traditional practice. Now, what was said by Litwin, Maggio, Perkins and Jackson is reaffirmed, in understanding that learning is not an automatic result of teaching, however, teaching exists because some learning is expected to develop and this occurs if there has been a previous teaching process. The quality of both would be fundamental to achieve an adequate correspondence.

## **Teaching strategies and content development: symbiosis**

According to Litwin (2012), teaching strategies refer not only to the methods and techniques used by the teacher, but also to the decisions and actions carried out to facilitate access, understanding and development of the content by students. Strategies involve careful planning and selection of activities, resources and pedagogical approaches that are appropriate for the learning objectives, so they are closely related and integrated with the content to be taught. In this sense, strategies must be designed in such a way that they promote deep understanding of the concepts, the transfer of knowledge to different contexts and the practical application of what has been learned.

Similarly, for Perkins, (2017) the active construction of knowledge by students must be promoted by teaching strategies, which implies creating spaces for students to interact with the content, relate it to their previous experiences, apply it in practical situations and connect it with various concepts and disciplines. Teaching strategies must be selected and adapted according to the learning objectives and the needs of the students.

Aligned with Perkins' approach, Jackson (2002) argues that in order to promote a deep understanding of the content, teaching strategies must be consistent with the learning objectives, in order to facilitate the students' construction of a solid base of knowledge and skills, for which, the clarity in the presentation of the content and the logical sequencing of the lessons, is vital for a coherent and organized understanding. There is no doubt that teaching strategies and content development act in an associative way, supporting and benefiting from each other. The way in which it is taught and what is taught must be articulated in a coordinated way, involving the student in the process, so that he or she can develop an effective understanding of the content and link it to his or her own reality.

Recognizing their symbolic relationship, how are teaching strategies and content development linked to “what” should be taught and “why” it should be taught? How can we achieve an understanding of what we are learning if we have difficulties or cognitive gaps? Litwin speaks of integration as a strategy in terms of the teaching resources used by teachers, such as case studies or storytelling, which help students build links with their prior learning and connect ideas, concepts, and information with specific situations that are familiar to them. “...integration can be designed or recognized because teachers use a case or story that allows them to identify numerous concepts, themes, ideas, and assumptions in their relationships based on a specific situation or product” (2012, p. 70).

Thus, this symbiotic relationship between teaching strategies and the content to be taught depends on the way in which the teacher approaches the subject through the use of teaching tools that promote integration between these and reality, in such a way that innovation and updating of teaching practices is sought towards what is relevant to the student, that is, towards good teaching and comprehensive teaching.

### **Good teaching and comprehensive teaching: harmony**

Edith Litwin argues that good teaching involves good teaching practices, which should focus on providing students with relevant, timely and valuable knowledge so that they can know, understand and take ownership of it. (Litwin, 1998)

For Perkins (2017), good teaching involves the exercise of reasoning, arguing and explaining because of its importance to the students' learning process, in the sense that they contribute to the deep and meaningful understanding of the content, fostering strategic and reflective thinking, as well as the development of higher cognitive skills.

Alicia Camilloni, for her part, maintains that good teaching is characterized by being reflective and focused on student learning, which is based on establishing learning objectives, strategic planning and adapting teaching to the needs of students (Camilloni, 2016).

Comprehensive teaching goes beyond the simple transmission of knowledge. Comprehensive teaching focuses on promoting deep and meaningful understanding of content by students, through strategies that encourage reflection, critical thinking and problem solving. Adapting to individual student characteristics is also essential to ensure that all students have the opportunity to understand content in a meaningful way (Litwin, 1997).

But what happens when there are deficiencies in the understanding of the students? According to Perkins, (2017) these difficulties would be related to the concern of mechanical retention and capture of information through memorization and repetition, which causes the fading or uselessness of what has been learned and the transmission of knowledge that is of little or no significance to the student. He adds the importance of reorganizing the content by placing the student at the center of the teaching process, understanding their cognitive differences and developing creative strategies to facilitate their access and assimilation of the information.

From this perspective, and in accordance with the research carried out by Litwin and Camilloni, it is imperative that teaching practices be oriented towards a deep and reflective



understanding of the learner. To do this, the teacher must carry out a professional and moral exercise regarding the relevance of the content he or she intends to teach, so that it is significant and timely for the student, so that he or she can remember it, understand it, and anchor it in a practical way in the social context. How can we achieve meaningful learning? How do memorable teachers, those who leave vivid traces and memories in the minds and hearts of their students, influence the assimilation and internalization of content? How can we be memorable? How can we achieve harmony between good teaching and comprehensive teaching? How can we do this in practice? How can we ensure that the ultimate goal of education is to generate meaningful learning in students, so that they build true knowledge and have the ability to transfer what they have learned to different practical contexts?

then addressed regarding the significance of learning through the assimilation of content and the joint and individual creation of knowledge.

### **Towards an empowering education: powerful teaching and meaningful learning**

Meaningful learning refers to the process in which students achieve a deep understanding of the information they receive, which allows them to make connections with previous knowledge, thus being able to create new knowledge from what they learn in the classroom (Moreira, 2020). To fulfill this purpose, it is necessary to have the predisposition of the students to accept the information, as well as the materials and content used by the teacher to transfer the information, the latter being relevant and related to the cognitive capacity of the students.

Maggio (2018) refers to the teaching process as a driving force of meaningful learning. He highlights the importance of powerful teaching that takes place in the classroom and endures over time in memory, in recollection. The approach to reality and therefore the transmission of content related to the current context are carried out in a creative and original way, encouraging the view of different perspectives on the constructs and thus turning the experience of learning into a moving and lasting act. The student, In addition to being able to generate new knowledge, it links new knowledge to those teaching practices that it does not forget, which facilitates its own process of assimilation and appropriation of content.

Along a very similar line, Jackson (2002) argues that exemplary practices by teachers produce valuable learning in their students, which transcends beyond the classroom. The

learning that is valuable, due to its relevance and power, would be that which originates in the classroom, in the present, in the transmission of content in which both the teacher and the student contribute and generate, together, in coherence, related and connected, and which will appear in the future as that knowledge that endures (Perosi, 2015).

Perkins (1999) argues that education should focus on developing fundamental skills and competencies in students, rather than simply transmitting information. He favors a more active and meaningful approach to learning, in which students are challenged to solve real problems, think critically, and apply their knowledge in authentic contexts. Thus, effective teaching involves designing learning experiences that are relevant and meaningful for students, connecting curricular content to their real lives and providing them with opportunities to explore and discover concepts for themselves.

For Litwin, significance (2012) is closely related to the assessments of Rodríguez, Maggio, Jackson, Perosi and Perkins. The involvement of the student in the process, the connection between what he learns and what he knows or experiences (a product of his own reality) and the emotion with which the content is transmitted would be, for Litwin, essential factors to achieve significant learning. He adds that narration and questioning awaken the interest of the student, since the former captures attention based on the story and the latter encourages questioning and openness to new perspectives of knowledge.

## Conclusions

The teaching and learning process is fundamental in the educational field, as it constitutes a dynamic interaction between teachers and students that promotes intellectual and personal growth. Teaching and learning are different but complementary processes, where the teacher assumes the role of facilitator of knowledge and the student becomes the active protagonist of his or her own learning.

It is crucial to note that teaching strategies must be congruent with the content taught. Teachers must carefully select strategies and methods that align with the learning objectives and cognitive characteristics of students. This involves using a variety of resources, appropriate pedagogical techniques, and continually evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies used.

Furthermore, advocating for good teaching involves offering students content that is valuable, useful and relevant to their learning. Likewise, comprehensive teaching seeks not only to transmit knowledge, but also to develop a deep understanding of the content, promoting the transfer of skills and the ability to apply knowledge in different contexts.

Finally, meaningful learning is the product of powerful teaching. Teachers must design educational experiences that are relevant, contextualized, and meaningful for students, that is, relating content to students' reality, incorporating hands-on activities, and encouraging critical reflection. Powerful teaching sparks curiosity, interest, and intrinsic motivation in students, which facilitates deep and lasting learning.

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