

# Professional and Social Identity Profiles in Higher Education: Implications in/of The Teacher and Student Relationship

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**ABSTRACT:** *This article presents the professional social identity profiles for professors at the State University of Feira de Santana (UEFS). It entangles reflections around the professor-student relationship in face of the teaching and learning processes at the university. The focus is adjusted to issues inherent to the educational practices of professors, in order to understand how their relationship with students is made visible by the teaching. The text aims to discuss the pedagogical actions of university professors in relation to the development of learning achieved by the students. This work has a quantitative research nature, and reveals the results of a survey containing 25 questions, which was applied to 338 teachers from different areas of knowledge. The study has concluded that the professor-student relationship is fundamental for the development of learning. Professors reveal that they plan classes and socialize it with students, besides, that they explain the evaluation criteria, including those ones related to correction.*  
**PROFESSOR PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL IDENTITY PROFILE, PROFESSOR-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP, TEACHING STRATEGIES, QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH.**

## Introduction

At the university, the professor-student relationship is fundamental for the promotion of the teaching and learning processes, in especial, for making the trust mechanisms of such relationships feasible. The higher education student need to transpose the barriers of university relationships, especially for the underclassman, in order to achieve success in the formative journey they experience in the daily life of the institution. These are multiple and complex relationships, that range from those established among classmates and with professors, up to other inherent to people who deal with the coordination of collegiate bodies, direction of departments, and further sectors, such as libraries, laboratories, pro-rectories, collegiate administration, etc. So, the student need to live with many people in this universe, as they need to learn about the academic environment functionality. Thus, the students may have the possibility to learn and to identify themselves with the knowledge produced in those relationships.

Inside the educational field, in which there may be accounted the pedagogical relationship among professors and students, it is very common to come across complaints from both professors and students. They say that the distancing among these may interfere in the learning and teaching process. Seemingly there is a cultural concept that the student need to establish links with the institution, be it academic or social, so they feel that they belong to that space and create bonds that go through the relationships there established. A well integrated student reveals, through his relational stance, that there is involvement in the university space, academically and socially (Tinto, 2012; Massi, 2013).

Therefore, it is stated that the configuration of the relational and cultural dimensions of the institution, in addition of the professor and student, make it possible for both to be intertwined with the teaching and learning processes that take place there. The perspective it to create pedagogical relationships that favor the

conditions of developing in the student a sense of belonging to the university space, thus the generation of knowledge construction. In this sense, the professor-student relationship should not be unilateralized in the expectations of one or the other only. If, on one hand, the professors must develop practices to that welcome students in their formative needs, on the other, students must also develop engagement attitudes with the proposed actions, and consequently with the educational space, having in sight the academic affiliation process.

The student creates a relational condition with the professors and with the educational space. This enables their academic filiation and creates the feasible conditions to learn the trade of being an autonomous and engaged student (Coulon, 2008), what implies that the student can generate conditions to maintain the relationships they have established with professors.

Likewise, the professors shall create relational conditions with students, aiming that they can understand the educational dynamics at the university, above all, due to the clarity that must be established in the pedagogical principles resorted by professors in learning development. In this way, the so started pedagogical relationship points towards the development of academic affiliation, with conditions of understanding the functionalities of institutional rules, and likewise, learning the craft of being a student, mobilizing professors to engage increasingly in the roles of their profession. This implies recognizing that the relationship between professors and students develops the conditions for learning in an ambivalent process, in which both are engaged and learn.

Often, the professor sees himself far from the students, and he develops an educational practice that closes on itself. This is mobilized by the need of the professor to self-impose teaching the content, and thus to fulfill the discipline program. In this area and in certain situations, whether the student learns or not becomes not one less concern. There also need to be considered the typifications of the university education, which is anchored in certain principles that make the classes to flow through lectures and oral presentations, which barely allow the professor and student interaction. In addition, the higher education practice is characterized by a number of activities which are inherent to this teaching segment. For certain situations, the university professors feel insecure to play the role of mediator in the process of questioning, reflecting and reframing the contents. So, they also feel insecure to face their condition of helping students to develop the capacity of thinking and arguing, which are abilities demanded in the new daily reality (Santos; Soares, 2011).

The educational practices of professors should favor conditions for students to be able to relate effectively with colleagues, with the professors, and with the employees. However, it is necessary to recognize the particularities of each institution according to the adopted organizational and pedagogical model, given the peculiarities of each individual in the context of the established relationships. In this way, the organization of the pedagogical work, established by professors in their practice, becomes an evidence of the engagement and educational affiliation processes – those are developed by students and result in success for the learning processes.

The presented study aims to discuss the pedagogical actions of professors, regarding the development of learning achieved by the student. For this, there are presented the results of a research developed by the Center for Studies and Research on University Pedagogy (NEPPU). It sought to map the social identity profile of professors working at different departments of the State University of Feira de Santana (UEFS), as well as to present the quantitative results from the perspective of four transversal pedagogical practices. Within this view, there are analyzed issues inherent to the procedures used to prepare the pedagogical planning, to develop teaching strategies, to produce and correct the learning assessment, as well as issues related to their Continuing Education – disregarding the *stricto sensu* nature courses.

This is a research focused on the professor-student relationship at the university, mapping what both say about the teaching and learning processes. Despite of this, it concentrates on the answers given by 338 participating professors. This work is divided into four other sections, besides the introduction which presents the objectives of the study. It is followed by the construction of its methodological framework, with a special focus on the construction and organization process for the questionnaire. The results for the social identity and professional profile of the participants are briefly presented in the second section. For the following section, there are the results and analysis of the questionnaire, grouping these into two perspectives, namely: pedagogical planning and learning assessment. Last, but not least, the final considerations are made.

## 1 Methodological path

This research has followed the quali-quantitative epistemology, according to Creswell (2007), as it anchors characteristics of both quantitative and qualitative research, generating a new way of carrying out studies for which may be feasible to work with both numerical data and texts that should be produced by its collaborators. It is worth mentioning that this work weights for the quantitative epistemology, as there are published the relative frequencies of variables, valuing the analysis of the greatest occurrences.

The device for collecting information was developed by a group of researchers and students on university teaching – these have conducted a research entitled *Professor-student relationship at the university*<sup>1</sup>. It is a questionnaire built by the dialogical relationships among professors and students that are part of NEPPU. Therefore, the construction of the instrument was based on classroom events of the university, focusing on the educational practices of professors while facing the challenge of generating learning conditions through the established pedagogical relationships with students. The questionnaire was applied during April 2020, through *Google Forms* platform. For this dynamic, it was created a link for accessing the questionnaire, sent by e-mail to all directors of department at UEFS along with a request that it could be forwarded to all professors in each of these. Out of a total of 982 professors in this institution, 338 have accessed and answered the questions. This number represents a sample of one third of the universe of professors.

The 338 professors, working at different areas of knowledge, have voluntarily accessed the questionnaire and answered it. They have gone through 33 questions; eight of these were inherent to the social identity and professional profile; 25 related to pedagogical situations experienced by them. The questionnaire was prepared considering situations reported by professors and student researchers with regard to pedagogical issues experiences in the context of planning, production of teaching strategies, educational assessment, and the personal investments in Continuing Education. For the social identity and professional profile, the options sought to map age, sex, race, type of institutional contractual, working regime, years of teaching in Higher Education, and years of teaching at other educational levels.

The questions were structured according to the principles of a *Likert*-type scale, composed of statements followed by the alternatives: never, sometimes, often and always. Given these four options, the participant could select only one of them. This is a very useful scale for analyzing the behavior of people face of a given phenomenon. In the field of education, it is a reference scale for understanding the frequency with which professors behave in situations of a pedagogical nature. In the specific case of this research, for the understanding of a relational nature. The statements of this research are originated from behavioral beliefs that are commonly seen in the context of classrooms. Thus, the beliefs reveal the attitudes adopted by professors in their relationship with the student in the face of the challenge of teaching and enabling learning.

Following this analytical direction, attitude is a characteristic of people that makes reference to the set of beliefs about something and their response to it (Thurstone, 1928). It is important to measure a pedagogical attitude in the field of university teaching, because this knowledge is useful in understanding the relational behavior established among professors and students at the university, and how it relates to the teaching and learning processes. It forms an interesting clue to develop the understanding about the ways in which professors and students make decisions to teach and to learn. This reveals the knowledge of how the relationships between these subjects are pedagogically organized within the scope of university teaching.

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## 2 On the social identity and professional profile of the participants

The State University of Feira de Santana was authorized by Federal Decree No. 77,496 in 1976, recognized by Ministerial Ordinance No. 874/86 of December 19, 1986, and Recertified by State Decree No. 9,271 of December 14, 2004<sup>2</sup>. It is a public institution in the State of Bahia, Brazil, that has a staff of 982 professors in nine different departments that integrate the university campus. Out of this universe of professors, 338 have participated in this study through the questionnaire, on which we have mounted a profile.

Regarding the age category, 45% of the sample space is over 50 year. 15% of them are registered between 46 and 50 years. In this sense, it is seen that 60% of the professors are over 46 years old. Only 2% of respondents are registered under the age of 30.

The male gender predominates, as is visible in 58% of respondents. This data indicates that the predominance in university teaching still is of men, observation that is confirmed by the census data from the Anísio Teixeira National Institute of Educational Studies and Research<sup>3</sup> (INEP). It points out the predominance of men in Higher Education, considering the total sum of professors in different regions and administrative spheres. It is worth noting that the INEP census subdivides the analysis of the teaching staff, considering the administrative categories of the higher education institutions (HEI). Therefore, the information about the professors considers their allocation at universities, colleges, university centers, and federal institutes. Within this interpretation, in Brazil, there is 53.7% of men working in Higher Education. It is observed that the male gender also predominates, with a total of 54.8%, the number of professors working in the Brazilian public network. On a similar scale, when considering the Brazilian state universities, men also predominate the team, with 52.8% of the total. But it was observed an opposite phenomenon for the state universities in the Northeastern Brazil with a female predominance, reaching 52%. The female gender predominance was also verified in the scenario of Bahia, with 51.5%, considering all education networks. For the public network in this state, there is also a predominance of women, with 51%. When analyzing the data related to professors who work at state universities in Bahia, the number of women still is also higher, reaching 54%. Therefore, with regard to sex, the numbers at UEFS contradict what is seen in the state and Northeast region trends, since there is a predominance of women for these last. On the other hand, the number of 58% of men at UEFS reveals the same trend observed for the rest of Brazil, in which men are still the majority in university teaching.

When considering the local trend of women in university teaching, UEFS stands out the need for women to occupy the teaching profession, as 58% of male professors indicates a high number, being even an event higher than the national distribution, which present 53.7% of men. These numbers stand out an imbalance between men and women at the university. According to what Teixeira and Freitas (2014) defend, although, in Brazil, men are the numerical majority in Higher Education, it is notorious a feminization process of the jobs in these institutions for both public and private networks. This is linked to the loss of status of the profession, as a decreases in its purchasing power, what lead to a process of proletarianization of teaching at this level.

However, UEFS data still shows that the power relationship between genders prevails and creates a situation that makes the presence of men in this institution to predominate. This may be explained by the ideas of Teixeira and Freitas (2014), who point to the existence of micro spaces for the performance of teachers, considering the gender relations. This suggests that the power relations existing between the genders make men dominate not only the area of study, but also the highest positions, under the hypothesis that women themselves are the agents of discrimination. According to the authors, this situation reproduces patriarchal values and discourages women from becoming present in some spaces in university teaching that still are occupied by men.

Treating the professional profile due to the color/race identification, 44% of the professors have identified themselves as brown, while 41% as white. Only 11% of the participants have identified themselves as black, which reveals that the participants hardly declared themselves as black. It shall be pointed that this question was structured with five options for choosing. So, the options were *indigenous*, *black*, *brown*, *yellow* and *white*. There was also an option named “*others*”, in which the participant could write about that option. In this regard, it was observed that one professor wrote that he did not agree with any of the options. Another one has

<sup>2</sup> Information available at the official UEFS portal: <http://www.uefs.br/modules/conteudo/conteudo.php?conteudo=12>

<sup>3</sup> Information available at: <http://portal.inep.gov.br/web/guest/sinopses-estatisticas-da-educacao-superior>. Accessed on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

marked the term brown, and said that this is how it is registered in her birth certificate. One other wrote the term mestizo and, finally, there is one who has stated the race identification as a mixture of indigenous, black and brown.

In this respect, it is interesting to note the significant percentage of people from the institution who claim to be white. It is worth remembering that it is a university located in the territory of the backwoods, inland Bahia, in which the presence of black and brown is prominent, according to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), 2010. This census shows that 17% of the population in Bahia is self-declared black, while 59% is self-declared brown. As a white person, there are only 22% of people. Analyzing the data from Feira de Santana city, it appears that only 19% of people declare themselves to be white, 23% as black, and 55% as brown. If we compare this data with the one from UEFS, it is seen a “whiteness” that reigns, reaching rates that represent more than twice of those who declare themselves as white in this city, and almost twice of the self-declared whites in the state. Thus, UEFS has a significant share of 41% of the professors who declare themselves to be white, added to the fact that 58% of these are men. Therefore, there is an identity profile that points to a characterization in which the males are the majority, and, inside this portion, there is a considerable number of individuals who are self-declared as white. This suggests that, considering the identity profile with regard to the variables sex and race/color, UEFS has a characteristic for which a significant number of white males are visible.

Regarding the type of contract with the institution, there are 92% of permanent teachers. Out of these, 60% have an exclusive dedication contract with the institution, and 43% are professors with more than 20 years of teaching in Higher Education experience. Out of the total, 35% have never had an experience in teaching in Elementary and Middle School Education, while inside the other 65% who have already done it, there are 30% with less than a 5 year experience in this type of teaching.

The data shows that there is a staff of professors with significant experience in university teaching and with exclusive dedication. This indicates that, on average, 60% of them does develop research and/or extension activities at the university due to the demands of their workload. On the other hand, attention is drawn to the number of professors who have never experienced teaching in Elementary and Middle Education, what indicates that they have learned to be a professor on their own training at university.

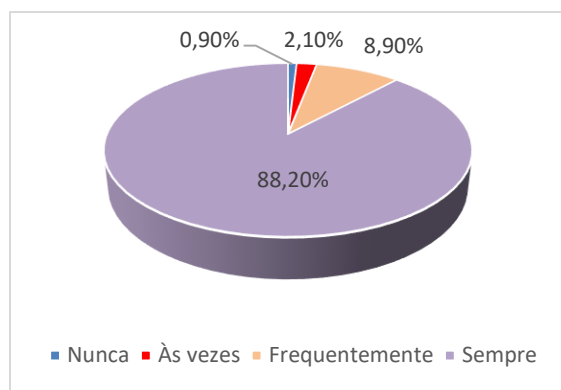
### 3 Practices around the pedagogical planning

Planning the pedagogical intervention is one of the relevant actions of/in university teaching. Such stance indicates that the professor reflects about his pedagogical work. He prepares all its engineering sequentially and neatly in order to develop the teaching activity with a view on the development of the learning. Presenting the course plan to students indicates a relational movement that professors establish with students. From it, there are created situations in which the pedagogical activity will be placed as the center of the educational reflections, developed throughout the teaching work. Usually, it is at the first meeting that professors present the course plan to the students.

Along with the development of pedagogical work, professors come to live with the difficulties of their students. This fact demarcates the search for ways of developing strategies and pedagogical interventions that will take into account these difficulties to undertake changes in planning. So, this process leads to the creation of methodologies, strategies and actions that will be structured with a focus on helping students in their learning.

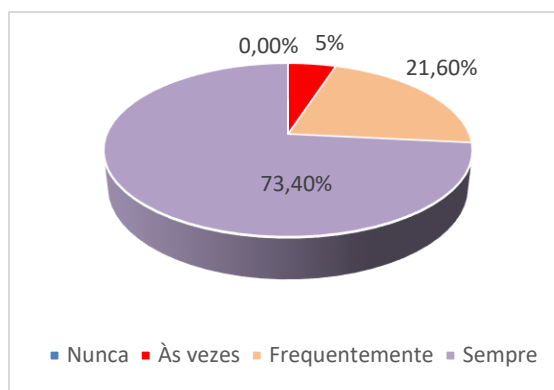
The first five questions of the research are turned to situations related to the planning, as well as to the fact that the professor considers the difficulties of the students to modify the plans, and to create differentiated teaching strategies. While analyzing the data, it was observed that there is a tendency of professors to affirm that they always present the plan to students, as well as they dedicate time to resolve the doubts during the classes. Graphs 1 and 2 illustrate these aspects.

**Graph 1**– Analysis of question: Presents discipline plan.



Source: Constructed by the author (2020).

**Graph 2** – Analysis of question: Provides time to resolve doubts



Source: Constructed by the author (2020).

*Presenting the discipline plan* appears with great evidence that this is always done by professors, but it does not necessarily indicate that this fact is directly related to the action of considering the difficulties of students to modify the plan. When asking professors about whether they modify their planning in order to adjust it to the pace and difficulties of the class, only 40% of them said to do it *always*. This situation indicates that, although a representative part (43%) of the sample affirms that they frequently make adjustments to the plan, many prioritize the development of the plan instead of adjusting it to meet the training needs of the students.

In a way, planning must bring together the skills of the professor, his theoretical and empirical knowledge on what is taught, but above all he must consider the problem around the social context in which he works. Therefore, the reality of students and the context in which they find themselves must be taken into consideration for the production of a functional plan, that finds the training needs. According to Libâneo (2001, p. 22), planning is of great importance because it is “a process of rationalization, organization and coordination of teaching action. It articulates the school activities along with the problem of the social context”. In this sense, the educational reality needs to be considered for adjustments to be made, and to guarantee the feasibility of the pedagogical plan in the view of the training needs of students.

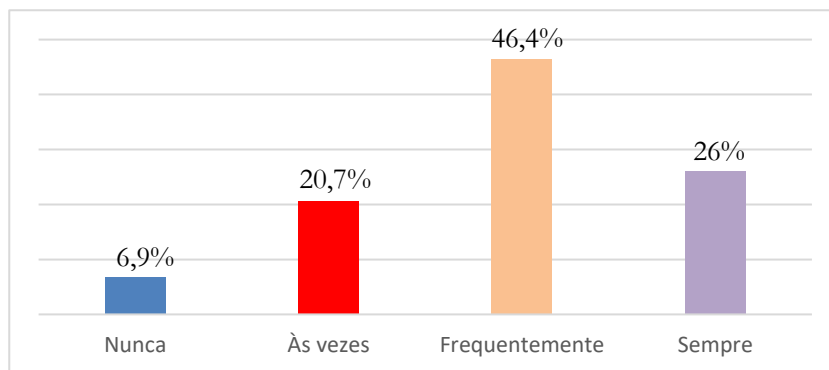
<sup>4</sup> Nunca = Never; Às vezes= Occasionally; Frequentemente= Frequently; Sempre=Always.

Here, it is defended the need to elaborate the planning from the difficulties of the students, as Oliveira (2007, p. 21) argues that

[...] the act of planning requires basic aspects to be considered. A first aspect is the knowledge of the reality of what you want to plan, the main needs that must be addressed; first of all, it is necessary a survey for the reality of what he intends to plan, in order for the planner to highlight them, in order to outline the purposes, goals or objectives of what is the most urgent to work on.

Therefore, it is necessary to professor not lose sight on the need to create pedagogical relationships with students, in order to be able to know their reality. This action shall be based on a diagnosis that favors him to know some of the difficulties presented by the class. From that, it is possible to adapt his methodology and to create conditions for the learning to be effective in their needs. Inside this context, it is a good idea that the teaching material should be produced according to the needs and difficulties of the students. In this regard, the participants were asked whether they select the teaching material according to the difficulties of their students. Graph 3 illustrates the results for this question.

**Graph 3<sup>5</sup>** – Analysis of question: Selects teaching material according to the difficulties of students.



Source: Constructed by the author (2020).

The results suggest that, although 26% of the professors report that they *always* select teaching materials due to difficulties of the students, there is a considerable number of them who answered doing it *frequently*. Adding the number of those who do it *always* and *frequently*, we have an amount of 73%. This result suggests that the main reinforcer to the selection process for the production of teaching materials is necessarily the difficulties of the students. There is, however, evidence that the educational practice of professors takes into account the relevance of didactic material characteristics, to generate the learning conditions from the difficulties revealed by students.

However, there are situations in which professors never consider such an issue. Inside the institution, this can be an indicator that some professors either do not know the realities of the students and their difficulties, and/nor choose to prioritize their own material in order to guarantee the quality of teaching by the quality of the material itself – not necessarily by the learning conditions and needs.

This research has aimed understanding the locus previous knowledge of students, and its influence on the production of new knowledge. It sought to map the information around the practice of professors, when considering the prior knowledge of the students, in order to develop teaching at the university. Pozo and Mateos (2009), while discussing about how professors can help students to learn how to learn, present some fundamental principles so that professors can enable conditions for the learning to be anchored in the principles of student autonomy. One of these principles, as pointed by the aforementioned authors, is related to the prior knowledge of students, which are fundamental for the new knowledge.

<sup>5</sup> Nunca = Never; Às vezes= Occasionally; Frequentemente= Frequently; Sempre=Always.

For students, learning how to learn means a condition to start from what they know to anchor new knowledge. This is a reflective and progressive movement in which new ideas are based on those that already exist in their cognitive structure. For professors, learning how to learn becomes learning how to teach. It means the dexterity of considering the previous knowledge of students to generate reflections use it as starting point. This action creates didactic conditions that take effect in a progressive structure of the learning development, over which that new knowledge is always produced from an already known experience.

When analyzing the data for the question that addresses the fact to consider the prior knowledge of students in order to introduce the new knowledge, there appears an interesting fact as the prior knowledge seems to be fundamental to consolidate practices that enable the learning, as asserted by Pozo and Mateos (2009). On this topic, 44% of professors say they *always* do it, and 40% report doing it *frequently*. Therefore, 84% of the sample reveals a dialogical disposition to apprehend the previous knowledge of students, in order to build educational paths that start up from such knowledge. This is an indication that pedagogical relationships are established so that professors assume that students have a prior knowledge and that it is necessary to generate learning conditions for new subjects and themes. These are the knowledge that the individuals already have, necessary and essential to create a learning structure for the new knowledge.

The previous knowledge conceptualized by Ausubel, Novak and Hanesian (1980) is that characterized as declarative, which is founded at the base of the knowledge that the student has already achieved in his formative experiences. According to Novak and Gowin (1996), prior knowledge is the knowledge or awareness of some object, case or idea, but it presupposes a set of other affective and contextual knowledge, which also configure the previous cognitive structure of the learning student. This movement implies recognizing that the cognitive structure generates conditions for the learner to create conditions for attributing meaning to what he learns, based on what he already knew. In this sense, the theory of meaningful learning conceives the prior knowledge of individuals as an explicit reference for the production of new learnings, therefore, as a relevant variable that must be considered in the organization of teaching. According to Ausubel, Novak and Hanesian (1980, p. 137), “if I had to reduce all educational psychology to a single principle, I would say: the singular factor that most influences learning is what the learner already knows. Discover that and teach him accordingly to it”.



## 4 Learning assessment practices

Regarding the discussions on the evaluation of learning, there are several perspectives to conceive the act of evaluating and, above all, on how to evaluate students at the university. Although contemporary pedagogy defends a conception of evaluation as an instrument of emancipation, there are certain situations in university education routine for which evaluation prevails with an emphasis on getting the results, instead of focusing on the learning processes.

In the pedagogical relationship between professors and students, it shall be pursued the development of evaluative actions to transpose the idea that the assessment results ends in the identification and registration of a symbol, usually numerical – a value through which student learning is measured. These are predominantly symbols that are represented through scores. Despite of this, these symbols are used to express the value attributed to the results that demonstrate the learning of students – it ends the act of evaluating. As revealed by Luckesi (2005), the value given by the professor to what was learned by the student is recorded and, definitely, the student will remain in this situation. This is equivalent to decisive classification.

In the context of university teaching, in which the professor-student relationship transposes the idea of having a score that represents what the student has learned throughout the formative process, it is necessary to consider the assessment as consisting of dialogic reflexive moments and movements. These are born in the practice of the professor, but have effective student participation over the evaluation process. This participation implies recognizing the autonomy of student with the view to consider the different approaches and assessment instruments, by which the evaluation takes place. In this sense, and considering the dialogical relationship between professor and student in the university teaching, the time to assess student learning should not be the point of arrival of the practice, but an opportunity to stop and judge if the walk is taking place with the previously established quality. An opportunity to resume the pedagogical practice in a more appropriate way, since the learning object of this action is dynamic. If it gains a classificatory function, the evaluation does not help the progress and the growth towards autonomy (Luckesi, 2005).

From the considerations hitherto exposed, it is understood that one of the central themes that transversalize the professor-student relationship undoubtedly concerns the process of learning assessment. This study is based on the principle that the evaluation is not limited to verification or checking. According to Silva, Ribeiro and Almeida (2018),

Understanding, proposing and managing the assessment of learning, taking into account its complexity, has established a challenge. University professors take it on the attempt of transposing the practice of assessment as a learning verifier. For the constructivist learning of emerging paradigm, evaluating presupposes a dialogical construction between different subjects, professor and student. This involves a paradigm based on the idea of developing cognitive processes that highlight the reflexive action of building knowledge. Therefore, the action of evolving the learning (Silva, Ribeiro & Almeida, 2018, p. 666-667).

The evaluative practice shall be taken as a principle of dialogical construction, evident within the relationship between professors and students. From this assumption, the issues inherent to the learning assessment dimension have focused on the principles of the dialogical relationship between professor and student. This is regarded to the actions of professors while discussing with students about the weaving of the assessment instruments, explaining the correcting criteria for those assessments, and, finally, including comments on the answers given by students when returning them.

In this perspective, it was presented the following statement to professors: You discuss how the learning assessment instruments will be. An amount of 61% of the sample stated that they *always* do; 27% has checked the option *frequently*. This indicates that the evaluation has been the stage for reflections on the educational practice of professors, and it is engendered in the dialogical relations with the students. This result is symmetrical to the data inherent to the action of presenting the teaching plan to the students, since the vast majority does present the plan – the assessment criteria and instruments to be adopted are inserted in it. However, it is not clear from the survey data what is the participation of the student in this dialogical and instrument construction

process. For example, it is not possible to infer that the assessment instruments are built from the contributions of the students, or even if they are developed based on their training needs.

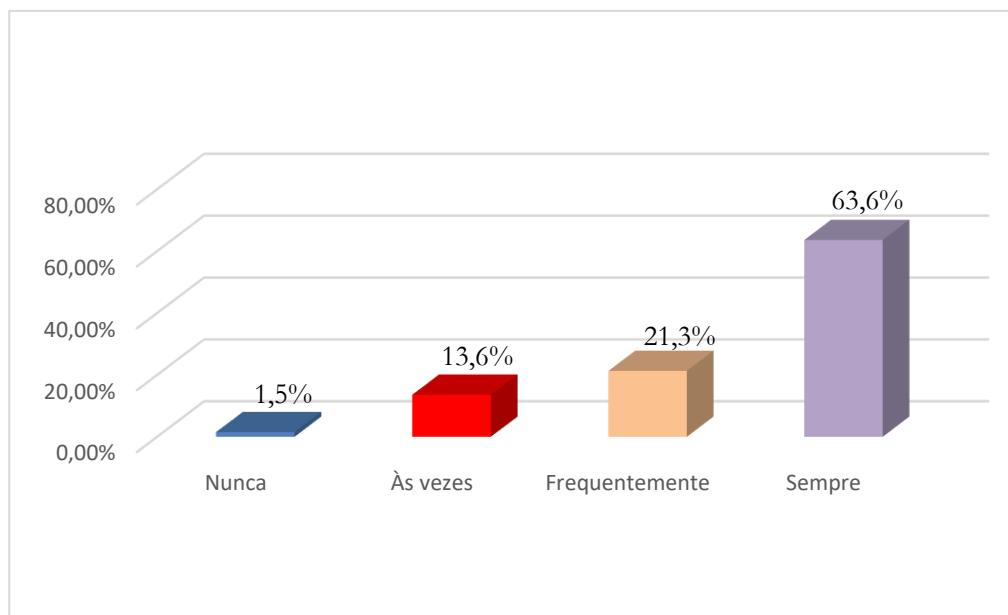
On the other hand, the data elucidate the willingness of professors to explain the evaluation criteria and, therefore, to show how the instruments are structured in their educational practice. Regarding the correction criteria for the assessments, the results show a tendency for professors to be concerned about making those explicit. However, there is no indication that the criteria are negotiated and woven within the dialogical relationships with students.

Even though explaining the criteria for the correction of the assessments is a relevant and necessary practice for the learner, as the assessment is based on objectives that must be clear to professors and students, it does not mean that these are built on/through dialogues with the students. But the positive aspect of making the criteria explicit must be highlighted. The data is illustrated in the graph below.

From what is shown in Graph 4, 64% of the participants affirm that they *always* explain the criteria for correcting the evaluations, and another 21% say they do it *frequently*. It is a strategy that brings a pedagogical relationship to the core of the educational practices. From this, the evaluation procedures are evident, and it generates clarity to the evaluation process. This suggests that there is evidence that “in university practice, professors have used teaching strategies that resort of the development and effectiveness of student learning as a fundamental principle” (SILVA, RIBEIRO and ALMEIDA, 2018, p. 667). In this sense, one of the strategies is to shed light on the rules of the evaluative game. It is necessary that professors and students do have knowledge about the fabric of the evaluation, as well as the objectives designed for students, which give them the condition to know the criteria adopted for the assessment.

In such dimension, it was also sought to verify whether professors record their comments in the returned evaluations, in order to generate a feedback on the performance of students. The data shows that 48% of professors do it *always*, while 32%, *frequently*. Therefore, these results imply that the act of evaluating is accompanied by a return to performance, which gives the students the condition to know qualitatively about their performance on this evaluation journey.

**Graph 4<sup>6</sup>** – Analysis of question: Make explicit the evaluation correction criteria



Source: Constructed by the author (2020).

<sup>6</sup> Nunca = Never; Às vezes= Occasionally; Frequentemente= Frequently; Sempre=Always.

The data shows considerable evidences of *feedback* practices. According to Brookhart (2008), the feedback given by professors through comments on the assessment instruments is essential for the learning progress. Such action contributes for the learning development, as well for thinking paths and strategies to be used on the learning through the answers. In this area, *feedback* contributes for understanding the paths that lead them to hit or miss the answers and, thus, for developing a reflective autonomy processes in the face of the evaluative practices developed by professors. However, it is worth noting that the data does not allow discussing the type of comment or its functionality in the evaluation process. Such data can be achieved by a qualitative research phase, in which professors can make clear how they do it, and the objectives undertaken to make such comments.

## Conclusions

At university, the professor-student relationship has been subject of debate, and object in many studies, with the aim of understanding how this relationship generates better learning conditions. Professors are credited with the idea of educational success, with the belief that they are the professionals who master the art of teaching, and therefore need to conduct the teaching process with skill, competence and professionalism, in order to generate effective results for the learning. However, it is necessary to understand that, especially in the university context, the pedagogical relationship constitutes a central point of practices that take effect in the relationship among people. University education is applied to young people and adults, therefore for those who are able to mediate and develop the teaching and learning process in an autonomous and effective way.

Conceiving that the educational reality of a public university such as UEFS, in which this study was conducted, is an unique situation while speaking of the production of reflective autonomies, it is necessary to bring up how the processes of pedagogical relationship have been developed and woven in the daily life of university teaching. In this sense, it is necessary to focus on the educational practice of professors, on one hand, and on the actions of students, on the other, thinking about its relationship process. Right the way, it emerges as a relevant theme to apprehend mechanisms that show the ways in which university teaching generates significant knowledge production.

Taking in account the outlines here established, in which the social identity and professional profile of the teachers was made visible, as well as the educational practices that they develop while planning and evaluating the teaching and learning, this research has revealed relevant data. This will allow the academic community to examine these and to assess whether the professor-student relationship is actually effective as it is indicated by the results. For this reason, it is necessary to understand if the response to these concerns is to make efforts and keep on generating pedagogical relationships such as those concluded here, or if it is necessary to promote changes and create conditions for the relational processes between professors and students.

The study has observed that the social identity and professional profiles of the sample is characterized by a majority of white men. They compose the permanent staff of the university, and most of them have an exclusive dedication working contract. Most of the professors are over 46 years old, and it was observed that a high number of them are over 50 years, with have more than 20 years of experience in higher education. These numbers have indicated an university at which prevails the male presence, revealing a similarity with the records of IBGE (2010) census. In other words, the State University of Feira de Santana still maintains similarity with the national scenario, while it is evident that most professors at public universities in the northeast region, as well as in the state of Bahia, are women. This indicates the need of expanding jobs and democratizing access of women to this institution.

The numbers indicates a high percentage of professors who work only at UEFS (more than 90% have exclusive dedication working contract) – these have conditions to fully engage in the actions provided by the institution. The professors working with this type of contract have better conditions to dedicate themselves to teaching, research and university extension activities, which may favor the expansion of situations and experiences for students, making possible the enlargement of the relations between professor and student. In addition, the permanent contracts give rise to idealized conditions that may help professors with the institutional demands, as the development of long-term projects that facilitate and expand academic relations with students.

Regarding the aspects inherent to educational planning, the study has allowed the conclusion that the participants carry out the planning and present it to students. However, there are no indications that pedagogical planning occurs due to the difficulties or needs of the students. Few are the professors who have reported to modify the plan, or to develop a teaching methodology, in order to meet the learning needs of them. Likewise, it is not possible to say that the selection of teaching material takes place based on these difficulties, even though a portion of professors reported that they select the didactic material in view of such difficulties.

For the learning assessment, the data show that this is one of the concerns of professors, who have reported that they discuss with students how the assessment instruments are characterized. This indicates that the evaluation is based on a dialogical basis, in which the idea of evaluating only for measuring or checking student performance is denied. Thus, the data shows a concern of professors to make comments on the answered evaluations, giving students a feedback on how their performance has been. This opens the possibility for reorienting their own practice, as well as guiding their perspective of developing other learning.

It is necessary to call attention to the fact that for this type of researches, characterized by a survey in which professors are presented to statements in order to choose the most coherent answer to their actions, it is very common to highlight the positive ones. For it, in a Likert-type scale, the frequency of answers may suggest positive or negative elements for the educational practices. That Said, it is relevant to consider that the answers may have been given with the aim of highlighting the positive elements of the teaching practice, and not necessarily indicating that these are thus active. But somehow, it is not up to the researcher to disprove the answers for this type of questionnaire. Instead, he shall analyze them in the light of what it suggests.

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