# The use of feedback in the teaching and learning process in Youth and Adult Education

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## Abstract

The present study aims to understand the impact of feedback on the teaching and learning process of English in Adult and Youth Education (EJA) classes. The theoretical framework, which is divided into three parts, addresses: EJA and educational legislation in relation to English language teaching; assessment in EJA; and feedback as a tool for formative assessment, based on authors such as Earl (2003), Brookhart (2008), Villas Boas (2014), Galdino (2018) and Tsagari *et al.* (2018). This was an action research study whose data collection included participant observation, field notes and focus groups with students. The results showed that students initially associated feedback with traditional assessment methods as they had little previous experience with this mechanism in the school environment. After the investigation, it was found that this assessment tool contributes significantly to overcoming uncertainty and promoting motivation, as it is understood as a tool that goes beyond the mere communication of results. Feedback was also found to have a positive impact on students' self-confidence and ability to overcome challenges related to their learning process. The relationship established between the teacher and students through this tool was also essential for student development and created a more collaborative and motivating learning environment.

**Keywords:** Feedback; Youth and Adult Education; English teaching; Assessment; Learning.

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# O Uso de *feedback* no processo de aprendizagem na Educação de Jovens e Adultos

## Resumo

O presente estudo tem como objetivo compreender o impacto do *feedback* no processo de ensino e aprendizagem de inglês em turmas da Educação de Jovens e Adultos (EJA). O embasamento teórico, dividido em três eixos, aborda: a EJA e a legislação educacional no ensino de inglês; a avaliação na EJA; e o feedback como ferramenta da avaliação formativa, com base em autores como Earl (2003), Brookhart (2008), Villas Boas (2014), Galdino (2018) e Tsagari *et al.* (2018). Trata-se de uma pesquisa-ação, cuja coleta de dados envolveu observação participante, notas de campo e grupos focais com estudantes. Os resultados revelaram que, inicialmente, os discentes associavam o feedback a métodos tradicionais de avaliação, com pouca vivência prévia dessa prática. Após a intervenção, o *feedback* foi compreendido como ferramenta que vai além da comunicação de resultados, contribuindo para a superação de inseguranças, o fortalecimento da motivação e da confiança no processo de aprendizagem. A relação entre professora e estudantes, mediada por essa ferramenta, mostrou-se essencial para a construção de um ambiente colaborativo e motivador, favorecendo o desenvolvimento dos discentes e a ressignificação da avaliação na EJA.

**Palavras-chave:** *Feedback*; Educação de Jovens e Adultos; Ensino de inglês; Avaliação; Aprendizagem.

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# El uso de la retroalimentación en el proceso de aprendizaje en la Educación de Jóvenes y dultos

## Resumen

El presente estudio tiene como objetivo comprender el impacto de la retroalimentación en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés en clases de Educación de Jóvenes y Adultos (EJA). El marco teórico, dividido en tres partes, aborda: la EJA y la legislación educativa en relación con la enseñanza del idioma inglés; la evaluación en la EJA; y la retroalimentación como herramienta de evaluación formativa, con base en autores como Earl (2003), Brookhart (2008), Villas Boas (2014), Galdino (2018) y Tsagari et al. (2018). Se trata de una investigación-acción cuya recopilación de datos incluyó observación participante, notas de campo y grupos focales con estudiantes. Los resultados mostraron que, inicialmente, los estudiantes asociaban la retroalimentación con métodos tradicionales de evaluación, ya que tenían poca experiencia previa con este mecanismo en el entorno escolar. Tras la investigación, se constató que esta herramienta evaluativa contribuye significativamente a superar inseguridades y a fomentar la motivación, al ser comprendida como una herramienta que va más allá de la mera comunicación de resultados. También se observó un impacto positivo en la autoconfianza del estudiantado y en su capacidad para enfrentar desafíos relacionados con su proceso de aprendizaje. La relación establecida entre la docente y el alumnado, mediada por esta herramienta, fue igualmente esencial para su desarrollo, generando un entorno de aprendizaje más colaborativo y motivador.

**Palabras clave:** retroalimentación; educación de jóvenes y adultos; eenseñanza del inglés; evaluación; aprendizaje

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## Introduction

In accordance with the *Operational Guidelines for Youth and Adult Education (EJA) of the Federal District Public School System*, EJA refers to young, adult, and elderly people of the working class who had restricted or interrupted access to formal educational processes (Brasil, 2021). Furthermore, according to the document, this mode of education aims to construct methods capable of broadly reaching all types of learning, in addition to guaranteeing the permanence and contact with education for the public it serves. These guidelines point out that, because this is a specific group seeking to reconstruct new paths by resuming/starting their studies, a curricular adaptation of the school processes of student practices is necessary according to the needs and individuality of the students.

Within this necessary adaptation, Silva (2021) asserts that *assessment practices* must be included. The discussion about the importance of assessment is essential for pedagogical development and for student learning. This happens because assessing learning has the objective of guiding the teacher and assisting them in their pedagogical practices so that students continuously develop their learning. In this sense, it is necessary to consider the previous assessment practices experienced by the EJA target audience, which often demotivated them and encouraged them to stop their studies (Silva, 2021).

For assessment practices to be significant in EJA, care is required when evaluating the student. It cannot insist on an exclusive practice that continuously submits the students of this modality to it. On the contrary, it must encourage, motivate, instruct, and direct students toward practices that are *continuous and formative*, aiming to develop their learning processes (Brasil, 2021). Thus, it is possible to perceive that assessment practices require caution to be implemented, especially in EJA, and have conceptions that need to be deconstructed so that their objective is learning, according to Villas Boas and Silva (2019).

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Nunes's study (2019), for example, shows that assessment tools, such as *peer assessment and self-assessment sheets*, when applied in EJA, generate positive results in the English teaching and learning process. Among these effects, the author identified the creation of a sense of responsibility in her students and a considerable increase in class participation.

In the same way, feedback, another assessment tool, can positively influence the teaching and learning of students. Brookhart (2008) understands this mechanism as any information provided to students about their performance or comprehension, with the purpose of reducing the distance between what they know and what is expected for them to know. She further states that this mechanism is applied to associate descriptions and suggestions with a student's specific work and that, if well executed, it can inform and guide them on what they need to understand their own learning processes. Therefore, the application of this assessment procedure in a motivating manner can lead the student to achieve their objectives regarding their learning, especially concerning English language teaching (Varela, 2011).

Considering the challenges discussed in relation to the teaching of the English language in the EJA context and the experiences previously portrayed, we formulated the following research question: *What is the impact of* feedback *on the English teaching and learning process in an EJA class within the context of the Pedagogical Residency Program (PRP)*[1]*?* This research seeks to investigate the effects of the assessment practice with feedback on the teaching and learning of the English language of these students, presenting the following specific objectives as a development: to identify the possibilities and challenges of using feedback in English teaching in EJA during the PRP experience; and to point out the extent to which this experience with feedback contributes to the development of EJA students' English learning.

Following this, the main concepts and arguments used to theoretically ground this research are presented. Then, we explain the methodological path, in which we present the research approach and type, the methodological

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instruments and procedures used, the context and participants of this investigation, as well as the data analysis and interpretation process. Finally, we show the final considerations.

## Assessment in EJA: Definitions

The central purpose of assessment is to subsidize the teacher in their pedagogical decisions, contributing to the qualification of the teaching and learning process (Silva, 2021). Aligned with this perspective, the *Curriculum in Movement for Youth and Adult Education* (SEDF, 2021) emphasizes that assessment in EJA must strengthen student autonomy, encouraging reflection on their own school practices. To this end, it guides that assessment should recognize and value the knowledge constructed throughout the students' life trajectories. Thus, assessing in EJA should not be limited to measuring knowledge, but rather recognizing the intersection between formal learning and knowledge acquired outside the school environment, creating a teaching process that is more significant and fair.

The National Curricular Guidelines for Youth and Adult Education (Brasil, 2000) and the Operational Guidelines for Youth and Adult Education (Brasil, 2010) establish that assessment in this context must be inclusive, formative, and articulated with the students' learning objectives, respecting their trajectories and life experiences. Unlike traditional assessment models, assessment in EJA should not reproduce historical inequalities or exclusions, but rather offer opportunities for the recognition of prior knowledge and effective progress.

Furthermore, these guidelines reinforce that assessment should guide the teaching process, providing useful information for both the teacher and the student, in order to promote continuous and meaningful learning. By valuing the diversity of rhythms, learning styles, and experiences of the students, assessment in EJA assumes a strategic role in reducing the educational barriers that these students have historically faced.

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The Operational Guidelines for Youth and Adult Education of the Federal District public system (Brasil, 2021, p. 50) reinforce that assessment should not "renew the exclusions to which the subjects of the modality were submitted over time." On the contrary, it should encourage, guide, inform, and lead students in a continuous and formative perspective, aimed at the development of learning. The document also presents examples of assessment practices that can be used and improved throughout the learning process, such as: peer assessment or colleague assessment, portfolio (physical or virtual), tests and exams, reflective records, and self-assessment.

The considerations presented indicate a strong focus on formative assessment, defined by Brown and Abeywickrama (2004) as that which evaluates the student throughout the development of their skills, helping to maintain the growth of this process. In contrast, summative assessment has the purpose of evaluating the student's productions during classes, usually at the end of a discipline or teaching unit, assigning a numerical or symbolic value. In the models mentioned by the Operational Guidelines (Brasil, 2021), summative assessment refers to tests and exams, for example.

In view of these considerations, it is important to highlight that, despite being of different natures and generating discussions about greater effectiveness between them, summative and formative assessments are not opponents; "each one has its purpose and its field of action" (Villas Boas, 2014, p. 59), and are, therefore, complementary. Expanding this discussion, Earl (2003) understands that assessment can present three different types of approaches, varying according to its purpose, and it is of utmost importance to know and differentiate them to recognize and know when, how, and for what purpose to use each of them.

The most common approach in schools is assessment of learning, which is summative in nature, aiming to report student progress to parents, focused on results, and is frequently expressed symbolically or numerically (Earl, 2003). In contrast, assessment for learning is guided by the formative nature and

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seeks to highlight student potential, identify their individual needs, and offer feedback to promote continuous development. In turn, assessment as learning is also formative and aims to engage students in the teaching process, making them critical by self-assessing and assessing their teachers and colleagues.

In the context of Youth and Adult Education, students generally value exams and grades, reflecting a summative assessment view (Earl, 2003). However, as Villas Boas and Silva (2019) point out, good grades do not guarantee continuity in studies or employment opportunities. It is essential to explore more appropriate assessment practices, such as text production, reports, and portfolios, which not only assess but also promote continuous learning. Furthermore, these tools can strengthen students' confidence and their perception of learning capacity.

In this regard, Nunes (2019), when researching assessment practices in the English language in EJA, conducted a focus group in which participating students indicated the exam as the main assessment instrument, relating it directly to scoring, and not to the continuity of learning. In her investigation, the author concluded that "the exam [...] should not be used as a mere accountability, but as part of a much broader process" (Nunes, 2019, p. 27), considering that this tool, if well planned, can serve as an assessment activity of both a formative and a summative nature (Villas Boas, 2017).

During her research, Nunes (2019) also noticed that, when using self-assessment and peer assessment, students felt insecure and incapable of assessing themselves and their classmates. In view of this, the author concluded that assessment can provide self-confidence and self-esteem to students, because:

> [...] it is a way of validating their knowledge and what they bring to the classroom. Therefore, it is necessary that assessment be planned beyond notation, approval, or failure, because only then will we help our students to recognize themselves as capable and active beings in their teaching-learning processes (Nunes, 2019, p. 29).

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In this sense, the importance of assessment as a fundamental component in educational contexts is highlighted. When well conducted, it serves as a valuable mechanism for identifying gaps, providing constructive feedback, and catalyzing individual development, thereby promoting a more dynamic teaching environment focused on true comprehension and the construction of knowledge.

## Feedback como mecanismo da avaliação formativa

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## Methodology

This research is based on the principles of action research, which, according to Tripp (2005, p. 445-446), "is a generic term for any process that follows a cycle in which practice is improved by systematically oscillating between acting in the field of practice and investigating it." For the execution of this technical procedure, the methodological approach of the research is qualitative in nature. As stated by Prodanov and Freitas (2013, p. 70), the concern is "much more with the process than with the product, with no preoccupation with proving previously established hypotheses."

As methodological research procedures, participant observation was used, given the fact that the second researcher assumed the role of one of the group members (Prodanov; Freitas, 2013), that of the class teacher. In addition, field notes were taken, which consist of "reports that describe the experiences and observations the researcher had while participating intensely and involved" (Emerson; Fretz; Shaw, 2014, p. 356). These annotations served to record relevant and important events.

Two focus groups were also conducted, used "when one wants to study the interaction in a group in relation to a specific theme," as highlighted by Flick (2009, p. 114). The first focus group occurred at the beginning of the research and the second at the end, in order to observe the students' point of view and obtain their perceptions throughout the process.

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It is also important to highlight that the analysis and interpretation of the data were conducted systematically, aligned with the research objectives and based on the interpretivist method described by Moita Lopes (1994). This approach seeks to understand how discourses or responses express and produce social realities, valuing in-depth and contextualized interpretations, rather than generalizing conclusions. To this end, thematic units were created based on the established objectives, which guided the categorization and organization of the collected data.

This process involved a careful and reiterated reading of the *corpus*, allowing the identification of patterns of meaning, recurrences, and particulars relevant to the understanding of the investigated phenomenon. The thematic units functioned as analytical lenses that enabled an interpretative approximation of the discourses, respecting the singularities of the subjects and the contexts in which they are inserted. This strategy was fundamental to ensure consistency between the empirical data, the research objectives, and the theoretical contributions mobilized.

For the selection of participants, a group of 12 students from the 3rd stage of High School EJA in a public school in the Federal District was chosen. The choice of this class is related to the work of one of the researchers within the scope of the Pedagogical Residency Program (PRP), funded by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), through which she continuously monitored the group, developing and implementing pedagogical activities in the classroom. This proximity allowed for a deeper understanding of the educational context and favored the establishment of necessary connections for conducting the research.

In order to preserve research ethics, the participating students had their real names omitted and were replaced by pseudonyms. Likewise, the research institution was also kept anonymous, following Flick's (2009) guidance to avoid talking about real people and using anonyms or changed names when referring to cases, as well as places and institutions. It is important to explain that,

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before starting the research, the Informed Consent Form (ICF) was delivered to all participants as an essential part of the procedure for respecting research ethics.

## Possibilities and Challenges with Feedback Practice

When exploring the use of feedback in EJA, an openness on the part of the students was noted during assessment moments. Many of them initially demonstrated insecurity and nervousness regarding the prospect of receiving feedback on the Directed Study assignment, which had been applied the previous week as an assessment activity, at the request of the supervising teacher of the Pedagogical Residency. However, this situation did not prevent them from openly hearing the teacher's considerations and guidance, as revealed by the following field note: *it was possible to perceive the insecurity of many of them before receiving the* feedback*. But all of them were open and receptive during the individual conversation* (Field Note, October 4, 2023).

The students' prior lack of exposure to the practice of feedback in EJA may be the implied factor behind the initial nervousness they felt during the interactions. This highlights the importance and relevance of this practice, especially due to the students' demonstrated willingness to receive feedback, despite initial insecurities. Nunes (2019), in her research on assessment practices in Youth and Adult Education, emphasizes that students, upon returning to school after a long time, are accompanied by insecurities and fears. In this regard, the notebook "Working with Youth and Adult Education: EJA Students" (Brasil, 2006) reinforces that students' insecurities and low self-esteem are the result of previous situations of failure and school exclusion they had already experienced.

EJA students are often unmotivated and insecure about classes in general, especially English classes, as stated by Thaina: "I barely know Portuguese, teacher" (Field Note, October 25, 2023). A response from the student Vanessa in her self-assessment and feedback sheet also evidences this:

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> 1-What do you think could be improved for the next class? **Vanessa**: I think asking the person if they understood, because sometimes they ask, but the person is embarrassed to say they didn't understand in front of the students. (Self-assessment and feedback sheet, October 4, 2023)

This response demonstrates the student's insecurity when exposing her understanding of the content. She asks that in the next classes, she not be asked if she had understood the content because it could embarrass her in front of the students. Using feedback on these occasions can be a motivational factor for them. The note below demonstrates this:

> In the feedback given to Vanessa, I mentioned that her insecurity regarding English could hinder the learning process, and that she didn't need to pressure herself so much about it, as she has a lot of potential. She was happy with the result of the Directed Study and responded to the assessment and feedback sheet saying that she was feeling more confident (Field Note, October 18, 2023).

At another time, Vanessa's responses began to highlight the positive influence of feedback on the motivational aspect:

> 1- How did you feel about your participation in today's class? **Vanessa**: Very good because I felt more confident, as I have a lot of insecurity in everything I do.

> 2- For you, what were the positive points of the class? And the negative ones? **Vanessa**: Positive because I saw that I really can learn English, negative is that I take a long time to understand the things being explained (Self-assessment and feedback sheet, October 18, 2023).

Similarly, and also in the same context of the Pedagogical Residency Program, Nunes (2019) reports the statement of an EJA student who brings the same perspectives: "we realized that it is possible to learn English within public school (EJA Student, PRP participant)." Therefore, after receiving constructive feedback on her insecurities, Vanessa demonstrated a change in her perception, as she felt encouraged and reported an improvement in her confidence in learning the English language. This exemplifies how feedback can be a motivational instrument for the teaching and learning of EJA students.

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Medeiros (2016) directly relates feedback to motivation, highlighting that, when positive, emphasizing the student's qualities, it can encourage them to seek continuity in their work.

Another possibility identified with the use of feedback was the strengthening of the relationship between teacher and student. An interaction with the student Yuri, which was initially a moment of feedback, transformed into an opportunity to establish a more personal conversation.

> *During a conversation with Yuri, giving* feedback *on his quick comprehension of the content despite arriving late to class, he felt comfortable and opened up about some difficulties he has been going through in his personal life* (Field Note, October 11, 2023).

This openness on Yuri's part shows that feedback is not just related to the exchange of information between teacher and student, but can be used to establish a space of security and welcoming. This can improve learning and offer emotional support to students. The student-teacher relationship is fundamental for providing feedback, as it establishes an environment of security and trust on the part of the student, who may feel comfortable expressing their feelings, doubts, and objectives. In this regard, Átila also provides a statement on his self-assessment and feedback sheet:

> 1- How did you feel about your participation in today's class? Átila: Very well guided by the Teacher, she makes us feel comfortable to express our feelings of doubt and also makes the class fun with games related to the class topic (Self-assessment and feedback sheet, October 18, 2023).

Examining the challenges faced with the use of feedback in EJA, it was evident that the main obstacles were related to student insecurities and motivation. Furthermore, it was observed that in each class, there was a need to encourage them again to participate in activities carried out jointly with the whole class. The field note made after class can demonstrate this:

> The students felt very insecure to participate in the game that practiced speaking and phrase creation using "going to," and many did not want to participate. However, everyone agreed to play in the end, after I

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> reassured them that I would help them. [...] Vanessa felt insecure and
> scared when she heard there would be a game about the content at
> the end of the class and said she would not participate, but when she
> realized she was understanding the review questions, she decided to
> participate in the game. [...] Yuri absolutely did not want to form the
> sentence, not even with the teacher's help, preferring to lose points in
> the game rather than forming the sentence (Field Note, October 18,
> 2023).

The students' reaction to activities involving the entire class shows a persistent reluctance. The students' insecurities, likely due to previous experiences, demanded a lot of attention to keep them engaged and motivated during the proposed activities, making it difficult to sustain more active class involvement. These behaviors highlight the fear students have of making mistakes.

Galdino (2018), when encountering students who did not want to interact, told them that they did not need to be afraid of making mistakes and shared her experiences during her trajectory, making mistakes and learning. The author noticed that "the students felt more encouraged to participate in the teacher-student interaction, that the fear dissipated, and that, little by little, [...] she managed to gain their trust" (Galdino, 2018, p. 34). Given this, the effectiveness of sharing personal experiences can be noted, emphasizing that making mistakes is part of the learning process, and teacher-student interaction emerges as a supportive tool to encourage student participation.

Regarding motivation, in some self-assessment and feedback sheets, in questions 2 and 3, a large portion of the students asked for games/play/dynamics:

> 2- For you, what were the negative points of the class? And the positive
> ones? **Lorenzo**: [...] Negative: there are some games missing in the
> classroom, other than that it's fine (Self-assessment and Feedback
> Sheet, October 25, 2023). **Leonardo**: [...] the negative thing is that there
> was no game (Self-assessment and feedback sheet, October 25, 2023).
> 3- What do you think could be improved for the next class? Lorenzo: In
> my opinion, I think we could have another class with the exercise game
> called Kahoot. I really liked the day we had this game (Self-assessment

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and feedback sheet, October 4, 2023). **Leonardo**: [...] I have one thing to ask: that we do more activities using the phone (Self-assessment and feedback sheet, October 4, 2023).

These responses reveal a desire from the students for a more dynamic approach in the teaching process and show the students' expectations for more interactive and engaging activities. However, some factors, such as the high demand for dynamics, students who do not like games, or the lack of time in classes, make this desired constancy extremely challenging for the students.

There wasn't enough time to carry out the game I had prepared, but even so, I noticed that some students continued asking for games. I realized that fun activities became a motivational instrument in the engagement and learning process of the students (Field Note, October 25, 2023).

The field note above can be exemplified through the responses of two students in their self-assessment and feedback sheets, in a class that included a fun activity as a way to socialize and exercise the content:

2- For you, what were the negative points of the class? And the positive ones? Átila: There was a game where the whole class participated and had fun (Self-assessment and feedback sheet, October 18, 2023). **Henrique**: [...] the positive point is that there was a dynamic; with this dynamic, it was easier to understand the content (Self-assessment and feedback sheet, October 18, 2023).

After analyzing the data, it is understood that the use of feedback in EJA is a tool that helps to overcome insecurities and can motivate students during their learning process, but it presents obstacles that hinder teaching. It is understood that keeping students motivated requires innovative strategies that meet student preferences. In this sense, making use of assessment and feedback can be an approach with many benefits. This implies considering the individual needs of each student, adapting the format and content of the feedback according to each one's learning style and specific interests. Furthermore, the implementation of educational technologies can be a way to make the assessment process more dynamic and engaging.

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Therefore, to maximize the benefits of using feedback in EJA, it is essential to invest in and promote a school culture that values the organization and development of more inclusive assessment practices through the creation of a more dynamic learning environment adapted to the individual needs of the students. The purpose must be in the planning and execution of practices that are truly committed to the success of learning and the continuous motivation of the student.

## Relationship Between Experiences and Learning in EJA

When questioned about how they felt receiving feedback during classes, two students mentioned incentive in their responses:

> Átila: Well, receiving feedback during classes, I felt encouraged, right? Even if, sometimes, it may not always be, like, something we want to hear. But it serves to teach us to learn from our mistakes. And to be better, right? In the next class, in the next assignment.

> **Leonardo:** [...] I was very happy and it really gave me a lot of desire. Like, a huge desire to learn English. So, I think... I'm sure I'm going to try, right, to put this into my vocabulary, to try to learn English.

These perspectives show that feedback, even if not always positive, as the student Átila comments, can be a mechanism with a favorable influence on student motivation, as it encourages them to analyze and perceive their mistakes and resolve them, thus potentially awakening interest in learning. One of the most important aspects of feedback is its potential to boost students' motivation, since it affects each one individually. Therefore, it is important that the return provided is as meaningful and comprehensive as possible (Tsagari et al., 2018).

Another perspective that students brought up about their feelings during feedback was related to the importance that the teacher demonstrated toward their learning process:

> **Vanessa:** I feel important because many teachers give their theory, and whether you understood or not, it doesn't matter to them. If they

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> are there, they are teaching the class, if you understood, fine. If you didn't understand, they don't care either.

> **Patrick**: I felt very happy because I know that the teacher Emily is concerned about me.

This perception reveals the positive influence that teaching actions can attribute to the learning processes of each student, highlighting the importance of promoting a positive and stimulating environment. The student perceives that the teacher cares about their development and feels motivated to want to improve their own learning process. Freitas (2011) mentions that student motivation can develop effectively when the teacher creates an environment of empathy and comprehension, fostering trust between both parties.

The students were asked about how feedback affected their motivation and engagement in their learning process, and they reinforced the ideas they had during classes:

> **Patrick:** When I receive positive feedback about my progress or even progress, I feel very motivated to continue striving and improving my skills. Therefore, it gives me confidence and makes me feel like I'm on the right track.

> **Vanessa**: It motivated me a lot, because I never had any interest in English, I won't lie. I never did, I never wanted to learn English, I thought it was very difficult and I said it wasn't for me. And after I learned some things, I still haven't learned a lot, but I learned some things, I became more interested, you know, because before I would say "there's no point, I'm not going to say anything" […] I was a little insecure with myself and said "oh, I'll never learn this, so why should I keep talking?"

The responses, once again, reinforce the importance of feedback as a mechanism that potentially favors motivation. Students feel more confident when their ability is noted by the teacher and, consequently, they engage in classroom activities.

When answering the question about overcoming challenges during English learning, the student Vanessa did not want to expose her personal experience

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in detail in front of her colleagues, by stating that she had overcome challenges during classes. But, later, individually, in a conversation with the teacher, she allowed the recording of her complete response:

> **Vanessa:** [...] it helped me a lot, in fact, because I am insecure with myself, I am insecure with my body, I am insecure with my speaking, I am insecure with my voice. So, like, you, Teacher Emily, gave me the opportunity to speak and, the day you called me aside and talked to me, I realized that you are there not only as a teacher, you are there as a friend, and you will show me more and more that it is possible for you to achieve something. And nowadays I am dreaming more, I am dreaming higher, something I didn't do before.

In addition to feeling motivated and engaged, the student Vanessa reported that she overcame her challenges related to her insecurity, not only related to English teaching, but she felt more confident in other areas of her life. The evidence of this process corroborates the idea that the teacher-student relationship, built through individual feedback, is also important for making learning more significant. This feedback provided is essential in EJA because it allows students to share their academic and personal difficulties, highlighting the importance of understanding the life experience and particularity of each one of them (Silva, 2021). Galdino (2018, p. 20) reinforces that "the teacher must show interest in the well-being and growth of their student inside and outside the classroom," which contributes to the student's integral development. By promoting an environment of support and comprehension, the teacher-student relationship transcends academic boundaries, positively impacting not only performance in the discipline but also strengthening the students' overall confidence and skills.

At another moment, during the question "did you have the opportunity to provide feedback to the teacher about the classes taught? If so, what was that experience like?", the student Átila, in his response, adds comments referring to the teacher-student relationship:

> Átila: Yes, I had the opportunity, the teacher Emily was always open with the students, always left that space for the students to speak, with

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> the teacher, student and teacher, teacher and student, she always gave that freedom [...] but between student and teacher Emily there was always this space, so at least for me I had the opportunity.

The student reinforces the importance of the relationship between student and teacher. By emphasizing the openness to dialogue that the teacher provided during classes, creating a significant space for an exchange of ideas between them, it is possible to notice the freedom of expression found by the student. Freire (2004, p. 133) believes that "witnessing openness to others, the curious availability to life, to its challenges, are necessary knowledge for educational practice," that is, providing an environment in which the teacher-student relationship is developed and explored is fundamental for a good education.

In summary, the reports from these students highlight that learning is not limited to academic content and can be influenced by the relationships built between teacher and student. This openness to dialogue, which often arises through feedback, has the capacity to help in overcoming challenges and promoting the students' personal growth as well.

The other student responses to the question about the feedback provided to the teacher, with the exception of only one, did not openly mention the self-assessment and feedback sheet as an instrument for this. However, indirectly, it was possible to perceive how the experiences they lived through brought a significant impact on their perceptions of teaching and learning. The open dialogue between the teacher and the students emerged as a crucial factor for the construction of a more welcoming and enriching environment.

Another student, Patrick, despite not directly mentioning the aforementioned Sheet, recounted how he felt when providing feedback, as revealed in the excerpt below from the second focus group:

> **Patrick:** Yes, I had the opportunity to offer feedback to the teacher. At the moment I felt a little fear and desperation, because it's not easy to give feedback. It's very complicated. In case you say something that does not please the other person, it's complicated.

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The experience reported by Patrick reveals the importance that the student attributes to the act of providing feedback, as he understands the complexity of it and has difficulties performing it. It is common for students to feel insecure in moments like this, mainly because it is a practice that is not prioritized or common in school environments (Earl, 2003). To face this challenge, it is essential to promote a change in the educational culture, recognizing the importance of feedback and self-assessment not only as an assessment tool but as a prolific means of mutual learning. Integrating these practices from the initial phases of education can help students develop the confidence and skills necessary to communicate their observations constructively.

The responses to the last question of the focus group, "for you, was the feedback provided effective? If so, in what way? If not, what could be improved for the feedback to be more effective?", were all positive. The students commented, for the most part, that feedback made them feel more comfortable and confident during classes:

> **Thaina**: Yes, the feedback was very effective for me, nowadays I can trust myself more, right, to learn English than before. Before, I couldn't believe I was capable, and nowadays I can.
>
> Átila: For me, Átila, it was effective, yes, I'm leaving these English classes even wanting to learn to speak, right, to take a course, something like that.
>
> **Lorenzo**: The feedback for me was quite effective, it helped me a lot with English, as I said last year I had a lot of difficulty and today, because I participate more in classes, talk more with the group about the subject, I think it helped me a lot.
>
> **Vanessa**: Yes, nowadays I can speak, like, if it's to ask something, even if I don't know, I try to pay attention so I can understand something. There are days when I arrive at school, my head is in another world, you know? But I get there and I manage to pay a little attention.
>
> **Thomas**: Well, the feedback was effective in terms of my learning style and also in the very way of student-teacher interaction, because it became something less automatic, you know? Something more organic,

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> it got much better. You are less embarrassed to ask something to the teacher than if it were a teacher who just kept to themselves and didn't give feedback and only wrote things on the board, you know? So, this issue of class with feedback is much better.

Based on the students' responses, it is notable that the feedback during classes was beneficial. They highlighted the increase in confidence, the willingness to participate in classes, and the interaction between student and teacher. These factors suggest that the use of this assessment resource in the classroom became significant during the students' learning process. It positively influences individual confidence, motivating students to participate actively in classes. The teacher-student relationship, also evidenced by them, demonstrates that the creation of a more collaborative environment contributes to breaking down barriers such as insecurities and specific difficulties of the discipline. To achieve these results, feedback needs to be formative in nature and must be understood as an important factor in classroom interaction, cooperating for students' meaningful learning and for them to reach their desired objectives (Varela, 2011).

Therefore, due to the responses obtained during the second focus group, the students perceived this practice as a procedure that, in addition to being used to analyze successes and errors and to create opportunities for improvement, provided a friendly and less intimidating environment, where they could express their opinions, without feeling pressured or uncomfortable by it. If feedback is carried out frequently during classes, whether formal or informal, positive or negative, it can shorten the relationship between teachers and students, enabling more effective and meaningful learning, both for the students and for the teachers. Proof of this, Galdino's research (2018) reveals that classroom interaction is a broken barrier capable of promoting expressive advances during her English classes. The author emphasizes the change in student behavior as they felt more comfortable participating in classes, fostering interest in studying the English language, which brought satisfaction not only to the students but also to her.

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## Final Considerations

Considering the focus of this research on analyzing the impact of feedback on the English teaching and learning process in a Youth and Adult Education class, its relevance lies in the need to understand how this mechanism can positively influence student learning. The lack of research addressing assessment practices, especially feedback, directed at EJA in English language teaching, contributes to making the study even more relevant.

The implementation of the self-assessment and feedback sheets, along with the field notes taken by the teacher, aimed to identify the possibilities and challenges related to the practice of feedback. By analyzing the students' responses, it was possible to perceive that the use of feedback provided significant possibilities for promoting the overcoming of insecurities and motivation for learning. Through it, the barriers between teacher and student diminished, making the environment safe with emotional support.

The challenges encountered during the implementation of feedback were also notable. Students were very resistant to participating in activities that required interaction with the teacher and the class. This highlighted the relevance of a careful approach to address the insecurities, which are possibly a result of students' previous experiences. Sharing personal experiences and creating an environment of trust is a successful strategy to encourage student participation (Galdino, 2018). Another point observed was the constant request for dynamics and games presented by the students in their self-assessment and feedback sheets; however, the management of time and the constant adaptation of classroom practices also became a challenge to meet these requests.

The second focus group conducted with the research participants, seeking to explore the relationship between the experiences lived by the students, obtained results that highlight the importance of feedback as a tool that goes beyond academic assessment. It directly influences the motivation, confidence,

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and overcoming of challenges faced by the students. The students highlighted that feedback creates an environment of emotional support, promoting the encouragement of active participation in the classroom.

The relationship established between teacher and student through feedback emerged as an essential factor for the development of EJA students. Just as Galdino (2018) points out, classroom interaction can overcome the barriers that many students face. The significant change in learning, and also in personal aspects, highlighted by the student Vanessa, indicates the fundamental role of feedback in emotional growth and the construction of a more welcoming and motivating learning experience.

Finally, as a contribution of this investigative study, the positive impact of feedback in creating a more collaborative and less intimidating learning environment is evidenced, where students feel comfortable expressing their opinions and overcoming insecurities. The use of feedback is seen as fundamental during the students' learning process and suggests paths to improve the educational approach, aiming not only at the result obtained by them but also at the development of the processes and the individual growth of each one.

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