

THE USAGE OF REFLECTIONS ON ASSESSMENT PROCESS

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Abstract

Reflections today have become part of the regular engagement of pupils in schools and students in universities. The chosen problem for research " The usage of reflections on assessment process ", intends to present and analyze how weekly reflections affected students as regular tasks in achieving results of learning and how reflections affected the improvement of their success in the final assessment. The main questions of this research will be: Do reflections affect the achievement and improvement of learning outcomes? How do reflections affect their success in the final evaluation?

The research was carried out with the students of the Faculty of Education, which held the exercises of the course "Assessment in Education" in the master program of subject teaching, selecting a sample of students, 100 of them. The research methodology is mixed, using the methods of analysis and comparison, storytelling and interviews, and conducting surveys and questionnaires with students. Students for each week made reflections and forwarded them to the electronic platform "classroom", they were analyzed and compared to determine whether they matched the learning outcomes of the subject, where at the end of the semester before the final assessment was completed the questionnaire with students for the usage of reflections on the assessment process, while interviews and their stories were conducted after the final assessment, to see their impact on the achievement of success in the final assessment. From the results and findings of the research, we have drawn findings and recommendations for the usage and utilization of reflections in the assessment process. Research findings and recommendations are important primarily for the Faculty of Education and other institutions of higher education in Kosovo, but also for education policymakers in Kosovo. At the same time, they assist teachers in their implementation of assessment policy.

Keywords: assessment, learning, process, usage, reflection.

1. Introduction

The chosen issue for research "The usage of reflections on assessment process", aims to see and analyze how weekly reflections affect students as regular tasks in achieving results of learning and how reflections affect their success in the assessment process. Nowadays reflections have become part of the regular engagement of students in universities. In the past, our education system at all levels has not been present such an action. Reflections on student engagement and duties were practiced only after the establishment of the Faculty of Education in 2002, when the first generations of students started in this faculty, specifically when they started internships in schools as interns with the role of class observer for three weeks in the first year of studies. Here in their diary, they had to write reflections. At the same time, they had to make three types of reflections: Descriptive, analytical, and critical (see Doracaku i mësimet praktik, 2002). Their mentor teachers in schools and their supervisory professors from the Faculty were also introduced to such an action. They had the task to evaluate in the final report the part of the student's reflections, in addition to the overall assessment and their other activities. Such a thing continues and happens even now with the students of the Faculty of Education who attend the Pedagogical Practice in schools.

In addition to the way it is practiced at the Faculty of Education with the accession to power and implementation of the new Curriculum in pre-university education in Kosovo, all teachers have a mandatory duty to reflect on the planning of each lesson. As for whether they use and implement the reflective task, it's not encountered such data or research among students. This has been the reason for such a study on the impact

of Reflections and their implementation with students as regular means, but to use the reflections as one of the assessment instruments. Also, it's been practiced with master students in recent years.

2. Theoretical review of the problem

The teaching profession today is not considered a craft, as it was previously considered, it is now a profession based on deep knowledge and research (Musai, 2014). According to Xavier Chia, (2010), a good teacher is considered: to be positive and encouraging, treat students fairly and impartially, have a sense of humor, set standards that are high but achievable, be clear and consistent in terms of rules and expectations, be flexible and willing to adapt, constantly seek to improve his teaching through reflective practice (Chia, 2010).

Teachers who master the determining and complete activity in education and human rights education are capable of reflecting critically on certain issues and questions in professional terms. They know the values, policies, principles, and programs of the UN, EU, European Council, and OSCE in professional education and the factors that influence the achievement of success (Brett et. Al., 2009).

The professional learning diary refers to a register of the teacher's activities to document his work in the process of reflection on his practice, and the content of the course and to identify areas in which they have support. Such a diary is used for formal assessment of teachers' progress in meeting the requirements for teacher licensing (Vlerësimi në funksion të zhvillimit të kompetencave të nxënësve, 2009). The teacher, as a reflective practitioner, means a very important source of information because through reflections he sees his shortcomings and successes in his daily work that he develops in the classroom. They use formative assessment to determine if students have achieved learning outcomes. This assessment is intended to assist teachers in identifying material that needs to be clarified or re-taught and should not be used solely for their assessment. Also, this type of assessment should be used to assure the teacher that the curriculum and learning outcomes and activities need to be modified in the process of his work (Vlerësimi në funksion të zhvillimit të kompetencave të nxënësve, 2009).

Folders are one of the methods or instruments of student assessment during formative assessment, which means a collection of continuous student work, to show the achievement of learning outcomes, self-analysis, and reflections on what they have learned. It consists of written and artistic works, but students can also include letters to dossier readers, presentations, figures, diagrams, essays, and everything they prepare for learning in their field, receiving lessons and assessments (Woolfolk, 2011). Evaluation of students' files and performance is done through the checklist, evaluation scales, and results manuals, which are used to determine the quality of a student's performance because the evaluation of files and exhibitions is based on criteria and not norms (Woolfolk, 2011).

Monitoring the professional development of teachers includes at least two steps: monitoring the implementation of professional development sessions, as well as monitoring the implementation of teachers in the classroom of knowledge and skills acquired through professional development. Performance is related to the results arising from the performance appraisal process that is carried out within the criteria set at the central level (currently in the framework of the administrative instruction for performance appraisal 14/2013 and the manual for performance appraisal of teachers). (<https://masht.rks-gov.net/>, 2017). Performance appraisal is realized through four instruments: Teacher self-assessment - 10% or 12 points; School principal assessment - 30% or 36 points; Inspection/participation in the classroom - 30% or 36 points and Planning and realization of the whole lesson - 30% or 36 points. The bearers of TAP (Teacher's Assessment Performance) are the MEST Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, MDE, (Municipal Directorate of Education), the school principal, and the teacher himself/herself. (<https://masht.rks-gov.net/>, 2017)

3. Research methodology

The research was conducted with the students of the Faculty of Education, the master program of subject teaching in the first year of the summer semester, within the subject "Assessment in education". For each week they had a reflective task from the content of the syllabus of the course. A sample of 100 students was selected as planned, in three different groups, where 81 students participated. The research methodology is mixed, using the methods of analysis and comparison of their reflections, statistics, and interviews of 10 students who finished the final exam. Students for each week made reflections and forwarded and uploaded them on the electronic platform "classroom", then we conducted questionnaires with students through "Google Forms" (online, due to the pandemic). The questionnaire was completed at the end of the semester before the final evaluation. They are analyzed and compared to see if they match the learning outcomes of the course. We conducted interviews with students after the final assessment, to see their impact on the success of the final assessment. The main questions of this research are: Do reflections affect the achievement and improvement of learning outcomes? How do reflections affect their success in the final assessment?

Hypothesis: The usage of reflective practices has an impact on the assessment process

4. Analysis of results

In this research are first analyzed and compared the reflections of students for each week, to see if the learning outcomes are being achieved and evidenced by students, about the topics provided by the syllabus. In general, their reflections are and highlight most of the learning outcomes of the topics and issues we discuss in lectures and exercises. However, it is noticed that they are more focused on descriptive reflections rather than on analytical and critical ones.

The second issue that has been analyzed and takes place in this study, is undoubtedly the quantitative part of the research, based on the findings through the presented questionnaire and graphs below, the main research questions show that reflections help and directly affect the achievement of learning outcomes because students are constantly required to read and study to prepare reflection as a weekly task. The results obtained show an in-depth and specific analysis for each of the following questions:

In this research, the reflections of students for each week are first analyzed and compared, to see if the learning outcomes are being achieved and evidenced by the students, about the topics that are foreseen with the syllabus. In general, their reflections are and highlight most of the learning outcomes of the topics and issues we discuss in lectures and exercises. However, it is noticed that they are more focused on descriptive reflections rather than on analytical and critical ones. The second issue that has been analyzed and takes place in this study is undoubtedly the quantitative part of the research, based on the findings through the questionnaire and graphs shown below, the main research questions show that reflections help and affect directly achieving learning outcomes because students are constantly required to read and study to prepare for reflection as a weekly task. They expect the same in the final evaluation.

Table 1. Data and results

1. Have you ever had a reflection assignment during your studies?	Yes	No	Sometimes
	54%	39%	9%
2. Should reflections be part of the engagement for students at the Faculty of Education?	Agree	Don't agree	Don't know
	99%	1%	0
3. Will you use the reflections with your students?	Yes	No	Don't know
	94%	1%	5%
4. How much do reflections help achieve learning outcomes?	Too much	Slightly	Not at all
	80%	15%	5%
5. Do reflections affect you in achieving learning outcomes?	Too much	Slightly	Not at all
	85%	15%	0
6. Did you submit the reflections or reflective tasks on time?	Yes	No	Sometimes
	85%	3%	12%
7. How long would it take to use the reflections?	Weekly	Every two weeks	Monthly
	53 students	26 St.	2 St.
8. How should the reflections be?	Written	Orally	Mixed
	35 St.	1 St.	45 St.
9. Should reflections be part of formative assessment as an instrument?	Should	Shouldn't	Don't know
	85%	5%	10%
10. Will weekly reflections affect the final assessment?	Yes	No	Don't know
	85%	1%	14%
11. How much should the reflections be evaluated in the final evaluation?	10%	15%	20%
	27 St.	17 St.	37 St.
12. How much do you think your reflections will be taken into consideration in the final assessment by your professors?	Too much	Slightly	Not at all
	30 St.	39 St.	12 St.

Question analysis 1. Students were asked if they had practiced such a thing before, as seen from the result over half of the respondents were familiar with the reflection, but 37% of them had not practiced such a thing before. The latter has certainly affected students who have not attended pedagogical practice in schools and have not had the opportunity to get acquainted with this form of teaching work through reflections. Analysis of question 2. Regarding whether reflections should be part of student engagement, the majority of 99% of respondents agree that they should be part of their work, while only 1% do not prefer such a thing. This majority means that reflections facilitate their learning and are attractive to students because they are constantly committed to achieving learning outcomes and improving and supplementing new knowledge.

Question analysis 3- Also 94% of students agree that they will use this modality in schools with their students, while only 6% are not sure that they will implement such a thing. Therefore, most of the students have been influenced and taken it as a model, which they will apply in school as teachers. Question analysis 4- Many

students think that reflections help to achieve learning outcomes. Respectively 95% of them think that they help a lot in achieving learning outcomes, whereas only 5% do not see the use of reflections as a positive one. Question analysis 5- 85% of respondents agree that the reflections they have made have directly affected them, while 15% think that they have had little impact on the achievement of learning outcomes. Analysis of question 6- Also the performance and submission of reflective tasks by students according to the result in question 6 is similar to the preliminary results of question 5, where 85% answered that they did the reflections on time, while others either did not send them on time or did not do them at all.

Question analysis 7- Regarding the time of conducting reflections, most students agree that this should be done every week for each issue or topic assigned by the plan, some think that the right time would be every two weeks, but some think that this should be done once a month, which means including a chapter with certain topics. Question analysis 8 - Most of the respondents are pro the way of applying the mixed form of reflections, which means written and oral reflections, and not only in one way. A considerable part of them think that they should be in writing only. This has been influenced by the method of application of reflection by teachers because they constantly ask students for written reflections.

Question analysis 9- In terms of continuous (formative) assessment by the teacher, 85% of respondents agree that reflection is one of the assessment instruments, 5% do not prefer it, while 10% do not define it, they are neutral. Question analysis 10- Of all respondents 85% think that weekly reflections will have an impact on the final assessment, while a small part about 14% do not know how much it will improve the final result. Only 1% do not believe it will have an impact on the final rating.

Analysis of question 11- From the data it can be seen that students want the reflections to occupy a more prominent place in the final assessment. From the current practice of evaluating reflections, most think that the assessment percentage should be increased from 10% to 20%. Analysis of question 12- Regarding how much their teachers have taken into consideration the reflections, most of them do not have the impression that they are considered, only about 25% think that they were taken into consideration in the final assessment.

5. Findings and recommendations

From the results and findings of the research, conclusions and recommendations have been drawn for the use and exploitation of reflections in the assessment process. Findings and research recommendations are important first place for the Faculty of Education and other institutions of higher education in Kosovo, but also for education policymakers in Kosovo. At the same time, they will assist teachers in their implementation of assessment policy. The findings of this research are as follows:

- First, Reflections affect the achievement of learning outcomes in students;
- Second, they should be part of student engagement as weekly assignments but in mixed form (written and oral);
- Third, the use of reflections in the faculty will influence and encourage students-teachers in the future to use them in school;
- Fourth, Reflections should be part of the formative and final assessment;
- Fifth, Reflections help and facilitate the final assessment.

From the findings and conclusions on the use of reflections, we recommend that:

- Reflections to be used more by the professors of our Faculty and to be a part of their evaluation in the final assessment;
- They should also be used by other pre-university education institutions, not only by teachers to reflect on their work, but also to use them in student assessment as a tool in formative assessment;
- Reflections to be also a part of policymakers and leaders of education, to achieve better results in the education system.

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