

THE PLANNING OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Abstract

One of the requirements of modern education, that is also a case of debate which we face every day in the pedagogical practice and in the successful realization of the learning process, is to control and evaluate the knowledge and the achievement of the students. During the evaluation, we have to focus on students' abilities, given the work and the achieved success. In this way, grading would be more realistic, and it would be based on the individuality of each student. This way of assessing would also prompt a positive sense to the students' work, and help them achieve a better success. Since the process of teaching and learning is a dynamic one, it is necessary to have a continuous checking and assessing, and it is done very carefully by the teacher. The teacher has to set some goals in the beginning, that he/she should fulfil. These goals are about what students should learn; these are the aims of the lessons. Only in this way we can contribute in the education for a regularity in the performance of duties, and will ensure that the teacher has successfully carried out the process of students' evaluation. This way of acting influences in a qualitative way the students' engagement and activity. Thus, a teacher with a plan, realizes and assesses its teaching job. So, the aim of the research was to ascertain how the planning of formative assessment affects the improving of the teacher's success and of the students' achievements. Based on this purpose, and on the complexity of the problem posed above, we decided to use the technique of questionnaires for the teachers. Hence, 150 teachers from five elementary schools in Tetovo were given questionnaires to fulfil. From the obtained results, we came to a conclusion that the teachers become motivated and encouraged during the realization of the learning process, and also that they control and assess the knowledge and the achievements of the students in a systematic and planning way.

Keywords: planning, formative assessment, success, achievements, teacher.

1. Theoretical review

Assessing, as an important part of the process of teaching, should be present in each step of school work. Evaluation of the teaching activities, in the right time, can help us to get informations about the results that students achieve and the teachers' work over time. These information, that we can get through the evaluation system, give us an overview about the quality of teaching and the results that students achieve. This can help us to obtain the efficiency and well functioning of students' assesment. From this we can conclude that the assessing of knowledge and achievements is one of the most important problems that we face everyday in the pedagogical practices.

Every work needs to be well organized. This is also needed by the teaching process during its realization. But it is also needed to verify and assess the predefined goals. If we want to achieve the success wanted in teaching and learning process, it is not enough to aim at a good explanation. We should use methods, instruments and the right educational principles, with the only purpose-to *stimulate students' work*. Using the assessments for the improvement of teaching quality depends primarily on the teachers and their behaviour. Teachers should get acquainted with the assessment instruments, results of the assessment, and to develop teaching methodologies that would lead to the improvement of teaching quality. Checking and assessing

the knowledge have two functions: *educative* and *instructive*. In other words, when grading and assessing is performed in a continuous and right way, it can accomplish its educative and even instructive function. (Osmani, 2007: 61) In this way they can contribute on the regularity of the teaching process.

In many studies and researches done before, it is proven that the students' success is improved when the teachers applied an effective strategy, like formative grading. This means that assessing by planning it before, and conducting everything in a continuous and systematic way, is done to prevent the potential failure of the students. This way of acting influences in a qualitative way the students' engagement and activity. In this way, the teacher will realize and assess its teaching according to a plan. The teacher has to set some goals in the beginning, that he/she should fulfil. These goals are about what students should learn; these are the aims of the lessons. (Вилотијевић, 1999: 57) This way, we can come to the conclusion that information, checking, and assessing, have a very important function in progressing and in fruitful work of education.

Formative assessment includes the diagnosis of prior knowledge; setting and following goals, and evaluating the results. Planning takes place at the beginning of every new unit, when goals are set. The starting point is the question: *What do I already know?* and *What do I not know?* or *What do I want to learn?* The first question helps the teacher to find out the strengths and prior knowledge of each student and the second question identifies the weakest areas.

Teachers set goals jointly with the class. Goals are also adjusted and changed to meet the needs of individual students. (Peršolja & Burdenski, 2010: 45).

According McManus (2008): „*Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes. Increasing numbers of educators regard formative assessment as a way not only to improve student learning, but also to increase student scores on significant achievement examinations.*“ (McManus, 2008:3)

Notifying and assessing are deep and delicate psychological processes. It is not enough to aim at a good explanation, if we want to achieve the success wanted in the teaching and learning process. We should use methods, instruments, and the right educational principles, with the only purpose to stimulate the students' work. But at the same time, the responsibility and the seriousness of the teacher are needed during the notification, checking and assessing. His/her objectivity, transparency, and fairness, are necessary during the grading of students' achievements, abilities, knowledge and success. (Berisha, 1995: 138) Precisely, this was what we wanted to investigate and prove. So, the aim of the research was to ascertain how the teacher's planning of the formative assessment affects the improving of the teacher's success and the student's creativity and motivation, and also the objective assessment of students' achievements.

2. The empirical part of the paper

The process of monitoring and assessing the students' achievement should be conducted in a systematic and planned manner. Only in this way we can contribute in the education for regularity in the performance of duties, and can assure that the teacher has carried out successfully and in an adequate way the process of students' evaluation. At the same time, he/she should provide data about the development and the progress of his/her students. The evaluation done in this way would affect positively the students' engagement and activity. In this way, the teacher will realize and assess its teaching according to a plan. But it is important to know, how much do they believe that this way of working is the right way. Their opinion is shown on table no.1, provided below:

Table 1. The views of teachers about the the importance of planning the formative evaluation in the teaching and learning process

How much importance do you give to the planning formative evaluation in the teaching and learning process?		<i>Teachers:</i>	
		f	%
a)	Very much	110	73,33
b)	Medium	30	20,00
c)	Little	10	6,66
d)	None	0	0,00
T		150	99,99

From table no.1's results we can see that most teachers give priority and precedence to the checking and assessing by planning in a continuous and systematic way. There are 73,33% of them who think in this way. Meanwhile, a small number of the asked teachers, only 6,66%, have declared that they give little importance to this way of checking and assessing, and the others, approximately 20 % of them, give a medium importance to it. None of the teachers who took part in this study accept that they do not practice in part and do not give importance to this type of evaluation.

From the obtained results, we have come to a conclusion that the teachers become motivated and encouraged during the realization of the learning process, and also that they would control and assess the students' knowledge and achievements in a continuous and systematic way, and are going to realize and assess their teaching job according to plan.

Conclusion

Formative assessing is done through the process of teaching. Its purpose is to gather information and to give efficient information over teaching and learning, in order to make these processes more successful.

Because the formative assessment process helps students achieve intended learning outcomes, based on explicit learning progressions, teachers must first identify and then communicate the instructional goal to students. Teachers must provide the criteria by which learning will be assessed, so that students will know whether they are successfully progressing toward the goal.

Sharing learning goals and criteria for success with students, supporting students as they monitor and take responsibility for their own learning, helping students to provide constructive feedback to each other, and involving students in decisions about how to move learning forward, are illustrations of students and teachers working together in the teaching and learning process. (McManus, 2008:3)

In that way of teaching and assessment, the teachers motivate the creativity and engagement of students in the process of learning, wich enables them to take responsibility for their own progress, work, learning and knowledge. Teachers should get acquainted with the assessment instruments, results of assessment, and develop teaching methodologies that would lead to the improvement of teaching quality.

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