THE IMPORTANCE OF FORMATIVE CHECKING AND ASSESSING IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

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Abstract

One of the requirements of modern education, that is also a case of debate with which we face every day in pedagogical practice and in the successful realization of the learning process is to control and evaluate the knowledge and the achievement of the students. Only in this way we can contribute in the education for a regularity in the performance of duties, and will assure that the teacher has done successfully and in an adequate way the process of evaluation of students. In the same time he/she has provided data about the development and the progress of his/her students. We posed a question to ourselves: Do teachers appreciate and use more the way of assessing the students by a continous and sistematic evaluation (formative assessing), or do they use a final and non-sistematic evaluation (summative assessing) of the students? Precisely this was the reason that we wanted to investigate and prove. So the aim of the research was to ascertain how formative assessment affect on improving teacher success, creativity, motivation and concentration of students, and also in the objective assessment of students' achievements. Based on this purpose, and on the complexity of the problem posed above, we defined to apply these methods: descriptive method, inductive method, deductive method, comparative method and statistical method. The technique that we used was a survey based on teachers' questionnaire, and as a tool is used their questionnaires. These were posed to 120 teachers, 30 teachers from each school. Two schools were in rural areas and two schools in urban areas. From the obtained results, we have come to a conclusion, teachers get motivated and encouraged during the realization of the learning process, also they control and assess the knowledge and the achievements of the students in a continuous and systematic way.

Keywords: student, teacher, achivements, checking, formative assessment.

Introduction

Every work needs to be well organized, also teaching and other pedagogical activities needs this organization during their realization. But it is also needed to verify and assess the predefined goals. The teacher has to put some targets in the beginning, that he/she should fulfil. These targets are about what students should learn, these are the aims of the lessons. In this way, we can get to the conclusion that information, checking and assesssing has a very important function in progressing and in fruitful work of education. Assessing, as an important part of this system, 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 informations, that we can get throught 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 function of students' assessment. From this we can conclude that assessing of knowledge and achievements is one of the most important problems that we face everyday in pedagogical practices.

But even if this process is important, we have denoted that many teachers do not give the proper importance, so this procedure is not attained in a planned and sistematic way. In general teachers tend to assess only students' knowledge, based on his/her subjective judgements that the teacher has for them.

During the evaluation we have to focus on students abilities, given work and the achievement success. In this way grading would be more real, and it would be based on the individuality of each student. This way of assessing would also prompt a positive sens to student's work, and help them to get a better success.

1. The importance and the priority of formative checking and assessing students' achievements.

Checking and assessing of the knowledge have two functions: *educative* and *instructive.* In other words, when grading and assessing is done in a countinuous and in the right way, it can not accomplish its educative function, but even that instructive function. (Osmani, 2007, p.61) In this way they can contribute on the regularity of the teaching process.

Formative assessing is done throught the process of teaching. Its purpose is to gather information and to give efficient information over teaching and learning, how to make these processes more successful.(Osmani, 2010, p.50)

In many studies and researches done before, it is proved that the success of the students is improved when the teachers have applied an effective strategy like formative grading. This mean that information and assessing by planning it before, and making everything in a countinuous and systematic way, is done to prevent the eventual failure of the students. This way of acting influences in a qualitative way in students' engagement and activity. By this, teacher with plan, realize and assess its teaching job. But it is important to know, how much do they believe that this way of working is. Their opinion over this is shown in *table no.1* given below:

❖ *How much important is for you to inform and assess according to the plan and in a continuous and systematic way?*

		No.	%
a)	Very much	89	74.16 %
b)	Few	7	5. 84 %
c)	Medium	24	20 %
ç)	None	0	0 %
	Totally:	120	100 %

Table no.1

From **table no.1** we can get the result that most of the teacher who were asked *give priority and precedence* to the checking and assessing by plan and in a countinuous and sistematic way. There are **74.16 %** of them who think in this way**.** Meanwhile, a small number of the teachers that were asked, respectively only **5.84 %** of them, have declared that they *few* importance to this way of checking and assessing, and the others approximately **20 %** of them give a *medium* importance to it. *No one* of the teachers that took part in this study accept that they do not practice in part and do not give importance to this type of evaluation.

2. The necessity and need of formative checking and assessing the students' achievements.

Notifying and assessing are deep and delicate psychological processes. It is not enough to aim a good explanation, if we want to achieve the success wanted in teaching and learning process. We should use methods, instruments and the right educational principles, with the only purpose to stimulate students' work. But in the same time it is needed the responsibility and the seriousness of the teacher during the notification, checking and assessing. It is needed his/her objectivity, transparency and being fair during the grading of students' achievements, abilities, knowledges and their success. (Berisha, 1995, p.138) Notifying, checking and grading have an important role in encouraging students to achieve high standards in education. Grading and grades present a purpose and reason in their actions and behaviors.

Teacher should work on student's self confidence, to help and motivate them to achieve the success. The pedagogical discretion of a teacher is related with the fact that student should not loose the faith in his/her abilities. This comes as an expression during the process of grading.

It is necessary to exist a trust between teacher and student, in which student should ask the teacher to check his/her achievements and tell if he/she is progressing, where is making mistakes and how the teacher can help to pass these weaknesses.

When a student is not successful, it is not only the fault of him, but many times it can also be the fault of the teacher. The duty of him/her is to create the right environment for the teaching process. The right conditions can make a student to tell everything that he/she knows and what he/she can do. So the teacher's duty is not only to expect the right answers from the students. (Osmani, 2007, p.24) Teacher should not be different toward student's answer and grade, in contrary he/she should be interested why the student has this performance, why is he making this mistake, why he is not prepared, is this a casual situation, or is something that countinue. If he is not learning, we should know the reason of this bad performance. (Berisha, 1995, p.140) It is needed to do all the efforts for the maximal activation of the students. The teacher should tend to make easier the checking process, in this way he/she will gain the trust of the students, because the checking process will not be a difficult process for the students. In this way he/she gain also their interest, develope their motivation, creative activities and their willing to learn.

Since the process of teaching and leaning is an dinamic one, it is necessary to have a countinuous checking and assessing, and it is done very carefully from the teacher. This gives to him a *feedback* over the students efficiency.

The feedback should be detailed, which will help teachers to have a full picture on the qualities and quantities of students' knowledges. On the other hand, feedback can be well done, in the case when the teacher should understand the way how students approach to the problems, how they can find the solution, how much the students are motivated and interested in his/her subject. The feedback should be on time, so it is needed to be done in a countinuous way. This means that the teacher should accept on time informations about students progress and their faults and difficulties. If the feedback is not evaluated by the teacher, he/she should teach in "blind" without the possibility to lead it with a plan and in a fluid way. (BZHA, 2007, p.5)

✛ *The feedback about the results*

The information that is taken from the assessing and grading process done in a sistematic and countinuous way, can be used as a feedback about the achievements of the students. According to this, the teacher and the student can plan and realize the work. Feedback can be given directly and in the right moment, and should be individualized for the progress of each student. Teacher should always inform students about their grading but he/she should be careful in the way of the interpretation. From the way of interpretation of the grading process, it is depended the effect that the feedback has over student's behaviour, his/her self confidence, and his/her commitment on the learning process. In this way the student will understand that his/her work lead to progress. From this research we got results in relation to the feedback of the checking and assessing process on students' achievements.

■ *Do you give to the students the reasons of your grading?*

		No.	%
a)	**Everytime**	89	74.16 %
b)	**Sometime**	30	25 %
c)	**Never**	1	0. 83 %
	Totally:	120	99.99 %

Table no.2

From **table no.2** *we* can see that **74.16 %** of teachers that took part in this study have declared that each time they grade, they try to give to students the feedback for their achievements, whereas **25 %** sometimes give to them the feedback of their results. Only one of them, that is **0.83 %** of asked teachers do not give any feedback to the students about their presentation.

But the problem that we can pose now is, can we be sure that the information that we got from the teachers is trustful? We still feel the necessity of other researches in this direction.

3. Teachers- Keeping personal notes over students' achievements

We treat *formative assessing* when we talk about developing and improving the proces of teaching and learning, but always based on the feedback. This is a countinuous assess, that often is done intuitively. Teachers many times keep personal notes based on the formative assessing. They use it to keep their impressons (progress, positive sides, difficulties). This assessment should be done systematically and be related with the grading process. (Osmani, 2010, p.50)

The progress and development of the students is a duty and an obligation of the school, and especially of the teacher. It needed all the efforts, for the simple reason to make students work more, and be more active. We should use all the methods and instruments. A method that we can use is *keeping notes during their assessment and grading*, through which is possible to achieve the defined purposes.

According to this, we should be informed continuously about the development and progress of the students, because they advance in their knowledges. This information present and important cause, because without this information we hardly can have a good assess and grading.

Teacher should keep personal notes, where he/she can put not only the official grades, but also notes about student's progress, and personal notes over each student according to their activities. All notes will help on an objective evaluation, and it will give value to grading during the assess of the students' achievements.

For this reason we need to know what do teachers feel about these notes. Their answers are given in *table no.3* as is given below:

- ▪ *Do you keep any personal notes to save the continuous achievements of the students?*

		No.	%
a)	Yes	114	95 %
b)	No	6	5 %
	Totally:	120	100 %

Table No.3

As we can see from the table above, teacher mostly declare *that they use personal* notes about each student, and they are **95 %** of asked teachers. Only 6 of them, respectively **5 %** of them do not *use in a continuous way students'achievements* and they do not keep personal notes.

From the results above we see that keeping personal notes about the achievemnts of the students, and their progress, it is a necessity. It can help on the evaluation of the students, in this way it will be objective and more successful. This would be better accepted by parents and students.

Conclusions

The activity of checking and assessing has two functions *educative* and *instructive*. In other words, when grading and assessing is realize by a continuous process and in a right way, it has the possibility to fulfil both of its functions. (Osmani, 2007, p.61) In this way they contribute to the regular education, and finishing of all obligatory duties.

From the results above we conclude that the process of checking and grading in our schools need bring up to date. We see that the information and checking are needed to determine the level of assimilation of the new knowledge, and not grading of students. The teacher should check the students' prior knowledge before he/she present the new learning content. Through the examination should be ascertained the level of understanding of content, students' capabilities and skills. It is needed to ascertain the individual needs of students, to analyze and eliminate causes which make it difficult for them during acquisition. After learning goals or topics, we can check the level of overall acquisition of the material learned by students.

During checking and assessing processes in pedagogical practice , the teacher should bear in mind ways of demanding the knowledge as: verbally, written, graphic works, research (laboratory exercises, practical, fieldwork, projects, artistic creations, and etc.). Depending on the nature of the subject, the teacher establishes a form of control and assessment (oral, written, practical or combined). During the assessment of knowledge and skills, teacher assessment should be published, specifically, students must notify the grading criteria, the amount of content that should be assessed and the time of assessment. Grading implemented throughout a class or group of students. The teacher is required to clarify the grade of each student (based what he has achieved, the progress and what mistakes he/she made). (BZHA, 2005, p.27) Students should be given the right of verifying the grade of his/her work.

Everything that we emphasized above, if it is properly adhered, would give to the process of checking and grading a contemporary character.

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