

A CASE STUDY: FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN ENGLISH CLASSES

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Abstract

Formative assessment is seen as a good practice in assisting learning of a foreign language. A number of investigations have been conducted to research whether its implementation in a particular educational context actually succeeds as it is claimed to be or not. Starting from the hypothesis that language learners teachers' assessment procedures are such influenced by a traditional assessment approach, this case study attempts to reveal the extent to which current assessment practices in several schools in Albania, concretely in the districts of Tirana, Elbasan and Durres, facilitate the learning process. This paper starts with an overview of the context of teaching English at primary and secondary level, examining factors affecting teachers' assessment practices, namely the policy, curriculum, the learning and teaching environment. The ideas in this paper come mainly from classroom observations and informal interviews conducted with teachers of foreign languages in English classes with a total of 30 class hours. However, in order to triangulate and ensure validity in this study, the findings are supported by preliminary results of a questionnaire on teachers' perceptions and assessment practices in the aforementioned districts and then were analyzed and discussed. Finally, this paper reaches in the conclusions that: current assessment practices are very much embedded within the traditional culture of examinations and testing. This type of assessment does not take into account that children may well still be developing physically, psychologically and cognitively. In addition, current assessment practices have not succeeded in helping children to become aware of their own strengths/weaknesses and to learn to monitor their own/their peers' progress. As a result, children have not become involved in the learning process and there is evidence that they respond negatively to teacher feedback.

Keywords: *formative assessment, foreign language, teaching, learning*