

APPROACHES TO FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

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Abstract. We should consider that evaluation plays a very important role in the school life of each student, this being a bridge between teaching and learning. Evaluation is the means by which we can observe what effects teaching has had on students, so that we can plan our next steps in future activities. Formative assessment wishes to inform the students about the objectives and goals they must achieve and at the same time to inform them and the teachers about the progress that were made towards the intended goals and objectives. Formative assessment plays an important role for metacognitive knowledge, as it encourages students towards the sphere of self-regulation and self-assessment, presents their own learning approach and allows them interventions, redirections and adjustments if needed. This assessment helps students develop their knowledge about themselves, influencing their motivation and control toward learning.

Keywords: assessment, formative assessment, student, teacher

Assessment can be considered as a continuous process that is made of the moment a development plan is designed, until the moment when the results are correlated and compared to the expected results. The evaluation process is certainly a feedback given to both the teacher and the student on how the intended activities were carried out. During this process, assessments will be made on how the intended activities were carried out, and a series of improvements will be developed that the student will take into account in future actions.

Assessment is part of the whole theory of education representing a system of concepts, principles, methods, techniques, procedures, means regarding the measurement and evaluation of results and the entire teaching process. Referring to assessment as "a practice or activity that isolates a cutout of concepts and contents, subsequently placed on levels of success, in the form of tasks attached to some concrete situations, in order to be quantified." (Cardinet, 1994, p. 5). Formative assessment is placed on a privileged place in modern pedagogical action because it is the type of assessment that intervenes in the learning process to support the student in the development of autonomous learning.

Formative assessment is an assessment that takes place throughout the entire pedagogical process, it is frequently carried out by the teacher and gives the students the opportunity to remedy their mistakes and shortcomings immediately after their

occurrence and before the onset of a cumulative phenomenon. It also consists in the fragmentation of a subject into chapters and in specifying for each of them the level at which the student overcomes a difficulty.

Formative assessment is always heading to immediate pedagogical aid. Formative assessment is a sequential chain of activities that is carried out periodically, which examines the efficiency of the methods used in the teaching action, providing information to the students about the progress they made and last but not least it supports and guides them toward the achievement of the intended objectives and goals. We see in a formative assessment an assurance of the progress made by each student engaged in the learning process, which aims to change the learning situations or its pace in order to bring about the right improvements.

Formative assessment is an internal evaluation that focuses on the process, which has the role to guide the teachers' activity. Formative assessment can be integrated into all the subjects and has to be used in absolutely all situations where teaching and learning are present, because we already know that between the three components teaching, learning and assessment there is a connection that forms a whole. This is considered the most representative way of assessment in pre-university education. Formative assessment is carried out through oral and written classroom assessments over the course of a day, through various practical homework or projects that students carry out. The teacher is required in this assessment to carry out a systematic, rhythmic and integrated assessment of the entire teaching-learning process. Formative evaluation also refers to the aspect of the notation. Giving a grade must be the result of a repeated evaluation at certain times that the teacher determines.

Formative assessment is closely related to the methodologies adapted by the teacher and his/her principles regarding learning. Practicing formative assessment is determined by a series of conditions and it is necessary in answering certain questions such as:

- What do we want the student to learn: "to know" or "to know how to do"?
- Do we want to pursue only the outcome of learning (success or failure) or do we want to overcome difficulties, to improve the process?
- Do we want an extrinsic or intrinsic motivation, do we admit or refuse the students' participation in the evaluation of their results?
- Do we want to go through a program at the same pace for all students or in an individualized, differentiated manner, depending on the possibilities of each student?" (Cardinet,1982, p.308).

In a formative assessment approach we can distinguish the following steps:

- gathering information that presents the progress and obstacles of learning that students have encountered;
- analyzing the information gathered from the perspectives of some previously specified principles and identifying the factors that are at the basis of the learning difficulties noted by the student;

- the integration of teaching and learning action according to the analysis of the gathered information.

The presentation of these stages determines a definition of formative assessment in terms of pedagogical action. Therefore, in the real educational process, the typical formative assessment “signifies the correction of an exercise that relaunches learning, through the contribution of additional information given to students, by as varied means as possible, leading to the awareness of their own errors and to the formation of self-assessment” (Roman,2014,p.48). By applying the formative assessment, the instructional-educational process is better understood, first as an action by the fact that the students contributes directly to the formation of their own development, and secondly by a process in which the teacher has the opportunity to improve his/her teaching, learning and evaluation aspects.

The purpose of the formative assessment is to identify situations in which the student encounters a problem, the content of that present difficulty and its improvement. Formative evaluation provides feedback and also requires corrective action.

The results of the formative assessment aim to provide feedback to students, but also to set new objectives for future actions that relate to learning. This feedback must always be direct and constructive and has to provide the information needed to improve performance.

As a conclusion, the impact of the “formative assessment is overwhelming, as it has led to substantial pedagogical paradigmatic changes in the status and role of those directly involved in the educational act, the teacher and the student.” (Popa, 2015, p. 41).

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