

CHANGES IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: ASSESSMENT AND ITS EFFECT IN STUDENTS' SUCCESS AND MOTIVATION

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Abstract

Nowadays, the world is changing very fast. Teaching and learning process is a dynamic process. It changes during the time due to the changes that occur in the world. Educational system is very important for the maintenance of the government and the function of the state itself. Therefore, developed countries always try to find out new ways of teaching and learning. Because of globalization new technology, methodologies, approaches that are applying in educational system in developed countries become also part of the educational system of transition countries.

The aim of the paper is to show the changes in the educational system in Macedonia and especially to examine the effect of new methods of assessment. In order to examine the effect the assessment in general and the effect of formative assessment in particular in students' success and motivation, I am going to interview the academic staff and some students of the International University of Struga.

New methodologies that are applying in educational system should always be tested because even the new things and the best approaches sometimes might have bad effect. Moreover, new approaches and methods that can function and show good results in one country, in another country can have the opposite effect. Therefore, the examination of the effects of the formative assessment as a new method of assessment in students' success and motivation is very important. The results of the study will be good evidence and will serve as a reference for the application of formative assessment and its effects in higher education in Struga.

Key words: Assessment University education Academic staff Globalisation Students' Success and Motivation

Globalization is a phenomenon, which affects the application of innovations all over the world. When something new is invented, it does not remain only in the country where it is invented, but it spreads all over the world and it becomes a part of peoples social life. This makes peoples life very dynamic. Technological development, new methodologies, new techniques affect all fields without leaving apart the educational system, which is very important for the development of the country. Therefore, the teaching and learning system can not remain the same over time. It changes continuously in order to fit with the development of other fields because society is tied as a chain where no field of social life can exist and develop separately from other field. Education as one of the most important parts of social life is changing due to the changes that happen in the other field. In this way, educational system becomes a modern system, which prepares students as worthy people, who will be able to apply the knowledge gathered during their studies in their jobs and everyday life. Therefore, the government of the Republic of Macedonia is taking some reforms in educational system. So, in the Republic of Macedonia, the teaching/learning process is changing and one of the parts of this process that is changing is assessment, the way students are evaluated in Macedonia. It is obvious that this is a wide process because it includes all levels of educational systems. There are a lot of projects, teacher training programs, where teachers are trained for the application of the new changes, new methodologies etc. In this seminars teachers are given also books which are published especially for the projects. These projects are part of the reforms that the Government takes in cooperation with the USAID.

Assessment plays a very important rule for in the whole educational system. It also can be considered as a crucial part of education because it can affect the students success and motivation through out their education. Moreover, students' evaluation can be used as a reference and a data in peoples life.

The objective of this study is to show if the way of assessing students has changes and to examine the effect

that the application of formative assessment can have in students' success and motivation. To have data for this objective, appropriate questionnaires were designed. University students are grown ups and are aware of the way they are evaluated ; furthermore, they also can be critical about the assessment, and the way they are evaluated. Therefore, besides the academic stuff of the International University of Struga, students participated in the study, too. This gives the study a clear picture of two different points of view about assessment, and its application in this university.

In order to achieve the aim of the study, appropriate questionnaires were designed. This study took place in Struga, Macedonia. Since the focus of the research was higher education problems, university students and the academic stuff of the International University of Struga, were chosen to be part of the study. They were required to answer the questions of the questionnaires which were designed especially for this study. The tools used were the questionnaires, academic stuff questionnaire and students' questionnaire. They were semi-organised questionnaires, to answer the question participants were supposed to circle one of the answers, which were given there, as one of the most appropriate answers, or they could give their own opinion to answer the questions. Both questionnaires contain five questions each. Moreover, all the questions were about the way students are evaluated in this university. Assessment is very important part of the educational program, which finalise the work done through a course, a semester, or an academic year.

Tools

The tools, which were used to gather information for this study, were two questionnaires, academic stuff questionnaire and students' questionnaire

In the study participated 15 members of the academic stuff and 50 students

The first question of the questionnaire was whether they consider assessment as an important part of the educational system. All the academic stuff members answered yes to this question. In addition, most of the students (47 out of 50 students) answered yes, just 3 of the

students choose the option “maybe” for this question. None of the participants answered “no” to this question.

The second question of the questionnaires was about the changes in the way of students are evaluated now in comparison with the way they were evaluated before. Almost all the academic staff (14 out of 15 academic staff members) answered that the assessment of the students has changed. Only one chooses the option “maybe” for this question. None of the academic staff members answered no to this question. The majority of the students (46 out of 50 students) also answered that the way of assessment has changed. Only 4 of the students choose the option “maybe” to answer this question. Moreover, none of the students answered “no” to this question.

The third question was about their opinion about the effect of formative assessment in students’ success. All the members of the academic staff answered that the application of formative assessment has positive effect in students’ success. None of them answered that the assessment of student only with a final exam is effective. The majority of the students (39 out of 50) thought that formative assessment is more effective for students success in comparison with the students assessment only with one final exam. So, only (11 out of 50 students) answered that final exam assessment is more effective than the formative assessment for the success of the students.

The fourth question was about the effectiveness of formative assessment in increasing the students’ motivation. All the members of the academic staff answered that the application of formative assessment has positive effect in increasing students’ motivation. None of them answered that the assessment of student only with a final exam is effective in increasing students’ motivation. Almost all the students (42 out of 50 students) answered that formative assessment has positive effect in increasing students’ motivation and only 8 of the students think that the assessment only with the final exam has positive effect in students’ motivation.

In the fifth question participants had to answer the question, if the students had the opportunity to choose the type of assessment, what would they choose? Most of the staff members (10 out of 15) think that the students would choose the formative assessment. On the other hand, five of the staff thinks that they students would choose the final exam. The majority of students (40 out of 50) think that if they would have the opportunity to choose the type of assessment they would choose formative assessment. On the other hand nine of the students think that they would choose final exam.

Questionnaires are often used as the main tools for gathering information in similar studies for several reasons. The first reason is that questionnaires are easy to design; researchers do not waste a lot of time in preparing them. The second reason is that it is very easy to analyse questionnaires’ results. The third reason is that participants in the study find it easy to fill the questionnaires. All this reasons make questionnaires very practical, and very useful. On the other hand, questionnaires have also the bad side. Since most of the time, questionnaires contain

multiple-choice questions; people just circle one of the options without thinking carefully about the question. This can be considered as one of the obstacles about the use of questionnaire. Another obstacle can be the participants’ sincerity in answering the questions. Participants may not be sincere when they fill the questionnaire, it can be maybe because they are not used with questionnaires, or because they just do not take it seriously.

As mentioned before the design of the questionnaires is not difficult, so there were no obstacles in terms of design of questionnaires in particular and of the whole study in general. Also, there were no obstacles in terms of the implementation because it was observed only one university, and the location where the study took place was only one city. This makes it easier to locate the participants of the study, the academic staff as well as the students.

The educational system in Macedonia is a changing continuously with the application of the application of the new approaches, techniques, ways of assessment, etc. From the results of the study is obvious that the way of assessment has changed and the application of the formative assessment is considered as very effective for the students’ success and motivation.

What makes the results of the study more interesting is the fact that they are based on different points of view, academic staff opinion and students’ opinion about assessment, who are somehow in opposite positions.

There are some advantages of this study. It gives valuable information about the changes in educational system in one of the universities in Macedonia in general and the staff members’ opinion and the students’ opinion about the effectiveness of formative assessment in students’ success and motivation.

The disadvantage of the study is that in the study participated only 15 staff members and 50 students. If in the study would participated more participants, and if the study would have taken place in more than just one university, the results of the study would have been more credible. But this study took place only in one university because of two factors, time and financial factor. If the study had taken place in other towns, much time and more money would have been necessary.

However, this study can be considered as an important reference for all the other researchers who would like to study the same field. The methodology, which is used in this study can be used by other researchers to do the same study in other towns in Macedonia.

In conclusion, it is obvious that assessment plays a crucial part in the educational system; moreover, formative assessment has positive effect in students’ success and motivation. Another thing, which is very important, is that the educational system is changing due to the changes that occur in other field. And, all the new methodologies, techniques, approaches that are invented in developed countries are applied in transition countries as well because of the globalization.