

## **Internal evaluation and its effects on improving student learning outcomes in lower secondary schools in Kosovo**

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### **Abstract:**

*The purpose of this paper is to present teachers and students' opinions about various issues related to the internal evaluation in lower secondary schools in Kosovo. The object of this study is, also, identifying the forms and criteria of internal evaluation in education as well as the harmonization of the assessment criteria with the requirements of the curriculum and teaching programs.*

*In order to conduct the research, qualitative and quantitative methods have been used. The survey was conducted in ten lower secondary schools in the municipality of Klinë both in the town and villages. Research instruments were questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires were intended for teachers and students, whereas, interviews with principals of different schools and other employees of the Directory of Education of the Municipality were also organized. Selection of teachers and students included in the research was randomly done. They were of different ages. The teachers' working experience was also included in the survey. Analysis of data derived from the research was done by the SPSS.*

*Based on the main findings of this research, we can conclude that the research concerning the students' assessment, in general, can help the teachers to change the practice of their students' assessment. This change of practice can have an enormous impact on the students' learning outcomes in lower secondary schools.*

**Key words:** internal evaluation, teachers, students, education, school.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Kosovo, in lower secondary schools, currently have been applied two ways of evaluation: external (standardized) evaluation, implemented by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, as well as internal evaluation, implemented by teachers. Besides teachers, this kind of evaluation is carried out even by professional assets, class councils, school management structures, directors with their professional staff and students. Student evaluation is a complex process. It is the "process of systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of information in order to determine to what extent the student has mastered guiding objectives (Kadrimi & Kadrimi, 2010, p.1). Whereas, internal evaluation is a process of systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of information using procedures and techniques of classroom assessment by teachers and students, who evaluate the work and achieving their mastery of instructional objectives in classroom. The purpose of internal evaluation is to raise the quality of teaching and learning. This type of evaluation fits with the purposes of the formative assessment. Formative assessment is one of the types of evaluation, which is used mostly in internal evaluation.

The term "formative" was first introduced in an essay about educational evaluation written by Michael Scriven in 1967. The term "formative assessment" has evolved over the past forty years, but the key idea is that teachers should use evidence of learning to adjust instruction (Burke, 2009, p.7).

According to Torrance and Pryor (1998), "one of the key arguments in favor of developing and extending the practice of formative assessment is that it will aid learning. This has become a virtually unchallenged axiom, even mantra, of

proponents of formative assessment. It is also intuitively very appealing: provide pupils with feedback on their strengths and weaknesses and they should be able to improve their performances and achieve more (p. 83)”.

Besides formative assessment, other types of evaluation which are used mostly in internal evaluation are diagnostic assessment as well, which aims to determine sustainable causes of problems in teaching and learning and formulating an action plan to help students and summative assessment, aiming at providing information on achievement of guiding objectives of subjects to the end of the sub-category, program category, at the end of the semester or at the end of the year, to grade. So "summative assessment or summative evaluation is something we do at the end of the unit or course for the purpose of students' knowledge evaluation. On this basis we judge the success of our teaching (Kadrimi and Kadrimi (2010), p.1). Summative assessment is used to make judgment teaching and curricula efficient (USAID, MEST, 2012, p.24). This type of evaluation gives us information on what the students have reached in certain periods of time.

We are determined to investigate assessment in our schools, because, in the opinion of Fullan (2001), the implementation of change in education has to do carried out with the “change in practice” (p.65).

This paper addresses various issues relating to the evaluation, and types of evaluation, evaluation criteria, assessment practices, etc. as a matter of interest to develop education in our society. We must recognize that assessment practices do fare more than provide information, they also shape people’s understanding about what is important to learn, what learning is, and who learners are (Moss, et al. 2006, p. 111.)

Questions to be dealt with are as following: Have teachers followed teachers training about formative assessment? What are the most frequently applied forms in

evaluation of students? How often teachers assess their students? After evaluation, do they offer students a feedback? What are the difficulties you face the most during the evaluation of students? etc. The reason that we are engaged to investigate in this direction has been the fact that the role of evaluation on improving student learning outcomes in lower secondary schools is very large.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

For years, the area of assessment was relegated to a secondary role in the educational process (Burke, 2009). Many educators feel assessment was ignored, misused, and totally misunderstood by administrators, teachers, parents, and students. In the last decade, however, assessment has emerged as one of the major components in the restructured school (Burke, 2009, p.1).

Nowadays, evaluation and its types, all along with criteria have been the topics of discussion for many researchers in the field of education. Assessment of learning (formative assessment) appropriate duties is those which provide information with a special emphasis on the process, not only to the correct answer, but to general learning (USAID, MEST, 2011. p.39). This assessment is the key component to achieve the desired results in teaching and learning in the classroom. The main purpose of a classroom assessment program is to improve students' learning. This is most likely to result if assessment is closely integrated with instruction and is guided by a basic set of conditions. The following guidelines provide a general framework for using student assessment effectively.

1. Effective assessment requires a clear conception of all intended learning outcomes.
2. Effective assessment requires that a variety of assessment procedures be used.

3. Effective assessment requires that the instructional relevance of the procedures be considered.
4. Effective assessment requires an adequate sample of student performance.
5. Effective assessment requires that the procedures be fair to every-one.
6. Effective assessment requires the specifications of criteria for judging successful performance.
7. Effective assessment requires feedback to students that emphasizes strengths of performance and weaknesses to be corrected.
8. Effective assessment must be supported by a comprehensive grading and report system. (Waugh & Gronlund, 2013, p. 21-25).

As it is seen above, among others, effective assessment requires feedback to students. So when the teacher intends to help students in the learning process, it gives them feedback. Feedback makes clear advantages and disadvantages to learning students. Regarding this, McMillan and James (ed.) (2007), went further, stating that: so when teachers intends to help students in the learning process, they give them feedback. Feedback makes clear advantages and disadvantages learning students. In relation to this, researchers went further, stating that: "The goal of formative assessment is the improvement of students motivation and learning. To reach this goal, teachers must apply a circular, continuing process that involves the students' evaluation work and their behavior and then giving feedback to them and instructional correctness (McMillan & James 2007, p. 3). "

Apart of feedback with special importance for teachers and students is the recognition of the evaluation criteria. The evaluation criteria are clear principles and well-defined way by which can be judged the assessment process. So, where there exist the norm of criteria, then we have to rely on our work on

students' evaluation. According to Popham, (2008), "it's one thing for students to understand what the nature of a curricular aim is; it's quite another element, they have to know how to display mastery of that aim. The second way, a teacher can clarify a curricular expectation to help students understand the evaluative criteria applied to determine the quality of students' performance (p.79)."

Evaluation should not be considered as a procedure that aims to punish or threaten the students, but as a way to stimulate and motivate them (Kerkime pedagogjike, 2010, p.113)." Students should be involved in monitoring and evaluation. According to Heritage, (2010), if students are going to be involved successfully in monitoring and assessing their own and their peers' learning, then students need to be regarded by their teachers as partners in learning. To be partners with students in learning, teachers have to invite students into the process, making them active consumers of information, rather than passive recipients (p.115). Contemporary school has the student centered, where the student is an active researcher and the teacher either a guide, counselor or monitor.

### **3. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

To fulfill this research, there have been used mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative ones. We should mention that, social science researchers, more and more are using mixed methods (Mathews & Ross, p.144). Also, it is used scientific literature that has to do with the assessment of students, i.e. internal evaluation. In addition, were analyzing the legal documents, plans and programs, as well as methodological guidelines for assessing students. To present the results obtained through the survey of students, teachers, and school principals there were used statistical methods.

To implement this research there was used surveying techniques in order to obtain data from both students and teachers as well. Also, research instruments of the survey were questionnaires. The questionnaires were done based on our research needs. In questionnaires were included questions pertaining to data of respondents and questions (evaluative questions) by which is intended to provide information about students' assessment. The data are presented in graphics and tables. After completing the research, the collected data (via questionnaire) were analyzed by SPSS.

There were included in the research: 2 education officials at the local level, 10 school directors, one deputy director, 300 students (Grades V due to the conclusion of a level of education, the classes VI, and the classes IX, due to the start of the second level, and completion of compulsory schooling level.), and 150 teachers. It means the total number of respondents was 463. In this paper, it has been presented only the results of questionnaires of teachers and students. Respondents were of two sexes, male and female. Of the total number of teachers (150), 72% of them were females, while 28% of them males. Whereas, of the total number of students (300), 160 were males and 140 females. The students involved in the research were 35% and 65% of the village from the city. Grade Level of the following students: from grades 1-5, totaled 50% of students, while the other half of the students were of the 6-9 grades. Within this research it is considered important to display the qualification and experience of teachers' work. (See Tab.1)

**Table 1. Teachers' qualification.**

	Nr.	%
Teachers' school	37	24.66%
High pedagogical school	46	30.66%
Faculty	63	42%
Master	4	2.66%
Total:	150	100%

Teachers participating in the survey had different work experience. These teachers, 30% of them worked at 1-5, while 70% of them worked at 6-9. Their experience is presented in the table 2.

**Table 2. Experience of working as teachers.**

	Nr.	%
1-5 years	18	12%
6-10 years	75	50%
11- 20 years	22	15%
Mbi 20 years	35	23%
Total:	150	100%

#### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

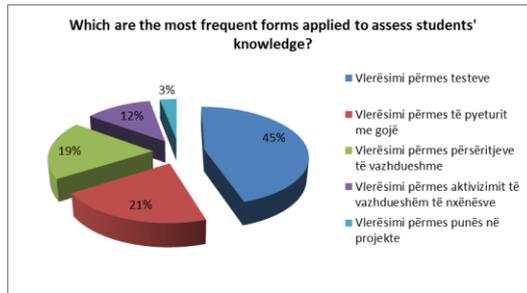
The results of this research show the opinions of teachers and students on various issues dealing mainly with internal evaluation. According to the results of research it appears that the assessment is one of the many challenges facing our education system. This is due to lack of training and assessment. E.g. question: Did you attend special training for teaching and assessment methodologies? 110 respondents, (73%) of them have said no, while 40 of them (27%) said yes. This result shows that the majority of teachers in the municipality of Klina have not attended this training. For this reason, they lack additional knowledge about the methodology of teaching in general, and assessment to methods, in particular. As the next question related to the training of teachers regarding formative assessment, the results are not satisfactory. Of all respondents, only 40 of them have completed training, although this type of assessment is deemed an integral part of the teaching process.

According to Heritage, (2010), the attitude the formative assessment is integral to instruction and essential to learning as a prerequisite for skillful use of formative assessment. "Teachers must view formative assessment and teaching

process as inseparable element, recognizing that one cannot happen without the other (p.115)”.

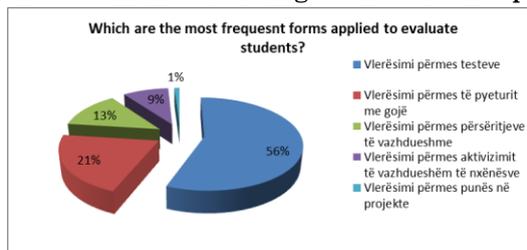
To the question: What are the most frequently forms applied in assessing students? The results are given in the following figure.

**Fig. 1. Forms of assessment according to the teacher opinions.**



From the data presented in the table above, it is shown that 45% of teachers do the assessment through tests, 21% orally, 19% through consistent repetitions, 12% rating activation continuing students and 3% are being assessed through the work on projects. At the question as above made to the students (which are the most frequent forms the teachers assess your knowledge)? See the students reply below on the fig. 2.

**Fig: 2. Forms of assessment according to the student opinions.**

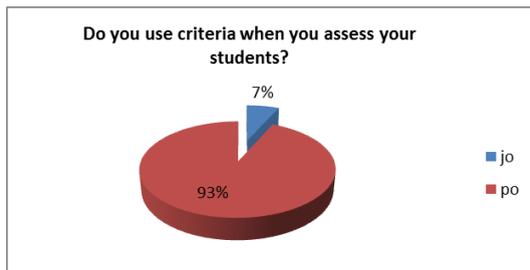


The surveyed students surveyed are of the following opinion: What are the most common forms that teachers evaluate you? 56% of teachers do their assessment through tests, 21% orally, 13% through consistent repetition, 9% through continuous

activation of students and 1% through projects. According to Burke, (2009), teacher made tests are Written or oral. The assessments are not commercially produced or standardized-in other words, broken tests are design Specifically for teacher and their students. "The term" test "however, refers to a written or oral more structured evaluation of Students' achievement. Teacher-made tests consist of a variety of formats, Including matching, yarn-in-the-blank, short answer, true-false Questions, or essays (p. 140).

When teachers were asked about the criteria in the evaluation (criteria represents the essence of assessment). Such criteria are used to assess students' results, see the following: Of 150 teachers, 93% of them use certain criteria to assess students while only 7% of them have no certain criteria. (See. Fig. 3).

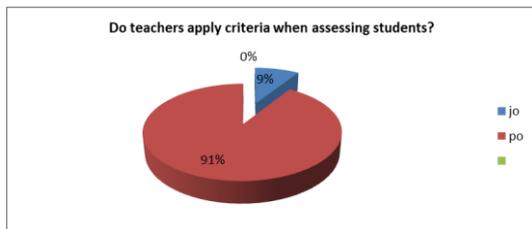
Fig. 3.



On the criteria assessment determination of students, teachers said they were based on: Instructions issued by MEST, 83% of respondents, the manuals received by training, said 10% of them, while 2% of the teachers stated that they use the instruction manual issued by KEC or similar centers.

The question to students: do the teachers use criteria when assessing your knowledge? There are the following results: 9% of the students said "no", while 91% of confirmed it with "yes".(See fig. 4)

Fig. 4.



At the question: Why to assess students? Teachers gave the following answers: 36% of respondents to evaluate their knowledge, 18% to see if they have mastered the learning material, to change our approach to teaching said 8%, to identify aspects the students have had difficulties 11%, to identify students hard learner from those who study less were 7%, to suit learning to the students requirements 5%, to help students achieve better results in learning 8% and 7% to perform my duty as a teacher.

At the question: In your opinion, what does a teacher take into consideration when assessing a student? The students replied as the following: 43% stated facts of elaborated topics, 16% the technique of performing duties of instruction, 19% of the students replied mastering the learning material, 19% of them stated mastering the learning material from text books, and 22% of them expected results from curricula.

Questions to the teachers: How often do you assess your students? 49% replied, every day, 16% every month after each chapter, 35% every three month, it is the time when we grade them with marks.

Question to students: How much do your teachers assess your knowledge? 15% of the replied every day, 21% replied, every month, after each chapter, 61% every three month period, 3% of them replied only one at the end of the term. Since, there should be made a report after each evaluation, the teachers were posed the question in relation to this issue: Do you feedback students after each evaluation? The outcomes are as

following: 45 % replied every time, 26% replied with often, 29% sometimes and 0% never.

According to Heritage, H. Margaret, (2010), “the purpose of feedback to students, then, is to help them identify the gap between where their learning currently stands, and assist them to move forward to close the gap and achieve the desired goals (p.81)“. Feedback helps students in the learning process and has a great importance.

According to the results collected in the field, the question was if they get feedback from teachers in relation to advancement and improvement in their learning. The students answered as the following: 11% replied, yes, 22% replied with often, 50% sometimes and 17%, never.

At the question: How much are you satisfied with the grading system by your teachers? Se the following replies: 24% are fully satisfied, 51% satisfied, 13% little satisfied, 12% not at all. On the question: if students are not satisfied with the teachers' assessment, what you teachers would you do in relation to this? The teachers replied as the following: 41% would be open to discuss the issue, 37% would be ready to give again a chance to students, 51% moderately satisfied, less satisfied, 13% little satisfied, and 12% not at all.

To the question: How much are you satisfied with the grading system by your teachers? The teachers replied as the following: 41% would be open to discuss the problem with students. 37% would be ready to assess students again, 11% replied, it is too late now, 11% replied, the do not care about students of they are satisfied with the assessment.

The question posed to students: If they were satisfied with assessment carried by their teachers? 43% would ask the teachers to assess again, 54% would wait for another assessment, and 3% of the respondents said it is too late, nothing can be done.

The question posed to the teachers: What are the effects achieved through the evaluation forms that you practice? The

data obtained show that the number of respondents said that 23% of students agree with the assessment, 5% of the students know exactly what they did not know, 6% the students would acquire better topics and units they had not prepared well, 19% of the teachers replied that they would review their work and would plan again teaching, 26% would use different strategies which would help students acquire easily the learning material, 2% would focus their attention on the students advancement and help them to overcome possible difficulties, 13% would assignee the students with additional learning activities considered necessary for them.

To the question: What are the difficulties you face the most during the evaluation of students? we received the following information, 39% to develop criteria for evaluation, 11% preparation of assessment instruments, 28 %, in the design of questions based on outcomes in plans and curricula, 11% in applying assessment criteria, 5% in persuading students to be graded, 6% persuading parents to assess their children, 0% I face no difficulties.

See in Tab. 3. the results based on questions: How much attention do you pay to improvement and advancement of the students?.

**Table: 3.**

How much attention do you pay to improve and advance your student's results?											Total
	<i>Always</i>		<i>Sometimes</i>		<i>rare</i>		<i>Never</i>		<i>I do not know</i>		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
a) Follow the students' progress	64	43%	54	36%	26	17%	0	0%	6	4%	150
b) Publish achieved results	68	45%	60	40%	22	15%	0	0%	0	0%	150
c) Discussion and debate with students in relation to their problems in terms of assessment	65	44%	48	32%	23	15%	14	9%	0	0%	150
d) Communication with the students; parents on students assessment	86	57%	46	31%	18	12%	0	%	0	0%	150
e) Assist development of competences of students to assess their progress through self-evaluation	67	44%	64	43%	12	8%	7	5%	0	0%	150
f) Students 'motivation for better results	46	31%	100	67%	4	2%	0	0%	0	0%	150

Meanwhile, the students answer to the question: How much attention do teachers pay improvement and advancement of your results at your learning outcomes? They are presented as follows. (See. Tab.4)

**Table: 4.**

How much attention do your teachers pay to improve and advance your results?											Total
	Always		Sometimes		Rare		Never		I do not know		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
a) Follow the students' progress	101	33%	167	56%	32	11%	0	0%	0	0%	300
b) Publish achieved results	78	26%	182	60%	32	11%	8	3%	0	0%	300
c) Discussion and debate with students in relation to their problems in terms of assessment	64	21%	197	66%	19	6%	7	3%	13	4%	300
d) Communication with the students; parents on students assessment	169	56%	100	33%	14	5%	0	0%	17	6%	300
e) Assist development of competences of students to assess their progress through self-evaluation	72	24%	123	41%	29	10%	31	10%	45	15%	300
f) Students 'motivation for better results	119	40%	73	24%	48	16%	26	9%	34	11%	300

In relation to communication and, its importance on assessment, Stiggins, (2005), expressed his conviction this way: "Nowhere is classroom assessment more of an art than when using personal communication to track student growth and development. Typically, there is no table of test specifications to match against our intended target. There are no test items to check for quality, no score results. We can't check for agreement among observes to see if judgments are consistent. Personal communication is more spontaneous, more personal (p.179)".

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the results of this research have been given some recommendations:

- Must be organized training for teachers on formative assessment.
- Must be organized training - workshops for instruments, methods and evaluation criteria.
- Trained teachers to share their knowledge with untrained teachers.
- Teachers should be supported by monitoring advisory in order to refresh the acquired knowledge.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

From the results of this research there is shown that teachers should be prepared to face the challenges facing the Kosovo education system today. In this context, it should be said that the internal assessment poses a serious challenge for teachers to prepare students to live in a knowledge society. Kosovo teachers need to develop professionalism. Also, teachers should further expand their knowledge on the development of the evaluation criteria for the preparation of assessment instruments either formative or summative assessment, etc. Assessment of learning is standard and important pedagogical and psychological process of education. Assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning should prepare students to achieve required skills of the new century, including critical thinking, reading, group work, self-esteem, solving the problems, creativity, research, ICT, enterprise, leadership, language use and other reflections that come within the development of the learning process.

Finally, we must say that the educational assessment should be able to support all professionals in developing

interpretations, decisions, and actions that enhance students' learning (Moss, 2006).

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