

## FEEDBACK IN FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

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**Abstract:** *In modern didactics, assessment is perceived as a complex, continuous activity, designed to take place in distinct but interconnected stages throughout the educational process. Formative assessment involves the constant monitoring of outcomes throughout the instructional process, thus ensuring progressive and well-structured learning in small sequences. An important aspect of this process is the feedback that provides useful information to students on their performance. In the research that I carried out in the undergraduate program Pedagogy of Primary and Pre-school Education, a number of key elements were investigated that refer to the aspects of feedback in formative assessment. The mode of investigation used in the research was the survey, carried out using the questionnaire as an instrument. A number of novel elements of the presence of feedback in formative assessment emerged from the research.*

**Key words:** *feedback; assessment; formative assessment; students.*

### Introduction

The notion of assessment is „the complex action of collecting a set of pertinent, valid and reliable information in relation to the relevance and value of some processes, performances, competences, skills, educational or didactic behaviours and the examination of the adequacy between this set of information and a set of criteria in correspondence with the objectives pursued and fixed beforehand. Assessment involves accomplishing the evaluative processes, is carried out in accordance with specific evaluative strategies and through appropriate methods, techniques and tools” (Bocoş, Răduţ-Taciu, Stan, 2016, p.127).

Roman A. presents assessment as „a singular term that can express one thing and its opposite: precision and approximation, precision and approximation, quantitative aspect and qualitative aspect which reveals the complexity of the evaluative process involving both measurement (based on quantitative data of measurements) and qualitative judgements (it involves defining beforehand of some criteria and reporting the

measurements made by them) in order to take some decisions” (Roman, 2014, p.16).

Modern didactic assessment is essentially a formative assessment, that supports and encourages the learning process through immediate and interactive adjustments made by the teacher. It focuses on highlighting the positive aspects of the entire learning process, not just the final results and supports continuous learning. A formative assessment can only be carried out in a formative teaching framework that stimulates and directs an active learning, capable of generating new strategies, approaches, techniques and motivations (Bocoş, 2017).

Formative assessment involves the constant monitoring of outcomes throughout the learning process, usually through small-sequence assessments. The transition to the next stage occurs only after the manner of conduct, the educational efficiency of the respective sequence and the results obtained are evaluated. These are followed by the implementation of measures to improve the teaching-learning process and performance (Bocoş, Jucan, 2019).

It is a type of internal assessment, carried out by those who teach and coordinate the educational process. Focused on the process, it is dynamic and flexible, and through quick and continuous feedback, it ensures constant adjustment of the educational activity. This adjustment largely depends on the educational strategies chosen by the educators (Bocoş, 2017).

Over the years, formative assessment has become a central topic in many educational researches due to its role in providing feedback. This feedback allows students to identify both their strengths and areas which need improvement, thus contributing to the deepening and consolidating of the learning process.

One of the important aspects for students derives from their participation and involvement in the assessment of their own learning acquisition and analysis of the feedback received from the teacher.

According to Black P. and Wiliam D., feedback is "any information provided to the subject of an action about his/her performance" (Black, Wiliam, 1998, p.53).

We can state that feedback has a supportive and motivating role in the learning process for students, helping them to be more self-confident..

Feedback is a means by which students are given the tools that will allow them to understand the aspects of learning.

We thus believe that feedback is not information that comes to us spontaneously but it is an integral part of the context of learning. It is used by the teacher to make decisions regarding the student's level of preparedness and also in diagnosing and possibly remediating the results.

Juwah C. mentions seven principles by which feedback can be used

effectively:

- **”developing self-evaluation”**: encouraging practices that help students to analyze and assess their own performance in the learning process;
- **”a constructive dialogue”**: promoting active and constructive communication between students, teachers and colleagues to clarify and improve learning;
- **”the clarification of standards”**: clearly defining objectives, standards and performance criteria so that students know what is expected of them;
- **”reducing the differences”**: creating opportunities for students to diminish the gap between their current level of performance and the desired level;
- **”useful information”**: providing relevant and accurate information about the progress and difficulties encountered by students;
- **”motivation and self-esteem”**: encouraging an environment that supports students' increased motivation and self-confidence;
- **”improving the didactic process”**: using feedback to guide educators on how to optimize teaching and learning strategies (Juwah, 2004).

Feedback involves a dual relationship between the teacher and the student. This duality implies an active participation of both parties in the feedback process, each having an important role in both providing and receiving it. The teacher relies on feedback to assess the students' level of preparation, to analyze the results obtained and to take remedial action if necessary. In turn, students use the feedback to identify their strengths and areas for improvement, consolidating their achievements and correcting their shortcomings.

### **Problem statement**

In the research we have carried out, a number of key elements have been investigated, which refer to the presence of feedback in formative assessment.

This study presents some information collected from third year students of the Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education program on the aspect of feedback and formative assessment.

The conclusions are based on a statistical analysis and confirm the presence of unique elements about the presence, role and importance of feedback in formative assessment.

### **Research questions**

The questions of the research raised the following issues: feedback, formative assessment, the improvement of academic performance,

difficulties in receiving and giving feedback, the prompt correction of errors, the consolidation of learning, the enhancement of students' performance, etc.

### Purpose of the study

The purpose of the research leads to the investigation of some elements related to the presence of feedback in the formative assessment encountered by the students of the third year of the study program Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education.

### Research methods

Throughout the research, the method of investigating the issue of the presence of feedback in formative assessment was the survey method, carried out using the questionnaire as an instrument.

### Findings

The sample of students consisted of sixty students of the third year of the study program Pedagogy of Primary and Preschool Education.

The first question of the questionnaire brings up the importance of feedback in student learning. As we can see, 73% of the students believe that the presence of feedback is important to a great extent in the learning process and the other 27% of the students believe that the presence of feedback is important to a little extent in the learning process, which leads to the need for the presence of feedback in the students' learning process.

#### 1.To what extent is feedback important in your learning process?

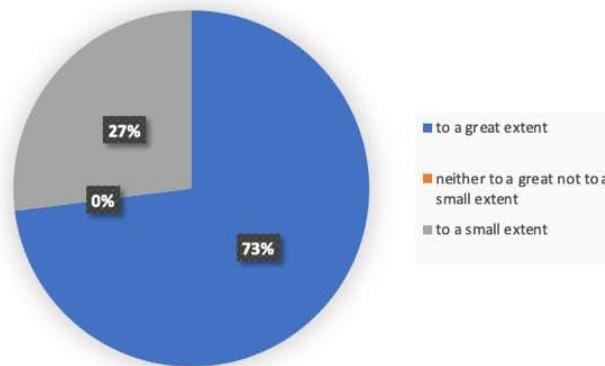


Figure 1. The importance of feedback in students' learning process

The second question refers to the improvement of academic performance using feedback. The results for this question were as follows: 57% of the students believe that feedback contributes to a great extent to improving academic performance, 14% of the students believe that feedback contributes neither to a great extent nor to a small extent

to improving academic performance, and 29% of the students believe that feedback contributes to a small extent to improving academic performance.

**2.To what extent do you believe that feedback contributes to the improvement of your academic performance?**

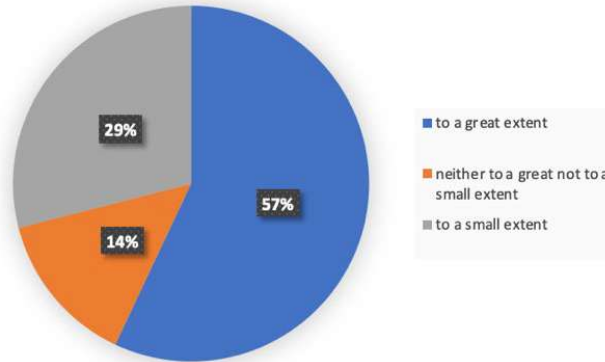


Figure 2. The improvement of academic performance using feedback.

The third question brings into discussion the presence of certain difficulties in receiving feedback from teachers. As we can see, 37% of the students claim that they have to a great extent/often difficulties in receiving feedback from teachers and 63% of the students claim that they have to a little extent/rare difficulties in receiving feedback from teachers.

**3.To what extent do you find it difficult to receive feedback from teachers?**

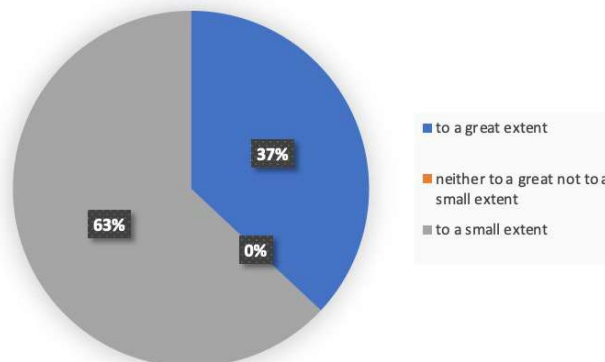


Figure 3. Difficulties in receiving feedback from teachers

The fourth question concerns the difficulties encountered in providing feedback to teachers. The results for this question were as follows: 83% of the students claim that they have difficulties in giving feedback to teachers and 17% of the students claim that they do not have any difficulties in giving feedback to teachers.

**4.To what extent do you encounter difficulties in providing feedback to teachers?**

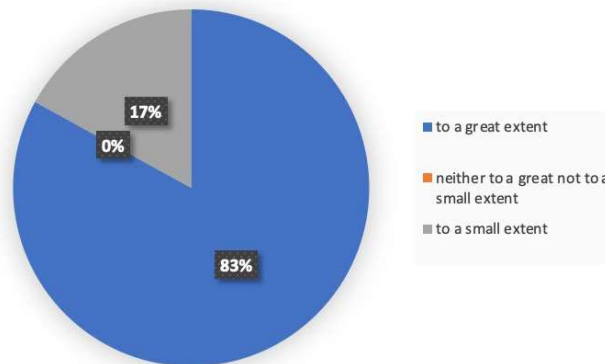


Figure 4. Difficulties in providing feedback to teachers.

The fifth question brings into discussion providing immediate feedback that allows for quick correction of errors and enhances student learning. As we can see 92% of the students believe that providing immediate feedback from the teacher leads to quick correction of errors and enhances learning, while the remaining 8% of the students believe that the help received from the teacher through feedback does not help or does not lead to quick correction of errors and enhancement of learning.

**5. To what extent does providing immediate feedback from the teacher allows for errors to be corrected quickly and consolidates learning?**

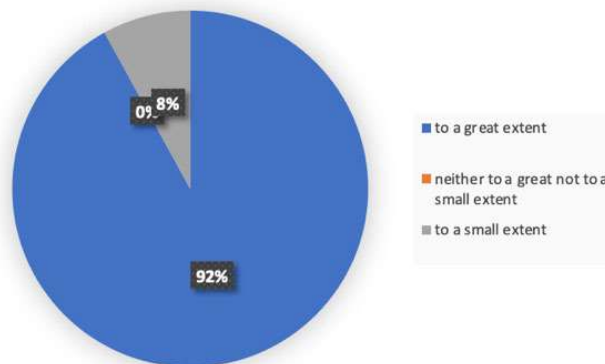


Figure 5. Providing immediate feedback allows for a quick correction of errors and consolidates learning.

The sixth question refers to the stimulation of critical thinking and development of problem-solving skills with the help of feedback. The results for this question were as follows: 61% of the students believe that feedback stimulates critical thinking and develops problem-solving skills to a great extent and 39% of the students believe that feedback stimulates critical thinking to a small extent and leads to the development of problem-solving skills.

**6. To what extent does feedback stimulate critical thinking and develops problem-solving skills?**

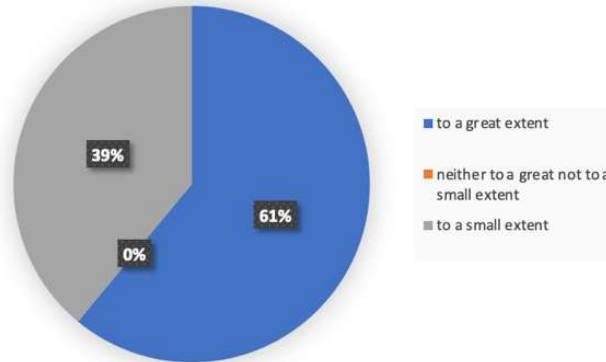


Figure 6. Stimulating critical thinking and developing problem solving skills with feedback.

The seventh question discusses the idea that feedback provided in formative assessment leads to increased student performance. As we can see, 85% of the students believe that feedback in formative assessment leads to a large extent to increased student performance, while 15% of the students believe that feedback in formative assessment leads to increased student performance to a small extent..

**7. To what extent does the feedback provided in formative assessment lead to increased student performance?**

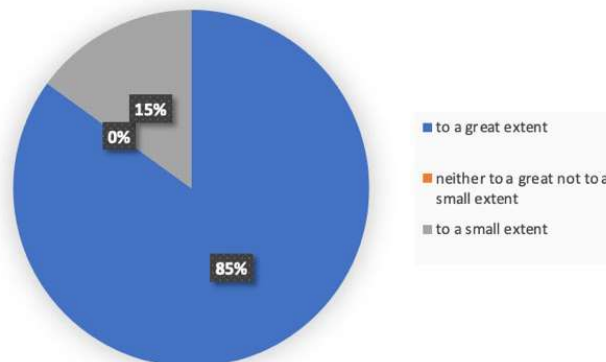


Figure 7. The feedback provided by formative assessment leads to increased students' performance.

The eighth question refers to the essential element in formative assessment that helps to improve academic performance, namely feedback. The results for this question were as follows: 77% of the students say that feedback is to a large extent the key element in formative assessment that helps to improve academic performance and 23% of the students say that feedback is to a small extent the key element in formative assessment that helps to improve academic performance.

**8. To what extent is feedback an essential element of formative assessment that helps to improve academic performance?**

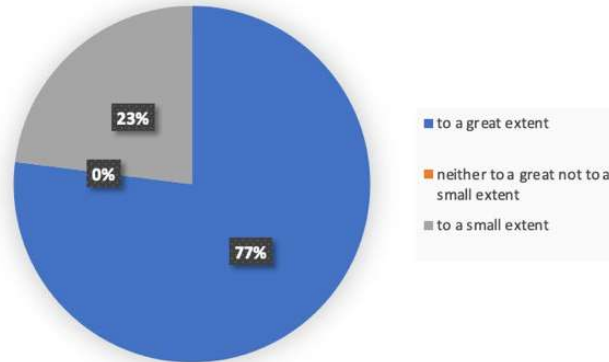


Figure 8. Feedback is an essential element of formative assessment that helps to improve academic performance.

The ninth question discusses how formative feedback helps to clarify learning expectations for students. As we can see, 96% of the students believe that formative feedback helps to a great extent in clarifying learning expectations, while 4% say that formative feedback helps to a little extent in clarifying learning expectations.

**9. To what extent does formative feedback help to clarify learning expectations for students?**

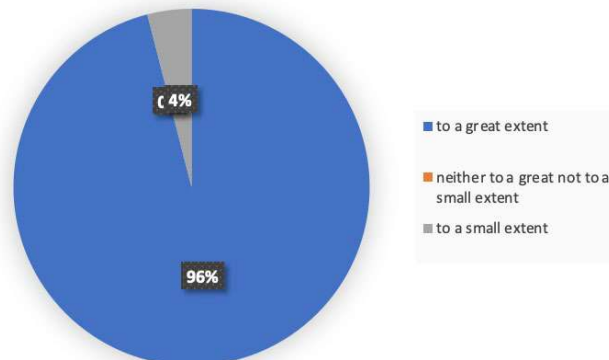


Figure 9. Formative feedback helps with clarifying learning expectations for students.

The tenth question refers to the extent to which feedback promotes the development of reflective and lifelong learning skills. The results for this question were as follows: 67% of the students claim that feedback promotes the development of reflective and lifelong learning skills to a great extent and 33% of the students claim that feedback promotes the development of reflective and lifelong learning skills to a small extent.

**10. To what extent does feedback promote the development of reflective capacity and lifelong learning?**



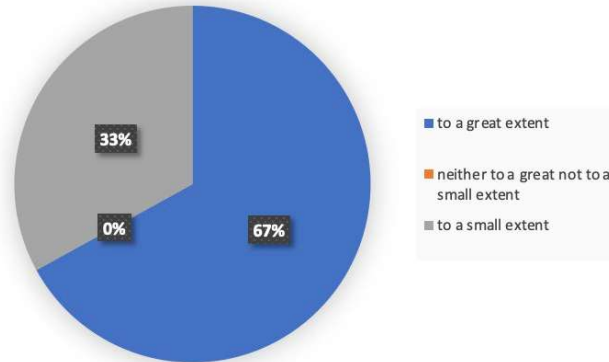


Figure 10. Feedback promotes the development of reflective capacity and lifelong learning.

### Conclusions

The analysis of the questionnaire results reveals students' opinions about the importance, place and role of feedback in the formative assessment process. The relevance of feedback is emphasized, with most students underlining its essential contribution to enhancing academic performance. Students particularly value feedback centered on the learning task and on the educational process, a recommendation that should be integrated by teachers into the formative assessment practice. Results show that providing feedback by students is challenging, being influenced by a lack of well-defined assessment criteria and limited experience.

Furthermore, students claim that providing immediate feedback from the teacher allows for quick correction of errors and consolidation of learning.

Students believe that feedback is an essential element of formative assessment, helping to improve academic performance, stimulating critical thinking and leading to the development of problem-solving skills.

They value a balance between positive and negative feedback, which is essential for supporting motivation and self-confidence, as well as stimulating the efforts to continuously improve performance.

It is formative feedback that promotes the development of reflective capacity and lifelong learning.

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