



The Benefits of Self –Assessment

Teona Tsintsadze*, Darina Mskhaladze, Tamila Dilaverova
BAU International University, Batumi

Abstract

The article examines the benefits of self-assessment and emphasizes its paramount importance in the teaching process. Our work analyzes the purpose of self-assessment, which is accompanied by numerous benefits when coupled with teachers' feedback. The primary aim of this article is to highlight the role of students in educational activities, who are equipped with the opportunity to involve in self-assessment through different approaches. Providing constructive feedback and setting adequate goals for the learning outcomes are also indispensable components in this process. Notably, students with low self-esteem often experience anxiety and depression, which is closely intertwined with academic performance and assessment. Modern educational standards offer a plethora of possibilities to integrate innovative practices into the teaching process, establishing engaging and welcoming environment for all students. Hence, constructive and appropriate self-assessment can significantly contribute to improving students' self-esteem, sharpening their skills, and promoting academic success. The article employs various methods, including self-reflective rubrics, self-assessment questionnaires and direct observation. Using these methods proves to have positive results in students' academic life. The final results and conclusions of our research, conducted at Bahcesehir International University Batumi (BAU) are thoroughly discussed and conceived in the study. These findings underline the powerful impact of self-assessment on students' academic development, marking its role in personal and educational outcomes. Results revealed that the majority of students gained autonomy and identified their strengths and areas for improvement in the learning process.

Keywords: rubrics, self-assessment, self-esteem, self-questionnaires, feedback.

1. Introduction

Methodological challenges associated with the system of assessing students' achievement are rapidly increasing with the advent of new educational standards. The assessment system proves to be a pivotal means of determining learning problems and giving constructive feedback. It clarifies, how successfully educational materials have been mastered and how gained practical skills have been embodied in practice. Ensuring the quality of education is the most important issue, and one of the effective tools for enhancing it in the process of reform is improving the assessment system.

In the traditional system, the teacher was the only person who knew the criteria for evaluating the student's activities and learning outcomes. However, through modern approaches, students now have the possibility to be fully involved in the learning process and its results. Numerous works and researches are dedicated to analyzing and examining contemporary assessment system. The most widely known approaches are formative and summative assessments. Formative assessment occurs during the learning process, while summative assessment takes place at the end of the learning period. As our paper attempts to integrate the self-assessment approach into the learning process, the main focus is to explore the paper from this perspective. Self-assessment is the type of assessment which is tightly linked to the level of aspirations, increased responsibility, and the acquisition of independent skills.

According to Tontus (2020), "Assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from various sources and activities in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences. The process restarts when assessment results are used to plan and modify subsequent learning. Assessment is the systematic field for reasoning about the development of students and the evaluation of the program and the effectiveness of the educational activities. It is the process of planning, implementing, clarifying, designing, collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and re-designing to increase students' learning and development. The assessment has a greater impact on student learning than teaching; assessment exceptionally influences how students react to their studies. Assessment informs learners what their teachers regard as important and thus what they should pay attention to. Thus, assessment acts as a guideline to study in a targeted way." He also emphasizes the role of constructive feedback. "For formative assessments to contribute to students' learning they must receive high-quality feedback on their efforts. Feedbacks must be constructive and developmental to be effective. It should also help learners to understand whether and how they have or have not met the criteria." (p.11)

Andrade and Du (2007), in their work *Student responses to criteria-referenced self-assessment* highlighted 6 main findings:

1. Students' attitudes toward self-assessment tended to become more positive as they gained experience with it.
2. Students felt they could self-assess effectively and were more likely to self-assess when they knew what their teacher expected.
3. Self-assessment involved checking progress, followed by revising and reflecting.
4. Students believed there were multiple benefits in self-assessment
5. Students reported that transfer of the self- assessment to other courses was spotty.
6. There was sometimes a tension between teachers' expectations and students' own standards of quality. (pp.164-167)

They also claim that "Misconceptions about student self-assessment are common. 'Self-assessment', we often hear, 'means letting students grade themselves.' This statement is generally delivered with a raised eyebrow ('What could be more ridiculous?') and followed closely by a critique: 'They'll just give themselves as!' True? Yes and no. If a teacher asks her students to grade themselves and counts those grades toward final grades, then yes, savvy students motivated by grades will give themselves As. If, in contrast, the teacher frames self-assessment as an opportunity to reflect on the quality of students' own work in order to learn more, make improvements and perhaps even earn a higher grade, a very different picture of self-assessment emerges." (p. 159)

As Schunk & Greene (2018), report "people judge themselves and their situations by comparing them to both external and internal standards. Where do those standards originate?

There is no doubt that external standards can become the measuring stick against which people judge their thoughts and actions. The performance standards set by schools, parents, and society are conveyed both explicitly (e.g., cut-off scores for certain academic programs) and tacitly (e.g., social recognition conferred for meeting high expectations). Parents and teachers offer direct instruction of certain standards, hoping that children will reach them and even internalize them. Standards also are conveyed indirectly by social models.” (p.24).

Ross (2006), recommends the following steps:

1. Define the criteria by which students assess their work.
2. Teach students how to apply the criteria.
3. Give students feedback on their self- assessments.
4. Give students help in using self-assessment data to improve performance. Under these conditions, criteria-referenced self-assessment can ensure that all students get the kind of feedback they need, when they need it, in order to learn and achieve. (p.17)

Boud (1995), in his work *Enhancing Learning through Self-assessment*, notes that characteristics of self- assessment is the involvement of students in identifying standards and/or criteria to apply to their work and making judgements about the extent to which they have met these criteria and standards. He gives the following definition of self-assessment - “In the act of questioning is the act of judging ourselves and making decisions about the next step. This is self-assessment” (p.1)

There are a number of ways to involve students in effective self-assessment. As Andrade and Valtcheva (2009), discuss in *Promoting Learning and Achievement Through Self-Assessment*, “in general, the process involves the following three steps: 1. Articulate expectations. 2. Self-assessment 3. Revision where students use their self-assessments to guide revision. This last step is crucial. Students are savvy, and will not self-assess thoughtfully unless they know that their efforts can lead to opportunities to actually make improvements and possibly increase their grades.” (p.14)

2. Methods

Students always differentiate themselves in performance based on teachers’ assessments. They tend to classify themselves into categories such as excellent, good, poor, frequently endowing themselves with qualities that prevent them from improving and sharpening cognitive and emotional skills. As a result, they might suffer from so-called “unfair assessment”. Poor self-esteem in students manifests evidently in their behavior and personality traits. Their development is hindered by their strong self-criticism and lack of self-confidence. The fear of failure is deep, leading them to underestimating their capabilities, results, and even personal qualities. Low self-esteem leads to avoiding problem-solving, and they ignore difficult tasks.

Our research was conducted by employing self-assessment throughout a term, with teachers’ constant observation, involvement and support. To portray the challenges of our research, we will give details of the learning process. Our university delivers medical education to foreign students, and for them, English is not their native language. Teaching process is in English. Our subject is Georgian as a foreign language and it makes matters worse, since they have to put all efforts into grasping the concepts and gaining insight into Georgian, which is characterized by numerous challenges, especially in the context of its exceptions and pronunciations. Consequently, students often show reluctance to participate, and our goal was to involve all of them in the teaching process. We believed, it was crucial to teach them to objectively figure out their strengths and weaknesses, especially since it was self-assessment and could have appeared biased. To prevent emergence of partiality, measures were taken immediately. Our research was planned and carried out as follows:

Rubric analysis-is a straightforward and simple method used in the research, since it does not require complexity. Teachers can use this method effortlessly and students typically embrace the challenges with distinction. Using rubrics prevents students from experiencing unforeseen failures in the learning process, helps them evaluate themselves strategically, contributing to their personal growth. First, we introduced the rubric to students through examples to clarify misunderstandings. In the teaching process, rubrics accentuated their strengths, such as knowledge, academic performance, attendance, incentive and various skills, including communicative, leadership and critical thinking. Then, rubrics leniently focused on their weaknesses, i.e. areas for improvement, addressing issues like being late for lectures, lack of responsibility, not fully involvement in the learning process and so forth. We guided students through examples and visual aids to ensure its smooth integration into the teaching process. They had an opportunity to grade themselves according to rubrics. After the grading process, we offered our evaluations with feedback and discussed differences.

Self-assessment questionnaires-At the end of the week, students completed their reflective questionnaires including a series of questions from different aspects, ranging from skills to behaviors. In this part, students were obliged to be ultimately fair while assessing themselves, focusing on the given questions to eradicate shortcomings. This was a collection of student work that demonstrated their progress and achievements over time. Questions such as: “How effectively do I prepare materials?” “Which topics do I find most difficult and why?” “Does this approach work for me?” “How good am I at managing my time?” “How effortlessly do I complete homework?” “What are the goals to improve my academic performance?” “Do I feel comfortable expressing my ideas?” “How effectively can I work on a team?” “How effectively can I employ feedback to improve my skills?” “What are my achievements this week?” “How can I manage anxiety related to learning process?” “How often do I need help from a teacher, when I cannot grasp something?” “What is my motivation in the learning process?” “What can I do when I feel frustrated and discouraged?” “Can I maintain a balance between studies and other aspects of my life?” “Can I deal with disagreements or different ideas in a group?” This type of questionnaires allowed students to exhibit their understanding of the subject, as well as demonstrate their creativity and communication skills.

Direct observation-Students were continuously being observed in the process of self-assessment and given constructive recommendations, and if any partiality prevailed, measures were immediately taken to manage it.

3. Results

Using these methods yielded a myriad of benefits:

- High self-esteem- Self-assessment instills a sense of responsibility for students’ steps and outcomes. They were committed to their goals to perform better, and their self-esteem enhanced noticeably. Self-reported reflective practice raised students’ responsibility and behavior.
- Emotional stability and stress management- in the self-assessing process, various skills are involved: recognizing, perceiving, understanding, concluding and handling the emotions. Constant reflection aided them in tackling their emotional conditions, as within this process they acknowledged themselves better.
- Better academic performance-by permanently evaluating their achievements, academic performance increased, productivity levels enhanced, and students learnt from their mistakes step by step, gaining insight into improving and rectifying them appropriately.

- Students strove to assert themselves, sought support from the teacher and classmates, and wanted their positive qualities noticed. Hence, after a term, students pointed out that insurmountable obstacles now seemed straightforward and easily digestible. They felt important and obtained a positive self-image. The environment played a huge role in the process of cooperating and reconciling the group as a unit. As a result, traits like stubbornness, indecisiveness, touchiness, and pickiness had almost vanished.

4. Conclusion

Our research aligns with the results of previous studies reported by Andrade and Du (2007). According to them, self-assessment gives students experience with multiple benefits and covers checking progress (pp.7,8). Based on the results of our conducted research, we can highlight five key findings that strengthen their statements.

1. **Students ceased to exaggerate the importance of failures.** At first, students were sensitive to failures. However, by constant involvement, they started to perceive mistakes not as failures but as chances for development.
2. **The level of shouldering the responsibility has tremendously mounted.** Self-assessment entitled students to manage their learning process. Consequently, they realized their duties and responsibilities within the educational process.
3. **The involvement of students with low academic performance enhanced.** One of the most remarkable outcomes was the increased engagement of students who previously struggled academically. Through these approaches, students with low academic performance gained insights into their learning barriers and felt more motivated to take part in the educational process. At the end of the term, their independent performance, engagement in pair/group work and discussions significantly enhanced.
4. **The ability of self-check and self-control has become more conspicuous.** Students became more proficient at controlling their own progress, identifying obstacles, and acting appropriately.
5. **Students commenced to search for mistakes with a desire to eliminate them.** Self-assessment helped students cultivate the habit of seeking solutions to their mistakes i.e. where they needed improvements. This process contributed to their academic and personal growth.

Ross (2006), recommends defining the criteria, giving appropriate feedback on self-assessment, and notes that criteria-referenced self-assessment can ensure that all students get the kind of feedback they need, when they need it, in order to learn and achieve. (p.7) As our study claims-self-assessment allows us to actively involve students in setting their own learning goals and criteria for evaluating their results. Students are encouraged to develop their individual learning approaches. Thus, the employment of self-assessment in the learning process allows students not only to recognize the limits of their abilities and handle challenges, but also to analyze underlying reasons and causes for those challenges and draw up strategies for resolving them. Boud (1995), emphasizes the importance of identifying criteria and standards in the learning process, highlighting that the act of judging leads to making decisions. (p.1). Our study discusses the steps of understanding, including providing precise and clear instructions, suggesting rubrics, self-assessment questionnaires, and creating a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for students. We successfully managed to instill self-assessment skills and provided students with valuable self-assessment experiences. The self-assessment approach allows students to learn how to use self-assessment questionnaires to increase their self-esteem. Inadequate self-assessment can lead to negative consequences, such as increased

social anxiety, poor adaptation, low academic performance, disharmony, the formation of inferiority complexes, aggression towards the outside world, and even unconscious conflict with their peers. Conversely, constructive self-assessment helps students become autonomous learners and analyze their progress, enables them to gain wide self-reflection, which contributes to improving self-awareness and academic performance.

It must be noted that self-assessment can't be implemented permanently and solely, it should have occasional use to motivate students and make them feel comfortable. The role of formative assessment must not be overlooked. In our previous article, (Tsintsadze et al, 2024), *How to handle the challenges prevailing through formative assessment*, our findings report that "A flexible and straightforward assessing system improves productivity. Hence, formative assessment with these characteristics increases objectivity, efficiency, and reliability. Applying formative assessment through written explanatory notes and constant, constructive feedback proves the positive outcomes. Employing formative assessment with these features, allows teachers to modify the framework of formative assessment mildly and generate immediate benefits with a profound improvement in terms of psychological issue, i.e. students with a lack of motivation and reluctance experience huge changes. The balance between strengths and weaknesses steadily remains and apparently notes with comments give a rise to this stability. Students with primarily low academic performance show remarkable growth with many completing the course with flying colors. Perseverance and tenacity that seemed lurked and hidden in students become fairly apparent. A straightforward and easily understandable assessment framework is essential, offering a myriad of useful benefits including: concentration enhancement, precision and perspicuity. Additionally, the framework is simple and there is less confusion among the students". (p.6).

Based on our investigation, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Self-assessment is a crucial educational practice that entitles students to complete their learning journeys successfully. It molds essential skills such as planning, self-discipline, and independent learning. Students are equipped to embrace challenges and become proficient at analyzing their strengths and areas for improvement.
- Implementation of self-assessment assists students to thoroughly understand the criteria for success, leading to better engagement and performance over time. Thus, self-assessment is a productive and powerful tool for shaping students' ability to evaluate their own results constructively, achieving to better learning outcomes and a deeper approach to the learning process. With transparent and appropriate guidance from teachers, self-assessment could generate benefits and raise readiness and eagerness. Hence, using a combination of methods and valuable feedback helps students better identify their potential.
- To avoid boring and monotonous lectures, it is highly recommended to establish an amicable and engaging learning environment by incorporating self-assessment techniques. Utilizing various methods can remarkably enhance both personal and professional development, as each approach enables students to mold a profound understanding of the subject and their own abilities.
- Integration of a self-assessment approach proves to have a positive impact on students' overall mood and motivation, bringing out positive personal traits and fostering their abilities to better adapt to the learning environment.

Because the research was conducted in a relatively small environment only throughout a term, it is advisable to investigate its further benefits and influence on students. Extensive study could offer more benefits and facts on its effectiveness.

References

- Andrade, H., & Du, Y. (2007). Student responses to criteria-referenced self-assessment. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 32(2), 159–181. <https://doi:10.1080/02602930600801928>
- Andrade, H., & Valtcheva, A. (2009) Promoting Learning and Achievement Through Self-Assessment. *Theory Into Practice*, 48(1), 12-19. <https://doi:10.1080/00405840802577544>
- Boud, D. J. (1995). *Enhancing Learning through Self-assessment*. London: Kogan Page.
- Natriello, G. (1987). The impact of evaluation processes on students. *Educational Psychologist*, 22(2), 155–175.
- Ross, J. (2006). The reliability, validity, and utility of self-assessment. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, 11(10), 1-13. <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/30005>
- Schunk, D. H., & Greene, J. A. (Eds.). (2018a). *Handbook of self-regulation of learning and performance*, (2 ed.) Routledge.
- Tontus, O. (2020), *Glossary of assessment and evaluation in higher education*, 11-17.
- Tsintsadze, T., Dilaverova, T., & Mskhaladze, D. (2024). How to handle the challenges prevailing through formative assessment. *Proceedings of The World Conference on Teaching and Education*, 3(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.33422/worldcte.v3i1.494>