

## THE ROLE OF CONSTANT AND CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK ON STUDENTS' LEARNING MOTIVATION

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**Abstract:** *The concept of students' learning motivation refers to identifying the effects of learning on students who successfully participate in the activities proposed in the instructive-educational process. Motivation influence students to self-encourage, self-identify and aspire to performance in learning, to self-regulated. (Hamjah, 2010).*

*The concept of constant and continuous feedback, in this research, is an important element of the continuous or formative assessment, offered by the teacher to the students; constant and continuous feedback is a conscious and deliberate reaction of teachers to offer students qualitative assessments aimed at maintaining a balance in the teaching- learning- evaluation process and to lead to an increased student learning motivation.*

*The present study is a part of a more extended research, this being an exploratory session, performed in order to investigate the role of constant and continuous feedback on students' learning motivation.*

*We have discover that students do not make a real correlation between immediate feedback and the assessment method through which such feedback can be provided. Through oral assessments students can receive the "clearest" feedback right away that could be a qualitative and quantitative feedback. Through the quiz, immediate feedback can be given in the sense of quantitative feedback.*

*We investigate students' motivation from the scale of the intrinsic motivation, with the secondary scale of pleasure and challenge, and from the scale of the extrinsic motivation, with the secondary scale of recognition and reward.*

**Keywords:** *constant and continuous feedback, motivation for learning, students learning motivation.*

### 1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In order to identify the role of constant and continuous feedback on students' learning motivation we first had to describe and operationalize the concepts on which we conducted this research: the concept of students' learning motivation and the concept of constant and continuous feedback.

The concept of students' learning motivation refers to identifying the effects of learning on students who successfully participate in the activities proposed in the instructive-educational process. When we say "motivation for learning," we ask ourselves: "Why do students learn?", so we think about the measurable level of active involvement in learning and the reasons why it happens.

Motivation plays an important role in determining student acquisitions and can influence students to self-encourage, self-identify and aspire to performance in learning. Motivation helps students to adjust themselves.

The learning process can be difficult if there is no motivation, because "it takes effort and striving to be able to achieve their goals." (Hamjah, 2010, p. 147)

According to Ryan (2000, p. 54- 67) "to be motivated" means to be "moved to do something"; the person who is "fueled or activated for a purpose is considered to be motivated".

In the academic context, "motivation refers to a learner's inclination, need, desire and compulsion to participate and to be successful in the process of learning" (Moenikia and Zahed-Babelan, 2010, p. 1540-1541).

Piccione, Burns, and Sinfield (2015) says that the "learning motivation" (from a pedagogical point of view) can be described as a "technical point of view", as follows: "motivations without a specific purpose" - learning for the pleasure of doing this and "motivations with a specific purpose and with different variables" - I teach in order to achieve the concrete objectives, professionally, personally and socially, to anticipate a success regarded as an essential goal in order to avoid a failure.

Thus, by motivating students to learn, we will determine students to participate in the proposed teaching activities by their own desires and needs and to be successful in learning throughout the teaching- learning- evaluation process.

The concept of constant and continuous feedback, in this research, is an important element of the continuous or formative assessment, offered by the teacher to the students; constant and continuous feedback is a conscious and deliberate reaction of teachers to offer students qualitative assessments aimed at maintaining a balance in the teaching-learning- evaluation process and to lead to an increased student learning motivation.

In the continuous assessments, the constant and continuous feedback provided by the teacher will lead to improving student behavior, generating effective attitudes towards learning, stimulating motivation for learning and mobilizing the student's learning effort.

The concept of constant and continuous feedback refers to feedback provided by the teacher to students, in a constant and uninterrupted manner throughout the teaching-learning process and throughout the evaluation process.

In general, the feedback given to students by the teacher will increase their awareness of what they learn, how they learn and how they should learn, what they can learn, so there will be changes in the style of learning of the student. Throughout the given feedback there will be improvements in existing competencies and will enhance the self-assessment competence and inter-appraisal competence.

In this study we are mostly interested in researching the constant and continuous feedback provided by the teacher to the students in the continuous evaluation activities.

Constant and continuous feedback is the feedback provided in the continuous assessment that has the role of regulating students' learning and assessment activities and will be constructive when it produces a positive change on the motivation of student learning.

## 2. GOALS AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**2.1. Goals.** The research is aimed to investigate the role of constant and continuous feedback on students' learning motivation. The main question from which I started was: What is the relationship between the students' learning motivation and the constant and continuous feedback given by the teacher to the students in the continuous assessment activities.

**2.2. Hypotheses.** We assume that learning motivation for students who are given constant and continuous feedback when they are evaluated through alternative assessment strategies is higher than for those who receive quantitative feedback when they are assessed through traditional strategies.

**2.3. Sample.** In the present research there were included 162 subjects, students from University of Transilvania from Brasov from the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Primary and Pre-school Pedagogy Education specializations (PIPP) and students from teacher training module from specializations Psychology and Mathematics-Informatics.

**2.4. Instruments used.** I used the ISEÎS questionnaire for identifying the assessment strategies from the students' perspective, used in higher education and the PM questionnaire of Teresa Amabile (1994), with the original designation WPI- questionnaire for identifying the work preferences, aiming at assessing individual differences on the intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions of motivation.

The questionnaire includes 28 closed-ended items, measured using a five-step Likert scale: 1- none, 2- very rare, 3- sometimes, 4-often, 5- always. Through this questionnaire I wanted to identify the assessment strategies used predominantly in higher education through three scales: traditional methods, alternative methods and feedback. In this article I will present the results obtained through the third scale from the ISEÎS questionnaire- the scale of feedback.

Through the feedback scale I aimed: to identify the level of student preference to choose together with the teacher the assessment strategies to be used in the courses or seminars; identifying student learning needs by choosing assessment strategies for the courses or seminars with teacher; identifying aspects of student's desire or preference for the type of feedback they can get from the teacher (immediate feedback, constant and continuous feedback, quantitative feedback, qualitative feedback); identifying the level of changes that students experienced as a result of assessment through alternative strategies and through the received feedback; identifying the level of improvement in student performance through alternative assessment strategies. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient is .77 for the full scale.

The motivation questionnaire PM (originals: WPI) is built by Teresa Amabile, Hill KG, Hennessey BA, Tighe EM (1994) as a tool for identifying work preferences, aiming at assessing individual differences on the intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions of motivation. The questionnaire contains 30 items that represent statements that the subject will rank on a four step scale (indicating the frequency with which a certain behavior occurs: never, sometimes, often, always).

The questionnaire was adapted to the purposes of the present study. This PM questionnaire was adapted to the academic environment and was used as a tool for determining the dominant type of motivation for student learning - intrinsic and extrinsic, as well as for evaluating the level of motivation for student learning.

The PM questionnaire evaluates students' motivational tendencies through two main scales - intrinsic and extrinsic, and two secondary scales - "pleasure" and "challenge" for intrinsic and "recognition" and "reward" for extrinsic (Amabile et al., 1994).

The main elements of the intrinsic motivation captured through the questionnaire are: self-determination, competence, engagement in the task, curiosity, joy, and interest (Amabile, 1994).

The main elements of extrinsic motivation captured through the questionnaire are: competition concerns, valuation, recognition, money or other tangible incentives, the constraints imposed by others (Amabile, 1994).

### 3. RESULTS

**3.1. The analysis of the data collected through the application of the ISEÎS questionnaire** goes to the following directions: the analysis of some aspects of student feedback such as identifying students' wishes or preferences regarding feedback from the teacher. The feedback received from the teacher could be: immediate feedback, constant and continuous feedback, quantitative feedback, qualitative feedback.

Analysing the data obtained about the responses to the feedback items, it emerged that students always "prefer", the following situations obtaining the highest scores: 59.3% of students would like to choose assessment strategies with the teacher from the course/ seminar (Q9); 58% of students prefer the choice of strategies used to evaluate courses/ seminars to be determined by their learning needs (Q10); 56.8% of students prefer to receive feedback immediately after being evaluated (Q11); 54.3% of students want to receive qualitative feedback (Q14); 44.4% of students prefer to be evaluated through assessment strategies that offer them the opportunity to be creative and innovative (Q15); 38.9% of students prefer to receive constant and continuous feedback (Q12).

Analysing the data we found out that 18.5% of the students do not prefer to be evaluated through assessment strategies that provide them algorithmic assessment tasks ("never"). Likewise, 43.8% of students "often" consider that the results obtained from the application of alternative assessment strategies offer them opportunities to apply the skills and knowledge acquired in practice. A percentage of 42.6 of the students consider that there are "often" changes, changes that they experience as a result of assessment through alternative strategies and feedback provided by the teacher. 42% of students "often" feel that there are improvements in their performance as a result of assessment through alternative strategies and feedback from the teacher.

Through the feedback scale we aimed at the following: identifying the student's preference for the assessment strategies used in the courses/ seminars; identifying opportunities for further use of competences formed by assessment through different alternative/traditional strategies; identifying aspects of student desire or preference for the feedback received from the teacher, that could be: immediate feedback, constant and continuous feedback, quantitative feedback, qualitative feedback.

Students "always" prefer, with a score of 19.1%, to receive a quantitative feedback (Q13) and, with a score of 54.3%, they also "always" prefer to receive qualitative feedback (Q14). The preference for quantitative or qualitative feedback comes from student's different learning needs, from the type of motivation involved in learning, from the interest they have in the results of the assessment. Qualitative feedback requires a greater effort on the teacher's part because it is assumed that he/ she has to offer quality assessments that are time consuming.

By analysing the students' responses we can see that the distribution of student preference to receive immediately feedback after being evaluated is an increasing one, starting at "never" with a score of 2.5% up to the "always" with a score of 56.8%. That means that students want most often to receive a feedback as soon as they have been assessed. 56.8% of students prefer to receive feedback immediately after they have been evaluated, although the assessment methods that can provide immediate feedback have not been ranked too high: 5.6% of students "always" prefer oral assessments and 29.6% of students "always" prefer quizzes.

By comparing these results, we realize that students do not make a real correlation between immediate feedback and the assessment method through which such feedback can be provided.

Oral assessments are traditional assessment methods through which students can receive the "clearest" feedback right away, and there can also be a qualitative feedback and a quantitative feedback. Through the quiz, immediate feedback can be given in the sense of quantitative feedback, but this "immediate" may actually be the time when all students have handed in the test which then it is corrected using response templates. 38.9% of students "always" prefer to receive a constant and continuous feedback, which means that the assessment must be made through continuous assessments throughout the semester, and the teacher must offer the students the opportunity to be evaluated accordingly.

**3.2. The analysis of the data obtained from the PM questionnaire** goes in two directions: the intrinsic motivation, with the scales of pleasure and challenge, and the extrinsic motivation, with recognition and reward scales.

Analysis of the data shows that students "always" prefer, with the highest scores, the tasks that give them "pleasure": 85.2% of students want what they learn to offer them opportunities to enrich their knowledge and skills (PM5); 53.1% of students prefer to plan their own affairs (PM7); 57.4% of students say they feel good when they can figure out themselves what they have to do (PM17); 64.2% of students prefer to do some exciting activity to forget everything (PM23); 78.4% of students say that it most matters to them to like what they do (PM30).

The "pleasure" factor is a subset of intrinsic motivation and represents students who are highly motivated to learn to participate in the proposed teaching activities; they find great pleasure in working and expressing themselves through what they do; they can be so absorbed in the work they do, they can forget everything; they generally prefer to establish by themselves what they have to do; they seek to learn from what they do and enjoy the work they carry out.

Students often prefer tasks that "provoke" them, this being a subscale of intrinsic motivation; there were obtained the following results: 53.7% of students "sometimes" prefer relatively simple, not too complicated tasks (PM9); 42.6% of students "often" prefer to personally deal with completely new problems for their own person (PM13); 50% of students say it's "always" important for them to do the job as they feel they have to do it (PM27); 45.7% of students "always" prefer tasks like: do I want to try? How good can I be in my school work? (PM28);

The "challenge" factor is a subset of intrinsic motivation which defines students strongly motivated by new situations and tasks to solve, by difficult and complex tasks; these students prefer activities that require their intellectual abilities or motor skills; they prefer poorly structured tasks and prefer to decide themselves what will be the working strategy.

Extrinsic motivation is another element that leads students to learn and an important factor in extrinsic motivation is "recognition," which has achieved the highest scores in the following stages: 61.1% of students say "never" prefers tasks like "I'm sure it's not worth doing your job well, unless someone else sees it "(PM18); 45.1% of students say that "sometimes" they are not so concerned about what others think about their work and school results (PM1); 50% of students say they "always" prefer recognition (appreciation) from the others because it stimulates them (PM24).

The "recognition" factor defines students who are strongly motivated by the recognition offered by others (teachers, colleagues, parents, friends, etc.), sensitive to the assessments of colleagues, teachers; these students tend to appreciate successes in comparison with others; they prefers activities where the teacher is the one who clearly sets goals and working sets.

"Reward" as an important factor in extrinsic motivation has achieved the following high scores: 48.1% of students say "sometimes" prefer the following situation - "I often think of notes and prizes" (PM16); 45,1% of students say that "always" prefer to solve tasks that have clearly formulated instructions (PM21); 41,4% of students say they "sometimes" need to feel rewarded for what they do (PM25).

The "reward" factor defines those students who are strongly motivated by the grade, qualification, appreciation reward they will receive for their work; these students always have in mind objectives as grades or prizes and are capable of a sustained effort to get them; rewarding students prefer clear work tasks.

**3.3. Analysis and interpretation of data resulting from the calculation of Pearson correlation coefficients.** After analysing the collected data and calculating the Pearson correlation coefficients, we can state that there is a statistically significant positive association between the feedback variable and the motivation for learning variable.

The feedback given to students in the assessment strongly correlates with pleasure (intrinsic motivation):  $r = 0,392$  where  $p < 0,001$ ; with the challenge intrinsic motivation):  $r = 0.291$  where  $p < 0.001$ .

Feedback offered to students in assessment correlates statistically significantly with recognition (extrinsic motivation):  $r = 0.165$  where  $p < 0.036$ ; with reward (extrinsic motivation):  $r = 0.161$  where  $p < 0.041$ .

The constant and continuous feedback given by the teacher to student correlates statistically significantly very strongly with pleasure because students like to receive qualitative appreciation for their activity, because through the feedback they will manage to self-regulate their learning activity, they will succeed in self-evaluation, they will enjoy what they receive as a payment of his success.

The constant and continuous feedback provided by the teacher to students correlates very strongly with the challenge because it determines the student to look for new solutions to overcome certain problems, to seek solutions to correct mistakes, to identify new ways to solve situations, to be innovative, creative, to seek new leverage of self-evaluation and inter- evaluation.

#### 4.CONCLUSIONS

This was only a small part of a bigger research on the impact of the alternative assessment strategies for motivating students for learning. Through this part of research we hope to open higher education teachers' eyes on the required necessity to offer a constant and continuous feedback to students which will lead to an increased motivation for learning. Teacher must offer a feedback to students both in summative assessment, but also in the continuous assessment.

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