

THE IMPACT OF FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT IMBALANCE ON STUDENT LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION**Normuminova Khulkar Aduvasievna**

Uzbekistan state world languages university

English language faculty №2 Department of teaching English language methodology №2

hulkarnormuminova@gmail.com

Abstract: Assessment is not simply a means of measuring student performance; it is a fundamental guide to teaching and learning. The design and implementation of assessments significantly affect how students allocate their time, approach assignments, and engage with academic content.

Summative assessment, defined as the assessment of learning at the end of a course, remains the dominant model in contemporary higher education. While summative methods serve important purposes such as certification and accountability, their dominance has raised concerns among educators and researchers. In particular, the limitations of formative assessment designed to support learning can lead to suboptimal learning outcomes. The question emerges: to what extent does the imbalance between formative and summative assessment affect student learning, and what strategies can be used to achieve a more effective integration?

Keywords: *summative assessment, imbalance, student motivation, student engagement*

INTRODUCTION

Formative and Summative Assessment Imbalance in Higher Education. Research shows that the assessment structure strongly influences students' use of learning methods. When summative assessment dominates the learning process, students are more likely to engage in learning strategies such as memorization and selective learning. These approaches prioritize short-term performance over long-term understanding. In contrast, deep learning involves critical analysis, integration of ideas, and application of knowledge to new contexts. The advantage of summative assessment rejects such approaches by rewarding outcomes rather than processes. Motivation is another key factor that influences assessment design.

Self-determination theory suggests that intrinsic motivation increases when students feel autonomy, competence, and connectedness. Formative assessment supports these elements by providing ongoing feedback and opportunities for improvement. However, when summative assessment becomes the primary focus, motivation often shifts to extrinsic goals, such as achieving high grades. This can discourage students from participating in activities that are not graded or that are low-scoring, leading to decreased engagement and engagement.

High-stakes final assessments can also cause significant psychological distress. Test anxiety, stress, and fear of failure are common outcomes, especially when a single assessment determines a large portion of the final grade. These factors can disrupt cognitive functioning and negatively impact learning. Additionally, grading multiple core tasks can encourage strategic behavior, in which students divide their efforts inefficiently, often neglecting ongoing learning in favor of last-minute preparation.

One of the most important aspects of ongoing assessment is its role in fostering self-regulated learning. Feedback allows students to monitor their progress, identify gaps in understanding, and adjust their learning strategies accordingly. Boud and Falchikov (2006) argue

that ongoing assessment practices should develop students' ability to evaluate their own work. Formative methods, including self-assessment and peer assessment, are particularly effective in developing these skills.

Ongoing assessment supports the development of higher-order cognitive skills, as described in Bloom's Taxonomy. Activities such as problem-solving tasks, case studies, and collaborative projects require analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. These skills are essential for academic success and professional competence. Unlike summative assessments, which often prioritize content memorization, formative approaches encourage students to engage more deeply with the material. Another advantage of formative assessment is its flexibility. It can be adapted to accommodate different learning styles and backgrounds, making it a more inclusive approach. By offering multiple forms of assessment, teachers can ensure that all students have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding. The link between assessment structure and academic integrity is increasingly recognized in the literature. High-level summative assessments create the conditions for the use of transfer, ChatGPT, especially when students perceive a high risk of failure. Assessment design plays a key role in addressing this issue. Tasks that require original thinking, use of context, and iterative development are less prone to plagiarism and cheating. The inclusion of formative elements such as submitted drafts and feedback periods further reduces the potential for misconduct. In addition, continuous assessment distributes grades across multiple tasks, reducing the burden of any one assessment and reducing pressure on students.

A growing body of research supports integrating formative and summative assessments into a coherent framework. Rather than treating them as separate entities, teachers are encouraged to develop assessment systems that prepare students for summative assessment. One effective strategy is the constructivist approach proposed by Biggs (1996), which aligns learning outcomes, instructional activities, and assessment methods. In this model, formative assessment serves as a framework that guides students toward successful completion of summative tasks. Furthermore, devoting a meaningful portion of the final grade to formative assessment can increase its perceived value. This encourages consistent engagement and enhances the value of the learning process.

Despite its advantages, formative assessment presents practical challenges. Providing timely and detailed feedback requires significant time and effort, especially in large classes. Technological tools such as automated feedback systems and online platforms can help address this issue, but they cannot fully replace in-person feedback. Another challenge is student perception. Students accustomed to traditional assessment systems may initially resist formative approaches. It is important to provide clear information about the purpose and benefits of these methods for successful implementation.

Institutional support is also essential. Policies, training, and resource allocation must be aligned to promote balanced assessment practices.

Conclusion

The imbalance between formative and summative assessment is a significant problem in higher education. While summative assessment is necessary to measure achievement, its dominance can discourage student engagement, encourage absenteeism, and increase the risk of academic dishonesty. Formative assessment offers a complementary approach that supports continuous learning, reflection, and skill development. Combining both forms of assessment on a consistent basis can improve educational effectiveness and better reflect the complexities of student learning. Ultimately, the purpose of assessment should be to promote meaningful and

ongoing learning beyond measurement. Achieving this requires a shift to more balanced and pedagogically informed assessment practices.

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