University "St. Kliment Ohridski" – Bitola
Faculty of Education – Bitola

ISSN: 1857- 8888
DOI: 10.20544/teacher.31.02

THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS: PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS

Violeta Janusheva
Faculty of Education, Republic of North Macedonia
violeta.januseva@uklo.edu.mk

Emili Bechvarovska
Faculty of Education, Republic of North Macedonia
becvarovskaemili@gmil.com

Andrea Veleska
Faculty of Education, Republic of North Macedonia
aveleska58@gmail.com

Andrea Emshovska
Faculty of Education, Republic of North Macedonia
aemsovska@gmail.com

Andriana Samardzieva
Faculty of Education, Republic of North Macedonia
samardzievaandriana@gmail.com

Abstract

This qualitative research examines the parents' perception of the students' assessment, regarding its objectivity with the aim to get more profound insights on the assessment practice. The sample consists of 200 parents. The analysis rests on the qualitative content analysis and the inductive-interpretative method, which enable the interpretation of the parents' attitudes and experiences without using statistical procedures.

The results showcase that the assessment of the students' achievements is experienced as a complex and sensitive process which do not always fulfill its pedagogical function. According to the parents, the grade is related to the subjectivity of the teachers and their personal impressions, which create a feeling of unjustice and inequality. Parents also point out to other aspects that are connected with the grade, such as the motivation, anxiety, professional aspect, their own behavior, and the unclear criteria and feedback. If taken into consideration, these insights may contribute to the improvement of the assessment practices.

Key words: Students, assessment, parents, attitudes.

1. Introduction

The educational process is a complex and multidimensional system in which various elements intertwine and depend each on another. This process is not only a simple transfer of information, but a dynamic structure as well, which comprises of the teaching content, the methods for teaching and learning, the interaction between the teachers and the students, and the socio-emotional context in which the learning occurs. The assessment stands out as a tool which connects all of these elements.

The assessment is a crucial factor in the educational process because it determines the level of knowledge, skills, and competencies which students gain in the teaching. Besides that, the assessment has a significant role in directing the learning, in increasing the students' motivation, and in creating their relations with the schools.

The assessment is a key element in the educational process through which the students' achievements are monitored and evaluated, in relation to the settled educational goals. As an integral part of the teaching process, the assessment has an important role because it directs and upgrades the teaching and learning process.

In this context, Bloom (1971) states that the assessment in the classroom should serve as an instrument which will support the learning and that the evaluation, as a highest cognitive level, represents the students' competencies to think critically and to evaluate upon strong arguments. Therefore, according to him, the successful assessment measures the quantity of the acquired knowledge, but also encourages the students to achieve higher levels of thinking activity. Bloom says that the assessment is a continuous process which provides information on the students' growth and on the efficacy of the teaching. From this perspective, the assessment should be systematic, transparent and based on clearly defined criteria. While in the traditional teaching, the grade is perceived as a final confirmation of the students' success, nowadays, in the contemporary pedagogy, it is being considered as an asset for promotion of the learning and encouragement of the development. As mentioned by Bloom (1971), the assessment has development function and it should improve the learning. The socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky (1978) stresses the relevance of the social interaction and of the support in the process of learning, which imply that the way feedback is given and received may stimulate or hinder the students' progress. Black & Wiliam (1998) also suggest that the quality formative assessment contributes in a large extent for improvement of students' achievements, especially when students and parents receive understandable feedback for their advantages and disadvantages. As stated by them, this type of assessment provides continuous feedback.

According to Nitko (2004), the assessment refers to collecting and using data with the aim to improve the teachers' teaching and the students' learning. The assessment is therefore, a relevant mechanism which directs and supports the students' development. Hattie (2009) says that the assessment has a strong influence on the students' personal growth, their motivation, self-confidence, and attitudes toward the school. Havelka, Hebib & Baucal (2003) point out that the assessment becomes a device which helps students to recognize their advantages and shortcomings, and which enables teachers to balance the teaching toward the students' needs. In the assessment process, the Bloom taxonomy enables the structure of the evaluation. Through this model, the assessment transfers into coherent system which adjusts itself toward the various levels of students' development. Talevski & Janusheva (2015) insists on objectivity, fairness and transparency and emphasize that the teachers must use clear and various criteria and indicators to eliminate the subjectivity.

1.1. The objectivity of the assessment

The objectivity of the assessment represents one of the basic principles of the pedagogic theory and practice. It suggests that the grade should be a result of the real students' knowledge, and should not rely on personal teachers' attitudes, emotions, or biases. As Cronbach (1971) says, the objectivity indicates that different assessors should give similar grades for similar achievements. Ideally, two teachers should assess students with the same grade for the same students' task. However, many studies prove that this occurs rarely.

The first who elaborates this problem is Piéron (1922). He determines that two assessors give different grades for same answers. These insights pose the question for the validity and the objectivity of the assessment and point out to the need of apparent criteria (Tyler, 1949).

Many probes show that there are factors which can affect the objectivity of the assessment.

a) Personal teachers' attitudes – The teachers may unconsciously favor certain students (Thorndike, 1913).

b) Effect of the first impression – The first impression may affect the future judgments (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).

c) Unclear criteria – Without apparently defined criteria, the assessment becomes subjective (Tyler, 1949).

d) Psychological condition of the teacher – It may influence the objectivity (Cronbach, 1971).

e) Sociological factors – The parents' expectations, the pressure from the school and the environment may significantly mark the assessment (Stiggins, 2005).

It has to be noted that despite the efforts, the total elimination of the subjectivity is almost impossible, simply because the assessor is a human (Cronbach, 1971). There is no such thing as absolute objectivity. Therefore, the modern pedagogy considers the fairness and the transparency as fundament of the assessment.

1.2. The role of the parents

In the modern educational context, parents are considered as relevant partners in the educational process. They monitor the work of their children at home, communicate with the teachers, and form attitudes for the quality of the teaching and the assessment. Because of this, their perceptions for the fairness and the objectivity of the assessment are a valuable indicator for the conditions in the schools, regarding the assessment. As said by Epstein (2001), the partnership between the school and the family is a prime mover for the students' success.

The parents often interpret the students' grade as an indicator of the children's capability, and due to this, their reactions toward the grades can be strongly emotional. Therefore, the positive support may increase students' self-confidence while the pressure may cause stress and fear from failure.

The parents' expectations are a governing factor in forming the students' motivation. When the grades are used as tools to compare students, the atmosphere in the family may be competitive and tensed. On the other side, the parents who point out the students' advancements, and not only the results, contribute for positive attitudes toward the learning. Deci & Ryan (1985) explain that the excessive pressure lowers the students' inner motivation.

If the parents consider that the assessment is subjective and not fair, their trust in the teachers and the school may be broken. This disbelief often leads to conflicts, appeals, and students' negative attitudes. Thus, the transparency is very important.

As said by Stiggins (2005), the clear and precise communication for the students' achievements builds trust. The effective communication between teachers and parents contributes to better understanding of the criteria for assessing the students' achievements. The parents meetings, the written feedback, and the individual discussion on students' accomplishments increase the transparency and lower the possibility to misunderstanding. The regular communication affects the trust (Epstein, 2001). A lot of studies showcase that the students who have supportive parents develop higher academic freedom and better motivation. The parents who stress the effort and not only the grades provide more balanced psychological expansion. In this vein, Henderson & Mapp (2002) claim that the family support improves the academic success.

The transparent assessment signalize that the criteria, assignments, and outcomes should be evidently explained. The parents who are informed for the assessing process have a bigger trust in the teachers and in the school. Opposite, the lack of information leads to doubts on biases. When teachers and parents collaborate, the students get balanced support in school and at home (Epstein, 2001). The supportive communication lowers the possibility for conflict and increases the motivation. This type of communication is a precondition for objective and fair assessment (Epstein, 2001; Stiggins, 2005). Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1997) showcase that the parents' involvement depends on their beliefs for their own responsibility in the education of their children.

The complexity of the assessment process opens the need of a deeper elaboration of its objectivity and validity. This paper focuses on the parents' opinions of the students' assessment in the Republic of North Macedonia. The sample consists of 200 participants with different age, sex, and professional background, which provides different perspectives on the topic. The method used for collecting the data is a survey and the method for analyzing the data relies upon the thematic analysis.

2. Broader research context

Considering that the assessment is one of the most complex components of the educational system, it is a subject of constant interest among various foreign and domestic researchers. Through their research, they aim to define its functions, challenges and the impact on the students' achievements. A substantial amount of research is directed toward the examination of the parents' perceptions and attitudes, in relation to the assessment. These inquires claim that the subjective experience of the grade has a direct impact on students' motivation and success.

Kohn (1993) argues that as a type of award, the grades affect the learning process counterproductive. He states that when students are focused to achieve higher grade, their interest for the teaching material is reduced, they become less directed toward intellectual risks and look for the easiest way to succeed. Therefore, according to him, the system of awards and punishments does not motivate the students to improve themselves. This system simply trains them to be obedient, which in a long term destroys their natural curiosity and their inner desire for knowledge.

Crook (2001) indicates that the parents experience the assessment as unfair when the criteria are not apparent and when there is an impression that the teachers implement different standards for different students. In these cases, the grade is not perceived as a reflection of the knowledge, but rather as a result of the subjective judgment. McMillan, Myran & Workman (2002) conclude that the type of the school significantly influences the criteria which teachers consider as most relevant when forming the grade. They reveal that the primary school teachers evaluate more the efforts, the engagement in the activities and the students' progress, while the high school teachers tend to be more objective and rely only on the students' attainments. Thus, according to them, as the students advance thorough the educational system, the assessment is less concentrated on the individual development and more on the standardized devices. As said by Cassady & Johnson (2002), the fear from grading can decrease the concentration and this may lead to lower results. They further claim that this anxiousness impacts negatively the students' efficacy. Observing the assessment as a complex moral and ethical act for the teachers, Zoeckler (2007) stresses out that teachers constantly experience internal conflicts in situation when they need to find balance between the objective standards and the personal students' circumstances. This research showcases that the teachers often sacrifice the objectivity in order to save the students' motivation or to award their efforts and thus, the grade becomes a type of pedagogical tool for support and not only for measurement of their achievements. The research emphasizes that it is almost impossible to achieve absolute neutrality in the classroom. Harlen (2007) says that the transparency in the assessment is a basic premise for building the trust among teachers, students and parents. If the criteria are not clear and not well explained, then, the opportunity for doubts and dissatisfaction is increased. Brookhart (2008; 2013) reveals that the feedback is also connected with the assessment process. Hattie (2009) claims that the primary school students are especially sensitive to judgments and comparisons. She further explains that the grades may support students' motivation, but also they can cause stress.

Epstein (2001) states that as active factors in the educational process, the parents develop clear attitudes for the quality of the teaching and assessment. These perceptions largely lean on the experiences of their children and on the level of transparency in the communication with the school. She points out that the unclear and undefined criteria result in parents' distrust and dissatisfaction. Janusheva & Pejchinovska (2011) suggest the usage of different techniques, strategies, and activities for teaching and assessing the students' accomplishments, in order to improve the validity and objectivity of the grades. Talevski & Janusheva (2011) elaborate on the assessment of the higher process skills (critical thinking, creative thinking, and the students' competencies to express themselves in a written form). They propose various criteria and indicators to increase the assessment objectivity of these skills. However, they stress that due to the complex nature of these skills, their assessment and their objective measurement is almost impossible. Tippin, Lafreniere & Page (2012) disclose that the students who are oriented toward the grades and are motivated only from the final results have higher level of stress, while the student who are oriented toward the learning and the knowledge declare consciousness and openness toward new experiences. According to them, the students experience the teachers as a less competent or unfair if they do not recognize and award their perceived effort and this indicates that the perception for the objectivity of the assessment is deeply related to the individual characteristic and academic goals. Harris & Brown (2013) analyze the parents' and students' attitudes toward the assessment and determine that the transparency is among the critical factors which enable the trust in the teachers' judgment. As reported by them, the parents evaluate the assessment positively when they receive obvious feedback and when they can monitor the students' evolution. Gajikj, Markov, Radulovikj & Stojanovikj (2014) analyze the use of the tests for assessing the students' knowledge and highlight that the assessment should not be reduced only to checking the facts, but it should be an indicator for encouraging the critical thinking. They further say that the tests cause stress and pressure among students and this can lead to learning for a grade instead of learning for knowledge. They also argue that the educational system needs various forms for students' achievements assessment which will evaluate their practical skills and their activity. Boner (2016) states that the teachers are constantly feeling pressured to be objective, although their professional ethics pull them toward more flexible and more supportive assessment. She reveals that the way teachers resolve this conflict significantly affects on the students' and parents' opinion on whether this process is mechanically or fair. Zenuni-Idrizi (2016) believes that oral and written feedback, peer assessment, posing questions and a dialogue will contribute to the objectivity of the students' assessment. Löfgren & Löfgren (2017)

claim that the moment when the students get their first grade represents a twist for their identity, which is formed largely by their "parents' eyes". They further reveal that the students experience the grade as a measure of their value in the family context where the higher grades are celebrated as a success of the whole family while the lower grades cause shame. Instead of being only information for the students' development, the grades become a powerful symbol which defines the student – parent relationship, forcing the students to focus on parents' satisfactions and expectations. Dimovski, Malcheski & Malcheska (2019) also concentrate on the objectivity of students' assessment, pointing out the clear criteria and the different methods for teaching and learning, which will encourage students' motivation and intellectual growth.

3. Methodology

According to Sandelowski (2010) and Janusheva (2022), the research question is a key of each research because it enables collecting qualitative data and determines the whole research process. In line with these insights, the research question of this paper is:

How the parents perceive the objectivity of the assessment?

The formulation of the research question is in line with the view that the qualitative research focuses on the understanding and interpretation of the participants' attitudes and experiences (Creswell, 2014).

In agreement with Creswell's (2014) view, the aim of the research refers to what can be done or what is done in order to answer the research question. Consistent to this insight, the aim of the paper is to analyze the parents' perceived attitudes toward the objectivity of the assessment.

As for the sample, the paper leans on Yin's (2011) and Gentles et al.'s perspective that the sample represents the "sources of information" and "participants" based on their relevance to get answer to the research question. The parents constantly monitor their children and have direct insights in their achievements. They also continuously communicate with the teachers. In relation to this understanding, the sample consists of 200 participants, and it is purposeful sample, which is in accordance with Lincoln & Guba (1985) who state that each sample is collected to fulfill certain goals. This determination of the sample enables collecting different opinions and experiences which contributes to more holistic insights of the analyzed phenomenon. The number of the participants is treated not as statistically representative but as meaningful to recognize dominant motives, attitudes, and problematic aspects related to the objectivity of the assessment.

The collection of the data is made through a survey, which in accordance with Nunan (1992) that the survey is the most widely used instrument in the qualitative research. The survey enables the participants to express their opinions freely and honestly and protects their privacy (Flick, 2009). The survey consists of 3 open questions which refer to parents' perception of the objectivity of the assessment.

The analysis of the data relies upon the qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2014) which means that the participants' responses are grouped in thematic categories. The categories are formed inductively, which means that they arise from the reading of the answers. In the analysis, the interpretative-inductive method used by Thomas (2006) and Kahlke (2014) is exploited as well.

4. Results, analysis and discussion

As a result of the thematic analysis, several themes and subthemes are identified.

First thematic category: Subjectivity of teachers' assessment

Almost all of the parents perceive the assessment of the students' achievements as unfair and subjective and relate it to various factors.

Subtheme 1: Perceived subjectivity of the assessment

All parents state that the grade is not always reflecting the real students' knowledge, and that it is affected by subjective factors.

> *I have an impression that the grade largely depends on teachers' personal opinions and not on knowledge.*

Sometimes, teachers grade the discipline and the behavior instead of the knowledge.

The assessment is not always objective and consistent.

There are students who are privileged, in relation to the family position or to the political party they belong.

The teachers' personal preferences affect the objectivity of the assessment and they demonstrate that the effort and the knowledge are not important. What is important is the closer connection with the teachers.

If the student get the etiquette of a bad student from the teachers, it is almost impossible to change that attitude even though the student demonstrates high quality knowledge.

These views are clear indicators that the parents' trust in the educational practices of assessment is disrupted. They also signalize that there is a problem connected with the parents' feel of injustice in the assessment. These results are in relation to the research of Harlen (2007) and Harris & Brown (2013) who indicate that if the assessment is not transparent, it creates doubts in its objectivity.

Subtheme 2: Motivation

Many parents point out to the relation between the subjectivity in the assessment and the motivation. When the students' grades do not reflect their real competencies or their efforts, the desire for further learning may be decreased.

If the students have an impression that the teachers are subjective or favor certain student, their motivation for further growth may be lowered. They may not be interest for the teaching and to think that they cannot fulfill the teachers' expectation.

The assessment which leans largely only on tests decrease the students' motivations.

These insights are in correlation with Kohn's (1993) view that students focused on higher grades have a lower motivation to improve themselves.

Subtheme 3: Anxiety

Some parents state that there is a deep connection between the subjectivity of the assessment and the anxiousness.

If students feel from the start that they are rejected by their teachers, they may develop anxiety.

The assessment generates stress and the feel for injustice.

These opinions are in accordance with the research of Cassady & Johnson (2002) who said that the fear from assessment can cause anxiety, and with the research of Brookhart (2013) who claims that the assessment should support the learning and not be source of fear. Further, these views support the findings of Tippin et al. (2012) and Gajikj et al. (2014) who claim that the students learning only for grades are more exposed to stress.

Subtheme 4: Professional aspects

Numerous parents further think that the subjectivity of the assessment can lead to professional discouragement.

The teachers' subjectivity ruins the students' self-confidence. They start to believe that they are not capable to involve in certain profession and base their self-assessment only on the teachers' grade.

Subtheme 5: Parents' pressure

Some parents relate the teachers' subjectivity with their own pressure for higher grades of their children.

The grades are often a result of the pressure parents put on teachers. They want higher grades for their children, thus the teachers "share" a lot of "fives" (grade 5) which are unrealistic.

Subtheme 6: Methods

A lot of parents talk about the methodological limitation which refers to the test as the one of the most used instrument for assessment of the students' achievements.

The assessment is mostly conducted via tests, and the other methods are neglected.

It is difficult to prepare a test which will assess the students' competencies for problem solving. The tests largely contain questions in which the correct answer should be circled or questions which answer should be added.

The grades from the tests are partial indicator for the students' knowledge because they often focus on memorizing the facts and do not demonstrate the competence for critical thinking and real life problem solving.

The students' curiosity is very important for their learning. In my opinion, the use of only one tool for assessment enlarges the students' stress and pressure. Students may also develop fear of mistake and show lower curiosity. Therefore, the learning becomes an obligation which causes neurosis and not satisfaction form revealing new insights.

The teachers should evaluate the students' effort and not only the final result.

The dialog between the teacher and the students, the school engagement in the class activity, the homework, and the project activity should be taken into account when forming the final grade.

These results confirm the previous findings of Janusheva & Pejchinovska (2011) that using various methods for assessing the students' accomplishments affects positively the validity and the objectivity of the assessment.

Second thematic category: Unclear and inconsistent criteria

Many parents indicate that the clearly defined criteria affect the objectivity of the assessment.

The criteria are not presented in advance.

The criteria change from topic to topic without an announcement.

The criteria are not implemented.

There is a manipulation with the criteria depending on the private connections someone have with the teachers.

The criteria should be clearer, and the assessment should be transparent.

These views are directly supporting the results of Epstein (2001) and Stiggins (2005) according to who fair and clearly defined criteria are among the most significant base for fair and objective assessment. Further, these insights are in accordance with the findings of Cassidy & Johnson (2002)

who state that parents tend to experience the assessment as unfair when the criteria are unclear and when they feel that teacher apply different standards for different students.

Third thematic category: Unclear feedback

Among the factors which contribute to the objectivity of the assessment, the parents mention the clear and effective feedback.

The students do not get effective and quality feedback.

The parents do not know how the final grade is formed.

This is in line with Brookhart (2013) who find out that the feedback is most essential component for the improvement of the teaching and affects the objectivity of the assessment. Further, these insights support the view of Harris & Brown (2013) who reveal that the parents perceive the assessment more positively if they get clear and effective feedback.

Conclusion

The research results confirm that the assessment of the students' accomplishment is a complex topic which depends on many factors. The results also demonstrate that although the assessment is considered as vital regarding the students' growth, there is an apparent parents' critical attitude toward its objectivity and capability to reflect the real knowledge. The parents' attitudes reveal the gap between the prescribed standards and the real teaching practice. Instead of development stimulation, the assessment is often experienced as a mechanism which leads to campaign learning, where the focus is on memorizing facts and not on critical thinking.

The research results also support the view that the usage of only one methodological tool provides a partial picture of the students' knowledge and this is not enough to assess the competence for solving real life problem situations.

The obtained results may be useful for the educational institutions and the creators of the educational politics in their efforts to reform the actual assessment system which will increase the transparency and the objectivity. In the same time, these insights open the space for further investigation on parents' attitudes, by enlarging the number of the questions and the units of the sample.

References

Bloom, B. S. (1971). *Handbook on formative and summative evaluation of student learning*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 5*(1), 7–74. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969595980050102.

Bonner, S. M. (2016). *Teachers' perceptions about assessment: Competing narratives*. Handbook of Human and Social Conditions in Assessment.

Brookhart, S. M. (2008). *How to give effective feedback to your students*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Brookhart, S. M. (2013). *How to create and use rubrics for formative assessment and grading*. ASCD.

Cassady, J. C., & Johnson, R. E. (2002). Cognitive test anxiety and academic performance. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 27*(2), 270–295.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. University of Nebraska: Sage Publications.

Crooks, T. (2001). The validity of formative assessment. In British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, University of Leeds (13–15). BERA.

Cronbach, L. J. (1971). *Test validation*. In R. L. Thorndike (Ed.), *Educational measurement* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York: Plenum.

Dimovski, I., Malcheski, R., & Malcheska, C. (2019). *Sledenje, proveruvanje i ocenuvanje na postiganjata na uchenicite* [Monitoring, checking and assessing the students' achievements]. Skopje.

Epstein, J. L. (2001). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Flick, U. (2009). *An introduction to qualitative research* (4th ed.). London: Sage.

Gajić, O., Markov, S. , Radulović, B., & Stojanović, M. (2014). The analysis of students' opinions on the role of knowledge tests in higher education. *The New Educational Review, 30*(4)114–125.

Harris, L. R., & Brown, G. T. L. (2013). Opportunities and obstacles to consider when using peer- and self-assessment to improve student learning: Case studies into teachers' implementation. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 36*, 101–111. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2013.07.008.

Harlen, W. (2007). *Assessment of learning*. SAGE Publications.

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. London: Routledge.

Havelka, N., Hebib, E., & Baucal, A. (2003). *Ocenjivanja za razvoj učenika: Priručnik za nastavnike*. Beograd.

Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (1997). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? *Review of Educational Research, 67*(1), 3–42.

Janusheva, V. (2022). A review of the qualitative research question(s)' relevance. *International Journal of Education „Teacher", 24*, 25–33. Bitola: Faculty of Education.

Janusheva, V., & Pejchinovska, M. (2011). Formative assessment in the teaching practice through the prism of the teachers. *International Conference: „Educational Technologies". Announcements of Union of Scientists – Sliven, 19*, 71–76.

Kahlke, M. R. (2014). Generic qualitative approaches: pitfalls and benefits of methodological mixology. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 13*(1), 37–52.

Kohn, A. (1993). *Punished by rewards: The trouble with gold stars, incentive plans, A's, praise, and other bribes*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Löfgren, H., & Löfgren, R. (2017). Grades in the eyes of our parents: A narrative approach to educational resilience in pupils' stories of getting their first grades. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy, 3*(2), 165–178. https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2017.1343624.

Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative content analysis. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 1*(2).

McMillan, J. H., Myran, S., & Workman, D. R. (2002). *Measuring teachers' perceptions of grading practices: Does school level make a difference?* European Journal of Psychology of Education.

Nitko, J. A. (2004). *Educational assessment of students*. Upper Saddle River, N. J. : Merrill.

Nunan, D. (1992). *Research methods in language learning.* Cambridge: Cambridge.

Piéron, H. (1922). *Les examens et la docimologie*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Stiggins, R. (2005). *Student-involved assessment for learning, 4th ed.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Sandelowski, M. (2010). What's in a name? Qualitative description revisited. *Research in Nursing & Health, 33*(1),77–84.

Talevski, D. J., & Janusheva, V. (2015). *Aspekti na ocenuvanjeto* [Aspects of the assessment]. Bitola: Faculty of Education.

Talevski, D. J., & Janusheva, V. (2011). Assessment of the essay questions with extended answer (EQEA). Book of proceedings – *VI International Balkan Congress for Education and Science: The Modern Society and Education* (409–415). Skopje: „Ss. Cyril and Methodius University", Faculty of Pedagogy.

Talevski, D. J., Janusheva, V., & Pejchinovska, M. (2014). Formative assessment and its effects in the teaching practice. *Modern social and educational challenges and phenomena – Polish and Macedonian Perspective* (212–221). Warszawa – Bitola: WyzsaSzkolaPeadogiczna w Warszawie, University „St. Kliment Ohridski".

Thorndike, E. L. (1913). *Educational psychology*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Tippin, G. K., Lafreniere, K. D., & Page, S. (2012). *Student perception of academic grading: Personality, academic orientation, and effort*. Active Learning in Higher Education.

Thomas, R. D. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American Journal of Evaluation, 27*(2), 237–246.

Tyler, R. W. (1949). *Basic principles of curriculum and instruction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Yin, R. K. (2011). *Qualitative research from start to finish.* The Guilford Press.

Zoeckler, L. G. (2007). *Moral aspects of grading: A study of high school English teachers' perceptions*. American Secondary Education.

Zenuni-Idrizi, V. (2016). *Primena na metodite i postapkite pri formativnoto ocenuvanje na postiganjata na uchenicite* [Implementation of the methods and procedures of the formative assessment of the students' achievements]. Skopje: Univerzitet "Sv. Kiril i Metodij".