



Reflections on the Impact of Absence of Summative Assessment on Students' Motivation and Learning

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ABSTRACT

It has been argued for many years whether assessment and grading systems make students learn better and motivate them toward learning. Grades are seen as the external agents that are taken from formative assessment which have summative value in the process of learning. The primary goal of grading is to measure students' achievement of the learning in a curriculum. These numerical signs serve as evidence about students' competence and their performance in the learning process. In some cases, getting a grade from an exam or a task not only assesses what one knows, but also enhances one's motivation for learning. Students need to see the results of their performance and the gap between the actual and desired goals in the process. Therefore, grades also help students shape their future learning goals and make them autonomous learners since they are the outcomes of formative assessment which goes together with summative assessment. This paper provides an insight into the impact of the absence of summative assessment and grades for motivation and learning in an urban English Prep school of a foundation university in Istanbul. The problem is students do not have to accomplish summative purposes of the assessment of the curriculum to enter the Proficiency exam in the second semester. In other words, they do not need to meet the requirements of the curriculum accept attending the lessons. The study sheds a light on the process and results of the absence of summative assessment and grades in one semester of the academic year. The findings of the study provide reflections and current evidence for the issue of whether this absence can have a positive or negative impact on students' motivation and learning.

Keywords: Assessment, summative assessment, motivation, learning.

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Toplam Değerlendirmenin Yoksunluğunun Öğrencilerin Motivasyon ve Öğrenme Üzerindeki Etkilerinin Yansımaları

ÖZ

Değerlendirme ve notlama sistemlerinin öğrencilerin daha iyi öğrenmelerine sebep olup olmadığı ve öğrenmelerini motive edip etmediği çok uzun yıllardır tartışılmaktadır. Notlar, öğrenme süreci içerisinde yapılan ölçme ve değerlendirmelerin toplam değer yansımasıdır. Notlamanın esas amacı müfredat hedefleri doğrultusunda öğrencilerin başarı durumlarının ölçülmesidir. Bu sayısal veriler aynı zamanda öğrencilerin öğrenme sürecindeki beceri ve performans düzeylerinin de göstergesidir. Bazı durumlarda bir sınav ya da bir ödevden alınan notlar sadece öğrencinin ne bildiğini ölçmekle kalmaz, o öğrencinin öğrenmeye olan motivasyonunu arttırmaya da yardımcı olur. Bu süreç içerisinde öğrenciler, hem performanslarını hem de buldukları durum ile hedefler arasındaki boşluğun sonuçlarını görmeleri de gerekmektedir. Aynı zamanda yapılan ölçme ve değerlendirmelerden alınan bu toplam değerler öğrencilerin gelecek öğrenim hedeflerini şekillendirmekte ve özerklik kazanmalarına da yardımcı olmaktadır. Bu çalışma İstanbul'da bulunan yerel bir vakıf üniversitesinin İngilizce Hazırlık bölümünde toplam değerlendirme ve notların olmaması durumunda motivasyon ve öğrenme üzerindeki etkilerine ışık tutmaktadır. Temel sorun; öğrencilerin yıl sonunda yapılan İngilizce Yeterlik sınavına girebilmeleri için müfredatın gerekli gördüğü toplam değerlendirmeden muaf tutulmalarıdır. Diğer bir deyişle; öğrenciler müfredatın ve sınavların gerekliliklerini yerine getirmelerine gerek kalmadan sadece derslere devam ederek bu sınava girme hakkını kazanmaktadırlar. Bu çalışma bir akademik yarıyıl içerisinde toplam değerlendirme ve notlarının yoksunluğunun uygulanma sürecine ve sonuçlarına bir ışık tutmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları böyle bir durumun öğrencilerin motivasyon ve öğrenmeleri üzerindeki olumlu ya da olumsuz etkilerinin olup olmadığını yansıtıcı ve destekleyici niteliktedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Değerlendirme, toplam değerlendirme, öğrenme, motivasyon.

INTRODUCTION

'Nothing we do to, or for our students is more important than our assessment of their work and the feedback we give them on it. The results of our assessment influence students for the rest of their lives and careers'.¹

It has been argued for many years whether assessment and grading systems make students learn better, and motivate them toward learning. As known the primary goal of grading is to measure students' achievement of the learning objectives in a curriculum. Grades are seen as the external agents that are taken from formative assessment which have summative value in the process of learning. These numerical signs serve as evidence about students' competence and their performance in the learning process. In some cases, getting a grade from an exam or a task not only assesses what one knows, but also enhances one's motivation for learning. Students need to see the results of their performance and the gap between the actual and the desired goals in the process of learning. Therefore, grades also help students shape their future learning goals and make them autonomous learners since they are the outcomes of formative assessment which goes together with summative assessment. Unfortunately, usually most students suffer from spending many hours studying for one exam, and they see that the material they studied was different from what was emphasized on the exam (Guskey, 2006) or another scenario is what this paper reflects; students have formative assessment, but they are eligible for summative assessment and grades to take the exit exam at the end of their academic year. According to many educators, these scenarios have unfortunate consequences; students discover that their hard work and effort do not pay off in school because the time and energy they spent in preparation for the assessment had little or no influence on the results of their end of year exams. Another issue is students see that they cannot rely on their teachers (Guskey, 2006) or the institution. As a result, they start to realize that their success depends on assumptions about what will be asked in the exams and how other types of assessments will be. Students will be aware that classroom assessments serve as a significant source of information of their performance and competence if they are well informed about the goals, tasks and assessment policy. Stiggins (2005) describes classroom assessment as 'the process of gathering evidence of student learning to inform instructional decisions'. So students are well-informed about what is being emphasized and the assessment criteria to judge their performance since all the information is given on the first day they come to school. He also adds that students should not see assessments as a reflection of their achievement, but they should enrich their motivation and improve success through assessments. Students know that classroom assessments are proof of their learning goals which are a good way to facilitate learning by providing essential feedback on their learning progress and by helping to identify learning problems (Bloom, Madaus & Hastings, 1981; Stiggins, 2002). Therefore, feedback is the goal of assessment as stated by (Ilgen & Davis, 2000; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996) and a fundamental aspect of continuous and comprehensive evaluation. In the case study,

¹ Race, P., Brown, S. And Smith, B. (2005) 500 Tips on assessment: 2nd edition, London: Routledge.

students usually receive feedback after assessed exams and portfolio writing tasks although exams and tasks do not have summative value. However, the given feedback provides them to see their strengths and weaknesses which will keep them working to improve their skills for their future education in their departments. In this way learning is enhanced through assessment in the institution where the study was conducted. The assessment policy is based on Assessment for learning (AfL) where learning is being promoted by means of feedback. The Assessment Reform Group² (ARG) in the UK defines AfL:

‘Assessment for learning is any assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting pupils’ learning. It thus differs from assessment designed primarily to serve the purposes of accountability, or of ranking, or of certifying competence.

An assessment activity can help learning if it provides information to be used as feedback by teachers, and by their pupils in assessing themselves and each other, to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Such assessment becomes ‘formative assessment’ when the evidence actually used to adapt the teaching work meets learning needs.’³

Although the policy is to promote formative use of summative assessment for learning, there may be a misunderstanding about the implication by the students. The study is meant to shed a light on the gap between process and result of the assessment policy. This study also includes different perspectives and discussions about the issue from the students. Students have to attend two 16-week terms in an academic year. In one term, there are two 8-week modules, and every student receives a mark for every grade component (formative assessment) of the course in the curriculum. Formative assessment includes; quizzes, midterm exam, final exam, speaking projects, writing portfolio, and teacher’s assessment. Every grade component has its own average in the total end of module grade. Students are required to complete all the components of one module and get minimum 60% of the overall to pass the first term or take the Proficiency exam. Even though our curriculum requires hard work, the student’s performance mainly relies on the last exam of the semester, and what they achieved during the term has no effect on the Proficiency exam. This policy applies for B2 and plus level students only, and other levels below them have to reach that minimum level to take the proficiency exam in the following term. In the second term, levels which are below B2 have to go on with the same procedure; they have to get the minimum 60% to sit in the proficiency exam. Unlike lower levels, B2 level students are eligible for grade components of the term because they are considered as reaching mastery of the program, and they have gained autonomy, so they can continue their future training without having summative assessment and grade stress. In other words, throughout the whole 16-week semester, there is lack of summative assessment although the formative assessment is in process. In one point of view, this could be considered something

² The Assessment Reform Group was established in 1989. See www.aiaa.org for further information.

³ Black et al. (2004:2-3). The Assessment Reform Group originated in 1989 that includes a voluntary group of researchers concerned with providing a research basis for decisions on assessment policymaking and practice in the UK. <http://www.aiaa.org.uk/afl/assessment-reform-group/>

positive because they will have one whole term of 16 weeks to improve their language skills.

Obviously, assessment and grades should encourage learning and the development of skills that are required to succeed in their department. Grades not only play a significant role in students' lifelong learning, but also the absence of grades causes a lack of motivation for learning. However, it is true to say that this idea is neither correct nor false. Motivation is another key concept that goes together with grades and feedback to foster learning. According to studies in this field, it is unlikely that grades alone create a learning environment, but rather create an environment where students put minimal effort in order to get a minimal passing grade. Since students know that their in-module summative assessment is not taken into account, they seem to be less interested in learning and grades.

It is important to state that the aim of this study is not to demonstrate evidence whether the assessment and grading policy of the institution is right or wrong. In this way the paper hopes to better the complexities of factors that are involved when attempting to understand the impact of summative assessment and grades on students' competence in learning English.

Background

The Twenty-first century has brought many complexities not only in life, but also in education. Many higher education institutions and universities have had to reconsider the needs of students, and have tried to keep pace with global changes both in learning and assessment practices. They need to evaluate and review, and make the necessary changes to work with learning. This also has brought the importance of assessment in language learning and motivation. According to the literature, assessment is said to be an integral component of a student's education and is recognized as an important factor in student learning, Boud and Associates (2010) have added that it plays an important role in fostering learning and motivation. In fact, there are various factors to be considered regarding this issue; institutions, teachers, teaching strategies, testing and assessment strategies. The most important of all is to reconsider the purposes of summative assessment because it has been discussed by Wrinkle (1947) that grades serve a variety of administrative functions and deal with (Airasian,1994) giving students feedback about their performances and achievement, providing guidance to students about their future work, and guiding teachers for instructional planning and to motivate students. Airasian listed the main functions of grades as follows:

1. Administrative, by dealing with decisions concerning matriculation, retention, and entrance into college
2. Guidance, by helping counselors provide direction to students
3. Instructional planning, by informing teachers about students' level of attainment in order to group for instruction
4. Feedback, to provide students with information about their progress and achievement
5. Motivation, to encourage students to try harder

Research conducted by Austin and McCann (1992) shows that the main purpose of grades is to provide feedback about student achievement. Motivation comes in third place whereas administration is the last. As unlikely as it may be, this examination is another perspective on the purpose of grades for English prep students in my country because grades are considered the primary goal in the classroom for many teachers and students in English medium universities. We all know grades are numerical signs in the process of evaluation of a student's work and performance at school, so it is hard to ignore the purpose of grades. "Grades are summative symbols that represent overall performance" (Pike, 2010). One could argue that getting high scores on tests does not necessarily mean that learning has been achieved. Most of us believe that it is mainly the outcome of familiarization of tests, and answering the questions, but not developing the skills and knowledge specified in the curriculum. However, according to much research in this field, the results are still ambiguous as to whether grading affects learning and motivation. Harlen & Deakin (2002) say that since the beginning of the 1970s the effects of grades on student motivation, learning and achievement has been a controversial question, and research indicates diverging results.

From one point of view, tests may motivate only the students who get high grades and increases the gap between the higher scoring students and the ones who get lower grades. Betts (1997) claims that weaker students may be more close to "giving up" when faced with stricter standards. Students with lower grades students feel that they are not moving on the right direction when they see that students with higher grades as more successful. Grades are effective when they are used for summative purposes, and if the purpose is formative, this will lead to progress in learning which is the expected goal of a curriculum. If the situation is the reverse, the scenario would be a kind of corruption which would cause students to work only to get grades; they become grade-oriented students because they feel that getting high grades, but not learning and producing will motivate them. Research conducted by Condry & Koslowski (1977) and Deci & Ryan (1987) states that grades affect the motivation, diminish the learning interest and reduce the mental ability to be creative and think of solutions to problems because grades lead students to produce more mechanical work rather than critical thinking. There are several studies to support their opinion. To illustrate, the experiment Grolnick and Ryan (1987) conducted showed that 'students had more trouble understanding' the assessed text than students who were eligible for grades. Anderman and Johnson (1988) found out students who studied the material for grades 'were less knowledgeable than their counterparts'. It is clear that the situation is debatable, and there is no one to put the blame on since they have grown up in a system where grades have been used as incentives for a long time. Everything they do at school depends on grades. Therefore, grades might play a role on the amount of students' enthusiasm and they put more effort into learning when they serve as results of formative assessment.

Another aspect to be pointed out is that students construct their own motivation based on their appraisal of the assessment context. Numerical signs can influence students' motivational beliefs both positively and negatively. Many studies have shown that qualitative assessment (where marks, grades or signs are given) "can lower the motivation towards learning". (Harlen & Crick, 2003) Such assessment

encourages students to focus on performance goals (passing the test) rather than learning goals. Butler (1987) argues that students' interest did not improve when feedback and marks were given. They paid less attention to the comments when marks were given a high priority and consequently they did not use these comments to make improvements. He also argued that grading students' performance is less effective than feedback comments because it leads students to compare themselves against others (ego-involvement). Therefore, weak students can see feedback given as grades negatively and their performance can be affected negatively, too. However, according to the literature, negative effects of grades on students' performance may vary.

For many educators and researchers grades are considered to be good examples of motivation used in schools, which is also very complex to understand, play a significant role in the success of foreign language learners. Dörnyei (1998) describes 'motivation provides impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning processes'. Her recent description of motivation clarifies motivation in L2, 'a complex system which is the result of various interacting elements acting together rather than in isolation and which function at various levels, including motivational, cognitive, emotional, and socio-contextual in order to produce a system which is in a continual process of change and development' (Dörnyei, 2009). She and other researchers have made a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Learners showing interest and satisfaction in what they learn, and in the learning process itself causes self-motivation and continuous learning (Harlen & Crick, 2003); is intrinsic motivation. These learners take responsibility of their learning since they see their role in the learning process. Extrinsic motivation refers to motives that are outside of and separate from the behaviors they cause; the motive for the behavior is not inherent in or essential to the behavior itself (Hoyenga & Hoyenga, 1984) to illustrate, if a student is promised to have a new car when he passes the proficiency exam, the motive will be to study only for the exam; the ultimate motive will not be learning. Although studying is regarded as part of learning, it might be a good idea to reconsider the manipulative side during the learning process. Also, Hoyenga adds that such an extrinsic incentive to study or complete a task can decrease intrinsic motivation. Therefore, Dev (1997) suggests that it is important to define factors that affect motivation so that they can develop intrinsic motivation. Research indicates that family expectations, teacher expectations, money and peer acceptance are factors that involve proving one's competence to another. As a result, intrinsic students improve their performance whereas extrinsic students prove their performance (Schraw, Horn, Thorndike, Christ & Bruning, 1995).

As was mentioned above in the introduction, the importance of formative assessment for learning must be considered. Assessment for learning happens throughout teaching and learning that provides feedback for students to improve them and help them see where they stand. "Teachers facilitate learning by providing students with important feedback on their learning progress by helping them identify learning problems" (Bloom, Madaus, & Hastings; Stiggins, as cited in Guskey, 2003:7). This necessarily does not mean that returning an exam paper to students with marks on them shows how and where they have improved or need

improvement. According to Black and William (1998), ‘The way in which test results are reported to pupils so that they can identify their own strengths and weaknesses is critical. Pupils must be given the means and opportunities to work with evidence of their difficulties. As a result, the formative use of summative assessment must take place rather than summative purpose of assessment in order to form self-reflection both for students and teachers. In other words, assessment for learning (AfL) enables teachers and the institution to confirm and verify what their students have achieved, and to understand both students and themselves. The four components of AfL summarizes the promotion of learning and teacher’s classroom practice:

- Questioning
- Feedback
- Peer and self-assessment
- The formative use of summative assessment⁴

Motivation is not the sole concept required in the process of learning. As mentioned above, feedback plays a vital role in the process where grades are seen an indication of motivation on student learning. Research done by Black and William (1998) concluded that descriptive feedback, rather than letter grades or scores, led to the highest improvements in performance. During feedback, if learning is the priority that focuses on strengths and weaknesses, it will be the most effective way that leads to learning rather than letting students get feedback on their grades. Many other studies clearly show that grades on their own were not effective in learning. Butler and Nisan (1986) concluded that ‘grades emphasized quantitative aspects of learning, depressed creativity, fostered a fear of failure, and weakened students’ interest when they compared effects of constructive feedback and grades. Therefore, good quality feedback is considered as a ‘fundamental aspect in the use of AfL’ (Torrance and Pryor, 2001). The study that Butler and Nisan (1986) and Butler (1987) conducted revealed that students who had received only feedback on their work received higher marks than the students who had received only ‘marking-centered feedback’⁵. Butler (1988) and many other researchers discussed the effects of feedback in terms of learning, but by giving grades and scores as known normative feedback, this could have negative motivational effects. The feedback intervention theory that was proposed by Kluger & DeNisi (1996) explained the negative effects of grades on students’ performance. According to the theory, ‘the optimal feedback should direct individuals’ attention to the details of a specific task and to learning methods that would help achieve desired results’. In other words, grades enable students to see themselves rather than the tasks. Therefore, the positive effect of feedback is undeniable and shown by the three empirical studies done in Germany (Köller, 2005). ‘Individual reference and feedback on students rather than social reference as assessment norms for teachers has positive effects. That is why Marzano (2000) and Oosterhof (2001) state that grades are considered to be the most common type of

⁴ Black et al. (2010).

⁵ Butler (1987).

feedback that students receive in class, more often than a letter grade or a numeric score by itself. Students should receive feedback from their teachers or peers during the academic year. If the students and teachers are clear about the purposes of learning and what is expected from each of them so that teachers provide constructive feedback in order for students to understand their progress. Research claims that feedback must be provided constructively in order to make students see their actual achievement and the desired learning goals.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

In the light of the complex nature of the relationship between summative assessment and student performance, I attempt to address the following hypotheses regarding whether the absence of this assessment has positive or negative impact on their learning and motivation.

1. Do students learn better when there is lack of summative assessment in their curriculum?
2. Are students more motivated due to the lack of summative assessment in their curriculum?

The Problem

In the first semester of the academic year, students who were in the B1 – B2 levels had to achieve an average of 60 % in order to enter the proficiency exam that was administered by the school. They had to accomplish all the formative requirements of the term and should have had a minimum 60 % to enter the final exam and the proficiency exam. Therefore, students receive summative assessment in class. Teachers grade students' class work and performance and often give feedback after written tests. However, most students met the achieved the minimum grade though they were not proficient users of the language to take the exam. In the second term, the students who passed their level successfully (60) were placed in proficiency classes, and grades were no more a threat for them to enter the proficiency exam at the end of the second term. But, there were grades that were based on inadequate information which made some students pass the level though they were not competent enough to reach the objectives and fulfill the required tasks. On the other hand, achieving the minimum grade is accomplished prior to the students in this level entering the exam, though Proficiency classes do not have to do this and students of this level have discovered that hard work and effort do not pay off because the time and energy they spent during the semester no influence on the proficiency exam results. However, this inconsistency in the system has caused arguments about the unfairness of the policy regarding proficiency students and its significant impacts on students' learning and motivation. This study aims to find the effects of this policy on students' learning and motivation.

Procedure

The research was conducted during one 16-week semester in the 2014 academic year in a regional private foundation university prep school in Istanbul with a population of 500 students. Only 220 students participated in this research since others did not have such a problem as mentioned above during the study conducted. The data was collected from a questionnaire and interviews with students. Questions concerned students' views about learning and motivation related to the absence of summative purposes of the assessment. There were 9 proficiency level classes consisting of an average of 25 pupils each. All students were given copies of the questionnaire during class. The questionnaire was first explained, and then they were asked to complete the scale on their own. The completed inventories were returned to the teacher at the end of class. After the completion of the questionnaire, interviews were held with the students who had written the comment section of the questionnaire. The data were entered and analyzed systematically. Simple descriptive frequency statistics were applied to the results from the analysis and interviews.

Materials

The questionnaire is designed to show the relationship of grades to learning and motivation. Each participant was asked to complete the questionnaire and write their comments at the bottom of the page. The Likert scale ranging from 1 (does not describe me) to 7 (strongly describes me) was chosen to reach the findings. Administration time ranged from 15-20 minutes. The questionnaire did not include the student's name to ensure confidentiality.

RESULTS

This study reflects the impact of the process and result of summative assessment on students' learning and motivation. The study aimed to elicit the views of the students not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively. However, the results are only at frequency level, and provide the perception of students toward the lack of summative assessment during the term. Validation of the argument would support the notion that summative assessment will increase student motivation and subsequently lead to a higher probability of learning. Both qualitative and quantitative data supported this conclusion.

Results of short interviews revealed that the majority of the students approached the absence of summative assessment with uncertainty. A number expressed their worries about the issue and they believed that they were more successful and felt as if they were learning in the first term compared to the second. Since they did not know why there was no importance given on the summative assessment, they stated that they had less motivation toward the task in the classroom. Overwhelmingly, the students indicated that they were coming to school for nothing. Although a large proportion of students indicated that they were aware of assessment only as a summative activity, there were a small proportion of them that they were aware of the idea that they should learn and do well in this term to develop their skills to pass

the exit exam. There is no evidence from students that the teachers had shared anything of a formative use of assessment. It was mentioned that the reason for this maybe teachers were more focused on performance outcomes rather than personal goals.

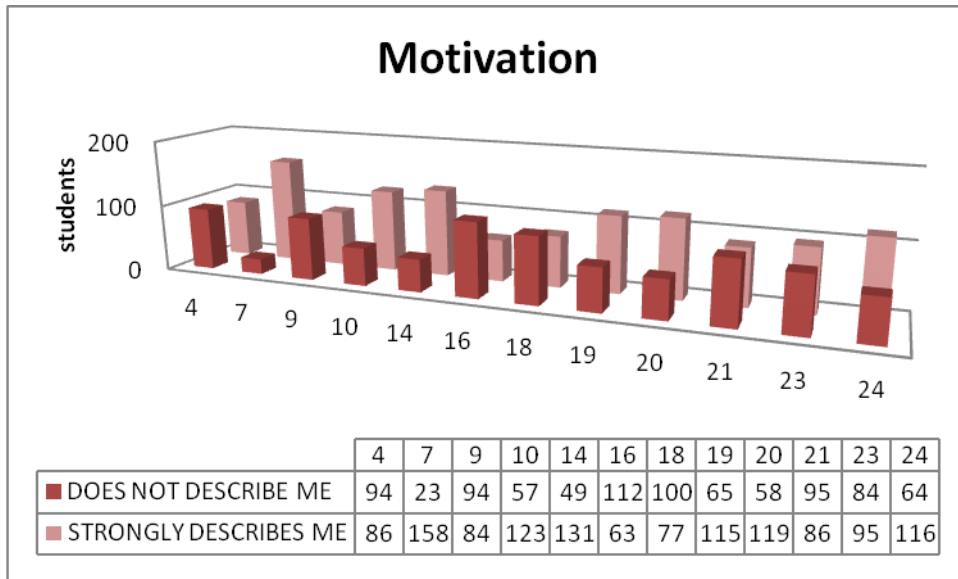


Figure 1. The results indicate the total points given to each question related with summative assessment and motivation

The graph shows the responses to the questions on summative assessment and motivation by 220 students. A high percentage of students believed that having no grade anxiety or the absence of grades during the semester made them feel relaxed and motivated. On the other hand, it was found that they perceived their academic performance depends on grades rather than learning, which showed a poor or even lack of motivation toward learning. The survey showed that about half of the students see exams not as motivational as it has to be. Another significant finding is about feedback. Most of the students (73%) believed that teacher feedback motivated them. However, it was reflected that the feedback students received after exams in the second term were not as effective as the first term since students were no more interested in grades.

Taking into account the survey, 59% of students claimed to have more motivation when they were not threatened by grades. They also reflected that when they had higher marks, their motivation for learning was higher whereas lower marks from exams demotivated them. Majority of them recognized the importance of summative assessment and grades were important for their motivation. As gathered from the survey, the data indicated that most of the students preferred to be motivated with a minimal passing grade.

Students (63%) who were performance oriented preferred to have summative assessment and grades in their academic term that was also effective on their motivation and performance. Although a large proportion of students reflected

positive views on this, the others were happy with the absence of grades since it had no effect on their performance; therefore felt more motivated.

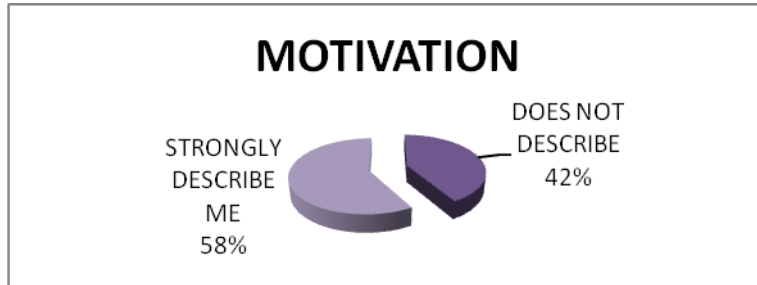


Figure 2. Overall results of students who prefer to have summative assessment for their motivation

To summarize, the above results indicate that students who perceived to be competent in their level would prefer to have grades. Students showed the highest endorsement for summative assessment, and the finding is positively relevant to summative purpose of assessment related to motivation and performance goal. On the other hand, less than a half still perceived summative assessment as demotivating on their learning.

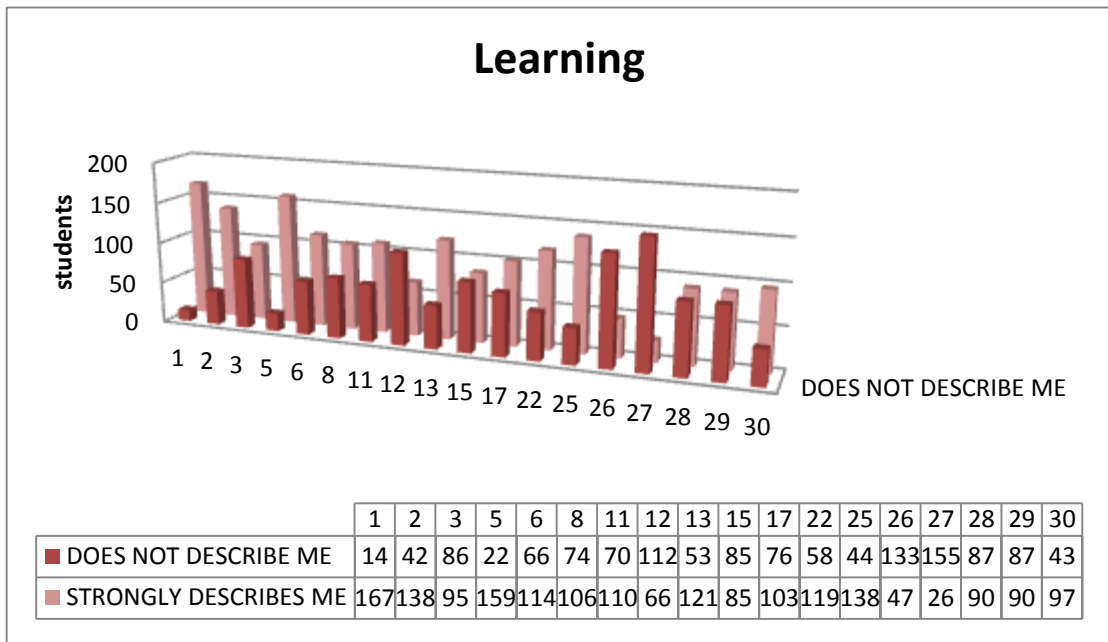


Figure 3. The results indicate the total points given to each question related with summative assessment and learning

The graph (fig.3) presents the distribution of questions and answers related with learning. The most significant result in the table is about exams and feedback. The findings revealed the direct and positive relation between exams and feedback. Most

of the students (59%) have positive views on learning their strong and weak points after exam and teacher feedback. The surprising result is that students do not see exams only numerical signs. The data indicates that 63% perceive exams as formal feedback which would lead them to improve; and as proof of their performance and see where they stand. What to gather from question 15 states the result that half of the students preferred to have summative assessment which evident that they learn better with grades. On the other hand, the finding supported the idea that even there was no grade threat, 74% of the participants claimed that they listened to their teacher in class to learn not for grades. The other significant finding is majority of the students (86%) regarded learning as more important than studying for exams. To sum up, the data only shows the students answers given to the related question. There is a positive relation with learning and grades. Although the findings gathered reveal that students preferred to have grade impact on their learning, whereas only a few factors contributed the idea that they preferred to learn but not interested in the summative assessment or believed that it had no effect on their performance. A further research should be conducted which would reveal the findings of a more detailed survey and deeper analysis on these factors.

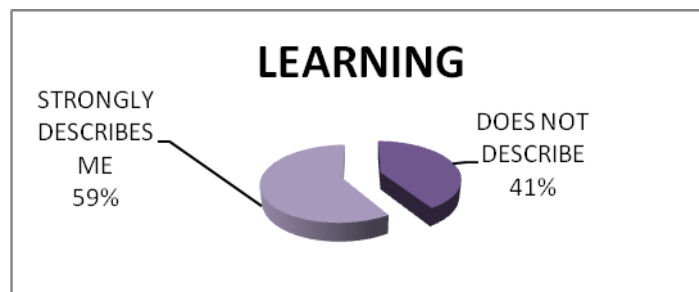


Figure 4. Overall results of students who prefer to have summative assessment for their learning

The figure presents the overall relation between summative assessment and learning. This is not a simple one because students who perceived themselves to be in favor of summative assessment would not prefer to put too much effort to learn. Majority of the students were likely to learn with summative assessment and grades. However, 41% was not interested in learning since they reflected that the absence of grades was not effective on their performance, and had no direct relation with their learning.

In summary, the results suggest that summative assessment is crucial to trigger student motivation toward learning. Moreover, a corrective and descriptive feedback may influence their learning as an evidence of their competence to succeed in any kind of assessment. The study reveals the idea that learning and motivation are merely reflection of summative assessment.

Limitations and Comments

While viewing the results of this study, limitations of the study need to be kept in mind. First, the sample was made of students from one school in Istanbul and with

limited number of participants. Another limitation of the study has to do with the level of participants. It was only applied for the Proficiency students. However, in the last module of the academic year, the same policy was applied to 300 students. The survey might have been applicable to them, but it was not possible to conduct the survey due to time constraint. Moreover, the study relied on frequency data which might also pose some limitations to its findings. The selected method is reliably applied but not justified. More quantification in the data would strengthen the findings and can help interpretation.

Recommendations and Further Implications

Based on the findings of this study, some recommendations for future research, educators and administrators can be made. This study could work with multiple levels of some institutions to test their learning and motivation varies across levels. Therefore, similar work should include multiple levels and schools of the participants to gain insight in the subject area. Furthermore, researchers might consider incorporating validate qualitative and quantative methodologies in order to in-depth students' learning and motivation strategies with and without grades.

CONCLUSION

Many schools aim at the development of their students' skills and learning, and assess their achievements. As we all know grades are traditional documentation of students' performance and achievement at school. Education literature suggests that grades can be motivational and encouraging toward class work and performance. However, for many researchers or educators there is even not one grading system is perfect to assess students accurately, and promote motivation for learning. There is no right or wrong of grades motivate of learning. Many studies show that formative assessment and feedback help students identify their strengths and weaknesses, and enhance learning. Hattie (1992) proved the idea of strong effect of feedback on achievement in her study that accurate feedback to students can increase their level of knowledge and understanding. It is also evident that if there is an achievement-oriented environment, students would concentrate more on learning than grades. The grades would be more useful if the exams are valid measures so that they would provide students detailed information about their achievement and level of competency.

This study reflects the direct relationship between summative assessment and learning and motivation. My hypothesis is positively related with the results. The results indicate that students will likely to prefer summative assessment and grades which are the outcomes of their class work and performance, and they feel therefore more motivated toward learning. The findings of the study support the theory of motivational function of grade, which is applied as a tool for success. Unlike this group of students, higher level students also prefer to have grades not only to enter the proficiency exam, but also to assess their class work and performance. Having the opportunity to study in a proficiency class did not significantly motivate students toward learning at this level. They were highly interested in getting grades since the

twenty-first century students are highly competitive, grading system might create a behavior that would shape their future development. Even the group of students who aim to have at minimal performance might be inspired and might be able to perform better and motivated in class with a proper grading system.

We all know that no grading system is perfect to assess learners accurately, promote behaviors and learning. Schools must be aware of the potential consequences of their selected assessment system, and be able to encourage students regarding that. Guskey (2002) stated 'If the purpose is to present a summary judgment of students' achievement and level of performance, then to count these behavioral infractions in determining the grade clearly miscommunicates. Although such infractions cannot be ignored, it is clear that they are not part of the evidence that shows what these students have learned and are able to do'. I hope the results of this study have important implications for English prep programs seeking to prepare their students to faculties. The schools must think about creating grading policies that are consistent with their aims in the curriculum. They should make assessments to become an integral part of their instructional process so that teachers also need to change their approach. It would be a good idea to use assessments as sources of information for both teachers and students. The way assessments administered would follow a good-quality feedback and enable students a second chance to prove their success. Moreover, 'students should take responsibility for developing their own sense of control over their success' (Stiggins, 2005).

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Appendix**QUESTIONNAIRE**

The following questions ask you about your motivation and learning related with exam grades. Use the scale below to answer the questions. If you think the statement is true for you, circle 7. If a statement is not true, circle 1. If the statement is more or less true for you, find the number between 1 and 7 that best describes you.

Thank You.

	Does not describe me				Strongly describes me		
1. Learning English is important for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I study because learning is important for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I study not to let down my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. When I face with a difficult test, I expect to fail before I expect to do well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. My academic performance depends on my efforts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. My academic performance depends on my grades.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. My motivation for learning is higher when I get good grades.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I learn better after exam feedback.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Exams are motivational for my studies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I feel demotivated for learning when I get lower marks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I learn my strong and weak points with exams.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Exams are just numerical signs for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I learn better with in class assessments that are provided by my teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Teacher feedback motivates me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I learn better when I do not have grade threat.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Challenging tasks make me motivated towards learning.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. I gain valuable knowledge during class time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Grades show my quality of performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. If I get an average grade, I feel satisfied.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. I feel better, when I accomplish a task in class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

21. Having no grade threat makes me more motivated.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Achieving a task is more important than getting a grade.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. I feel demotivated when my grades are lower than my peers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. I feel more relaxed because I don't have to get any marks to enter the Proficiency exam.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. It is important to learn rather than getting grades.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. During class time I often don't listen to my teacher because I think of other things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. Learning is not important for me because I only study for exams.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. I want to learn and do better in class because it is important for my future training.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. I still want to go to class and learn even I don't have grade threat to enter the end of year exam.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. I have improved more with my teacher's guidance and feedback.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B. Please write what you feel and think of yourself as a learner when you compare first and second terms.

