

Gamification Solution in Teacher Education

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Abstract:

Introduction: Achievements of students in higher education are influenced by several factors. From the students' perspective a key factor is the motivation, without which it is extremely difficult to make any progress, and from the teachers' perspective the conservative methodological culture is primarily responsible for the fact that students are often uninterested, apathetic, and therefore they do not meet the expected requirements at all or only at a low level.

Methods: In a pilot project we gamified the evaluation of a teacher education course at the University of Debrecen. We asked the participating students (26 students) at the beginning and at the end of the semester for their opinion on the evaluation system used. For this purpose, we used a short questionnaire that we compiled, which included both closed and open questions.

Results: At the beginning of the semester, this form of assessment was very new to most students, and the difficulty of the assessment was judged differently by the course participants. In the end, students completed an average of nearly 5 (4.67) of the nine optional tasks. There were some tasks that were rated as both enjoyable and developmental by many, but there were also some that were barely chosen. Overall, the vast majority rated gamification as good or better than traditional assessment based on completion of compulsory tasks.

Discussion: Gamification should be included in teacher education courses because first-hand experience can not only increase the intention to use the method in the future but can also influence the attitude of prospective teachers towards innovative teaching methods in a positive direction.

Limitations: The size of the sample and the content of the optional tasks used do not allow the generalisation of the results to the whole population.

Conclusions: Our results show that gamification can be an effective alternative to traditional education. It can increase student satisfaction, motivation and develop

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a broader range of competences, but it requires precise conditions and ownership. It would be useful to investigate the results of gamification assessment in other courses and how students' perceptions of the method change in courses where they are no longer unfamiliar with it.

Key words: gamification, methodological innovation, higher education, teacher education.

The Parental Impact on Education: Understanding the Correlation between the Parental Involvement and Academic Results

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Abstract:

Introduction: Extensively researched in the realm of education, the involvement of parents in their offspring's academic performance has been the subject of increased attention. This article aims to examine the impact of parental contribution on their children's scholastic accomplishments, concentrating on the statistical correlation between the two.

Methods: This study used qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the association between parents' involvement and academic results.

Results: Results show that parental involvement boosts academic performance.

Discussion: Understanding the impact of parental education on children's academic performance is essential for educators, policymakers, and families alike, as it highlights the importance of fostering an educationally rich environment for children to thrive.

Limitations: The data of this study were collected from a survey of 356 parents from different schools in Saudi Arabia in 2023.

Conclusions: The study's findings show that parental involvement positively impacts students' academic outcomes by 42.1%.

Key words: parental involvement, academic results, education, statistical correlation.

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A Detailed Examination of 8th Grade Students’ Mathematical Reasoning Process¹

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Abstract:

Introduction: This study aims to reveal the mathematical reasoning process of 8th-grade students and the reasoning indicators they use in this process.

Methods: The study was carried out in line with the data obtained from the Mathematical Reasoning Test (MRT) administered to 292 8th-grade students.

Results: The mathematical reasoning performances of the participants were generally at low and medium levels. Evidence was found that students used reasoning indicators such as “... for/because of..., /therefore/so/thus...”, “if ... then...”, “because...”, “should be/should be...” and “equal...” when reasoning.

Discussion: It is important that when evaluating the solutions to questions that require mathematical reasoning, students must be interviewed and confirmed how they reached those solutions.

Limitations: The limitations of the research are, firstly, that it is limited to 8th graders, and secondly, that students will get bored if the number of questions in the MRT is high.

Conclusions: Students must be asked to justify their reasoning while solving problems that require mathematical reasoning.

Key words: mathematical reasoning, reasoning indicators, 8th grade students.

¹ This study is a part of the doctoral dissertation prepared by the first author under the supervision of the second author.

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The Need for Academic Writing in Albania

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Abstract:

Introduction: This research analyzes the importance of academic writing in Albania and suggests introducing it as a mandatory course in all fields of study. The study aims to identify students' perceptions of academic writing and the importance of clear structure and guidelines in academic writing templates. The research collected data through 253 online questionnaires from students of private and public HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) in Albania, revealing that students lacked adequate skills in primary writing forms and were unaware of the steps required to use resources.

Methods: 253 Albanian university students participated in a study on academic writing abilities and methods. The study used a structured questionnaire with 23 closed-ended questions related to statements relevant to the concepts provided by the Literature Review on the issues of writing skills, methodology, and the required steps of academic writing.

Results: The study found that over half of the students surveyed did not study academic writing, which was mainly offered as an elective course for the undergraduate level. Less than half of the students confirmed that their universities offered a template for them to guide themselves through the studying process. The research also found a connection between the lack of academic writing in the curricula and academic integrity.

Discussion: The Ministry of Education and HEIs should provide theoretical and methodological guidelines for designing academic writing courses in Albanian. Academic writing programs in Albanian and English should be offered to faculty members and researchers. Academic Writing should be mandatory for every study program, collaborating with disciplinary professors and linguistics to improve the existing curricula and creating opportunities for students to express their critical thinking through writing skills.

Limitations: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this research faced limitations in accessing the syllabi of some faculties and restricted student gatherings.

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Therefore, the questionnaire was delivered online, and the results presented in the paper refer to the respondents' self-regulation while answering online.

Conclusions: The survey revealed that students from public and non-public higher education institutions lack basic writing skills, prefer internet guidance over professor's assistance, struggle with paraphrasing, summarizing, and referencing, and lack academic integrity. However, students showed a high interest in academic writing as a mandatory course in higher education institutions.

Key words: academic writing, higher education institutions, mandatory.

Implementing Competency-Based Language Teaching Assessment and Achievement of Competency in Speaking Skills at Grade Four

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Abstract:

Introduction: The study aimed to investigate the implementation of Competency-Based Language Teaching assessment and proficiency in English speaking skills.

Methods: The study adopted a mixed methods approach and descriptive survey design. A random sample of 97 grade four English teachers and 56 grade four students were selected. The study utilized various methods to collect data, including a questionnaire, observation, interview, and oral test. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods.

Results: The result showed that there was limited implementation of Competency-Based Language Teaching assessment in speaking skills. The findings also showed that the teachers' awareness of the purpose of the speaking skills assessment in Competency-Based Language Teaching was below average. The study also found that students scored below satisfactory in speaking skills competencies, indicating that they did not achieve the intended level of mastery.

Discussion: Teachers' awareness of the assessment's aim must be ensured to guarantee the implementation of the Competency-Based Language Teaching assessment. Competency-Based Language Teaching assessment also should ensure the achievement of learners' speaking competency.

Limitations: The number of schools selected as the sample was only four for the questionnaire and achievement test.

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Conclusions: The study recommends that teachers implement Competency-Based Language Teaching assessments practically in spoken language instruction, be aware of the purpose of Competency-Based Language Teaching assessments in speaking skills, and promote learners based on the mastery of competency at each level.

Key words: assessment, speaking skills, competency, achievement, mastery.

Constraints, Contradictions and Challenges regarding Cooperation of Parents during COVID-19: A Social Capital Perspective

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Abstract:

Introduction: When calamity hits humanity in the form of natural disasters, they appear unannounced. The same applies to the recent destructive and disruptive Covid-19 pandemic. During the early days of this pandemic, life activities were halted abruptly. Global education systems were not spared - most institutions were caught napping and forced to close. The educational development of children was adversely affected by the hard lockdown and stringent restrictions that followed the outbreak of the pandemic. The role that parents had to play in the education of their children needed to evolve to meet the new demands.

Methods: The researchers approached this study from a qualitative interpretivist philosophical stance to interview principals, teachers, and parents. In addition, this paper was located within Coleman's social capital theory.

Results: Amongst the key findings that emerged from the study were serious challenges regarding parents' cooperation during the Covid-19 pandemic, namely, communication challenges between the school and home, increased learner absenteeism, and failure by learners to do schoolwork. Finally, the study also found that some parents were disinterested and disengaged from the schools. This study is significant because it provides epistemological insights and understanding of the challenges schools experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Discussion: Without exception, all participants felt strongly that the involvement of parents in a child's education during a pandemic such as Covid-19 is significant. According to Durisic and Bunijevac (2017), the more actively parents are involved in their children's learning, the more benefits are achieved. In contrast, there often seems to be little to no collaboration between the school and the home in ensuring that their common goal of seeing the child succeed is

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achieved. This is in harmony with the findings of Porumbu and Necsoi (2013) who intimate that, sometimes, parents may feel like they are doing everything to help their children, but due to lack of communication between the parents and the school, the school may feel as though involvement is lacking.

Limitations: The study was limited to only three schools and only nine participants were subjected to semi-structured interviews.

Conclusions: The study provided epistemological insights regarding the cooperation and involvement of parents during the trying circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. This study provided the findings which are critical for theory, practice and policy to the education systems regarding future disasters.

Key words: parental participation, involvement, social capital, Covid-19 pandemic, constraints.

Development of a Teacher Rating Scale for Giftedness (TRSG)

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Abstract:

Introduction: Intellectual giftedness is an important student characteristic that teachers need to take into consideration when designing education programs and providing educational support to these students. Effective nomination and identification are the basis for further education. In nominating gifted students for special educational programs, teachers play an important role by providing information about superior characteristics of students. The purpose of this study is to develop a teacher rating scale (TRSG) for nominating the children to gifted education programs.

Methods: In order to develop a teacher rating scale (TRSG) for nominating the children to gifted education programs, the present study involved three stages: item generation, instrument application and validity-reliability analyses. One hundred sixty-nine teachers participated in the study. To ensure the validity of the scale, its content, construct and criterion-related validity were examined, and to ensure its reliability, its Cronbach alpha value was calculated. For content validity, three experts on gifted education examined the items and the whole scale in terms of successful intelligence theory. After their approval of the content, construct validity was examined by confirmatory factor analysis.

Results: The result of the analysis supported the three-factor structure of the scale having 17 items. According to the results of the research, it has been established that the TRSG is a valid and reliable instrument, and it may be used to nominate gifted children based on the evaluations of the teachers.

Discussion: Sternberg (2018) defined three components. According to the theory of Sternberg (2018), giftedness involves analytical, practical and creative intelligences, and they are associated not only with each other but also with a G factor. In the analysis, each item was classified under a component of successful

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intelligence theory and the statistical examinations supported the anticipated associations among the items and the factors.

Limitations: The sample size of the teachers was small. The limitations of this study are the use of convenience sampling and the inclusion of only 169 teachers in the sample. Another limitation is rating bias.

Conclusions: The results on the validity and reliability supported the notion that the scale is appropriate to be used for nomination purposes by teachers in gifted education programs. Its limited number of items, quick application, and simple scoring procedures make it advantageous for use in various contexts.

Key words: gifted children, nomination, successful intelligence, teacher rating scale, validity, reliability.