**To what extent does formative assessment affect pupil motivation in a S1 social subjects classroom?**

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Formative assessment has become a major research interest in the last 25 years, with educators and policy makers taking particular interest in how it can support learning, motivation, and achievement for all (Simpson and Hayward, 1998; Steinmayr et al, 2019; Cizek and Lim, 2023). The link between motivation and formative assessment has been researched before (for example see Cauley and McMillan, 2010; Evans et al, 2014; Heitink et al., 2016; Näsström et al., 2021), but seldom in a Scottish secondary school context. Within the Scottish context, the Hayward review (2023) exemplifies that many Scottish teachers and learners are reporting that a focus on examinations is dominating learning and teaching, leading to demotivated learners. The Scottish Government (2020) suggests that there is a case for a new approach to assessment that recognises and understands progress for all learners, that is supportive and responsive, even before pupils reach the senior phase.

This research enquiry sets out to discover to what extent formative assessment can impact motivation of S1 pupils in a social subjects setting, as well as providing pupils’ perspectives on formative assessment in the classroom. The study took place in a Scottish secondary school, with one S1 class as a target group and five other S1 classes as a control group. There were fourteen pupils in the target group and twenty-seven pupils in the control group. This research utilised a pragmatic, mixed-method approach, employing questionnaires to elicit quantitative data, and focus groups and a teacher log to elicit qualitative data.

The findings established that formative assessment positively impacted autonomous and controlled motivation. The target group had a comparatively bigger positive change than the control group for behavioural engagement (+0.26) with an effect size of 0.24. Autonomous motivation also had a comparatively bigger change for the target group (+0.09), with an effect size of 0.06. Furthermore, the target group also had a comparatively bigger positive change in controlled motivation than the control group (+0.24), with an effect size of 0.22. Pupil perspectives indicated that questioning, feedback, learning goals and self-assessment were viewed as promoting motivation and engagement though enhanced understanding and confidence, as well as also facilitating a supportive classroom climate. However, peer-assessment was considered to be both a positive and negative experience, depending on participants’ learning contexts.

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