

# EXIT TICKETS' EFFECT ON ENGAGEMENT IN COLLEGE CLASSROOMS

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## Abstract

Higher education classrooms have long suffered from a lack of engagement and interactivity. As a result, students learning often suffers. Engaging students in large lecture halls is a challenging task that requires purposeful planning by instructors. This study investigated the learning effectiveness and engagement appeal of using exit tickets as a digital tool in education courses at Universidad Rey Juan Carlos (Spain). Exit tickets provide a classroom activity that challenges students with questions at the end of the class and encourages them to take stock of their learning. They require students to do some synthesis of the lecture's content and emphasizes what each student is thinking. Exit tickets can provide valuable feedback to instructors about the class, allowing them to gauge what students have learned and if additional practice is needed. Students submit their "digital exit tickets" via Socrative -a Student Response System- or "paper exit tickets" before leaving the class. A group of 158 freshmen college students participated in this study. These students included prospective early childhood and elementary school teachers. A questionnaire-based survey was conducted to inquire into students' perceptions on the exit tickets experience, and data collected was examined. As the data reveal, exit tickets help students to be actively engaged in the learning process and encourage student connections to content, self-reflection, and a purpose for future learning, enhancing their college learning experience. Results also indicate that exit tickets provide evidence of mastered content and students' challenges, improve students' behavior and academic achievement, and have the most positive impact on students learning outcomes.

Keywords: Exit tickets, higher education, engagement.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Many technologies enable K-12 educators to pose questions during class and get feedback from students, increasing interactivity and engagement. While asking questions in small classroom settings allows for discussions on particular topics, in large college classrooms can be a challenging endeavour. However, some instructors are experimenting with the idea of a flipped classroom model and other technological developments. [3]

Current research [1] identifies *Bring Your Own Device* (BYOD) as one of the trends to be adopted by higher education institutions in one year's time or less to make use of mobile learning in the classroom, increasing the use of blended learning and redesigning learning spaces. Smartphones and laptop computers could play a major role in teaching and learning in higher education institutions if BYOD policies are adopted. In this sense, it has become the responsibility of instructors to fosters environments that promotes engagement and interactivity. In higher education programs, attitude is key in adopting innovative practices. How then can college teachers help students to think critically? In particular, what can be done to enhance the education model in the higher education classroom?

### 1.1 Exit tickets

Many K-12 educators use a classroom activity called an "exit ticket" (also called exit slip or check-out) as a formative assessment that challenges students with questions at the end of the class and encourages them to take stock of their own learning. Exit tickets require students to do some synthesis of the lecture's content and emphasizes what each student is thinking. They can provide valuable feedback to instructors about the class, allowing them to gauge what students have learned and if additional practice is needed. Although exit tickets prompts allow students to think critically, assess and organize their learning, it could be challenging for universities and colleges. According to Marzano [2], exit tickets can provide formative assessment data (information about students' current understanding of new learning), stimulate self-analysis (analyse and reflect on their efforts around their learning), focus on instructional strategies (reflect on the effectiveness of instructional strategies), and are open communications to the teachers. In this study, students submitted their "digital exit

tickets” via Socrative -a Student Response System- (Fig. 1) or “paper exit tickets” before leaving the class.

How well did you understand today's material?

A Totally got it

B Pretty well

C Not very well

D Not at all

SUBMIT ANSWER

What did you learn in today's class?

SUBMIT ANSWER

Socrative Student Response by MasteryConnect

Figure 1. Digital exit ticket prompts.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

The population of interest for this study was a hundred and fifty-eight freshmen college students. These students included prospective early childhood and elementary school teachers from Universidad Rey Juan Carlos taking two 12-week semester classes where digital and paper exit tickets were adopted in the 2015 academic year.

During the first week of the semester, both instructors introduced the formative assessment and then integrated its use to engage students in the classroom and maximize active learning. In these courses, exit tickets were used routinely as a tool to obtain student responses at the end of class to monitor students learning and improve the teaching-learning process. All students writing digital exit tickets had access to the internet via their smartphones, tablets or laptops.

In order for us to gain quantitative insights and inquire into students' perceptions on the exit tickets experience, participants were asked to voluntarily answer an online questionnaire at the end of the semester. This questionnaire was reviewed by a group of teachers' educators and revised by the primary investigator, and then pilot tested. The final version of the survey instrument developed consist of 20 items that include demographic items and items included for forthcoming analyses. Scale items were coded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly disagree' (1) to 'Strongly agree' (5). Descriptive statistics were calculated via means, standard deviations and percentages, using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 22.0).

## 3 RESULTS

The data collected in this research were analyzed to find out students' perceptions towards the educational experience (Table 1). One of the major findings was the participants' beliefs that using exit tickets enhanced their classroom experience. More than 83% of the participants think that the use of exit tickets helped them in their learning and 86,1% would use them in their future teaching practice.

Table 1. Prospective early childhood and elementary educators' responses.

Question items: The use of exit tickets...	Mean (n=158)	SD (n=158)
1. Helped me boost my motivation.	3,63	0,777
2. Helped me to stay focused on class.	4,23	0,722
3. Improved my academic performance.	3,86	0,786
4. Improved my classroom behavior.	3,63	0,817
5. Improved my attitude toward learning.	3,85	0,781
6. Improved my understanding of the content.	3,85	0,807
7. Improved the communication with the teacher about the difficulties encountered.	3,47	0,915
8. Improved memorization of class contents.	3,91	0,843
9. Helped me to reflect on class contents.	4,03	0,773
10. Helped me to identify difficulties in understanding class contents.	3,89	0,782
11. Helped me in the analysis and synthesis of the contents explained in class.	3,91	0,835
12. Helped make classes more dynamic.	3,66	1,013
13. Helped teachers to identify the degree of understanding and/or difficulties of students.	3,92	0,859

As expected the use of exit tickets helped students reflect on class contents (76,6%), and stay focused during class (86,7%). Participants reported that exit tickets are a tool that help them analyze and synthesize content (70.9%), improving not only their memorization of the content (72,2%) but also the understanding of the content (72,2%) making them more aware of the difficulties encountered (72,8%), allowing instructors to identify the degree of content understanding (77,2%). Surprisingly 60,1% of the students indicated that the use of exit tickets helped them to boost their motivation and is considered by more than 57% as a classroom activity that helps teachers improve behavior in their classrooms. In fact, more than 71% students indicated that their academic performance and attitude toward learning improved after implementing the use of exit tickets in the classroom. However, there were no significant differences between the group using digital exit tickets and the group using paper exit tickets.

#### 4 CONCLUSIONS

This study has discussed one of the tools we expect to have a significant impact on the the ways in which students engage in the higher education classroom, the use of exit tickets. As the data reveal, exit tickets help students to be actively engaged in the learning process and encourage student connections to content, self-reflection, and a purpose for future learning, enhancing their college learning experience. Results also indicate that exit tickets provide evidence of mastered content and students' challenges, improve students' behavior and academic achievement, and have the most positive impact on students learning outcomes. The finding suggest that exit tickets have the potential to provide new learning experiences. In these experiences, students can engage more frequently in more practical and meaningful learning activities, which would make BYOD for higher educational settings more effective. Nevertheless, a longer-term study would be necessary to see more changes in students engagement.

#### REFERENCES

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