



**CONTRAST BETWEEN ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT POLICIES AT A  
BILINGUAL SCHOOL VS EFL CLASSROOM REALITY**

How can Alternative Assessment for Young EFL Learners as a Pedagogical Practice Match the Evaluative Proposal in a Bilingual Private School in Colombia?

**Jennyfer Esguerra Sánchez**

Asesor de Investigación

Cristina Peñafort

Universidad ICESI

Facultad de Escuelas de la Educación

Maestría en la Enseñanza del Inglés

como Lengua Extranjera

Santiago de Cali

2021

*This research study is dedicated to my loved ones who never allowed me to give up on my dreams. To my mother, who inspires me every day to follow my dreams. To my sweetheart who is the light to my darkness and my biggest supporter. Lastly, to all the teachers who continue to work hard towards revolutionizing language education all around the world.*

## **Acknowledgments**

This research study became a reality with the kind support and help of many individuals. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of them.

Foremost, I want to thank my savior, **Jesus Christ**, for the wisdom, strength, and health he bestowed upon me, which made it possible to finish this research study.

I am forever in debt to Professor Christina Peñafort, my tutor, for her guidance and constant supervision and for encouraging me to complete this study. I would also like to express my gratitude to the participants of this study, thank you for your time, honesty, and support to conduct this research project.

Lastly, I could never forget to thank my amazing but very competitive classmates and fellow magisters: Martha Orobio, Carolina Lemos, Oscar Sánchez, and Diego Paredes. I truly enjoyed our classes together and the friendship that we managed to forge amidst all the chaos.

## **Abstract**

This research project aimed to conclude how teachers' practice of Alternative Assessment for young EFL learners can align with the evaluative proposal of a bilingual private school in Colombia. In addition, it aimed to explore the teachers' perceptions and experiences implementing Dynamic Assessment with young EFL students. The data for this qualitative grounded theory study was collected through online questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations of the 16 teacher participants. There were two other participants who represented the institution, and they were interviewed in order to assess the School's proposals and expectations. The data collected was analyzed with computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, and subjected to the three levels of analysis adopted from Urquhart (2013). The findings indicated that (a) primary EFL teachers in this institution have positive perceptions and experiences of their implementation of Dynamic Assessment as an Alternative Assessment approach to evaluation. (b) There is a partial alignment of the teachers' practice of Alternative Assessment and the proposal of the institution, therefore, more training is required for new teachers to ensure that the School's proposal is met by all the primary teachers. (c) Teachers are aware of the need to have more frequent and differentiated training sections to successfully carry out the school's innovative assessment proposal.

**Key words:** EFL, alternative assessment, traditional assessment, dynamic assessment

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	7
1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY .....	9
1.1 Justification.....	9
1.2 Statement of the problem .....	10
1.3 Research question .....	11
2. OBJECTIVES .....	12
2.1 General Objective .....	12
2.2 Specific objectives .....	12
3. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	13
3.1 Assessment .....	13
3.2 Traditional assessment.....	14
3.3 Arguments against traditional assessment.....	14
3.4 Alternative assessment.....	16
3.5 Dynamic assessment .....	17
3.6 The concept of Zone of Proximal Development .....	17
3.7 Alternative Assessment in the EFL classroom .....	19
3.8 Teacher's Role in Dynamic Assessment.....	20
3.9 Advantages and Disadvantages of Alternative Assessment.....	20
4. METHOD.....	23
4.1 Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory.....	24
4.2 School Setting .....	25
4.3 Participants .....	27
4.4 Research Design.....	30
4.4.1 Phase one - Teacher's perceptions and experience in relation to DA.....	31
4.4.2 Phase two- Teacher's implementation of alternative assessment in the EFL classroom.....	32
4.4.3 Phase three - Correlation between the School's proposal and the classroom implementation .....	34
4.4.4 Phase four - Determining areas that need to improve when supporting teachers towards applying the evaluative methodology proposed by the school. ....	35
4.5 Data analysis.....	35

4.6 Qualitative data analysis software - NVivo .....	38
4.7 Trustworthiness and validity .....	38
4.8 Ethical considerations.....	39
<b>5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>41</b>
5.1 Teacher’s perceptions and experiences - coding of data.....	41
5.2 Perceptions on alternative assessment codes.....	44
5.2.1 Starting point.....	44
5.2.2 Strengths .....	44
5.2.3 Lack of time.....	46
5.3 Experiences on alternative assessment codes .....	47
5.3.1 Alternative assessment implementation.....	47
5.3.2 Previous knowledge. ....	48
5.3.3 Self-correction.....	49
5.3.4 Students' response.....	50
5.3.5 Parents' response .....	50
5.4 Institutional support codes.....	51
5.4.1 Fresh reminder .....	51
5.4.2 Bilingual training .....	52
5.4.3 Teacher training focused on specific needs.....	53
5.4.4 Smaller groups with more practical exercises.....	55
5.5 Theoretical Coding.....	56
5.6 Implementation of the pedagogical practice in the EFL classrooms .....	57
5.6.1 Feedback- The teacher provides information about both the strengths and weaknesses of students.....	59
5.6.2 Scaffolding process.....	59
5.6.3 Use of rubrics.....	60
5.6.4 Cooperative work is promoted. ....	61
5.6.5 Self and peer assessment.....	62
5.6.6 Tools that allow students to track their progress. ....	62
5.6.7 Emotional link with the teacher.....	63
5.6.8 Interactions between students and teachers.....	64
5.6.9 Information and Communication Technology to promote learning. ....	64
5.6.10 Teacher models for students.....	65

5.6.11 The teacher provides accommodations for the students' different levels of English. ....	66
5.6.12 The teacher promotes cultural awareness. ....	67
5.7 School's Proposal .....	67
5.7.1 School's pedagogical history. ....	68
5.7.2 The School's methods. ....	69
5.7.3 The use of project-based learning. ....	69
5.7.4 The Alternative Assessment processes. ....	70
5.7.5 The teachers' learning process. ....	71
5.7.6 The classroom observation process. ....	72
5.8 Consistency with what the school proposes .....	73
5.8.1 Classroom Management Strategies. ....	74
5.8.2 Tools To Track Students' Process. ....	74
5.8.3 Cooperative Work. ....	75
5.8.4 Emotional Environment. ....	76
5.8.5 Dynamic Assessment. ....	77
5.8.6 Feedback Strategies. ....	78
5.8.7 Use Of ICT. ....	78
5.8.8 Pedagogic Proposal. ....	79
6. CONCLUSIONS .....	81
6.1 FINAL REMARKS .....	81
6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS .....	84
6.3 LIMITATIONS.....	85
7. REFERENCES.....	86
8. APPENDICES.....	90
8.1 Appendix 1 Consent Form .....	90
8.2 Appendix 2 Welcome Email .....	92
8.3 Appendix 3 Teacher Questionnaire .....	93
8.4 Appendix 4 Interview Framework.....	96
8.5 Appendix 5 Administrator's Interview Framework .....	98
8.6 Appendix 6 Open Coding Results .....	100
8.7 Appendix 7 Class Observation Format.....	101
8.8 Appendix 8 Class Observation Report.....	103

## INTRODUCTION

In the last couple of decades, educators and students around the world have been witnesses of the need for changes in the way we assess learning. Assessment exists to gain an insight into the students' level of knowledge or ability, but it can be an aggravating process for both students and teachers alike. Traditional assessment has been the most common method to evaluate students and it is usually implemented at the end of the learning process as it is focused on a final product. As indicated by Gould (1996 as cited in Nazari, 2012, p.4). Standardized testing, which is the most used evaluation method in traditional assessment, became popular in the United States and served to screen immigrants entering the country and to assess the capabilities of soldier recruits. Since then, standardized tests have made their way into other countries and contexts, including the educational setting.

Considering the necessity to revolutionize education and shift assessment practices from traditional to alternative, dynamic assessment (DA), which is one of the forms of Alternative Assessment, is introduced as a way to assess students' performance based on the whole learning process. Rea-Dickins (2004) concluded in her research that language teachers often feel torn between being facilitators of language development or judges of language performance as an achievement. DA represents a paradigm shift toward a new way of assessment that focuses on helping students develop through intervention. In order for institutions and teachers to successfully implement this assessment practice, educators must be properly

trained for the challenges of developing appropriate assessment instruments and strategies when implementing DA in the language classroom.

The present study begins by stating the historical framework and different approaches of dynamic assessment as an evaluation method, as well as the implications of DA in the second and foreign language classroom. The aim of this study is to analyze teacher's knowledge and perceptions in relation to Alternative Assessment in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom and to observe the practice of dynamic assessment as a form of Alternative Assessment in the EFL classroom by the primary teachers at a private bilingual school in Cali, Colombia that currently professes this assessment method in its value proposition.



## **1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Justification**

As language education evolves, the importance to move away from traditional testing and towards involving the students in their own learning progress has become more evident. As language teachers, many of the participants in this study have faced the challenges of this evolution and as teachers in this institution have also learned a great amount about dynamic assessment.

The institution in this research study has been highlighted amongst all of the other bilingual schools in this city, mainly because of their evaluative proposal. This proposal is worthy of researching and protecting against the traditional assessment imposition from the outside.

The purpose of this qualitative grounded theory research is to observe the Alternative Assessment (AA) implementation in the EFL classroom by primary teachers and to contrast it to the School's proposed practice of this Alternative Assessment method in the School where this study took place. According to Tsagari et al. (2018), Alternative Assessment can be very beneficial to students' process.

This assessment method aids in the evaluation of the process and product of learning as well as the students' learning behaviors. It can also enable the monitoring of instruction and supply meaningful results to all the team players involved in the learning process. Tsagari et al. (2018) believe that Alternative

Assessment can promote autonomous and self-directed learning and provide new roles for teachers, who no longer are considered to be transmitters of knowledge but as agents that provide students with opportunities to enhance their own learning. In order for Alternative Assessment to be an asset to the student's learning processes, the teachers need to be well versed in this method and have the schools' support and necessary teacher training.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

A bilingual private school in Cali, Colombia has adopted a nontraditional assessment method which is defying the traditional traits of education in this country. In recent decades there has been a shift from teacher-centered classes to a more student-centered approach. This shift in teaching approaches and methods has called for a revolution in assessment practices moving away from traditional assessment and towards alternative assessment.

According to Lochner, Conrad, and Graham (2015), teachers are central to whether a curriculum or proposal is delivered consistently, effectively, and with efficacy to enable the support of student progress and growth. This can also be said about implementing an evaluative methodology proposed by a school.

Some of the teachers in this School have expressed the need for more training, especially for those teachers who joined the institution during the pandemic and were hired virtually. Concerns about the implementation of the School's proposed evaluative methodology by the new teachers arise. The claim of transforming teaching and education altogether, is not an easy claim to upkeep. It

is necessary to study how this value proposal is currently being implemented by new and senior teachers in the EFL primary classrooms. As well as how can this be sustained through the changes that come with hiring new teachers who might not be well versed on the School's pedagogy, in order to better support them and to ensure that the pedagogical proposal can withstand the test of time.

### **1.3 Research question**

How can Alternative Assessment for Young EFL Learners as a Pedagogical Practice Match the Evaluative Proposal in a Bilingual Private School in Colombia?

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

### **2.1 General Objective**

To establish how teachers' practice of Alternative Assessment for young EFL learners can align with the evaluative proposal of a bilingual private school in Colombia.

### **2.2 Specific objectives**

1. To describe the teachers' perceptions and classroom experiences in relation to dynamic assessment in the EFL classroom as the School's proposed evaluative methodology.
2. To examine the implementation of the pedagogical practice of dynamic assessment in the EFL primary classrooms.
3. To analyze the consistency between the School's proposal, in terms of evaluative methodology, and the classroom implementation.
4. To determine, from the teachers' perspective, if there are any areas that need to improve when supporting teachers towards applying the evaluative methodology proposed by the School.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 Assessment

Assessment is a crucial part of language teaching and learning, most often regarded as a systematic process in which students' learning is measured. Team players within the educational community have different ideas regarding assessment strategies. Many believe that the traditional assessment methods are superior and more effective than alternative assessment methods.

As discussed by Tosuncuoglu,(2018) appropriate assessment selection can help teachers classify and grade their students' skills as well as give them feedback accordingly and adapt their own teaching strategies to supply the students' needs. Many language educators are becoming more interested in being part of the selection for assessment methods. Assessment affects teachers and students, which is why teachers should be considered when choosing or when advocating for certain types of assessment.

According to Berry (2010), the evaluation process can provoke negative memories and feelings in students which can lead them to doubt their own abilities harming the students' performance greatly. Nasab (2015) argues that one of the most prominent issues associated with traditional assessment is the fact that it fails to capture the multidimensional aspects of what students know or have learned. Assessment is a powerful tool for language educators and students all over the world, and as such, should never be static, on the contrary, it needs to be constantly developing.

### **3.2 Traditional assessment**

Traditional assessment usually refers to all the conventional methods of assessment, which usually use written documents such as exams or quizzes. Another example of traditional assessments is the standardized test, which vary according to the country. In Colombia the most recognized standardized test is the “pruebas saber” (ICFES) and in the United States the SATs. These standardized tests are given to the students with one sole purpose, to measure how much the students have learned. Quite often, these tests include multiple choice questions, which consist of one or more sentences followed by a list of two or more suggested answers. According to Krnčević (2020), multiple choice questions are commonly used by teachers, schools, and assessment entities because they ensure the scorer's reliability since there is only one correct answer, which also makes grading an easier process.

### **3.3 Arguments against traditional assessment**

As declared by Tzuriel (2021), the main argument against traditional assessment is the fact that they do not adequately reveal students' cognitive capacities. Four main criticisms have been made towards the use of traditional assessments. The first states that this type of assessment does not provide meaningful information about learning processes or give an insight towards deficient cognitive functions that might be responsible for learning difficulties. As stated by Tzuriel (2021), teachers not only need to know the students' actual level of performance but also what the students can achieve with the help of a peer or an

adult, the nature of their learning processes, and observe which strategies can facilitate learning amongst their students. Unfortunately, traditional assessment can only offer teachers the first criteria.

The second criticism facing traditional assessment according to Tzurriel (2021) is the fact that many students perform poorly on standardized tests, these scores do not reflect the learning potential of children. Many students fail these standardized tests due to the lack of opportunities for learning experiences or even traumatic life experiences that have impaired their cognitive development. As addressed by Fany and Cole (1990) children might have a high level of intelligence and abstract reasoning, but they perform rather poorly on different cognitive tasks, especially on those involving time limits.

Thirdly, any traditional assessment practices aim to give a general description of students, mostly on their position within their peer group. They do not provide a clear and descriptive narrative on each students' cognitive process. These types of narratives are important for educators to adjust their practices to meet all of their students' particular needs. The final criticism against traditional assessment is the fact that it does not take into consideration non-intellective factors, which often influence students' cognitive performance, factors such as intrinsic motivation, anxiety, frustration, tolerance, self-confidence, and more which are not less important in determining children's intellectual achievements than cognitive factors.

According to Fatemipour and Jafari (2015), traditional assessment can only measure the learner's actual level of performance but does not care about the individuality of the students. It labels students without considering the development

of students' performance. In response to these and many more of the disadvantages of traditional assessment, alternative assessment came to be.

### **3.4 Alternative assessment**

Alternative assessment can be defined as an “umbrella” term to describe all efforts that do not comply with the traditional assessment practices. There are a variety of labels used to describe forms of alternative assessment, as stated by Krnčević (2020) some of these labels include performance assessment, dynamic assessment, portfolio assessment, informal assessment, authentic assessment, and more.

Janisch et al. (2007, as cited in Tan, 2011), describe alternative assessment as being different from traditional testing in that it is situated in the classroom allowing teachers to make choices in the strategies used. Also as being based on a constructivist view of learning where the student, the materials and the context all impact the learning outcomes, and where the learning processes seem to be greater than the product.

Another big difference from the traditional assessment is the fact that alternative assessment is only focused on asking students to show what they can do, while being evaluated on what they use and produce rather than just in what they are able to memorize and recall. The sole purpose of alternative assessment is to “gather evidence about how students are approaching, processing, and completing ‘real-life’ tasks in a particular domain” (García & Pearson, 1994, p. 357).



Alternative assessment methods do not interfere with the class because they do not need additional time to implement them, as do traditional assessments. The everyday activities the students are engaged with are the basis for alternative assessment. Because alternative assessment is mostly based on daily class activities, it also reflects the institution's curriculum, unlike traditional assessment.

### **3.5 Dynamic assessment**

As acknowledged by Naeini and Duvall (2012), dynamic assessment is one of the forms of alternative assessment that follows Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and its implications for assessment. According to Vygotsky (1978), high-level mental processes such as voluntary attention and memory, problem solving, and concept formation, arise through interaction with the environment, through daily activities and socialization. Language is the tool that helps students negotiate between cognition and their environment. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory states that learning moves from being regulated by the environment and eventually arrives to self-regulation. The more regulated a process is, the more a student can learn in an independent manner.

### **3.6 The concept of Zone of Proximal Development**

Vygotsky presented the concept of zone of proximal development or ZPD, which as he defines it, it refers to the distance between a child's "actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving" and the higher level of "potential development as determined through problem solving

under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Dynamic assessment intends to explore a child's zone of proximal development through their interactions with the more knowledgeable other in many cases the teacher or a peer who aids the student regulation and only offers assistance or mediation when needed. In this order of ideas, the concept of ZPD implies that aid should be provided to students during assessment in order to see what they are truly capable of. Vygotsky (1978) observed that it is what a learner can do in cooperation with others which indicates their future independent performance.

Dynamic assessment invites educators to consider the students actual development level and potential level when trying to determine the student's cognitive development. A student's actual development level can be measured by observing their independent problem solving without any assistance from the adult, and the potential level can be observed after the student has been mediated on how to solve a problem. This potential development transforms into the student's actual development level through the process of internalization. In Vygotsky's words:

An essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90)

### **3.7 Alternative Assessment in the EFL classroom**

Learning a language is considered to be a social activity and it is enhanced when learners are engaged in meaningful social interactions and through interactions with more knowledgeable others. In recent decades, the teaching of English as a foreign language has shifted from being a teacher-centered process, towards being a student-centered process where the communicative competence is sought. This shift in foreign language instruction has also led a shift from traditional assessment methods to alternative assessment methods, which support new the student-centered nature of language teaching.

Alternative Assessment, and Dynamic Assessment to be more specific, provide the language teacher not only with the students' current proficiency level of the target language but also with the ability to measure the student's potential, in other words, what the learner could do when using the target language. It also provides the information needed to alter or improve instruction to ensure that each student can meet an established target language goal.

DA allows language teachers to focus on what the learner knows and builds upon that previous knowledge while focusing on the students' performance rather than the learner's ability to memorize and recall discrete items that can be taken out of context. As stated by Richards and Rodgers (2014), there is a need for new forms of assessment that can help teachers when building up a narrative of what students can do in the L2, to replace traditional ones, which tested lower-order skills.

Poehner & Infante (2017), describe DA as an integration of both assessment and instruction, which allows teachers to identify learner's emerging abilities by offering feedback and prompts when learners encounter difficulties in tasks, which makes it possible to determine the learner's understanding and control over a particular feature of the target language.

### **3.8 Teacher's Role in Dynamic Assessment**

In DA the teacher becomes a mediator of the students' learning process, by providing students with a scaffolding technique which supports their learning. As indicated by Tabatabaei and Bakhtiarvand (2014) the role of the teacher in DA is to be an observer who interacts with the learners to aid and mediate their process by using their higher knowledge of the target language. "In DA an examiner not only gives performance contingent feedback but also offers instruction in response to student's failure to change or improve the student's attainment" (p. 9).

A teacher who uses DA in their classroom, is also a teacher who promotes self-assessment and peer assessment as a tool to guide the student's development. The teacher guides the student into developing an active role in their learning process and to also aid other students by using scaffolding techniques.

### **3.9 Advantages and Disadvantages of Alternative Assessment**

There are many advantages to implementing alternative assessment in the classroom. As indicated by Kutbiddinova (2021) this assessment method aids in measuring the proficiency of the learner based on their reasoning and thinking

skills, which results on students gaining a better experience and learning how to solve problems. Another advantage of alternative assessments is the fact that it allows teachers to recognize a learner's unique set of abilities and understand better how to guide the learner towards success in an assigned task.

Макаренко (2014), concludes that alternative assessment permits for the learner's process of reaching the result to be assessed as opposed to the final product, as it is done in the traditional assessment, which from a point of view of the communicative approach, is neither authentic nor communicative. Furthermore, Alternative Assessment creates an assessment environment where instruction and evaluation are aligned, and where the learner is familiar with what is expected of them, which allows for them to engage in self-assessment and peer assessment which also results in more autonomous students who can collaborate with peers.

There are certainly some disadvantages when carrying out Alternative Assessments. Kutbiddinova (2021) points out that the process can be time consuming for the teachers as it is a harder process to evaluate than a traditional assessment. Teachers must take the time to plan and create differentiated assessment tools, and to provide students with on-going feedback. Additionally, it can become difficult to grade students work as there are many acceptable answers, this can make it challenging for the teacher to also make trend predictions.

Another obstacle that can occur when adopting alternative assessment has to do with reliability, since the interpretation of results can be highly subjective as the learners have different processes that involve different mediation levels from

the teacher. In addition, another weakness of alternative assessment methods implementation is the parental lack of support when it comes to this type of assessment.

As exposed by Demir et al (2018), parents often pressure the teachers and the institutions towards doing traditional testing because of their lack of knowledge on alternative assessment and because they desire to know their children's level within the class, not to mention, that most parental figures have been assessed with the traditional method and change can be challenging to accept.

#### 4. METHOD

The general objective of this qualitative grounded theory study was to determine to what extent is the teacher's practice of alternative assessment in the EFL primary classroom aligned with the school's proposed evaluative methodology. In order to achieve this general objective, it was necessary to develop specific objectives which were sequential, in other words, they arise in a particular order and the development of each one allows continuing with the next.

These objectives aimed to firstly describe the teachers' perceptions and overall experiences in relation to dynamic assessment as the alternative assessment methodology proposed by the school. In addition, this study was also interested in the implementation of this pedagogical practice in the EFL primary classrooms and in exploring the consistency between the schools' proposal and teacher's application. Finally, the study aimed to determine if there were any areas that needed bettering in order to support the teachers when carrying out dynamic assessments in the EFL classrooms.

As stated by Stake (2010) when the aim of the research is to give an explanation to an event based on the experiences and or perceptions of a person then the most appropriate form of a study is a qualitative one. Because the purposes of this study were to examine teachers' practices and experiences with both the implementation of alternative assessment with young EFL learners and their perceptions of the school's curriculum, a qualitative approach was the most appropriate choice.

#### **4.1 Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory**

Charmaz (2014) states that grounded theory methods consist of systematic but flexible guidelines that aid in the collection and analysis of qualitative data to construct theories grounded on the data itself. The main aspect of the grounded theory is that it allows for the data analysis to start at the beginning of the data collection process which helps the researchers separate, sort, and synthesize the data through qualitative coding. Coding means that the researchers are able to attach labels to the groups of data that depict what each group is about. Coding sifts data, sorts it, and allows researchers to make comparisons with other groups of data. As this study has the main purpose to compare the real alternative assessment practices in an EFL classroom and the cohesiveness between that and the expectations of the school, the grounded theory makes sense as the main method for data collection and analysis.

Grounded theory was first introduced in 1967 by Glaser and Strauss, as “the discovery of theory from data” (Glaser & Strauss 2017). The Grounded theory is a research approach that studies processes, interactions, and actions with the goal of developing theories of problems people experience. In a way, grounded theory methodology as stated by Stake (2010) helps move from individual knowledge to collective knowledge. The process of grounded theory consists of different phases, which are: Settling on a research problem, framing the research question, data collection, data coding and analysis, and theory development.

Charmaz (2014) explains that grounded theory contains constructivist inclinations. As described by the author, human experience is relative to its paradigm, influenced by society, culture, and other influences. This research aims



to build a theory based on each participant's experiences through coding the data from interviews and observations and build an argument based on the interpretation of their shared perceptions.

Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis by Charmaz (2014) guided the research for this study and the grounded theory methodology used in the collection and analysis of data. Charmaz (2014) writes about segments for a grounded theory such as coding, generating memos, analyzing data as it is generated to construct theory, selecting fundamental categories from coding, and finally generating a theory. All of these procedural steps aid the researcher in adapting their views and continually evolving to allow for new theories to emerge from the data collected.

## **4.2 School Setting**

The study was conducted in the primary section of a private bilingual school, with more than 57 years of experience in bilingual education in Cali, Colombia. This private bilingual school has trademarked its pedagogy "open project" and as discussed in the newspaper El País (2019), the School is interested in changing education by changing the way the students are taught, always searching for meaningful ways to spark the students' interest in their learning process.

As shown in *Table 1*, the school is divided into four sections, Preschool with 87 students in the grades of nursery and transition, Primary with 267 students in the grades of preparatory through fifth grade, Elementary School with 161 students in sixth grade through eighth grade, and High School with 149 students in ninth

grade through eleven grade. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on the section of primary.

Number of students enrolled in the school							
Preschool		Primary		Middle School		High School	
<b>Nursery</b>	<b>33</b>	<i>Preparatory</i>	<b>40</b>	<i>Sixth Grade</i>	<b>59</b>	<i>Ninth Grade</i>	<b>48</b>
<b>Transition</b>	<b>54</b>	<i>First Grade</i>	<b>51</b>	<i>Seven Grade</i>	<b>50</b>	<i>Tenth Grade</i>	<b>50</b>
		<i>Second Grade</i>	<b>48</b>	<i>Eighth Grade</i>	<b>52</b>	<i>Eleventh Grade</i>	<b>51</b>
		<i>Third Grade</i>	<b>48</b>				
		<i>Fourth Grade</i>	<b>36</b>				
		<i>Fifth Grade</i>	<b>44</b>				

Table 1 - Number of students enrolled in the school

The following information provides some insight on the School's primary section and its teachers. The primary section is made up of two sub-sections, Primary I and Primary II. As Table 2 shows, Primary I is made up of 3-grade levels: preparatory, first grade, and second grade. Primary II is also made up of 3-grade levels: third-grade, fourth grade, and fifth grade. These grade levels generally have subdivisions labeled with letters, usually A, B, and C (e.g., First A). Primary I and II students attended classes every day from 7:30 a.m. to 2:35 p.m.

Number of students enrolled in primary	
Primary I	
<b>Preparatory</b>	40
<b>First Grade</b>	51
<b>Second Grade</b>	48
Primary II	
<b>Third Grade</b>	48
<b>Fourth Grade</b>	36
<b>Fifth Grade</b>	44

Table 2 - Number of students enrolled in primary

Students in Primary I have several classes in English, which are led by the homeroom teachers. Primary I homeroom teachers are in charge of leading content and language integrated classes for their students, this means that they teach English, Science, Math, and Social Studies in the target language. Primary II homeroom teachers have a slightly different teaching setup than Primary I homeroom teachers, with the exception of third-grade teachers who are also in charge of leading content and language integrated classes for their students. Fourth and fifth-grade homeroom teachers are in charge of teaching Science, Math, and Social Studies and there are two teachers who are solely in charge of teaching English in fourth and fifth grade respectively.

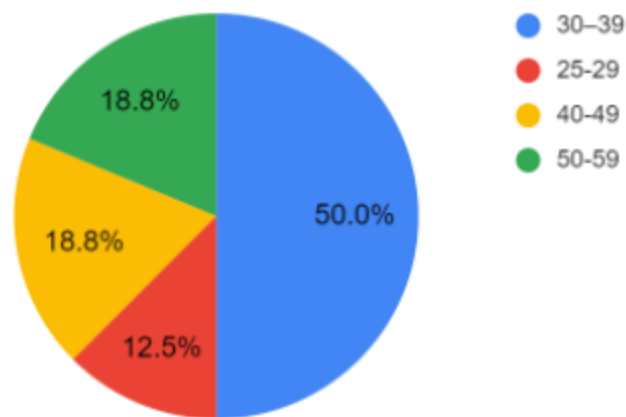
### **4.3 Participants**

The present research is a qualitative grounded theory study centered around the alternative assessment practices inside the EFL classroom, therefore, the 16 participant teachers were selected taking into account two criteria. Firstly, as most qualitative data is collected through interactions with participants through the use of surveys, questionnaires, and interviews, the first criterion was to find participants who would volunteer to take part in the study.

Secondly, because the study is focused on EFL classroom practices, the second criterion was for participants that use English as the main instruction language in their primary classrooms. Another consideration taken when selecting the participants was to ensure the participation of both senior teachers and new

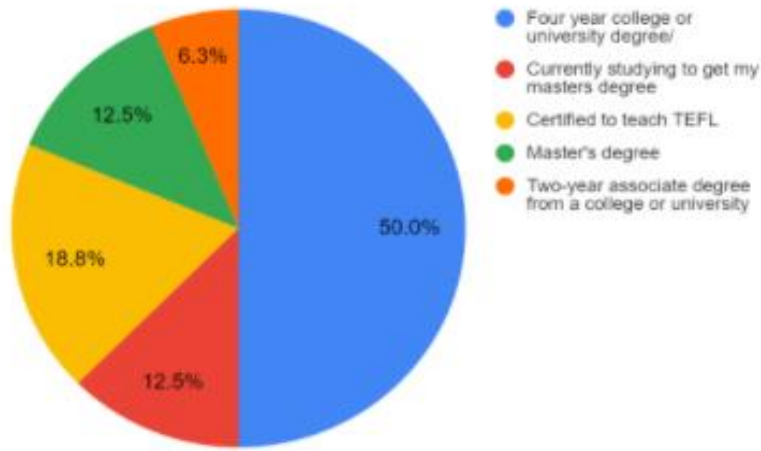
teachers in the primary section of the school. As part of this study, the pedagogical vice- principal and the academic coordinator of the primary section were also interviewed to get a broader view of the expectations on alternative assessments in the school.

In this group, all the 16 EFL teachers invited to participate, confirmed their interest in being part of this study. Out of the 16 participants, 15 are female and 1 is male. As seen in *Graph 1- Age*, 50% of the participants (8 teachers) are between the ages of 30 and 39 years old. Another 18.8% (3 teachers) are in the age range of 50 to 59 years old, 18.8% (3 teachers) are between the ages of 40 to 49 years old and 12.5% (2 teachers) are within the 25-29 age group.



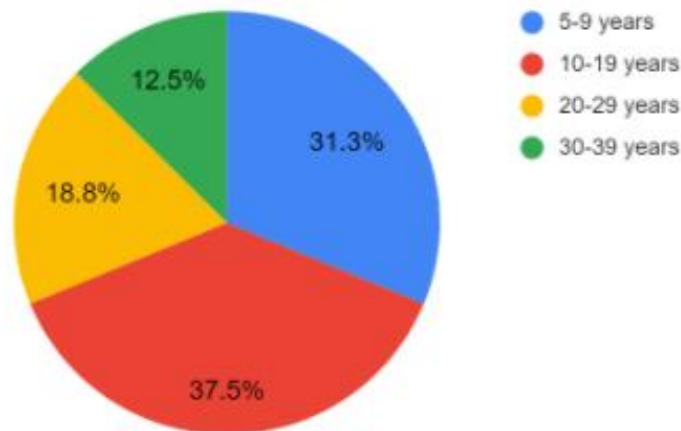
*Graph 1- Age of participants*

Currently, 2 of the teachers participating in this study teach only content and language Integrated areas (Math, Science, Social Studies) and 2 other teachers teach only English.

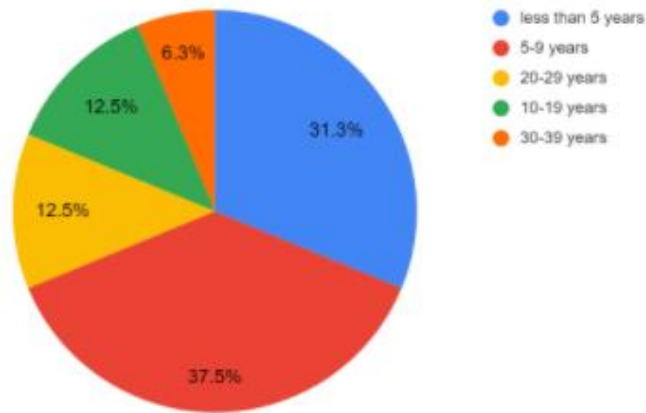


*Graph 2 - Level of education*

*Graph 2 - Level of education* shows that 50% (8 teachers) hold a bachelor's degree in language teaching, that 18.8% (3 teachers) are certified to teach TEFL, that 12.5% (2 teachers) hold a master's degree in education, and/or language education, that 12.5 % (2 teachers) are currently enrolled in a master's program in education, and 6.3 % (1 teacher) holds an associate degree.



*Graph 3 - Teaching experience*



Graph 4 - Teaching time in the current school

Graph 3 - *Teaching experience* shows the participants' total years of overall language teaching experience and in contrast Graph 4 - *Teaching time in the current school*, shows the amount of time they have been working in this bilingual private school where the present study was carried out. It can be said that 31.3% of the participants (5 teachers) are new to this institution and the proposed methodologies.

#### 4.4 Research Design

In the case of this research study, the first phase was focused in describing the teacher's thoughts and experiences in relation to alternative assessment, specifically dynamic assessment. To achieve this, it was important to first obtain the School's and teachers' approval through the use of a consent letter shown in Appendix 1 which was signed by all the participants.

Subsequently, the participants were screened by using a demographic questionnaire via google forms (See Appendix 3) to help the researcher document

the level of candidate diversity in the study, as well as verify that the participants met the second criterion set for this research, which referred to the teacher’s language of instruction being English. In the questionnaire, teachers were required to provide some general information that was considered useful for further analysis: age, gender, total years of teaching experience, years of work at this particular school, and educational level.

The research design for this study was divided in four phases in relation to the four specific objectives established by the researcher. Table 3 displays the four phases of the research study and summarizes each phase’s intention to achieve the objectives set out by the researcher.

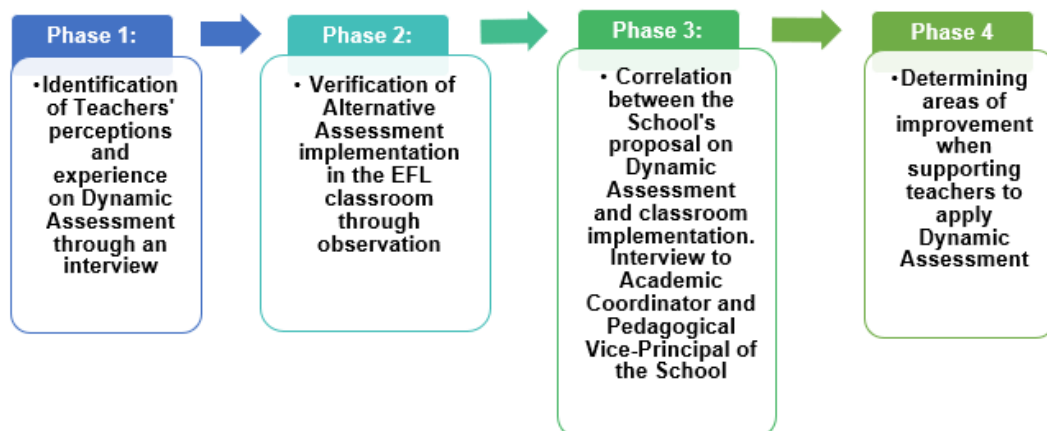


Table 3 – Phases of the research study

#### 4.4.1 Phase one - Teacher’s perceptions and experience in relation to DA

As mentioned above, the first stage for carrying out this study aimed at describing the teachers’ perceptions of what alternative assessment is and their overall experiences with this evaluative method. This phase included the design of

an interview framework (See Appendix 4), where the use of open-ended questions was vital to the process of getting to know the teachers' perceptions towards three main topics, alternative assessment, the school's proposal for dynamic assessment as the evaluative method and their opinions on institutional support. More questions followed with the intent to get a broad view of the participants' experience and overall perceptions.

Each participant interview took place in a single session in person. Because of the nature of this study and the usage of open-ended questions in the interviewing process, some questions may change or be altered in each interview if there was the need to clarify or explore more on certain topics depending on the participant's answers. The grounded theory allows for this type of event to happen since it allows for discovering the phenomenon during the research process (Charmaz, 2014).

Lastly, participants were allowed to review the interviews one time before submitting them for analysis. Participants were encouraged to add any comments upon reflection on their individual interviews prior to the transcribing phase. Participants did not have access to any other interviews and were not told which other teachers were part of the study.

#### **4.4.2 Phase two- Teacher's implementation of alternative assessment in the EFL classroom**

The second stage of this master's report addressed the implementation of alternative assessment and especially dynamic assessment in the EFL primary classroom. The main data collection method in this phase was classroom



observation, because there were 16 participants, to interview and observe, it was decided to observe two non-successive classes where the language of instruction was English and where any type of assessment was taking place. Consequently, a total of 32 hours of class were observed for this study. During the observations, the observer took notes when any assessment activity took place and recorded the classes to better examine how the assessment activity was processed.

The researcher also used an observation framework, as stated by Maxwell (2001), the advantages of prepared observation sheets include the opportunity to focus specifically on the desired field and provide the observer with a more organized way to record observations, which is beneficial to the analysis of data observed. As shown in Appendix 7, the observation sheet had several aspects related to dynamic assessment, which arose from the teacher's individual interviews, which took place in phase two of this research study.

All classroom interactions that took place in the class were audio-recorded by the observer. Therefore, a total of 32 lessons across all of the grades in the primary level were recorded so that classroom assessment practices could be analyzed in detail with the help of transcribed dialogues of both the teacher and the students during any assessment activity. The observer took an un-obstructive role and took notes related to the assessment practices of the primary teacher team. As part of this observation, all documents related to assessment activities used in class were collected in order to analyze the teachers' assessment practices.

#### **4.4.3 Phase three - Correlation between the School's proposal and the classroom implementation**

In the third stage of this research, the correlation between the School's proposal of the evaluative method, in this case, dynamic assessment, and the classroom implementation by the primary teachers was the main focus. In order to accomplish this analysis, it was needed to interview the primary academic coordinator and pedagogical vice-principal of the school to get acquainted with the school's proposal in terms of assessment. As mentioned by Charmaz (2014), the grounded theory allows for questions to be changed or modified in each interview if there is a need to clarify or explore more on certain aspects of the participant's answers.

An interview framework was created to guide along with the conversation, as shown in Appendix 5. The questions in this interview were open-ended questions with the intention to get to know the participant's views and knowledge on what is expected by the school to happen in the EFL primary classroom in terms of assessment. These interviews were also recorded in order to be transcribed and to perform further analysis. Both of these participants signed the consent form shown in Appendix 1. Lastly, the participants in this phase were also allowed to review the interviews one time before submitting them for analysis.

The interviews in phase three helped to compare both narratives on the implementation of dynamic assessment in the primary EFL classroom from the teacher's and the School's perspectives in order to determine if they are in alignment.

#### **4.4.4 Phase four - Determining areas that need to improve when supporting teachers towards applying the evaluative methodology proposed by the school.**

With the information collected through the interviews with teachers, especially with the questions pertaining to “*Part F*” of the phase one interview framework as shown in Appendix 4, which referred to institutional support, an analysis was carried out aiming to determine areas of improvement when it comes to guiding teachers on the evaluative methodology proposed by the school.

It is important to mention, that the results from this phase part from the participant’s answers and in order to be seen appropriate as a conclusion, needed to be included in at least three of the participants’ interviews. That is to say, at least three participants had to express the same opinion in order for the answer to be part of the results of phase four which refers to areas of possible improvement.

#### **4.5 Data analysis**

With the information collected through the answers participants provided in the interviews conducted in phase 1, the classroom observations described in phase 2 and the narratives from the interviews to the primary academic coordinator and pedagogical vice-principal of the school, an analysis was carried out. This analysis was aiming to describe teachers’ perceptions and classroom experiences in relation to dynamic assessment, to examine how the dynamic assessment was being implemented in the EFL primary classrooms, and to analyze how consistent the teacher’s practice of this alternative assessment method could be in terms of

the school's expectation. Additionally, the data analysis attempted to determine from the teacher's point of view, if there were any areas in need of improvement as regards institutional support to teachers when applying alternative assessment methods.

The information gathered from this study was registered in different charts created in the Google Sheets tool where it was possible to consolidate the data provided by every single participant and which helped to develop a comprehensive understanding of the teachers' answers and information gathered from classroom observations. The results of the diversity questionnaire were analyzed in a quantitative manner and provided the researcher with the level of candidate diversity in the study, in terms of seniority of the teachers in this particular school. It was important for the study to have teachers with a different range of experience with the School's proposed assessment methods, in other words, senior and new teachers alike.

The participants' answers in the interviews, both the 16 participant teachers and the 2-administrative staff, were transcribed and coded adhering to the text by Charmaz (2014) regarding conducting a grounded theory study. As explained by Urquhart (2013), the process of coding interviews aids the researcher in understanding the perspectives of the participants and in analyzing their combined experiences. Coding of interview transcripts was completed in the same order that the interviews were conducted (See Appendix 6), and it was done in groups of four interviews at the time, this allowed the researcher to reflect and edit the interview questions as new theories began to emerge from the data being analyzed.

The process of coding helped to prevent the researcher from overemphasizing in the interviews the importance of any aspect early in the study and helped ensure a thorough analysis of the entire gathered data. Coding the transcriptions, or in other words, breaking them down into meaningful and manageable pieces of data, was a critical part of the data analysis in this research study. As defined by Urquhart (2013) and Birks & Mills (2011), the process of analyzing, reanalyzing, and comparing new data to existing data is known as a constant comparison, which was a critical aspect in lending credibility to the theories that emerged from the data. As each phase of coding began, it was important to continue reviewing the data in previous phases so that connections were constantly being made. Coding terms used for this research study were adopted from Urquhart (2013), who referred to the three phases of coding as open phase, selective phase, and finally the theoretical phase.

As explained by Urquhart (2013), open coding refers to the stage of the study where each line of transcribed interview text is coded line by line. This coding of line by line is said to be a critical part of grounded theory methods according to Charmaz (2014). In this present study, this method of coding aided the researcher in focusing on a thorough manner during each individual interview. Selective coding occurs when there are no new codes emerging from the data or when the code relates to categories already established during the previous coding. Selective coding in this research study was used in order to find prominent themes or categories within the data gathered in the participant interviews.

Finally, theoretical coding, as Urquhart (2013) defines, occurs when the codes and categories that emerged during the open coding and selective coding phase are compared and relationships are found between them. The result of these possible correlations between codes and categories is said to be the theory or phenomenon.

#### **4.6 Qualitative data analysis software - NVivo**

For the purpose of aiding in the data management and analysis process of the present study, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, was used. The main coding source was led by the researcher, the data analysis software was used to find words for comparison with the manually coded categories. Due to the extensive amount of data collected during this study in the forms of interviews with 16 teacher participants in total, it was necessary to use this software for a thorough sorting of the data.

#### **4.7 Trustworthiness and validity**

The trustworthiness and validity of this qualitative grounded theory study were established by ensuring that there was no researcher bias and by interpreting the data in an unbiased way. Transcribing the teacher interviews and manually coding them aid in ensuring a meaningful understanding of the interview content and participant intent. Manually coding the interviews using grounded theory methodology helped ensure impartial interpretation of the data collected, which in turn helped to minimize bias.

The use of systematic comparisons as stated by Charmaz (2014) helped demonstrate the links between the analysis and the results. Constant comparative analysis was a critical aspect in lending credibility to the theories that emerge from the data as the researcher was able to specifically focus on those codes and categories that had the analytical weight to be used in the results and conclusions of this study (Charmaz, 2014). While the data for this research will be accessible for 2 years following the approval of the study, all transcripts and recordings will thereafter be disposed of. The unavailability of the data after 2 years, causes a potential limitation to the trustworthiness and credibility of this study in the future.

#### **4.8 Ethical considerations**

There were several steps taken by the researcher in order to keep ethics a top priority in this research study. The informed consent form, shown in Appendix 1, was read to each participant before the interview process and a copy of the signed consent form was emailed to them in advance of said interview. This consent form follows the university's guidelines including a short description of the study, an explanation of the procedures, the description of possible risks and benefits, and a notice to inform that the participants were free to withdraw at any time. The researcher sent an email, as shown in Appendix 2, welcoming the participants to the study, and giving them a brief description of what would happen at the different stages of this research study.

All participants were informed that this process would be anonymous and that all the information provided would be used for academic purposes. The anonymity clause was also included in all the documents sent to the participants

and the questionnaire sent via email along with the welcoming letter. Additionally, all recorded materials will be erased after 2 years after the present study has been submitted and approved by the research committee, minimizing any confidentiality risk.



## **5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, the results gathered from the different sources: questionnaire, interview, and classroom observation regarding the teacher's perceptions and the classroom implementation of alternative assessment for young EFL learners are presented and discussed, as well as the examination towards establishing an alignment with the school's evaluative proposal. The results have been grouped in such a way that they respond to the general objective and the specific objectives established for this research study.

### **5.1 Teacher's perceptions and experiences - coding of data**

The process used to analyze transcripts from the 16 individual interviews conducted to uncover codes and themes is described in detail in this chapter. Coding means that the researcher can attach labels to the groups of data that depict what each group is about. Coding sifts data, sorts it, and allows researchers to make comparisons with other groups of data. As stated in the previous chapter the three levels of analysis adopted from Urquhart (2013) were the following: (a) open coding, (b) selective coding, and (c) theoretical coding. At each level of analysis, a constant comparison was used to distill the data further, until themes began to emerge from the data. Included in the chapter are figures and graphics used to present detailed code and theme data.

Transcripts were uploaded into computer software, NVivo, for further analysis. Each interview was coded again manually using the software and then

compared to the manual coding initially completed during the interview collection. Coding the interviews again, having all 18 interviews to compare, aided constant comparative analysis techniques critical to grounded theory methodology. This process helped the researcher to remain consistent in emphasizing key points during coding. The open coding results included 46 codes from manual coding, as shown in Appendix 6.

In the next analysis phase, selective coding, the researcher searched to find categories emerging from the similarities in the open codes. Additionally, during the selective coding phase the research was mindful to sort the emerging categories based on which research study objective they belong to, that is to say, if they were perceptions, experiences, or suggestions of alternative assessment and its implementation within this School's context. Figure 1 includes the summary of the data and analysis process for open, selective, and theoretical coding.

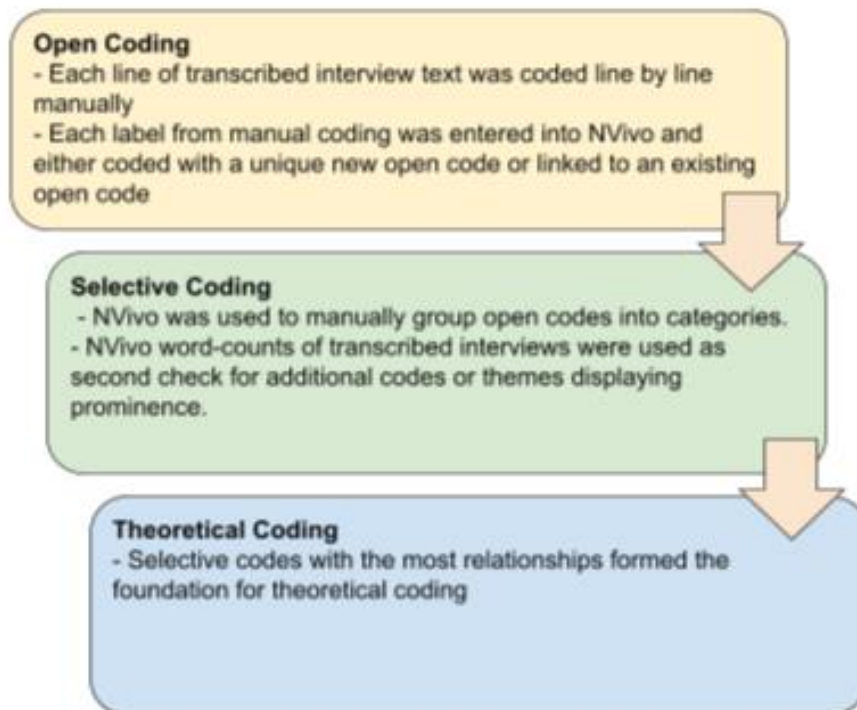


Figure 1. Data and Analysis Process.

Using NVivo software, the researcher used word-count queries to form word clouds as another tool in discovering selective codes from the data. In analyzing the prominence of codes, or the number of references assigned to a group of codes, selective codes emerged from the data. For the purposes of this study, the researcher defined prominence as having 8 or more references assigned to a code. Theoretical coding resulted from the relationships both within and across the open codes and selective codes. Relationships across the selective codes were analyzed. The selective codes with the most relationships formed the start of theoretical coding.

Adhering to grounded theory methodology, some questions were asked of some participants but not of others. Constant comparison was exercised to ensure that additional weight was not added on a per code basis only. For example, every participant was asked questions regarding the implementation of alternative assessment in their classrooms, but not every participant was asked questions about the process of introducing alternative assessment as the evaluative practice in this School. The latter was a question only asked to 6 participants out of 16 since this began to emerge as a code after interviewing the senior teachers in the study. The paragraph section headers that follow, indicate the selective codes that emerged and quotes from the interview transcripts that were chosen to elaborate on the main idea behind these codes. The researcher picked the quotes that best capture the essence of each selective code according to what the participants shared in the interviews. There were three distinctions in the selective codes:

perceptions on alternative assessment codes, experiences on alternative assessment codes, and institutional support codes.

## **5.2 Perceptions on alternative assessment codes**

**5.2.1 Starting point.** One of the perceptions on alternative assessment open codes was that *alternative assessment was a process and not a final product*, with more than 10 references, and the second open code was *alternative assessment that allows teachers to have a starting point* with more than 11 vignettes assigned. One of the ways a participant expressed this view was the following:

*To me, assessment is not an evaluation, it is not only a final product it is not only a stage. Evaluation is part of the process, so I am always evaluating my students.* (Teacher 16)

Another teacher expressed her view of alternative assessment as a starting point with the following statement:

*It is a way to know where my kids are and where my teaching is and where it needs to go. If I know what my kids are having trouble with or what my kids are achieving, I can go from there so it's like a starting point for my teaching. I can reorganize my teaching according to what I see in the diagnostic assessments.* (Teacher 4)

**5.2.2 Strengths.** Strengths is an umbrella term used in this research study that capsulizes some open codes that came up in the first process and that are now under this term, some of them are: rewarding, productive, promoting student's autonomy, and fostering critical thinking. Over 10 open codes were assigned to the

umbrella term of strengths. One hundred percent of participants mentioned at least three of these descriptors for the umbrella term of strengths.

Three participants notably captured the main idea of what the participants shared when asked what they believed to be an advantage of alternative assessment and more specifically dynamic assessment as the evaluative proposal in the School. One teacher heartily shared their perception of the advantages of alternative assessment in this context.

*In my case, dynamic assessment allows me to get familiar with each student and their current moment in the learning process. It is very rewarding to see how the students get involved in their learning process and as young as these students are, it is great to see them take control of what they can achieve in the foreign language. (Teacher 8)*

Another participant shared the benefits of using diagnostic evaluation as part of the teaching practices behind dynamic assessment.

*Dynamic assessment gives me the tools to know where they are right now and their needs, their specific needs, because I feel like everyone in this classroom is completely different, but they have these very specific needs each one of them, so the dynamic assessment and the diagnostic evaluation help me know how much they are improving and how much I need to scaffold in order for them to reach those goals. (Teacher 1)*

Lastly, this participant shared why they believe alternative assessment is a more productive evaluative method for EFL teachers.

*I think in the long run not that it makes it easier, it makes it more satisfying, or it makes it more productive because my kids are learning other skills that*

*I cannot teach them with the test on a paper, so I think that is more valuable to me. (Teacher 12)*

**5.2.3 Lack of time.** Over 15 references were assigned to this open code, elevating to a selective code. The participant responses when talking about their perceptions on alternative assessment as the proposed evaluative methodology were largely about having concerns about the lack of time; they have to implement such methodology. Teacher 4 discussed how lack of time can affect the implementation of alternative assessments in this context.

*We need more help, it is a lot of work, and we have a lot of different responsibilities, especially now after the pandemic. We do not really have that much time to plan a profound alternative assessment activity.*

(Teacher 4)

Participant 15 emphasized a similar sentiment about the lack of time to plan alternative assessment activities and brings up a new situation, which is the difficulty that the teacher team can face when having a new team member who might not be familiar with the dynamic assessment as the School's alternative assessment proposal.

*I want to say that time is something that we do not have. We have always tried to help new teachers along the way, but I feel that it is not enough. It is not enough to say in a planning session we evaluate students in this way because, well that has a background, that is, the explanation of all that is a theory underneath that there is a whole theory and to the new teacher there is no time to explain what Vygotsky wrote. It is very hard in my case to plan*

*for four subjects in two hours, and if on top of that you add a new teacher to the mix, there will be even less time. (Teacher 15)*

### **5.3 Experiences on alternative assessment codes**

**5.3.1 Alternative assessment implementation.** Over 11 references were assigned to this open code, elevating the code to a selective code. Several participants discussed the implementation of dynamic assessment in their EFL classrooms. Several participants discussed the importance of creating an emotional bond with the students when implementing dynamic assessment.

*I try to get to know them, I try to see what they are like, what their interests are, where they come from, what type of family they come from, what is the family dynamic at home, etc. I think all these factors affect my students' behaviors in the classroom. The more I know about them the more I'm able to do for them and I think they really appreciate that. (Teacher 2)*

Other participants also discussed the importance of having a positive emotional bond with students and how this can aid in the assessment process.

*I like to assess their oral skills at any point during the class, for example when I ask them in the mornings how they are or how they feel. I can see in the oral part of their language when I ask them how they are doing. It is part of a normal relationship with my students. Sometimes I will say hello to them, and I see the one that always answers like a robot hi! How are you? happy! and then there's the other one that tries the different words you teach them. If students feel like the teacher does not care for them, I feel like the learning process can fracture. (Teacher 3)*

Some participants discussed the usage of rubrics in their implementation of dynamic assessment with their students.

*When they (the students) see for example, there were doing it as a game or that you are using a rubric that they helped create or that they understand where they are at, and they can measure the progress I think it is positive because they feel comfortable and know that they are taken into consideration on what they want to be evaluated with. (Teacher 14)*

One participant described their strategy of using rubrics with young EFL learners in order to guide them through the self and peer evaluation process they will face later on.

*I also work with rubrics; we create a rubric I show them what it is I help them position themselves on the rubric. Sometimes, I'm not going to say that I do this every time with every test with every class, because it's not it wouldn't be possible to do it takes a long time, but we started with their behavior in class or how they followed the classroom agreements. I think that makes it easier for them to self-evaluate and to peer-evaluation, which they will have to do in later grades, and which is also a big part of alternative assessment. (Teacher 2)*

**5.3.2 Previous knowledge.** Over 15 references were assigned to this open code, for some participants the use of the student's previous knowledge in the learning process is fundamental.

*They (the students) see the regularities of what is being taught but that it begins from their previous knowledge and then analyzing the regularities is*



*key also because they get involved in the knowledge with the previous knowledge. (Teacher 5)*

*We have a tool that mediates our learning and teaching actions, we refer to it as the index, this tool guides our process throughout the different periods in the school year. We create the index in all of the different subjects, and it basically tells us what we know, what we want to learn, and at the end of the period, we can go back to it and see if we reached our goal. This tool begins with the student's previous knowledge. If we did not take that into consideration it would not be such a successful tool to mediate their learning. (Teacher 2)*

**5.3.3 Self-correction.** Another open code referred to several times by several participants, in 10 references to be exact, was self-correction. Two participants noted the advantages of implementing this strategy with their students as part of their alternative assessment practice.

*I like to use round tables to assess my student's integrated skills. The round table activity allows them to build upon each other's opinion or to argue against a classmates' opinion, and ultimately it allows them to self-correct and to reflect on their communicative skills. (Teacher 11)*

*I also give my students a chance to look at their work before submitting it. To correct their mistakes to learn from what they did wrong and maybe solve it in a different way. This is something that would be a crime in*

*traditional assessment practice. This allows my students to realize that we can learn from our mistakes and that they do not define our abilities. (Teacher 7)*

**5.3.4 Students' response.** As we discussed the participants' experiences with alternative assessment, the open code of student response had over 15 references assigned to it. Participants mentioned how in their experience their students have responded to alternative assessments in the EFL classroom.

*The whole process makes the students take an active role in their own learning. They have to constantly be measuring themselves and their learning and seeing what they need to get to the finish line, and we set the finish line together as a group. Throughout the period we're always measuring how far we are from that finish line. (Teacher 5)*

*I think they enjoy being made part of the process and my kids are too young to really understand the difference. I think most of them come from being in preschool here at the school where this is the first year where they're doing assessments, so I don't think they have anything to compare it to. But I see them become very involved in the whole process of evaluating their work and I think they enjoy it. (Teacher 9)*

**5.3.5 Parents' response.** Over 10 vignettes included parents' responses to alternative assessment, elevating this category to a selective code. The first reference below describes the process of reporting a student's performance to the parents and the reaction this teacher often gets.

*Sometimes parents only want to know results, like numbers, so when you start telling them about different activities and how the kids are responding to those, they're still expecting you to give them like a quantitative grade. They'll say things like give me a number is Mikey failing or not? so they always expect you to do that. There is a tradition in our country so it's hard to change it. So, I think it's a matter of teaching the parents. (Teacher 4)*

Another participant emphasized the need for parent training in the school's proposed evaluative method since they often become anxious because they expect to hear very traditional results on their children's performance.

*I mean the parents I know it's one thing because they probably are very traditional and when you start talking about the process, especially in the way we teach Math, which is completely opposed to the traditional way we all learned math, the parents often get impatient and begin trying to teach students things at home, this hurts the process we have here at school. (Teacher 6)*

#### **5.4 Institutional support codes.**

**5.4.1 Fresh reminder.** This selective code had 13 references assigned, several participants viewed the institutional training as a fresh reminder, one participant mentioned the importance of having constant training on the school's proposed methodologies.

*It's always a fresh reminder of our methodology, how we need to work. We can get caught up in our things and sometimes get off track. This is how we do it, this is how we need to do it and we don't know. Independently of how*

*long we've been working here, training is necessary to ensure that we are fulfilling the school's promise. (Teacher 1)*

Another teacher mentioned a similar idea to the previous participant but added the need for more time in order to attend the training sessions proposed by the school and to be able to take advantage of them.

*For me it is a refresher, but I think that we could always do more in terms of training. It all comes down to time. Sometimes we go into these training stressed for time to enter grades or write reports or do planning and we cannot really focus on what is being taught because we are anxious about what we are not currently doing in terms of admin work. (Teacher 6)*

**5.4.2 Bilingual training.** More than 10 references were assigned to the selective code of bilingual training. One participant's perspective was that teachers who use English as the instruction language in the School need training in English.

*I think for the bilingual teachers, we should have this training in English, all the material that we receive is in Spanish and even though most of us speak Spanish as well, I think the way that we could learn more about the theories and all the technical language would be if they were in English. Also, the process of acquiring a second language is not being taken into account in the training and this is essentially what we do. (Teacher 7)*

When asked about the support received by the institution in terms of training in bilingual education, one participant emphasized the need for change in this aspect.

*In terms of English coordination, there have been many changes because it has been a necessity to learn in English for bilingual teachers. But one still feels in a certain way abandoned because most of our training is in Spanish and directed towards the process of acquiring the first language. Also, I think it is important to see what is being studied at the moment, what new theories are out there in terms of bilingual education. (Teacher 6)*

**5.4.3 Teacher training focused on specific needs.** A participant described the desire for the teacher training session to be more regular and to be focused on teacher's specific needs when attempting to implement the School's evaluative proposals.

*I like to point out that if you don't know something they are (coordinators) just helping you out, they know that every teacher is in a different moment just like the students are. I would like the training to be much more regular, maybe we should have more spaces where we are trained by other teachers. Sometimes, the way she (trainer) gives a training is at a level that many teachers are not used to because of their level of education so, in a way, it could be like starting a little lower depending on the public's previous knowledge. (Teacher 14)*

Another participant spoke about their process as a new teacher in the School and how the training session could be intimidating since they were done with all of the teachers at the same time. This participant expresses that they did

not know much in terms of the School's proposals and that in the training it was consistently the same teachers participating.

*I am going back to when I first started her, I feel very intimidated to speak or to say I don't get it, or I don't know what you're talking about. Everyone else seemed to know where we were at, but I didn't, and I don't know if anyone else felt this because no one really said that. I feel like the training needs to be I don't know maybe separated, you know with the teachers that are new, the teachers that know these things in different groups to allow the new teachers to learn more. Because if you put them all together in a group, I think it's hard. It's hard for those teachers that are just trying to learn, and this is not an easy subject. This is very hard. This is changing our teacher's DNA, so you need that space. (Teacher 2)*

The School opted for a different training session structure while this research was taking place, One of the participants mentioned this change in the training style of the institution. During this training session, the School chose several senior teachers who they considered “experts” in the different proposed methodologies by the School to give seminars to other teachers. The teachers had to sign up for the seminars that interested them the most.

*During the break (semana de receso) in October they (the School) offered different seminaries with different approaches or different ideas and you get to choose where to go because sometimes we go to the meeting with the same thing repeatedly, but this way you learn, you choose what you want to*

*learn and you learn different things, but also you can see what you really do your needs really are in focus on that. (Teacher 4)*

**5.4.4 Smaller groups with more practical exercises.** Over 9 references were assigned to this open code, elevating to a selective code. The participant responses when talking about the training sessions also led to this code being prominent. One participant expressed that they sometimes had training sessions by grade levels and that these meetings were much more helpful since they felt it was more personalized and structured to help them with practical exercises based on the students in their grade.

*We have had group-level meetings and I think those meetings are a better space to talk about the proposals in terms of evaluation and to really focus on the students in each grade. It also helped me express myself without feeling self-conscious because the session was with my co-workers, and I felt comfortable expressing my needs or asking for clarification. Those meetings are not regular meetings and I think they should be. (Teacher 9)*

Participant 7 suggested that the training should be more dynamic, given that they are often repetitive, and it could benefit from using smaller differentiated groups based on the teacher's experience level with the School's proposals.

*Maybe if the teacher training were a little bit more dynamic and a little more focused towards what we actually want to do and if maybe things didn't repeat themselves all the time, we would be looking forward to all these types of training sessions. I want to make a suggestion, maybe there should*

*be different training based on different groups of teachers, like a more dynamic way of teaching things. (Teacher 7)*

## **5.5 Theoretical Coding**

As stated by Charmaz (2014), theoretical coding is a sophisticated level of coding that follows the codes the researcher has selected during focused coding. Theoretical codes specify possible relationships between categories developed during the selective coding phase. These codes help the research tell an analytic story that has coherence.

Three main factor themes emerged from the NVivo analysis. The themes resulted from the theoretical coding. The selective codes with the most relationships formed the start of theoretical coding. The three themes that resulted from theoretical coding included: (a) perceptions on alternative assessment codes, (b) experiences on alternative assessment codes, and (c) institutional support codes.

The first theme summarized many of the different perceptions participants had when implementing Alternative Assessment in the primary EFL classroom. The overall concept of implementing Alternative Assessment was a positive one as the participants were able to see the strengths from using this evaluative method. However, participants also expressed under this theme, the lack of time to properly implement dynamic assessment, especially for the homeroom teachers who oversee several subject and logistics in the classroom.



The second theme described the experiences of implementing DA by the participants in their classrooms. As a result of reviewing the relationship between the open and selective codes in this category, the findings show that teachers have had both positive and negative experiences. The results from this theme give room to the suggestions for improvement found in the third theme.

Finally, the third theme reviewed the support provided by the institution to train teachers. The participants expressed strengths and weakness of the support supplied by the School in terms of trainings. These three themes emerged from the analysis in the NVivo software and helped the researcher reach three of the four specific objectives in this research study.

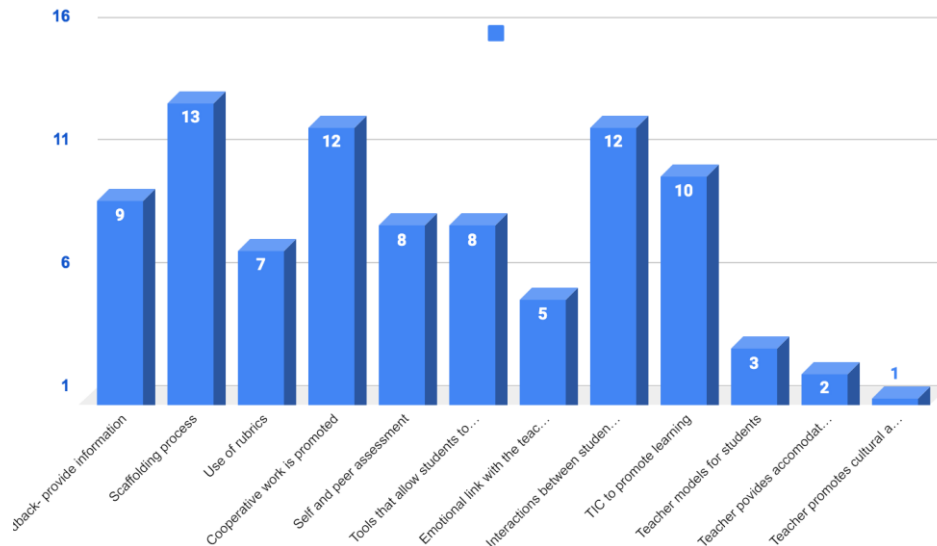
### **5.6 Implementation of the pedagogical practice in the EFL classrooms**

To examine the implementation of the pedagogical practice of dynamic assessment in the EFL primary classroom, classroom observations were made. The observation guidelines were created in accordance with what the participants mentioned in the previous interviews. The observation sheet included the following parameters that according to the participants were implemented in their EFL classrooms as part of the evaluative method of dynamic assessment. The criteria for the classroom observations are described in *Table 3* below.

Classroom Observation guide
Feedback- provide information about both the strengths and weaknesses of students
Scaffolding process
Use of rubrics
Cooperative work is promoted
Self and peer assessment
Tools that allow students to track their progress
Emotional link with the teacher
Interactions between students and teacher
TIC to promote learning
Teacher models for students
Teacher provides accommodations for the students' different levels of English
Teacher promotes cultural awareness

Table 3 - Classroom observation guide

Graph 5 shows the results from the classroom observations made by the researcher and provided the study with the results to the specific objective to examine the implementation of the pedagogical practice of dynamic assessment in the School's EFL primary classrooms.



Graph 5 - Results from Classroom Observations

**5.6.1 Feedback- The teacher provides information about both the strengths and weaknesses of students.** This criterion was met by 56.25% (9 teachers) of the participants in the classroom observations. One participant went around the classroom, giving individual feedback to each student while assessing their skills. From what was observed by all the 9 teachers who adhere to this criterion in their classroom observations, feedback took several forms depending on the students who were receiving it.

Another participant provided students with written feedback while they were doing classwork. This participant explained that because the students in this grade are so young, they have a feedback system with different colors which allows the students to understand the feedback given by their teacher. It was observed that all the 9 participants in this criterion used feedback with students before the students handed each particular assessment activity.

**5.6.2 Scaffolding process.** 81.25% (13 teachers) of participants met this criterion during their classroom observations. Scaffolding was the criterion most fulfilled by the participants of this study during their classroom observations. When asked about this process, one participant explained the importance of scaffolding for the students' process.

*Scaffolding is the base of what we do here in the School, as teachers we support our students' learning by offering assistance throughout their learning process. This support is removed in stages until the students can do the task without the assistance of the teacher or the assistance of a more knowledgeable peer. (Teacher 2)*

One participant used scaffolding between peers. During an assessment activity, the teacher paired up students based on their English level, making pairs with one student who was struggling and one who was more knowledgeable in the task at hand. This participant described the process and the thought behind this scaffolding strategy.

*Every year we have students who have different levels and different abilities with the foreign language. For me as their teacher, it is important to acknowledge this and to use it in order to guide their learning. The more advanced students thrive while explaining to the other students what they already know and the lower-level students learn by seeing their peers do the task at hand, much more than if I were to just model the task. I think this goes hand in hand with social constructivism which is a pillar in this School's pedagogy. (Teacher 3)*

**5.6.3 Use of rubrics.** The use of rubrics was a criterion which came up in several of the participant interviews. During the classroom observations it was noted that 43.75% (7 teachers) of participants used this method during the observed classes. One participant used rubrics created with the students to mediate their writing process. Students would self-assess their written productions in the draft stage with the rubric before handing in the final copy to be assessed by the teacher with the same rubric.

Another participant opted for rubrics when helping their students assess their own behavior in terms of the classroom agreements they had previously created at the beginning of the year. According to another participant, rubrics help students take an active role in their learning process.

*When you introduce rubrics to the students, they measure themselves and know where they are and where they need to go. As teachers we guide them, so this process is not a competitive one but a self-awareness process where each student measures his/ her own process and sets his/her own goals. (Teacher 7)*

**5.6.4 Cooperative work is promoted.** A total of 12 teachers which is equivalent to 75% of the participants used cooperative work in their observed lessons. Cooperative work was observed in different activities throughout the observations. Three participants used cooperative work in their Math classes. One of these three participants described the process of cooperative work in the student's Math lessons.

*In Math, we use something called "situaciones problema" which is basically learning Math through the use of problem-solving techniques. As language teachers we are often in charge of other subjects, but the alternative assessment does not stop with English class, it is a transversal tool. The students learn to solve problems which are often games created by the teachers and they learn together as they solve the problem at hand, so cooperative work is fundamental in this process. (Teacher 15)*

Another participant used cooperative work in science class as students did research on their project about bees. The evaluation of this task is a self-assessment that students have to do at the end of the project and that reflects their own learning process during the project.

*Every period we have a project where we integrate the areas, in this period we are learning about bees. This period has been worked on with Science*

*and English. The students have been researching in groups and we have read several texts on bees. We also had a visit from an expert beekeeper and the students were able to strengthen their knowledge with this visit. The assessment process with this project is a self-assessment where students evaluate their own process and a writing activity where they blend both English and Science to write about their learning on the subject. (Teacher 6)*

**5.6.5 Self and peer assessment.** A total of 50 % of participants (8 teachers) used self and peer assessment as part of their implementation of dynamic assessment in their classroom observations. This strategy, according to the participants who applied it, allows students to be mindful of their process while also promoting their argumentative skills when assessing other peers. One participant who used peer assessment in their class, described the process as a way to promote self-awareness and metacognition in the students.

*When we begin introducing the students to the process of peer assessment, we first model it as to guide them in terms of what words they can use to describe what works and what needs work. Eventually we want students to internalize the characteristics of quality work by evaluating the work of their peers. Finally, to become aware of their own learning process and to be able to evaluate it in an honest manner. (Teacher 8)*

**5.6.6 Tools that allow students to track their progress.** The use of tools that aid students in tracking their progress was evidenced with 50% of the participants (8 teachers) in the classroom observations. This criterion was closely

linked with the use of rubrics to mediate the students' learning. It was listed individually because it was also evidenced that the teachers used what they refer to as the "index", which as one participant describes it, is the institution's tool to mediate the learning of students.

*Every period we introduce the students to the index, there is a general index that groups together all the areas taught in English and is made up from all of the subject's indexes. The index is a tool that guides both the teacher and the student in the path to a goal set by both players. The students determine what they want to know within each area, and this goes in the index.*

*Throughout the period the teacher must review the index with the students to see if they are on their way to the goals they set at the beginning of the year. If I have to describe it is like a KWL chart of sorts where we list what we know, which is our previous knowledge, what we want to know, the goal we all set as a group and at the end we decide if we met this goal and talk about what we learned. (Teacher 3)*

**5.6.7 Emotional link with the teacher.** This criterion was observed with 5 participants out of the 16 in the study, roughly 31%. One participant described the importance of emotional bonds in the assessment process.

*This year, due to the pandemic and the whole situation with Covid- 19, we began to work with emotions and mindfulness in the classroom. Our English project this period is about emotions, and the reason is that emotion is a factor that can alter the student's assessment process. For me as a teacher, it is important to know how my students are feeling before I begin to assess*

*them, because a bad day can mean a different grade from a student. We work with the students in the zones of regulations where they have to identify how they are feeling and what they can do to control that emotion in order to continue their day at school in the best way possible. (Teacher 1)*

Other participants were also using the zones of regulation to guide students through emotions that could harm their learning process. The participants who met this criterion also expressed the importance of the students being able to confide in their teachers with other aspects besides the academic. In the interviews, 100% of the participants spoke about the importance of having a positive relationship with their students as part of their teaching practice.

**5.6.8 Interactions between students and teachers.** This criterion referred to the interactions that took place between teachers and students amidst an evaluative activity. During the classroom observations, several interactions were recorded, 75% of participants engaged in interactions in the assessment process. One participant illustrates the necessity for interaction while students are being assessed.

*I must guide my students through this process, it is not enough to hand them a paper and expect them to answer my questions. I need to go around making sure they understand the instructions and that they can express their knowledge in the activities. (Teacher 11)*

**5.6.9 Information and Communication Technology to promote learning.**

A total of 62.5% of the 16 participants (10 teachers) used Information and



Communication Technology (ICT) to promote learning in the classroom observations. One of the participants described the usage of a reading platform in her English classes.

*In the School, we use Raz kids, which is a platform that allows students to improve their reading skills in a foreign language. The platform provides the students with leveled books and with tools like recording themselves to listen to their own reading and self-assess. The platform also provides the teachers with benchmark passages to assess the students reading level and fluency. (Teacher 4)*

Another participant used technology tools to assess students during a round table discussion about the narrative text the students read in English. The teacher used a technological platform to first collect suggested questions from the students and to then assign the students talking prompts and questions which assessed their knowledge of the story they read this period. Another participant uses a video recording platform to assess the students' oral skills when asking them to record video journals every week with the tablets provided by the School.

**5.6.10 Teacher models for students.** This criterion was met by 18.75% of the participants (3 teachers). The participants who modeled for the students in the observed lessons are the teachers with the youngest students in the primary session. One of the three participants explains that this is a type of scaffolding that the teacher does with the youngest students who are still getting used to following instructions in the foreign language.

*Because of our students' English level, we must model for them, this is the first year of formal education for these children and by modeling, we are able to show the students what we expect their work to look like or how we expect them to accomplish a task. It is a great technique to guide them along with their learning. (Teacher 15)*

#### **5.6.11 The teacher provides accommodations for the students'**

**different levels of English.** This criterion was met by 12.5% of participants a total of 2 teachers. The participants who met this criterion, design different assessments based on specific cases of students who are new to the school and do not possess the same level of English as their peers. The assessments cognitively demand the same for all students but the assessment for new students had different strategies to help the student understand the questions better. One of the participants described this process.

*We agreed as a group that we will have two types of assessment based on the student's exposure to the foreign language. The second assessment was designed as an instrument to facilitate the development of competencies. (Teacher 9)*

**5.6.12 The teacher promotes cultural awareness.** One participant promoted cultural awareness during the classroom observations for this study. The participant assessed the students in relation to a text about Chinese traditions and had the students relate this information to their own culture by asking the students thought-provoking questions. Students were assessed on their oral skills, but the assessment activity also promoted critical thinking as well as cultural awareness in students.

Another participant assessed the students' grammatical knowledge through the creation of a recipe book. The aim of this activity was to first discover the uniqueness of the cuisine in this country and then to share this information in a recipe book. During this activity, the students became self-aware of their own culture and were interested in discovering where the ingredients came from and why people cook this way in their country but use different ingredients and methods in other cultures. This activity promoted cultural awareness while implementing dynamic assessment activities.

## **5.7 School's Proposal**

As mentioned previously the main focus for phase 3 of this research study was to find the correlation between the School's proposal of the evaluative method, in this case, dynamic assessment, and the classroom implementation by the primary teachers. To accomplish this analysis, it was needed to interview coordinators of the School to get acquainted with the School's proposal in terms of assessment.

During the analysis of these interviews, six themes emerged. The analysis of these two interviews was different than the previous coding stages due to the number of participants for this phase (2). The six themes that emerged were: the School's history in terms of pedagogical decisions, the School's methods, the use of project-based learning, the Alternative Assessment process, the teachers' learning process and the classroom observation process.

**5.7.1 School's pedagogical history.** The School has three main pillars also referred to as the School's three main lines of research. These three pillars influenced all of the School's decision in terms of pedagogy. One of the participants described these three pillars:

*We began basically with 3 lines of research, we worked on psychogenetics because the studies of Piaget had a lot of influence on the entire cognitive line. We worked a lot on the training of teachers in the Information processing and later on all the cultural historical work. We decided to have a spiral curriculum because the same theory taught us that students had to go up the levels of performance and that it was not necessary to teach so much content but basically to create axes for each area of knowledge that will articulate the conceptual and procedural contents and that is how we were putting together the design from preschool to grade 11 (Participant 17)*

**5.7.2 The School's methods.** The School prioritizes the comprehension and textual production in both languages and this is the main guideline for the bilingual teachers when planning their lessons and projects. Most of the homeroom teachers in the School teach several subjects in English as explained by participant 18, the School has chosen different globalizing methods for subjects like Math and Science.

*The method is the reflection of that pedagogical thought, so the method could not be a traditional method but a globalizing method. In English we have the textual practice of the seven linguistic levels and that textual practice changed the way we teach reading and writing in both languages. Each area has been developing its own methodologies, so in Mathematics we have the problem situations (Situaciones problema). In Natural Sciences the Scientific Method and thus we blend the globalizing method with special methods for each area of study and that will always guarantee that we do not work in a traditional way. (Participant 18)*

**5.7.3 The use of project-based learning.** Another key aspect of the School's methodology is the use of project based learning (PBL). The teachers are expected to use projects for the treatment of information to regulate the students' learning. Participant 18 describes the process that the teachers follow when implementing PBL in their classrooms:

*We studied quite a few globalizing methods and we chose one a classroom project for the treatment of information. This type of project begins with a procedural thread. This thread should consistently reflect the relationship*

*between the learners' needs and the school's pillars. Another tool that teachers use is an index which allows the children and the teachers to observe the development of the project. The discussion remains throughout the project because it has to do with what the children talk about and discuss. (Participant 18)*

**5.7.4 The Alternative Assessment processes.** The School has been working towards implementing Alternative Assessment as the evaluative method for over 5 years. As described by participant 17, the School began this process and followed the works of Vygotsky with the Zone of real and proximal development. The evaluation process has three moments, the initial evaluation, formative, and the summative evaluation.

*We arrived 4 -5 years ago to the subject of evaluation. The concept of creating a formative evaluation has 3 moments, the diagnosis of the process, the summative and dynamic evaluation. We apply it more with the concept of a zone of real and proximal development when it is one to one. The formative is more for the group and the dynamic more so. We have already documented experiences of teachers who have done the dynamic evaluation with the children, where the children especially have participated at the beginning to examine where they themselves are and where they need to go. (Participant 17)*

Both participants in this phase highlight the importance of the students being active in the assessment process. Participant 18 discusses the significance of including the students in this process:

*It is very important in what we are learning that this evaluation results are public, that is, because it is necessary to break like that paradigm of competition among children. We strive to change that conception that evaluating is to classify the children; we evaluate to know the learning processes of our children. (Participant 18)*

**5.7.5 The teachers' learning process.** Participant 18 states the importance of the teachers' learning process for the School, in order to successfully follow the vision for an educational revolution. The School advocates for the teachers' to be trained in learning theories, in order to grasp the influence that their practice has in the students learning process.

*There are teachers who have already gotten on their feet because their vision of education has changed, so everything has to do with that, it has to do with the fact that the teacher already has a different representation of what learning is and of how their teaching affects that process. We cannot change evaluation if there is not a deep knowledge of how the students learn and how the strategies used by the teachers get that child to save that information, to build that knowledge. Everything has a lot to do with the vision that the School has of education, which is reflected in a practice towards an alternative evaluation. (Participant 18)*

The School's coordinators are aware that there are new teachers who may come into the institution with experience in other methods that differ from the School's proposed methods. It is encouraged that teachers begin their learning process much like the students; as participant 17 expresses, this process must be

done in a cultural setting and following the School's approach to learning just like in the classrooms. The school also encourages that fellow teachers with more experience guide the new teachers when needed.

*The knowledge of the teacher, as it happens with the students, occurs in the culture. We ask that new teachers who enter, let's say a new culture, a new organization like this School, where they face a change in methods to be then mobilized by this disruption of what they previously bring. There are those teachers who find aids so that they can continue to communicate and learn this new "speech". The teacher who desires to also change their perception of education and evaluation frequently begins to reach out first to colleagues to ask for help, and we encourage that. (Participant 17)*

**5.7.6 The classroom observation process.** The pedagogy office is in charge of periodically conducting classroom observations. Participant 18 explains the process of observing teachers in the School and mentions the classroom observation report created for this purpose (See Appendix 8).

*This pedagogy office must fulfill 2 objectives. One is the classroom observations that relates to the teacher's practice by verifying the pedagogical proposal in the classroom. In the class observation report, there are many points that have to do with the proposal but of course we don't expect the teacher to do it as it is, or to fulfill them all in the class observed. What we seek is that to see a teacher who keeps moving and desires to learn more about the proposal, we are aware that some teachers will learn faster than others, as the same applies to the children, and that is*



*acceptable. The second objective we seek is the level of argumentation behind the teachers' planning of lessons. (Participant 18)*

## **5.8 Consistency with what the school proposes**

As the general objective of this study was to establish if the teachers' practice of Alternative Assessment could be in alignment with what the School proposed in their method, for this final part of the results the School's classroom observation report criteria was used to analyze the researcher's classroom observations. The observation report provided by the School (Appendix 8) has as purpose to "verify if the sequencing of contents and strategies is being carried out in the classroom through a contemporary pedagogical proposal".

The report has different headings pertaining to the nature of the different pedagogical proposals of the school. These headings were: Classroom management strategies, Tools to track students' process, Cooperative work, Emotional environment, Dynamic assessment implementation, Feedback strategies, Use of ICT and Compliance of the pedagogic proposal.

**5.8.1 Classroom Management Strategies.** This section related to the teacher's decisions in the classroom. Some of the items within this section included the teacher's ability to create situations where the students faced cognitive imbalance. As described by Kibler (2011), cognitive imbalance refers to Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development that describes cognitive disequilibrium as a state of cognitive imbalance that individuals face when encountering information that requires them to develop new schema.

Throughout the classroom observations carried out in this study, it was found that 62.5% of the participants (10 teachers) successfully achieved this cognitive imbalance in their observed classrooms. Most of these participants relied on the project's "problematic question". Problematic questions, as their name implies, are questions that pose problems in order, not only to attract the attention of students because they are outlined in a striking or interesting way, but their main objective is to encourage constant investigation and generate new knowledge.

**5.8.2 Tools to Track Students' Process.** This section compiles four items that refer to the use of tools or strategies for the teachers and the students to track the process. The items make reference to the use of the mediating tool "index", which many participants mentioned in their interviews. As expressed by several participants before, the School relies heavily in the use of this tool to carry out the processing information projects proposed as part of their method.

It was observed that 100% of the participants use the index as a mediating tool to track the learning process of students. It was also observed that the participants evoked the students' previous knowledge in order to establish a "start

line". The "start line" allows the students to be conscientious of their own process and measure their own learning at the end of each academic period. It should be noted that all participants had the index tool publicly exposed in the classroom allowing students to have the possibility of making an insight into the road ahead before reaching the proposed goal.

**5.8.3 Cooperative Work.** This category describes the use of organized and structured activities which allow the students to work in small groups to enhance student learning. One of the items in this section refers to the teacher allowing the construction and reconstruction of knowledge among peers.

The School follows a socio-cultural model which is heavily influenced by the work of Vygotsky. This approach states that what learners can accomplish on their own is less indicative of their intellectual development than what they can do with peers' assistance in a social context. Vygotsky (1986) stated that concept formation initiates through social relationships and then culminates with the individual learner internalizing that concept. The School also proposes that the teachers role in the classroom is no longer as a dispenser-of-knowledge but that it changes to a facilitator of learning and cooperative work allows for this change to take place.

It was observed that 68.7% of participants use some type of cooperative work in the observed classes. One participant (Teacher 11) assessed the students during a round table, which was a cooperative work activity in English class, where students build upon the opinions of others. In this activity, the teacher gave clear instructions and expressed the expectation for the activity so that the students

understood how they were being assessed. The students enjoyed the activity, and the teacher was able to assess the different foreign language skills in an integrated cooperative activity.

**5.8.4 Emotional Environment.** This segment of the observation report provided by the School, refers to the emotional environment that promotes learning. The School expects the teachers to promote social behaviors in the classroom, as one of the key points of their mission is to develop the students' character. Teachers are expected to encourage students to treat each other with respect and use appropriate communication when in class. Students are motivated to perform well in a class that is perceived as emotionally safe, free from negative emotions and stress.

One of the items in this category is the teachers' ability to maintain a good atmosphere within the class that allows the construction of meanings. It was observed that 100% of the participants were mindful of the students' emotions and ensured that there was a positive environment suitable for learning in the classes observed. It is worth noting that 100% of the participants in their interviews mentioned this aspect to be a vital one in their students' learning process. It is also important to highlight that all of the participants had visual aids in the classroom about emotional awareness and management for the students to follow. The participants mentioned that this was also a key part of their project, and that the students were being educated on what they referred to as the zones of regulation.

The zones of regulation, according to Kuypers (2011) is a systematic, cognitive-behavioral approach used to teach students how to regulate their

feelings, energy, and sensory needs in order to meet the demands of the situation around them and be successful socially.

**5.8.5 Dynamic Assessment.** The fourth category in the observation report was the most important criterion for this research study. This section referred to the teachers process of dynamic assessment as the alternative assessment practice proposed by the School. The two items in this section described the use of an initial evaluation or diagnosis of the students as a starting point in the learning process. As well as the use of an evaluation of the process of the students and not just of the final stage in their learning.

It was observed that 100% of the participants conducted an initial evaluation. And more than that, they used that initial assessment to help their students to place themselves at the starting point of the learning process guided to the proposed goal. It was also discovered that 100% of the participants also conduct an evaluation of the process of each student. The student is the center of the process evaluation, showing that self-evaluation and peer evaluation strengthen the development of their abilities and skills.

**5.8.6 Feedback Strategies.** This category refers to the usage of feedback strategies in the classroom. In the classroom observation it was noted that 62.5% of participants (10 teachers) used quality feedback strategies. Quality feedback as described by Shute (2008) focusses on addressing what is working and what is not working in a student's task. It should motivate learners by acknowledging what has been done well and expressing in a sensitive manner what needs to improve while encouraging the students to persevere.

For the feedback to be effective, learners need to act on the information to improve their work. Students need to develop an appropriate understanding of what is expected of them in a task. It was observed that 7 of the participants guided the students through the creation and internalization of rubrics to assess their own work and the work of others. It should be noted that 8 of the participants relied on self and peer assessment as a feedback strategy.

**5.8.7 Use Of ICT.** This section refers to the use of technology integrated strategies during the learning activity. To the School the use of ICT should have a relationship to the proposal, in which teachers' and students' roles evolve as learners are no longer dependent on solely the teacher as main source of information.

The use of these tools was also evidenced in the application of the scientific method by 10 teachers, where the students pose hypothesis and must carry out an investigation using the technological tools presented by the teacher. Another use of technology observed, was when the teachers used the tablets provided by the school to strengthen the literacy process through an application called Raz kids.

This strategy went hand in hand with the proposal of the seven linguistic levels which is carried out to lead students to oral and written comprehension and production of different types of texts in the foreign language.

**5.8.8 Pedagogic Proposal.** This section specified the teacher's general knowledge and implementation of the School's pedagogic proposal. One of the administrative participants in this study expressed the following referring to this item in the observation report:

*We are aware that the teachers are in different moments in their learning process, and it is not an easy task to come to the School and start applying the methods that have taken us 10 years to hone. When we do these observations, we keep this in mind, and look for other clues beside the lesson observed to find the School's proposal, for example we will interview a student or look at the notebooks to find evidence that the pedagogical proposal is taking place in this classroom. (Participant 18)*

One of the items in this category refers to the teacher's knowledge of the subjects discussed in class as the teacher must provide scaffolding and play the role of the more knowledgeable peer in this process. According to the observations and to the statement by participant 18, it was observed that 100% of the teachers had general knowledge of the School's proposals and implemented at least one of the criteria in this observation report.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that there was a correlation between the number of years in the School and the consistency with which the teachers applied

the School's proposal. This was observed in first the interviews conducted to the newer teachers and their classroom observations.



## 6. CONCLUSIONS

### **Main findings on teachers' perceptions and experiences.**

Some conclusions were made after the discussion of the findings of this research, which aimed at describing the teachers' views and experiences with Alternative Assessment. It can be concluded that teachers have a clear understanding of the concept of Alternative Assessment and that they are aware of the benefits of implementing this assessment practice in their classrooms. The findings also showed a significant concern on the lack of time teachers have in order to implement and learn more about dynamic assessment as the School's proposed evaluative methodology.

It can also be concluded that the teachers had positive experiences when implementing this assessment practice with the students and saw positive outcomes in their learning process and overall personal growth. However, it was also indicated that the teachers had different experiences with the parents around the practice of alternative assessment and the demands the parents make based on their traditional assessment background.

### **Implementation of dynamic assessment in the Primary EFL classrooms.**

Based on EFL primary teachers' implementation of Alternative Assessment and more specifically the School's proposed methodology of dynamic assessment, the findings showed a strong emphasis on 4 of the main criteria in the observation guidelines created by the researcher. The results showed that the strongest points observed by all participants were: the process of scaffolding to support the students' learning process, the use of cooperative work to reinforce the social

aspect of learning based on the works of Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, the teachers' strategies to ensure a proper emotional environment for learning and the use of technology integrated strategies during the learning activities.

### **Consistency with the proposal.**

The findings showed that there is a partial alignment of the teachers' practice of Alternative Assessment and the proposal of the institution, therefore, more training is required for new teachers to ensure that the School's proposal is wholly met by all the primary teachers.

The results showed that the strongest points of consistency with the proposal were: the execution of an initial, a formative and summative evaluation of the students' learning process, also the teachers' positive emotional bond with students which allows for a positive learning environment, the use of the "index" as a mediating tool for the students' learning process and finally the implementation of ICT strategies and cooperative learning strategies in accordance with the social construction of knowledge guided by the works of Vygotsky.

### **Possible areas of improvement**

Teachers gave a lot of importance to the pedagogical component, and the benefits of having professional trainings in order to refresh and enhance their previous knowledge. Even though, teachers expressed how the institutional support has been helpful, the findings show that teachers deem necessary the implementation of bilingual trainings alongside with the usual Spanish professional development trainings.

According to the teachers' views on institutional support, the findings show that teachers consider that there should be a more structured support system for new teachers entering the institution as well as training for specific needs depending on what teachers struggle with in terms of the School's proposal. All in all, the School has contributed to its teachers' professional development with different trainings and has steered them toward the school's pedagogical goal of revolutionizing education.

## **6.1 FINAL REMARKS**

Based on my own role as a teacher of this institution and the role of researcher in this study, the development of this thesis has meant a great opportunity to analyze, reflect and improve on my own teaching practice. The process of interviewing and observing my fellow teachers has also helped to build a bridge that was not existent before, where the institution is open to hear about the teachers' views and ideas without the teachers being fearful of any consequences.

Secondly, this research has given me a more comprehensive view of the institution's mission to revolutionize education and the important role that we, the teachers play in achieving this mission. It has helped me as a teacher to feel more confident in the decisions I take in the classroom and the objectives behind them. I am thankful that I was able to live this process and to realize that I am a teacher who dares to dream about the revolution of education.

Finally, as a researcher, this study has given me a meaningful academic view of my context and the challenges in regard to the understanding of the teachers' perceptions and implementations of alternative assessment and the influence the institution has had on the teachers' professional growth. It has also provided me with concrete elements to guide the institution in the aspects that need to be improved.

## **6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Professional development training can help teachers to become proficient in many different topics but can also be used to educate teachers in the proposed curriculum and School's methodologies. Avidov-Ungar (2016), considers that professional development allows teachers to find a balance between the needs of the school, the needs of the students while promoting knowledge, skills, and values. Teacher training can make teachers more efficient but can also be intimidating for new teachers who might not be adept in the methodology proposed by the school. If there is a set proposal in certain methodologies that revolves around revolutionizing education, then it makes sense to constantly train teachers who might join the school with different beliefs and experiences.

It can be more beneficial to group teachers and to address their particular needs in separate training sessions than to group all of the teachers, senior and new teachers, and teach the same topic to all of them. Some of the senior teachers might already know this and be familiar with the content while other teachers might need an introduction course to be able to move forward in their development. The

school might need to adapt its training accordingly to better guide teachers towards what is expected to happen in the classrooms.

### **6.3 LIMITATIONS**

The potential limitations in this present study include the fact that it solicited the perceptions and experiences of a representative but relatively small sample of the whole population of EFL School teachers. Also, results cannot be generalized to preschool, middle school and high school teachers, and teachers of other subjects different from English, Math, Science and Social Studies. Another possible limitation includes the covid-19 restrictions for students and teachers, these new regulations may have altered the regular interactions in the classrooms between the students and teachers.

Additionally, another limitation to this study was the possible inaccurate responses to the questionnaire and interviews as participants may seek to provide responses that would be acceptable to the interviewer. Finally, the limited time spent in the field could also have had an impact in the classroom observations.

## 7. REFERENCES

- Avidov-Ungar, O. (2016). A model of professional development: Teachers' perceptions of their professional development. *Teachers and Teaching*, 22(6), 653-669. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2016.1158955>
- Berry, R. (2011). Assessment reforms around the world. In *Assessment reform in education* (pp. 89-102). Springer, Dordrecht.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Colegio Bennett: la escuela que enseña a cambiar el mundo. (2019, October 27). *El País*, p. 12. Proyectos especiales. <https://www.elpais.com.co/marcas-de-corazon/colegio-bennett-la-escuela-que-ensena-a-cambiar-el-mundo.html>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Demir, M., Cynthia, A. T., & Başboğaoğlu, U. (2018). Comparative investigation of alternative assessment methods used in Turkey and United States elementary 4th grade mathematics curriculum. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 10(7), 72-82. <https://doi.org/10.5897/IJEAPS2018.0561>
- Fant, M., & Cole, R. (1990). Spoken letter recognition. *Advances in neural information processing systems*, 3, 220-226.
- Fatemipour, H., & Jafari, F. (2015). The effect of dynamic assessment on the development of passive vocabulary of intermediate EFL learners. *J. Educ. Manage. Stud*, 5(1), 41-51.
- Garcia, G. E., & Pearson, P. D. (1994). Chapter 8: Assessment and diversity. *Review of research in education*, 20(1), 337-391.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (2017). *Discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

- Janisch, C., Liu, X., & Akrofi, A. (2007). Implementing Alternative Assessment: Opportunities and Obstacles, *The Educational Forum*, 71(3), 221-230.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131720709335007>
- Kibler J. (2011) Cognitive Disequilibrium. In: Goldstein S., Naglieri J.A. (eds) Encyclopedia of Child Behavior and Development. Springer, Boston, MA.  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-79061-9\\_598](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-79061-9_598)
- Krnčević Purić, D. (2020). *Alternative Assessment: EFL Teacher's Perspectives* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Rijeka. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Department of English Language and Literature).
- Kutbiddinova, S. (2021). Advantages And Disadvantages of Alternative Assessment. *integration Of Science, Education and Practice. Scientific-Methodical Journal*, 110-113.
- Kuypers, L. (2011). The zones of regulation. *San Jose: Think Social Publishing*.
- Lochner, B., Conrad, R., & Graham, E. (2015). Secondary teachers' concerns in adopting learning management systems: A US perspective. *TechTrends: Linking Research and Practice to Improve Learning*, 59(5), 62-70.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-015-0892-4>
- Макаренко, О. Є. (2014). *Advantages of Alternative Assessment in Teaching ESP* (Doctoral dissertation, Харківський національний університет ім. ВН Каразіна).
- Maxwell, G. S. (2001). *Teacher Observation in Student Assessment*. Brisbane: Queensland School Curriculum Council.
- Mills, J., & Birks, M. (2014). *Qualitative methodology: A practical guide*. Sage.
- Naeini, J., & Duvall, E. (2012). Dynamic assessment and the impact on English language learners' reading comprehension performance. *Language Testing in Asia*, 2(2), 1-20.  
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473920163>
- Nasab, F. G. (2015). Alternative versus traditional assessment. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 2(6), 165-178.

- Nasri, N., Roslan, S. N., Sekuan, M. I., Bakar, K. A., & Puteh, S. N. (2010). Teachers' perception on alternative assessment. In *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* (Vol. 7, pp. 37–42). Elsevier Ltd.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.10.006>
- Nazari, B. (2012). Teach-to-Test Instruction of Dynamic Assessment: A critical overview. *Bellaterra Journal of Teaching & Learning Language & Literature*, 5(4), 56-68.<https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/jtl3.468>
- Poehner, M. E., & Infante, P. (2017). Mediated development: A Vygotskian approach to transforming second language learner abilities. *TESOL Q*, 51(2), 332-357.<https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.308>
- Rea-Dickins, P. (2004). Understanding teachers as agents of assessment. *Language Testing*, 21(3), 249-258.  
<https://doi.org/10.1191/0265532204lt283ed>
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Shute, V. J. (2008). Focus on formative feedback. *Review of educational research*, 78(1), 153-189.
- Stake, R. E. (2010). *Qualitative Research: Studying How Things Work*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Tabatabaei, S. & Bakhtiarvand, M. (2014). Application of Dynamic Assessment in Second and Foreign Language Teaching. *International Journal for Teachers of English*, 4(3), pp. 1-14.
- Tan, K. H. (2012). How Teachers Understand and Use Power in Alternative Assessment. *Education Research International*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1155/2012/382465>



- Tsagari, D., Vogt, K., Froelich, V., Csépes, I., Fekete, A., Green, A., & Kordia, S. (2018). *Handbook of assessment for language teachers*. European Commission. Retrieved from [https://taleproject.eu/pluginfile.php/2129/mod\\_page/content/12/TALE%20Handbook%20-%20colour.pdf](https://taleproject.eu/pluginfile.php/2129/mod_page/content/12/TALE%20Handbook%20-%20colour.pdf)
- Tosuncuoglu, I. (2018). Importance of Assessment in ELT. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 6(9), 163-167. <https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v6i9.3443>
- Tzuriel, D. (2021). Dynamic assessment of young children. In *Mediated Learning and Cognitive Modifiability* (pp. 89-98). Springer, Cham.
- Urquhart, C. (2012). *Grounded theory for qualitative research: A practical guide*. Sage.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (ed. by M. Cole, V. John–Steiner, S. Scribner & E. Souberman). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. (Original translated work published 1962).

## 8. APPENDICES

### 8.1 Appendix 1 Consent Form



Universidad Icesi – Maestría en Enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera  
Investigación: Can Alternative Assessment for Young EFL Learners as a Pedagogical Practice Match the Curriculum Proposal in a Bilingual Private School in Colombia?

Investigadora Principal: Jennyfer Esguerra Sanchez

Título de la investigación: Alternative Assessment In The EFL Classroom Expectation Meets Reality

Tutora: Cristina Peñafort

Sitio de investigación: la investigación se llevará a cabo en el Colegio Bennett,

#### Introducción:

La Maestría en Enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera tiene como requisito de grado la realización de un trabajo de grado de tipo investigativo. El propósito de este trabajo es tanto el desarrollo de competencias investigativas por parte de los docentes, como la práctica reflexiva. En este sentido, se busca entender y establecer si existe una consistencia entre la implementación de la evaluación alternativa llevada a cabo por los maestros de lengua extranjera en las aulas y la expectativa propuesta por la institución académica.

Para poder proceder con el ejercicio investigativo, es necesario contar con la autorización de la institución académica para observar, llevar a cabo encuestas y entrevistas a maestros y usar información de la propuesta pedagógica del colegio. Esta investigación se llevará a cabo durante seis meses y hará parte del trabajo desarrollado en el área de Seminario de Investigación.

¿Por qué razón se está haciendo este estudio? Esta investigación se está realizando como proyecto de investigación requisito para grado de la Maestría en Enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera en la Universidad Icesi. El estudio busca establecer si existe una consistencia entre lo que sucede en las aulas y lo que se espera de la práctica de los maestros y así generar estrategias para mejorar la práctica individual de los maestros y lograr que se cumplan las propuestas pedagógicas del colegio como se espera.

¿Cuáles son los procedimientos de este estudio? ¿Qué van a pedir a los participantes que hagan?

Durante esta Investigación la investigadora realizará encuestas a los maestros y directivos y llevará a cabo observaciones de diferentes clases de inglés en la sesión de primaria, las cuales se grabarán y se transcribirán para análisis.

¿Cuáles son los riesgos o inconvenientes del estudio? Se considera que no hay riesgos ni inconvenientes por participar en esta investigación. Los nombres e información de los participantes y de la institución permanecerá anónima en el estudio

¿Cuáles son los beneficios de este estudio? La participación de la institución y de los maestros en este estudio es de suma importancia para ambas partes. Para la institución significa la posibilidad de analizar el proceso que se lleva a cabo en las aulas y poder determinar si se debe actuar para asegurar que la propuesta y la expectativa de la práctica de la evaluación alternativa se esté llevando a cabo como es de esperar. Para los maestros significa la posibilidad de analizar y reflexionar en su práctica y en la implementación e importancia de la evaluación alternativa en sus clases de inglés. Así como el poder comprender y autoevaluar sus conocimientos en cuanto a la propuesta pedagógica del colegio de una manera no intimidante ya que su información se mantendrá anónima.

¿Se hará algún pago por la participación en este estudio? Los participantes no recibirán pago alguno por la participación en este estudio. Tampoco habrá consecuencias si se decide no autorizar la participación de algún participante.

¿Existen costos por participar en este estudio? No hay costos por participar en esta investigación.

¿Se puede dejar de participar en el estudio y cuáles son los derechos de los participantes ? Usted no tiene que autorizar su participación en este estudio si no lo desea. Si está de acuerdo con autorizar su participación en este estudio, pero luego cambia de opinión, se podrá solicitar el retiro en cualquier momento. No hay ninguna penalidad o consecuencia si se decide que no se quiere participar o no se quiere continuar participando.

Los participantes no están obligados a contestar preguntas relacionadas con el estudio que no quieran contestar.

¿A quién puedo contactar en caso de tener preguntas? Puede contactar a Jennyfer Esguerra al correo [Jennesguerra28@gmail.com](mailto:Jennesguerra28@gmail.com)

¿Qué uso harán de la información que se recolecta a partir de la investigación? La información recolectada en la presente investigación será usada con el fin exclusivo de conocer más sobre la práctica e implementación de la evaluación alternativa en las aulas y por los maestros de lengua extranjera de la sesión de primaria de la institución. No se publicarán nombres ni datos propios en los informes que se produzcan en el proceso de investigación. El uso de la información será confidencial y con propósitos académicos únicamente. Se requieren registros fotográficos y videos, en los que se puedan ver aspectos del proceso de aprendizaje decisivos para el desarrollo de esta investigación, se solicita su autorización para utilizar este material en la elaboración del documento final. Los registros grabados se transcribieron en el trabajo escrito mas no se incluirán los nombres de los participantes.

#### Documentación de consentimiento

Yo \_\_\_\_\_, identificado con \_\_\_\_\_ he leído este documento y decidí participar en el proyecto de investigación descrito arriba. El objetivo general, el tipo de participación que tendré y los posibles riesgos e inconvenientes han sido explicados de manera satisfactoria. Declaro entender que puedo retirarme en cualquier momento. Al escribir mi nombre yo certifico que he leído este documento de consentimiento y que estoy de acuerdo con participar en esta investigación.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nombre del participante

\_\_\_\_\_  
Documento de Identidad

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del participante

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha

## 8.2 Appendix 2 Welcome Email



September 21st, 2021

Dear Teacher,

**WELCOME** to the study *“Alternative Assessment In The EFL Classroom Expectation Meets Reality.”* I am very excited that you will be participating in this study, in this email, you will find important information about the research process including how to reach me. Attached you will find a PDF copy of your consent form, remember that this study is **100% anonymous** and your identity will be protected by the researcher Jennyfer Esguerra Sanchez if you need to contact the researcher please do this at this email: [jennesguerra28@gmail.com](mailto:jennesguerra28@gmail.com).

During this study, the researcher will spontaneously visit your class a total number of **two (2) times**, these observations will be recorded in order to transcribe the relevant information into the study. After the analysis process has been done, the recordings will be deleted. As part of this study, the researcher will conduct an **in-person interview** and a **google forms questionnaire** to analyze the diversity of the participants in this study. This interview will be scheduled in order to not interfere with your day-to-day responsibilities at the school.

This is the link to comply with the google forms questionnaire, please fill out this form in order to begin the study:

<https://forms.gle/9uEw1AgX6PoLFDKj9>

*Thank you again for your time and help with this thesis project, your participation is truly indispensable.*

Sincerely,

Jenn Esguerra.  
Researcher

## 8.3 Appendix 3- Teacher Questionnaire

# Teacher Questionnaire

This questionnaire is used as a tool to analyze teacher perceptions of classroom dynamic assessment.

---

\* Required

1. Email \*

---

### Confidentiality

All information that is collected in this study will be treated confidentially. While results will be made available you are guaranteed that neither you, this school nor any of its personnel will be identified in any report of the results of the study. [Participation in this survey is voluntary and any individual may withdraw at any time.]

2. Name (This will be kept anonymous and is only asked to ensure that everyone answers the questionnaire) \*

---

3. What is your gender? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Female

Male

4. How old are you? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Under 25
- 25-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60+

5. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Doctoral degree or equivalent (Ph.D., Ed.D., J.D., M.D.)
- Master's degree
- Four year college or university degree/
- Two-year associate degree from a college or university
- Certified to teach TEFL
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. How long have you been working as a teacher? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Over 40 years
- 30-39 years
- 20-29 years
- 10-19 years
- 5-9 years
- less than 5 years

7. How long have you been working as a teacher at this school? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Over 40 years
- 30-39 years
- 20-29 years
- 10-19 years
- 5-9 years
- less than 5 years

8. Which subjects do you currently teach? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- English only
- Math only
- Science only
- Social Studies only
- Content and language integrated areas (English, Math, Science and Social Studies)

## **8.4 Appendix 4 Interview Framework**

### **Interview framework**

#### **A. Background**

1. Tell me about yourself and your teaching background.
2. How has your background influenced your teaching beliefs and practice?
3. In what contexts have you taught so far?
4. Which type of assessment practice have you performed in previous jobs?

#### **B. Self-image**

1. How do you describe yourself as a teacher?
2. What do you enjoy most about your position?
3. How would you describe your relationship with your students? What do you do to ensure a healthy relationship with your students every year?

#### **C. Alternative Assessment Knowledge**

1. What is assessment?
2. What is the Relationship between Assessment and Instruction?
3. What do you know about alternative assessment?
4. What do you think about traditional assessment?
5. Does alternative assessment make your job easier?

#### **D. Alternative Assessment Perception**

1. What do you know about the school's proposal for the dynamic assessment?
2. What do you think are the advantages or disadvantages of implementing alternative assessment in the EFL classroom in the primary?
3. How do you implement alternative assessments with your students?



### **E. Alternative Assessment Experiences**

1. How do the students respond to this type of assessment?
2. How much freedom do you feel you have in choosing assessment activities in the school? How free should you be in doing so?
3. How does the assessment process look like in your classes? Does it always go according to plan?
4. Do you feel like the school's proposed assessment practices are achievable in the EFL classroom or is it impractical when assessing EFL students?
5. When reporting a student's progress to your superiors or parents, do you feel that alternative assessment is supported by them?

### **F. Institutional Support**

1. Have you attended a teacher training course here at the school? Describe it and explain what you liked and disliked about it?
2. In your opinion, how does the school support the development of the teachers when dealing with changes or innovations in the curriculum or school's proposed pedagogy?
3. Is this support enough? Suggestions?

### **G. Other**

1. Please describe your first year as a teacher of this school, how did you feel? How did you learn the school's proposed pedagogy practices? What was limiting? What was helpful?

## 8.5 Appendix 5 Administrator's Interview Framework

### Administrators Interview framework

#### A. Background

1. Tell me about yourself and how did you start here in this school?
2. How was that first year as an administrator in this school?

#### B. Self-image

1. How do you describe your relationship with the teachers who are under your supervision?
2. How do you describe yourself as a teacher administrator?
3. What do you enjoy most about your position?

#### C. Alternative Assessment Knowledge

4. Were you included in the school's implementation of the dynamic assessment process? If yes, explain how was that process from the admin's view, why was this decision taken?
5. As an administrator, how do you monitor the curricular fidelity of teachers for the proposed evaluative methodology?"
6. If you had to explain the school's proposed evaluative methodology how would you describe it?

#### D. Institutional Support

1. As an administrator, what procedures do you use, if any, to help teachers through the introduction and implementation of a dynamic assessment?
2. When asked to implement a new curriculum, what resources are available to support teachers through this change?"
3. What administrative actions, if any, do you think would support the onboarding of a new evaluative methodology?"

4. What is this process like every year for new teachers? How does the school ensure they are following the proposed methodologies?
6. How is alternative assessment seen by the families of the students in this school?
7. Are there any training sessions for the families to understand the school's evaluative proposal?

**E. Value proposal**

1. What is the school's value proposition?
2. In your opinion why do families keep bringing their children here to learn?

## 8.6 Appendix 6 Open Coding Results

Open coding results		
<i>Codes 1-16</i>	<i>Codes 17-31</i>	<i>Codes 32- 46</i>
Assessment is a requirement	The School follows 3 types of evaluation	The School's proposal is achievable but we need more time
Starting point	Alternative Assessment allows students to think critically	Parents ask for traditional rating of students
Diagnostic evaluation	Alternative Assessment promotes autonomy	Parents need to be trained on the school's proposals for evaluation
Scaffolding	There is not enough time to carry our alternative assessment	Trainings are enjoyable because we share our ideas
Get to the finish line	Parents do not support alternative assessment	Trainings are fresh reminders
Self-evaluation	Implement alternative assessment through self-corrections	Trainings have too much theory
Dynamic assessment refers to the process	Emotional link teachers-students	Trainings should be more practical
Traditional assessment is important	Student's previous knowledge	Teachers need pedagogical training in English
Traditional assessment is hard to move away from	Usage of rubrics	Trainings should be done in smaller groups based on teacher's levels of understanding on the School's proposals
Alternative assessment is complex	Peer-correction	Trainings need to be more focused on specific needs
Alternative assessment is rewarding	Students are less nervous with alternative assessment	As a new teacher observing my peers helped
Alternative assessment is more productive	Students enjoy being part of the process	Being a new teacher was overwhelming
Alternative assessment requires much more time	Students take an active role in their learning	I felt intimidated as a new teacher
Alternative assessment is a long process	Team work	Co-workers are an essential part of learning the School's proposals
Alternative assessment is difficult for new teachers	We have freedom to choose what we evaluate	Scientific method
7 Linguistic levels	Project based learning	Socio-constructivism

## 8.7 Appendix 7 Class Observation Format



Observation Sheet

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Observation # \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher # \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Observer \_\_\_\_\_ Recording # \_\_\_\_\_

Materials for analysis Yes No

<b>Feedback- provide information about both the strengths and weaknesses of students</b>	
<b>Scaffolding process</b>	
<b>Use of rubrics</b>	
<b>Cooperative work is promoted</b>	
<b>Self and peer assessment</b>	

<b>Tools that allow students to track their progress</b>	
<b>Emotional link with the teacher</b>	
<b>Interactions between students and teacher</b>	
<b>Other comments</b>	

## 8.8 Appendix 8 Class Observation Report

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION REPORT	
Criteria	
PURPOSE:	Verify if the sequencing of contents and strategies is being carried out in the classroom through a contemporary pedagogical proposal.
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES	
Integrated content during the activity	
The teacher is clear about the learning goal focused towards the development of his students.	
Does the teacher create situations and promote cognitive imbalance?	
Does the teacher use logical means to conduct the students toward the concept?	
Does the teacher use strategies for the treatment of information?	
Does the teacher invite his students to record what they learned in their notebook?	
Does the teacher solve the students' questions favoring the understanding of knowledge?	
Did the teacher give a clear explanation of the task?	
TOOLS TO TRACK STUDENTS' PROCESS	
Does the teacher recall previous knowledge before starting the activity in the classroom?	
Does the teacher start his project from a problem of reality, managing to motivate the group?	
The teacher uses the index to self-regulate learning	
Does the teacher use the BOA (guiding basis for action) as a means of teaching?	
COOPERATIVE WORK	
Does the teacher take into account the participation of all his students and encourage argumentation in the classroom?	
Does the teacher allow the construction and reconstruction of knowledge among peers?	
EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENT	
Was the teacher punctual upon arrival?	
Does the teacher maintain a good atmosphere within the class that allows the construction of meanings?	
Is the teacher respectful and courteous when addressing his students?	
Does the teacher occupy a place of authority within the classroom?	

<b>DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT</b>
Did the teacher conduct an Initial evaluation (Diagnostic)?
Does the teacher conduct an evaluation of the process?
<b>FEEDBACK STRATEGIES</b>
Does the teacher use feedback strategies?
<b>USE OF ICT</b>
Integrated strategies during the activity- Describes the use of ICT and its relationship with the value proposal.
<b>PEDAGOGIC PROPOSAL</b>
The teacher widely knows the subject to be discussed, has investigated it and the interest in making the subjects more complex is observed in his explanations. (various views of the problem)
In general, classroom practice is evidenced according to the School's proposal Pedagógica