



LICENCIATURA EN EDUCACIÓN CON ÉNFASIS EN INGLÉS

**PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT AS AN ALTERNATIVE INSTRUMENT TO
IMPROVE FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN FOURTH AND FIFTH
STUDENTS ON A PRIVATE SCHOOL**

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**TRABAJO DE GRADO PARA OPTAR AL TÍTULO DE
LICENCIADO EN EDUCACIÓN CON ÉNFASIS EN INGLÉS**

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2016

NOTA DE ACEPTACIÓN

JURADO

JURADO

Dedicated to

The almighty God of every knowledge, JEHOVAH.

Acknowledgments

During the development of this proposal, we thank all the teachers who contributed to this research formative process.

To the Education program for the support and partnership

To our families, husband and son, who were deprived from our time in order to accomplish our dreams.

Abstract

This study describes a research that was carried out in order to contribute to improve foreign language learning in fourth and fifth grade students of a private school. It is so relevant to highlight that the assessment instrument could be used in order to promote, improve and facilitate meaningful learning. Data was collected through a participatory observation, structured interview and survey and using a type of research called action research. The results revealed that the instruments of assessment used by the English teacher such as written exam, quiz and worksheet, these did not contribute to achieve the best outcomes in the English learning of the fourth and fifth graders but when the students did the assessments activities they had an active participation, they used the English language, they showed an interest in doing the activities and they did an self-reflection which allows them to realize that they are improving their English learning. The results obtained with the students revealed that assessment activities as a preliminary phase of portfolio contributed in improving the English learning process of the students of fourth and fifth grade. They gained meaningful knowledge in the English language.

Key words: portfolio assessment, learning, skills, English as a foreign language

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Introduction

The teaching and learning process of a new language like English in a context where it is not spoken but just in the English class is a really big challenge that includes several aspects to take into account, such as content, methodology, material, didactic and an excellent human resources it means an English teacher, among others aspects. Besides, it is important to highlight that the teaching and learning process is accompanied by a process of assessment that allow measuring learner's ability and performance, for which it is necessary to implement the assessment instruments. Assessment is an essential component of learning any foreign language and not only to be used to describe what they have learned, but diagnosing those aspects of learning to be reinforced by the teacher or student.

It is well known that learning a foreign language is not an easy task and the institutions in Colombia are working on improving the quality of all these teaching and evaluating process in order to provide students with the guaranty of a success in the journey.

This project is centered in a private school in Cartagena located in Santa Monica neighborhood. This school offers pre – school and primary in the morning on weekdays. In this school we did our internship in 2015, during that period we had the opportunity to work with fourth and fifth grade which are constituted of 8 students who share the same classroom and they belong to middle-income families. After having observed some English classes where the English teacher assessed the students using traditional assessment instrument, we could see that the students are showing low outcomes in the knowledge of the English language. Even though, the English teacher used different traditional

assessment instruments such as written exam, quiz, and worksheet the outcomes were the same.

It is necessary to take into consideration that assessment is the process of gathering information on students' learning process using assessment instrument. It could be possible to include an alternative instrument of assessment in order to enhance students learning and help students gain knowledge. Some examples of alternative instruments are reports, journals, speeches, videos among others. But one of those strategies most relevant for this research is the use of portfolio assessment as an alternative instrument in the assessment process.

The portfolio name was taken from the Anglo-Saxon portfolio assessment (Evaluation folder) or portfolio process (learning folder). It is important to highlight that the portfolio has its origin in the field of professionals such as writers, artists, publishers, photographers. They must offer samples of their work in order to show their training face to the working market. (Barragán, 2005). In many disciplines, portfolios help learning by providing portraits of students, offering multidimensional perspectives, encouraging students to participate, and linking to teaching (O' Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996; Genesee & Upshur, 1996). Research demonstrates that portfolios have been used mainly for two purposes in education; namely, for alternative assessment (Ballard, 1992; Barootchi & Keshavaraz, 2002; Coombe & Barlow, 2004) and self-growth (Ersin, 2005; Henkin 1993; Yang, 2003). In second language education, portfolios have become popular particularly in recent years (Ballard, 1992; Barootchi & Keshavaraz, 2002; Coombe & Barlow, 2004; Ersin, 2005, Saglam, 2005; Yang, 2003).

In this school our project takes place in fourth and fifth grade, the traditional instruments used are quiz, worksheet, and written exams, and these did not showed good results. (See appendix C). According to the observations made, the students' attitude towards assessment instrument is not relevant. For some of the students, the idea is to complete the English exams although they do not understand what the exams say; the other ones, ask more than once during the exam and the teacher explains to them again. This situation demonstrates that the students' interest is focused on obtaining a grade. But where is the interest in gaining knowledge about the English Language? And improve it?

This situation showed monotony in the assessment instrument implemented which nor leads to process improvement neither to the development of new skills in students when they are learning a foreign language but rather some of the students are failing the exams, have a low level in English and they have a negative attitude towards the English language.

This position leads us to establish the following research question: What is the effect of using Portfolio assessment as an alternative instruments to improve English language learning in fourth and fifth grade students on a private school?

It will be shown through the whole work, the methodology, results, recommendations and conclusion about the effects of portfolio assessment to improve EFL in a fourth and fifth grades. It is important to highlight that in this project the assessment process takes place in order to lead the students toward meaningful English learning.

This study intents to enhance English language teaching and learning process through the implementation of portfolio as an alternative instrument of assessment of fourth and fifth graders in a private school. In order to achieve the objective stated, it is necessary to diagnose the impact of the traditional assessment instruments used in the English class with

the students of fourth and fifth grade and propose alternative assessment activities as a preliminary phase, to develop during the class.

It is imperative to mention some definitions of portfolio. According to Wyatt III and Looper (2004) who mentioned, “an educational portfolio is a very personal collection of artifacts and reflections about one’s accomplishments, learning, strengths, and best works which is dynamic, ever-growing, and ever-changing” (p. 2).

In addition to that, to be more precise in an L2 context, Snavely and Wright (2003) define portfolio as the direct evidence of a student’s efforts, accomplishments, and advancement throughout a period of time that play both a role as a purposeful collection of student work to show the student’s efforts, progress, and achievements and as a teaching tool which helps the development of L2 skills of the student as well as how well students have learned the subjects, what they have not learned yet, and what they still need to improve.

One characteristic of the portfolios assessment is the students’ self-reflection about their works. This is a strong characteristic which allows that the portfolio becomes an instrument not only to assess but also for learning. Moreover, this alternative instrument to the traditional instruments implies self - discipline and students’ responsibility, the development of a critical attitude and autonomy, simultaneously contributes to the participation and collaboration between peers and teachers.

Portfolio assessment has a strong element of self-assessment and feedback which allows students to develop skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, among others. Furthermore, Portfolio assessment is a developmental process for both teachers and students, it can promote a dialog between them about of students’ works and provide a new perspective on teaching and learning process.

One important thing is that the students can use their creativity to apply and interact with the knowledge in “real-world” experiences and with the realization that portfolios provide authentic evidence of what students know, believe and are able to do, they have become a desired tool for evaluating language learning (Ozturk & Cecen, 2007).

Most importantly, portfolio assessments provide an authentic way of demonstrating skills and accomplishments. They encourage a real world experience that demands organization, decision making, and metacognition. Used in a thoughtful, carefully planned way, portfolio assessment can foster a positive outlook on learning and achievement. (Fernsten, 2009).

If portfolio assessment is implemented as an alternative instrument in the assessment instruments in a private school, the process of English learning could be improved meaningfully and the students will give the value this language acquisition process deserves.

There are several benefits that the teachers may have from using portfolio assessment. One thing teachers can improve by using portfolio assessment is the way to teach because teachers learn how to become observers, to take notes and reflect. In addition to that, the teachers need to be active and innovator because when using portfolio, they have to be creative when planning and performing the portfolio so they capture the attention and interest of the students in the assessment process.

According to the research it is imperative to note the concept of Evaluation which was defined by Weiss (1972) as “the systematic gathering of information for the purpose of making decisions” (p.22). However, the tools that the teachers have been using as an

evaluation are not given the best outcomes in the English learning, principally because these are not involve to the learner in their learning process; reason for which, it is necessary apply new and alternative forms of evaluation like portfolio.

On the other hand, traditional assessment ways like multiple choice tests have been used to evaluate students' performance in English language teaching (ELT) at schools, but these assessment methods are not effective and efficient because they do not show the real performance of students (Yastibas,2015). Actually, with the traditional assessment instruments just memorization will work. Assessment is an essential component of learning any foreign language and not only to be used to describe what they have learned, but diagnosing those aspects of learning to be reinforced by the teacher or student.

The recent use of portfolios in teaching and teacher education is grounded in a new vision of teacher assessment and professional development (Wolf & Dietz, 1998). New assessment methods have been developed recently that do justice to the complexity of teaching and learning to teach, and that offer insights into both the behavior and the knowledge acquisition of teachers, contribute to professional development, and fit into a constructivist view of learning (Mabry, 1999; Uhlenbeck, Verloop, &Beijaard, 2002). The portfolio is one of these relatively new assessment methods, and it is intended to give a picture of both teachers' practical knowledge and their behavior and to encourage them to engage in professional self-development by reflecting on the way they function in their own teaching practice.

Portfolios have been used for a long time by various professions as a means to document a person's achievements. For example artists, architects or designers collect samples of their

work in portfolios. They use them to show evidence of their best practice, but also to demonstrate how their skills have developed over the years as a consequence of the learning process. In second/foreign language classrooms, the greatest potential of portfolios is to document and chart students' growth in proficiency in the four language skills.

Gronlund (1998) explains that it has to do with tasks from daily life, such as solving problems that exist in the world. In authentic assessment, it is very closely linked to formative assessment ('assessment for learning') and the learner is seen as an active partner in the assessment process. Through learners' involvement with the assessment process in which opportunities are given for self- and peer group assessment, they are encouraged to reflect in order to take the responsibility for their own learning. Therefore, because authentic assessment is a more qualitative and valid alternative to traditional pen and paper testing, it provides a more comprehensive picture of the learner's performance, growth and progress. Journals, practical work, exhibitions, discussions, interviews and portfolios are some of the tools that could possibly be utilized in authentic assessment. A portfolio could therefore be only one of the many possible means used to gather.

Different studies about portfolio assessment as an alternative instrument to improve English learning demonstrate good results with different group of students. One of the experimental studies dealing for portfolio assessment by Barootchi and Ketshavarah (2002) examined whether portfolio assessment contributes to ESL learner achievement or not. Regarding this purpose, they conducted a researcher and compared two ESL classes' writing assessment scores. In one of the classes students writing skills were evaluating through "teacher-made test" and through portfolio assessment in the other. The finding of

their work indicated that portfolio assessment contributed to Iranian ESL learner' achievement positively. In this study, while both groups of subjects were taught using the same method of instructions, the group that was provided with the portfolio assessment (the experimental group) not only benefited from their teacher reflection and comments on their learner, but also gave the teacher a clearer picture of their learning status which positively affected the whole institution. The researcher found out the portfolio assessment is a promising testing and teaching tool for teacher which can be used in conjunction with teacher made test to provide continuous, ongoing measurement of students' growth needed for formative evaluation and for planning instructional programmers.

Similar results were also seen in Caner' (2002) study, in which he aimed to provide alternative assessment instruments for young ESL learner. Carner (2002) compares two 4th grades classes in a state primary school in terms of language learning and performance evaluation. In one of the classes, portfolio was used both as an assessment instrument and a language development file, and traditional assessment instruments in the other class. When the student's achievement were compared, it was found that the subjects in the portfolio class were more successful than the other class. These finding revealed that portfolio is a proper assessment instrument and an effective teaching tool for young learners in terms of their developmental stages in the language learning.

Van (2010) exposed in the article "the portfolio as an authentic assessment tool for learning: Is it serving its purpose?" was focuses on the utilization of the learner portfolio in the learning area Social Sciences as an alternative, authentic assessment tool to demonstrate the performance, progress and growth of learners in relation to the expected learning

outcomes. The purpose of the portfolio, namely to promote learning, is not disputed, but the question is whether this assessment tool is really being used to its best advantage, and if not, why not. An attempt is made in this article to shed light on the apparent under-utilisation of learner portfolios. Although the use of portfolios is widely commended, the purpose of this assessment tool is not being realized in practice. In his conclusion he mentioned that the portfolio has vast possibilities to help develop learner potential, but it must be used correctly to succeed in this goal. Traditional pen and paper testing and examinations are not adequate for decision making in this regard – particularly not in terms of learner progress and growth.

As Behzad Nezakatgoo (2011) exposed in the study “portfolio as a viable alternative in writing assessment”, on the results of the study confirmed that students whose work was evaluated by portfolio system had a significant reduction in their errors in mechanics of writing when compared to those students whose work was evaluated by the more traditional evaluation system. For that reason portfolio is more effectively than traditional evaluation.

A revision of the literature concerning assessment instruments, portfolio assessment, learning, skills and English as a foreign language helped us support the positive impact of portfolio assessment as an alternative instrument. First to all, portfolio assessment is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student’s efforts, progress and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit and evidence of student self-reflection. (Paulson, Paulson & Meyer, 1991). According to (Krashen, 1982) the learned system or learning is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a

conscious process which results in conscious knowledge about the language, for example knowledge of grammar rules. Something relevant in this study is contribute to the development of different skills in the learner. Skill is defined as an ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carryout complex activities or job functions involving ideas (cognitive skills), things (technical skills), and/or people (interpersonal skills). (TalentAlign, 2012). According to the basic standards of English competence EFL is defined as the English that is not spoken in the immediate local environment and social conditions.

In the following section we will present the type of research design that we followed, the setting and population, in which we carried out this project and there is an explanation of data collection, techniques and procedures that we used.

Methodology

Portfolio assessment as an alternative instrument to improve in foreign language learning in fourth and fifth students of a private school corresponds to a qualitative design, in which interpretative and descriptive characteristics of the phenomena being investigated are taken into account rather than with measuring or counting.

This project is based on an action research. According to Carr and Kemmis (1986) describe action research as “a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situation in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out” (p.1). Furthermore, action research generally involves inquiring into one's own practice through a process of self- monitoring that generally includes entering a cycle of planning,

acting, observing and reflecting on questions, data and interpretation on an issue or problem in order to improve practice. (Farrell, 2008). This type of study was chosen because what we are interested in this research is how the students of fourth and fifth grade interpret their experiences with the assessment instruments and contribute to improve these experiences where the research takes place.

Our specific population is the students of fourth and fifth grade who do not come with any specific English process. Both grades share the same classroom and have four students, 4 are boys and 4 are girls. Their ages range from 8-10 years. The students belong to four stratum, where they have comfortable and well economic conditions, with access to the technological tools, and their parents are well academic prepared people.

The school has one English teacher who teaches English, Math and Social studies in all the grades from first to fifth. Besides, she is the English coordinator. It is important to know that the English teacher studied Tourism and took some English courses many years ago but she does not have a degree in foreign languages.

Data for the study was collected by doing observations, survey to the students and an interview with the English teacher. The observations were conducted by the intern who was in her internships and could interact with the students and English teacher.

As first point a participatory observation technique was carried out with the students of fourth and fifth grade in order to interact with the context. Observation is one of the most important techniques in order to witness in a critical way what is happening in our classroom. It takes into account many aspects such as context, characteristics of the students, teachers, processes, and us as teachers. It involved keeping a journal (field daily)

of the different aspects that happened in English classes. Marshall and Rossman (1989) define observation as “the systematic description of events, behaviors, artifacts in the social setting chosen for study” (p.79). Furthermore, observations enable the researcher to describe existing situations using the five senses, providing a written photograph of the situation under study (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993).

The type of observation implemented during the project was participant observation, here the researcher is known and recognized by the participants and in many cases, and the participants know the research goals of the observer. There is some interaction with the participants but the interaction is limited. The researcher’s aim is to play a neutral role as much as possible.

The purpose of this observation was to know the instruments of assessment that are being applied to the students, what impacts have these instruments in the students and what are the real results that are being gotten. Moreover, knowing if it is possible include an alternative instruments of assessment which help to strengthen the assessment instruments implemented. (See appendix A)

Secondly, a qualitative survey research is often used as a meaning of collecting verbatim statements from respondents who are the students of fourth and fifth grade. In this, a list of questions was designed with the help of our tutor in order to apply them in a survey to the students. In the design of these questions, we took into account the observations made. This survey has 9 clear and easy questions of multiple selections with only answer and in which preferences for English subject and basic knowledge about assessment instruments were asked. This survey was explained and each student answers

according to their opinion. The value of the information provided can be extremely high.

(See appendix B).

The survey of nine (9) questions was carried out to characterize their interest and basic ideas about the instruments of assessment of fourth and fifth graders in a private school. This survey was developed with eight (8) students. This instrument was carried out in Spanish, taking into consideration the English level of the students.

The other technique is an interview which was applied to the English teacher of fourth and fifth grade. An interview is a face to face dialogue where one of the participants is who ask and the other one answers, sometimes this “dialogue” can be focused in a specific purpose. In the words of Thill and Bovee, an interview is any planned conversation with a specific purpose involving two or more people. It can bring out data for the research purpose and makes the researcher to feel that the data what she collected is true and honest and original because of the face to face interaction.

The interview was the last instrument applied to the English teacher. This interview was approved by the tutor, the questions were about the assessment instruments implemented and if the English teacher knows another instruments for assessment. In this research we used structured interview which is typically formal and organized and may include several interviewers, commonly referred to as a panel interview. An interviewer who has a more structured style will usually begin with what is known as an “icebreaker” question. The icebreaker is used to relax the participant before the more serious questions are asked.

During the application the teacher was friendly and very collaborative with the realization of this one. This interview consists of 10 questions which were developed in a flexible dialogue. It must be said that it did not use tape recorder but the answers were written. (See appendix C)

The results gotten through of these techniques are described in the following chapter: results.

2. Results

The results are presented in two parts; first, the results obtained from the techniques of data collection (participatory observation, structured interview and survey) to diagnose the impact of the traditional assessment instruments used in the English class with the students of fourth and fifth grade, and the second part corresponds to implementation of some assessment activities to enhance English language teaching and learning process.

2.1 Impact of the traditional assessment instruments on their English learning.

Data obtained from the techniques mentioned above revealed important aspects about the impact of traditional assessment instrument implemented.

A participatory observation was made while the students were taking a quiz. The topic assessed was wh/questions and personal pronouns. During the quiz the students asked many times, then the English teacher said no more questions, you did not study, it is the same exam. The quiz was done mechanically. According to this, the goals were focused in knowing and writing about the grammar of the topics of the English Book. In order to record the situation, a field note was taken and this was focused on the following levels:

Descriptive level refers to the participatory observation made by the intern. It was observed that the homework of the last class must be studied for doing a quiz in the next class but the majority of the students did not do it. For that reason, teacher says that they could not understand the quiz. It was observed that the teacher uses the same tools for assessment. For example: Exams and quizzes. The majority of the times, the exams and quizzes are the same. It could be observed that the students use the same exercises of the exam for the quiz, do not

contributed successfully in allowing the learner to gain knowledge neither to pass the quiz. It was known because when the students were doing the quiz the majority of them completed the questions with whatever answer and at the end of the quiz the teacher said: the majority of the students fail the quiz. Moreover, it may be considered that the English teacher did not explain clearly the theme neither the goals nor the exams. The students' gestures showed that they did not understand the quiz, and that they will wait for a different quiz.

Reflexive level refers to the reflection made by the intern after participatory observation. It was observed that the students need to be assessed with alternative tool in order to improve their English Language learning, encourage their motivation, ensure an active participation and they can realize that they are learning the language. Besides, it is important to give them an excellent guide in the process.

Propositive level refers to proposal made by the intern. It suggests to take into consideration an alternative instrument of assessment, which allows the students gain knowledge meaningfully, they can show their capabilities and develop listening, speaking, writing and reading skills through the portfolio assessment.

Finally, it is important to mention that the period of evaluation includes one week for exams and one week for worksheet. In this period the majority of the student got a low grade. With this situation the strategy of the English teacher was to give them a quiz in order to improve the grade but she did not take into account that the assessment instruments must enhance learning opportunities and not only emphasize the grading function. Besides, the instrument of assessment used by her such as exam, worksheet and quiz had the same format, the same content (grammar) and the results were the same.

After that, in order to improve the grade of the students, the teacher checked the notebooks and took into consideration the participation during the period. Then, she gave a final grade. It is important to highlight that in this first period the majority of the students did not get the goals which were not reviewed in any moment.

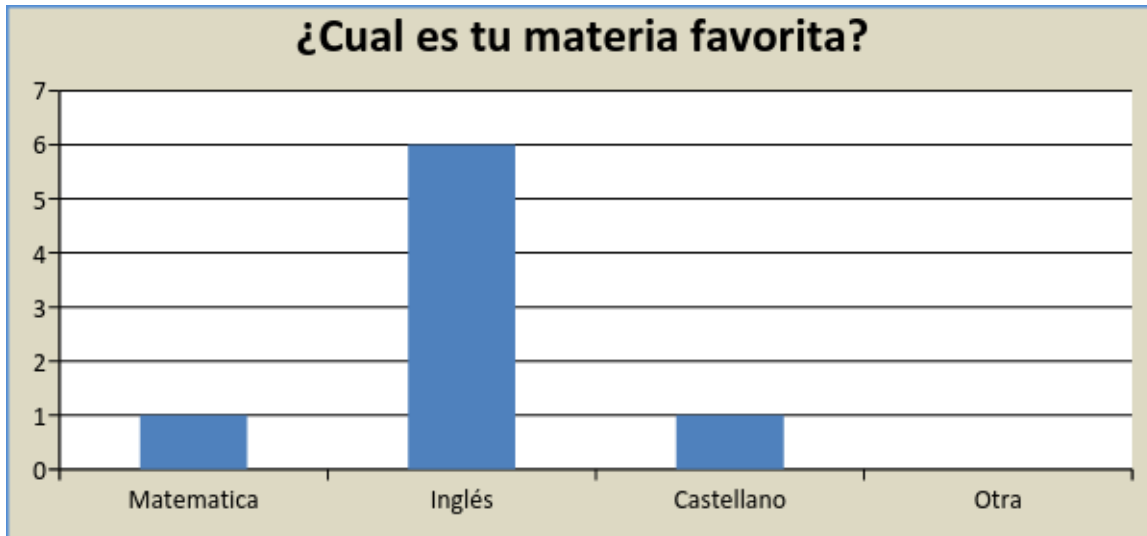
According to the participatory observation made, the impact of the traditional assessment instruments in the English learning is not positive, this is not helpful for the learner to have beneficial learning experience. As it was said previously, the tools that the English teacher has been using as an assessment are not providing the best outcomes in the English learning of the fourth and fifth graders.

On the other hand, the questions of the survey were about preference and like with the English learning, the activities done in the English class, the moments of the English class, the assessments instrument and the possibility to implement an alternative instrument.

The first questions were in order to have a general view of the students toward English language, and the last ones were focused on assessment instrument.

The following graphics were designed for the purpose of demonstrating the different percentages analyzed according to each questions, the most relevant aspects and description of these ones.

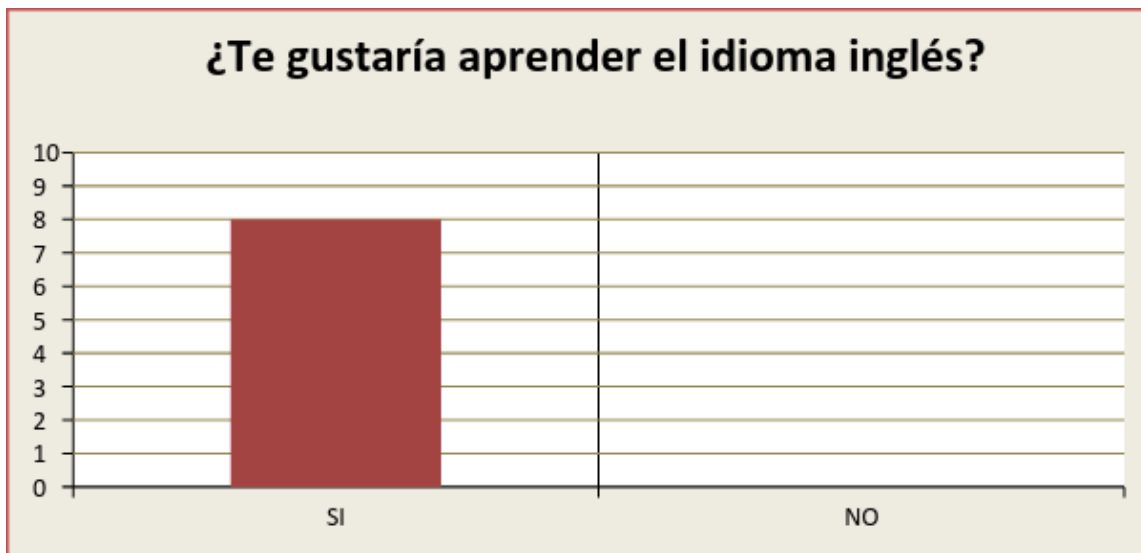
Graphic 1. What is your favorite subject?



Graphic 1. As we can see, a significant percentage 75% of the students their favorite subject is English, while 12, 5% answered their favorite subject is math, and the other 12,5 % demonstrated preference for Spanish subject.

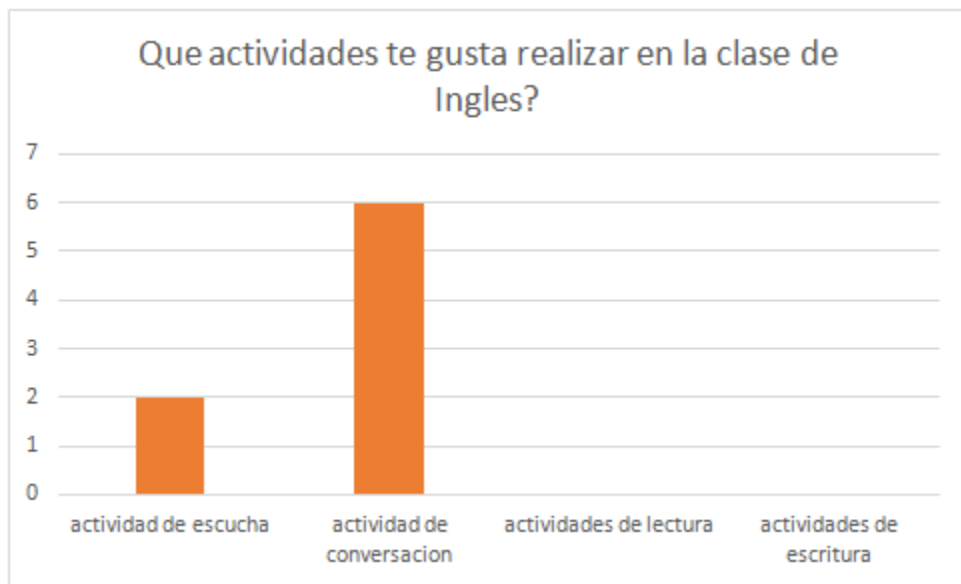
It is relevant to mention that the students revealed an important preference for the English class when this is conducted by the intern who guided the English class with different material, a class planned where it explained and showed the nature of activities such as Introduction, presentation, application, evaluation and its approximately time (Richards, 2008), in order to get meaningful results. According to the project focused in assessment process, the intern had conversations with graders about the instruments of assessment and their relevant role in improving the English Learning process. Furthermore, it enhanced in all the moment the use of the English Language and recognizing the importance of this Language in our present and future lives.

Graphic 2. Would you like to learn the English Language?



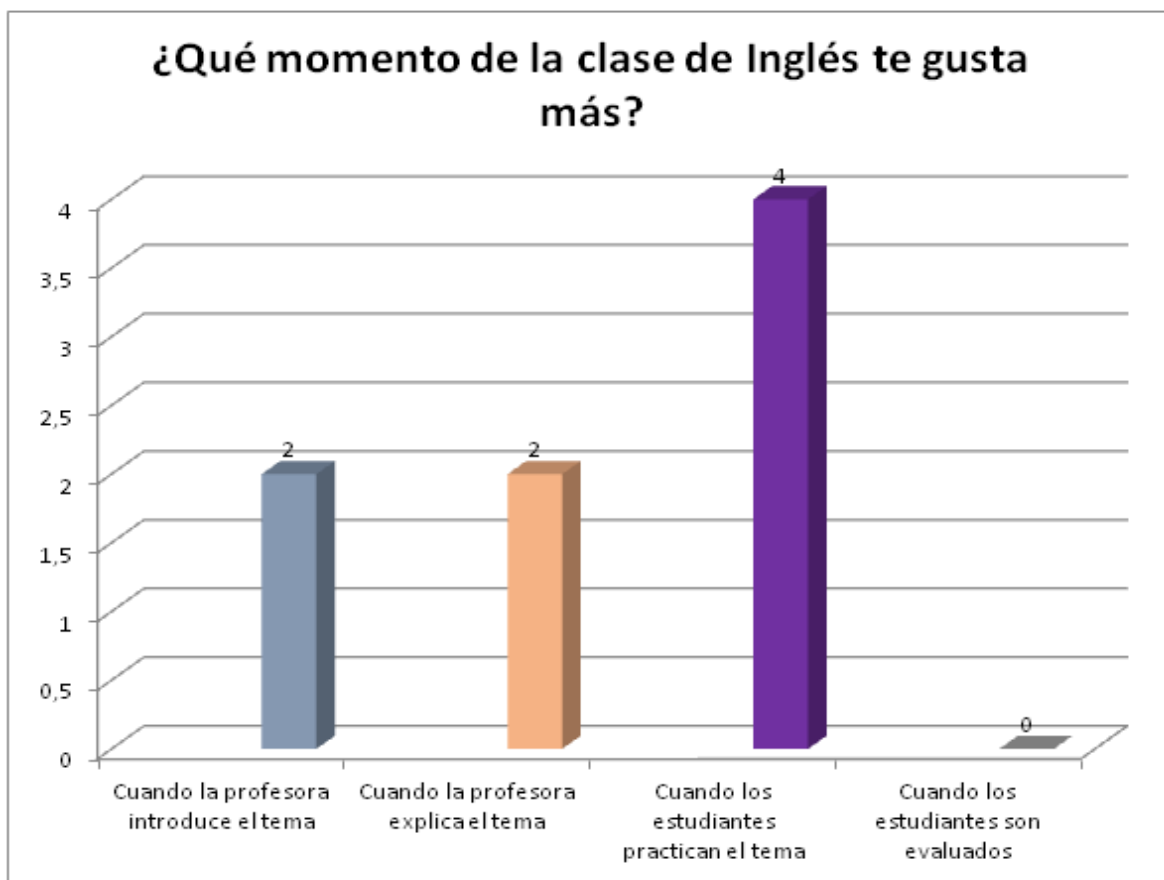
Graphic N°2 shows a total majority of preference, where students express that they would like to learn English language as it was shown in the previous graph, students tend to prefer a more dynamic, active and different class where English language is truly used by all the participants. This could be evidence in the proposed assessment activities (See appendix D)

Graphic 3. What kind of activities would you like doing in the English class?



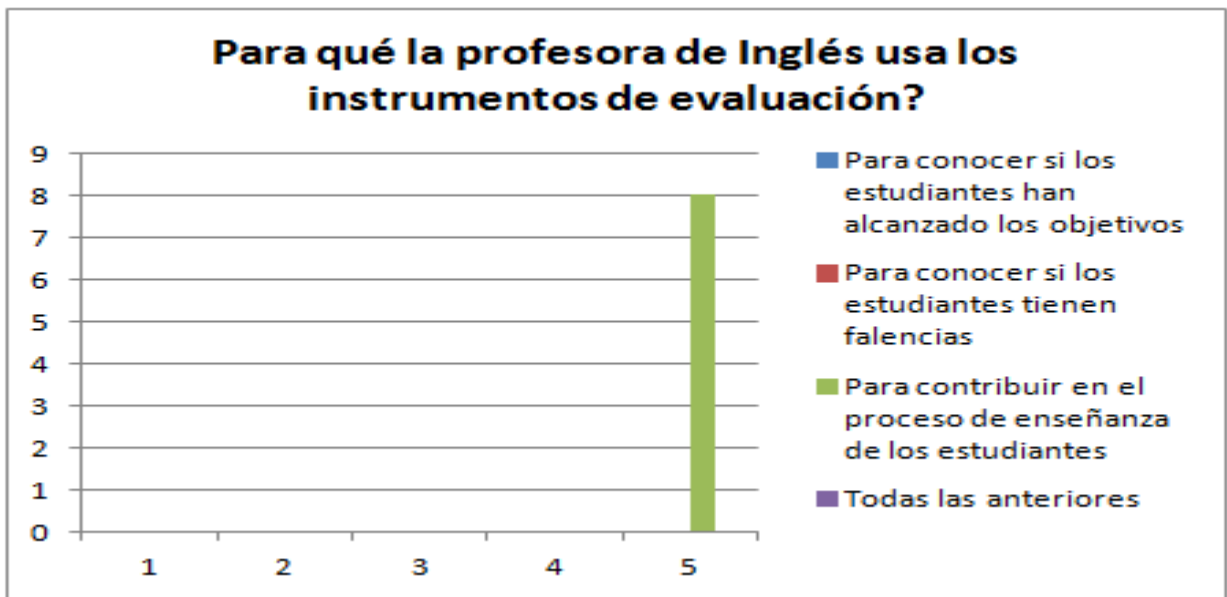
In the English teaching, it is important to develop the different skills and Graphic N° 3 shows that 75% of the students prefer activities of conversations and the 25% of the students prefer activities of listening. It is important to highlight that the activities of reading and writing are not preferred for them. Writing and reading have been considered two important and hard skills to develop in the learning process; in education and in our daily these ones will be very used and they will be our principal tools.

Graphic 4. What moment of the English class do you like the most?



This question is focused in knowing what percentage of preference the activities of evaluation have. Graphic 4 refers the most common nature of activity that the students prefer. As can be seen, 50% of the students like when they practice the topic. 25% of the students like when the teacher introduces the topic, and the others 25% of the students like when the teacher explains or presents the topic. But 0% of the students do not like to be assessed. It is too important to say that the students had not idea about the importance of the assessment instruments and their experiences with the instrument of assessments used were not the best. This situation provide the opportunity of presenting an alternative instruments of assessment.

Graphic 5. What does the English teacher use the instruments of assessment for?



In graphic 5 as can be represented, a total majority 100% of students say that the assessment helps or contributes to the learning process. However, they did not study for it.

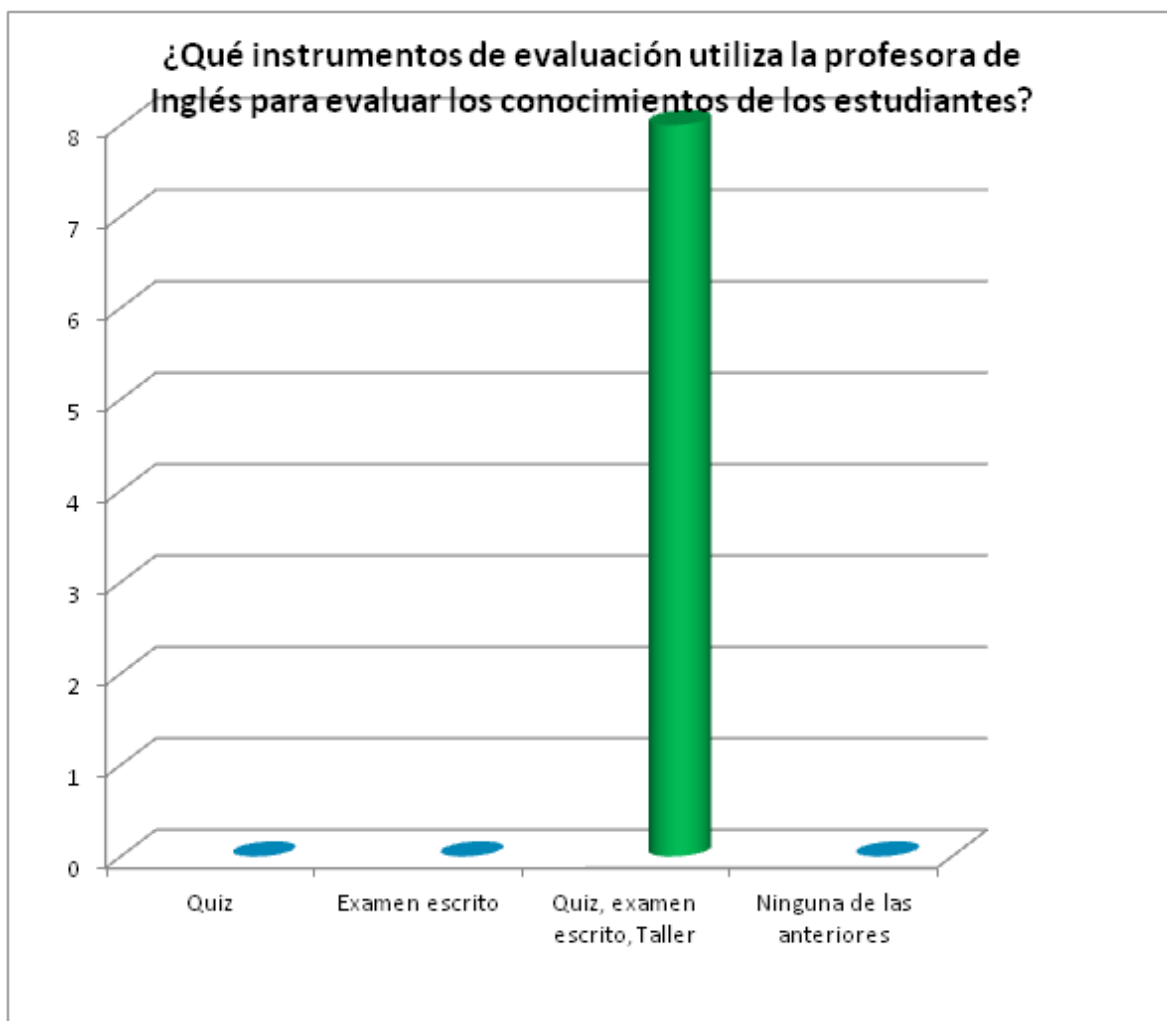
Actually, if this question had not had four options for answering the students had not had any idea. This was a big opportunity in order to show them some relevant aspects of the importance of the assessment.

Graphic 6. When you have an evaluation, do you study to...?



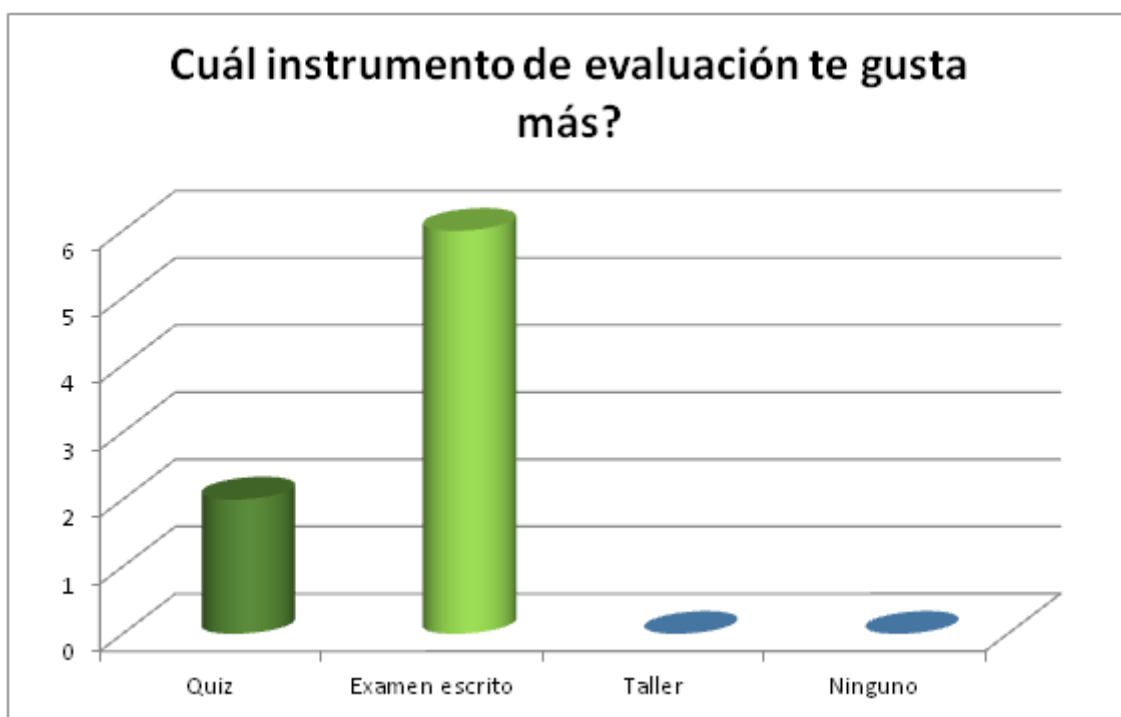
Graphic 6 shows the most significant frequency that the students study to get a good grade. It revealed that they did not know that the assessment instrument must go beyond having a grading function. While it is represented that the other 50% of the students demonstrate that they study for reinforcing what they have learned or to continue with the learning.

Graphic 7. What instruments of assessments does the English teacher use to assess the students' knowledge?



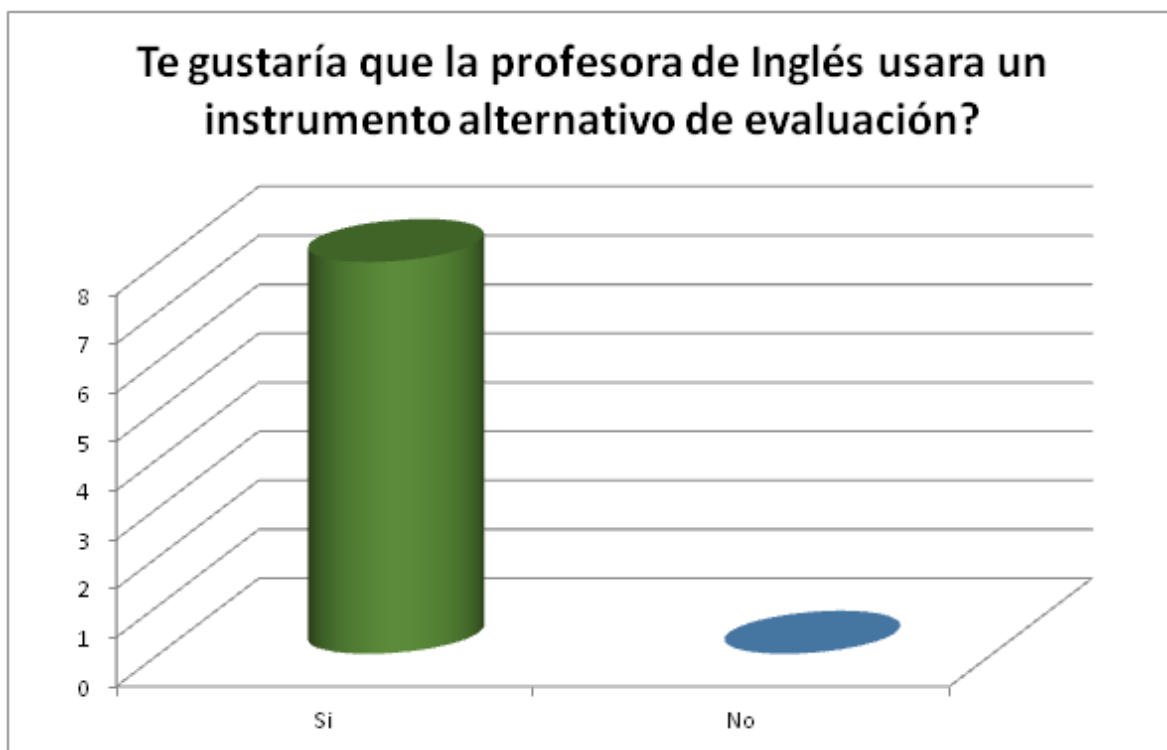
Graphic 7 shows the majority of the students say that the teacher uses quizzes, written exams and worksheets in order to assess the students' knowledge. It is necessary to point out that thanks to the previously conversation between students and intern about the instruments of assessment, they knew about it and identified them easily.

Graphic 8. What instrument of assessment do you like the most?



Graphic 8 shows 75% of the students said that they like the written exam because they have the chance to choose the answers when the questions are multiple selections with only answer. Moreover, the students said if I did not study I can choose whatever answers but I do not know if it will be the correct or not. The most important thing is to pass the exam. These comments show the necessity to create meaningful experience with the assessment instrument to improve English learning.

Graphic 9. Would you like the English Teacher to use an alternative instrument of assessment?



Graphic 9 shows a total majority of preference, where students express their inclination for using an alternative instrument for assessment.

According to the survey made to the learners, the impact of the traditional assessment instruments in the English learning is not positive. These are not providing quality in the learning.

These answers revealed that the students like the English language but they did not know the importance of the assessment instrument in their English learning. It is necessary that the students are involved in their learning and they can develop and apply their abilities in a different, funny, creative and satisfactory way of assessment instruments. Furthermore,

it will allow them to improve their experiences with the assessments instrument that they know.

This interview was applied to the English teacher; she is the teacher of fourth and fifth grade. This interview was carried out with the intention of consolidating data obtained from the observation and the survey.

In this interview, the majority of the answers are similar to the observation made, but it does not match with the first answers because she does not take into account the logic learning sequence. According to the observations made, she does not prepare some classes. When she is in class, she decides what page of book the students are going to do. We considered the logic learning sequence is a significant way in order to address the teaching, learning and assessment process.

The answers for the 3rd, 4th and 5th questions show the instruments that she is using for assessment which are written and oral exam, worksheets, homework and check notebook. According to the observations made and the survey made to the learners, these instruments are not given the best results. . It means, these did not improved real English learning and the students could not be aware of their improvement process for this reason, we considered that the assessment instruments implemented by her should include alternative instruments for assessing. According to this study, we are proposing to implement portfolio assessment as an alternative assessment instrument.

Finally, the answers for the 7th, 8th, and 9th questions show that she would like to know about portfolio, it will be all for a better development and outcome from the students.

The last answers to the last questions of this interview showed the possibility of implementing an alternative assessment instrument if this improves the outcomes of the learners in their English learning process which means that the impact of the traditional assessment instruments in the English learning is not completely positive.

2.2 Impact of the Assessment activities as a preliminary phase of portfolio assessment on their English learning.

The second part corresponds to implementation of some assessment activities to enhance English learning. Three assessment activities were implemented with the fourth and fifth graders of which two were selected by the students as the best works. At the end of these activities a self-reflection was made by the learners and with help of the intern due to their level of English.

Activity 1

Note: The schedule of the English subject was three hour per week of 45 minutes.

The English teacher gave to us 25 minutes per class and this activity was developed in two classes.

First English class: (25 minutes)

1. The intern explained the objectives or goals of the assessment activity
 - Reinforce the knowledge acquired
 - Use the English Language in a natural way

- Learn by doing

2. Taking into account the themes developed by the English teacher in the first period such as personal information, physical appearance, among others, the intern and the students chose the theme “physical appearance” in order to reinforce it. The intern reminded them the vocabulary, the question (what do you look like), and how they could answer. Then the intern gave an example.

She said everyone think about James Rodriguez. Pay attention to his physical appearance, what does James Rodriguez look like? The description that the intern made was accompanied by pointing out the part of the body described

3. The intern said to them: you are going to do the similar activity at home.

First, chose any person: member of your family, soccer player, actress, classmate, teacher, and intern, whoever you want.

Second, you are going to paste his/ her photo on a paper or you can draw him/her

Third, you are going to point out on the picture the part of the body that you are going to describe. And write the sentence.

For next class, you are going to bring the picture but you cannot show it to anyone. This picture must be given to the intern.

Second English class: (25 minutes)

Some of the students brought the activity and they seemed interested in knowing what they were going to do. The students gave the activity to the intern and she put them on

the board. She reviewed the script and corrected the mistakes on the board. Everyone practice the pronunciation of the sentences with the intern.

Let's do it.

The intern said: "please, one volunteer who describe his/her person without saying the name". One student did the activity and the other ones must say who it is, and so on.

Results:

The students who did the activity at home and who did not do it were happy because they were speaking in English, they had an active participation and they wanted to continue. For that reason, this activity continued. In the third class the student who did not do the activity at home must do it for the next class.

Activity 2: "Personal information"

Note: The schedule of the English subject was three hour per week of 45 minutes.

The English teacher gave us 25 minutes per class and this activity was developed in two classes.

First English class: (25 minutes)

1. The intern explained the objectives or goals of the assessment activity
 - Reinforce the knowledge acquired
 - Use the English Language in a natural way
 - Learn by doing

2. Taking into account the themes developed by the English teacher in the first period such as Personal information, physical appearance, among others

The intern and the students chose the theme “Personal Information” in order to reinforce it.

3. The intern reminded and practiced the pronunciation about eight question of the basic personal information which the English teacher taught them.

The questions and answers were the following:

1. What **is** your name? My name is...
2. How old **are** you? I am Years old
3. Where do you **study**? I study at
4. Where **are** you from? I am from Cartagena
5. What is your favorite subject? My favorite subject is....
6. Where do you **live**? I live in
7. What sport do you **play**? I play
8. Who **is** your best friend? My best friend is...

The intern gave students a paper with these eight questions with their answers, but each student in his/ her paper had a question highlighted which they must bring in a piece of cardboard. (See appendix D)

Students must bring the cardboard the next class and practice the questions with its answers at home.

Second class (45 minutes)

All the students brought the activity and they wanted to know what was going to happen.

The intern greeted them and asked them: are you ready? They said with a smile: yes, miss.

The intern explained what they were going to do, play to organize a puzzle.

I'm going to call any student. That student puts his question and answer on the board but this must be disorganize in order to be organize by another student. Then, He or she chooses a classmate who is going to organize the puzzle and so on.

After that, all students do the activity, the intern gave a paper to the students and the intern put the puzzles on the board but one by one. The student must organize the questions and its answer and write it on the paper.

The first three students to complete the activity correctly were the winners.

Results: the students were paying attention carefully, they had an active participation, they wrote the question easily and when the class was over, they continued saying the questions and answers but in a natural way. They have the chance to use the language in class and out of class.

It is important to say in this preliminary phase that the students did the different assessment activities and self-reflections. These were developed, checked and collected in the portfolio assessment which is a folder decorate or made by the students with whatever material that they want. In this phase, it is necessary taking into consideration the students' efforts, accomplishment and progress to be assessed.

This self-reflection was made with all the students at the same time. First, they said their reflections orally and in Spanish. Second, the intern helped them to write it in English.

SELF REFLECTION

The students said:

1. Estas actividades fueron cheveres.

These activities were wonderful.

2. Me gustaron porque sentí que estaba hablando inglés y no solo era escribir en la libreta o en el libro.

I liked them because I felt that I was speaking English and it was not only to write on the notebook or on the book.

3. Yo quería participar sin pensar en nada más, sólo quería intentarlo.

I wanted to participate without thinking in anything else; I only wanted to try it.

4. Mi pronunciación no fue la mejor, (ja ja ja ja) pero usted me ayudó a hacerlo correctamente.

My pronunciation was not the best, but the intern helped me to do it correctly

5. La verdad, yo nunca pensé en una nota, yo pensé en hacer las cosas bien.

To tell the truth, I never thought in getting a grade, I thought in doing the things well.

6. Yo no realicé las actividades en casa, pero me di cuenta que era necesario hacerlas para participar en clase.

I did not do the activities at home, but I understood that this was necessary to do in order to participate in class.

7. Yo no entiendo cuando la practicante habla en Inglés pero me gusta porque ella me ayuda a entender.

I do not understand when the intern speaks English but I like it because she helps me to understand.

Conclusion and recommendations

The study suggests that the use of the portfolio is based on two points: (1) learning aimed at developing meaningful learning; and (2) a methodology of foreign language teaching student-centered, emphasizing the processes without losing sight of the products and takes into account individual needs and learning styles.

It was noticed that the classes are governed only by the activities in the book and that, leads the students to live in monotony. Due to this reason, when it was the time for testing students, they were failing exams.

In the assessment activities implemented as a preliminary part of a portfolio it is important to highlight that the themes were choose between the intern and the students who focused their attention in the themes where they had weaknesses. Being that one of the purposes of the portfolio is to help students on their weaknesses. On the other hand, one important dimension of portfolio assessment is that it should actively involve the students in the process of assessment, for that reason students have to reflect themselves about their learning process.

At the end of the assessment activities implemented, an oral reflection was made by students in Spanish but in order to improve their writing skill, the intern helped them to write the reflection. Some of the students said some ideas and some verbs in English and all together organize the first reflection in English for the portfolio. This allowed them realize that they are learning English Language.

As it is proposed in this project, to enhance English language teaching and learning process through the implementation of portfolio as an alternative instrument in the

assessment process of fourth and fifth graders in a private school, it could be stated that the use of assessment activities as a preliminary phase of portfolio assessment in this institution was something new and significant for both students and teacher. It is important to say that the interns only had 25 minutes per class in order to develop the assessment activities. For that reason, these could be developed in three or four classes.

The experience becomes extremely satisfying and productive and provided insights into the advantages and disadvantages of using the assessment activities as a preliminary phase of the portfolio. Although it may involve more work for the teacher, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and applicability of this institution in courses aimed to develop the four skills it is possible and desirable. The portfolio assessment as an instrument of assessment allows developing an integrated assessment-oriented generation of self-reflection and metacognitive strategies, promoting meaningful learning and a pledge of greater academic performance.

The institution and the teacher contributed within a very significant way, because we were allowed to socialize and carry out our project with the students.

It is usual to find shortcomings in developing assessment processes, as these do not occur spontaneously in students and careful induction thereof is required.

Finally, under the features and advantages mentioned, it is worth mentioning the need to develop among our English teachers and students a portfolio assessment culture that gives greater operational viability to its implementation in the classroom.

It is important to highlight that in some schools the English teaching, learning and assessment process need to be improved. According to this, our research which focuses principally in the assessment process, It has allowed us, as beginner researchers realize that one thing is to know the theory about any theme and another one is carrying out this theory.

However, taking into account the experiences lived and described previously we are motivated in order to carry out this project and that can contribute meaningful in this assessment process.

The portfolio as an alternative instrument for assessment will help teachers identify strengths and weaknesses, monitor students' performance and progress, provide grading, and generally motivate students positively. The students become fully engaged in the learning process, which promotes learner autonomy and increases motivation. The students become active in learning since they produce their own works and follow the activities which are necessary for keeping a portfolio.

The assessment process for fourth and fifth grade in this institution should include an alternative instrument for assessing like portfolio assessment that allows to the student realize:

- ✓ The importance of self - checking their knowledge in orders to identify their weakness or strengthens. For students, portfolio serves as an authentic source to show practically what a student has achieved. It encourages students to become independent and self-directed learners, and enhances communication among

teachers, students, and parents. It shows students their strong and weak points.

Tsagari (2004) points out that portfolio helps students to become “skilled judges” of their own weaknesses and strengths.

- ✓ That they are learning the English language by doing
- ✓ That they need to develop a variety of skills
- ✓ That they can check their progress in the language.
- ✓ That they can show what they can do

Based on the information above, the students could show a meaningful and excellent carry out in the next years of high school regarding English language learning.

Appendixes

Appendix A Field Notes

Week: April 13th to April 17th

Grade: Fourth and fifth

Theme: Wh/questions and personal pronoun

Activity: quiz

DESCRIPTIVE LEVEL	REFLEXIVE LEVEL	PROPOSITIVE LEVEL

Appendix B Survey

FUNDACIÓN UNIVERSITARIA COLOMBO INTERNACIONAL

IX SEMESTRE/2015

Corporación educativa parque de los Niños School

Encuesta

Estudiante: _____ Edad: _____

Grado: _____ Fecha: _____

Docente de inglés: _____

1. ¿Cuál es tu materia favorita?

a. Matemáticas

b. Inglés

c. Castellano

d. Otra,Cuál? _____

2. ¿Te gustaría aprender el idioma Inglés?

SI_____ NO_____

3. En tu clase de inglés cuales son las actividades que más te gustan

a. Actividades de lectura

- b. Actividades de escucha
 - c. Actividades de escritura
 - d. Actividades de conversación
4. En una clase de inglés, ¿que momento de la clase te gusta más?
- a. Cuando la profesora introduce la clase
 - b. Cuando la profesora explica el tema
 - c. Cuando los estudiantes practican el tema
 - d. Cuando los estudiantes son evaluados
5. ¿Para que evalúan a los estudiantes?
- a. Para conocer si han alcanzado los objetivos planteados
 - b. Para conocer si tienen falencias
 - c. Para aportar a su proceso de aprendizaje
 - d. Todas las anteriores
6. A la hora de las evaluaciones, te preparas para:
- a. Obtener una buena nota
 - b. Reforzar lo aprendido
 - c. Ninguna de las anteriores

d. Otra, Cuál

7. ¿Qué instrumentos utiliza la profesora de inglés para evaluar los conocimientos de los estudiantes?

a. Quiz

b. Examen escrito

c. Quiz, examen escrito, taller

d. Otro, Cuál?

8. De los instrumentos para evaluar los conocimientos aprendidos ¿Cuál te gusta más?

a. Quiz

b. Examen escrito

c. Taller

d. Ninguno

9. ¿Te gustaría que la profesora de inglés utilice un nuevo instrumento de evaluación, que complemente los que ya existen, para chequear y evaluar los aprendizajes de los estudiantes?

Appendix C Interview

FUNDACIÓN UNIVERSITARIA UNICOLOMBO

IX SEMESTRE/2015

Corporación educativa parque de los Niños School

ENTREVISTA

Docente de inglés: _____

Grado: _____ Fecha: _____

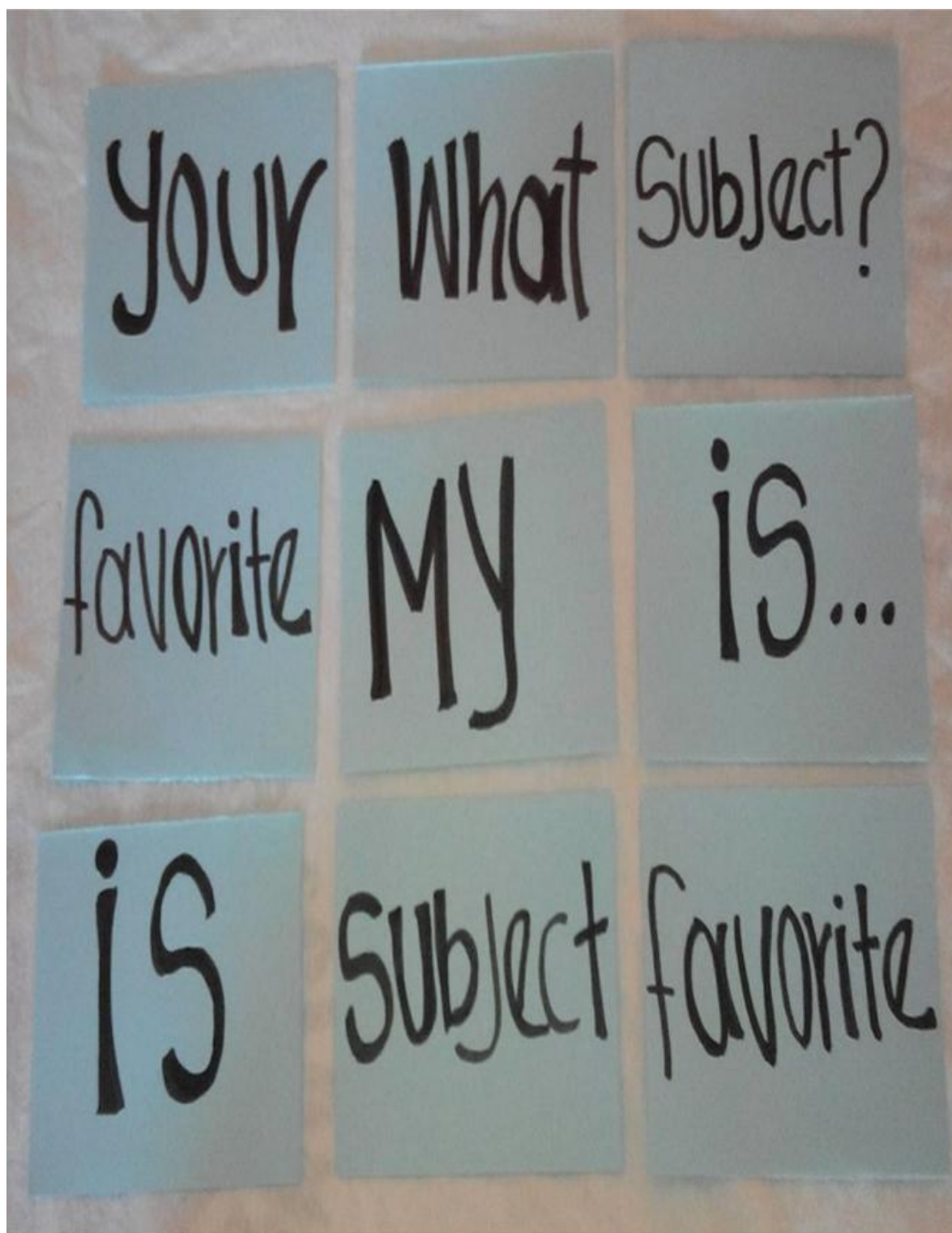
La siguiente entrevista se centra principalmente en los instrumentos que se están utilizando en el proceso de evaluación del estudiante

1. ¿Tiene usted en cuenta la secuencia lógica de aprendizaje para apoyar el proceso de enseñanza, aprendizaje y evaluación?
2. ¿En qué momento de la clase de inglés usted realiza retroalimentación?
3. ¿Qué instrumentos utiliza para realizar repaso/retroalimentación y evaluar a los estudiantes?
4. ¿Cómo chequea usted las fortalezas o debilidades de los estudiantes, en cuanto a los temas aprendidos, antes de emitir una calificación final?

5. Al emitir una calificación final ¿qué aspectos tiene en cuenta?
6. Al utilizar los instrumentos antes mencionados, (pregunta N° 3) ¿Cree usted que arrojan evidencias que los estudiantes de quinto grado han alcanzado los objetivos o no los han alcanzado?
7. ¿Qué estrategias utiliza con los estudiantes que no alcanzaron los objetivos planteados?
8. ¿Cree usted que si se utiliza un instrumento de evaluación novedoso y diferente, que complemente los que usted utiliza, se podría contribuir al proceso de evaluación y retroalimentación del aprendizaje del estudiante?
9. ¿Conoce usted acerca del portfolio assessment? Si la respuesta es si, explique en qué consiste.

10. Como docente de inglés, ¿usted se arriesgaría a innovar con otro instrumento de evaluación que le permita: chequear el proceso de los estudiantes, despertar y mantener la motivación en los estudiantes, desarrollar o potencializar las habilidades que posean y finalmente, que aporte para emitir un juicio final?





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