PEER-ASSESSMENT IN AN ENGLISH WRITING CLASS AT THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO

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DEDICATED TO

I dedicate this project to God, all my

wonderful family, my dear boyfriend for his

great love and all my charming friends.

Thanks for all your invaluable support.

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I thank God, my family for their

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESUMEN

La evaluación juega un papel importante en todo el proceso de enseñanza y de aprendizaje. Esto es un término relevante en la actual práctica educativa, el cual se divide en dos grupos importantes, uno de estos, es la Evaluación Tradicional y otro es la Evaluación Alternativa.

La escritura es una habilidad productiva en la cual los estudiantes usan la lengua que ellos saben y su estructura. Hay muchas maneras diferentes para evaluar la escritura, pero, tradicionalmente, se aplican cuestionarios y pruebas, dentro de los cuales están inmersos la autoevaluación, y la evaluación en binas o pares, portafolios y evaluación de desempeño.

La evaluación en binas o pares, se hace entre compañeros y ayuda a obtener una retroalimentación en el trabajo de los estudiantes, en la cual se produce una continua reflexión y el dialogo sigue su curso.

Palabras claves: Evaluación, Escritura, Evaluación de escritura, Evaluación en Binas o Pares.

ABSTRACT

Assessment plays an important role in all of the teaching and learning process. It is a pertinent term in a current educational practice, which is divided into two important groups, one of these, is Traditional Assessment and the other one is Alternative Assessment.

Writing is a productive skill in which students use the language they know and its structure. There are many different ways to assess writing but, traditionally, writing assessment involves questionnaires and tests, such as self-assessment, peer-assessment, portfolios and performance assessment.

Peer-Assessment is the evaluation made between classmates and it helps to get feedback on the students' work from which continued reflection and dialogue may continue.

Key words: Assessment, Writing, Writing Assessment and Peer-assessment.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The first chapter deals with the description of the problem. We will also discuss the problem statement, objectives and the significance of the problem. Besides, some terms that are related to this research will be explained in order to make readers better understand them and finally the limitations found in this research will be presented.

Description of the Problem

The general topic of our problem is related to assessment in the classroom, at the English and French program at the University of Nariño. In addition, the specific topic is peer-assessment; with this research, we want to know whether teachers and students know and apply this kind of assessment process, and the reasons why they may or may not apply it.

Problem Statement

In which way is peer-assessment incorporated to the assessment process in the English and French program, and which are the reasons why teachers may or may not apply it?

Significance

This research is useful because it can show that there are many ways to assess which could be applied by teachers in the English and French program. These types of assessment methods may help to change the misconception that there is only one way to assess; for instance using traditional tools such as yes-no

questions or multiple choice tests. This study may also contribute to provide current information for teachers who still tend to focus on traditional practices. On the other hand, this research is focused on teachers and students of the English and French program of the University of Nariño.

This research is significant because there are no more projects or researches related to this topic at the English and French program at the University of Nariño. It is also important, because, in this way the implementation of new methods to assess can be developed. Nowadays communicative approaches require alternative assessment which is not widely researched in EFL settings.

Questions

General Research Question

How is peer-assessment implemented in an English class at the University of Nariño?

Sub Questions

1. How many teachers and students know about peer-assessment?

2. How do teachers implement peer-assessment in their classes?

3. What is the learners' perception regarding peer-assessment?

4. In which classes is peer-assessment implemented?

5. What is the teachers' attitude regarding the application of peer-assessment in their classes?

Objectives

Subsequent to the description of the problem and to the questions, it is necessary to explain the main and the specific objectives, which were aspects of the basis and the projection of this research.

General Objective

To analyze whether peer-assessment is applied or not in English classes at the University of Nariño.

Specific Objectives

To define learners' perceptions regarding peer-assessment.

To identify in which classes peer-assessment is implemented.

To identify in which way teachers develop this type of assessment.

To identify teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of peer-assessment in their classes.

Delimitations

Conceptual

Assessment: is the process by which monitoring of the progress of students' knowledge is developed in a certain field, also of their beliefs, attitudes and abilities. It is an outgoing process inside the classroom. (Brown, 2004)

Peer-Assessment: is the evaluation made between classmates and it helps to get feedback on the students' work. On top of this, Brown, Bull & Pendlebury (1997) explain that peer-

assessment is the assessment of the work of others with equal status and usually has an element of mutuality. Underpinning a peer-assessment process is giving and receiving feedback from which continued reflection and perhaps dialogue may continue.

According to Brown 2004, peer-assessment is a cooperative learning. Many people go through a whole regimen of education, from kindergarten up to graduate studies.

Population

The average age of participants is between 20 and 25 from both genders; students were chosen at random; their social level it is not relevant, and most of them were born in the city of Pasto.

Geographical

This research was carried out in the English and French Program at the University of Nariño that is located in Las Acacias neighborhood. This is a conducive place to develop the teaching-learning process in a foreign language, because there are two laboratories that have a lot of authentic material such as videos, cassettes, etc, one resource center equipped with theoretical books in English or in Spanish, literary books, and proficiency books.

Limitations

We have to recognize some anticipated problems with our topic such as: a) in the resource center, there is not any

research related with this topic, and the bibliography references are not sufficient. b) Another relevant aspect is that when the research is being developed, teachers as well as students might not give truthful information. This is because in some way they feel satisfied with the assessment method they are currently applying or maybe they feel some pressure due to the consequences that this study could imply. Another reason that might be present is that students are comfortable with the assessment method that is being applied to them. Finally, another limitation is the fact that teachers do not allow us to observe their classes because they feel uncomfortable about having someone with less experience observing and evaluating them.

One possible solution for the first problem is that there are some articles in teaching journals such as FORUM, Modern Language Journal (MLJ) and some books by well-known authors in the field of assessment (Brown, 2004; O'Malley & Valdez, 1996 among others). Additional information can also be found on the Internet. A pilot study was carried out in order to get truthful information that will help us to know how useful the information is. This information will also clarify to students and teachers that our results do not have any negative consequences in their performance. In conclusion, explaining to teachers in a kind way that we are not going to judge them but to look for facts that help us with our research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

THEORIES OF EVALUATION,ASSESSMENT, TESTING AND WRITING ASSESSMENT

Theoretical framework

In this section we can clarify some relevant aspects such as assessment, evaluation and testing, as a manner to guide and support this research. This review of literature has the purpose of helping in understanding all of the previous concepts related with peer-assessment in an English writing class at the English and French program at the University of Nariño.

First of all, it is important to clarify the difference between three concepts that might be confused: evaluation, assessment and testing. We start with the broadest term which is evaluation.

Evaluation

Evaluation, according to Nunan (1999) can be defined as the collecting of information about aspects of the curriculum, which include learners, teachers and materials, and the posterior interpretation of that data with the purpose of making decisions.

These decisions could be opening or closing a program, hiring teachers - or firing teachers who do not comply with the standards set by the institution- or certifying a program. Since the evaluation is related to an institution or program, it is usually carried out by external agents who can belong to the government or to private accreditation agencies among others.

Evaluation takes time since a wide array of elements needs to be taken into account and it can be carried out in weeks, months or even years. Assessment is a sub-component of evaluation that is related to the tools and techniques for collecting and interpreting information about the learning process. The main purpose of evaluation is to collect information systematically in order to indicate the worth or merit of a programme or project. (Weir, and Roberts, 1994).

A narrower concept is assessment and since this research is focused on one part of evaluation which is peer assessment, this part will be explained in depth.

Assessment

Assessment is for Brown (2004), an ongoing process inside the classroom. He suggests that every time a student answers a question, makes a comment or tries out a new word or a pattern, the teacher subconsciously assesses the student's performance.

Brown adds that it is a subcomponent of evaluation since it encompasses what goes on inside the classroom. Here the main agent is the teacher, who designs and applies tasks with the purpose of collecting and interpreting information, this time about what learners can and cannot do as the result of the instructional process that has occurred over a certain time.

Genesee (2001) explains that "Assessment of an individual student's progress or achievement is an important component of

evaluation: it is that part of evaluation that includes the collection and analysis of information about student learning".

On the other hand, it is the set of procedures for evaluating the knowledge and abilities of English Language Learners (ELL), and is used for at least six purposes with them:

1. Screening and identification: To identify students for content of area support.

2. Placement: To determine the language proficiency and content area competencies of students.

3. Reclassification or exit: If a student has gained the language skills.

4. Monitoring student progress: Review the learning process in students.

5. Evaluating Programs: Determining the possible effects of government and instructional programs (an example of this can be the accreditation process carried out currently in Colombia in university programs).

6. Accountability: Making sure that students attain expected educational goals or standards, including testing for high school graduation.

Inside assessment there are some principles that are similar to testing, they are defined next in a general way:

Practicality

When somebody says that a test is practical this means that it is not excessively expensive, stays within appropriate time constraints, it has a scoring evaluation procedure that is specific and time efficient. (Brown, 2004)

Reliability

It refers to the results in a test, in other words, when you apply the same test twice, the results cannot vary significantly. Inside reliability there are:

Student-related reliability: This is related to physical and psychological factors as fatigue or anxiety that can affect their performance.

Rater reliability: refers to the aspects that can affect the scoring process for instance teachers' inexperience or lack of clear parameters.

Test administration reliability: is related to the conditions under which learners take the test for example, noise, light, desks, and chairs.

Validity

It is the most important principle "the extent to which inferences made from assessment results are appropriate meaningful and useful in terms of the purpose of the assessment" (Gronlund, 1998, cited by Brown, 2004). There are four types of validity and they are:

Content Validity: The correspondence between curriculum objectives and the objectives being assessed.

Consequential Validity: The way in which the assessment is used to benefit students (Darling- Hammond 1994; Shepard 1993). It has to do with the consequences of a test as well as accuracy in measuring intended criteria, its impact on the training of test-takers, its result on the learner, and the analysis of the test.(Brown,2004)

Construct Validity: theoretical understanding of the skills that are assessed. It is composed by a great amount of issues in the language learning process. (Brown, 2004)

Face Validity: the content of the test is perceived as fair and meaningful by students. "... based on the subjective judgement of the examinees who take it, the administrative personnel who decide on its use, and other psychometrically unsophisticated observers"(Mousavi, 2002 cited by Brown 2004)

Authenticity

Bachman and Palmer, 1996, page 23; define authenticity as the degree of correspondence of the characteristics of a given language test task to the features of a target language task. (Cited by Brown, 2004, page 28.)

Washback

"It refers to the effects the tests have on instruction in terms of how students prepare for the test" (Brown, 2004). Another viewpoint of washback is finding formative and summative test in different ways for instance:

Formative Assessment: is related to the process during the learning process when the aim is to improve instruction.

Summative Assessment: is related to all grades that at the end of the course are provided to educational authorities.

(Brindley, 1998)[1](Brown, 2004)

Authentic assessment

To talk about assessment is important to explain that there are many kinds of assessment, which are contained by Authentic Assessment and can be applied inside this concept: that is the multiple forms to assess what the student is learning, his or her achievement, motivation, and what attitudes he or she has on instructional and relevant classroom activities.

In incorporating Authentic Assessment, authors like Brown (2004) have suggested some steps that are necessary for a correct application of an authentic assessment process; and these can be summarized as follows:

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[1]http://www.tki.org.nz/r/esol/esolonline/secondary_mainstream/research/nzresearch/jenni_bedford/review_e.php

Build a team:

Create a team that has to be composed of teachers, parents, and administrators, in order to discuss the goals of authentic assessment and the function of this application in the school or university.

Determine the purposes:

"The most important advice when writing assessment criteria is clarity and brevity. Ambiguity should be avoided at all costs and the language used should be clear to both academic staff and students. The criteria used must be both reliable (i.e., consistent results over time) and valid (i.e., assesses what it claims to assess) and are focused on the essential aspects of performance for the achievement of a pass or the specified grade."[2] The aim of assessment also includes identification, placement and reclassification of learners as well as monitoring student achievement during instruction.

Specify Objectives:

The objectives may be evaluated by the assessment team when they are considering different types of assessment.

Conduct professional development on authentic assessment:

It is similar to build a team, but in this part teachers share their experience to create a functional and original assessment test for the class.

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[2] http://www.bath.ac.uk/learningandteaching/themes/assessment-criteria/

Collect examples of authentic assessments:

Look for examples of the assessments that seem consistent with the objectives determined before and the types of assessment that can be more suitable for the course and the students.

Additionally, teachers can read books, articles or attend conferences about authentic assessment to get additional insights on this topic.

Adapt existing tools of assessment or develop new ones:

This can be useful for teachers that are beginning to work with alternative assessment. Adapt existing instruments of assessment to meet local purposes by changing the item content, format, or scoring rubric.

Try out the assessment:

Give the assessment tools to students, score the papers, and discuss the instruments of assessment with the students and other teachers. This can help avoid resistance against introducing changes in assessment in your school and it can help you see what possible problems you can find.

Review the assessment:

Discuss the assessment with others members of the team and make final adjustments to the assessments or the rubrics

The concept of assessment as well as the most relevant features of assessment types, which are the most important terms regarding this research, have been explained. At this point we

are going to continue talking about the whole components of authentic assessment. It is important to clarify that this is a huge term; hence, it contains several characteristics, activities and steps.

According to Feuer and Fulton, 1993 cited by O'Malley and Valdez, 1996; there are several kinds of activities for an authentic assess:

Oral interviews:

The teacher should assess the oral proficiency regularly, especially with beginners, for this purpose students can respond orally to questions about different topics that might include their knowledge, activities and interest or preferences. We should listen to students carefully if we want to obtain excellent results in their performance.

Story or text retelling:

Students read or listen to a story or text and then retell the main idea or selected details. They respond orally and they are rated on how they describe the events in the story.

Writing samples:

Students create descriptive, expository, convincing, or reference papers. Inside this aspect, it can be found documents about personal experience, stories or poems.

Projects and exhibitions:

Students complete a project in a specific topic or area, and it can be developed in pairs or individually, it can be composed by written or oral designs.

Experiments or Demonstrations:

Students develop experiments or demonstrations through the use of some materials, (for example a microscope, this work is presented in an oral or a written report. It is used more in sciences, such as, biology, chemistry, and physics.

Constructed-Response Items:

Students respond in a written form to open-ended questions. This assessment is focused on how much students apply information rather than how much they recall of what has been taught.

Teacher Observations:

The teacher observes students, responding to instructional material, or interacting with other students. The teacher needs to record observations systematically over time to note changes in student performance.

Performance Assessment

Inside the different kinds of Authentic Assessment is *Performance Assessment*, in which the student constructs a response in an oral or written way (Feuer and Fulton 1993; Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters 1992)

The student can answer in formal or informal assessment contexts or also he or she may be observed during a class. The most useful examples to apply in order to collect valuable information are: oral reports, writing samples, individual and group projects, exhibitions and demonstrations.

In Performance Assessment the criteria to evaluate is very important and it has to be made public and known in advance for the teacher and of course for students. (Adapted from Aschbacher 1991; Herman, Aschbacher; and Winters 1992)

Some characteristics of Performance Assessment are:

Constructed Response:

Students create an expanded response engage in a performance, or create a product, it means, using several sentences to explain an idea.

Higher-order Thinking:

The student usually uses higher levels of opinions in creating answers to open – ended questions. It means that students have to make a deep explanation of their thoughts.

Authenticity:

Tasks are significant, demanding, and engaging activities that reflect good training or other real- world contexts where the student is expected to achieve.

Integrative:

The tasks call for incorporation of language skills and, in some cases, for integration of knowledge and skills across content areas. It means that students have to mix all their ideas in a coherent a cohesive way.

Process and product:

Procedures and strategies for concluding the correct answer or for looking at multiple elucidations to difficult tasks are often assessed as well as the creation or the "right" response.

Depth versus Breadth:

Performance assessment gives information in depth about a student's skills as compared to the breadth of treatment commoner of multiple choice tests.

Portfolio Assessment

The second kind to explain is *Portfolio Assessment* which is a systematic recollection of student works that is analyzed to show progress over time. The portfolio can include samples of student work and sometimes selected by teachers or by students.

It could be used in the middle the course or at the end; it depends on the teacher's criteria.

Self-Assessment

The third kind is *Self-Assessment* which promotes direct involvement in learning and the integration of cognitive abilities with motivation and attitude toward learning. With

this activity students have freedom to choose challenging activities, take risks, advance their own learning and accomplish desired goals. Because they have the entire situation under control and also they decided which resources to use, which is a useful tool for students who want to be more confident with themselves and at the same time help other students, the trust is gotten on their own. With Self- Assessment learners become judges of their own strengths and weaknesses.

Peer-Assessment

Finally, the last and the most important kind of assessment contained in this research, is *Peer-Assessment*. In this manner of assessing students clarify the characteristics of quality work by means of evaluating the work of their peers, one purpose of it, is giving feedback. The person who is assessing his or her partner has to have a clear conception of what they are looking for, so it is important to know what aspects are going to be scored. It is necessary to have an adequate learning environment, in the way that students can feel relaxed and can give truthful comments. It would be a good idea for the application of peer-assessment, starting by creating groups of 3 or 4 students with the intention of getting trust between them.[3]

Some advantages of peer-assessment is that students become autonomous and could be involved in a motivating way, for the

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[3] http://www.iml.uts.edu.au/assessment/students/peer.html

period of the whole class teacher and students can clarify their assessment criteria, students can get a huge variety of feedback and in this part the teacher is not an essential element in the development of the course. In contrast, there are some disadvantages in which students cannot take the assessment process as serious as it is, they cannot evaluate in an objective way and maybe the feedback that they give to their peers could be misunderstood.

Furthermore, it is important to explain that the components of an authentic assessment can be used in portfolio, performance, self or peer-assessment, since these types are different authentic manners to assess the learners within the teaching and learning process.

<div align="center">Testing</div>

Testing is the narrowest concept of the three as Brown (2004) suggests and it is concerned with the tools teachers can use to assess. "Tests in simple terms are a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge or performance in a given domain" (Brown, D.C (2001)). Some features of testing can be summarized as follows:

According to Hedge (2000), testing helps to cover the specific steps that educators or examiners use to measure ability in the language (e.g., a written test on grammar, an oral exam, or a journal to assess writing).

Brown (2004) says that testing refers to the instruments used by teachers in order to assess learners within a particular domain, in this case, language proficiency, and defines tests as: "…prepared administrative procedures that occur at identifiable times in a curriculum when learners muster all their faculties to offer peak performance, knowing that their responses are being measured and evaluated". As it can be seen, there are different ideas and definitions regarding testing, but there seems to be consensus regarding the idea that testing is specific and related to the materials or tools teachers use with students.

Definitions are clear and many teachers may be familiar with them, but assessment can be imprecise due to the variety of conceptions that authors and teachers have about this process. For instance, Cohen considers that assessment is an unknown area. In which, there are some students who think, that, tests are a kind of examination for their learning processes. Teachers may have a different purpose and not be satisfied with the tests results because they had a different purpose in mind. Cohen developed a survey in 1985, whose results made evident some misconceptions about what a test is: first of all students think that tests are some kind of punishment, tests are the only way for grading and that students are not well-trained to take the tests. Some ways to cope with these misconceptions and to enhance the testing in general are suggested next:

"A more constructive view of language testing exists when: a) testing is seen as an opportunity for interaction between teachers and students. b) Students are judged based on the knowledge they have. c) Tests are intended to help students improve their skills. d) The criteria for success on the tests are clear to students. e) Students receive a grade for their performance on a set representing different testing methods (not just one). f) The test takers are trained in how to take tests, especially those involving unfamiliar formats. g) The tests are returned promptly, and h) the results are discussed".[4] (Shohamy, 1985, p. 515).

There are some key issues to build an instrument to assess learners. The first thing to consider is to be aware of the objectives of the tests. For instance, one test could have twelve different intentions: some administrative ones like assessment, placement, exemptions, certification, and promotions and so on; other purposes are instructional and include diagnosis, evidence of progress, providing feedback to the respondent, or the evaluation of teaching or of the curriculum. (Canale & Swain, 1980 cited by Brown, 2004)

When designing a test or assessment task it is also important to consider what our learners should be able to know or do as the result of teaching. In Colombia, the purpose of tests

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[4] (Shohamy, 1985, p. 515)

might be to demonstrate that learners have achieved a certain

level of proficiency as indicated by the Colombian standards.

However, teachers should also consider more universal elements.

For instance, according to Canale & Swain (1980) p. 29 cited

by Andrew Cohen, there is a strategic competence, which means a

compensation for a lack in a language area; while Bachman in 1990

reveals that strategic competence is composed of three parts: the

first one is an assessment component in which communicative goals

emerge. The second is a planning one where students stand out the

main items from language ability and plan in what circumstances

they can use it and the final one is an execution part in which

the student performs the plan. Some items can be tested inside

discourse maybe by means of grammatical or sociolinguistic

competence.

An additional element to consider in testing and in deciding

our purposes is the fact that tasks need to have a specific focus

in order to facilitate scoring. It is also necessary to think

about the need or the suitability of some technological issues

like computer-based assessment (Dunkel 1999 cited by Andrew

Cohen) since tests based on technology can be useful for dealing

with receptive skills like reading, but do not seem to be very

effective for testing productive skills like speaking.

A final issue that may have an influence on the design of

tests is that they could or may include the assessment of cross-

cultural pragmatics in the way of speech acts like complaining,

describing, or requesting among others. Regardless of the

objective, the testing procedure can be carried out incorporating

different skills and by means of portfolios where they collect

their compositions, journals where learners can register what

they have learned in the class, vocabulary or reading logs to

create their own learning dictionaries, conferences, oral

presentations and using self-assessment and peer-assessment

(Brown 1998).

Regarding this research, it is important to explain some

deep concepts.

Now that these three concepts have been clarified, it is

important to discuss in a deep manner, the conception of

assessment in combination with writing, since peer assessment can

be incorporated effectively in the teaching process and because

that skill is the focus of this paper.

Writing Assessment

Writing assessment with English Language Learners (ELLs) is

focused on three purposes:

The first one is the identification and program placement

in English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual programs.

Here, students are assigned to a certain level or group depending

on their proficiency. The second purpose is monitoring students'

progress. This is the most common purpose among teachers and the

one we believe is the suitable for this research. This purpose also entails that by means of instruction teachers can determine the student needs. Finally, the last purpose of writing assessment is accountability. That means, collecting information that tells teachers if learners have learned efficiently (or inefficiently) the contents of a course. With these purposes in mind, we need to turn to describing the person who will perform the writing assessment task to be graded by the teacher, themselves or their peers.

Brown (2004) states that there are a great amount of activities that a second language writer can create, relating assessing writing skills. In this case, it emerged a multiplicity of options of written genres that second language learners need to acquire. In assessing writing, it is possible to find three types of genres of writing such as: Academic writing, Job-related writing and Personal writing; these types of genres contained different sorts of activities and tasks in order to make the learner improve his or her performance, it also depends on the level.

Relating this research, the relevant term is Academic Writing, so, inside this there are activities such as

Papers and general subject reports

Essays, compositions.

Academically focused journals.

Short answer, test responses.

Technical reports. (Ex: lab reports)

Theses, dissertations.

The Writer

The writer transforms what she/he thinks in "self-initiated" topics (Hamp-Lyons 1990). Students who write can make allowance to several types of knowledge; for example, knowledge of the content, which is a prior knowledge; procedural knowledge, whose purpose is to organize the content, to help the composition to be coherent and cohesive and to have objectives, and among others. (Hillocks 1987).

According to this part writing assessment takes into account another aspects beyond mechanics and grammar, it also helps to realize in what aspects of the writing process students need reinforcement.

Peer-assessment in Writing

Writing is, as it has been suggested before, a skill that is suitable for peer-assessment because learners have a tangible piece of work written by their peers to work with. As some authors affirm, "Students can evaluate each other's writing through peer-assessment as they participate in student writing conferences" (Cramer 1982; Pearce 1983). The teacher can organize these conferences, so that students have a clear set of parameters to assess their classmates' work, there is a specific

amount of time to do the task and they clarify the aspects that students should focus on when assessing.

In order to keep students' interest in peer-assessment and to avoid using too much time out of class work, teachers have to be aware of the fact that it is not necessary to grade each activity that the students develop or produce, but it is important to recognize if students are getting enough feedback or not through the peer-assessment process.

Peer-assessment is useful for large classes in the way that teachers do not waste time trying to grade numerous papers occasionally, but they have the opportunity to have information about their students through multiple sources. Teachers could also choose some of the whole papers assessed to analyze the students' progress. Besides these advantages, it can be added that students can interact with others to apply performance standards, and give their classmates some suggestions about the way in which they can improve their writing.

After the task has been carried out, the teacher can address some questions to the class. Some common questions that are asked when teachers use peer-assessment are: what did you like about the paper? What facts or ideas can be added to the paper? In addition, what changes could be made to improve the paper? Next to this step, the students who were evaluated can edit and rewrite their papers.

Although the process seems very simple to apply, some elements can prevent the success of peer-assessment. For instance, the learners have a low proficiency level and cannot give feedback to other students. Other possibility could be the lack of time to train students, lack of time to give students the opportunity of grading the compositions or maybe learners do not feel comfortable assessing others.

It is important to note that if teachers apply this kind of assessment, it has to be authentic and flexible and be patient while learners adjust to this new experience. These problems can be overcome and teachers should attempt to involve students in this experience because when students learn to evaluate the work of their peers, they are extending their own opportunities to learn how to write (Cramer, 1982).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

In the previous chapter we discussed the different theories and concepts that support this research problem, the content of this chapter will deal with the research design and data analysis.

Design

The research process that was developed belongs to a qualitative paradigm. Hence, the methods that were used to collect data are classroom observation and surveys.

The information was collected in the middle of the semester because at this point students were developing the academic process with enough time to realize if assessment is applied. The information was collected at the University of Nariño with the two most advanced semesters of the English and French Program.

Participants, setting and sample

Participants

The groups that we chose to carry out this research were the students of the two most advanced semesters of the English and French Program at the University of Nariño.

Setting

The place selected to carry out our research is the University of Nariño. It is located in Las Acacias neighbourhood, its structure is adequate for the learning – teaching process, it has four buildings, which are distributed in this way: one for

under-graduate studies, (in licenciatura programs, English and French, Spanish and English, Spanish and Literature and Natural Sciences), another one for post-graduate studies, in the other one there are the television and radio stations from the University of Nariño and an auditory. The last building has the administrative offices of the Linguistics and Languages Department. In each classroom there are a TV set and a VCR to be used in each class. Inside the University there is a comfortable environment which might be conducive for applying different assessment types, including the one we intend to analyze in this research.

Sample

We chose four students at random from the final two semesters of the English and French program at the University of Nariño without previous advice in order to carry out the data collection process. Although the sample seems a bit small, it is important to note that in advanced semesters the groups are composed by few students.

Data Collection Techniques

The different instruments used to support this research were the following:

Observations

These were structured because we have already determined what we were looking for in the observation context. (See appendix # 1 of students and teachers format)

Surveys (Questionnaires)

We can use these, because they were self administrated, and helped us collect data on phenomena which are not easily observed (assessment and training), with open questions, yes/no questions of scales. (See appendix # 2 of students and # 3 of teachers' format)

Validation Criteria

We used triangulation as a criterion of validation; this was carried out by comparing surveys, observations, bibliographic information and our own interpretation.

Pilot Study

In our project we intend to know if teachers apply peer-assessment in their writing classes.

A pilot study in which four students of two advanced semesters of the English and French program were chosen at random and without prior warning was carried out.

First of all we asked for the permission of teachers and of course students, in this case our classmates, to complete some surveys.

Once these questionnaires were applied, we could conclude that the information given by teachers and students is relevant and sufficient for this research, but it was necessary to change the introduction, the directions and some questions since some of them that were not answered by the participants.

Therefore, in the appendix # 2 we can see the old format of students' questionnaire and in appendix # 3 we can see the new format which was corrected as consequence of the pilot study. The aspect that corresponds to teachers is explained in appendix # 4 which contains the old format of teachers' questionnaire and the recent teachers' questionnaire is in appendix # 5. So, in order to see the changes that were made to the format of both questionnaires, it is necessary to compare the format design.

Nowadays, we have already noticed that we are not going to have problems with permission because each person is willing to do the surveys. In relation to the observations we have already talked with the teachers and the administrators and hopefully, they will give us the necessary support, as much as they can.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Subsequent to the chapter on methodological aspects, the fourth chapter of this project is presented in order to provide readers with all the information about the analysis and outcomes of the surveys provided by all the participants and the observations done in classes using the FIAC system.

Classroom observation analysis

Classroom observation was intended to help us clarify what is the most common kind of assessment method and to know if peer-assessment is implemented. In addition, this procedure will help us determine if the information provided in the surveys coincides with what was observed. Then, the characteristics of the chosen sample and the most relevant findings collected can be reported.

It can be noted that in the following analysis of data the observation format for both students and teachers will be discussed together.

First, it is necessary to describe the observations that were developed with two teachers in two writing classes of eight and tenth semester in the English and French program at the University of Nariño, the observation lasted four hours per each teacher. While observing we sat in a corner of the eight semester's classroom, in order not to disturb or interrupt the normal development of the class. The teacher arrived, greeted the

students and moved on explaining which were going to be the tasks or activities for the class. Students began to read an article, first they skimmed the reading to get a global vision of the text, then they scanned the article to make a deep analysis of the content, answer some questions asked by the teacher, they analyzed if the text had coherence and if it was accurate.

After doing this, the teacher asked students to create a similar passage using a free topic. Subsequent to the development of the passage, students had to exchange their papers with their classmates, in order to get feedback in spelling, grammar, punctuation, missing words, word order, wrong word, and capitalization. In this way, students applied Peer-assessment without being aware of it. Students gave the teacher the corrected papers, in order to get a grade. The class finished, students went out to take a break.

The next observation of the same group and teacher is similar to the first one, the beginning and the explanation of the class was the same, and students were assigned an activity to develop. However, there were some differences, since brainstorming was applied this time; it was related to the title of a story, with this tool students had to do a composition based on the several opinions their classmates gave about the title.

After doing this creation, the teacher began to apply a jigsaw activity about the previous reading, sharing ideas and

answering some questions. The class ended and the activity was completed as homework. Although there was not direct peer-assessment, it could be observed that there is a high degree of participation and interaction on the part of students in this writing class.

Both tenth-semester observations were similar regarding the techniques used to assess. The teacher applied peer-assessment and essays in both classes, because students showed interest in this type of activities. The different aspects were that teacher varied the instruments to measure the teaching-learning process, with activities such as reading comprehension and dialogues where the skills were integrated.

Concerning the previous information, it is possible to conclude that students feel comfortable with this kind of assessment method, since they are agree with the components of peer-assessment. On the other hand, they applied the tasks and activities of this type of assessment in a correct way; due to they follow the steps and directions gave by the teacher. In any moment of the application of this one, students showed to be confused. Hence, we can affirm that peer-assessment is possible to be carried out in the English and French program at the University of Nariño. (See appendix # 1 – Observation format.)

Students' Surveys Analysis

Surveys were an excellent source to help us to clarify if students know assessment as a whole. First, it is important to see the format of the survey.

These answers were provided by eight semester students of the English and French program at the University of Nariño and they are transcribed exactly as the students wrote them.

In the first open-ended question "What is your personal definition of assessment?"; Student A, responded that: "Assessment is the qualification of someone´s knowledge regarding a determinate topic". Student B answered that: "it is a certain procedure carried out to know if the knowledge given has been assimilated". Student C wrote: "I consider assessment as the way in which the development you have in a certain course is validated". Finally, Student D said, "Assessment is a way for measure knowledge".

According to Brown (2004), Assessment is an ongoing process inside the classroom. He suggests that every time a student answers a question, makes a comment or tries out a new word or a pattern, the teacher subconsciously assesses the student's performance. Our perception regarding this question is that learners have a clear concept of assessment in spite of not having had any instruction regarding Assessment yet. However,

these students' concepts are not far from the real concept of Assessment. This might be because students have already started a kind of pedagogical practice in "INSTITUCION EDUCATIVA MUNICIPAL, ESCUELA NORMAL SUPERIOR DE PASTO" and this has given them some knowledge about when it has to be applied, depending on the characteristics of the learners, on the age, and on the level.

For the second open-ended question, "Which kind of assessment does your teacher implement in her or his classes". Student A, responded "it was Constant assessment carried out by the teacher". Student B said, "It was Written and oral evaluation about the topics that has been learned". Student C suggested "Most of the time our teachers use different activities for assessing our development in the classroom, for instance, group work activities, exams, presentations, homework". Finally, student D thought that, "Self – assessment, peer- assessment, tests".

Brown (2004) explains that the assessment process could be, authentic or traditional. Inside authentic assessment, it is possible to find different kinds of assessment methods, such as Performance assessment, Self-assessment, Portfolio Assessment and Peer-assessment. These concepts were already explained, and based on the answers given, it can be said that teachers of the English and French Program at the University of Nariño, are constantly,

using and applying traditional assessment to their students; some examples of it could be tests and homework. These instruments of assessment are very common in oral and written classes. For this reason, students may tend to think that the only way to get a grade is a test, in this part emerges the misconception that a test is a kind of punishment for students. Another implication of these answers is that following the example of teachers, students begin to think that evaluation or assessment is the same as grading.

These types of assessment techniques proposed but those teachers who applied traditional assessment are not similar to the authentic ones suggested by experts, named previously. According to our training and theoretical background, it can be induced that it is necessary to vary the assessment tasks, in this way students who feel threatened by tests can realize that there are other ways to be assessed, in oral or written aspects using demonstrations, group work, portfolios, oral interviews and among others.

Regarding the students answers we can notice that the predominant task is the written ones, because they tend to have tests and homework.

In the third open-ended question "Are you familiar with the concept of peer- assessment? If so, do you think that the use

of peer-assessment is an effective tool to teach and learn a second or foreign language, why?"

Student A responded: "Yes it is, since our peers might notice our weaknesses in an easier way, it is likely to learn from our classmates". Student B wrote: "Yes, it can be negative when the student who performs the assessment does not have the enough knowledge about the topic". Student C said: "Yes, yes because sometimes our Partners have a very good English level so they are a very powerful source for achieving some knowledge". Moreover, the last student, D answered: "Yes, yes of course, since everybody develops knowledge in a different way, so a partner can know something. I do not and with "peer-assessment", I can learn things and share what I know".

Brown, Bull & Pendlebury (1997) argue that peer-assessment is the assessment of the work of others with equal status and usually has an element of mutuality. Students, who were examined in this survey, think that it is an effective tool to teach and learn a second or foreign language, but also they claim that this kind of assessment has some negative consequences when it is not applied in a correct way. It means that the person who applies peer-assessment needs to have enough knowledge in order to discern with which type of students it can work, in which subject

or theme it can be useful and the success of peer assessment depends on the maturity of the learners.

In the fourth open-ended question, "Which assessment tasks does your teacher often use to assess writing skills?"

Student A did not answer this question. Student B wrote: "Self – assessment and peer – assessment". Student C said: "Not all the teachers use it, but the teacher who uses it, makes us interchange papers so that you can have contribution to better your work". In addition, student D answered "Self- correction, peer- correction and correction in-group".

According to Brown (2004)In assessing writing, it is possible to find three types of genres of writing such as: Academic writing, Job-related writing and Personal writing; these types of genres contained different sorts of activities and tasks in order to make the learner improve his or her performance, it also depends on the level.

For this research and considering the surveyed students, the relevant term is Academic Writing. Inside it there are activities such as: Papers and general subject reports essays, compositions, academically focused journals, short answers, test responses, technical reports (Ex: lab reports), theses, and dissertations, which teachers at the University should consider to be included in advanced semesters.

Regarding the background, it can be reported that the most common sort of assessment tasks in writing is peer-assessment; although the concept is not very clear for students, they can notice it in an inductive way. That is, they apply it, unconsciously. Three students consider that peer-assessment is the most common task that the teacher uses for assessing writing. Two learners thought that self-assessment is the most frequent activity and one examinee agrees that assessment in-group is the most regular option to assess writing skills. In the next graphic, we can appreciate these answers:
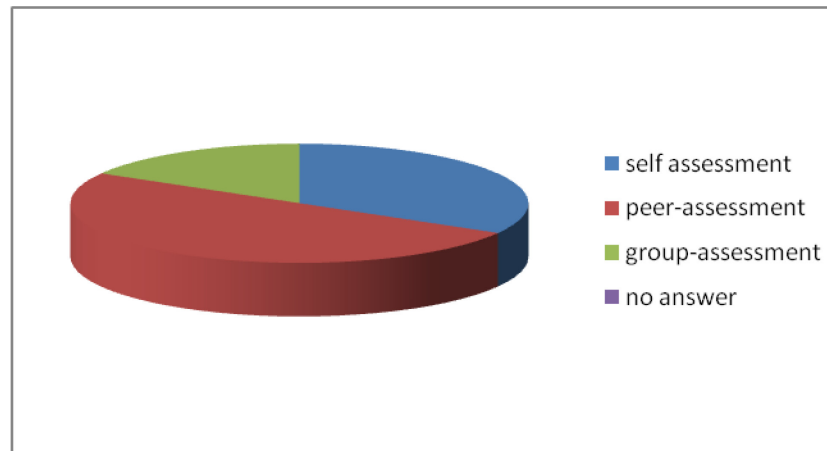

Tenth Semester Students

The next part of the analysis corresponds to the answers provided by students of tenth semester of the English and French program at the University of Nariño. It was expected that the answers would be different given that they have already done their practicum and they took a course on evaluation, assessment and testing.

In the first open-ended question, "What is your personal definition of assessment?" Student A responded that: "Assessment refers to how to assess students by taking into account listening, speaking, Reading and writing". Student B said: "Assessment is the general conception of knowing about the students, methodology, and process in the class". Student C wrote: "It is to know what the student progress is in a certain time or subject, especially about knowledge". Besides, student D thought that, "Assessment is the activity or task throw, which an evaluation is performed".

Brown's (2004) concepts were explained in the answers of eight semester students. We can realize that the responses of tenth semester students are very varied and not concrete; nevertheless, they are related to the definition of Brown. On the other hand, in their process of instruction, they have already studied a lot of topics and aspects related to Evaluation, so, they know which the implications around the assessment process are and how to manage it, depending on the characteristics of the examinees.

In the second open-ended question, "Which kind of assessment does your teacher implemented in her or his class?" the student A responded that: "The teacher implemented assessment in-group, pairs and individual". Student B said: "Oral, written, group,

individual assessment". Student C wrote: "Individual assessment and sometimes peer- assessment or group assessment". Moreover, the student D agrees that: "an Oral presentation is the way teacher applies for evaluating our Reading comprehension".

Brown (2004) explains that the assessment process could be, authentic or traditional as it was suggested before. The answers provided by tenth semester students reveal that they are aware of the existing different sorts of assessment tasks and they affirm that in their classes the teachers employ a great variety of techniques and methods in order to assess the performance of his or her students. Finally, it is possible to conclude that these students have a wider knowledge about different kinds of assessment, the terminology related to this, and how the teacher applies it.

Concerning the sample that is being analyzed in this research, it is possible to say that three of the surveyed students assert that individual assessment is the most common method that teachers use in their classes, and the same percentage thought that the most common one is assessment in groups. Two students of the sample add that peer and oral assessment is the most usual techniques for assessing the learning process. The following graphic shows these answers:
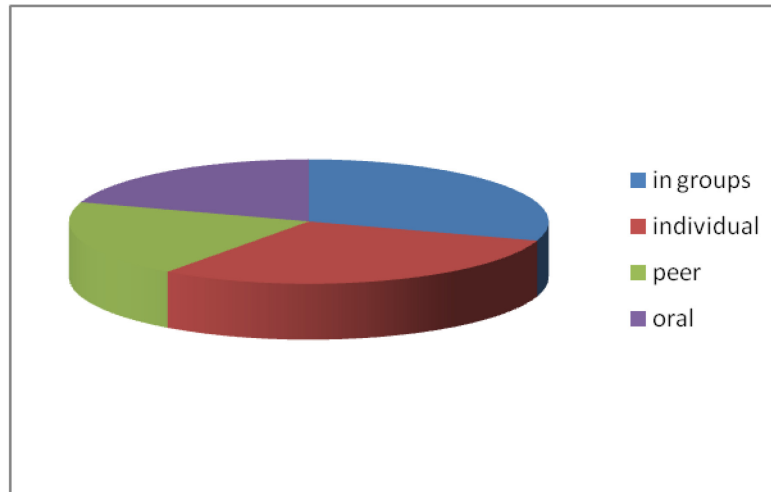
In the third open-ended question, "Are you familiar with the concept of peer- assessment? If so, do you think that the use of peer- assessment is an effective tool to teach and learn a second or foreign language, why?"

Student A responded: "Yes, yes, because some students need his partner´s help to learn. Besides, because between partners there is confidence". Student B argues: "Because we learn sharing with others doing activities, giving ideas". Student C wrote: "Yes, because we can help each other with different points of view". In addition, student D said "Yes. Because if you count with a friend or partner back up you feel more confident and the stress filter comes down".

We can notice that students have an accurate definition of peer-assessment; also, they feel that this kind of assessment is an effective tool to teach and learn a second or foreign language

since they associated some positive characteristics of peer-assessment with its implications in the development of a class. One possible reason to explain this could be that tenth semester students have already experienced the planning and application of this assessment type in their training as teachers and know that it can yield good results since their students can become less nervous and feel relaxed when they are going to be assessed. In this way, the misconception that many teachers and students have relating assessment as a punishment can start to be changed.

In the last open-ended question, "Which assessment tasks does your teacher often use to assess writing skills?" student A cited "essays, description of places or people, etc". Student B wrote "multiple choice, open questionnaires free writing and essay". Student C answered: "With essays". Furthermore, student D declared that "Writing essays are the task; my teacher often uses to assess writing skills".

According to Brown (2004) in assessing writing, it is possible to find three types of genres of writing such as academic writing, Job-related writing and Personal writing. These were further explained previously. Hence, analyzing the survey we can observe that all of the examinees added that essays is the most common task that the teacher uses to assess the writing skills. Two students claim that free writing, which in terms of

assessing writing corresponds to compositions, is the most
frequent task. Two learners said that multiple-choice tasks,
which correspond to short answers or test responses, are the most
common activity. Likewise, two students affirm that open
questionnaires, which belong to the last, term are what teachers
implement the most in order to assess writing skills.
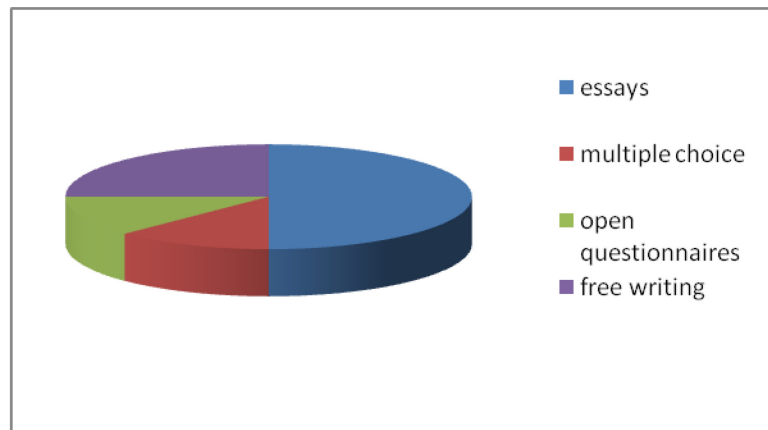
The second part of the survey was composed by multiple-
choice questions. The following analysis corresponds to the
answers gave by the students of eight and tenth semester of the
English and French program at the University of Nariño.

To analyze this section it was necessary to create some
categories regarding the questions of the survey. The next chart
contains these categories and the answers given by the students
of eight semester of the English and French program at the
University of Nariño.

In this analysis of data with categories, is important to
clarify that the abbreviations used in this case correspond to sA

for student A, sB for student B, sC for student C and sD for student D.

Here are the answers given by eight semester students:

		Strongly agree	Agree	disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Attitude towards written tasks.	Comfortable	sA,sC,			
	Confident	sA, sC,	Sb		
	Pleasant	sC,	sA,		
	Relaxed		sA, sC	sD	
2. students' perception regarding the application of alternative assessment	Difficult			sA, sC	
	Interesting	sC, sD	sA, sB		
	Modern	sC	sA,		
	Challenging		sA, sC		
3.students results obtained using their preferred assessment task	Excellent	sA, sC			
	Satisfying	sC	sA,		
	Average		sA, sC, sD		
	Disappointing			sA,	Sc
	Negative		sB	sA,	sC
4. frequency of application of peer assessment in a writing class	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	never	
		sB	sA, sC	Sd	
5. application of	sC, sD	sA, sB,			

peer-assessment in a writing course.					

Here are the answers provided by tenth semester students:

		Strongly agree	Agree	disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Attitude towards written tasks.	Comfortable	sB, sD	sC		
	Confident		sC, sD	sB	
	Pleasant	sB, sD	sC		
	Relaxed	sA,	sD	sB, sC	
2. students' perception regarding the application of alternative assessment	Difficult		sC, sD	sB	
	Interesting	sB	sC, sD		
	Modern	sA, sB, sD	sC		
	Challenging	sB, sD	sC		
3.students results obtained using their preferred assessment task	Excellent	sB, sD		sC	
	Satisfying	sA, sB, sD		sC	
	Average		sB, sD	sC	
	Disappointing			sC	sB, sD
	Negative			sC	sB, sD
4. frequency of application of peer assessment in a	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	never	
		sB, sD	sA, sC		

writing class					
5. Application of peer-assessment in a writing course.	sC,	sA, sB, sD			

In the first category, it can be noticed that students have a positive attitude toward written tasks. This might be caused by the fact that through high school and then in the university, most teachers include written tasks as part of assessment and students are familiar with them. It can be added that written tasks seem to be prevalent in foreign language classes at the University of Nariño in general, since through writing you can assess elements like spelling, grammar, use of connectors, accuracy and vocabulary.

Regarding the second category of the survey, which is students' perception, we can realize that they are interested in the application of alternative assessment and that it is a modern tool by means of which they can be assessed in their classes. It is evident that students feel pleased when they experience new techniques and they may be considering alternative assessment as a valid tool for applying it in the future with their own students.

In the third category, students' results, students affirmed that the results obtained using their preferred assessment tasks,

which could vary depending on the assessment method used by the teacher, are average. It could happened, because students always expect outstanding results at the moment of being assessed with their preferred method, but the teacher cannot please everyone, so she/he varies the tasks, and the results always will be different in each class. However, other students feel satisfaction with their results, because they notice that they could obtain better results if they develop their preferred assessment task. The recommendation here would be to expose students to different types of tasks so that they get familiar with them so that their results can be enhanced.

According to the fourth category, frequency of application of peer-assessment, students suggest that peer assessment is still not a prevalent practice, but it is sometimes applied. This is coherent with what was observed in the writing classes. It is important to mention that peer assessment was sometimes used as a class technique, rather than as an assessment task.

The last category, application of peer-assessment in writing classes, some students thought that it must always be included in writing courses, but others thought that it must only be included sometimes. One possible reason for this could be that they feel confident with this kind of method to assess, and also it is easy to apply by both, teacher and students.

Teachers' Surveys Analysis

Surveys were useful tools to help us find out if teachers recognized the whole concept of assessment and its implications. First, it is important to see the format of the survey. (See appendix # 5 – new format for teachers' questionnaire)

In this part are included the answers provided by teachers who work in the English and French program at the University of Nariño.

To develop this part of the analysis, concepts considered by Brown (2004) such as assessment and peer assessment were taken into account as it was done with students' answers.

In the first open-ended question "What is your personal definition of assessment, and how do you implement it in the classroom?" teacher 1, responded that: "Assessment is a process of constant observation of students to help them achieve some teaching and learning objectives. I implement it by means of observation, class tasks, and research activities". Teacher 2 answered that: "it is every way of testing students' production or knowledge". Teacher 3 wrote, "Assessment is a continuous process that occurs between teachers and students in the classroom". Finally, teacher 4, said that "Assessment is generally considered as the process of gathering and discussing information taken from a wide range of sources with a view to

gaining as complete an understanding as possible of what students know or have learned during a certain period of training. The idea behind this is also to find out what students can do with the knowledge at their disposal. I implement assessment in class based on performance tasks, multi-domain assessment tasks and self-assessment tasks among others".

Our perception related to this question is that the assessment concept is very clear, because nowadays this type of method is being implemented several times. One possible reason could be that teachers are getting modern training so, they not only apply traditional assessment but also, they mixed it, with alternative options. We can see this aspect in the observation that was done twice, and we saw that teacher do not leave traditional procedures but at the same time, they are using the alternative tools to assess the teaching and learning process. They could think that they have to vary the way to assess in order to get the motivation of the students, and help them to improve their knowledge so students can gain new abilities to be applied at the moment, when they will be teachers. The theoretical framework cited in this part, is the same that appears in the students' survey analysis.

In the second open-ended question, "what types of assessment are, in your opinion the most effective in L2 instruction, why?"

Teacher 1 responded that: "I think autoevaluation is okay, but students need more formal evaluation such as: tasks, exams, essays, research work, peer-evaluation also helps. Teacher 2 said that "it depends on the area you want to emphasize; but I think that those types of assessment in which students have to produce pieces of language are the most useful", teacher 3, wrote "in my opinion the more effective types of assessment are both formative and summative". Finally, teacher 4 thought that, "This depends on the specific objectives of the course. For instance if the purpose of the course is to help students develop their oral skills, then oral presentations, case studies, would be in order but if the aim is to foster writing skills then the teacher can recourse to such tasks as essays, reports, etc. Ideally, in the CA frame all the types of assessment listed above would be of real value".

Related to this question we can suggest that teachers assert in the same options about the most effective tool in L2 instruction, they said that depends on the area that want to be emphasized, in this case that peer-assessment is a useful tool to measure writing skill. Because, they can learn of their classmates' mistakes, so they are getting feedback and in this way, they are gaining experience and knowledge in order to do not commit the same errors of the past. They are getting feedback

about grammar, and its form. The review of literature is in the analysis of students' surveys.

In the third open-ended question "Are you familiar with the concept of peer-assessment?". If so, do you think that the use of peer-assessment is an effective tool to teach and learn a second or foreign language, why?. Teacher 1 responded: "Yes. It is very useful because classmates can benefit from each other's experience in the FL. correcting other people's mistakes helps correcting our own". Teacher 2 wrote, "Yes, we as teachers should be very careful with this type of assessment, each peer-assessment activity must be well planned and items to be tested must be chosen carefully". Teacher 3 said, "yes, because when learning a new language you need to interact with others in real life and peer-assessment can help you improve language production". Moreover, the last teacher 4 answered: "I guess that nowadays the role of the teacher has changed significantly. Part of this change means a more direct and purposeful involvement of the student in his own learning. This in turn means that students can learn from one another. As a result of this, students should show an increased ability to make independent judgments of their own work and of the work of their peers. Needless to say, this type of assessment also contributes to creating a relaxed atmosphere in which the students feel free and eager to

participate in class thus increasing their chances of producing language and receiving feedback from their own peers. In other words, the students themselves become another source of learning".

At this point, we can see that every teacher is familiar with the concept of peer-assessment; it could be demonstrate by means of the answers that they provided. All of them conclude that the use of peer-assessment is an effective tool to teach and learn a second or foreign language, because it has many advantages that are important in this process, such as learn to accept our own errors even other persons notice them. They could think that because they want to help students to be more confident, and to learn how to assess with some specific parameters taught by their teachers.

In the fourth open-ended question, "Which assessment tasks do you often use to assess learner's writing skills?" Teacher 1 said, "Class tasks, sequence of drafting, peer assessment". Teacher 2 wrote, "Self-descriptions, writing essays, creating stories, organizing sentences, information transfer". Teacher 3 argues: "essays, writing exams". In addition, teacher 4 answered, "those I provided in reaction to question number two".

Regarding this question, it is possible to see that all of the teachers preferred to use writing essays when they are assessing written production so it leads to the application of peer-assessment. In the observation, we can saw that they used this types of writing tasks in order to employ peer-assessment as an additional tool of assess their students and their classes.

In the final open-ended question, "would you be willing to apply peer-assessment in your writing courses? Which limitations do you think peer-assessment has?" Teacher 1 argues: "I apply it". Teacher 2 responded that: "I feel that if peer-assessment is not clearly established, it might lead to misconceptions and students could feel uncomfortable". Teacher 3 said, "yes, maybe that you have no time to assess all the papers. Teachers have so much things to do in addition students feel no good with it". Teacher 4 thought "the drawbacks of peer assessment may be summarized as follows: Students may not have the ability to evaluate each other. This may be due to lack of information on the topics being dealt with. In addition, a barrier may be created between the smart students and those who do not show special skills to assimilate their peer´s suggestions or corrections".

Subsequent to this aspect teachers applied peer-assessment in their writing courses as an effective tool to assess. At the same time, they thought that there are some possible limitations

of this type of method to assess; for example, students could feel jealous about the results of the other peers. Another limitation is the bad attitude about being assessed by other partner, maybe because they can feel threaten or criticized by the opinions of their classmates. This aspect could cause shame of students that peer-assessment could produce since each other evaluates the production of each classmate. Thanks to the observation that was developed, we can confirm this aspect, students feel ashamed with their classmates correcting their mistakes and they give some suggestions in order to do not commit the same mistake again. Talking about the second part of the survey, we can find multiple-choice questions. The following charts correspond to the answers gave by teachers of the English and French program at the University of Nariño.

   In this analysis of data with categories, it is important to clarify that the abbreviations used correspond to the following categories: T1 for teacher 1, T2 for teacher 2, T3 for teacher 3 and T4 for teacher 4.

|		Strongly Agree	agree	disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Attitude towards written tasks.	comfortable	T3, T4			
	confident	T1, T2	T3, T4		
	pleasant	T4	T3		
	relaxed	T4		T3	

2. teachers' perception regarding the application of different types of assessment	difficult			T3	
	interesting	T1, T2,T3, T4			
	modern	T3, T4			
	challenging	T3, T4			
3.teacher results obtained using their preferred assessment task	excellent	T1	T3		
	satisfying	T2, T4	T3		
	average		T3		
	disappointing				T3
	negative				T3
4. frequency of application of peer assessment in a writing class	**always**	**sometimes**	**rarely**	**never**	
		T1, T3, T4	T2		
5. application of peer-assessment in writing courses		T1, T2, T3, T4			

In the first category, it can be noticed that the teacher feels confident towards written tasks. This might be caused by the fact that through their career as teachers, they applied several activities in written tasks, and the results are good, by means of applying essays, creating stories, writing exams and

peer-assessment they feel confident because students are familiar with written tasks. Written tasks are essential in foreign language classes at the University of Nariño in general, since through writing you can assess elements like spelling, grammar, use of connectors, accuracy and vocabulary.
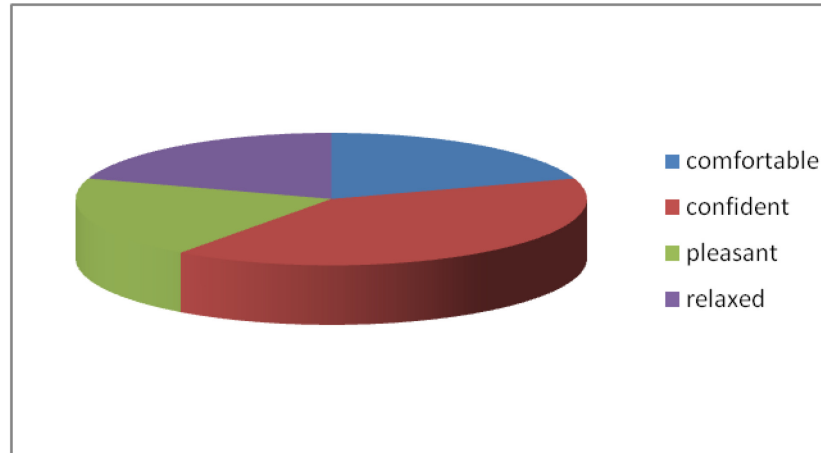
Regarding the second category of the survey, which is teachers' perception, we can realize that they are interested in the application of alternative assessment in the same way students do. One possible cause of this could be that when they applied alternative assessment they are innovating the way of evaluating students' performance regarding their knowledge.
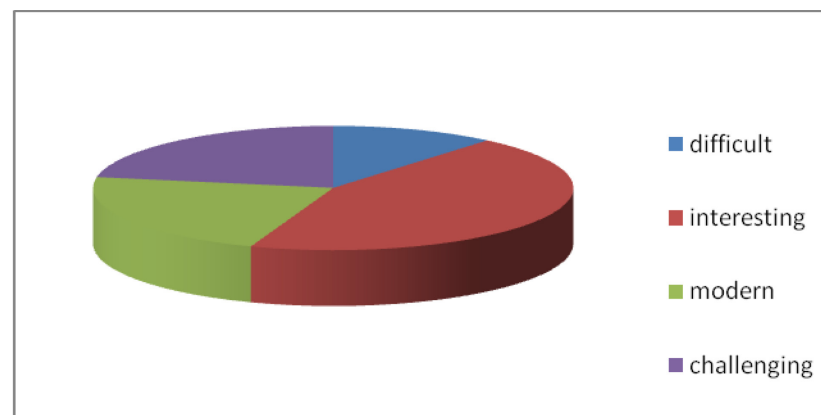
In the third category, teachers' results, teachers affirmed that the results obtained using their preferred assessment tasks, are satisfying. The reason for this could be that teachers always applied methods in order to get the best results; they planned these activities with dedication, so the results are the best. The results are satisfying because the teachers create the different types of activities based on the characteristics of their students, since each activity is created in adequate way.
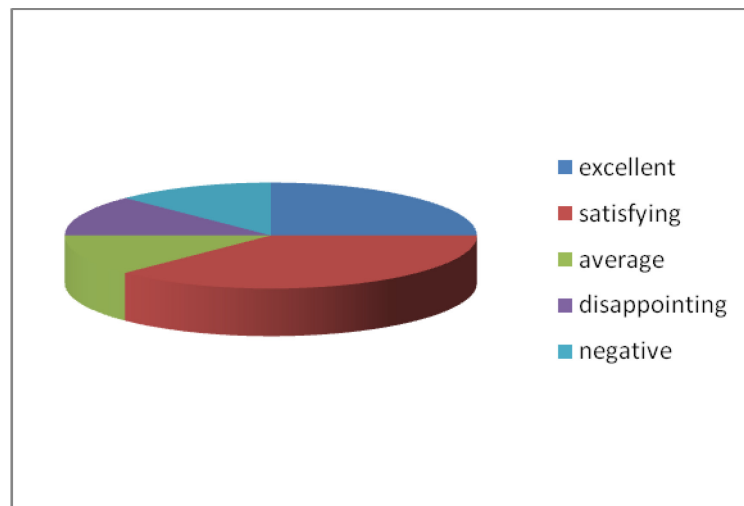
According to the fourth category, frequency of application of peer-assessment, teachers proposed that peer assessment is not an element that is applied everyday, but it is sometimes applied. This is coherent with what was observed in the writing classes. It is important to mention that peer assessment is a useful tool for teachers.
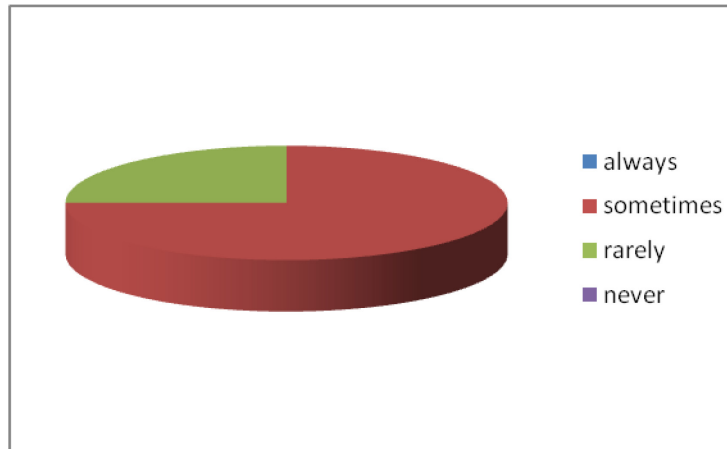
The last category, application of peer-assessment in writing classes, the whole group of surveyed teachers considered that peer-assessment must be included sometimes in writing courses. One possible reason for this could be that they feel convinced of the results and of the experience attained with this kind of method to assess. Moreover, along their training they can notice that this kind of method to assess is easy to apply by both, teacher and students.
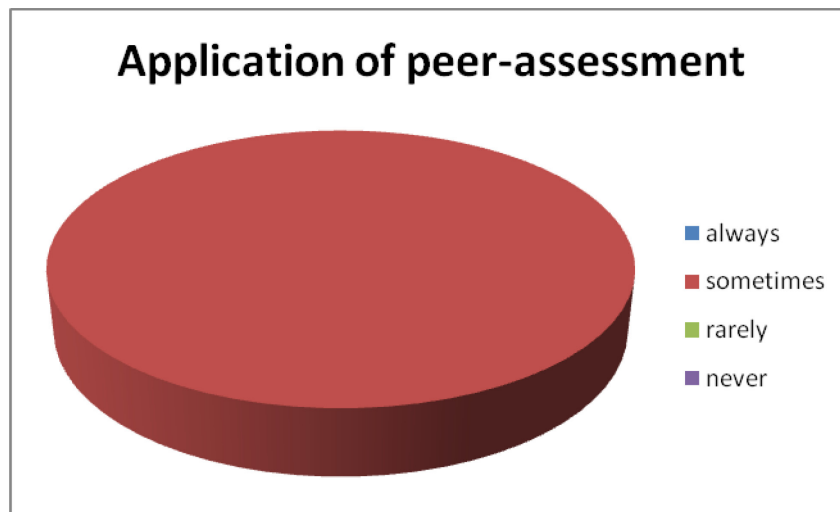
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

After having analyzed the information provided by the participants, by the class observations and after having compared that to the authors outlined in the review of the literature, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The results of the observations and of the analysis are similar, so it is possible to conclude that peer-assessment is applied, not only as a method of assessment but also as an activity in class. It means that teachers use peer-assessment in order to assess the proficiency of their students and they use it as an activity to be developed during the class, but not as a tool of assessment.

Despite having realized through the observation that teachers in the advanced semesters use peer-assessment. It is possible to say that it is not yet the most prevalent assessment type in writing classes in this University. This could change if teachers get more information about the recent trends in assessment. Students also suggested in the surveys that peer-assessment could be used more extensively so, it seems that they feel comfortable with this type of assessment method.

Peer assessment's application in the English and French program displays some features such as teachers use it in an inductive way and most of the time the teacher integrates other

tasks, for instance: free writing, portfolio assessment and among others.

An important aspect found during our research is the fact that peer-assessment is implemented in an English Writing class, successfully. This success could be attributed to the fact that in this type of tasks, students and teachers have the opportunity to interact, share their ideas, perceptions, and promote the learners' confidence at individual and group levels. This permits a better assessment experience, when it is carried out not only by teachers, but also by students.

During our observations in different classes of writing at the University of Nariño, we could notice that teachers used peer-assessment as a way to reinforce writing skills, confidence and good relationships among students. Teachers use peer-assessment as a very useful tool for checking spelling, grammar, coherence, connected ideas and reading comprehension, also to save time and maximizing participation.

Throughout the process of collecting information in our monograph work, we could see that many teachers apply peer-assessment in an unconscious way and in many times they use this kind of assessment integrating other activities, like, brainstorming, free writing, essays, compositions and portfolios assessment.

Another important thing that we could say in relation to Peer Assessment is that it is an effective tool in writing classes at the University of Nariño, because it is a mechanism to measure students' knowledge in writing. We can identify this method as a well-done exercise in class for practicing in every subject.

A positive conclusion can be that students are familiar with the terminology and the procedures related to peer-assessment. This indicates that learners are aware of assessment and may start changing their perception about assessment, not as a punishment that cannot be avoid in the learning process, but as a useful tool to enhance the teaching and learning process of foreign languages.

One more aspect that is important is that Peer assessment is applied, not as constantly as we would like, but some teachers are starting to vary their ways to assess students' performance. One possible cause of this situation is that they are analyzing little by little the reaction of students to this new trend to assess, in this way, they can realize the advantages and disadvantages and they could apply correctly in order to not having bad results.

As a result of our project we can state that the most of time Peer assessment is implemented in an English writing class. Since taking into account its characteristics, the most adequate

skill to develop this kind of method to assess is writing. Because students write a paper, exchange their work with other classmates, the classmates correct each one work and finally they give some suggestion about the form and content of the paper, this process can be developed in other classes but not as completely as in writing.

Teachers are developing peer assessment by means of different types of activities such as class tasks, sequence of drafting, self descriptions, writing essays, creating stories, organizing sentences, information transfer and among others.

Regarding the term and characteristics of peer assessment, teacher attitudes towards the implementation of peer assessment in their class are that they feel confident with this type of method to assess, this could be happening thanks to the decision of varying the methods and activities to measure the students' proficiency . They settled to apply peer-assessment sometimes, and the result s are agreeable, they did not have any big problem or inconvenience in the application hence, they are confident in the aspect about peer-assessment.

Thanks to the development of this work, we can say that, we are going to apply peer-assessment. Because the results that we could get with this method are good, this is an innovative and feasible vision of the assessment process and it is a good idea to apply it in order to get students' confidence, to get the

class does not become monotonous and to begin to change the misconception about assessment is a punishment.

Some advantages of the application of peer-assessment are that teachers can save time; teach students that they can evaluate their classmates in order to be responsible; it helps students to become autonomous, to get natural feedback, among others. Some disadvantages of the use of peer-assessment is that it can create discord and jealousy between partners, that students do not have enough maturity to develop this process, among others.

Through the development of this paper, we can learn that for a correct application of peer assessment it is necessary to analyze the characteristics of the group in which we are going to apply this kind of assessment method; in this way, we are not going to have bad results and misconceptions.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

First, both students and teachers have to read and know about peer-assessment, its implications, its delimitations, and the way to use it in a correct way during their writing classes and try to implement this kind of assessment method, in other classes with different skills, such as speaking, listening and reading.

On the other hand, thanks to this research, some teachers could be interested in applying peer-assessment in their classes;

therefore some advice for them could be, first to read the whole components and characteristics of peer-assessment, then to analyze in which classes and in which aspects or topics they can apply it. Moreover, they have to be aware that it is necessary to explain the students how to work with this topic, in this way the obtained results will be the expected for the teacher.

According to our research another important recommendation for teachers and students about Peer- Assessment are the steps in its application. The first one is, explaining what peer assessment for their students is. Second, determining a specific topic to develop in class, it could be, for example, a free writing style. Third, asking students to interchange papers among them. Finally, explaining them how to assess their classmates, it means that is necessary to give them some parameters according to punctuation, grammar, spelling, and capital letters. In addition, some tips related to margins, and of course, all students have to know the degree of responsibility when they are assessing their classmates because they have to do some recommendations and suggestions about their papers. These steps are very important in the application of peer-assessment because in this way students and teachers will know what are going to be the expectations, how to apply it in a correct way, and what the correct order of steps to follow in order to get good results is.

A further recommendation is that peer assessment is the most effective tool in writing assessment, because it can be identified as a method well structured and prepared. It also could be an exercise or activity to be developed in every class. Moreover, we recommend this kind of method in class, because students and teachers feel more relaxed, comfortable.

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ANNEXES

APPENDIX # 1- OBSERVATION FORMAT

UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO

LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

ENGLISH AND FRENCH PROGRAM

"PEER-ASSESSMENT IN A WRITING ENGLISH CLASS IN THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO"

OBSERVATION FORMAT

This observation will be developed to know what the most common kind of assessment method is and if peer- assessment is implemented by using checklists in a natural, unstructured, and flexible setting observation.

Teacher _____ - _____ semester

The methods used to assess observed, in an English Writing class were

_____

_____

	Assessment Categories	*Occurrence*	Total
	The teacher applies unconsciously authentic assessment		

Teacher Application	The teacher explains, what kind of assessment method he is going to use, before applying it.		
	The teacher apply peer assessment in correct way		
	The teacher combine peer-assessment with another kind of assessment method		
Students Perception	The students show a good attitude regarding the assessment method, implemented by the teacher		
	The students apply correctly, the tasks inside peer-assessment.		
	The students feel comfortable, with this kind of assessment method.		

Adapted from Flanders' FIAC system (1970)- assessment categories.

APPENDIX # 2 – OLD FORMAT FOR STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO

LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

ENGLISH AND FRENCH PROGRAM

"PEER-ASSESSMENT IN A WRITING ENGLISH CLASS IN THE ENGLISH AND

FRENCH PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO"

STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire will be applied to the last semester students
of the English and French program, and has as objective
collecting data to know if peer-assessment is well-known and
applied in writing English classes.

Instructions: this questionnaire is divided in two parts, the
first one has open-ended questions and the second one has scales
in which you have to mark with ¨X¨ the extent to which you agree
with each of the statements.

   I. OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

       1. What do you think that assessment is?

_____

_____

       2. In your classes, how are you assessed?

_____

_____

3. How many kinds of assessment do you know?

_____

_____

4. Which of these kinds of assessment, do you think is the

best?

_____

_____

II. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS.

Mark with "X" depending on your preference.

		strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1. With the common assessment in writing, I feel	comfortable				
	confident				
	pleasant				
	relaxed				
2. Applying different types of assessment is?	difficult				
	interesting				
	modern				
	challenging				
3. The results that you have gotten with this type of assessment are:	good				
	pleasant				
	disappointing				
	hesitant				

	bad				
4. How often do you apply peer-assessment applied in your writing English class?	always	sometimes	rarely	never	
5. if you have to teach a class, how often would you apply peer-assessment?					

5. Which of the following characteristics, do you think correspond to peer-assessment?

a.) It is embedded in classroom tasks designed to elicit performance without recording results and making fixed judgments about a student's competence. _____

b.) It is constructed o the assumption that language can be broken down into its component parts and that those parts can be tested successfully. _____

c.) It refers to the assessment of students, both formative reviews to provide feedback and summative grading. _____

d.) It is a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain. _____

APPENDIX # 3 – NEW FORMAT OF STUDENTS' QUESTIONAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO

LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

ENGLISH AND FRENCH PROGRAM

"PEER-ASSESSMENT IN A WRITING ENGLISH CLASS IN THE ENGLISH AND

FRENCH PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO"

STUDENTS´ QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire has been only created for research purposes. It is anonymous and it has the purpose of finding out information related to peer-assessment use in writing instruction. Your answers will be very valuable in reaching this objective.

I.OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

 1. What is your personal definition of assessment?

_____

_____

 2. Which kind of assessment does your teacher implemented in her or his classes?

_____

_____

3. Are you familiar with the concept of peer-assessment?

   Yes___   No___

If so, do you think that the use of peer-assessment is an

effective tool to teach and learn a second or foreign language.

Why?

_____

_____

4. Which assessment tasks does your teacher often use to assess

   writing skills?

_____

_____

   II. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS.

Mark with an "X" the choice that best completes the idea,

depending on your preference.

		Strongly Agree	agree	disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. When your teacher applies to you written exams, or essay-writing I feel	comfortable				
	confident				
	pleasant				
	relaxed				
2. I think applying different types of assessment such as	difficult				
	interesting				
	modern				

portfolios is	challenging				
3. The results obtained using your preferred assessment tasks, so far, are in your opinion	excellent				
	satisfying				
	average				
	disappointing				
	negative				

4. How often does your teacher apply peer-assessment in his or her writing courses?	**always**	**sometimes**	**rarely**	**never**
5. Peer-assessment must be included in writing courses				

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

APPENDIX # 4 – OLD FORMAT FOR TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO

LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

ENGLISH AND FRENCH PROGRAM

"PEER-ASSESSMENT IN A WRITING ENGLISH CLASS IN THE ENGLISH AND

FRENCH PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO"

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire will be applied to the writing teachers' of the last semester students of the English and French program, and has as an objective collecting data to know if peer-assessment is well-known and applied in a writing English class.

Instructions: this questionnaire is divided in two parts, the first one has open-ended questions and the second one has scales in which you have to mark with ¨X¨ the extent to which you agree with each of the statements.

   I. OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

      1. What do you think that assessment is, and how to

         implement it in the classroom?

_____

_____

2. In your classes, how do you assess your students?

_____

_____

3. How many kinds of assessment do you know, explain?

_____

_____

4. Which of these kinds of assessment, do you think is the best?

_____

_____

5. Do you think that the use of peer-assessment is a good way to learn or teach languages?

_____

_____

III. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS.

Mark with "X" depending on your preference. (only one option)

		strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1. Applying common assessment in writing, I feel	comfortable				
	confident				
	pleasant				
	Relaxed				

2. Applying different types of assessment is?	difficult				
	interesting				
	modern				
	challenging				
3. The results that you have gotten from your students applying this type of assessment are:	good				
	pleasant				
	disappointing				
	hesitant				
	bad				
4. How often do you apply peer-assessment applied in your writing English class?	always	sometimes	rarely	never	
5. The method that I use to assess a writing English class is or are:	Self-assessment	Peer-assessment	Yes-no questions	Portfolio-assessment	

III. Which of the following characteristics, do you think
correspond to peer-assessment?

e.) It is embedded in classroom tasks designed to elicit performance without recording results and making fixed judgments about a student's competence. _____

f.) It is constructed o the assumption that language can be broken down into its component parts and that those parts can be tested successfully. _____

g.) It refers to the assessment of students, both formative reviews to provide feedback and summative grading. _____

h.) It is a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain. _____

THANK YOU…

APPENDIX # 5 – NEW FORMAT FOR TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO

LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

ENGLISH AND FRENCH PROGRAM

"PEER-ASSESSMENT IN A WRITING ENGLISH CLASS IN THE ENGLISH AND

FRENCH PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NARIÑO"

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire has been only created for research purposes. It is anonymous and it has the purpose of finding out information related to peer-assessment use in writing instruction. Your answers will be very valuable in reaching this objective.

I.OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. What is your personal definition of assessment and how do you implement it in the classroom?

_____

_____

2. What types of assessment are, in your opinion, the most effective in L2 instruction? Why?

_____

_____

3. Are you familiar with the concept of peer-assessment?

Yes___   No___

If so, do you think that the use of peer-assessment is an effective tool to teach and learn a second or foreign language. Why?

_____

_____

4. Which assessment tasks do you often use to assess learners' writing skills?

_____

_____

5. Would you be willing to apply peer-assessment in your writing courses? Which limitations do you think peer-assessment has?

_____

_____

IV.   MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS.

Mark with an "X" the choice that best completes the idea, depending on your preference.

		Strongly Agree	agree	disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. When applying written exams, or essay-writing to assess students I feel	comfortable				
	confident				
	pleasant				
	relaxed				
2. I think applying different types of assessment such as portfolios is	difficult				
	interesting				
	modern				
	challenging				
3. The results obtained using your preferred assessment tasks, so far, are in your opinion	excellent				
	satisfying				
	average				
	disappointing				
	negative				
4. How often do you apply peer-assessment in your writing courses?	**always**	**sometimes**	**rarely**	**never**	
5. Peer-assessment must be included in writing courses					

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION