

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALTERNATIVE
ASSESSMENT IN THE YOUNG LEARNER CLASSROOM

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT IN THE YOUNG LEARNER CLASSROOM

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The purpose of this study was to explore and develop a better understanding of the implementation of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom. This in-depth, qualitative study focuses on teachers' practices and beliefs, as well as the student perspective and the role of alternative assessment in the instructional process. Case studies were carried out on nine different English language teachers and their use of alternative assessment strategies and tools over a six month period in their first, second, third, fourth and fifth grade English classrooms. Data was collected through interviews, observations and relevant documents. Findings show that teachers use a variety of different alternative assessment methods and tools with varying degrees of regularity and effectiveness. Teachers believe that alternative assessment shows learning and interaction between thinking and learning, emphasizes the student as an individual and encourages active and autonomous learners. They also believe it promotes differentiated learning, clarifies expectations and motivates learners and teachers. Teachers believe that alternative assessment has a positive impact on the learning process and outcomes, as well as on the affective and cognitive development of the students. Six classroom implementation factors were determined to impact on the use of alternative assessment in the

classroom: language ability, cognitive ability, planning, time, training and classroom environment.

Keywords: Young learners, alternative assessment, assessment.

ÖZ

ÇOCUKLARA YABANCI DİL ÖĞRETİMİNDE ALTERNATİF DEĞERLENDİRME YÖNTEMLERİYLE İLGİLİ BİR ÇALIŞMA

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Bu çalışmanın amacı küçük yaştaki öğrenci sınıflarında alternatif değerlendirme uygulamalarını keşfetmek ve daha iyi bir anlayış geliştirmektir. Bu geniş kapsamlı ve nitelikli çalışma öğrencilerin bakış açısı ve eğitim sürecinde alternatif değerlendirmenin etkilerinin yanısıra öğretmenlerin uygulamalarına ve inanışlarına odaklanmaktadır. Vaka çalışmaları dokuz farklı İngilizce öğretmenin ve onların birinci, ikinci, üçüncü, dördüncü ve beşinci sınıflarında altı aylık bir sürede alternatif değerlendirme uygulamaları stratejileri ve araçları üzerine uygulanmıştır. Veriler görüşmeler, ders gözlemleri ve ilgili belgeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Bulgular öğretmenlerin alternatif değerlendirme metotlarını değişen devamlılıklarla ve verimliliklerle kullandıklarını göstermiştir. Öğretmenler alternatif değerlendirmenin öğrenmeyi, düşünme ve öğrenme arasındaki etkileşimi gösterdiğine, öğrenciyi bir birey olarak vurguladığına ve aktif ve bağımsız öğrenciler olma yönünde cesaretlendirdiğine inanmaktadırlar. Ayrıca farklılaştırılmış öğrenmeyi teşvik ettiğine, beklentileri netleştirdiğine ve öğrencileri ve öğretmenleri motive ettiğine

inanmaktadırlar. Öğretmenler alternatif değerlendirmenin öğrenme sürecinde ve sonuçlarında ve aynı zamanda öğrencilerin duyuşsal ve bilişsel gelişmelerinde olumlu etkisi olduğuna inanıyorlar. Altı sınıf uygulaması etmenleri alternatif değerlendirmenin sınıfta kullanımına etki etmek üzere belirlenmiştir: dil yeteneđi, kavramsal zeka, planlama, süre, eğitim ve sınıf ortamı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Küçük yaştaki öğrenciler, alternatif değerlendirme, değerlendirme.

To My Family

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

AFL	: Assessment for Learning
CELTA	: Certificate for English Language Teachers
CIP	: Curriculum Implementation Program
COTE	: Course for Overseas Teachers of English
IB	: International Baccalaureate
IBO	: International Baccalaureate Organization
PYP	: Primary Years Program
TPR	: Total Physical Response

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of six sections the first of which discusses the background to the study. The second section presents the aim of the study, including a brief description of the research methodology. The third section introduces the need for the study. The fourth section briefly notes the limitations of the study. The fifth section is an overview of the chapter and the sixth section defines some key terms.

1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Assessment of young learners is inherently complicated due to the characteristics of young learners and the nature of assessment. “Elementary education is based on principles of child growth and development, recognizing that children develop at different rates and bring different experiences, learning styles and emotions to their learning” (McKay, 2006, p. 24). Young learners are growing physically, emotionally, socially and cognitively. They are developing general, as well as literacy skills, knowledge and understandings that may or may not transfer from their first language. Such age-related and individual differences need to be considered in the content of language learning, learning theories, teaching methods and assessment.

Assessment sends messages to students that affect their self-concept and self-worth, as well as their understanding of what is important in learning and in the world. Children come to their own conclusions about a foreign language based on what and how they are taught. The same is true for assessment. “Assessment practices not only determine children’s futures and how their time is spent, but also carry messages for children about what parents and teachers consider important in language learning and life” (Cameron, 2001b, p. 240). In addition, “Educational research demonstrated

long ago that children live up to the expectations of their teachers, whether those are low or high. Expectations are perhaps more clearly revealed through assessment practices than anywhere else” (Cameron, 2001b, p.240).

Assessment of young learners should provide feedback on what students can do and areas that they have misunderstood, while sending students appropriate messages about themselves and the world around them. Teachers and assessors of young learners have found ways to structure assessment procedures to encourage children by showing them what they have learned and to give positive feedback, motivating them to succeed” (McKay, 2006, p. 23). Cameron (2001b) also stresses that, “the process and outcomes of assessment can motivate learners” (p.220).

Alternative assessments such as; portfolios, self-assessment, peer-assessment, projects and teacher observation are believed to encourage and motivate young learners and to strengthen the interaction between instruction and assessment through ongoing feedback. However, like many areas of teaching English to young learners, the implementation of alternative assessment, could benefit from more classrooms based, empirical research. Leung and Lewkowicz (2006) advocate that understanding what teachers are thinking and doing when they carry out assessment in the classroom is a first step.

1.2. AIM OF THE STUDY

As students of English begin the process of language learning earlier and earlier, the task of assessing learners becomes more challenging. The purpose of this study is to explore the implementation of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom and thus develop a better understanding of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom. Case studies were carried out on nine different English Language teachers and their use of alternative assessment strategies and tools over a six month period in their first, second, third, fourth and fifth grade English classrooms in order to permit the in-depth study of teachers and students in the classroom setting. The study focuses on teachers’ practices and beliefs, as well as the students’ response.

The role of alternative assessment in the instructional process will also be analyzed. Data was collected through interviews, classroom observations and documents.

To this end, the following research questions were constructed to guide the exploration of the implementation of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom:

RQ 1. What are teacher's alternative assessment practices?

RQ 1a. What types of alternative assessment do teachers implement?

RQ 1b. What factors impact the classroom implementation of alternative assessment?

RQ2. What are teachers' beliefs about assessment in the young learner classroom?

RQ2a. What are teachers' beliefs about alternative assessment in the young learner classroom?

RQ2b. What are teachers' beliefs about the benefits of implementing alternative assessment?

RQ2c. What are teachers' beliefs about the challenges of implementing alternative assessment?

RQ3. How do students respond to alternative assessment?

RQ4. What role does alternative assessment have in the instructional process?

RQ4a. In what ways is alternative assessment in alignment with the instructional process?

RQ4b. In what ways is alternative assessment not in alignment with the instructional process?

1.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In the researching, reporting and teaching of English to young learners; “there is, simultaneously, evidence of considerable innovation as well as a lack of clarity on

some fundamental issues” (Rea-Dickens, 2000 p. 245). Teaching children is not a new practice, however, in the last ten years there has been significant growth of English classes, both in state systems and in private language schools (Cameron, 2001b). Cameron is not alone in her claim that the recent increase in interest has led to the publication of methodology books, but a parallel debate about theoretical and research issues is largely missing. Similar calls for investigation have also been heard about alternative assessment. Tsagari urges that we must, “understand how the aspects of alternative assessment are actually accomplished in classroom interaction and to develop appropriate theory and research methods in the study of this highly complex and dynamic teaching-learning-assessing interface before any definite conclusions about its positive effects on teaching and learning are drawn (Tsagari, 2004, p. 14). Rea-Dickens (2000a), Cameron (2001b), and McKay (2005) advocate for more empirical research. Classroom teachers also seek to learn effective alternative assessment methods. Based on the findings from this study, the researcher plans to add further insight into the implementation of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom.

1.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study are discussed throughout the thesis with particular emphasis in the reflections on the research methodology in Chapter 3. The case study approach does not always lead to findings that are transferable to a more general population. This study may be considered limited by the choice of school and participants in the study since they were selected through convenience sampling. Respect for the demanding timetable of the participating teachers was a consideration in the study as was direct interaction with the students. Responses from the students were limited to students’ participation during the student focus group about Portfolio Day. The structure and size of the focus group might also be considered a limitation. The internal role of the researcher, a teacher and coordinator at the school, may also be considered a limitation of the study.

Considerations and measures taken to address the limitations and reduce the influences of any biases are seen throughout the paper.

1.5. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Following this introduction, an overview of the literature with a particular emphasis on assessment, alternative assessment and young learners is presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3, details the design of the study and the data collection tools, including data analysis. Information is also given about the school and participants. Chapter 4 reports and discusses the findings of the study while Chapter 5 discusses the conclusion and implications.

1.6. DEFINITION OF TERMS

alternative assessment:	non-traditional assessment methods and tools
anecdotal records	: records of a child's actions and behavior over time
checklist	: a record of what a student can do at a certain time
conference:	: meaningful discussion between a teacher and student
observation	: the informal or formal process of noticing and adjusting
peer assessment	: students reflecting and giving feedback to another student
portfolio	: a collection of student work that shows progress over time
rating scale	: numerical representation of a students' ability
self-assessment	: students reflecting on thier own development
young learners	: students between the ages of six and twelve

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter begins with an overlook of terminology and proceeds with a discussion of alternative assessment. A review of selected research on young learners is followed by a more detailed survey of recent trends in assessment of young learners and a discussion of some relevant studies. A brief summary related to teacher beliefs and practices, as well as to the concept of alignment will conclude the chapter. The review is by no means comprehensive, nor is it aimed to be. The main aim is to focus on aspects of these areas which are most relevant to this thesis in order to place this study in a theoretical context.

2.1 ASSESSMENT AND TESTING

The term ‘assessment’ is used as an umbrella term for all methods of testing and assessment. Testing usually refers to more formal or standardized testing procedures which are an influential component of language programs around the world. ‘Assessment’ and ‘alternative assessment’ are used to refer to more informal methods often, but not solely, used in classrooms (Brown 2004, Brown 2005). There are other terms that are also used to refer to assessing students’ language without the use of formal tests; authentic assessment, performance assessment, continuous assessment, on-going assessment, informal assessment, descriptive assessment, direct assessment, dynamic assessment, instructional assessment, responsive assessment, complementary assessment, formative assessment, portfolio assessment, situated/contextualized assessment, assessment by exhibition (Aschbacher 1991, Archbald 1991, Brindley, 2001, Cumming & Maxwell 1999,

O'Malley & Valdez Pierce 1996, Soodak 2000, Tsagari 2004). The differences in meaning and use will not be discussed. This dissertation refers to 'alternative assessment' in the broad sense of the term. While discussing the work of other researchers these terms as well as the term 'alternative assessment' will be used when it has been indicated appropriate.

2.2 ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT

Hamayan (1995) claims that changes in assessment practices are a reflection of a similar shift in the beliefs and practices of the teaching and learning of languages. She proposes two contributing factors and states, "More holistic and integrative views of language, and the push toward the development of higher-order skills, have given rise to alternative approaches to assessment" (p. 213). The development of a more global view of language learning means that language learning is no longer seen as a passive process where skills are accumulated, but as an active one with the learner in a more central role. Standards were also raised to a more sophisticated level to include goals outside of traditional areas of language proficiency such as content area teaching. With these changes came a need for assessment that accounted for new beliefs about teaching and learning. Educators also wanted assessment that interacted with and reflected the learning process and guided instruction in the classroom.

Tsagari (2004) argues that the need for alternative assessments stemmed from dissatisfaction with the type of information gathered from high-stakes/standardized tests and teacher-made tests. Such tests can have a negative impact by narrowing the curriculum and restricting the methodology and instructional materials used. High-stakes exams also affect how students approach learning and can psychologically affect teachers and students. Teacher-made tests may not accurately monitor student progress and the school curriculum. According to Black and William (1998), pioneers of Assessment For Learning (AFL), "One of the outstanding features of studies of assessment in recent years has been the shift in the focus of attention, towards greater interest in the interactions between assessment and classroom

learning and away from concentration on the properties of restricted forms of test which are only weakly linked to the learning experiences of students” (p. 1).

Alternative assessment provides information that is easy for students and teachers to use and understand. It can be used to evaluate the learner and the instruction. Teachers can also use the information from alternative assessment and provide a framework for organizing student work and making decisions about their students and classrooms. Alternative assessment gives students more responsibility for their learning and allows them to see and appreciate their own accomplishments (Rief, 1990). Teachers have also been empowered. “As a result of the increasing legitimacy of alternative assessment, which is mostly classroom-based, one further important change has occurred; it has given teachers the power of assessment” (Hamayan, 1995, p. 216).

Hamayan (1995) synthesized the five characteristics of alternative assessment as proximity to actual language use and performance, a holistic view of language, an integrative view of learning, developmental appropriateness and multiple referencing. She summarizes these characteristics and their implications as follows:

- ‘Proximity to actual language use and performance’ specifies that alternative assessment is based on activities that have an authentic communicative purpose. Accordingly, alternative assessment tends to be classroom based. Therefore, the teachers have begun to play a more active role in assessment. Teachers are no longer recipients of information from the experts, but are assessors and providers of information. Hamayan explains that, “The increasing popularity of alternative procedures has opened up the realm of assessment to include teachers who are not likely to be specialists in the area of testing, research, evaluation, and psychometrics” (p. 214).
- ‘A holistic view of language’ is based on the principle that aspects of language, phonology, grammar and vocabulary, are interrelated and the four skills of language, listening, speaking, reading and writing are also a part of

an integrated whole. Alternative assessment also views the whole learner in his or her natural social, academic and physical context.

- ‘An integrative view of learning’ acknowledges that various aspects of a learner’s life, academic and personal, as well as a wide range of skills and abilities are a part of the development of language learning that must be recognized.
- ‘Developmental appropriateness’ refers to procedures that sets cognitively, socially and academically appropriate expectations. This characteristic is particularly meaningful for young language learners.
- ‘Multiple referencing’ asserts that information about learners should be collected through a variety of sources and means.

Other scholars have also defined the common characteristics of alternative assessment. Aschbacher (1991) lists several common characteristics of alternative assessments based on her previous work,

- require problem solving and higher level thinking,
- involve tasks that are worthwhile as instructional activities,
- use real-world contexts or simulations,
- focus on processes as well as products, and
- encourage public disclosure of standards and criteria.

Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters (1992, p. 6) continue to advocate that alternative assessments should use tasks that are also meaningful instructional activities and approximate real-world applications. They also mention additional criteria:

- require students to perform, create, produce, or do something;
- tap into higher level thinking and problem-solving skills;
- ensure that people, not machines, do the scoring, using human judgment; and
- call upon teachers to perform new instructional assessment

Huerta-Macías (1995), focusing on the US ESL context, also put emphasis on the notion that alternative assessment should consist of normal day-to-day activities and should provide information about the strengths and weaknesses of the students. In addition Huerta-Macías mentions that when done properly they should be muticulturally sensitive. This supports the assertion that equity in education was another contributing factor to the development of alternative assessment.

Brown and Hudson (1998) discuss the three different criteria of Hamayan (1995), Aschbacher (1991) and Herman, Aschbacher and Winters (1992) and present a compilation of twelve comprehensive items:

- require students to perform, create, produce, or do something;
- use real-world contexts or simulations;
- are nonintrusive in that they extend the day-to-day classroom activities;
- allow students to be assessed on what they normally do in class every day;
- use tasks that represent meaningful instructional activities;
- focus on processes as well as products;
- tap into higher level thinking and problem-solving skills;
- provide information about both the strengths and weaknesses of students;
- are multiculturally sensitive when properly administered;
- ensure that people, not machines, do the scoring, using human judgment;
- encourage open disclosure of standards and rating criteria; and
- call upon teachers to perform new instructional and assessment role

Brown and Hudson (1998) are enthusiastic about the possibilities of new assessment procedures, however, they are not alone in being cautious about issues of reliability and validity. They suggest that procedures used in performance assessment serve as an example in this area since they are similar logically and technically. When these issues are re-visited later in this paper it is interesting to note that when Bachman (2002) discusses these issues he uses the terms performance assessment and alternative assessment interchangeably.

Brown and Hudson (1998) also question the phrase alternative assessments due to their concern that it indicates three possible misconceptions: (a) that these assessment procedure are an entirely new way of doing things, (b) that they are completely separate and different from mainstream or traditional testing and the preciously mentioned concern that (c) they do not adhere to set requirements of test construction and decision making. They “view procedures like portfolios, conferences, diaries, self-assessments, and peer assessments not as alternative assessments but rather as alternatives in assessment” (p. 657). This distinction was first suggested by John Norris, in Norris et al. (1998). This distinction emphasizes that there is not one set of alternatives, but many alternatives in assessments, and that these alternatives are not exempt from set guidelines in assessment. It is also a reminder that different test types serve different purposes, each with unique strengths and weakness. Teachers should be knowledgeable about the purposes, strengths and weaknesses of alternatives in assessment and should make informed choices. They believe that, “Language teachers have always done assessment in one form or another, and these new procuedures are just new developments in a long tradition” (p. 657).

Alderson and Banerjee (2001) briefly discuss alternative assessment as a part of their state-of the-art review on assessment. They summarize that alternative assessment adhere to, “procedures which are less formal than traditional testing, which are gathered over a period of time rather than being taken at one point in time, which are usually formative rather than summative in function, are often low-stakes in terms of consequences, and are claimed to have beneficial washback effects” (p. 228). This definition explains what alternative assessment is not, ‘testing’ and focuses on the time frame and the purpose of the assessment, on-going and its formative role in the instructional process. The authors also suggest that the, “ ‘alternative assessment movement’, if it may be termed such, probably began in writing assessment, where the limitations of a one-off improptu single writing task are apparent” (p. 228). In traditional tests of writing students write their reponse to a short prompt with minimal input and planning time during a limited time span and with limited possibilities for redrafting and revising. Alderson and Banderjee

suggest that this led to the portfolio assessment movement for first language writing, ESL in the US and foreign languages. “Although portfolio assessment in other subject areas (art, graphic, design, architecture, music) is not new, in foreign language education portfolios have been hailed as a major innovation, supposedly overcoming the drawbacks of traditional assessment” (p. 229). Several accounts (Hughes Wilhelm 1996, Padilla 1996, Short 1993) of how alternative assessments have been used are mentioned. These accounts are criticized for being descriptive and persuasive instead of research-based, empirical studies that address the advantages and disadvantages of alternative assessment. Leung and Lewkowicz (2006) recommend that instead of assuming that, “all teachers will be able to adopt a formative approach in recommended ways, it may be a good idea to first find out what teachers think and do when carrying out classroom assessment” (p. 227).

Hamayan (1995) addresses the differences between alternative assessment used for large-scale evaluation as opposed to classroom-level evaluation. She advises that for classroom-level evaluation the purpose of the assessment and how it will interact with the instructional process and the curriculum should be guiding factors at the planning stages. Alternative assessment must adhere to well-thought out and planned criteria. When the results of the assessment will be used to make high stakes decisions, issues related to reliability, validity and authenticity must be properly addressed. Huerta-Macías expressed the notion that “alternative assessments” are somehow “in and of themselves valid, due to the direct nature of the assessment” (Huerta-Macías, 1995, p. 10). Clapham (2000), similar to Brown and Hudson (1998), questions this belief and argues that alternative assessments must also adhere to rigorous standards and should be trialed for validity and reliability in practice.

Bachman and Palmer (1996) introduced the concept of ‘usefulness’ for assessment procedures, incorporating the ideas of reliability, construct validity, authenticity, interactiveness, practicality and impact. Bachman (2002) warns that performance assessments (alternative assessments) have focused on the authenticity of the task to the extent that the constructs that these tasks are intended to measure are not always

given the necessary attention. These constructs are more complex than those of traditional exam types where we already see the predicament where language is simultaneously the object and the instrument of testing. Alternative assessments are meant to show language in use. Language in use, “involves the full range of areas of language ability, as well topical knowledge and affective schemata” (p. 5). In this situation the language ability we want to measure becomes entangled with other abilities and with the methods used for assessment. As more attributes are involved in the process, the process and establishing validity of the process becomes more complicated. Bachman asserts that there are two important validity issues. First, there is the question of what conclusions can be drawn from the test performance and second, what generalizations can be made from those conclusions. Bachman suggests that when designing assessment tasks the role of language and content must be clear in the constructs that are to be measured. He further suggests that the development and design of the assessment task must be construct-based and task-based.

Bachman (2002) further argues that there are four questions that should be asked to address validity:

1. What construct(s) are assessed? (What specific inferences about test takers’ abilities can we make on the basis of their performance on this assessment task?)
2. What is(are) the domain(s) of generalizations of assessment-based inferences?
 - a. To what domain(s) of learning tasks or real-world tasks do we expect our inferences about test takers’ abilities to extrapolate, based on this assessment task?
 - b. How representative of learning tasks and real-world tasks is this assessment task? That is, to what extent do the characteristics of the assessment task correspond to the characteristics of learning tasks and real world tasks?

- c. To what extent do test takers' responses to the assessment task correspond to individuals' responses to similar learning tasks and real-life tasks?
3. How authentic are test takers' responses to the assessment task? (To what extent and in what specific ways do test takers perceive the assessment task as corresponding to learning tasks, or to real-life tasks?)
4. How interactive are test takers' responses to the assessment task? (To what extent does the test task engage the areas of ability to be assessed?)

Questions three and four refer to authenticity and integrativeness which are specific qualities related to performance assessment. Briefly, authenticity has at least two different definitions in the literature. Messick (1996) asserts that authenticity is the extent to which definition of the construct is portrayed in the assessment task. Interactiveness relates to the involvement of other characteristics of the test taker. The more the task measures what it is planned to measure, the greater the construct validity. When the task activates abilities that are not intended to be measured, the construct validity is weakened. According to Bachman and Palmer (1996) authenticity is "the degree of correspondence of the characteristics of a given language test task to the features of a target language use (TLU) task" (p. 23).

Bachman (2002) argues that in order to address these issues three factors must be present during the design, development and usage of performance assessments: (a) a cognitively-based definition of the construct-abilities to be assessed, (b) a clearly identified and defined domain of target use situation tasks, and (c) a set of distinguishing characteristics for describing both the assessment task and the target language use task (p. 9). In the case of language testing a cognitive model of language use ability is necessary because constructs based on a single theory do not provide a base comprehensive enough for the design of tests nor for the extrapolation of results. The first element, a cognitively-based model of language use and language ability, is composed of language use, language ability, topical knowledge and affect. Language use refers to the activity in which the language assessment activities occur. During this activity there is interaction between topical

knowledge, language knowledge, personal characteristics, as well as metacognitive strategies and affective factors of each language user. Interaction between multiple language users involves input and utterances. Language ability consists of language knowledge, organizational and pragmatic knowledge, as well as metacognitive strategies. Metacognitive strategies relate to language knowledge, topical knowledge, personal characteristics and affect which make the connection to language use. (Palmer and Bachman, 1996)

For the second element, a clearly identified domain of target language use situations and tasks, must be described. One or more target language use domains needs to be stipulated. Finally, for the third element, a set of distinguishing characteristics for describing both the assessment tasks and the target use tasks, should be clarified. In order to do this the following five characteristics of the framework should be addressed; setting, rubric, input, expected response and the relationship between input and response.

A brief description of these characteristics will be given. The setting includes physical characteristics such as noise level and environment. The rubric should include the instructions and how they are given, difficulty of the task and some characterizing variables of the task, the structure of the task, the sequencing and the time limitations. The criteria is also included in this characteristic. The input is the material that students are expected to process in order to respond and the expected response is what we want to elicit from the students. Both input and expected response must account for language characteristics and topical knowledge. Finally, the relationship between input and response address such questions as the flexibility of the teacher to be able to adapt his or her response to the level of the child and to what extent will the child need to add his or her background knowledge to the input in order to respond.

This model is of great interest theoretically and practically, however classroom practice can also be revealing. According to Rea-Dickens (2000) different representations of assessment and language development are reflected through

classroom practice. She urges colleagues to develop a broader knowledge base in the areas of teacher implementation of classroom assessment. She suggests there is much to learn about teachers' purposes for assessment, management of assessment and uses of data collected.

2.3 ASSESSMENT METHODS AND TYPES

Hamp-Lyons' (1992) distinction between activities that yield information for assessment and those ways which we organize and record the information is practical. Adhering to this principle, Tsagari (2004) summarizes the following methods of alternative assessment from the relevant literature:

- Observations
- Games
- Portfolios
- Diaries/Journals
- Self-assessment
- Demonstrations
- Peer-assessment
- Exhibitions
- Projects
- Conferences
- Story re-telling
- Think-alouds
- Dramatization
- Debates

Tsagari (2004) also refers to the following tools as the most frequently used tools:

- Anecdotal records
- Progress cards
- Checklists
- Learner profiles
- Rating scales
- Questionnaires

Hamayan (1995) has a similar list, but also includes writing samples and interviews as popular methods and inventories as a commonly used tool. She notes that, "Practically any classroom, school or language-related activity can serve as a source of information about the learner, his or her language proficiency, the learning process, the effectiveness of instruction or the classroom" (p. 217).

The discussion that follows is a brief review of the most common alternative assessment tools. Definitions are given as commonly used in literature and practice relevant to young learners. “Observation is one of the most useful assessment techniques to use with children because it does not disturb the children and allows them to be assessed in the process of ordinary classroom activities” (Cameron, 2001b, p. 231). Cameron explains that most skillful teachers are constantly engaged in the process of observe – notice – adjust teaching. For example, if a teacher is reading a story and the students do not seem to understand the main idea, the teacher can stop and explain a few key words or go back and re-read, stopping at important points to enhance comprehension. However, when observation is used as an assessment technique there should be a pre-determined focus and the information that will provide the evidence should be decided. In the above example, students’ participation, facial expressions, body language and responses could provide information about their oral comprehension of the story.

McKay (2006) distinguishes between incidental and planned observation. Incidental observation is a natural part of teaching that occurs when the teacher and students are engaged in classroom activities and tasks. The teacher might make observations during oral interaction or when watching a student writing a draft or working on a project. These observations can also take place outside of the classroom, on the playground or in the school cafeteria. The teacher might wonder, “Can the student ask for help in English?” As the teacher observes the students mental or written notes are taken that later inform teaching decisions. Planned observations involve a variety of techniques, but require that notes are taken in a systematic way. The teacher may also use checklists or rating scales that he or she has designed to fit a particular purpose or ones that have been produced by an external source.

“A portfolio means a collection of a students’ work and evidence of student achievement over a period of time” (Pinter, 2006, p. 136). Portfolios create a strong link between teaching and assessment since they are an example of what a learner can do. “This method of assessment can also motivate learners by getting them to focus on what they are good at and to develop ownership of the learning process,

thus promoting learner independence” (p. 137). Students and teachers should work together to develop and understand the criteria that students should follow when they select work for their portfolio. Portfolios also help children to improve their reflection skills. As students become more capable of choosing appropriate work that reflects their abilities, they are also becoming more capable of reflecting on their own learning. McKay advocates that “The judicious use of portfolios can underpin classroom assessment, establishing greater learner and parental involvement in learning, more opportunities for explicitness in expectations and greater support for learning through assessment” (McKay, 2006, p. 160).

Self-assessment is a teaching strategy as much as it is an assessment method. “Self assessment means that children are asked to think about their own performances and achievements on a regular basis” (Pinter, 2006, p. 136). Pinter warns that children need gradual training in this area and that during such training the criteria and task should be kept similar. Cameron (2001) suggests that initial training might be more effective in the mother tongue which leads to further questioning about how the balance between language learning and learner autonomy can be maintained. Learning journals and diaries can be an extension of this work. Younger or beginning level learners can use phrases such as; I like, I don’t like and I learned to begin reflecting on their own learning.

Peer assessment helps children, “gain awareness of about what is required, or about a good piece of work, by reflecting on another child’s performance using a simple set of criteria” (McKay, 2006, p.166). Like self-assessment, peer-assessment also requires training. Students need to understand the guidelines established by the criteria and how to give feedback by sharing positive comments first and, generally, how to show appropriate and supportive behavior. A natural challenge of peer assessment is that students tend to be influenced by their friends.

Projects involve a series of tasks that are completed either individually or as a group. A project might involve research, note-taking, drafting, editing and re-drafting for older students and a more direct process for younger students such as

designing a house or creating a city. There are many ways for the students to present their project, but for language assessment purposes there should be a language component and learners should have the criteria before they begin their project. Projects can also include a demonstration or be a part of an exhibition.

Story re-telling can be used with texts that students have heard or read. Story retells are particularly helpful in the early stages of language learning because it is less challenging for students to re-tell a plot than to create a new plot. However, it can be challenging for students to re-tell stories that they have heard orally since one of the advantages of read alouds is that they can be above the child's independent working level. The teacher can look for different elements in the re-telling and should set up the task and the criteria accordingly. For example, the teacher might be interested in the units of ideas a student can remember, the proper sequencing of events or the use of key phrases. The task can be a free response or it can be designed as a more structured task. The criteria for evaluation should be clear to the students before they begin the task. Dramatizations can also be used to check oral and reading comprehension in addition to other abilities.

Games are an integral part of the young learner classroom and can easily be integrated into classroom assessment tasks. Teachers should ensure that the task suits the purpose of the assessment, the context of the assessment and the characteristics of the particular class. 'Listen and do', action tasks and total physical response (TPR) activities are excellent ways to check students listening comprehension. McKay (2006) warns that when this type of assessment is used with a whole class individual children might be copying their classmates so that individual checks should be carried out.

Conferences with students and with other people in the students' lives, parents, class teachers, assistants, can provide valuable information about other areas of learning and the students' lives. For example, a reading conference involves the teacher listening to the student reading, asking questions, monitoring the use of reading strategies, analysing errors and checking the child's attitude and motivation. Writing

conferences are also a key part of writing instructions. During formal one-on-one work with students or during the course of instruction when a teacher moves from student to student, teachers are able to get a better understanding of a student's current writing processes and understandings.

Debates and think alouds, when done in the target language, can be used with students who have mastered more advanced speaking skills. Debates provide a platform for students to use their speaking skills in both a planned and spontaneous environment. Think alouds require students to share their thought process when reading, solving problems, or responding to questions. Both activities can provide insight into the abilities and strategies used by the student.

Keeping records of student development is an important part of assessment. Records can be kept in a variety of different ways; anecdotal notes, checklists, rating scales, questionnaires, learner profiles, and progress reports. Anecdotal notes are a type of record where the teacher records a child's actions and behavior over a period of time. True anecdotal notes are objective as opposed to subjective or interpretive. Checklists can be designed in different ways, but typically there is either a column of student names at the left or a row of student names across. There are then spaces left where the teacher can fill in an assessment task or activity. Different systems can be used, but typically the teacher has a symbol for when the goal has been met, when the goal is being worked on and when it has not been attempted yet. Some course books have their own checklist. A rating scale requires the rater to assign a numeral representation to the object. For example, one (1) might represent excellent, two (2) good, three (3) average, four (4) fair and (5) poor. Rating scales and questionnaires can also be used by the students for self-reflection. Progress reports and learner profiles can be considered records of learning.

2.4 YOUNG LEARNERS

Cameron (2001b) advocates that among other misconceptions there exists the myth that teaching young learners is straightforward. Since every child is unique, even within the same context and age range, teaching them is not straightforward. The

social, emotional and cognitive characteristics of young learners cannot be categorized into strict age brackets or grade levels. Table 2.4 -1 shows some of the possible features of young learners on a continuum from younger to older learners. In heterogeneous classes, the student profile will consist of a range of the characteristics which can be seen in this table.

Table 2.4-1 Possible features of young learners

Younger learners	Older learners
Children are at pre-school or in the first couple of years of schooling.	These children are well established at school and comfortable with school routines.
Generally they have a holistic approach to language, which means that they understand meaningful messages but cannot analyze language yet.	They show a growing interest in analytical approaches which means that they begin to take an interest in language as an abstract system.
They have lower level of awareness about themselves as language learners as well as about the process of learning	They have well developed skills as readers and writers.
Generally they are more concerned about themselves than others.	They have a growing awareness about the world around them.
They have a limited knowledge about the world.	They begin to show interest in real life issues.
They enjoy fantasy, imagination and movement.	

Source: Pinter (2006), p. 2

Considering these characteristics we will examine five principles set forth by Cameron (2001b) to use while teaching young learners. These principles are based on the theoretical work of Piaget (the child as active learner), Vygotsky (the child as social, Zone of Proximate Development) and Bruner (scaffolding and routines).

The first principle relates to the fact that children actively try to construct meaning, “Teachers thus need to examine classroom activities from the child’s point of view in order to assess whether pupils will understand what to do or will be able to make sense of new language” (p. 19). This applies to new language and to classroom activities, including assessment. The second principle refers to children’s need to have space for their language to grow. Routines and scaffolding are considered two strategies that create space for this growth. Again, we can include assessment, and in particular, alternative assessments, into these routines and scaffolds. The third principle refers to children’s need for guidance in order to notice and attend to the aspects of the foreign language that are meaningful. The fourth principle stresses that development comes from the internalization of social interaction. Social interaction plays a key roll in the young learner classroom and in alternative assessments. The last, and most important principle, children’s foreign language learning depends on what they experience. “There are important links between what and how children are taught, and what they learn” (p. 20). We also saw this concept repeated when we addressed assessment.

When we compare learning a first language to learning additional languages we find that motivation is crucial. Many children who begin to learn English as a foreign language are not immersed in an English-speaking environment where they need to learn English to meet immediate social and academic needs. They are learning English as a subject in school whether it is as a separate or integrated subject. Children who are in this situation may not feel a real need or clear motivation to use and learn English so it is in their best interest to foster their motivation. According to a longitudinal study completed by Marianne Nikolov (1999), a Hungarian teacher and researcher, the sources of children’s motivation to learn English change as they get older. In her study younger children were motivated to learn by positive attitudes towards English and the learning context, while around the age of 11 and 12 students began to be more affected by extrinsic factors. Alternative assessment techniques are suggested as a motivating factor.

Dornyei (1994), a prominent figure in motivational research, suggests that the components of foreign language learning motivation have three levels; language

level; learner level and learning-situation level. The language level consists of integrative motivational subsystem and instrumental motivational subsystem while the learner level includes the need for achievement and self confidence, including language use anxiety, perceived L2 competence, causal attributions and self-efficacy. The learning situation level is divided into three components. The first component, course specific motivational components, refers to interest, relevance, expectancy and satisfaction. The second component, teacher-specific motivational components refers to concepts such as affiliative drive, authority type and direct socialization of motivation (modelling, task presentation, feedback). The final component is group specific; goal orientedness, norm and reward system, group cohesion and classroom goal structure. This model places more emphasis on the learning situation.

According to Dornyei's (2001) summary of new themes and approaches in second language motivation research, there are five particularly interesting motivational areas: social motivation; motivation from a process-oriented perspective; the neurobiological basis of motivation; L2 motivation and self-determination theory; and task motivation. Dornyei also highlights six emerging motivational themes; teacher motivation, motivation and learning strategy use, demotivation, willingness to communicate, motivational self-regulation or self-motivation, and motivating language learners. Motivating language learners refers to the how not the what of motivation in the classroom which is a driving force in the young learners' classroom.

2.5 ASSESSMENT OF YOUNG LEARNERS

Hasselgreen (2005, p. 338) asserts that there is consensus that assessment procedures for young language learners should comply with the following:

- Tasks should be appealing to the age group, interesting and captivating, preferably with elements of game and fun.

- Many types of assessment should be used, with the pupil's, the parents' and the teacher's perspectives involved.
- Both the tasks and forms of feedback should be designed so that the pupil's strengths (what he or she can do) are highlighted.
- The pupil should, at least under some circumstances, be given support in carrying out the tasks.
- The teacher should be given access to and support in understanding basic criteria and methods for assessing language ability.
- The activities used in assessment should be good learning activities in themselves.

Rea-Dickens (2000) summarizes the main themes of assessment in early language learning as:

- Processes and procedure used by teachers to inform teaching and learning;
- Assessment of achievement at the end of the primary phase of education; and
- Teachers' professional development

According to Alderson and Banjeree (2001) the growing trend to introduce foreign languages at the primary school level has resulted in a natural interest in the assessment of the language development of young learners. The main themes in this area focus on the challenges of assessing young learners due to previously mentioned factors such as; age, motivation, interests, background knowledge and stage of cognitive development. These factors influence the need to design tasks that are developmentally appropriate and that respect the negative effect of perceived 'failure' on future learning. Formative and summative assessments that focus on what students can do are another theme of interest. Issues related to more formal testing procedures, including designing tasks that are fair for children from different schools or language programs and the problems of interacting with unknown assessors and interlocuters are also listed.

McKay (2005) recognizes five main themes in the assessment of young learners; the standards movement, large-scale, content-based assessment, academic language proficiency, classroom assessment, and assessment of young language learners in a foreign language context. The first three themes are related to the assessment of second language learners learning a language in a minority language learning context. The last two themes include research into the assessment of foreign language learners. One of the main focuses of classroom assessment research is on the validity and reliability of these procedures and on new ways of thinking that are emerging about formative assessment. This is also important in mainstream language assessment. McKay also recognizes that the assessment of young learners requires specialist knowledge of assessment and of young learners as the characteristics of young learners are highly relevant in the assessment process. This knowledge includes the features of social, emotional and cognitive growth, as well as an understanding of their developing literacy. The vulnerability of young learners is seen again as an underlying principle.

Rea-Dickens (2001) asked several questions about formative assessment with young learners:

- What constitutes 'quality' in formative assessment?
- Are these assessments creating opportunities for learning?
- What constitutes evidence of language learning?
- Are teachers in the EAL (English as an additional language) context able to distinguish between a language need, a special education need, a curriculum content need?

Leung (2005) also asks three questions:

- What do teachers do when they carry out formative assessment?
- What do teachers look for when they are assessing?
- What theories or 'standards' do teachers use when they make judgements and decisions?

2.6 ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

Alternative assessment in the classroom is supported by the belief that it creates a strong connection between instruction and assessment by creating a feedback loop. Figure 2.6-1 as adapted from Genesee and Hamayan (1994, p. 215) clearly emphasizes this feedback loop.

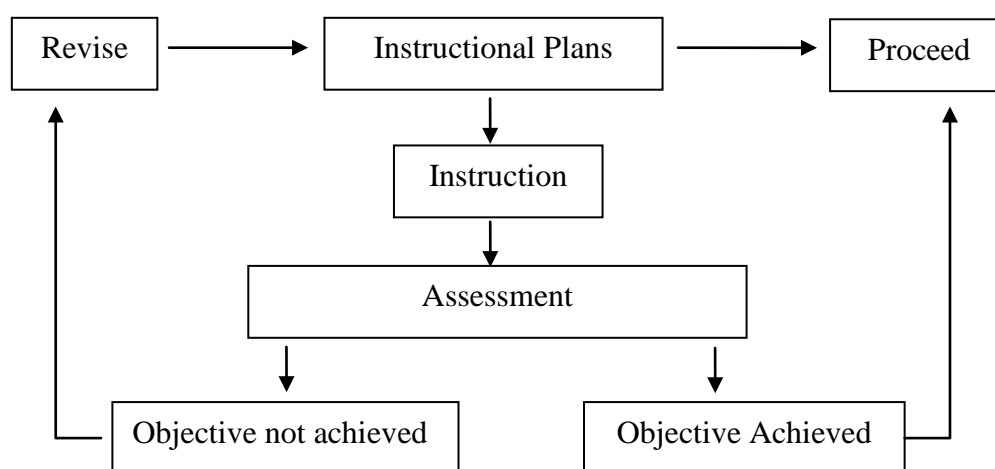


Figure 2.6-1. Feedback loop

Source: Genesee and Hamayan (1994), p. 215

Rea-Dickens (2004) states that assessment is a natural part of teaching. Teachers make selections based on their experiences and beliefs about language learning, development and proficiency, intending to make choices that are in the best interest of their students. These decisions affect lesson content and sequencing, material selection, lesson plans and so forth. Teachers are involved in the on-going observation of their students which leads them to form opinions about the progress of individual learners and to make decisions about specific learning outcomes and overall performance. Rea-Dickens claims that teachers have a tendency to focus on the formal mechanisms that are in place and to under-estimate the observation-driven approaches which have a strong presence in everyday classroom practice. Until recently, this focus on formal methods and procedures has also been reflected in research. “Assessment, with specific reference to teaching and learning in the

language classroom, has remained, until recently, relatively unresearched” (p. 249). She urges that more attention be paid to the teacher as assessor as is the case in classroom-based assessment and alternative assessment.

In discussing classroom assessments, another from of alternative assessment, in the young learner context, McKay (2006) explains that three phases of the assessment process previously described by Bachman; design, operational (development) and administration phases affect practice to varying degrees depending on the time available, whether the assessment is planned or not and whether it is a high-stakes assessment. As in more formal procedures McKay suggests that in classroom-based assessment, in the design phase the teacher sets the purpose of the assessment, checks that the assessment is appropriate to the language needs and characteristics of the learners and determines that the assessment is consistent with the specifications of the curriculum. In the operational phase the teachers prepares the tasks, including instructions and criteria. In the administration phase the teacher checks that the procedure has worked well. McKay further suggests that the following questions can be asked to represent the stages:

- Why do I need to know, and who else needs to know?
- What do I need to know?
- How can I find out?
- What will I do with the information?
- How will I know that the assessment has been effective and how can I improve it next time?

Black (1993) emphasized for assessment to be formative the feedback information has to be used in such a way that differential treatments are incorporated in response to the feedback. (Black, pg. 9)

McKay elaborates on this process as seen in Figure 2.6-2.

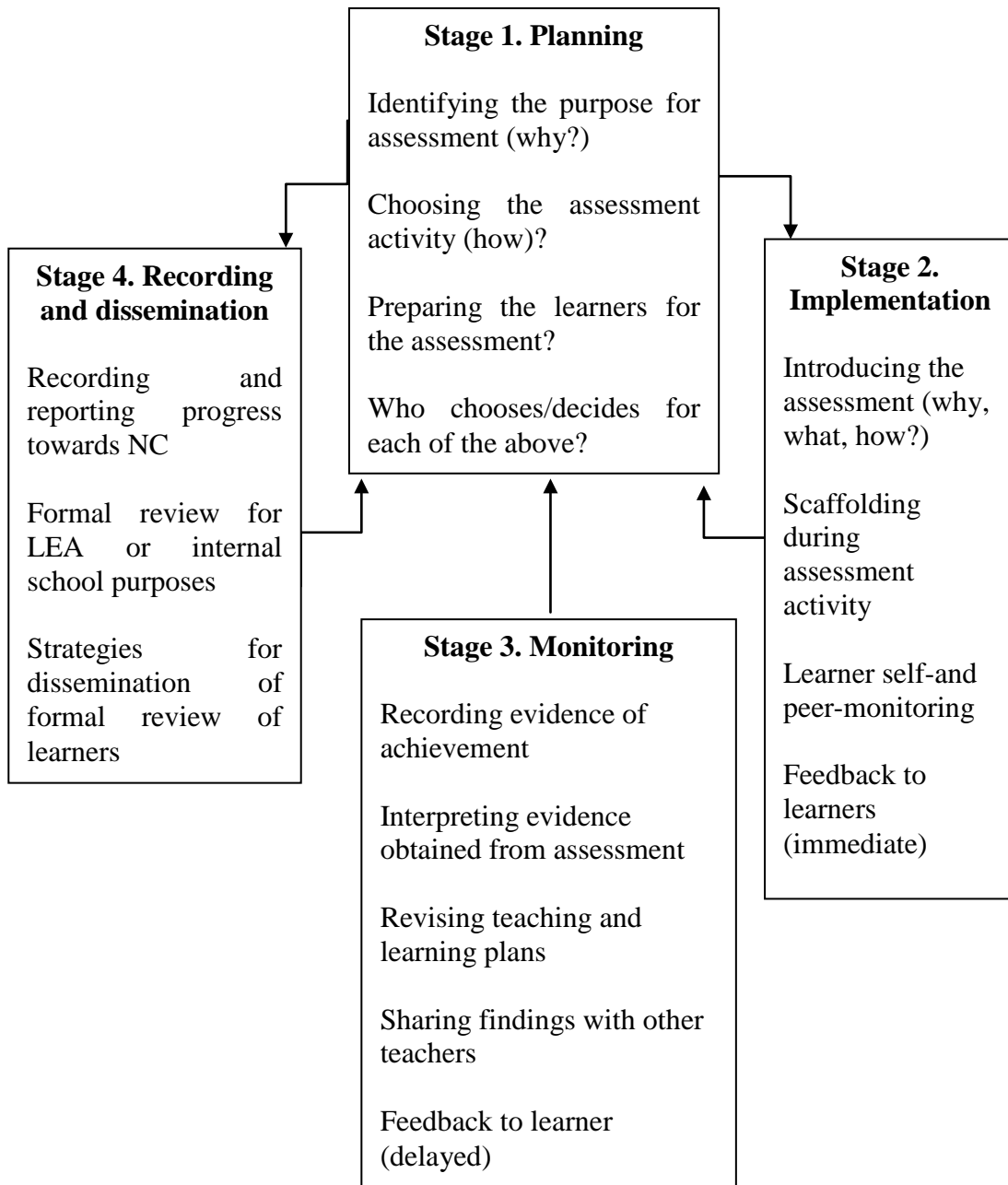


Figure 2.6-2. Processes and strategies in instruction-embedded classroom assessment

Source: McKay, (2006), p.156

2.7 RELEVANT STUDIES

In order to better understand issues related to alternative assessment and young learners, a review of selected relevant empirical research, representing the international and national context, is presented. Rea-Dickens and Gardner (2000) conducted a case study on the nature of formative assessment in a primary school that involved nine inner-city schools, with specific attention to the language support of English language learners. They asked the following questions:

1. What is the range and perceived quality of assessment procedures in place? Which assessment procedures are used? For which purposes? With what effects?
- 2) Which issues do those professionals responsible for the language support of learners with EAL perceive as most important in their assessments of both the language development and achievement of their pupils?
- 3) What are the different representations of the assessment process, including how assessment supports curricular decision making and language learning classroom practice?

They argue in the conclusion that distinctions between formative and summative assessment is not as clear-cut as they seem. They also argue that the interaction between reliability and validity in relation to classroom-based assessment is complex.

Gatullow (2000) presented a case study in Italy focusing on formative assessment in the ELT primary classroom. Her research had a dual focus on the researcher and the teachers. Her main aims were:

- 1) For the researcher to identify:
 - (a) and describe how assessment is being interpreted and implemented by EFL teachers in the final years of primary schools (i.e., children aged 8–10 years);
 - (b) the different dimensions of formative assessment;
 - (c) some examples of ‘good practice’ of formative assessment.

2) For the teachers to have the opportunity to reflect on:

- (a) the difference between formative and summative assessment in terms of information, collection procedures, feedback provision and use of their results;
- (b) the different dimensions of formative assessment;
- (c) the extent and range of assessment actions in the classroom, both implicit and explicit;
- (d) the possible development of improved strategies for formative classroom assessment.

The data analysed during the beginning of the study indicated that some formative assessment actions are more common than others such as; questioning, correcting and judging. Observing process, examining product and metacognitive questioning, which are considered to be more beneficial were not used as frequently. The teachers had developed an increased awareness of a wide range of formative assessment including those that are believed to be more beneficial. Teachers also recognized the importance of an open attitude towards learners, and the importance of peer-teacher observations with the purpose of developing a new understanding of one's work.

Studies related to assessment and alternative assessment have also been carried out in the Turkish context. Çimer and Timuçin (2008) conducted a case study on formative assessment perceptions and habits of primary school English Teachers in Trabzon province. There were 200 participating English teachers in the study. The researchers concluded that the teachers applied a variety of performance tasks for the purpose of formative assessment. Although teachers were confident and successful when applying different types of assessment, they showed a need to improve their knowledge about the theory and associated terminology. In-service training was suggested for practicing teachers. Çimer and Timuçin made the observation that teachers who had more recently completed their training were more familiar with formative assessment techniques. They suggested this as a positive sign for teacher education.

Many of these studies focus on the changes caused by the implementation of the new primary education curriculum based on constructivism which was implemented in 2004-2005. Özdemir (2009) focused on issues encountered by classroom teachers in the measurement and assessment process of the new primary education curriculum in Turkey. The participants in the study consisted of 287 classroom teachers from 21 different schools in Kırıkkale provincial centre. Data was collected using the descriptive method through the use of a survey model. A Likert type scale was used in order to identify the issues experienced by classroom teachers. Based on factor analysis a six-factor, 25-item structure emerged. The sub-factors of the scale were determined as alternative measurement-assessment tools, time, environment, student, parent and inspection elements. The results showed that teachers were experiencing difficulties with the new measurement and assessment procedures in relation to all of the sub-factors. Teachers reported that their biggest challenge was time. Class size was also an issue. Teachers working in larger classes (30-40 students and 40-50 students) experienced more problems. As a result of this study, recommendations were made for further research into teachers' strengths and weaknesses in the area of measurement and assessment and in-service training and on-going evaluation of teachers in these areas.

Çiftci (2010) carried out research to gain a better understanding of teachers' opinions about performance tasks, a type of alternative assessment, used in schools. The participants in this study were 20 class teachers from the Central Konya Province, teaching either grade four or five. Results of this study showed that teachers faced problems due to the attitudes of the parents, insufficient time, high student to teacher ratio, lack of equipment and excessiveness of the evaluation forms. Çiftci concluded that teachers have problems with the assessment and evaluation part of the new curricula.

Gelbal and Kelecioğlu (2007) administered a survey to 242 classroom and branch teachers teaching grades one to six in the central province of Ankara to examine the proficiency perceptions of the teachers and problems they confront in general when applying measurement and evaluation techniques. The most common problems the

teachers met when trying to use measurement instruments was crowded classrooms and insufficient duration of the course. They also recommended further education on the preparation and use of measurement methods for the teachers.

Birgin and Baki (2009) conducted an investigation into primary school teachers' proficiency perceptions about measurement and assessment methods. This sample consisted of 975 randomly selected primary school teachers from 15 provinces in Turkey. This study revealed that teachers did not perceive themselves as proficient in performance and alternative assessment methods such as; journals, rubrics, self/peer assessment, attitude scales, interviews, portfolios and projects. Birgin and Baki also suggested in-service training and introducing teachers to alternative assessment and giving them the opportunity to use different alternative assessment methods during their undergraduate education.

2.8 TEACHER BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Clark and Peterson (1986) conceptualized three different fundamental types of teachers' thought processes: (1) teacher planning, (2) teachers' interactive thoughts and decisions and (3) teachers' theories and beliefs. Teachers' beliefs affect planning and their interactive thoughts and decisions and classroom behavior (Nisbett and Ross, 1980). Theories and beliefs are an important part of teachers' general knowledge through which teachers perceive, process and act upon information in the classroom (Munby, 1982). According to Brousseau, Book and Byers (1988) beliefs are influenced by teaching subcultures, pre-service experience and experience in the classroom. Teachers' beliefs affect teaching and learning. However, inconsistency between teacher's beliefs and practice can occur. Inconsistencies can be attributed to the reality of the classroom. The complexities of classroom life can affect teachers' abilities to align their beliefs with their practices. Ashton (1990) reported that many teachers base classroom decisions on classroom realities like mutual teacher-student respect, classroom management and routine,

needs of students in heterogeneous class classes, student learning, materials, social and emotional characteristics.

2.9 ALIGNMENT

Cohen (1984) describes ‘instructional alignment’ as the extent to which intended outcomes, instructional processes and instructional assessment match. According to Anderson (2002) there are three primary components of curriculum: objectives, instructional activities and supporting materials, and assessments. Curriculum alignment requires a strong link between these three components. Anderson states, “curriculum alignment requires a strong link between objectives and assessments, between objectives and instructional activities and materials and between assessments and instructional activities and materials” (p. 257). Figure 2.9-1 shows this relationship.

Classroom assessments reflect the concepts and skills that the teacher emphasized in class, along with the teacher's clear criteria for judging students' performance. These concepts, skills, and criteria align with the teacher's instructional activities and ideally broader goals, as well.

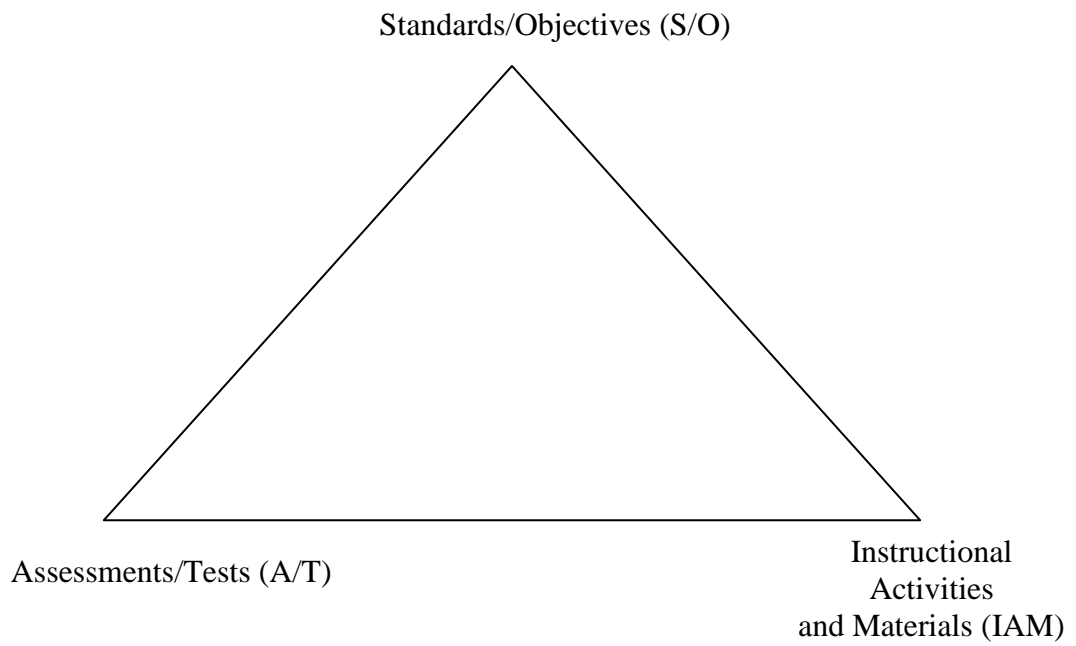


Figure 2.9-1. Link between objectives and assessments

Source: Anderson, (2002), pg. 256

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study is a qualitative case study of the implementation of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom. The purpose of the study is to explore alternative assessment with regard to teachers' beliefs, attitudes and practices, students' perspective, as well as factors affecting implementation and its role in the instructional process. Case studies, focusing on nine different English Language teachers working with either first, second, third, fourth or fifth grade students in a private primary school with an enriched English program, were carried out over a six month period. This design permitted the in-depth study of teachers in the school and classroom environment. Interviews, classroom observations, focus groups and document analysis were used during the time period of the study to provide rich data from a variety of sources.

This chapter presents and justifies the research methodology designed for this purpose. The research design, including research paradigm and case study model are discussed. This discussion places the study within a qualitative paradigm and explains why a case study approach was chosen. The presentation of the research questions follows. Relevant information about the setting and the participants is presented. Data collection instruments and procedures used for the interviews, classroom observations, focus groups and documents are described.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is a qualitative case study, which focuses on a group of teachers and their students in the complex real world setting of a school and in some of its classrooms.

3.1.1. Research Paradigm

The main focus of qualitative research is description and analysis that is used to understand and interpret complex behavior in a natural setting. According to Miles and Huberman (1994) there are several descriptors that are repeatedly seen as features of qualitative research:

- It is conducted through an intense and/or prolonged contact with a “field” or life situation. These situations are typically “banal” or normal ones, reflective of the everyday life of individuals, groups, societies, and organizations.
- The researcher attempts to capture data on the perceptions of local actors from “the inside,” through a process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding or interpretation, and of suspending or “bracketing” preconceptions about the topics under discussion.
- A main task is to explicate the ways people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situations
- Most analysis is done with words. The words can be assembled, sub-clustered, broken into semiotic segments. They can be organized to permit the researcher to contrast, compare, analyze, and bestow patterns upon them.

Qualitative research is most appropriate when the research issues are exploratory in nature and the issues being put to informants may require complex, discursive replies (Brannen, 1992). Thus, in studying a topic such as the implementation of alternative assessments in the young learner classroom, qualitative research provides the necessary framework.

3.1.2. Case study approach

This section outlines the main characteristics of case study as a research approach or strategy. The term strategy is used with intention as case study is not a method, but a choice of object to be studied. The chosen object is the case. Once the case or

object has been chosen and defined a variety of techniques and procedures, including observation, interview, field notes and documentary analysis can be used to investigate the case (Adelman, Jenkins & Kemmis, 1980). The defined case is often referred to as a 'bounded system'.

Case studies can use any combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The research method is not a distinguishing factor in defining a case study. The most important aspect of a case study is the definition of the case and its parameters. Yin describes a case study as, "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 1994, p. 13). McDonough and McDonough (1997) view a case study as a natural approach following the central tenets of qualitative research by being emic (from within the case) and holistic (the whole system in its context).

Merriam describes a qualitative case study as, "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit. Case studies are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources" (Merriam, 1988 p. 16).

He proposed the following definition of these four key words:

- particularistic, focusing on on a specific situation or phenomenon
- descriptive, providing a rich "thick" description of a phenomenon under study, thick description, a term originating in anthropology means a complete, literal description of a cultural phenomenon
- heuristic, helping to illuminate the phenomenon being studied
- inductive, developing theory grounded in multiple data sources.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) list the defining features of a case study as the following:

- It is concerned with a rich and vivid description of events relevant to the case.
- It provides a chronological narrative of events relevant to the case.

- It blends a description of events with the analysis of them.
- It focuses on individual actors or groups of actors, and seeks to understand their perceptions of events.
- It highlights specific events that are relevant to the case.
- The researcher is integrally involved in the case.
- An attempt is made to portray the richness of the case in writing up the report.

Case studies can also be classified. Yin (1984) proposed three classifications: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Exploratory case studies are used for piloting, descriptive case studies for providing narrative accounts and explanatory case studies for testing theories. Merriam (1988) also proposed three classifications one of which was descriptive. The other two were interpretative, developing conceptual categories inductively in order to examine initial assumption, and evaluative, explaining and judging.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) note case studies may be written with different purposes including to chronicle, to ‘render’, to describe; to teach; or a combination. They further note that accordingly case studies may demand different actions from the enquirer, be written at a different analytic level and will result in different products. Stake (1994) considers classification based on the initial purpose of the case study. He distinguishes between: the intrinsic case study, where the interest is in the case for its own sake, based on uniqueness and the instrumental case study, which is chosen to help understand something else, based on issues. The third type is the collective case study in which multiple cases are studied to gain a fuller picture. Groups of individual studies are undertaken to gain a richer perspective than would be possible with an individual study. In an intrinsic study the case of interest, “because in all its particularity and ordinariness, the case is of interest” (Stake, 2000, p. 432).

In light of these perspectives, the case being studied is the implementation of alternative assessment from the perspective of a specific group of teachers within

the real-life setting of their school and classrooms. Interest in this study was intrinsic, inspired by many conversations and experiences shared by the researcher, students, parents, administrators and teachers, several of which became participants in this study. It is the aim of the study to provide a rich, “thick” description that will illuminate the phenomenon specified in the study and will lead to the development of theory based on multiple sources of data.

The case study protocol for this study is presented in Table 3.1-1

Table 3.1-1 Summary case study protocol

Purpose	To explore the implementation of alternative assessment by nine primary school teachers in order to describe and analyze teachers' beliefs and practices, as well as factors affecting implementation, its role in the instructional process, and the student perspective.
Informants	Nine primary school English teachers working in the same school, teaching different grade levels
Research questions	The research questions are listed in Section 3.1.3
Data collection procedures	Data collection for each informant is through: Classroom observation and teacher reflection of two consecutive lessons at three different times in the semester Two semi-structured interviews and three follow-up interviews Document analysis Student focus group interview
Data collection timetable	The data collection timetable is outlined in Tables 3.6-2 and 3.6-3
Data analysis	Collecting data, coding, categorising, drawing conclusions
Data re-checking and verification of findings	Determining and establishing internal validity; seeking counter evidence and confirming or disproving findings peer check, member check

3.1.3. Research questions

The research questions were designed to guide the study as it explored the implementation of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom:

RQ 1. What are teacher's alternative assessment practices?

RQ 1a. What types of alternative assessment do teachers implement?

RQ 1b. What factors impact the classroom implementation of alternative assessment?

RQ2. What are teachers' beliefs about assessment in the young learner classroom?

RQ2a. What are teachers' beliefs about alternative assessment in the young learner classroom?

RQ2b. What are teachers' beliefs about the benefits of implementing alternative assessment?

RQ2c. What are teachers' beliefs about the challenges of implementing alternative assessment?

RQ3. How do students respond to alternative assessment?

RQ4. What role does alternative assessment have in the instructional process?

RQ4a. In what ways is alternative assessment aligned with the instructional process?

RQ4b. In what ways is alternative assessment not aligned with the instructional process?

3.2 THE SETTING

In this section there is a description of the setting made complete by a brief discussion of the English department. The school is a private primary school with students from kindergarten to grade eight located in Turkey. There are approximately 900 students in the school of which almost 100% are Turkish nationals. Of these students fewer than 4% come from an international background where the student, a parent or both parents, are either foreign or speak a foreign language at home. This is to emphasize that the school is not a school with an international student population, but a school that is striving to provide an international education and to establish a bilingual learning environment through an enriched English program.

The school is responsible to the Ministry of Education which manages education throughout the country. According to the national curriculum students start English language education in grade four. At the school in this study, as is true with many

private schools in the region, students start attending English classes in kindergarten. In fact, many students begin English language education before they enter primary school in private pre-schools and day care centers. English language education is an important factor for parents when considering educational options for their children. The school site was chosen for the study because of its enriched English program and reasons of convenience as discussed further in Section 3.3.4.

The teachers in this study were teaching in grades one, two, three, four or five. In grades one to three there were approximately 23 students in each heterogeneous class and four classes at each level. In grades four and five the student to teacher ratio is smaller with an average of twenty students in each heterogeneous class. There were four sections of fourth grade and three sections of fifth grade. Each class has a main class teacher that teaches the core subjects consisting of Turkish, math, science and social studies. These classes comprise the majority of the lessons taught throughout the forty-lesson school week. English is taught for ten lessons and the remaining hours are taught by subject-area teachers who are specialized to teach physical education, art, drama and music. Class teacher and English teachers teach their lessons in the main class teacher's classroom. Other subject areas have special areas for their lessons such as; the gym, art workshop, the drama room and the music room. In classrooms most of the display and storage space is used by the main class teacher with a portion of the display area designated for English.

At each grade level there are two English teachers, a native-speaking teacher and a Turkish teacher. In most cases each teacher teaches five hours with each class at their level to total the ten hours of English taught. Slight variations can occur due to scheduling. Divisions in teaching and other responsibilities, other than translation, are not based upon this distinction. The main reason for this structure is to expose students to the advantages of having two different teachers, one foreign and one Turkish, and to provide the department with the advantages of such diversity. In addition, to the two main class teachers there is a support teacher who team teaches in grade one for eight lessons a week and in grade two for four lessons a week, two lessons with each class and one lesson, respectively. In grades four and five there is

a writing teacher who divides each class with the main class teacher during two lessons a week for focused writing instruction with small, homogeneous groups.

There is also a teacher who is appointed level leader for each level. The level leader is responsible for coordinating the work load for the level. The majority of coordination work occurs during weekly planning meetings, but is also dispersed throughout the week during informal meetings and daily conversations.

3.2.1. The English curriculum

In the 2008-2009 academic year the English Curriculum Committee, comprised of the three English unit heads, two teachers and the vice-principal responsible for the English Department wrote a new English curriculum. The first year of implementation of the new curriculum took place during the 2009-2010 academic year which overlapped with the time period of this study.

The new English curriculum was written in response to several factors. One of the prominent reasons was the 2007-2008 school-wide adoption of a new approach, the Primary Years Program (PYP). The PYP approach prepares students to be globally-minded citizens of the world. Accordingly, it was determined that English needed to be taught in a more meaning rich environment where language was not just a subject, but a tool for learning and communicating. In addition, there was a general consensus among stakeholders that the expected English level of the students should be higher and the learning outcomes and exit level made more explicit. In part this was due to increasing expectations, in line with PYP, and due to an already existent discontent with the former English curriculum and program. The previous curriculum did not provide the needed structure and details to support the growing English program. A simple but relevant example is that assessment was not a component in the previous curriculum. The new curriculum, however, specifies learning outcomes at each grade level in oral language, listening and speaking, written language, reading and writing, and media literacy and for each learning objective sample questions, activities, assessments and notes for the teacher are

provided. The new attention given to assessment in the English curriculum matches that outlined by the PYP approach which emphasizes the importance of formative assessment.

In order to put the new curriculum into practice teachers write course implementation plans (CIP) that are six-week plans. There are six of these plans throughout the year. These plans specify the learning outcome, materials and resources, student activities, student production, assessment and any links to the PYP units of inquiry, as described in Section 3.2.2.

3.2.2. The PYP approach

The Primary Years Program, also referred to as PYP, is an International Baccalaureate (IB) program supported by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). IB programs aim, “to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world” (Making the PYP Happen, 2007, p. 4). The IBO presents schools with a philosophical perspective on what international education may be and a curricular framework which is used as a reference point when designing a school’s curriculum. The curricular framework consists of essential elements, known as knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes, and action all of which are reflected in the learner profile, the cornerstone of the program. According to the learner profile students should strive to be knowledgeable, balanced, principled, open-minded, reflective, caring, thinkers, communicators, risk-takers, and inquirers.

In PYP, planning for the school year is completed through unit of inquiries. Each unit has a different cross-curricular focus based on the following themes; who we are, where we are in place and time, how we express ourselves, how the world works, how we organize ourselves and sharing the planet. Similar to the CIPs mentioned in Section 3.2.1., there are six units of inquiry throughout the year that are each six weeks in duration. English teachers have two options when incorporating the PYP unit of inquiry into their CIPs. One option is to treat the unit

of inquiry as a separate strand that is taught between two to four hours a week. Fourth and fifth grade teachers usually use this option. The other option is to integrate the topic thematically throughout the CIP and the ten weekly lessons. This option is more widely used in grades one to three.

Regarding language teaching the PYP language scope and sequence was a source of inspiration for the new curriculum. The guidelines set forth for the planning of language inquiry has an influence on every day practice. According to these guidelines, “Language is fundamental to learning and permeates the entire Primary Years Programme (PYP). By learning language as well as learning about and through language, we nurture an appreciation of the richness of language and a love of literature.”

According to the PYP curriculum framework, the assessment component should be divided into three interrelated areas, assessing, recording and reporting. How this assessment is carried out is the responsibility of individual schools. Assessment is understood as the gathering and analyzing of information about student performance with the main purpose of informing practicing. Assessment should identify what students know, understand, can do and feel at different stages in the learning process. It is also important that the process, as well as the product should be assessed.

Teachers need to specify learning outcomes before choosing and developing the method of assessment. When designing assessments teachers are expected to use a variety of techniques which take student diversity into consideration and that engage students in the process so that students develop critical-thinking, reflection and self-assessment skills. It is also critical that all members of the school community, students, teachers, parents and administrators, know why there is an assessment, what is being assessed and what the criteria for success is.

3.2.3. The school assessment policy

The main objectives of assessment at the school are to systematically gather information to encourage student learning and growth, to provide updates for students and parents and to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the school's programs. The school policy outlines the importance and the effective use of formative and summative assessment, however, formative assessment is emphasized in the policy. At the time of the study the Assessment Policy had not been formally adopted, but was a working document. The policy outlines specific agreements related to formative assessment such as:

- frequent use
- range of techniques
- integral part of learning
- self-evaluation and peer evaluation leading to life-long learning
- realistic picture
- regular feedback
- regular reporting (report cards and portfolios)
- display of work
- positive orientation

During the time of this research project the vice-principal responsible for the English Department instated an informal policy that teachers should use a minimum of two new alternative assessment methods or tools during each six-week cycle of the unit of inquiries and CIPs.

3.3 THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

Nine teachers, and two additional teachers who assisted with piloting at various stages of the project, volunteered to participate in the study. Of the nine teachers there was one first grade teacher and two teachers at each grade level from grade two to five. As mentioned in Section 3.2 one of the reasons the researcher chose this site was for convenience. Teachers at this school are both open and accustomed to professional development. At the school there are twelve teachers teaching in grades one to five, including the researcher. The researcher spoke informally to all of the teachers about participating in the study. One teacher did not feel comfortable with the time commitment that she felt the study would entail and another teacher was unable to participate as she would be on leave for part of the study. The remaining nine teachers showed willingness to participate in the study. They demonstrated interest, although to different degrees, in young learners and alternative assessment. They represented different grade levels and backgrounds. It was decided that these nine teachers, reached through convenience sampling, should be included in the study for theoretical and practical purposes. Theoretically, nine teachers would provide a wider range of perspectives and experiences that would make a more complete picture of the implementation of alternative assessments within the school's English Department. Practically, it would allow for some flexibility should a teacher want to withdraw from the study for any reason. Table 3.3-1 provides background information about the teachers.

Teacher 1 (T1) has a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a master's in teaching English as a second language. T1 has been teaching for thirteen years. During that time she taught pre-school and worked as a pull-out ESL teacher in the United States. As a pull-out ESL teacher she worked individually with students in kindergarten to grade five. T1 started teaching at the focus school three years ago and has taught grades four and five at the school. Currently she is teaching grade four. At the end of this school year T1 will leave to work at a different international post.

Table 3.3-1 Background information of participants

Teacher	Current Grade Level	Years of Experience	Educational Background
Teacher 1	Grade 4	13	BA Elementary Education MA ESL
Teacher 2	Grade 3	14	BA American Culture and Literature Young Learner Certificate COTE
Teacher 3	Grade 5	10	BA English Language and Literature MA Teaching English
Teacher 4	Grade 5	8	BA CELTA
Teacher 5	Grade 3	4	BA CELTA
Teacher 6	Grade 2	2	BA CELTA
Teacher 7	Grade 2	3	BA English Language and Literature MA Teaching English
Teacher 8	Grade 4	8	BA English Language and Literature Pedagogy Certificate CELTA MA ELT
Teacher 9	Grade 1	10	BA English COTE MA ELT

Teacher 2 (T2) has been teaching for fourteen years. She has taught for thirteen years at the focus school, teaching in every grade from kindergarten to grade six, and one year at a private language institute for adults. She has a bachelor's degree in American Culture and Literature and COTE. She also has a certificate for teaching ELT to young learners. This is her second consecutive year teaching grade three.

Teacher 3 (T3) has a bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature and a master's in Teaching English. She has ten years of teaching experience, the last five at the focus school. The first five years were in a private language institute where she worked with children and adults. At the focus school she taught grade seven for three years and she is now in her second year teaching grade five.

Teacher 4 (T4) has a bachelor's degree in a field outside of education and has completed CELTA training. She has taught for eight years in three different

countries and has worked with all grades from kindergarten to adults. She has been teaching at the focus school for four years. During the first four years she taught grade three. For the last two years she has taught grade five and has had the additional responsibility of group coordinator for grades three to five.

Teacher 5 (T5) has a bachelor's degree in a field outside of teaching and a TEFL and CELTA certificate. She started her teaching career at the focus school and is currently in her fourth year. She has worked with most grades at the school and with college students during the CELTA course she attended. Most of her time teaching has been with grade three and that is where she is currently teaching.

Teacher 6 (T6) is in her second of year of teaching. She has a bachelor's degree in a field outside of education and a CELTA certificate. This is her first year working with young learners and her first year at the focus school. She works in kindergarten and grade one as a team-teacher and in grade two as a teacher and team-teacher. She has also spent some time teaching grade eight. During this study we focused on her work in grade two. Although a new teacher, T6 is reflective, critical and aware. She spends significant time to write detailed reflections.

Teacher 7 (T7) has a bachelor's degree in English language and literature and a master's degree in teaching English. T7 is in her third year of teaching and her second year at the focus school. She has been teaching grade two since she began working at the school.

Teacher 8 (T8) has a bachelor's degree in English Language and literature and a master's degree in English Language Teaching. She also has a pedagogy certificate and a CELTA certificate. She began her teaching career at the focus school and has now been teaching there for eight years. She has taught grades three, four and five and currently is teaching grade four.

Teacher 9 (T9) has been teaching for ten years with all ten years at the focus school. She has worked with all grade levels from kindergarten to grade seven except for grade four. She is now teaching grade one which she teaches almost every year. In

addition to a bachelor's degree, T9 has a master's degree in English Language Teaching and COTE.

To a certain extent I, the researcher, can also be considered a participant in this study as a participant observer and as a colleague to the participants in the study. Patton states that, "The extent of participation is a continuum that varies from complete immersion in the setting as full participant to complete separation from the setting as spectator, with a great deal of variation along the continuum between those two points" (Patton, 2002, p. 265). I was at different places on this continuum throughout the study, however, I tried to remain aware of where I was on the continuum and of the influence it could have on the study.

The inspiration from the study came from my experiences working at the school and it was also through the trust of my school and colleagues that I was able to carry out this research. Thus, I was also an internal reviewer with the benefit of an insider's view. As the study proceeded I remained open to the different emerging perspectives remaining conscious of the belief that the, "perspective that the researcher brings to qualitative inquiry is part of the context for the findings" (Patton, 2002, p. 65).

At this point discussion of reflexivity seems appropriate. Reflexivity stresses the importance of political and cultural consciousness, as well as self-awareness and ownership of one's perspective. It stresses that understanding is about self-understanding and consciousness, "to have an ongoing conversation about experience while simultaneously living in the moment" (Hertz 1997, viii). Writing in the first-person is one way to indicate self-awareness, but of course this is not the only option as expressing voice is also a matter of style and preference. For this reason, while I tend to use "I", I also refer to 'the researcher' in my work.

3.4 THE STUDENT FOCUS GROUP

A student focus group, consisting of twenty-one students, was conducted in a grade three English class. The focus group was held after Portfolio Day which is a special

day for each grade level held in June when students present their portfolios to their parents at school during class time. This choice was made because discussion of Portfolio Day fit naturally into the instructional process and gave the students a concrete experience to talk about. Grade three was chosen as it was the average grade being taught by the teachers in the study. All students in the class participated in the focus group because students are accustomed to giving feedback in this way and it was necessary to conduct the focus group interview in a way that would not disturb the established routine.

The researcher wrote the questions for this tool in English. Three classroom teachers and three experts reviewed the questions. Based on the feedback no changes were made to the questions. The questions were then translated into Turkish and back-checked for accuracy. To address concerns related to reliability and validity the focus group session was piloted in a second grade class since these students were close to the same maturity level as the grade three students. Based on the piloted session, the class teacher's role in the process and the procedure of the discussion was clarified.

The researcher posed one central question, "Can you please tell me about Portfolio Day?" There were also eight probes prepared to give the students more guidance. These probes asked about what Portfolio Day was, how students prepared for the day, who participated and why there was such an event. Students were asked how they felt about the experience, as well as what they learned, if anything. Students were also given a chance to discuss other thoughts they had about Portfolio Day.

The focus group session was run by the class' Turkish English teacher. The researcher was present at the focus session, as was another Turkish English teacher volunteer. It was decided that a recording device was neither necessary nor desired as it might inhibit student responses and change the dynamic of the lesson. The class' teacher asked the questions in Turkish and students were free to respond in Turkish or English. The volunteer wrote down verbatim the responses of the students. These answers were later written in transcript form and Turkish responses were translated into English and back-checked.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Participants in the study agreed to participate based on the information stated in the voluntary participation form. This form addressed the three main ethical concerns of educational case study research: confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent. This information was also reiterated at the beginning of each interview session. Participants were also informed about additional work that this project would entail and that it would be used in part for my doctoral thesis. Caution was used in order not to alter the learning environment which would jeopardize the naturalistic character of the study. I reminded and sometimes reassured teachers that what I wanted to see was the reality of their classrooms and that there were no certain expectations to be met at any time during the study.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Data was collected through interviews, observation, focus group (discussed in Section 3.4) and documents. There were two interviews, with each teacher participating in an initial interview at the beginning of the study and a summative interview at the end. Each teacher was observed for six lessons at a minimum of three different times throughout the study. Four of these lessons were focus lessons indicating that the teacher felt that some sort of alternative assessment was being used. Before each observation the teacher completed a pre-observation reflection form and after each observation the teacher completed a post-observation reflection form and was asked to complete a form with additional questions, as well. One class also participated in a student focus group. As the study developed I felt that attending weekly level planning meetings, when possible would add additional insight to the data. The school assessment policy, the new English curriculum, course implementations plans and samples of student work were also analyzed. A summary of the data collected is shown in Table 3.6-1. A complete documentation of data collection tools is presented in Appendix A.

Table 3.6-1 Summary of data collection

Data Collection Tool	Details	Total
Interviews		
Initial Interview	9 interviews	18 interviews
Summative Interview	9 interviews	
Classroom Observations		
Initial	2 lessons	54 lessons
Focus Observation	4 lessons	54 reflection forms
Pre-Observation Notes	3 reflection forms	27 running
Post-Observation Notes	3 reflection forms	commentaries
Running Commentary	3 running commentaries	27 follow up
Follow-up	3 follow ups	
Focus Group	1	1 focus group
Document Analysis		
School Assessment Policy		
English Curriculum		
Course Implementation Plans	-	-
Student Work		

3.6.1. Interviews

Interviewing allows us to view another person’s perspective with the understanding that this perspective is meaningful and can be made explicit. The interviews in this study were designed with this principle in mind. Caution was taken to phrase questions so that teachers would not feel pressured to give an expected answer. In addition, having already established rapport with the participants was a distinct advantage that I felt throughout data collection. Teachers participated in an initial interview before the observation cycle and in a summative interview after the observation cycle. The development of the two instruments followed similar procedures.

The initial interview questions were designed with direct links between the interview questions and the research questions. Before any interviews were conducted the researcher received feedback from three experts in the field that addressed face and construct validity. Based on this feedback the researcher was able to improve the quality of questions before piloting the interview. For example, “What is assessment?” was changed to a series of questions so that participants did

not feel that their knowledge was being tested, but that their experiences were being valued. It was replaced with questions such as, “Could you explain how you view assessment?” and “If you were asked by a new teacher for some advice about alternative assessments, what would you say?” There were three reiterations of the feedback process before the instrumented was piloted. The interview was piloted twice and after this process a few minor adjustments were made to the order and wording of questions to increase the clarity and the natural flow of the interview.

The finalized initial interview was comprised of fifteen questions that gathered information about the current grade level being taught and background information. Questions were asked about a typical lesson including probes about the physical environment, teacher role, student activities, materials and the assessment component. Questions were also asked about the planning process in order to gather information from the teacher’s perspectives about the general process as well as about the practical application of learning objectives. Another aim of these questions was to understand if and how objectives are checked or measured. Teachers were asked questions regarding their general views of assessment and how they assess their students. They were also asked more specific questions about alternative assessment, including questions about their experiences with alternative assessment, both positive and negative, as well as advice for new teachers. Another series of questions asked about the types of alternative assessments they had used and if there were any types they had not used, but would like to use. The interview also had a question that addressed students’ reactions to their experiences with alternative assessment. Teachers were given the opportunity to ask questions and to talk about any issues of interest.

Interviews were carried out in an available empty room at a convenient time usually during the school day for the two parties involved. There were two interviews that were held during the semester holiday, as this was agreed to be more convenient for the participant and researcher. The time of the initial interviews varied from 16 minutes to 37 minutes.

Summative interviews were held after the observation period. The interview questions were aligned with the research questions and were designed to further

explore certain issues and to address new issues that had surfaced during the observation period. In order to strengthen the validity and reliability of the interview, feedback from three experts was considered before it was piloted two times. No significant changes were necessary as a result of the feedback or piloting.

The summative interview was also a semi-structured interview, but of considerably shorter length with four questions. The questions focused on the teachers' experiences with alternative assessments in the last semester. The first question asked about the factors that had an impact on alternative assessment. The second question concerned the role of alternative assessment in the instructional process. The third question asked about the teachers' interpretations of the students' experiences. The final question gave teachers a chance to add or say anything they wanted. The summative interviews were also carried out at in an available empty room at a non-teaching time for the researcher and participant. Interviews lasted between five and ten minutes.

All interviews were recorded by using a laptop with an external microphone. Teachers were informed that they could turn off the microphone at any time during the interviews, however no participants used this option. There were no technical difficulties at the time of recording or at the time of transcription. The researcher transcribed all of the interviews, listening to each interview a minimum of two times. The schedule for the initial and summative interviews can be seen in Table 3.6-2.

Table 3.6-2 Interview schedule

Interview	Time Period
Initial Interview	January – February 2010
Summative Interview	June 2010

3.6.2. Classroom observations

Classroom observation was an important research method for exploring the reality of how alternative assessment was being approached in the classroom. The researcher observed each teacher at three different points during the observation period for a total of six lessons per teacher. When it was possible two consecutive lessons were observed at three different times.

There were four different data collection tools that were used during the observation cycle, Pre-Observation Notes, Post-Observation Notes, Follow-up Questions or Interview, and Running Commentary. A brief discussion of the development of these data collection tools and how they were used during the process will be addressed. The data collection tools were also subject to feedback and two complete cycles of piloting.

The purpose of the first observation was to become familiar with the teacher and the students in the classroom environment. Teachers were given the date and time that researcher would come to observe. Teachers were able to reschedule the observation if necessary or desired. Prior to the observation the teacher would complete the ‘Pre-Observation Notes’ so that the observer would have some insight into what the teacher had planned and the reasoning behind it. The use of the word ‘Notes’ in this data collection tool was intentional so that teachers did not feel like the observations were evaluative. The teacher reassured all participants that she was interested in the daily reality of their classrooms, not in something that was created for the purpose of an observation. Furthermore, the observer did not want the teachers to feel pressured to write a detailed lesson plan or to make special plans for the observed lesson. If teachers felt that this was necessary it could create a false reality and put extra stress on the teachers.

During the observation I recorded my notes about the lesson on the “Running Commentary”. As previously mentioned, this form had been piloted two times. An independent observer also used the form simultaneously. It was agreed that these forms suited the purpose. The researcher did not want to be limited by a pre-

determined structure to these forms. However some areas of observation were kept consistent. Time was noted in five minute intervals, but commentary was continuous. The main focus of comments was on the physical environment, teacher and student activities, interaction patterns, lesson objectives, assessment of learning, materials and student reactions. Any questions or uncertainties were also noted for later clarification.

Upon completion of the observation teachers wrote their reflections about the lesson on the form, 'Post-Observation Notes'. This form was purposefully designed to be an informal way for teachers to express their thoughts and opinions. The teachers were asked to write about their feelings and opinions about the lesson and to include whether or not the objective(s) were met and why they felt that way. As is typical with reflective forms, teachers also discussed what they thought had gone well and what they thought could have gone better.

I planned to conduct a follow-up interview after each observation. However, out of respect for the participants' time and to assure that participants did not feel an unnecessary burden, I gave the option to either attend an informal interview or to write the answers to the same questions in their own time. Teachers were told that if they felt that they had properly addressed the issues from the follow-up interview in the 'Post-Observation Notes' they should not feel obligated to answer again. They also were informed that they had the right to answer or to not answer any questions as they saw fit. Eight teachers chose to write their answers and one teacher opted to have an oral interview. The answers from this interview were written by the researcher at the time of the interview.

The aim of the follow-up interview questions was to address any topics that had not naturally been addressed by the participants' reflection in the post-observation notes. There were six questions. The first asked whether the lesson was a typical lesson or not. The second question inquired if the teacher felt the objectives had been met and why. The third question asked that teachers expressed their reflections about what they would keep the same in a similar lesson and what they would change. In the fourth question teachers were asked if they were able to check students' learning during the lesson. This was followed up with the following

probes, “How were you able to do that?” and “What made it challenging for you to do that?” The next question asked about student reactions from the teachers’ perspective. The final question allowed teachers to add any additional information.

The other four lessons were focus observations. These lessons were two consecutive lessons occurring at two distinct times. The purpose of these observations was to observe teachers implementing alternative assessment in their classrooms. However, the researcher did not want to disturb the natural learning environment. For this reason the researcher did not plan the specific date and time of the observations, forcing teachers to manipulate their instruction, but rather provided a possible week or a series of optional dates so that teachers could pick the time that would best fit with their instructional plans. At this time the researcher also asked to attend the weekly level meetings with the belief that it might add further insight into the planning process. The researcher was able to attend two level meetings and one initial meeting for piloting purposes.

After the date and time of the observations were set the procedure for the teachers was identical with that in the first series of observations. Teachers completed the ‘Pre-Observation Notes’ form before the lesson so that the observer would know what the teacher had planned for the lesson and the logic behind it. After the lesson the teachers completed a ‘Post-Observation Notes’ form where they expressed their thoughts and opinions about the lesson. The teachers also wrote about their feelings and opinions about the lesson which included whether or not the objective(s) were met and why they felt that way. Participants also discussed what they thought had gone well and what they thought could have gone better.

The researcher also planned to conduct a follow-up interview after each focus observation. However, due to the same concern for the teachers’ time and to ensure that they did not feel burdened by participation in the study, the researcher gave participants the option to either attend an informal interview or to write the answers to the identical questions in their own time. As there were two focus observations, there were two more follow-up interviews for each teacher. The same eight teachers chose to write their answers with the same teacher opting to have an oral interview.

The answers from these interviews were written by the researcher at the time of the interview.

The questions for the follow-up interview of the focus lessons were similar to those used after the first observation. The first five questions and the last question were the same. Questions six, seven and eight focused on the particular alternative assessment strategy or tool that was used in the focus lesson. The sixth question referred to the advantages and disadvantages of the tool or strategy used. The seventh question requested information about the factors that assisted and hindered the process of implementation and the eighth question inquired about the alignment of the strategy or tool with the instructional process.

The researcher summarized the information from each series of pre-observation notes, post observation notes, follow-up interview and running commentary into a narrative format. For each teacher there were three summaries. The summary of the first observation included general impressions, the role of the teacher/student, interaction patterns, objectives and whether or not they were met and whether or not the teacher felt it was a typical lesson. The researcher also noted any additional thoughts and reflections. The summary of the two focus observations focused on these points, as well as information relevant to the alternative assessment tool or strategy used. The time schedule for these observations is available in Table 3.6-3.

Table 3.6-3 Observation schedule

Observation	Lessons/Participant	Time Period
Initial Observation	2	February-March 2010
Focus Observations	4	May – June 2010

3.6.3. Planning meetings

Grade level teachers have weekly meetings that last for one to two lessons depending on time and need. This is when the coordination for level work is discussed and when the majority of weekly and daily plans are finalized. As

previously mentioned, during the course of the study it seemed that attendance at these weekly meetings would offer another perspective. Teachers were approached about this possibility and they responded positively. The researcher attended a planning meeting to pilot the effectiveness of using a running commentary at such a meeting and to develop a better awareness of what these meetings entailed. The researcher attended two planning meetings during the time period of the focus observations, one in grade four and one in grade three. During these meetings the researcher wrote notes about the topics of discussion and any relevant details.

3.6.4. Document analysis

The English curriculum, School Assessment Policy, course implementation plans and samples of student work were included in the data analysis. Data gathered from documents can be used in the same way as those gathered from interview or observations. (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993).

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Qualitative data analysis refers to the systematic experience of examining, describing, summarizing, analyzing, and synthesizing the evidence in order to answer the research questions. This is an ongoing process beginning during data collection and continuing throughout the analysis. Data analysis for this study was inductive meaning that the patterns, themes and categories of analysis emerged from the data (Patton, 2002).

During the process of data collection, initial data analysis began with the development of ideas and areas for further inquiry. It also included transcription and summarization of lesson observations. Data reduction continued during the data collection period and beyond. It involved the processes of describing, further summarizing, selecting, simplifying, coding and categorizing the data from interviews, lesson observations, planning meetings, documents and the student focus group. The option of using a computer-based analysis was considered, but it did not offer any distinct advantages in this study, therefore, data was manually

coded and then examined to discover emergent patterns or categories. Baring the research questions in mind, data analyses was first approached by examining individual cases and then by looking across cases. Data from different sources were triangulated throughout this process to strengthen the internal validity of the study as discussed in Section 3.8.

The second phase of data analysis is the display of the data through visual representations in summaries, tables and other diagrammatic means. These visual representations are a way to make sense of the data, facilitate analytic induction and to draw preliminary answers to the research questions. In the third phase of analysis, conclusions were hypothesized and then checked and re-checked against the data in order to be disproved or verified (Thomas 2006, Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Peer review by a fellow doctoral student was carried out in order to increase the trustworthiness of the analysis and interpretation. Independent parallel coding, where the second coder initially coded the raw text of an interview and of the student focus group, formed one part of the peer review. After the second coder completed the initial coding, the two sets were compared. Although there were some discrepancies in word choice, upon discussion the categories were found to be consistent. The code of 'motivating' was also added. A clarity check on the categories was also performed. For this, the second coder referred to the research questions, the categories developed and the raw text that the peer reviewer had coded. A check was then made to compare the categories that the researcher and the second coder had identified. The peer reviewer was not familiar with the term differentiated learning in this context and did not identify some of the categories in the particular sample piece of text. The other categories were found consistent.

Member checks formed an informal part of the data collection process. Post-analysis review, of interested participants, began as a more formal procedure but did not result in any content-based feedback. Direct quotes from the participants were also used to ensure that their voices were heard. In Table 3.7-1, a sample of coding of an initial interview is shown. More sample documentation of interviews, classroom observations, student focus group interview and peer review are presented in Appendices B through E.

Table 3.7-1 Sample coding of summative interviews

T1	Normally, from the daily classroom routines, assessment is usually oral and it comes at the end of the lesson and it is usually an overview or checkup type thing. Usually most of the assessment is paper-pencil. But, sometimes students have an opportunity to present or show what they know. And, also, the completed assignment or the completed work is also used as an assessment.	RX: Oral assessment at the end of the lesson Paper-pencil assessment Completed task
R	That is a good point. Could you, so you mentioned how you assess your students. Alright thank you. Is there anything you want to add to that before I move on to our next point?	
T1	Sometimes we also do dramas and dramas are another form of assessment. The students will get in groups and decide what they will do and actually act out a drama to show their understanding or what it is they have learned. So that is another thing we do.	RX: Drama
R	Could you explain how you view assessment, maybe in general terms?	
T1	I view assessment as any way a student can show the teacher or other students what they have learned. It can be paper-pencil, it can vary from paper-pencil to demonstration. It can be in the form on anecdotal notes that the teacher makes just from observing what the	R1 Beliefs: Definition of assessment
	students are doing. It could even be drama. It could be a project. A project can also be some form of assessment. This is all I can think of.	
R	Mhm. Sounds good. You mentioned anecdotal notes. Do you use those at your levels?	RX: Anecdotal notes
T1	I used to. I used to, but these days no. (laughs)	
R	Did you use them while you were here?	
T1	I used them my first year here, yes I did. I would jot down in my lesson plan book different things that I observed because it was so difficult, it was difficult to actually gage what the students were learning because they didn't show it on their exams. Their exams, exam scores were usually low. I knew in the classroom in daily classroom activities they would show me their knowledge. It would always be disappointing to see their exam scores.	R1: Difficulty assessing young learners

3.8 INTERNAL VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Internal validity is the extent to which the findings accurately depict the case under investigation. In this study internal validity refers to the accuracy with which the implementation of alternative assessment by the nine participants is presented with regard to the participants' beliefs and practices, as well as factors of implementation, its role in the instructional process, and the student perspective. The focus of this study is on the teacher and the reality of the implementation of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom. Therefore, the representation of this reality should be credible with the participants.

Several techniques were employed to strengthen the design of the research. Multiple methods of triangulation strengthened internal validity. Data triangulation was present as data was collected from different people at different times and from different spaces. Methodological triangulation can be noted in the use of more than one method to gather data, such as through interviews, observations and documents. Findings were determined when consistency was found between the data collected from different people at different times and through different methods. Peer examination was also used with emergent findings and issues and member checks were used to ensure credibility.

External validity refers to the extent to which the results can be generalized. In case study research generalization of results is not the aim nor is it necessarily desirable. Stake (1988) clarifies the main preoccupation of the case study approach is with the understanding of the particular case, a thorough understanding of its uniqueness and its complexity. What is of interest is whether or not interested readers have enough information to decide if the information is transferable. Reliability refers to the consistency and repeatability of the results. Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggest that instead of the term reliability, alternatives such as 'dependability' or 'consistency' may be more appropriate for the qualitative paradigm. Qualitative researchers are more interested in the fit between what they record and the reality of what is happening. In order to strengthen the research design in these areas a logical

explanation of the theory of the study as well as the details of the study were discussed. A case study protocol was also presented with a clear audit trail.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This qualitative case study, focusing on nine teachers, explores the implementation of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom. The purpose of this study, as outlined by the research questions, is to investigate teachers' practices, teachers' beliefs, factors that affect the implementation of alternative assessment, the students' perspective and alignment of alternative assessment with the instructional process. Consistent with the characteristics of the case study approach (as described in Chapter 3), This chapter begins with information about individual cases in order to raise awareness and increase understanding. Teachers' experiences with different alternative assessment tools and strategies are analyzed, followed by cross-case data analysis of the interview and classroom observation data. Additional findings from the student focus group and document analysis of the school assessment policy, sample course implementation plans and student work are also discussed. Discussion of the results is embedded throughout the chapter with a summary of the main findings and further discussion concluding the chapter.

4.1. INDIVIDUAL CASES

Implementation of alternative assessment cannot be isolated from the teachers who use it and the learning environment where it is used. The aim of this section is to personalize and contextualize the study by briefly giving information about the participants, the teaching materials they use and the learning environment where they teach. Beginning to hear the voices of the participants and learning more about them as teachers and the context where they teach sets the background for the detailed discussion of the implementation of alternative assessment later in the chapter. This information was gathered during the initial interview and the three

classroom observation cycles which included pre-observation notes, running commentaries, post-observation notes and follow-up questions.

4.1.1. Teacher 1

T1 who has virtually no Turkish language ability has developed a nice relationship with her fourth grade students and a friendly and productive classroom environment. She has a calm, yet firm presence in the classroom. T1 is the type of teacher who is critical and eager to find ways to improve her lessons. She put noticeable effort into her lesson reflections. She also mentioned at the end that she hoped her lessons and feedback were of use to this research and that my work had made her seriously consider using more alternative assessment types. T1 describes her classroom as a place where,

You would see a lot of teacher interaction between me and the students. I would be asking lots of questions and students would be responding by raising their hands or sometimes shouting out. And in all the midst of that you would see me disciplining as well. Giving points or rewarding correct behavior. You would see a lot of question and answer, question and answer.

T1 describes her classroom as medium sized. She says,

When you walk into the room the whiteboard is immediately to your right on the wall and the teacher's desk is in the front of the classroom. Students' desks are placed or situated in groups, maybe sometimes three or four or sometimes groups of six because the classroom teacher changes it from time to time, but it is kind of like that teacher dominant thing with the teacher in the front of the room. But I don't always stand in front of the room. I walk around, as well.

T1 uses a variety of materials in her classroom. She usually prepares her own worksheets to ensure that they are at the level of the students. She states, "Most of

the main material that we always end up doing is making or creating worksheets and one of the reasons why we are doing this is because we want to make sure that the worksheets are at the level of the students.” Worksheets either have a grammar focus or support PYP topics and concepts. T1 also uses readers, library books, realia, visuals and PowerPoint presentations to support learning in her classroom.

4.1.2. Teacher 2

There is a disciplined environment in T2’s third grade classroom where expectations are clear and high. T2 describes her classroom as a busy place.

Our lessons should be full of activities because we are working with young learners. I try to change the activities often. In forty minutes I try to do at least three activities for one topic or subject. I try to get them more involved in the lessons. They are doing. I am just conducting.

T2 explains that, “We have six readers and a course book, but most of things we (emphasis) are doing, teacher-made materials, PowerPoint.”

T2 is a critical and reflective teacher. She explained to me after a lesson observation that she was not satisfied with the presentation of the grammar point because it did not have sufficient examples. Because of this she felt she was not able to meet her objective. She immediately changed the presentation before using it again with her next class.

T2 has strong classroom routines and procedures in place that encourage autonomy. T2 explains that as an English teacher, “We are just visitors in the classroom, but I think this year is more suitable than other years because they (students) can work in groups, which is perfect for us.” She is also pleased with the bulletin board that they use. “So we are using the board a lot because just that part is ours because the rest is the organization of the class teacher.” She uses the board to display routines, daily lesson plans, required materials list and extra work for students.

4.1.3. Teacher 3

T3 explains with a little humor a typical lesson in her grade three class.

Generally first I start with, unfortunately, a lot of reminders. Then we start with the lesson of the day. Generally, I announce what is going to be done. And then if there is something we need to do together we start with that part first. Then they go to their groups for individual work. They do it and then we come together again to see the answers or for closure, we can say.

T3 sets the mood in her class with her calm, friendly yet enthusiastic attitude. She creates a comfortable environment and establishes good rapport with the students, often using humor. During one lesson T3 introduced students to vocabulary and phrasal verbs related to electronic equipment to help them with the PYP unit of inquiry. She made what could have been a mundane topic, fun with her personality and twists in the lesson plan. She started off with an error correction that grabbed the students' attention. She often used students in the role of teacher and when students did independent work it was in pairs and they were encouraged to help each other.

T3 is pleased with the availability of technology in the classroom. "What I like the most for this year is there is a laptop and projector in each classroom we can use." She also mentions course books and the students' portfolios when talking about the materials used. "We have portfolios that we want to use on a regular basis; that is why we have been working hard on portfolios nowadays."

T3 is not satisfied with the physical environment where she teaches.

One side of the rooms is windows. The other side is lockers. So there is one wall, I can say. The other one is board. Generally how I feel is that there is not enough space to put some stuff up on the walls, for example. Or to use effectively for group work or other things like that. In some classes for example, it is difficult to go to

the back of the classrooms, to get behind the students, to reach. So that kind of difficult thing makes it more difficult for us to do some activities.

4.1.4. Teacher 4

T4 is disciplined and expects the same from her grade five students. She has high expectations for a quiet and orderly classroom and little tolerance for much else. In line with these expectations the atmosphere in her class is positive and quiet. T4 and her students use their literature book, teacher-prepared materials and the laptop and internet. She also adds, “and of course dictionaries and the students’ materials.” T4 explains that she does have a typical lesson. She teaches four different classes four hours a week. Two of those hours are for reading and the other two hours are for the writing process. She explains,

Depending on which of the two we are doing generally the students are doing some sort of task. If it is the writing process, I am monitoring them or they are conferring and discussing what they are going to write. If it is a reading lesson then we are reading and doing comprehension work.

She states that the structure of the writing and reading lessons differ. “In the writing process we put them in groups of two generally and it is a bit more collaborative anyway because they ask questions.” The classroom and the class size also have an effect. “In the reading lessons we read a novel and it is a full class of twenty so that is generally individual.” She explains further, “The desks are usually in rows. For the writing lesson we are in the science lab so it is a round table. So they are together and I am with them so they are next to each other.”

4.1.5. Teacher 5

T5 explains that the routines are regular in her grade five class, but there is no typical lesson.

We normally start off saying hello, going over the date, the weather and then what we are going to do in that particular lesson depending on the lesson. It could be a reading lesson. It could be from the course book we are using or at the moment we are doing PYP, Primary Years Program, so it could be a lesson relating to the units of inquiry.

She also says that at her grade level, “Mostly because it is grade 3 we do mostly listening and speaking. Sometimes of course, they do write as well. But, mostly it is speaking and listening.”

T5 and her partner, T2, prepare a lot of materials related to the units of inquiry. They have a book for reading practice and other materials. “This year we have been using readers mostly. We have six readers for the year. We also have a course book, an ESL course book which we started to use with our unit of inquiry. And this is quite a difficult course book. It is mostly context based, not really grammar activities.”

When T5 teaches, the routines, procedure and expectations of the class can be clearly observed. She confidently maintains a fast-paced, well-behaved and enthusiastic class. T5 describes how the physical environment supports learning. Students sit in groups. They have an ‘English Corner’ in the classroom where student work is displayed. There is also an incentive chart in the ‘English Corner’ and speech bubbles of language students can use are displayed.

4.1.6. Teacher 6

T6 talks about a typical lesson in terms of activities, her role as a teacher and the goals for the students. She begins the lesson with routines that are structured to prepare her grade two students for learning.

On any given day you would usually see some sort of reading or listening practice for the students. And we try to do some sort of follow-up activity which involves some sort of writing because we

find that they struggle with that the most at such a young age. And in most classes we try to turn something into a game-like situation because it makes the students more excited about learning.

T6 describes her role as a teacher.

I would say that I, as the teacher, am trying to set up the environment and model for the students and then I try to have as much student participation as possible. I think in a normal class the goal is to have students speaking as much as possible, but in some classrooms depending on discipline problems there is more teacher involvement or managing in the classroom. So I'd say generally in the beginning I speak a lot more and I try to get them aware of what they are doing and how to do it properly. And then I try to monitor then and let them experiment with the activity and try to accomplish it.

She adds that the goal is for students to pay attention and follow directions in order to take what they have learned and use it.

T6 notes that English teachers do not have their own classrooms so the set up can change depending on the main class teacher. Students sit together in groups, "and in the front of the classroom is a chalkboard and the students sit at their tables so a lot of time we have to turn their chairs to have them face the front of the room." The walls are decorated with student work and reference materials. T6 also notes the size of the classroom. "In general the classrooms are a little small. It is often a tight fit for everyone to be in there."

During a typical lesson students use their reading course book. They also use the, "internet a lot for games, for internet stories, internet songs and they really get excited about that so we try to use it a lot." T6 and her students also use materials that the teacher and students prepare.

4.1.7. Teacher 7

In a typical lesson T7 tries to fulfill the role she has defined for herself as a teacher. “I usually monitor the kids, if they are on task, if they are using English. I try to motivate them.” T7 describes her busy grade two classroom.

You can’t predict what will happen with kids, but most of the time we are doing hands on activities with the kids. They like talking, making sentences and they like art activities so they are generally busy with reading, writing and other communicative activities.

This was typical of one of the lessons I observed where I described the classroom as, “busy with happy students engaged in a variety of activity; cutting, pasting and clarifying.”

T7 is happy with the new course books this year. “Our course book for this year is really nice because it requires from the kids more communication and when they communicate more, they use English more and when they use English more, they learn more.” She does not think that the classroom has enough space for some activities. “I would rather have some space for reading for example, a reading corner, a library in the classroom, an English library. It would be much better if we had those. But, I don’t think the space is enough for the second grades, no.”

4.1.8. Teacher 8

T8’s class has a friendly and warm atmosphere. There is a well organized and disciplined classroom environment with the teacher in a central role. T8 mentions this when she describes a typical lesson, “Sometimes it is student-centered, but mostly the teacher does speak because we give lots of explanations.” Students are usually, “listening, speaking, sometimes it is group work so they discuss or they work on their own sometimes. First they do it, either on their own or in pairs or groups and then we check answers or they check answers.” They use course books, readers, dictionaries, laptop, projector, PowerPoint presentations and pictures. The teachers usually prepare the worksheets, presentations and games.

T8 describes that in the classroom English is limited to, “one corner because we don’t have room, unfortunately.” She also mentions that it is the homeroom teacher who decides on the set up of the classroom. “In the classroom the desks usually change and the way the kids are seated. So it is the homeroom teacher who decides on that.” She explains that it can be a challenge to set up group work because the students need to physically move their desks.

4.1.9. Teacher 9

T9 describes how a typical grade one lesson begins with daily routines. “We start with the day of the week and then the weather and then write the date on the board and of course before all of them we take the attendance.” Typical plans include, “some vocabulary presentation and a project or an activity to follow it or maybe some PYP topic.” In one of the lessons I observed the topic was seasons. T9 read aloud a book about seasons while the students, seated on the floor, listened quietly. The class then brainstormed key vocabulary that students used to write a poem about a season of their choice. After the teacher corrected the poem, students worked on displaying their poems artistically.

T9’s class is a peaceful and happy place to work. She is calm and consistent and creates an environment suitable for a place of learning. She is satisfied with the group seating arrangements found in the classroom. T9 and her grade one students use a course book which she describes as a “pile of reading texts”. They also use a picture dictionary, “and the other is all teacher prepared materials, more like project based or activity based materials.”

4.2. TEACHERS' ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

This section focuses on the alternative assessment types that teachers have used and examines their specific experiences with them. The alternative assessment types used by teachers are summarized based on classroom observations, including pre-observation notes, running commentaries, post-observation notes and responses and

follow-up questions provided further insight. Data about specific experiences draw on the observation cycle.

The interview questions did not distinguish alternative assessment methods and strategies from tools. This decision was made in line with the common use of the general term alternative assessment among the participating teachers. As can be seen in the example below, responses did not require a distinction either.

When T3 was asked what types of alternative assessment she used, she responded,

I used peer assessment by using other types of checklists, not that detailed but by using rubrics. And students assessing each other. And as a part of projects they presented their projects too. So during the presentations I had a chance to see students communicating with each other, asking questions and teaching each other. Other than that I don't know whether it can be considered assessment or not but I have given certificates for learner profile. I think that is all I can remember.

In this response T3 has not made a distinction between alternative assessment methods such as, peer assessing, projects and presentations from tools like checklists, rubrics and tools. However, for the purpose of reporting a distinction has been made.

4.2.1. Implementation of alternative assessment methods and tools

There are three tables that summarize the types of alternative assessment that teachers use based on Tsagari's (2004) summary of alternative assessment and tools. Table 4.2-1 shows the alternative assessment methods that teachers use. Table 4.2-2 (will be presented later in this chapter) shows the alternative assessment methods that teachers used, but that are not included in Tsagari's summary. Table 4.2-3 (will be presented later in this chapter) shows the alternative assessments tools that teachers use. These findings offer new insights into practicing teachers' use of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom.

The alternative assessment methods listed in Table 4.2-1 are based on Tsagari's (2004) summary of alternative assessment methods. The category 'other' has been added to represent those activities that participants mentioned that were not included in the summary. These activities are discussed elsewhere.

Table 4.2-1. A summary of alternative assessment methods

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9
Observations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Portfolios	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Self-assessment		O	X		O			X	
Peer-assessment		X	X	X	X				X
Projects	X		X	X				X	
Story re-telling		X							
Dramatization	X	X					X		
Games		X							
Diaries/Journal									
Debates									
Exhibitions									
Conferences									
Think –alouds									
Other	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

In Table 4.2-1 an 'X' represents an alternative assessment method that the teacher self-reported either in an interview, pre-observation notes, post-observation notes or follow-up questions. An 'O' represents an alternative assessment method that the teacher did not report, but that was observed during the observation cycles. This distinction is important because of what it might imply. There is the natural possibility that the teacher overlooked the use of a particular alternative assessment method and did not mention it for this reason. There is also the possibility that the teacher has a different opinion about the particular assessment in question.

There were three instances when an alternative assessment method was not reported, but was observed. One teacher (T1) did not initially report portfolio use. Two teachers (T2, T5) did not report self-assessment although it was observed as part of portfolio work. T1 did not self-report use of portfolios in her classroom

because she did not classify a portfolio as an alternative method of assessment. T1 had a different perception of portfolios as shown by the following conversation that transpired during the initial interview between the researcher (R) and T1:

R: Okay, yes. Sounds good. What types of alternative assessments have you used in your classroom?

T1: So far it would have to be projects and dramas and I think that is really it other than paper-pencil.

R: Portfolios: maybe?

T1: Well, yea hmm. We are doing portfolios, but I have never considered them a form of alternative assessment. That is something new to me.

R: Well, I think different people consider it differently. So what would you have considered it?

T1: Just a record of the work you have done in the course and the work you've enjoyed or the work you've done really well on. That is how I was viewing the portfolio. But, you are right it can be, especially in terms of writing, because you can show the progress, a student can show the progress he or she has made if they are using the portfolio to add writing. I guess that just dawned on me, but in our writing class in grade four we haven't gotten that far yet.

As shown in Table 4.2-1 all nine teachers have used teacher observation, portfolios and self-reflection as methods of alternative assessment. All participants have also mentioned use of another method, 'other', of alternative assessment. This point will be addressed later in this section.

Table 4.2-1 shows, consistent with the literature, that all teachers reported using observation as a method of alternative assessment which was also apparent during the lesson observation cycles. There are many examples of incidental observation.

Planned observations are less common and will be discussed with relation to teachers' specific experiences with alternative assessment. During the first focus lesson observation of T1, the alternative assessment task that she planned was for students to write a friendly letter from the perspective of a student from another country. While completing the 'Post-observation Interview', in response to the first question, "Do you think the lesson I observed was typical?" T1 answered, "Yes and no. The students' behavior was typical to the work presented, but the use of alternative assessment is not typical." She formed her opinion based on observations of student behavior and revealed that she did not regularly use alternative assessment. She was the only teacher to report this. After a reading comprehension and portfolio lesson T3 was asked, "Do you feel like the main objectives were met? Why? Why not?" She answered, "Yes. Because they were on task, listening attentively, trying hard to figure out, participating and reflecting on their learning which is the most important." T3 also based her decision on observation. T7 wrote in her post-observation notes about group activity students had done to practice vocabulary and reading, "It was difficult to make sure that all the kids were involved in the group work, but I could see that most of them were." T7 directly uses the word 'see' to indicate observation.

Document analysis of a sample course implementation plan (CIP) supports this finding. CIPs are six-week planning documents that detail the learning outcomes, assessment, student activities and production, materials and resources, project work and homework for the sixty lessons that are planned in a six-week period. According to analysis of a sample CIP from the six-month period of the study, the following forms of assesment were planned; teacher observation, anecdotal notes, task completion, checklist, self-evaluation (portfolio), peer check, and peer evaluation. The most frequently planned strategy was teacher observation.

All participating teachers use portfolios and self-reflection. Self-reflection was not mentioned separately by any teacher. This finding is consistent with the school policy that outlines regular portfolio use, and self-reflection as a part of that process, for all grade levels. In this case, portfolio use is not only a school policy, but is a part of the school culture. Students present their portfolios to their parents on

‘Portfolio Day’ which is a day at the end of the year to celebrate learning. Students show work from all subject areas, including English. Not having an English portfolio on this day is not a viable option for students or teachers. This indicates that some teachers might be encouraged to use an alternative assessment method when it is a clearly defined policy or tradition at the school. This might be because of teachers’ respect for the established system or because it is easier to participate in a system that is already in place. It might also indicate that teachers have seen the benefits of portfolio use and are encouraged to continue.

Use of other types of alternative assessment was more limited. Five teachers (T2, T3, T4, T5, T9) have used peer-assessment. Four teachers (T1, T3, T4, T8) have used projects. Three teachers (T1, T2, T7) have used dramatization. One teacher (T2) has also used story-retelling and games and another teacher (T1) has used conferences. The remaining four methods, diaries/journals, debates, exhibition and think alouds, were not mentioned or observed.

All nine teachers also reported other methods of alternative assessment that were not included in the summary (Tzagari, 2004). These other types of alternative assessment mentioned by the teachers are listed in Table 4.2-2. Alternative assessment methods that were mentioned in the interviews are marked with an “X”. Methods that teachers wrote or spoke about during post-observation reflection are represented by ‘R’. These ‘other’ activities that teachers define and use as alternative assessment provide insight into teachers’ beliefs and into classroom practice.

As shown in Table 4.2-2, task completion, also referred to as completed assignment, was the ‘other’ alternative assessment most often mentioned by the participants and the most frequently mentioned method of alternative assessment after teacher observation, portfolio and self-reflection. Six teachers (T1, T4, T5, T6, T8, T9) note use of task completion/completed assignment. T4 referred to the idea of ‘completion’ when reflecting on her lesson that contained listening practice for the exam and presentation of homework projects. When asked, “Do you feel like the main objectives were met?” T4 answered “Yes, the students completed the lesson and reached the learning outcome.” In the initial interview T9 was asked, “How do

you check that the students are learning what you want them to learn?" T9 answered in a somewhat apologetic tone, "It is usually done through teacher observation and I walk around the class and see how students are doing and also the final version of their project, worksheet or whatever they are doing shows the teacher how much they have learned or haven't. Usually through observation and looking at their work." Completion of work might not mean that students have understood.

Table 4.2-2. A summary of "other" alternative assessment methods

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9
Teacher monitors	R		X	R	X	X	X	R	X
Task completion Completed assignment	X			X	X	X		X	X
Question-answer	X			R			X	X	
Total Physical Response (TPR)		X			X				
KWL Chart		X	X						
Mind Map Concept Map				X			X		
Written Assessment Tools							X		
Oral Assessment	X								
Speaking presentation					X				
Recorded Stories		X							
Individual Feedback			X						
Discussion				X					
Group Work				X					

Teacher monitoring is also a commonly used alternative as reflected in Table 4.2-2. Five teachers (T3, T5, T6, T7, T9) mentioned monitoring by the teacher as another form of alternative assessment. T5 gave an immediate response when asked about the assessment component of a typical lesson. She answered, "We monitor." She then continued to give more examples of what is done at her grade level to check learning. T7 offered this advice to a new teacher, "First of all a young teacher or inexperienced teacher should monitor, check the learning process continually."

Three additional teachers (T1, T4, T8) mentioned monitoring as a way to check learning in post-observation reflections. T4, when reflecting on a lesson where she

used concept maps as a way to check reading comprehension, responded to the question, “Do you feel like you were able to check student learning during the lesson?” with the following answer, “Yes, I monitored and I immediately knew the initial activity of a concept map for the chapter was too difficult so we did it together. Then I assigned a concept map to do individually.” T8 also had a similar response when she reflected on a lesson where she implemented an alternative writing assessment. When asked the same question, “Do you feel like you were able to check student learning during the lesson?” she also referred to monitoring. She responded, “I did a quick review and I monitored and checked students’ writing.” T1 was also asked the same question when she used a crossword puzzle to check reading comprehension. T1 wrote, “I was able to check some as they were performing the task by walking around and answering the questions and we checked as a whole class.” T1 mentioned monitoring again after a writing lesson where she planned to have students write a friendly letter as an alternative assessment. T1 responded, “Yes, by walking around and asking questions and briefly reading rough drafts.” As T1 walked around the room she was monitoring to make decisions about what questions to ask and whom to ask. She was also making decisions about which rough drafts to read.

Table 4.2-2 also shows that ‘Question-answer’ was mentioned by three teachers (T1, T7, T8) as a method used in the initial interview and by one teacher (T4) during the reflection process. When asked how she checks learning, T7 explains in the initial interview, “Most of the time through questions and answers throughout the class because they have just started making full sentences. They have just learned how to write in Turkish. So I try to ask questions and through the answers I check their understanding.”

T8 explains that, “Maybe it is not so much that we are really testing that the kids have learned the lesson, but we do in a way understand if the kids have learned it through various questions.” Although T4 did not mention this method during the initial interview when reflecting upon a lesson she thought about the question, “Do you feel you were able to check students’ learning during the lesson?” and wrote, “Yes, by their ability to answer the questions.”

Use of other types of alternative assessment methods was less frequent. Two teachers (T2, T5) mentioned TPR. Two teachers (T2, T3) recognized K (Know) W (Want to know) L (What I have learned) Chart and two teachers (T4, T7) mentioned use of mind or concept maps. One teacher noticed each of the remaining methods, written assessment tools (T7), oral assessment (T1), speaking presentation (T5).

Table 4.2-3 shows which alternative assessment tools the teachers have used. The alternative assessment tools listed in Table 4.2-3 are based on Tsagari's (2004) summary of alternative assessment tools. The category 'other' has been added to represent those activities that participants mentioned that were not included in the summary. An 'X' represents an alternative assessment tool that the teacher self-reported. There were no additional alternative assessment tools that were not reported by the teacher, but that were observed during the observation cycles.

Table 4.2-3. A summary of alternative assessment tools

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9
Anecdotal records	X					X			
Checklists		X	X		X	X			X
Rating scales						X			
Progress cards			X			X			
Learner Profiles			X						
Questionnaires									
Other		X	X	X	X	X	X		

Five teachers (T2, T3, T5, T6, T9) referred to checklists. Two teachers (T1, T6) mentioned use of anecdotal notes, as one teacher referred to it, and the other as 'teacher notes'. These notes do not actually fit the definition of the term in that include subjective comments. Two teachers (T3, T6) also mention progress cards. Rating scales and learner profiles are mentioned by one teacher each, T6 and T3, respectively. No participants mentioned the use of questionnaires.

The 'other' alternative assessment tool referenced by the teachers is a rubric. Six teachers (T2, T3, T4, T5, T6 and T7) considered rubrics an alternative assessment tool and said that they used it. Rubrics are classified as a tool due to how teachers define and use them.

T7 explained how they used rubrics in grade two,

We used it actually for a booklet. The kids were asked to make a booklet using some sentences from a reader they had read and they made pictures to go with the sentences. We used a rubric based on four steps. If they had for example perfect sentences to go with perfect, not perfect, but the appropriate picture they got four out of four for example.

T4 supports the use of rubrics. “As for rubrics it works out because they know what they are going to be assessed on before they do the project or presentation or whatever it is they are going to do.” She refers to using rubrics as a tool again when discussing that some people consider drama as an alternative assessment.

R: Some people mentioned that they consider drama (an alternative assessment type).

T4: I guess it could be definitely. But I think a rubric needs to be used or some sort of outcome. You would need to know what you wanted to see in the drama. If I can talk about a project I did last year, they are re-doing it this semester using a rubric. They got to choose a certain project and some of them are dramas and one of them is a game, a song. But, the problem we had last year was when we assigned it we didn't give them specifics in regard to content. So the content was very weak. It didn't talk about the book really. It talked about one aspect of the novel we read, but they didn't talk about the plot. They didn't talk about the characters so this year we sort of refocused it to talk about that. They get to pick whichever assignment they want to do and it is based on multiple intelligences, but we've given them a clear criteria that they have to cover those four things for whatever project they choose. So, hopefully the outcomes or the products will be a bit more of an overview of the book. That is the purpose of the project. It is at the end of the novel so now it is their chance

to show what they have learned. So we found last year there wasn't a lot of content. So, hopefully by giving them specific content criteria that will solve the problem this year. So I guess to get back to drama, yes it can be an alternative assessment but if you don't know what you want to see or what you want them to dramatize then how do you know that they have learned something? What is the purpose of the drama? I think that needs to be clear.

Most Teachers share T4's belief that, "it (rubric) clarifies my expectations as much as it does theirs." A rubric is a tool to clarify expectations for teachers and students.

4.2.2. Teachers' experiences with alternative assessment

In this section some specific experiences with five of the most frequently used alternative assessment methods and tools, teacher observation (in conjunction with teacher notes), portfolios, self-assessment and peer-assessment, will be presented to provide further insight into teachers' practices and into factors that affect implementation. Findings related to beliefs, the student perspective and the role of alternative assessment in the instructional process will also be addressed. Information in this section draws on the observed lessons and insights provided by the teachers in their pre-observation notes, post-observation notes and follow-up interviews. Additional information about the alternative assessment method or tool gathered from document analysis is also included when available. Input from this section will be discussed throughout chapter four.

4.2.2.1 Observation/Teacher notes

This section reports the finding related to teachers' experiences with observation and teacher notes. Table 4.2-4 summarizes the participants' experiences with observation and teacher notes.

Table 4.2-4 Summary of experience with observation/ teacher notes

Practice	Beliefs	Students	Role
Not enough time Difficult to maintain consistency Scheduling issues	Measures learning	Small group More interaction Individual feedback Differentiated learning	Decisions made for planning

T6 used what she calls ‘teacher notes’ when team-teaching in grade two. She worked with groups of four or five students while the main class teacher taught the other students. She had the same objectives, but the lesson would be conducted outside of the classroom with a smaller group. She felt the students benefited most from the set-up of the lesson,

Like I said, having two teachers in the classroom, when it did work, when I was able to take out a small group made it much better for the assessment because you work with a smaller group of kids and you get a better idea because they interact more with the materials and the lesson and you could have a much better idea.

She found the biggest challenge was to maintain consistency. Sometimes the lessons that she was scheduled to teach were not geared toward small groups and at other times there were last minute changes in the schedule so that she could not carry out planned activities that were good for small groups. T6 explained,

I would say also that for teacher notes, especially when I worked with the students it depended a lot on how they were feeling that day, especially because it was not as consistent as I would have liked it. It was sometimes hard to tell if they were struggling with something or if it was just a bad day. So I think in general the timetable was the biggest impediment.

A sample of teacher notes written by T6 is shown in Figure 4.2-1

- He gets distracted very easily but he was usually one of the quickest to find the answers from the story and he usually found the correct answers. I think I will continue to keep him seated next to me so that I can encourage him to focus.

- His understanding of instructions was very good and he was interested in the topic. I'm not sure that I will take him out next time.

- It took her longer to get started with the work, but once she did it was clear that she could underline the prepositions and had a good feel for understanding the parts of a sentence.

- She started right away with the worksheet and appeared to have a good grasp of prepositions. But when I sat with her and asked her to underline the prepositions, she had some difficulties. I find that likes appearing to understand and doesn't like asking for help as much.

Figure 4.2-1. A sample of teacher notes written by T6

4.2.2.2 Portfolio

This section reports the finding related to teachers' experiences with portfolios.

Table 4.2-5 summarizes the participants' experiences with portfolios.

Table 4.2-5 Summary of experience with portfolios

Practice	Beliefs	Students	Role
L1 vs. L2 Teacher support for writing/reflection Familiarity with procedure/routines Training Classroom management Unclear 'work tag'	Increases students ability to reflect	Review/Remember Select Reflect See Improvement Become more confident Enjoy	Completion of portfolio lesson every six weeks/six times a year Portfolio Day

During the observations, I observed four portfolio lessons, as they are called by the teachers. Three of these observations were focus observations. The structure of these lessons varies depending on the grade level and the teacher, however, the main components are the same. The students review their completed work and select one or two pieces of work to include in their portfolio. Students then complete a reflection form, commonly referred to as a 'work tag', and show their work to their teacher. The structure of the 'work tag' varies at each level depending on the language and cognitive ability of the students. Teachers then give feedback about the acceptability of the selected work and the quality of the reflection. Student work should show student production and the reflection should show signs of effort.

In T9's grade one class there were two teachers present during the portfolio lesson. When I arrived the teachers had already passed back their completed work. At this point students started to look through their work and complete the 'work tag' which is written in English and Turkish and can be completed in either language. At this grade level most students prefer to write in Turkish. The teachers monitored and checked the students' work. Often students wanted help thinking aloud, particularly with more reflective questions like, 'What did you learn? What would you do differently?' T9 recognized that students need a lot of teacher support to write their answers, but she was pleased because most of the class had chosen their work and had written answers that were reflective. Students also showed that they were aware of what they had learned. T9 also noted that students had become more confident

about filling in their own 'work tag' because they had now completed the activity four times previously.


T9 spoke about the challenges of portfolios in the initial interview, "in the beginning of the year they can't read and write so we have to send the work tags home for the parent to complete for their child or sometimes we have to help with writing." She also explains that it is a chance for students to review and remember what they have done and to be more reflective. When she talks about the end of the year she says, "And also they can see the development, the improvement in their English level or also how they handle things, even their drawings and handwriting, everything. It shows how education has been useful for them."

When T9 reflected during the summative interview on portfolios she said,

When we looked at their portfolios on the portfolio day where they presented their work to their parents we have seen the improvement in their work and on the 'work tags' of the portfolio. So at the beginning they couldn't answer the questions, like how you would change your work if you did it again. They would say, "Well, I wouldn't change it." But then they have started to become more reflective on their work so it shows that it has helped a lot for them to become more reflective about their work.



T7 also believes that students become more reflective through portfolio work and she notes that they enjoy choosing their work. In grade two students are expected to answer in English, but they are given structured choices. I observed T7's grade two students working on their portfolios during a lesson before lunch when the students were quite lively. The teacher clarified the process, which students seemed to be familiar with, and then continued to give time and attention to classroom management to ensure that the task was completed. T7 later reflected that it might have been better if the students waiting had a task to complete or if she had grouped the work before the lesson to reduce the time it took to pass back student work. She notes that in general this procedure works well since students are familiar with portfolio work.

I visited T2's grade three class during a typical portfolio lesson. The students were used to the routine so the teacher did not interfere much. Students began to work and the teacher monitored. The teacher encouraged students to write in English if they could and later to present in English too. The teacher also asked some key questions to help students think about their work reflectively. Students seemed to enjoy this activity, looking through their old work and selecting work for their portfolio. The teacher said that they had always shown positive reactions to this kind of activity. After selecting their work they fill out a work tag. At the end of the lesson students have a chance to present their work. Some students do this in English. In addition to being trained how to reflect, students are also taught organization skills. T2 thought most students did well. She attributed this in part to the fact that students have a 'portfolio lesson' after each unit. However, she noted that sometimes students struggle to know which piece of work is suitable for their portfolios, i.e. it should be more creative, project-based work instead of mechanical, worksheets. She thought that the work-tag could be made more explicit for the students. T2 stated that since students are used to this type of activity because they have been doing it since first grade, there really are no disadvantages. Growth is evident when you watch grade three students complete their portfolio lessons. A sample of portfolio 'work tag' from that lesson is shown in Figure 4.2-2.



İ.D.V. ÖZEL BİLKENT İLKÖĞRETİM OKULU

Grade 3 Portfolio Work Tag

Name: _____

Date: 07.05.2010

Which piece of work did you choose? Hangi çalışmayı seçtiniz?
I chose the natural disasters photos.

Why do you like it? Bu çalışmadan neden hoşlandınız?
Because I write it this work.

How did you do it? Çalışmayı nasıl yaptınız?
First I look at the photo and I wrote.

If you did it again, what would you change? Bu çalışmayı tekrar yaparsanız neyi değiştirdiniz?
Nothing.






Figure 4.2-2. A sample of portfolio 'work tag' prepared by T2 and T5

In T1's grade four class she set up a writing activity for students to work on independently so that she could have conferences with individual students to discuss their portfolios. At times this was challenging because some of the students had a difficult time working autonomously. She reflected that she was not happy with this part of her lesson because she felt she had given too many instructions as once. She also thought that the students needed more guidance with each activity and that the activities should have been done one at a time instead of simultaneously. Because of this she felt that some students did not respond positively to the portfolio task.

T3 talks about portfolio work in grade 5,

After the first unit we spent one hour for self-evaluation checklist and one hour for portfolio. But now they are getting better and they can do them both in one period. I check their portfolios, give feedback and if there is anything that needs to be changed, they change it and give it back and I check it again.

T3 felt positively about the portfolio lesson I observed. She felt that all the students were on task and were reflecting on their own learning and progress.

As I said, student-wise I felt they became better about reflecting on their learning. It was really difficult for this age group to understand what was expected for them to do in terms of reflecting on their learning. At the beginning they didn't have an idea.

4.2.2.3 Self-assessment

This section reports the finding related to teachers' experiences with self-assessment. Table 4.2-6 summarizes the participants' experiences with self-assessment.

As previously mentioned at the end of every unit T3's class does self-assessment in addition to portfolio work. Students begin the self-assessment by reviewing what they have done in the unit through a brainstorm.

Table 4.2-6 Summary of experience with self-assessment

Practice	Beliefs	Students	Role
Familiarity with procedure/routines Teacher support Language/Cognitive ability	Increases students ability to reflect	Review/Remember Reflect Students who only go through the motions	Completion of self-assessment every six weeks/six times a year Feedback about what they have learned

As the teacher adds ideas to the brainstorm she also writes down the name of the student who has given it. After the teacher has guided them through the review, they complete the self-reflection form. The teacher goes through each part of the self-reflection form and the students make any clarifications needed and respond individually. T3 notices students have become better at self-assessment and she is able to use their responses as a form of feedback.

As I said for each unit I make a checklist of about twenty-eight items, a summary of what we have focused on during the unit. And I give it to students so they grade themselves on each item out of five. And then first I collect them to see what they've done and I generally look at the items where most of the students have given themselves lower grades and then I focus on that later again.

T3 mentions that a challenge she faces is students who go through the motions of the process without taking it to the next level.

So I did what my teacher wanted me to do so my expectations are met and I kept telling them how to do it, writing, telling, writing, telling, announcing to the whole class, etc. Now they are getting better, but also I keep telling them for reflection that not only writing there the right thing to do, but you must start doing

something. If you said, that you are going to study more vocabulary then start doing it, how are you going to start. So it is hard for this grade level but I believe that they started learning a lot and it will be helpful for them in the future.

T2 and T5 also used self-reflection, but this was a new practice for them and they did not discuss it in detail. A sample of self-assessment that was completed in conjunction with peer-assessment by T2 and T5's grade three students is shown in Figure 4.2-3.

Natural disasters What can I do?
 Colour the face to show how well you learnt about natural disasters.

1. I can describe 5 natural disasters.
 (Smiley face) (Neutral face) (Sad face)

2. I can choose 10 things for my safety bag.
 (Smiley face) (Neutral face) (Sad face)

3. I can draw pictures to match sentences about protecting our homes from

.....earthquakes. (Smiley face) (Neutral face) (Sad face)

.....floods. (Smiley face) (Neutral face) (Sad face)

.....tornadoes. (Smiley face) (Neutral face) (Sad face)

Natural disasters What can I do?
 Give your book to a friend. Friend's name

Colour the face to show how well your friend learnt about natural disasters.

1. She/he can describe 5 natural disasters.
 (Smiley face) (Sad face) (Sad face)

2. She/he can choose 10 things for my safety bag.
 (Smiley face) (Neutral face) (Sad face)

3. She/he can draw pictures to match sentences about protecting our homes from

3.....earthquakes. (Smiley face) (Sad face) (Sad face)

4.....floods. (Smiley face) (Sad face) (Sad face)

2.....tornadoes. (Smiley face) (Neutral face) (Sad face)

Figure 4.2-3 A sample of self assessment prepared by T2 and T5

4.2.2.4 Peer-assessment

This section reports the finding related to teachers' experiences with peer-assessment. Table 4.2-7 summarizes the participants' experiences with peer-assessment.

Table 4.2-7 Summary of experience with portfolios

Practice	Beliefs	Students	Role
Planning Matching the purpose to the assessment Lack of objectivity present in grade one Classroom management	Saves time	Review/Remember Autonomous Reflective	Group work

In T2's grade three class she planned a lesson that included self-assessment and peer-assessment. Students had completed a unit about natural disasters and were asked to make a booklet in which they can make a brief summary about what they have learned about the topic. The last two pages of the book are dedicated for self-assessment and peer-assessment. Refer to Figure 4.2-3 and 4.2-4 for a detailed sample of student work.

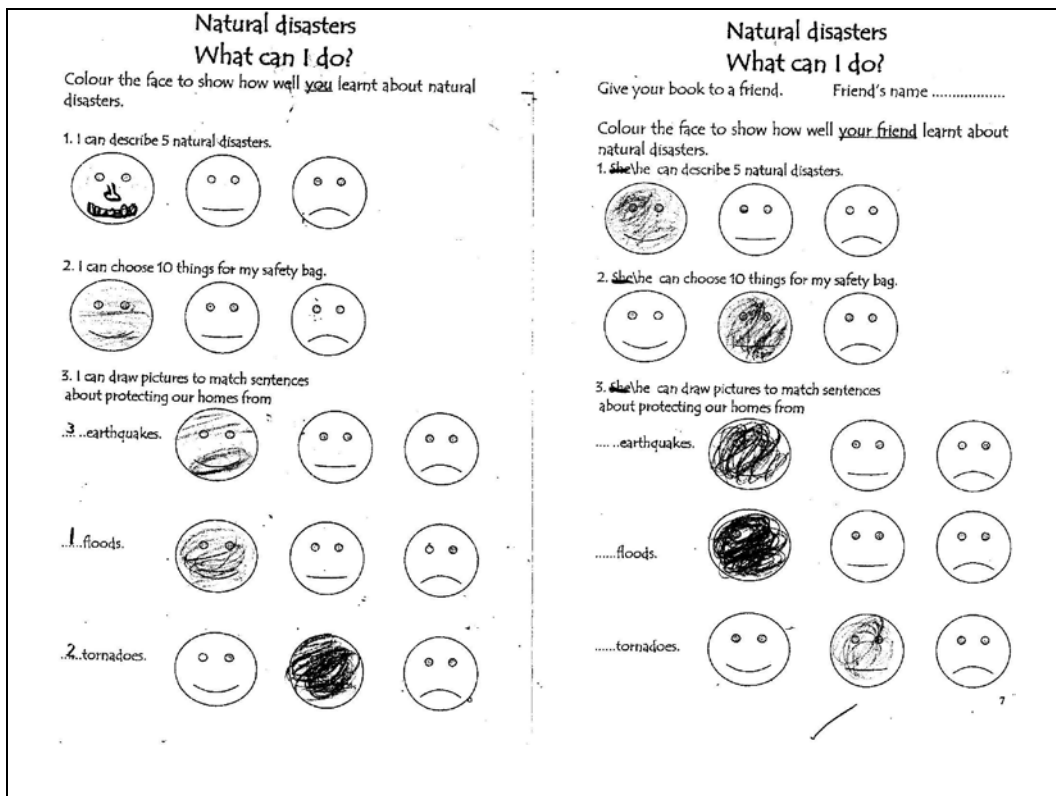


Figure 4.2-4 A sample of peer assessment prepared by T2 and T5

The teacher writes on the 'Pre-observation Notes', "We've planned the lesson this way because we have been trying different types of assessments. This is one of them." While briefly giving the instructions T2 says, "You know what to do so don't ask me because this is going to be your work. Yours." She later says, "We are just checking, T5 and I, how much we've taught you." T2 is consistent about this message. "I am not going to decide. This is your own evaluation. While observing I noted, "Some students are more critical. Teacher tries to let students make their own decision with a little guidance." I also noted, "Students are really looking through their books, checking back, referencing pages." Even after the lesson finished some students continued discussing their evaluation. One student explained to another student why he couldn't give her a higher evaluation. The other student justified that she could not finish because she did not have enough time.

In T9's grade one class I observed their first experience with peer-evaluation. This lesson was linked to a lesson about the environment. The teacher presented the natural resources, sun, wind, water, wood and petrol. As the teacher presented the new0 vocabulary words, students brainstormed how the resources are used. Then the teacher organized the students into five groups of five and one group of four to prepare a poster about one of the resources. After students completed their poster, the teacher exchanged posters among the groups so they could give feedback based on the criteria (nice pictures, good ideas, neat) set by the teacher. T9 thought, "Although it was the first time students had experienced peer assessment, most of the students did a great job." They checked other groups' work carefully and commented on the three different areas (nice picture, good ideas, neat) of the poster. T9 reflected that, "Some students were not being objective enough. If it was a friend they didn't like although the work was really good, they ticked the sad face. Covering the names of the students who prepared the poster may help next time."

T4 in her fifth grade class also taught an observed lesson where she had students peer-check. T4 explains this part of her lesson in her pre-observation notes,

Students will finish reading Chapter 1 of Huckleberry Finn. We will read the chapter out loud, students will volunteer. Once finished the chapter the students will prepare questions to ask. The teacher will assign each group parts to work with. The students will first write the questions and answers in their notebooks individually. Then they will share their questions and peer-check the grammar. The teacher will prompt them to ask questions in the past tense, Why did...?

For this part of the lesson the teacher writes the instructions on the board. The fourth and final item on the list instructs, “When finished check your questions with your group (check grammar and information).” Students begin to work and the teacher begins to monitor. T4 gives feedback to the students about the quality and quantity of their questions. She also gives several reminders about the noise level although as an observer it seems reasonable for group work. After the lesson, T4 completed the “Follow-up Questions”, including follow-up question number six, “What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of the alternative assessment tool/strategy you implemented?” She said, “By having students work in groups they could peer check and then I checked. It saved time.”

4.2.2.5 Other

As mentioned in Table 4.2-1 and Table 4.2-3 some teachers considered other tasks a form of alternative assessment. Teachers were also observed and reflected on their experiences with crossword puzzles, question-answer and concept maps. McKay (2006) suggests that all valuable classroom activities can be used to assess students.

4.2.3. Summary of results and discussion

A summary of the results of the observation cycle is presented in this section. Table 4.2-8 shows the summary of results from the observation cycle.

Table 4.2-8 Summary of results from observation cycle

Practice	Beliefs	Students	Role
L1 vs. L2 Teacher support Teacher support for writing/reflection Familiarity with procedure/routines Planning Not matching assessment to purpose Not enough time Difficult to maintain consistency Training Unclear 'work tag' Classroom management	Measures learning Increases students ability to reflect Saves time	Review/Remember Select Reflect See Improvement Become more confident Become more confident Enjoy Small groups More interaction Individualized feedback Differentiated learning	Completion of portfolio lesson every six weeks/six times a year Decisions made about instructional process

4.3. CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION FACTORS

Classroom implementation factors are summarized in this section. The main themes of classroom implementation are factors that were repeated throughout the data. Determination of classroom implementation factors was based on cross-analysis of the classroom observation and student work samples and the initial and summative interviews, included in this section. Those characteristics that emerged from multiple sources of data were determined as a characteristic. Similar characteristics were grouped together and named thus, six factors, language ability, cognitive ability, time, planning, training and classroom environment, were determined to affect classroom implementation of alternative assessment. In Table 4.3-1 the main themes are in bold with the associated characteristics listed. These themes are discussed in detail in sections 4.3.1 - 4.3.6.

Table 4.3-1 Classroom implementation factors

Language Ability	Cognitive Ability
Students' level of English Use of L1 vs. L2 Students' developing literacy skills	Matching assessment activity to cognitive ability
Planning	Time
Aligning assessment and purpose Developing appropriate criteria/clear instructions Consistent/Inconsistent implementation Time needed	For planning outside of class For implementation in class For reviewing and marking work outside of class For training students
Training	Classroom Environment
Repetition/routines Student familiarity with task Teachers' knowledge	Class profile Student to teacher ratio Classroom management Physical environment

4.3.1. Language ability

Language ability is a key factor in the implementation of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom. As discussed in Chapter 2, when using alternative methods of assessment, teachers face the already present predicament of language assessment where language is simultaneously the object and the instrument of testing. This is consistent with the finding of this case study where teachers of young learners also question the use of L1 and L2. Teachers explain the difficulty of balancing the need of students to understand and fulfill the task with the overall aim of improving students' language skills. For some teachers, it is a question of the ends justifying the means. However, if a teacher does not speak the same L1 as the students, using L1 is not a balancing issue, but a limiting one. For very young learners there are additional issues because of their developing literacy skills.

T6 addresses several of these issues in the initial interview. When talking about instructions she says, "I think that one of the challenges that I have mentioned already is explaining to them how you are going to assess them, what it means, like using basic enough language so that they understand exactly what is going on." She

also addresses the issue of encouraging reflection in English, reaching the core of the issue,

You could potentially switch to Turkish to get them to understand but I don't know what is really the goal. What is the goal there for them to understand in English or is the goal for them to learn how to reflect, even if that means explaining to them in Turkish or trying to get them to think more but doing that probing in Turkish rather than English?

T1 also addresses a related issue in the initial interview provided below.

R: Are there any type of alternative assessments you would like to use, but have not for some reason?

T1: I think I would like to do more journal, journal type reflective assessment because I think that would be easiest to actually to take a look at. I would like a reflective journal. I think that. I would be open to any other type of alternative assessments. I am not aware, I guess, of a lot. I think I would have to investigate that more.

R: So, if you would like to do a journal is there a reason why you haven't done it to this point?

T1: Yeah, I think that I would have to show the students how to do it and really explain what I am looking for and make sure they know how to use the past tense, I guess. (laughs) But, I think it would be overwhelming to expect a student to do it in English in grade four, but I like the idea. I think it might be overwhelming for them. If I said, "Okay, do it in Turkish" and if there were some way that I could read it that would be great, but I am limited in Turkish and I wouldn't want that to fall on the Turkish teacher."

Related to this issue, T6 brings up an interesting way to look at it,

It's hard because you can have a lot of good ideas but it has to be something that you can simplify to the level. I mean it might be different if it is something more focused on the teacher doing than the students doing, but even then like I said you want to explain to them what is going on and what they are being assessed on.

The idea of whether an alternative assessment method or tool places the demand of 'doing' on the teacher or student is addressed in Table 4.3-2 by indicating the interaction focus. This was an interesting point that deserved attention. The most frequently used alternative assessment methods are those where the teacher 'is doing'.

Table 4.3-2 A summary of alternative assessment methods and interaction focus

Interaction Focus	Alternative Assessment Methods	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9
Teacher	Observations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Teacher monitors	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Teacher-Student	Task completion/ Completed assignment	X			X	X	X		X	X
	Question-answer	X			X			X	X	
Student	Peer-assessment		X	X	X	X				X
	Projects	X		X	X				X	
	Dramatization	X	X					X		
	Self-assessment		X	X		X				

4.3.2. Cognitive ability

The cognitive ability of students also must be taken into consideration. McKay (2006) also recognized the need for assessment of young learners to be responsive to cognitive development. T4 explains some of the issues she finds challenging with alternative assessment and young learners. "And, also maturity issues. You need to match the assessment with their cognitive capabilities. I think that the self-assessment or peer-assessment that you get from a kindergardner is different than what you would get from a second grader. So that needs to come into play as well."

This awareness was also mentioned by T9, “It depends on the students’ needs and the teachers’ objectives, but you know for the grade level I am teaching it is quite difficult to do things like peer-assessment or self-assessment because they are quite young to do things like that. They either say everything is good or no this is not that good.”

4.3.3. Planning

Participants most common concerns are related to the operational phase. Teachers struggle to develop appropriate criteria and clear instructions and commonly attribute this to language and cognitive abilities. T8 explains that, “Criteria cannot be as in-depth as it could have been if it were in Turkish because of their level. Especially with very young learners, it is just basic things.” In spite of the challenges teachers need to set criteria and clear instructions . T3 says, “So if you want them to submit something really good, something where you feel like yes we’ve done it, you must give them something very clear, very detailed, really very clear. You must be really, very clear with your expectations and write them all.”

Problems occurred during some observations that could be linked to planning. It was observed during the planning meetings that teachers did not always have the time to plan properly. Some teachers might not have the training required, as well. T1 represents many other teachers when she says,

When we do meet we will figure out what it is we want to teach the students, what is we want them to learn and how best we are going to do that. What activities will best suit our purpose and then maybe figure out a small oral assessment or something, nothing formal.

These problems made outcomes less informative for the teachers. Teachers would benefit from spending quality time planning how to use alternative assessment so that the information collected can guide their teaching effectively. T4 notes this weakness in her summative interview.

I think an interesting sidebar would be how we can take this assessment if we now have a better way of assessing or learning how to assess in a more effective way, what do we do with that information? How do we address the gaps in learning? Especially in our classrooms, when we have multilevel classrooms it is really hard sometimes.

T1 used anecdotal notes as another way to measure how much students were learning. She stopped using them because she did not feel that she was using them for the intended purpose. This is an example of a mismatch between the planned purpose and the outcome. T1 spoke about this in the initial interview.

T1: I used them (anecdotal notes) my first year here, yes I did. I would just jot down in my lesson plan book different things that I observed because it was so difficult. It was difficult to actually gauge what the students were learning because they didn't show it on their exams. Their exams, exam scores were usually low. I knew in the classroom in daily classroom activities they would show their knowledge. It would always be disappointing to see their exam scores. But, I gave up on that. (laughs)

R: Why did you give up, if you don't mind me asking?

T1: Time consuming and other things took over. I started to focus more on actually completing my lessons from beginning to end. Because a lot of time I would leave some lessons undone. And eventually the anecdotal records turned into behavior. Like this one isn't behaving right or whatever so I just gave up.

This excerpt leads into the next factor.

4.3.4. Time

Teachers also face pressure due to time. Teachers refer to time inside the class as well as time outside of class. Outside of class teachers need time to plan and time to mark or review student work. T4 stresses that, “It is not even what you do in the classroom, but the correcting of all that outside of the classroom to see if they have learned.” T4 does not think it is very realistic for teachers to carry out certain types of assessment regularly. When T4 reflected during the summative interview on the concept maps that she had her students complete to check reading comprehension she commented, “If I did it with four classes, eighty students, each week, bi-weekly, once a month, it would be very difficult.” T3 also mentions this issue, “I think having four classes and eighty students made it very difficult. I don’t mean during because you are in class. It is on the spot. You are doing it there. But things like portfolios, I collected them five times so with eighty students it is really difficult to write feedback to each and every one of them.” Teachers have limited time so they must make realistic choices in order to create alternative routines that are consistent.

4.3.5. Training

Teachers and students require training to benefit from alternative assessment. Teachers also need to schedule time to train their students so that they become familiar with the alternative tasks and routines and thus becomes more effective. T5 succinctly states, “I suppose if you start at the beginning of the year with some different types of assessment the students would get used to it. It if is a new thing it could take a very long time.” T4 explains why she must take time when introducing different alternative assessments, “At this point any one of those takes a lot of time because we have to teach them what we want them to do with the information and to slow down because they have a tendency to want to get it done and finish quickly.” T9 referred to her experience with portfolios and student reflection, “once they got into the routine of that it was easier and the students’ answers improved. So maybe planning it ahead and then really working on it would help.”

Training is also related to teachers' knowledge base. Several teachers mentioned a lack of knowledge or a desire to increase their knowledge about alternative assessment. T1 says, "I'd like to get some resource book on alternative assessments or maybe you actually know of one cause I would like to use it more often."

4.3.6. Classroom environment

Teachers also attend to the classroom environment when they make decisions about implementing alternative assessment. The class profile, the student to teacher ratio, classroom management and the physical environment are part of this factor. T4 mentioned this as a positive factor when trying a new form of alternative assessment with one of her classes. "It was easy to use this strategy (concept map) because this was a good class who is open to anything and does not have real discipline problems." Teachers must make decisions that are compatible with the context where they teach. T4 also discussed the physical environment, "If you can manipulate the class environment, put desks together, take them apart, group them in certain tables. You have to be able to move the classroom around."

4.4. BELIEFS ABOUT ASSESSMENT AND ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT

This section will examine the main themes relating to assessment and alternative assessment, including the challenges and benefits of alternative assessment.

4.4.1. Teachers' beliefs about assessment

In order to achieve a better understanding of teachers' beliefs about alternative assessment, this study also addressed the teachers' general beliefs about assessing young learners during the initial interview. Content analysis of the question, "Could you explain your view (or general view) about assessment?" revealed the following

findings. Teachers believe assessment is something that is necessary to 'check learning'. They also believe it should be 'varied' and 'on-going' and should take 'affective factors' and the 'role of motivation' into consideration. Direct quotes and a summary table referring to their general views of assessing young learners are listed in Tables 4.4-1 and 4.4-2.

Table 4.4-1 Teachers' general beliefs of assessing young learners

Checks/shows learning	T1	“I view assessment as any way a student can show the teacher what they have learned.”
	T2	“So it is necessary but I am not a traditional kind of test person because I like to see productions of students, mostly”
	T6	“I view assessments as a necessary part of the classroom to see if what you are teaching them is being understood or processed by the students.”
	T7	“Especially, with the young learners, they learn very quickly and they forget very quickly so you need to check and maybe go over again and again some of the topics, if they have any questions or it is not very clear in their mind.”
	T8	“One to learn if they have learned in the lesson and two, to produce a product at the end of a few weeks of study.”
	T9	“It is a great tool to see how much students have learned, how much you have achieved your goals and also it gives you the opportunity to go back and review and it is very helpful for reflection.”
Role of affective factors/motivation	T2	“Sometimes maybe their personalities affect them because they don't want to show their knowledge because they are shy.”
	T3	“When there are exams around they feel stressed with them and you must practice for the exam so you must spend many hours, class hours to practice for them because they are nervous, parents are nervous. The administration is nervous. You are as well.”
		“Most students if they know they are being assessed and know they are going to get a grade for it, if they

Table 4.4-1 (cont'd) Teachers' general beliefs of assessing young learners

Role of affective factors/motivation	T5	do get a grade for it, a lot of them get nervous. Like every week we have the spelling test. So in the beginning of the year or for new students it might be scary for them or the students might get nervous and it might affect their performance.”
	T7	“I think it is also difficult at a younger level because sometimes students just have a bad day and with assessment they don’t want to do it. It doesn’t necessarily show what they can do, but their mood on that day.”
	T9	“I think limiting it to one class period, like regular tests here, limiting it to forty minutes and also putting pressure and stress on students, are the disadvantages of testing.” “They (young learners) can easily be demotivated when they have a bad remark or when they have an assessment with a bad grade, like a low grade. I think balancing it, doing it without demotivating them and helping them to carry out their good work is important. Also, when they feel like everything is great sometimes they feel like they know everything and I don’t need to try hard anymore.”
Varied	T1	“It can be paper-pencil. It can vary from paper-pencil to demonstration. It can be in the form of anecdotal notes that the teacher makes just observing what the students are doing. It could even be a drama. It could be a project.”
	T4	“It doesn’t always have to be a quiz, but I do think there is a definite place for that in education even if you are trying to do alternative assessment. I still think there is a place for quizzes. But I think it depends on the class environment and how many students you have, if you can do different types of assessment. Even self-assessment can be involved.”
	T5	“It is more effective to use different types of alternative types just so it is more fair.”
	T8	“I think variation, variety is important.”
Necessary/essential	T2	“It is something necessary for us to see what we are doing, what we need to complete or go over.”
	T6	“I view assessments as a necessary part of the classroom to see if what you are teaching them is being understood or processed by the students.”

Table 4.4-1 (cont'd) Teachers' general beliefs of assessing young learners

Necessary/essential	T7	“Assessment is an essential part of the class I think because you need to monitor and you need to check if you have reached your aim or not in every class.”
On-going	T4	“I think it can be on-going. I think you can do it as you go along.”
	T5	“So I like to do formative assessment as you go along. Formative assessment, checklists, monitoring in class. Small presentations in class and not too many exams, not much of a focus on exams.”
	T9	“Students should be more free and the assessment should take place in the regular on-going lesson.”

As shown in Table 4.4-2, the most frequent belief about assessing young learners is that it checks and shows learning, which is followed by the importance of affective factors and variety.

Table 4.4-2 Teachers' general beliefs of assessing young learners

General Beliefs	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9
Checks/shows learning	X	X				X	X	X	X
Role of affective factors/motivation		X	X		X		X		X
Varied	X			X	X			X	
Necessary/essential		X				X	X		
On-going				X	X				X

4.4.2. Alternative assessment

Teachers’ beliefs about assessment are consistent with their beliefs about alternative assessment. Table 4.4-3 shows a compilation of the main themes that emerged about the benefits of alternative assessment through interviews and the classroom observation cycle. Main themes are those themes which were found in multiple sources of data. These main themes have been categorized and labeled by focus in

order to be more meaningful. The challenges of alternative assessment overlap with the implementation factors, language ability, cognitive ability, planning, time, training and classroom environment, listed in Table 4.3-1. Addressing these factors effectively is the challenge of implementing alternative assessment in the young learner classroom and will not be discussed again in this section.

Table 4.4-3 Benefits of alternative assessment

Focus Category	Main Themes
Process-focused	Shows learning
	Shows interaction between thinking and learning
Student-focused	Emphasizes the student as an individual
	Encourages active learners
	Encourages autonomous learners
Learning-focused	Suitable for differentiated learning
	Clarifies expectations
	Motivates
	Provides feedback for teaching

Participating teachers believe that alternative assessment focuses on the process, students and learning. The process includes documentation of learning and the interaction between thinking and learning. The process of alternative assessment emphasizes the link between thinking or reflection and learning. T7 says, “I think at the end of the day when they leave the classroom they start to think about what they have learned during the day because we have a lot of question and answer and a lot of other assessment tools.” Alternative assessment also shows teachers and students what students have learned. Teachers often referred to this as ‘seeing’ or ‘showing’ learning. T3 says, “Because the kids can see much better. They can evaluate themselves and they can see.” T4 says, “It (alternative assessment) can show learning more than a quiz can or an exam can, but I think you need to be really clear in your expectations and what you want to see and what learning you want to see.”

Student-focused includes emphasizing the student as an individual, and encouraging students to be active and autonomous learners. This factor is seen repeatedly throughout the interviews and observation cycles. T5 wrote in a post-observation

reflection, “Students are active and are a part of the process which makes them more responsible”.

Learning-focused represents beliefs such as the suitability of alternative assessment for differentiated learning, clarifying expectations and providing feedback for teaching. T2 believes, “Everybody’s different so you can’t test one student with just one type of test.” T1 explains how she uses alternative assessment to provide feedback for her teaching, “you can identify which students grasp concepts easily and which ones don’t so you can make adjustment to your teaching process.” The use of alternative assessment is noted as a motivating factor for teachers and learners which is why it is categorized as learning-focused. T3 was motivated by, “seeing how they started to get better in reflecting on their learning. So I felt it worked.”

4.5. STUDENTS' RESPONSE

This section summarizes the students’ responses to their experiences with alternative assessment, specifically with ‘Portfolio Day’. Based on the findings of the interviews, the classroom observation cycle and the student focus group, the student responses listed in Table 4.5-1 have been noted. Student responses to alternative assessment are categorized as affective factors and cognitive factors. Affective factors are comprised of positive and negative feelings. Cognitive factors are represented by educational benefits.

Table 4.5-1 Student response

Affective Factors		Cognitive Factors
Positive Emotions	Negative Emotions	Educational Benefits
Accomplished	Competitiveness	Individualized attention
Pride	Lack of interest	Opportunity to show knowledge
Confidence	Lack of seriousness	Opportunity to see improvement
Relaxed		Ability to reflect
Fairness		Autonomous learning
Happy		Active learning
Motivated		

4.5.1. Teacher's perceptions of students' response

Teachers noted that students benefited from individualized attention and the opportunity to show knowledge and improvement in different ways. Students became more active and autonomous learners with an ability to reflect on their learning.

Teachers perceived students to have a sense of accomplishment, pride and confidence. Teachers thought they were more relaxed and happy when alternative assessment types were used. Teachers also believed that students found alternative assessment fair. As a result, students were motivated by the use of alternative assessment.

Participants mentioned concerns about some competitive students who had the potential to lose interest or not take an activity seriously if there was not a grade given at the end. Participants also mentioned the need to motivate students. T6 explained a basic principle of working with young learners. "So the basic thing is if they like doing something they do it. They enjoy doing it. So for young learners it is important to make thing enjoyable, I think." However, even teachers that voiced these concerns believed that students' experiences with alternative assessment were positive.

4.5.2. Student focus group

The student focus group gave a voice to the students. The student focus group was asked several questions, as described in Chapter 3, related to their experience on Portfolio Day. The main purposes of the questions were to understand how students interpreted the event, how they felt about it and what they learned from it. According to the student focus group, Portfolio Day is a day to show to their parents what they have learned and how they have improved. Students expressed positive feelings about the day and pride in their improvement. During the discussion they expressed a sense of accomplishment and showed the ability to reflect.

Students believed the main aims of the day are to show progress and learning to their parents. Student E explains that, “Portfolio Day is to finish the year and mom and dad come and we tell our portfolio and describe.” Student M reflects and answers in Turkish, “I have observed that I had improved a lot since second grade. We don’t have difficulty with those pieces of work that we had difficulty with last year.” Student E agrees, “In second grade we are saying ‘the ball’, in third grade we are autobiographies, poems, etc. We have learnt so many things all year long. We learn more things every year.”

Students felt proud to show their work to their parents. Student E said in English, My mom and dad came. I tell my activities. What we would change. Choose five work. “Very good portfolio presentation” said mom and dad.” Student K had similar feelings that she also expressed in English, "Portfolio day is very good. My portfolio is very good. I presented it to my parents. I did not have enough time to present all of it. I remember the questions, I answered them.”

4.6. ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT AND THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS

This section will analyze the role of alternative assessment in the instructional process based on the data from the interviews and classroom observation cycle and the results of analysis of the English curriculum and the school assessment policy. These findings are related to Cohen’s (1984) definition of ‘instructional alignment’ as the extent to which intended outcomes, instructional processes and instructional assessment match. First the teachers’ perspectives, based on the data from the interview and classroom observation cycle, will be shared and then the results of document analysis will be shared. As summarized in Table 4.6-1, teachers’ practices are aligned with instructional processes and instructional assessment. Teachers' alternative assessment practices are aligned with intended outcomes, however, teachers do not systematically use the results of alternative assessment to check

whether intended outcomes have been met. The English curriculum and the school assessment policy are aligned in all three areas.

Table 4.6-1 Instructional alignment

Applicable to	Outcomes	Process	Assessment
Teachers	-/+	+	+
Documents	+	+	+

4.6.1. Teacher perspective

When asked about alignment teachers tended to focus on general themes of consistency and inconsistency. All teachers believed that it was natural to implement alternate assessments to check learning. Concerns were only voiced by grade four and five teachers, who are responsible for giving students formal grades, about balancing the use of alternative assessment with the formal grading system.

All nine participants believed that alternative assessment was something that could be implemented naturally as a part of the instructional process. As T6 explained, “To me it (alternative assessment) is just one more thing to add into the process. If you want to figure out if they are learning what you are teaching them. So it is something that since I started planning this year, it is something that has always been added into the process.”

Some alternative assessment methods and tools have a regular role in the instructional process. Portfolio and self- reflection were a regular part of the system and were planned accordingly. Teachers repeatedly noted that students benefited from the familiarity they had with these tasks. Teachers also consistently used observation, teacher monitoring and task completion as ways to check student learning. Other types of alternative assessment did not have a consistent role in the instructional process, which might affect their impact in the classroom.

T4 talks about the link between planning and effectiveness,

I think it (alternative assessment) can be aligned. If planned effectively there is no issue with alignment. If you have a lesson aim or a learning objective that you want to reach, if you plan your alternative assessment to complete that learning objective then it is completely aligned. I mean it is like anything you have to plan it effectively.

Teachers use alternative assessment to monitor learning and to guide planning of subsequent lessons. They also use alternative assessment as a source of information to use when checking that the curriculum outcomes have been met. However, most teachers felt this was an area that needed improvement. When T3 was asked how teachers at her grade level decide that an objective has been covered properly, she answered, "I question it myself too. So I assume first of all that it is covered, but of course we have to check it regularly but it sometimes happens and sometimes doesn't." T5 answered a similar question by saying, "I suppose that is something we could work on further. Going back to it and seeing if we have accomplished it." T8 had a similar response, "Actually, we don't. Unfortunately, we do not go back to look at learner outcomes and what we had expected. Maybe in the PYP unit, yes." T1 offered insight into this issue which can be read in the following excerpt from the initial interview:

R: Is there a way that you check that they (learning outcomes) have been met? That the students have fulfilled them?

T1: At this time I would have to say no. We just attempt to make sure that we are doing them and whatever comes out in the class as far as oral assessment, that is as far as we go for now.

R: Sure.

T1: But I do believe that we need to change and instead of deciding what we want to do and choosing the activities we should actually look at the learning outcomes first and choose the activities based on the learning outcomes. Then maybe then we might be more

likely to make sure or to ask ourselves have we met it.

T6 also shares this concern. When asked if checking the learning outcomes is a part of the process she shares her concern,

I guess sometimes that is a part of the process. Especially I think the way that we are planning right now the learning outcomes are maybe not as much of a focus as they should be. For example, you should focus on what you want the learning outcome to be and then think of the activity to fit with that. I think we do things a little bit backwards in that regard.

Teaching activities aligned with alternative assessment methods and tools. Teachers have a strong role in the planning and preparation of activities and materials used for both purposes. T4 explains,

“So I think, I don’t even think they knew it was an alternative assessment. It doesn’t really cross their minds that it is something different. We always do things with them that are new or they haven’t really done or they aren’t really comfortable with so I think if you asked them what was your lesson like I don’t think they would say anything was different about the lesson.”

The grade four (T1, T8) and grade five teachers (T3, T4) mentioned practical concerns with balancing the use of alternative assessment with the exam-focused system. Formal English grades begin in grade four so this is a natural concern. T3 is the most vocal about this concern,

“Alternative assessment and inquiry based learning really are two things that go hand in hand so that is why I think they work very well together. But my concern has always been the other exams, let’s say ministry type exams so we always have to have them and to help them to get better grades for them as well. We always have

to practice for these as well. This I think is the negative part.”

4.6.2. Document perspective

The school assessment policy and the English curriculum are intended to guide practices from pre-kindergarten through grade eight. These documents support the use of multiple tools for on-going assessment. The school assessment policy, as outlined in Chapter 3, advocates frequent use of:

- a range of techniques
- self evaluation and peer evaluation leading to life-long learning
- regular feedback
- regular reporting (report cards and portfolios)
- displays of work

The English Curriculum also, “aims to blend traditional assessment techniques with more modern alternative assessment techniques.” The document further asserts that, “The alternative assessment approach aims to replace traditional instruments that use multiple-choice, true-false and fill-in-the-blank items and provide a more inductive approach to language teaching by integrating the four skills and target language in a real language context, whilst encompassing all the individual needs of the students”

The introduction to the curriculum encourages the use of the following methods and tools:

- Peer assessment,
- Group feedback
- Self-evaluation
- Diaries

- Reflection journals
- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Grids and charts
- Writing activities
- Discussions
- Projects
- Performances
- Portfolios
- Presentations
- Models
- Tests
- Questioning
- Goal setting

Table 4.6-2 shows which of the alternative assessment methods and tools that are advocated in the curriculum are used by the participating teachers.

Table 4.6-2 Suggested alternative assessment tasks and implemented tasks

Encouraged by curriculum	Implemented by teachers
Peer assessment	X
Group feedback	
Self-evaluation	X
Diaries	
Reflection journals	
Questionnaires	
Interviews	
Grids and charts	X
Writing activities	X
Discussions	X
Projects	X
Performances	
Portfolios	X
Presentations	X
Models	
Questioning	X
Goal setting	X

The teachers used peer assessment, self-evaluation, grids and charts, writing activities, discussions, projects, portfolios, presentations, questioning and goal setting as alternative types of methods. Some of the alternative assessment methods and tools might have been considered more appropriate for middle school.

The following qualities are put forth as aims for students:

- Reflective
- Active learners
- Enthusiastic
- Independent
- Increased self-esteem
- Sense of personal achievement

Table 4.6-3 Shows the student qualities that are aims of the curriculum and which ones have been mentioned by teachers and students in relation to the implementation of alternative assessment. Teachers and students mentioned development of these characteristics as benefits of alternative assessment.

Table 4.6-3 Student qualities

Aims of curriculum	Affective benefits of alternative assessment
Reflective	X
Active learners	X
Enthusiastic	X
Independent	X
Increased self-esteem	X
Sense of personal achievement	X

The conclusion of the introduction to the curriculum stresses that instruction should emphasize ‘process vs. product’ and the individual needs of students. “Through the assessment process teachers should give the utmost importance to fairness, variety, appropriacy, individual students’ needs, clear instructions, achievement level and the effective feedback and learning of the students” (The English Curriculum, unpublished). Teachers mentioned fairness and variety as a benefit of alternative

assessment. They also mentioned that it was geared toward meeting individual students' needs and for providing effective feedback.

For each learning objective in the curriculum there are also sample questions, sample activities, sample assessments and notes for the teachers. Analysis of the grade three curriculum document showed that 40 out of 42 samples were given as a 'can do' statement and two examples of alternative assessment types were given; peer- and self-assessment and venn diagram. When this issue was explored, members of the curriculum committee explained that it was difficult to find a realistic assessment for each objective. These findings indicate a possible inconsistency between the guiding theories of the document and their practical application. However, it is important to remember that this study took place during the first year of curriculum implementation and that ideally inconsistencies will decrease over time.

4.7. SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS AND PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

This section summarizes and discusses the major findings of this case study and including a graphic summary of the findings, followed by further discussion. A summary of research findings is presented in Table 4.7-1.

Table 4.7-1 Summary of research findings

Research Question	Data Sources	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Findings
RQ 1. What are teacher's alternative assessment practices?	Participating teachers	Classroom observation cycle Interviews	Content analysis Thematic analysis	Teachers use a variety of different alternative assessment methods and tools for a variety of purposes and with varying degrees of effectiveness.
RQ 1a. What types of alternative assessment do teachers implement?	Participating teachers	Classroom observation cycle Interviews	Content analysis	All nine teachers use observation, portfolios and self-reflection as methods of alternative assessment. Use of other types of alternative assessment was more limited.
RQ 1b. What factors impact the classroom implementation of alternative assessment?	Participating teachers	Classroom observation cycle Interviews	Thematic analysis	There are six classroom implementation factors: Language ability Cognitive ability Planning Time Training Classroom environment
RQ2. What are teachers' beliefs about assessment in the young learner classroom?	Participating teachers	Classroom observation cycle Interviews	Thematic analysis Content analysis	The main purpose is to check learning. Teachers also believe it should be 'varied' and 'on-going' and should take 'affective factors' and the 'role of motivation' into consideration.
RQ2a. What are teachers' beliefs about alternative assessment in the young learner classroom?	Participating teachers	Observation cycle Interviews	Thematic analysis	Teachers believe that alternative assessment shows learning and interaction between thinking and learning, emphasizes the student as an individual and encourages active and autonomous learners.

Table 4.7-1(cont'd) Summary of research findings

Research Question	Data Sources	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Findings
				They also believe it is suitable for differentiated learning, clarifies expectations and motivates learners and teachers.
RQ2b. What are teachers' beliefs about the benefits of implementing alternative assessment?	Participating teachers	Observation cycle Interviews	Thematic analysis	Teachers believe that alternative assessment has a positive impact on the learning process and outcomes, as well as on the affective and cognitive development of the students.
RQ2c. What are teachers' beliefs about the challenges of implementing alternative assessment?	Participating teachers	Observation cycle Interviews	Thematic analysis	Teachers believe that adequately addressing implementation factors is the main challenge of implementing alternative assessment.
RQ3. How do students respond to alternative assessment?	Student focus group Participating teachers	Student focus group interview Observation cycle Interviews	Thematic analysis	Most students respond positively with feelings of accomplishment, pride, confidence and happiness. They are relaxed and motivated and have a sense of fairness.

Table 4.7-1(cont'd) Summary of research findings

Research Question	Data Sources	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Findings
RQ4. What role does alternative assessment have in the instructional process?	Participating teachers The English curriculum The school assessment policy	Observation cycle Interviews Document analysis	Thematic analysis Content analysis	Alternative assessment has a natural role to check learning in the instructional process.
RQ4a. In what ways is alternative assessment in alignment with the instructional process?	Participating teachers The English curriculum The school assessment policy	Observation cycle Interviews Document analysis	Thematic analysis Content analysis	Teachers align their instructional and assessment processes. Some teachers question the interaction of alternative assessment and formal grading. School documents are aligned with alternative assessment.
RQ4b. In what ways is alternative assessment not in alignment with the instructional process?	Participating teachers The English curriculum The school assessment policy	Observation cycle Interviews Document analysis	Thematic analysis Content analysis	Teachers do not use results of alternative assessment to check learning objectives.

This summary is reflected in the proposed alternative assessment framework as shown in Figure 4.7-1 .

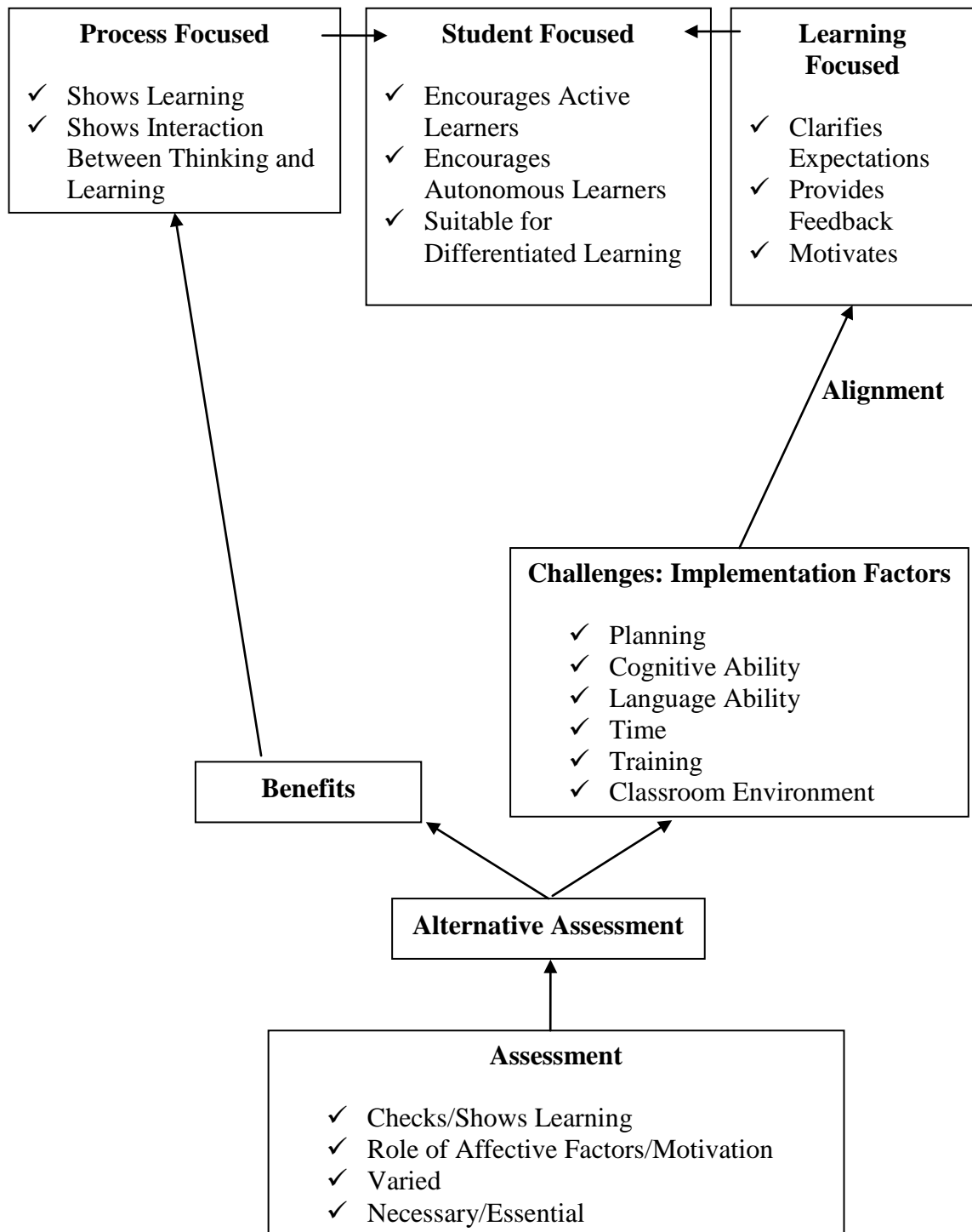


Figure 4.7-1 Summary of findings

Teachers' general beliefs about assessment are positive. Teachers describe assessment in positive terms; checks/shows learning, varied and on-going. Teachers recognize the importance of assessment and view it as a positive part of the teaching-learning process. This foundation indicates that teachers are likely to have a positive orientation towards alternative assessment since these three characteristics are essential components in the use of alternative assessment. Teachers also recognize that assessment is necessary and that motivation, as well as other affective factors have a role. There were no teachers involved in the study that had a negative view of assessment. There were no references that implied that it was unnecessary or damaging to the teaching-learning process. Teachers were concerned about how assessing their students affected their motivation, but their main concerns were related to how to assess their students effectively. As previously mentioned, it was from this concern, that this study was inspired.

At this stage in the study I was aware of my role as an internal reviewer. Prior to the study, I thought there would be teachers that had negative feelings toward assessment in general and that found alternative assessment time-consuming and ineffective. I presumed that having this type of contrast would add insight to the study, however, this was not the case. While it is possible that teachers' responses were biased as they were aware that the study was about alternative assessment, it seems unlikely as their responses and actions were consistent throughout the time period of the study and as an internal reviewer my contact with the participants was extensive. It is possible that if this study had been conducted prior to the implementation of the new English curriculum and the PYP approach that the findings might have been different because both the current English curriculum and the PYP approach have positive orientations toward assessment and advocate for the use of varied and on-going assessment. In addition, for the first time the school was putting an assessment policy into action. There was no available documentation about any changes nor was it within the scope of the study. Nonetheless, this discovery was welcomed and the study proceeded accordingly.

There are some alternative methods and tools such as; observation, portfolios, self-assessment, teacher monitoring, task completion and rubrics, that all teachers use and that have a regular role in the instructional process. Observation has been noted as a common tool used by teachers. Most of the participating teachers refer to observation in the sense of a natural activity they engage in when teaching, not as a focused activity with a clear objective to be recorded. At this point, my experiences as a teacher, made me question the effectiveness of this type of general observation. It is not uncommon for teachers to form a false positive or negative impression of students' abilities and characteristics during the routine act of observation as observation is a complicated activity. This is not to underestimate the power of teacher observation, but to serve as a reminder that planned observations should play an important role.

Teacher monitoring and task completion fall into a similar category. This type of informal assessment consists of the students carrying out daily tasks and the teacher monitoring the whole class while checking their completed work either during the lesson or after. Teacher monitoring is not limited to the monitoring of learning. The teacher must also monitor the learning environment in order to maintain discipline and a positive atmosphere. Managing this balance is a challenging activity and how it is carried out and to what degree of effectiveness varies from teacher to teacher. In addition, teachers must be aware that task completion does not always mean that the student has understood the task. In some cases, a student might have received help from a classmate. In other cases, a student might have been able to complete the task without complete understanding. Observation, teacher monitoring and task completion are alternative assessment types that put the burden of assessment on the teacher. They are alternative ways to assess students effectively, but they should not be used alone. Alternative assessment types that place more demand on the students should also be used.

Portfolios, self-assessment and rubrics were also frequently used types of alternative assessment. As previously discussed, the teachers did not distinguish alternative assessment methods from tools. With the exception of one teacher, who showed

some hesitation before including rubrics as a form of alternative assessment, other teachers accepted this as a type of alternative assessment without clarification. Portfolios and self-assessment usually were implemented as a joint-activity. Portfolios, including self-assessment, are a requirement of the school and of the Turkish ministry of education starting from grade four. This indicates that there must be reasons why teachers do not implement non-required types of alternative assessment. It was difficult to assess this issue without teachers feeling like what they were doing was not satisfactory.

Other types of alternative assessment are not used as frequently nor as effectively. There are several possible reasons for this which can be linked to the six factors of implementation; language ability, cognitive ability, time, planning, training and classroom environment. The language and cognitive ability of the students can be perceived as a limiting factor in the choice and implementation of alternative assessment. Finding a balance between these two abilities varies from grade level to grade level and from student to student. The challenge in language assessment is using the object of assessment as a part of the assessment itself. This is equally true and challenging with alternative assessment. With young learners this is further complicated by the consideration of students' cognitive ability. For example, with an activity like a story re-tell, if not planned carefully, the instructions can appear more complicated than the task to young learners. Thus, bringing into question other factors.

Teachers limited time in and out of the classroom for training the students and providing feedback can influence the decisions they make, as well. Issues of time and work load are a reality for all teachers. In this study class size did not exceed twenty-four students, yet this limited options for teachers. In schools where class sizes can range from 30-50 students, the time required for implementing many types of alternative assessment can be considered all but impossible. The same can be said to be true about the classroom environment, where the physical set up to the class profile, also affect teachers' options. These issues can have a positive or negative

impact. The physical set up and the class profile, also including the number of students, can make certain activities more feasible than others.

Planning was an intended focus of this study, however it became clear that the amount of detailed planning of alternative assessment implementation by the participants was either not in place or was not observable by the researcher. When examined this lack of planning appeared to be related to time and to training, as well. Teachers would benefit from a broadened knowledge base about alternative assessment and possibly about assessment, in general. Training should focus on creating a planning process that incorporates valid and reliable alternative assessment activities that loop meaningful feedback into the learning process. Teachers need the support of a procedure in place to address how cognitive ability and language ability will be addressed when using an alternative assessment. This procedure should also address issues related to the class environment. By having such a system in place, training of the students will become a more structured process. In addition to the implementation factors the learning outcomes, learning process and teaching activities and materials need to be stressed as a part of the planning process.

Alternative assessment is an integral part of the new English curriculum, the PYP approach and the school assessment policy. Alternative assessment is also widely supported by teachers and students, however, results of alternative assessment were not systematically used to measure learning outcomes nor to give clear feedback into the learning process. This indicates an area of further training for the study participants.

Alternative assessment has benefits that have been classified as process-focused, student-focused and learning-focused. The overall result should put emphasis on learning and the process of learning that benefits the students. Students in grades one to five had overwhelmingly positive responses to alternative assessment. This alone is a reason to pursue alternative assessment. The key to success with young learners is the combination of meaningful learning with enjoyable activities that

students are willing and able to do. Having a better understanding of what this entails, requires a more detailed examination of the student perspective. Reaching this perspective is complicated due to the cognitive and language abilities of the students.

The most effective way of determining what students are capable and are not capable of doing is not an easy question to answer, but we do have some answers to the question of effective implementation of alternative assessment. Knowing more about classroom practices can make it possible to take the necessary steps forward.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

After a brief summary of the research scope and aims, the major conclusions regarding:

- teachers' alternative assessment practice in the young learner classroom
- implementation factors,
- teachers' beliefs about assessment and alternative assessment,
- student perspective,
- the role of alternative assessment in the instructional process

will be presented. Discussions of the implications for practice and research will conclude the thesis and the chapter.

5.1. SUMMARY

As students of English begin the process of language learning earlier and earlier, the task of assessing learners becomes more challenging. Assessment of young language learners is complex due both to the characteristics of young learners and to the inherent challenges of language assessment. Young learners are developing physically, emotionally, socially and cognitively at unique rates. They are also developing general academic and literacy skills, as well as knowledge and understanding of the world. These individual developmental and academic differences need to be considered in language learning and assessment.

Typical language testing does not answer the needs of young language learners. Alternative assessment such as the use of observation, portfolios, self-assessment, peer-assessment and projects are said to encourage and motivate young learners and to provide ongoing feedback that strengthens the interaction between instruction and assessment. However, like many areas of teaching English to young learners, the implementation of alternative assessment, could benefit from more classroom-based, empirical research.

The purpose of this study is to explore the implementation of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom and thus develop a better understanding of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom. In order to do this case studies were carried out on nine different English language teachers and their use of alternative assessment strategies and tools over a six month period in their first, second, third, fourth and fifth grade English classrooms. This in-depth study focuses on teachers' practices and beliefs, as well as the student perspective. The role of alternative assessment in the instructional process is also analyzed. Data was collected through a series of interviews, classroom observations and document analysis.

To this end, the research questions listed in Table 5.1-1 were constructed to guide the exploration of the implementation of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom.

Table 5.1-1 Research questions and relevant factors

Factor	Research Question
Alternative Assessment Practices	RQ 1. What are teacher's alternative assessment practices?
	RQ 1a. What types of alternative assessment do teachers implement?
	RQ 1b. What factors impact the classroom implementation of alternative assessment?
Beliefs	RQ2. What are teachers' beliefs about assessment in the young learner classroom?
	RQ2a. What are teachers' beliefs about alternative assessment in the young learner classroom?
	RQ2b. What are teachers' beliefs about the benefits of implementing alternative assessment?
	RQ2c. What are teachers' beliefs about the challenges of implementing alternative assessment?
Student Perspective	RQ4. How do students respond to alternative assessment?
Role	RQ3. What role does alternative assessment have in the instructional process?
	RQ3a. In what ways is alternative assessment aligned with the instructional process?
	RQ3b. In what ways is alternative assessment not aligned with the instructional process?

5.2. CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions based on the summary and interpretation of the significant findings are discussed in line with each factor with emphasis to individual research questions and relevant literature.

5.2.1. Alternative assessment practice

One of the aims of the study is to understand teachers' alternative assessment practices, including what types of alternative assessment teachers use and what factors affect implementation.

5.2.1.1. Use of alternative assessment

Similar to other studies (Birgin & Baki 2009, Gatullov 2000) the findings of this study show that teachers use different alternative assessment with varying degrees of frequency and confidence. All nine teachers have used teacher observation, portfolios and self-reflection as methods of alternative assessment. Cameron (2001b) notes that observation is regularly used by teachers. Use of other types of alternative assessment was more limited. Five teachers (T2, T3, T4, T5, T9) have used peer-assessment. Four teachers (T1, T3, T4, T7) have used projects. Three teachers (T1, T2, T7) have used dramatization. One teacher (T2) has also used story-retelling and games and another teacher (T1) has used conferences. The remaining four methods, diaries/journals, debates, exhibition and think alouds were not mentioned or observed.

All nine teachers also reported other methods of alternative assessment that were not included in the original table. Task completion, also referred to as completed assignment, was the 'other' alternative assessment most often mentioned by the participants and the most frequently mentioned method of alternative assessment after teacher observation, portfolio and self-reflection. Six teachers (T1, T4, T5, T6, T8, T9) note use of task completion/completed assignment. Five teachers (T3, T5, T6, T7, T9) in the interviews and an additional three teachers (T1, T4, T8) during the observation cycle mentioned monitoring by the teacher as another form of alternative assessment. 'Question-answer' was mentioned by three teachers (T1, T7, T8) in the initial interview as a method used and by one teacher (T4) during the reflection process. Two teachers (T2, T5) mentioned TPR. Two teachers (T2, T3) recognized K (Know) W (Want to know) L (What I have learned) Chart and two teachers (T4, T7) mentioned use of mind or concept maps. One teacher noted each

of the remaining methods, written assessment tools (T7), oral assessment (T1), speaking presentation. These ‘other’ activities that teachers define and use as alternative assessment provide insight not only about teachers’ classroom practice, but about their beliefs as well. It also confirms the idea that any instructional activity can be used as an assessment.

With respect to alternative assessment tools, five teachers (T2, T3, T5, T6, T9) referred to checklists. Two teachers (T1, T6) mention use of anecdotal notes, as one teacher referred to it, and the other as ‘teacher notes’. The notes do not fit the definition of the term that indicates that notes should not include subjective comments. Two teachers (T3, T6) also mention progress cards. Rating scales and learner profiles are mentioned by one teacher each, T6 and T3, respectively. No participants mentioned the use of questionnaires. The ‘other’ alternative assessment tool referenced by the teachers is a rubric. Six teachers (T2, T3, T4, T5, T6 and T7) considered rubrics an alternative assessment tool and said that they used it.

Table 5.2-1 summarizes the use of the most frequently implemented alternative assessment methods and tools. It also shows the interaction focus of these alternative assessment types. ‘T’ denotes that the teacher is ‘doing’ most of the work. ‘T-S’ indicates that teachers and students either work together or carry varying degrees of responsibility throughout the task. ‘S’ symbolizes that the task burden is on the student.

Table 5.2-1 A summary of alternative assessment methods and tools

Interaction Focus	Method/Tool	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9
T	Observations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
T	Teacher monitors	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
T-S	Rubric		X	X	X	X	X	X		
T-S	Checklist		X	X		X	X			X
T-S	Task completion Completed assignment	X			X	X	X		X	X

Table 5.2-1(cont'd) A summary of alternative assessment methods and tools

Interaction Focus	Method/Tool	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9
T-S	Question-answer	X			X			X	X	
S	Portfolio/Self-Reflection	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
S	Peer-assessment		X	X	X	X				X
S	Projects	X		X	X				X	
S	Dramatization	X	X					X		
S	Self-assessment		X	X		X				

5.2.1.2. Implementation factors

Six factors that can have a positive or negative impact on the implementation of alternative assessment were determined;

- language ability
- cognitive ability
- time
- planning
- training
- classroom environment

Teachers of young learners debate the use of L1 and L2. Teachers face the challenge of balancing the need of students to understand the task and carry out higher-order thinking skills and using the language of instruction vs. the mother tongue. Teachers that do not speak the L1 of the students can find this a challenge. For very young learners there are additional issues related to their developing reading and writing

skills. The cognitive ability of students also is a factor that needs to be taken into consideration. Cameron (2001b) and McKay (2006) are clear about the challenges that language and cognitive abilities indicate.

Participants' most common concerns are related to the operational phase of planning when teachers struggle to align assessment with the intended purpose and to develop appropriate criteria and clear instructions. This is also linked to language and cognitive abilities. Having more time to plan and learn about planning would help teachers face these challenges and make implementation more effective. Problems which occur during implementation make outcomes less informative for the teachers. Some teachers also have difficulties aligning the alternative assessment with the purpose.

Teachers also face pressure due to time. Teachers refer to time inside the class as well as time outside of class. Inside class teachers need time to train students to use alternative assessment activities and outside class teachers need time to plan and time to check student work. Teachers must make realistic choices in order to create routines that are consistent. According to Özdemir (2009) in the Turkish primary school setting time, training and classroom environment were also seen as prominent factors.

Teachers and students require training to benefit from alternative assessment. When students become familiar with certain alternative tasks and routines they are more effective. Teachers must also attend to the classroom environment when they make decisions about implementing alternative assessment. The class profile, the student to teacher ratio, classroom management and the physical environment are parts of this factor.

5.2.2. Teachers' beliefs about assessment and alternative assessment

Another focus of this study is to understand teachers beliefs about alternative assessment, including the benefits and challenges of alternative assessment. In order

to do this the study also looked at teachers' beliefs about assessment and young learners.

5.2.2.1. Teachers' beliefs about assessment

Teachers' general beliefs about assessment account for the following aspects:

- Checks/shows learning
- Role of affective factors/motivation
- Varied
- Necessary/essential
- On-going

Teachers believe assessment is something that is necessary to check learning. They also believe it should be varied and on-going and should take affective factors and the role of motivation into consideration. This concept of assessment is consistent with teachers' beliefs about alternative assessment.

5.2.2.2. Teachers' beliefs about alternative assessment

Teachers believe that alternative assessment has the following benefits:

- Shows learning
- Shows interaction between thinking and learning
- Emphasizes the student as an individual
- Encourages active learners
- Encourages autonomous learners
- Suitable for differentiated learning
- Clarifies expectations
- Motivates

- Provides feedback for teaching

These beliefs can be categorized into process-focused, student-focused and learning-focused. These beliefs are shown in Table 5.2-2

Table 5.2-2 Benefits of alternative assessment

Benefits of Alternative Assessment
Process-focused <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows learning • Shows interaction between thinking and learning
Student-focused <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes the student as an individual • Encourages active learners • Encourages autonomous learners
Learning-focused <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for differentiated learning • Clarifies expectations • Motivates • Provides feedback for teaching

Teachers found that the challenge of implementing alternative assessment was responding effectively to the factors of implementation:

- language ability
- cognitive ability
- time
- planning

- training
- classroom environment

5.2.3. Students' response

Student responses to alternative assessment are categorized as affective factors and cognitive factors. Affective factors are comprised of positive and negative feelings. Teachers and students noted that students felt accomplishment, pride, confidence and happiness. They also recognized that students felt relaxed and appreciated the fairness of the tasks. In addition, students felt motivated. Teachers mentioned concerns with the possibility of competitive students not being interested. They also mentioned that some students did not take alternative assessment tasks seriously. Cognitive factors are represented by educational benefits. Teachers noted that students benefited from individualized attention and the opportunity to show knowledge and improvement in different ways. Students became active and autonomous learners with an ability to reflect on their learning.

The student focus group allowed students to discuss Portfolio Day. The purpose of the questions was to understand how students interpreted the event, how they felt about it and what they learned from it. According to the student focus group, Portfolio Day is a day to show to their parents what they have learned and how they have improved. Students expressed positive feelings about the day and pride in their improvement. In our discussion they expressed a sense of accomplishment and showed the ability to reflect.

5.2.4. Role in the instructional process

An important aim of this study was to understand the role alternative assessment has in the instructional process. This also includes how the use of alternative assessment is aligned and is not aligned with the instructional process. In order to develop a complete account, data was drawn from teachers and school documents.

5.2.4.1. Teachers' perspective

When approaching the issue of alignment, teachers tended to focus on general themes of consistency and inconsistency. Teachers expressed that it was natural to integrate alternative assessment into the instructional process to check learning. Teachers in grades four and five, who are responsible for assigning official grades to their students, mentioned that there were some problems with alignment since there was an emphasis on formal exams and grading and alternative assessment did not have a place in formal grading.

Some alternative assessment methods and tools such as, portfolios and self-reflection, had a regular part in the instructional process. Teachers noted that students benefited from the familiarity they had with these tasks. Teachers also consistently used observation, teacher monitoring and task completion as ways to check student learning. Other types of alternative assessment were not planned as consistently, which appeared to have an impact on their effective use in the classroom.

Teachers used alternative assessment to monitor learning and to guide planning of subsequent lessons. Teachers also used alternative assessment as a source of information to use when assessing completion of curriculum outcomes but, most teachers felt this was an area that needed improvement. This was attributed to weaknesses in the planning process where sometimes the focus shifted from learned outcomes to classroom activities.

5.2.4.2. Document perspective

The school Assessment Policy and the English curriculum support the use of multiple tools for on-going assessment. The English curriculum specifically outlines the use of alternative assessment methods and tools. During this study teachers used

ten of the eighteen suggested methods and tools. The English curriculum aims to foster students who are reflective, active learners, enthusiastic, independent, with a sense of personal achievement and increased self-esteem. All of these qualities are mentioned by teachers and students as benefits of using alternative assessment

5.3. IMPLICATIONS

Both Turkey and internationally there is still limited classroom based research on the implementation of alternative assessment with young learners. The present case study offers valuable insight into current practice. It provides a portrait of what a group of teachers are doing in their classrooms, an area that is in need of such research and insight. (Cameron 2001a, Cameron 2001b, McKay 2006, Leung & Lewkowicz 2006, Rea-Dickens 2000) It also provides insight into possible areas of future research related to alternative assessment and young learners.

5.3.1. Implications for practice

This section addresses implications for improving the implementation of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom.

- Implementation factors (language ability, cognitive ability, time, planning, training, classroom environment) for alternative assessment should be taken into consideration during the design, operational (development) and administration phases. Purposeful decisions that satisfactorily address language ability, cognitive ability, planning, training, time and classroom management, improve the outcomes of alternative assessment methods and tools. Figure 5.1 shows how implementation factors, with particular emphasis on planning, are linked to the potential benefits of alternative assessment methods and tools. Bachman (2002) and McKay (2006) suggest guidelines for planning. Adaptations of these guidelines should be trialed with the teachers of young learners.

- Teachers should be aware of whether the teacher or student has the responsibility of ‘doing’ during the alternative assessment task. Tasks where the teachers work more such as, teacher observation and teacher monitoring, can be more easily applied with younger learners because there are fewer challenges (giving instructions, using L1 vs. L2, training students) related to language ability and cognitive ability. Tasks where students work more such as, portfolios and peer-assessment, can be more challenging to plan and implement, but have a greater cognitive and affective impact on the students due to raised awareness.
- Teachers should plan carefully and systematically to ensure a match between the task and the purpose, which means planning should start with the learning objectives and not the activities or alternative assessment methods or tools. (Genesee and Hamayan, 1994) Teachers should be aware that the gathered information can provide individual feedback for daily teaching activities, as well as for long-term curricular goals.
- Teachers should consider repetition and consistency of tasks for successful implementation. Students need to be familiar with the alternative assessment task in order to complete it in a way that accurately reflects their knowledge and ability. Students also improve their meta-cognitive abilities as they apply these abilities repeatedly in similar situations. For example, students’ abilities to self-reflect improved over time with the systematic use of portfolios.
- This case study increased awareness at the sight school about alternative assessment methods and tools. Teachers should be encouraged to deepen their knowledge through professional reading, discussion, training and practice with particular emphasis on the design and operational phases.
- In-service training and undergraduate courses offered in ELT programs should develop training teachers’ knowledge base and should use opportunities to expose teachers to the use of alternative assessment.

5.3.2. Implications for future research

Possible areas of future research related to alternative assessment and young learners will be discussed in this section.

- The present case study offers an in-depth analysis of the implementation of alternative assessment at the site school. Case studies from similar and different (public schools) young learner contexts would broaden insight in the field of alternative assessment of young learners.
- The nine participating teachers all believed in the benefits of alternative assessment and implemented alternative assessment; however, the participants had different background knowledge and experience in this area. This participant profile provided a clear example of the current state of practice at the site school. However, case studies that focused on ‘best practices’ in this area through concentrated study on teachers who effectively implement alternative assessment in the instructional process would offer a valuable perspective.
- Further research focusing on assessment planning and thought processes used by teachers to inform and link assessment, teaching and learning is an area that deserves attention. This area would also investigate how alternative assessment is planned, how the collected information is used for teaching and how it impacts on learning.
- Data gathered from alternative assessment methods and tools should be explored. Whether this is through terms such as validity and reliability or through terms that represent a different standard is also a question to be examined.
- Further studies that look at the interaction between formal assessment and alternative assessment in grades four and five where formal grades are assigned would be of interest.

- Another important area of research is related to teacher education and professional development. Teachers' perceived competence in the area of assessment and young learners should be studied with a focus on pre-service teacher education and in-service training.

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APPENDICES

A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS MATRIX

Opening statement:

As you know, I am conducting research for my doctoral thesis on the implementation of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom. As someone who teaches young learners, you are in an invaluable position to describe your own experiences with young learners and alternative assessment. And that is what this experience is about: your experiences with young learners and alternative assessment and your thoughts about these experiences.

The answers from this interview, as well as the other interviews, are an important part of my research. Neither your name nor the name of other teachers, nor that of the school or of any of the students will be mentioned in my work. As we go through the interview, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask. I'd like to record what you say so that my information is accurate. If at any time you would like to stop the recording, all you have to do is press this button on the microphone and the recording will stop. Or if there is anything you do not want to answer, just say so. The purpose of this interview is to get your insights into the implementation of alternative assessment and young learners. Are there any questions before we begin? Then let me thank you in advance for your time and insight. Let's begin.

Table A.1. Interview questions

#	Interview Question	Research Question	Question Type	Past	Present	Future
1.	What grade level are you teaching now?		Background		X	
2.	Suppose I was in your classroom during a typical lesson what would I see happening? Probes – What would the physical environment look like? What would you be doing? What would the students be doing? What type of materials would be being used? Would there usually be some sort of assessment component during the lesson? Could you describe that?	3a. In what ways is alternative assessment in alignment with the instructional process? 3b. In what ways is alternative assessment not in alignment with the instructional process?			X	
3.	Could you explain how you view assessment?	1. 3. 4.			X	
4.	How do you assess your students? (Probe: How often do you assess your students?)	1. 3. 4.			X	
5.	How does planning work at your level? (Probes: How is the curriculum put into action? How are objectives planned? Met? Measured? Materials	3a. 3b.			X	

	developed? Assessments planned?)					
6.	What types of alternative assessments have you used in your classroom? (Prompt: portfolio)	1.		X		
7.	Could you share some of the experiences you have had with (the different types of) alternative assessment you have used in your classes?	1a. 1b. 2a. 2b.		X		
8.	Depending on response to previous question : (Probe: Have you had any negative experiences?/ Have you had any positive experiences?)	1a. 1b. 2a. 2b.		X		
9.	If you were asked by a new teacher for some advice about alternative assessments, what would you say? (Probe: Perhaps they would want to know about what you have found useful or not so useful.)	1a. 1b.			X	
10.	If that same teacher asked you about what factors can help or hinder the process of using alternative assessment in the classroom, what would you say?	2a. 2b.			X	

11.	Are there any types of alternative assessments you would like to use, but have not for some reason? (Why?)	2b.			X	
12.	From your experiences as a teacher, how do you think students respond to the use of alternative assessment?	5.		X		
13.	Generally speaking, what are the main obstacles of assessing young learners in English?	4.			X	
14.	Is there anything else you would like to mention?			X	X	X
15.	If you don't mind, I would like to conclude our interview by gathering a little more information about your teaching background: How long have you been teaching? Has all of that time been at this school? What grade levels/age groups have you worked with?		Background	X		

Pre-observation Notes

Teacher:

Date:

Class:

Lesson(s):

Briefly describe the lesson(s) you have planned. When appropriate please include information about the objective(s) and why you have planned your lesson(s) in this way.

Lesson Observation Form

Date:

Teacher:

Lesson:

Time	Activity	Running Commentary

Page: _____

Time	Activity	Running Commentary

Page: _____

Post-observation Notes

Teacher:

Date:

Class:

Lesson(s):

<p>Briefly describe how you felt about the lesson(s). When appropriate please include whether or not you felt the objective(s) was(were) met and why you feel that way, as well your thoughts on what went well and what you think could have gone better.</p>

Follow-Up Questions

Teacher:

Date:

Class:

Lesson(s):

1. Do you think the lesson(s) I observed were typical lessons? (In what ways was it typical? In what ways was it not typical?)
2. Do you feel like the main objective(s) were met? Why? Why not?
3. If you were to do this lesson or a similar lesson again, what would you keep the same and what would you do differently?
4. Do you feel like you were able to check students' learning during the lesson? How were you able to do that? What made it challenging for you to do that?
5. How did you think the students reacted to the lesson?
6. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of the alternative assessment tool/strategy you implemented?
7. What factors made it easier for you to implement this tool/strategy? What factors made it challenging for you to implement this tool/strategy?
8. How do you think this strategy/tool fit with the instructional process? (How was it in alignment? How was it not in alignment? i.e., materials used, routines, etc.)
9. Is there anything else you would like to mention about your lesson(s)?

Follow-up Interview

Teacher:

Date:

Class:

Lesson(s):

1. Do you think the lesson(s) I observed were typical lessons? (In what ways was it typical? In what ways was it not typical?)
2. Do you feel like the main objective(s) were met? Why? Why not?
3. If you were to do this lesson or a similar lesson again is what would you keep the same and what would you do differently?
4. Do you feel like you were able to check students' learning during the lesson? How were you able to do that? What made it challenging for you to do that?
5. How did you think the students reacted to the lesson?
6. Is there anything else you would like to mention about your lesson(s)?

Summative Interview

Opening statement:

I would like to thank you again for participating in my research this semester. I know how busy you are so I greatly appreciate that you have been willing to share your experiences, your classroom and your time with me. This interview will be brief. It will be our last interview until I have finished processing my data at which time I might ask you to share your opinions with me again if you are interested and willing.

As you know, the answers from this interview, as well as the other interviews, are an important part of my research. Neither your name nor the name of other teachers, nor that of the school or of any of the students will be mentioned in my work. As we go through the interview, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask. I'd like to record this interview as well so that my information is accurate. If at any time you would like to stop the recording, all you have to do is press this button on the microphone and the recording will stop. If there is anything you do not want to answer, just say so. The purpose of this interview is to gather any additional insights you might like to share about the implementation of alternative assessment and young learners. Are there any questions before we begin? Thank you again. Shall we start?

Table A.2 Summative interview questions

#	Interview Question	Research Question	Question Type	Past	Present	Future
1.	If you reflect back on the last semester what factors have you found had an impact on the classroom implementation of alternative assessment (tools and strategies)? Probes:	2		X		

	<p>What factors have had a positive impact on the classroom implementation of alternative assessment (tools and strategies)?</p> <p>What factors have had a negative impact on the classroom implementation of alternative assessment (tools and strategies)?</p>					
3.	<p>Thinking back over the last semester how would you describe the role of alternative assessment in the instructional process?</p> <p>Probes:</p> <p>How would you describe the role of alternative assessment in the your teaching?</p> <p>What effect do you think alternative assessments have on student learning?</p> <p>In what ways is alternative assessment in alignment with the instructional process?</p> <p>In what ways is alternative assessment not in alignment with the instructional process?</p>	3			X	
4.	<p>Again, thinking back over the last semester how do you think students have reacted to their experiences with alternative assessment?</p> <p>Probe:</p> <p>How do you think students interpret their experiences with alternative assessment?</p>	4		X		
5.	<p>Is there anything else you would like to add?</p>					

B. SAMPLE CODING OF A TRANSCRIBED INITIAL INTERVIEW

Interview with Teacher 6(T6), January 2010, conducted by Lynn B. Çetin, transcribed from audio source.
Time: 36:15

R	<p>Okay, thank you for agreeing to be here over the holiday, I know your time is very precious. As you know, I am conducting research for my doctoral thesis on the implementation of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom. As someone who teaches young learners, you are in an invaluable position to describe your own experiences with young learners and alternative assessment. And that is what this experience is about: your experiences with young learners and alternative assessment and your thoughts about these experiences.</p> <p>The answers from this interview, as well as the other interviews, are an important part of my research. Neither your name nor the name of other teachers, nor that of the school or of any of the students will be mentioned in my work. As we go through the interview, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask. I'd like to record what you say so that my information is accurate. If at any time you would like to stop the recording, all you have to do is press this button on the microphone and the recording will stop. Or if there is anything you do not want to answer, just say so. The purpose of this interview is to get your insights into the implementation of alternative assessment and young learners. Are there any questions before we begin?</p>	
T6	No	
R	Then let me thank you in advance for your time and insight. Let's begin. So what grade level are you teaching now?	
T6	Right now I teach three different grade levels, kindergarten, first and second grade and most of my teaching is team teaching.	

R	Okay, great. So suppose I was in your classroom or one of your classrooms perhaps second grade, during a typical lesson what might I see happening?	
T6	Well, you would see in the beginning the set of routines that we have to have the students get themselves ready to begin learning. On any given day you would usually see some sort of reading or listening practice for the students. And we try to do some sort of follow-up activity with that which involves some sort of writing because we find that they struggle with the most at such a young age. And in most classes we try to turn something into a game-like situation because it makes the students more excited about learning.	R3 Teaching: Routines(to get students ready for learning) Reading and Listening with a follow-up writing activity Games to make students excited about learning
R	Sounds good. So during a typical lesson, if there is a typical lesson, how would you describe what you are doing and what students are doing?	
T6	I would say that I as the teacher am trying to set up the environment and model for the students and then I try to have as much student participation as possible. I think in a normal class I think the goal is to have students speaking as much as possible, but in some classrooms depending on discipline problems there is more teacher involvement or managing of the classroom. So I'd say generally in the beginning I speak a lot more and I try to get them aware of what they are doing and how to do it properly. And then I try to monitor them and let them experiment with the activity and try to accomplish it. I guess.	R3 Teaching: Set up the environment Model Encourage student participation And experimentation Monitor Discipline problems can require an increase in teacher involvement
R	Great. So you talked about it already, but is there anything else you would mention about what the students are doing?	
T6	I would say a lot of times they are, they are asked to follow directions. One of the most important things is to get them to follow directions correctly and to pay attention. I guess also getting them to produce something on a certain level. Usually if they do a reading or a listening they have to follow along and the goal is to get them to take what they have learned and use it whether that is in a game	R3 Teaching: Main goals for students are to follow directions, pay attention and produce something using what they have learned. Game

	or in a writing exercise, or coming up with sentences as a class and copying it down in their book to practice writing in English.	Writing exercise Whole class activity/Individuals copy
R	Okay, great. Thank you. Can you tell me a little bit about what the physical environment looks like in the classroom?	
T6	Classrooms have approximately five or six tables, I can't remember right now and on each table four or five students can sit . And in the front of the classroom is a chalkboard and the students sit at their tables so a lot of time we have to turn their chairs to have them face the front of the room . And on the walls around us is the work that they have done together as a class, like sight words or words from the story or posters that they've made. And each day the classroom changes depending on what the main class teacher does because we enter the classrooms . We do not have our own classroom. So sometimes you will have three tables together with most of the students sitting around this table, but I would say in general the classrooms are a little small . It is often a tight fit for everyone to be in there and I would say that is about it.	R3 Physical: Group Rearranging Classroom teacher Limited space
R	Great. Could you talk a little bit about the types of materials that would be used in a typical lesson?	
T6	Definitely. In a typical lesson we would normally use one of their course books. They have Cornerstone and we typically do reading from this course book and these readings usually incorporate a listening of sorts. They also have their Green English Notebook that they also use for example to write down sentences or answers to questions from the Cornerstone book. And I would say also we use the internet a lot for games for internet stories, internet songs and they really get excited about that so we try to use that a lot. And then I'd say the next type of material, the last one we would use are materials that they create where we give them maybe where we give them cards and they have to draw pictures and write adjectives and play a memory game after that.	
T6	Okay, thank you. What sort of assessment component, if there is one might I see during a typical lesson?	

	<p>So we don't often use tests. I'd say the only test used in the class normally is a spelling test at the end of the week. And that is held every other week. So that's sort of a rare occurrence a test in the classroom. I would say generally assessment would be for example if they have written sentences in their book each student will bring their sentences to the teacher and the teacher will check and see if they have done them correctly. Also, we have been doing more longer term projects that involve like a checklist usually so we will show the checklists to the kids to get them used to using that type of assessment and then they will have it there to look at what they have done and check and see if they have done it or sometimes we take their work and we feel out the checklist. And I guess generally there is a lot of teacher observation, as well. Especially with a group that large sometimes it is hard to do large scale assessment so it is more how we observe the students.</p>	<p>RZ: Spelling test</p> <p>RY: Rare occurrence</p> <p>RX: <i>Student work</i> Teacher checks Checklist (for longer term projects) Teacher observation</p> <p>R1 Beliefs/Advantages/Disadvantages: Teacher observation works with a large group because a larger scale assessment is difficult</p>
R	Great, thank you. Can you explain how you view assessment?	
T6	<p>I view assessment as a necessary part of the classroom to see if what you are teaching them is being understood or processed by the students. And I think at this level, especially with younger learners, assessment is necessary, cause you kind of need, especially with such a large classroom because you need basic things that all students can understand and if someone is not understanding you need to know that and maybe give them extra work, inform their parents so they work with them, maybe take them out of the class for one-on-one lessons. I guess in general assessment isn't as set as it is with older students because there is often not a right or wrong example, for example on a test that you give a middle schooler it is like right or wrong. This is just seeing how much they can do normally, like how some students can go beyond what you have asked them to do and some students can try to maybe they fulfill three out of your four requirements or maybe two out of your four requirements but I think it is also difficult at a younger level because sometimes students just have a bad day and with assessment they don't want to, it doesn't necessarily show what they can</p>	<p>R1 Beliefs: Assessment is a necessary part of teaching to check that what you are teaching is being understood or processed.</p> <p>To establish a basic level of what all students can do. Steps need to be taken when there is a student who is not reaching this level.</p> <p>To see how much students can do normally</p> <p>R1 Beliefs/Disadvantages: Results can be dependent on affective factors (mood, desire to</p>

	do, but their mood on that day and how you know if they want to participate or they don't want to participate. So I find it is a little more hazy with the younger years.	partipate) 'A little more hazy' with younger learners
R	Great. This might be repeating, I might be repeating myself but I just want to ask question so you have a chance to express everything that you want to. So if it is repetitive, sorry. So how do you assess your students? You mentioned some things is there anything else you might not have mentioned?	
T6	Well, we use report cards at the end of the semester and I believe halfway through the semester as well they get report cards. I mentioned the checklist. We have been using that a lot so they can do longer term projects and drafts of things so they learn how to do things to see what they have done and improve upon the things they can improve on and to have sort of a final copy. We've been doing spelling tests as I've said. Also we do, we've done reading it is sort of like a checklist I would say, or a scale usually for their reading ability. We'll practice. We will read a story and then a week later we will tell them that they are going to be given a random page and they are going to have to read it and be assessed on pronunciation, flow. So I would say a scale we would also use in second grade. Those are the only things I can think of currently.	RZ: Report cards RX: Checklist Scale (reading)
R	Okay. That is great. So backtracking a little bit, how does planning work at the levels you, I think you mentioned you work in three different levels, but if you want to you can talk about second grade?	
T6	I feel like the planning at most levels starts out the same by doing CIPs. So we plan a tentative six weeks, but in second grade normally we meet on a Wednesday and plan for the following week, but those plans also sometimes get changed around	

	<p>depending on how the students are doing for example maybe there is a special class that day so how do we fit in with the general school schedule, as well. That can change the plan and we try to have most of the materials ready by the end of the week for the next because then we can see whether, assess whether it will be too difficult or too easy but I would say the plans are not incredibly detailed it is not like a minute by minute plan but because it is two or three teachers at that level it gives a general idea and we come to some sort of a general consensus of how the lesson will run but each teachers normally does it a little bit different depending on their style and what they feel like should be emphasized. There generally is agreement about that but it kind of comes out in different ways.</p>	
R	<p>Great so you mentioned your CIPs so that might lead into my next question. So when you have the curriculum you put it into action so that is maybe like your CIPs?</p>	
T6	<p>Yea, I would say that.</p>	
R	<p>Okay, so then there are objectives or learning outcomes in you CIPs so how do you measure or decide if those have been met or is that a part of the process?</p>	
T6	<p>I guess sometimes that is a part of the process, especially I think the way that we are planning right now the learning outcomes are maybe not as much of a focus as they should be. For example, you should focus on what you want the learning outcome to be and then think of the activity to fit with that. I think we do things a little bit backwards in that regard, but I think for the larger learning objectives, like usually for a week we have a general idea of what needs to get done. I mean from my understanding in a six-week there are certain learning outcomes, maybe it is not like specifically for each class, but in general that must be met especially for larger projects, a project that might take like a full week or two weeks and those I would say have been more integrated with our activities. And we have created like a checklist or a scale or noted teacher observation like in notebooks to say how they are doing with this to sort of give it a general</p>	<p>R3: Not a daily focus on learning objectives, but for the ‘larger learning objectives’, general idea of ‘what needs to get done’.</p>

	assessment. But I would say that on a day to day basis there is not as much there this is the learning outcome I want to achieve today and this is the activity I am going to do to achieve it.	
R	Right, thank you. What about, well actually you mentioned about this already but is there anything you can add about how materials are developed?	
T6	Yes, I think the materials we often, especially with the other two members of the level who have done this before they usually have memories of what they have done in the past sort of like a resource bank in their own head and so they will sometime say, “Oh I remember this, we can do that,” but at the same time we try to base the materials that we have done off of the book or I have noticed that we have done a lot of scaffolding with materials we have used in the past like old PowerPoint presentations but we add new things so it is constant review but then there is something new at the end, that is good for the kids because they feel like they have seen in before so they are more comfortable, they can accomplish something and then try something new. And I guess each one of us, except maybe me, the two main teachers divide the materials half and half and they usually check them with one another and they are usually made at least a couple of days in advance so it isn’t too last minute so you know it as at the students level.	R3: Scaffolding (comfort and accomplishment)
R	Sounds good. What about assessments how are they planned?	
T6	Assessments, for example the tests are planned regularly like a couple of weeks in advance we want to know what words they are working on for their spelling test. And then the other, I mentioned those before, the sort of larger scale assessments, we make a draft of them, like I would make a draft of the assessment and send it to the other two teachers in the level and they will look at it and will change it cause a lot of times with assessment even more so than with materials it is really important to have your language correct and have it to be clear especially to the younger kids if you are going to show it to them in advance. And also for yourself because you don’t want people saying that is vague how	RY: Importance of receiving feedback on assessments. Must be careful with language.

	can you really judge that or assess that? So I'd say that we spend we usually start those a little earlier than and spend more time drafting them and reviewing them as a whole group than maybe normal materials that we use for the classroom.	
R	Good. What about the checklists and scales are those planned in a similar way?	
T6	Yea, yea.	
R	That is what you were talking about.	
T6	Yea, it was mostly that. The spelling test is something the kids are used to and we are used to so that is.	RZ: Spelling tests ('used to')
R	I thought perhaps you were talking about the unit tests? No, you were talking about.	
T6	The alternative assessments.	
R	Great. So what types of alternative assessments have you used in your classroom? You have mentioned checklists, scales.	
T6	We use also portfolios as a form of assessment and the students pick what they think is their best work and say why also they think it is their best work. I'd say also anecdotal notes, I'd say that is the majority besides of course teacher observation which is a little more informal but we use that as well to judge the students and I also when I take a smaller group of students out of the classroom at the end of each group I will write down what they have down, how they did it, how you know sometimes you will have a student you think who puts on this bravado of of course I am very smart but when you get them in a smaller group you can see that they do struggle more than they let on and maybe they don't understand as much as they say they do so that is all I can think of actually right now. The scales, would you like me to describe them?	RX: Portfolios Anecdotal notes Teacher observation R1 Beliefs/ Advantages: Observing students in smaller groups via anecdotal notes and teacher observation can reveal students true abilities.
R	Sure if you like.	
T6	For example we use scales like a 0, 1, 2, 3 type scale	RX: checklist

	<p>for certain classroom projects and also for reading as well. We have mentioned for reading for example, the flow, pronunciation and whether they recognize punctuation. You have something like developing, good, excellent something like that. And we also used like for the checklist they are more like when we had them create poems, if they used a certain word they could check it off the checklist and so if they had a lot of checks it meant they used a lot of different words. It took them a while to understand how it worked per say, but I think they finally understand how to do it.</p>	<p>RY: Repetition and time needed for training.</p>
R	<p>That's good. So you have talked it a little bit, but perhaps could you share in a little more detail the experience you have had with these types of assessments or alternative assessments.</p>	
T6	<p>I think with these types of assessments like for example with the checklist it was difficult at first because we wanted the checklist to be in English so it was hard coming up with the exact wording that the students could understand because sometimes they would see the wording, I used this word like for example in adjective or and they'd say, write down I use an adjective and they'd check it. So to kind of use a simple enough language that they could understand it took a few times to draft it, but I thought it was useful having them do it themselves because especially with such a big class they I felt that it was almost easier to do because you didn't have to do it individually for each student and they could see what they were supposed to do, whether they understood that, I would say in most classes the majority of students after a few times of doing it understood what it was. Some still weren't quite sure what they were supposed to but I would say that it was useful, but I would say almost the scales it's good for them to do it on their own, but like the scales that we've done where it is sort of like an individual test might be a little more accurate in some ways. Because for example when we use the checklist they might say 'I can use adjectives' and they have, but they have used it incorrectly in their poem so I think that like for example we did the scales after the checklist so I think we had a better idea of how to word it and what exactly are expectations were. Because yea they can</p>	<p>RY/R1 Beliefs Difficulties: Level of English Using English without compromising purpose of assessment</p> <p>R1 Beliefs Advantages: It is helpful in a large class when students can do participate in assessing. Individual testing might be more accurate</p>

	use an adjective but if they use it an incorrect manner, do we accept that? Is that correct, if they use the wrong adjective for example, for the wrong season is that okay? So I think that the scales I've noticed in class, they are still difficult to create, but it is a little clearer whether they have done well or not.	
R	Great, thank you.	
T6	Mmhm	
R	Have you had any negative experiences?	
T6	Um, I wouldn't say completely negative I would say it is more of a learning experience because like I mentioned before you learn what is clear and what is not clear. Like something that seems clear to you then you implement it and it doesn't actually make sense or it is not as clear as it could be that I think is not negative, but it you know, you have learned from the assessments that have not gone very well what to change in order to do the next ones.	RY: Through experience you learn to make assessments clear.
R	Got it. So imagine if you were asked by a new teacher for some advice about assessments what would you say? Perhaps they would want to know what you have found useful or not useful.	
T6	I would say for assessments for younger kids, like I said, the language is very important and being very clear on your expectations. So I would suggest the new drafter, (laughs) the new drafter, the new teacher to draft their assessments and to talk about it with colleagues and sort of a little bit earlier and take the time to develop the assessment and that to not be discouraged if it does not go very well in class because then you take that and you learn from it again. And I would recommend keeping things as simple as you possibly can with younger learners and assessment because its, I like using scales a lot because we try to make them like a three point scale, not a five or ten point scale not a big scale, but a small one so that you have a good idea of what low is, what average/good is and what excellent is. And you don't really have to differentiate between the two because that is very difficult with younger children. So that's what I recommend. And I would tell him or her to be I guess to really get to know your students	RY: Clear language Clear expectations RY: Keep it simple RY: Teacher observation best way in guiding assessment of students.

	<p>well and to kind of I don't know I think the most important things to start with is to keep a teacher observation book that can be one of the best ways in guiding you to assess your students. You remember what they have done on a certain day or maybe something they have really excelled at. For example there is a student in 2*, student x and student x is very low in class. He often appears like he isn't really understanding, but then when I took him out for a smaller group exercise I realized that his pronunciation is actually very good and that he can usually read very well. I am not sure if he can understand what he is reading, but he can read it. I find that sometimes you get a negative picture of a kid in your head and when it is time to write report cards that can sort of overshadow where as if you have records of what you remembering them doing you can use that as a form of assessment.</p>	<p>RY: Records are a more objective form of assessment for writing reports.</p>
R	Thank you. If that same teacher asked you about what factors can either help or hinder the process of using assessment or alternative assessment in the classroom, what would you say?	
T6	So factors, things that can either help or hinder.	
R	Yea so like things that make it you know, easier or harder.	
T6	Um. I guess you mean in terms of like working with colleagues in terms of creating the alternative assessment?	
R	Yea, any part of the process whether it is planning before or implementing in the classroom, either way.	
T6	<p>To start with you need to be comfortable having a dialogue with your other teachers because something that might seem clear, another person might pick out that it is not very clear. It is really important to collaborate before hand. So I think that helps the process. At the same time if you are working with another teacher and maybe even by yourself it can sort of hinder it because like I said something that might see clear to you might not be or if you have someone who doesn't like collaborative work it can make it difficult to create</p>	<p>R2 Positively Affecting Factors: Collaborating with colleagues</p> <p>R2 Negatively Affecting Factors: Working alone Working with someone who does not like to collaborate</p>

	<p>an alternative assessment. And then classroom-wise I think that it is important to spend some time and model for the students especially if they are doing the assessment themselves I think to do that at first you have to spend a fair amount of time introducing it, modeling it and to recognize that it won't work perfectly right away. And to understand all that and to introduce it slowly will help the process. I think even when you are doing the assessment when it is like an individual one-on-one thing it is good to let the students know what they are being tested on because maybe they would take it more seriously, like I said I had a student who is like, "Oh I don't want to participate in this." If they know it is an assessment then maybe they will actually try instead of saying, "Well, whatever. I won't partake in this." I think being as open with your students as possible can unless of course it is like a closed test, that is not really useful for them, but giving them as much time, warning as possible so they can practice and basically making it so that they can succeed if they put in the work and they try hard. Rather than just jumping or giving them something last minute and saying, "Oh we're going to do this."</p>	<p>R2 Positively Affecting Factors: Model Take the time to do it slowly Recognize it is a process Inform students they are being assessed Giving students time to prepare so they can succeed</p>
R	Right	
T6	"today."	
R	Thank you. Are there any types of alternative assessment that you would like to use, but haven't for some reason?	
T6	I'm sure there's a lot more ways of assessing students out there	
R	But there isn't something out there that is in your mind that you haven't used for some reason.	
T6	Nothing really in my mind right now.	
R	From your experiences as a teacher how do you think students respond to using alternative assessments or being assessed in alternative ways?	
T6	I think sometimes they are a little confused by it because they're not used to it. They are, I mean they	R4: A little confused Not used to it

	<p>are at the age where they do not have too many tests so I think they can be confused by it, but at the same time they are not, well like for example, like with older students they know they have a test and that is what matters. And anything outside of the test, especially I think in the Turkish education system like anything outside of the test is not really important. So I think there is, I think for younger kids especially, maybe working with alternative assessment they are not as closed off to it. But, at the same time it is different. It is different from a spelling test or a unit test. So I think sometimes they don't take it very seriously, but of course you have the students who will always take it very seriously. But, some students might take a spelling test more seriously. You have a group of students who might take the spelling test more seriously but the like the alternative assessment, especially I don't know sometimes for example maybe they can't think beyond this. Like in kindergarten when we do the portfolios they just sort of say I like this because I like it. So yea it is not as much as their brain being like it is not like they are thinking through it. Being like I like this because of x, y and z. They just like it and they often don't think about the reasons behind it.</p>	<p>Older students are only concerned with tests. Open to it Some don't take it seriously</p>
R	<p>What about student responses to portfolios?</p>	
T6	<p>I've actually never done a portfolio class with second grade, but I've done it in kindergarten and first grade and I think that it can be difficult because as I said before they can just say I like it because I like it. And with the classes as big as the classes we have sometimes it can be hard to say, "Well, no can you do it again. This is what I want you to think about. And also the level of their English doesn't really allow you to do that in English. So if you want them to consider it more you often have to describe in Turkish. And even then sometimes you get answers like I like it because I like it. So I think that it is important to get them started on it but it can also be a little challenging because some kids will think about it but some kids will just you know it is difficult to explain to them what you want them to do in English first of all and even in Turkish they might not take the time to really think about it. It is like well if I can finish this as quickly as possible I can go back to what I was doing. Like in kindergarten</p>	<p>R1 Beliefs/Disadvantages: Age level/cognitive ability required for certain types of assessment, self-assessment, reflection Level of English</p>

	<p>I'll pull the students out and ask them about the portfolio. We'll spread their work out and ask them, "Which one do you like?" "Which is your favorite? And, "Why do you like it?" "Why did you pick this one?" And sometimes they will just look around and they will see other kids playing with blocks and they will just look and say "That one" And I am like, "But that is the one on top. Wait let me spread it out first." And they will be like, "No, that one." And I will be like, "Why?" And they will say, "I like animals" or something. And it is an animal but you can very much tell that they just want to go back and play with all the other students. So it can kind of be a difficult process. It seems like maybe if it is involved with the parents like in first grade, maybe that doesn't always work out well but you can inform the parents and they take the time to sit with their kids I think maybe it can be a little bit better than the chaos that can sometimes be portfolios with younger children.</p>	<p>R2 Positively Impacting Factors: Parental support</p>
R	<p>Yes, indeed. Okay, so generally speaking what do you find are the main obstacles to assessing young learners in English?</p>	
T6	<p>I think that one of the challenges that I have mentioned already is explaining to them how you are going to assess them, what it means, like using basic enough language English so that they understand exactly what is going on. Because is you did have the language ability in Turkish, you could potentially switch to Turkish to get them to understand but I really don't know what is really the goal, what is the goal there for them to understand in English or is the goal for them to learn how to try to reflect, even if that means explaining to them in Turkish or trying to get them to think more but doing that probing in Turkish rather than in English. So I think the hardest thing with young learners is that their level of English is not very high and trying to ask them to do what I consider deep thinking, I think for them, can take a lot of time and I know it doesn't always work. It's hard because you can have a lot of good ideas but it has to be something that you can simplify to the level. I mean it might be different if it is something that is more focused on the teacher doing than the students doing, but even then like I</p>	<p>R1 Beliefs/Disadvantages: Age level/cognitive ability required for certain types of assessment, self-assessment, reflection Level of English</p> <p>RY/R1 Beliefs Difficulties: Level of English Questioning the purpose: understanding in English vs. reflecting in Turkish Teacher doing vs. Student doing</p>

	said you want to explain to them what is going on and what they are being assessed on, like how we are doing this. Because you want them involved in the process, as well. So I don't know I think their level of English is the hardest.	
R	I can see that. Is there anything else you would like to mention?	
T6	Not that I can think of. I think it is useful alternative assessments for younger learners because then you can, again they are not quite at the age where I think tests are appropriate. You don't want them to be focused on tests. Especially, I think alternative assessment can really focus on the process rather than getting a high grade on this one test which is like this one, kind of like a one-off in class. So I like the idea of trying at least a little bit to focus on the process with them rather than like you know like try to spell all these words correctly which is important, but it's maybe the process will last longer with them.	RY: Alternative assessment focuses on the process
R	That's great. Thank you. So if you don't mind I would like to end our interview by getting a little bit of information about your teaching and educational background.	
T6	Okay	
R	How long have you been teaching?	
T6	This will be my second year of teaching.	
R	Has all of that time been at this school?	
T6	No, the year before I worked at BUSEL, the English Preparatory School at Bilkent and I was a speaking teacher so I didn't teach grammar and I taught to pre-university students so older students.	
R	Okay and your educational background?	
T6	I have a BA in Middle Eastern Studies and I have a CELTA degree a CELTA teaching degree and that is my educational background.	
R	Great. Thank you.	
T6	Thank you	

C. A SAMPLE SUMMARY OF A CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Summary

Teacher: T2

Date: May 4, 2010

Description: focus lesson observation #1 - 3B, lesson 1 (portfolio)
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Again this is a class with **high expectations that are clear along with explicit routines and procedures**. This lesson was a typical portfolio lesson. **The students are now used to this routine so the teacher does not need to ‘interfere’ much**. Students began to work and the teacher monitored. **The teacher encouraged students to write in English if they can and later to present in English too**. The teacher also asked some key questions to help students think about their work reflectively. **Students seemed to enjoy this activity, looking through their old work and selecting work for their portfolio. The teacher said that they have always shown positive reactions to this kind of activity. After they have selected their work they fill out a work tag. At the end of the lesson students have a chance to present their work/selections. Some students do this English. In addition to being trained how to reflect, students are also taught organization skills**. T2 thought most students did well. She attributed this in part to the fact that students have a **‘portfolio lesson’ after each unit**. However, she noted that **sometimes students struggle to know which piece of work is suitable for their portfolios**, i.e. it should be more creative, project-based work instead of mechanical, worksheets. **She did however think that the work-tag could be clearer to the students**. T2 stated that now that students are used to this type of activity (**they have been doing it since first grade**), there really are no disadvantages. **It fits in with the instructional process, as portfolios at the end of every unit are a routine part of planning. Growth is evident when you watch grade 3 students complete their portfolio lessons**.

R2/R3: High expectations, explicit routines, procedures
R2 Positively affecting factors: Students are used to this routine, portfolio lesson after each unit, since first grade
R4 Students: Enjoy reviewing work, selecting, reflecting.
R4 Students/Challenges: Students can find it difficult to select appropriate work, work tag could be clearer.
R1 Advantages: Students

	<p>present their work. Some write/speak in English. Als learn organizational skills</p> <p>R3: Porfolio lesson is carried out every 6 weeks at the end of the unit.</p> <p>R1</p> <p>Advantages: Development from grade 1 to grade 3.</p>
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D. TRANSCRIBED AND CODED STUDENT FOCUS GROUP

Table D.1 Initial coding from the student focus group

Translated Focus Group Interview with Grade 3, June 2010, conducted by class teacher (CT), attended by Lynn B. Cetin and volunteer recorder and translator Original answers given in English are presented in bold.		
CT	Today we are going to ask you some questions about Portfolio Day. The questions will be in Turkish and you can answer in Turkish, if you like. Can you please tell me about Portfolio Day?	
A	It went well. We chose five pieces of second grade work and give third grade work. We presented it. Then, we talked about what we chose for English and why we chose it.	Reflection
E	My mom and dad came. I tell my activities. What we would change. Choose five work. "Very good portfolio presentation" said mom and dad.	
K	Portfolio day is very good. My portfolio is very good. I presented it to my parents. I did not have enough time to present all of it. I remember the questions, I answered them.	Accomplishment
D	I was nervous first but then I was fine. It was really good. I presented my English portfolio first. It went well. My mom liked it a lot.	
E	My presentation was very good. My performance was very good. Five second grade, five third grade. Our teacher was there, too. She also liked it.	Accomplishment
CT	What is it?	
C	Last Wednesday before the school finishes.	
E2	It is presenting what we have done.	Accomplishment
E	Portfolio Day is finish the year and mom and dad	Communication

	come and we tell our portfolio and describe.	
CT	Who participated?	
A	Grade three	
M	My dad	
E2	Mothers and fathers	
Z	My mom and my little brothers.	
CT	Why did you do it?	
D	In order to compare second and third grade. So that they can see the improvement.	Show improvement
C	They don't know what we do. It is for them to see it.	Communication: To make learning more transparent
CT	How did you prepare for it?	
D	We organized our files, we picked the work, we rehearsed, we presented to our friends, we worked hard.	Presentation Effort
E	We cleared our portfolio, chose 5 work. We practiced.	Choice
CT	How do you feel about your experience?	
M	I have observed that I had improved a lot since second grade. We don't have difficulty with those pieces of work that we had difficulty with last year.	Reflection Self-assessment Improvement
E	In second grade we are saying 'the ball', in third grade we are autobiographies, poems, etc.	Improvement
CT	What if anything did you learn from the experience?	
E2	I have learnt presenting something, talking about something and introducing ourselves.	
E	We have learnt so many things all year long. We learn more things every year.	Reflection Accomplishment
CT	Would you want to do it again? (Why? /Why not?)	
E	Yes, I would like to. Because this time I would like to use my time more efficiently. I could not finish everything.	
D	I wouldn't want to. I used my time efficiently, I finished	Self-assessment

	everything.	
X	Yes. I would like to use my time more efficiently. I could not finish the Turkish part.	Self-assessment
E	I did not have time for the English part.	Self-assessment
M	Yes. I again the presentation because it is very funny.	Enjoyment
D	Yes, I would want to because I would like to see the improvements I will make next year.	Self-reflection Improvement
CT	Is there anything else you would like to share?	
A	I have learnt that in order to do something well, we need to work hard.	Effort

E. PEER CHECK

A sample preliminary coding of the initial interview with T9 (Date of Interview : February 2010: Duration of Interview : 19:54)

R	<p>As you know, I am conducting research for my doctoral thesis on the implementation of alternative assessment in the young learner classroom. As someone who teaches young learners, you are in an invaluable position to describe your own experiences with young learners and alternative assessment. And that is what this experience is about: your experiences with young learners and alternative assessment and your thoughts about these experiences.</p> <p>The answers from this interview, as well as the other interviews, are an important part of my research. Neither your name nor the name of other teachers, nor that of the school or of any of the students will be mentioned in my work. As we go through the interview, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask. I'd like to record what you say so that my information is accurate. If at any time you would like to stop the recording, all you have to do is press the button on the microphone and the recording will stop. Or if there is anything you do not want to answer, just say so. Are there any questions before we begin?</p>	
R	Then let me thank you again in advance for your time and insight. Okay, let's begin. So I wanted to start with just a little background information. What grade level are you teaching?	
T9	First grade, seven year old students.	
R	So suppose I was in your classroom during a typical lesson, if there is such a thing as a typical lesson, what might I see happening? What are you doing? What are the students doing?	
T9	Well we have our daily routines . We start with the day of the week and then the weather and then write the date on the board and of course before all of them we take the attendance. And then you know like maybe	

	doing some vocabulary presentation and a project or an activity to follow it or maybe some PYP topic .	
R	What does the physical environment of the classroom look like?	
T9	There are five tables in the classroom and like each table has four or five students so it is more like a group seating plan.	
R	Okay, thank you. So could you tell me a little bit about what types of materials you use in the classroom? Coursebook, extra material, anything?	
T9	Well, our coursebook is more like a pile of reading texts, which is called <i>Cornerstone</i> and we have readers. Also we have a picture dictionary that we use in the classroom too for like students when they have to look for a word. And the other is all teacher prepared materials, more like project based or activity based materials.	
R	Okay. Could you tell me if there is an assessment component during the lesson what might that look like? How do you check that the students are learning what you want them to learn?	
T9	It is usually done through teacher observation and I walk around the class and see how students are doing and also the final version of their project, worksheet or whatever they are doing shows the teacher how much they have learned or haven't. Usually through observation and looking at their work.	Assessment through in-class observation
R	Can you tell me a little bit more how you assess your students?	
T9	Well, um.	
R	So you mentioned during class by teacher observation, by checking their work.	
T9	And, also after each PYP unit we have it is more like vocabulary testing the students circle the word that they hear among the three pictures of words and also sometimes they do presentations, short presentations about the topic we are working on but there isn't a	Vocab testing Short presentation Not systematic No rubric

	systematic way, well there isn't a rubric to evaluate their presentations. I don't know like.	
R	That is great, thank you. Just generally speaking, I mean I don't know throughout the interview I might repeat myself a little bit I just want to give you a chance to share as much information as you feel comfortable with, could you explain how you view assessment, generally speaking?	
T9	Well, how I view assessment, well it is a great tool to see how much students have learned, how much you have achieved your goals and also it gives you the opportunity to go back and review and it is very helpful for reflection, but also I think like limiting it to one class period, like regular tests here, limiting it to forty minutes and also putting some pressures and stress on students, are the disadvantages of testing. Students should be more free and should the assessment should take place in the regular on-going lesson.	(referring to traditional assessment) Check if they have learned Review Reflection But stressful and should be limited. (referring to alt. Ass.) Free A part of regular classes
R	So back tracking a little bit, can tell me how planning works at your level? For example, I think there is a new curriculum, so how do you make sure that the curriculum is put into action in the classroom?	
T9	We prepare CIPs. And with our partner, I mean the teacher we share the level with, we plan accordingly, also taking the PYP lines of inquiry into consideration and the items in the curriculum we plan our CIPS which is like every six weeks. I mean six weeks of six units. We also try to cover all the objectives mentioned in the curriculum and also try to match and cover all the lines of inquiry in the PYP unit.	PYP lines-guideliness CIPs with a partner (6 week plans-6 units)
R	Okay. So with the objectives how do you or do you measure or decide that they have been met?	
T9	Again through observation, teacher observation you can say and through the students' work.	Observing st. Workd to check learning
R	So how do you plan the development of materials at your level? You mentioned that you use quite a bit of teacher-made materials in class.	

T9	We share the workload. We prepare with our partner. I mean I am not quite clear about what you are.	Partnership
R	The question. For example, the materials that are used in class how do you decide that those are the materials that you want to use.	
T9	So with the person we share the grade level with we discuss what we need and then we decide if we need to prepare it or use the ones that are already prepared for.	Partnership in planning
R	So according to your needs, objectives.	
T9	Yea sure.	Objectives-materials
R	What about your assessments, how are they planned? You mentioned some of the assessments that you used. For example, vocabulary.	
T9	Again through looking at our objectives and again those tests are prepared by those teachers, teaching that level.	Teacher prepared tests for assessing vocab Team work/partnership
R	Thank you. Okay, what type of alternative assessments have you used in your classroom? I believe you are using portfolios for example.	
T9	Yes, well portfolios and also they pick to choose their own work they put in their portfolios and they also have a work tag that is attached to their piece of work that they have chosen. And, other than portfolio what else do we use? I don't think we use anything other than portfolios.	Portfolios & student choice & work tag
R	Okay, could you share some of the experiences you've had with portfolios perhaps positive, negative?	
T9	Well, positive I think when we have that portfolio period, that portfolio lesson they get all their work back from that PYP unit, or that six weeks so they have a chance to look at what they've done and also remember the things that were covered during the lessons and then they choose their own work which makes them be kind of be more, how can I say like, more reflective about their own work because they also have to mention (work tag) why they like their work and why they have	Pos. of port. Portfolio period Overview of 6 weeks Review & reflect (self-assessment-choosing & reflecting using

	<p>chosen that work and also they have to think if they were to do that work again, how they would change it. What kind of changes would they make to make it better so it also gives them an opportunity to think back and reflect on their work and also with portfolios, of course we have some difficulties, especially with first grades because in the beginning of the year they can't read and write so we have to send the work tags home for the parent to complete for their child or sometimes we have to help them a lot with writing. But, second semester is usually easier when they can read and write.</p>	<p>the work tag)</p> <p>Down sides: First semester- do not know reading & writing Lots of parent & teacher support needed</p>
R	<p>Thank you. So imagine if you were asked by a new teacher for some advice about assessment, alternative assessment, what would you say? You know perhaps they would want to know what you have found useful or not so useful.</p>	
T9	<p>Well, actually the advice would depend on which grade level they were going to work with or why you know they were thinking of doing an alternative assessment. It depends on the students' needs and the teacher's objectives, but you know for the grade level I am teaching it is quite difficult to do things like peer-assessment or self-assessment because they are quite young to do things like that. They are either like say everything is good or like no this is not that good. Things like the portfolio or like the teacher observation is so important. Portfolios work really good with that age. And also at the end of the year they have something to take home and maybe to carry to next years, the work they have. And also they can see the development, the improvement in their English level or also their you know they handle the things, even their drawings and handwriting, everything. It shows how education has been useful for them.</p>	<p>Level Objectives Down side (difficulty of peer & self assessment-age-simplistic comments)</p> <p>A good record of learning & sth. To take home & continuity</p>
R	<p>Thank you. Imagine that same teacher asks you what factors can help or hinder the process of using alternative assessments, maybe in your case portfolios what would you say? What makes the process easier or what makes that process more difficult?</p>	
T9	<p>I think I have mentioned it like writing, writing down</p>	<p>Writing down</p>

	<p>the answers in the work tag is difficult. And some students want to take their work back home. They want to keep it which is why they don't want to pick their best work and to put in the portfolio. But, still with some teacher guidance and help they get to choose their best work. And, also maybe in portfolio it doesn't always have to be their best work. They can also choose the work they didn't like and they can also reflect on why they didn't like that work and how they could improve it. And you know sometimes when you send the portfolios home it may be difficult to get them back because sometimes students, sometimes parents forget to send it back to school. Or sometimes they they were supposed to keep it at home. But, once they get to the routine of portfolio work everything becomes easier.</p>	<p>the answers in the work tag. Sts not choosing the best for port because they want to take it home☺ Forgetting to bring it back Guidance is important</p>
R	<p>Are there any types of alternative assessments you would like to use but haven't for some reason?</p>	
T9	<p>Well, yes self-assessment would be something I would like to use, but maybe with this age group it could be one column of self-assessment which has another column that has another column of teacher assessment on the side so they can see if their answers match with what the teacher thinks or if it doesn't and maybe after a couple of times of doing it maybe they can get a more like concrete, a more objective assessment, self, assessing themselves.</p>	<p>Self-assessment tool</p>
R	<p>So if that is something you would like to do, is there a reason why you haven't done it or just ?</p>	
T9	<p>I don't know I feel like they'll just say, "It was good." or "It was really good." Or if it was not writing but circling something, like 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, I feel like they would just circle five all the time. Or sometimes there are students who are not confident enough so maybe they would be harsh on themselves and say no, it wasn't good where the teacher would think that it was a good job. So I am not quite sure if they would be realistic and objective enough to do that.</p>	<p>Self assessment concerns Overrating Underestimating Realistic & objective self-assessment</p>
R	<p>So from you experiences as a teacher how do you think students respond to using alternative assessments? Like in your case, portfolios, how do you think they respond to that?</p>	

T9	Students love having a portfolio. And also they like to choose their own work when they have that opportunity when it is their work and they pick their best work. And also I mean sometimes they want to fill in the second part of the work tag which is like which expects them to be reflective and change it they probably say, “I like it as it is. I wouldn’t change it.” But, in that case we try to encourage them to come up with an answer and explain them there is always a way to make it even better. So, but now they have started to come up with an answer and they have started to come up with great answers now so I think that part was quite challenging at the beginning of the year, but students are getting used to it.	Sts love it Learning to answer the 2 nd question
R	Good. So generally speaking, what are the main obstacles of assessing young learners in English? What do you find the most challenging?	
T9	Well, like they can easily be demotivated when they have a bad remark or when they have an assessment with a bad grade, like a low grade. I think like balancing it, like doing it without demotivating them. Or like also helping them to carry out their good work. When they feel like okay everything is great sometimes they feel like I know everything, I don’t need to try hard anymore, kind of like. Keeping that balance is difficult. I don’t know like, I think that is the only difficulty, I think.	Giving feedback that motivates them
R	Is there anything else you would like to mention?	
T9	No	
R	Okay, so if you don’t mind I would like to conclude our interview by gathering just a little bit more information about your teaching background. How long have you been teaching?	
T9	Ten years	
R	Has all of that time been at this school?	
T9	Yes	
R	What grade levels or age groups have you worked with?	
T9	I’ve worked with almost grade levels from kindergarten	

	to eighth grade. I haven't taught fourth grade or seventh grade ever. Other than that all the grades.	
R	Okay, great. Thank you.	
T9	You are welcome.	

A sample summative interview with T6 (Date of Interview : June 2010: Duration of Interview : 9:33)

R	<p>I would like to thank you again for participating in my research this semester. I know how busy you are so I greatly appreciate that you have been willing to share your experiences, your classroom and your time with me. This interview will be brief. It will be our last interview until I have finished processing my data at which time I might ask you to share your opinions with me again if you are interested and willing.</p> <p>As you know, the answers from this interview, as well as the other interviews, are an important part of my research. Neither your name nor the name of other teachers, nor that of the school or of any of the students will be mentioned in my work. As we go through the interview, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask. I'd like to record this interview as well so that my information is accurate. If at any time you would like to stop the recording, all you have to do is slide this button on the microphone and the recording will stop. If there is anything you do not want to answer, just say so. The purpose of this interview is to gather any additional insights you might like to share about the implementation of alternative assessment and young learners. Are there any questions before we begin?</p>	
T6	No	
R	Thank you again. Shall we start?	
T6	Sure	
R	If you reflect back on the last semester what factors have you found had an impact on the classroom implementation of alternative assessment?	

T6	Hmm	
R	You can take some time to think, if you like.	
T6	I think first off some of the biggest factors were, I would have to say, especially in second grades where I worked with small groups and wrote teacher notes about the students, sometimes the lesson plans themselves didn't always gear themselves toward small groups so I think that impeded the consistency of implementing it. And it was difficult to do because you need two teacher to take out small groups and sometimes there would be scheduling conflicts, last minute changes in the schedule, so we could have planned activities that were good for small groups but sometimes other things happened outside of that. And I would say also that for teacher notes, especially when I worked with the students it depended on a lot on how they were feeling that day, especially because it was not as consistent as I would have liked it. It was sometimes hard to tell if they were struggling with something or if it was just a bad day. So I think in general the timetable was the biggest impediment.	Context limitations? Timetable Managing group work
R	Thank you. Were there any factors that had a positive impact?	
T6	Like I said having two teachers in the classroom, when it did work, when I was able to take out a small group made it much better I think for the assessment because you just work with a smaller group of kids and you get a better idea because they interact more with the materials and the lesson and you could a much better idea. So yea, having two teachers in the classroom. Also when I worked with Vanesa in kindergarten having two teachers there to work on portfolios allows you to spend more time listening to the kids.	Positive Working with a partner
R	Thank you. Thinking back over the last semester how would you describe the role of alternative asesment in the instructional process? If it had a role.	
T6	In giving instructions? Or in the act of teaching?	
R	Yea, in the act of teaching.	
T6	I would say that it was useful in the sense that you got to know your students a lot better and I found that I	Positive on teaching Getting to know your

	<p>learned much more about my students from alternative assessment than from a spelling test or a unit test and that allowed me to have better interactions with them when I was teaching. Because you often got a sense of, for example with portfolios, what kind of activities they liked and what kind of activities they found satisfying or challenging. You could use that to sort of change your materials as you go or maybe make last minute changes that you would otherwise wouldn't have made without the alternative assessment. I think the biggest thing is that you get to know your students a lot more. Their strengths and weaknesses.</p>	<p>students-strengths and weaknesses</p>
R	<p>Great. What affect do you think alternative assessments had or have on student learning?</p>	
T6	<p>I think especially it made them much more reflective on their learning and got them thinking about why are they doing something and not just doing it for the sake of doing it. Especially with portfolios, I found that they become a lot more, they learn to look at themselves in a different light than they would have before. And then with the other assessment that I did, the teacher notes, I think that the activity that lead to the assessment, basically me taking out a small group of kids was really positive for student learning because they saw that a teacher was taking an interest in them and then in the following lesson when I didn't take them out they seemed to look to me more and they wanted to interact with me more and felt much more comfortable asking questions so I think it improves student to teacher relations and I think it makes students feel more comfortable in the classroom and more comfortable expressing their problems with the work.</p>	<p>Student learning Reflective Esp the small group activity Improving st-te relationship Sts feeling more comfortable</p>
R	<p>Good. In what ways would you say that alternative assessment is in alignment with the instructional process, curriculum implementation, planning, materials?</p>	
T6	<p>I think that it is very much inline with the what is it described as, the instructional process, I think it is very much in line with that because, you, as you plan, especially with the curriculum we are doing the PYP curriculum, I think that you are doing it from a more content based approach so you can't necessarily test them on grammar or anything like that. So to me it is just one more thing to add into the process, like it's you want to figure out if they are actually learning what you are teaching them so it is something that since I started</p>	<p>Consistent with PTP-focus on the learning process</p>

	planning this year it is something that has always been added into the process. So yea.	
R	Would you say there are ways that it is not in alignment with the instructional process?	
T6	I mean I think it is very easy to avoid it, like, if you are not thinking about it, especially with younger learners it is much easier to say okay I will make a big test at the end of the course. So I think for me if I had not been aware of it at the beginning of the year, because this is the first environment I am really teaching in, if I hadn't been aware of it in the beginning of the year, I could have easily not implemented it. It is one of those things that if you are aware of it and know how to do it you could easily fit it in. It makes you think a little bit more while you are planning, but in the end it makes your plans a lot better. But if you are not thinking about you can easily sort of ignore it. Because not including it in the process is not a hindrance, I would say.	
R	Thank you. Again, thinking back over the last semester how do you think students have reacted to their experiences with alternative assessment? I think you mentioned this, but if you have anything else to say.	
T6	Yea. I just think they have reacted mostly positively. Some students of course are lazy as always and they don't want to take the time to be reflective or don't, don't appreciate more one on one attention of the teacher, but overall I would say the majority of students have had a very positive reaction because they love having someone taking more of an interest in them. I think at the end of the day alternative assessment forces us to take more interest in our students and to get to know them better and they become less a number on a page and more of an actual little human being. So I think at the end of the day they very much like that.	Most sts are happy feeling that they are cared for
R	Is there anything else you would like to add?	
T6	No, I guess that is it.	
R	Okay, thank you very much.	
T6	You are welcome.	

Initial coding from the student focus group

<p>Translated Focus Group Interview with Grade 3, June 2010, conducted by class teacher (CT), attended by Lynn B. Cetin and volunteer recorder and translator</p> <p>Original answers given in English are presented in bold.</p>		
CT	<p>Today we are going to ask you some questions about Portfolio Day. The questions will be in Turkish and you can answer in Turkish, if you like.</p> <p>Can you please tell me about Portfolio Day?</p>	
A	<p>It went well. We chose five pieces of second grade work and give third grade work. We presented it. Then, we talked about what we chose for English and why we chose it.</p>	<p>Positive choosing and presenting</p>
E	<p>My mom and dad came. I tell my activities. What we would change. Choose five work. "Very good portfolio presentation" said mom and dad.</p>	<p>Positive parents came and liked it. Choosing and presenting.</p>
K	<p>Portfolio day is very good. My portfolio is very good. I presented it to my parents. I did not have enough time to present all of it. I remember the questions, I answered them.</p>	<p>Positive. Parents. Presenting.</p>
D	<p>I was nervous first but then I was fine. It was really good. I presented my English portfolio first. It went well. My mom liked it a lot.</p>	<p>Positive. Parents liked it.</p>
E	<p>My presentation was very good. My performance was very good. Five second grade, five third grade. Our teacher was there, too. She also liked it.</p>	<p>Positive. Other grades and teacher came.</p>
CT	<p>What is it?</p>	
C	<p>Last Wednesday before the school finishes.</p>	
E2	<p>It is presenting what we have done.</p>	<p>Presenting.</p>
E	<p>Portfolio Day is finish the year and mom and dad come</p>	<p>Parents.</p>

	and we tell our portfolio and describe.	Describing.
CT	Who participated?	
A	Grade three	
M	My dad	
E2	Mothers and fathers	
Z	My mom and my little brothers.	
CT	Why did you do it?	
D	In order to compare second and third grade. So that they can see the improvement.	To see our progress
C	They don't know what we do. It is for them to see it.	Sharing with others
CT	How did you prepare for it?	
D	We organized our files, we picked the work, we rehearsed, we presented to our friends, we worked hard.	Organizing, choosing, rehearsing, presenting, hard work
E	We cleared our portfolio, chose 5 work. We practiced.	Organizing, choosing, practice.
CT	How do you feel about your experience?	
M	I have observed that I had improved a lot since second grade. We don't have difficulty with those pieces of work that we had difficulty with last year.	progress
E	In second grade we are saying 'the ball', in third grade we are autobiographies, poems, etc.	progress
CT	What if anything did you learn from the experience?	
E2	I have learnt presenting something, talking about something and introducing ourselves.	Presenting & introducing oneself
E	We have learnt so many things all year long. We learn more things every year.	Overview of the year
CT	Would you want to do it again? (Why? /Why not?)	?
E	Yes , I would like to. Because this time I would like to use my time more efficiently. I could not finish	

	everything.	
D	I wouldn't want to. I used my time efficiently, I finished everything.	
X	Yes. I would like to use my time more efficiently. I could not finish the Turkish part.	
E	I did not have time for the English part.	
M	Yes. I again the presentation because it is very funny.	
D	Yes, I would want to because I would like to see the improvements I will make next year.	
CT	Is there anything else you would like to share?	
A	I have learnt that in order to do something well, we need to work hard.	

If I was analyzing this data as an independent researcher, I'd have created categories using the what I had highlighted in the box. Then, I'd eliminate the themes that are not recurrent.

Benefits of Alternative Assessment
Process-focused <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair • Varied • Shows learning • Shows interaction between thinking and learning
Student-focused <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes the student as an individual • Encourages active learners • Encourages autonomous learners
Learning-focused <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable for differentiated learning • Clarifies expectations • Provides feedback for teaching

VITA

Lynn Marie Bethard Çetin was born in 1974 in San Diego, California. She received a B.A. in Spanish Language and Literature from the University of California, Berkeley in 1996. After graduation she started her teaching career as a bilingual classroom teacher in the Bay Area where she worked with primary school students and adults. In 1999 she earned a California teaching credential from the state of California and California State University, East Bay that gave special authorization to work with ESL and bilingual students. She moved to Turkey in 2000 and began to work as an English teacher in a private primary school in the fall of 2001. Lynn has held a variety of different positions in the school and has been a regular participant in professional development and training. She received her M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on literacy and multilingual students from San Diego State University in 2005. She began her doctoral studies at METU in the fall of 2006.

TURKISH SUMMARY

GİRİŞ

Bu çalışmanın amacı küçük yaştaki öğrenci sınıflarında alternatif değerlendirme uygulamalarını keşfetmek ve daha iyi bir anlayış geliştirmektir. Bu geniş kapsamlı ve nitelikli çalışma, öğrencilerin bakış açısı ve eğitim sürecinde alternatif değerlendirmenin etkilerinin yanısıra öğretmenlerin uygulamalarına ve inanışlarına odaklanmaktadır. Vaka çalışmaları dokuz farklı İngilizce öğretmenin ve onların birinci, ikinci, üçüncü, dördüncü ve beşinci sınıflarında altı aylık bir sürede alternatif değerlendirme uygulamaları, stratejileri ve araçları üzerine uygulanmıştır. Veriler görüşmeler, ders gözlemleri ve ilgili belgeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Bulgular öğretmenlerin alternatif değerlendirme metotlarını değişen devamlılıklarla ve verimliliklerle kullandıklarını göstermiştir. Öğretmenler, alternatif değerlendirmenin öğrenmeyi, düşünme ve öğrenme arasındaki etkileşimi gösterdiğine, öğrenciyi bir birey olarak vurguladığına ve aktif ve bağımsız öğrenciler olma yönünde cesaretlendirdiğine inanmaktadırlar. Ayrıca farklılaştırılmış öğrenmeyi teşvik ettiğine, beklentileri netleştirdiğine ve öğrencileri ve öğretmenleri motive ettiğine inanmaktadırlar. Öğretmenler, alternatif değerlendirmenin öğrenme sürecinde ve sonuçlarında ve aynı zamanda öğrencilerin duyuşsal ve bilişsel gelişimlerinde olumlu etkisi olduğuna inanıyorlar. Altı sınıf uygulaması etmenleri, alternatif değerlendirmenin sınıfta kullanımına etki etmek üzere belirlenmiştir: dil yeteneği, kavramsal zeka, planlama, süre, eğitim ve sınıf ortamı.

Yapılan araştırmalarda, küçük yaştaki öğrencilerin eğitiminde “önemli yeniliklerle birlikte bazı temel konularda şeffaflık eksikliği olduğu görülmektedir” (Rea-Dickens, 2000 p. 245). Çocuk eğitimi üzerine yapılan çalışmalar yeni bir uygulama değildir, buna rağmen, son on yılda İngilizce derslerinde gerek devlet sisteminde gerekse de özel dil okullarında önemli ölçüde gelişmeler olmuştur (Cameron, 2001b). Cameron bu iddasında yalnız değildir. Şöyle ki, son zamanlarda ki artan ilgi, metodoloji kitap yayınlarının artmasına olanak sağlamıştır. Fakat teorik ve araştırma konularında buna paralel bir tartışma geliştirilmesi konusunda büyük

ölçüde eksiklikler vardır. Alternatif yaklaşımlar da arařtırmalar içinde buna benzer düşünceler belirtmektedir. Tsagari'nin ileri sürdüğü yaklaşım ise "Alternatif değerlendirme yaklaşımlarının aslında sınıfta etkileşim içinde nasıl gerçekleştirildiğini ve bu çalışmaya uygun kuram ve araştırma yöntemlerinin bu oldukça karmaşık ve dinamik öğretme-öğrenme arayüzü değerlendirmesi ile pozitif etkilerinin olduğu gibi kesin bir sonuca varmadan nasıl geliştireceğimizi" öğrenmemiz gerektiğidir (Tsagari, 2004, p. 14). Rea-Dickens (2000a), Cameron (2001b), and McKay (2005) ise daha ampirik bir arařtırmayı savunmaktadır. Savunmacılar, sınıf öğretmenlerinin aynı zamanda etkili bir alternatif değerlendirme yöntemi öğrenmeye çalıştıklarını belirtmektedirler. Bu çalışmada bulunan sonuçlara göre de arařtırmacıların küçük yaştaki öğrenci sınıflarındaki alternatif değerlendirme uygulamalarına daha fazla anlayış eklemeyi planladıkları sonucuna varılmaktadır.

ÇALIŞMANIN AMACI

Bu çalışmanın amacı, küçük yaştaki öğrenci sınıflarında alternatif değerlendirme uygulamalarını keşfetmek ve böylece küçük öğrenci sınıflarında alternatif değerlendirme alanında daha iyi bir anlayış geliştirmektir. Vaka çalışmaları dokuz farklı İngilizce dil öğretmeni üzerinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Onların alternatif değerlendirme stratejileri ve araçları, öğretmenler ve öğrencilerin sınıf ortamlarında derinlemesine bir çalışmaya olanak sağlamak için altı aylık bir dönem içinde ve onların birinci ikinci üçüncü dördüncü ve beşinci sınıf İngilizce derslerinde incelenmiştir. Bu çalışma hem öğretmenlerin çalışmaları ve inançları, hem de öğrencilerin tepkisi üzerine odaklanmaktadır. Buna ek olarak, öğretim sürecinde alternatif değerlendirmenin rolü de analiz edilecektir.

İLGİLİ ÇALIŞMALAR

Daha iyi bir alternatif değerlendirme ve küçük yaştaki öğrencilerin ilgili oldukları konuları anlamak amacıyla, uluslararası ve ulusal bağlamda temsil edilen ampirik bir araştırma ve inceleme seçilmiş, sunulmuştur.

Rea-Dickens ve Gardner (2000) ilköğretim okulunda biçimlendirici değerlendirme niteliği üzerine vaka çalışması yapmıştır. Bu çalışma, İngilizce dili öğrenenlerin dil desteği için özel dikkat ile, dokuz şehiriçi okul için yapılmıştır. Araştırmacı öğrencilere şu soruları sormaktadır:

1. Yerinde değerlendirme prosedürlerinin aralığı ve alınan değeri nedir? Ne içindir? Nelerden etkilenir?
2. Bu profesyoneller hangi konularda öğrencilerin EAL ile dil desteği ile birlikte hem dil gelişimi ve başarı puanları, hemde öğrencilerin kendi değerlendirmelerindeki algısından sorumludurlar?
3. Değerlendirme, müfredat, karar verme ve dil sınıfı pratik öğrenme destekleri de dahil değerlendirme sürecinin farklı gösterimleri nelerdir?

Sonuçta öğretmenler biçimlendirme ve son değerlendirme arasındaki farklılıkların göründükleri gibi kesin çizgilerle belirlenmemiş olduğunu idda ediyorlar. Ayrıca, sınıf tabanlı değerlendirme ile ilgili olarak da güvenilirlik ve geçerlilik arasındaki etkileşimin karmaşık olduğunu söylemektedirler.

Gatullo (2000)'in İtalya'da sunduğu bir vaka çalışmasında ELT öğretimi yapılan birinci sınıf düzeyinde biçimlendirici değerlendirme üzerinde duruluyor. İlgili yazarın temel amacı;

1) Araştırmacılar için

- a) EFL öğretmenleri tarafından ilköğretim okullarının son yıllarda nasıl tanımlandığını ve değerlendirildiğini (örneğin 8-10 yaş arası çocuklar)
- b) biçimlendirici değerlendirmenin farklı boyutlarını;
- c) biçimlendirici değerlendirmenin 'iyi uygulama' bazlı örneklerini betimlemektir.

2) Öğretmenler için

- a) bilgi toplama yöntemleri, geri bildirim sağlanması ve sonuçlarının kullanımı açısından biçimlendirme ve son değerlendirme arasındaki farkların
- b) biçimlendirici değerlendirmenin farklı boyutlarının
- c) sınıfta, hem örtük ve hem de açık ölçüde değerlendirme eylem yelpazesinin
- d) biçimlendirici sınıf değerlendirme için geliştirilmiş stratejilerin olası gelişimi

için bir fırsat oluşunun

altını çizmektedir.

Çalışmanın başlangıcı sırasında, analiz verileri, bazı biçimlendirici değerlendirme eylemlerinin diğerlerine göre daha sık olduğunu göstermiş, düzeltme ve yargılar sorgulanmıştır. Süreç izlenmesi ve ürün inceleme sorgulamasında, daha faydalı olduğu düşünülen üstbilişsel yöntem sık olarak kullanılan bir yöntem değildi. Öğretmenler daha fazla yararlı olacağını düşündükleri biçimlendirici değerlendirmeyi bu bilinçle geliştirmişlerdi. Öğretmenler de öğrencilerine karşı açık bir tutumun önemini ve bir çalışmalarının yeni bir anlayış geliştirmek amacı ile meslektaş-öğretmen gözlemlerine dayanması gerekliliğini anlamış oldular.

Yürütülen çalışmalar Türk Milli Eğitim içeriği çerçevesinde yürütülmektedir. Çimer ve Timuçin (2008) biçimlendirici değerlendirme algıları ve ilkokul İngilizce öğretmenlerinin alışkanlıkları üzerine Trabzon ilinde bir vaka çalışması yürüttü. Bu çalışmada 200 katılımcı İngilizce öğretmenin çalışması vardı. Araştırmacılar, bu çalışma sonucunda öğretmenlerin biçimlendirici değerlendirme amacıyla çeşitli performans görevlerini uygulamaları gerektiği sonucuna varmışlardır. Öğretmenler kendilerine güvenen kişilerdir ve farklı değerlendirme metodları uygulamada başarılı olmalarına rağmen, teori ve terminoloji ilişkileri geliştirme konusunda gelişme göstermeye ihtiyaçları olduğu görülmektedir. Bu çalışmada öğretmenler için hizmetiçi eğitim uygulamasına geçilmesinin faydalı olacağı sonucuna varıldı. Çimer ve Timuçin'in gözlemlerine göre son zamanlarda eğitimini tamamlayan öğretmenlerin daha biçimlendirici değerlendirme tekniklerine aşına olduğu sonucu ortaya çıkmıştır. İlgili araştırmacılar öğretmen eğitimi için bunun olumlu bir işaret olduğunu düşünmektedirler.

Yeni ilköğretim müfredat uygulaması sonrası yenilenen bir yapılandırmaya dayalı değişikliklere odaklanan bu çalışmaların çoğu 2004-2005 yıllarında gerçekleştirilmiştir. Özdemir (2009) Türkiye'de yeni uygulanmaya başlanan ilköğretim programında, ölçme ve değerlendirme sürecinde, sınıf öğretmenleri

tarafından karşılaşılan sorunlar üzerinde durmuştur. Çalışmaya Kırıkkale il merkezinde görev yapan 21 farklı okuldan 287 sınıf öğretmeni katılmıştır. İlgili veriler tarama modelinin bir kullanımı yoluyla açıklayıcı yöntem kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Likert tipi ölçek, sınıf öğretmenleri tarafından yaşanan sorunları belirlemek için kullanılmıştır. Altı faktör analizine dayanarak, 25 maddelik yapı ortaya çıkmıştır. Ölçeğin bahsedilen altı faktörü alternatif ölçme-değerlendirme araçları, zaman, çevre, öğrenci, veli ve denetim elemanları olarak belirlenmiştir. Elde edilen sonuçlara göre öğretmenlerin alt faktörlerin hepsi ile ilgili olarak yeni ölçme ve değerlendirme yöntemleri hakkında zorluklar yaşadığı belirlenmiştir. Öğretmenler, en büyük zorluk yaşadıkları durumun ise zaman olduğunu bildirmişlerdir. Ayrıca, sınıf mevcudu da düşünülmesi gereken bir konudur. Kalabalık sınıflarda çalışan öğretmenlerin (30-40 öğrenci ve 40-50 öğrenci) daha fazla sorun yaşadığı belirlenmiştir. Bu çalışmanın sonucunda, öneriler, ölçme ve değerlendirme, hizmet içi eğitim ve bu alanlarda öğretmenlerin değerlendirilmesinin devamı kapsamında, öğretmenlerin güçlü ve zayıf yönlerini belirlemek için daha fazla araştırma yapılması gerektiği belirtilmiştir.

Çiftçi, S. (2010) okullarda kullanılan performans görevleri hakkında öğretmenlerin görüşlerini, alternatif bir değerlendirme türü olarak, daha iyi anlayabilmek için araştırma yapmıştır. Bu çalışmada katılımcı olan 20 sınıf öğretmeni dördüncü veya beşinci sınıfta eğitim veren ve Konya İli merkezinde çalışan kişiler idi. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları, öğretmenlerin, anne-babaların davranışları, yeterli süre, öğretmen oranı, ekipman eksikliği, değerlendirme formlarındaki aşırılık ve öğrenci tutumları nedeniyle çeşitli sorunlarla karşı karşıya olduğunu göstermiştir. Böylece, Çiftçi, öğretmenlerin yeni müfredatın ölçme ve değerlendirme bölümü ile ilgili sorunların var olduğu sonucuna varmıştır.

Gelbal ve Kelecioğlu (2007), ölçme ve değerlendirme teknikleri uygulanırken genel olarak öğretmenlerin karşılaştıkları sorunların yeterlilik algılarını incelemek için, Ankara'nın merkez ilçelerindeki birinci sınıftan altıncı sınıfa kadar değişik sınıflarda eğitim veren 242 sınıf ve branş öğretmenleri için bir anket uyguladı. Öğretmenlerin ölçme aletleri kullanmaya çalışırken karşılaştıkları başlıca sorunlar, kalabalık

dersikler ve tabii ki yetersiz ders süreleri idi. Sonuç olarak, ilgili arařtırmacılar da öğretmenler için ölçüm yöntemlerinin kullanımı konusunda daha fazla eğitim önermektedirler.

Birgin ve Baki (2009) ölçme ve değerlendirme yöntemleri hakkında ilköğretim okulu öğretmenlerinin yeterlik algıları hakkında soruşturma yürütmüştür. Bu örnekte, Türkiye'de 15 ilden 975 rastgele seçilen ilköğretim öğretmenleri çalışmaya dahil olmuştur. Bu çalışma, öğretmenlerin kendi performansları ve alternatif değerlendirme yöntemleri (Dergiler, listeleri, öz / yaşıt değerlendirme, tutum ölçekleri, görüşme, portföyler ve projeler) ile yeterli algıya sahip olmadıklarını göstermektedir. Birgin ve Baki de öğretmenler için hizmet içi eğitim ve alternatif değerlendirme konularında yeterli tanıtımların yapılması gerektiğine ve lisans eğitimi süresince farklı alternatif değerlendirme yöntemlerini kullanmalarına fırsat verilmesi gerektiğine vurgu yapmıştır.

DEĞERLENDİRME YÖNTEM VE ÇEŞİTLERİ

Hamp-Lyons (1992), faaliyetler arasında ayırım olduğunu ve bizim bu yolla bilgileri düzenleyerek kayıt etmemizin daha pratik olacağını belirtmiştir. Bu ilkeye bağlılık, Tsagari (2004) ilgili literatürde alternatif değerlendirme metodları olarak aşağıdaki gibi ortaya çıkmıştır:

- Gözlemler
- Portfolyolar
- Kendini değerlendirme
- Yaşıtını değerlendirme
- Projeler
- Hikaye tekrarlı anlatımı
- Dramatize etme
- Oyunlar
- Günlükler/Dergiler
- Gösterimler
- Sergiler
- Konferanslar
- Sesli düşünme
- Tartışmalar

Tsagari (2004)'da en sık kullanılan araçlar şöyledir:

- Kişisel alıntılara dayalı kayıtlar
- İlerleme Kartları
- Kontrol Listesi
- Öğrenci Profilleri
- Derecelendirme Ölçekleri
- Anketler

Hamayan (1995)'de de benzer bir liste vardır. Bunun yanı sıra, ilgili çalışma, yaygın olarak kullanılan bir araç olan popüler yöntem ve stoklar gibi örnekler ve röportajları da içerir. Hamada'nın belirttiği gibi 'Hemen her sınıfta, okul ya da dil ile ilgili etkinlikler öğrenci hakkında bilgi kaynağı olarak hizmet edebilir, öğrencinin dil yeterliliği, öğrenme süreci, eğitim veya sınıf etkinliği, durumunu belirleyebilir' (p.217)

Bu tartışma en yaygın alternatif değerlendirme araçları için kısa bir derlemedir.

ARAŞTIRMA SORULARI

Bu amaçla, aşağıdaki araştırma soruları küçük yaştaki öğrenci sınıflarında alternatif değerlendirme uygulamasına rehber teşkil etmek üzere kurgulanmıştır:

RQ 1. Öğretmenin alternatif değerlendirme uygulamaları nelerdir?

RQ 1a. Öğretmenler hangi tür alternatif değerlendirme türleri uygulamaktadırlar?

RQ 1b. Alternatif değerlendirme uygulamalarını etkileyen etkenler nelerdir?

RQ2. Öğretmenlerin küçük yaştaki öğrenci sınıflarında yapılan değerlendirmeler hakkındaki inanışları nelerdir?

RQ2a. Öğretmenlerin küçük yaştaki öğrenci sınıflarında yapılan alternatif değerlendirmeler hakkındaki inanışları nelerdir?

RQ2b. Öğretmenlerin küçük yaştaki öğrenci sınıflarında yapılan alternatif değerlendirmelerin yararları hakkındaki inanışları nelerdir?

RQ2c. Öğretmenlerin küçük yaştaki öğrenci sınıflarında yapılan alternatif değerlendirmelerin zorlukları hakkındaki inanışları nelerdir?

RQ3.Öğrencilerin alternatif değerlendirmeler hakkındaki tepkileri nelerdir?

RQ4. Alternatif değerlendirmenin öğretim sürecindeki rolü nedir?

RQ4a. Alternatif değerlendirme ne şekilde öğretim süreciyle uyum içinde olabilir?

RQ4b. Alternatif değerlendirme ne şekilde öğretim süreciyle uyumsuz bir durum içinde olabilir?

ARAŞTIRMA YÖNTEMİ

Bu çalışma nitel bir durum çalışmasıdır. Çalışılan durum, okul ve derslik içindeki gerçek yaşam ortamında öğretmenlerin belirli bir grup açısından alternatif değerlendirme uygulamasıdır. Araştırmacı tarafından öğrenciler, veliler, idareciler ve öğretmenler ile bir çok deneyim paylaşılmış ve birçoğu bu çalışmada katılımcı olmuşlardır. Bu çalışmanın amacı zengin “içerikli” bir tanımlama sağlamaktır. Bu tanımlama bu çalışmada belirtilen olguyu aydınlatacak ve bu verilerle birden fazla kaynağa dayalı bir kuramının gelişiminde yol gösterici olacaktır. Görüşmeler, sınıf gözlemleri ve belgeleri ile ilgili veriler toplanmıştır. Bununla birlikte çeşitli teknikler araştırmanın tasarımını güçlendirmek için istihdam edilmiştir.

Nirengi (üçgenleme) çoklu yöntemleri ile iç geçerlilik güçlendirilmiştir. Nirengi çoklu yöntemleri verinin farklı zamanlarda farklı kişiler ve farklı alanlarda toplanmış olması olarak tanımlanmıştır. Metodolojik nirengi sağlanması için görüşmeler, gözlemler ve belgeler üzerinden veri toplanarak birden fazla yöntem kullanılmıştır. Bulguların tutarlılığı, farklı zamanlarda farklı insanlardan toplanan veriler arasında kıyaslama yaparak ve bu verilerin farklı yöntemlerle değerlendirilmesiyle sağlanmıştır.

Meslektaş incelemesi de gelişmekte olan bulgular ile birlikte kullanılmış ve sorunlar ve üye kontrolleri güvenilirliği sağlamak için kullanılmıştır. Dış geçerlilik ile ilgili olarak, örnek bir çalışma protokolü de açık bir denetim izi ile birlikte mevcuttur.

VERİ TOPLAMA VE ANALİZ YÖNTEMLERİ

Veriler, görüşme, gözlem, odak grup (Bölüm 3.4 'de tartışılan) ve belgeler olarak toplanmıştır. Her katılımcı öğretmen ile iki ayrı görüşme yapılmıştır. Bunlar çalışmanın başında ön görüşme ve sonunda bir özetleyici röportaj şeklindedir. Her öğretmen çalışma boyunca altı ders için farklı zamanlarda en az üç kez gözlenmiş, bu derslerden odak ders olan dört tanesinde öğretmenin birkaç çeşit alternatif değerlendirme kullandığı belirlenmiştir. Bu gözlemlerden önce, öğretmen bir ön gözlem izlenim formu doldurmuş ve her bir gözlem sonrasında ise gözlem sonrası izlenim formu ile ek soruların olduğu bir form doldurması istenmiştir. Bir sınıf ise odak grup olarak bu çalışmaya katılmıştır. Çalışma devam ederken, çalışmacı haftalık düzey planlama toplantılarına katılarak mümkün olduğunda ek kişisel görüşlerini de bu araştırmaya eklemeyi uygun görmüştür. Okul değerlendirme politikası, yeni İngilizce müfredat, ders uygulamaları planları ve öğrenci çalışma örnekleri de analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma sorularını aklında bırakarak, veri analizi, bireysel vakaları inceleyerek ve ardından olguları inceleyerek betimlenmiştir. Farklı kaynaklardan elde edilen veriler çalışmanın iç geçerliliğini güçlendirmek için bu süreç boyunca üçgenleme çoklu yöntemi ile elde edilmiştir.

AYARLAMALAR

Araştırma soruları esas alındığında, bu araştırma bireysel vakaları inceleyen ve ardından olguları inceleyerek betimleyen öncü bir araştırmadır. Farklı kaynaklardan elde edilen veriler çalışmanın iç geçerliliğini güçlendirmek için veri toplama süreci boyunca çoklu yöntem ile elde edilmiştir.

Çalışmada gözlemlenen okul Türkiye'de bulunan ve anaokulundan sekizinci sınıf düzeyine kadar öğrencisi bulunan özel bir ilköğretim okuludur. Bu öğrencilerin neredeyse % 100 Türk vatandaşı olup, okulda yaklaşık 900 öğrenci bulunmaktadır. Bu öğrencilerden %4'ünden azı uluslararası bir altyapıdan gelmektedir. Diğer bir deyişle bir ebeveyni ya da her iki ebeveyni yabancı uyruklu olan veya evde yabancı dil kullanan kişilerdir. Bu durum, incelenen okulun uluslararası nüfuslu bir okul

olmamakla birlikte, uluslararası bir eğitim sağlamak için zengin bir İngilizce programı aracılığıyla iki dilli bir öğrenme ortamı oluşturulmaya çalışan bir okul olduğunu vurgulamaktadır.

KATILIMCILAR

Bu kapsamda dokuz öğretmen ve projenin çeşitli aşamalarında destekçi olan iki ek öğretmen, çalışmaya katılmak için gönüllü olmuştur. Bu dokuz öğretmenin arasında bir birinci sınıf öğretmeni ve ikinci sınıftan beşinci sınıfa kadar ikişer sınıf öğretmeni bulunmaktadır. Örnekleme yoluyla seçilen bu dokuz öğretmen, teorik ve pratik amaçlar için çalışmaya dahil edilmiştir.

Öğrenci odak grubu, üçüncü sınıftaki 21 öğrenciden oluşan bir sınıftır. Odak grup haziran aylarında yapılacak her sınıf düzeyi için özel bir gün olan portföy gününde oluşturulmuş olup, bu günde öğrenciler ders saatleri sırasında okulda ebeveynlerine portföylerini sunmaktadırlar. Böyle bir gün seçimi yapılma nedeni portföy günündeki tartışmaların öğretim sürecine doğal olarak uyum sağlaması ve öğrenciler hakkında konuşmak için somut bir deneyim vermesidir. Öğretmenler tarafından yapılan notlandırmada üç notu ortalama not olarak seçilmiştir.

Bu çalışmada, araştırmacı olarak ben de, bir gözlemci ve katılımcıların bir iş arkadaşı olarak fiili olarak ek bir katılımcı olarak sayılabileceğimi düşünmekteyim. Okulda çalıştığım sürede kazandığım tecrübeler bu çalışmaya ilham vermiştir. Benim, okuluma ve meslektaşlarıma olan güvenim de bu araştırmanın yapılabilmesine olanak sağlamıştır. Sonuç olarak, ben de okul içinden yararlı ve dahili bir eleştirmen olarak bu çalışmada aktif bir rol aldım.

BAŞLICA BULGULARIN ÖZETİ

Araştırma Sorusu 1

Öğretmenler çok çeşitli amaçlar için etkinlik dereceleri değişen farklı alternatif değerlendirme yöntemleri ve çeşitli araçlar kullanır. Araştırmaya katılan dokuz

öğretmen de alternatif değerlendirme yöntemi olarak gözlemler, portföyler ve kendi kanaatlerini kullanmaktadırlar. Başka tür alternatif değerlendirme yöntemlerinin kullanımının çok daha sınırlı olduğu anlaşılmıştır. Dil yeteneği, bilişsel yetenek, planlama, zaman ve eğitim olarak sayılabilecek faktörlerin alternatif değerlendirme uygulamasını etkilediği belirlenmiştir.

Araştırma Sorusu 2

Öğretmenler değerlendirmenin temel amacının öğrenme kontrolünü denetlemek olduğuna inanıyorlar. Öğretmenler ayrıca değerlendirmenin 'farklı', 'devam eden', 'etkili' ve 'motivasyon rolü' dikkate alınan bir yaklaşım olduğuna inanıyorlar. Öğretmenler, alternatif değerlendirmenin öğrenmeyi ve düşünme ve öğrenme arasındaki etkileşimi gösterdiğini, bir birey olarak öğrenciyi vurguladığını, etkin ve özerk öğrenciler olmalarını teşvik ettiğini düşünmektedirler. Bununla birlikte, bu yöntemin farklı öğrenme biçimleri için uygun, beklentilerini karşılayan ve öğrenciler ve öğretmenleri motive eden bir yönü olduğunu düşünmektedirler. Ayrıca, öğretmenler, alternatif değerlendirmenin öğrenme üzerinde olumlu etkisinin olduğunu ve yeterince uygulama faktörlerini ele aldığını, alternatif değerlendirme süreci ve sonuçlarını, ve de bunun yanı sıra öğrencilerin duyuşsal ve bilişsel gelişimini geliştirdiğini savunmaktadırlar.

Araştırma Sorusu 3

Çoğu öğrenci alternatif değerlendirme yöntemleri uygulandığında kendilerini başarılı, gururlu, güvenli ve mutlu hissederler. Benzer olarak öğrenciler uygulama sonrası kendilerini rahat, motive olmuş ve de adaletle değerlendirilmiş hissederler.

Araştırma Sorusu 4

Alternatif değerlendirme öğretim sürecindeki öğrenmeyi kontrol etmek için doğal bir role sahiptir. Öğretmenler, öğretim ve değerlendirme süreçleri düzenlerler. Bazı öğretmenler alternatif ölçme ve resmi derecelendirme etkileşimlerini sorgularlar. Okul belgeleri alternatif değerlendirmenin tüm yönleri ile hazırlanır. Öğretmenler

öğrenme hedeflerini kontrol etmek için alternatif değerlendirme sonuçlarını kullanmazlar.

Öğretmen ve öğrencilerin alternatif değerlendirme hakkında olumlu inançları vardır ve bu aynı zamanda değerlendirme hakkında öğretmenlerin genel inançlarını da yansıtır.

Gözlemler, portföyler, özdeğerlendirme, öğretmen izleme, görev tamamlama ve değerlendirme listeleri, bu öğretim sürecinde tüm öğretmenlerin kullandığı ve yönetimde düzenli bir role sahip araçlardır. Diğer alternatif değerlendirme yöntemleri ne sık ne de etkili bir yöntem olarak kullanılmaktadırlar.

Bunun doğrudan uygulamalı altı faktöre bağlı bir çok olası nedeni vardır. Bu faktörler, dil yeteneğini, bilişsel yetenek, zaman, planlama, eğitim ve sınıf ortamı olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Öğrencilerin dil ve bilişsel yetenek seçimi alternatif değerlendirme uygulanmalarında kısıtlayıcı bir faktör olarak algılanıyor olabilir. Öğretmenlerin , öğrencilerin eğitimi için sınıf içi ve dışındaki zamanlarının sınırlı olması ve dolayısı ile yetersiz geribesleme de öğretmenlerin de kararlarını sınırlandırmaktadır. Sınıf ortamıyla ilgili konular özellikle sınıfın fiziksel koşulları da öğretmenlerin fikirlerini etkiler. Ancak, planlama bu konuların tümünde altta yatan faktördür. Çünkü planlama diğer beş faktörü etkiler ve diğer beş faktörden etkilenir.Uygulama faktörlerinin yanısıra, öğrenme çıktıları, yönetim süreci ve öğretim faaliyetleri ile malzemeler de planlama sürecinin bir parçası olarak vurgulanmaktadır. Öğretmenlerin etkin ve sürekli plan yapması için fazla zaman ve eğitilmiş olmaları gerekir. Eğitim, geçerli ve güvenilir alternatif değerlendirme faaliyetleri yaratmaya odaklanmalı ve bu da öğrenme süreci içine anlamlı geribildirim döngüsünü oluşturmalıdır.

UYGULAMA FAKTÖRLERİ

Alternatif değerlendirmelerin uygulanabilirliği üzerinde olumlu ya da olumsuz bir etkisi olabilecek altı faktör belirlenmiştir;

- dil kabiliyeti
- bilişsel kabiliyet
- zamanlama
- planlama
- eğitim
- sınıf ortamı

Küçük yaştaki öğrencilerin öğretmenleri, L1 ve L2 kullanımı hakkında tereddüt ve tartışma yaşamaktadırlar. Öğretmenler, öğrencilerine onların iyi bilmedikleri bir dilde görevlerini anlatmak ve üst düzey düşünme becerilerini geliştirmek gibi zor bir durumla karşı karşıyadır. Öğretmenlerin, L1 sınıfındaki öğrencilerle konuşmalarını bir meydan okuma anlamına gelebilir. Çok genç yaştaki öğrencilerin gelişmekte olan okuma ve yazma becerileri ile ilgili ek sorunları vardır. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin bilişsel yeteneği de dikkate alınması gereken bir faktördür. Cameron (2001b) ve McKay (2006), dil ve bilişsel yetenekleri gösterme sorunları hakkında açık fikirlidirler.

Katılımcıların en yaygın endişeleri, öğretmenlerin mücadelesi ve amacı ile ilgili değerlendirme, uygun kriterler ve net talimatlar geliştirmek için planlama işletme aşaması ile ilgilidir. Bu aynı zamanda dil ve bilişsel yetenekler ile bağlantılıdır. Öğretmenlerin bu tür sorunlarla karşı karşıya kaldığında daha fazla vakit geçirebilmeyi ve planlamayı öğrenebilmeleri uygulamayı daha da etkin kılacaktır. Uygulama sırasında ortaya çıkan sorunlar öğretmenler için daha az bilgilendirici sonuçların ortaya çıkmasına neden olmaktadır. Bazı öğretmenler de alternatif değerlendirmenin zorlukları ile başa çıkmaya çalışmaktadırlar.

Öğretmenler de süre kısıtlaması nedeniyle baskı altındadır. Öğretmenlerin sınıftaki zamanlarının yanı sıra sınıf dışında da zamana ihtiyaçları vardır. Sınıf öğretmenlerinin sınıf içinde öğrencilerin çalışmalarını kontrol etmek için ve sınıf dışında ihtiyaç planı için alternatif değerlendirme faaliyetleri yaratmak adına

zamana ihtiyaçları vardır. Öğretmenler, tutarlı rutinleri yaratmak için gerçekçi seçimler yapmalıdırlar. Özdemir (2009) göre, zaman, eğitim ve sınıf ortamının ayarı Türk ilkokul sisteminde önemli faktörler olarak görülmüştür.

Öğretmen ve öğrencilerin alternatif değerlendirme elde etmek için eğitim almaları gerekmektedir. Öğrencilerin bazı alternatif görevler alarak daha etkili ve zamana bağlı çalışmayı öğrenmesi gerekir. Öğretmenler de alternatif değerlendirme uygulanması esnasında, zaman zaman sınıf ortamında değerlendirmelere katılmak zorundadırlar. Sınıf profili, öğretmen oranı, sınıf yönetimi ve fiziksel çevre içinde öğrenci bu faktörün bir parçasıdır.

ÖĞRENCİ TEPKİLERİ

Alternatif değerlendirme yöntemlerinde öğrenci tepkileri bilişsel faktörler ve duygusal faktörler olarak kategorize edilir. Duygusal faktörler olumlu ve olumsuz duygulardan oluşur. Öğretmenler ve öğrenciler öğrencilerin başarı, gurur, güven ve mutluluk duyduklarını farkedebildiler. Ayrıca öğrencilerin verilen görevlerde rahat ve adaletli olduğunu gözlemledikler. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin motive olduklarını hissettiler. Öğretmenlerin, öğrenciler arasında rekabeti tespit ettiği gözlemlendi. Bunun yanı sıra öğretmenler, bazı öğrencilerin alternatif değerlendirme görevlerini ciddiyetle sürdürmediklerini belirttiler. Bilişsel faktörler eğitim yararları ile temsil edilmektedir. Öğretmenler öğrencilerin bireysel ilgi ve farklı şekillerde bilgi ve gelişme göstermek için fırsat yaratmış olduğunu kaydettikler. Öğrencilerin öğrenme üzerinde düşünme becerisi ile aktif ve otonom öğrenciler oldukları belirlendi.

Seçilen bir öğrenci grubunun portföy gününü değerlendirmesine ve tartışmasına izin verildi. Soruların amacı, öğrencilerin bu konuda ne hissettiğini ve bu konudan ne öğrendiğini tespit etmektir. Öğrenci odak grubuna göre, portföy günü , öğrendiklerini ve gelişimlerini ailelerine göstermek için düzenlenmiş bir gündür. Öğrenciler bu gün ile ilgili olumlu duygular içinde olduklarını dile getirdiler. Bizim tartışmamız

için ise bu durum öğrencilerin başarı duygusunu ifade edebildiğini ve yansıtabildiğini göstermektedir.

ÖĞRETMEN PERSPEKTİFİ

Uyum sorununa bakış açısı geliştirirken, öğretmenler genel temalarda tutarlılık ve tutarsızlık konularına eğilimdedirler. Öğretmenler öğrenmeyi kontrol etmek için öğretim sürecinde alternatif değerlendirme entegrasyonunun doğal olduğunu dile getirdiler. Dördüncü ve beşinci sınıflarda eğitim veren öğretmenler, örgün sınavlar ve notlandırmada alternatif değerlendirmeye bir vurgu yaptılar, şöyle ki, alternatif değerlendirmeler resmi notlandırmada dikkate alınamıyordu.

Bazı alternatif değerlendirme yöntemleri ve portföyler ve kendini yansıtmaya gibi araçlar, öğretim sürecinin olağan bir parçası oldu. Öğretmenler öğrencilerin yaptıkları bu görevlerden yarar sağladıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenler de öğrencilerin öğrenme yetisini kontrol etme yöntemi olarak gözlem, öğretmen izleme ve görevin tamamlanması ilkelerini kullanmışlardır. Diğer alternatif değerlendirme yöntemleri ise planlı olarak uygulandı ve sınıfta etkin kullanımı üzerinde bir etkiye sahip olduğu ortaya çıktı.

Öğretmen öğrenmeyi izlemek için ders planlama kılavuzu olarak alternatif değerlendirme kullanır. Öğretmenler aynı zamanda müfredat sonuçlarının tamamlanmasını değerlendirirken bir bilgi kaynağı olarak alternatif değerlendirme kullanır. Fakat, öğretmenler, bu alanın gelişmeye ihtiyacı olan bir alan olduğunu hissetmektedirler. Bu bazen odak sınıf içinde planlama sürecindeki zayıflıklara bağlanmaktadır.

UYGULAMALARIN GEREKLİLİKLERİ

Bu bölüm küçük yaştaki öğrencilerin sınıfta alternatif değerlendirme uygulamalarını geliştirmeye yönelik etkilerini işaret eder.

- Alternatif değerlendirme için uygulanan faktörlerin (dil yeteneğini, bilişsel yetenek, zaman, planlama, eğitim, sınıf ortamı) tasarımı, işlevsel (gelişim) ve yönetim aşamalarında dikkate alınmalıdır.

Amaca yönelik kararlar dil yeteneğini, bilişsel yeteneği, planlama, eğitim, zaman ve sınıf yönetimini başarılı bir şekilde işaret eder ve alternatif değerlendirme yöntemleri ve araçları sonuç almayı geliştirecektir. Şekil 5.1’de planlama üzerine vurgu yapılarak, uygulanan faktörler, alternatif değerlendirme yöntemlerinin ve araçlarının potansiyel yararları ile bağlantılı olduğunu gösterir. Bachman (2002) ve McKay (2006), planlama için çözüm yolları önermektedirler. Bu kılavuzların işaret ettikleri küçük yaştaki öğrencilerin öğretmenleriyle birlikte izlemesinin gerekliliğidir.

- Öğretmen, öğretmen veya öğrencinin alternatif değerlendirme görevi sırasında sorumluluğunu yerine getirip getirmediğini bilmek zorundadır. Öğretmenlerin çok çalıştığı gözlemlene ve izleme görevlerini kolaylıkla küçük yaştaki öğrencilere uygulayabilirler çünkü (L1 L2 vs kullanarak verilen eğitim süreci talimatlarında) dil yeteneği ve bilişsel yetenek ile ilgili az sayıda sorun bulunmaktadır. Öğrencilerin çok çalıştığı portföyleme ve yaşıtlı değerlendirme görevleri planlama ve uygulama olarak zorlatıcı olmakta fakat öğrencilerin yükseltilmiş farkındalıkları nedeniyle daha büyük bir bilişsel ve duygusal etki yaratabilmektedir.
- Öğretmenler görev ve amaç arasında bir uyum sağlamak için dikkatli ve sistematik bir plan içinde olmalıdırlar. Bu, planlamanın öğrenme hedefleri ile değil, faaliyetleri veya alternatif değerlendirme yöntemleri ile başlaması gerektiği anlamına gelmektedir (Genesee and Hamayan, 1994). Öğretmenler topladıkları bilgilerin hem günlük öğretim faaliyetleri için bireysel geribildirim, hem de uzun vadeli müfredat hedefleri olarak sağlayabildiklerini bilmelidirler.
- Öğretmenler tekrarı ve görevlerin tutarlılığını başarılı bir uygulama için düşünmelidirler. Öğrencilerimizin okullarını doğru mesleki bilgi

ve becerilerini yansıtan bir şekilde tamamlanması için alternatif değerlendirme görevine aşına olmaları gerekir. Öğrencilerin ayrıca meta-bilişsel yetenekleri geliştirmekte ve benzer durumlarda tekrar tekrar bu yeteneklerini kullanmaktadır. Örneğin, öğrencilerin yetenekleri kendilerini yansıtacak portföylerinin sistematik kullanımı ile zamanla düzeldi.

- Bu durumda, bu örnek olay incelemesi çalışması, alternatif değerlendirme yöntemleri ve araçları hakkında görüş ve farkındalığı arttırdı. Öğretmenlerin mesleki okuma, tartışma, eğitim ve uygulama tasarım ve operasyonel aşamalarına ağırlık vererek, bilgilerini derinleştirmek için teşvik edilmesi gerekliliği ortaya çıktı.

GELECEKTEKİ UYGULAMALARIN GEREKLİLİKLERİ

Sonuç olarak, alternatif ölçme ve küçük yaştaki öğrenciler ile ilgili yapılacak gelecekteki muhtemel araştırmalar bu bölümde ele alınacaktır.

- Bu örnek olay incelemesi çalışmasında okuldaki alternatif değerlendirme uygulamasının derinlemesine bir analizi sunmaktadır. Benzer ve farkı (kamu okullarında) tip okullarda küçük yaştaki öğrenciler için alternatif değerlendirme alanlarının genişletilmesi gerekmektedir.
- Bu çalışmaya katılan dokuz öğretmenin hepsi, alternatif değerlendirmenin faydalarına inanmakta ve alternatif değerlendirmeleri uygulamaktadır. Buna rağmen, katılımcıların bu alanda farklı bir arka plan bilgisi ve deneyimi olduğu görülmüştür. Bu katılımcı profili, okulda uygulama için mevcut durumun net bir örneği olduğunu teşkil etmiştir. Ancak, 'en iyi uygulamalar ' odaklı vaka çalışmaları, etkili değerli bir perspektif sunacak öğretim

sürecinde alternatif değerlendirme uygulamaları yapacak öğretmenler üzerinde yoğunlaştı.

- Gelecekteki arařtırmalar değerlendirme planına odaklanmalı ve bu aşamaları kullanan yöntemlere, öğretmenler, değerlendirme bağlantısı, öğretme ve öğrenme alanlarında gereken dikkati vermelidirler. Bu alanda da toplanan bilgilerin öğretim için nasıl kullanıldığı, alternatif ölçmenin nasıl planlandığı ve öğrenme üzerindeki etkilerinin nasıl etkilendiğı arařtırılabilir.
- Alternatif değerlendirme yöntemleri ile ilgili veri toplanmalı ve alternatif değerlendirme araçları arařtırılmalıdır. Geçerlilik ve güvenilirlik gibi farklı bir standartı temsil eden terimler de incelenmesi gereken bir sorundur.
- Arařtırmanın bir başka önemli alanı da öğretmen eğitimi ve mesleki gelişimi ile ilgilidir. Öğretmenin algılanan yeterliliğı, hizmet öncesi ve hizmet içi eğitim etkinliğı de incelenmelidir.