

**Formative Interactive Assessment to Address Anxiety in Writing: A Proposal for  
Middle School**

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### **Abstract**

This monograph reports an inquiry at a middle school English language class in Bogota that looked into the levels of anxiety in the syllabus's writing component. The literature has identified communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Our diagnosis indicated that the eighth-graders felt apprehension and frustration in writing tasks, which affected their linguistic development and self-esteem. We look into how learners perceive the use of interactive resources in their foreign language learning. On account of this, we proposed a pedagogical intervention to understand the participants' thoughts on interactive tasks supported with Google Classroom. We planned questionnaires, interviews, students' artifacts, and journals. We encourage fellow teachers to use our pedagogical innovation to help their learners reduce their anxiety when producing original texts or expressing themselves in writing.

*Keywords:* Computer-based learning, Formative Assessment, Interactive resources, Language Anxiety, Writing.

### **Resumen**

Esta monografía detalla una investigación que analiza los niveles de ansiedad en el componente de escritura en inglés en una escuela secundaria de Bogotá. Gracias a los estudios previos, se identificó aprensión en la comunicación, ansiedad durante los exámenes y miedo a la evaluación negativa. Nuestro diagnóstico indicó que los alumnos de octavo grado sentían temor y frustración en las tareas de escritura, lo que afectaba su desarrollo lingüístico y autoestima. Además, analizamos cómo los alumnos perciben el uso de recursos interactivos en su aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera. Por ello, propusimos una intervención pedagógica para entender la percepción de los participantes sobre las tareas interactivas soportadas a través de Google Classroom. Para analizar los datos, diseñamos cuestionarios y entrevistas, y planeamos la recolección de creaciones y diarios. Con este proyecto, alentamos a nuestros colegas docentes a implementar nuestra innovación pedagógica para ayudar a sus alumnos a reducir la ansiedad al producir textos originales o expresarse por escrito.

*Palabras clave:* Ansiedad lingüística, Aprendizaje por computadora, Escritura en inglés, Evaluación formativa, Recursos interactivos

## Chapter I. Introduction

We observed that learning another language (L2) became an arduous practice for many due to the unease it can generate for our school's learners. This project explored practical and innovative alternatives that encourage students to produce written tasks in English. We consider it essential to address anxiety and observe their anxiety levels when introducing interactive tools like Google Classroom. The project started in the school, and we had to move it to a remote learning environment due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. It brought difficulties for the application and the data collection.

Gardner (1980) argues that affective variables play a primary role in language acquisition. We should consider the socio-psychological factors. For this reason, many researchers (Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Young, 1992; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Gkonou, Daubney, & Dewaele, 2017) have identified the relationship between these types of sensations with different language competences. In this project, we propose to analyze the different levels of anxiety that students can present during the assessment. This paper contributes to the research domain of English writing assessment mediated by technology. On it, 31 eighth-graders participated and were the beneficiaries.

For decades, researchers had discussed language anxiety concerns about speaking skills. According to Zabihi et al. (2018), "that is partly because research on anxiety started in the 1980s, a time when communicative language teaching (CLT) and its focus on the oral dimensions of language use were in vogue". However, pupils' emotions affect writing, and it can worsen when it involves assessment. In the teacher practicum, we identified the non-conformity of our pupils towards the conventional English writing assessment.

There are many reasons why people can undergo this struggle when being tested. Horwitz & Cope (1986) integrated three related inquiries in the conceptualization of foreign language anxiety, including *communication apprehension*, *test anxiety*, and *fear of negative evaluation*. We understood that these factors affect the learners' linguistic development and self-esteem, thanks to applying written tasks.

Considering assessment as one of the main elements that affect language anxiety, we want to examine the influence that *Formative Assessment* (FA) might have on the perceptions about L2. This type of assessment proposes to improve the learners' competences through appraisals of their outcomes. All of this, by "short-circuiting the randomness and inefficiency of trial-and-error learning" (Sadler, 1989, p. 120).

To better achieve the assessing writing process, we employed interactive resources such as Padlet, Mind Mup, or Genially gathered in the Google Classroom platform. As stated by Henao (2017), “the use of these gadgets might enrich the practices in the EFL context by providing meaningful and interesting input to support language learning” (p. 25). In that way, the students work in a familiar environment that makes them feel comfortable.

Besides, it is vital to understand the steps that pupils follow during the L2 acquisition. We implemented the Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb, 1984) for the pedagogical intervention design. This method embraces the following stages: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. We believe that it enhances the learners' commitment and promotes learning through the reflection of their realities.

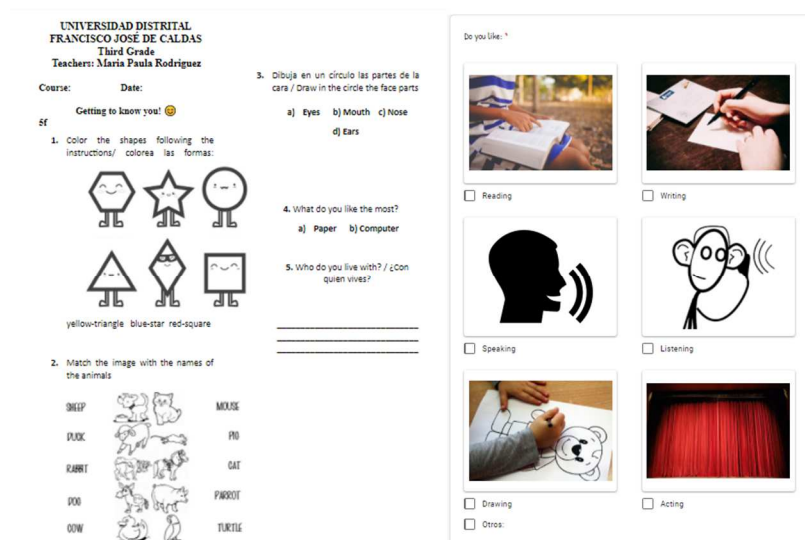
Five chapters compose this paper. The first chapter presents our background and problem statement. We describe in the second chapter, the theoretical foundations and literature that support our work. In the third chapter, we discuss the research design, the research question, and objectives. The fourth chapter describes the methodology and procedures of the feasible pedagogical intervention. Finally, we invite teachers to apply this proposal to their on-site or online practices.

## Statement of the Problem

As a part of our academic formation in the English teaching field, we worked for two years as pre-service teachers at schools of Bogotá. We encountered students from low-income families. In general, learning a foreign language was not a priority in their lives, and their motivation was low. The educational institutions had small libraries, computer rooms, and followed the guidelines of the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN 2006, 2016a, 2016b). However, most of the time, the syllabus and the resources came from us.

Our first approach to the writing language anxiety inquiry occurred with third-graders in a school located downtown. We worked with 31 students between 7 and 10 years old, and most came from orphan foundations. There we decided to apply a need analysis on paper, which resulted in colored figures and no writing outcomes. We then designed a need analysis using Google Surveys with open-questions, as seen in figure 1. The head-teacher suggested us to write the questions in English and illustrate it to generate engagement. In the online survey, participants showed a willingness to respond without hesitation.

Figure 1. *Printed and Google Survey Need Analysis formats*



After that experience, we reviewed the literature and discovered that introducing interactive resources promotes language development. For instance, Henao (2017) states that using ICTs might open better relationships between teachers and learners because of their technology skills. Day by day, students use the internet, programs, and apps in their interests.



As teachers, we can take advantage of this to involve new tools in the second language acquisition, and in the same way, learn from them.

At another school, we worked on a process-based collaborative writing project. The group consisted of 28 students from 12 and 15 years old. The objective of the project was to create a story's setting and characters. Figure 2 displays the first draft of one group of students whose language expression is limited to the word level.

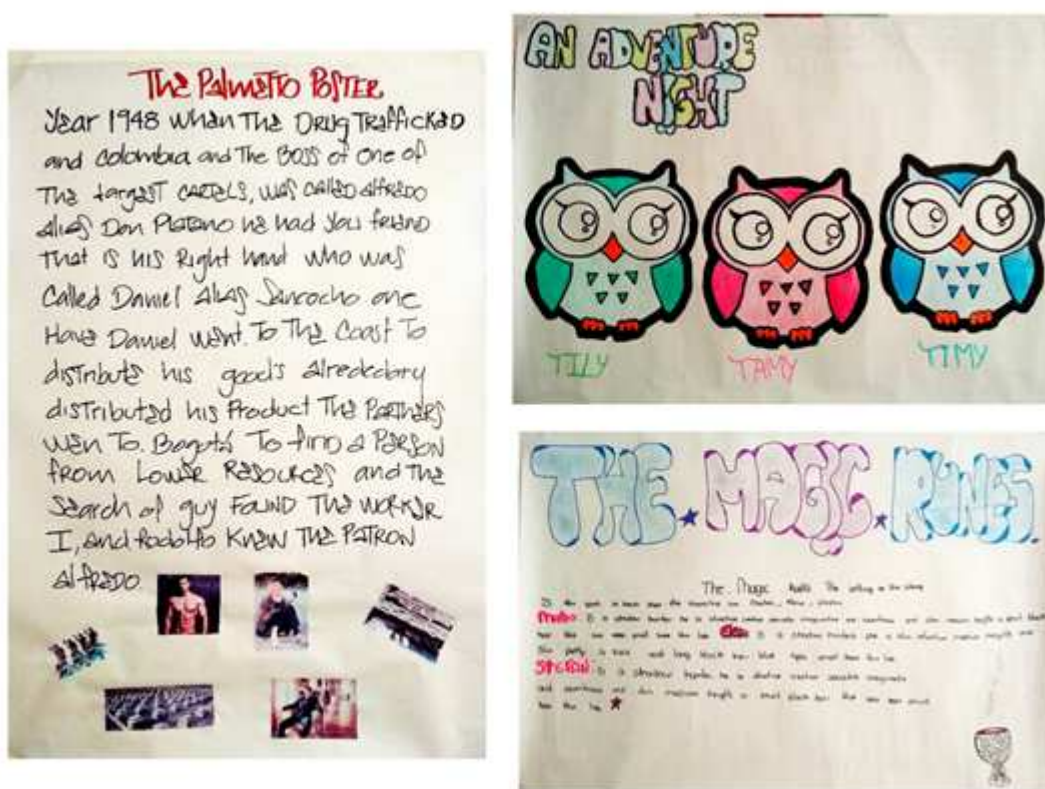
Figure 2. First draft for the basics of the story.



Most learners expressed emotional discomfort and scant confidence in those exercises due to their lack of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Only one-third of the students presented the final text for fear of failure. This phenomenon was identified by Daly and Miller (1975) who established that EFL learners with high anxiety levels think about writing as a tedious task. Consequently, they tend to avoid situations they need to write.

The first group did a story about drug dealing in Colombia. Instead of describing the setting and characters, they preferred to write a short narration. The second group did not show a final text in the poster, but they read it aloud; their tale was about three owls' adventures in a magic forest. The third group created a fanfic story based on the *Shadow Hunters* series. Figure 3 shows their work.

Figure 3. Final drafts of the stories.



Third poster transcription:

The setting of the story is New York in nowa days, the characters are Mateo, Elena, Stefan. Mateo: Is a shadow hunter he is attractive, creative sociable, imaginative, and adventurous and slim, medium height is short black hair blue oval eyes small has thin lips.

Elena is a shadowhunter she is slim attractive medium height and slim pretty is face oval long black hair blue eyes small has thin lips.

Stefan is a shadow hunter he is attractive creative sociable imaginative and slim medium height is short black hair blue oval eyes small has thin lips.

As teachers, we need to address language anxiety levels in writing during formative assessment. It underlies our pupils' achievement to strengthen their confidence and perceptions about acquiring a foreign language. According to Horwitz & Cope (1986), "students with higher levels of writing anxiety write shorter compositions and qualify their writing less than their calmer counterparts do" (p. 126). Our action research study explored the anxiety levels in the computer-based writing assessment of EFL eighth-graders.

We inquire into the learners' weaknesses in foreign language learning, considering their beliefs and needs in the 21st century, such as problem-solving, thinking, and collaboration skills in the information age. We also offer teachers a better understanding of

the concern to generate reflections on their pedagogical practices. As professionals, it drives us to look for strategies and improvements to support our teaching. With these purposes in mind, we want to know how we can address anxiety in writing through formative interactive assessment?

Our proposal analyzes the students' language anxiety levels during writing formative assessment through ICTs. For achieving this, we set these objectives:

- To identify the students' language anxiety levels during the ICTs application in the formative writing assessment.
- To compare the students' language anxiety levels in the writing assessment process supported with ICT.
- To characterize the students' language anxiety levels in the implementation of the online assessment.

## Chapter II. Literature Review

Once we established the research problem, we built a foundation of knowledge employing the literature review. We analyzed the concepts language learning anxiety (LLA), assessment, and assessing writing; and studies related to our inquiry for understanding their contributions, gaps, and unanswered questions. Along with this, we identified the need for additional research and placed our project in the field of L2 acquisition, concentrating on LLA. Moreover, we reviewed recent research reports and doctoral dissertations. Moreover, we discussed the relationship between these works and our concerns.

### Language Learning Anxiety

Language anxiety is an issue that hinders L2 acquisition. Students may be reluctant to participate, produce written texts, or be assessed in any form. As a consequence of these emotional states, such as fear, concern, and panic, learners become discouraged and avoid language use. For Gkonou et al. (2017), "anxiety may be conceived as facilitating, a helpful anxiety leading to greater attention, effort and performance, or debilitating that is a downward spiral of negative thoughts and feelings, leading to diminished attention and poorer performance." (p. 5). Based on the previous statement, we looked into LLA to understand its effects.

Horwitz and Cope's (1986) defined LLA as a "distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128), which means that emotional and psychological factors are as relevant as cognitive competences. Similarly, Sadiq (2017) states that "language learners who experienced language anxiety will lead them to feeling of worried about failing" (p. 1). As teachers, we should estimate these perceptions' impact when planning activities, especially if they involve assessment. For instance, there might be external aspects that also involve anxiety in L2, such as time constrain, exam formats, and the students' language proficiency.

Bearing that in mind, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) propose a closer definition that defines language anxiety as a "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts including speaking, listening, and learning" (p. 284). It explains our learners' behavior: When they need to answer an open question, they feel overwhelmed with the task and express things such as "I do not know what to write," "I know what to write, but I do not know how to do it in English," or "Can I do it in Spanish?".

They sit down, staring at the blank page like if it was their worst enemy, and they did not have anything to defend themselves.

Even when these definitions encompass all the aspects that influence the students' performance, we needed a narrow description of our investigation's scope since we are interested in the sentiments that students manifest in writing tasks. In response to LLA, Young (1992) states that "although some research examines the relationship between anxiety and language learning or performance, little research is available that investigates language anxiety as it relates specifically to listening, reading, or writing." It emboldens us to explore the language anxiety field, focusing on written competence and its psychological factors.

Regarding the causes of language anxiety, Xiao & Wong (2014) mentioned: "low self-esteem, self-perceived low level of ability, lack of group membership with peers and beliefs about language learning" (p. 591) as factors for the detriment of the performance. Our learners do not need to carry out communicative tasks with the language out of the classroom; thus, they do not practice enough the English written production, which could have a relevant effect on their confidence. They are afraid of expressing themselves and make mistakes.

Besides, the students do not want to receive negative feedback from the teachers or that their partners make fun of them; all those responses from others affect their self-esteem and self-perception. This discomfort is not only related to the context but the pedagogical procedures. On account of this, Horwitz & Cope (1986) state that "although similar to test anxiety, fear of evaluation is broader in scope because it's not limited to test-taking situations; rather, it may occur in any social, evaluative situation" (p. 128). Considering these concepts, we defined language learning anxiety as the apprehension related to the FLL that results from a complex of emotional and psychological variables and influences the learners' performance. For this proposal, we focused on the effects of LLA in the assessment stage.

## **Assessment**

Evaluation methods have been created over time to estimate the knowledge acquired. Moon (2003) considers the kind of information assessment provides and the decisions that educators might take. The data allows educators to design methodologies, materials, and even curricula that point to other teaching purposes.

Assessment is "a general term which includes all methods used to gather information about children's knowledge, ability, understanding, attitudes, and motivation" (Ioannou-

Georgiou, 2003, p. 4). Cameron (2001) states that assessment is related to learners' performance. Thus, it provides relevant information for evaluation. That is why we conceive assessing not only for knowledge and performance but attitudes and motivation as well. For Gikandi et al. (2011), assessment in either *summative* types (for validation and accreditation) or *formative* (assessment to support learning) are at the heart of education. However, identifying misconceptions or gaps in learning brings us closer to the term of formative assessment. Spector et al. (2016) argue that “formative assessment refers to the appraisals of student performance intended to help learners attain intended goals” (p. 59). It allows us to inspire ownership of their knowledge, and it is an aid for building teaching.

We assess it all the time and without even noticing it with sentences such as "I like it," "It looks good," "Well done," or the opposite. For assessing, we determine that feedback is appropriate since it provides details of the learners' journey. On it, all the members of the educational community contribute to acquiring knowledge.

To achieve the formative assessment purpose, we contemplated the principles of good feedback practice. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) suggest that “while students have been given more responsibility for learning in recent years there has been far greater reluctance to give them increased responsibility for assessment processes” (p. 15). In that way, having structured criteria encourages pupils to discuss and reflect based on their context. These principles also include peer-assessment without applying final grades; it is vital to engage them in promoting positive and corrective feedback for their daily lives. This proposal aims to unify the steps that compound assessment, in this case: a foreign language and personal training for each individual.

Our pedagogical innovation refers to the use of ICT tools (Google Classroom) as a vehicle to create an enjoyable learning environment while assessing writing. According to Yulia et al. (2019), utilizing online platforms for assessment "can function as an innovative pedagogical strategy through facilitating opportunities in formative and immediate feedback, engagement with critical learning processes" (p. 232).

We examined using this instrument to integrate the 21st-century pupils' workflow in the learning stage. Churches (2008) states that “this generation of students respond well to clear goals and objectives, assessed in a transparent manner.” Hence, they should be involved in developing the assessment criteria to reflect on the task purpose, strategy, relevance, and significance in their lives.

### **The Assessment of Writing**

We explored mechanisms to assess written competence. The term *writing assessment* encompasses a variety of approaches for examining this communicative ability. Weigle (2002) distinguishes three types: The first is the timed *impromptu writing test* (often referred to as ‘direct’), a large-scale assessment in which the students should produce a sample of writing in a short period; this is the most common method for testing in L1 and L2 contexts. The second is *indirect* and consists of multiple-choice exams of grammar and usage. The third is the *portfolio*, which evaluates several texts written in non-controlled situations over a long-term period.

Direct tests focus on the written product and provide only one chance to evidence the learners' proficiency. To illustrate, Lee and Coniam (2013) asserted that "when marking student writing, teachers have used general assessment criteria and evaluated writing with numeric scores, marking every error – underscoring the primarily summative orientation to assessment" (p. 37). It means that its purpose is to categorize students according to standards rather than value their progress.

Additionally, this type of assessment had several drawbacks. For instance, it does not reflect the way we write in real-world conditions. Hsu (2017) claimed, “when students are only guided to write time-limited writing assessments, they will get used to a restricted way of writing.” (p. 23) Another limitation is that one sample does not show the performance in different genres, purposes, and audiences; and attempts to meet the teacher’s expectations rather than express their voices. (Hsu, 2017; Lee, 2017)

In response to the previous statements, Lee (2017) raises the concept of writing assessment practices "as a process, apart from it being a product to be judged for its quality" (p. 14). Furthermore, it involves various activities, allowing collaborative and creative work (Nabhan, 2019). However, teachers need to resort to a reliable method. Dunsmuir et al. (2015) hold that it is essential to opt for "the development of scoring rubrics and methods that define performance criteria on written expression, to better inform practice and learning." (p. 4).

After reviewing the strengths and shortcomings of assessing writing, we designed the intervention based on the portfolio guidelines. This assessment modality fosters the pupils’ participation in their L2 learning, and it is adaptable to their context, needs, interests, and abilities. We planned a range of activities that mix learning styles, media formats, and genres gathered in the Google Classroom platform.

Researchers support authentic assessment because “it reflects various types of writing as well as levels of complexity related to the task assigned in the prompt” (Chapman, 1990, p.

7). However, to understand the technique that students use in these instances, the author also proposed a system in which focus, elaboration, organization, and conventions are the narrative's fundamental axis.

To conclude, we reckon assessing writing as a complex practice. It entails time-management, scoring rubrics, diverse activities, and recognition for writers' voices. Regardless of the techniques that teachers apply, assessment is strongly related to writing apprehension due to its nature.

### **Overview of Research studies on Language Learning Anxiety, Assessing Writing, and Interactive ICTs.**

This section reviews recent studies related to writing anxiety, assessment, and ICTs. First, we approached how to measure language anxiety levels (questionnaires, discourse analysis, and physiological tests). Then, we considered assessing writing methods (direct test, portfolio, and process writing), And finally, we examined the use of interactive tools in foreign language learning.

In regards to LLA, Valencia Robles (2017) carried out qualitative research to collect the affections and thoughts of 31 college students towards the APTIS computer-based test in Spain. The author applied online questionnaires and a blackboard platform project. The results pointed out that external factors can increase anxiety levels during assessments such as timing (19%), noise, familiarity with the virtual format (10%), and technical problems with the interface.

For Valencia Robles (2017), anxiety is a facilitating aspect; these reactions in L2 learning can increase motivation. On the other hand, the study presents ICTs as a flexible and efficient resource for assessing and understanding pupils' perspectives. Paying attention to the factors that cause anxiety in the classroom can improve future computer-based studies' performance.

Bollinger (2017) undertook a quantitative causal-comparative study with 147 Spanish and French students at a community college in Georgia. The research determined differences between Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) levels and student accomplishment in traditional and distance learning. The author applied the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire and gathered the final numerical course grades. Bollinger presented three results. First, there was no statistically remarkable difference between participants'



scores from the two learning environments: students from traditional sessions did not perform better than their distance-learning counterparts. Secondly, based on achievement and FLA's levels (low, moderate, high), participants with lower levels performed better than those with a high level. The author also found a considerable divergence between the pupils' FLCAS results in both learning environments. Students in on-site classes were less anxious than those in distance learning sessions.

This work guided us to identify and categorize the writers' FLA levels with a trustworthy instrument. It also provided us with insights into the differences between the traditional and distance learning environment. The conclusions oriented the choice of our data collection instruments' design and helped us find a workable way to recognize the language anxiety levels in assessing writing.

Blasco (2016) conducted a case study to identify the relationships between metacognitive writing strategies, anxiety, and self-efficacy. The population was six upper-secondary EFL students in Spain who took a think-aloud protocol while crafting a text in English and then completed a questionnaire. The author borrowed the items related to writing anxiety from the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI). The results showed a positive correlation between writing metacognition and writing self-efficacy. Regarding writing anxiety, high-achievers and low-achievers had significant differences. The former did the task with more confidence and dealt with the frequent problems calmly. The latter was worried about making grammar mistakes, low grades, negative feedback, or being chosen as a class discussion sample.

The proposal contributed to narrowing down our project and understanding writing anxiety levels and measuring them. Besides, it provided strategies to work with Spanish-speaking students. Moreover, we realized the importance of including students with different achievement levels to comprehend the phenomena better.

To analyze the writing anxiety levels from another point of view, we reviewed correlational research by Daud et al. (2016). It sought to determine how anxiety in the second language can affect students' writing performance and intends to see whether the deficit model supports students' poor performance in writing. The authors conducted the study through questionnaires and Writing Apprehension Tests (WAT) at the MARA University of Technology with 186 third-year students following Diploma in Accountancy and Business courses.

As a result, it showed that low performing students are more anxious than high performers due to deficiencies in some writing competence dimensions, particularly

vocabulary and language use. The authors contributed to our project as they propose to find teaching alternatives to change the perception of second language writing. They gave a broad view of a questionnaire that explores tendencies, attitudes, and feelings towards writing. This test reported 0.94 Cronbach's alpha reliability and, like our study, proposes the adaptation of the test based on the needs of the participants as EFL learners.

Lew and Tang (2017) conducted a case study with eight fluent Chinese EFL writers at an English-medium University. The investigation had two stages which gathered the emotions in EFL writing. The purpose of the first one was to gather students' emotions during the experience in EFL writing. The second aimed to correlate the heart rate and GSR data to anxiety using wearable and sensing technology.

According to participants, tests' time pressure increases the power of concentration and focus to bear on the written task. However, English writing exams prevented students from producing a better piece or fully developing their ideas. Furthermore, empathetic instructors boosted their self-confidence. Finally, the physiological analysis showed that participants felt a higher anxiety level when starting a new paragraph of an essay, and the lowest when revising the references.

This article enriched our knowledge about writers' views. The authors stated that anxiety is the most often cited descriptive reaction associated with EFL. The apprehension includes frustration about the topic and fear of asking the instructor for clarification. Similarly, our proposal's first stage intends to comprehend the emotions that affect writers' assessment.

Following the assessing writing issue, Contreras-Soto et al. (2019) implemented a mixed-method project in a Chilean school with 26 sixth graders for seven weeks. It consisted of composing weekly paragraphs based on new vocabulary and teacher's feedback. Then, they took an achievement assessment. The authors applied pre- and post-test surveys and interviews with a focus group of seven learners to find possible effects of the writing portfolios strategy on the test anxiety levels.

The results showed that the decrease in test-related anxiety was significant in 73% of the participants, while 23% reported an increment. Furthermore, students were positive towards collaborative writing and felt pleased with the teachers' feedback strategies. This article presented a robust theoretical background about test anxiety and how alternative writing assessment forms can enhance students' accomplishments. The authors support that using activities from different genres reduces the possibilities of failure and results in higher levels of confidence.

Regarding process writing (PW), Hasanah et al. (2017) investigated the technique's effect on reducing writing anxiety and promoting learners' achievement. The author conducted a mixed-method study with 30 ESL/EFL eleventh graders from Indonesia using questionnaires, writing tests, and interviews. It demonstrated how linguistic difficulties, low self-confidence, and insufficient writing practice could generate anxiety. Still, knowing the topic and the audience helps them elaborating on their writing ideas. It also produces a more comfortable environment to write an outline and, subsequently, create the first draft.

The proposal establishes the benefits of using the PW for assessing. Hasanah et al. (2017) recommended collaborative work between teachers and students in text production to promote self-efficacy development. Process writing is the most appropriate one regarding formative writing assessment since we are interested in valuing the learners' progress instead of the final product.

Correspondingly, Rashidi and Bahadori (2018) applied a mixed-method study that analyzed the effects of dynamic assessment on ELF students' L2 writing abilities. The participants were 17 intermediate EFL Iranian students whose age range was from 20 to 35, seven learners in a control group, and 10 in the experimental. The process consists of the three-step cycle of pretest–teach–posttest. The stages were: topic-choice, idea-generation, and macro revising. Researchers used t-tests and qualitative comparisons based on content and organization to analyze the differences between pre and posttests.

The results showed that the dynamic assessment framework could enhance EFL process writing and confidence. The scores of the experimental group were significantly higher than the control group. This improvement responded to a continuous and mutual effort for both the teacher and the learner.

This study gave us feasible evidence of the effectiveness of using assessment focused on the writing process that involves a series of steps and teacher constant feedback. The authors highlighted the importance of the interactive effort for both educators and students to solve creative problems.

Afterward, we present some ways teachers have been using ICTs to foster learners' writing practices. To illustrate, Henao (2017) led a qualitative action-research with 12 college students from Colombia to determine how the virtual platform (Quia) benefits learners' performance, writing competencies, and attitudes towards English as a foreign language. The author collected the data through Likert-scale questionnaires, observations, teacher's journals, and lesson reports.

This article indicated the effectiveness of ICTs in the writing micro-skills and pupils' self-esteem. The innovative platform contributed to creating their written discourse and acquire sufficient confidence to express ideas. The author conceives issues such as assessment and cooperative work as keys to success because it improves the distribution of knowledge and healthy competition. Besides, he states that interactive tools enrich the student environment and allow new adventures. Furthermore, teachers can encourage critical thinking and provide greater exposure to the language, forming new academic habits. We can say that a virtual platform is a vehicle for supporting writing assessment.

To illustrate the use of virtual tools in teaching English, Albashtawi & Al Bataineh (2020) did a quantitative quasi-experimental study based on the needs of 26 EFL Syrian diploma students in Jordan. The main objective was to examine the Google Classroom impact on the EFL pupils' writing performance through tests and questionnaires.

The results showed the importance of Google Classroom to complement face-to-face encounters with appropriate materials and assessment features. There was a positive attitude regarding the platform user-friendly interface and accessibility. Due to the intervention's length (12 weeks), the writing tests revealed reliable results in pretest and post-test scores. Thanks to this research, we became aware of the effects of interactive resources on writing achievement. In this digital age, we need to take advantage of tech aids in education. It also offered us strategies to design our pedagogical intervention.

To examine the use of ICTs in secondary EFL teachers' daily practices in public schools, Izquierdo et al. (2017) did a mixed-method study that drew on a quantitative descriptive-exploratory design and a qualitative multiple-case study. The participants of the study were 28 secondary school English teachers from Mexico and 2,944 learners. The case study involved a subsample of six teachers.

The results showed that the systematic use of ICTs for teaching English in public secondary education is still at an early stage. Several teachers manifested a lack of knowledge of device management and virtual material design; also, they showed mistrust about the effectiveness of ICTs in language learning. Younger teachers are more willing to involve technology in the class and encourage students to use virtual tools to learn English. Besides, most teachers prefer to use their resources instead of the ones that the schools provide. The authors propose rethinking the normativity, infrastructure, and training issues related to ITC available in public schools.

This analysis provides us with a scope of the use of technologies in the Latin-American context. The authors pointed out some drawbacks to applying ICTs in language

learning; for implementing computer-based methodologies, we need to consider the resources available in the institutions, the normativity that prescribes the curriculum design, and the proper training on technical devices and virtual tools. Our context could somehow prevent us from involving ICTs in the classes. However, we could see how fast the teachers had to adapt their classes to online environments during the pandemic and how difficult it was. We intend to contribute to these new dynamics of education with our study.

To look into the effect of the face-to-face teaching and online sessions using Google Classroom on the writing ability of EFL students, Sujannah et al. (2020) created quasi-experimental research with 53 third-semester students at Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia. They applied a learner autonomy questionnaire and writing tests to know the learners' ability before and after the intervention.

It showed that there was a positive relationship between autonomy and writing proficiency. Students that ponder in their learning are likely to have high writing proficiency too. The Google Classroom factor enriched the writing abilities in the classroom and created a personalized English experience.

This work contributes to our project as the authors propose a learning environment where technological innovation supplements the regular classroom experience. Additionally, they suggest using Google Classroom as an educational tool due to its accessibility and the communicative and collaborative support it provides. Conclusively, the authors address the need that exists to motivate students to work on their learning through variables that intervene in the platform: in our case, Genially, MindMup, Padlet, etc.

To sum up, the studies reported previously give us valuable information about our project. On the one hand, the authors pointed out dislike about the topic and shyness of asking for clarification as causes of L2 apprehension. Besides, they proposed measuring methods to recognize the anxiety levels, such as the FLCAS and the SLWAI tests. On the other hand, they offered alternatives for assessing writing focused on formative assessment and process writing. At last, the authors indicated the effectiveness of ICTs in developing the written skills and the student's self-confidence.

### **Theory Underlying the Study**

We considered the *transformative curriculum* as the foundation of our pedagogical practices. According to Stevens-long (2012), it refers to "a process of learning experienced by a learner, and an educational program or event designed to foster learning experiences that

result in or catalyze a transformational outcome" (p. 184). It motivated us to understand the writers' responses for creating methods and empower them to work in open and inclusive environments.

Concerning the literature reviewed, the previous studies, and the theory that underlined our project, we understand writing as a complex process that generates anxiety, especially when it involves assessment. Regarding the types of assessing writing, we contemplated formative assessment to embrace the students' perceptions of English as a foreign language; it focuses not only on the product but on the writers' paths and voices. The transformative curriculum also ponders the use of innovative resources that respond to today's learners.

We learned about quantitative instruments to categorize language anxiety levels and qualitative instruments to gather the pupils' life stories for analyzing the phenomena. For us, language has a social dimension and contributes to identity construction: Through English writing, the students can build their voices and, in that way, portray their visions of the world thoughtfully. Thus, they can address their interests and create meaningful experiences. We conceive self-confidence, autonomy, and learners' role as crucial aspects of our proposal. The inquiries led us to propose this main research question: *How can we address anxiety in writing through formative interactive assessment?*

And the sub-question: *What effect does Google classroom have on the interactive formative assessment process?*

### Chapter III. Research Design

This chapter offers a broader vision of our journey through the project design. It defines the research paradigms and establishes how they fit our purposes. Secondly, it describes the research methods and procedures. Then, it provides information about the context, participants, and sampling. Following, it presents the instruments and methods of data collection and proposes a schedule of activities. The chapter closes recalling the research question and objectives.

#### Type of Study

We intend to identify the language anxiety levels and gather the pupils' perceptions towards writing assessment. For that, we combined qualitative and quantitative methods. The former provided us with a conversational nature. The latter allows us to perform statistical strategies to analyze anxiety in writing. For that reason, we considered both perspectives to discover new directions and find meanings that go beyond those derived from using a single method.

Regarding *qualitative research*, Rossman & Rallis (2016) describe it as "a broad approach to the study of social phenomena." (p. 4) Besides, they characterize this type of inquiry as naturalistic and interpretive. The first characteristic means that researchers gather data under real-world conditions about the sensory episodes; the second refers to their interest in describing, analyzing, and interpreting a central phenomenon. We gather data in a classroom (natural setting) about language anxiety (phenomenon).

Besides, our proposal shares other features with this paradigm. According to Yin (2015), qualitative researchers attempt to represent the views and perspectives of participants. Moreover, researchers aim to contribute with their insights into the concepts related to explain human social behavior. We want to understand why learners have difficulties solving writing tasks and explore the role of anxiety in this stage.

Concerning *quantitative research*, Lankshear & Knobel (2004) state that "anything of interest to social researchers can and should be measured" (p. 63). In our case, we estimate the learners' language anxiety using an established classification. Vogt (1999) explains that it "involves a process of controlling variables with a view to testing in an objective manner some theory or set of hypotheses about a process or relationship in ways that are deemed to be internally and externally valid" (p. 152). For the proposal, we require parameters to compare the writing anxiety levels before and after interactive resources.

After contemplating the strengths of both approaches, we decided on the *mixed-method* paradigm. Creswell & Creswell (2017) affirm that "collecting diverse types of data best provides a more complete understanding of a research problem." (p. 41). Accordingly, we compared the viewpoints drawn from both methods and minimize shortcomings to provide accurate insights. For this purpose, we triangulated data collected from interviews, observations, questionnaires, and journals.

## **Research Method and Procedures**

After establishing the mixed-method is the one that best suits our aim, we needed to select a flexible method compatible with our proposed objectives. According to Given (2008), action research is carried out by participants who are insiders to the situation under investigation. We resolved that action research allows us to create empowering research: It entails directing an inquiry and focuses on the participants' development. It gives credence to critical thinking (discussion, decision, and action) by participating in collaborative research for particular troubles (Mills, 2000)

Besides, *Action Research* attempts to discover issues and provide practical solutions. For this project, we identified a reluctance in students when being assessed in writing, and we incorporated interactive tools to learn more about the concern. Also, our project aims at understanding how learners perceive L2 learning. We monitored the impact of the pedagogical proposal and thus have a wide range of data to generate actionable and reflective knowledge.

## **Context and Participants**

We designed this project based on the practices of 31 middle school students from eighth - grade who are between 13 to 15 age-old (60% female, 40% men). For selecting the eight participants, we employed purposeful sampling to opt for people who can help us to understand language anxiety. Since we want to represent multiple perspectives on the issue, we propose applying maximal variation sampling. It means choosing individuals who differ in their language learning achievement to create a detailed insight (Creswell, 2015). The participants belonged to either Colombian or Venezuelan low-income families, 30% resides around the institution, and 70% in the municipalities surrounding Bogotá. Their working-class neighborhoods had security problems and commonly dealt with family and drug addiction issues.



The educational institution located in Engativá has high results in the national standardized tests. It has an advantage over others since it has the support of the British Council English program, which uses Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Despite that, students have disruptive behaviors. They show little interest in the activities and disapprove the head-teacher classroom management. Some teachers thought this group was challenging: They preferred to stay away to avoid the stress caused by the behavior and comments learners usually make against them. Learners expressed that the institution has a low English level than the MEN standards, and most of them expressed reluctance to L2 learning.

### **Researcher's Role**

In this study, we assumed two roles: As quantitative researchers, we collected the thoughts and feelings of the participants, taking this into account that "the primary responsibility of the researcher is to safeguard participants and their data" (Sutton & Austin, 2015). In this case, we adopted a reflective vision in which we identified the values and social features that shape our interpretations of the results. To contrast, as qualitative researchers, we combined the observation and the mathematical expression to measure the variables objectively. In that manner, we complemented the roles to obtain different perspectives of the data collected.

### **Data Collection Instruments and Procedures**

The following section provides techniques to organize, collect, and analyze contextualized data. Initially, it is necessary to ask for parents' consent (Appendix 1). Then, we select questionnaires to gather students' thoughts about English learning, writing anxiety, assessment, and ICTs. During the pedagogical intervention, teachers will observe the sessions and write journals with their understanding. Additionally, learners will produce written compositions. Finally, we suggest holding interviews to collect their perspectives about the encounters.

*Interviewing* techniques offer rich information sources based on the participants' opinions and emotions. Gill et al. (2008) explain it as a way to "explore the views, experiences, beliefs, and motivations of individuals on specific matters." (p. 292). For that, we decided to employ questionnaires and interviews.

We selected the *questionnaires* as the instrument for collecting this information since questions are open-ended (how, what, why questions with unlimited space for response). The issues addressed in the questionnaires cover English's roles in students' lives, viewpoints toward writing tasks, assessment, feedback, and contact with ICTs in the pedagogical context. We collected this data for future comparison.

Beyond, this instrument will help the researchers to categorize the learners' writing anxiety levels. For ensuring the data reliability, we based this section on the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) designed by Cheng (2004). However, we borrowed an adaptation from Blasco (2016) since it narrowed the aspects we need to inquire about. Appendix 2 illustrates the final version of the questionnaire.

We also propose conducting *interviews* to put together pupils' viewpoints. It allows them to express their emotions and qualify their responses. We designed a semi-structured interview with four questions; teachers will apply them at the end of the intervention. Through this procedure, researchers will inquire about how the participants felt during the writing assessment mediated by ICTs and find any variation from the questionnaires' answers. Appendix 3 exemplifies the questions.

Second, we chose the *observing* technique because it allows us to examine the phenomena in natural conditions and permit us to have a greater comprehension of the setting of interest. According to Yin (2015), it can be a key in research because “what you perceive with your own senses is not filtered by what others might have (self) reported to you or what the author of some document might have seen” (p. 133).

During the pedagogical intervention, we suggest keeping *journals* to reflect on the daily circumstances. Journals record the thoughts, sensations, reflections, and observations of the writer. They focus on a specific lesson, activity, or student, or describe the writers' more general day-to-day thinking or questions (Freeman, 1998). It is crucial to record the events that may offer valuable information about the course of action to make adjustments along the way. Consequently, to keep track of the questions that emerge from the observation, they could lead to further deliberation.

The final technique is *reading documentation* because it collects and examines the writers' outcomes. Yin (2015) describes it as “the compiling or accumulating of objects (documents, artifacts, and archival records) related to your study topic” (p. 147). Teachers will evidence the effects of the pedagogical intervention using the students' *artifacts*. According to Saldaña & Omasta (2016), artifacts are invaluable because they “reflect their

values, attitudes, and belief systems” (p. 68). It will provide valuable information about learning and the development of written skills.

Chart 1 displays a general view of the schedule of activities. It shows the techniques, instruments, and proposed time to gather data from the eight participants selected. In week 1, teachers will apply the questionnaire. Along the process, they will record their reflections through journals. Educators will also collect students’ artifacts except in weeks 4 and 6. In week 10, they will apply interviews.

Table 1. *Schedule of activities*

Techniques	Instruments	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
Observation	Teacher’s journals										
Interviewing	Questionnaires										
	Interviews										
Reading documentation	Students’ artifacts										

### **Trustworthiness and Generalizability**

To guarantee our project's credibility, we established the triangulation of three procedures for the data analysis: Journals and interviews correspond to the qualitative paradigm, and the questionnaires belong to the quantitative type. It allows us to demonstrate the truth and consistency of the obtained results. The instruments' design permits future researchers to replicate the study in other contexts and derive similar products. Regarding confirmability, we want the results to rely on the participants' voices. We adopted a reflective attitude for the data collection and interpretation that discard any potential bias or personal position.

The item that measures the level of anxiety in writing, Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI), borrowed from Blasco (2016), validated an overall Cronbach’s alpha of 0.94. According to its designer, Cheng (2004), “these results indicated that the SLWAI as a whole was a measure of high internal consistency and respectable temporal stability.” (p. 327). After exploratory factor analysis, the author concluded that SLWAI “does

not confound writing anxiety with beliefs about one's writing ability, thereby providing favorable evidence of the discriminant validity of the SLWAI" (Cheng, 2004, p. 327)

### **Unit of Analysis**

This proposal's unit of analysis is meaningful words, phrases, sentences, and text that help address students' language learning anxiety levels through formative assessment. The questionnaire included a list of 18 items divided into four categories:

- English learning (2 items)
- Assessing writing (2 items)
- Writing anxiety (12 items)
- Interactive tool (2 items)

For measuring the writing anxiety levels, we used the SLWAI questionnaire by Cheng (2004) and modified the statements to work based on the participants' nature and context. The writing anxiety section has a 5-point Likert scale (1-5), in which 1 meant *Never*, 2 meant *Rarely*, 3 meant *Sometimes*, 4 meant *Usually*, and 5 meant *Always*. Five of the items (2,5,8,10,12) are negatively worded and require reverse scoring before being summed up to generate total scores. A mean score above 39 points is considered a high level, a mean score lower than 30 as a low level, and a mean score between 30 and 39 is a moderate level of anxiety.

## Chapter IV. Pedagogical Intervention

In this chapter, we discuss all the decisions that underlie the teaching actions; it aims to work on the learners' written competences and the implementation of ICTs in L2 environments. It begins with a brief rationale for our pedagogical intervention. Then, it presents the instructional objective. Afterward, it describes the tasks, activities, procedures, and the resources used throughout the lessons. Following, we introduce the role of the students and teachers. Finally, it establishes the assessment and evidence of achievement. The following section exposes to our readers the justification of the design.

### Theory of Learning

According to the vision above, we rely on the *communicative learning approach*. For Mezirow (1997), "communicative learning involves understanding purposes, values, beliefs, and feelings and is less amenable to empirical tests." (p. 6) This point is crucial for our study in terms of autonomy and consciousness in assessment stages. It does not aim to force the process, but rather to create associations with previous experiences and facilitate knowledge acquisition through self-reflection.

### Theory of Language

We lean on the vision of language as a *socio-cultural construction* to underlie the communicative learning field. Hawkins (2010) stated that "a socio-cultural view of language posits that language use is about situated meaning-making, and meanings constructed in communication are not just based on language." (p. 98) Nonverbal signals such as facial expressions are part of the interchanges. This theory enriches this proposal because it emphasizes interaction as the primary source of language. We will address writing through collaborative tasks in real-life contexts.

### Instructional Design

Since we desired to understand the anxiety levels in writing, we integrated activities that facilitate learning and recognized the impact of emotions in our learners' performance. Moreover, we are aware of providing flexible environments that empowered pupils as active agents of their learning.

Our pedagogical innovation is oriented to the application of interactive resources to boost writing practices. According to Derakhshan (2015), studies focused on technology-based methods and writing has reported significant changes in the learners' confidence and motivation. It gives our learners more freedom to experiment and encourages them to work on their language development.

For the project, we selected ICT resources that encompassed formative assessment activities and tracked students' progress. We were looking for an intuitive platform that allows us to create tasks, share materials, give feedback, and grade their work. Google Classroom supports formative assessment, which is essential in helping students who might need more encouragement or motivation (McGinnis, 2020).

Google Classroom is the most suitable platform for the investigation requirements. The tool works with other services from Google:

- The materials could appear in their Drive folders.
- They would receive notifications about the tasks and deadlines on Gmail and Calendar.
- Teachers-researchers can create questionnaires in Forms for the lessons.

We took advantage of its assessment features and complement it with other ICT resources such as Mind Mup, Pixton, or Canva.

The Experiential Learning Cycle underlies the design of the course. Kolb (1984) establishes four stages: Concrete Experience (doing an activity), Reflective Observation (pondering on the performance in the task), Abstract Conceptualization (involving theory), and Active Experimentation (planning a new trial). This cycle allows students to be engaged in their learning and to grasp the interactive tools.

We relied on the “Esquema Curricular Sugerido” proposed by MEN (2016) for the curriculum design. It provides us with content, activities, and assessment indicators that allow students to communicate, interact, and boost their social and professional abilities. One of eighth-graders' main goal is to “determine the impact of consumerism in adolescents” (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016b, p. 64). We chose this topic for the development of the didactic unit.

### **Instructional Objectives**

This instructional design aims to promote the development of writers' voices and self-efficacy. This project attempts to strengthen learners' writing competences through

innovative tools. It also integrates the use of virtual platforms in assessment strategies. Lastly, we intend to generate awareness about global issues. For this, we took into account learners' needs and interests during the design of the activities.

### **Description of the Lessons**

Based on the Experiential Learning cycles, we planned ten lessons of two hours each. Considering MEN's suggested curriculum (2016b) the lessons focused on a real-life topic: Consumerism. We worked on the most common concepts of the matter (consumption, online shopping, shopaholics, consuming habits, labor exploitation for massive production), grammatical tenses (past, present simple and continuous, active-passive voice), and opinion statements. In the didactic unit, we included tasks such as discussions, role-plays, and drawings. We projected to use surveys, mind maps, forums, comics, and posters to evaluate the writers' competences. Through these activities, the students develop their critical thinking and learn how to express themselves in English.

We decided to apply interactive resources as Pixton, MindMup, and Quizzis gathered in Google Classroom to assess language competencies. The platform admits those formats and enables sharing text, images, videos, links, and files. Hence, learners can upload their products for direct or peer assessment. We can also organize sections with different components, such as materials, evaluations, or discussions. In that way, students will find what they need quickly.

In chart 2, we described the ten lessons. It determines the experiential cycle stages, the content (vocabulary and grammatical structures), the learning and instructional objectives, the planned activities, the participants' written outcomes, and the resources. The lesson plan also contemplates the tutor-led, self, and peer-assessment as formative strategies.

Table 2. *Overview of the Lesson Plans*

Class	Cycles	Content	Objectives	Activities	Outcomes and Resources
1	Concrete Experience.	<b>Vocabulary:</b> Consumer, to consume, consumerism, goods, purchase, spend, discount, sale, gifts, presents  <b>Grammar:</b> Present and past tense.	<b>Learning objectives</b> - Recognize the effects of consumerism in daily life. - Understand the theoretical insights about consumerism.  <b>Instructional objectives</b> - Conduct brainstorming to gather viewpoints of the group. - Carry on a discussion to reflect on the topic. - Describe the theoretical foundations of the topic.	Brainstorming about Christmas expenses in Padlet.	- Padlet board with perceptions about Christmas expenses. - Teacher's journal with perspectives on the recognizable feelings of our students.  Google classroom platform: Genially presentation
	Reflective Observation.			Discussion: How important is to spend money on Christmas?	
	Abstract Conceptualization			Genially presentation of the topic: Consumerism.	
	Active Experimentation			Autonomous research: Differences between consumption and consumerism.	
2	Concrete Experience.	<b>Vocabulary:</b> Consumption, I (really) think that I believe (that) I am sure that In my opinion <b>Grammar:</b> Opinion statements/state ments of opinion.	<b>Learning objectives</b> - Distinguish the differences between consumption and consumerism - Identify structures to express opinions or points of view. - Propose a drawing activity to express ideas.  <b>Instructional objectives</b> - Guide socialization of their work. - Present the grammar structures for expressing opinions. - Propose a written activity reflection.	Group activity: Drawing the differences between consumption and consumerism in Aggie.io.	- Drawings. - Written opinion about the topic. - Teacher's journal with our perspectives on the recognizable feelings of our students.  Google Classroom: aggie.io and forum.
	Reflective Observation.			Socialization: Sharing drawings and ideas about the topic.	
	Abstract Conceptualization			Presentation of structures to express opinions of points of view: Video and explanation.	
	Active Experimentation			Autonomous work: Students write their opinions about consumerism in Google Classroom Forum.	
3	Concrete Experience.	<b>Vocabulary:</b> Online shopping, cards, carts, sign in, sign up, wish list, checkout, account, payment, coupons, return/ refund.  <b>Grammar:</b> The disadvantage of ... is.	<b>Learning objectives</b> - Organize ideas about the topic in a mind map. - Create a hypothetical situation to generate awareness about a topic.  <b>Instructional objectives</b> - Use mind maps to convey information. - Lead a role-play to discuss a specific topic. - Provide feedback on writing.	Mind Map: How to do online shopping? Using Mind Mup.	- Mind map. - Script. - Teacher's journal with our perspectives on the recognizable feelings of our students.  Google Classroom: Mind Mup and Google Docs.
	Reflective Observation.			Role-play: Drawbacks and dangers of online shopping (Script draft on Google Docs and feedback).	



		There are many negative aspects, and one of them is.			
4	Reflective Observation.	<b>Vocabulary:</b> Web sales, shoppers, stores, increase, decrease, prices, business, e-Commerce, in stock, out of stock. <b>Grammar:</b> Present simple and continuous, and past tense. Active - Passive voice	<b>Learning objectives</b> - Critique consumer behaviors through a role play. - Analyze article information to encourage critical thinking. <b>Instructional objectives</b> - Coordinate presentations. - Integrate guided reading techniques for presenting the information. - Apply gamification strategies to assess performance.	Role-play performance.	- Role-play. - Teacher's journal with our perspectives on the recognizable feelings of our students.  Google Classroom: Jeopardy , online article.
	Abstract Conceptualization			Teachers' guided reading article: "As pandemic pushes on, online sales grow 76% in June".	
	Active Experimentation			Jeopardy Game about the article and previous activities.	
5	Concrete Experience.	<b>Vocabulary:</b> Go shopping, do the shopping, grocery shopping, window shopping, shop around, for sale, a wallet, a receipt, a price tag. <b>Grammar:</b> <i>Structure:</i> <i>Creating a story</i> Once upon a time, there was _____. Every day, _____. One day _____. Because of that, Because of that, <i>Structure:</i> <i>Survey</i>	<b>Learning objectives</b> - Create a collaborative story based on their context. - Distinguish the main ideas from a narration. - Identify expressions and vocabulary for task-making. - Design a survey to gather information about their context. <b>Instructional objectives</b> - Conduct creative writing exercise. - Involve students in their social context using personal narratives. - Present expressions and vocabulary for real-life tasks. - Describe survey structures and guidelines.	A collaborative story using Fluky Roulette and Google Docs: Consumerism in your context.	- Collaborative story. - Survey about families' consuming habits. - Teacher's journal with our perspectives on the recognizable feelings of our students.  Google Classroom, Docs, Meet, and Surveys. Fluky roulette, aggie.io.
	Reflective Observation.			Storytime: Weird shopping experiences using Aggie.io.	
	Abstract Conceptualization			Explanation: Shopping expressions and vocabulary, how to create a survey.	
	Active Experimentation			Autonomous work: Create a Google survey about consumerism in Colombian families.	
6	Concrete Experience.	<b>Vocabulary:</b> <i>For feedback:</i> I like it! - I love it! -Good job! - Great stuff! - Well done! - Not exactly. -	<b>Learning objectives</b> - Provide feedback for peers' writing. - Discuss the content of video clips. - Collect data in their social context through	Peer review: Survey.	- Peer review comments. - Final survey - Teacher's journal with our perspectives on the recognizable
	Reflective Observation.			Comparative reflection: <i>Confessions of a Shopaholic Movie clip.</i>	

	Abstract Conceptualization	Good try, but... <i>Shopaholics:</i> Shopaholic, waste money on something, bargain hunting, shopping spree, shopping therapy, splash out on something. <b>Grammar:</b> Present tenses.	surveys. <b>Instructional objectives</b> - Supply guidelines for peer-reviewing. - Lead a discussion. - Describe real-life cases of social issues.	Presentation: Real-life shopaholics.	feelings of our students.  Google Classroom comments, Google Surveys and videos.
	Active Experimentation			Apply the survey to their families and reflect on the results stating their opinions	
7	Concrete Experience.	<b>Vocabulary:</b> <i>For trends:</i> To rise, to increase, to decrease, to fall. <i>For comics:</i> Panel, gutter, tier, splash, splash, spread, speech bubble, caption, sound effect. <b>Grammar:</b> Present and past tenses. Verbs to describe. Literary figure: Onomatopoeia.	<b>Learning objectives</b> - Describe the results of a survey. - Produce outcomes about families' consuming habits. - Apply storytelling techniques in a comic. <b>Instructional objectives</b> - Discern perceptions about a specific topic. - Introduce social inquiries through hot topics. - Explain the uses of Pixton for creating narratives.	Surveys' results socialization.	- Students' comments on the forum. - Comic in Pixton. - Teacher's journal with our perspectives on the recognizable feelings of our students.  Google Classroom, Google Surveys, Pixton.
	Reflective Observation.			Forum: Written conclusions about families' consuming habits.	
	Abstract Conceptualization			Explanation: Trends and their influence on daily consumer life.	
	Active Experimentation			Create a comic using Pixton (Collaborative work).	
8	Concrete Experience.	<b>Vocabulary:</b> <i>For feedback:</i> I like it! I love it! Good job! Not exactly. Good try, but... That is almost it. Let's try that again.	<b>Learning objectives</b> - Express opinions about art creations in a short text. - Identify expressions to present arguments in a debate. <b>Instructional objectives</b> - Offer critical feedback strategies. - Explain how to use grammar structures to give points of view and argue students' ideas. - Assess written competences through Quizizz.	Comics' gallery in Google Classroom.	- Comics. - Written comments on partners' work. - Results of the test. - Teacher's journal with our perspectives on the recognizable feelings of our students.  Google Classroom, Quizizz.
	Reflective Observation.			Comment on partners' creation in a short text.	
	Abstract Conceptualization			Explanation: How to offer arguments and demonstrate the position on a topic.	
	Active Experimentation			Written test in Quizizz.	

		think of...? What are your thoughts on...?			
9	Concrete Experience.	<b>Vocabulary:</b> The exploitation of labor, worker, employer, capitalist, slavery, enterprise, salary, human right, and abuse. <b>Grammar:</b> I'm not sure I agree with you on... I'm sorry but I don't agree. Or I'm afraid I disagree. I see what you're saying but...	<b>Learning objectives</b> - Identify the main ideas from a video. - Discuss ideas about hypermedia content. - Understand critical situations in daily life. - Build arguments for debate. <b>Instructional objectives</b> - Involve students in critical situations thought hypermedia content. - Introduce social topics using a news report. - Guide learners in the argument-making task.	Video: The Simpson. <i>Made in China</i> .	- Written arguments. - Teacher's journal with our perspectives on the recognizable feelings of our students.  Google Classroom, video, and Google Docs.
	Reflective Observation.			Oral reflection of the previous video.	
	Abstract Conceptualization			News report: Labor exploitation for massive production.	
	Active Experimentation			Debate: Building written arguments for and against a topic.	
10	Concrete Experience.	<b>Grammar:</b> I'm not sure I agree with you on... I'm sorry, but I disagree. Or I'm afraid I disagree. I see what you're saying but... You have a point there but... or I understand where you're coming from but...	<b>Learning objectives</b> - Adopt, take and defend a position in social issues - Assess their performance. <b>Instructional objectives</b> - Lead a debate about a topic. - Give guidelines to self-evaluation.	Debate: Labor exploitation for massive production.	- Self-assessment. - Teacher's journal with our perspectives on the recognizable feelings of our students.  Google Classroom, Google Survey, PowerPoint presentations and online web pages.
	Reflective Observation.			Self-assessment.	
	Active Experimentation			Game contest: The higher and lower game, charades and who wants to be a millionaire.	

## Learner's Role

We embrace the student-centered classroom vision for our practices, which Jones (2007) defined as "a place where we consider the students' needs, as a group and as individuals, and encourage them to participate in the learning process all the time" (p. 2). It is suitable for our aspirations because it incorporates formative assessment, ICT, and self-management.

For us, students are active agents of their learning. It means that they work collaboratively to help each other and generate knowledge. They are independent of the teacher and contribute to the lesson planning with their motivations. In this type of environment, learners can share ideas, learn from the other, and use English for meaningful purposes. In that way, they feel confident and less anxious. (Nagaraju, Madhavaiah, & Peter, 2013)

### **Teacher's Role**

We believe that teachers are resource providers, facilitators, and guides. Emailiana (2017) states that teachers “consider the needs of the students, as a group and as individuals, and encourage them to participate in the learning process all the time” (p. 61). They create authentic experiences and apply technologies to personalize teaching.

As teacher-researcher, we took a reflective role to examine the theoretical framework, pupils' background, and data to suggest possible answers to our inquiries and draw conclusions. Throughout the project, we mulled over our epistemological assumptions, personal beliefs, values, and interpretations of the phenomenon (Given, 2008). For example, we determined our learning, language, curriculum, and classroom visions to guide our pedagogical decisions. We consider relevant the psychological and social aspects of the pupils' L2 learning process. Besides, we recognize communication to embolden them in language acquisition.

### **Assessment**

For us, the assessment focuses on the entire process rather than final exams and products. In the intervention, teachers will evaluate based on *formative assessment*, which requires ongoing feedback. It involves comprehensible, actionable, and relevant comments about learners' work. The course includes tutor-led, peer, and self-assessment sessions to enhance the critical analysis of their journey.

Through this method, teachers can also monitor students' learning. First, they will need to target the writers' language level, and then, they will be able to track their achievement throughout the progress. The criteria will encompass participation, productions, and real-life purposes. All of this directed to the learning outcomes established in the activities chart.

The assessment includes:

- Diagnosis of English level
- Participation in discussions, debates, role-plays, and creative gallery.
- Written tasks: Mind map, script, collaborative story, and forum.
- Real-life purposes: Readings of news, surveys, and comics.
- Peer assessment (comments on partners' work), tutor-led (exam), and self-assessment.

## Chapter VI. Conclusions, Pedagogical Implications, Limitations, and Further Research

Thanks to this research journey and the instructional design, we arrived at several conclusions, even if we did not apply the intervention due to the global pandemic situation. Initially, we comprehend writing anxiety as a relevant matter for our learners' lives. Previous studies proposed instruments for measuring language anxiety levels, but they focused on academic writing rather than the writers' initial steps. Feelings impact learning a foreign language; for that, FL teachers need preparation to provide valuable feedback, design assessment rubrics, and offer writing strategies to avoid English learning apprehension.

We found that *formative assessment* is the most adequate because it strengthens the pupils' social development. Likewise, summative evaluation limits creativity, and it does not involve aspects of writing, such as different genres and stages. We believe that beneficial feedback should be clear, practical, constructive, and delivered on time. Also, writers have to know the assessing criteria since the beginning of the intervention. The MEN recommend some writing resources in their suggested curriculum, but they were published more than a decade ago.

It is pertinent to use ICTs tools to address the students' necessities in the current education of the 21st century. Besides facilitating the interaction, it fosters multiculturalism to share values and beliefs; the context plays a vital role in language learning. The COVID-19 global pandemic has shown us the importance of knowing and handling this kind of resource. For instance, there is a variety to supplement the writing acquisition.

As for recommendations and pedagogical implications, we suggest the application of our proposal. We consider that teachers should work on the development of English writing competencies from the early stages. Also, they should be aware of anxiety and its effects on language achievement. Finally, they need to learn about interactive tools and how to take advantage of them.

As a final point, we acknowledge some limitations of the study. First, the implementation requires both traditional and virtual environments. For that reason, the quarantine was a shortcoming. Furthermore, researchers need to reflect on any factor that can generate anxiety beyond language; to illustrate, the lack of time, learning environments, assessment rubrics, and online materials affect learners' perception. Other drawbacks are the facilitator's insufficient knowledge about the tools or writing assessment, the deficit of resources or a constraining syllabus in the school, the lack of consent from parents and head-teacher, and the pupils' disinterest and materials' misuse.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Consent Form

**UNIVERSIDAD DISTRITAL FRANCISCO JOSÉ DE CALDAS**  
**FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS Y EDUCACIÓN**

#### CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Los invitamos a usted y a su hijo(a) a participar en un estudio de investigación realizado por Paula Andrea Velásquez y María Paula Rodríguez, quienes son profesoras practicantes en el área de inglés en la Institución, como parte de su proyecto “*Abordando la ansiedad en la escritura con evaluación formativa interactiva*”. El estudio, así como sus derechos como participante, se describen a continuación.

**Descripción:** Este estudio examinará la percepción de los estudiantes a exámenes escritos en inglés. Los niños desarrollarán un cuestionario al iniciar el estudio para conocer sus opiniones acerca de los procesos evaluativos al momento de aprender una lengua extranjera y al finalizar responderán en una entrevista las preguntas planteadas por el investigador sobre cómo se sintieron a lo largo del proceso y sus reacciones a la hora de trabajar usando herramientas virtuales. La entrevista de su hijo(a) se grabará en video para su uso en procedimientos de investigación estándar (por ejemplo, análisis de respuestas, presentación, etc.). La identidad de su hijo(a) no se revelará a nadie más que al investigador principal y a sus asociados de investigación designados.

**Confidencialidad:** Las respuestas de los niños no se asociarán con su nombre. Por el contrario, a cada niño se le dará un número de identificación en la hoja del entrevistador. La grabación de video de la participación de su hijo(a) se destruirá después de que se haya transcrito.

**Riesgos y beneficios:** No existen riesgos para la seguridad de su hijo(a). Puede optar por obtener una vista previa de la grabación de video o verla con su hijo(a). El proyecto no plantea cuestiones delicadas o controvertidas.

**Libertad para retirar o rechazar la participación:** Su hijo(a) tiene el derecho de negarse a responder cualquiera de las preguntas del entrevistador sin perjuicio del investigador.

**Procedimiento de queja:** Si tiene alguna inquietud o no está satisfecho con algún aspecto de este estudio, puede informar las quejas a los siguientes números de contacto: 3213273001 – 3229483540.

#### Declaración de consentimiento informado

Yo \_\_\_\_\_, doy permiso para que mi hijo(a) \_\_\_\_\_ participe en el proyecto de investigación titulado “*Explorando la ansiedad en la escritura del inglés usando tecnologías de la comunicación*” y acepto que graben en audio o video a mi hijo(a) durante este estudio.

El estudio me fue explicado y mis preguntas fueron respondidas a mi satisfacción. Entiendo que se respetará el derecho de mi hijo(a) a retirarse o negarse a participar y que sus respuestas e identidad se mantendrán confidenciales. Doy este consentimiento voluntariamente.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Firma y cédula del tutor*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Firma de investigador*

## Appendix B. Questionnaire About English Writing

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Este cuestionario está dividido en cuatro partes: aprendizaje del inglés, evaluación y ansiedad en la escritura, y herramientas interactivas. En las preguntas del 1 al 5, por favor lee cada afirmación y marca un número indicando qué tan cierto es para ti, siendo 1 nunca o casi nunca y 5 siempre o casi siempre. En las preguntas de opción múltiple, selecciona aquellas respuestas con las que te identifiques. En cuanto a la privacidad, tu identidad y respuestas serán confidenciales y si se hace una alusión hacia ti, será completamente anónima.

<b>English Learning</b> (Aprendizaje del inglés)					
1. ¿Qué tan importante es el inglés para ti?	1	2	3	4	5
2. ¿Cómo consideras tu nivel de inglés actualmente?	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Assessing Writing</b> (Evaluación en la escritura)	
<p><b>¿De qué forma tu docente te ayuda a mejorar tus textos en inglés?</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Marca los errores en el texto y escribe la forma correcta</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Marca los errores en el texto y tú debes descubrir porqué está mal</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Te explica oralmente cada uno de tus errores</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Califica tus textos, pero no te dice cómo mejorarlos</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Otros: _____</p>
<p><b>¿En qué forma prefieres ser evaluado?</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Test escrito en papel</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Test oral</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Actividades con herramientas virtuales</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Portafolio de tareas y trabajos en clase</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Otros: _____</p>

<b>Writing Anxiety</b> (Ansiedad en la escritura)					
1. Me paralizó cuando me piden escribir redacciones en inglés inesperadamente.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Suelo sentirme cómodo y a gusto al escribir en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5



3. Suelo sentir pánico (tiemblo, transpiro, siento mi cuerpo rígido, las ideas se me lían, etc.) cuando tengo que escribir redacciones en inglés con límite de tiempo.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Me suelo quedar en blanco cuando empiezo a escribir una redacción en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Cuando escribo en inglés, suelo tener las ideas muy claras.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Me suele preocupar el hecho de poder usar expresiones o construir frases de forma incorrecta cuando escribo en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Cuando escribo redacciones en inglés, me siento preocupado e incómodo si sé que las van a evaluar.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Cuando escribo en inglés, las ideas y las palabras me salen sin problema.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Si mi redacción en inglés va a ser evaluada, me preocupa sacar una mala nota.	1	2	3	4	5
10. No me preocupa lo que otras personas puedan pensar de mis redacciones en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Me asusta que mi redacción en inglés pueda ser elegida como un ejemplo para debatir en clase.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Suelo buscar cualquier oportunidad posible para escribir redacciones en inglés fuera de clase.	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Interactive Tools</b> (Uso de herramientas virtuales en el aula)		
¿Has usado herramientas virtuales para redactar textos en inglés?	Si	No
Si la respuesta es sí, ¿cuáles?		

## Appendix C. Interview

Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre del entrevistado/a: \_\_\_\_\_

Edad: \_\_\_\_\_

### Objetivo

Conocer la percepción de los estudiantes hacia el aprendizaje de la escritura y los procesos evaluativos en el inglés como lengua extranjera.

### Preguntas

#### Aspecto emocional

¿Cómo te sentiste al usar diferentes actividades para evaluar tu escritura en inglés?

¿Encuentras alguna diferencia entre escribir usando medios tradicionales y digitales? ¿Alguna te hace sentir mejor?

#### Sobre la evaluación de la escritura

¿Qué actividades suelen hacer tus profesores para evaluar tu escritura en inglés?

¿Prefieres ser evaluado usando herramientas virtuales o usando la evaluación escrita? ¿Por qué?

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