ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT IN PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Final dissertation

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To my family, specially to my uncle Francesc.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

There has recently been a huge debate about the need to assess Young Language Learners and there is also an active debate about the introduction of English in early stages. Despite the fact that there are many controversial opinions on these topics, they are very important in the current education systems, even more in Pre-school education. This project aims to analyse teachers' opinions and methods when assessing young learners and for this reason, the concerns and beliefs of three Slovene and four Catalan teachers about assessment will be analysed. The analysis will consider teachers' answers to the interviews, as well as some observations carried out in different preschools. The results of the study on different topics, such as teachers' beliefs and concerns, tools used for assessing Young Language Learners and the way that teachers share assessment results with families will be discussed in this paper.

Key words: assessment, Young Language Learners, introduction of English, Pre-school.

Recentment s'ha realitzat un gran debat sobre la necessitat d'avaluar els joves aprenents de llengua i també hi ha un actiu debat sobre la introducció de l'anglès en les primeres etapes. Malgrat que hi ha moltes opinions controvertides sobre aquests temes, són molt importants en els sistemes educatius actuals, sobretot en l'etapa d'Educació Infantil. Aquest projecte pretén analitzar les opinions i els mètodes que els mestres utilitzen a l'hora d'avaluar els joves aprenents de llengua i, per aquest motiu, s'analitzaran les inquietuds i creences de tres mestres eslovenes i quatre catalanes sobre l'avaluació. L'anàlisi considerarà les respostes de les mestres a les entrevistes, així com algunes observacions realitzades en diferents escoles i llars d'infants. Els resultats de l'estudi sobre diferents temes com ara les creences i inquietuds dels professors, les eines utilitzades per avaluar els joves aprenents de llengua i la forma en què els mestres comparteixen els resultats de l'avaluació amb les famílies es tractaran al llarg d'aquest document.

Paraules claus: avaluació, joves aprenents de llengua, introducció de l'anglès, Educació Infantil.

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1. Introduction

Assessment is one of the most important aspects of an education system. Teachers have to assess children to follow and report their students' progress and achievement, but also to plan future interventions according to the children's needs. However, assessment has always been a controversial topic and it is even more controversial when we associate assessment and young learners. Nowadays there is still an active debate about how and when Young Language Learners should be assessed. The Catalan Curriculum, the *Currículum i Orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle* (2016), does not provide clear instructions to teachers about how they should assess, as it is little prescriptive in this topic.

Another controversial topic when teaching Young Language Learners is the introduction of English. What is more, English is not a curricular subject in Preschool Catalan education system, but in recent years, a growing number of schools have started introducing English when children are three years of age, but there is still a dynamic debate about the benefits of an early start. Some people defend the idea that children should start learning English as soon as possible, but other ones claim that children should first acquire their L1 properly, and then they can be introduced to a second language.

Having said that, as a future teacher I am very interested in both topics, because there are strong points on both sides and I will have to face up these debates in my future practise. Moreover, during the present academic year, I have had the possibility to do the placement in another country, Slovenia. For this reason, I decided to carry out this research project considering both education systems, to discover how Slovene education system copes with these two controversial topics. However, Catalan and Slovene education systems are slightly different, and for this reason, comparing them was quite hard. Nonetheless, Catalan and Slovene teachers were interviewed to analyse their beliefs and concerns about assessment, in order to achieve the main aims of this final dissertation.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 General view of assessment

The topic of assessment has been bringing up for discussion for so many years. Moreover, as Basford & Bath (2009) suggest "Assessment (...) in early childhood education (ECE) is currently a key International issue" (p.119). Having said that, is clear that the assessment is a controversial topic in the education, and this topic is also challenging for those who participate in the education world. However, there are different reasons for using assessment. As Harris (2009) considers, the fact of assessing can help teachers to identify the different needs of the children, to plan effective intervention for children needs, to improve teachers' interventions and to realize about children's strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, Leong & McAffee (as cited in Harris, 2009) defend that "Authentic assessment allows an early childhood educator to gather and document evidence of a child's progress in a way that is beneficial to the child, the family, teachers and administrators". Mc Kay (2006), also agree on the fact that assessment has potential benefits: "There are many reasons why young learners might be assessed and there are a variety of different people interested on the results of their assessment" (p.20). According to her, teachers should be very interested in their students' assessment, because through assessment:

> "Teachers and assessors (…) of young learners need to examine the assessment tasks and procedures they construct, to work to become aware of (…) and to ensure that the impact on the child, the community, the teacher and school and the learning programme is positive" (Mckay, 2006, p.19).

In this point, it is clear that assessment should be present in the daily life of students and teachers but before assessing, it is also important to recognize the objectives that are wanted to be achieved through the assessment. According to the *Catalog of Screening and Assessment instruments for Young Children* (2010), the assessment should pursue different objectives: determining the need for services, planning program goals, identifying key instructional strategies and determining learning experiences. Moreover, in the document of *Currículum i orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle* (2016) it is also suggested that the assessment can help teachers to understand better how children develop and learn, understand in which learning and development stage they are and knowing which kind of stimulus should be given to the infants, to reflect about the teacher educative practice in order to improve it and helping children to be conscious of their own learning process.

2.2 How should we assess young learners?

As commented before, assessment has some benefits but it is also important to remain that not all kinds of assessment can have these benefits. Effective assessment should be considered for the teachers to take profit of the advantages of using assessment. Mckay (2006), suggests that "Effective assessment procedures (…) are assessments that have been designed to ensure, as far as possible, valid and fair information on the student's abilities and progress" (p.18). Mckay refers to valid assessment as the one that assesses what should be assessed and fair as that assessment that provide appropriate and useful information about children's abilities. According to her, this kind of assessment has different benefits: "Effective assessment gives educator feedback in the teaching and learning process, informing the next teaching decision and giving guidance on how students should be optimally placed, for example, in the next grade level (Mckay, 2006, p.19). Moreover, the effective assessment also has some benefits for the students, because, according to Mckay; can help students to acquire knowledge of their own progress and motivate them to keep improving. It is important to keep in mind that not all the assessments are effective and that assessment can be also dangerous. "Assessment is able to establish and maintain social positions if it is designed in such a way that it favours the privileged society, perpetuating the status quo" (McKay, 2006, p.19).

There are different conceptions about how the assessment on the early childhood education should be. In the document of *Catalog of Screening and Assessment instruments for Young Children* (2010) it is said that mainly this assessment should be ongoing and dynamic. Moreover, it is also said that it should include different methods and tools for assessing. The tools used for assessing should be chosen based on the characteristics of the child and the curriculum. Moreover, this document, also explains some of the characteristics that an assessment system should accomplish as being conducted in a child's typical day, that is, not in artificial situations, including documentation of ongoing assessments, including input from different professionals and staff, providing evidence of child progress over time, and provide information communicated with families.

Another document that also comments on how assessment should be carried out is *Currículum i orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle* (2016). According to this document, assessment should be regulatory, continuous, positive, integrated and diversified, qualitative and participative. Referring to the regulatory character, it is said

that education should promote a regulatory and oriented character of the learning process. Moreover, it is also important to include the needed improvements to facilitate the development of children's capacities. Assessment should also be continuous and it should be done during all the moments of the learning and teaching process. Moreover, it is also important to establish a positive assessment, in order to refer to the children's capabilities, instead of their limitations. That is, considering what children can do and what can help them to acquire further abilities. According to this document, assessment should be also integrated and diversified as it should be part of the daily life in the educative centres and should also consider different sources of information and be shared with other professionals. Finally, the process of assessment should be a participative task in which all the members of the educative community, infants included, should have the right to participate in it.

Apart from that, this document also considers the documentation and the observation key aspects of the process of assessment. The observation is essential to realize about all the progresses that infants make and analyse them. Besides, the documentation is the process of documenting the evidences, educative progresses, emotions, experiences… and reflecting about them. Documentation just make sense if it is shared with the others, to share the experiences that children are living inside the school and to give to the others the possibility to reflect about that. However, in order to practise useful processes of documentation and observation it is important to establish common criteria and having clear the objectives that we try to achieve with these two processes. According to this document, the process of observation and documentation are the two processes of the assessment cycle, the first one for collecting information and the second one for analysing this information. This process is cyclic, and it has five phases, two for the observation process and three for the process of documenting. The observation process includes selecting the assessment object and collecting information and the documenting process includes analysing the information, deciding the improvement proposals and communicating it with the other professionals and families.

Mckay (2006) also suggests that all the assessment processes should include three different phases. The first one is the design phase that, according to Mckay (2006), "(…) in this phase the teacher decides on the purpose for the procedure, checks that the assessment is appropriate for the situations tasks and tasks that learners need (…), and checks the characteristics of the learners" (p.146). Moreover, she also argues that the teacher should revise the constructs to be assessed and that needed resources are available. The second one is the operationalization phase, that according to her "In the

operationalization phase, the teacher prepares the assessment tasks (…)" (Mckay, 2006, p.146). Moreover, in this phase, the teacher also thinks about the instructions that will be given to the students to carry out the process of assessment and prepare the scoring methods. Finally, there is the administration phase, in which "the teacher is concerned with actually carrying out the assessment procedure and checking that the procedure has worked well" (Mckay, 2006, p.146).

As it was commented before, the assessment process just makes sense if it is shared with the different agents in the education process. For example, Herman, Wardrip, Hall & Chimino (2012) defend that "sharing data publicly with students is important (…). Sharing data about progress with students demonstrates expectations. Plus, discussing data with students supports student self-regulation, an important developmental priority for these teachers" (p.29). Moreover, the document of *Currículum i orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle* (2016) also gives us some information about the benefits of sharing the process of assessment with children, that can help them to be conscious about their own assessment and about the process they followed to learn.

There are clear evidences that assessment should be also shared with students' families. As it is highlighted in the document *Catalog of Screening and Assessment instruments for Young Children* (2010), "Parents should be consulted and informed regularly and viewed as active participants in the assessment and program-planning process by providing information and feedback" (p.10). In the *Currículum i orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle* (2016) is also suggested that the assessment should be shared with the families, that can help them to know the evolution of their children and to have enough information about the educative task that is taking place inside the school to ensure the families-teacher collaboration. Moreover, in this document they also advise the teachers that is important to "listen to the families, for the knowledge that they have from their children, but also in relation with the opinion that they have about what we do and accept that maybe there are things that should be improved" (p. 84).[1] This importance of engaging families in the daily life of the school is also considered in Markström article. Lpfö (as cited in Markström, 2010) argues that "The interplay between parents and teachers, both in everyday talk and during parent-teacher conference, is said to be concerned with children's development, learning and well-being both at home and at preschool".

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[1] My translation from *Currículum i orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle*

Having explained some considerations about how the assessment of early childhood should be, there are other important aspects that need to be considered about the topic of assessment. One of the key topic of the assessment is which aspects should be considered to bring up the process of assessment. According the *Currículum i orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle* (2016), the final aim of the Early Childhood education should be "contributing to the emotional and affective, physic and motor, social and cognitive development of the infants in cooperation with families, giving them a confident surrounding in which they feel confidence and welcomed and with their learning expectations" (p.124).[2] In this sense, the assessment should consider the final aim of the early childhood education, assessing the development of the items in the terms considered before, and the tasks that teachers make to help children to achieve this aim.

Moreover, this document also suggests that when assessing, teachers should focus on two aspects. The first one is the children's processes, that means that teachers should observe the progress of the infants, their development, their desires, how they communicate, how they acquire abilities…However, every educative centre should select their assessment characteristics, that should be coherent with their beliefs, their needs, their projects and the children's needs to observe the progress and development. The second one is teachers' practice. In this sense, it is important to consider that one of the main objectives of the assessment, as commented before, is to evaluate teachers' practice in order to reflect upon it and improve it if necessary. The curriculum also suggests that sometimes teachers just keep doing what they've been doing for some years, without reflecting about that. According to it, every educative practice is open to improvement and it is in this point, where assessment make sense. This process of reflection is important to realize if teachers' actions are effective according children's desires and needs.

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[2] My translation from *Currículum i orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle*

2.3 Tools and resources

Another important aspect that should be considered when we talk about assessment is the tools and resources that can be used for assessing. Inside the *Currículum i orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle* (2006), there is one chapter that specifies about the resources that can be used for the process of assessing. For example, one of these tools is the album, that can allow children to collect all their productions. However, in the document it is suggested that it is important to find a tool that can include different situations of the school, apart from children productions, and that contribute to make the learning process more individualized. One of the resources that can help to achieve this, is the learning folder or dossier. This resource allows teachers to collect the projects of children in a folder. Moreover, one of the main characteristics of this resource is that is personalized for every student, and that can allow the participation of students. The main aim of using this tool is to provide evidences of the students learning and development, through teachers notes, drawings, writings, and pictures of the experiences of children in the school, among others. Moreover, in this document some other resources that can complement the learning folder are mentioned, as the classroom diaries or notebooks, that collect group experiences and can be shared with other infants, professionals, families… However, the most important issue is to reflect about the learning process and find effective resources for assessing and documenting them.

As commented before, the curriculum suggests that every school should find the most useful tools according to their characteristics, but if we consider the advantages that, according to it, the learning folder has, it is clear that it should be considered during the process of assessing. As reported by the curriculum, the learning folder has advantages for the three agents that should be considered in the process of assessment: infants, families and teachers. The learning folder can help children to make their own learning process explicit, to reflect about their process and improve it and to share their productions, among others. It can be useful for the families too, as can give them the possibility to participate in the learning process of infants, to know the tasks and projects in which their children participate and to reinforce positively their children when it is needed. Finally, the learning folder can help teachers to engage families in the children learning process, give them the possibility to teach to students to reflect about their own process of learning and transfer to children the need of having different values, as creativity and effort, among others, to improve.

Moreover, the *Currículum i orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle* is not the only that is in support of using this kind of assessment. Another resource that can be also useful for assessing and shares lots of characteristics with the learning folder is the portfolio. Kim & Yazdin (2014) suggest that "Portfolio assessment refers to using collection of student work samples from classroom to understand student learning in classrooms. Because student work samples are collected over time, student portfolios demonstrate growth and progress that individual students make during a school year" (p.222).

Harris (2009) highlights some of the evidences that a portfolio should contain. According to her, it should contain work samples, that according to Carini (as cited in Harris, 2009) are "examples of a child's work (such as drawings, writing samples photos of block structures) that have been saved as records of the child's progress". The portfolio should also contain systematic observations that refer to the observations that teacher write in the portfolio about the students, and should also contain anecdotal records, that " (…) provide essential information about a child's progress and activities in the classroom and information about a child's progress and activities in the classroom and information on what occurs in the classroom everyday environment" (Harris, 2009, p.83). Checklist or inventory should be also inside the portfolio and according to Harris (2009) they consist on lists of children's traits and behaviour. In this sense, according to her, they help teachers to observe specific skills and to assess their own instruction. Finally, rating scales and interviews are other evidences that should be considered in a portfolio. Beaty (as cited in Harris, 2009), agree that rating scales "(…) assist teachers in tracking children's progress and observing areas in which children need to improve". Moreover, Harris (2009), also suggests that this evidence helps teachers to realize about children's progress and the areas in which children need to improve. She also suggests that "Interviews can be the basis of assessing children, allowing teachers to gain an idea of child's abilities before he or she enters the classroom and also enhances teacher-parent relationships" (Harris, 2009, p.83).

Considering the characteristics of portfolio and the evidences that should include, it is clear that there are lots of advantages in the use of portfolios, but it is important to highlight some of them. Kim & Yazdian (2014) highlight one of the key benefits of using portfolios: "Because a learning portfolio collects student works samples over time, it provides teachers with opportunities to understand the process of student learning" (p.221). However, in their article they point out that portfolios can contribute to communication and collaboration, opportunities for transforming teaching and

demonstration of student growth and progress over time. Referring to the first key aspect, "portfolio facilitates communication and collaboration among teachers, students and parents" (Kim & Yazdian, 2014, p.222). What's more, they also suggest that teachers should identify the objectives of using portfolios and these should be communicated to the students. The perspectives that teachers have about students' progress should also be communicated and argued with students. The second aspect, opportunities for transforming teaching, is also highlighted; "Portfolio assessment provides rich contexts for teachers to transform their teaching to meet the needs of individual students" (Kim & Yazdian, 2014, p.223). Finally, they also argue that "(…) student portfolios demonstrate growth and progress that individual students make during a school year" (Kim & Yazdian, 2014, p.222).

2.4 Kinds of assessment

Although the benefits of assessing had been discussed before, it is important to mention that there are different kinds of assessments. According to Mckay (2006) we can differentiate between informal and formal assessment. "Informal assessment usually refers to classroom assessment carried out during the course of teaching and learning process" (p.20). However, "Formal assessment usually refers to assessment that is planned and carried out through formal procedures" (Mckay, 2006, p.20). Moreover, she also differentiates between classroom assessment and external assessment: "Classroom assessment is prepared and conducted by teachers in classroom, whereas external assessment is prepared by those outside the classroom" (Mckay, 2006, p.20). During the process of the assessment, teachers should make some decisions, as deciding which kind of assessment they are going to use. It is important to consider that teachers' decisions will have lot of influence in the process of assessing.

Mckay (2006) also differentiate between low-stakes decisions and high-stakes decisions. "Low stake decisions are relatively minor and are relatively easy to correct. There is a low cost for making a wrong decision" (p.20). Nonetheless, "High-stakes decisions (…) are likely to affect students' lives and decisions are difficult to correct. The costs of making a wrong decision are high" (Mckay, 2006, p.20). In this sense, when a teacher should make a decision, it is important to consider if it is a low-stake decision or a high-stake decision. In the case that it would be a high-stake decision, it is important to consider the benefits and the possible risks, because as it was commented before, the process of assessment can involve some risks. Another possible differentiation for kinds of assessment is between formative and summative assessments. Dixson and Worrell

(2016) ensure that "Two tools that teachers commonly use to assess student learning of new material and knowledge are formative and summative assessment" (p.153). According to them, formative assessment helps the teachers to collect data to improve the student's learning process and summative assessment use data to assess what the students know or have retained.

Black & William (2010) suggest that formative assessment can be defined as "activities undertaken by teachers and by their students in assessing themselves that provide information to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning activities" (p.82). Mckay (2006) also distinguishes between these two kinds of assessments and introduces the advantages of using them. "Formative assessment gives teachers information about how well the student is doing (…) often involves diagnostic assessment when teachers analyse learners' specific strengths and weaknesses" (p.22). The advantages of using this kind of assessment are also discussed by different authors. Black & William (2010) also suggest that formative assessment also helps to define the goals of the learning, the relationship that students have with this goal and what can be improved to achieve this goal. Cook (as cited in Black & William, 2010) states that formative assessment can be spontaneous or planned and they give one example of each one: "Spontaneous formative assessments are (…) such as when a teacher calls on a student to provide an example just covered (…)" (p.155). According to them, this kind of formative assessment can be very useful, as it can provide teachers and students information about the student learning process in real time. However, "Planned formative assessments include activities such quizzes and homework exercises that are assigned to assess student progress" (Dixson&Warrell, 2016, p.155).

In contrast, in the National Research Council (as cited in Dixson &Worrell, 2016) the summative assessment is defined as "accumulative assessments (…) that intend to capture what a student has learned, or the quality of the learning and judge performance against some standards" (p.156). Moreover, Harlen & Gardner (as cited in Dixson &Worrell, 2016) argue that:

> "In addition to (…) determining a student's level of success or proficiency (…), summative assessments are also used to determine the eligibility for special programs, to assess if a student should advance to the next grade level, provide career guidance, or to assess qualifications for awards" (p.156).

Mckay (2006) also clarifies the definition and the benefits of summative assessment:

"At the end of the course of study, a teacher, and others too, want to know how a student has progressed during a period of study. This information is needed not only to measure what had been learned during the course, but also to report to others about achievement. This is summative assessment, which usually takes place at the end of a school term or school year" (p.22).

The differences between summative and formative assessments seem clear, but we must not forget that "(…) the distinction between formative and summative assessment is mainly related to the ways in which assessment results are used, as many assessments developed for formative purposes can be used for summative purposes and vice versa" (Dixson &Worrell, 2016, p. 154). However, it is important to clarify that there are different kinds of assessment but that both of them can complement each other. Moreover, National Research Council (as cited in Dixson &Worrell, 2016), defends that "(…) ideally, the two types of assessment should complement each other, as they serve related purposes" (p.157). What's more, "Formative assessment should be used during instruction to help students learn material initially and throughout the learning process. Summative assessments can be used at the end (…) to assess (…) how much learning students have gained and retained" (Dixson &Worrell, 2016, p.157). As Dixson & Worrel (2016) highlight, "(…) it is important for teachers to be mindful of the goals of their assessment and how they plan to use assessment results, so that they choose the best tools to accomplish the goal at hand" (p.157).

2.5 Assessing young language learners

It has been proved that assessment is always challenging, but it can be said that it is even more challenging when it consists on assessing young language learners. As known, children have different characteristics that make them different from adults and these differences also are noticeable during the process of learning and assessing. "Children bring to their language learning their own personalities, likes and dislikes and interests, their own individual cognitive styles and capabilities and their own strengths and weaknesses" (Mckay, 2006, p.5). Moreover, Mckay (2006) also points out that children are different from adults in three different aspects: growth, literacy and vulnerability. It is very important that teachers keep in mind these young learners' characteristics in order to promote valid assessments, that as commented before, are the ones that provide valid and fair information of the students' progress. Regarding the first aspect, growth, "(…) children are in a state of constant cognitive, social, emotional

and physical growth" (Mckay, 2006, p.6). Referring to cognitive growth, one aspect that should be highlighted is the attention that young children can pay to one task:

> "The attention span of young learners in the early years of schooling is short, as little as 10 to 15 minutes; they are easily diverted and distracted by other pupils. They may drop out a task when they find it difficult, though they are often willing to try a task in order to please the teachers" (Mckay, 2006, p.6)

For this reason, to avoid that children drop out a task, Mckay (2006) highlights that "Knowledge of children's cognitive stage of development is important for the effective assessment of young language learners. The cognitive demands of tasks should be commensurate with children's age-related abilities" (p.8). Moreover, in order to help children to be concentrated on the task, Mckay (2006) highlights the importance of choosing a quiet and calm space to assess the children, to allow them to be concentrated and not distracted. What's more, "Assessment should, therefore, wherever possible, be familiar and involve familiar adults, rather than strangers" (Mckay, 2006, p.9)

> "Texts used in assessment tasks should deal with familiar content-with home and family and school and with familiar, simple genres (…) like children's stories and folktales. If the assessment situation permits, interlocutor support should be available to encourage the children, remind them, keep them on track as they complete the task" (Mckay, 2006, p.10).

Regarding the second characteristic of young language learners, Mckay, defends that "A defining characteristic of literacy development is that children have first to develop understandings about how reading and writing work and that these develop over several years, beginning before they start school" (Mckay, 2006, p.11). As it is commented before, the other special characteristic of young language learners is vulnerability. Teachers should be careful during the process of assessment, because as Mckay (2006) suggest:

> "(...) young learners have a particular vulnerability that requires careful attention. For the most part young learners have confidence in their own abilities, if they have received love and support in the past. However, at this age, children have a heightened sensitivity to praise, criticism and approval and their self-steem is strongly influenced by experiences at school" (Mckay, 2006, p.14).

Moreover, she also argues that children should feel good about themselves when they are assessed and for this reason, it is important to plan activities that can make children in which they succeed. What's more, according to her, if they have the feeling that they succeed, they will keep the enthusiasm and creativity. In contrast, if tasks make feel the students that they are not capable they will not have a positive self-concept, and they can lose motivation and self-esteem. That is, "When young learners are assessed, it important that children experience overall success and a sense of progression" (Mckay, 2006, p.14).

2.6 Assessing foreign languages

The process of assessment is even more challenging when it consists on evaluating a foreign language, as it is English for some children. Learning a new language is quite difficult and also challenging for young learners. In the words of Kim&Yazdian, "English language learners often demonstrate a wide gap between what they understand about the world around them and what they can express in English" (p.222). Moreover, they also struggle when they have to speak, because:

> "First language learners are able to build on their oral language to read and write. Foreign language learners bring a background of literacy development in their first language to their language learning. (…) The developing first and second language (…) of young learners ensures that young learner assessment will always require special consideration" (Mckay, 2006, p.13).

For this reason, Cameron (2001) suggests that is very important to have clear learning language goals for every lesson to be able to assess young language learners. Moreover, she also mentions the importance of having explicit goals: "By making goals explicit, (…) we have a check on the potential value of each lesson to the pupils. These same goals will make assessment a much more straightforward process because they can act as a target or focus (…) (Cameron, 2001, p.228). Furthermore, she also points out that it is very important to find the focus of assessment, that " (…) is the precise aspect of language that is being attended to and assessed or measured" (Cameron, 2001, p.229). In addition, she also argues that sometimes there might be more than one focus of assessment, but sometimes it can be difficult, as when assessing oral language. Moreover, Nunan (2011) also mentions that for assessing language, there are different factors that need to be considered, as the age and the level of children, the content of language learning, the methods of teaching, the aims and learning theories.

As discussed before, the assessment of young language learners is challenging, but there are some strategies that can help teachers to assess English language effectively. Cameron (2001) points out that "(…) 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" (p.231). We can distinguish between two kinds of observations: incidental observations and planned observations. According to Mckay (2006), "Incidental observation occurs as the teacher circulates among students who are engaged in classroom tasks and activities" (p.153). Moreover, according to her, it can take place during the process of reading, writing and oral conferences among others. In contrast, in planned observation "Teachers may watch children's performance in tasks and activities in the classroom and take notes of what they see in regular and systematic way. They may use observation checklists or rating scales" (Mckay, 2006, p.154). Cameron (2001), agrees with Mckay and highlights that "The most common way of recording observations of children's performances is through a checklist on which the teacher simply ticks when a pupil has achieved the goal" (p.233). However, she also points out that checklists limit the information that can be recorded about a child's progress. Moreover, Nunan (2011) also agrees on that, and points out that "With younger learners, informal means, such as observation and discussions with learners, will probably be the best way to collect assessment data" (p.224).

Mason (as cited in Mckay, 2006) suggests that teachers should "Be consistent and systematic with (…) observations because young children's learning about written language develop and changes very rapidly. Have a schedule for observing different children every day or every few days" (p.154). Another strategy that might be useful is the use of conferences, that according to Mckay (2006) "(…) Involve the teacher engaging in a focused discussion with young learners about their work. (…) Teachers questions to elicit children's responses, in order to assess their progress and help children to reflect on their own performance" (p.159). Cameron (2001) also suggests that for assessing language through observations it is very important to "look very carefully at the particular aspect of language that we are concentrating on, and use our experience and knowledge about language and learning to guide us in what we look for and how we interpret what we see" (p.231).

Self-and peer assessment and classroom tests are other strategies for assessing young language learners. According to Mckay (2006), if children are invited to take active part of their own or their classmates process of assessment this will help them to reflect about

their processes and performances. Moreover, this encourages a more autonomous learning process and more awareness of the quality of their work. However,

> "Children need to be trained for peer-assessment as with self-assessment. (…) They need to learn, for example, to follow the criteria, to say positive things first, and not to laugh at others when they are experiencing difficulty. (…) Nevertheless, peer-assessment gives children awareness of what is expected, and an opportunity to learn how to help and learn from others" (Mckay, 2006, p.166)

In contrast, "A classroom tests refers to an individual task, or set of tasks, in which the conditions are controlled" (Mckay, 2006, p.167). Moroever, she also argues that classroom tests should be planned taking into account the objectives, the content covered and the kind of tasks used. Moreover,

> "Assessment tasks should not extend beyond the child's experience of the world; if children have never seen (…) the sea or sandcastles, they may not be able to respond to the instructions in the input, regardless of the general language ability" (Mckay, 2006, p.8).

Finally, another useful strategy can be the use of portfolios, that it has been already mentioned. However, portfolios can be a powerful strategy for assessing languages. For example, Kim & Yazdin (2014) argue that "portfolio assessment is a more valid way to assess English language learners without disadvantaging their linguistic and cultural differences" (p.221). What is more, "When the teacher and child, or parents and child, look through the portfolio together, this can itself become a stimulating language activity" (Mckay, 2006, p.161). Puckett and Black (2001) differentiate between process, archival and aggregated portfolios. According to them, process portfolios consist on following student's progress, archival portfolios contain some of the products of process portfolios to have evidences of child's abilities and the aggregated portfolio is a class portfolio.
It is important at this point to mention The European Language Portfolio:

> "The European Language Portfolio aims to provide evidence of learning in order to 'showcase' learning and progress. (…) The portfolio asks the children to give details about all the languages they can use, and where they use them and asks them to record what they can do in the target language (colouring in speech bubbles, ticking checklists and filling in additional information about their course) It also gives them the chance to do some language activities" (Mckay, 2006, p.162).

Finally, it is clear that the assessment of young language learners is challenging, but also necessary. For this reason, it is very important to consider the different aspects discussed before, as the general view of assessment, how assessment should be carried out, tools and resources used to assess, kinds of assessment, and the challenges of assessing young language learners and a foreign language to plan effective and positive assessments.

3. Study

3.1 Research objectives

As mentioned in the introduction, the aim of this project is to analyse the current situation of Preschool assessment in Catalonia and Slovenia, especially assessment of young language learners exposed to English. For this reason, the main research question posed in this project was the following:

What are the main beliefs and concerns of Catalan and Slovene teachers about the assessment of English in Young Language Learners?

Three sub-questions were also formulated:

- Which tools do the English teachers use to assess Young Language Learners?
- What do they think about the introduction of English in the Preschool stage?
- How do they share the information of the assessment with children's families?

The main aim of the research questions was to provide answers to the different objectives of this project:

- To describe and analyse the system of assessment that Preschool Catalan English teachers use to assess students.
- To investigate beliefs and concerns that Slovene teachers have about assessment and compare it with Catalan teachers' beliefs.
- To recognize the conception that English teachers have about the introduction of English in early stages.
- To analyse the main tools used to assess and investigate how useful they are.
- To discover how teachers share assessment results with children and children's families.

3.2 Instruments

In order to analyse the teachers' conceptions about the different topics mentioned before, different instruments were used. The main instrument used was an interview (see Appendix 1) that was useful to examine in detail the perception of Catalan teachers about these different topics. First of all, all the teachers were asked about their professional trajectory, because their answers in this topic were considered essential in order to contextualize their answers. Moreover, as mentioned before, teachers were also asked about what they understand for assessment in Preschool stage, because as mentioned in the research objectives, the main research question was related with this topic. Furthermore, teachers were also interviewed about the advantages of assessing children for both; teachers and children. The questionnaire also tackled the way they share the assessment with families and if they share the assessment with other teachers of the school. Other important topics are the tools that teachers use for assessing and the role of the schools' beliefs in the process of assessing and for this reason, all the teachers were asked about which resources do they use to assess and which are the schools' suggestions about the process of assessing. Additionally, teachers were also asked about the introduction of English in early stages, as this is a controversial issue and their beliefs on this topic were important to be considered in this project.

All the questions were formulated in an open way, because the main objective of the interviews was to discover teachers' beliefs about the different topics and open questions allowed to gather lot of information from them. Moreover, questions were asked from general to the specific and all the teachers were asked the same questions in order to compare their questions. Nonetheless, after the second interview I decided to add one question about the pressure of assessment, because in the first two interviews, both teachers talked about this topic and I considered this topic very important and for this reason I asked all the other teachers about it.

These were the questions asked to the Catalan teachers, but as mentioned in the introduction, three Slovene teachers were also interviewed. However, the Slovene Preschool education system is very different from the Catalan education system, and for this reason, the questions asked to the Slovene teachers were different from the questions asked to the Catalan teachers. Moreover, I could not found more than one English teacher, and I decided to interview two other teachers about assessment, and for this reason, the questions asked to the Slovene teachers were also different for the three teachers. In order to decide which questions were going to be asked to the Slovene

teachers, I decided to do some daily observations about their interventions in the different lessons.

The diary kept during my internship was also used to decide what questions were going to be asked to the different teachers. In this way, observations and the diary of the placement report were two tools used for carrying out this research. The first Slovene teacher interviewed, the English teacher was asked about her professional trajectory, the challenges of teaching English to young learners, the strategies used to teach English, the resources used to assess students' knowledge and how she corrects children's mistakes.

Another topic considered important along the research is how the assessment results are communicated to families. In Slovenian kindergartens, all the families are very engaged in kindergartens' activities, and for this reason I decided to interview one Slovene teacher about teacher-family relationship. She was asked about her professional trajectory, the families' role in the kindergarten, the strategies used to engage families and the advantages and difficulties of engaging them in kindergarten's life. Finally, the teacher was asked about the meetings that she does with the families to talk about children's' progresses and the joint meetings that she prepares every year to plan some activities, together with the families. One important part in the theoretical framework is the use of portfolios and for this reason a teacher that has been using portfolios for twenty years was interviewed about the use of portfolios. However, this teacher also considers the teacher-family relationship very important, and for this reason she was asked about this topic too. This teacher was asked about her professional trajectory, how she started using portfolios, the advantages and disadvantages of using portfolios, how the portfolio helps her to engage families in kindergarten and what kind of evidences are collected in the portfolios, specially language evidences. All the interviews were transcribed and the analysed. Teachers' opinions about the different topics were collected in different tables (see Appendixes 8-19) and in this way, their answers were compared and gathered in the different topics already mentioned.

3.3 Participants

As mentioned before, in the instruments section, the main tool used to carry out this project was the interview. Seven different teachers were interviewed to analyse their opinions on their beliefs and ways of assessing Young learners. All of them have different professional trajectories that are important to consider. In Appendix 8 their answers about their professional trajectory can be found. As mentioned before, four of the interviewed teachers are from Catalonia and three of them are from Slovenia.

The first person that was interviewed was a psychologist that is working in a semi-private school located in Mataró. She studied Psychology in Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona because she wanted to help people. However, she studied Clinical Psychology, but when she finished the degree, she started working in a kindergarten, where realized that children are her life, and she started working in this semi-private school. Nowadays, she is teaching some non-curricular subjects in Infant, Primary and Secondary education and she is the teacher of the English workshop in Infant Education, and she is also working as a psychotherapist with children with special needs. The second teacher that was interviewed is a Preschool English teacher in a semi-private school in Mataró. When she finished her school, she already knew that she wanted to be a teacher but she did not know if she wanted to study Infant or Primary school. Then, she decided to study Primary Education in the field of English. When she finished her degree, she carried on studying one more year to become an Infant Education and one year later she studied a Masters in the field of ICT. In 2014, she started working in this school for one year she substituted the school's principal. Nowadays she is teaching English from P-3 to P-5, and she is also the ICT coordinator of the school. The third teacher that was interviewed is a Primary and Preschool teacher that is working in a semi-private school of Canet de Mar. Nowadays she is teaching Spanish and English from P-3 to P-5 and she is also teaching some workshops in English in Primary Education. The fourth teacher that was interviewed is a foreign language teacher who has 16 years experience in the field of education. She lived some years in the United States. She is now working in a public school located in Vic. She is teaching English in Infant and Primary Education.

The profile of the teachers in Slovenia is slightly different. One of the three interviewed teacher is an English teacher that is working in a public kindergarten located in Ljubljana. She studied German and History in Ljubljana University but when she finished the degree she realized that she wanted to work in a kindergarten. For this reason, she had to do a

special course for being a Preschool assistant. Nowadays she is working as an English teacher in this kindergarten, and she is teaching children from two to six years of age.

Another of the participants in the study is a Slovene teacher working in a public kindergarten of Ljubljana who has 35 years of experience. She knew from a very early age that she wanted to work with children she decided to take a preschool high school course. She started working in this kindergarten when she was 19 years old but then Slovene laws changes, and she had to study the university degree, which she got in 1993. The last teacher is a Slovene kindergarten teacher with 36 years' experience working in a kindergarten located in Ljubljana. Nowadays, she is the boss of the unit in which she is working.

3.4 Data analysis and discussion

With the intention of analysing the data collected from the interviews, these interviews were first transcribed. Their answers were carefully analysed and different topics were identified: assessment beliefs, benefits of assessment, assessment and families, assessment and school, introduction of English, tools for assessing, sharing the assessment and the pressure of assessment. Moreover, some of the comments of Slovene teachers will be considered apart from these topics, because, as mentioned in the participants section, the Slovene education system and their profiles are slightly different. All the topics will be discussed to analyse and compare teachers' opinions on the main topic of this research project: assessment of very young EFL language learners.

Regarding the topic of assessment beliefs, it must be said that all the teachers have different perspectives on this topic (see appendix 9). First, the psychologist agrees that assessment should consist in realizing if children have achieved age-basic standards in different aspects, as autonomy and cognition. Moreover, she argues that assessment should be more general and should consider different topics and abilities, because children are dimensional. The second interviewed teacher, the preschool English teacher, also agrees that in Infant education just general and global aspects should be assessed, as the relationship between children, motivation, behaviours… This teacher also defends that during Infant education assessment should never be the main objective, and she understands assessment as the opportunity to make children's progresses visible, to detect possible difficulties and to plan future interventions. This opinion of understanding assessment as a way to make children's progresses visible and plan future interventions is shared by the *Catalog of Screening and Assessment Instruments for Young children* (2010) that highlights that assessment should pursue different objectives such as determining the need for services or determine learning experiences. Furthermore, the Primary and Preschool teacher has a similar understanding of assessment, as she understands the assessment as the record of the evolution of children in terms of knowledge, maturity and cognition. In the same position, the document *Currículum i Orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle* (2016) points out that assessment can help teachers to understand better how children develop and learn, to understand in which learning and developmental stage they are and to know which kind of stimulus should be given to the infants.

The Foreign language teacher also points out that assessment should help to supervise if the teaching-learning progress is effective. This teacher also highlights that assessment should be a tool to assess the process, more than children's knowledge and

points out that assessment should help to assess teacher's methods as well as children's progress. This opinion of considering assessment useful for reflecting about children's progresses and teachers' methods is considered in *Currículum i Orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle* (2016), as it is stated that when assessing, teachers should focus on two aspects: children's processes, that means that teachers should observe the proegress of infants, their development, their desires, how they communicate, how they acquire abilities… and teachers' practice in order to evaluate them and to reflect upon it and improve it if necessary.

 Teachers were also asked about the benefits of assessing young learners (see appendix 10). The psychologist argues that a general assessment can help teachers to be more relaxed when assessing. According to her point of view, if teachers assess every child as a global person, they do not have to suffer when they have to write the reports to parents, because in this way they do not have to label pupils. Moreover, Mckay (2006) highlights that this is very important, because if assessment makes the students feel that they are not capable of doing something, they will not have a positive self-concept, and they can lose motivation and self-esteem. However, the rest of teachers have different opinions, and, for example, the Preschool English teacher highlights that assessment allows teachers to observe children's progress and to realize how they can help children. The Primary and Preschool teacher also understands assessment as a tool that allows teachers to reflect about the teaching-learning process, as she considers that it helps the teacher to realize how the group is progressing and if the group is achieving the objectives or if the teacher needs to improve something. Moreover, the Foreign language teacher also agrees on that, as she thinks that assessment gives teacher information about where the student is and also gives to teachers the information they need to continue because it allows them to realize whether they have achieved the main objectives, if the activities were useful and what they should do next. This conception is also introduced in Harris (2009), in which the author discusses the idea that assessment can help teachers to identify children's needs, to plan effective intervention according to their needs, to improve teachers' interventions and to realize about children's strengths and weaknesses. In addition, The Preschool English teacher also suggests that not all kinds of assessments can be effective, and she defends that just well targeted assessment can be useful. Mckay (2006) points out that is very important to practice some effective assessment procedures, that "(…) are assessments that have been designed to ensure, as far as possible, valid and fair information on the students' abilities and progress" (p.18). Moreover, Mckay argues that it is very important to consider effective assessment, because if assessment is not well targeted, " (…) is able to

establish and maintain social positions (…)" (p.19). Finally, she highlights that for avoiding the dangers of assessment teachers should "(…) examine the assessment tasks and procedures (…) to ensure that the impact on the child, the community, the teacher and school and the learning programme is positive" (Mckay, 2006, p.19)

All the teachers were also asked about how they share the assessment with families (see appendix 11). The Primary and Preschool teacher points out that families need the assessment because they need a formal feedback of their children. Moreover, she thinks that through assessment teachers can explain to families how their children are doing in school and how they can help their children to improve. Moreover, the Foreign language teacher also points out that assessment gives families the opportunity to know what their children have learnt, and they can realize about their children's behaviour. Furthermore, the Preschool English teacher suggests that assessment can be very useful for families to realize about their children's progresses and what they are doing at school. Moreover, she suggests that through assessment families can discover things that they do not know about their children. This fact of sharing information with families is very important and according the *Catalog of Screening and Assessment Instruments for Young children* (2010), "parents should be consulted and informed regularly and viewed as active participants in the assessment and program-planning process by providing information and feedback" (p.10). The psychologist gives another point of view, as she comments that assessment helps teachers because through it teachers can explain what they observe and can give them some advice. Along the same lines, the *Currículum i Orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle* (2016), understands that the final aim of the Early childhood education should be "contributing to the emotional and affective, physic and motor, social and cognitive development of the infants in cooperation with families, giving them a confident surrounding in which they feel confident and welcomed with their learning expectations" (p.124). [3]According to the psychologist, assessment is very useful because through it teachers can help children and families at the same time.
Besides, the Slovene teacher interviewed about the family-teacher relationship, explains that she organizes individual and group meetings with families every year. She meets every family in individual meetings, at least once a year, and she comments and discusses children's progress in different levels of development. In these meetings, she uses evidences collected from children to show parents how successful their child is at accomplishing certain goals.

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[3] My translation from *Currículum i orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle*

The Slovene English teacher has a different conception of assessment, and she just asks the teachers to talk with parents if she realizes that one child is very good at languages. However, if one child has some problems with English she does not say anything, because she thinks that this child may just needs more time and the child is not ready for hard work on a second language yet. Finally, the Slovene teacher interviewed about the use of portfolios highlights that portfolios are very helpful for the communication between teachers and families, because through showing the portfolios families can see what their child is doing at school. Moreover, families can also cooperate with the teacher, as they can suggest to her some activities and can add some contents to other activities. The document of *Currículum i Orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle* (2016) also highlights the importance of portfolios or learning folders to create partnerships, and suggests that the learning folder can help teachers to engage families in the children learning process, give them the possibility to teach to students to reflect about their own process of learning and transfer to children the need of having different values, as creativity and effort, among others, to improve.

As mentioned before, another topic dealt with in the interviews was assessment and school (see appendix 12). In this topic, different answers were provided. For example, the Primary and Preschool teacher comments that in the school that she is working the teachers are free to use their own tools and the school just recommends them to do an ongoing assessment. Moreover, the Foreign language teacher also argues that in the school she is working in, every teacher decides his or her own assessment criteria. However, she also highlights that every January and June all the teachers participate in a meeting in which they talk about assessment. She considers these meetings very useful, as in these meetings they can decide if they should change some things. Nonetheless, the psychologist points out that the school she is working in gives teachers all the information and resources they need to assess. Moreover, all the teachers of the school are participating in a training program about dimensional assessment and all of them use the same software tool, provided by the school, to carry out the process of assessment. Finally, the Preschool English teacher comments that they do not assess English, but they have some meetings in which they think how they should assess children. Moreover, at the end of the year they write a report about every child and the items of the report are already determined by the school. However, some items are quite general and teachers can add their own observations in these reports.

The fifth topic is the introduction of English (see Appendix 13). Although most of the teachers consider that the introduction of English in Preschool education can be very useful, some differences between their answers can be found. The English teacher of Slovenia points out that introducing English in Preschool can be quite hard because children cannot read or write and some children have not acquired their first language properly yet, and they can start mixing some words. In addition, learning English can be difficult for them because some sounds are completely different from the ones in their first language. Her opinion coincides with Kim&Yazdian (2014), who state that young language learners have more challenges, because "English language learners often demonstrate a wide gap between what they understand and what they can express in English (p.222). However, she also defends the fact that it can be easier because as they do not write, teachers do not have to worry about how they will write the vocabulary learnt. Moreover, she defends that Preschool stage is the best period to introduce English, because children are very motivated, most of them are not worried about possible mistakes, and they want to learn this new language. This teacher also understands that introducing English in this period is very important because it is the easiest way to make sure that children will like the language, because it is introduced through games, songs… This opinion is also shared by the Preschool English teacher, who agrees that introducing English in Preschool allows teachers to introduce English differently, in a more natural and funny way. Moreover, similarly as the English teacher of Slovenia, she suggests that in this stage children are very curious, and they love English, and for this reason the main objective that she tries to achieve in every lesson is that children enjoy English lessons, have positive experiences and increase their motivation. Similarly, the Psychologist comments that she uses games for making lessons more interesting and help children to learn English with positive emotions.

On the other hand, the Foreign language teacher highlights that the introduction of English at this stage is very important, because the younger the children the faster acquire things, and they acquire the oral part easily. However, in the school she is working in, children start English lessons at four years of age, because in this school there are some children that when they start school, at three years of age, they still do not master Catalan or Spanish, and they think that it is better to help them to learn Spanish and Catalan first. In her opinion, if resources are available, it is better to start as young as possible, but sometimes is may be better to start later, but providing major input and with the guarantee of continuity. The Primary and Preschool children also defends the idea that starting English when children are four years old would be a great idea, as sometimes, at three years of age, children are so young, and some of them

enjoy the lessons, but others are not comfortable, because they do not know Catalan properly and it is difficult to introduce a new language. Besides, according to her point of view, the introduction of English in early stages will help them to achieve the objectives of the Primary stage, and they will lose the fear for languages, as they will have had previous contact with the language. In the same way, the psychologist considers the introduction of English at this stage very positive, as it can help children to establish a basis and in this way they are not afraid when they start English lessons in Primary.

The interviewed teachers were also asked about the tools that they use for the assessment (see Appendix 14). In this topic, an agreement can be found, as almost all the teachers have mentioned the observation as the main tool used for assessing. Similarly, Cameron (2001) suggests that "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" (p.231). However, she also suggests that for assessing language through observations is very important to "(…) look very carefully at the particular aspect of language that we are concentrating on, and use our experience and knowledge about language and learning to guide us in what we look for and how we interpret what we see" (Cameron, 2001, p.231). Moreover, in the the *Currículum i Orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle* (2016) is also mentioned that observation is essential to realize about all the progresses that infants make and analyse them. For example, the Psychologist explains that she uses observations and some evidences to assess children's progress in terms of autonomy and concepts, among others. Moreover, the Preschool English teacher comments that she observes how children react and behave in every session and how children acquire routines, as they are very important during the Preschool stage. Similarly, the Primary and Preschool teacher also uses direct observations for assessing, and thinks that is important to assess their reaction during the English lesson, more than assessing the knowledge. Moreover, sometimes she takes pictures and prepares documentations for families and during every session she assesses if children have reached the objectives of the unit. According to the *Currículum i Orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle* (2016) the documentation is the process of documenting the evidences, educative progresses, emotions, experiences… and reflecting about them. Moreover it is suggested that documentation just makes sense if it is shared with the others. Similarly, the Slovene teacher interviewed about the teacher-family relationship, explains that in the individual meetings with families she uses some evidences, as notes of the observations, images and recordings of children's speech, to show them how successful their child is at accomplishing certain goals. In the same way, the Foreign

language teacher also records videos and takes pictures of children, and she basically uses observations because in Preschool education children cannot do tests. Moreover, every unit she assesses children through observation and taking notes on different topics: storytelling listening, storytelling comprehension, instructions comprehension, vocabulary recognition, vocabulary reproduction, their ability to sing songs, verbal and non-verbal communication and general behaviour. In this sense, Cameron (2001) suggests that it is essential to have clear language learning language goals, and she also mentions the importance of having explicit assessment goals. On the other hand, the Slovene teacher interviewed about the use of portfolios explains that she does an individual portfolio for every child, a classroom portfolio and a "secret" portfolio that includes confidential data of children and just children's family and the teacher can see.

Finally, teachers were asked about the pressure of assessment (see Appendix 16). First, the psychologist considers that teachers must be very careful when communicating assessment results to families, because some families can think that a child's failure is their failure, and some of them are very strict. Moreover, she also considers that if we stop labelling students, failure will disappear. She also highlights that diversity should be taken into account, as every child has his/her own pace. Along the same lines, the Preschool English teacher agrees that families are too worried about children's education in general and about English, and sometimes they want children to learn faster than they should, and teachers should help families to be more relaxed. The Primary and Preschool teacher also emphasizes this point, and says that, in her school she is working to change the reports and instead of writing "not achieved" aim they write "in progress". According to her, now parents are less stressed, as they see that their children at the end will achieve the objective. On the other hand, the Slovene English teacher points out that she does not use grades to assess students, as she thinks that in this kind of assessment children are always under pressure. Moreover, she denounces that in the schools everyone is worried about the grades, not about the knowledge and for her this is a clear proof that something is not working. Finally, the Foreign language teacher defends the idea that if children need to improve, this should be communicated to the families, because families can help them to solve the problem. However, if this is not communicated to families, when families realize about it, it can be too late. Moreover, she comments that is always important to find positive things about every child, because there are always some positive things.

According to the *Currículum i Orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle* (2016) establishing a positive assessment, the one that refers to children's capabilities instead of their limitations, is very important.

As mentioned in the introduction of this section, some answers of Slovene teachers will be considered apart from the main topics. The answers of the Slovene English teacher (see Appendix 17) were classified in four different topics: differences between teaching adults and teaching children, the structure of the English lesson, the role of the first language and the ways of correcting children. About the first topic, the teacher suggests that teaching children is sometimes easier, because many times adults can be embarrassed about their mistakes, but children are not. Moreover, adults are always thinking about grammar tenses and pronunciation, but children do not have these problems. These ideas are clearly in line with what Mckay (2006) suggests that "For the most part young learners have confidence in their own abilities, if they have received love and support in the past" (p.14).

The teacher also explains that they always start a session with a little bit of speaking in Slovene, to prepare children for the new topic, then she introduces the vocabulary through images, they play some games to acquire the vocabulary and at the end of the session they sing songs, because according to her this is the easiest way for children to acquire some structures. The Slovene English teacher also highlights that children's first language helps them to acquire a second language, as they can make associations between their first language and English. Finally, she also comments the way she corrects children. If a child says one word wrong she just repeats the word correctly one more time and most of the time the child repeats it correctly. According to her, if she would correct children by saying that they are wrong, they will lose their confidence, and they will not participate. This danger of losing the confidence is also explained by Mckay (2006), who argues that if tasks make students feel that they are not capable they will not have a positive self-concept, and they can lose motivation and self-esteem.

The answers of the Slovene teacher interviewed about teacher-family relationship were classified in five different topics (see Appendix 18): the role of the families in the kindergarten, the integration of families in kindergarten's life, advantages of having a close relationship with families, challenges of engaging families in kindergarten's life and meetings with families. Regarding the first topic, the teacher points out that Slovene kindergartens consider the teacher-family relationship very important and this is considered in their national curriculum. Moreover, the kindergarten she is working in also considers this essential and this is the reason why in the teachers meeting of the beginning of the school year they always talk about how they can engage families in

kindergarten's activities. She also thinks that the involvement of parents is one of the most important things in early ages, and she always invites them to collaborate with her. She also reveals how she integrates families, as every year she prepares activities for them and invites them to participate in all the kindergarten's activities that are introduced in the first joint meeting. At least once a month she invites one family to prepare an interesting activity for all the children in the group. According to her, children are very happy when families are engaged in kindergarten's activities, but sometimes is hard to involve parents because they are too busy.

About the advantages of having a close relationship with families, the teacher considers that parents' involvement is very beneficial for all: teachers, families and children. Involved parents can observe children's progresses and can realize that children in schools are educated.

The challenges of engaging families were also discussed along the interview. The teacher explains that sometimes families think that teachers just take care of children and do not educate them and for this reason sometimes engaging them can be difficult. Moreover, some families think that they do not have the obligation to be involved in kindergarten's program, however she considers that this is very helpful for all of them.

Furthermore, this teacher also describes what the meetings with families are like. She highlights that there are individual and joint meetings, and that every year there are three mandatory joint meetings organized by the kindergarten, but every teacher decides if they want to do more meetings or not. She always does more than these three meetings, as she considers them very useful. For preparing joint meetings, every year she chooses a different topic and prepares activities with families related to this topic. On the other hand, in the individual meetings she discusses children's progress and asks families how is the child at home, because she highlights that families know their children better and sometimes they can give her some useful information.

Finally, the answers of the Slovene teacher interviewed about portfolios can be classified in four different topics (see Appendix 19): advantages of using portfolios, disadvantages of using portfolios, sharing portfolios and evidences. First, regarding the first topic, the teacher explains that she cannot understand her job without portfolios, because they allow them to realize about children's abilities and weaknesses and allows her to see every child in different senses, as motor skills, communication, fine motor control, autonomy, problem solving ability... This fact of reflecting about every child's abilities is one of the main important characteristics of the portfolio, and it is highlighted in *Currículum i Orientacions Educació Infantil: segon cicle* (2016) that learning folder or portfolio is a very good resource because it is personalized for every student.

Furthermore, she thinks that the use of portfolios is very useful for children because they can see their progresses, and they can also learn through looking at their classmates' portfolios. In this case, they can see the differences between them and their classmates, and they can think, together with the teacher, what can they do to acquire the same abilities, and this is a kind of autonomous learning. This is very important, because according to Mckay (2006) if children are invited to take active part of their own or their classmates process of assessment this will help them to reflect about their processes and performances, and this encourages more autonomous learning process and more awareness of the quality of their work. Moreover, the teacher also points out that portfolios are very helpful for the communication between teachers and families, as they can look and analyse the portfolios together. The idea that portfolio promotes communication is also defended by Kim & Yazdian (2014) that suggest that "(…) portfolio facilitates communication and collaboration among teachers, students and parents" (p.222).

However, although she does not consider it a disadvantage because she considers portfolios very useful, she also points out that doing portfolios is really time-consuming. Regarding the topic of sharing portfolios, the teacher suggests that portfolios are very useful for creating partnerships. According to her, families cooperate with her in building portfolios, as they suggest some activities to improve portfolios, they can bring some materials to add in portfolios, as pictures of children, among others. Finally, talking about the evidences included in portfolios, the teacher explains that she adds content in portfolios every day, and every month she has a meeting with families, and they look the portfolios very deeply. Moreover, the first page of the portfolio includes a child's picture of the first day and the date, the second page includes the weight and the height to observe how they are growing and in the third page they stamp child's hands or feet. Furthermore, along the portfolios different kind of evidences can be found, as evidences about children's movements, jumping, running, P.E. lessons, speech, Maths… The teacher also mentions the kind of language evidences that are included in portfolios. In the first ages she just writes down children's first words, how they try to communicate with other children and adults, how they start building sentences… As children grow up, she starts adding other kind of language evidences, and she writes about how children explain fairy tales, how they pronounce difficult words… However, when she prepares activities in which children must speak in front of other people, she makes sure that they are ready and confident enough, so she works with them about how to speak in front of the rest of the children.

4. Conslusions

In this section the conclusions that were reached through the research project will be discussed. In order to present these conclusions, the research question and the three sub-questions posed in this project will be answered.

The main objective of the project was to discover teachers' main beliefs about the assessment of Young Language Learners. In this sense, it has to be said that some results were found. Some teachers understand assessment as a way to record children's evolution and also as a way to revise if children have achieved the age-basic standards. Moreover, some of them also understand assessment as a way to assess teachers' methods and to supervise if the teaching-learning process is effective or not. However, some teachers also highlight that assessment should consider different aspects, because children are dimensional, but others also think that assessment should never be the main goal with Young Language Learners, as they are too young. What is more, some teachers also consider that the fact of assessing can make children feel under pressure, and according to that, it is very important to avoid that, because children's confidence and self-esteem can decrease. Finally, regarding the beliefs and concerns of assessment, we can say that some of the teachers consider that assessment can be useful for teachers, families and children, but it is also important to highlight that some of the teachers also feel quite uncomfortable when assessing Young Language Learners, because they consider them too young to be assessed.

As mentioned in the research objectives, one of the three sub-questions of the project was to discover the tools that teachers use to assess Young Language Learners. In this sense, teachers mentioned different tools, as recordings of children's speech, pictures and dartboards, among others. Although different tools are used to assess Young Learners, it is important to mention that al the teachers talked about observation as the main tool used for assessing. Moreover, different teachers consider that observing the way how children teach and behave when they are exposed to English is very important, because in the first stages is very important to make sure that children are learning with positive attitudes and motivation. One teacher also mentioned the importance of having clear focuses to assess, such as vocabulary recognition or storytelling comprehension, among others. Finally, as discussed before observation should be always considered when assessing Young Learners, but another interviewed teacher considers portfolio essential to teach and assess children, because it allows to look deeply into every child's progress.

Another sub-question was related about the introduction of English in Preschool stage. Most of the teachers coincide that the introduction of English in early stages is very positive, as it can help them to stablish a basis in a natural way. Moreover, some of them also point out that in this stage children are very curious and motivated to learn English, and it is clear that motivation is one of the key aspects when talking about learning. Moreover, according to them, in this stage children can learn English while having fun and this is very important, as according to some teachers is very important that children have positive experiences and emotions towards this new language. However, all the teachers also consider that introducing a new language to Young Language Learners is also challenging, and they also point out that sometimes children might be too young to be exposed to the new language and some of them can feel uncomfortable. Moreover, another teacher also discusses that sometimes is better to start introducing English later, but with a major input and continuity. In this sense, it is clear that, although all the teachers consider that the introduction of English is very positive, they also understand that sometimes children are so young, and this is why we have to make sure that they feel comfortable with the new language. Moreover, analysing their opinions, it seems that they prioritize the fact of learning with positive emotions and experiences, more than the amount of knowledge acquired.

Finally, the other sub-question was related about the way that teachers share assessment's information with children's families. The way in which teachers share the assessment information with families is very important, as assessment just makes sense when it is shared. Most of the teachers understand that teachers-family cooperation is essential in education and that is why they consider very important sharing the assessment with families, to establish this bridges of communication. Most of them coincide that when sharing assessment results with families is very important, as families can discover how their children are progressing and how families can help them. Moreover, through individual meetings in which teachers share the assessment with families, teachers can also discover some children's aspects that can help them to understand better assessment results. For this reason, sharing information with children's families is very important, because families are very interested in children's progresses and they can help them to improve and they can also support them when they have some difficulties.

5. Limitations

Carrying out this project has not been easy for different reasons. First of all, as argued in the introduction of this project, the main topic of the research, assessment has always been quite controversial. However, apart from the controversial nature of the topic, another issue added some difficulties to the research, that is assessing young learners and assessing young English learners. In the Catalan and Slovene education system, the introduction of English is not mandatory in Preschool stage. Although most of the schools introduce English in this stage, there are some schools that do not consider English in the reports that are given to the families, and for this reason it has been quite difficult to analyse and consider their opinion in some topics and that is why in some cases teachers were asked for general assessment, not just for assessing English.

Moreover, another difficult situation that was needed to face up was finding the participants for the research. In this way, finding Pre-school English teachers that agreed to be interviewed was quite difficult, because some of them did not feel comfortable with the topic of assessment, as some teachers that teach English in Pre-school are not Pre-school teachers and do not feel comfortable talking about this topic. Moreover, in Slovenia just one English teacher was interviewed, because in the kindergarten I did the placement there was just one English teacher. However, I decided to interview two other teachers about other topics that had been discussed in the theoretical framework: the use of portfolios to assess and teacher-family relationship.

Furthermore, as commented in previous sections, this project was carried out considering the opinions of Slovene and Catalan teachers, but then, when analysing the interviews, comparing their opinions was quite difficult. The Catalan and Slovene educations system are slighltly different, and for this reason comparing the results was quite difficult. For this reason, Catalan teachers' opinions were analysed topic by topic, but the Slovene teachers opinions were considered apart. Analysing the same topic in two different education systems was interesting, but also challenging for the reasons exposed before. What is more, searching the appropriate resources to complete the theoretical framework was also a challenge. Most of the literature is about English or Second Language assessment, but most of it refers to older language learners.

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7. Appendices
7.1 Appendix 1

Interview with a psychologist

C: Buenos días, en primer lugar, me gustaría que me explicaras un poco qué has estudiado, cómo has llegado a trabajar en este colegio y qué funciones desarrollas aquí.

J: Yo estudié la carrera de Psicología hace ya unos cuantos años, la acabé con 21 años y tengo 34. Yo estudié en este colegio, hice Bachillerato y luego fui a la UAB a estudiar Psicología. No tenía muy claro a que me quería dedicar, pero sí que tenía muy claro que quería estudiar Psicología porque me gustaba mucho ayudar. Yo estudié Psicología clínica, para trabajar en hospitales, en terapia, una área más clínica y privada, no en un colegio ni nada de eso. Cuando salí de la carrera, al no tener nada acabé en una guardería y allí me di cuenta que los niños eran mi vida y me encantaban, entonces estando en la guardería me llamaron de este colegio, ya que era antigua alumna y me cogieron. Cuando yo entré aquí entré por una plaza de profesora, pero claro yo era psicóloga. Entonces no podía ser profesora porque no tengo la carrera, pero sí puedo hacer asignaturas no curriculares. Entonces hago gabinete, mis horas de psicología de atender a los niños y las horas de profesora en asignaturas no curriculares. Entonces empiezo en Educación Infantil, llevo ya diez años en el cole, he ido variando un poco, he estado en Primaria, Infantil, en la ESO haciendo un taller de Psicología dónde buscaba cuentos que tuvieran que ver con la psicología, como por ejemplo algún cuento de hadas vinculado con la teoría de Freud. Todo tenía que ver con la psicología y a partir de allí trataba fobias, aspectos relacionados con la autoestima, los miedos… Ahora todas las horas las hago en Infantil, yo he estado haciendo terapia grupal a nivel de Infantil. Ahora hago una hora en P-3, una hora en P-4 y una hora en P-5, éste es mi taller de inglés. Yo antes hacía terapia grupal en castellano, pero a medida que ha ido pasando el tiempo hemos empezado el taller de inglés, hago terapia grupal e inglés a la vez, tratando de aplicar lo que quiero trabajar como psicóloga, pero en inglés. Este taller sirve mucho para detectar si los niños tienen algún problema que debe de ser tratado y entonces junto con la tutora los derivamos al gabinete. Me sirve mucho para ver al niño como actúa a nivel grupal y puedo tratarlo a nivel grupal sin que ellos se den cuenta porque es un taller de inglés y a nivel individual en el gabinete. Luego también hago valores en primero de primaria y terapia, que es el gabinete, hago desde P-3 hasta segundo de primaria.

C: Perfecto, muchas gracias. Ahora me gustaría saber ¿qué es lo que entiendes tu por evaluación en Educación Infantil?

J: Yo, des del punto de vista como psicóloga, creo que la evaluación es poder darse cuenta de si el niño ha conseguido los mínimos de su edad, en el sentido de autonomía, de a sí mismo, no sólo a nivel cognitivo. También creo que tiene que haber unos mínimos a nivel cognitivo, por ejemplo, si se sabe los colores, que sepan leer y escribir a finales de P-5 pero a nivel psicológico esto es muy dimensional, un niño a lo mejor tiene 5 años y su nivel madurativo no le permite leer en P-5 y otro sí. Yo creo que a nivel de evaluación en Educación Infantil debería ser mucho más general, porque claro si ponemos etiquetas o un corte de si no lee no ha llegado y eso a nivel madurativo no se puede valorar porque cada uno tiene su propio tiempo. Por ejemplo, hablando de las patologías o de las dificultades que tiene un niño muchas veces vemos que, por ejemplo, hay un niño que parece que sea hiperactivo, pero a medida que van madurando nos vamos dando cuenta que simplemente ha sido un problema emocional y esto demuestra que no se puede etiquetar a un niño, hablando desde el punto de vista como psicóloga. Como ya he dicho antes, creo que este tipo de evaluación debería ser un poco más general, si que se necesita unos ítems, alguna cosa más objetiva: ha conseguido esto y ha conseguido lo otro. A nivel de maduración depende del niño y eso no significa que haya fracaso escolar porque cada uno tiene su vida y su manera de crecer.

C: Perfecto. ¿Qué es lo que crees que puede aportar a una maestra el hecho de evaluar a los alumnos de la manera que tu has comentado, fijándose en el nivel madurativo de ellos, en el progreso…?

J: A la maestra yo creo que le puede aportar la tranquilidad de no tener que sufrir, cuando se ponen las notas siempre hay aquella intranquilidad de cómo lo pongo, cómo lo digo o cómo lo hago para que no influya en un niño ni en un padre. Es lo que hablábamos antes de las etiquetas, cuando tu no etiquetas a un niño, cuando tu no dices éste si vale y el otro no creo que estas ayudando a que no haya ese fracaso escolar porque, por ejemplo, un disléxico, un niño que tenga dificultades a nivel de lectoescriptura, que no pueda aprender a leer en P-5 porque le cuesta muchísimo, si le dices que no puede le estas condenando al fracaso escolar. Estos niños no tienen fracaso escolar, simplemente son diferentes. Yo creo que hay que ayudarles, a nivel de la maestra la ayudará a no tener tanta presión y a dejar sobre todo que el niño fluya, haga lo que ha venido a hacer en este mundo, a ser él mismo y a poder dar lo que él tiene sin tener que decir me guio por estos estándares y si no llega ha fracasado. Un disléxico no puede llevar el ritmo que lleva un colegio ordinario, no puede porque son más creativos y a la maestra le aporta más dejar ir y más dejar que el niño sea él y se

pueda expresar como él es. El sistema escolar parece que va a nivel de test, tu sacas esta nota y esto te dice si sirves o si no sirves y no es verdad porque se han visto muchos casos de niños que creen que fracasan escolarmente y luego son una eminencia en lo que a ellos les gusta. A eso me refiero, hay que dejar que fluya la naturaleza del niño, pero claro, dentro de lo que se pueda porque también hay que evaluar, hay que poner una nota, pero esto condiciona mucho.

C: ¡Gracias! ¿Cómo debería ser transmitida la evaluación a las familias?

J: Yo hago entrevistas con las familias para explicarles que es lo que veo en el niño a través de la terapia, les doy unas cuantas pautas y sigo tratando al niño. Voy ayudando a las familias y al niño al mismo tiempo. A nivel de las tutoras, y por lo que yo voy viendo, ellas siempre hacen una entrevista y ayudan a las familias con algunas pautas, por ejemplo, habría que ayudar al niño con este aspecto, habría que ponerles más rutinas, habría que darle más autonomía…. Muchas veces recomendamos a las familias que den más autonomía a los niños, porqué vemos que hay niños que no avanzan, pero no porque no sepan sino por qué no tienen ese ímpetu de decir yo quiero trabajar… Vemos que a muchos niños les cuesta dar el paso de crecer y vemos muchos problemas a nivel psicosomático como la caca, el pipi… y todo eso va ligado. En este sentido, las tutoras me ayudan a mí y yo las ayudo, somos como un equipo. Cuando evalúan, mientras va pasando el trimestre las tutoras ayudan a las familias, van haciendo las entrevistas que necesiten junto conmigo y luego cuando tiene que poner las notas a nivel evaluativo no son ítems cerrados y directos, sino que es más general, hay unos criterios y las tutoras deciden si se cumple mucho, poco, a veces… El niño es dimensional, puede madurar y cambiar y por eso no puedes encasillarlos en eso. Lo que pasa es que los comentarios no suelen ser el niño no es capaz de … sino que son más recomendaciones, por ejemplo, podríamos probar de explicarle un cuento cada noche para ayudarle a mejorar su escucha atenta. Hay que tener mucho cuidado porque jugamos también con la culpa de los papás. Yo me encuentro muchas veces cuando hago entrevistas que le pasa algo al niño y yo intento hacerles ver que es algo que le pasa al niño y lo solucionaremos, pero las familias piensan que es algo que ellos no han hecho bien y por esto le pasa al niño esto. Por esto hay que tener mucho cuidado, hay también familias muy exigentes y hay que tener mucho cuidado y entender cada familia cómo es. Hay que tener mucho cuidado porque muchas veces nos encontramos con niños que quieren agradar a sus familias, piensan que tienen que ser cómo sus familias quieren que sean porque si no piensan que no les gustan. Des de este punto de vista, intento trabajar un poco el tema relación familia-niño. Aquí el problema no está en el niño, sino que está en la familia, escucho muchos padres que dicen: yo no quiero que le pase como a mí, yo quiero que…

Nos olvidamos de preocuparnos por lo que quieren los niños. En definitiva, lo que las familias ven en los niños es una proyección suya, son sus miedos. A nivel de clase, si la profesora lo vende como algo que no es preocupante el niño lo ve como algo que no es preocupante.

C: ¿Dentro del centro tenéis algunas directrices o pautas a seguir para la evaluación de los niños?

J: Sí, ahora mismo todas las tutoras están haciendo un curso para evaluar de la nueva manera dimensional, todo está muy pautado y mirado. Aquí hay un control muy bueno. Lo que se hace se hace bien. Todo el mundo va a una y cada vez mejora. Por ejemplo, a nivel tecnológico ahora se evalúa con un programa informático, se encarga una misma persona, en definitiva todo está muy trabajado.

C: ¿Qué piensas de la introducción del inglés a partir de P-3?

J:Yo creo que es genial, como yo lo trabajo a nivel de juego creo que es interesante para los niños. Yo necesito transmitir siempre, cuando a ti te gusta les va a gustar a ellos y a mí me justa jugar, tirarme por el suelo, chillar y bailar. Lo que yo hago es que sigo una pauta del cap d'en Jack, de Mackmillian y en la guía me lo explica todo genial, qué tengo que hacer, cómo tengo que hacerlo… y yo la adapto, lo que intento hacer es establecer rutinas, primero los niños se sientan, empezamos con el hello, how are you?… Todo esto para que les vaya sonando. Yo utilizo el proyector y la web de simple songs y lo que voy haciendo es que les pongo la canción para que la escuchen y hacemos un poco de vocabulario: sit down, stand up, move your body… Después ya lo adapto al vocabulario que toque, por ejemplo, si tocan prendas de ropa digo que Jack está malito y tenemos que abrigarlo y cojo prendas de los niños y vestimos al muñeco diciendo el nombre de la prenda. Es todo muy visual, muy juego, el niño aprende con una emoción positiva. Cuando tú ayudas al niño a que tenga esta emoción positiva y se divierta al niño se le queda. También hay que repetir, pero sobretodo es esto, aprender con esta emoción positiva.

C: Entonces, ¿piensas que es positiva la introducción del inglés a Infantil?

J: Claro, cuando llegan a primero los niños ya no están tan asustados, antes llegaban a primero y el idioma no les sonaba, pero ahora llegan y ya les suena. La profesora de primero me ha comentado que ha notado mucha diferencia, que se da cuenta que ahora en primero las bases ya las tienen, ya entienden, obviamente a nivel de grafía no pero ya les suena. Ya tienen el oído preparado, ya saben gran parte del vocabulario básico… Pero ahora todo va muy pronto, el otro día estaba haciendo los colores en P-3 y muchos

niños ya los sabían, hay muchas guarderías que ya introducen el inglés, algunas familias en su casa también lo hacen, miran algunos dibujos… La verdad es que a ellos les gusta, ellos están deseando que llegue el rato de Inglés. Yo estoy encantada.

C: ¿Cuando las maestras avalúan qué utilizan para hacerlo?

J: Utilizan un poco de todo, para evaluar se basan en la observación del día a día y en pequeñas pruebas. Por ejemplo, si reconocen los colores, si son autónomos según alguna observación… no es un examen, pero sí que miran más o menos como están los mínimos. En P-3 sería la autonomía, en P-4, por ejemplo, si avanzan a nivel de lectura… Es lo mismo que a nivel psicológico, cuando yo avalúo si un niño tiene algún tipo de dificultad o patología. No es sólo un test, que es más objetivo, es todo: observación, rúbricas… pero sobre todo el progreso, el día a día.

C: ¿Cuando se hacen los informes de progreso? ¿Antes de hacer el informe se comparte información entre los distintos profesores?

J: Una vez al trimestre, son las notas de final de trimestre. Cada tutora pone sus notas y después tenemos la reunión de evaluación que se hace de Educación Infantil, Ciclo Inicial, Ciclo Medio y Ciclo Superior. Yo acudo a aquellas dónde se habla de los niños a los cuales estoy haciendo terapia, aquellos que tienen necesidades especiales. Es un momento para hablar del progreso, de sus dificultades y de futuras intervenciones. Esta reunión de evaluación también se hace una vez al trimestre.

Interview with a Pre-school English teacher of Catalonia

C: Bon dia i moltes gràcies per atendre'm, en primer lloc m'agradaria que m'expliquessis quina és la teva trajectòria professional, què vas estudiar, com vas arribar a aquesta escola...?

M: Moltes gràcies a tu per venir, sempre és una alegria poder parlar amb futures mestres que s'estan formant. Quan vaig acabar el Batxillerat tenia molt clar cap a on volia que anés el meu futur, volia ser mestra. Tot i això, no sabia ben bé si volia estudiar Educació Infantil o Educació Primària i finalment vaig acabar optant per fer Educació Primària. Vaig estudiar la carrera a Barcelona, a la Universitat Ramon Llull i em vaig acabar especialitzant en llengua estrangera. Quan vaig acabar Educació Primària, vaig tenir la oportunitat de seguir un any més a la universitat i poder fer el grau d'Educació Infantil i com que quan vaig haver d'escollir el grau vaig tenir el dubte de si estudiar Infantil o Primària, vaig pensar que ho havia de fer. Quan vaig acabar Infantil vaig adonar-me que aquesta etapa és apassionant, ja que està plena de progressos i reptes. Per exemple, aquí a l'escola tenim la oportunitat de veure els infants des que comencen P-3 fins que marxen a P-5 i és increïble tot el que poden progressar en menys de tres anys. Un cop vaig acabar el grau, vaig pensar que havia de seguir estudiant, i vaig decidir optar per la branca de les TIC i vaig fer un màster per especialitzar-me. L'any 2014 vaig començar a treballar a aquesta escola, primer com a tutora però l'any següent ja vaig deixar de ser tutora i vaig començar a ser la mestra d'anglès.

C: Ostres! Així que vas entrar com a tutora i després vas començar a portar tot l'anglès a Educació Infantil...

M: Sí! A l'escola teníem una mestra d'anglès a Educació Infantil però en realitat era mestra d'Educació Primària i portava tot l'anglès a Educació Primària i també feia alguna classe a Secundària. Per aquesta raó l'escola va decidir oferir-me fer les classes d'anglès i jo vaig estar encantada. En realitat era el que jo havia estudiat i era un gran repte per a mi. Però les coses es van complicar una mica, ja que la directora va haver d'agafar-se la baixa i jo vaig ocupar el seu lloc. Durant aquesta etapa va ser força complicat, ja que coordinava les TIC, feia totes les sessions d'anglès i a més havia de fer totes les tasques de direcció així que tenia moltes coses al cap i no tenia prou temps per dedicar a les sessions d'anglès com m'hagués agradat fer-ho però per sort, al cap d'uns mesos la directora ja va tornar i tot es va posar al seu lloc.

C: Perfecte! Bé, com ja t'he comentat, el meu treball està enfocat en l'avaluació a Educació Infantil, així que m'agradaria saber què és el que entens tu per avaluació a l'Educació infantil.

M: Bé, en primer lloc penso que l'avaluació a Educació Infantil mai hauria de ser l'objectiu principal. Vull dir que penso que l'etapa d'Infantil és una etapa introductòria, on els infants han d'anar adquirint les seves pròpies estratègies per poder ser competents en aspectes que necessitaran en el seu futur. A més, com ja t'he comentat abans, a l'etapa d'Educació Infantil es produeixen molts canvis en molt poc temps i per aquesta raó crec que no ens podem referir al mateix quan parlem d'avaluació a Educació Infantil que a Educació Primària. Tot i això, penso que l'avaluació a Educació Infantil, en cert punt, és necessària, ja que el fet d'avaluar porta a observar clarament els progressos dels infants, i a més, pot ajudar a veure quines dificultats tenen els infants i de quina manera els mestres els podem ajudar. Per tant, entenc l'avaluació a aquesta etapa d'Infantil com aquella oportunitat de fer visibles els aprenentatges i els progressos dels infants però també de detectar possibles dificultats i planificar de quina manera els podem ajudar.

C: D'acord! Per tant, penses que l'avaluació a Educació Infantil pot ser útil pels mestres...

M: Sí! Tot i això, cal tenir en compte que sempre depèn del tipus d'avaluació que es faci. Un any a unes pràctiques, vaig adonar-me que hi havia una mestra que estava avaluant si els alumnes sabien els colors, si se'ls sabien els hi enganxava un gomet verd a la mà, i si no se'ls sabien els hi enganxava un gomet vermell i ella, tan sols no es va anotar ni una sola observació i en aquest cas, penso que aquesta avaluació, si és que se'n pot dir avaluació, no era útil per ningú, ni per la mestra, ni encara menys pels infants, però una avaluació ben orientada pot ajudar als mestres en molts aspectes. Per exemple, com ja he comentat abans, els pot ajudar a adonar-se dels aprenentatges dels infants, també dels seus progressos i pot ajudar a detectar possibles dificultats. A més, penso que l'avaluació dels infants implica alhora una autoavaluació dels mestres, per saber si les estratègies utilitzades són útils o no ho són. Per exemple, si pretenem introduir als infants alguns aspectes bàsics de la llengua anglesa, i volem que els utilitzin a les sessions d'anglès i ens adonem que a les sessions els infants no utilitzen aquests coneixements, per exemple, quan entrem ens diuen hola enlloc de "hello" vol dir que com a mestres hem estat utilitzant alguna estratègia errònia i l'hauríem de modificar per complir els objectius. Per tant, avaluar també pot implicar adonar-se que el docent s'ha estat equivocant. Però aquest aspecte és positiu, perquè si te n'adones el pots millorar

i pots detectar en què t'has equivocat: el plantejament d'objectius, les dificultats, els recursos i estratègies...

C: I a les famílies dels infants; què creus que els pot aportar?

M: A les famílies crec que la avaluació que els mestres fan dels nens i nenes a les escoles també els pot ser molt útil. L'avaluació que es fa als infants pot ajudar a les famílies a entendre quin és el progrés que segueixen els nens a l'escola, però també els ajuda a saber què és el que estem fent a l'escola, quines activitats estem preparant per ells i com ho fem. A més, crec que l'avaluació també pot ajudar als pares a veure els seus fills des d'un altre punt de vista. Ens hi trobem molt, sobretot a P-3 quan fem alguna entrevista i comentem als pares les nostres observacions i molts d'ells es queden sorpresos, perquè a casa els seus fills es comporten d'una manera molt diferent. Hem d'entendre que l'escola és un sistema complex, en el que hi ha molts infants, moltes mestres i moltes activitats a fer, i és un escenari completament diferent al que tenen a casa, on normalment les coses van a un altre ritme. Una altra cosa que crec que les famílies necessiten i molts cops s'aconsegueix compartint amb ells les observacions que fem a l'escola és el fet de rebaixar tensions o preocupacions que les famílies tenen. Ens hi estem trobant moltíssim, cada cop els pares estan més preocupats per l'educació dels seus fills i moltes vegades volen que tot vagi molt més ràpid del que hauria d'anar, volen que els seus fills aprenguin ràpid i molt bé, i molts cops estan convençuts que si el seu fill no aprèn una cosa a la primera els han de forçar perquè ho facin. Des de l'escola sempre intentem rebaixar aquesta preocupació, són infants i aprenen a passos gegants però només són nens i necessiten temps, com qualsevol persona, i així els hi intentem expressar a les famílies. A més, sempre els tranquil·litza que els expliquem el que els seus fills saben i a nosaltres també ens va molt bé poder-los comentar allò que veiem, perquè des de casa també ens poden ajudar amb molts aspectes.

C: I pel que fa a la manera com avalueu, el centre en el qual treballes t'aporta algunes directius a seguir durant el procés d'avaluació?

M: Bé, l'anglès no és una assignatura curricular i no l'avaluem. Penso que em resultaria molt difícil avaluar-la i que d'alguna manera perdria la màgia. Els nens i nenes encara són molt petits, alguns d'ells que entren a P-3 fins i tot tenen problemes per parlar català, com podria avaluar-los en una segona llengua, si encara no han après la vehicular... Tot i això, en el centre fem moltes reunions i en algunes parlem de com hauríem d'avaluar els infants. La veritat és que penso que a l'escola tots els mestres tenim veu i tots els canvis i processos són fruit del diàleg entre nosaltres, diguéssim que en aquest sentit no tenim imposicions, però tots els mestres de l'escola seguim un patró similar. De fet,

a final de curs hem d'elaborar un informe individual de cada infant on els ítems ja estan fixats i cada mestre ha d'emplenar-lo segons consideri. Tot i això, en l'informe també hi ha altres aspectes més oberts, com observacions generals on els mestres donem una visió més global de l'infant, dels seus progressos però també dels propers objectius que tenim fixats. I és això, en parlem molt amb els companys, provem coses noves i després avaluem si són útils o si hem de tornar a fer algun canvi.

C: Perfecte, i ara pel que fa a l'anglès més explícitament, què en penses de la introducció de l'anglès a Infantil?

M: La veritat és que defenso 100% la introducció de l'anglès a aquesta etapa. L'etapa d'Infantil és molt maca i et permet treballar les coses d'una manera molt diferent que a Primària. A Infantil es pot començar a introduir l'anglès però d'una manera molt natural i divertida. El meu objectiu no és que els nens i nenes acabin l'etapa d'Infantil sent capaços d'entendre l'anglès i encara menys parlar-lo, l'objectiu principal és que gaudeixin molt de les classes d'anglès i que tinguin experiències positives. Quan preparo les classes ho faig amb aquests dos objectius, i per això, utilitzo sobretot moltes cançons. Penso que si els nens i nenes ara tenen una experiència positiva amb l'anglès això els ajudarà a estimar aquesta llengua i a voler saber-ne més i més. Penso també que és una etapa adequada per introduir una nova llengua, els infants a aquesta edat tenen una curiositat immensa per tot el que els envolta i veig que l'anglès els hi agrada moltíssim. També estan molt preparats per aprendre, encara que ja fa uns anys que faig de mestra d'anglès, cada vegada em sorprenc més de com de ràpid aprenen els nens, és realment increïble.

C: Ja has dit que no avalueu l'anglès a Educació Infantil, però si ho haguessis de fer quins aspectes creus que serien importants?

M: Bé, tot i que no avaluo explícitament, és a dir, l'assignatura d'anglès no apareix a l'informe que donem als pares a final de curs, sí que observo a cada lliçó als infants. Com ja he dit abans, el meu objectiu és que els infants gaudeixin d'aquestes classes d'anglès i, per tant, em fixo en si semblen contents o no mentre estan a l'aula. També m'interessa molt veure quina és la seva participació, si participen activament o no, perquè això també m'ajuda a planificar les properes sessions. Per exemple, si veig que hi ha un nen o una nena que sempre es queda al darrere de la classe i no participa massa, intento fer alguna cosa per integrar-lo a la classe d'anglès, li faig alguna pregunta, li demano si vol ser voluntari... A més, també observo el seu comportament, sobretot pel que fa a les rutines perquè a l'etapa d'Educació Infantil són súper importants. Alguns nens i nenes a P-3, sobretot, encara els hi costa. Pensa que alguns,

no la majoria però sí que cada any ens en trobem com a mínim un, no han anat a la llar d'infants i l'adaptació i l'adquisició de rutines els hi costa moltíssim perquè és la primera vegada que s'hi troben. Penso que bàsicament em fixaria en els mateixos aspectes que em basaria en una altra sessió. De fet, l'educació Infantil és molt global, i penso que l'avaluació també ho hauria de ser. Caldria avaluar aspectes globals dels nens i nenes, avaluar aspectes claus, com la relació dels nens i nenes amb els seus companys, perquè és un aspecte clau a l'educació infantil, la motivació i predisposició per l'aprenentatge, l'adquisició d'hàbits i rutines...

C: I, per tant, quines eines utilitzaries per avaluar als infants?

M: Bàsicament l'observació que penso que és clau per qualsevol mestre. Jo em baso molt en tot el que observo a les classes i segons el que veig en cada nen o nena doncs decideixo què hauria de fer en la següent classe. De vegades, però també escric tot allò que observo perquè molts cops em va bé. En la llibreta de cada curs apunto força coses, com les activitats que faig, reaccions dels nens i m'acaba sent útil... De vegades, quan vull començar algun nou tema i no sé com fer-ho miro la llibreta de cursos anteriors per comprovar com ho havia fet i com havia funcionat i segons el que veig decideixo les activitats. Quan havia de redactar els informes a finals de curs, quan no era la mestra d'anglès, molts cops al tercer trimestre feia unes sessions per poder observar amb més claredat alguns dels ítems, però penso que com que els informes són molt generals, i a més a més, al tercer trimestre ja portes un curs sencer amb tots els nens i nenes, moltes vegades ja en tens prou amb el coneixement que tens d'ells.

C: Perfecte! I quan realitzes un procés d'avaluació el comparteixes amb els altres mestres o amb altres professionals?

M: Sí, com ja t'he comentat, a l'escola fem forces reunions per tractar molts temes. Abans d'acabar el curs, també fem reunions amb tots els mestres que participen a cada curs, i comentem, nen per nen, què pensem que hi posarem a l'informe. Aquestes reunions van molt bé, perquè de vegades hi ha algun ítem que no sabem ben bé què posar-hi i l'ajuda d'altres mestres que també estan amb els nens i nenes van molt bé. A més, a les reunions també hi ha la psicopedagoga de l'escola que també opina sobre els infants que ella porta i si detecta alguna cosa sobre algun dels nens que parlem també mirem si hauria de rebre ajuda o no. En el cas que la tutora dels nens i nenes no segueixi amb el grup l'any vinent, si quan es fa la reunió al tercer trimestre ja se sap qui serà la nova tutora, també ve a la reunió i així pot començar a fer-se una idea de com és el grup i de quina manera s'ha estat treballant amb tots ells. Són trobades molt útils.

7.3 Appendix 3

Interview with a Primary and Pre-school teacher of Catalonia

C: En primer lloc moltes gràcies per rebre'm. M'agradaria que m'expliquessis una mica quina ha estat la teva trajectòria professional, què vas estudiar, on estàs treballant...

L: Val, començo des de l'actualitat i així t'ho explico millor. Porto 6 anys a l'escola on estic treballant actualment, una escola concertada de Canet de Mar, i aquí he anat canviant una mica les meves tasques, ara porto dos anys fent Llengua Castellana a Educació Infantil i la Llengua anglesa i a Educació Primària estic fent tallers de "science", junt amb altres tallers, també en anglès. Abans d'aquests dos anys vaig estar dos anys més només a Primària, fent diversos tallers d'anglès, i un any, el segon d'haver entrat a l'escola, perquè porto 6 anys, vaig fer només Llengua anglesa a Educació Infantil. Abans d'haver estat treballant aquesta escola, vaig estar un any als Maristes de Badalona, on feia Llengua anglesa a Educació Primària i també a Educació Infantil i abans havia estat fent substitucions a diverses escoles, una mica de tot. Vaig estudiar Magisteri en especialitat en Llengua anglesa a la UB, quan només eren tres anys.

C: Perfecte! Quan parlem d'avaluació a Educació Infantil, què és el que tu entens?

L: Jo per avaluació entenc el registre de l'evolució que fa el nen, és a dir, una mica com el seguiment de com ha estat avaluant el nen, des de que comença el curs fins que l'acaba, o fins i tot des de P-3 fins a P-5. Hi ha una evolució tant a nivell de coneixements, o de maduresa, com a nivell cognitiu, com veus que va avançant el nen. És una qüestió de seguiment, de poder veure com els nens han evolucionat però alhora com estant evolucionant.

C: I quan tu avalues, com a mestra, què t'aporta aquesta avaluació?

L: Jo avaluo, sobretot, a partir de l'observació directa. Ara estic pensant, per exemple, en Educació Infantil, quan faig Llengua castellana, faig participar molt als nens, intento que sigui tot molt oral, aleshores a mi el que m'aporta quan jo faig aquesta avaluació final, és com una reflexió, una pausa que jo faig de reflexió, estic avaluant a aquell nen no? Ha assolit el que jo vull que acabi fent? Ha avançat? S'ha quedat encallat? Per què està avançant correctament? O per què s'ha quedat estancat? Què puc fer? És com que m'ajuda a mi a veure com està avaluant el grup i en concret cada nen, és a dir, si estic aconseguint allò que jo em proposo o si no ho estic aconseguint.

C: I a les famílies d'aquests infants, el fet que tu els avaluïs i els comuniquis aquesta avaluació, que penses que els hi pot aportar?

L: Ara parlaré com a mare i com a mestra. Com a mare tu necessites l'avaluació, perquè tu pots parlar amb la mestra i et pot parlar de molts aspectes però tu necessites com un "feedback" més formal i de cada trimestre de com està evolucionant el nen o nena. Com a mestra, tu el que els hi estàs dient amb l'avaluació és: el nen va bé, a l'aula es mostra així i també si hi ha algun aspecte que podria millorar amb l'ajuda de la família i proposar-los coses que podrien fer a casa per ajudar al nen o nena a millorar, de vegades perquè li costa algun aspecte, perquè li fa molta vergonya parlar en veu alta a la classe, o no sé per què no li agrada fer algun tipus d'activitat, i des de casa potser et poden ajudar. M'entens?

C: Sí! I tant! I l'escola on treballes, durant el procés d'avaluació, t'aporta alguna directriu? Teniu algunes bases establertes?

L: No, és una escola on sí que ens diuen que ha de ser una avaluació contínua, però després tu mateixa marques bastant quins són els criteris i com els vols avaluar, l'únic que et demanen és que tinguis fet l'informe per un dia determinat, però no et marquen gaire com ho has de fer. Et recomanen, el que et deia, una avaluació contínua però la veritat és que ens deixen força llibertat a tots els mestres.

C: D'acord! Has dit que actualment estàs a Infantil fent la Llengua Anglesa, què penses de la introducció d'aquesta llengua estrangera a Educació Infantil?

L: A veure, què és el que passa? Per exemple a P-3, quan els nens comencen l'Educació Infantil, hi ha molts que encara són molt immadurs, que potser no han anat ni a la llar d'infants, aleshores, tu comences i si tu ets la figura de mestre en anglès, n'hi ha alguns que els hi va fantàstic, mira, em parla en anglès, i em fa cançons en anglès, i no presenta cap problema però n'hi ha d'altres que quasi s'espanten, no sé com dir-ho. Això demostra que potser P-3 és molt d'hora, no molt d'hora per tots, però sí que hi ha bastants nens, sobretot els més petits, que de vegades encara estan aprenent a parlar, o no estan gaire acostumats a estar fora de casa, i una tonteria com aquesta però potser fa falta que hagi passat més temps. De vegades, podríem introduir-lo a l'últim trimestre de P-3, o a P-4... Sempre introduïm l'anglès a Educació Infantil o a Educació Primària, però potser el podem introduir a Educació Infantil sense necessitat que sigui a P-3, o al tercer trimestre.

C: I què els pot aportar als nens el fet de començar, per exemple, a P-4 enlloc de començar a primer?

L: Els pot aportar una base, una base, perquè, per exemple, la llengua castellana la tenen en el seu dia a dia i hi ha moltes paraules de vocabulari que sense que ningú els hi ha demanat que ho sàpiguen, les saben, o saben cançons, o coneixen contes... Tindran més o menys nivell en llengua castellana però en llengua anglesa això no passa. Tu introdueixes la llengua anglesa a P-4 i hi ha nens que sí que ho agafaran, i mostraran interès i això és fantàstic perquè arribaran a primer amb una bona base, per aconseguir els objectius de llengua anglesa a Educació Primària, però n'hi ha d'altres que potser no et parlaran però reconeixeran la llengua anglesa i podran gaudir de les cançons, contes... Perdran la por, perquè de vegades, si no es fa llengua anglesa a Educació Infantil quan es comença a Educació Primària n'hi ha alguns que sembla que es bloquegen, és un canvi massa fort.

C: Quan has d'avaluar la llengua anglesa a Educació Infantil, quins aspectes creus que són convenients avaluar?

L: Jo crec que el que s'ha d'avaluar és com reacciona el nen davant la Llengua Anglesa, si és capaç de gaudir una cançó quan tu li poses en llengua anglesa, si fins i tot està al punt de començar a cantar-la, si l'entén, pot entendre el que diu amb imatges o el que sigui, si, per exemple, utilitza després les frases de les cançons en el dia a dia, com per exemple, "Hello" o "How are you?". En definitiva, avaluar com aquest nen o nena reacciona davant la llengua anglesa i fins a quin punt incorpora l'anglès al dia a dia, més que coneixements, per exemple, ha après el color groc, em refereixo més a com es mostra a l'aula, com gaudeix...

C: Abans has parlat de l'observació com una eina per avaluar, en fas servir alguna més?

L: N'havia fet servir una en llengua anglesa a una altra de les escoles que estava i era una diana, i ens les feien fer en cada unitat, per exemple, hi havia els colors, doncs a cada color havies d'avaluar si sabia el nom, si el podia reconèixer, o per exemple, les cançons si les sabia o les gaudia, allà tot era amb dianes. Moltes altres vegades, també vaig fent fotos o vídeos a les activitats que anem fent a la classe, i en el cas de les fotos de vegades les acompanyo de text i faig una documentació perquè els pares puguin veure què hem fet i als nens també els hi agrada molt veure's a les fotos.

C: I amb quina periodicitat avalues als infants?

Per unitats, cada curs em plantejo quines unitats presentaré a cada curs i avaluo cada unitat. Cada cop que feia una unitat, on tenia com a mínim un conte i una cançó i altres activitats i quan acabava la unitat avaluava si havien assolit els objectius plantejats.

C: Quan cada mestre/a que ha realitzat un procés d'avaluació en el grup, us trobeu per comentar-la?

L: A mi m'agrada molt, jo ho necessito tant a Educació Primària com a Educació Infantil. No ens ho demana l'escola, però sí que necessito parlar amb les altres mestres, perquè per exemple, si veig que hi ha un nen que quan explico un conte no sap estar quiet, ho puc comentar amb altres mestres, o no pot respondre les preguntes, i molts cops veiem que li passa quasi el mateix en totes les altres assignatures, però si els altres mestres et comenten que a les seves classes això no passa, aleshores, et planteges què és el que estàs fent malament, però no acostuma a passar.

C: Perfecte, per acabar! Com creus que pot afectar un comentari d'un objectiu no assolit o un aspecte a millorar en un infant i a les seves famílies?

L: Has d'anar molt amb compte, perquè sobretot a Educació Infantil, hi ha molts pares que estan molt preocupats. Si tu escrius en un informe que no ha assolit un aspecte, que tu com mestre/a no li dones cap més importància de la que té, però decideixes posar no assolit, les famílies es poden quedar molt preocupades i pensar que hi ha algun problema cognitiu, que ha de fer reforç a casa. A l'escola on estic ara, fa dos anys vam canviar l'informe, i vam decidir canviar el "no assolit" per "en procés", que si t'hi fixes el missatge és diferent, perquè ara transmetem a les famílies calma, perquè en procés es refereix a que ho acabarà assolint.

Com a mare, també ho veig, a l'escola dels meus fills utilitzen el color verd, taronja i vermell per avaluar a Educació Infantil i crec que també és una bona manera i a més a més, quan hi ha un aspecte en taronja o vermell, hi ha un redactat on expliquen tots els progressos que l'infant ha fet. Si tu observes un objectiu no assolit, et penses que està estancat però si ho acompanyen d'un redactat amb tots els progressos que ha anat fent, t'adones que està progressant i que finalment ho aconseguirà.

Interview with a foreign language teaher in Catalonia

C: Bé en primer lloc, moltíssimes gràcies per concedir-me aquesta entrevista. Per poder contextualitzar una mica l'entrevista, et voldria demanar si em podries explicar una mica quina ha estat la teva trajectòria professional.

V: Sí, la meva experiència laboral ha estat bastant extensa! He treballat a quasi tots els nivells, quan vaig acabar la carrera vaig estar a una escola de primària donant anglès, d'especialista d'anglès i de primària, després vaig marxar durant un temps a Estats Units, quan vaig tornar d'Estats Units vaig començar una altra titulació universitària i a més a més vaig començar a treballar pel Departament d'Educació, vaig treballar a instituts d'Educació Secundària fent substitucions, vaig estar a dos o tres instituts i després he estat bàsicament en escoles d'Educació Primària. Durant molts anys vaig estar a Primària però després vaig arribar a aquesta escola, fa 16 anys, i aquí vaig començar el projecte d'anglès a Infantil, no el primer any, però com que m'havien assignat hores a Infantil van veure la necessitat de que ja que tenien una especialista que estava a Infantil, doncs que poguessin començar a fer alguna cosa d'anglès a Educació Infantil, i el vaig començar a fer farà 14 o 15 anys.

C: Així doncs, tu vas estudiar Educació Primària?

V: No, jo vaig estudiar Llengua Estrangera, el que passa és que quan tens l'especialitat de Llengua Estrangera tant pots fer d'especialista d'anglès com de tutor de Primària. En les meves primeres substitucions vaig fer de tutor i especialista, però després, en les altres substitucions tant a instituts, com a altres escoles, com aquí he fet d'especialista.

C: Perfecte! I quan parlem de l'avaluació a Educació Infantil què és el que tu entens?

V: L'avaluació jo penso que ha de servir com per supervisar o vetllar que el procés d'ensenyament-aprenentatge està funcionant. Penso que el més important és avaluar tot el procés, més que el que els nens han après, perquè evidentment el que els nens han après també et serveix perquè si no han après res és perquè potser el procés no funciona, però és molt important avaluar tot el procés perquè no només has d'avaluar el procés dels nens sinó que també la pròpia tasca, perquè si veus que hi ha coses que no funcionen moltes vegades és perquè no ho has enfocat bé, perquè si ho gestiones d'una manera o una altra manera anirà més bé, o perquè si ho fas en gran grup potser en petit grup aniria millor, o al revés... Penso que hi ha d'haver aquestes dues vessants,

tant l'avaluació de l'alumne com l'avaluació de la pròpia tasca perquè abans potser es tendia molt a només avaluar els alumnes i buscar uns resultats però, de fet, el nou currículum ja està enfocat totalment a això, i sobretot, jo penso que s'ha de vetllar molt pels processos, més que pels continguts que s'arriben a obtenir al final, jo penso que els processos són el més important.

C: D'acord! I com a mestra, el fet d'avaluar a un infant, què t'aporta?

V: Aquesta avaluació aporta informació d'on està cada infant, perquè clar tens molts alumnes, i a nivell d'Educació Infantil, madurativament estan a llocs diferents, hi ha nens que igual poden parlar i nens que només identificaran vocabulari, vull dir que també pots veure on estan, el punt on es troben els alumnes, evidentment el que han après, t'aporta la informació que necessites per continuar. És a dir, a partir de l'avaluació d'una unitat pots continuar a la unitat següent, perquè saps si han assolit els objectius que t'havies proposat al principi o no i saps més o menys on estan els nens. També saps si han funcionat més o menys les activitats que has fet o no i si en la unitat següent podràs fer activitats similars o hauràs de canviar totalment, és a dir, que no només informació sobre el que han après sinó també sobre com ha funcionat tot el procés.

C: I a les famílies dels infants, què penses que aquesta avaluació els hi pot aportar?

V: Home, jo penso que l'avaluació que fem nosaltres els hi aporta una mica el què puguin haver après, perquè en el cas de la nostra escola l'anglès sí que apareix a l'informe que es lliura a les famílies, i a més, hi ha diferents ítems, no només es tracta d'un redactat. Si, per exemple, mostra interès per una història, perquè hi ha molts ítems que fan referència a l'interès i a l'actitud, evidentment també hi ha coses de vocabulari, si sap o no sap, si intenta produir alguna estructura o algun "chunk", si canta les cançons... Penso que poden veure una mica a nivell global l'actitud del seu fill o filla davant d'aquesta àrea o aspecte, perquè en el nostre cas, l'informe d'anglès no té un apartat concret, sinó que està integrat dins l'informe d'Infantil, i per tant, si hi ha algun aspecte que és més d'observació o experimentació i hi ha una part de l'àrea que fa referència a aquest aspecte ho col·loquem aquí, i si hi ha un altre aspecte que és més de producció està a un altre apartat. Està molt integrat dins el que és l'informe general, perquè pensem que ha de ser una cosa globalitzada, que hem d'entendre els nens d'una manera global, no àrea per àrea, sobretot a Infantil.

C: Aquí, des de l'escola, teniu algunes directrius marcades sobre com heu de fer aquest procés d'avaluació?

V: El que fem és, per exemple, jo tinc uns criteris, els criteris d'avaluació que jo observo a cada unitat didàctica que són: "storytelling listening", que seria escoltar, una cosa més actitudinal, storytelling comprehension, si ho entenen o no però sempre s'intenta agafar com una cosa global, la comprensió global, no fa falta que entenguin tot el vocabulari que surt, instructions comprehension, si quan tu els hi dónes instruccions són capaços de seguir-les, és més de comprensió que de producció tot el que observo, perquè P-5 és tot just el segon any que fan anglès perquè comencen a P-4, a P-3 nosaltres no fem anglès i és molt un tema més d'actitud. Dins del vocabulari tenim el "vocabulary recognition" i "vocabulary reproduction", l'apartat de "vocabulary recognition" pot ser que n'hi hagi molts que no hi arribin però si el reconeixen, doncs s'ha de valorar també. Aleshores, "singing songs", no només s'ha de valorar si es saben la cançó o no sinó que si tenen predisposició per cantar-la, si s'ho passen bé, i aleshores "verbal and non verbal comunication" perquè aquest aspecte és molt important perquè la comunicació no verbal aporta molta informació, tu la fas servir molt com a adult perquè t'entenguin i ells quan s'intenten dirigir a tu, alguns ho fan en català, alguns ho intenten fer en anglès i també utilitzen molta comunicació no verbal i penso que també s'ha de valorar i després, més l'apartat d'actitud en general, si participen a les activitats amb il·lusió i coses d'aquestes i aleshores, el primer que fem és fixar aquests criteris que són els que o observaré al llarg de tota la unitat i després fixo els instruments d'avaluació, com ho faré. A Educació Infantil, és bàsicament l'observació, perquè no pots passar proves, sí que de vegades, per exemple, si estem fent un "memory" doncs observo i a una llibreta ho vaig apuntant per després poder-ho passar a les notes perquè si no és molt difícil. Això seria a nivell personal, i a nivell de centre, també tenim establertes unes actuacions, que són el primer trimestre es fa un informe per la família, al final del trimestre, llavors en els de P-5 els ítems que hi surten, perquè els pares observin són molt semblants als que t'he dit, no et sabria dir ben bé si són exactament els mateixos, però si no són molt similars. Potser de vocabulari només n'hi ha un però bàsicament són els mateixos i a P-4, com que acaben de començar, al primer trimestre només es valoren coses més d'actitud, si tenen predisposició per escoltar les històries, si tenen ganes de cantar, si tenen una actitud participativa quan es fan activitats... i llavors això s'inclou a l'informe del primer trimestre, ja que a Infantil només fem dos informes, un al primer trimestre i un altre al tercer trimestre i llavors al tercer trimestre sí que ja es valoren tots els ítems que t'he descrit. A P-4 i a P-5 els ítems són els mateixos però com que els nens estan en una etapa diferent, les valoracions són diferents. A part d'això, també tenim unes sessions d'avaluació on hi participen tots els mestres que intervenen en aquell nivell i en fem una

al febrer i una altra al juny. Aquí a l'informe és més una nota que tu fas i va a les famílies però a les sessions d'avaluació van molt bé perquè ho discutim amb tots els mestres, sobretot si hi ha algunes intervencions que les hem de canviar. Jo mateixa, per exemple, si els agrupaments d'anglès no funcionen hem de canviar grups i coses d'aquestes i aleshores serveixen perquè a partir de l'avaluació també canviem les actuacions que fem els mestres.

C: I què en penses del fet d'introduir la llengua anglesa a Educació Infantil?

V: Jo penso que la introducció de l'anglès a Infantil és important perquè com més petits els nens més facilitat tenen , sobretot en adquirir la part oral de la llengua, ja que quan són més grans tot el tema d'oïda, entonació, fonètica, musicalitat de la llengua... costa molt més, de fet, la gent que ha après anglès de grans tenen moltíssims problemes de fonètica i també jo penso que és perquè l'aprenen escrit i no oral però nosaltres quan vam començar el projecte vam estar valorant començar a P-3, no ho hem fet a P-3 perquè tenim molts nens que són de famílies nouvingudes i que no tenen el català com a primera llengua i ens va semblar que seria una mica com un garbuix i llavors comencem a P-4 però amb un input de tres sessions setmanals, clar, ja moltes escoles que comencen a P-3 però només amb una sessió a la setmana i jo penso que començar no és gaire efectiu, perquè molts nens, d'una setmana a una altra ja no recorden del que has fet, llavors de vegades és millor començar una mica més tard però amb un input més gran i amb més continuïtat perquè tres sessions de 40 minuts a la setmana sí que donen per treballar moltes coses i dues sessions es fan amb el gran grup, una la fem a l'aula de psicomotricitat, perquè fem activitats de moviment, una altra es fa dins de l'aula ordinària i l'altre es fa en tallers, que són grups més reduïts i va molt bé perquè depèn de quina aspectes vulguis treballar no tens 25 nens, perquè clar, treballar amb 25 nens és bastant difícil de gestionar. Jo penso que si hi ha els recursos, com més aviat es comenci millor, és a dir, si poguéssim començar a les llars d'infants seria ideal, però clar els recursos són els que són i aleshores, de vegades, cal tenir en compte poder començar una mica més tard, però quan comences d'una manera més efectiva.

C: Has parlat una mica de la periodicitat amb la que avalues als infants...

V: Sí, a cada unitat, però el que passa és que, de cada unitat, puc tenir tres notes de cada aspecte, i llavors entre les tres faig una mitjana però bàsicament és anar prenent notes. De vegades també faig fotografies o vídeos, perquè si fem role plays faig vídeos per després mirar-los amb els nens però a mi també em serveix per avaluar perquè igual en el moment que estem fent l'activitat no puc observar-ho tot però després quan el torno a mirar puc observar moltes més coses.

C: D'acord! I un cop has realitzat un procés d'avaluació, et reuneixes amb el claustre per parlar-ne?

És el que t'he explicat, fem dos informes però les sessions d'avaluació són posteriors, fem el primer informe i surt a la família sense haver fet una sessió d'avaluació abans, però després d'aquesta sessió d'avaluació hi ha les entrevistes amb les famílies i, per tant, si hi ha alguna cosa que s'ha de traslladar a la família, com que al segon trimestre no fem informe, les tutores ho poden fer durant l'entrevista personalitzada, que també és una forma més de transmetre el procés d'avaluació. Al tercer trimestre sí que hi ha la sessió d'avaluació i després l'informe.

C: Com penses que pot afectar a un infant, però també a les seves famílies, un comentari negatiu, o d'un objectiu no assolit, un necessita millorar...?

V: Jo penso que si un infant necessita millorar la família és la primera que ho ha de saber, perquè si la família sap que aquest nen té alguna mancança segurament el podrà ajudar, però també penso que l'informe que fem arribar a la família o la manera en la que diem les coses s'ha de fer amb molt de tacte, perquè de vegades les coses presentades d'una manera o una altra, si una cosa l'expliques bé, la raones bé i l'intentes girar amb una part més positiva, sempre buscant aspectes positius, perquè segur que hi ha coses positives la família segurament ho entendrà millor. Si tu en un informe només li poses allò negatiu, evidentment segurament la família es pot molestar i de vegades, també és una mica la manera de dir les coses, però jo penso que si un nen té dificultats en alguns aspectes la família ho ha de saber perquè si ho saben el poden ajudar. De vegades també passa que si no s'informa a la família, igual es tracta d'un problema que es pot solventar i ja està, però i si no? Es pot anar fent gran i quan la família se n'assabenta ja és molt més difícil de gestionar.

Interview with the Slovene English teacher

C: Thank you very much for accepting to be interviewed! First of all, I would like that you explain a little bit your professional trajectory. Can you define it a little bit?

Z: Okay, so I am a preschool teacher and I work here in the kindergarten as an English teacher. Well, I studied, actually, German and History and then, when I wanted to start working in the kindergarten I had to do a special year for being a preschool teacher. Actually, I am not a teacher, I am a preschool assistant.

C: Okay! And what do you think that are the challenges of teaching English to young language learners?

Z: When I started working in the kindergarten I had only experience with a little bit older children, so from the first grade, for teenagers and also adults and my biggest worries were that children can't write or read, so I was a little bit afraid of what I actually can do with them but I figured out that it is much easier to teach a language to young learners because you do not have to worry about how they will write it down or read it and because when they hear something they can repeat it and it is not important how it is written so I do not see actually a problem there except in really hard words, if they have to repeat some hard words then maybe is hard for them but otherwise I think it is the easiest period to teach and learn English. Actually, this year is our second year with the younger ones and this year I have children who are two to six.

C: And which do you think that are the main differences between teaching English to young learners or teaching it to adults, or teenagers…?

Z: Okay, a very important difference is that these children, who are so young, if you are a good motivator you can teach them anything because they still want to learn and for example in teenagers you might came across a problem that they do not want to learn English because the parents want them to learn English and adults are usually quite motivated because they need English, for example in the job, but some of them are too much worried, because they think that they will say something wrong and that is not a problem with children because if they say something wrong they mostly laugh and that is it, they forget it and they learn on, they do not have fear and I think that this is the main difference because they are scared of the language. Most adults go to an English course and most of the time they are scared that they would say something wrong but it does not matter, if teacher explains that nobody is perfect, that they do not have to be perfect

it is still the same. They always think about the grammar, if this is the correct tense, if they are saying it correctly, if the pronunciation is right and it is always a problem but with children you do not have that problems.

C: Okey, and now what do you think that are the challenges for the young language learners learning a second language?

Z: For example, these children who are quite young some of them still have some problems with Slovene because they are very young and some of them do not even speak Slovene, so learning a second language can be quite difficult for them because they start to mix the words but I think, in our kindergarten we have many children who come from other countries, actually English is the second foreign language for them, but we figured out that it helps them to learn also Slovene, because when they learn English they are at the same levels than other children, so they do not know the words and they get a bit of confidence and then it is easier for them to learn Slovene, so it can be hard for them, because the words are completely different from ours or there are some letters who they do not know and some.. I do not know sounds… and I think that is the hardest because they do not know how to pronounce the words, for example.

C: How is one of our English lessons, I mean which strategies do you use for teaching English?

Z: In the beginning we do a little bit of talk, in Slovene, mostly so I can prepare them for the vocabulary we are going to talk that hour, so for example last week we talked about winter Olympic games, so we talked a little bit about Olympic games and then we started the lesson, and when they figured out what I am talking about I can show them a picture and tell them how do you say that picture in English, so I always use pictures because that is the way children learn, for example they can't see a word that is written down because our children cannot read or write and it is easier for them to make the association, so it's much easier for them, and then, when we have, let's say, it depends on the age of the children but, for example with the five to six years old we learn from the eight to ten new words every hour and then we play some games with the words, I do not know, we play what's missing so I take one word away and they have to figure out which one is missing, or stop, so I point pictures and then I make a mistake and they have to say stop and they have to correct me, or we can play what we call telephone game, so we whispered one to the other a word and it has to come all the circle around, or we can play the word detectives, so I can hide the words in the playroom and they have to find them and tell me what they found and something like that. So learning the new vocabulary takes about, let's say, 20 minutes, then we have 15 minutes for games

and at the end we usually sing some songs because that is the easiest way to teach them some phrases because it is quite boring to repeat the phrase over again so we just sing some songs. The vocabulary should be known for the children in Slovene, you can't talk about something they do not know and they do not understand, for example, with the younger ones we did not talk a lot about Olympic games, we talked about winter sports, some that they know, for example, skiing or ice skating, so that is the context, they have to know the words in Slovene, otherwise it is quite difficult.

C: How do you think that children's first language helps them to acquire a second language?

Z: Well, if their speech is quite good developed they do not have such a hard time to say the words, if they have some speech problems with some words it can be quite difficult, then the second part is, for example, when they have quite long vocabulary in Slovene they can also make some associations with other words, for example some words are quite easy because they are almost the same, for example, with the bus is "autobus" in Slovene and bus in English, so it is similar and they can make the association and, what else, when they, for example, know a word from a cartoon in English, they also can quite easily translated it into English because when they watch television in English, or even a Slovene cartoon, or a cartoon that was translated, for example, R.I.O, it helps me a lot with the colours because the main bird is called blue and it is called blue still in Slovene so we just talk about R.I.O and they just say okay, this is blue, what colour is this one, and we just learn that this is the colour blue and it is quite easy like that.

C: And which tools or which resources do you use to make sure that children are achieving the lessons main goals or year's main goal?

Z: Mostly I check the vocabulary through games, I often repeat some words, for example in another lesson, or I combine the words, the vocabulary mainly, I do not know, umbers, colours, staff like that… and then I also have a special game that is called "Smarties" and it is like a game for just repeating the vocabulary, I have a special wheel, like the Twister and I put some vocabulary on it, for example, a symbol for body parts, a symbol for animals, food and I do not know, maybe feelings or staff like that and they have to turn the wheel and, for example, when it stops in the body parts, then they have to collect small circles with smarties and when they come back they have to tell me a word that is connected with the body parts, or an easier version is that I put the pictures on the ground, so they can still see the pictures, they do not have to remember all the words but they can see the pictures, because it is quite easier for them, then they put the circle with the smarties on the picture and they have to say the word, that is the easiest part,

for example, for four to five years old and for the five to six years old you have to tell the words, but without grades because I think it is quite hard to assess young children because they are constantly under pressure if they are asked a question directly because most of them are afraid or are just in a period that they do not feel comfortable about talking in front of the others and I do not think that it is okay to assess young children at all, actually, would say that the first grades or, if we still need grades, because it is actually a really stupid thing, but it is quite easier for them just to teach them that it is important to learn for themselves, not for the grades, because, for example, in our schools everyone worries about the grades, not about the knowledge they acquire, so I would never do that in the kindergarten , it is quite hard for them to be assessed.

C: Okay, thank you! You explained that through games you make sure that children have acquired the vocabulary but if you do some observations about some children, do you share it with the teachers?

Yes, of course! For example, if I see that, for example, a child is really, really good in English, I always talk to the teacher because I think that is important that he or she can tell then the parents that the child has some talent for languages because it is quite obvious that someone is good at languages and someone is not but it does not matter because actually the English in the kindergarten, I think that is very important to have it, because that is the easiest way to make sure that they like the language because there are games, there are songs, and some fun and when there is a child that is particularly good I always talk to the teacher because I say: Okay, please tell the parents they can make something more out of that and if someone is quite "bad" I actually do not talk about it because maybe it is just that they are not ready for hard work on language.

C: And which are the resources that you use to correct children?

Z: Okay, when they say a word correctly, it is okay, but if someone says it wrong, I just say the word one more time correctly, because most of the time, they repeat it correctly, because if you would say no that is not okay, the child would shut down, or for example, I make mistakes myself, so they see that it is okay to make mistakes, for example, in games, or if someone says something wrong, we can just make a joke out of it, so we can then say what it is correct but we do not laugh about someone, we just make a joke because sometimes they can remember the correct word easily if they have some context, a story, around the wrong word, otherwise we do not correct or we do not use punishments or staff like that.

C: Okay, we already finished, thank you very much!

Interview with a Slovene Pre-school teacher about teacher-family relationship

C: Good afternoon and thank you very much for receiving me. First of all, I would like to ask you if you can define a little bit your professional trajectory.

J:Yes, sure. First of all, you have to know that I knew at a very young age already that I would like to work with children when I grow up. For this reason, I decided to study for being a kindergarten teacher and my professional path started with me entering a high school program for pre-teachers. I started working in a kindergarten at a very young age, when I was only 19 years old and I started working as a pre-teacher. However, after 10 years of working in this profession, Slovenian laws changed and we were required to finish university to keep the title. I really loved my job and for this reason I decided to start the university degree required and I studied it while I was working full time and I got my degree in 1993. Now, I have been involved with this profession for 35 years, and I have to say that I'm passionate about my job in the kindergarten and I can't imagine myself working in a different place. Slovenia is a very good place to work as a pre-teacher, because we have a lot of freedom and we can find the topics and programs while leading groups of children to certain goals. However, the goals are determent in national curriculum. This allowed freedom and this is what keeps me motivated and enthusiastic about my profession. I keep looking for new exciting challenges.

C: Nice! And which is the role of children's families in your kindergarten? And what about your group?

J: In Slovenia, in all the kindergartens the relationship between kindergarten teachers and families are very important, and it's also considered in our national curriculum. The kindergarten I work at considers involvement of parents on some levels as a very important part of the program. Every year, in the meeting of the beginning of the school year, we always discuss about how can we engage families in kindergarten activities. Families can come inside the kindergarten whenever they want and we are always very happy when we see that they are involved in our activities. For me, the involvement of parents is one of the most important things in early ages, and this is why in my group I always invite parents to some activities and I always ask them to collaborate with me.

C: Okay! And how do you integrate families in kindergarten's life?

J: Every year I prepare similar activities for parents, but they are involved differently every year. Sometimes it's hard because there are some parents that can't be involved in the

kindergarten as much as they'd like, For me it's also difficult, because I'm sure that children are very happy when families are engaged in kindergarten's activities and I try to engage them but sometimes is very, very hard. I always invite parents to participate in our activities and during the first joint meeting I introduce them all the topics that will take place during the school year. Then, it is up to them where they would like to participate, and they can also suggest me some other activities. At least once a month, I invite one family to come to the kindergarten and they prepare an activity for all the children in the group and this is always an interesting activity.

C: And what do you think that are the advantages of having a close relationship with children's families?

J: First of all, I have to say that a special connection between kindergarten's staff and families evolves when families are involved with year's program. This involvement is very positive for all, children, families but also for kindergarten staff. When this happen, we are active together and we trust each other more. For parents is important, because they can observe how their children are learning a lot during the school year and it is easier for them to understand that children are not being only supervised in the kindergarten but educated as well. I like all the activities in which parents are involved, and the involvement of parents has brought many great and unforgettable moments. I get very good feedbacks every time a group finishes pre-school education about the activities in which we cooperate with families.

C: Nice! And what are the "difficulties" of engaging families in kindergarten's life?

J: Sometimes when families first bring their children to our kindergarten they come with a false impression that there is no pre-school education during the year. Sometimes they just think that we are in the kindergarten taking care of their children but without educating them and I think that for this reason sometimes it's difficult to engage them. Some parents think that they don't have the obligation to be involved in our program, and they are right, they are not obligated but this is very helpful for all, children, families and kindergarten staff. Some of them can be surprise when they are exposed to the fact that we expect them to be involved in our program to a certain level, but at the end of the school year almost all of them have already participate in our activities. Sometimes, as I said before, is also difficult because some parents do not have time to participate in the activities, but this can be quite hard for children.

C: Thank you! And how many individual meetings do you have with families? And joint meetings?

J: If there are no extraordinary needs I meet every child's parents once a year individually, but if I observe something that has to be said to parents, I organize another meeting with them. If they want to do more meetings there are no problems, I am very flexible and if they want to talk with me for any reason we do more meetings. This is for the individual meetings, just with me, families and the assistants if this is necessary. We meet more often in joint meetings. There are 3 mandatory joint meetings organised by the kindergarten: greeting to fall, the Carnival and greeting to spring. The kindergarten every year asks us to do these three meetings, but we always do more than three meetings, because they are a very good way to involve parents and with their help we can prepare more activities and we have more resources. I usually do 4 more meetings every year, so every year I do 7 joint meetings.

C: And how do you prepare the meetings with families?
J: First, for the individual meetings I collect a variety of evidences about children's progress to present them to his or her parents. I use the evidences to show parents how successful or unsuccessful a child is at accomplishing certain goals. I always take some notes of children progress, and I use them to explain parents how I see his or her child, and I record children's speech, I take photos of them… All these evidences are very helpful in the meetings with families, because they can observe how their children are progressing. Before seeing child's parents I discuss with all the teachers that are working in the group and this is always very helpful.
For the joint meetings, it depends on the year and the topic chosen for the year. Every year we choose a topic and we prepare some activities with parents related to this topic. They suggest some activities, they organize themselves to help me, they try to find founds and materials…

C: Okay! And how and when do you communicate to the families the children's progresses?
J: Once a month I invite 5 families for a meeting where I comment and discuss child's progress on different levels of development, these are individual meetings. I use the evidences that I told before and we talk about the progress of children. In the meetings, I also ask families about how is this child at home because this helps me a lot. Sometimes, children behave different at home and at class and a fluent communication with children's families can be very useful. I am very interested in the way that families see their children, because they know them better than me, and sometimes they explain to me somethings that are very interesting and help me to understand better that child.
C: Thank you very much!

Interview with a Slovene teacher that is using portfolio

C: Good morning and thank you for this welcoming! The first question I would like to ask to you is about your professional trajectory. How long have you been working here? What did you study?

M: As I was very young, I already know that I wanted to be a teacher. For this reason, I decided to go to the university and I ended the university degree forty years ago. At first, I did not know if I wanted to study Kindergarten or Primary school degree, but at the end I decided to study for being a kindergarten teacher. I've been working in Pjdenjped kindergarten for 36 years, and now I'm in this unit but I've been working in different units, like Zalog, Orlova, the one we had in Galjevica…

C: Nice! Now, I would like to know when did you start using portfolios and why you decided to use them.

M: I started using portfolios twenty years ago, because in Ljubljana there were a group of professionals from the school community that started a project about portfolios and I was invited to participate. This project lasted three years, and I was very happy when they invited me to participate in this project, because I really wanted to find something new for children, I wanted to find another way to observe the children, to see how they progressed and also I wanted to have another tool to assess my actions, to see if I was doing my job correctly or I needed to make some changes.

C: Okay! And what do you think that are the advantages of using portfolios? For you as a teacher but also for children.

M: Portfolio for me is very important and I cannot understand my job without portfolios. I can observe all the children very deeply through the use of portfolios. I can realize about children's weaknesses but also about their abilities. When you have a group of children, let's say, 20, you cannot observe all of them carefully, but portfolio allows me to see every child, what he or she likes to do and can do. Due to the use of portfolios, you can know every child in different senses: motor skills, ability to communicate, fine motor control, autonomy and the ability to solve problems, among others. For children, the use of portfolios is also positive, because children can look to the portfolio whenever they want, and they can see their progresses and they can see how they have been raising the different objectives. Children love to see their classmates' portfolio, and they can realize about what their classmates can do and they can't and then I talk with them and

we decided what can we do to learn that and this is an autonomous learning, because they can realize about what they need to learn and then we decided together which steps they can follow to achieve it.

C: Thank you! And what do you think that are the disadvantages of using portfolios?

M:I think that there are not disadvantages, because it is very helpful for my job, I think that is very helpful when you work with children. It is also very helpful for the communication between teachers and families, because you can just show the portfolio in the parents' individual meetings and they can see what we've been doing in the kindergarten. I do not consider that this is a disadvantage, because it is very useful, but doing portfolios takes you a lot of time, it's a lot of work, because you must do one portfolio for each child. I also do different portfolios, one that is about children's progresses, the activities they participate in, some of their evidences… Another one that is the classroom portfolio and I also do another individual portfolio that can be just seen by me and the families of the children, because I have confidential information about children, some personal data that can't be shared with others. Another inconvenient could be that sometimes I must write down the speech of children and sometimes they speak too quick and it can be difficult. For example, when you arrived here, there was a boy that was explaining a fairy tale and I was transcribing his speech but he was speaking too quick. In this way, I know how children use the sentences, and some words, how they build sentences… This is very helpful, but sometimes is quite difficult and then I have to write the speech in the computer, with the date, the situation and the name of the child to add it in the portfolio.

C: Brilliant! And how often do you add content in portfolios?

M: I add content in the portfolio every day because it is very important to write down everything I see, "positive things" but also "negative things" but I can't write the negative things in children's portfolio, because they can be blocked because of my comments and I just write these "negative things" in my personal portfolio, that can be seen just by me or children's families. Every month I have a meeting with parents and I look deeply in all the portfolios to decide which aspects I have to talk with parents.

C: Does the use of portfolio helps you to be more engaged with the families?

M: For me, but also for families, the use of portfolio is positive. It is very helpful for partnership because families can see what I did and what children did. Families can cooperate with me to build the portfolio, they can tell me how I can improve the portfolio,

they can bring some materials as pictures of children and they can tell me what they need to include in the portfolio. They can bring images of children at home and we put it in the portfolio, this is a cooperative portfolio. Portfolio for families is very helpful, they are very happy and proud when they look into the portfolios. However, I do not share portfolios with all of my colleagues, but I share them with my assistant because when I am not here, she can continue doing the portfolios and we cooperate. With the other teachers is not very easy because every teacher or assistant has his/her own way of working and sometimes, if they do not use portfolio can be hard, because for many teachers portfolio is not important, and when they see that I am doing portfolios they think that this is a waste of time, it's a lot of work but it's very useful for me. You know? When I have some students that are doing the internship with me I always show them the portfolios, and how important is the use of portfolios as future teachers.

C: Nice! And what kind of evidences do you collect in portfolios? What kind of language evidences?

M: The first page in my portfolio includes a children's picture of the day that they start in the kindergarten and the date. The second page includes the weight and the height, because in this way at the end of the year they can compare and they can see how they grew up. Then, in the next page they put their hands or their feet in the pain and they stamp it, and we can compare which ones are bigger, or smaller. It is about individual identity, that is very important. Then, in the portfolio I also add some evidence about children's movements, jumping, running, P.E lessons… The speech is also included in the portfolio, and I also add some content about Maths, their understanding, how they understand the rules. When I have new content to teach, first I have to discover the previous knowledge of children about this topic, what do they know? What can they do? And then, when I know it, I can start planning how I will teach them, it is very important to know the "starting point". I also add their drawings and what they want to say about the drawings. When they finish a drawing, they come to me and tell me what do they want me to write in the drawing to add it in the portfolio. For the language evidences, in the first ages just write the first words of children, how they try to communicate with adults and with other children, how they start building sentences… When they grow up, I can start writing about how they explain a fairy tale, I also write about how they pronounce some difficult sounds because sometimes they switch /p/ and /d/ sounds and is very important to be careful with that, because If they do not learn it do it correctly, they can fossilize it. Last year, I realized that children have a big problem with pronouncing some sounds and I decided to do some voice exercises and it seems that this is working! If one child has a problem with the speech, I call the parents and I ask

them to call the speech therapist and they can ask for help. If they have problems with the speech, is very important to solve them before they go to school, when children are three or four years old, because the speech is very important for all the subjects, because they must talk to teachers, to other children… all is related to the speech. When I prepare activities in which children have to speak in front of other people, I have to make sure that they are ready and confident and I work with them to help them and then they are ready to speak in front of the rest of the children. When in the group I have a child with speech difficulties, I talk with the rest of the children and we talk about diversity, special needs, so children can understand him or her and they do not laugh.

7.8 Appendix 8

Professional trajectory of the interviewed teachers

1: Psychologist (Catalonia)	2: Pre-school English Teacher (Catalonia)	3: Primary and Preschool Teacher (Catalonia)	4: Foreign language teacher (Catalonia)	5: English teacher (Slovenia)	6: teachers-families relationship (Slovenia)	7: Teacher that uses portfolio (Slovenia)
I Psychology degree (helping people) II Realized that children are her life III Psychology + no curricular (Infant, Primary and Secondary)+ English workshop (to detect special needs)	I She knows she wanted to be a teacher, but had some doubts between Primary and Infant Education. She studied Primary in the field of English. II Then she studied Infant Education Degree III Master's Degree in ITC IV Teaching English in Infant Education since 2014 V She substitute the director for one year	I she has been working in this semiprivate school for 6 years. She is teaching English and Spanish in Infant stage and some workshops in English in Primary. II she used to work in another semiprivate school in which she taught English in all both stages III she studied Teaching in the field of English	I wide experience. She worked in Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education. She lived in United States. II she started working in this school 16 years ago and she started the project of introducing English in Preschool III She studied Foreign language and then she can work as a tutor or as an English teacher	I Preschool assistant that works in the kindergarten as an English teacher. She is teaching English in 2-6 years old groups II She studied German and History and had to do a special year for teaching in the kindergarten	I she knew at a very young age that she wanted to work with children II she studied for being a kindergarten teacher in a high school program for teachers III she started working as a pre-teacher when she was just 19 years old IV after 10 years laws changes and she had to finish university to keep the degree. She got it in 1993 V she has been involved in this profession for 35 years. She is passionate about it and can't imagine herself in another place	I she discovered she wanted to be a teacher at a very young age. She went to the university and although she had some doubts between teaching Primary or kindergarten she decided to study for being a kindergarten teacher II she's been working in this kindergarten for 36 years

7.9 Appendix 9

Answers of teachers in the topic of assessment beliefs

1: Psychologist (Catalonia)	2: Pre-school English Teacher (Catalonia)	3: Primary and Preschool Teacher (Catalonia)	4: Foreign language teacher (Catalonia)	5: English teacher (Slovenia)	6: teachers-families relationship (Slovenia)	7: Teacher that uses portfolio (Slovenia)
IV achieve age-basic standards (autonomy+ cognitive) **V** should be more general, no "labels", everyone has his/her own pace **X** Children are dimensional; assessment should consider different aspects!	**VI** In Infant Education stage assessment should never be the main objective, it's too early to assess them **VIII:** Assessment is the opportunity to make the progresses visible, to detect possible difficulties and to plan future interventions **XXI** During this stage we should assess global aspects, as the relationship between children, motivation…	**IV** she understands assessment as the record of the evolution of children in terms of knowledge, maturity and cognitive level	**IV** assessment should help to supervise if the teaching-learning progress is effective or not **V** the most important thing is to assess the process, more than children knowledge. The assessment allows to assess children but also teacher's methods.			

7.10   Appendix 10

Answers of teachers in the topic of benefits of assessment

1: Psychologist (Catalonia)	2: Pre-school English Teacher (Catalonia)	3: Primary and Preschool Teacher (Catalonia)	4: Foreign language teacher (Catalonia)	5: English teacher (Slovenia)	6: teachers-families relationship (Slovenia)	7: Teacher that uses portfolio (Slovenia)
VI be relaxed	**VII** assessment allows teachers to observe children's progress and to realize how they can help children **IX** well targeted assessment can be very useful for teachers but not all kinds of assessment are useful **X** the evaluation is also a good way to evaluate if the strategies that the teachers are using are effective or not and to decide future interventions.	**VI** the assessment allows her to reflect about the process of teaching and learning. It helps her to realize how the group is progressing, if she is achieving the objectives and what can she do to improve.	**VI** assessment gives information about where is the student. **VII** assessment gives to the teachers the information they need to continue, because it allows teachers to know if they achieved the objectives, If the activities were useful and what should they do in the next unit.			

7.11   Appendix 11

Answers of teachers in the topic of assessment and families

1: Psycholo-gist (Catalonia)	2: Pre-school English Teacher (Catalonia)	3: Primary and Preschool Teacher (Catalonia)	4: Foreign language teacher (Catalonia)	5: English teacher (Slove-nia)	6: teachers-families relationship (Slovenia)	7: Teacher that uses portfolio (Slovenia)
VIII to explain what I observe, to give them advices, help children and families at the same time **IX** cooperation between teachers and psychology during the meetings	**XI** assessment can be also useful for families, to realize about child's progress and what we are doing at school **XII** assessment is also useful because sometimes families discover some things that they did not know about their children	**VII** Families need the assessment, because they need a "formal" feedback **VIII** through assessment teachers can explain families how children are doing, how can they help him/her to improve…	**VIII** assessment gives families the opportunity to know what children have learnt, they can realize about children's behaviour.	**XVIII** if a child is really good in English she talks with the teacher and asks him/her to tell parents that this child has some talent for languages **XX** if a child is not very good at English she does not tell the teacher, because maybe what happens is that he/she is not ready for hard work on language yet	**XXII** she meets every family at least once a year in an individual meeting. If it's necessary she organizes more. Every month she organizes five individual meetings and discusses child's progress on different levels of development **XXIV** in this meetings she shows to the parents some evidences. She uses them to show parents how successful a child is at accomplishing certain goals. She also takes some notes of children's progress, takes photos and records children's speech	**X** portfolios are very helpful for the communication between teachers and families, because you can show portfolios to children's families in individual meetings and they can see what they've been doing **XVI** portfolios are very useful for partnership. Families cooperate with her in building portfolios, they suggest them some activities to improve portfolios, they can bring some materials to add in portfolios. It's a cooperative portfolio and families are very happy and proud when they see their children's portfolio

7.12   Appendix 12

Answers of teachers in the topic of assessment and school

1: Psychologist (Catalonia)	2: Pre-school English Teacher (Catalonia)	3: Primary and Preschool Teacher (Catalonia)	4: Foreign language teacher (Catalonia)	5: English teacher (Slovenia)	6: teachers-families relationship (Slovenia)	7: Teacher that uses portfolio (Slovenia)
II new assessment training, provided by the school XIII use of ICT	XIV in this school they do not assess English XV they have some meetings and think about how they should assess. At the end of the year they have to write a report and items are already determined. However, some items are quite general and teachers can write their observations.	IX teachers are free to use their own tools and the school just recommends them to do an ongoing assessment	X every teacher decides his/her own criteria XV every January and June they have some meetings in which they talk about the assessment. They are very useful because they can decide if they should change some things.			

Answers of teachers in the topic of introduction of English

1: Psychologist (Catalonia)	2: Pre-school English Teacher (Catalonia)	3: Primary and Preschool Teacher (Catalonia)	4: Foreign language teacher (Catalonia)	5: English teacher (Slovenia)	6: teachers-families relationship (Slovenia)	7: Teacher that uses portfolio (Slovenia)
XIV very positive **XV** using games make the lessons interesting **XVI** learning English with positive emotions **XVII** help them to stablish a basis, they are not afraid when they start English in Primary Education.	**XVI** Introducing English in Infant education allows teachers to work with English differently than in Primary, in a more natural and funny way. **XVII** The main objective is that children enjoy English lessons and have positive experiences. That will increase their motivation. **XVIII** Preschool is a right stage to introduce a new language, children are very curious and they love English	**X** sometimes in P-3 children are so young to start with English lessons. Some of them enjoy the lessons but others are still not comfortable with that. Sometimes they do not even say more than 20 words in Catalan and then is quite difficult to introduce another language. **XI** Introducing English in the last term of P-3 or in P-4 would be a good idea **XII** Introducing English in Preschool can help children to acquire a base before	**XII** they start English in P-4 **XVI** the introduction of English in this stage is very important because as younger as children are they acquire things quicklier. They acquire the oral part very easy. **XVII** they do not start English in P-3 because they have some students that do not speak Catalan or Spanish at home and they think that is better to help them to acquire Spanish or Catalan first.	**III** it can be difficult because children can't read or write **IV** however, she discovered that it's easier because you don't have to worry about how they will write down the words. **V** teaching children can be easier because if you are a good motivator you can teach them anything because they still want to learn. She thinks this is the easiest period to teach English. **VI** sometimes adults can be embarrassed because of their mistakes, but children don't have fear and they learn on. Adults are always thinking about if they are using the correct grammar tenses and if they are pronouncing it correctly but children don't have these problems. **VII** some young children don't		

		starting Primary. **XIII** This will help them to achieve the objectives of the Primary stage and they will lose the fear. Starting English in Primary without any previous contact with the language can be so hard for children.	**XVIII** sometimes is better to start later but with a major input and continuity. However, if the resources are available, is better to start as younger as possible.	know Slovene yet, so learning a foreign language can be difficult because they can start mixing words **VIII** learning English can be difficult for children because some words and sounds are completely different than the ones in their language **XIX** is very important to start teaching English in the kindergarten because is the easiest way to make sure that they like the language, because in the lessons there are some games, songs and some fun.		

7.14   Appendix 14

Answers of teachers in the topic of tools for assessing

1: Psycholo-gist (Catalonia)	2: Pre-school English Teacher (Catalonia)	3: Primary and Preschool Teacher (Catalonia)	4: Foreign language teacher (Catalonia)	5: English teacher (Slovenia)	6: teachers-families relation-ship (Slovenia)	7: Teacher that uses portfolio (Slovenia)
XVIII observation+ evidences (autonomy, concepts…), they assess the progress	XIX she observes how children react and behave in every session XX she also observes how children acquire the routines. Routines are very important and sometimes it is difficult because for some children is the first time that they are exposed to routines.	V she essentially uses direct observations for assessing children XIV it is important to assess how they r eact during the English lesson and how much they use English, more than assessing the knowledge. XV she used to use dartboards for assessing children's knowledge at the end of every unit XVI sometimes she takes pictures and prepares documentations for families. XVII every unit she assesses if children have reached the objectives of the unit	XI every unit she observes different things: storytelling listening, storytelling comprehension, instructions comprehension, vocabulary recognition, vocabulary reproduction, singing songs and verbal and non verbal communication and general behaviours. XIII they basically use observation because they can't do tests. Sometimes she observes how children participate in activities and takes notes XIX she assesses every unit XX sometimes she records video and take pictures of children		XXIV in this meetings she shows to the parents some evidences. She uses them to show parents how successful a child is at accomplishing certain goals. She also takes some notes of children's progress, takes photos and records children's speech	XI (….) She does an individual portfolio for each child, the classroom portfolio and the "secret portfolio" that includes confidential data of children and just children's families and the teacher can see

7.15 Appendix 15

Answers of teachers in the topic of reports and sharing the assessment

1:Psychologist (Catalonia)	2: Pre-school English Teacher (Catalonia)	3: Primary and Preschool Teacher (Catalonia)	4: Foreign language teacher (Catalonia)	5: English teacher (Slovenia)	6: teachers-families relationship (Slovenia)	7: Teacher that uses portfolio (Slovenia)
XIX every term they write a report XX every term they have a meeting to discuss about the children's progress, they also talk about future interventions	XV At the end of the year they have to write a report and items are already determined. However, some items are quite general and teachers can write their observations. XXIV Reports are very general, and in the third term, when they write the reports, they already have enough information of children. XXV every year, before writing the final report, all the teachers that teach in a group do a meeting to talk about every child. These meetings are very useful XXVI The psychotherapist of the school comes to the meetings and she talks about the children she is attending and if we have some doubts about	XVIII meetings for assessing students are not mandatory but she says that she really needs to meet with the teachers that teach in the same group to share the evaluation.	IX the report is general, they understand children as global. English report is integrated in the general report. XIV at the end of the first term families receive a report. At the end of the school year they also receive a report in which the items that appear referring to English are the same that the teacher assesses during the units, but in the report of the students of P-4, in the first term they just write about behaviours, not content. Items are the same in P-4 and P-5 but the		XXV before individual meetings the teacher discusses with all the teachers that are working in the group the progress of that child	XV every month she has a meeting with every family and she looks deeply the portfolio to decide which aspects she should discuss with parents XVII she does not share portfolios with the rest of colleagues, she just shares them with her assistant to cooperate with her XVIII she does not share portfolios with other teachers because every teacher has his/her own way of working. For many teachers, portfolios are a

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	other children she helps us		rating is different **XXI** if she has to say something to a child's family, she contacts with the tutor and asks him/her to organize a meeting.			waste of time

Answers of teachers in the topic of the pressure of assessment

1: Psychologist (Catalonia)	2: Pre-school English Teacher (Catalonia)	3: Primary and Preschool Teacher (Catalonia)	4: Foreign language teacher (Catalonia)	5: English teacher (Slovenia)	6: teachers-families relationship (Slovenia)	7: Teacher that uses portfolio (Slovenia)
VII no labels-no failure, be careful with "negative" comments, decrease the pressure, take into account diversity. Be careful with minimum-standards! **XI** be careful, some families think that a failure is their fault, sometimes they are too exigent, it is important to understand families **V** should be more general, no "labels", everyone has his/her own pace	**XIII** families are too worried about children's education and sometimes they want children to learn quicklier than they should but sometimes assessment helps them to be less worried	**XIX** it important to be careful because in Preschool there are some parents that are too worried. If you write that a child did not achieve an objective they might be stressed **XX** two years ago in the school she works they decided to change the report and changed "not achieved" for "in progress". Now it is different, because they communicate families that their children are in progress, they say that they will achieve it.	**XXII** if a child needs to improve, his or her family should be the first one to know it, because they can help him or her. If parents know it and help children they can solve the problem but if not, maybe when families realize about that is too late. **XXIII** it's very important to be careful. It's important to find always positive things.	**XVII** She does not use grades, because she thinks that in this kind of assessment children would be under pressure. Most of them are afraid if they are asked a question directly. In schools everyone worries about grades, not about the knowledge, something is not working.		

7.17 Appendix 17

Answers of the English teacher of Slovenia

Professional trajectory	I Preschool assistant that works in the kindergarten as an English teacher. She is teaching English in 2-6 years old groups II She studied German and History and had to do a special year for teaching in the kindergarten
Challenges of teaching English to young learners	III it can be difficult because children can't read or write IV however, she discovered that it's easier because you don't have to worry about how they will write down the words
Teaching adults VS teaching children	V teaching children can be easier because if you are a good motivator you can teach them anything because they still want to learn. She thinks this is the easiest period to teach English VI sometimes adults can be embarrassed because of their mistakes, but children don't have fear and they learn on. Adults are always thinking about if they are using the correct grammar tenses and if they are pronouncing it correctly but children don't have these problems
Challenges of learning English	VII some young children don't know Slovene yet, so learning a foreign language can be difficult because they can start mixing words VIII learning English can be difficult for children because some words and sounds are completely different than the ones in their language
Structure of an English lesson	IX They start the session with a little bit of talk in Slovene, to prepare children for the new vocabulary X Then, during 20 minutes she introduces the vocabulary through images, because in this way children can make association. XI Then, they play some games to acquire the vocabulary. This takes 15 minutes XII At the end, in the last 5 minutes they usually sing songs, because this is the easiest way for children to acquire some sentences. XIII The vocabulary introduced should be known for children in Slovene
The role of first language in acquiring the second language	XIV Children can make some associations between their first language and English because some words are similar
Tools and resources for assessing	XV She mostly checks the acquisition of vocabulary through games XVI She use one special game, called smarties, in which children have to turn a wheel and then they have to collect small smarties, in which some images of vocabulary appeared, and they have to come back to the teacher and say the name of that word.

	XVII She does not use grades, because she thinks that in this kind of assessment children would be under pressure. Most of them are afraid if they are asked a question directly. In schools everyone worries about grades, not about the knowledge, something is not working.
Sharing the observations with teachers	**XVIII** if a child is really good in English she talks with the teacher and asks him/her to tell parents that this child has some talent for languages **XIX** is very important to start teaching English in the kindergarten because is the easiest way to make sure that they like the language, because in the lessons there are some games, songs and some fun. **XX** if a child is not very good at English she does not tell the teacher, because maybe what happens is that he/she is not ready for hard work on language yet
How to correct children?	**XXI** if someone says one word wrong she just repeats the word correctly one more time and most of the time he/she repeats it correctly **XXII** if she would correct children saying this is not correct, they will lose their confidence and they will not participate

7.18   Appendix 18

Answers of the Slovene teacher about the relationship between teachers and families

Professional trajectory	I she knew at a very young age that she wanted to work with children II she studied for being a kindergarten teacher in a high school program for teachers III she started working as a pre-teacher when she was just 19 years old IV after 10 years laws changes and she had to finish university to keep the degree. She got it in 1993 V she has been involved in this profession for 35 years. She is passionate about it and can't imagine herself in another place
Role of the families in the kindergarten	VI in Slovene kindergartens the relationship between teachers and families is very important and it is considered in the national curriculum VII the kindergarten she works in considers the involvement of parents as a very important part of the program VIII in the meeting of the beginning of the course teachers talk about how can they engage families in the kindergarten activities IX families can come inside the kindergarten whenever they want X involvement of parents is one of the most important things in early ages ad she always invites parents to collaborate with her
Integration of families in kindergarten's life	XI every year she prepares activities for families XII sometimes it's hard to involve parents because they are too busy XIII she is convinced that children are very happy when families are engaged in kindergarten's activities XIV she invites parents to participate in all the activities and she introduces them the activities that will take place during the school year in the first meeting XV at least once a month she invites one family to prepare an interesting activity for all the children in her group
Advantages of having a close relationship with families	XVI the involvement of families is very positive for all; families, teachers and children XVII if parents are involved can observe children's progress and can understand that children are educated in the kindergarten, not just supervised XVIII she likes all the activities in which parents are involved and she has very good feedbacks from parents of this kind of activities
Challenges of engaging families in kindergarten's life	XIX sometimes families think that in the kindergarten teachers just take care of children and do not educate them, and for this reason sometimes is difficult to engage them XX some parents think they do not have the obligation to be involved in kindergarten's program, but this is very helpful for all, children, families and kindergarten staff XXI some parents do not have time to participate in the activities

| Meetings with families | **XXII** she meets every family at least once a year in an individual meeting. However, if it's necessary she organizes more meetings. Every month the teacher organizes five individual meetings in which she comments and discusses child's progress on different levels of development
XXIII every year there are three mandatory joint meetings organized by the kindergarten. However, they always do more joint meetings because these are a good way to involve parents and with their help kindergarten staff can prepare more activities
XXIV in the individual meetings the teacher shows to the parents some evidences that she collected from children. She uses them to show parents how successful or unsuccessful a child is at accomplishing certain goals. She also takes some notes of children's progress and sometimes she also takes photos and records children's speech
XXV before individual meetings the teacher discusses with all the teachers that are working in the group the progress of that child
XXVI for preparing the joint meetings, every year she chooses a different topic and prepare activities with parents related to this topic. Parents can suggest some activities.
XXVIII in the individual meetings she also asks families about how a child is at home. Sometimes children behave differently at home and individual meetings can be very useful. In this meetings teacher is also interested in how the family sees the child, because they know their children better than her |

Answers of the Slovene teacher about the use of portfolios

Professional trajectory	I she discovered she wanted to be a teacher at a very young age. She went to the university and although she had some doubts between teaching Primary or kindergarten she decided to study for being a kindergarten teacher II she's been working in this kindergarten for 36 years
Starting the project of portfolios	III she started using portfolios 20 years ago. A group of professionals of the school community started a project about portfolios and she was invited to participate IV when she was invited she was very happy, because she was trying to find something new, another way to observe children, to see their progresses but also to assess her own actions
Advantages of using portfolios	V she can't understand her job without portfolios. She can observe children very deeply; she can realize about their weaknesses and abilities. When you have 20 children you can't observe them carefully but the use of portfolio allows her to observe all children carefully VI portfolios allow her to see every child in different senses: motor skills, communication, fine motor control, autonomy, ability to solve problems… VII the use of portfolios is also useful for children because they can look to the portfolio whenever they want, they can see their progress and how they raised different objectives VIII children also love to see their classmates' portfolios. They can realize about their classmates' abilities and the differences between them. If they are interested in acquiring some of these abilities, they talk with the teacher and with the help of the teacher they decide what can they do to learn that. This is a kind of autonomous learning X portfolios are very helpful for the communication between teachers and families, because you can show portfolios to children's families in individual meetings and they can see what they've been doing
Disadvantages of using portfolios	IX she thinks there are no real disadvantages because it's very helpful for her job XI she does not consider it a disadvantage but doing portfolios takes lot of time. She does an individual portfolio for each child, the classroom portfolio and the "secret portfolio" that includes confidential data of children and just children's families and the teacher can see XII sometimes she must write down children's speech to add it in the portfolio, but it can be difficult because they speak quickly. However, this is very useful because she can see how children use sentences, how they use the vocabulary learnt…
Sharing portfolios	XVI portfolios are very useful for partnership. Families cooperate with her in building portfolios, they suggest them some activities to improve portfolios, they can bring some materials to add in portfolios, as pictures of children. This is a

	cooperative portfolio and families are very happy and proud when they see their children's portfolio **XVII** she does not share portfolios with the rest of colleagues, she just shares them with her assistant to cooperate with her **XVIII** she does not share portfolios with other teachers because every teacher has his/her own way of working. For many teachers, portfolios are a waste of time **XIX** when she has some students of the university in her group she always shows them the portfolios, and tries to make them realize about the importance of using portfolios
Evidences in portfolios	**XIII** she adds content in portfolios every day **XIV** she adds positive and "negative" things in portfolios but she just adds the second evidences in the "secret portfolio", because if children see the "negative" things they can be blocked **XV** every month she has a meeting with every family and she looks deeply the portfolio to decide which aspects she should discuss with parents **XX** the first page in the portfolio includes a children's picture of the first day in the kindergarten and the date **XXI** the second page includes the weight and the height and at the end of the year they compare and see how they grew up **XXII** in the third page they stamp children's hands or feet and compare which ones are bigger, smaller… **XXIII** in the portfolio different kinds of evidences can be found, as evidences about children's movements, jumping, running, P.E lessons, speech, Maths (their understanding and how they understand rules) **XXIV** when she has new content to teach first she tries to discover the children's previous knowledge and then she plans how she will teach the new content **XXV** she also adds children's drawings in portfolios, when they finish a drawing they say to the teacher the things they want to put in the teacher and she writes it down **XXVI** for the language evidences in the first ages she writes the first words of children, how they try to communicate with adults or other children, how they start building sentences… **XXVII** when they grow up she adds other kind of language evidences. She writes about how they explain a fairy tale, how they pronounce difficult words… **XXVIII** when she prepares activities in which children have to speak in front of other people, she makes sure that they are ready and confident enough, so she works with them about how to speak in front of the rest of the children

Description of an English lesson in Slovenia

- **Title of the lesson:** Discovering the jungle animals.
- **Topic:** as it has been explaining before, the English teacher chooses one topic for each week and she works with this topic with the children of the different groups. The topic of this week was jungle animals and she adapted this topic to the different groups according children age and children's needs.
- **Age group:** these activities were addressed to all the children that have English lessons in the kindergarten, that means that was addressed to 3-6 years old children. However, some groups are mixed and 2 and 3 years old children are together in the same group and for this reason some 2 years old children also participated in this activity, although the teacher thinks that some of them are too young for participating in English lessons and in this kind of activities.
- **Grouping of pupils**: these activities were carried out with the whole group of students. That means that all the students in the classroom participated in the same activities in the same time. However, the English teacher thinks that the results will be better if they split the group into two, because she thinks that 20 children (in most of the group they were almost 20, which is the maximum number of students allowed for these ages). However, the teacher also argues that is very difficult to split the group, because in that case they would need two English teachers or children would just receive English lessons twice a month, instead of once a week.
- **Timing**: the timing of the activity depended on the group. As commented before, the groups that are under 5 years old received just a 20 minutes' lesson, but the 5 years old group received a 40 minutes lesson. Moreover, the mixed groups in which there were some students that already were 5 years old, received a 40 minutes lesson too, although some students were just 3 or 4 years old.
- **Materials**: the materials needed for each activity vary according the different activities that the teacher decided to do with each group. For example, for the activity 2, the materials needed were the pieces of puzzles of the jungle animals that the teacher decided to teach to each group. For the activities 4, 5 and 7, the material needed were the different images of the jungle animals that the teacher decided to teach to the students. For the activity 6 the materials needed were 20 cards in which 5 jungle animals appeared and 100 stickers, as the cards of jungle animals too. Finally, for the activity 8 just a Cd of classical music was needed.

- **Aims**:
  - **Activity 1: Which jungle animals do we know**?:
    - to realize about the previous knowledge of children.
    - to distinguish between jungle animals and other kinds of animals.
    - to introduce the jungle animals that the teacher chose.
  - **Activity 2: Jungle animals puzzles**
    - to cooperate with other students to solve the puzzle.
    - to introduce the jungle animals that the teacher chose.
  - **Activity 3: Guess which animal I am talking about**!:
    - to know the basic characteristics of the different jungle animals chosen by the teacher.
    - To discover and remember the name of the jungle animals in English.
  - **Activity 4: Which animal is in the picture**?:
    - to remember the name of the jungle animals in English
    - to cooperate between classmates to guess all the animals that the teacher had already introduced to them.
  - **Activity 5: Turn around and close your eyes**:
    - to be concentrated to guess which card/cards is/are missing.
    - to remember the name of the jungle animals that were already introduced before.
  - **Activity 6: Bingo**!:
    - to be concentrated to listen the teacher's commands and the animals that she says.
    - to remember the names of the jungle animals in English in order to stick the sticker in the right animal.
  - **Activity 7: Stop game**:
    - to be concentrated while the teacher is pointing and saying the name of the animal
    - to remember and retain the names of the jungle animals
  - **Activity 8: Let's turn into**:
    - to be concentrated to listen when the music stops and represent the animal that the teacher or a classmate have said.
    - to know which movements can represent every jungle animals and represent them.
    - to remember the names of the jungle animals in English to represent the right animal.

- **Activities**:
  - **Activity 1: Which jungle animals do we know**?: the teacher asked the students to sit down in the chairs and explained to the students that the topic of this lesson was jungle animals. Then, she asked children which jungle animals did they know. Children had to raise their hands in order to speak, and then the teacher said the name of a student and it was his/her turn. Some children said the name of non-jungle animals and the teacher just said that they were animals but that they did not live in the jungle and encouraged them to keep thinking about jungle animals.
  - **Activity 2: Jungle animals puzzles**: the teacher printed some images of some jungle animals and she cut them into different shapes. Then, she gave one piece to each student and then students had to find the other students that had a part of their puzzle animal. Every animal was printed in a different colour paper, so it was easy for children to find the classmates that had the same animal. When all the children finished their puzzles, the teacher asked them which animal was represented in every puzzle. In most of the animals, the children said the name in Slovenian and then the teacher asked if someone knew the word in English. At the end, the teacher told them the name of the animals they did not guessed before.
  - **Activity 3: Guess which animal I am talking about**!: this activity was carried out when some jungle animals were already presented. The teacher started describing the animals that she wanted to introduce to students and were not already presented. She described them by saying the main characteristics of the animals, as their colour and the length, among others. The children had to guess which was the animal that the teacher was talking about and also the name in English. If they did not know it, the teacher tries to give them some clues and then she gave the correct answer.
  - **Activity 4: Which animal is in the picture**?: this activity was done when all the jungle animals that the teacher wanted to introduce were presented. Then, the teacher took one card and gave it to one child and this child had to say the name of the animal but if he/she did not know it, him/her classmates helped them. Then, the child had to gave the card to another child and this child had to repeat the name too and they repeat the same until all the children have said the name of all the animals that were already introduced to them.

- o **Activity 5: Turn around and close your eyes**: the teacher put the cards of the animals that were already introduced and asked the children to look at all the images carefully. Then, the teacher asked all the students to turn around and to close their eyes. Next, teacher took some images (at the first round two and in the next rounds more) and asked the children to turn around and guess which animals were missing.
- o **Activity 6: Bingo**!: the teacher gave to the students cards in which the images of five animals appears. Most of them were jungle animals, but there also appeared some pets, as a cat or a dog, because some weeks ago they talked about pets. Then, the teacher gave to each student five stickers and she took the jungle animals cards and put them on the floor. She started saying the jungle animals' names and then, when she said one name she asked one student to turn the card of the animal she said before. If in the children's cards the animal that the teacher said was represented, the children should stick one of the stickers in the image. One children finish their own car, that is when all the animals that the children had in their cards were already said, the children should say: bingo!.
- o **Activity 7: Stop game**: the teacher put some of the cards of the jungle animals that were already introduced and started pointing at them and saying the name of the animals. Then, when the teacher said an incorrect name, the children should say stop and then they should say the correct name of the animal. At the first round, the teacher just started with two cards but in the last turn the teacher used all the jungle animal cards.
- o **Activity 8: Let's turn into…**: the teacher put some classical music and when she stopped the song, she said to the children: now, let's turn into… and she said the name of one animal. Then, children should start moving around the space representing the animal that the teacher has said. In the next rounds, the teacher just stopped the music and asked one child to decide which animal they were going to represent.
- **Methodologies**: in general, it can be said that this activity, as well as the English learning, was very interactive and dynamic, and children took active part of their own process of learning. Moreover, the teacher started the session by an activity that allowed her to know the previous knowledge of the students, by asking them which jungle animals they knew. The fact of starting the session in this way, help her lot to stablish an start point but also was a good way to introduce the topic, as the children took active part of this introduction. Moreover, during all the

activities the teacher asked students to raise their hands if they wanted to speak, what made students understand that there are some rules that they should follow. Moreover, this rules are very useful for this kind of activities, in which the whole group of students participate. Moreover, in some of the activities that the teacher prepared, the students should cooperate for achieving the goal of the activity. This cooperation between classmates is very important, because every child has a different knowledge and background and by cooperating all of them can share these knowledges, what means that all the students will learn from the activity and also from their classmates. What's more, the teacher always has in mind which topic she is going to introduce to the students but she is also flexible and she adapts the content to the age and the needs of the groups. I think that this ability of being flexible is necessary because if the activities are not adapted to te different groups, for sure, some of them will not work with some groups, because of the age or their needs, among others.

Another important aspect to mention, is how the teacher correct students. When the teacher corrected the student, she did not do it in a direct way, as she did not want children to feel insecure. She corrected the students just by repeating the words that the children have said incorrectly but without saying that this was not correct or she just congratulated student without correcting them. In general, it can be said that all the activities motivated the student and as the way I see it this is because the teacher found dynamic activities but also because the teacher adapted the activities to each group. Moreover, the teacher wanted student to participate a lot, but if one child did not want to participate, the teacher encouraged them to participate but without forcing them.

- **Evaluation**: during the kindergarten stage, teachers do not evaluate their students. However, the teacher observed carefully how every child reacted to every activity. Moreover, if he saw that one child was struggling with one word or activity, she tried to find the way to help this child but the teacher did not take any note of their observations.