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Teaching

The Role of the Affective Filter in the Oral Skills Performance of
Fourth Grade Students at Anglo American School during the Second
Semester of 2021

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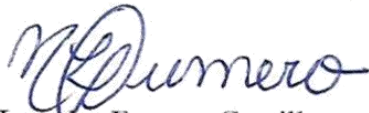
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“Do not stop when you are tired,
Stop when you are done”

For two years in a row, I have been trying to finish my thesis, then Covid came and made things more complicated. However, I decided it was about time to finish what must be finished. I dedicate this project to my one and only love, for him to realize that even when things seem to be hard and impossible if you desire something with all your heart you may reach for the stars. Don't be wrong I didn't wish to finish this with all my heart. What I really wanted was for you to learn that giving up is not an option and I wanted you to feel proud of not only a strong mom but a perseverant student and resilient person.

I also dedicate this project to the two major bothersome people I know in my life; my older brother and my younger sister, who pushed every moment for me to have this done. Thanks guys!! At the end I did enjoy the process.

And finally, my parents, both always wanting me to become better in whatever I decided to do. I know it took me a long time, but as anything else that I have desired with all my heart, I had it done. Thanks for teaching me never to give up and never to surrender to my fears.

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ABBREVIATIONS

EFL: English as a Foreign Language
ESL: English as a Second Language.
SLA: Second Language Acquisition
FLA: Foreign Language Acquisition
FL: Foreign Language
LA: Language Acquisition

ABSTRACT

Humankind is a wonderful species that reigns on Earth since long time ago. From the beginning of existence people have learned and taught, a variety of contents and topics. The process of teaching and learning have changed through the years in a drastic way, but the fact that humans learn remains until actual times. During long periods, subject matter has been the most important thing to pay attention to, but from different perspectives of history and science, there is always the question on the individual receiving that knowledge and the way different variables affect the process of learning. This research aims to understand which is the role of the affective filter in learning English as a Foreign Language, especially in the oral part of the language. Using the knowledge of Krashen, a well-known around the world psychologist who studied the process of learning a second language.

Krashen established 5 different theories, the main one for this report is Krashen's Theory of the affective Filter, which states that an EFL student with a high affective filter, will block most of the actual learning process of the language. On the other hand, an EFL student with a lower affective filter will easily learn the language and use it in an effective way. Already knowing the theory, the main idea is to see the influence of the affective filter in the actual context of the Pandemic Covid- Sars 2 over Fourth Grade Students of Anglo-American School, specifically in the oral skills performance and the use of English daily. Anglo American School, is a private institution, where English is spoken in every class except Spanish and Social Studies.

One of the most important elements to consider is the change of students from a virtual only context to a live class context and the influence the worldwide situation is having. For the investigation process there were several perspectives analyzed: starting from the view of students, talking to their homeroom teachers and listening to the professionals in charge of psychology. It is important to mention also, that during the research process there were several periods where students had to go back to virtuality because of the national situation, or the presence of Covid cases in their classroom, one single positive case, made the whole generation quarantine for at least ten days.

RESUMEN

La humanidad es una especie maravillosa que reina en la Tierra desde hace mucho tiempo. Desde el principio de la existencia las personas han aprendido y enseñado una variedad de contenidos y temas. El proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje ha cambiado a través de los años de una manera drástica, pero el hecho de que los humanos aprendan permanece hasta tiempos actuales. Durante largos períodos, el contenido ha sido lo más importante a lo que se presta atención, pero desde diferentes perspectivas de la historia y la ciencia, siempre existe la pregunta sobre el individuo que recibe ese conocimiento y la forma en que las diferentes variables afectan el proceso de aprendizaje. Esta investigación tiene como objetivo comprender cuál es el papel del filtro afectivo en el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera, especialmente en la parte oral de la lengua. Utilizando los conocimientos de Krashen, un conocido psicólogo y profesor de lenguas, quien estudió el proceso de aprendizaje de un segundo idioma como tal y las variables que le pueden afectar.

Krashen estableció 5 hipótesis diferentes, la principal para este informe es la Teoría del Filtro Afectivo, que establece que un estudiante de inglés como lengua extranjera con un filtro afectivo alto, bloqueará la mayor parte del proceso de aprendizaje real del idioma. Por otro lado, un estudiante de inglés como lengua extranjera con un filtro afectivo más bajo aprenderá fácilmente el idioma y lo usará de manera efectiva y adecuada. Ya conociendo la teoría, el objetivo primordial es ver la influencia del filtro afectivo en el contexto real de la Pandemia SARS COVID 2 sobre los estudiantes de Cuarto Grado de la Escuela Angloamericana, específicamente en el rendimiento de las habilidades orales y el uso diario del inglés. La Escuela Anglo Americana, es una institución privada, donde se habla inglés en todas las clases excepto español y estudios sociales.

Uno de los elementos más importantes a considerar es el cambio de los estudiantes de un contexto solo virtual a un contexto de clase presencial y la influencia que está teniendo la situación mundial en ellos y ellas. Para el proceso de investigación se analizaron varias perspectivas: partiendo de la visión de los alumnos, hablando con sus profesores de aula y escuchando a los profesionales a cargo del desarrollo emocional y psicológico. Es importante mencionar también, que durante el proceso de investigación hubo varios periodos donde los estudiantes tuvieron que volver a la virtualidad debido a la situación nacional, o la presencia de casos de Covid en su aula, un solo caso positivo, hizo que toda la generación se pusiera en cuarentena durante al menos diez días.

1. Introduction

This world has amazing and wonderful experiences that change people's life, from small family events to huge worldwide situations. These events may influence a human in different aspects and can even cause the alteration of a life. What has been happening in the planet regarding the presence of a new virus is a life changing event in every society around the world. Entire populations have been affected in many ways by the quarantine and the Pandemic itself. Education has been affected by the presence of Coronavirus. All around the world the learning process had to make changes real fast and strongly. The effects of this situation are still unknown for most educators and institutions all around the world. However, it is not possible that a serious event like a contagious virus, that changed the lives of so many people, pass unseen. As educators it is wise to expect some consequences in the learning process of every student, changing form a face-to-face system to a 100% virtual modality of education might help some students but it also might have been a difficult struggle to others. There are a lot of situations that educators are going to be dealing for the first time in history.

Before the Pandemic started there were several educators that related the affective filter in students with their performance in the acquisition of a foreign language. Stephen Krashen developed a theory that influenced the field of teaching English as a second language. In his theories he came up with some hypothesis of learning. One of these hypotheses relates to the affective filter in students and it basically explains that language cannot be learned if the student is blocking at any point the process. This blocking can be considered a filter to acquire the language and the level each person has on this filter in fundamental to the teaching process.

After a huge social event like the Pandemic of the year 2020 it is probable that the affective filter in each student will be modified and therefore influences in different ways their process of acquiring a second language. The affective filter does influence each aspect of the learning process, so it is important to understand how it can influence the oral skills of fourth grade students after the Pandemic and their return to school. Understanding the outcome of this research educators might have a chance to improve the process of teaching English as a foreign language (from now on EFL).

Teaching English is a process that can be influenced by different factors, this investigation relates factors as: family context, teacher's personality, and the Coronavirus itself to the affective filter each student has, with the finality of improving their learning process. Even if the results are specific to a fourth-grade population, it would help any teacher to modify and improve their teaching process.

CHAPTER I
RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Problem Approach

The investigation is held with four different groups of fourth grade students at Anglo American School, with ages between 9 and 11 years old, in the La Unión of Tres Ríos, Cartago city, during the second semester of the year 2021. After returning to on site education with a hybrid system alternating one week virtually and one week on site.

1.1.1 Background

Understanding the way, a small child acquires knowledge can be somewhat complicated, according to different authors, the stage of development when young children acquire basic knowledge is marked by some characteristics. Childhood itself has different stages of growth where these characteristics tend to vary and change according not only to age, but also to the skills acquired, the context and the social relationship any child has. One basic skill for learning, is the acquisition of language, this skill starts from the first social unit of a person, the family. Basic words and contents are learned from the moment a baby is born, when related to parents, family, and friends. The acquisition of the first words is mainly assimilated in the mother language in which the child is born. However, society has induced humankind in learning and developing multilinguistic skills as an ability that promotes a better functioning in the outside society.

The importance of learning a foreign language rest upon the shoulders of thousands of teachers around the world. Not only mentioning English or Spanish as second languages but so many others. The common idea of teaching a foreign language, takes actual and future teachers to study closer the process needed to acquire the skills. It is indeed

important to understand how this process can become more successful and make the studies needed to understand fully the process of teaching and learning a foreign language.

The acquisition of EFL is a very common process all around the world. Thousands of people need to be fluent not only in their mother tongue but also in many others to find their full development. This process is initiated in the scholar years and continues with the growth in every child in the education system. Over the years teachers have found the process of teaching a foreign language to be evolving and changing according to different factors, one of the factors that has been proposed by Stephen Krashen, an expert in the field of language acquisition theories and development. This man proposed 5 different hypotheses related to the second language acquisition process. The one followed in this investigation is the affective filter hypothesis. Schultz (1998) summarizes the affective filter hypothesis as “a number of affective variables that play a facilitative, but non-casual, role in a second language acquisition.” Which basically, means that the language acquisition process is influenced directly by affective variables that are not directly related to grammar rules or pronunciation patterns. Once Krashen started exploring the 5 hypothesis he proposed, a lot of investigations have been developed regarding affective filter hypothesis.

In Finland, the studies regarding the topics have been plenty, Laine (2002) states in his report that “A person’s views of life depend largely on his views of himself. In learning, optimal results ensure only if the learner feels free and confident enough to allow the inflow of information.” The investigation done in Finland refers to high school students learning a foreign language in their high school curriculum and giving a lot of importance

to the influence student's attitude, personality, and self - awareness have in the successful process of learning a Foreign Language.

Another important study made on Malang during 2015 regarding Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis establishes that the more positive, comfortable, and secure a child feels inside a group, the easier it is for him or her to acquire a foreign language. (Zen, 2015) In this same research the author establishes an important relationship between language acquisition and social relationships, not only with playmates and friends but with the neighborhood activities and school environment.

All around the world acquiring a foreign language is a skill needed to become more competent in different situations; from professional environment to working internationally. Speaking, comprehending, and using a foreign language is a process that needs to be effective, and this is the reason why it is so important to understand different things that can be influencing and making the process not as fluent as speaking a native language. In 2009, Du, a Chinese educational investigator, worked on a research project that wanted to evidence how the affective filter is related to the acquisition of a second language. After his research, he was able to prove that the students of higher level as to university level are also influenced by the level of affective filter. As to this he mentions: "People with high affective filter will lower their intake whereas people with low affective filter allow more input into their language acquisition device." (Du, 2009) In other words, the affective filter is an important factor related to second and even third language acquisition in any level of education.

In Central America, specifically Costa Rica, the hypothesis of Krashen is known, however, there has not been any studies or investigation processes which make inference or mention the importance of the affective filter level in the acquisition of a language. The curriculum of the Ministry of education has been changing for several years. The professional formation of teachers around the country has been including in their programs theories and courses related to emotional intelligence, multiple intelligence and how the stability of the emotional context of a student can affect their learning process. The integral view of students as emotional, rational individuals makes it easier to have an idea of the affective elements related to the learning process. This investigation process looks for a way to understand and help future English teachers acquire skills to make the learning of a second language an easier and more efficient process. Not by improving strategies to teach the methodological part of the language but to understand the way affective elements can influence the input and the skills a second language learner may have.

1.1.2 Problematization

1.1.3

Teaching English as a second language can be an exceptional experience for any creative and innovative person. However, during the process of professional development and formation, there is great variety of theory that refers to the grammatical part of the language, the listening and speaking, the phonetics, and other different elements that form part of teaching a second language. Nevertheless, when working in a private bilingual school, where all these different elements are already covered and where the biggest percentage of students have a high level of skills in the target language, there is another

important factor that is affecting the acquisition of a second language. The need of understanding what is going on with the other percentage of the population that has received the same program during the same amount of time but has not been able to feel comfortable with the use of the second language from an integral view is the basic reason why the affective filter is so important to be researched among a private bilingual population. There has not been found, by the author of this thesis, a studied conducted in the country where the hypothesis of Krashen's affective filter is proven or not to have an importance in the acquisition of EFL.

1.1.4 Justification

The investigation presented here is justified from the practical implications it has for the later development of future programs of study in teaching foreign languages. (Hernández et al, 2014) From the results obtained the need of the curriculum of studies that future teachers of English will have can be modified to help professionals understand in a deeper way the concept of the affective elements the process has and how setting a low or high filter will affect the results their teaching experience daily.

Another important justification of this investigation process is the actual context living worldwide around the SARS COVID, where students, teachers, families have needed to change their daily routines to keep track of the education process of their children. Teachers had not only been learning new strategies, but from now on the process of education has been modified and the emotional and affective environment where students felt comfortable has changed dramatically. Therefore, not only understanding how can the affective filter influence in the process but also accepting the need to learn different ways

and different strategies to lower student's filter, will be a must for every teacher around the country.

1.2 Problem Formulation

What is the role of the affective filter in the oral skills performance of Fourth grade students at Anglo American School during the Second Semester of 2021?

Objectives

1.2.1 General Objective

The general objective of the investigation presented is:

To demonstrate the role of the affective filter in the oral skills performance of Fourth grade students at Anglo American School during the Second Semester of 2021.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

Picturing the role of the affective filter in the performance of students' oral skill after an event as the Pandemic, lived since last year, must also include several specific objectives to be able to understand from a bigger scale the context in which the research is developed. The specific objectives for the investigation process are:

- Identify the elements of virtual context that might influence in the affective filter of fourth grade students.
- State the influence of the virtual context in the oral skills performance of fourth grade students.
- Relate teacher's personality to the affective filter in the oral skills performance of fourth grade students after the Pandemic.

- List the different factors of how the Pandemic has influence in the affective filter of fourth grade students.

1.3 Scopes and Limitations

1.3.1 Scopes

During the process of the investigation there were two main scopes that can be mentioned. The first one, even if the national context was still instable for children to attend classes with a normal schedule, the instruments were applied efficiently and families were always willing to answer question, fill in paper and even, giving the permit for an outsider to observe and record information given by their children. The students were very opened in terms of sharing information and at moments the time was not enough for them to share everything they wanted.

The other important element to mention as a scope was the willingness of the school, the teachers, the psychologists and, the principal to participate in the research as well as to give all the information and space to complete the investigation. Even if the sample of the population was randomly picked, every parent signed the request and permit for their children to be part of the research process.

1.3.2 Limitations

The main limitation, related to the process was the fact of having the Pandemic constantly changing the routine students had as well as limiting the amount of time to observe their interactions with the teachers. Their schedule changed from 7:25 a.m. to 2:25 p.m., to what the Ministry of Health allowed; from 7:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Even if the time was long

enough to observe and interview every subject needed, the time for student's interaction was relatively fast to what usually is expected from a class.

Even if Krashen is a well-known researcher, in Costa Rica his theories have not been studied as much, which lead to not having a great variety of background referring to Costa Rica and English as a Foreign Language.

CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Historical Framework

This investigation has many different factors that are very important to define and understand for a better comprehension of the problem and the solutions that came out from the results. One of the main issues an investigation needs to have, is the understanding of the population with which is going to be worked with. Every stage in human development has different general characteristics, some of them are present in the general population, but this does not mean that every individual follows the descriptions completely; however, it is important to have a general picture of the characterization of the population part of the investigation.

2.1.1 Stage of development

The population of this research process is a group of students, from a private school, aging from 9-10 years old. 12 boys and 12 girls. Even though the gender of the individual does influence in the characterization Papalia tries to generalize things that have been observed in this stage of life. Papalia (2004) list the characteristics mentioned below as general features people have when they are going through the stage of life called middle childhood. "This stage starts more or less at the same time a child starts the educational process inside the elementary system." The ages with which the students start the learning process has changed since long time ago. However, Papalia also states that most of the children that delay their initiation in school tend to be behind in different skills and process than children that follow the average path.

Papalia (2004) establishes the common features of the development stage as:

- The average ages of the stage go from 7 years old to 11 years old.
- Children at this stage tend to grow from 2.54 to 7.62 centimeters per year.
- Their weight increases from 2.27 kg to 3.6 kg per year.
- Girls conserve a bigger percentage of fat than boys, characteristic that will continue until grownup stage.
- Their average calorie consumption varies from 2200 to 2500 calories depending in their daily activities.
- Their daily diets should have a lot of grains, fruits, vegetables and complex carbohydrates (potato, pasta, bread and cereals).
- Their motor skills are incrementing as they move along in the learning process and curricular activities at school.
- They tend to constantly play rough. Because they are learning how strong and flexible, they can be. As well as learning to control their balance better than in preschool years.

According to Piaget also mentioned by Papalia (2004), “around the age of seven children enter in the cognitive stage called concrete operations.” Mainly during this stage, children can use mental operations to solve concrete problems. They have a better and clearer idea of the distance between two places or the space between two different moments. During this stage, children use inductive reasoning as well as deductive reasoning to solve all their main problems, daily activities, school assignments and every situation they experience. The memory is another important skill during this stage, which they start developing to achieve all their goals inside school and outside school. This is the

moment in their life cycle that most learning difficulties are observed by parents and teachers.

This are the main characteristics the stage of development has shown from years ago, however as it was mentioned before, some children are exceptions to the rules and the reality, context, family, and environment where they are growing may influence their development. One fundamental factor that has to be well known when doing this investigation is the context in which the students are getting EFL process developed. Knowing the school environment, the mission and vision, and the subjects taught are also important for the investigation.

2.1.2 Anglo American Institution

2.1.2.1 Anglo American School Vision and Mission

In order to be able to pursue the main objective of the research project is very important to learn about the institution where the research process is done. In addition to the mission and vision of the school it is very important to know which the methodology of education they follow is. This information was given by the principal of the school in a document called Teacher's Manual (2016) this document, is changed yearly according to the objectives the institution has each year.

The mission the institution follows is “we are an educational community where we learn to live with enthusiasm in an innovator environment, creative and inclusive.” (Teacher's Manual 2016) Therefore the institution has the idea to make students learn in a place where they feel comfortable, and at the same time have the tools that society is asking to be a professional. Their vision says, “we search to build a better society by modeling

people always willing to learn, to contribute and to be happy. Anglo American School Teacher's Manual (2016) Both their mission and vision have the idea to create a better society for the world to become an extraordinary place.

On the other hand, Anglo American School follows different methodologies as base to their learning processes. They follow the meaningful learning, a process by which students should include in their cognitive system new information by relating it to old information. The institution follows Ausbel's (1970) idea that includes the capacity to refer to cross ideas, accommodate data or facts and find links in all the information available, explore relationships and establish links.

The teacher's Manual also includes the theory of Multiple Intelligences in which Gardner (1983) establishes the importance of the different strategies, teachers could use to develop in all their magnitude the capacities of students in their educational process by using all multiple intelligences. Hand by hand with this methodology, Anglo American School also works with research process based on the PBL theory, in which investigation is the main goal. Anglo American works under the format of Big six, where students learn step by step the process of developing a research process, from asking the questions to looking and summarizing the information.

Finally, they also work from a theory of cooperative learning, constructivism, critical and creative thinking, values and habits of mind; leading the students to be protagonist in their learning process and making the teachers work only as models, or facilitators with the capacity to lead students through their work.

Knowing where the population develops and finding the ideas behind the educational proposal of the school, gives a general idea of the system and how involved the educators are in the teaching learning process. Therefore, to understand the social context of the population will amplify the vision where the investigation process is going to be developed.

2.1.3 Population

The population with which the investigation takes place is one group of fourth grade from Anglo American School. In Anglo American School there are four groups per level. During this investigation, the population in study is only one of the four groups which has a teacher aware of affective filter.

The group chosen is the complete generation of fourth grade and there is a brief description of the group's characteristics below.

Gender:

Students	Boys	Girls
75	35	40

The group has a 46 % of male students and 54 % of female students, from 75 students, 40 of them are girls and the 35 are boys. Therefore, this population works perfectly, because even though the percentage is different, the difference is not more than a 10 %.

Living location:

Students	Tres Ríos	Curridabat	Cartago	Other
75	25	25	15	10

A 67% of the population lives close to school. Most of the students travel for 20 or less minutes to arrive from school to their house and the other way around. So, most of the population don't waste time in distance travel. The students from Cartago, a 20 % of the total population, need to travel for about 30 minutes to arrive to school from their house. And only the 13 % of the population travels for more than 45 minutes each day to arrive to school and to go back to their houses.

House Situation

Students	Own	Rented	Other
75	58	10	7

Most of the students of this class live in their own house. Only a 13.3 % rent a house nearby the school. And two of these three families rent a house because they are building a new house and do not have a place to stay yet. And a 9 % of the population live with their grandparents or close family.

Social Status

Students	Lower class (Have scholarship)	Middle class	High class
75	3	25	47

The monthly fee that parents must pay to have their children in this institution is related to the level the child is passing. In the case of fourth grade, they pay as any elementary student each month. However, seeing the social status of their families is important to say that they have all the means to pay for the monthly fee. However, there

are three families that have a scholarship that pays for their children's education. One of the families has a sport scholarship and the other two have educational scholarships.

Realizing the different factors that influence the lifestyle of students from this population can be helpful to understand and plan the recommendations which are going to be giving after analyzing the results. As the investigation is taken in the EFL process it is important to understand the level on English the school asks for and the level of English students have at the end of their educational process.

2.1.4 Anglo American School's English level and support.

Anglo American School is now days ranked as number 4 in the result of the MEP's national exams. The performance and academy load students manage in the institution is completely related to the demands parents and students are asking for in the IB program. The school counsel asks the teachers to maintain the levels of performance as high as the standards allow them to be.

The level of English a student of Anglo American should have in 11th grade should be fluent and at its majority comprehensible by native speakers, both in the oral and written parts. Therefore, there are high standards for students as well as teachers that make the community of Anglo. When a student of 9th grade finishes its year, they must present the TOEIC test and earn 915 points score. If the student gets less than that they should come to summer camp and recover subject from the year until they repeat the test and have more than 915.

Teachers on the other hand must have a score higher that 920 in the TOEIC test to be able to teach at Anglo American School. And these two reasons are an important part of

the process of learning. Anglo has also the intention to make every student be able to achieve each goal they have. It does not matter how much work it takes or how many different strategies there are to arrive to the same spot. Anglo-American School has a psychological and a pedagogical department which work daily on helping every student to strive for their goals as high as they can be. The departments are formed by 2 psychologists, 2 counselors, 2 psicopedagogists, and a teacher on deep disabilities. All of them work together as a team next to the teachers and students.

For the research to be a success it is important to have an extensive and detailed knowledge about the population worked with. All the conditions that characterize the population have an influence in the way the population acts and learns.

The main topic of the investigation relates to one of the hypotheses presented by Stephen Krashen that talks about the needs students have when learning English as a foreign language. A summary of the hypothesis is described below.

2.2 Theoretical- Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Affective filter

Krashen's affective filter theory has been connected and used to understand better the process of the acquisition of any language. EFL programs have been paying closer attention to the hypothesis presented by this professor of education. Stephen Krashen was born in 1941 in Chicago Illinois. He completed his linguistic doctorate in 1972, in the University of California UCLA. Stephen Krashen is best known for all his studies and work in establishing a general theory of second language acquisition. He is also the cofounder of the Natural Approach and is the creator of sheltered subject matter teaching. He is the author of several books including: his first one; Principles and practices of second

language acquisition (1980), *Three Arguments Against whole language and why they are wrong* (1999) and *Under attack: The case against bilingual education* (1997). He is considered an expert in the field of linguistics. His last articles have been mostly related to the study on non- English and bilingual acquisition, making five important hypotheses well accepted among the community of worldwide teachers (Schutz, 1999). These five hypotheses summarize the general approach Krashen considers important when teaching EFL.

Krashen's Theory of second language acquisition consist of these five main hypotheses: the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the input hypothesis, the affective filter hypothesis, and the natural order hypothesis. All of them have a great importance in EFL, however for this investigation process the one with fundamental importance is going to be the affective filter hypothesis.

Krashen mentioned by Schultz (1999) establishes in this hypothesis that "there are several affective variables that play an important and non-casual role in SLA." He mentions some of the variables include motivation, self-confidence, anxiety and personality traits." Krashen's hypothesis establishes that an individual with high motivation, strong self-confidence, a positive self-image, low levels of anxiety and extroversion are better equipped for SLA. Therefore, individuals with the other side of these variables, can raise the affective filter and form a mental block. Which will eventually prevent comprehensible input used for acquisition. "In other words, when the filter is high it impedes language acquisition, on the other hand, when the filter is low the acquisition will take place naturally." (Shultz, 1999). To understand better how these variables can affect students, it

is essential to define each of the variables mentioned by Krashen in his hypothesis. The variables are the following:

Motivation

Motivation is the first variable mentioned by Krashen; however, the word's meaning is very wide among its use in education. Huitt, W (2011) gathers different meanings given to motivation in a variety of psychology textbooks and summarizes it as; "an internal state or condition (sometimes described as a need, desire or want) that serves to activate or energize behavior and give it direction." In other words, motivation can be considered as the energy set upon a goal, and regarding EFL, the energy to acquire the language must be high to serve as an engine for the students to learn in an easier and more fluent way. Franken (2006) mentioned by Huitt (2011) gives additional details to the concept by defining motivation as "the arousal, direction and persistence of behavior." A powerful reason to try to accomplish something, is what gives the direction and strength to any person who has a goal.

In this investigation, motivation is explained deeper and classified into two main types that are closely related to the affective filter itself. However, it is very important to mention that many researchers are now beginning to acknowledge that the motivation has a great and strong role not only in EFL but in education widely. Even if the topic of motivation is large enough to have an investigation itself, it is considered by most motivation theorists that motivation is involved in the performance of every learner and in every topic around the world.

Krashen's hypothesis is not only related to external factors of each student, but motivation can also be seen from both sides, external to the person or internal too. Therefore, later during this research paper the topic will be better developed. One of the personal, internal factors mentioned by Krashen in his hypothesis is self-confidence.

Self-confidence

The definition of self-confidence can be subjective according to the context where it is used. Therefore, the meaning used in this investigation is the basic one, given by Merriam Webster Dictionary. Self-confidence is defined as "confidence in oneself and in one's power and abilities." With this definition it is stated that self-confidence is going to vary from one person to the other, which makes this factor unstable and not rigid to the education process but often linked to the individuality of a person. Some synonyms given to the word in the online dictionary that can also give a clearer view of the definition are self-assurance and self-esteem, both words keep direct relationship with personality traits and individuality.

Using the definition given, the process of being a teacher of EFL gets tough, but not impossible. Even if every student deal with a different level of self-confidence, this factor is always related to the next one mentioned by Krashen, self-image.

Self-Image

To understand the concept of self-image it is important to visualize it from the view of professionals that work with it daily. The APA dictionary defines self- image as "one's view or concept of oneself. Self-image is a crucial aspect of an individual's personality that can determine the success of relationships and a sense of general well-being." Even if the

definition given by the American Psychology Association gives a general concept, it is comprehensible that everyone's self-image is different and also influenced by the context and life situations. The more positive a person's self-image is, the easier it is going to be to acquire EFL, not only because of concepts and grammar, but also because this will generate security and confidence in the students.

When a person feels comfortable with itself and the abilities he or she has, it is easier to learn any new process, the willingness is high and the insecurity low. So, having a poor self-image can slow the process of learning in any subject matter. The Mountain State Centers for Independent Living mentioned by Akerman (2021) explains that self-image is how a person perceives itself in many different aspects, that are build up over the individual's life. It is also mentioned by Akerman that the images a person collects in life might generate a positive or a negative self-image and this can influence the way the learning process occurs in a person's life.

When the self-confidence and self-image are not strong enough for a person to live in a positive environment, their presence of negative feelings, emotions and situations bring the next factor mentioned by Krashen, in his hypothesis, anxiety.

Anxiety

There are several feelings and emotions that can block the process of learning in any student, most of these negative feelings and emotions are small pieces of a big issue called anxiety. When learning a new language, the reactions students have, are very varied accordingly to their personal traits. However, there are emotions that arouse from new experiences. Anxiety is defined by the APA as "an emotion characterized by feelings of

tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure. People with high levels of anxiety usually have recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns.” (Rugel, 2020). In other words, anxiety is a situation of discomfort towards something, that can even expose an individual to physical changes and not pleasant situations. It is fundamental to relate this emotion with the success an EFL program may try to accomplish. All children are different not only in personalities but also in the way they confront a situation like anxiety. Some people, even tend to avoid situations that generate anxiety in general terms. Krashen’s point of giving an important role to anxiety in learning EFL gives reason to understand how every child needs different tools to learn and grow.

Now, not every person deals with anxiety the same way, and therefore the other factor that Krashen mentions is so important. The variety of personalities inside a classroom is huge and so diverse that no child is like any other, and personality traits play an important role in learning EFL.

Personal Traits: Extroversion

When teaching inside a classroom, any teacher should know that students are going to be unique and each one of them will have different traits that will play a fundamental role in their learning process. It is not the same to teach to an outgoing extroverted student than to one that is insecure and shy, the approach needed to teach the same lesson to those two different students is completely different.

Inside the professional development a teacher has before arriving to a class, not only the stages of life are studied, but also the different learning styles students might have. Additionally, the personal traits are an important element to consider when teaching EFL.

Krashen list a specific personal trait for the success of EFL, he considers extroversion to be an influential characteristic in students with a low affective filter. The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines the word extroversion as; “a personality trait or style characterized by a preference for orientation to engaging socially with others,” which can be explained as those people who learn better from social interaction and relationships than individual work. The Merriam Webster dictionary also mentions how this concept was first introduced by the psychologist C.G. Jung in the early 1900. Korzan and Boswell also mentioned in the Merriam Webster dictionary say, “extroversion is characterized by being outgoing and drawing energy from interacting with other.” Hence, extroversion is a personality trait that not every EFL student might have in the classroom, especially when they lack self-confidence, have a negative self-image and all of this causes anxiety issues.

All these elements mentioned in Krashen’s hypothesis are strong factors that cause the affective filter to be lower or higher depending on each individual, therefore, teacher’s work is not exclusively related to teaching vocabulary, grammar rules and phonetics per se. But making sure the channel where students are going to receive the information, to later construct their knowledge, is safe and ready, and working with the affective filter at its lowest will make this a possible task.

Teaching procedures have evolved from the first time a teacher began a class. Nowadays, factors related to context, family environment, social environment, and even psychological development of the students, have an important role in teaching EFL. Consequently, teachers need to learn new theories from where teaching can become a better and more effective procedure for the students. Therefore, emotional intelligence is a topic

that is considered in this investigation, the better comprehended the concept is, the better the teacher will acquire the tools to ensure a successful learning process.

2.2.2 Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a new topic inside psychology and education. Worldwide, it was openly mentioned as a sustained theory until 1990. Daniel Goleman was the first psychologist to write a book named emotional intelligence on 1995. Goleman centered his work after the well-known psychologist Howard Gardner and his work with multiple intelligences, where he describes how intelligence is not one single component in human thinking, but it is form by different parts. Which explains how a very smart mathematician is not quite good in sports or music. After reviewing Gardner's eight multiple intelligences, Goleman started researching about emotional intelligence, even if the concept was mentioned before by the American psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer in 1990, and also used by Robert Thorndike as "social intelligence" in 1920. Afterwards, during the year 1943, psychologists around the globe started paying attention to the non-intellective abilities and their role for predicting a person's ability to succeed in life. Nowadays, the concept of emotional intelligence is used in many different fields, and it is considered also an important factor in a person's performance in his daily work.

Goleman (2006) defines emotional intelligence as "the ability, capacity, skill or self-perceived ability to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of oneself, of others and of groups." People who are able not only to recognize their feelings, but to express them in a proper way and deal with the negative ones have a high emotional intelligence. According to Goleman (2006), emotional intelligence branches from behavior, emotions, communication among other theories. In his book, Goleman explains how emotional

intelligences is divided into five important domains, and all of them relate to knowing self-motions, managing self-emotions, recognizing and understanding other's emotions. The five domains mentioned by Goleman are:

Self-Awareness:

This domain shows people that are aware of everything surrounding their reality. They know which emotions they are feeling, realize the links between their feelings and what they think, what they do or say. Recognize how their feelings affect their performance and have control of their values and goals. They know which are their strengths and weaknesses. They are always open to feedback and work hard on learning and reflect. People with self-awareness are decisive and able to make tough decisions despite uncertainties and pressures.

Self-regulation:

The domain of self-regulations describes mostly the capacity of a person to not only being aware of emotions and feeling but to control them and not the other way around. People with self-regulation manage their impulsive feelings and distressing emotions well, always staying compose, positive and undisturbed even in difficult periods. They think clearly and stay focused under pressure. Admit their own mistakes and take tough, principled stands even if they are unpopular. They are organized and careful in their work.

2.6.3 Self-motivation:

People that present a strong self-motivation do not need any pep talk to achieve their goals and tasks. They are conscious of the objective and do not lose track of their task. They learn how to improve their performance.

Social Awareness:

Loud people tend to be confused with social aware people. Individuals with this strong domain are attentive to emotional cues and listen well. They show sensitivity and understand other's perspectives. They help, based on understanding people's needs and feelings. Most of the time they serve as mentors, give timely coaching, and offer assignments that challenge and grow person's skills.

Social Skills:

People with strong social skills are those that you are going to observe in leader situations. They are skilled in persuasion, are effective give and take, registering emotional cues in attuning their message. They deal with difficult issues straightforwardly, listen well and seek mutual understanding and welcome sharing of information fully. They foster open communication and stay receptive to bad news. They are most likely to encourage debate and open discussion but always willing to propose a win-win solution.

These five domains are competences that society is asking for, in order to have a better world. It is very difficult to teach most of these skills, however inside a classroom, students that have a strong emotional intelligence are those that have their affective filter at their lowest and insure their learning process in a very positive way.

The role of an English teacher is not only to teach phonemics, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, it is to prepare children to be able to conquer any goal they have and surpass any obstacle in their life. Therefore, lowering the affective filter will not only help a student perform better in EFL but also will give them the tools to live a more positive life and this will make our world a better place. Teachers have a huge role in this

process but sometimes, the direction is lost in daily life actions. How can a teacher make sure a student learns? By making sure they feel happy, motivated, self-confident and even if they struggle, teachers should set an example of living from a positive environment. Humor is one tool that might help teachers lowering the affective filter of any student.

2.2.3 Humor as a factor of affective filter

Education students are often offered with different paths from which they can choose the one that best suits their personality and their abilities to teach a class. However, one of the common components taught all around universities in Costa Rica is the authority a teacher should have to be able to control the environment in the classroom. Most of the times this component is misunderstood and not applied in a proper way. That is when teachers tend to treat students from a power position and not a respectful position. When you view a class where the teacher is the only one in charge of transmitting knowledge, the center of authority and the only owner of the process, is where anxiety comes in.

Teachers do not do this on purpose, but through history the formation of professionals in education has had the incorrect idea of an authoritarian teacher. Times have change, and the teaching- learning process has changed as well. In present times, students have different needs to make their process successful, to be better prepared for society and for life itself. As it was mentioned before by Krashen and implied by Goleman in their theories the levels of anxiety which students are dealing are strong obstacles to their learning process. Teachers are not the only solution to this problem but might help making a difference inside the environment in their classes.

When a person is feeling stressful, one of the most common recommendations given is to practice activities that make them have fun and feel relaxed. Commonly, when an individual has fun, they tend to laugh and enjoy better any activity. Therefore, humor can be considered as an important element to lower the affective filter in any classroom around the world. Bilokuoglu and Debreli wrote an article for the *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies* in which they proposed humor as an important characteristic that any language class should have. They said, “A teacher with humorous character inevitably aids in reducing any potential fear that may be experienced by students in relation to the learning of a second language.” (2018) Reading the idea may sound funny itself, but thinking about it in a deeper way, it would be so much easier for a student to work hard in class where his or her teacher creates a funny environment towards language instead of a formal one.

Making a comparison with a life situation can open even a wider panorama around humor. When making a line for 45 minutes anywhere, the time and tension of waiting in silence can make the situation uncomfortable and unpleasant, but if one single person in the line says a funny joke about waiting, the tension is partly released, and feelings of others can even be more suitable.

Humor itself has a lot of studies on its background related to the benefits inside human’s brain, which can only lead us to think that it may be use as a tool inside EFL classes, specially knowing the culture of Costa Rica as to be the happiest country. Of course, it needs to be handled in a professional way and not all the students are going to identify with the teacher’s humor but, it might give the teacher a working material to lower the affective filter of many students. Berylne (1969) mentioned by Bilokuoglu and Debreli

(2018) explains how in FL classrooms “anxiety and vexation can emerge because of the learners’ shortage in the FL rules and this anxiety and vexation may be eased with the employment of humor by teachers.” Not a strange view when entering a FL class, to have students feeling anxious and very insecure of what they are learning, and the laughter around different situations might help release tension, starting from a strong and well directed point, being the teacher the one in charge of directing humor not to students but to the language itself.

Bilokuoglu and Debreli (2018) also mentioned Wanzer, Frymier and Irwin’s Instructional Humor Processing Theory (2009) in which they established; “the humorous messages that the instructors utilize should lead to increase student’s motivation, rise in attention and to the creation of positive effect.” Appropriate use of humor leads to positive effects in any class, especially when students feel the task is hard, the expectations are high, and their self-confidence do not feel so strong. Therefore, teachers have different paths to choose from: leading to an unbearable class or to an entertained, more relaxed environment where the knowledge is going to be constructed and not only passed. Ozudogru and Robert mentioned by Bilokuoglu and Debreli (2018) emphasizes in making the learning process more enjoyable by the use of humor for both the instructor and the learners, using it since the first ice breaker in day one of the class.

Humor can be used as a tool to lower anxiety levels and release tension; however, it is very important to use it in balanced way. Forman mentioned by Bilokuoglu and Debreli (2018) underlines “that the use of humor in a primary school classroom resulted in reduced tension. But he also proposes that there needs to be tension in the classroom at some degree for students to feel the need to learn.” Like any other tool in education, it is not a magic pill

given for students to learn EFL, but a helper inside the classroom will make the teaching learning process a more comfortable experience from everyone involved.

Self-image, self-confidence, and anxiety are not the only elements present in this research process. Motivation is another concept that needs to be defined and understood. Motivation is divided into two different types, one that can be promoted from the external elements and one that is internal to everyone.

2.2.4 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

When a person has a goal in their life there is a stimulus that can make the goal easier to reach, this stimulus is called motivation. It might come from two different directions: the internal, intrinsic motivation or the external, extrinsic motivation. Both stimuli come from different factors but mostly work as a strength to achieve something. So, it can be seen as both forces to be positive. Which of these stimuli can direct the goals of EFL students? Well, it really does not matter, the important thing is to know what kind of motivation each student has in order to work as a guide with each student knowing what motivates them to move forward.

According to Ryan and Deci (2000) being motivated is “to be moved to do something”. Being motivated is then to have the desire to do or acquire something specifically. But that desire can be linked to results, and there is where the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation comes from. The intrinsic motivation is explained by Ryan and Deci as “doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable,” (2000; pg. 56) the simple fact of doing something just for the fun of it is what intrinsic motivation refers to

meanwhile, extrinsic motivation refers to “doing something because it leads to a separable outcome”. (Ryan and Deci. 2000; pg. 60) A good example to these different types of motivation is practicing a sport. One person can be running every afternoon, because she or he needs to lose weight, which will be having an extrinsic motivation, the consequence of running every afternoon is what makes the person do it. In the meantime, another person might run every afternoon to release stress and enjoy the feelings that the action per se gives him or her, this will be the intrinsic motivation, the simple fact of running gives satisfaction to the person.

Learning English as a foreign language can also present these two types of motivations, and they can be an obstacle to the lowering of the affective filter if the teacher does not know how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can help each student in the process of learning the target language. Going deeper into the subject of motivation, extrinsic motivation can also be an obstacle for a learning process when not used for the benefit of the individual. But if teachers all around the world, understand the importance that motivation can have to lower the affective filter their EFL classes might enrich to have positive experiences not only for a few students but for all of them.

One of the most important factors related to the affective filter is to increase self-confidence and decrease anxiety levels. By knowing each student's reason to learn English as a foreign language, the teacher may become not only the facilitator of the process but also the guide of motivation and leader to a successful process of learning.

Every private school in the country has different goals related to their students and the skills they want to develop. Anglo American school follows not only the Curriculum of the Ministry of Education but also, an American curriculum that ensures fourth grade

students to exist the label having acquired several oral skills. This is called the exit profile of the level and in order to see how students can improve their oral skills it is important to learn which are the skills the school wants them to exit the grade with.

2.2.5 EFL Oral skills in Anglo American School

As any other school in Costa Rica, Anglo American needs to follow some requirements given by the Ministry of Education; however, the EFL program the school has does not stop by fulfilling only the requirements the MEP gives. Anglo American School follows a program in which some oral skills must be acquired for a student to continue with the education process. Each grade works with different level of the same standards, in the case of fourth grade, for a student to pass to the next level they need to be promoted in eight different skills which the teacher will assess periodically. The list of skills (Annual Exit Profile 2020) asked for a promotion of fourth grade are:

- Participate in a group discussion in an orderly and respectful way.
- Listen attentively.
- Ask questions in an appropriate way.
- Support opinions with facts and details.
- Debate about studied topics.
- Follow the speech guidelines when presenting in class or other projects. Present using the correct intonation and pronunciation.
- Use English to communicate ideas and questions in class.

All these skills require active participation, self-confidence, and fluency for students to acquire them after one year. It is very important to mention that these group of skills are being taught in Anglo American since preschool, always according to the level of the curriculum and objectives. Which means that in fourth grade students should already be able to speak fluently and make themselves be understood. Therefore, lowering the affective filter will create a better environment for them to feel comfortable with the language and able to overcome any intonation, pronunciation and even shyness present in the process. Anglo American School has been characterized for many years to have high levels of English comprehension and fluency from their students, after making this research process there have been some important details that are not mainly related to the curriculum but to the context and characteristics of the actual population that have given a clue of better practices inside the EFL classrooms.

Not every school in Costa Rica, share the same high standards that Anglo American has related to the comprehension of EFL or the use of the language in a proper way. However, every school, works with populations of young students trying to acquire EFL, as a requirement for life and development. And most of the populations that work with EFL programs are exposed to the same conditions that will raise the affective filter. Therefore, all the theories presented here become fundamental for the understanding and the application of better strategies to teach English as a foreign language. Even if the standards vary, from one context to the other, the affective filter is a barrier that teachers will have in every school where English is taught.

Learning English as a foreign language will give an advantage to every person, and it is the job of the teacher to make the path to it easier and more comfortable. It is not easy to overcome a lot of issues the system and country have regarding the bilingual education,

but when talking about students, teachers are the first influential factor, and it is fundamental to make that influence a positive one for each student and for the system itself.

The methodology that this research project followed is described in the methodological framework, the type of research, the variables, the population, and the different strategies used have been described and explained in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Type of research

The research process that is presented in this investigation has all the characteristics to be called qualitative. According to Sampieri (2010) “the qualitative approach looks mainly for the expansion of data and information... in the qualitative investigations the self-thinking is the bridge that joins the investigator with the participants of the process.” In other words, the qualitative approach tries not to measure a phenomenon, but it tries to look for the reasons and explanations of the event or phenomenon itself. The qualitative approach gets close to the phenomenon by observing the surrounds and everything that involves it. Inside the qualitative approach, these investigations fall in the category of phenomenological type, because it is trying to explain how the performance of oral skills are related directly to a phenomenon called affective filter.

3.1.1 Design of the research

The design this project follows is the grounded theory that was born in 1967 and it was suggested by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in his book “The discovery of Grounded Theory” mentioned by Eddington (1967 pg. 57-63) which is based in the symbolic interactionism. “It uses a systematic procedure to generate a theory that explains in a conceptual level an action, an interaction or a specific area.” The research project presented here looks to explain the relationship between the affective filter and the oral skills performance of students inside an EFL classroom.

This investigation follows an exploratory design because it explores the phenomenon of affective filter related to oral skills performance students may handle in a language arts class. Therefore, the strategies employed in the gathering of information are mostly based in observation and small interview to students as well as teachers. The

phenomenon of high affective filter is a topic related to every student in the class, this is why the research follows the exploratory format, because it is involving every student in the class, with or without shyness. A major novelty in the study of oral skills performance and its relationship to affective filter.

3.2 Subjects

For this project there are two different subjects. First the direct subjects, the teachers. To choose these teachers, the only parameter of inclusion is that they need to be actual fourth grade teachers during this year. On the other hand, the only factor of exclusion is that they cannot be teaching Spanish nor any other school grade than fourth. Then, there is the second subjects which are indirect subjects, the generation of fourth grade. The parameter of inclusion for these subjects is that they need to be part of the generation of fourth grade during the actual year and the factor of exclusion is that they all need to be non-native English speakers, and they cannot be students of any other grade level but fourth.

3.3 Strategies and Instruments to gather information

The strategies that are used to observe the relationship between affective filter and students are the observation by the investigator, an interview with the homeroom teacher directed interviews with students of fourth grade, interviews with other subject matter teacher where English is used in class.

1. Observation: Sampieri mentioned by Bisquerra (2009) defines the observation as a basic technique to produce quality descriptions. Bisquerra adds that is not only an

important instrument but also the importance of having a written register of the information observed.

2. Interview: A guided interview according to Bisquerra (2009) a guided interview is a prepared set of questions that will provide the requirements analyst with a wealth of information. In this case, the type of interview that was held was a questionnaire with written questions for the students and an oral interview with each of the four teachers.
3. Participative observation: Bisquerra (2009) defines the participative observation as the action a third party does in relation to the same phenomenon.

3.4 Sampling Selection

The sample used in this thesis is probabilistic sample. Probability sampling is a method that utilizes some form of random selection. The subjects of the population get an equal opportunity to be selected as representative a sample. The population of fourth grade students is divided into 5 groups of 15 students. The sample group is chosen randomly picking four students from each group. The names were drawn out of a bag, two boys and two girls. Making the sample have a total of 20 students, 10 boys and 10 girls. The sample represents a 27 % of the population being 50 % of the sample females and 50 % males. At the beginning of the theoretical framework the populations described was of 24 students, 12 boys and 12 girls, however, because of the national pandemic, the sample was reduced.

3.5 Variables Operationalization

There are three main sources of information for the research process made for this project. The primary source of information is the Language Arts teacher of fourth grade, who is giving the most important information as well as the majority. Then the secondary source of information is the fourth-grade students of the actual generation. And finally, the tertiary source is the theoretical framework elaborated from different authors and different sources of information.

Some of the variables this project presents are summarized in the chart shown below.

Specific objectives	Hypothesis	Variable	Conceptual definition	Operational definition	Instrumental Definition
Identify the elements of virtual context that might influence in the affective filter of fourth grade students.	The lack of social interaction, the amount of time in front of the computer, the lack of hands-on social activities affected the level of the affective filter.	The elements of virtual context that have an effect in the affective filter of students of fourth grade	Students with high motivation, strong self-confidence, a positive self-image, low levels of anxiety and extroversion are better to learn the foreign language. Krashen mentioned by Shutz (2019)	Students' Interview High Affective Filter will be present if high levels of anxiety and negative emotions arise. Low affective Filter will be present if positive and relaxed feeling arise in the	Students' Interview Teachers' Interview

				interview result.	
State the influence of the virtual context in the oral skills performance of fourth grade students.	The lack of social participation in group project and live presentations affected the oral skills performance.	Influence of virtual context in the oral skills performance	“The effect the virtual context has on the performance of oral skills” Azzizi (2017/2018) graders.	Students Interview Low influence if the students keep speaking in English during 80% if the classes. Moderate influence if the students keep speaking in English in about 50-60% of the classes. High influence if the students speak mostly in Spanish in the English required classes.	Students’ Interview
Relate teacher’s personality to the affective filter in the oral	Having overstressed, and too structured	Teacher’s personality inside live classroom.	Different personal traits and characteristics	Positive Traits Low affective filter	Students’ Interview Psychology Interview.

skills performance of fourth grade students after the Pandemic.	teachers will affect the affective filter of fourth grade students and their oral skills.		a teacher has when teaching a live classroom. Bilokcuoglu H. and Debreli E. (2018)	Negative traits High affective filter.	
List the different factors of how the Pandemic has influence in the affective filter of fourth grade students.	The Pandemic factors as anxiety, closed doors, lack of social contact and social distancing influence in having a high affective filter.	Factors related to the Pandemic.	Details related to the Pandemic that influence in the affective filter. Khalid (2021)	List of factors mentioned by students and teacher.	Students' Interview

Source: Students and teachers interviews as well as the mentioned by Khalid (2021)

The nature of the variables of this project is mainly qualitative because all of them are handling a qualitative phenomenon that cannot be measured by number, but only by the explanation of the phenomenon itself. They are integrated in a nominal scale because what is pretended is to look and establish the relationship among them, making references to their similarities and differences. And the principle that sets behind the variables is one of

exclusivity in which the intention is for the variables not to combine among themselves. In the chart shown above all the four variables of this investigation are present in the specific verbs, defined as in concept and set the instruments that are used to gather all the information needed for each variable.

CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

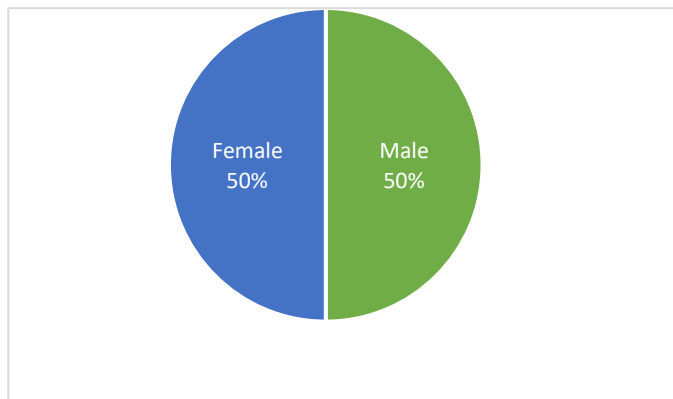
4.1. Diagnostic and Analysis of Data

After the detailed gathering of the information, it is very important to analyze the outcomes in an organized way to be able to set conclusions and recommendations after the research process. Therefore, the analysis of the information needs to contemplate all the answers given by the interviews and population randomly selected.

4.1.1 Students' Interview

The population used as a sample was a group of 20 students from 5 different groups of fourth grade, all of which are 10 years old and have been receiving classes in a hybrid method since the beginning of the year. The first graphic shown below demonstrates the gender status of the student population interviewed.

Figure 1: Gender of student sample



Source: Students' questioners

The population sample was divided into equal percentage of male and female to have an equivalent number of answers coming from both female and male perspectives. Even if the students interviewed were just a sample of the population the equal number of

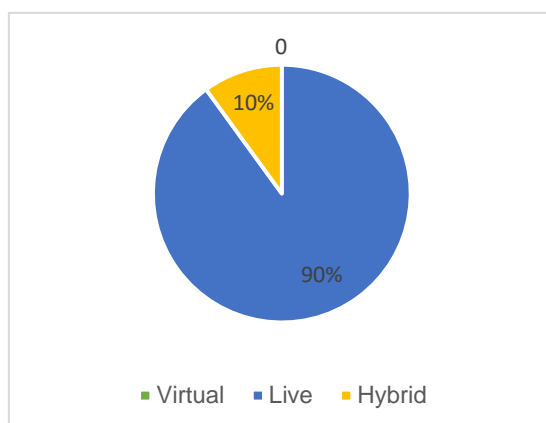
boy and girls gives a general perspective of the thoughts, feelings and views of both genders from the actual generation of fourth grade.

The student's questionnaire was subdivided into four different parts; the first one, related to virtual classes in general; specifically referring to the preferences, format, and elements affecting it. The second one asks more deeply and directly into their feelings towards virtuality and the Pandemic itself. Then the third part tries to inquire about the importance of teacher's personality in regards of the use of English in the class. And the last part mainly talks about which has been their experience with virtuality.

Virtual classes

The first question of the instrument inquiries about the type of system they prefer, it is important to understand that all of these students received a complete virtual education during 2020, but started the hybrid program in February of 2021, which give them the experience of three different models.

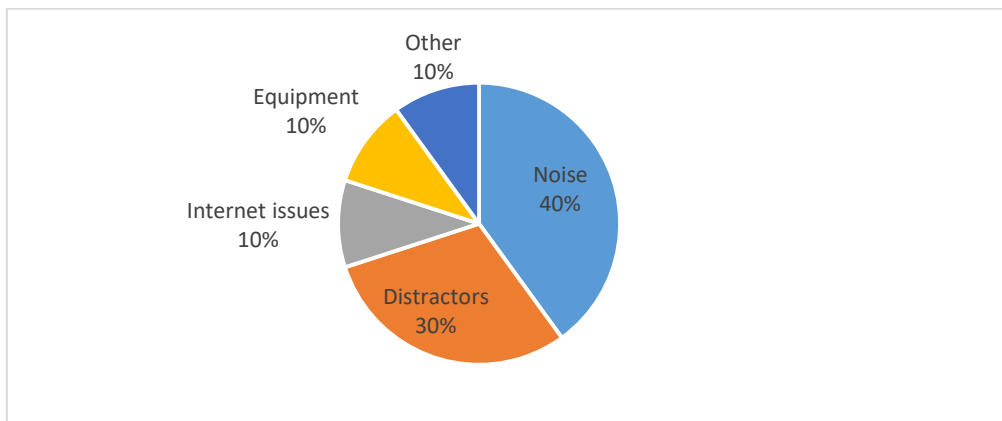
Figure 2: System Preference



According to the answers given, even if students feel very comfortable with virtuality, they still prefer the system where they go to school to receive their lesson inside a classroom. Only a 10% of the population chose the hybrid system, which demonstrates that virtuality was not chosen by any percentage, this fact is really important because it gives the actual feeling that most of the population of students is having after being abruptly taken from their normal status inside school environment. Even if the data acquired in this investigation process might refer only to one private school in the country it is probable that the feeling is shared among students all around Costa Rica, especially those that have the resources of receiving virtual classes.

The next question gives a clue of the difficultness most students have regarding to changing from live classes to virtuality without being prepared for it. This question asks about the things that make it hard to receive online virtual classes.

Figure 3: Hard elements for virtual classes

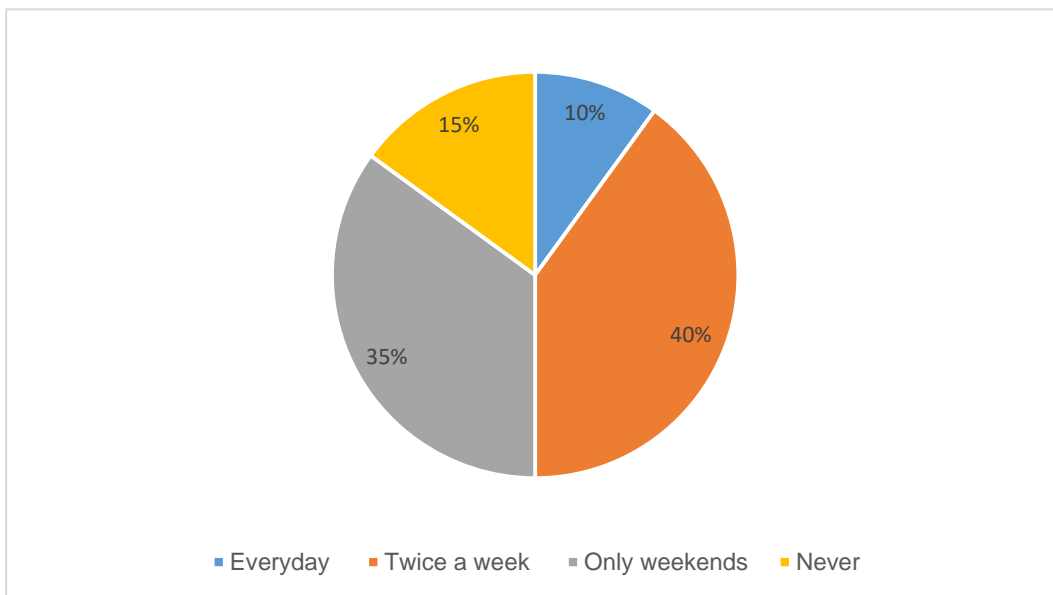


The major number of students answered that the noise in the house was one of the main issues to be able to receive their education virtually, as well as the external distractors as pets, family members and even things in the computer that are not related to school. It is very important to mention that only a 10 % of the populations mark other as an option and

the answers they wrote were: “having to keep an eye on my siblings” and “not having any access to computer or internet connection.” This basically shows that most of the population of fourth grade had the material resources to receive their classes virtually but had to deal with different external and internal factors that made it difficult for them to be able to work properly from the virtual program.

Question four, ascertains about the amount of time they use the computer before the first lock down. This question basically tries to set an antecedent of the time spent inside the technology appliances before the Pandemic threw it as a must.

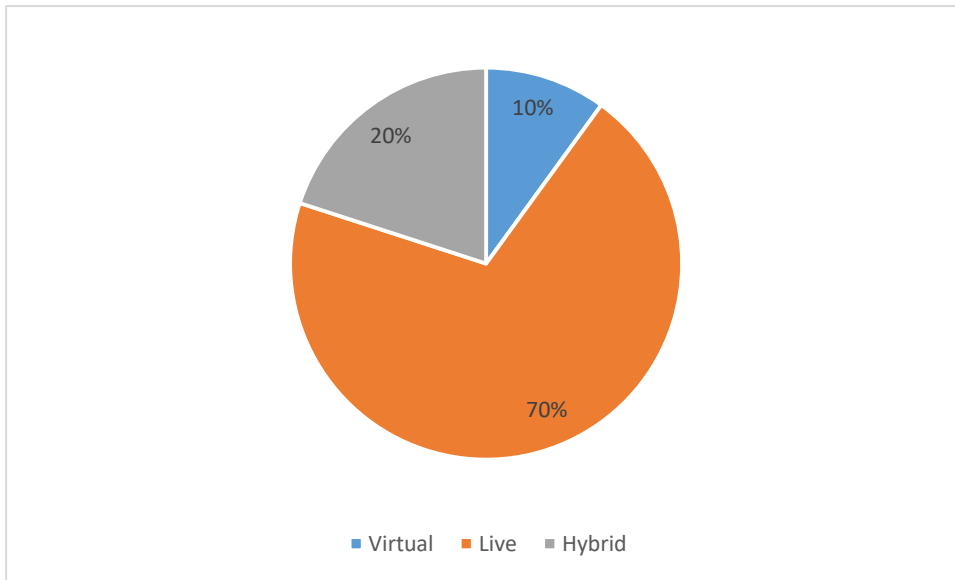
Figure 4: Technology appliances time



Even if the year is 2021, where technology is important worldwide, this graph points out a different reality, where children still spend most of their time doing something else than working from a computer or even using it to play. Even if this doesn't show how much time students use in video games it throws out a fact about a change made in society and in education because of a Pandemic. So, no matter if the system has changed it is important to understand if students are happy with the changes they have experienced and

not only happy but confident and comfortable enough to have a successful educational process. The next questions ask directly in which of the three methods they feel happier: the virtual, live classes or the hybrid program.

Figure 5: Feeling Happy Program

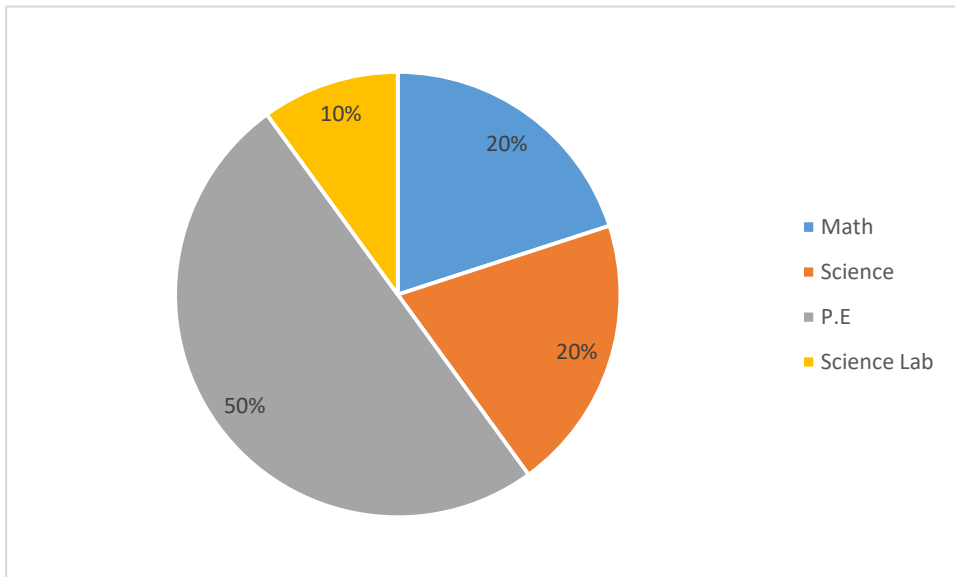


In the first question made in this investigation process the students had to answer which program they preferred, however, here the question was directed to the way they feel and how do they feel happier. Often, humankind has mixed the concept of doing something because it's better or doing something because it gives happy feelings. A 70% of the population feels happier receiving live classes, only a 10 % chose virtuality as making them feel happier and a 20% decided that the hybrid program makes them feel happier. Other than thinking in the best option for the moment or even for them, this question wanted to see which was the method that made them happier and without a doubt it is clear it is the live method.

The next question asks the population to choose a class they enjoyed the most when receiving it in school and the answers were more than expected, especially with a

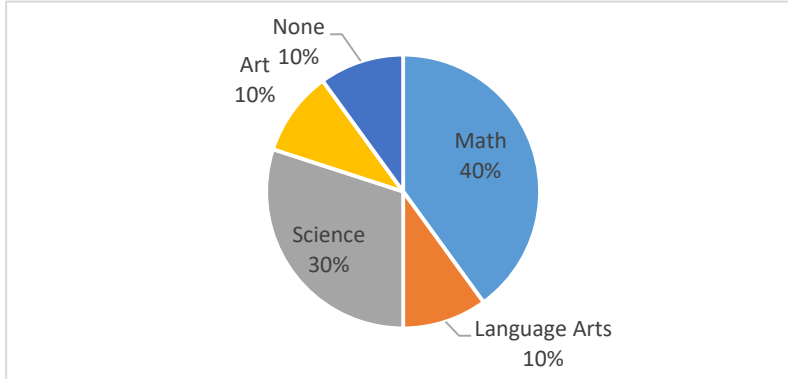
population of students that demonstrated before, that their time in front of the computer before the lockdown was very small or even none.

Figure 6: Class chosen lively



The answers given by the population for this question were only four, from a group of nine subjects they receive in school. Only the four mentioned in the graph were chosen as subject they prefer to receive in school. Most of the students were answering as P.E to be the favorite subject to receive in school, live, with their teachers and classmates. Then the next question was thrown, in which there can be a comparison, because of the context of the question. The question asked which the most enjoyable class was during virtual lessons.

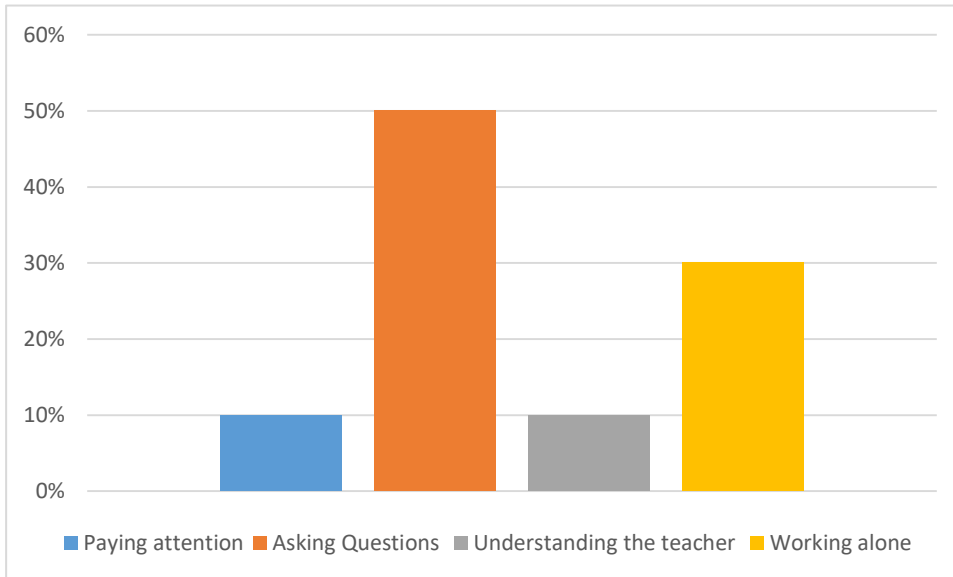
Figure 7: Virtual Favorite Class



The most important information that can be taken from the results given by this question is the fact that none of the students chose P.E. as a subject they enjoyed receiving from virtual lessons, contrary to the question asked before, in which a 50% chose P.E as their favorite subject. Therefore, students have different likes when having to receive their lessons through the computer. It is also interesting to observe how mathematics keeps being chosen and increased as the context of students changed from live education to virtual.

In the next question students were asked about the hardest thing they considered doing when working virtually, the question was given four different options as answer and one that was none, and this last one was not chose by any student. This means all students considered there was something hard in the virtual program.

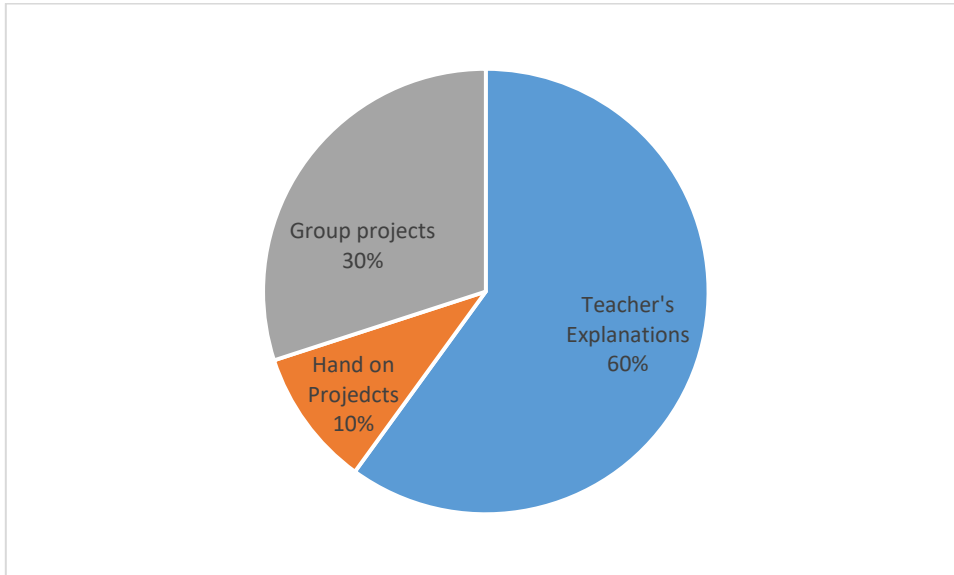
Figure 8: Hard thing during virtual class



Students considered that asking questions during the virtual class is one of the most difficult tasks they have, a 50% of the population confirmed that talking to each other during virtual classes is not as easy as when done lively, and asking questions mentioned as part of the conversation they lack having specially for the difficultness that implies the internet connection and all the other factors implied in receiving classes from their house and not a well-prepared environment.

One important piece of information gathered from this part of the interview was the activity they miss the most since the start of the lockdown. Activities they did before that are not directly related to the educational process might also lead to understand the emotional state of students and the way they are dealing with all related to the Pandemic.

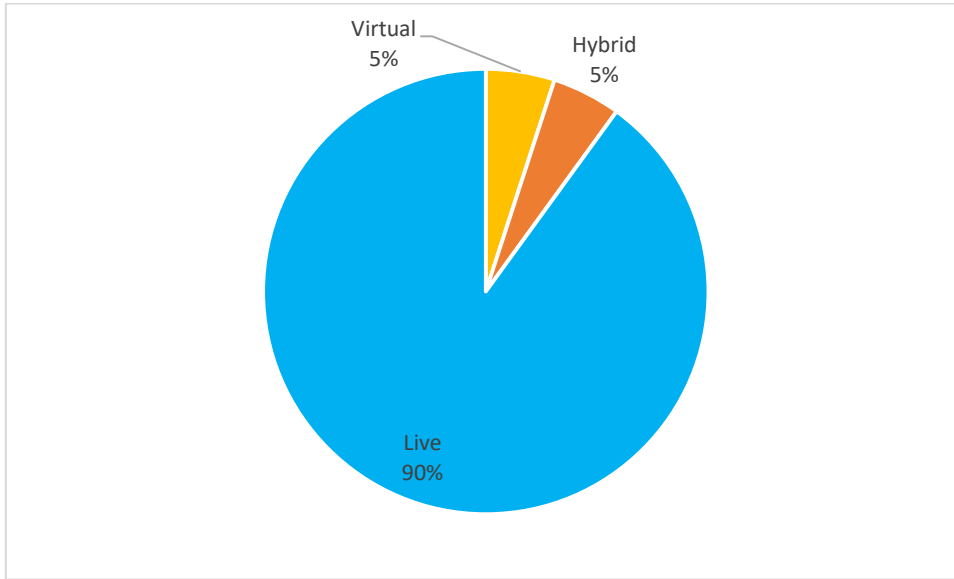
Figure 9: Things missed



The event shown in the graphs demonstrates the things students missed the most are basically those that imply human contact or close relationship. They mentioned it was not the same listening to the explanation teacher gave over the computer than the explanation given by teacher in the class. Most of the student commented when filling in the questionnaire that teacher tried their best to make virtual classes intense and dynamic, but the classes could not be compared to the ones received daily when going to school.

The last question of this part of the student's interview asked directly how was easier for them to communicate with their classmates and teachers.

Figure 10: Easier to talk by



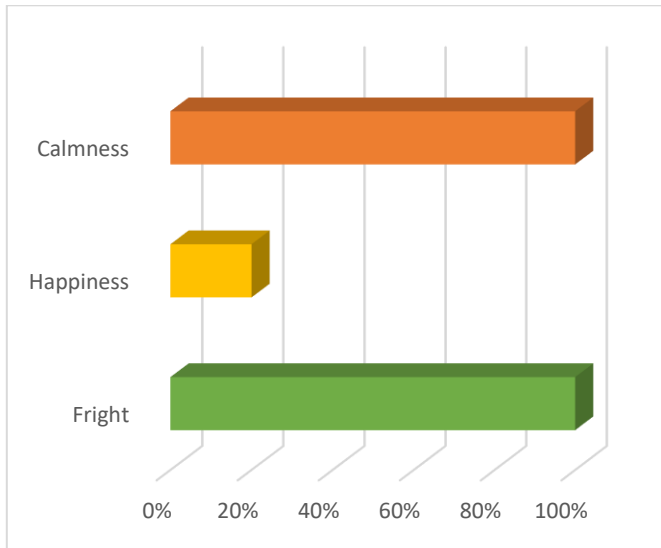
Just by observing the crushing percentage of students that chose live as the easier way to talk to their friends and teachers, it is demonstrated that not only the population feels happier with going to school to receive their lessons but also think that they need to see each other and relate to be able to have an efficient communication. Closing the questions that relate to virtual classes it can be observed the need students have on returning to their live day by day classes, not only because of the elements that imply the educational process but also the elements that make them feel happy and comfortable, which in the end tend to influence their affective filter towards the use of English in the classroom and their process of Learning any new skill.

Virtual Classes Feelings

The second part of the instrument passed on to fourth grade students display the results on the way they feel towards virtual classes, from the first moment they started receiving classes virtually to the present moment, in which they are back to school in a

daily live interaction. The first three questions ask them about the feeling they had at the beginning of the Pandemic, the middle and the actual moment. The changes in the way they felt before and now can be observe easily.

Figure 11: First feeling during Pandemic

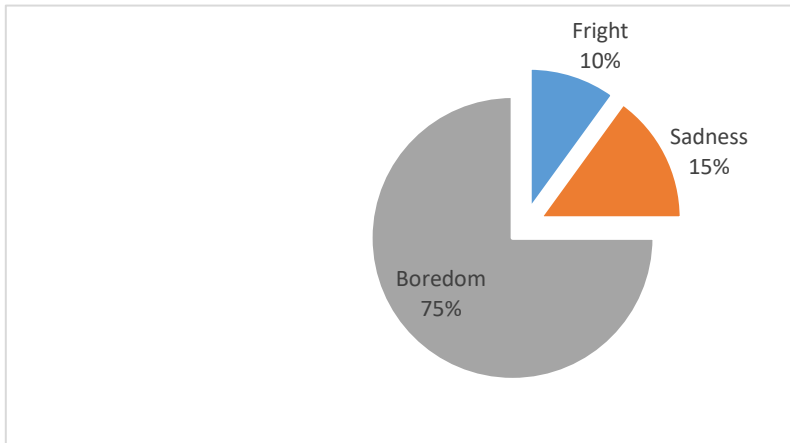


The options of answers given to the students were six different feeling: fright, happiness, sadness, anger, boredom, and calmness; they were asked to choose as many feelings as they wanted. The only three feelings chosen were fright, happiness, and calmness. It was kind of contradictory to have all the population choosing both fright and calmness at the same time. Some of the students expressed that they were afraid because of having to be sent home because of a virus, but they also felt calm when they realized school was going to continue without any obstacle. Even if they were feeling anxious because of the national situation, and all the information regarding a new disease that was around their safe environment, they felt secure about continuing their learning process.

After receiving a several weeks of virtuality from the computer, the feeling changed and most of the population was able to identify this change without any hesitation. The

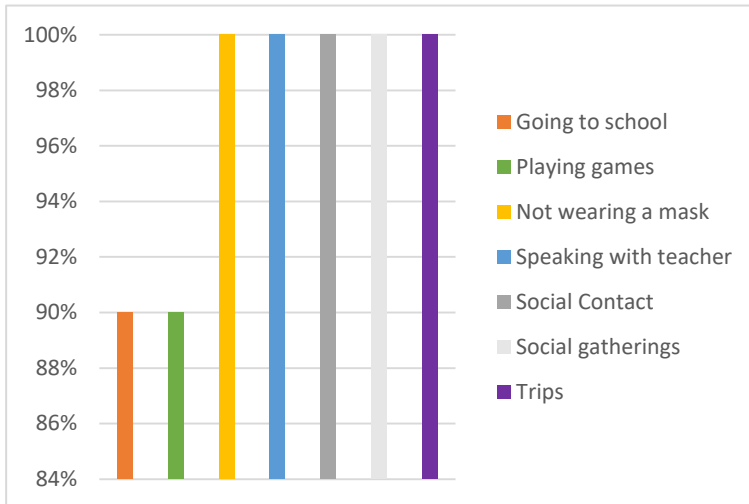
options to answer were the same given in the question before but the selection this time was different. There was still a small population that felt fright, however most of them switched to a different mood and position.

Figure 12: Feelings after a couple of weeks.



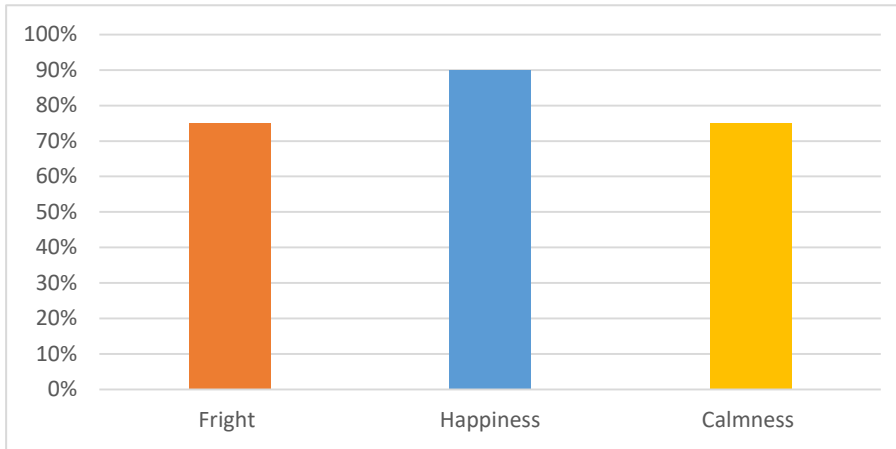
Instead of becoming confident and calm about the situation they were living from the safety of their houses, most of the students felt bored, because they were not allowed to return to their classes, they were not allowed to talk face to face with their friends or even have social time with their neighbor friends, because life had changed in every family represented in the sample population. Parents became more protective with their children's health and the protocols they needed to follow as a family to be healthy. After realizing that feelings had changed it was very important to clarify what was going on in the schedules and life of fourth grade students. So, the next question was made to understand what was missed from the life before the Pandemic.

Figure 13: Activities missed



For this question, students were able to choose as many activities as they wanted, that they missed doing. All the students choose the fact of wearing a mask, as something uncomfortable that they missed not to use it. Some of them even commented that it was so long since they use it that they don't remember a life without a mask. The answers chosen by all the population have the social factor, all of them included speaking, or having close contact with someone else. Even if the distancing is a health protocol, they need to follow to stay healthy and try to go back to normal life, it has been one of the toughest elements they have had to overcome and deal with. The last question basically asked them about the actual moment, and the way they feel.

Figure 14 : Feeling Actual Moment

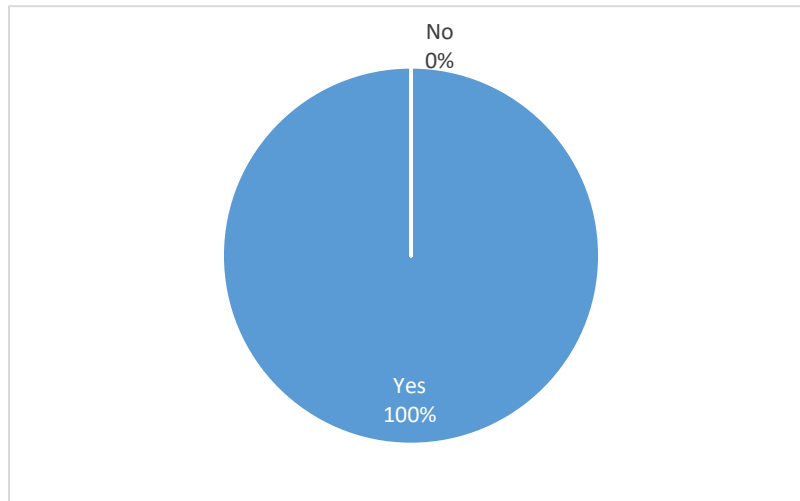


The actual context in which this question has been asked, gives a different point of view. The population is answering the way they feel, from inside the classroom. Yes, things have changed, and there are only thirteen more classmates within the class, but they are actually feeling the coming back to a normal situation in school. Some commented that they were still afraid of the virus, but having their parents already vaccinated and the teachers as well the situation changes a lot. Most of the students express their happiness and their wish to go back to school without any hesitation.

Teacher's Personality

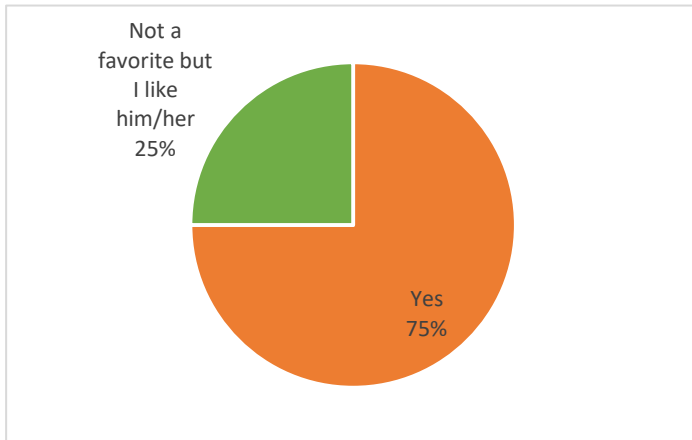
The next part of the instrument was made to observe and evidence the existence of that teacher, with who the students feel more comfortable, close, and more open to talk about any topic. According to Krashen's Theory, students with a lower affective filter will develop better ground to learn and having a close teacher and someone with who the students feel more comfortable will lower the affective filter and increase self-confidence.

Figure 15: Close teacher during Pandemic



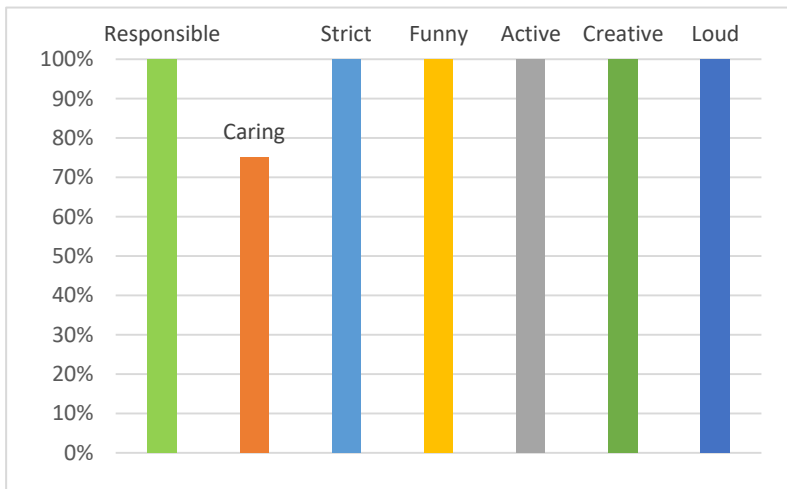
The first question was to determine if the students had had a close connection to any of their teacher during the most difficult time of their closure inside their homes. 100 % of the population answer positively to this. When applying the instrument there were comments about perceiving their teacher more as a friend and counselor than only a math or English teacher. The comments were full of emotions and there were some of the kids that share tears when remember there was only their teacher to listen to them about any topic they wanted to talk about. Fundamental to understand that most of the fourth-grade population has working parents which means, most of them spent their virtual school day by themselves. The second question was not related directly to the Pandemic but more into their common daily life as Fourth Grade students.

Figure 16: Favorite Teacher



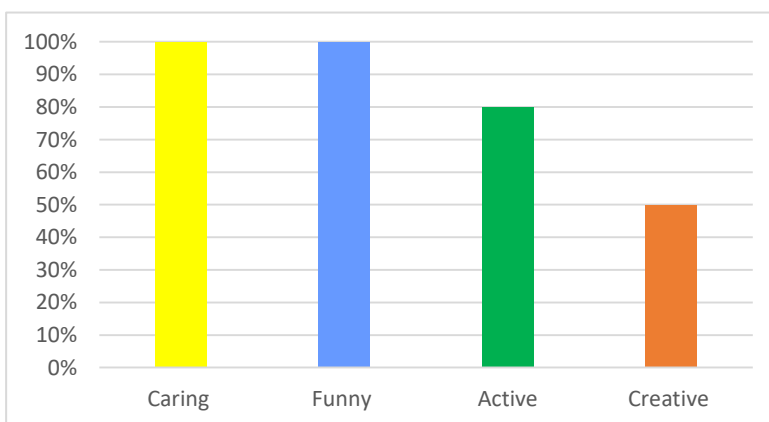
When reading this question out loud for students to answer there was a massive reaction that was not expected, every single student answer immediately already saying the name of the teacher without any hesitation or doubt about it. After observing the fact that most of them had selected the same teacher both next questions were very easy to answer, and some kids even mentioned that they were very alike questions. When there was a pause to explain the difference between characteristics that this teacher has and characteristics that they loved about the teacher, they answer in unison: “They are the same”.

Figure 17: Characteristics the teacher has



The characteristics the students choose were not all the mentioned in the list of options, none of them chose angry, grumpy, or lazy. They had to ask for example to understand the meaning of the word caring; when it was explained they all said most of the teachers had to be caring to be teachers. A very interesting choice they picked was strict. Some of them commented that the teacher they chose was very strict but, that did not mean they dislike her for that. Most of them even said they felt secure with a strict teacher.

Figure 18: Characteristics liked from the teacher



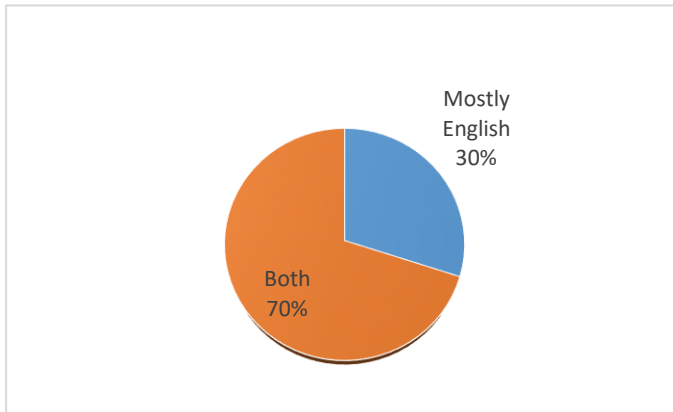
During the explanation of this question, the students made emphasis in the fact that they liked that particular teacher because “ her class is funny”, “ she tries hard to make us laugh”, “she enjoys spending time with us”, “she can listen to any topic I talk to her about” and one of the most common answers they commented orally was “ she always enters the class with a huge smile and her laugh can be heard all the way from the parking lot”. Observing the comments of the students it is easy to identify humor as one of the things they really think is important. After knowing what their likes were in regards of teacher’s characteristics it was important to understand if these characteristics help them have an oral contact with that teacher and in which language it is easier.

Figure 19: Comfortable Students



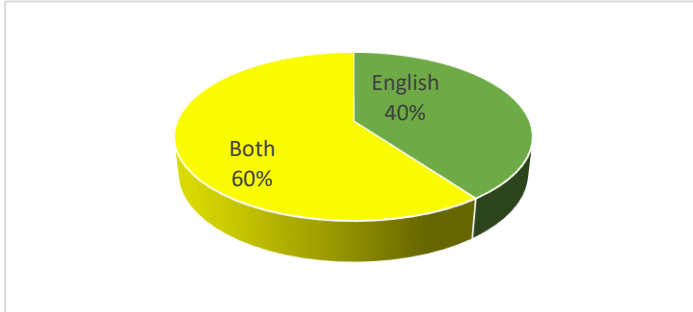
The whole sample answer affirmative to the question of feeling comfortable speaking to that teacher they thought was their favorite one. Some of the oral comments were: “she is very easy and fun to talk to”, “she really pays attention”, “she always makes you feel, everything is going to be ok”. The capacity they had to answer this question without even taking a minute to think about it led to understand that in fact there is closeness and strong feelings towards the teachers in question.

Figure 20: Language Spoken



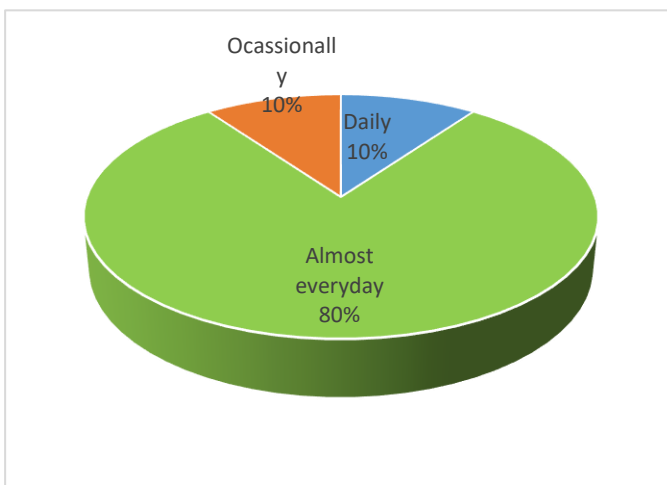
After analyzing how easy it was for the students to answer how easy it was to talk to their teacher, the question about the language came to make them think a while. Most of them said the teacher used only English, but when returning the question to them and also observing their interaction with the teacher in the class, they were not afraid to accept that they used both languages to talk to her. Especially when they needed to ask something very confusing or personal. Even if a 70% of the population used both languages there is the other 30 %, that commented how listening to her in English all the time made them just talk in English. In the next figure this percentage is supported with the fact that they not only feel comfortable talking to their teachers in their native language but also in the language they are expected to use in the class.

Figure 21: Language Use



It is very important to remember that the amount of English to which the students of Fourth Grade of Anglo-American School are exposed is higher than the one in the public system of education in the country. Students receive every single subject in English except for one lesson of Spanish or Social Studies daily. Therefore, they see every teacher eight lessons a week, in a normal schedule. However, with the reduced schedule of the Pandemic given nationally, they are receiving half the number of lessons with each teacher.

Figure 22: Amount of speaking time



On this figure the results are evident, the students have a lot of interactions with their teachers, and they speak every weekday, not only about the school subjects but also about

personal and emotional topics. And the language they use to do it is mostly English, which is the language required in almost every subject on daily bases. The last question that was asked in this part of the instrument was related to, describing the things they like the most about their favorite teacher. In the next table are all the answer the students gave.

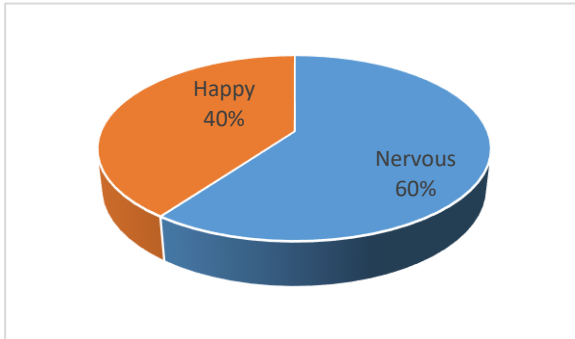
Students	Sentence
1- 15	I feel she really loves me.
2-3-14	She makes me feel invincible.
4-5-6	Since I am with her, I love math
7	She makes math easier and fun
8 -9-11	I like entering her class, it is a new adventure everyday
10 -13-14	She cares about the things I like and dislike.
15	She makes me laugh
16	English is so much easier with her.
17-18	It is fun even to make mistakes, she makes me really learn.
19	I learn to love math because of her.
20	Coming to school is more enjoyable because of her.

Table 1: Characteristics of my favorite teacher

Virtual classes likes and dislikes.

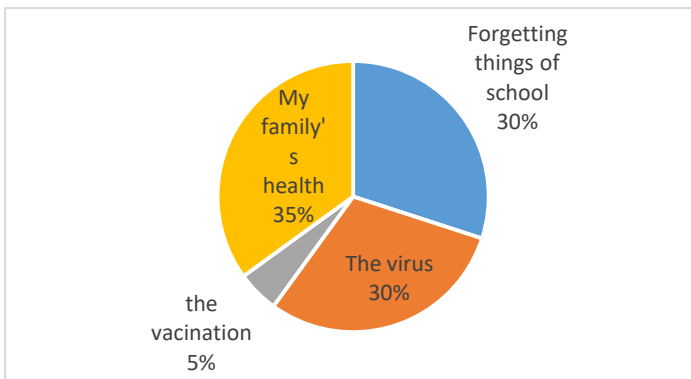
The last part of the interview threw important information about the way students are really feeling with the virtuality and how hard it can be for them. One of the most common feeling and emotion they are having is one that will indeed rise their affective filter. They are not only feeling happy to go be back at school, but also nervous about all the situation the world is dealing with.

Figure 23: Emotions back at school



Happiness is present when asked about being back at school, however the strongest feeling the students are having comes hand in hand with the fact they are not vaccinated yet and the health of their parents and grandparents. Prove of this is the next figure in which the answers to the question about their worries are evident.

Figure 24: Worries



This worldwide situation has brought among young children different worries that they did not have to deal with before. It is wise and important for parents, teacher, schools and even the government to pay close attention to the topics the children are listening to and thinking about. It is true, the need to take care is still present in daily life, but also the levels of anxiety will increase if the situation continues without any control.

After analyzing the results of the students' instrument, it is important to analyze the information from a different perspective, the point of view from people that related daily with students and their affective filter directly.

4.1.2 Teachers' Interview

After reviewing and analyzing all the data gathered from students, it is very important to check the perspective and gathered data from a different source. One of the main sources of information for this investigation other than the students are the teachers, professionals who are in contact daily with the reality of the affective filter each student has. This instrument was applied to four different teachers, that work with the population researched and who give their subject matter in English.

Table 2: General Information

Question	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D
Subject matter	Language Arts	Science	Math	World Geography
Time in Anglo	Eight years	Twelve years	Fifteen years	Four years
Time teaching	Fifteen years	Fifteen years	Fifteen years	Six years
Degree	License	Masters	Bach. In the process of Lic.	In the process of Bach
Knowledge of Krashen's Theory	Yes	No	Yes	No

Source: Teacher's Questionnaire

The four-teacher interviewed have more than two years of experience in Anglo American school, which means that all of them worked fully live before the Pandemic started and before the lockdown. This will give a subjective perspective of how they feel their students, their way of teaching and even their lives have changed. An important fact is also their level of education and the awareness of Krashen's Theory and how this can be related to their everyday work. Even if the next question sounds romantic, asking about the

way they feel, can lead to understand how teachers have handle the Pandemic themselves, which will immediately be reflected in the way they teach and socialize with their students.

Table 3: Actual feelings

Question	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D
Actual feelings	“I am exhausted, definitely I didn’t study to be a virtual teacher. It has been harder than what I expected, and the school really asks for so much from us.”	“This year has been tough, I started giving science without any book, which means all the material given to the students, needs to come from me. However, this has given me the opportunity to teach science as I want to.”	“Wow, this is a deep question, jajajaj I try not to focus on my feelings but in the way my students feel every day, of course it has been tough, we were not prepared for this but I have learned that every single day in life you have the chance to complain or learn something new. “	“When everything started, I was very scared, especially because I am the youngest in the team. However, this gave me the opportunity to help my colleagues learn about technology a new way to teach. I still feel scared, but now I am in control of my lessons and class.”

Four different people teaching the same group of students, with completely different personalities, perspectives of life and even ways to deal with stress. They all answered honestly and were able to express their feelings, however their body language expressed tiredness and exhaustion. They feel happy they still have a job, and they try to fulfill every assignment and requirement they are asked for, but their physical aspect show how tire and stress they are. The next question asked took 50 % of the teachers a long time to answer it will the other 50 % immediately responded.

Table 4: Toughest Obstacles 2020/2021

Question	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D
Toughest Obstacles	“For me the hardest thing was to implement a new platform virtually without even learning how to use it properly. It is not easy to have students on the other side of the computer paying constant attention.”	“Not having a book, or the resources needed to give lessons online. Now, one of the most difficult things is to make students follow health protocols to stay safe, virus free and life in school. They are scared about it but they are still small children who like to interact and play.”	“I had to deal with two hard obstacles, my subject matter needs for the teacher to demonstrate, to play with concrete knowledge to later ask them to analyze and think, so working through a computer was very difficult, not because of technology, because I love it, but because of the process. And the other thing is that kids need social contact, and the computer made it very hard to read their emotions and comprehension when explaining anything; from adding to the Pandemic.	“The hardest thing for me was to capture students’ attention, when virtually. They were always doing something else than being present in class. Now that we are back, we have to start teaching them again the proper way of paying attention and having to work, completing assignments and remembering how school was.”

Most of them refer to the change in their way of teaching, however only one of them refers on how difficult it was to read students’ state through a computer. The interesting fact is that this teacher was the one more mentioned by the student population as their

favorite teacher. Joined to all this is also the fact that this teacher mentioned she reads a lot about psychology and different ways kids grow. The next question is going to give a hint about the closeness in the relationship between students and teacher. It is important to remember that these four teachers are the homeroom teachers of the four classes of fourth grade, which only means they not only share during their subject classes but also during homeroom hour every week.

Table 5: Students' emotional state during lockdown

Question	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D
Student's Emotional State	<p>"During the lockdown students' emotions were a roller coaster. At first, they felt happy with the fact of staying home, until they saw things were serious and our return to normality was far from possible."</p>	<p>"My students liked it a lot, most of them felt happy, because they were able to receive classes in their pjs and in the place where they felt more secure. After a couple of months, they started feeling lockdown and wanted to be in school, normal as everyone else"</p>	<p>"My group had a tough time, even if they wanted to stay home because it was the safest place, they also needed to see each other and spend time together. At first some even were closed to the idea of receiving virtual education but talking about the way everyone felt made a huge difference, they felt they were not alone."</p>	<p>"My kids are tough, they felt bad at the beginning, but they found the way to use TEAMS as a tool for their interactions. Even now, they still join after class using teams."</p>

It is very interesting to observe how all the teachers have a close relationship with their students, even if the last two years have been different to the interactions in the past. All of them agree in how the beginning and the changes were hard for everyone but the

way each group of students dealt with it was very guided by their teachers' reaction and personality. Making a closer reference to the way of their students in virtual classes the answers were different.

Table 6: Students in virtual classes

Question	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D
Students Virtually	“They were not used to having their teacher through a computer, the lack physical contact, eye contact, word contact, made it hard for them to stay focus even for small periods of time.”	“I tried very hard to give science in an interactive way, which lead to experiments and hands on activities. At the beginning it was challenging because they are home alone receiving the classes and sometimes, they need guidance and help, but over time they became more independent and self - sufficient”	“I had to think hardly about a way to teach math through a computer that will stick their attention and at the same time give them the right tools to solve each problem by themselves. They were great, they got used to my ppt and they were able to self-teach themselves just by observing the presentation without my explanation.”	“I can say these generations are tough, they are dealing with obstacles none of us dealt before. They are prepared for technology but not for independent virtual work. They had to learn it fast to overcome the issues of the virtual education.”

All the teachers, agreed in having tough situations but also tough students, who were able to overcome every situation. They even commented in the difference of personalities their students have, and how for some of them the virtual program was a success meanwhile others needed to be in school to be able to gain the skills they were trying to teach. It is interesting how all of them commented that they feel very stress in live

school, but because of the virus, not because of teaching. They even said teaching in school is wonderful.

Table 7: Hardest elements as a teacher

Question	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D
Hardest elements	Attention spam, parents, reading students comprehension.	Attention Spam, independence, responsibility.	Reading students state through the computer.	Attention Spam and independence.

All the teachers agreed that the most difficult element they had to deal with was the attention spam, most of the students were more tolerable to distractions while others had no control over them. Interesting how Teacher C, continues reflecting the importance the affective filter has in her daily life teaching process. When asked to comment more about her answer, she said it was already difficult to see how every single kid was affected in a different way by the Pandemic and sometimes she felt there was nothing she could do through the computer screen.

Table 8: Pandemic and Affective Filter

Question	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D
Pandemic and affective filter.	The Pandemic has affected their affective filter for sure, they are more insecure and anxious all the time. I teach a second language and one of the things I can see	“Feelings and emotions have been affected, they are more insecure, and they are not afraid of showing it.”	“The affective filter is one of the things mostly affected with this Pandemic, we are having insecure, anxious children going back to the classes without	“Teachers, parents and students are affected emotionally because of this Pandemic. We have experienced something we were not prepared to.

	differently is the way they speak more in Spanish than they did before.”		being well prepared or listened about the way they feel. Math in English is by itself a complicated topic, but now, the most important thing is to make them lower their filter in order to live, learn and be happy.”	Life has to change and the way we teach our children too.
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It is clear how the 50% of the teachers that know about affective filter, clearly remarked that it is in a high point and there is a need to lower it for the benefit of students. However, the other 50 % of the teachers that have not enough knowledge about the affective filter, also commented how the students are anxious and more insecure about everything around them and how these feelings and emotions affect their way of learning.

4.1.3 Psychologists' Interview

Table 9: General Information

Question	Psychologist A	Psychologist B
Profession	Psychologist Social Worker	Psychologist
Psychologist in Anglo	8 years	4 years
Work Population	1A- 1B 2C- 2D 3A- 3B 4C- 4D 5A- 5B 6C- 6D	1C - 1D 2A - 2B 3C - 3D 4A - 4B 5C - 5D 6A - 6B

It is very interesting to observe how both psychologists work with every generation of students, instead of having a psychologist for lower elementary and another one for upper elementary, they both work with all the levels. By dividing the generation in two groups per professional. When they were asked why they work following this methodology both agreed that it is better for both of them to be dealing with all stages and in that way, they can also get more experienced in situations according to the level of growth and maturity.

Table 10: Toughest obstacles 2020/2021

Question	Psychologist A	Psychologist B
Obstacles	“One of the hardest things was to understand which was my job, virtually speaking. I knew from the beginning some teachers were going to need more help than others. Students were harder to reach because their parents thought they had everything under control.”	“ I knew from the start that our main population was going to be teachers, they are amazing people but dealing with the fact of being inside the house, teaching from a computer was going to make it very hard for them to accept and change. Not being present day by day supporting them in their work was the hardest for me”

Both psychologists were more worried about the emotional health and condition of the teachers than from those of the students. They commented that if the teachers were stable and felt relaxed, most of the students were going to have a better process adapting to their new educational environment or even coming back to school with very different conditions. Both professional mentioned they were worried for some of the fourth grade level teachers, because they knew them from back and, were aware of their difficultness to adapt to change.

Table 11: Students' emotional state during lockdown

Question	Psychologist A	Psychologist B
	“At the beginning most of them were relaxed, having fun and thinking this was going to be something short. The problems of anxiety and panic attacks started when they had to stay home after mid-year vacation period.	“Students started feeling anxious and insecure about everything going around them when they realized it was not only going to be a lockdown for a week or two. Most of them commented that they feared forgetting everything of school.”

The evidence of an increase in the affective filter is observed in the answers of both psychologists. They both mentioned how students' attitude towards the lockdown changed from the first couple of weeks to the time inside their houses and away from their teachers and friends. They started feeling more scared and insecure of what was going on and if they were going back to school as they once had. Even if most of the students were in their nuclear family circle, their parents were also experiencing difficult emotions as well as taking hard decisions that were going to influence in the wellbeing of their children. Both professionals mentioned how they felt at some point useless and wanted to do so much more for the families and kids, but there was nothing else they could do.

Table 12: Teachers during lockdown

Question	Psychologist A	Psychologist B
Emotional State	“I became worried about my colleagues when we started realizing lockdown was going to take more than a couple of weeks, then when things became even harder in the country, I started calling them more often to see how they were. It was a roller coaster for some of them. They had to teach, to receive their	“I worked with very strong-minded teachers, some of them were clear, confident about how they were going to deal with this, some others tried to keep a good attitude, but the situation was stronger. One thing that called my attention was the fact that even if things were bad outside of their computer, when you entered a class to accompany them, their world was positive and full of good things for the kids. And

	salary, they had to be careful with the information they gave to children, they had to stay healthy and at the same time positive. It was a race against all bad things.”	that is no something you saw in every teacher in this country. “
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Even if the variable in question is not to learn about teachers’ affective filter, knowing how hard and difficult it was for them to keep it low can give a hint of the process the fourth-grade students were going to deal with when they went back to school. Once they did, both professionals said, they thought the fact of being back in school helped some of them feel less restrained to distance but, it also raised the insecurity of teachers regarding the virus and their health. Even after they were vaccinated their confidence and security was not working positive towards trying to have some normality.

Table 13: Hardest things for teachers

Question	Psychologist A	Psychologist B
Hardest elements for teachers	“I think for some of them the change from live to live classes to virtual classes was one of the most difficult things. Also having to handles their worries from inside their own lockdown was kind of hard.”	“My teachers dealt with some issues of self confidence in regards with technology, but the hardest thing for them was not to be able to attend the needs of their students in the usual way. However, let me tell you there are a couple of teachers that went the extra mile for their kids. The kids know it and they are glad to come back to school to share their lives together again.”

It is very interesting to observe the feeling of partnership both professionals have when referring to their colleagues. Even if they were trying to focus only the Fourth-Grade teachers, it was evident how they felt the tightness of team effort all around. Both professionals agreed that the hardest elements teachers had to deal with, was the fact of

being away from their students and not able to give the attention, and support their students needed to feel secure and relaxed. They both commented that the level of affective filter the students came back with was higher than the one they have ever experienced, one of them even said. “We have just witnessed these levels of anxiety, insecurity and sadness, when our kids have had a physical lost, like losing their parents or siblings.” Therefore, they considered their work is going to be fundamental not only this year but also in the near future. Helping not only children in school but giving a helping hand to the real healers of the hearts to come.

Table 14: Characteristics of teachers

Question	Psychologist A	Psychologist B
Characteristics of the teachers you work with	<p>“I have 2 different teachers with who I work from fourth grade. Their personalities are very similar, some of the characteristics I can tell you they have are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creative - responsible - respectful - loyal - organized -caring - self-aware of their weaknesses - strong - stubborn - closed minded. - leaders - the first ones to step up. - smart - useful - follow the procedures -follow the rules -giving” 	<p>“I work with the opposite side of the balance. My two fourth grade teachers give a more energetic charisma to the team. However, among themselves they are also very different. I will describe them as Teacher C and Teacher D.</p> <p>Teacher C is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - energetic and happy - loud and funny -proactive, thinks out of the box, solving - respectful - enthusiastic, extroverted -flexible and positive -caring - leader and persistent - adventurous <p>Teacher D is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - smart, a great listener and adviser - creative, artistic - very loyal and emotional -responsible but relaxed - humble -adequate and assertive -resilient - positive -caring and giving

		These two teachers are those that run with their children until the end of the race, even if they arrive in last place, and they make their children feel they are all winners.
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Both psychologists have a great range of knowledge about the teachers they work with, their relationship can be described as far more open to only school issues. Even if they mentioned that two of the four teachers are more structured and organized than the other, they are sure that the team has made the process of fourth grade students coming back to school much easier than any other team; because of the great balance they have, and the facility of two of them to lead not only educationally speaking but also in forming a team. “They teach four different subjects, but they work to show their kids the path to a better way of dealing with everything that is happening.” These were the last words of both of them when finishing the interview.

Table 15: Needed characteristics for coming back.

Question	Psychologist A	Psychologist B
Needs for coming back	“That is a deep and hard question. What characteristics do teachers need to go back to school and help us lower students’ affective filter? Well, the first thing we need is for them to feel confident and secure about their own health and life. Then try to adapt the way they were used to teach to the way our kids need to come back.”	“We do have teachers with all the needs to receive our students back in school. They are Fourth Grade Team, they have worked hard to build a team of grownups prepared to face day by day situations with their children and lead them through the right path.”

Even if the question was general, both psychologists answered in a very different way. Psychologist A was referring mostly to the teachers around the school that are still

not feeling secure and self-confident with the situation of coronavirus and their coming back to the classes. It was commented that “Teachers need to make a change in their perspective of the educational process because our children have lost two complete years of normality and school as they knew it.” Meanwhile, Psychologist B, was very focused in the positive attitude the group of fourth grade teachers has shown and the capacity they have as teachers, humans, women and individuals to overcome every obstacle the Pandemic has given to their profession.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

After finishing the investigation process there are several statements that need to be said, as conclusion to a detailed process with several variables, characteristics, and problems. The process took, 6 months to be developed, in a period where live classes and virtuality were combined roughly and in variable moments.

The oral skills performance of Fourth Grade students can be referred as: always speaking in English, using the English language within every teacher that uses English in their classroom, use their oral skills in English with their classmates, during classes. To express the role of the affective filter in oral skills with specifically this population it is important to remember that the affective filter refers to how comfortable a student feels in relation to anxiety, self- confidence and security when using the language. Once mentioned this, it was observed that the affective filter in this generation was very high because of the Pandemic situation experienced since March 2020.

Examining the high level of affective filter was evident when students where asked a simple question; How are you feeling? Most of the feelings observed were negative and all related to a high level of affective filter. The strongest feeling presented by students was anxiety, and fright. Even as they returned back to school, their feelings were almost the same, because they now had to deal with a completely different reality coming to class, to the one they were used to. Teachers and psychologists also refer to having to work harder with the anxiety present in students in both contexts, during virtual classes and the come back to school process. One interesting conclusion that teachers made and is evident just by reading the interviews and observing the way students were acting is that their anxiety levels make them use their native language as a safe tool to make them be heard and most

importantly understood. As a general conclusion the level of affective filter in this population is high and has made students feel more comfortable using their native language in every class, even if they start speaking in English, the overall situation is changing the language to make them be understood, not only what they are saying orally but also the emotional aspect of their comments.

The Pandemic brought different situations that contribute to high level of the affective filter in these students; some of them can be corrected immediately and some other factors are things that might take a while to change until the country's situation with the Virus gets better. Some of the elements of virtual context that influenced in the affective filter were not having the teacher face to face, which increased the lack of understanding and comprehension levels of students. Teachers' emotional situation also affected their attitude towards lessons, and made students feel less comfortable with some teachers. Instability of the internet, even if most of the families in the study had access to the internet, there were issues with the speed and sometimes even with lack of service. Another element was the lack of family resources to have access the right equipment for all their children, most kids had brothers and sister and they were all receiving classes at the same time. Lack of social interaction, group support and group work face to face, most of the students mentioned the need to work with that classmate that had helped them understand during their previous years in school. And finally, the Country's situation in regard to the increase of positive cases, the reality of this fact increased the level of insecurity and anxiety in parents, teachers, and grownups in general, which immediately was reflected on students from their house to their safe place, school.

After mentioning all the factors that influenced in their affective filter, it has been observed that receiving classes virtually, decreased the use of English in students of Fourth Grade, which means their oral skills performance has decreased at least one or two years according to their English teachers. Even if Anglo American School is private and most of the students have a high social and economic level, the fact of not being able to reach to their teacher at any time and also the fact that teachers lowered their standards of English use in class to try to accompany students in their virtual process in a more direct way, made their performance in the oral use of English decreased from the usual level expected in Fourth grade students.

One of the most interesting conclusions arrived after the research is the level of influence, teachers' personality has in the students' affective filter level. There were 4 different teachers involved in the process. Two of them very well organized, strict, and rigid in their classes and two with open minded, caring, and creative personalities. Students not only prefer the classes of the creative teachers, but when observing the classes, it was evident they felt more comfortable using English with these two teachers. An astonishing observation was made in the class of the teacher selected by 95% of the student population as their favorite, the use of humor, and laughter and caring comments made a great impact in every student. There was not, one single student that didn't want to participate in this class or wanted to stay after the class had finished. The personality of this teacher is explosive, full of energy and the relationship she has with the students make them appreciate her subject and feel more comfortable not only with English but also with them. Something rare and not common was the fact that this teacher always started the class telling a story about something funny, something shameful that had happened to her when

she was a child or a couple of days ago. Students were always willing to speak in English in her class, even if it was a yes/no question. There was a big difference between the student's attitude in this class and the others.

Even if the Pandemic has shown different aspects of humankind that should be fixed, it also has made children worry about things they didn't need to before. Other than the elements mentioned before as the influence in the oral skills performance; the factor of the Pandemic that has elevated the level of the affective filter in fourth grade students is fear, fright, and insecurity about the future. Students are scared even if they do not understand the big world situation this Pandemic has brought. They feel scared of going to school; however, they miss their classes, their teacher and their classmates very much. They do not understand why their life has changed so much in such a little time and it has been hard for them also to understand how much time this is going to last. The lack of social relationships and playing time has made their personality close and mistrust their capacity to speak fluently in English without any concern.

5.2 Recommendations

The Pandemic is a factor that influences everything known, therefore, it is important to adapt the process of living, having social contact, and teaching as well. It is not easy to give recommendations in the actual context, because things might change abruptly in any moment. However, the increased level of affective filter can be reduced slowly until the situation changes enough to have a normal teaching process again. The easier options to follow are those that imply teachers and parents.

Some of the suggestions to make influence of the Pandemic affect less or even drop the affective filter are:

- Even if it is important for students to be aware of the situation the world and the country is living, it is important to select properly the information that is going to be shared with students, especially inside school boundaries.
- Teachers and parents should follow the same path in the amount and quality of information given to Fourth Grade students.
- The time students are assisting school is not enough for them to cover a complete program of language arts, so it would be wise to make more emphasis in the main oral skills and work with them more often. This will reduce the amount of subject matter given but will increase the performance of students when using oral skills. Also, teacher will have less worries about the timing and program and more time to have quality conversations in English with their students.
- The program should allow teachers to use some spaces to listen to their students and make them feel they are heard and comprehended.
- There are a lot of factors related to the Pandemic that will not be changed in the close future, it would be important for students to have more open opportunities to use English as a requirement. A program of virtual friendship with an American School would be a great option, to increase their use of English.
- Even if every teacher has a different personality and it is impossible to have two of a kind. It will benefit students if their English Teachers apply more humor into their classroom. Students will feel closer to the teacher, and more comfortable using the language that the Teacher uses. Each teacher should remember how

difficult it was for some of them to make mistakes without feeling ashamed.

Laughing about mistakes made by the teacher can release a lot of tension and make students understand everyone has the right to make mistakes.

- Students and teachers are dealing with a lot of pressure and anxiety that overwhelms them. It will be beneficial to have open spaces for both to breath, meditate, and exercise without risking their health.
- Even if it is not always possible, parents should also use English in their houses with their kids, this will make them feel confident when using the language at school
- Most of the students have the virtual resources to receive their classes online, it would be a good thing to include some apps that make them practice their oral skills.
- The use of English by teachers should be a constant, not only with their students but also with their colleagues and in the case of English-speaking parents, the use should be a must.
- The last recommendation given is the most important one. The actual situation Costa Rica is living, does not give a clear overview to the education. But it gives a great opportunity for teachers to teach life skills, feelings and real-life situations through the use of oral skills, this will make students feel more comfortable about speaking in English and trying to become more fluent and able to keep a strong conversation.

It is well known that things will change from here on, the education not only in the country needs adaptation, but all around the world. Students have lost almost two years

of normality. Anglo American School is privileged with the economic situation their families have. However, there are public institutions where education has been stopped completely. Therefore, there should exist a reform in the way teachers see their students, a way inclined to patience, tolerance, care, love, fun and creativity. Costa Rica's future depends on the life skills and the tools teachers will give to the students that are living the Pandemic of Coronavirus 19.

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APENDIXES

Dear Students:

This questionnaire is part of a study being conducted by the students from the English career of the Universidad Hispanoamericana of Costa Rica to get their License.

As you research and study every day to learn new things, today I want to ask you some questions to learn new things about your feeling. Everything that you answer will help me in a university project and I will not provide any names or reveal any confidential information. If you need help with any question, please let me know.

Please read each question and follow the instructions to answer them. This is not a test and will not have any score.

Virtual Classes

1. Where do you prefer to receive classes? (Select one answer)
 - a) In my room
 - b) In the office
 - c) In the classroom
 - d) On my bed
 - e) Other: _____

2. Which things make it harder to receive virtual classes? (Select one answer)
 - a) Noise of the house
 - b) Distractors
 - c) Internet issues
 - d) Not enough equipment (computers, tablets)
 - e) Other: _____

3. How often did you use the computer before the lockdown? (Select all answers needed)
 - a) Everyday
 - b) Twice a week
 - c) Only weekends
 - d) Never
 - e) Other: _____

4. In which system do you feel happier? (Select one answer)
 - a) Virtual
 - b) Face-to-face
 - c) Hybrid

5. Which was the class that you enjoyed the most in school? (Select only one)

- a) Math
- b) Language arts
- c) Science
- d) Spanish
- e) social Studies
- f) P. E
- g) Arts
- h) Music
- i) Science Lab
- j) None

6. Which was the class that you enjoyed the most in virtual classes?

- a) Math
- b) Language arts
- c) Science
- d) Spanish
- e) Social Studies
- f) P. E
- g) Arts
- h) Music
- i) Science Lab
- j) None

7. Which of these activities, you consider hard in virtual class?

- a) Paying attention
- b) Asking questions
- c) Understanding the teacher
- d) Working alone
- e) None

8. Which was the thing that you missed the most when virtual classes started?

- a) Going to school
- b) Teacher's explanations
- c) Hands on project
- d) Group projects
- e) Other: _____

9. In which system is it easier to talk to your friends and teacher? (Select one answer)
- a) Virtual
 - b) Live
 - c) Hybrid

Virtual Classes feelings

1. Which was your first feeling when the government send everyone home during 2020? (Select as many as you need)
- a) Fright
 - b) Happiness
 - c) Sadness
 - d) Anger
 - e) Boredom
 - f) Calmness
2. After a couple of weeks of receiving classes at home which was your strongest feeling? (Select one answer)
- a) Fright
 - b) Happiness
 - c) Sadness
 - d) Anger
 - e) Boredom
 - f) Calmness
3. Which are the activities that you miss the most now? (you can select more than one)
- a) Going to school
 - b) Playing games
 - c) Not wearing a mask
 - d) Speaking with teacher
 - e) Social Contact (hugs, kisses, holding hands)
 - f) Social Gatherings
 - g) Trips
 - h) Other: _____
4. Now, that we are back at school which is your strongest feeling (Select one answer)
- a) Fright
 - b) Happiness
 - c) Sadness
 - d) Anger
 - e) Boredom
 - f) Calmness

Teacher's Personality

1. During the first lock down did you have a teacher you felt closer to? (Select one answer)
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

2. Do you have a favorite teacher? (Select one answer)
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Not favorite but I like him/her

3. Which are the characteristics this teacher has? (Select as many as you need)
 - a) Responsible
 - b) Caring
 - c) Strict
 - d) Angry
 - e) Funny
 - f) Active
 - g) Organized
 - h) Creative
 - i) Grumpy
 - j) Loud
 - k) Bad tempered
 - l) Lazy

4. Which are the characteristics this teacher has that you like? (Select as many as you need)
 - a) Responsible
 - b) Caring
 - c) Strict
 - d) Angry
 - e) Funny
 - f) Active
 - g) Organized
 - h) Creative

5. Do you feel comfortable speaking to this teacher? (Select one answer)
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

6. In which language do you speak to this teacher? (Select one answer)
 - a) Mostly Spanish
 - b) Mostly English
 - c) Both

 7. How often do you receive class with this teacher? (Select one answer)
 - a) Daily
 - b) Three times a week
 - c) Twice a week
 - d) Weekly

 8. Write in a sentence what is it that you like the most about this teacher.
-

Virtual classes likes and dislikes

1. How do you feel going back to school? (Select one answer)
 - a) Nervous
 - b) Afraid
 - c) Angry
 - d) Happy
 - e) Anxious
 - f) Other: _____

2. Which are the things that worry you the most of everyday classes?
 - a) Not learning
 - b) Forgetting things of school
 - c) The virus
 - d) The vaccination
 - e) My family's health

Teacher's Interview

This interview is part of a study being conducted by the students from the English career of the Universidad Hispanoamericana of Costa Rica to obtain the Licentiate degree in English teaching. It consists of 10 questions in total. It is confidential, and you have the right to refuse to collaborate or to withdraw at any time. However, your assistance is invaluable in helping us to understand the Role of the Affective Filter in the Oral Skills Performance have in the process of learning a foreign language.

Thank you for your collaboration!

1. Which subject matter do you teach? _____

2. How long have you been teaching _____?

3. How long have you been a teacher? _____

4. How are you feeling right now with the covid situation?

5. Which has been the toughest obstacle from 2020/2021?

6. Which was your impression of your students emotionally during the first lockdown?

7. Which was your impression of your students towards virtual classes?

8. Which elements do you consider were the hardest for you as a teacher? And for your students?

9. Do you think the Pandemic has affected the affective filter of your students?

10. Can you describe the difference of the students before and after lockdown?

Psychologist's Interview

This interview is part of a study being conducted by the students from the English career of the Universidad Hispanoamericana of Costa Rica to obtain the Licentiate degree in English teaching. It consists of 9 questions in total. It is confidential, and you have the right to refuse to collaborate or to withdraw at any time. However, your assistance is invaluable in helping us to understand the Role of the Affective Filter in the Oral Skills Performance have in the process of learning a foreign language.

Thank you for your collaboration!

1. How long have you been a psychologist at the school?_____

2. How are you feeling right now?

3. Which has been the toughest obstacle from 2020/2021?

4. Which was your impression of the students' emotional state during the first lockdown?

5. Which was your impression of the teachers during the lockdown?

6. Which elements do you consider were the hardest for the teachers during virtual classes?

7. Which characteristics do you think are important for any teacher?

8. From these characteristics that you mentioned do you considered there is one that will help the students feel less anxious and more confident with themselves?

9. Which are the characteristics that a teacher should have coming back from school after Pandemic to help her/his students feel comfortable?
