DOCTORAL (PHD) DISSERTATION

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Applying the Backward Design Model in Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A Comparison of Teachers' and Students' Perceptions in Ecuador

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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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APPLYING THE BACKWARD DESIGN MODEL IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: A COMPARISON OF TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS IN ECUADOR

Supervisor: Dr. Éva Major, Ph.D.

Budapest, 2023

Dedication

To my family, friends, and teachers.

Most remarkable to my Grandmother, for being my first teacher. To my Mother and Father for encouraging and supporting me to go on every adventure, especially this one. To my Siblings for being my best cheerleaders.

Acknowledgements

I want to thank all my teachers from Eötvös Loránd University for their help throughout this process. My special thanks go to Dr. Éva Major, DDrKrisztina Károly, Dr. Dorottya Holló, and Dr. Ágnes Albert for their countless hours of reflecting, encouraging, and patience over these years to accomplish this dream.

I thank my in-house defense committee members for being generous with their expertise and time to improve this dissertation. Finally, I would like to thank the teachers and students who participated in this study; their excitement and willingness to be part of it made completing this thesis an enjoyable experience.

Statement of Originality

By my signature below, I certify that my doctoral dissertation, entitled *Applying the Backward Design Model in Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A Comparison of Teachers' and Students' Perceptions in Ecuador,* is entirely the result of my work. In my research proposal, I have cited all the sources (printed, electronic, or oral) I have used and have consistently indicated their origin.

Date: 2023.09.22

Signature: Carlos Alvarez Llerena

Abstract

The global importance of English as a lingua franca has made the English language syllabus an integral part of all levels of education. This study aimed to explore how the Backward Design Model (BDM) application contributed to the syllabus planning and teaching-learning process of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Ecuador. This research followed a three-phase design; the first phase focused on gathering information about EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of the teaching-learning process in Ecuador and how teachers plan their English language courses. The second phase concentrated on training teachers to apply the BDM for developing their syllabus and unit plans to teach English during one semester. The third phase aimed to gain in-depth insights into the teachers' and students' perceptions of applying the BDM in their English lessons.

The participants comprised 16 Ecuadorian EFL secondary school teachers and 283 Ecuadorian EFL students. A convergent mixed method design was applied to obtain participant data by drawing inferences using qualitative and quantitative methods to triangulate information to enhance the findings' accuracy. The research instruments for getting data were teachers' interviews, students' pre-questionnaire, teachers' unit plans, teachers' reflections, focus-group interviews with teachers and students, and students' post-questionnaire.

The content and thematic analysis of the transcripts from audio-recorded interviews and the other instruments revealed that all the teachers followed the traditional or Forward Model Design when planning the syllabus. As reported by teachers, designing the unit plans based on the BDM principles was a complex but productive process since it let them ensure that the content to be taught would remain focused and organized. They also mentioned that

planning backwards is a more authentic and meaningful process that allows them to plan flexibly according to their students' realities and necessities.

Besides, they perceived that the performance tasks based on the Backward Design Model and the GRASPS framework allowed their students to make the final projects more structured, organized, and contextualized than traditional ones. All teachers mentioned creativity, autonomous learning, and lifelong learning as the skills students showed when performing tasks based on the BDM. Furthermore, the teachers and students perceived that applying the BDM helped enhance listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills; nonetheless, they manifested that writing and reading skills were the most developed.

The teachers stated that following the unit template based on the BDM principles and the WHERETO framework permitted them to align the teaching activities, strategies, and materials with the final performance tasks, which was the most remarkable difference between the BDM and FDM. However, all teachers agreed that planning using the BDM could not be applied in Ecuador because the Ministry of Education already provided them with a template to plan their syllabus, which is mandatory in public institutions. The most outstanding findings from this study suggested that applying the BDM had significantly impacted the syllabus planning and teaching-learning process in the context of EFL. Notably, the teachers' and students' positive perceptions of the application of BDM substantiated the superiority of BDM over the traditional or FDM.

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CHAPTER I

1. Introduction

In the last decade, there have been many changes in many fields of language education. Syllabus design in English as a Foreign Language instruction is not an exception. Curriculum and syllabus design concepts have been acknowledged as essential aspects of language education (Richards, 2013; Voogt et al., 2016). Rahimpour (2010) argued that there are different conflicting views on what distinguishes curriculum and syllabus. Consequently, in the first place, it is imperative to elucidate how these terms will be applied in this dissertation.

According to Macalister and Nation (2019), a curriculum is a broad blueprint that involves consideration of principles, needs, and environments that contribute to the planning of an educational program. Thus, "the responsibility for curriculum planning is spread across the levels of the classroom, school, district, and state." (Espinosa & Soto, 2015, p.35). Here and now, the term **curriculum** will be applied as a broad national guide for teachers that sets the expectations for students' learning for a particular area of study.

On the other hand, Dündar and Merç (2017) claimed that the syllabus is a part of the curriculum where the teachers decide which approaches, methods, strategies, activities, and techniques they apply in the classroom to reach the intended students' learning outcomes. In the same vein, (Nunan, 1988) stated that syllabus design is a narrow process that concerns the selection of content of the subject to be taught in the class. Henceforth, the term **syllabus** in this dissertation will be applied as a concept that summarizes the topics to be covered, or unit plans to be taught in a particular subject.

In teaching the English language, "the development and implementation of language teaching programs can be approached in several different ways, each of which has different implications for curriculum design." (Richards, 2013, p.5). She pointed out that the syllabus design could be done by applying three main approaches: The Forward Design Model (FMD), the Central Design Model (CDM), and the Backward Design Model (BDM). Due to this, teachers are considered the essential elements when designing the syllabus for their subjects and connecting them with the main requirements of the national curriculum (Espinosa & Soto, 2015).

Slavych (2020) argued that the Forward Design Model is a traditional course or syllabi design that begins with the specifications of learning objectives and content to be taught, then moves on to planning the teaching process, and finishes with designing the assessment of students' learning outcomes. On the other hand, regarding the Central Design Model, the author claimed that the instructor plans their class around the teaching process based on learning tasks; this process guides the development of the content to be taught and the assessment of students' learning outcomes.

Finally, as shown in Figure 1, Richards (2013) stated that the Backward Design Model "starts from the specification of learning outcomes and decisions on methodology and syllabus are developed from the learning outcomes." (p.5).

Figure 1

The Backward Design Model

outcomes content process

Note. From Richards (2013).

In Ecuador, EFL teachers plan their syllabus by focusing on a language-centered approach and following the sequence of contents established in the teachers' guide textbooks (Alvarez & Ha, 2022; Rea & Sánchez, 2018). The teachers "are required to develop students' communicative competence, but the final exams are predominantly grammar-oriented." (Acosta & Cajas, 2018, p.102). Therefore, Ecuador's English Language Teaching syllabus planning is mainly associated with the Forward and Central Design Model.

In 2016, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) implemented the current National Curriculum for English as a Foreign Language with new methodologies and strategies to enhance students' English proficiency. Nevertheless, despite the continuous endeavors of MINEDUC to improve EFL education in Ecuador, the expected results have not been obtained because of constraints such as the lack of teacher training and professional development and the heavy load of extracurricular activities (Alvarez & Ha, 2022).

Machado (2019) stated that compared to Latin American countries, Ecuadorian students from secondary and university levels received the lowest English proficiency score in a standardized international exam provided by the English First Organization (EF) in 2019. Therefore, the ineffective connection between the EFL national curriculum principles and

teaching practices and the existent disconnection between language curriculum, policy, and actual classroom reality are essential factors that affect teaching EFL (Salinas, 2017; Zhang & Liu, 2014).

After a detailed exploration of the existing research on ELT and EFL in Ecuador, it is noticeable that too little attention has been paid to the investigation of syllabus planning in teaching EFL. There is still a broad gap in how the syllabus planning based on the BDM can be applied to link the Ecuadorian national curriculum's main requirements with the classroom teaching practices to improve students' language achievements. Consequently, the lack of research in this area encouraged the researcher to conduct the present study to explore and reveal teachers' and students' perceptions of applying the BDM in the context of teaching EFL.

1.2 The Aims of the Research

Regardless of the studies conducted to probe the effectiveness of the application of the BDM in teaching EFL, Hodaeian and Biria (2015) highlighted the significance of replication of studies to use findings for improving and developing the EFL teaching process.

In the case of the Ecuadorian context in secondary schools, applying the BDM to teaching and learning EFL has yet to be researched. Thus, this study aims to explore, reveal, and understand teachers' and students' perceptions of the application of the BDM in the context of teaching EFL to:

1. explore, describe, and interpret teachers' and students' perceptions regarding applying the BDM in teaching and learning EFL.

2. find out teachers' and students' insights on the application of syllabus design and performance tasks based on the BDM in teaching and learning English and

3. provide the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education, curriculum designers, policymakers, and EFL teachers with a syllabus design based on the BDM to effectively connect the EFL national curriculum requirements and the teaching practices in the classroom.

1.3 The Organization of the Thesis

The remainder of this dissertation is divided as follows: *Chapter 1* points out the general introduction and the established aims of this study.

Chapter 2 presents the underlying foundation for this research and provides a relevant literature review related to applying the BDM in teaching and learning EFL. This chapter explains the difference between the three language syllabus approaches that Richards (2013) established: the Forward, Central, and Backward Design Models. Furthermore, it displays a theoretical analysis of the BDM and how its implementation has impacted EFL classrooms. Finally, this chapter briefly introduces the Ecuadorian education system and a review of the English National Curriculum and coursebooks provided by the Ministry of Education for elementary, primary, and secondary public schools.

Chapter 3 presents the overall research methodology employed in the three phases of this study: teacher training focused on the BDM, syllabus design process, and the application of the BDM in EFL secondary schools. Besides, it addresses the research methodology on which the empirical foundation of this study was built to respond to the research aims. This chapter introduces this study's research and sub-research questions and continues by

justifying the rationale for employing the research method approach and the instruments for data collection.

Chapters 4, 5, and *6* explain in-depth and justify the integration of specific research methods, participants, data collection instruments, data analysis, and discussion of the obtained findings from the three phases of the study.

Chapter 7 brings together and discusses the main findings of the three phases of the study to pinpoint the main novelties and contributions to the research field in EFL education. Therefore, this research offers theoretical and practical contributions for improving EFL teaching and learning practices to provide students with more contextualized and authentic ways to improve their English proficiency and other skills such as learning autonomy, creativity, and lifelong learning. Furthermore, it attempts to provide the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education with another way for EFL teachers to design language courses or units by aligning the National Curriculum requirements with teaching practices and students' expected results. Finally, this chapter also points out the study's limitations and suggests potential future work related to this topic.

1.4 Review of Related Literature and Research

This section provides an overview of the topics and terms that fall within the scope of the study. It includes relevant information about curriculum, syllabus design approaches, its characteristics, and some previous studies carried out by different researchers in various contexts with a similar focus to this study.

Besides, this chapter provides a theoretical framework to support the research aims concerning applying the Backward Design Model in teaching English as a Foreign Language at secondary public schools in Ecuador.

1.5 Syllabus Design Approaches in Language Teaching

Teachers must plan their courses intentionally to ensure students learn the essential information, develop their skills, and guarantee that any externally mandated standards are met (Slavych, 2020). According to Richards (2013), the planning and implementation of language teaching programs can be addressed in three curriculum approaches: the Forward, Central, and Backward Design models. These three approaches differ in how the input or syllabus content, process or methodology, and output or assessment are addressed when designing the overall course or units. Thus, "the choice of either one of those approaches is determined by the focus of the syllabus." (Somé-Guiébré, 2018, p.73).

Teachers are in charge of deciding which could be the most suitable approach to design their syllabus according to their teaching context. As shown in Figure 2, Richards (2013) asserted that **input** refers to the linguistic content of the course, **process** denotes the types of learning activities, procedures, and techniques teachers use to teach, and **output** refers to students' learning outcomes. Consequently, the input is related to the course syllabus; the process focuses on the language teaching methodologies applied in the classroom, and the output deals with students' learning objectives that must be achieved at the end of a lesson, unit, or course.

Figure 2

Dimensions of a Curriculum

Input	Process	Output
Syllabus	Methodology	Learning outcomes

Note: Adapted from Richards (2013).

These three design approaches could be adopted in educational settings according to the context and reality of each institution. However, the FDM is widely applied in teaching EFL due to the linear relationship of the input, process, and output in the syllabus planning. According to Crabbe (2007), syllabus planning primarily provides a range of learning opportunities that link the activities and learning goals. Thus, the three design approaches do not have to be considered different entities because they can intersect in other areas of the same picture.

1.5.1 The Forward Design Model (FDM)

The FDM is a traditional course design conducted in teacher education programs for over 50 years (Tyler, 1969). The "Forward design is based on the assumption that input, process, and output are related in a linear fashion" (Hosseini et al., 2019, p.38). In other words, the FDM starts with syllabus planning, moves to methodology, and is followed by an assessment of learning outcomes. Therefore, the instruction content is established before choices about methods and output are determined (Tung & Minh, 2020).

The FDM syllabus is centered on the content and the language to be covered. The methodology is transmissive and teacher-directed (Somé-Guiébré, 2018). The FDM is a

sequence process from simple to complex activities; it explicitly presents rules and imitations of language models, emphasizing accuracy (Mills et al., 2019; Richards, 2013).

Furthermore, the FDM "may be preferred in circumstances where a mandated curriculum is in place, where teachers have little choice over what and how to teach, where teachers rely mainly on textbooks and commercial materials rather than teacher-designed resources, where class size is large and where tests and assessment are designed centrally rather than by individual teachers." (Jjingo & Visser, 2018, p.28). Figure 3 displays how the syllabus designing process based on the FDM is conducted.

Figure 3

The Forward Design Model
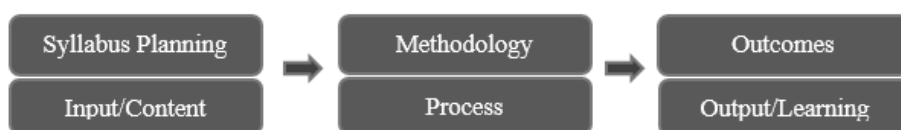
Note: Adapted from Richards (2013).

1.5.2 The Central Design Model (CDM)

The CDM is an activity-based model where learning is based on constructing new knowledge through participation in specific education and social contexts (Richards, 2013). It is also known as the process or negotiated syllabus since learners negotiate the content to be taught, and the methodology is learner-centered (Clarke, 1991). The task is considered the most significant aspect of the instructional design process, from determining learners' needs to measuring learners' achievements (Rahimpour, 2008).

The course design starts with selecting teaching activities, techniques, and methods; after that, the input and output issues are not specified in advance and are addressed as the syllabus is implemented (Somé-Guiébré, 2018). Figure 4 shows how the course planning is executed by applying the CDM. Richards (2013) claimed that activities are the vision of the class, where methodology includes the practice of English skills and real-life situations.

Figure 4

The Central Design Model
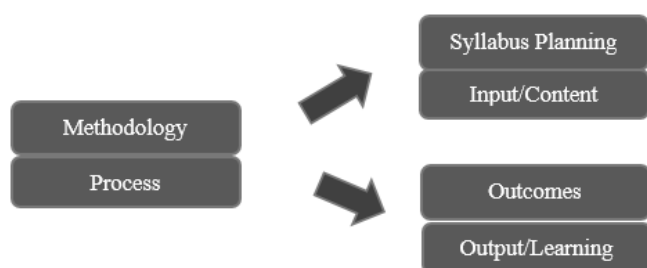
Note: Adapted from Richards (2013).

1.5.3 The Backward Design Model (BDM)

Wiggins and McTighe (2005) stated that Understanding by Design (UbD) offers a backward planning process that guides syllabus design, assessment, and instruction, focusing on teaching and assessing for understanding and learning transfer. This type of planning is often used in conjunction with syllabus design and instructional design, which covers designing or developing the syllabus for students to increase and enhance learning experiences for acquiring knowledge and skills needed to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

This idea of planning backwards from desired results is not new; according to Ullaha and Javed (2019), Ralph Tyler is a pioneer model. Tyler (1969) linked his model's foundation with the Product model for the current Learning Outcomes Curriculum, later called the

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Backward Design Model. Thenceforth, Tyler (1950) described this approach as an effective process for focusing on setting objectives, evaluating progress, selecting learning experiences, and organizing instruction that integrates national goals with students' needs.

Consequently, the BDM concept is a unit or course planning approach logically inferred from the results sought, not derived from the methods, books, and activities teachers are more comfortable working with. Accordingly, the BDM is an approach to designing a curriculum, teaching programs, or units that begin with the end in mind and plans toward the end (McTighe & Willis, 2019). As shown in Figure 5, Richards (2013) stated that the BDM starts from the specification of learning outcomes, and decisions on methodology and syllabus are developed from the learning outcomes." (p.5). Wiggins and McTighe (2005) established three stages for planning backwards: identifying desired results, determining acceptable evidence, and designing learning experiences and instruction. Therefore, every task and piece of instruction has a purpose that fits with the course's learning goals.

Figure 5
The Backward Design Model
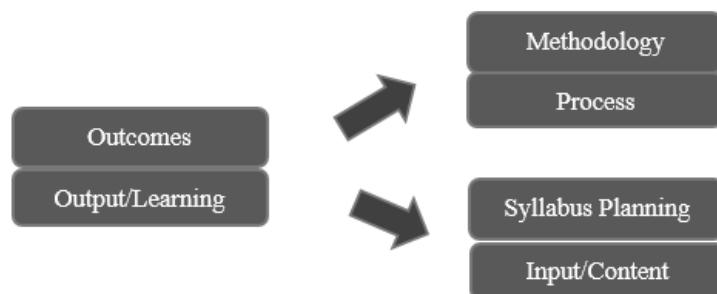
Note: Adapted from Richards (2013).

1.6 The Backward Design Model in Education

The BDM has been applied during the last decades in different fields of education. For instance, Economics (Lu & Teng, 2022), Medicine (Emory, 2014), Computer Education (Lee & Koo, 2015), Architecture and Engineering (Sideeg, 2016), Social Studies and Language Arts (Childre et al., 2009), Accounting and Finance (Fischer, 2016), Mathematics (De las Peñas et al., 2021), and Linguistics (Hodaeian & Biria, 2015; Hosseini et al., 2019; Paesani, 2017).

This model advocates for teachers to develop their syllabi, teaching programs, courses, or units by establishing a transfer goal – what they want students to be able to do with the content they are learning (Alvarez, 2020; Guillot et al., 2020). Therefore, teaching is not about engaging students in exciting content but ensuring they have the necessary resources to understand how to progress their knowledge.

The main focus of the BDM is twofold. First, it intends to support teachers in designing teaching courses, syllabi, or units, focusing on developing and deepening students' understanding of essential ideas (McTighe & Wiggins, 2004). Second, it aims to achieve student learning and enduring understanding by designing educational experiences to target students' outcomes and designing the syllabus and instruction based on them.

Aiming to provide a better explanation of the primary purpose of the BDM, researchers have applied various analogies such as planning the purchase of a house, going on vacation, building a house, or using a GPS device in the car (Clayton, 2011; Fox & Doherty, 2012; Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). Through these analogies, the researchers linked

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the BDM with people's experiences, where, to achieve those big goals, they have to start with the big idea before thinking about how they will accomplish those aims.

Furthermore, planning backwards tries to avoid the *twin sins* of traditional design. According to Wiggins and McTighe (2005), the twin sins are related to an **activity focus** (often activities that are fun and interesting but do not have any intellectual purpose) and **coverage-focused** (marching through the textbook by attempting to cover every piece of factual information). Consequently, according to Wiggins and McTighe (2011), in the BDM planning:

> We do not start with content; we begin with what students are expected to be able to do with the content. What would real use of the content look like? What should students ultimately be able to say and do with content if they "get it"? And if that is what real learning looks like, what should be taught – and how – to make it most likely that the teaching leads to fluent, flexible, and lasting learning? (p. 7).

Besides, McTighe and Willis (2019) claimed that the BDM is based on seven fundamental tenets:

> 1) Learning is enhanced when teachers think purposefully about curriculum planning.
>
> 2) The framework helps focus curriculum and teaching on developing and deepening students' understanding and transfer of learning.
>
> 3) Understanding is revealed when students can make sense of and transfer their learning through authentic performance. Six facets of understanding – the capacity to *explain, apply, shift, perspective, empathize,* and *self-assess* – can serve as understanding indicators.
>
> 4) Effective curriculum is planned *backwards* from long-term-out comes a three-stage design process. This process helps avoid three common educational problems: (a)

treating the textbook as the curriculum rather than a source; (b) activity-oriented teaching in which no clear priorities and purposes are apparent; and (c) test prep, in which students practice the format of standardized tests while concentrating only on tested content.

5) Teachers are coaches of understanding, not mere purveyors of content knowledge, skill, or activity. They focus on ensuring that transfer of learning happens, rather than just assuming that students learned what was taught.

6) Regular reviews of curriculum against design standards enhance curricular quality, leading to deeper learning; at the same time, concomitant reviews of student work in professional learning communities (PLCs) inform needed adjustments in curriculum and instruction to maximize student learning.

7) Teachers, schools, and districts can "work smarter" and more effectively by sharing their curriculum and assessment design with others. (p.22-23).

1.6.1 Philosophical Foundations of the Backward Design Model

The BDM is not a new educational approach. Even though Wiggins and McTighe introduced this term in 1998, Tyler (1950) described the logic of the BDM clearly and concisely more than 50 years ago:

Educational objectives become the criteria by which materials are selected, content is outlined, instructional procedures are developed, and tests and examinations are prepared… Hence, if we are to study an educational program systematically and intelligently, we must first be sure about the educational objectives aimed at… The purpose of a statement of objectives is to indicate the kinds of changes in the student

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to be brought about so that instructional activities can be planned and developed in a way likely to attain these objectives (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998, p.3, 45).

Hence, Wiggins and McTighe (2005) claimed that the BDM advocates reversing traditional planning by:

starting with the end (desired results) and then identifying the evidence necessary to determine that results have been achieved (assessment). With the results and assessment clearly specified, the designers determine the necessary (enabling) knowledge and skill, and only then, the teaching needed to equip students to perform (p.338).

Some research pieces have shown the strong connections between the BDM principles with Bloom's Taxonomy and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (Michael & Libarkin, 2016; Obada et al., 2021; Sideeg, 2016). These connections are mostly related to increasing the rigor of the course, the frame of collaborative work and discussion, designing activities to help personalize learning, planning project-based learning, and evaluating the complexity of assignments.

Besides, the association of the BDM, Bloom's Taxonomy, and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory has demonstrated that it "helps educators identify the big ideas that they want students to come to understand at a deep level so that they can transfer their learning to new situations" (McTighe & Willis, 2019, p.27). Hence, transferability, application, and authenticity are addressed in connecting these three concepts.

1.6.2 Bloom's Taxonomy

Bloom's Taxonomy provides a framework or organization for classifying and measuring educational objectives. "This taxonomy organizes educational goals into a hierarchy whose four principles emphasize the cognitive process along with psychological, behavioural, and procedural processes." (Villacís & Hidalgo, 2019, p.51). It also provides a framework for classifying statements of what is expected or intended for students to learn due to immersion in the teaching process (Krathwohl, 2002).

Bloom (1956) proposed an educational model for categorizing degrees of cognitive complexity of assessment items and tasks according to six levels of complexity. "The lowest level is *knowledge,* followed by *comprehension* and *application.* The next three levels are *analysis, synthesis,* and *evaluation.*" (Chambers, 2019, p.80). Bloom's taxonomy encourages learners to move up the pyramid to higher-order thinking and cognitive skills. Thereby, students can demonstrate what they have learned to build something tangible or conceptual or use their knowledge to solve new problems (Gul et al., 2020).

Krathwohl (2002) modified the taxonomy somewhat to "Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating" (p.4). The most significant change was adding *Creation* as the highest level of Bloom's Taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002). Therefore, producing or creating a new or original work is at the top of the taxonomy, allowing students to transfer their knowledge in different contexts and situations.

This hierarchical taxonomy highlights that learning at the higher levels depends on having attained prerequisite knowledge and skills at lower levels to reach higher levels systematically (Smyshlyak, 2020). As shown in Figure 6, Armstrong (2016) claimed that

"the categories after Knowledge were presented as skills and abilities, understanding that knowledge was the necessary precondition for putting these skills and abilities into practice" (p.1).

Figure 6

The Blooms' Taxonomy
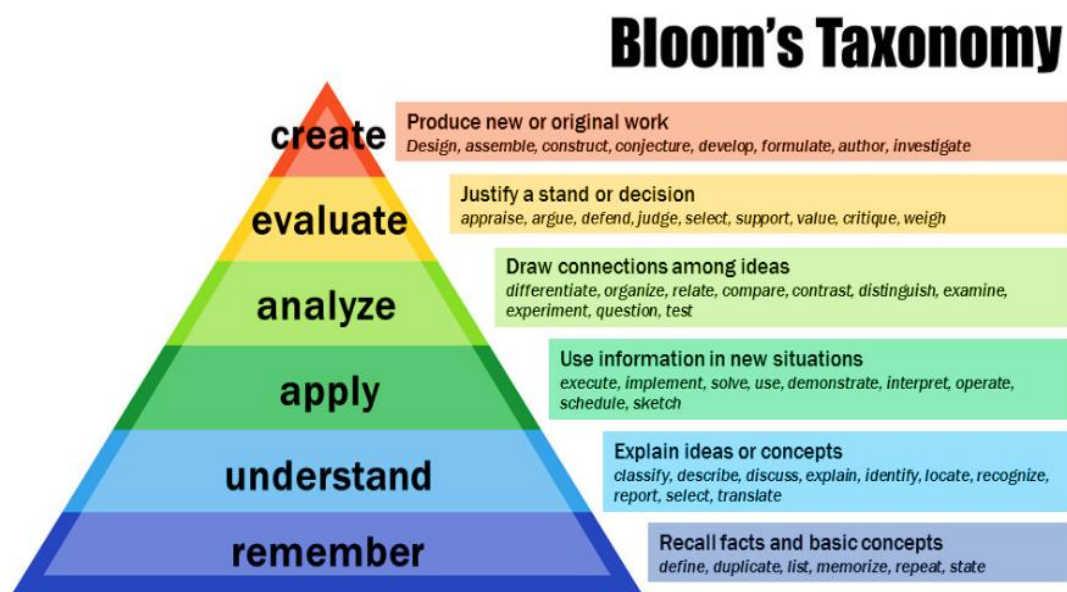
Note: Armstrong (2006).

Teachers must create their syllabi, units, and lesson plans when teaching EFL. In this case, Bloom's taxonomy provides a broader vision to teachers about students' learning that involves not only acquiring the knowledge but using this knowledge in a variety of new situations (Mohammadi et al., 2015). Therefore, by performing authentic tasks, EFL students can improve their critical thinking and primary language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Mizbani & Chalak, 2017).

1.6.3 Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky introduced the sociocultural theory in the 1920s and 1930s. This theory highlights the importance of sociocultural forces in shaping a child's development and learning (Kozulin, 2016). Thus, the child's education is initiated by interaction and social and cultural influences acquired from parents, teachers, and more able peers (Panhwar et al., 2016).

The Vygotskian theory and the constructivist approach have been related to language pedagogy. Awadelkarin (2021) stated that "Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of learning would presumably bear all the contours of scaffolding essential for English language learners" (p.829). Bruner introduced the term scaffolding in educational contexts in the 1970s. According to Cho and Jonassen (2002), scaffolding is "a form of assistance provided to a learner by more capable teachers or peers that helps learners perform a task that would normally not be accomplished by working independently" (p.165).

Mahan (2020) asserted that the scaffolding process in teaching EFL supports students' language learning. For instance, Faraj (2015) explained that when applying scaffolding techniques, the teachers, step by step, provide the students with enough assistance to build up their language skills and then gradually transfer the responsibility to the students for completing the task. Thus, scaffolding strategies help students internalize new information and become independent and self-regulated learners.

Likewise, Cole and Scribner (1978) claimed that the learning and development process could not occur in isolation; hence, collaboration occupies a central position in the procedure. Collaborative learning makes students support one another in achieving the

desired goal. To articulate the space in which learning occurs, "one of the influential concepts of sociocultural theory in language acquisition is the zone of proximal development (Amerian et al., 2014, p.1). As shown in Figure 7, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a concept that outlines the distance between the level of actual development as an independent learner and the level of potential development achieved by solving problems with the support of an adult guide and facilitator or in collaboration with peers who are comparatively more capable. They are called more knowledgeable others (MKO) (Vygotsky, 1978). The ZPD is the space between what a student can do without assistance and what the student can do with teacher guidance or in collaboration with more capable classmates.

Figure 7

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development
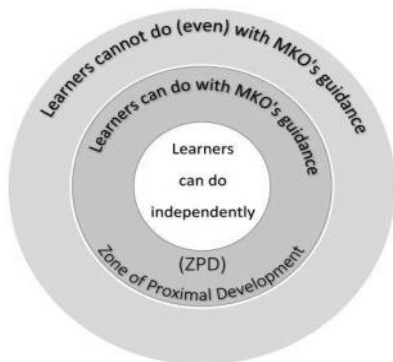
Note: Sideeg (2016).

Kozulin (2016) asserted that Vygotsky's system "has generated several applying programs offering new techniques for the enhancement of students' cognitive functions, development of metacognition and integration of cognitive elements into instructional practice" (p.7). These programs facilitate teachers using the Theory of Constructivism in a class environment where student learning is scaffolded (Cole & Scribner, 1978; Rababah & Almwajeh, 2018). Consequently, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and ZPD are effective

methods that can be applied in EFL classrooms to increase students' academic and social support and, as a result, their English and collaborative skills.

1.6.4 Connections between the Backward Design Model, Bloom's Taxonomy, and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

Through a deep examination of studies that focus on applying the Backward Design Model, Bloom's Taxonomy, and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory for educational purposes, it was noticed that these terms are linked due to similar characteristics that these concepts have. The primary connections are related to crafting and aligning learning outcomes with assessment and teaching materials to help students achieve the desired goals in each lesson, unit, or course.

Regarding **crafting learning outcomes,** the primary goal of the BDM is "developing and deepening student understanding – the ability to make meaning of learning via "big ideas" and to transfer learning" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011, p.3). This process involves creating well-crafted, specific, concrete, measurable, achievable, and relevant objectives. Thus, instead of thinking about what the course will do, teachers need to focus on what students will be able to do after taking the course. The BDM provides a GRASPS element, which the teacher uses to well-craft the tasks students have to perform at the end of the unit or course. The GRASPS element will be explained in depth in the next section.

Similarly, Bloom's Taxonomy advocates for teachers to have a "broader vision of learning that includes acquiring the knowledge and being able to use the knowledge in a variety of new situations" (Mohammadi et al., 2015, p.10). This taxonomy asks teachers to challenge students to use higher-order thinking skills where they can analyze, apply, evaluate,

and create authentic tasks as evidence to demonstrate their learning. Consequently, the BDM and Bloom's taxonomy similarity is that both approaches require teachers to design their courses by focusing on how students will demonstrate and transfer their knowledge and understanding to new contexts.

Furthermore, the second similarity between the BDM and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory is related to the **alignment of learning outcomes** with the assessment and teaching materials where students must participate in different social and collaborative activities to transfer knowledge and understanding to new contexts. The idea of the BDM is to teach toward the desired goal, which usually ensures that the content taught remains focused and organized. Thus, the syllabus design should be focused on an effective learning plan to avoid activity-oriented and coverage-focused teaching (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

Wu et al. (2019) claimed that the BDM allows teachers to design the learning process by drawing their attention to specific learning activities and scaffolding learning to achieve students' learning outcomes. Consequently, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and scaffolding learning are linked with the BDM because they ask teachers to provide students with organized and specific learning activities and materials to help them achieve their learning goals efficiently.

The BDM and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory approach align philosophical and instructional goals that allow instructors to select and organize high-quality activities and materials matching individual and contextual student needs (Armes, 2020).

Furthermore, the "backward design is an approach to conceptualize and construct a curriculum that helps scaffold students in comprehending and responding to complex tasks

to become self-directed learners" (McTighe & Wiggins, 2012, as cited in Pradhan, 2021). The students can collaborate to support each other in accomplishing the desired objectives of each unit or course.

Sideeg (2016) claimed that using the taxonomy with the BDM and Vygotsky's ZPD can draw a roadmap for crafting students' learning outcomes, an essential aspect of effective course design. In teaching EFL, Kaivanpanah and Langari (2020) asserted that implementing Bloom-based instruction supported by Vygotskian scaffolding can create an environment to cultivate learners' social skills to achieve students' learning outcomes. Thus, EFL students can enhance their language learning by working collaboratively and supporting them to solve problems, complete tasks, or learn new concepts.

The term *create* from Bloom's Taxonomy better fits the meaning of the term *application* used on the BDM and the performance assessment movement in general (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Therefore, the BDM, Bloom's Taxonomy, and the Vygotsky Sociocultural Theory are related to crafting clear learning objectives and outcomes, aligning assessment and evaluation methodologies, and materials and activities where students work collaboratively to transfer their knowledge to different contexts. Figure 8 illustrates the primary connections between the features of the BDM, Bloom's Taxonomy, and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory.

Figure 8

Connections Between the Backward Design Model, Bloom's Taxonomy, and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory


```
                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
                    │ Crafting Learning Outcomes │
                    └──────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────┐         ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Authentic Performance Tasks  │         │ Zone Proximal Development    │
│ The GRASPS Frame             │         │ Scaffolding Learning         │
│ Understanding/Transferability│         │                              │
└─────────────────────────────┘         └─────────────────────────────┘

                                         VYGOTSKY'S
  BLOOMS' TAXONOMY  ◄──  BACKWARD DESIGN  ──►  SOCIOCULTURAL
                              MODEL                THEORY

┌─────────────────────────────┐         ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Effectively align objectives │         │ Activity-oriented instruction│
│ to assessment, techniques,   │         │ Collaborative Learning       │
│ and standards                │         │                              │
│ The WHERETO Framework        │         └─────────────────────────────┘
└─────────────────────────────┘

                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
                    │ Alignment of learning outcomes │
                    └──────────────────────────┘
```
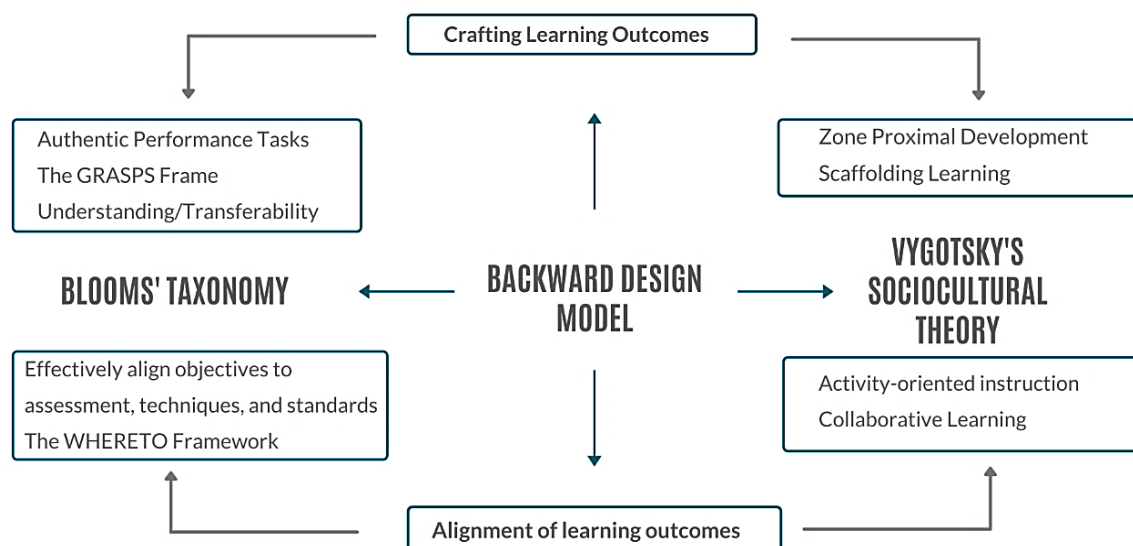
1.7 The Backward Design Model Process

Wiggins and McTighe (1998) introduced the BDM as an approach to course or unit plans where the students' learning outcomes are the principal aspects of teaching planning. They indicated that the BDM refers to planning the course or unit backwards by establishing the desired results or learning outcomes before choosing the type of assessment and instructional methodologies to be applied in the learning process. Thus, the BDM is "a method for planning learning that pursues specific understanding" (Hideaki, 2021, p.32).

The BDM advocates for teachers to start planning based on the desired results or learning outcomes they expect from their students before thinking about the activities and learning experiences they will apply in their teaching instruction. Furthermore, the BDM

emphasized authenticity and transferability of knowledge by asking students to perform final tasks based on real or simulated situations.

As shown in Figure 9, Wiggins and McTighe (1998) established a three-stage backward design process used to plan a course or units that include desired understandings, assessment and evidence to show enduring understanding, performance tasks that require the transfer of knowledge, and alignment of teaching materials and activities for learning experiences.

Figure 9

Stages of the Backward Desing Model
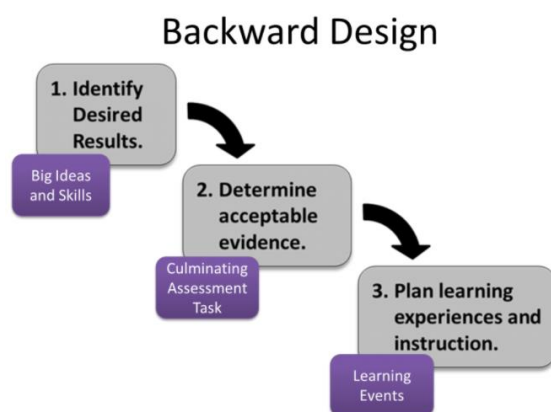
Note: Wiggins & McTighe (2005).

The first stage deals with identifying the desired results (making a video, designing a brochure, or performing a recycling campaign) that teachers want their students to know and be able to do after they complete the program, course, or unit. These desired results are based on performance tasks (designing a brochure that provides information on how to prevent COVID-19 in school) that are defined as authentic tasks where students demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, and skills by performing real or simulated tasks to an identified audience (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

The second stage focuses on determining assessment evidence (rubrics, homework, self-assessment, observations) to validate and check if students have acquired enough knowledge and understanding to achieve the desired results established in stage one. This stage involves integrating various instruments to assess students' performance during the learning process.

Wiggins and McTighe (2005) claimed that one core assessment of students' learning outcomes is developing a performance-based authentic evaluation, which should be based on the GRASPS framework. The GRASPS acronym stands for Goal, Role, Audience, Situation, Performance, and Standards, which guides teachers in designing authentic performance tasks to engage students through contextualized learning.

Consequently, Wiggins and McTighe (2005) explained that the authentic performance tasks based on the GRASPS framework are "distinguished from other types of assessments by their particular features… Students develop tangible products or performances for an identified audience… Furthermore, evaluative criteria and performance standards are appropriated to the task – and known by the student in advance" (p.157).

Carlson and Marshall (2015) claimed that "an important part of GRASPS is to place students in a real-world scenario where they produce artifacts that reflect both the content of the course and what they may need to produce in an authentic setting" (p.5).

As shown in Table 1, Hulme et al. (2014) explained how this acronym is employed:

Table 1

Assessment Tasks via G.R.A.S.P.S.

Goal	Provide a statement of the task.
Role	Define the role of the students.
Audience	Identify the target audience.
Situation	Set the context of the scenario.
Product	Clarify what the students will create.
Standards	Issue rubrics to measure success.

Note: Hulme et al. (2014).

Finally, the third stage emphasizes learning experiences and instruction teachers will apply to lead students to achieve the desired results. Teachers prioritize the content to teach and students' learning experiences during the learning process. The learning experiences and instruction are based on the WHERETO framework; this acronym is used for planning steps to satisfy the requirements of the instructional course or unit (Hulme et al., 2014). This framework is used in Stage 3 to cause students learning, performance success, and goals accomplishments (Wiggings & McTighe, 2011).

As shown in Figure 10, the WHERETO framework summarizes the key elements that should be found in your learning plan, given the desired results and assessment drafted in Stages 1 and 2 (Wiggins & McTighe, 2012).

Figure 10

WHERETO Considerations for the Learning Planning
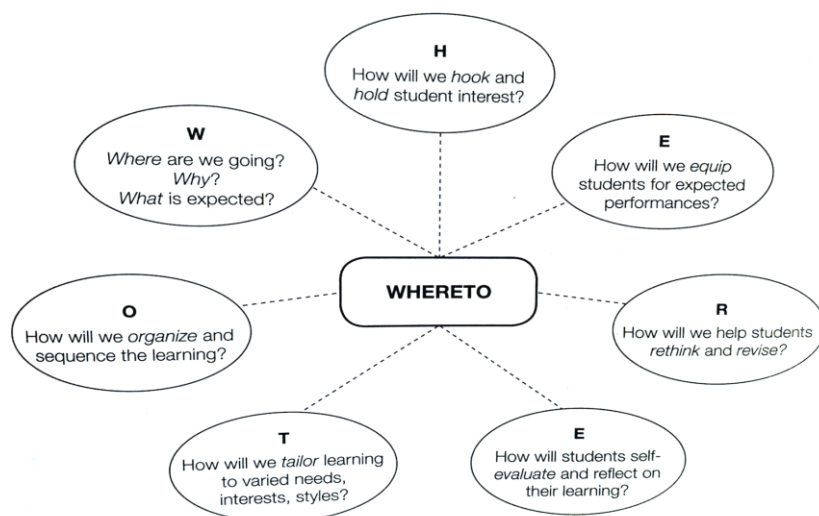
Note: Wiggins & McTighe (2012).

      The three stages provided by the BDM template could be applied to developing unit plans for teaching (micro-level) or larger-scale curriculum development for courses and syllabi (macro-level) (McTighe & Wiggins, 2004; Whitehouse, 2014). This template enables teachers to provide goal-oriented instruction and student-centered learning objectives rather than solely focusing on the curriculum's national standards.

      Table 2 displays the unit plan template provided by Wiggins and McTighe (2005) to cover the stages of the BDM. It provides a preliminary look at the BDM process in a one-page version that contains this model's main elements. "The form of template offers a means of succinctly presenting to design unit; its function is to guide the design process. When completed, the template can be used for self-assessment, peer review, and sharing the completed unit design with others" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p.23).

Table 2

UbD Template (version 1.0) with Design Questions for Teachers

Title:		Subject/Course:
Topic:	Grade:	Designer(s):

Stage 1- Desired Results

Established Goals:
- What relevant goals (e.g., content standards, course or program objectives, learning outcomes) will this design address?

Understandings: Students will understand that… • What are the big ideas? • What specific understandings about them are desired? • What misunderstandings are predictable?	Essential Questions: • What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?
Students will know… • What key knowledge will students acquire as a result of this unit? • Think in terms of nouns and in terms of content	Students will be able to … • What key skills will students acquire as a result of this unit? • Think in terms of verbs.

Stage 2- Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks: • Through what authentic performance tasks will students demonstrate the desired understandings? • By what criteria will performances of understandings be judged?	Other Evidence: • Through what other evidence (e.g., quizzes, tests, academic prompts, observations, homework, journals) will students demonstrate achievement of desired results? • How will students reflect upon and self–assess their learning?

Stage 3- Learning Plan

Learning Activities:
What learning experiences and instruction will enable students to achieve the desired results? How will the design
W= Help students to know **W**here the unit is going and **W**hat is expected? Help the teacher know **W**here the students are coming from (prior knowledge, interests)?
H= **H**ook all students and **H**old their interest?
E= **E**quip students, help them **E**xperience the key ideas and **E**xplore the issues?
R= Provide opportunites to **R**ethink and **R**evise their understandings and work?
E= Allow students to **E**valuate their work and its implications?
T= Be **T**ailored (personalized) to the different needs, interests, and abilities of learners?
O= Be **O**rganized to maximize initial and sustained engagement as well as effective learning?

Note: Wiggins & McTighe (2005).

1.7.1 Stage 1: Identify Desired Results

In the BDM, "the first step is all about defining desired results of a lesson or program." (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p.49). In Stage 1, "there are several major components to consider when planning a UbD unit, reflective of the complexity of long-term academic objectives" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011, p.14). These academic objectives or desired outcomes guide the planning process by asking several questions, including "(a) what should students know, understand, and be able to demonstrate? (b) what content is important for understanding? and (c) What enduring or long-term understandings are desired?" (Emory, 2014).

McTighe and Willis (2019) argued that:

The first stage in the design process calls for clarity about instruction priorities and long-term goals. In Stage 1, we consider the *big ideas* we want our students to come to understand and the long-term transfer goals that those ideas enable. We examined established content standards and related curriculum outcomes, such as 21st-century skills, to identify the big ideas to be understood and the related transfer performances. We frame companion *essential questions* around these targeted *understanding* and *transfer goals.* Finally, we identify specific knowledge and skill objectives (p.29).

As seen in Figure 12, concepts such as *understanding, essential questions, acquisition, meaning-making,* and *transfer* are mentioned in this stage.

Table 3

The UbD Template, Version 2.0: Stage 1

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3" style="text-align:center">Stage 1 – Desired Results</th></tr>
<tr>
<td>Established Goals

What content standards and program- or mission-related- goal(s) will this unit address?

What habits of mind and cross-disciplinary goals(s) – for example, 21st-century skills and core competencies – will this unit address?</td>
<td colspan="2" style="text-align:center">Transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">Students will be able to use their learning independently...
What kinds of long-term independent accomplishments are desired?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2" style="text-align:center">Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDERSTANDINGS
Students will understand that…
What specifically do you want students to understand?
What inferences should they make?</td>
<td>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
Students will keep considering…
What thought-provoking questions will foster inquiry, meaning-making, and transfer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2" style="text-align:center">Acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will know…
What facts and basic concepts should students know and be able to recall?</td>
<td>Students will be skilled at…
What discrete skills and processes should students be able to use?</td>
</tr>
</table>

Note: Wiggins & McTighe (2011).

1.7.1.1 Transfer

The first element in Stage 1 is related to established learning goals, *big ideas, or desired results.* These big ideas "typically include national, state, local or professional standards; course or program objectives; and district learning outcomes." (McTighe & Wiggins, 2004, p.60). The big ideas can help establish learning priorities and clarify goals to serve teachers as a "tool for sharpening thinking, connecting discrepant pieces of knowledge, and equipping learners for transferable applications" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p.70).

The big ideas or desired results are the enduring understandings that learners should remember long after the instruction concludes (Mills et al., 2019). Brown (2004) explained that enduring understandings are "statements that clearly articulate big ideas that have lasting

value beyond the classroom and that students can revisit throughout their lives" (p.17). Hence, by identifying the enduring concepts and desired student outcomes, they can transfer what they have learned to new contexts or disciplines (Roth, 2017; Saeed & Javed, 2021; Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

The big ideas provide a conceptual lens for prioritizing content, serve as an organizer for connecting important facts, skills, and actions, and transfer knowledge to other contexts (McTighe & Wiggins, 2004). Therefore, the key to the BDM is that teachers understand that they must be designed backwards from a complex long-term performance where content is used in real situations.

1.7.1.2 Meaning

The enduring understanding is the central aspect in meaning-making the concepts used in authentic scenarios. They should (1) focus on more significant concepts, processes, and principles that will typically be more difficult for students to comprehend and will harbor misconceptions, (2) have application value beyond the classroom and into the future, and (3) engage students and sustain inquiry (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998, as cited in Kantorski et al., 2019).

McTighe and Willis (2019) provided a difference between knowledge and understanding to explain understanding better. According to the authors, *knowledge* refers to "knowing" facts, vocabulary, and basic concepts, while *understanding* involves comprehension of abstract and transferrable ideas; e.g., "a student can know the fact (e.g., the date of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* Supreme Court ruling) without understanding its meaning." (p.67).

When deciding which topics to cover and develop, it is essential to remember that in terms of learning, less is often more; it is necessary to prioritize the content that needs to be taught (Isecke, 2011). Figure 11 presents the three-layer conceptual model filters to identify learning goals and clarify content priorities.

Figure 11

Stage 1. Identifying Desired Results and Establishing Curricular Priorities
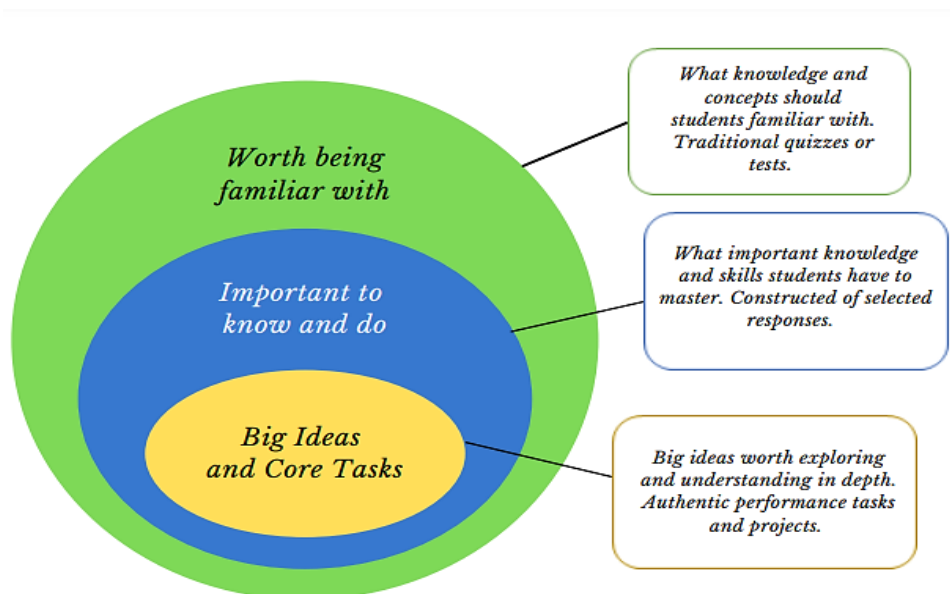
Note: Adapted from Wiggins & McTighe (1998).

Wiggins and McTighe (2005) provided a broad contextualization of six facets in which students can genuinely demonstrate understanding when they:

Can explain – via generalizations or principles, providing justified and systematic accounts of phenomena, facts, and data; make insightful connections and provide illuminating examples or illustrations,

Can interpret – tell meaningful stories; offer apt translations, reveal historical or persona dimension to ideas and events; make the object of understanding personal or accessible through images, anecdotes, analogies, and models.

Can apply – effectively use and adapt what we know in diverse and authentic contexts – we can "do" the subject.

Have perspective – see and hear points of view through critical eyes and ears; see the big picture.

Can empathize – find value in what others might find odd, alien, or implausible; perceive sensitively based on direct prior experience.

Have self-knowledge – show metacognitive awareness; perceive the personal style, prejudices, projections, and habits of mind that shape and impede our own understanding; know what we do not understand; reflect on the meaning of learning and experience (p. 84).

Consequently, an enduring understanding involves the *big ideas* that give meaning and importance to facts; can transfer to other topics, fields, and adult life; is usually not noticeable, often counterintuitive, and easily misunderstood; may provide a conceptual foundation for basic skills; is deliberately framed as a generalization- the "moral of the story" (McTighe & Wiggins, 2004).

Table 4 shows how the six facets of understanding are related to performance verbs:

Table 4

Performance Verbs Based Upon the Six Facets of Understanding

Facet of Understanding	Description
Explanation	Demonstrate, describe, express, model, predict, prove, show, teach, derive, and justify.
Interpretation	Critique, evaluate, translate, illustrate, judge, create analogies, document, read between the lines, and tell a story.
Application	Adapt, create, invent, produce, solve, use, propose, build, debug, exhibit, and produce.
Perspective	Analyze, argue, compare, contrast, infer, and criticize.
Empathy	Be like, be open to, believe, consider, relate, image, and role-play.
Self-knowledge	Be aware of, realize, recognize, reflect, and self-assess.

Note: Adapted from Wiggins & McTighe (2011).

In the same way, essential questions (EQs) are necessary and expected elements in the first stage of the BDM teaching planning. They make teachers' unit or course plans more likely to yield focused, thoughtful learning and learners (McTighe & Wiggins, 2013). The seven defining characteristics of a good essential question are the following: it

1. is *open-ended*; it typically will not have a single, final, or correct answer.

2. is *thought-provoking* and *intellectually engaging,* often sparking discussion and debate.

3. calls for *higher-order thinking*, such as analysis, inference, evaluation, and prediction. It cannot be effectively answered by recall alone.

4. points toward *important, transferable ideas* within (and sometimes across) disciplines.

5. raises *additional questions* and sparks further inquiry.

6. requires *support* and *justification*, not just an answer.

7. *recurs* over time; that is, the question can and should be revisited again and again (Wiggins & McTighe, 2013, p.3).

Hence, thoughtfully constructed EQs guide the learning goals for a unit of instruction, encouraging learners to explore a topic to deepen their knowledge and understanding (McTighe & Wiggins, 2013, as cited in Clementi, 2014). McTighe and Wiggins (2013) argued that EQs in the BDM are:

> Signals that inquiry is a crucial goal of education make it more likely that the unit will be intellectually engaging, help to clarify and prioritize standards for teachers, provide transparency for students, encourage and model metacognition for students, provide opportunities for intra-and interdisciplinary connections, and support meaningful differentiation (p.17).

1.7.1.3 Acquisition

The last components in this stage are knowledge and skills. These are "the more discrete objectives we want students to know and do" (McTighe & Wiggins, 2004, p.60). Here, critical declarative knowledge (basic concepts, factual information, and vocabulary) and procedural knowledge (discrete or basic know-how skills) are stated as the aspects that students have to acquire at the end of the unit or course (McTighe & Wiggins, 2013).

To identify the essential knowledge and skills that students have to acquire at the end of the unit, McTighe & Wiggins (2013) claimed that:

47

Knowledge and skill are core building blocks for later meaning-making and transfer. We must avoid just listing facts or definitions that do not contribute to understanding.

You plan to assess whether the student has the targeted knowledge and skill. The only place in Stage 1 is explicitly what you intend to evaluate and teach.

*The target knowledge and skill fit naturally within the unit and l*earning them will not seem disconnected or arbitrary to students in the unit's context (p.21).

In the BDM, knowledge and skills are essential tools to achieve students' effective performance of the tasks. Thus, knowledge and skills specify what learners should be able to do and know as a result of the instruction. Table 5 displays some knowledge and skills students have to acquire in each unit of study.

Table 5

Samples of Knowledge and Skills

Knowledge *What we want students to know:*	Skills *What we want students to be able to do:*
Vocabulary Terminology Definitions Key factual information Formulas Critical details Important events and people Sequence and timelines	Basic skills: decoding, arithmetic, computation Communication skills: listening, speaking, writing Thinking skills: compare, infer, analyze, interpret Research, inquiry, and investigation skills Study skills: notetaking Interpersonal and group skills

Note: Adapted from McTighe & Wiggins (2004).

1.7.2 Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence

The following stage provides valid evidence of the student's abilities to apply and transfer the new learning in realistic and various situations. It concerns developing assessment strategies to determine if the students' desired outcomes in Stage 1 have been achieved (Jensen et al., 2017; Kang & Jeon, 2016; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). This stage focuses on choosing what types of assessments will best demonstrate that students achieved the desired results from Stage 1 and the criteria to prove students' proficiency and understanding.

In this stage, questions such as (a) What should students know, understand, and be able to demonstrate? (b) How will we know whether or not a student has achieved the learning outcomes? (c) What content is essential for understanding? (d) What are the criteria for success? (e) What enduring or long-term understandings are desired? are focused on this stage (Emory, 2014; Whitehouse, 2014).

Emory (2014) stated that developing assessment strategies based on the six facets of understanding can facilitate evidence for students' learning outcomes achievement and competence measurement. Thus, evidence of understanding is demonstrated by students' ability to *explain, interpret, apply, perceive, empathize, and self-evaluate* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). The evidence of learning does not just mean answering questions in the end-of-topic test but also looking for evidence of students' learning progress throughout the teaching sequence (Richards, 2013; Whitehouse, 2014; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). The central aspect of Stage 2 is using performance tasks as evidence of students' understanding to apply the knowledge to various problems, issues, situations, and contexts. As shown in Table 6, the main elements of this stage are the performance task and other assessment

strategies, which are integrated to check students' improvements during the learning process (Alvarez, 2020; Whitehouse, 2014).

Table 6

The UbD Template, Version 2.0: Stage 2

Stage 2 - Evidence		
Code	**Evaluative Criteria**	
Are all desired results being appropriately assessed?	What criteria will be used in each assessment to evaluate the attainment of the desired results? Regardless of the format of the assessment, what qualities are most important?	PERFORMANCE TASK(S): *Students will show that they really understand by evidence of…* *How will students demonstrate their understanding (meaning-making and transfer) through complex performance?* --- OTHER EVIDENCE: *Students will show they have achieved Stage 1 goals by…* *What other evidence will you collect to determine whether Stage 1 goals were achieved?*

Note: Wiggins & McTighe (2011).

In this stage, the unit designers must understand that:

Authentic assessment tasks call for real or simulated performance, reflecting how people use knowledge and skill in the world beyond school.

The GRASPS elements help the designer create contextualized, real-world tasks. Students often find authentic tasks more relevant and engaging than typical tests. In addition to authentic tasks, a valid assessment of all Stage 1 elements typically requires evidence of more than a traditional kind. (Wiggins & McTighe, 2012, p.70).

1.7.2.1 Performance Tasks (GRASPS)

Performance tasks are one of the essential elements in BDM planning. Wiggins & McTighe (2012) developed a practical tool for authentic task designing using the GRASPS framework to equip students to apply their understanding and knowledge to address new and

realistically contextualized issues and situations (Hulme et al., 2014; McTigue & Wiggins, 1999). While the facets of understanding help designers find the right kinds of tasks to be applied, the GRASPS elements help refine each task to ensure its authenticity (McTighe, 2013; Wiggins, 1991; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). According to McTighe and Willis (2019), the GRASPS elements for each letter are (1) a real-world **G**oal, (2) a meaningful **R**ole for the student, (3) an authentic (or simulated) **A**udience, (4) a contextualized **situation** that involves a real-world application, (5) students-generated culminating **P**roducts and **P**erformances, and (6) the **S**uccess criteria by which student products and performance will be judged. Table 7 displays a template to be followed to establish genuine goals and authentic applications of knowledge:

Table 7

GRASPS Worksheet

Goal :
- Your task is _____
- The goal is to _____
- The problem/challenge is_____
- The obstacle(s) to overcome is (are) _____

Role:
- You are _____
- You have been asked to _____
- Your job is _____

Audience:
- Your client(s) is (are) _____
- The target audience is   _____
- You need to convince _____

Situation:
- The context you find yourself in is _____
- The challenge involves dealing with _____

Product/Performance and Purpose:
- You will create a _____
  in order to _____
- You need to develop _____
  so that _____

Standards & Criteria for Success:
- Your performance needs to _____
- Your work will be judged by _____
- Your product must meet the following standards _____
- A successful result will _____

Note: Wiggins & McTighe (2012).

Similarly, as shown in Table 8, Wiggins and McTighe (2012) suggested a list of student product(s) and performance(s) that will provide evidence of understanding and proficiency:

Table 8

Examples of Performance Tasks Based on the BDM

Written	Oral	Visual
Advertisement	Conversation	Advertisement
Biography	Debate	Banner
Blog	Discussion	Book/ CD cover
Book report/review	Dramatization	Cartoon
Brochure	Dramatic reading	Collage
Crossword puzzle	Infomercial	Computer graphic
Editorial	Interview	Data display
Essay	Radios script	Design
Field guide	Oral presentation	Diagram
Historical fiction	Oral report	Display
Journal	Poetry reading	Drawing
Lab report	Podcast	Facebook/ My Space page
Letter	Puppet show	Flowchart
Log	Rap	Flyer
Magazine article	Skit	Game
Memo	Speech	Graph
Newscast	Song	Map
Newspaper article	Teach a lesson	Model
Play		PowerPoint show
Poem		Photograph(s)
Position paper/policy brief		Questionnaire
Proposal		Painting
Research report		Poster
Screenplay		Scrapbook
Script		Sculpture
Story		Storyboard
Test		Videotape
Tweet		Website

Note: Wiggins & McTighe (2012).

1.7.2.2 Other Assessment Methods

In Stage 2, apart from performance tasks, it is essential to identify and apply other assessment methods to document, validate, and determine the extent to which students achieve specific knowledge, skills, and understandings from Stage 1 (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998; Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). These assessment methods could be formative or summative, including conventional quizzes, tests, and assignments that must be aligned with the desired results from Stage 1.

The BDM encourages teachers to think like an assessor before designing specific units to consider in advance how they will determine if students achieve the desired learning outcomes.

Because understanding develops as a result of ongoing inquiry and rethinking, the assessment of understanding should be thought of in terms of a collection of evidence over time instead of an event–a single moment-in-time test at the end of instruction– as so often happens in current practice (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998, p.5).

Reynolds and Kearns (2016) claimed that there are two types of assessments, "the formative assessments are typically appropriate for day-to-day class activities, while summative assessments typically come at midterms, finals, or the end of major units" (p.20). The formative assessment helps students learn and practice the new knowledge throughout the course by identifying gaps and supporting specific student needs. On the other hand, the summative assessment evaluates students' performance at the end of the instructional period.

Figure 12 depicts the range of assessment methods that teachers have to consider when planning to collect acceptable evidence:

Figure 12

Continuum of Assessment Methods
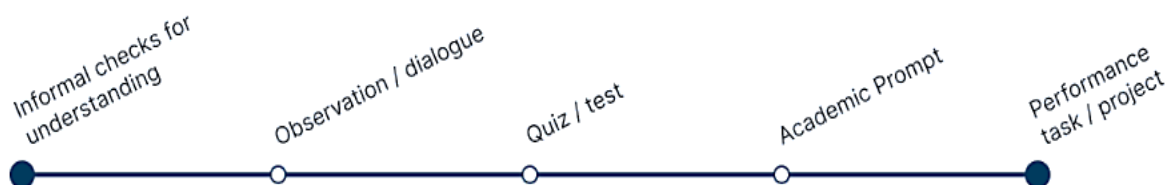
The continuum of assessment methods includes:

Check understandings (oral questions, observations, and informal dialogues), traditional quizzes, tests, open-ended prompts, and performance tasks and projects. They vary in scope (from simple to complex), time frame (from short-term to long-term), setting (from decontextualized to authentic contexts), and structure (from highly to nonstructured) (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998, p.5).

The BDM is not built around pre-determined activities and assignments that students have to do in the classroom but around what teachers expect students to be able to know and show at the end of the course. Therefore, the assessment must be aligned with the desired outcomes from Stage 1.

Table 9 illustrates the balanced use of various types of evaluations and their relationship with curriculum priorities:

Table 9

Types of assessment applied in the BDM

Quiz and Test Items

These are simple, content-focused questions. They

- Assess for factual information, concepts, and discrete skill.
- Use selected-response or short-answer formats.
- Are convergent—typically they have a single, best answer.
- May be easily scored using an answer key (or machine scoring).
- Are typically secure (not known in advance).

Academic Prompts

These are open-ended questions or problems that require the student to think critically, not just recall knowledge, and then to prepare a response, product, or performance. They

- Require constructed responses under school or exam conditions.
- Are open. There is not a single, best answer or a best strategy for answering or solving them.
- Often are ill-structured, requiring the development of a strategy.
- Involve analysis, synthesis, or evaluation.
- Typically require an explanation or defense of the answer given or methods used.
- Require judgment-based scoring based on criteria and performance standards.
- May or may not be secure.

Performance Tasks and Projects

As complex challenges that mirror the issues and problems faced by adults, they are authentic. Ranging in length from short-term tasks to long-term, multistaged projects, they require a production or performance. They differ from prompts because they

- Feature a setting that is real or simulated: one that involves the kind of constraints, background noise, incentives, and opportunities an adult would find in a similar situation.
- Typically require the student to address an identified audience.
- Are based on a specific purpose that relates to the audience.
- Allow the student greater opportunity to personalize the task.
- Are not secure. Task, criteria, and standards are known in advance and guide the student's work.

Note: Wiggins & McTighe (1998).

In the BDM, the assessments of learning based on Stage 1 are evaluative (summative) and the basis for grading. On the other hand, Stage 2 is where the formative assessments for learning- pre- and ongoing- are included (McTighe & Willis, 2019). Thus, the BDM requests teachers to balance the formative and summative assessments to be applied to learning. Table 10 summarizes the various purposes for classroom assessments:

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Table 10

The Purpose of Classroom Assessment

Purposes for Classroom Assessment		
Evaluative Assessments *of* **Learning**	**Formative Assessments** *for* **Learning**	
Summative Assessments	**Pre-assessments**	**Ongoing Assessments**
Summative assessments are more formal and evaluative in nature, generally resulting in a score or grade. These assessments are typically conducted toward the end of a unit, course, or grade level to determine the degree of mastery or proficiency according to identified learning targets. Their results may be public (e.g., on report cards).	Pre-assessments *precede* instruction on a new topic to check students' prior knowledge and experience, skill levels, and potential misconceptions. Pre-assessments can also be used to learn students' interests, talents, and learning preferences. Pre-assessments provide information to assist teacher planning and guide differentiated instruction.	Ongoing assessments provide feedback to learners and teachers to improve learning and performance. Formative assessments include formal (e.g., quizzes) and informal methods (e.g., teachers' observation as students work). Because their purpose is to *inform,* the formative assessment results should generally not be used for grading nor made public.
Examples: unit test, performance task, final exam, culminating project or performance, "best work" portfolio.	*Examples:* pre-test, survey, KWL, skill checks, observations, and interest surveys.	*Examples:* oral questioning, teachers' observations, review of draft work, think-aloud by students, and exit cards.

Note: McTighe (2013).

To align the enduring understandings, knowledge, and skills with the different types of assessment, the BDM template assigned one box for essential performance tasks and another box for all other evidence. "A balance of types of assessments is good measurement and wise practice in teaching." (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p.169). Therefore, for topics that students are familiar with, traditional quizzes and tests can be applied; however, for the enduring understanding of topics, performance tasks and projects are the most recommendable ways to assess students.

Figure 13 provides a general overview of how practical assessment is conducted by revealing the general relationship between assessment types and the evidence they provide for different curricular goals:

Figure 13

Curricular Priorities and Assessment Methods
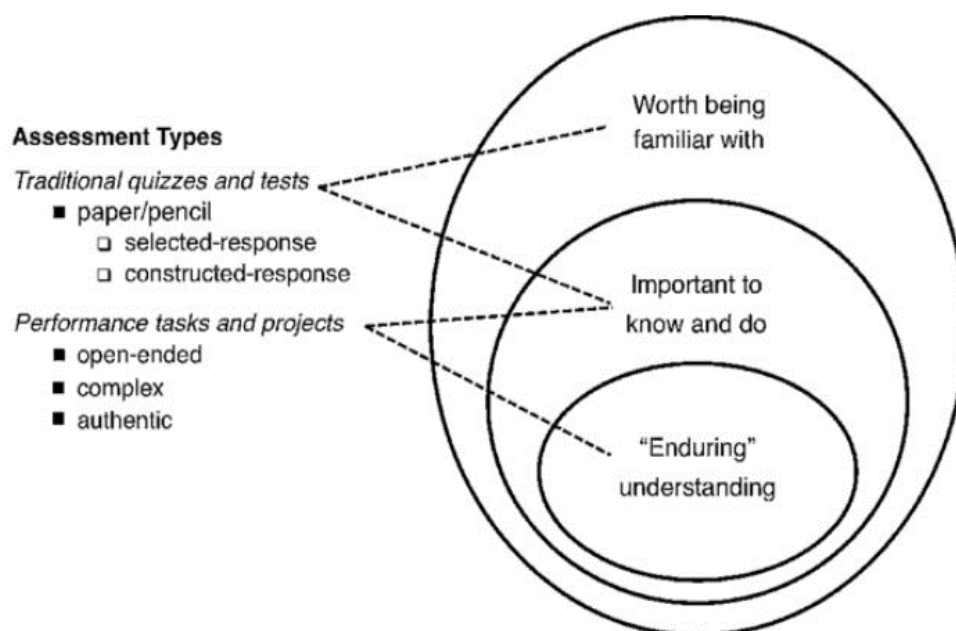
Note: Wiggins & McTighe (2005).

1.7.3 Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction

Stage 3 from the BDM focuses on designing the activities, teaching methods, techniques, and resources that will be applied to make the desired results from Stage 1 happen. According to Wiggins and McTighe (2011), "the logic of backward design mandates that our learning plan aligns with our goals (Stage 1) and their corresponding assessments (Stage 2)" (p.25).

When planning backwards, it is essential to see the bigger picture of learning events needed to achieve the desired results in Stage 1 (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). After determining the goals and the evidence required to collect, questions like the following are stated in Stage 3: what kinds of learning activities are most appropriate? What are the best ways to cause student learning, performance success, and goal accomplishment? What instruction is logically required? (Paesani, 2017; Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).

The learning experiences have to be undertaken logically and contextualized in this stage. According to Wiggins and McTighe (2005), when planning backwards, the best designs have the following characteristics:

- Clear performance goals based on genuine and explicit challenge.

- Hands-on approach throughout; far less front-loaded "teaching" than typical.

- Focus on interesting and important ideas, questions, issues, problems.

- Obvious real-world applications, hence meaning for learners.

- Powerful feedback system, with opportunities to learn from trial and error.

- Personalized approach, with more than one way to do the major tasks and room for adapting the process and goal to style, interest, and need.

- Clear models and modelling.

- Time set aside for focused reflection.

- Variety in methods, grouping, and tasks.

- Safe environment for taking risks.

- The teacher's role resembles that of a facilitator or coach.

- More of an immersion experience than a typical classroom experience.

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- The big picture is provided and clear throughout, with a transparent back-and-forth flow between the parts and the whole (p.196-197).

In Stage 3, teachers make choices based on student learning outcomes. As shown in Figure 23, Wiggins and McTighe (2011) developed a learning plan that symbolizes the three educational goals categories: acquisition, meaning-making, and transfer (A-M-T). As mentioned in Table 11, the purpose of **acquiring** knowledge and skills is automaticity. Besides, **meaning-making** is meant to convey the idea that understanding requires active intellectual work by the learner, and **transfer** refers to effectively applying learning to new contexts (McTighe & Willis, 2019).

Table 11

Learning Plan

Stage 3 – Learning Plan		
Code	What pre-assessment will you use to check students' prior knowledge, skill levels, and potential misconceptions?	*Pre-assessment*
What is the goal for (or type of) each learning event?	Learning Events *Student success or transfer, meaning, and acquisition depend upon…* Are all three types of goals (acquisition, meaning, and transfer) addressed in the learning plan? Does the learning plan reflect principles of learning and best practices? Is there a tight alignment with Stages 1 and 2? Is the plan likely to be engaging and effective for all students?	*Progress Monitoring* How will you monitor students' progress toward acquisition, meaning, and transfer during lesson events? What are the potential rough spots and student misunderstandings? How will students get the feedback they need?

Note: Wiggins & McTighe, 2011

The A-M-T letters stand for acquisition, meaning-making, and transfer. These letters are used as analytic categories for reviewing a learning plan based on the goals established

in Stage 1 (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). Wiggins and McTighe (2005) recommended using these categories to code the teaching and learning events in Stage 3. Therefore, Stage 3 focuses primarily on how students actively construct meaning by transferring their skills, knowledge, and understandings to authentic contexts (Iino et al., 2017; Murphy & Harper, 2018). Table 12 displays action verbs to help plan teaching and learning according to the teachers' A-M-T goals:

Table 12
Action Verbs for A-M-T

Goal Types	Action Verbs
Acquisition	• Apprehend • Calculate • Define • Discern • Identify • Memorize/ Recall • Notice • Paraphrase • Plugin • Select • State
Meaning	• Analyze • Compare/ Contrast • Critique • Defend/ Interpret • Evaluate/ Test • Explain/ Prove • Generalize • Justify/support • Summarize/Synthesize • Translate • Verify
Transfer	• Adapt (based on feedback) • Adjust (based on results) • Apply/ Create • Design • Innovate • Perform effectively • Self-assess • Solve/ Troubleshoot

Note: Wiggins & McTighe (2011).

McTighe and Wiggins (2004) developed the WHERETO framework to support effective and engaging teaching for deep learning. The WHERETO elements "can serve as a recipe that assesses the planned learning experiences and instruction in Stage 3" (D'Angelo et al., 2019, p.4). Wiggins and McTighe (2005) stated that this acronym included:

W— Ensure that students understand WHERE the unit is ahead and WHY.

H— HOOK students at the beginning and HOLD their attention throughout.

E— EQUIP students with the necessary experiences, tools, knowledge, and know-how to meet performance goals.

R— Give students numerous opportunities to RETHINK big ideas, REFLECT on progress, and REVISE their work.

E— Build-in opportunities for students to EVALUATE progress and self-assess.

T— Be TAILORED to reflect individual talents, interests, styles, and needs.

O— Be ORGANIZED to optimize deep understanding as opposed to superficial coverage (p.197–198).

Table 13 establishes the description for each WHERETO element, the questions to be considered, and examples of how these elements can be implemented when planning the course or unit.

Table 13

The WHERETO Elements

	Description	Questions to consider	How can this be done
W	Ensure that all students understand the unit's goals, *where* the unit is headed, *why* the new learning will be essential and valuable, and *what* is expected of the learners.	*How will I help students know where we are headed in this unit? How can I connect this new learning to past learning and experiences? How will I preview how their learning will be assessed?*	Post essential questions on the board, beginning the instruction unit with the learning objectives or ending the lesson with something to think about for the next lesson.
H	*Hook* students to capture their attention in the beginning and *hold* their interest throughout the unit.	*What interesting and thought-provoking hook could I use to engage my students? How can I tap into the brain's natural curiosity to hook learners around this new topic? How might I sustain students' interest over time, especially when the going gets difficult?*	Approach students' interests by questioning key ideas from the previous lesson, asking learners to watch a short clip that ties into the lesson, or having something at the front of the classroom that is unusual or different.
E	Determine what learning experiences will *equip* students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and understanding to be prepared to meet performance goals.	*How will learning experiences help students acquire and retain foundational information and basic skills? How will I engage learners in actively making meaning of the big ideas and essential questions? How will I equip students to be able to transfer their learning to perform tasks?*	Learners should feel able to do specific tasks associated with the learning objective. This can be done through scaffolding from prior lessons to the current lesson.
R	Provide students opportunities to *rethink* big ideas and *revise* their work based on formative feedback.	*How can I deepen students' understanding by guiding them to rethink their comprehension of essential ideas? How will I provide helpful feedback to help students improve their products and performance through revision?*	Instructors may be able to do so by allowing learners to reflect on assessments for partial credit, allowing for critiques on papers from instructor feedback, or allowing time for peer review on a project.

E	Build opportunities for students to monitor and **_evaluate_** their progress along the way.	_How can I encourage students' metacognition by monitoring and self-evaluating their performance?_	Learners should be allowed to evaluate the work they have given to the instructor through self-assessment via a rubric.
T	**_Tailor_** the unit to differentiate and personalise learning plans so that each student works toward an appropriate and achievable challenge.	_How could I encourage students' metacognition by monitoring and self-evaluating their performance?_	This aspect requires knowing what your learners prefer. Tailoring student learning can occur in other ways, such as allowing learners to pick an assignment of their choice.
O	**_Organize_** and sequence the unit's lessons to maximize student engagement and effectiveness.	_What lesson sequence can make learning most interesting for students?_ _In what ways can I make lessons flow in a brain-friendly manner?_	The instructor should think of the key idea or concept as the main piece of instruction in a logical flow.

Note: Adapted from McTighe & Willis (2019).

The BDM provides planning teaching based on explicit instruction focusing on student learning and understanding. It encourages teachers to establish big ideas that require student knowledge transfer before implementing them into the syllabus. Hence, all the activities, teaching methodologies, and recourses have a purpose aligned with the overarching students' outcomes and goals of the course or unit.

Furthermore, the incorporation of the BDM provides a student-centered approach. Teachers guided by the national, district, or institutional standards apply the BDM as a framework to identify teaching and learning priorities based on students' needs, likes, and dislikes. Students can develop performance tasks based on the GRASPS elements to transfer their knowledge to authentic contexts.

Wiggins and McTighe (2005) provided a way of thinking purposefully about course planning for effective teaching and learning practices using the WHERETO elements and the A-M-T coding for teaching and learning events. They indicate that:

Deliberate and focused instructional design requires us, as teachers and curriculum writers, to make an important shift in our thinking about the nature of our job. The shift involves thinking a lot about the specific learnings sought and the evidence of such learnings before thinking about what we, as teachers, will do or provide in teaching and learning activities. (p.14).

As shown in Table 14, (Bowen, 2017) adapted the UbD template provided by Wiggins and McTighe in 2005 with the description of each segment through the stages of the BMD:

Table 14

Backward Design Template with descriptions; UbD Template 2.0

Stage 1 – Desired Results		
ESTABLISHED GOALS The enduring understandings and learning goals of the lesson, unit, or course.	*Transfer*	
	Students will be able to independently use their learning to… Refers to how students will transfer the knowledge gained from the lesson, unit, or course and apply it outside of the context of the course.	
	Meaning	
	UNDERSTANDINGS *Students will understand that…* Refers to the big ideas and specific understandings students will have when the complete the lesson, unit, or course.	ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS Refers to the provocative questions that foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning. These questions typically frame the lesson, unit, or course and are often revisited. If students attain the established goals, they should be able to answer the essential question(s).
	Acquisition	
	Students will know… Refers to the key knowledge students will acquire from the lesson, unit, or course.	*Students will be skilled at…* Refers to the key skills students will acquire from the lesson, unit, or course.

Stage 2 – Evidence and Assessment	
Evaluative Criteria	**Assessment Evidence**
Refers to the various types of criteria that students will be evaluated on.	PERFORMANCE TASK(S): Refers to the authentic performance task(s) that students will complete to demonstrate the desired understandings or demonstrate they have attained the goals. The performance task(s) are typically larger assessments that coalesce various concepts and understandings like large projects or papers.
	OTHER EVIDENCE: Refers to other types of evidence that will show if students have demonstrated achievement of the desired results. This includes quizzes, tests, homework, etc. This is also a good point to consider incorporating self-assessments and student reflections.
Stage 3 – Learning Plan	
Summary of Key Learning Events and Instruction	
This stage encompasses the individual learning activities and instructional strategies that will be employed. This includes lectures, discussions, problem-solving sessions, etc.	

Note: Bowen (2017).

The BDM has been applied in various ELT research. According to Dávila (2017), the BDM has helped language teachers develop interdisciplinary work, encourage students to understand their reality, and take the foreign language as a communication tool, not as an object of study. Therefore, the following section will cover empirical research that has been conducted in EFL contexts around the world.

1.8 Research that Supports the Backward Design Model in English as a Foreign Language

Some research has shed light on the effectiveness of applying the BDM in EFL classrooms. These investigations have shown that integrating the BDM in language classrooms can help teachers' professional development (Asaoka, 2021; Fox & Doherty, 2012; Jozwik & Lin, 2017; McTighe & Thomas, 2003; Richards, 2013; Whitehouse, 2014); and students' English language improvements (Abd El Ghany et al., 2019; Hosseini et al., 2019; Saeed & Javed, 2021; Yurtseven & Altun, 2016).

1.8.1 The Backward Design Model in Teaching EFL

The BDM has been applied for foreign language curriculum and syllabus development worldwide. Korotchenko et al. (2015) stated that the BDM helps foreign language teachers effectively associate the national, state, district, or institutional education standards with the syllabus content, students' needs, and expected learning outcomes. Therefore, the BDM supports teachers in establishing curricular priorities and clear syllabus expectations (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998).

In terms of pedagogical instruction, (Brown, 2004) claimed that the successful implementation of the BDM in education could support teachers in establishing clear goals, foster instructional activities, promote students' understandings, expand the range of assessment to monitor student achievements, and provide authentic and meaningful resources that are aligned with the expected students' outcomes.

By using the BDM template, teachers can craft students' learning outcomes (Sideeg, 2016). This template is divided into three stages that allow teachers to align students' expected results, learning assessments, and the resources applied to meet the learning outcomes (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). Thus, designing course or unit plans based on the BDM template assists teachers in following and maintaining articulation of the planning objectives, the transfer tasks developed during the learning process, and the resources applied to achieve students' learning goals (Eddy, 2017).

Regarding teachers' professional development, Yurtseven and Altun (2016) claimed that implementing the BDM positively impacts EFL classrooms. It allows teachers to improve their teaching process by clearly defining how the instruction will be conducted and

prioritizing the content, activities, and materials applied in the students' learning process. Furthermore, it helps teachers avoid purposeless activity-oriented design and aimless coverage of topics that could be interesting but do not lead students to achieve the desired outcomes efficiently.

Similarly, Jozwik and Lin (2017) indicated that implementing the BDM has three main benefits for teachers' professional development. First, by using the BDM template, teachers can reflect on their teaching strengths and weaknesses; thus, the BDM planning could be flexible and adaptable to the reality of each school. Second, teachers can fulfill the established students' goals efficiently by prioritizing the content to be covered and using meaningful and authentic activities and teaching materials. Finally, the community stakeholders and teachers are satisfied due to the alignment of projects, evaluative procedures, and students' learning objectives.

1.8.2 The Backward Design Model in Learning EFL

A large body of research in teaching EFL shows the efficacy of applying the BDM to foster students' language skills, interaction, creativity, and motivation to learn this language. Due to the BDM providing a syllabus planning based on the solid alignment of students' desired results, assessment, and teaching and learning materials, some researchers have conducted studies to show its efficacy in EFL countries.

The first research was conducted by Hosseini et al. (2019). After applying the BDM planning in the teaching process, they indicated that applying the BDM in EFL classrooms helped EFL students to increase and master their writing abilities. Furthermore, the authors highlighted that using student-centered methods and asking students to perform tasks based

on the GRASPS framework extended students' satisfaction and motivation to learn the language.

Hodaeian and Biria (2015) conducted a study on EFL reading skills to find the significant effects of applying the BDM on reading comprehension. The researchers found that using the BDM is more effective than the FDM and the CDM. They indicated that EFL learners from the experimental group obtained better results in reading comprehension. Furthermore, the BDM provided students different opportunities to understand and use texts, words, and expressions in authentic contexts.

Abd El Ghany et al. (2019) investigated the effect of applying performance tasks on developing students' EFL listening comprehension skills. At the end of the investigation, the researcher found that the experimental group obtained better results regarding their listening comprehension skills. Besides, the researcher indicates that performance tasks give students more meaningful opportunities to improve their listening skills in a supportive and friendly environment.

Implementing the BDM motivates students to learn and apply the language in authentic contexts; as a result, it increases their speaking skills. Yurtseven and Altun (2016) claim that using the BDM and authentic performance tasks in foreign language classrooms positively influences students' motivation to interact and practice their speaking skills. According to the researchers, the participants prioritized their speaking skills over other skills because they had more opportunities to practice English, which increased their courage and self-confidence in speaking in English.

Furthermore, authentic performance tasks based on the GRASPS elements motivate students to transfer their learning to new contexts they will find within and outside the classroom (McTighe & Willis, 2019). According to the researchers, the performance task is the essential learning activity or assessment where students are asked to demonstrate their knowledge, enduring understanding, and proficiency in authentic contexts.

Finally, Drake and Reid (2018) highlighted the importance of integrating the three stages of the BDM to help students understand the topic in-depth and create rich learning opportunities to improve students' 21st-century skills. These skills relate to students' critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, collaboration, cooperation, and metacognition abilities (McTighe & Willis, 2019).

1.8.3 The Connection Between the Backward Design Model and the Common European Framework of References for Languages

Cadena et al. (2018) claimed that language education is traditionally associated with the Forward and Central syllabus design. However, nowadays, empirical studies have shown the benefits of applying the Backward Design Model to increase students' English skills. According to Cadena et al. (2018), the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is a recent example of BDM planning because it anchors the learning outcomes with the syllabus and teaching methods to use the language from the functional point of view.

In fact, The Council of Europe (2018) indicated that in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, "the teaching and learning process is driven by action, that it is **action-oriented**. It also clearly suggests planning backwards from learners' real-life communicative needs, with consequent alignment between curriculum, teaching,

and assessment" (p.27). Therefore, the "CEFR is a tool to assist the planning of curricula, courses, and examinations by working backwards from what the users/learners need to be able to do in the language" The Council of Europe (2018, p.26).

Another connection between the CEFR and the BDM is that they promote a **friendly assessment practice**.   The Council of Europe (2018) advocates seeing learners as plurilingual and pluricultural beings who use the language rather than just learning about the language. Furthermore, it indicated that the CEFR is an action-oriented approach that implies purposeful and collaborative tasks in the classroom, whose primary focus is not language but other products or outcomes (e.g., planning an excursion, making a poster, designing a festival, choosing a candidate and so on). In link with this statement, the BDM proposes authentic performance tasks based on the GRASPS framework, which guides teachers to engage students in a real-world scenario where they produce artifacts that reflect both the content of the course and what they may need to produce in an authentic setting (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

North et al. (2018) stated that:

The essence of backward design is that, like the CEFR, it sees the learner as a language user, not a language student. It is interested in what the learner will be able to do after the course and what they will need to learn or become accustomed to in order to reach their goals. Hence, it tends to focus on **real-world outcomes**. These may be encapsulated in a series of needs-based tasks … but it is convenient to express them in CEFR-style can-do descriptors (p.22).

Furthermore, the CEFR and BDM aim to promote students' active participation in the learning process by providing **differentiated instruction**. The Council of Europe (2018) indicated that the CEFR is an "action-oriented approach that puts the co-construction of meaning (through interaction) at the center of the learning and teaching process (p.27). Moreover, the CEFR includes many descriptor scales to encourage users to develop differentiated profiles according to their needs, facilitate understanding, and shape successful communication between learners who may have individual, sociocultural, sociolinguistic, or intellectual differences in perspectives (The Council of Europe, 2018).

In connection with the BDM, Ozyurt et al. (2021) asserted that the BDM increases the active participation of students in the teaching-learning process from the beginning to the end by creating learning activities taking into consideration individual differences through the "T" element of the WHERETO element and the GRASPS framework of the BDM. The "T" element of WHERETO allows teachers to personalize each student's learning according to their needs, interests, and learning styles through differentiated instruction (Alvarez et al., 2023; Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). Thus, the linkage between the BDM and differentiated instruction is straightforward because they fuse to guide the professional growth of teachers who have the will to continue developing the skills necessary to get to know students' needs to ensure their students have learned what matters most, to have a realistic opportunity to meet the students' needs in the classroom, and to focus on the most important and enduring for their students to learn about the lesson topic (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006).

It is essential to mention that the Ecuadorian EFL national curriculum is aligned with the CEFR standards by considering the social, cognitive, emotional, and physical growth of

the students and their language abilities as they progress from level A1.1 to B1.2 of the CEFR (See1.5.3). Therefore, the MINEDUC (2016b) states that:

> Through alignment to these international standards, the curriculum intends to develop learners who are effective listeners and speakers, learners who can evaluate and analyze information in a variety of ways using a variety of skills, learners who can respond appropriately in a range of social interactions and learners who are critical and creative thinkers (MINEDUC, 2016b, pg. 238).

1.9 The Ecuadorian Context

This section provides background information on Ecuador and its education system to identify what motivated this research. Ecuador is the smallest of the Andean countries, located on the northwest side of South America. This country has 17 million inhabitants in 256,370 km2, and it is distributed in four regions: Coastal (Coast), Andean (Sierra), Amazon (Oriente), and Insular (Galápagos Islands) (Garrido et al., 2021).

Due to colonization and forced acculturation for more than five centuries, the indigenous people have been subjected to different changes, including language, religion, ethnic identity, and cultural practices (Haboud & King, 2007; Knapp, 2020). Therefore, due to the various indigenous tribes in its four regions, Ecuador is considered a multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual country.

Nowadays, Spanish and twelve Indian languages are spoken in Ecuador. The Spanish colony imposed the Spanish language in 1532, and it became the official language in Ecuador since that time (Haboud & King, 2007). In addition to Spanish, Colorado, Cayapa, Coaquier,

Quichua, Siona, Secoya, Tetete, Cofan, Huaorani, Shuar, Anchuar, and Zaparo are spoken roughly by indigenous in Ecuador (Stark, 2021).

According to Abril (2019), the education system in Ecuador is grounded in two reforms: the New Ecuadorian Constitution (Asamblea Constituyente, 2008) and the *Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural* (Organic Law of Intercultural Education) (Presidency of the Republic, 2011). Furthermore, The National Plan of Good Living (2013-2017) was created to "encourage inclusion and social cohesion, peaceful coexistence and culture of peace, eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence." (Vernimmen Aguirre, 2019, p.166).

Between 2006 and 2016, during the presidency of Rafael Correa, Ecuador experienced significant changes and improvements in the field of education through the creation of policies and laws to strengthen the development of peoples' skills in different areas in which education was an essential part (Restrepo & Orosz, 2021; Tobar et al., 2021). These improvements, implemented during the Correa government, reform with substantive results in quality and equity in education (Baxter, 2019).

The education system in Ecuador is divided into three main sections. Pre-primary, elementary, and basic education (named Educación General Básica EGB); secondary education (mandatory and called Bachillerato General Unificado BGU); and tertiary education (Alvarado et al., 2020; Wierucka, 2021).

Regarding teaching EFL, MINEDUC (2014) established that EFL subject is mandatory for public, religion-driven, and private institutions from the second grade of primary school to the last year of high school. Furthermore, in 2016, the Ecuadorian Ministry

of Education provided the National English Curriculum, which established the national objectives and educational standards that contain the methodological suggestions to be applied in the EFL classrooms and the coding system that must be used for syllabus planning.

Accordingly, the following sub-sections will introduce Ecuadorian EFL education by summarizing information about teaching EFL in Ecuador, EFL course books applied in public institutions, and the Ecuadorian EFL National Curriculum.

1.9.1 Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Ecuador

English Language Teaching (ELT) was introduced in Ecuador in 1912. Since then, several projects, programs, and government policies have been implemented to improve and update ELT in Ecuador. As shown in Table 15, after conducting an exhaustive revision of the evolution of teaching EFL during the period 1912 to 2020, Mosquera et al. (2020) provided the following key elements:

Table 15
Government Policies Evolution for English Language Teaching in Ecuador 1912-2020

Periods	Outstanding elements of EFL teaching and learning
1912-1929	English language teaching was introduced in Ecuador in 1912. The training of English teachers began with the first University Program in languages founded at the Central University of Ecuador in 1928 in Quito city.
1930-1969	In the 1930s, laws regarding education administration launched a curriculum focused on urban education of a religious nature. English became an official subject in the national secondary school curriculum after 1950.
1970-1980	Educational programs improved access to public education in Ecuador. The quality of education decreased, and rural education was almost eliminated.

1981-1990	EFL in universities focused on developing the four language skills with the Communicative Teaching Approach; however, EFL teaching in Ecuador ratified the Traditional teaching centered on the grammar and translation process. In 1990, the EFL program was not mandatory in Ecuador; in public education, English was taught only for one or two hours per week.
1991-2000	The Curricular Reform for the Development of the Learning English (CRADLE) project was implemented by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) and the British Council. This project was based on the guidelines established by the Common European Framework of Reference for Training, Learning, and Evaluation of Foreign Languages (CEFR). One million two hundred thousand students and their teachers participated in this project. However, despite the innovations introduced for the CRADLE project, the performance of English learners was still poor.
2000-2010	English is officially taught in Ecuador's private and public educational establishments. EFL was an elective subject, and based on the available resources, school authorities decided whether to include English in the educational program. Public schools increase English classes from 3 to 5 hours per week.
2011-2020	In 2014, MINEDUC stated that EFL teaching would be mandatory for public, religion-driven, and private institutions from the second grade of primary school to the last year of high school. In 2014, Ecuador implemented The Ecuadorian in-Service English Language Teacher Standards based on the document developed by the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). The government ran the Go Teacher Program from 2016 to 2018. This program aims to improve the teachers' English language level to B2 through an intensive training program in English-speaking countries. (MINEDUC, 2016a) implemented The English National Curriculum, which proposes to develop the communicative skills (a) listening, (b) speaking, (c) reading, and (d) writing, and the evaluation according to the CEFR. Besides, it is desired that students at the end of high school should reach at least a B1 English proficiency level based on the CEFR.

Note: Adapted from Villafuerte & Mosquera (2020).

In 2016, considering the great importance of English learning worldwide, the MINEDUC established new regulations and guidelines for teaching EFL as a compulsory subject in the national curriculum of private and public institutions.

1.9.2 Ecuadorian Coursebooks

The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education provides the course books that must be used in primary and secondary public schools. These course books are mainly written by Ecuadorian authors and freely distributed in all public schools from EGB to BGU education levels. These course books are the primary teaching resources of Ecuadorian EFL teachers in the classrooms.

The main aim of these course books is to foster students' 21st-century skills, such as social, thinking, and cultural skills, as a foundation for lifelong learning (MINEDUC, 2016a). Likewise, terms such as interculturality, authentic language, scaffolding learning, Bloom's taxonomy, and leaner-centered approach are addressed in the course books. Besides, these course books focus on the authentic use of the target language and its production in real-life situations (Espinosa & Soto, 2015).

The Ecuadorian EFL course books comprise 72 modules distributed in six units per year of the twelve school years of primary and secondary levels. According to Alvarez and Guevara (2021), the principles that frame the textbooks are Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). As shown in Figure 14, the course book presents the central theme, the English skills to be covered, the topic connection with other subjects, and the values addressed in each unit.

Figure 14

Pedagogical modules organization for each unit
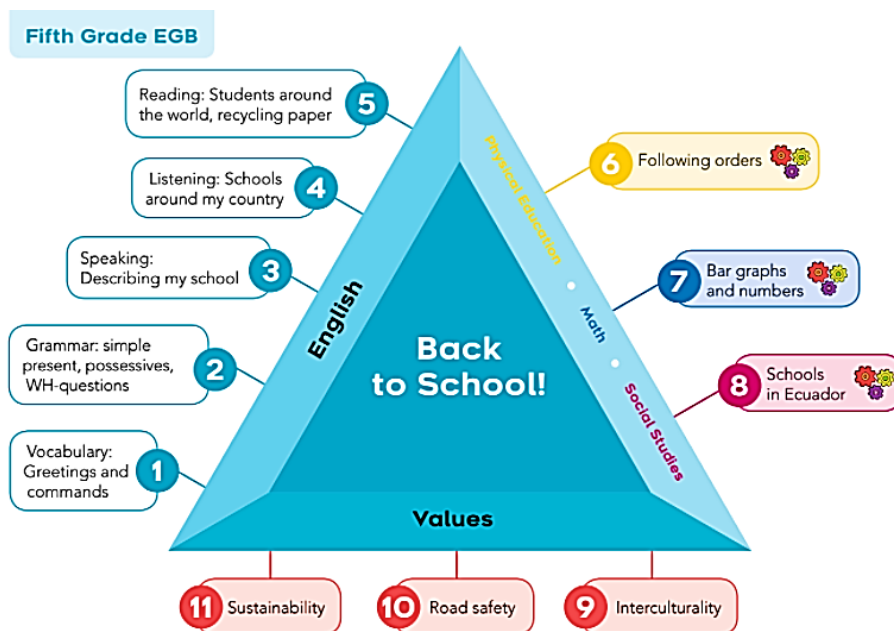
Note: Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (2016): Central Themes and Topics for Unit 1 of the Fifth Grade of Primary School.

According to Alvarez & Guevara (2021), the course books adhere to the requirements advocated by MINEDUC; for instance, the teaching material is aligned with the students' contexts, the content is linked with CLIL, and most activities focus on authenticity and meaningful topics. However, the researchers also mentioned that the lack of teaching training about the correct use of the course books and the inequitable amount of activities to practice the four primary English skills are the main challenges that the course books have.

1.9.3 The Ecuadorian EFL National Curriculum

In 2016, MINEDUC implemented the current National Curriculum for English as a Foreign Language. The four main elements influencing the Ecuadorian National Curriculum are Social, Educational, Pedagogical, and Evaluation instruments for curriculum design (Cadena et al., 2018). Besides, this national curriculum includes instruction for students from

2nd to 10th grade of Basic General Education (EGB) to 1st to 3rd of Unified General Baccalaureate or high school (BGU) (Villafuerte & Macías, 2020).

Regarding teaching English as a Foreign Language, Alvarez and Guevara (2021) claimed that the main principles that frame the Ecuadorian EFL national curriculum are 1) Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), 2) Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and 3) The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). According to (MINEDUC, 2016a), the CLT focuses on developing the four communicative English skills rather than linguistic content learning; therefore, students can be competent in using a second language for oral and written communication.

Likewise, MINEDUC (2016a) implemented CLIL to support the curriculum that develops cognitive, social, and linguistic competencies and integrates critical thinking skills as defined in Bloom's Taxonomy. The curriculum divided the CLIL into five curricular threads: Communication and Cultural Awareness, Oral Communication, Reading, Writing, and Language through the Arts. The innovative thread is Language through the Arts, which "supports the CLIL component of the curriculum by providing written and oral texts, authentic content-based, and cross-curricular materials" (p.194).

Another contextualized aspect of the Ecuadorian national curriculum is how the English proficiency levels are divided based on the CEFR language proficiency. This distribution begins from Pre A1.1 to B1.2.

Figure 15 displays how the CEFR proficiency levels are distributed in Ecuador's EFL National Curriculum from primary to high school.

Figure 15

Levels of Proficiency: Branching Approach
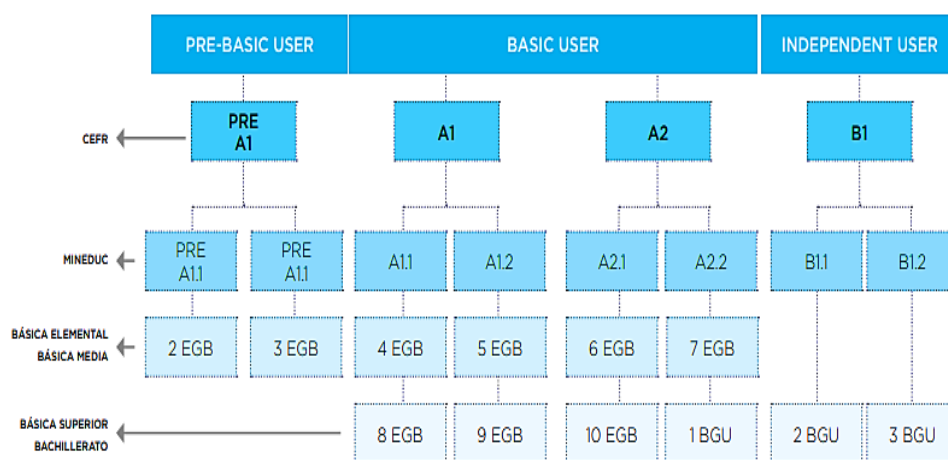
Note: MINEDUC (2016b).

The national curriculum recommends implementing the communicative approach and evaluating students' achievements according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Villafuerte & Macías, 2020). The Council of Europe published CEFR in 2021, understands language users as social agents and recognizes them as members of society regardless of linguistic proficiency (Hideaki, 2021). In Ecuador, students who finish secondary school are expected to achieve the B1 level according to the CEFR (Benalcázar & Ortega, 2019).

Furthermore, the national curriculum established a coding system for planning the English courses teachers must use when designing the syllabus. The coding system consists of General Objectives (OG) and mandatory and desirable objectives, Evaluation Criteria (CE), Indicators for the performance criteria (I.EFL), and Skills and performance descriptors

to be evaluated (EFL). Appendix A shows an example of how teachers from high school must do the planning process.

Unfortunately, despite the continuous endeavours of the Ministry of Education to improve EFL education in Ecuador, the expected results have not been obtained. Machado (2019) stated that compared to Latin American countries, Ecuadorian students from secondary and university levels were ranked 90th out of 112 countries worldwide in an international standardized exam provided by the Education First Organization (2022).

In the same vein, Salinas (2017) stated that the ineffective connection between the EFL national curriculum principles and teaching practices makes teachers feel frustrated and unmotivated to work. Additionally, students' English language proficiency may be low due to the existing disconnection between the EFL national curriculum principles and actual classroom reality, the lack of ELT preparation, and teachers' low English language proficiency throughout the country (Kuhlman & Serrano, 2018; Sevy-Biloon et al., 2020).

According to Saavedra (2012), Ecuador has received very little attention in education research, resulting in a dearth of empirical information. Similarly, after a detailed exploration of the existing research related to ELT and EFL in Ecuador, it is noticeable that too little attention has been paid to the investigation of syllabus planning in teaching EFL.

Consequently, to fill this gap and to reach the aims mentioned above, this dissertation explores the teachers' and students' perceptions of implementing the BDM within education environments where Ecuadorian EFL secondary teachers hold diverse views and beliefs about syllabi or unit planning. Thus, this study offers new perspectives to the Ecuadorian

Ministry of Education, stakeholders, curriculum designers, and language teachers with an innovative and updated way to plan language teaching courses or units.

The expected outcomes of this study lie in helping EFL teachers focus on clear objectives and desired results by stimulating their students' authentic performance. Using the BDM planning template, teachers will align curriculum requirements, CEFR principles, assessments, and learning experiences toward the performance task students must conduct at the end of each unit.

CHAPTER II

2. Methodology

Considering the lack of EFL teachers' and students' perceptions on applying the BDM in teaching EFL in Ecuador, this chapter explains the research questions, the research design, research instruments, and demographic information of the teachers and students who participated in this dissertation.

2.1 Research Questions

The main research questions and related sub-questions driving this dissertation were as follows:

1. How do Ecuadorian EFL teachers in secondary education plan their teaching process?

1.1 What connections do Ecuadorian EFL teachers perceive between the Backward Design Model and the Ecuadorian EFL national curriculum?

1.2 What differences do Ecuadorian EFL teachers at the secondary level perceive between applying the Backward Design Model and the Traditional Design Model when planning their syllabus?

1.3 How does applying the Backward Design Model change Ecuadorian EFL teachers' planning and teaching practices?

1.4 How do teachers perceive the implementation of the performance tasks based on the Backward Design Model?

2. How do Ecuadorian EFL teachers perceive the development of unit plans based on the Backward Design Model?

2.1 How does the implementation of unit plans influence Ecuadorian EFL teachers' planning and teaching?

2.2 How do Ecuadorian EFL teachers perceive implementing the Backward Design Model for planning and teaching their classes?

2.3 How efficiently do Ecuadorian EFL teachers perceive unit plans based on the Backward Design Model to promote students' lifelong learning?

3. How does applying performance tasks based on Backward Design planning affect Ecuadorian EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of learning English?

3.1 How do teachers perceive the application of performance tasks in teaching English?

3.2 How do students perceive the application of performance tasks helping their autonomous learning?

3.3 How do students perceive the implementation of performance tasks affecting their creativity?

3.4 How do students perceive the implementation of performance tasks developing their English language skills?

2.2 Research Design

Considering the aims and research questions of this dissertation, the direction of this study is led by the Pragmatism research philosophy, which "allows and guides mixed

methods researchers to use a variety of approaches to answer research questions that cannot be addressed using a singular method." (Doyle et al., 2009, p.175). Data were collected through mixed methods procedures (Creswell, 2017). Creswell et al. (2007) defined mixed methods as "research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry." (p.4). Thus, triangulation of the collection was possible to enrich the information and enhance the accuracy of the findings (Kumar, 2018).

As there was very little information in Ecuador about the EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of applying the BDM, this study follows an experimental research design. It is defined as "research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or program of inquiry." (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007, p.4). In addition to gaining as much information about the topic, this is a longitudinal study since it explores the extent of changes in the phenomenon over time (Csizér, 2020; Dörnyei, 2007; Kumar, 2018).

This dissertation also followed a convergent research design. The qualitative and quantitative data were collected in approximately the same timeframe, analyzed independently, and then integrated to identify possible sources of convergence or divergence (McCrudden et al., 2019). The quantitative approach examines the causal relationship between variables, while the qualitative approach explores and interprets the meaning of individual and group perceptions of the established research topic Maarouf (2019).

This research followed a three-phase design; the details and layout of its development are presented in Figure 16. It combines theory and practice to improve teachers' practices in the classroom and professional development (Niemi, 2018).

Figure 16

Three-phase research

Research Study
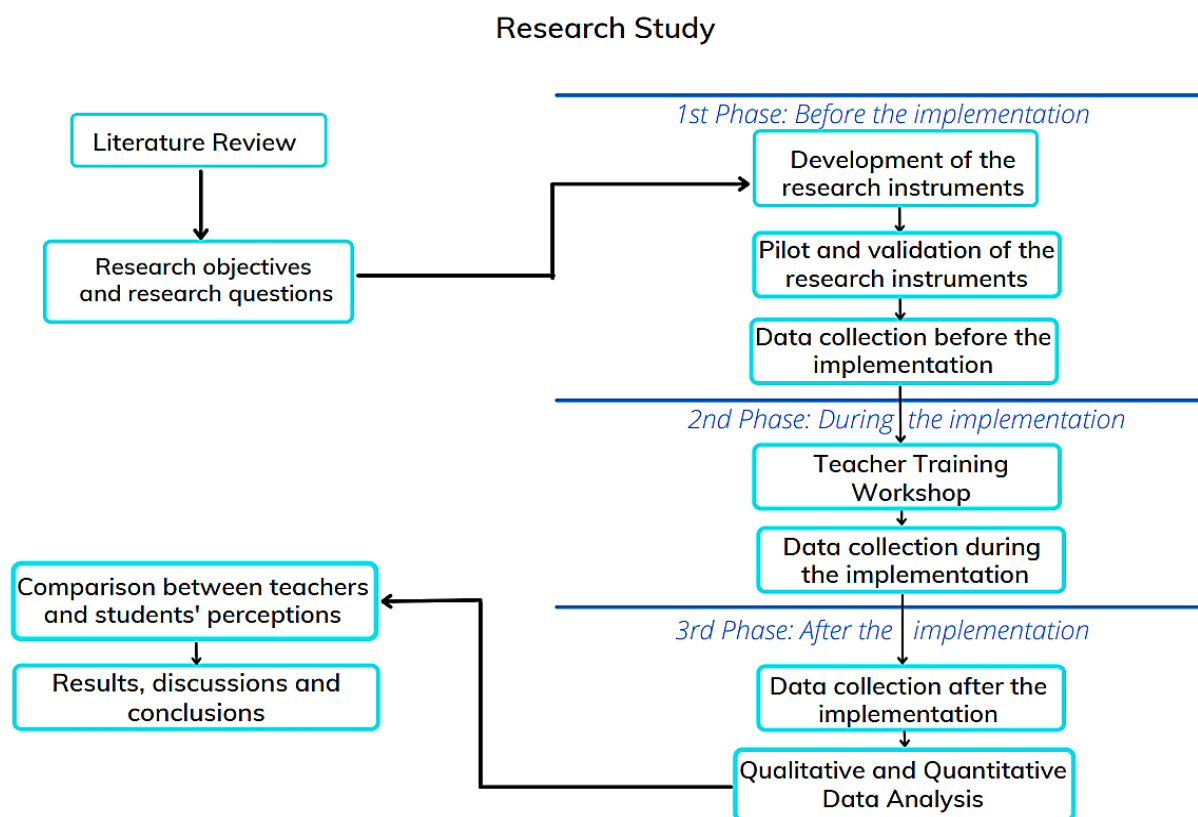
2.3 Participants and Settings

The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education approved the study to be conducted in the academic year 2020-2021 (Appendix B). Purposive sampling was applied for this study by selecting EFL teachers and students at secondary public schools from different regions in Ecuador. The purposive sample helps ensure the research findings are credible to

stakeholders (Denieffe, 2020). Therefore, this study comprised 16 Ecuadorian EFL teachers and 283 EFL students from high school (BGU). All the communications and permissions were written in Spanish since it is the first language of all research participants.

The target teachers were contacted by their e-mail addresses to request participation in this study, following confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process. Teachers voluntarily participated in this research by filling in a consent form. The teachers who participated chose one class to conduct this study in. After receiving a teacher training course, teachers initially contacted students to explain the main essential aspects of this study and asked them to participate.

As for student participation gender, 53% were girls, and 47% were boys. The student age distribution was as follows: 14 years old (13%), 15 years old (13%), 16 years old (33%), 17 years old (28%), and 18 years old (13%). When collecting data at the different schools, different types of classes were selected, most characteristically, in Year 1 of BGU (30%), in Year 2 of BGU (20%), and in Year 3 of BGU (50%).

According to self-reported perceptions about their English proficiency, most students (21%) and (79%) were of A1 and A2 beginner and intermediate levels, respectively. The students from Year 1 and Year 2 of BGU (50%) attended English classes five academic hours per week, while Year 3 of BGU (50%) had three hours per week.

The teacher sample consisted of 16 Ecuadorian EFL teachers across various regions of Ecuador.

Table 16 displays the demographic data of the participants:

Table 16

Detailed information on EFL teachers participating in the study.

Name	Gender	Age	Native Language	Experience teaching EFL (years)	Degree
Maria	F	31	Spanish	5	Bachelor in EFL
Karla	F	28	Spanish	4	Bachelor in EFL
Carlos	M	30	Spanish	6	Bachelor in EFL
Gabriela	F	40	Spanish	16	Master in Linguistics
Silvana	F	32	Spanish	12	Bachelor in EFL
Elvia	F	48	Spanish	23	Bachelor in EFL
Danilo	M	40	Spanish	14	Master in Linguistics
Wilson	M	42	Spanish	4	Bachelor in Informatics
Norma	F	42	Spanish	16	Bachelor EFL
Diana	F	36	Spanish	18	Master in Language Pedagogy
Patricia	F	55	Spanish	30	Bachelor in EFL
Nelly	F	54	Spanish	31	Bachelor in EFL
Mauricio	M	34	Spanish	17	Master in Language Pedagogy
Andrea	F	34	Spanish	11	Bachelor in Language Pedagogy
Luisa	F	31	Spanish	8	Bachelor in EFL
Andres	M	34	Spanish	10	Bachelor in Basic Education

Likewise, the students were asked if they wanted to participate in the focus-group interviews after completing the post-survey. Table 17 shows the demographic information of the voluntary participants:

Table 17

Detailed information on EFL students participating in the focus group interviews.

Name	Gender	Age	Native Language	Class
Estefanía	F	17	Spanish	3rd
Lourdes	F	17	Spanish	3rd
Diego	M	17	Spanish	3rd
Martín	M	16	Spanish	2nd
Carolina	F	16	Spanish	3rd
Laura	F	16	Spanish	2nd
Camila	F	15	Spanish	1st
Oscar	M	16	Spanish	2nd
Gabriela	F	15	Spanish	1st
Vinicio	M	15	Spanish	1st
Esthela	F	17	Spanish	3rd
Cristian	M	16	Spanish	3rd

2.4 Instruments

To explore and gain insights into the EFL teachers' and students' perceptions about the implementation of the BDM and its components, the data collection tools used in this study were the following:

(1) Teachers' interviews (Appendix D)

(2) Students' pre - questionnaire (Appendix E)

(3) Teachers' unit plans based on the BDM (Appendix F)

(4) Teachers' reflections on the implementation of the BDM (Appendix G)

(5) Focus-group interviews with teachers (Appendix H)

(6) Students' post - questionnaire (Appendix I)

(7) Focus-group interviews with students (Appendix J)

The individual and focus group interviews were piloted based on the four-phase process to develop and refine an interview protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016); the process of validating a long qualitative interview (Prescott, 2011); and (Qoyyimah, 2021), ethical data translation in qualitative educational research. Furthermore, all instruments received expert judgment from Ph.D. students, the supervisor of this research, and other university professors whose expertise falls within this field. The researcher, supervisor, and colleagues developed the questions and statements validated and piloted for each research instrument (Appendix C).

Likewise, two EFL teachers from Ecuador and one from the United States of America participated in the back-translation process of the instruments. Back-translation is a technique where two bilinguals participate; the first person translates from the source of the target language, and the second blindly translates from the target language to the original (Brislin, 2016). After this process, when the two versions of the target language are identical, he suggested that it is equivalent to the source in language form and can be applied as a tool for inquiry.

The back-translation process was developed without any problem. The instruments had few changes; most were based on synonyms for the technical words, such as the Backward Design Model, performance tasks, and scaffolding learning. The next phase of this study consisted of pilot testing the instruments to determine flaws, limitations, or other research instrument issues (Kvale, 2011). This phase's main objective was to confirm, adjust, and redefine the instrument's content based on participants' information (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Creswell et al., 2007). Consequently, all the instruments were in Spanish, the native

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language in Ecuador, which generated a comfortable and relaxing discussion of the interview's topics.

2.4.1 Semi-structured Interview

At the beginning of the research, an interview (1) was applied to explore EFL teachers' perceptions and beliefs about English Language Teaching in Ecuador and how they associate the national curriculum requirements with syllabus planning. After piloting the interview schedule, some changes related to technical words and synonyms were made to confirm, adjust, and redefine the research instrument to be ready for its application (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Therefore, words such as syllabus, curriculum, scaffolding, and Backward Design Model were changed with their designations in Spanish.

The interview schedule had twenty questions and was divided into five constructs: opening script, opening questions, instructional design questions, questions related to assessment, and learning activities. Each interview lasted around 45 minutes, and they were recorded through Skype and transcribed using Google Docs. The main objective of the interview schedule, the approximate time that the discussion will take, and some ethical issues, such as anonymity and confidentiality, were mentioned in each interview.

2.4.2 Students' Pre-questionnaire

The questionnaire was issued to first, second, and third-grade high school students. It aimed to discover students' perceptions of learning English as a Foreign Language in Ecuador. It was applied at the beginning of the research and consisted of thirty questions related to the EFL learning process in Ecuador using a Likert scale. The criteria were strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. It consisted of four constructs: personal

information, EFL learning preferences, EFL learning perceptions in Ecuador, and EFL types of assessments. Therefore, this survey was carried out to have a general idea of how students perceive learning English in public secondary schools.

2.4.3 Teachers' Unit Designs Based on the BDM Template

The planning of the units was designed in light of the BDM. The 16 teachers worked collaboratively to plan the units for the first semester of the school year, three units in total. Teachers' groups were divided according to the class they would teach during the school year. Thus, each group designed three units for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years. In the unit design, teachers followed the three main stages of the BDM and the requirements postulated by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education when planning the syllabus.

As seen in Appendix F, the first unit teachers designed, using the BDM, was about security protocols to prevent Coronavirus. In the first stage, the teachers establish the desired results, enduring understandings, essential questions, knowledge, and skills that students will achieve at the end of the unit. Furthermore, they linked that unit plan with the objectives, the CEFR indicators for performance, and skill and performance criteria established in the Ecuadorian EFL national curriculum.

In the second stage, the teachers designed the performance task based on the GRASPS acronym and the standards and criteria provided in the Ecuadorian EFL national curriculum. Furthermore, the teachers added other types of assessment such as individual and group tasks, projects, rubrics, and Testmoz and Padlet software. All the criteria and evaluation techniques were based on the desired results from stage 1.

Finally, in stage three, the teacher elaborated on the learning plan. Each unit was planned for 5 to 6 weeks, and the teachers followed the WHERETO elements from the BDM to connect the three stages in the unit plan. All the teaching resources and activities were aligned to the final performance task from Stage 2, and the desired results were established in Stage 1.

2.4.4 Teachers' Reflections on the Implementation of the BDM

After applying the BDM unit designs during the semester, teachers wrote a reflection to probe their thoughts, ideas, and perceptions of this application. The main aim of these questions was to find first insights and perceptions of applying the BDM in EFL classrooms. The written reflection consisted of ten questions that teachers answered individually. Using Google Docs, the teachers were asked to answer these questions based on their experience applying the BDM, pointing out its benefits and challenges. The teachers' answers allowed the researcher to create the questions for the focus group interviews.

2.4.5 Focus-group Interviews with Teachers

This procedure was conducted at the end of the application for the BDM in the semester. It consisted of nine questions that aimed to investigate the teachers' points of view on their experience using the BDM in their English classes (Appendix H). The questions were elaborated based on the teachers' reflections and related to comparing the traditional model and the BDM, the planning process, and the application of performance tasks for enhancing students' language skills. Therefore, this research technique was applied to refine and further explain the findings by triangulating data from the other research instruments used in this study.

2.4.6 Students' Post-questionnaire

After finishing the semester, students were asked to complete a post-questionnaire related to their perceptions of applying the BDM and performance tasks. It consisted of 36 questions, divided into four constructs: Students' perceptions of applying the BDM, Learning English, Creativity, and Autonomous Learning (Appendix I). The students were asked if they wanted to participate in the focus interview process, which will be conducted at the end of this investigation.

2.4.7 Focus-group Interviews with Students

From the 283 students who participated in this study, two focus-group interviews were conducted with six students in each group. This process aimed to explore and gain in-depth insights into the results obtained from the post-questionnaire. Each interview consisted of eight questions and lasted one hour (Appendix J). The constructs of the interview were divided into an introduction, opening questions, and prompts. Before asking questions from the interview, the students were asked to fill in a Google spreadsheet document to find their demographic information, as shown in Table 17.

2.5 Data Collection Procedures

As mentioned before, this study consisted of three main phases. The first phase involved an initial qualitative part by conducting individual interviews (Appendix D) with the teachers to explore EFL teacher perceptions and beliefs about English Language Teaching in Ecuador and to gain insights into how Ecuadorian teachers plan their syllabi.

Besides, a questionnaire (Appendix E) was applied to discover students' beliefs about learning English in Ecuador.

For the second phase of the study, based on findings from phase one, a two-week workshop was conducted for the 16 EFL teachers who participated in this study. The workshop for the teachers aimed to prepare teachers as skillful planners by covering the main characteristics of the BDM and the designing process of units based on the BDM template, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education requirements, and the CEFR descriptors. Here, teachers worked collaboratively to associate the BDM aspects with the Ecuadorian national curriculum, the course books provided by MINEDUC, and their English language instruction (Appendix F).

After learning about the BDM, the 16 teachers were divided into three groups to start planning the three units for the semester. The topics of these units were Security Protocols to Prevent Coronavirus, Environmental Issues, and the History of Our World. The teachers first started thinking about which will be the final performance task their students would perform in order to evidence their knowledge. Therefore, the performance task for the first unit was *to create an illustrated brochure that provides essential information about COVID-19 and the ways to prevent it.* The performance task for the second unit was *to create an illustrated PowerPoint presentation that provides essential information about environmental issues and how to protect the Earth.* Finally, the performance task for the third unit was to *make a fossil and explain it by recording a video.*

Considering the performance tasks for each unit, the teachers started filling the BDM template by working together in Google Docs. In Stage 1, the teachers worked collaboratively

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to establish the expected desired results from their students. Thus, the established goals, essential questions, enduring understandings, and skills that students need to achieve at the end of the unit were addressed by aligning and connecting the learning goals with the Ecuadorian national curriculum requirements and the CEFR descriptors.

In Stage 2, the teachers established how to evaluate their students' achievements. The central aspect of this stage was the creation of the performance tasks based on the GRASP model. For instance, for unit one (Appendix F), the teachers established a goal, role, audience, situation, product, standards, and criteria for success. The performance task for unit one was the following:

> *The learner is a doctor who works in some clinics and hospitals in the town. As a doctor, he/she was asked to create an informative brochure that describes Coronavirus and the ways to prevent this illness. This brochure will be delivered to the town's high school and university students. The standards and criteria for success are based on the rubric that covers the following conditions: specific information about coronavirus, an organized and outstanding layout to provide at least five recommendations for healthy schools, and clear and coherent information.*

In this stage, the teachers also worked on establishing the formative and summative assessment they would use during the unit and the rubric to evaluate students' performance tasks. For unit one, for instance, they indicated that students would be asked to perform individual and group tasks such as reading and listening comprehension activities related to ways to prevent Coronavirus, writing paragraphs about it, and performing speaking activities to provide recommendations for people in order to prevent Coronavirus. Furthermore, they

shared with the members of the groups different technological tools they usually use to evaluate their students. These tech-tools were Kahoot, Padlet, Plickers, Educreations, Testmoz, and Google Drive.

The third phase of this study focused on applying the units and performance tasks based on the BDM. This phase lasted six months of the school year and covered three units. During the application, different research instruments, such as teachers' reflections, were applied to obtain in-depth information to answer the research questions of this study. After implementing the three units, individual and focus group interviews and students' post-surveys were conducted with teachers and students to gain their perception of using the BDM in the teaching-learning process.

CHAPTER III

3. Data Analysis

Considering the research questions of this dissertation, different qualitative and quantitative methods were applied to gain in-depth information about the topic of this study. Thus, the data sources and analysis to answer each research question will be described to explain the whole process better.

Research question 1: How do Ecuadorian EFL teachers in secondary education perceive using the Backward Design Model in their teaching process?

To answer this question, individual and focus-group interviews were designed to be conducted at the beginning and the end of this study and conducted with 16 Ecuadorian EFL teachers. It focused on gaining initial and final insights into how Ecuadorian EFL teachers from public secondary schools associate the national curriculum requirements with the BDM when designing their English syllabus.

The individual interviews took place during July and August 2020. They were conducted and recorded using Skype, and each session was conducted in Spanish and lasted approximately 30-45 minutes. The interview protocol has twenty-two questions, divided into five constructs: opening script, opening questions, instructional design questions, questions related to assessment, and learning activities.

Similarly, the focus-group interviews took place at the end of the semester of the academic year 2020-2021. Two focus group interviews were conducted with six teachers in each group. This process was completed during February and March 2021 through Zoom and

lasted one hour each. The main focus of this process was to gain in-depth insight into the teachers' perceptions of applying the BDM in their EFL classes.

Research question 2: How do Ecuadorian EFL teachers perceive unit plans' development based on the Backward Design Model?

To answer this research question, teachers' unit designs based on the BDM and teachers' reflections on implementing the BDM were applied as instruments to collect data. After providing the teachers' workshop on using the BDM for EFL purposes, teachers had to work collaboratively to design unit plans 1, 2, and 3 for the first semester. These teachers' unit designs followed the template provided by Bowen (2017), which contains the three stages of the BDM: desired results, evidence and assessment, and learning plan.

Teachers collaborate on Google Docs to plan each unit before the school year by connecting the Ecuadorian National Curriculum, teaching practices, and the designed BDM unit template. Furthermore, they aligned all these planning aspects with the performance tasks based on the GRASPS elements and students' desired outcomes.

At the end of each unit, they were asked to write their reflections on implementing the BDM in their English lessons through Google Docs. This reflection document comprises ten open questions based on the planning process, teaching and learning experiences, and easy and complicated issues related to implementing the BDM in their English classes.

Research question 3: How does applying performance tasks based on Backward Design planning affect Ecuadorian EFL students' perceptions?

To answer this question, focus-group teacher interviews, focus-group student interviews, and students' post-questionnaires were conducted. In the focus-group interview,

the teachers were divided into two groups. Hence, two interviews were carried out with six participants through Zoom. It was divided into five constructs: opening script, opening questions, instructional design questions, questions related to assessment, and learning activities. Each focus-group interview explored the teachers' perceptions and experiences of integrating the Backward Design Model in Ecuadorian EFL public schools.

To know students' perceptions of the BDM in their English classes, a designed questionnaire was applied to them at the end of this application. The questionnaire was conducted through Google Docs, consisting of 34 questions on a five-point Likert scale divided into totally disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and totally agree. Moreover, the questionnaire has five sections: students' perceptions of performance tasks, lifelong learning, English skills, creativity, and autonomous learning.

Besides, two focus-group student interviews were conducted. The main objective was to explore in-depth the students' answers to the post-questionnaire. It consisted of eight questions about students' perceptions of how their teachers taught English during the semester, creating and applying performance tasks, developing English skills and autonomous learning, creativity, and collaborative learning.

Table 18 summarizes the data sources to gather information to answer the research questions and sub-questions of this study and the methods applied to analyze this information.

Table 18

Overview of data sources and data analysis

Research Question	Data sources	Methods of analysis
1. How do Ecuadorian EFL teachers perceive using the Backward Design Model in their teaching process?		
1.1 How do Ecuadorian EFL teachers in secondary education plan their teaching process?	Pre- individual Interviews Literature: Ecuadorian EFL National Curriculum (2016), National Curriculum Specifications for EFL Teaching and Learning (2014), and English Standards (2012)	Thick description of the teaching context Document analysis Descriptive Statistics Thematic Analysis
1.2 What connections do Ecuadorian EFL teachers perceive between the Backward Design Model and the Ecuadorian EFL national curriculum?	Focus-group interviews	Thematic analysis
1.3 What differences do Ecuadorian EFL teachers perceive between the Backward Design and Traditional Model when planning their syllabus?	Focus-group interviews Teachers' reflections (Google Docs)	Thematic analysis
1.4 How does implementing the Backward Design Model change Ecuadorian EFL teachers' planning and teaching practices?	Focus-group interview (teachers) Focus-group interview (students) Teachers' reflections	Thematic analysis Document analysis
1.5 How do teachers perceive the implementation of the performance tasks based on the Backward Design Model?	Focus-group interview (teachers) Focus-group interview (students) Teachers' reflections	Thematic analysis Document analysis
2. How do Ecuadorian EFL teachers perceive the development of unit plans based on the Backward Design Model?		
2.1 What do Ecuadorian EFL teachers think about using the Backward Design Model for planning and teaching their classes?	Focus-group interview Teachers' reflections	Document analysis Thematic analysis
2.2 How efficiently do Ecuadorian EFL teachers perceive implementing unit plans based on the Backward Design Model to promote students' lifelong learning?	Focus-group interview (teachers) Focus-group interview (students) Teachers' reflections	Thematic analysis

3. How does applying performance tasks based on Backward Design planning affect Ecuadorian EFL teachers' and students' perceptions?		
3.1 How do students from secondary education perceive learning English as a Foreign Language in Ecuador?	Focus-group interview (teachers) Focus-group interview (students) Teachers' reflections Students' pre-post questionnaires	Thematic analysis Descriptive Statistics Students 'questionnaire
3.2 How do students perceive the application of performance tasks helping their autonomous learning?	Focus-group interview (teachers) Focus-group interview (students) Teachers' reflections Students' pre-post questionnaires	Thematic analysis Descriptive Statistics Students 'questionnaire
3.3 How do students perceive the implementation of performance tasks affecting their creativity?	Focus-group interview (teachers) Focus-group interview (students) Teachers' reflections Students' pre-post questionnaires	Thematic analysis Descriptive Statistics Students 'questionnaire
3.4 How do students perceive the implementation of performance tasks developing their English language skills?	Focus-group interview (teachers) Focus-group interview (students) Teachers' reflections Students' pre-post questionnaires	Thematic analysis Descriptive Statistics Students' questionnaire

This dissertation applied descriptive statistics to summarize the data and calculate means, percentages, and frequencies. Additionally, the SPSS was utilized to perform the Cronbach's alpha coefficient reliability test of the two questionnaires. The data collected from students' pre- and post-questionnaires were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Software. This software analyzes descriptive and inferential data using keywords and commands readily comprehensible to the users (Zou et al., 2019).

The quantitative data analysis process contains two main phases. First, the pre and post-questionnaires were exported from Google Forms to Microsoft Excel; then, the data was organized, categorized, cleaned for analysis, and exported to SPSS. An identification number

was assigned to each questionnaire from 1 to 283. The second step focused on conducting the data analysis by including the following statistical techniques:

The Cronbach Alpha was established to test the internal consistency coefficients of the constructed scales of the questionnaires. Dörnyei (2007) claimed that to show satisfactory internal reliability, the values of the coefficients must be higher than 0.7 on a scale of .00 to 1.0. The pre and post-questionnaires applied in this dissertation showed reliability of .0950 and 0.947, respectively. These results showed high values, which indicated that "none of the scales should be discarded for future analysis" (Csizér, 2020, p.90). Table 19 and Table 20 shows the results obtained in the students' questionnaires.

Table 19

Cronbach's alpha of the three scales of the pre-questionnaire: Students' perceptions of learning English as a foreign language in Ecuador

Scales	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Activities	8	.87
Content	7	.970
Assessment	15	.836

Table 20

Cronbach's alpha of the four scales of the post questionnaires: Students' perceptions of the application of the BDM in their English lessons.

Scales	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Performance Tasks	11	.798
Learning English	6	.869
Creativity	6	.872
Autonomous Learning	11	.873

The descriptive statistics measures were calculated to describe or summarize the main characteristics of the sample and calculate the mean, frequency, and percentages for the scales of each questionnaire (George & Mallery, 2018). This dissertation was designed to be exploratory research; therefore, no factor analysis was needed to be conducted (Csizér, 2020).

The qualitative data analysis process was conducted to explore in-depth the teachers' and students' insights from individual interviews, focus group interviews, teachers' planning based on the BDM, and teachers' written reflections. Thus, thematic and content analysis were applied in this section. The thematic analysis (TA) method is an analytical process that involves coding and theme development from qualitative data (Terry et al., 2017; Bowen, 2009).

Credibility, transferability, confirmability, reliability, dependability, and authenticity were used while analyzing the data to determine the trustworthiness of its analysis (Kyngäs et al., 2020). This analysis followed the (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018) process. First, the collected data was transcribed to notice patterns and familiarize participants with answers (Appendix N). Then, it was disassembled to create meaningful grouping through coding. After that, the codes or categories were put together into context to create themes hierarchically. Two other researchers carried out this whole process to validate that the data coding was consistent.

Document analysis also was applied as a data source for the present study. Bowen (2009) claimed that document analysis is a tool for qualitative research that involves skimming, reading, and interpreting the documentary evidence to answer specific research questions. For this purpose, various documents provided by the Ecuadorian Ministry of

Education and empirical articles were examined to understand how the Ecuadorian Educational system works.

3.1 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted by following different ethical considerations. All the instruments were designed, validated, and piloted by following the guidelines proposed by (Brislin, 2016; Castillo-Montoya, 2016; J. Creswell & Poth, 2016; Kvale, 2011; Prescott, 2011; Qoyyimah, 2021). All the instruments were checked to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. They received expert judgment from Ph.D. students, the supervisor of this research, and other university professors whose expertise falls within this field.

This study was conducted in 14 Ecuadorian secondary public high schools. The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education administrates these schools, and English as a Foreign Language is a compulsory subject. Henceforth, the first step in conducting this research was obtaining the permission of the MINEDUC (Appendix B).

After receiving permission from the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education, an invitation letter was sent to the principals of different schools in Ecuador who were in charge of sending it to the English teachers (Appendix L). This letter included the essential information of this research, and it was made clear that participation was voluntary and that their responses would be kept confidential. Furthermore, it established the schedule for the full implementation of this study and recognized this research's right to privacy and freedom of movement. Finally, it was indicated that at the end of the implementation, teachers would receive a certificate for their participation (Appendix M).

This study also followed the ethical guidelines proposed by ELTE PPK Doctoral School of Education. Furthermore, an application form related to the Research Ethics in the Language Pedagogy Ph.D. Programme was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (Appendix K).

CHAPTER IV

4. Research Results and Discussion

4.1 Phase 1 – The investigation of participants' perceptions of English as a Foreign Language in Ecuador

The first phase of this study aimed to explore the perceptions that teachers and students have concerning the EFL teaching-learning process in Ecuador. The rationale behind this phase was twofold. First, to obtain holistic and general insights into how teachers plan their instructional design, teaching materials, assessment, and learning activities. Hence, to determine if they are applying the Forward, Central, or Backward Design to plan their syllabus, units, and lessons. The second aim was to obtain students' perceptions of the materials, activities, strategies, and assessments applied when learning English at school. Therefore, this phase was guided by the following research questions:

How do Ecuadorian EFL teachers in secondary education plan their teaching process?

How do students from secondary education perceive learning English as a Foreign Language in Ecuador?

4.1 Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching English as a Foreign Language

As mentioned before, the primary data source for this section was semi-structured interviews. The data analysis was guided by thematic analysis (Bowen, 2009; Terry et al., 2017). The sixteen interviews contained 93,768 words in total. Using Microsoft Word, the findings were coded using common coloring patterns and emergent themes to create potential

themes. Subsequently, those potential themes were related to curriculum planning, learning objectives, assessment, teaching materials, and activities.

4.1.1 Ecuadorian EFL Teachers' Perceptions of the Ecuadorian EFL National Curriculum

Analyses of the interviews showed that all the teachers considered some incongruence between the Ecuadorian EFL national curriculum and their teaching practices. The findings showed that all the participating teachers were concerned about the national curriculum's expectations and principles because they were not adapted to the reality of the Ecuadorian educational context.

The teachers mentioned that although the reformed curriculum, established in 2016, tried to improve the quality of English teaching and learning in Ecuadorian secondary schools, various factors hindered them from carrying out the intended curriculum. These obstacles included a lack of teacher training and technological resources, students' low English proficiency and motivation to learn the language, excessive extracurricular activities, and the inconsistency of course books with the students' English level. These results are illustrated in the following examples:

> Although the national curriculum, as a document, is well organized and incorporates current teaching approaches and methods to teach EFL, it is not developed based on our teaching reality. There are not enough facilities in Ecuador to implement these new approaches because of factors such as working with forty-five students per class and lack of motivation to learn English (María).

The Curriculum Approach and CLIL, on which the curriculum is based, are not applied in public schools due to different circumstances, such as lack of teacher training and students' motivation to learn the English language. Furthermore, the lack of technology and the internet in our schools prevents teachers from achieving national curriculum requirements (Diana).

Since the national curriculum does not cover essential factors, such as teaching students with special needs, using the curriculum in planning is not efficient. Besides, the curriculum provides guidelines for schools from urban areas since rural areas do not have internet and ways to practice the target language (Nelly).

Similarly, all the teachers believed that the main issues they found when planning their teaching-learning process were the excessive mandatory and desirable objectives each school year and the confusing coding system in developing the micro-curriculum planning.

Karla, for example, claimed that when planning a lesson, matching the general objectives' codes, the mandatory and desirable goals for each curricular thread, the performance indicators, and the evaluation criteria is a waste of time. For her, *this complex process aims to fulfill bureaucratic procedures rather than educational purposes.*

Mauricio added that *because of this confusing and unnecessary coding system, most teachers only filled in these documents to fulfill the Ministry of Education requirements when planning their lessons.* He claimed that *most teachers only copy and paste the syllabus since it wastes time, and they must invest their time in other teaching activities.*

Norma manifested that *using the code system to plan the syllabus was confusing and demotivating.* She explained that *high school teachers had not received formal training in*

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planning based on the coding system provided by the national curriculum reform. The teacher also manifested that planning the syllabus *should not be based only on following the national curriculum guidelines but on designing the syllabus based on the reality of each school.*

These results are corroborated by different authors who conducted the same research in other countries. Salinas (2017), for instance, indicated that the macro and micro contextual factors, such as the incongruence of the National Curriculum and teaching practices, impede English teaching success. Furthermore, the teaching reality within the limited resources and the students' lack of motivation to learn a language demotivated English teachers from working effectively (Zhang & Liu, 2014).

4.1.2 Ecuadorian EFL Teachers' Planning

According to the teachers, designing the annual plan based on the MINEDUC requirements was complex and futile. Cristian stressed the importance of planning before starting the lesson to avoid improvising when teaching English. Nevertheless, the teacher also claimed that *to follow the national curriculum requirements and fill in all the documents at the beginning of the school year, teachers wasted time simply copying and pasting the document and not contextualizing it according to the reality of each school.*

Elvia stated that the reality was that *teachers had to plan using codes from the national curriculum and the course books provided by the Ministry of Education, even though they were allowed to prioritize the content they wanted to teach.* Maria mentioned that planning students' exit profiles based on the CEFR and obtaining the B1 level at the end of high school was only a utopian goal when teaching EFL in Ecuador. She indicated that

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according to the national curriculum, students entering high school are at an A2.2 English proficiency level. However, the majority of students are at the A1 level. Consequently, students cannot achieve the B1 level the Ministry of Education requires at the end of high school.

The participants found teaching EFL in Ecuadorian secondary public institutions challenging. When planning the syllabus, it was found that all the teachers followed the traditional design, which started with deciding the content to be taught, then the teaching process, and finally, the assessment instruments to evaluate students' outcomes (Richards, 2013). Other factors that impeded or aided ELT in Ecuador are educational policies, infrastructure, perceptions, and English Language Teaching status (Sevy-Biloon et al., 2020).

In this section, the teachers confirmed that those factors influenced them to apply traditional grammar-translation methods in most of their classes. It was found that even though the teachers frequently applied grammar-translation methods in their lessons, they always tried to use meaningful activities and authentic materials from different sources. Furthermore, all the teachers indicated that they saw themselves as guides, motivators, and facilitators of their students' learning within the English teaching process.

4.1.3 Ecuadorian EFL Teachers' Reported Practices

The teaching practices and learning experiences in EFL contexts were the factors that affected teachers' beliefs. Although all the teachers indicated that teaching English in Ecuador was not an easy job, it had been established that they had substantial experience in teaching EFL in Ecuadorian public schools. The teachers' most common aspects were planning, assessment, and activities and materials applied in the classroom.

Concerning assessment, all the teachers indicated that they evaluated students in a formative and summative way. Observations, class participation, discussions, and projects were the most mentioned instruments for a formative assessment, making them an essential aspect of the learning process.

An overall belief was that projects were the best way to assess students' English skills. Luisa claimed that the best way to connect the national curriculum objectives, the content, and lifelong learning was to evaluate based on projects. For her, *when students develop their projects, they can achieve some requirements stipulated in the curriculum, such as collaborative work, autonomous learning, and transferability of the acquired knowledge to different scenarios*. Nelly also indicated that, when developing projects, students improved their English skills, creativity, and independent learning. As an assessment tool, Mauricio mentioned that *projects were authentic and more valuable than standardized tests*.

All the teachers believed that the new coursebook provided by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education included engaging and contextualized content. However, it mainly focused on writing and reading English skills, which was unsuitable for the students' English proficiency. Therefore, the teachers preferred using their materials and providing activities based on students' reality.

Esteban indicated that *even though the coursebooks published by the Ministry of Education had engaging and exciting activities, he preferred using other authentic and contextualized activities from the Internet*. Andrés also claimed that he preferred *prioritizing which content the students would learn by choosing the most original activities from the Ministry of Education's coursebook and handouts designed by himself.*

Another constraint to implementing the national curriculum was the teachers' limited knowledge and skills in using Information Communication Technology (ICT). Fifteen of the sixteen teachers considered the lack of technology one of the most important challenges in carrying out the new EFL national curriculum.

Cristian claimed that even though the national curriculum encouraged the use of technology to improve students' language skills, the reality was that schools did not have an internet connection, and students did not have ICT tools to work in the classroom. He claimed that *public schools only had internet connections in the administrative offices, and some students did not have cell phones, which hindered the use of ICT in class.* Furthermore, Diana avoided using ICT tools and online platforms in the classroom because she explained that working with 35 to 45 students with only a few computers is difficult. Norma stated that *teachers were not adequately trained to use technology and new teaching methodologies in the last seven years.*

There was a note in the teachers' perspectives about their roles. The results revealed that although teaching English was challenging and demanding in Ecuador, the teachers considered themselves facilitators, motivators, and guides of their students' knowledge. Wilson argued that teachers were motivators of students' learning, and Carlos claimed that *students' motivation to learn a language in Ecuador is relatively low. However, language teachers are probably the only ones who can motivate students to learn English by sharing their experiences abroad and highlighting aspects of new cultures and places to visit.*

Besides, Maria stated that teachers used to be the center of learning, but nowadays, teachers have become learning guides. She said that *teachers now are guides in constructing their students' knowledge by designing learner-centered approach activities.* Similarly, all

the teachers considered themselves facilitators of knowledge because they provided the necessary scaffolding and teaching support when required.

Although none of the participants has said it directly, according to the teachers' answers, they are assumed to apply the traditional or Forward Design Model to plan their syllabus and units. This assumption is corroborated by Jjingo and Visser (2018), who explained that the FDM is commonly used when teachers are mandated to follow the national curriculum following a linear sequence of syllabus planning, where the EFL classes are with many students, and tests are designed centrally than by an individual teacher.

4.2 Students' Perceptions of Learning English as a Foreign Language in Ecuador

A pre-questionnaire was distributed to students in the first, second, and third year of high school to explore their perceptions of learning EFL in Ecuador. It was applied at the beginning of the research and consisted of thirty questions related to the EFL learning process in Ecuador. Table 21, Table 22, and Table 23 show descriptive statistics and percentages of each scale and the respective questions from the questionnaire.

4.2.1 Students' Perceptions of Learning English

Table 21 displays the mean and percentages of students' perceptions of EFL learning in their classrooms. The primary constructs are based on language learning activities, alignment of the learning activities and content with final projects, and the teacher's guidance during the learning process.

Table 21

Distribution of the mean and percentages of students' perceptions of learning English

Scales	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoy English classes because:					
the activities provided by the teacher are interesting	44.3	36.6	14.5	2.7	1.9
I can apply the content I learned in real-life situations	24.8	40.1	28.2	4.6	2.3
I can show my new knowledge when we present our projects	27.1	43.1	22.5	5.0	2.3
the activities we perform in class are connected to the final project I have to perform	8.4	29.4	3.8	57.6	0.8
all the activities are related to the main topic of the unit	10.3	30.5	2.3	53.4	3.4
all the materials are connected to the main topic of the unit	10.3	25.5	7.3	50.2	6,7
I realize that in every class, I understand the content related to the team better	29.8	40.1	5.3	22.9	1.9
the teacher constantly monitors my learning	48.9	32.8	12.6	1.5	4.2
the teacher constantly guides my learning	56.7	30.2	7.3	2.7	3.1

The outcomes shown in Table 21 reveal that research participants generally had positive perceptions of learning English as a Foreign Language. Since the mean values of the three scales were 31.7% and 29.53% for the strongly agree and agree criteria, it could be said

that students have positive perceptions of how EFL teaching is conducted in Ecuador. However, a closer examination of the findings indicated that there are also some statements such as activities applied in the classroom 57.6%, 53.4%; the lack of application of different types of instruments 41.2%; the scarce integration of speaking activities 61.5%, and the authenticity of activities 40.1% are factors that, according to the students, hinder them from improving their language skills.

Regarding the results from this table, it is notable that most students enjoy learning English. They either strongly agreed or agreed with almost all the criteria; for instance, they strongly agreed that the activities provided by teachers are interesting 44.3%, the constant monitoring 48.9% and guidance from teachers 56.9%, and the development of final projects 27.1% are the main factors that make them enjoy their English classes.

On the other hand, there is a high tendency of responders that the activities applied in the classroom are not authentic 40.4%, and they are not connected with the final projects they have to perform 57.6% or the main topic of the unit 53.4%. These results showed that even though teachers apply interesting and motivating materials and resources, they are not aligned with the student's desired outcomes.

4.2.2 Students' Perceptions of Learning English: Lessons

The second section is related to the content covered during each unit; furthermore, the students' perceptions of which skills are the most commonly used in their English classes. Table 22 presents the distribution of percentages of the obtained results.

Table 22

Distribution of the mean and percentages of students' perceptions of English content

Scales	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English classes at high school are:					
primarily focused on covering the content of the course book	37.4	36.6	19.5	4.2	2.3
primarily focused on improving grammar	40.1	44.3	11.5	1.9	2.3
mostly focused on improving writing skills	38.2	40.8	16.0	2.7	2.3
mostly focused on improving reading skills	51.5	33.6	9.5	3.1	2.3
mostly focused on improving speaking skills	9.5	24.8	3.4	61.5	0.8
mostly focused on improving listening skills	9.9	31.7	1.9	54.2	2.3
Mostly focused on achieving the main topic of the unit	54.6	34.0	7.6	2.3	1.5

Regarding Table 22, it was found that students perceived that English lessons are based on covering the content of the course book by mainly focusing on grammar approach and writing and reading skills. Most students (74%) strongly agreed that their English classes mainly cover the course book's content to achieve the learning objectives. The students either strongly agreed or agreed that the English classes mainly focus on improving grammar 84.4%; only 4.2% disagreed with this statement. In terms of English skills, the students perceived that the English classes mainly focused on reading skills, followed by writing, speaking, and listening skills.

Regarding reading comprehension skills, 85.1% of students agreed and strongly agreed that reading is the main skill used in the classroom; only 5.4% disagreed. Similarly,

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concerning writing skills, 79% of students agreed that the English lessons mainly focused on writing. However, 61.5% and 54.2% of students indicated that their English classes do not focus on improving their speaking and listening skills, respectively.

4.2.3 Students' Perceptions of Learning English: Assessment Tools

Finally, Table 23 focuses on displaying the students' perceptions of their teachers' instruments to assess their English skills. Different formative and summative tools were provided so students could choose the ones their teacher used to evaluate them in their English classes.

Table 23

Distribution of the mean and percentages of students' perceptions of assessment tools

Scales	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I can see my improvements because the teacher applies:					
rubrics related to the final project	21.0	38.9	35.1	0.8	4.2
end-of-unit test	48.9	28.2	17.9	2.3	2.7
daily assessment	20.6	8.0	28.6	38.5	4.2
evaluation instruments aligned to the content	18.3	3.1.7	36.2	39.7	2.7
different types of evaluation instruments	19.1	32.1	3.8	41.2	3.8
self-evaluation instruments	24.4	37.8	6.1	23.7	8.0
projects/ final products	42.4	30.5	19.5	5.3	2.3
written tests	43.9	30.5	18.3	3.4	3.8
reading comprehension tests	37.4	38.2	18.7	3.4	2.3
class discussions	12.6	37.4	3.4	44.3	2.7
observation	5.3	28.6	1.9	24.0	40.1
checklists	6.5	24.8	2.3	34.0	32.4
final exam	50.0	26.7	16.4	4.2	2.7

In this table, it can be seen that students are familiar with different types of assessment and evaluation tools. The tools that most students have experienced are end-of-unit tests 77.1%, final projects 72.9%, written tests 74.4%, reading comprehension tests 75.6%, and final exams 76.7%.

Almost half of the students agreed that they applied rubrics to evaluate their final project, 59.9%. On the other hand, observation 64.1%, checklists 66.4%, and daily assessment 42.7% are the main factors students have not experienced in evaluation. Finally, only 55% of students believed that the evaluation instruments were aligned with the content learned during the unit.

Phase 2 – The investigation of teachers' perceptions on the development of unit plans based on the Backward Design Model

The second phase of the present study explores the teachers' perceptions of using the Backward Design Model template to plan their syllabi and units. The rationale behind this phase was to gain deep insights and understand how satisfied teachers felt with applying the BDM template and its main characteristics in classroom teaching.

To gain fundamental insights and understanding, the second phase of this study was guided by the following research questions and sub-questions:

How do Ecuadorian EFL teachers perceive the development of unit plans based on the Backward Design Model?

What do Ecuadorian EFL teachers think about using the Backward Design Model for planning and teaching their classes?

How does the implementation of unit plans influence Ecuadorian EFL teachers' planning and teaching?

How efficiently do Ecuadorian EFL teachers perceive the implementation of unit plans based on the Backward Design Model to promote students' lifelong learning?

4.3 Teachers' Perceptions of Applying the Backward Design Model for Planning and Teaching Their Lessons

To gain understanding and profound insights into this phase, teachers attended a two-week workshop introducing them to the BDM characteristics. They had the opportunity to plan three units collaboratively. To answer the established research and sub-research questions, teachers' planning (Appendix F), written reflections (Appendix G), and two focus-group interviews (Appendix H) were applied as research tools.

The data analysis was guided by thematic analysis (Bowen, 2009; Terry et al., 2017). The focus-group interviews contained 42,833 words in total. Common coloring patterns created the codes and emerging themes. The potential themes were related to applying the BDM and its main features in teaching English as a Foreign Language.

4.3.1 Teachers' Perceptions of the Development of Unit Plans Based on the Backward Design Model

According to the teachers, designing the syllabus and unit plans based on the BDM principles was a complex but productive process. The teachers indicated that having an authentic and specific goal allowed them to teach toward this goal. They noted that applying

the three stages of the BDM let them ensure that the content to be taught will remain focused and organized.

Elvia, for example, claimed that applying the BDM to plan their English classes gave her a clear view of what she expected from her students at the end of each unit. She indicated that when she started the planning process, *an essential aspect was to focus on the student's desired results, then I started working on how I would evaluate my students' understandings and knowledge to finally plan the techniques, strategies, and teaching materials to use to achieve the primary goal.*

Danilo added that having a final performance task before starting to teach students gave him and his students a broad idea of what they were asked to do at the end of the unit. For him, *the originality of planning using the BDM starts from focusing on the final goal, which is the last performance task. Thus, students have a better idea of what I expected from them at the end of the unit.*

Likewise, Mauricio claimed that planning using the BDM helped him have a clear idea of what, how, and why he would apply different strategies, activities, or resources. He manifested that *he found the BDM planning more convenient than the planning established by the Ministry of Education because it is based on authentic learning where students can develop projects based on real scenarios.*

Even though all teachers had positive perceptions about implementing the BDM in their English classes, some teachers stated that planning using the BDM could not be applied in Ecuador because the Ministry of Education already provided them with a template to plan their syllabus, which is mandatory in public institutions.

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For instance, Diana manifested that implementing the BDM in Ecuador could be difficult since the teachers already have the mandatory templates to fill in when planning their syllabi. Furthermore, she claimed that *most teachers plan their syllabus by following the FDM, so if the Ministry of Education wants to introduce BDM planning in EFL contexts, all teachers must be trained.*

4.3.2 The Influence of the Implementation of Unit Plans on Ecuadorian EFL Teachers' Planning and Teaching

The implementation of the BDM templates had a positive influence on the participants. All teachers indicated that working collaboratively to fill in the BDM templates allowed them to work more effectively in planning their syllabi. Besides, the teachers found remarkable the three stages presented by the BDM to have a big and clear idea of how the English instruction will be conducted.

Gabriela stressed that *applying the BDM to plan my syllabus was helpful because filling in each stage and its components gave me a decisive view of the primary goal of each unit.* Thus, she could prioritize the content taught and choose the best techniques to assess that content.

Luisa stated that using the BDM helped her better organize the content to be led by always considering the final learning goal she expected from her students. She indicated that *providing students with the final performance task clarified what I expected them to do at the end of the unit*.

Maria claimed that *the template for planning based on the BDM is more practical and authentic than the one provided by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education*

asks us to fill in or plan the syllabus based on general objectives, evaluation criteria, and

parameters that most teachers simply fill in mechanically. On the other hand, the planning

based on the BDM is based on tangible goals according to our contexts.

All teachers agreed that using the BDM templates allowed them to work more efficiently and flexibly in collaborative work. Diana stated that *after attending the teachers' workshop, the planning process based on the BDM was exciting because I could provide and receive feedback from colleagues from other parts of Ecuador.*

Likewise, Karla mentioned that *planning the syllabus by following the BDM template allowed me to learn more teaching techniques, strategies, and technological tools that my colleagues shared with me when planning collaboratively.* She explained that working in groups to design the syllabus based on the BDM template allowed her to learn new technological tools and teaching materials for her students. Some examples of these tech tools were Duolingo, Quiz Your English, Hello Talk, and Kahoot.

4.3.3 Teachers' Perceptions of the Efficiency of the Implementation of the Backward Design Model to Promote Students' Lifelong Learning

Regarding this aspect, it was found that all teachers agreed that applying the BDM and performance tasks promotes students' lifelong learning. All the teachers mentioned real context and authenticity as how the BDM supports lifelong learning, and they even provided examples of how the students applied the learned knowledge and skills in real situations with different contexts.

I believe that applying the BDM in English classes promotes lifelong learning. As all

the teachers mentioned, the connection between activities based on the final objective

of the unit and the use of content based on real contexts, students relate the topics to the situations in their lives. For example, in unit 2 of the environmental topics, they already knew how to respond to problems in their community using English as a means of communication (Maria).

Applying the BDM helped my students feel encouraged to learn English. Besides, the students felt motivated to complete their final projects by performing authentic roles such as environmentalists, reporters, auditors, and doctors. The students remembered the learned content much longer than when studying for an exam (Danilo).

I believe that using the BDM for unit planning provides lifelong learning for our students. For example, the first project related to COVID-19 promoted learning for life to apply it during this time of pandemic and post-pandemic because we must have the same care. So, what was reinforced through the development of the brochure is learning for life because students will use it authentically. Knowledge is transferable to different contexts and the people surrounding our students. (Mauricio)

Phase 3 – The investigation of teachers' and students' perceptions of the application of the Backward Design Model

The third phase of this study explored the teachers' and students' perceptions of applying the Backward Design Model during the first semester of the school year. It was divided into two groups to obtain fundamental insights and understandings of this study. The first group of research questions and sub-questions focus on the teachers' perceptions of applying the BDM in English teaching in the classroom. The second group of research

questions and sub-questions concentrate on the students' perceptions of the BDM on English learning in the school.

The rationale behind this phase was to gain deep insights and understand how teachers felt about applying the BDM in teaching. Besides, this phase focuses on gaining students' perceptions if they noticed any change related to the English learning process in their classroom; thus, to find out how effective the BDM and performance tasks were in comparison with the traditional way of teaching.

4.4 The Investigation of Teachers' Perceptions of the Application of the Backward Design Model

The following research question and sub-questions guided this group:

How do Ecuadorian EFL teachers perceive using the Backward Design Model in their teaching process?

What connections do Ecuadorian EFL teachers perceive between the Backward Design Model and the Ecuadorian EFL national curriculum?

What differences do Ecuadorian EFL teachers perceive between the Backward Design and Traditional Model when planning their syllabus?

How do teachers perceive the implementation of the performance tasks based on the Backward Design Model?

4.4.1 Connections that Ecuadorian ELF Teachers Perceived Between the Backward

Design Model and the Ecuadorian EFL National Curriculum

Analyses of the interviews showed that all teachers considered that there were strong connections between the Ecuadorian national curriculum and the BDM. The findings revealed that the primary relationships are related to the alignment to CEFR standards, scaffolding learning, authentic interpersonal interactions, communicative approach, autonomous learning, and CLIL Curricular Threads established by MINEDUC (2016). This is illustrated in the following examples:

For me, there is a strong connection between the BDM and the national curriculum requirements because, according to the curriculum, we have to plan our syllabus based on the communicative approach and CLIL. Therefore, applying the BDM and performance tasks positively affected my classes. My students had more interactions and were more confident when they presented their final projects. Also, they could enhance their English skills and show their creativity (Diana).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education asked us to plan the syllabus based on pedagogical files based on projects. The BDM planning came at the right time because it was perfect for us since we could easily design and organize the syllabus according to the final projects. Besides, for me, the BDM provides a flexible syllabus process so that we have a clearer vision of what activities students need support on and the activities they can do by themselves (Danilo).

The main connection for me is the CLIL Curricular Threads. The BDM allowed students to improve their interaction, oral communication, reading, and writing.

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However, the most connection was with Curricular Thread 5: Language through the

Arts because by developing the performance tasks, students improved their language

skills in an enjoyable and novel way (Elvia).

Regarding the Communicative Approach, I think that the BDM is a more coherent

syllabus design process since it can be customized according to the general

guidelines of the national curriculum while taking into account the reality of our

schools and our students' needs (Cristian).

The results showed that the participants found the application of the BDM as an authentic process where they could link the national curriculum requirements with their teaching context in a more organized and flexible way. These results are corroborated by Korotchenko et al. (2015), who stated that the BDM helps foreign language teachers effectively associate the national, state, district, or institutional education standards with the syllabus content, students' needs, and expected learning outcomes.

4.4.2 Differences that Ecuadorian EFL Teachers Perceived between the Backward Design Model and the Traditional Model

The participants mentioned syllabus planning as the main difference they found between the Forward Design Model and the Backward Design Model. They indicated that following the unit template based on the BDM principles and aligning the teaching activities, strategies, and materials with the final performance tasks was the most remarkable difference between these two models.

Following and filling in the three stages of the BDM template is the main difference

I found against the FDM. Even though the first stage was similar to the FDM, the

BDM asked us to plan based on essential questions, knowledge, and understandings

that students need to have to transfer their new knowledge. Then, instead of planning

the content to be covered, we had to plan first what instruments would be applied to

evaluate our students. With this in mind, we could align the content with stages 2 and

1.

Compared to traditional planning, the BDM is based not only on a general objective

to be achieved, such as writing a letter to your teacher. The BDM planning begins

with designing the final product that students have to produce at the end of each unit

to show their understanding and new knowledge in authentic contexts. Furthermore,

the assessment based on the final performance task was the most exciting aspect of

the BDM process (Patricia).

The process of BDM, in my view, is better than the traditional model since it allows

for better organizing and aligning of the teaching activities, materials, and strategies

by focusing on the final goal. Besides, I clearly knew the objectives of the first, second,

and third units, as did my students. With the traditional model, all the goals were

written only in the documents but not achieved at the end of the school year. (Karla)

As the colleague said, planning based on the BDM is practical for teachers and

students. It gives us a more organized and straightforward way of the objectives that

students must meet at the end of each unit, and our students have a clear idea of these

objectives. Besides, by providing explicit resources and activities based on the final

goal, I noticed that students felt more enthusiastic and motivated to develop the

performance task at the end of each unit (Andrea).

These results are supported by Brown (2004), who explained that the BDM helps teachers establish clear goals by providing authentic and meaningful resources aligned with the students' expected outcomes. Likewise, Wiggins and McTighe (1998) explained that the BDM helps teachers establish curricular priorities and clear syllabus expectations that give them a clear idea of what their students must achieve at the end of each unit or language course.

4.4.3 Teachers' Perceptions of the Implementation of Performance Tasks Based on the Backward Design Model

According to all the participants, the performance tasks based on the Backward Design Model are similar to the final projects students usually develop at the end of the unit or school year. However, the teachers claimed that the GRASPS elements allowed them to make the performance tasks more structured and organized than the traditional projects. From the interviews, the common themes mentioned by the participants were authenticity, real-life situations, roles, autonomous learning, creativity, and language skills.

Cristian stated that *the performance tasks are the key to connecting what the students have learned during each unit with real-life situations in different contexts.* He explained that his students applied their English and other skills, such as creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving, using the performance tasks. Similarly, Danilo claimed that *the activities based on the BDM are more significant for the students since they could apply their knowledge based on what is happening now, for instance, by making the brochure to prevent COVID-19.*

Gabriela stated that *applying the GRASPS framework gives students a clearer idea of what I expected from them in the project. Compared with the traditional projects, the performance tasks were more organized and clear for my students. I noticed the difference between the class in which I applied the BDM and the one I did not; the students who developed the performance tasks based on the BDM presented better projects.*

All teachers mentioned creativity as one of the skills that students could show by applying the performance tasks. Mauricio stated that his students developed and led their creativity by using performance tasks because they had the flexibility to choose how they would present the final performance task. He manifested that *when I asked my students to work on their last performance tasks, I noticed that most of my students could create original and exciting projects.*

Likewise, Diana claimed that *students showed their creativity when presenting the final projects by using different ways to attract attention, such as images, ideas, and figures in an organized and coherent manner.* Andrés manifested that *providing specific requirements to develop the performance tasks encouraged students to show their creativity.*

Autonomous learning was another aspect highlighted by teachers. Mauricio claimed that *even though students worked collaboratively to develop the performance tasks, they had to present individual works. Thus, I saw that students improved their autonomous learning to create and present their final projects because they asked me or tried to find information from other sources to accomplish the performance tasks efficiently.*

Luisa explained that her students demonstrated their ability to autonomously learn the contents in each class to develop the performance tasks. She claimed that *the class where*

I applied the BDM was more motivated to work and present their final projects than the other classes. Besides, I noticed that students already had all the content, skills, and knowledge needed to do the performance tasks, so they interacted more with their classmates and me.

According to the participants, applying the BDM in their classroom helped students increase their language skills. They mentioned that even though the classes were online, they noticed their students' language improvements because they could use their language knowledge in different contexts. All teachers agreed that students improved their four primary language skills: speaking, writing, listening, and reading. However, writing and reading were the skills teachers mentioned that students improved the most.

Nelly stated that *by applying the BDM, students improved all their linguistic abilities, but their writing skill was the most developed.* She explained that it was challenging to manage forty students per class to talk when teaching online due to the pandemic period. Consequently, she did not apply many speaking activities in the class that the BDM was implemented and the other classes she teaches EFL.

Similarly, Patricia claimed that *students improved their English skills because they had a clear idea of building their performance tasks and could practice the language by transferring their knowledge and understanding in authentic contexts.* Again, she explained that most students' developed skills during this intervention were writing and reading.

Maria stated that the activities based on the BDM are more practical than the traditional model. She said that *because all the activities and materials were aligned with the primary objective, students received scaffold learning, which helped them start from the most*

basic and easy activities that gradually increased. She mentioned that students developed all the English skills at the same level.

Luisa added that her students improved their speaking skills because the final performance task was aligned with the students' acquired knowledge during the unit. She claimed she *was stunned by how easy it was for students to carry out a one-minute speaking task, and some even continued speaking more without difficulty.* She compared the class where the BDM was applied and the other class where the FDM was conducted, and she mentioned that *the class where I used the BDM showed better results than the other class.*

Cristian also indicated that *students improved their speaking and listening skills because they felt more motivated and confident to put more effort into developing the final project.* He also agreed that students from the class where the intervention was done showed better results than the other classes because he noticed that students who received the intervention were more motivated in the classroom.

Several studies support these findings. Hosseini et al. (2019) claimed that the BDM is a student-centered approach that increases motivation and satisfaction in learning a language, and besides, applying the GRASPS element from the BDM places students in real-world scenarios that are more relevant and engaging than typical tests (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Consequently, performance tasks are one of the most essential and innovative aspects of the BDM.

4.5 The Investigation of Students' Perceptions of the Application of the Backward Design Model

To determine students' perceptions of applying performance tasks based on the BDM, 283 students were invited to respond to a 36 Likert-type list. The statements dealt with Learning English, Creativity, and Autonomous Learning using a 5-point scale including 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3(neutral), 2(disagree), and 1(strongly disagree). Furthermore, two groups of six students participated in the focus-interview process. The research questions and sub-questions that led this section were the following:

How does applying performance tasks based on Backward Design planning affect Ecuadorian EFL students' perceptions?

How do students perceive the application of performance tasks helping their autonomous learning?

How do students perceive the implementation of performance tasks affecting their creativity?

How do students perceive the execution of performance tasks developing their English language skills?

4.5.1 Students' Perceptions of the Application of Performance Tasks Based on the Backward Design Model

The obtained results of the students' perceptions of developing and presenting performance tasks based on the BDM are displayed in Table 24. Criteria such as transferability of knowledge to other contexts, alignment between teaching activities and materials with the performance task, and content priority were addressed in this section.

Table 24

Distribution of the percentages of students' perceptions of the application of the Backward Design Model.

Scales	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I perceived changes in how my teacher taught English during the last three units.	27.9	32.5	25.4	8.1	6.0
My teachers provided all the necessary knowledge to create the final projects.	66.8	23.0	8.5	1.1	0.7
I could easily follow the teachers' instructions to do final projects.	39.9	42.4	14.1	2.5	1.1
Creating final projects is better than taking a test.	64.0	17.3	12.4	3.5	2.8
By creating final projects, I could transfer my knowledge to real-life situations.	44.2	40.3	13.4	1.8	4
The final projects helped me focus on the essential ideas of the content I learned.	47.7	36.7	12.7	1.4	1.4
I could better understand the final projects I had to do.	35.0	43.5	17.0	3.2	1.4
Creating the final projects could reinforce what I learned during the units.	62.0	19.3	10.4	5.5	2.8
I better understood what steps to take to create the final projects.	32.5	45.9	17.3	3.2	1.1
I used my methods to learn vocabulary words related to the final projects.	27.6	41.3	24.7	5.7	0.7
I would love to continue doing final projects to improve my English skills in the future.	58.0	28.3	11.0	1.8	1.1

The results in Table 24 reveal that most students strongly agreed and agreed with all of the statements in this table. It means that students' perceptions of the application of the BDM in their English classes were positive. Furthermore, from the focus-group interview responses, most respondents had positive perceptions of applying performance tasks based on the BDM.

The criteria that students rated with the highest percentages were: *my teacher provided all necessary knowledge to create performance tasks for final projects* (89,8%);

creating final projects is better than taking a test (81.3%)*,* and *by doing the final projects I could reinforce what I learned during each unit* (81.3%). According to students' perceptions, these three aspects unequivocally benefit most from integrating the performance tasks based on the BDM.

Estefanía explained that creating the last three projects was interesting and meaningful. She pointed out that *doing the final projects was easy because they only had to organize all the knowledge and content they had already obtained during each unit*. Similarly, Diego claimed that *creating these projects was the best way to use the acquired knowledge in real situations, such as creating a brochure to prevent COVID-19 or campaigns against river pollution*.

The results also showed that most students believe that by applying the final performance tasks, they could transfer their acquired knowledge and skills to real-life situations (84.2%). Oscar claimed that *having enough knowledge about the unit's topic, he could use it in the problems the teachers provided and in other cases where the vocabulary could fit*. Furthermore, according to Estefanía, she managed to create and distribute the brochure to prevent COVID-19 in her school, motivating her to continue learning English.

Regarding prioritizing content, most students either strongly agreed (47.7%) or agreed (36.7%) that creating performance tasks helped them focus on the essential ideas and concepts they learned in the classroom. Vinicio stated that *I could reinforce what he learned during each unit by making the final performance tasks*. He explained that he had to check his notebook notes and other materials to organize and classify the content the students would use to create the performance tasks. Lourdes also stated that to do the performance tasks, she

had to choose the essential information she got from her teacher and the activities she did in the class.

Regarding instructions and steps to develop authentic performance tasks, most students strongly agreed that, during these units, it was easier to follow teachers' instructions, and the students had a better idea of the steps needed to create the final projects. According to Carolina, she could do the final projects without a problem using rubrics and all the material provided by teachers. For her, *having clear criteria of how the final project had to be done was the most essential aspect of achieving the performance tasks efficiently.* Similarly, Vinicio asserted that he felt confident and enjoyed customizing his final projects by following the steps provided by his teachers.

The results of this study are aligned with a body of literature review regarding one of the main aspects of syllabus planning based on the BDM, the performance tasks. As mentioned before, they are the essential elements of the BDM that uses the GRASPS framework to equip students with enough understanding and knowledge to apply in different contexts (Hulme et al., 2014; McTigue & Wiggins, 1999; Wiggins & McTighe, 2012). Furthermore, BDM planning allows the teacher to efficiently craft students' learning outcomes and align assessments, teaching methodologies, and materials and activities that students use to develop authentic performance tasks (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

4.5.2 Students' Perceptions of Applying Performance Tasks Based on the BDM to Foster Motivation and Language Skills

Table 25 shows the obtained results of how students perceived English learning during the intervention of this investigation. The main elements from this table are related to motivation to learn English and English skills improvements.

Table 25

Distribution of the mean and percentages of students' perceptions of the application of the performance tasks to improve their motivation and language skills.

Scales	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Language skills					
By creating the final projects, I felt more motivated to learn English.	38.8	42.8	15.9	2.5	0
All the materials and activities applied during these units helped me develop the final projects better.	38.2	40.8	16.0	2.7	2.3
Creating the final projects helped me improve my English speaking skills.	27.2	42.4	25.1	4.9	0.4
Creating the final projects helped me improve my English reading skills.	33.6	40.3	21.2	4.6	0.4
Creating the final projects helped me improve my English listening skills.	27.9	40.3	26.1	4.2	1.4
Creating the final projects helped me improve my English writing skills.	33.9	44.5	17.3	3.5	0.8

The analysis of the first criterion showed that most respondents (81.6%) either agreed or strongly agreed that *they felt more motivated to learn English by creating the final projects*. All students who participated in the focus-group interviews indicated that developing the final projects in each unit is better than taking traditional exams. They also claimed that

creating and customizing the final projects motivated them to learn and continue practicing their English skills.

In this regard, Lourdes said *that developing the final projects motivated me to be more interested in learning English because I could use the new knowledge to help my community. I could see that I could apply this language for meaningful purposes, like creating campaigns to stop deforestation in my community.* Similarly, Oscar claimed that *customizing the final project according to my preferences was the essential aspect of these units. I felt more comfortable and motivated to use my knowledge to create projects for my community; this does not happen when you only take traditional exams.*

Similarly, regarding the alignment of teaching materials and activities with the performance tasks, 79% of the students strongly agreed and agreed that the activities and materials they applied throughout the unit helped them develop the final performance tasks. Only 5% of students strongly disagreed with this statement, while 16% chose the neutral criterion.

The findings indicated that most EFL students participating in the study either agreed or strongly agreed that applying performance tasks helped them foster their English skills. Specifically speaking (69.6%), reading (73.9%), listening (68.2%), and writing (78.4%). The focus-group interviewees supported the results obtained from this scale of the survey questionnaire.

Regarding reading skills, Laura indicated that *I fostered my English skills by developing performance tasks, mainly my reading skills.* She claimed that the main skill she improved was reading because her teacher asked students to read different texts, and she had

the opportunity to learn new words and expressions in English. Similarly, Vinicio stated that *reading was the primary skill I improved because, as a part of the final project, we had to read different texts that the teacher gave us and texts we found on the internet to add meaningful information to our final project.*

For speaking, Cristian indicated that *creating the final projects for these units was more interactive and significant.* He stated that by developing the final projects, he had the opportunity to practice his speaking skills with his classmates because they had to work in groups to choose what content and information, they would prefer to be part of the projects. On the other hand, Camila stated that *only the third final project helped foster her speaking skills.* She asserted that even though the performance tasks helped her increase their English skills, she did not improve her speaking skills efficiently. She said that *most of the activities focused on writing and reading.*

Responses to the listening criteria reflect that almost a third of participants perceived that applying performance tasks helped them increase their listening skills. Esteban said that *listening was one of the primary skills I improved because there were interesting videos that the teachers asked us to watch.* Similarly, Diego affirmed that he increased his listening skills when his teachers asked them to listen to videos related to the vocabulary and content they were learning. He said that *connecting the vocabulary and content we learned with the videos the teacher showed us helped me better understand the information presented in the videos.*

As one can see, writing skills obtained the highest percentage of the four main English skills (78.4%). The results from the focus-group interview showed that all interviewees perceived that writing was the main skill they improved. Oscar, for instance, claimed that

developing the final project helped me increase my vocabulary and writing skills. Similarly, Laura manifested that *the final projects asked us to use all the skills; however, I think the primary skill I improved was writing because I learned how the paragraphs must be written.* Cristian claimed that *at the end of the units, I noticed my writing improvements because writing paragraphs became more manageable for me.*

Overall, students' perceptions of applying performance tasks based on the BDM to increase motivation and their English skills were positive. In terms of motivation, results are supported by Hosseini et al. (2019), who stated that applying the GRASPS elements from the BDM in EFL classrooms helps extend students' satisfaction and motivation to learn the language. Besides, using performance tasks influences students' motivation to interact and practice their English skills to transfer their learning to new contexts they will find in and outside the classroom (McTighe & Willis, 2019; Yurtseven & Altun, 2016).

Similarly, regarding English skills, the analysis of relevant variables confirms that applying performance tasks helped students enhance their English skills. The studies that support these results are done on increasing writing skills (Hossein et al., 2019; Mills et al., 2019), reading skills (McTighe & Willis, 2019; Hodaeian & Biria, 2015), speaking skills (Yurtseven & Altun, 2016), and for listening skills (Abd El Ghany et al., 2019).

4.5.3 Students' Perceptions of Applying Performance Tasks Based on the BDM to Foster Creativity

Table 26 illustrates the findings related to students' perceptions of developing performance tasks to improve their creativity. This section focused on criteria such as confidence, freedom to express ideas, and respect for individual diversity and originality.

Table 26

Distribution of percentages of students' perceptions of the application of the performance tasks to foster their creativity.

Scales	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Creativity					
I felt more confident that I could perform creatively on the final projects.	37.8	45.2	13.4	2.5	1.1
I was more confident I could develop creative ideas for the final projects.	20.6	38.5	8.0	28.6	4.2
The final projects supported the freedom to express ideas.	38.2	40.8	16.0	2.7	2.3
The final projects showed respect for individual diversity.	65.0	21.3	9.4	1.2	3.1
I enjoyed customizing my final projects.	41.7	36.0	16.6	4.9	0.7
I demonstrated originality in my final projects.	37.8	38.2	19.4	4.2	0.4
By creating the final projects, I could efficiently combine all the topics I learned during each unit.	30.4	45.2	21.2	2.5	0.7
Creating rubrics related to the final projects was a flexible process where I found different ways to develop them.	37.8	45.6	13.4	1.8	1.4

Another goal of this dissertation was to investigate students' attitudes toward applying performance tasks to increase their creativity. Responses showed that, in general, students' initial attitudes towards performance tasks to increase creativity appeared to be positive. In the focus-group interviews, all the students agreed that they could use and show their creativity skills by applying performance tasks based on the BDM. Furthermore, they

felt more confident and freer to demonstrate and customize their ideas to create the final projects.

Table 26 confirms the obtained results from the interviews. As one can see, the data analysis showed that most students (83%) either strongly agreed or agreed that using performance tasks made them feel more comfortable performing creatively on the final projects. Vinicio, for instance, claimed that *I love creating things in all the subjects; however, in English, it was sometimes hard because the teachers just asked us to take an exam. By focusing on final projects, I could increase my English skills and use my creativity.* Estefanía also indicated that *I could show and improve my creativity by creating final projects that were interesting and significant for my community and me.*

In light of the above, 59% of students also strongly agreed that performing final projects helped them develop creative ideas. Diego indicated that *having a final project with all the needed parameters gave me better creative ideas about how to do the project or final task.* Likewise, Oscar said that *having a role like being a doctor made me start thinking that way. Thus, I use my creativity to create the final project as best as possible.* Carolina affirmed that creating final projects made her *think about creative ideas for presenting the projects to their specific audience.*

In terms of supporting freedom, autonomy, and flexibility to express ideas, more than half of the participants agreed that performing final projects allowed them to express their opinions freely and creatively. From the focus group interviews, all students approved that their final projects during the three units differed from the other projects they had created before in their English classes. They mentioned that these three projects allowed them to

choose how each project would be developed and organized and the images, information, and facts they wanted to address.

Laura emphasized that she found the creation of final projects beneficial because *I could express my thoughts and ideas and use my creativity to do the final projects.* Camila stated that she felt free when developing the final projects. She said that *even though we had to follow the criteria from the rubric, it did not hold me back from using my creativity and the way I wanted to present my projects.* Cristian claimed *I enjoyed performing the final projects because I felt free to express my ideas without being afraid of making mistakes and using pictures and colours to foster my creativity.*

According to the following criterion, 76% of students strongly agreed that performance tasks allowed them to demonstrate their originality; 77.7% explained that the final performance tasks are open and flexible activities that let them customize their projects according to their differences and preferences. Furthermore, they again claimed that they found performance tasks as exciting and motivating lessons more authentic and meaningful than traditional tests.

Estefanía stated that *originality is the most interesting aspect of the final projects. Working on projects was the best way to show my creativity and originality. My classmates and I created the projects according to our preferences and likes.* Likewise, Diego explained that *customizing my projects was interesting since I could use the materials, colors, and images I wanted. Thus, we can show the originality of our projects because none of my classmates presented the same project.*

Customizing the projects was another aspect that all the students agreed on and its importance in developing creativity. Carolina stated that *adapting the topics learned and organizing them according to the rubric provided by my teacher made me feel free to use my imagination and creativity to the maximum.* Camila also claimed that by *creating the final projects, I felt more motivated and encouraged to work hard to present original and meaningful projects to the class.*

In short, students' perceptions regarding applying performance tasks to foster their creativity were positive. Most students perceive that using performance tasks and the GRASPS framework allowed them to create and customize their final projects in a flexible way that helped them use their creativity. The study conducted by Hosseini et al. (2019) supported these results since they indicated that applying the BDM in teaching EFL is an efficient process to foster students' creativity. They furthermore stated that using the BDM helps students improve their 21st-century skills, including creativity (Drake & Reid, 2018; McTighe & Willis, 2019).

4.5.4 Students' Perceptions of Applying Performance Tasks Based on the BDM to Foster Autonomous Learning

The final aim of this dissertation was to obtain results related to the students' perceptions of applying performance tasks based on the BDM to increase their autonomous learning. As shown in Table 27, concepts such as autonomy, learning from peers, deciding and prioritizing content, and being responsible for gathering extra information were applied in this section.

Table 27

Distribution of the mean and percentages of students' perceptions of the application of the performance tasks to improve their autonomous learning.

Scales	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Autonomous Learning					
The final projects gave me a satisfying level of autonomy.	39.9	36.0	20.5	1.8	1.8
I enjoyed the process of creating the final projects.	29.7	31.4	25.8	8.5	4.6
I could learn from my classmates.	55.1	32.5	9.2	1.8	1.4
I care about my final projects.	40.3	38.2	18.0	2.5	1.1
I decided how to organize my final projects.	47.7	40.3	9.5	2.1	0.4
I found information from different sources to develop my final projects.	32.9	38.9	24.4	2.5	1.4
I could decide what the most important content to learn was.	37.8	38.9	20.8	1.8	0.7
I could correct my own mistakes.	50.9	30.4	14.5	3.5	0.7
I was responsible for my learning.	39.6	38.9	18.4	2.5	0.7
I decided what content to study and when to study.	51.2	28.3	17.3	2.8	0.4
I used the internet to find information to do my final projects.	21.6	23.7	13.8	30.0	11.0
I provided feedback on my classmates' projects.	41.1	35.4	16.9	4.8	1.8

Most students perceived that applying the performance tasks allowed them to foster autonomous learning skills. They explained that developing their final projects permitted them to find information from different resources, decide the content to be part of the

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projects, be responsible for their own learning, and learn from their classmates and external resources.

Regarding the first criterion, three-quarters of all responders either agreed or strongly agreed (75.9%) that applying the performance tasks *gave them a satisfying level of autonomy.* The focus-group interviews supported these results because all the students stated that the final projects let them self-direct their own learning by taking responsibility for the decisions of what resources, content, and organization they will use to create their final projects.

Carolina stated that *developing the final projects for me was relevant because I could learn from my teachers and the different resources I found on the internet. Besides, creating my last project made me feel responsible for my learning.* Similarly, Vinicio claimed that *customizing the final project and deciding which images, content, and resources I would use made me feel responsible and independent of my learning.*

Lourdes said that *I felt the final projects allowed me to learn autonomously since we had the materials our teacher provided us, and we had to find more information to create these projects.* Besides, according to Oscar, *following the teacher's rubric allowed me to self-assess my progress, set my learning path, and provide feedback to my classmates.* Camila claimed that *creating the final projects promoted my autonomous learning because I used all the activities and materials provided by the teachers to practice outside and inside the classroom.*

Providing feedback is one of the main goals of the BDM to improve learning and performance tasks (McTighe, 2013). According to this criterion, most students (76.5%) indicated they *provided feedback to their classmates.* Gabriela claimed that she could also

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improve her projects by providing feedback to her classmates. She noted that *giving feedback to my classmates allows me to find their strengths and weaknesses and mine as well. Thus, I noticed my mistakes and felt more enthusiastic about continuing to learn on my own.* In this way, Cristian asserted that *providing feedback to my classmates made me more self-aware of my mistakes, and I tried to find new ways to solve them.*

Likewise, most students (87.6%) indicated that *they learned from their classmates.* These results align with Wiggins and McTighe (2011), who claimed that the BDM requests teachers to plan their instruction based on different social and collaborative activities where students can foster their autonomous learning. Esteban manifested that *working with my classmates in groups on activities based on the content made me feel comfortable and more eager to learn new things by myself. Furthermore, I could share new vocabulary words with my classmates, who did the same.*

Gabriela also claimed that *creating the final projects in the classroom was fun and exciting because I noticed that all my classmates had different ideas to present the final project. However, when the teacher asked us to provide feedback on my classmates' work, I could learn new words and expressions that they found by themselves.* Diego said *I enjoyed working with my classmates because some know more English than I do, and they were helping me finish my final project.*

Regarding organization, 90% of the participants mentioned that developing the performance tasks made them prioritize, choose, and decide how to organize the learned content to present the final project at the end of the unit. The students indicated that arranging

the content fostered their autonomous learning since they had to return to the learned content and sometimes had to find new words and expressions they did not learn in class.

Oscar explained that *the teachers provided us with enough information to create the final project; however, we were responsible for checking all the content already learned to use in the project at the end of the unit. Doing the final project and following the rubric was a way to foster my autonomous learning since I had to find new words and expressions according to my interests.* Similarly, Estefanía indicated that *when organizing the content to be part of the project, she had to check online resources to understand better the topic covered.*

A significant emergent theme was related to the differentiation of teaching and learning. Most students stated that customizing their final projects according to their preferences, prioritizing the project's content, and having different options to present the project made them more motivated and interested in the English classes. McTighe and Wiggins (2013) supported these findings since they claimed that applying the BDM provides a meaningful differentiation in how students achieve their learning outcomes. Likewise, the BDM helps teachers differentiate and personalize the learning plan to allow students to work toward an appropriate and achievable goal (McTighe & Willis, 2019).

Novelty appeared to be another emerging theme: a new way to plan the syllabus and align all the contents, activities, and teaching materials positively affected teachers' and students' perspectives. Even though planning backwards to achieve desired results is not new, this study found that all teachers did not know about this model. They indicated that planning based on the BDM template and the authentic performance tasks was the most innovative aspect of this study. Likewise, students said that developing the performance tasks

based on the GRASPS framework was a new and meaningful process that allowed them to focus on how the tasks had to be done efficiently.

Wiggins and McTighe (2005), who created this concept, manifested that the BDM allows teachers to plan their lessons, units, and courses logically and systematically based on the specification of learning outcomes that let students transfer their new knowledge in authentic scenarios. Besides, it intends to support teachers in developing and deepening students' learning and enduring understanding by generating authentic and meaningful educational experiences (McTighe & Wiggins, 2004). Thus, applying the performance tasks based on the GRASPS elements allows students to transfer learning to authentic scenarios.

CHAPTER V

5. Conclusions

This chapter presents a summary of the findings of the three phases of this study. Consequently, it displays the conclusions of the teachers' and students' perceptions of applying the BDM and its main features in the EFL teaching-learning process. Furthermore, the study's limitations and possible directions for future research are also addressed in this chapter.

This study was designed to explore the teachers' and students' perceptions of applying the BDM in fourteen public secondary schools in Ecuador's Highland and Amazon regions. The research mainly focused on finding teachers' perspectives on designing and applying the syllabus based on the BDM to teach EFL. Furthermore, the study investigated students' perceptions of using performance tasks based on the BDM to learn EFL.

The study began with an introduction where the research gap and the main objectives of this thesis were outlined. Besides, to carry out this study, it was necessary to review the relevant theoretical and empirical literature of previous studies to provide a theoretical framework of the Backward Design Model, its main characteristics, and applications in the process of EFL teaching/learning field.

Furthermore, concurrent mixed-method data collection approaches were employed in this study to obtain as much information as possible to answer the established research questions. Seven qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments were applied in this research to strengthen the results and to make the triangulation of information possible.

For the purpose of this research, a convenience sample was conducted. Thus, the data were obtained from 16 EFL teachers and 283 EFL students from fourteen Ecuadorian public high schools. Regarding the gender balance of the participant teachers, 69% were female, and 31% were male. As for students' gender, 53% were girls, and 47% were boys.

Two pre- and post-questionnaires were designed and applied at the beginning and end of this research. The pre-questionnaire examined students' perceptions of learning EFL in Ecuadorian secondary schools. On the other hand, the post-questionnaire was applied to explore students' perceptions of using the BDM features in learning EFL.

A semi-structured interview guide was applied at the beginning of the study to elicit information about the teachers' perceptions of teaching EFL in Ecuador. The primary constructs covered in this interview were related to the Ecuadorian EFL national curriculum, course books provided by the Ministry of Education, syllabus planning, assessing, and activities and learning materials. After the transcription and coding of results, the results helped to infer whether teachers apply the Forward, Central, or Backward Design when they plan their syllabus.

During the two-week workshop on BDM, the teachers designed three units that were applied from September 2020 to February 2021. These unit designs are also part of the research instruments because they provide information on how the BDM unit template can be linked to Ecuadorian national curriculum requirements. After the workshop, the teachers applied the unit designed based on the BDM, and they also filled in ten open questions where they reflected on the application of the BDM in the first or second unit. With these reflections, the last research instruments were designed.

The last research instruments applied were focus group interviews with teachers and students. These focus group interviews aimed to obtain teachers' thoughts on BDM planning and its elements. Likewise, students' focus group interviews were applied to find their perceptions of the EFL teaching/learning process during the three units and the application of performance tasks based on the BDM.

The IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 25 was applied to analyze the quantitative results. The Cronbach Alpha was calculated to estimate the scales' internal consistency and the instruments' reliability. The SPSS software was also used to run descriptive statistics of the population and frequency of results. On the other hand, the qualitative analysis was done by transcribing all the obtained data from the interviews and conducting thematic and content analysis.

5.1 Phase 1

The results of the study's first phase indicate that all the teachers considered some incongruence between the requirements established in the Ecuadorian EFL national curriculum and their teaching practices. They explained that although the national curriculum provides current and innovative teaching methodologies, they cannot be applied efficiently in Ecuador for different factors.

According to the teachers, the factors that impede English teaching success in Ecuador are social and pedagogical factors such as the limited technological resources in the schools, lack of teacher training, the low motivation of students to learn English, excessive extracurricular activities, the number of students per class, and the inconsistency of course books.

All the teachers believed the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education coursebook included engaging and contextualized content. However, they mainly focus on writing and reading English skills, and their content is unsuitable for the students' English proficiency. They manifested that the coursebooks do not provide enough speaking activities where students can use the language authentically.

Therefore, the teachers preferred using their materials or other sources such as coursebooks and the internet and providing students activities based on their reality. Besides, the teachers indicated that their limited knowledge and skills in using Information Communication Technology and the lack of technological resources in the classroom are among the most critical challenges in implementing the new EFL national curriculum.

Designing the annual plan based on the MINEDUC requirements is complex and futile for the participants. The teachers explained that at the beginning of the school year, they have to fill in, design, and plan many documents, which is a waste of time because it simply copies and blends the documents without contextualizing the planning according to the reality of each school. Consequently, the teachers confirmed that those factors influenced them to apply traditional grammar-translation methods in most of their classes.

In addition, planning the syllabus based on the coding system proposed by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education is another factor that demotivated English teachers from working effectively. All the teachers agreed that planning using the coding system proposed by the Ministry of Education is the most confusing and challenging part of planning the syllabus, and they think that designing the syllabus based on the coding system is just a waste of time.

When planning the syllabus, it was found that all the teachers followed the traditional design, which started with deciding the content to be taught, then the teaching process, and finally, the assessment instruments to evaluate students' outcomes (Richards, 2013). Furthermore, it was found that even though the teachers applied the grammar-translation methods frequently in their lessons, they always tried to use meaningful activities and authentic materials from different sources.

Regarding EFL teachers' reported practices, all the teachers indicated that teaching English in Ecuador is difficult. The main aspects addressed were planning, assessment, and activities and materials applied in the classroom. Concerning assessment, all the teachers indicated that they evaluated students in a formative and summative way. Observations, class participation, discussions, and projects were the most mentioned instruments for a formative assessment, making them an essential aspect of the learning process. An overall belief was that projects were the best way to assess students.

There was a note in the teachers' perspectives about their roles. The results revealed that although teaching English was challenging and demanding in Ecuador, the teachers considered themselves facilitators, motivators, and guides of their students' knowledge. Although none of the participants has ever said it directly, according to the teachers' answers, they are assumed to apply the traditional or Forward Design Model to plan their syllabus and units.

Regarding students' perceptions of learning English as a Foreign Language, the research participants generally have positive perceptions of learning English as a Foreign Language. Most participants indicated that they enjoy learning English because the activities provided by their teachers are interesting, they have constant monitoring and guidance from

teachers, and they enjoy developing the final projects. However, a high tendency of responders claimed that the activities and materials applied in the classroom were not authentic and were not connected with the main topic of each unit and the final projects they had to perform at the end of the unit.

Regarding English lessons, the students indicated that they are mainly focused on covering the coursebook's content to achieve its objectives. Besides, most students agreed that the English classes mainly focus on improving grammar, writing skills, and reading comprehension, and they claimed that their English classes are not focused on improving speaking and listening skills.

Concerning assessment, the students are familiarized with different types of assessment and evaluation tools. The tools that most students have experienced are end-of-unit tests, final projects, written tests, reading comprehension tests, and final exams. Almost half of the students agreed to have applied rubrics to evaluate their final project. On the other hand, observation, checklists, and daily assessments are the main factors students have not experienced in evaluation. Finally, only a few students believed that the evaluation instruments aligned with the content learned during the unit.

5.2 Phase 2

The data collection of this phase was limited to training the 16 English teachers to design the three first units of the syllabus and apply them in their English lessons. The primary purpose was to provide teachers with all the information related to the BDM and guide them during planning and implementing the BDM in their classrooms. Therefore, to

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obtain initial insights into teachers' perceptions about applying the BDM and its main features and the connections with the Ecuadorian national curriculum requirements.

During the two-week workshop, the teachers learned about the BDM and its main characteristics and worked collaboratively to plan the first three units of the syllabus. In this phase, the unit planning designed by the participants and written reflections were the main instruments for obtaining data. The teachers' written reflections were conducted to get their perspectives on the level of complexity of planning backwards and the influence of the implementation of unit plans based on the BDM template.

As reported by teachers, designing the unit plans based on the BDM principles was a complex but productive process. The teachers highlighted the importance of planning by having an authentic and specific goal. They indicated that planning backwards gave them a better idea of what and how to teach based on the final goal or performance task. They noted that applying the three stages of the BDM let them ensure that the content to be taught will remain focused and organized.

Besides, the implementation of the BDM templates had a positive influence on the participants. All teachers indicated that working collaboratively to fill in the BDM templates allowed them to work more effectively in planning their syllabi. The teachers found remarkable the three stages presented by the BDM to have a significant and clear idea of how the English instruction will be conducted. Finally, they claimed that the BDM is a more understandable and contextualized process than planning based on the code system proposed by the Ministry of Education.

Even though all teachers had positive perceptions about implementing the BDM in their English classes, they agreed that planning using the BDM could not be applied in Ecuador because the Ministry of Education had already provided them with a template to plan their syllabus, which is mandatory in public institutions. Furthermore, they indicated that most Ecuadorian English teachers do not know how to design using the BDM, which will complicate integrating this model in the EFL classroom.

5.3 Phase 3

The rationale behind this study phase was to explore in-depth the teachers' and students' perceptions about applying the BDM and performance tasks in the EFL lessons. Consequently, to evaluate the process regards pedagogical considerations. The data was collected from all the participants at the end of the implementation through teachers' focus groups, students' focus groups, and a students' questionnaire. The qualitative research findings emerged from the analysis and codification of the interview transcripts, while the quantitative results were run using SPSS for statistical analysis.

The analysis of the focus group interviews displays that all teachers considered that there are strong connections between the Ecuadorian national curriculum requirements and planning using the BDM. The findings revealed that the primary relationships are related to the alignment to CEFR standards, scaffolding learning, authentic interpersonal interactions, communicative approach, autonomous learning, and CLIL Curricular Threads established by MINEDUC (2016).

Regarding syllabus planning, the participants mentioned that the Forward or traditional Design Model and the Backward Design Model differ. They stated that following

the unit template based on the BDM principles and aligning the teaching activities, strategies, and materials with the final performance tasks was the most remarkable difference between these two models. Furthermore, they mentioned that planning backwards is a more authentic and meaningful process that allows teachers to plan flexibly according to their students' realities and necessities.

The teachers perceive that the performance tasks based on the Backward Design Model are similar to the final projects students usually develop at the end of the unit or school year. However, the teachers claimed that the GRASPS and WHERETO elements from the BDM allowed them to make the teaching process and final projects more structured and organized than traditional ones. They indicated that providing students with an actual situation, role, and specific criteria was one outstanding aspect of the BDM.

All teachers mentioned creativity, autonomous learning, and lifelong learning as the primary skills students showed and improved when performing tasks based on the BDM. The teachers said that making the performance tasks open and flexible encourages students to show their creativity. Besides, the students learned autonomously by checking the topics covered in each unit to develop the performance tasks. Finally, all teachers agreed that applying performance tasks promotes students' lifelong learning because they could transfer the applied knowledge to authentic contexts.

Regarding English language skills, the teachers perceived that applying the BDM helped their students enhance their listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills; nonetheless, they manifested that writing and reading skills were the most developed skills of their students. The teachers explained that students improved their English skills because

they had a clear idea of developing the performance tasks and transferring the knowledge to different scenarios. Besides, they mentioned that their students had more opportunities to practice what they had learned through the unit by having the teaching materials and activities aligned with the desired outcomes.

Concerning developing performance tasks to increase their primary English skills, most students showed positive perceptions of using the performance tasks based on the BDM to improve their English skills. Specifically speaking (69.6%), reading (73.9%), listening (68.2%), and writing (78.4%). These results are similar to those obtained from teachers, who indicated that writing and reading were the most English skills they developed when using the BDM.

5.4 Contribution to Literature

There is scarce evidence of any research on applying the BDM to EFL teacher education in Ecuadorian public secondary schools. Therefore, this dissertation provides an essential and valuable contribution to the literature for the following reasons:

1. it is considered the first study into Ecuadorian EFL teaching on the issue of syllabus design based on the BDM. Thus, it provides stakeholders with how effective the application of the BDM and its principal characteristics in improving students' English skills could be.

2. based on the theoretical background, this study contributes to the literature by connecting the main principles of the Backward Design Model, Bloom's Taxonomy, and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory.

3. it provides the MINEDUC with the teachers' insights on using the Ecuadorian EFL national curriculum and course books to make possible changes in how the syllabus is designed and some obstacles found in the content of the books.

4. it compares the Ecuadorian EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of applying the BDM to increase English skills in secondary schools. Besides, other skills such as learning autonomy, creativity, and lifelong learning are addressed in this study.

5. further, this study can help teachers maximize their lessons by aligning the teaching materials, activities, and resources to help students achieve the main goal or big ideas systematically and organized.

6. this study attempts to provide the MINEDUC with another way that EFL teachers can design their syllabi and units based on authentic contexts and meaningful activities. Thus, teachers can have a holistic view and flexibly plan their teaching programs based on their students' necessities.

5.5 Pedagogical and Theoretical Implications

The evidence from this study offers theoretical and practical contributions. Although teachers and students positively perceive integrating the BDM and its features for improving the EFL teaching and learning practices, the teachers indicated that applying the BDM planning in the Ecuadorian context could be challenging and complex. The main reasons are the lack of teaching training in using the BDM and the standardized planning that the MINEDUC mandates teachers to design their syllabus.

However, based on the findings of this study, the following guidelines will be helpful to consider to improve the current status of EFL teaching and learning in secondary schools in Ecuador:

1. The MINEDUC and policymakers need to provide a flexible procedure for syllabus planning. Besides the traditional or FDM, applying the BDM to plan the syllabus could improve the EFL teaching and learning process.

2. The MINEDUC must offer Ecuadorian EFL teachers different pedagogical trainings, workshops, and seminars based on current ELT and ICT practices. Teacher training for designing their syllabus based on the BDM could be an excellent option to provide students with a more contextualized and authentic way to use English.

3. Applying the BDM to EFL teaching is a complex but worthy process. Designing the syllabus and units to be covered by applying the three stages of the BDM lets teachers ensure that the content to be taught will remain focused on the authentic and specific goal.

4. Applying performance tasks based on the BDM could significantly increase students' listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills. Besides, developing the performance tasks will help students enhance other skills such as learning autonomy, creativity, lifelong learning, and collaborative skills.

5. Considering the positive perceptions that teachers and students who participated in this study have towards integrating the BDM in their English lessons, applying the BDM and performance tasks could be used as a novel aspect to motivate and challenge students to learn English authentically.

5.6 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This dissertation faced certain limitations. At first, a potential limitation was how the research was conducted. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the study was carried out 100% online. Even though using technology to conduct this study was the best option, the lack of internet and slow connection did not allow the researcher, teachers, and students to develop the scheduled activities efficiently. To address this problem, applying the same research process in face-to-face classes is suggested.

The second limitation relates to the data collection process because all the obtained data highly depends on the reported participants. The main issue was that, consciously or not, the participating teachers may have over-reported the results of using the BDM in their teaching practices. To overcome this problem, future research could apply other research instruments, such as classroom observation and field trips, to obtain more specific information from primary sources.

The third limitation also pertains to data collection procedures. After the two-week BDM workshop, teachers reflected on their perceptions of planning backwards. All the teachers perceived that planning backwards was beneficial. However, they were not requested to consider other possible aspects influencing their answers. In the interviews, the teachers barely mentioned collaboration, interaction, technology, instructional strategies, and teaching materials as the main aspects that help them to plan the units effectively. Nevertheless, obtaining more information regarding whether or not these aspects influence the teachers' perceptions is recommended.

The fourth limitation is related to the participants of this study, being specific teachers. There is a possibility that this dissertation has insufficient identifiable individual differences from the sample group because there were sixteen teachers, mainly from the Amazon and Highland Regions. Therefore, the remaining population may affect the generalizability of the findings.

Future research may be able to investigate these relationships further, trying out the BDM for more extended periods in other schools from the Coast Region and the Galápagos Islands to compare with this dissertation's results. Besides, future research investigating the application of the BDM in the EFL context, with the help of a control and experimental group, can help researchers compare student language proficiency improvements.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Example of the coding system provided by the Ecuadorian EFL National Curriculum for high schools

a) Curricular Objectives

2. Curricular Objectives of the English as a Foreign Language Area for Subnivel Bachillerato General Unificado

By the end of Bachillerato General Unificado, and as a result of the learning outcomes in the EFL area, learners will be able to:

O.EFL 5.1	Encounter socio-cultural aspects of their own and other countries in a thoughtful and inquisitive manner, maturely, and openly experiencing other cultures and languages from the secure standpoint of their own national and cultural identity.
O.EFL 5.2	Draw on this established propensity for curiosity and tolerance towards different cultures to comprehend the role of diversity in building an intercultural and multinational society.
O.EFL 5.3	Access greater flexibility of mind, creativity, enhanced linguistic intelligence, and critical thinking skills through an appreciation of linguistic differences. Enjoy an enriched perspective of their own L1 and of language use for communication and learning.
O.EFL 5.4	Deploy a range of learning strategies, thereby increasing disposition and ability to independently access further (language) learning and practice opportunities. Respect themselves and others within the communication process, cultivating habits of honesty and integrity into responsible academic behavior.
O.EFL 5.5	Directly access the main points and important details of up-to-date English language texts, such as those published on the web, for professional or general investigation, through the efficient use of ICT and reference tools where required.
O.EFL 5.6	Through selected media, participate in reasonably extended spoken or written dialogue with peers from different L1 backgrounds on work, study, or general topics of common interest, expressing ideas and opinions effectively and appropriately.
O.EFL 5.7	Interact quite clearly, confidently, and appropriately in a range of formal and informal social situations with a limited but effective command of the spoken language (CEFR B1 level)

b) Mandatory and desirable objectives

Curricular Thread 1:

Communication and cultural awareness

MANDATORY (8)	DESIRABLE (3)

EFL 5.1.1	Display an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of different cultures by recognizing and sharing cross-cultural experiences and ideas.
EFL 5.1.2	Demonstrate mindfulness, empathy, tolerance and an overall respect for the integrity of cultures in daily classroom activities.
EFL 5.1.3	Find parallels between Ecuadorian cultural and political referents and those of other countries by talking about holidays, symbols, customs and schooling.
EFL 5.1.4	Identify and interpret how cultural and language patterns in English are used when exchanging ideas on familiar topics according to a B1.2 level. (Example: slang, idioms, humor, levels of formality, etc.)
EFL 5.1.5	Identify, discuss and analyze cultural products from Ecuador and beyond and use them to explore the perspectives of the culture.
EFL 5.1.6	Demonstrate an ability to make informed choices about and take action on issues of prejudice and discrimination.
EFL 5.1.7	Interpret and demonstrate knowledge of nonverbal and oral communication features by applying them in appropriate contexts. (Example: use of stress, intonation, pace, etc.)
EFL 5.1.8	Discover and employ alternative ways of saying things in social and classroom interactions.
EFL 5.1.9	Communicate information and ideas effectively to diverse audiences using a variety of media and formats.
EFL 5.1.10	Take initiative in a discussion in a positive way by being sensitive to the nuances of peers' comments, reactions and responses (both verbal and nonverbal)
EFL 5.1.11	Apply self-correcting and self-monitoring strategies in social and classroom interactions by adjusting presentation and language production to effectively express opinions and make evaluations. (Example: asking questions, starting over, rephrasing, exploring alternative pronunciations, etc.)

c) Evaluation criteria

4. Evaluation criteria for English as a Foreign Language in Bachillerato General Unificado

Curricular Thread 1: Communication and cultural awareness

●······ Evaluation criteria

CE.EFL.5.1. Display an understanding of the integrity of different cultures by sharing experiences and by participating in class activities and discussions in a way that shows empathy and respect for others.

Methodological orientation for evaluation criteria

These performance criteria could be evaluated by:

- Hearing a song from another country and finding similarities with a song from Ecuador.
- Writing a weekly journal entry about a cross-cultural experience.
- Finding recipes from other cultures and regions and then sharing them in class.
- Reading two legends from different regions in Ecuador and completing a chart to show the differences.
- Reading a myth from another region/culture and sharing a similar experience.
- Reflecting on differences between people from other countries and regions.
- Researching schooling from other cultures and presenting them on a class blog.
- Responding sensitively to a peer's opinion about a text read in class.
- Watching a video about how people live in Ecuador or another country, and taking notes on the cultural practices mentioned, then leading a discussion in small groups.
- Sharing a cross-cultural experience (such as traveling, trying a new food, meeting someone from another country) in pairs or as a class.
- Reading a story about another culture and responding to the main ideas with a short opinion.
- Watching a video or reading a text about different cultural practices and talking about similarities and differences in small groups.

General EFL area objectives being assessed	Skills and performance descriptors to be evaluated
OG.EFL1. Encounter socio-cultural aspects of their own and other countries in a thoughtful and inquisitive manner, maturely and openly experiencing other cultures and languages from the secure standpoint of their own national and cultural identity.	**EFL 5.1.1.** Display an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of different cultures by recognizing and sharing cross-cultural experiences and ideas.
OG.EFL2. Draw on this established propensity for curiosity and tolerance towards different cultures to comprehend the role of diversity in building an intercultural and multinational society.	**EFL 5.1.2.** Demonstrate mindfulness, empathy, tolerance and an overall respect for the integrity of cultures in daily classroom activities.
OG.EFL6. Through selected media, participate in reasonably extended spoken or written dialogue with peers from different L1 backgrounds on work, study or general topics of common interest, expressing ideas and opinions effectively and appropriately.	**EFL 5.1.10.** Take initiative in a discussion in a positive way by being sensitive to the nuances of peers' comments, reactions and responses (both verbal and nonverbal)
How the objectives contribute to the exit profile	Indicators for the performance criteria
I.3. We can communicate in a clear manner, in our own and other languages. We make use of different codes of communication such as numerical, digital, artistic, and gestures. We take responsibility for what we say.	**I.EFL.5.1.1.** Learners can demonstrate an understanding of the integrity of different cultures by sharing experiences and by participating in class activities and discussions in a way that shows empathy and respect for others. (I.3, S.1, S.2, J.1, J.3)
S.1. We take on social responsibility and have the ability to interact with heterogeneous groups from an understanding, tolerant, and empathetic standpoint.	
S.2. We build our national identity in search of a peaceful world and we value our multi-ethnicity and multi-cultural background. We respect the identity of other peoples and individuals.	
J.1. We understand the needs and strengths of our country and commit to building an equal, inclusive and democratic society.	**CEFR: B1.2.** Topics: World Around Us, Countries and Nationalities, Descriptions and Appearance, Adjectives, Time, Personal Experiences, Food, Free Time and Hobbies.
J.3. We act with respect and responsibility both towards ourselves and others, nature, and the world of ideas. We meet our obligations and demand respect for our rights.	

Appendix B

Acceptance letter

Oficio Nro. MINEDUC-CZ6-03D01-2020-0463-O

Azogues, 24 de julio de 2020

Asunto: SOLICITA PERMISO PARA QUE 15 DOCENTES QUE DAN LA CATEDRA DE INGLES DE LAS I.E. FISCALES PARTICIPEN EN EL PROYECTO DE GRADO.

Ingeniero Industrial
Carlos Lenin Alvarez Llerena
Docente
UNIDAD EDUCATIVA " JUAN B. VASQUEZ "
En su Despacho
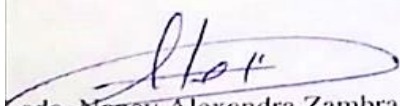
De mi consideración:

En respuesta al Documento No. SM. comunico a usted que se autoriza para que 15 docentes de la asignatura de Lengua Extranjera del tercero de bachillerato, puedan realizar la propuesta de investigación establecida dentro del programa de Doctorado que usted sigue, conforme los siguientes lineamientos:

El tema de investigación es -Implementing the B¡ckw¡rd Derign model in Engtisfi 6 ¡ Foreign Language contex$: Te¡chers ¡nd students' perceptions' 'implementación del Modelo en Retrospectiva en Contextos de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera: Percepciones de Profesores y Estudiantes, la participación durará el primer quimestre del año lectivo 2020-2021, y se desarrollan de acuerdo al cronograma establecido (anexol), el mismo que puede ser adaptado de acuerdo a las directrices del Ministerio de Educación, Dirección Distrital, instituciones y profesores participantes en la investigación. la investigación, en su mayoría, se realizará mediante el uso del internet y herramientas tecnológicas lo que ayudará a no obstaculizar el normal proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, teniendo que coordinar con los directivos de las Instituciones Educativas, para solicitar los datos de los profesores que solicita.

Con sentimientos de distinguida consideración.

Atentamente,

Lcda. Nancy Alexandra Zambrano Coronel
DIRECTORA DISTRITAL 2 DISTRITO 03D01 AZOGUES - BIBLIÁN - DÉLEG

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Appendix C

Creation and validation of the questions for the research instruments

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1WOtaeTwDmJgHDiZfYDasIkpM8dsbnRNX85t1UXxcm78/edit#gid=0

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

10 open ended questions

PAMELA

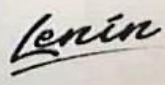|	
1	What does the word "pedagogical" conjure up in your mind
2	In your opinion, how related are the modules to the curriculum? Please provide examples.
3	Do you think that the activities embraced current methodologies? (CLIL, CLT), and how do you evidenced it?
4	Please tell the positive aspects you found using the modules in relation to the age, needs and interests of your learners/students?
5	Please tell the negative aspects you found using the modules in relation to the age, needs and interests of your learners/students?
6	How do you feel about the time of implementation and the content of the modules?
7	What was the aspect of the "pedagogical modules" that you enjoyed the most?
8	comment on the usefulness of the modules
9	Would you recommend the modules for future classes? Mention two reasons
10	What problems do you usually encountered when using the modules?
10A	What strategies did you use to solve these problems?

DIANA

1	What do you think about the new modules in general?
1a	What do you think about the transition from old methodology to the new modules?
1b	What do you think about the resources given in these new modules?
1c	What do you think about the time of implementation and the content of the modules?
3	Regarding the activities and current methodologies:
5	To what extent is the content of the modules related to CLIL?
6	To what extent is the content of the modules related to Communicative Approach?
10	To what extent is the content of the modules related to Project Based Learning?
7	Which aspects/elements of the new modules would you change, why?
7a	What strategies did you use to solve these problems?
8	Which aspects/elements of the new modules you enjoyed the most?

CARLOS

1	What do you think about the new modules in general?
2	How related are the new English pedagogical modules to the Ecuadorian EFL Curriculum?
3	Can you describe the positive aspects you found using these new modules?
4	Can you describe the negative aspects you found using these new modules?
5	To what extent the content of the new modules are related to CLIL?
6	To what extent the content of the new modules are related to Communicative Approach?
7	Which aspects/elements of the new modules would you change, why?
8	Which aspects/elements of the new modules you enjoyed the most?
9	What do you think about the tansition process from old new modules were done by the Ministry of Education?
11	What do you think about the resources given in these new modules?
	Only digital books
	Few listening tasks
	Only 3/6 modules
	Lack of teacher guide
	Time

Appendix D

Semi-structured interview

Opening script:

Dear ………,

Thank you for your participation. This interview will last approximately half an hour and include questions about your pedagogical and professional practicum within the classroom. I plan to record this interview for analytical purposes. Please let me know if you want me to stop using the recorder or the interview itself at any time. Your answers will be confidential, and I will not use your name anywhere in the study. This study aims to describe the teachers' perceptions of English language teaching in Ecuador.

Your participation is voluntary, and there are no right or wrong answers. Let me know if you need to stop or breathe at any time. Do you have any questions before starting? Then, I will begin recording this interview with your permission, okay?

Opening questions:

First, I will ask you a couple of personal questions.

1. I am sorry, but I must ask about your age for research purposes.

2. What is your educational background?

3. When did you get your degree?

4. What is your first language?

5. How many years of experience as an EFL teacher do you have?

6. What is the age and level of English of the students you teach?

> **Prompt: From those levels, which level are you spending more time teaching?**

Instructional design questions:

Here are some questions about learning planning.

1. Could you tell me what you know about the Ecuadorian EFL curriculum?

2. What does it mean for you to plan English classes?

3. How do you plan the units you teach during the year?

4. How do you manage or deal with the content you must cover in each unit?

Prompt: What are the priorities you consider when planning each unit?

Questions related to the evaluation:

Now, we will continue with the next part:

1. How do you ensure your students achieve lifelong learning in their English classes?

2. What instruments do you use to verify student learning?

3. There are multiple ways to evaluate students. How do you evaluate your students?

4. How do you assess your students in a formative way?

5. How do you assess your students in a summative way?

6. What do you think about assessing based on project-based learning?

Prompt: Have you taught by using this strategy?

Prompt: Which benefits/inconveniences have you found when applying scaffolding learning?

Learning activities:

Finally, I will ask some questions about the learning activities that apply to your lessons.

1. What activities and tasks will equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve their learning objectives this year?

Prompt: Which meaningful or authentic activities have you applied in the lessons?

2. What is the main objective of the first unit?

Prompt: What is the final product/project of this unit?

3. How will students work to achieve this objective?

4. What is the main objective of the second unit?

Prompt: What is the final product/project of this unit?

5. How will students work to achieve this objective?

6. What is the main objective of the third unit?

Prompt: What is the final product/project of this unit?

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7. How will students work to achieve this objective?

8. Describe the materials you use to achieve student-learning objectives.

9. What do you think about scaffolding learning?

      Prompt: Have you taught by using this strategy?

      Prompt: Which benefits/inconveniences have you found when applying scaffolding learning?

10. What is your role as a teacher when teaching a lesson?

Is there anything you would like to add?

Thanks.

Appendix E

Students' perceptions of learning English as a Foreign Language

I. Information about this questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to gather information about your learning experiences while learning English. It is essential that you answer all the questions with maximal sincerity. The data you will provide us will be treated as confidential.

Please put a tick (✓) in place for each statement, showing your attitude towards the statement.

The explanation of the options for part II is as follows: SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), N (Neutral), D (Disagree), and SD (Strongly Disagree).

II. Personal data

1) School where you are studying:

_____

2) In which year of high school are you?

First of Bachillerato   ____

Second of Bachillerato   ____

Third of Bachillerato   ____

3) Age

____

4) Place of Birth

_____

5) Sex

Male _____   Female _____

A. I enjoy English classes because:

No	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	the activities provided by the teacher are interesting					
2	I can apply the content I learned in real-life situations.					
3	I can show my new knowledge when we present our projects.					

No	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
4	the activities we perform in class are connected to the final project I have to perform					
5	all the activities are related to the main topic of the unit					
6	all the materials are connected to the main topic of the unit					
7	I realize that in every class, I understand the content related to the unit better.					
8	the teacher constantly monitors my learning					
9	the teacher constantly guides my learning					

B. English classes at high school are:

No	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
10	mostly focused on covering the content of the course book					
11	mostly focused on improving grammar					
12	mostly focused on improving writing skills					
13	mostly focused on improving reading skills					
14	mostly focused on improving speaking skills					
15	mostly focused on improving listening skills					
16	mostly focused on achieving the main topic of the unit.					

C. I can see my improvements because the teacher applies:

No	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
17	rubrics related to the final project					
18	end-of-unit test					
19	daily assessment					
20	evaluation instruments aligned to the content					
21	different types of evaluation instruments					
22	self-evaluation instruments					
23	projects/ final products					
24	written tests					
25	creative assignments					
26	reading comprehension tests					
27	class discussions					
28	observation					
29	checklists					
30	final exam					

Appendix F

Backward Design Unit Plan 1

Title: Coronavirus	Subject: English
Topic: Security protocols to prevent Coronavirus	Grade: 3rd BGU
Designer(s): Diana, Danilo, Mauricio, Patricia, Maria	

Stage 1 - Desired Results

Established Goals:

English Writing Standard A2: Produce simple procedural and narrative texts with some detail and variety in sentence structure yet may contain some usage errors.

- *Students will be able to participate in reasonably spoken or written dialogue with peers from different backgrounds on work, study, or general topics of common interest, expressing ideas and opinions effectively and appropriately using selected media.*

- *Students will be able to understand the most important aspects of life by studying its challenges and commitment to maintaining sustainable environments that ensure health.*

Understandings:	Essential Questions:
Students will understand that being safe is essential to keeping healthy.	How can we be safe with our health?
Students will understand the best protocols to prevent coronavirus in their community.	What do you do to prevent coronavirus?
Students will understand the importance of integrating security protocols with friends.	What security protocols do you think you need to have with other people?
	When do you need to wear a mask?

Students will know…	Students will be able to…
To use the correct grammatical time structure (simple past, part of the verb to be, zero, and first conditional)

To structure a paragraph, practice the principal skills like writing, reading, listening, and speaking.

To provide recommendations for healthy schools by using should and should not.

Using the context or environment to apply the new knowledge in real
life.

I.EFL.5.1.1. Learners can demonstrate an understanding of the integrity of different cultures by sharing experiences and participating in in-class activities and discussions to show empathy and respect for others.

Learners can produce well-constructed informational texts by applying the writing process. I.EFL.5.15.1.(I.2, I.3, I.4, S.3, J.1). | Provide security protocols to prevent coronavirus in their community.

Create a brochure to explain the main aspects of coronavirus and ways to avoid it.

EFL 5.3.1. Find specific, predictable information in short, simple texts on a range of age- and level-appropriate topics. (Example: biographies, news articles, narratives, memoirs and personal accounts, formal letters, and emails.)

EFL 5.4.4. To support collaboration, learning, and productivity, select and effectively use digital tools to write, edit, revise, and publish written work. (Example: image editing, Google, infographic makers, audio and video editing, and presentation apps.)

EFL 5.4.7. Use the process of prewriting, drafting, revising, peer editing, and proofreading (i.e., "the writing process") to produce well-constructed informational texts. |

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks

Goal: To create an illustrated brochure that provides important coronavirus information.

Role: Students are doctors who work in some clinics and hospitals.

Audience: Students from high school.

Situation: The major in your city has asked you to create an informative brochure about the coronavirus.

Product/Performance: You must create a brochure describing coronavirus and its ways to prevent this illness. This brochure will be delivered to students from different high schools.

Standards and Criteria for Success:

Your brochure should contain the following:

- Information about coronavirus.
- An organized and outstanding layout.
- Provide at least five recommendations for healthy schools.
- Clear and coherent information.

Other evidence:

- Individual and group tasks
- Creative assignments
- Portfolios
- Projects
- Testmoz: Comprehension questions.
- Padlet: Write a summary of your reaction to caring for friends.
- Rubrics

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Week 1

1. Diagnostic tests and students' levelling.

2. Students' Questionnaire https://forms.gle/A3Fx1ihtfcVA8JY68

3. Word Bingo.

    Security, protocol, hand washing, alcohol, soap, rules, pandemic, coronavirus, meetings, protection, prevention, parties, social distance, emergency, greetings, transmission, quarantine.

https://myfreebingocards.com/bingo-card-generator

F	M	I	R	E	T	A	W	N	S	I	O	J	N	M
H	O	M	N	O	I	T	N	E	V	E	R	P	O	A
F	O	M	N	P	R	A	H	S	E	S	K	Z	I	S
P	Z	U	Z	O	E	E	P	S	M	N	C	L	T	K
P	X	N	U	L	I	R	V	O	O	O	Y	W	A	O
C	H	E	C	F	E	T	T	E	R	A	A	W	L	F
D	G	S	K	A	Q	P	C	O	F	S	P	E	O	R
R	U	Y	D	H	M	D	N	E	H	E	A	U	S	Y
U	O	S	I	Y	T	A	T	H	F	P	P	C	I	O
B	C	T	S	T	V	E	A	U	Y	N	K	D	N	T
I	C	E	O	I	C	O	V	I	D	G	I	G	N	I
O	C	M	R	H	E	A	L	T	H	Y	I	X	Y	S
N	U	U	I	M	M	E	Q	N	X	Z	K	E	U	S
M	S	Z	F	G	B	A	I	J	D	H	Y	M	N	U
L	B	E	P	X	I	S	F	O	A	Q	T	L	H	E

SOAP	MASK	INFECTION
TISSUE	SPREAD	PREVENTION
CORONAVIRUS	WASH	SYMPTOMS
FEVER	COUGH	WATER
IMMUNE SYSTEM	HEALTHY	HYGIENE
CLEAN	COVID	ISOLATION

Coronavirus Challenge

https://www.liveworksheets.com/worksheets/en/English_as_a_Second_Language_(ESL)/Coronavirus/Coronavirus_challenge_zp883757md

Week 2

1. Students' levelling.

2. Answer the following questions:

What do you do to prevent coronavirus?

How many times a day do you wash your hands?

When do you need to wear a mask?

3. Read about Coronavirus and choose True or False:

CORONAVIRUS

Coronavirus is a newly discovered virus. It causes a disease called Covid-19. In some parts of the world, it has made lots of people sick. Corona is Latin for crown, because under the microscope, these viruses look like a crown with spikes.

A lot of symptoms are similar to the flu. You may have a dry and itchy cough, fever, lots of sneezing and it can even be hard to breathe. Most people who have gotten sick with coronavirus have had a mild case. It means you will not feel the disease. But people who are much older or who already have health problems are more likely to get sicker with coronavirus. Here are some things you can do to protect yourself, family, and friends from getting sick: 1) wash your hands often using soap and water. 2) Sneeze into your elbows. It is believed that coronavirus spreads through little liquid drops from our lungs. If you sneeze into your elbows, you can prevent germs from going far into the air. 3) Avoid touching your face. Don't pick your nose. Don't touch your mouth. Don't rub your eyes. They are the places where the virus can enter our bodies.

Remember that this kind of virus can affect anybody. It doesn't matter where you are from. Don't forget, there are a lot of helpers out there who are working to protect us from the virus. We can do our part by taking care of our health and staying at home to stop the virus from spreading to others.

After reading: Write TRUE or FALSE

1. Coronavirus causes a common flu. (…………)
2. Under a microscope, the virus looks like a crown. (…………)
3. The symptoms of Coronavirus are different from the flu. (…………)
4. Older people will have more problems with coronavirus. (…………)
5. We should call the police to get help for coronavirus. (…………)
6. We should not touch our faces to avoid the virus. (…………)
7. Staying at home is doing our job to stop the virus. (…………)
8. The virus only affects people in Asia. (…………)

4. Work in groups to answer the following questions:

1. Which country did the virus come from?

2. On what day did the virus start?

3. Name 2 countries affected by the virus:

4. How many people have been in hospital because of the virus?

5. Where is the virus suspected to have come from?

6. How is the virus passed from person to person?

Week 3

1. Safety protocols: using should and shouldn't

Read the text and underline the basic safety protocols for returning to school during the pandemic.

BASIC PRINCIPLES TO KEEP STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND STAFF SAFE AT SCHOOL AND HELP TO STOP THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS.

Recommendations for healthy schools:
- Sick students, teachers and other staff *should not* come to school
- Schools *should* wash their hands regularly with safe water and soap, alcohol rub/hand sanitizer or chlorine solution.
- There *should* be daily disinfection and cleaning of school surfaces
- Schools *should* provide water, sanitation and waste management facilities and follow environmental cleaning and decontamination procedures
- Schools *should* promote social distancing, including maintaining 2 meters distance. Students should not have parties.
- Everyone *should* wear a mask.

2. Write five tips about how to stay safe when you come from school or work.

3. What is a brochure?

https://www.slideshare.net/VinaaNurAzizah/brochure-4919949

How to design a brochure? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjpVsUM2MPQ

--------- Food ---------

Interesting Facts

•

•

•

•

Welcome to the

_____

**Region of the
United States!**

**Why would you
visit this region?**

Designed By

_____

Week 4

1. Writing paragraphs

HOW TO WRITE PARAGRAPHS

PARAGRAPHS

A paragraph is a group of sentences that express a complete thought. It is usually about 5 – 7 sentences (but it can be longer or shorter)

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love LEARNING

https://englishdotcom.net/how-to-write-a-good-paragraph/

Hamburger paragraph

Parts of a Paragraph

Topic Sentence: This sentence tells the reader the main idea, or what the paragraph will be about.

Supporting Sentence One: This sentence gives specific details relating to the main idea.

Supporting Sentence Two: This sentence gives another specific detail relating to the main idea.

Supporting Sentence Three: This sentence gives more specific details relating to the main idea.

Concluding Sentence: This sentence refers to the topic sentence and sums up the main idea of the paragraph.

2. Write a paragraph about coronavirus and explain how to prevent it. (PADLET or Google Docs)

Week 5:

Developing the authentic performance task

Rubric:

	4	3	2	1
Organization	The brochure has excellent formatting and very well organized information.	The brochure has appropriate formatting and well-organized information.	The brochure has some organized information with random formatting.	The brochure's format and organization of material are confusing to the reader.
Ideas	The brochure communicates relevant information appropriately and effectively to the intended audience.	The brochure communicates relevant information appropriately to the intended audience.	The brochure communicates irrelevant information, or communicates inappropriately to the intended audience.	The brochure communicates irrelevant information, and communicates inappropriately to the intended audience.
Conventions	All of the writing is done in complete sentences. Capitalization and punctuation are correct throughout the brochure.	Most of the writing is done in complete sentences. Most of the capitalization and punctuation are correct throughout the brochure.	Some of the writing is done in complete sentences. Some of the capitalization and punctuation are correct throughout the brochure.	Most of the writing is not done in complete sentences. Most of the capitalization and punctuation are not correct throughout the brochure.
Graphics	The graphics go well with the text, and there is a good mix of text and graphics.	The graphics go well with the text, but there are so many that they distract from the text.	The graphics go well with the text, but there are too few.	The graphics do not go with the accompanying text or appear to be randomly chosen.

1. Students organize the information they already have about coronavirus and the most important safety protocols to prevent it.

2. Students work in groups or individually to create the brochure (it could be digital).

Appendix G

Teachers' reflections on the implementation of the BDM

After you have applied the Backward Design on the first unit, indicate the following:

1) How did you find the planning process for Unit 1 based on the BDM?

2) What experience did you have implementing BDM during this semester?

3) How do you think your students reacted to implementing the BDM and performance tasks during this semester?

4) What did you like the most about implementing the BDM this semester?

5) What did you find difficult in implementing the BDM this semester?

6) What do you think about your students' performance task (project)?

7) If you compare the results of your other classes and the class you implemented the BDM model, do you think there was any important difference between students' learning outcomes?

8) Do you think integrating the BDM this semester changed the teaching-learning process? Yes or no? Why?

9) Do you think integrating the BDM promotes lifelong learning? Yes or no? Why?

10) To what extent does the BDM planning associate your instruction with the Ministry of Education requirements?

Appendix H

Focus-group interviews with teachers

Dear teachers,

Welcome, and thank you for your participation! I appreciate your help in conducting this research. My name is Carlos Alvarez, and I will be the moderator of this interview. This interview will last approximately one hour. I hope all of you participate in this interview in a peaceful and relaxing way. I plan to record this interview for analytical purposes. Please let me know if you want me to stop using the recorder or the interview itself at any time. Your answers will be confidential, and I will not use your name anywhere in the study. This study explores your perceptions of implementing the Backward Design Model in Ecuadorian EFL public schools. Your participation is voluntary, and there are no right or wrong answers. Do you have any questions before starting? Then, I will begin recording this interview with your permission, okay?

1) How did you find the planning process based on the BDM?

2) What experience did you have implementing BDM during this semester?

3) How do you think your students reacted to implementing the BDM and performance tasks during this semester?

4) What do you think about your students' performance task (project)?

5) If you compare the results of your other classes and the class in which you implemented the BDM model, do you think there was any important difference between students' learning outcomes?

6) To what extent does the BDM planning associate your instruction with the Ministry of Education requirements

7) What did you like the most about implementing the BDM this semester?

8) What did you find difficult in implementing the BDM this semester?

9) Will you continue applying the BDM in your future lessons?

Appendix I

Students' perceptions of the application of the BDM in their English lessons

Dear students, please answer the following statements according to these criteria:
1. Totally Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Totally Agree

Application of the BDM

1. Did you perceive any changes in how your teacher taught English in these three units compared to other teachers?

2. My teachers provided all the necessary knowledge to create the final projects.

3. I could easily follow the teachers' instructions for the final projects.

4. Creating final projects is better than taking a test.

5. I could transfer my knowledge to real-life situations by creating final projects.

6. The final projects helped me focus on the essential ideas of the content I learned.

7. I could understand better the final project I had to do.

8. I could reinforce what I learned during the units by creating the final projects.

9. I better understood what steps to take to create the final projects.

10. I used my methods to learn vocabulary words related to the final project.

11. In the future, I would love to continue doing the final project to improve my English skills.

Learning English

1. Creating the final projects makes me more motivated to learn English.

2. All the materials and activities applied during these units helped me develop the final projects better.

3. Creating the final projects helped me improve my English speaking skills.

4. Creating the final projects helped me improve my English reading skills.

5. Creating the final projects helped me improve my English writing skills.

6. Creating the final projects helped me improve my English reading skills.

Creativity

1. I felt more confident I could perform creatively on the two final projects (brochure and PPT).

2. I was more confident that I could develop creative ideas for the final projects.

3. The final projects supported the freedom to express ideas.

4. The final projects showed respect for individual diversity.

5. I enjoyed customizing my brochure.

6. I demonstrated originality in my brochure.

7. By creating the final projects, I could efficiently combine all the topics I learned during each unit.

8. Creating final projects was a flexible process where I found different ways to develop them.

Autonomous Learning

1. I enjoyed the process of creating the final projects.

2. I could learn from my classmates.

3. I care about my final projects.

4. I decided how to organize my final products.

5. I found information from different sources to develop my final project.

6. I could decide what was the more important content to learn.

7. I could correct my own mistakes.

8. I was responsible for my own learning.

9. I decided what to study and when to study it.

10. I used the internet to find information for my final project.

11. I provided feedback on my classmates' projects.

Appendix J

Focus-group interviews with students

Dear students,

Welcome, and thank you for your participation! I appreciate your help in conducting this research. My name is Carlos Alvarez, and I will be the moderator of this interview. This interview will last approximately one hour. I hope all of you participate in this interview in a peaceful and relaxing way. I plan to record this interview for analytical purposes. Please let me know if you want me to stop using the recorder or the interview itself at any time. Your answers will be confidential, and I will not use your name anywhere in the study. This study explores the students' perceptions of integrating the Backward Design Model in Ecuadorian EFL public schools.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and there are no right or wrong answers. Do you have any questions before starting? Then, I will begin recording this interview with your permission, okay?

Opening questions:

First, I will ask you to complete the following information:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1dYzSLAHF-

GoEpjKBbQv0JLROeWgLbyqcPI9sahMiRVY/edit#gid=0

1. Which changes did you perceive in how your teacher taught English?

2. What experience did you have when developing the performance tasks?

3. Why could you easily follow your teacher's instructions for developing the performance tasks?

4. To what extent were all the materials and activities applied during each unit related to the performance tasks?

5. Why did you feel more motivated to learn English by developing performance tasks?

6. How do you connect the performance tasks with transferring your knowledge to real-life situations?

7. Which language skills did you improve by developing the performance tasks?

8. Which other skills did you improve by developing the performance tasks?

9. would you like to continue learning by developing performance tasks in the future?
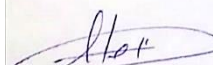
Appendix K

Research Ethics Approval in the Language Pedagogy Ph.D. Programme

Researcher's name:	Carlos Lenin Alvarez Llerena
E-mail address:	caalvarezllerena@gmail.com
Title of the research:	Applying the Backward Design Model in Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A comparison of teachers' and students' perceptions in Ecuador.
Co-researchers (if any):	
Expected dates of the beginning and the end of the research:	December 2019 March 2021
Research funder (if any):	
Date of the submission of the application:	January 15th. 2021
Research goal (100-200 words):	This study explores and analyses teachers´ and students´ perceptions of applying the Backward Design Model in the Ecuadorian EFL contexts. Teachers will be trained in using the BDM and its main aspects in EFL contexts. Aspects such as the BDM and the EFL national curriculum's congruence, the micro-curricular planning based on the BDM unit design templates, and the application of performance tasks based on the BDM will be considered the most important aspects of this study. Hence, at the end of the implementation, teachers and students will share their perceptions of integrating the BDM into their English lessons.
Age of the research participants (underline):	Teachers: 28-55 years Students: 14-17 years.
How many research participants will be involved?	Teachers: 15-16 Students: 250 Students are from 14 to 17 years. Regarding students' pre and post-questionnaires, teachers sent the links to the two questionnaires at the beginning and the end of the BDM implementation. For the students' focus-group interviews that will be carried out at the end of the BDM implementation, guardians or parents must sign a consent form to allow students to be part of this study.
Method of the selection of the participants. Please attach the appropriate documentation:	Purpose Sampling Method Invitation Letter: July 15th, 2020

| advertising text, invitation letter, etc. |

ELTE Eötvös Loránd University   Faculty of Education and Psychology

Hungría, Budapest, 15 de Julio del 2020

Lcda. Alexandra Zambrano

DIRECTORA DISTRITAL 03D01 AZOGUES- BIBLIÁN – DÉLEG

En su Despacho:

Sra. Directora Distrital:

CARLOS LENIN ÁLVAREZ LLERENA, ecuatoriano, con cédula de identidad Nro. 0301760450, estudiante de Doctorado en la Facultad de Educación de la **Universidad Eötvös Loránd**, de la República de Hungría, por medio del presente y de la manera más comedida me permito solicitar a su autoridad, se digne conceder el permiso correspondiente a quince Docentes que impartan la asignatura de Lengua Extranjera (Inglés), y que laboren en Unidades Educativas Públicas, en el Distrito de su acertada Dirección, para realizar la propuesta de investigación establecida dentro del Programa de Doctorado, conforme los siguientes lineamientos:

El tema de investigación es "**Implementing the Backward Design model in English as a Foreign Language contexts: Teachers and students' perceptions**" "**Implementación del Modelo en Retrospectiva en Contextos de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera: Percepciones de Profesores y Estudiantes**".

La propuesta de investigación tiene como objetivo la implementación del modelo en retrospectiva para la alineación de las exigencias del curriculum nacional ecuatoriano, los módulos pedagógicos establecidos por el Ministerio de Educación y la planificación de experiencias de aprendizaje y evaluación que los maestros de inglés aplican en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje.

Para cumplir con este objetivo, que contribuirá al mejoramiento en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera, es necesaria la participación como manifesté anteriormente, de 15 profesores de lengua extranjera del Distrito, que dicten la asignatura en el tercer año de bachillerato en instituciones educativas públicas.

La participación durará el primer quimestre del año lectivo 2020-2021, y se desarrollará de acuerdo al cronograma establecido (anexo1), el mismo que puede ser adaptado de acuerdo a las directrices del Ministerio de Educación, Dirección Distrital, instituciones y profesores participantes en la investigación. La investigación, en su mayoría, se realizará mediante el uso del internet y herramientas tecnológicas lo que ayudará a no obstaculizar el normal proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje en las instituciones educativas.

Acceptance letter from the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education: July 24, 2020 |

Location of the study	Ecuador			
Short description of the study (The research protocol should be described in detail. The theoretical background of the research is not relevant from the ethical point of view.)	**Research Protocol**			

Research Protocol

August 2020	Sep 2020- Jan 2021	January 2021	Feb – March 2021
August 21ˢᵗ, 22ⁿᵈ, 24ᵗʰ: Individual interviews with the participants (teachers) (30-45 min each) **August 25ᵗʰ:** Teaching training 1 (3h): Explanation and general investigation organization. Elements of the Ecuadorian national foreign language curriculum and its standards. http://bit.ly/35Nv8LN **August 26th:** Teaching training 2 (3h): Backward Design Model, general principles, and main elements.	Start of the research proposal implementation. Application of pre-questionnaires to students. At the end of each unit, teachers will write reflections and share experiences about design in retrospect (1 hour each at the end of each unit)	**January 22nd, 23rd:** Focus group interviews with students and teachers at the end of the implementation. **January 25th – 29th** Application of post-questionnaires to students about their experiences and perceptions of	Compilation and organization of the information obtained from professors and students for their respective analysis and writing of the doctoral thesis

	http://bit.ly/3qs8CA5 **August 27th**: Teaching training 3 (3h): BDM Unit Designs: elements related to CLIL, student-centered learning, and project-based learning. http://bit.ly/3oSKO7Z **August 28th:** Teaching training (3h): Planning based on the BDM of the first unit of the pedagogical modules. http://bit.ly/2XJHr7F **August 31st:** Teaching training (3h): Planning based on the BDM of the second unit of the pedagogical modules. http://bit.ly/2KmjQH5 http://bit.ly/35MdPuS		learning through the use of the BDM
What kind of equipment, instruments, and tools will you use? Please attach the appropriate documentation.	(1) Pre-individual teachers' interviews (2) Students' pre-questionnaires (3) Teachers' unit designs based on the BDM (4) Teachers' reflections on the implementation of the BDM (5) Focus-group teachers' interviews (6) Focus-group students interviews (7) Students' post-questionnaires		
What questionnaires, tests, and interview techniques are you planning to use? Please attach the questionnaires, interview guides, and tests.	Pre-individual teachers' interviews: http://bit.ly/3swWsIc Students' pre-questionnaires: http://bit.ly/3ii3UlA Teachers' unit designs based on the BDM: http://bit.ly/2KmjQH5 ; http://bit.ly/35MdPuS Teachers' reflections on the implementation of the BDM: http://bit.ly/3bMIb42 Focus-group teachers' interviews: http://bit.ly/3spWod0 Focus-group students' interviews: still in the designing process Students' post-questionnaires: http://bit.ly/3svHX7l		
Explain the short- and long-term handling and archiving of the recorded data and what measures will be taken	This study is being conducted in fourteen secondary-level public high schools in Ecuador. Purpose sampling was applied to choose the potential participants for this study. The target participants are 16 Ecuadorian EFL teachers and 283		

to preserve participants' anonymity.	EFL students. All the communications and permissions were conducted in Spanish since it is the first language of all research participants. The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education approved authorizations from Zone 6, and teachers from this research decided to participate voluntarily. Furthermore, pseudonyms are being used to preserve participants' anonymity.

A "YES" answer to the following questions does not imply that the study is not feasible.			If you have answered YES to any of these questions, explain how the physical and emotional safety of the participants will be guaranteed.
Does the study involve the application of unpleasant stimuli?	NO	YES	
Does the study involve the application of unpleasant (data acquisition) conditions?	NO	YES	
Does the study involve the participation of mentally disabled people?	NO	YES	
Does the study involve the participation of people with special educational needs?	NO	YES	
Does the study involve the deception of the participants?	NO	YES	
Does the study involve concealment of the nature or purpose of the research?	NO	YES	
Does the study involve a procedure (procedures) that may even unintentionally induce anxiety or suffering (e.g., an in-depth interview)?	NO	YES	

Are there any other ethical aspects of the study not mentioned above? (E.g., giving rewards to encourage participation[1], keeping a record of and archiving data, etc.) If yes, please provide a brief description.	At the end of the study, teachers will receive one certificate of participation, which can be applied as a teacher's development document. The certificate is the following:

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[1] Remember that giving rewards to participants may seriously threaten the integrity of the research. However, if an incentive is deemed suitable, consider any harmful effects of e.g., sweets. If in doubt, ask for expert advice.
(c.f. https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-2011.pdf?noredirect=1)

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

This certificate goes to

XXXXXX

For participating in the research *"Implementing the Backward Design Model in teaching English as a Foreign Language in Ecuadorian secondary schools: Teachers' perceptions and students' achievements"* during the period of September 2020 – February 2021 (50 hours).

Dr. Éva Major
Supervisor

Ing. Carlos Alvarez, Mcs.
Researcher

I believe the proposed research is consistent with the ethical standards of education research.
I ask for approval for the study to be carried out.

Date: January 15th, 2020

Researcher

To be filled in by the Ethics Committee[2]:

The Research Ethics Committee has examined the research plan and proposes the following changes:

Date:………………………

_____
signature of the chair of the committee
(or signature of the acting member)

Or:

The Research Ethics Committee examined the research plan and approved the proposed research methods and procedures.

Date:………………………

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Appendix L

Consent to Participate Request

Invitation to participate e-mail

Subject: Applying the Backward Design Model in Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A comparison of teachers' and students' perceptions in Ecuador

Dear teacher,

First, thank you for accepting to be part of this research. My name is Carlos Alvarez Llerena. I am a Ph.D. student in the English Language Pedagogy program at Eötvös Loránd University in Hungary (http://langped.elte.hu/).

I am sending this e-mail to provide more information about this study. The main purpose of this research is to explore the teachers' and students' perceptions of the application of this model in your English classes to provide results to the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education and Ecuadorian policymakers to create new ways to bridge the existing gap between what is established in the National Curriculum and real teaching-practices.

My procedure entails conducting different research tools such as interviews, focus-group interviews, and surveys to gain in-depth information on the implementation of this model. Furthermore, as a part of the implementation, you will be asked to attend a workshop where I will provide all the information related to the BDM, and you will also plan three units for half of the school year.

The attempted schedule is attached to this e-mail to see how the research will be conducted. It is essential to mention that your participation is voluntary, and the information and documents provided will remain confidential. In addition, if you are willing to participate, you will receive a participation certificate at the end of the implementation.

If you are willing to participate, please return the attached consent letter with your cell phone at a suitable time.

Thank you for being so considerate,

Carlos Alvarez

Researcher

Appendix M

Certificate of Participation

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

This certificate goes to

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For participating in the research *"Implementing the Backward Design Model in teaching English as a Foreign Language: A comparison of teachers' and students' perceptions in Ecuador"* during the period of August 2020 – March 2021 (50 hours).

Dr. Éva Major
Supervisor

Ing. Carlos Alvarez, Mcs.
Researcher

Appendix N

Sample of how the thematic analysis was conducted.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YQXE9uitJq4uRqSxx1cdXNKeTJiELfkJ1UCU3m2
aeYo/edit

Danilo Sí muchas gracias Bueno mi percepción sobre los libros sobre el material didáctico que estos últimos años se ha venido utilizando con los estudiantes
en el caso mío por la experiencia que tengo en los primeros segundos y terceros años de bachillerato no me acuerdo Hace cuántos años hace 3 más o menos Creo no estoy muy seguro usábamos el libro Postcard de Pearson que me parecía un libro muy bueno para trabajar que el gobierno hizo el esfuerzo para que los estudiantes manejen y usen este libro que era un libro organizado tenía partes bien definidas se podía trabajar mejor con los estudiantes luego vino este segundo libro que ya no tenía tantas tan organizado y tan detallado no era tan pedagógica la organización de los temas de la gramática etcétera Pero se podía trabajar incluyendo metodología propia y materiales que cada docente podíamos utilizar en cuanto a los módulos estos últimos módulos que fue el cambio de este libro a los módulos sí ha habido una diferencia bastante grande porque hay mucha más dificultad para trabajar con estos módulos como decían los compañeros No está bien organizado la parte de gramática más es en la parte de lectura y oral, si, es necesario y los estudiantes tienen bastante déficit en estas áreas de lenguaje Pero todas las destrezas son complementarias pienso yo y yo Yo creo que un libro material didáctico debe tener para su eficacia todas estas partes con los compañeros en el colegio donde yo trabajo decidimos trabajar seguir trabajando con los libros anteriores ya que los módulos no eran de mucha ayuda decidimos simplemente tomar algunas lecturas de ahí para trabajar pero no trabajar en Sí con los módulos en su totalidad. lo que sí me parece también es que no se contextualiza tanto con la realidad de los estudiantes las lecturas o los temas que propone el módulo y que se necesita bastante material extra para trabajar con los estudiantes en todas las destrezas no sólo en las destrezas que enfatiza el módulo Esa es mi percepción compañeros Muchas gracias
Carlos Muchas gracias Danilo seguimos con Dianita por favor
Diana gracias Bueno creo que mi opinión también es compartida con la de los mis compañeros también opino que obviamente este módulo tiene sus ventajas y sus desventajas primeramente creo que en mi caso ya estado usando los módulos nuevos por 4 meses antes de que pase la, esta situación difícil que estamos atravesando hemos tratado de usar el módulo 1 y el módulo 2 estoy hablando para el segundo año de bachillerato de acuerdo a esta pequeña experiencia digamos así en este tiempo he podido notar de que Obviamente si Estos módulos son extensos para las 6 semanas del parcial que debemos cubrir es súper extenso Entonces esto indudablemente nos obliga a los docentes a hacer adaptaciones seleccionando temas y bueno en fin tratando de cubrir las destrezas que estamos que hemos puesto más bien en la planificación de unidad Y qué bueno también eso a veces nos va a llevar a un poco de estrés porque eso de estar buscando Con qué destrezas bueno se vinculan Entonces eso en ese caso si estamos un poquito estresado los docentes también obviamente lo extenso que se hace este módulo se pierde secuencia es como si volviera a ser un poco repetitivo cuando más bien Yo creo que deberían de Haber puesto ya los contenidos o los temas que se van a dar juntos ahora lo que sí me llama la atención y obviamente he estado un poco analizando y tratando de investigar lo que es redes sociales con las mismas personas que han elaborado estos módulos lo que me llama la atención de esas personas es que ellas tratan de que los docentes cambiemos la metodología de enseñanza ellas lo que nos dicen es que ya no nos enfoquemos tanto en gramática sino que obviamente nos enfoquemos en los métodos lo que es él