**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR**

**SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**

RESEARCH PROJECT PROFILE FOR THE GRADUATION WORK TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF "LICENCIATURA EN LENGUAS MODERNAS, ESPECIALIDAD EN FRANCÉS E INGLÉS

# THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNET AS AN ACADEMIC TOOL IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN STUDENTS OF INTENSIVE INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH COURSES FROM THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR, YEAR 2018

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**This is the way I found to tell you how thankful I am for every little thing you have done for me. This for you my beloved mother.**

## DELIMITATION OF THE PROBLEM.

Current technology provides new opportunities to increase the effectiveness of language learning and teaching. Incorporating well-organized and effective technology into foreign language teaching and learning processes for improving students' language proficiency has become more useful to educators. Taking into account the fast changes in technology, it is important for language teachers to recognize how to effectively and efficiently integrate technology into their classes or programs to help students acquire second language easily and also to improve their motivation successfully.

Students usually develop four main skills and other sub skills when they are learning a foreign language. Internet and other technologies have provided a positive effect in the development of these skills. Teachers and also students have been greatly benefitted by the integration of these technologies as part of the process of teaching and learning a second language. Furthermore, it seems technology not only provides an improvement of the development of the language proficiency but it also provides a more effective, dynamic and attractive environment for students to learn. Thus, students feel more motivated to learn inside and outside the classroom. The use of internet as an academic tool offers many possibilities for teachers and students.

In El Salvador, there are many institutions that are now using internet as an important element for the development of second language proficiency. The University of El Salvador offers two careers aimed to develop English as a second language. At the Foreign Language Department of this university there are several courses oriented to the development of productive and receptive skills, and among those courses, the Intensive English courses are usually considered the most important ones due to the variety of activities or tasks that they contain in order to achieve such development of skills. From those courses, the Intensive Intermediate English course, Semester 2-2018 is identified as one of the most challenging courses and it is the level which serves as the population to be exposed to internet interaction as an academic tool in this research in order to test the impact this has on the proficiency level of the second language and identify the different areas that internet affects the most.

The semester 2-2018 starts in August and it ends in November, this is the time frame that the research used in order to collect and analyze information.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

New methodologies, resources, techniques, approaches and technologies are becoming more and more popular at the time of teaching and learning a foreign language. In all these interaction with new ways of teaching and learning, the internet is becoming probably the most used and reliable tool that offers an almost unlimited source of resources to improve the second language acquisition. Thus, the interaction, use or integration of internet as an academic tool is becoming more and more necessary. Institutions all over the world are implementing new methodologies based on internet to improve or make the learning process more attractive and convenient not only for students but also for educators. Different types of academic platforms, social networks, general websites, authentic material and many other examples of resources are offered by this technology. This, at the same time requires relying on the access of equipment that allows controlling the use of technology with an academic purpose. Academies and other institutions that offer the opportunity to learn a foreign language are evolving and updating their resources in order to take advantage of this technology. By doing so, they not only assure a close interaction between the educator and the student but they also offer a wide variety of tools and opportunity for the students to improve their skills.

Apparently, internet has become the future of learning almost everything, including a foreign language. However, it is necessary to know more than just how many resources you can find for a well-organized class. It is important to know as well to what extent internet affects the development of the necessary skills to acquire a foreign language. It is necessary then, to know in what areas or in what skills the internet can be of more help for the development of a foreign language. This information can contribute to a more effective development of those skills that sometimes are not refined, and it can also provide access to know how internet develops different areas of acquisition to use it to its best instead of only relying on a wide access of resources that can help but not refine what students really need to improve when they are learning a second language.

The Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador includes this technology aiming to obtain a better or more effective process of teaching and learning of a

foreign language. The FLD has the necessary tools to improve this process in a great percentage. It is necessary then, to study or analyze all the advantages that the educators at the FLD can have when they integrate this technology to improve the process of learning. In other words, it is necessary to identify in what areas of the process of teaching and learning, the internet offers more help and better results to develop a second language.

## OBJECTIVES

**General Objective**

- To discover, to what extent, internet as an academic tool affects the development of second language acquisition of students in Intermediate courses during the year 2018.

**Specific Objectives**

- To analyze what areas of second language acquisition are more influenced by the use of internet in the classroom or program development.

- To evaluate the performance of students before and after the exposure to internet as an academic tool.

- To expose students to internet activities and tools that can develop their second language acquisition based on the program to be developed during that course.

- To propose a list of recommendations that can lead to a better development of second language acquisition through the exposure to internet as an academic tool in the classroom.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**General question.**

- What are the effects of the use of internet as an academic tool on the second language proficiency level and acquisition process of students?

**Subsidiary questions**

- Does the use of internet as an academic tool influence positively or negatively the language proficiency level and acquisition process of students from Intensive Intermediate English II, Semester I-2018 at the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador?

- What is the language proficiency level of students based on the diagnostic tests?

- What is the proficiency comparison from the groups, the group that is exposed to authentic material and the group that is not exposed?

## JUSTIFICATION

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects that the exposition to virtual activities, material and use of internet as an academic tool has on the development of a second language acquisition. Even though many studies and articles can be found about the benefits of the use of internet or technology to develop a more attractive class to achieve a more effective teaching and learning process (Chapelle, 2007), there is not enough information on how internet can actually affect in different areas of the acquisition process and to what extent the internet is more convenient to be used when developing a second language. This broad topic requires of more attention and detailed study to understand the true advantages of the inclusion of this technology in classrooms. Despite this, many institutions seem to be using this technology just a source of almost infinite material than can be found to have a more creative class instead of focusing those resources to specific areas or skills that should be developed more effectively or more accurately than others depending on the objective of each class and the abilities of the students in those courses.

Teachers of English or any other language have tried to identify the best resources, materials, activities, strategies or techniques than can complement or create an effective methodology to improve or guarantee an acceptable L2 acquisition. Internet came to be one of the most important tools nowadays to create a more modern and effective process of learning a second language. This research is important because by exposing students to an active interaction to internet as a tool, teacher will discover what areas of L2 acquisition are more benefitted, or developed in students. Teacher will have a wider specter of opportunities to develop areas that other regular o typical activities and resources inside the classroom cannot develop in students. Teacher can also develop new strategies based on the effectiveness of certain platforms or websites that can assure a better understanding or control of the language. The interaction in a virtual environment with other members of the class or even with information of the real world can give teachers the opportunity to develop subconscious acquisition in students since they will be practicing the language and learning to react spontaneously to situations. Teacher will certainly see the benefits of knowing how internet can help to the development of L2 acquisition. There is no doubt that teacher can

find a great opportunity in internet to develop a more effective class. Students, therefore, will also have great benefits from research that explains or points out the benefits of internet as academic tool. Even if this tool was not used in classrooms, a research such as this one could provide enough information to students learning a second language to help them create a clear understanding of what resources, strategies and techniques they can use to improve their proficiency. This research could provide a guide on what areas they can improve faster or better and they could have access to that resource even if they are not in class. Information about the effects of using internet for academic purposes can clearly help students.

This research pretends to contribute to teacher and students with valuable information that can lead to significant changes in the way the teaching and learning process is developed to achieve a high level of second language acquisition. This paper provides valuable information for the FLD at the University of El Salvador to be used in order to improve the curricula or the strategies used by the teachers working in the institution, and help students to be able to have more access to new and more effective resources.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### RESEARCH ANTECEDENTS

Teachers transmit information to students, and develop skills and competences as well. They lead students to the relevant information and they teach students the different ways of processing information. Thus, it is important that teachers themselves are well-informed. The conventional sources of information for teachers have been the library, the bookstore and even their colleagues. However, today's teachers can obtain a multitude of diverse information from almost anywhere in the world quickly and easily through the Internet.

Internet not only changes the way we access to information but it also changes the way we teach. The teaching-learning process of a second language has been studied for decades in order to keep it updated and to offer the most effective and attractive way to accomplish the second language acquisition. Many theories and approaches have appeared; some of them are still in use while some other just disappeared.

Li Li Lin (2009) in her research project: “Technology and Second Language Learning” from the Alliant International University, reinforces the belief that technology offers more and new opportunities to increase the effectiveness of L2 learning and teaching. Within this research there is clear emphasis on using the internet as a tool for improving the students’ language proficiency level. Lin, states that the new opportunities to reach an effective L2 acquisition come from the Incorporation of that she calls: well-organized and effective technology.

This research justifies that based on the fast changing evolution of technology, it is very important for L2 teachers to recognize how effectively and efficiently integrate technology into their curriculum design to help students acquire second language easily. At the same time, this research introduces theory that supports the idea that this technology can also enhance the motivation and other social aspects of the learning process. As a result L2 acquisition could be achieved more efficiently. Besides, based on theories and references

such as the ones provided by Butler-Pascoe and Wiburg (2003) where we can find twelve attributes of how technology enriches the second language learning environment as well as how technology meaningfully supports these characteristics, this dissertation offers meaningful characteristics in order to address the relationship between technology and second language learning.

Later their research concludes by stating that although many advantages to using technology have been proposed by researchers in the field of education, it is not as easily implemented as it appears. However, with continued contribution of 21st century technology and efforts of educators around the world, the aforementioned obstacles in implementing technology into curriculum may begin to decrease and optimism about application progress may also increase.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

"Without question, our ability to easily publish content online and to connect to vast networks of passionate learners will force us to rethink the way we communicate with our constituents, the way we deliver our curriculum and the expectations we have of our students." (Richardson, 2008, p.5) The use of different technologies in the educational area gives educators the possibility of going beyond the classroom walls and of changing the way they approach, envision and conceive the teaching-learning process. The potential these tools have, impact very much on our own learning and the learning of others. Certainly, there is no theory that demonstrates a unique way or approach to acquire a second language; each of them contributes with ideas and elements of how the acquisition of L2 can be reached. The following theories are exposed in order to understand the subject that has been studied in this research.

Before going to the Technology part of this research there is a need to explore some other elements that contribute a great way to the construction of acquisition, especially when we talk about the acquisition of a second language.

## Defining teaching

We could start by saying that teaching is not as easy as it looks if we want to define it; almost everything can be taught. We could give examples as geography, chemistry or a second language; we could also teach how to ride a bike, to knit, or to cook. However, these teachings share the common principle that a change is produced in the individual's cognitive schemes in the form of new (or the improvement of the existing) knowledge. Concretely, from an academic point of view, Moreno (2003) expresses that teaching is the process that promotes intentionally and systematically the learning process and that it must be originated in the student. This process is progressive, dynamic, and produces a methodical transformation of the individual. Teaching has a starting point and pedagogical foundations that generate learning objectives. These goals define the content that will be taught, the methodology, strategies and techniques that will be used to accomplish the planned and desired transformations of the one who is receiving the instruction. These objectives not only guide the teaching process but also steer the teacher's task and serve as a way to evaluate teaching efficiency (Lontiev, 1991).

We could consider teaching then as the process of creating the necessary conditions to produce new knowledge, skills and abilities; that should give students the tools to be critical and autonomous as to lead their own education.

## Defining learning

Through time, various authors and researchers have created different definitions of "learning" and "teaching" according to the school or place's vision and methodology, their experience, beliefs and philosophy. Finding a definition that satisfies all the ideas and convictions is hard; however, Shuell (1986) offers a definition that combines the different ideas and common points of other authors: learning is defined as "an enduring change in behavior, or in the capacity to behave in a given fashion, which results from practice or other forms of experience". Although this explanation is not attributed to any particular learning theory, it can be analyzed from the behaviorist, cognitivist and constructivist perspective.

According to behaviorists, learning takes place with stimuli, a response, the association between them and constant reinforcement. The definition offered by Shuell (1986) refers to an enduring change in the individuals' behavior. The fact that it is enduring could mean that the stimuli and the response are constantly occurring so that the change that is taking place can be reinforced, generating durability over time.

Cognitivism is interested in the mental processes that are involved in the generation of knowledge. Snelbecker (1983, as cited in Ertmer & Newby, 1993) mentions that with cognitivism, a great emphasis was given to "the more complex cognitive processes such as thinking, problem solving, language, concept formation and information processing". These processes can be identified in Shuell's (1986) definition as the "capacity to behave in a given fashion, which results from practice or other forms of experience". An individual's experience can be acquired from the way she or he retrieves, understands, organizes and assimilates the information that has been received; also from the way that s/he faces and solves problems and in the meta-cognitive processes that take place in order to form concepts. All these experiences have an impact on the conduct and behavior of human beings, altering it in one way or another.

The constructivist perspective considers that meaning is created from experiences and interaction and that knowledge evolves and is produced day to day. With the information we as individuals obtain through mental filters, our reality and personal interpretations of the world are constructed. Shuell's interpretation of learning explains that the enduring changes in behavior are produced through practice and experience; this is to say that the individual is building a change in his/her conduct or behavior due to a particular situation that generated it.

The concept of learning is broad and can be seen from different perspectives; however, considering the previously mentioned views, learning will be considered as a lifelong process in which information and experiences are transformed into knowledge, abilities, skills, behaviors and attitudes. The learning process does not happen only in formal

settings like schools and classrooms; it does not require academic degrees or diplomas, sometimes it happens unconsciously. It is a process that is constantly changing and it requires practice, reflection and interaction with the environment and the people that surround us.

One of the major developments in language teaching and learning in the 1980s, in concert with communicative language teaching, was the emergence of task-based language teaching and learning. This was an important movement that highlighted that students not only need to have knowledge of a language but also need to develop the ability to actually use it to achieve communicative purposes. Thus, students' learning was no longer to be described only in terms of inventories of language items, but also, and most importantly, in terms of tasks that they would accomplish – that is, what students do.

**The nature of tasks**

There has been an extensive debate on what constitutes a 'task' for the purposes of languages teaching and learning. Some distinctions have been drawn, for example, between 'exercises' (focused on noticing and developing aspects of the form of language) and 'tasks' (focused on integrated use of language) or between 'pedagogic' tasks (tasks accomplished for the purposes of classroom learning) and 'real-life' tasks (tasks involving the use of language in the real-world). More recently, emphasis in general education has been placed on developing 'higher order thinking tasks' or 'rich tasks'. Teachers developing these rich tasks build deep, elaborated thinking into the tasks they ask students to do. As languages educators, we consider not only the need to develop accuracy (through a focus on form) and fluency (through active use of the target language in tasks) but also, and importantly, the need to develop complexity (Skehan, 1998) in interpreting and using language and in reflecting upon language and culture in the context of use. Thus, in developing tasks we also need to consider how each task builds on or extends previous learning and how it contributes to continuous and cumulative learning. Some of these distinctions are worth considering in developing the range of learning experiences that comprise a teaching and learning program for our students.

Good language learning tasks, then, involve the judicious use of existing knowledge and above all an intellectual challenge (in both content and processes) for students; they involve interaction; they appeal to students' imagination and expand their interests; they develop confidence and provide a sense of achievement and enjoyment; and they contribute to learners' ever-developing communicative and learning repertoires.

**Task-types**

"The value of tasks relies on the fact that they represent an integrative, purposeful, contextualized piece of work. Tasks may be grouped in different ways to ensure a comprehensiveness and variety of experiences. These groupings are called task-types. The most frequently used way of categorizing tasks is according to the four macro-skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing". (Scarino1988).

According to Clark, Scarino & Brownell, (1994), tasks need to be:

- interacting and discussing
- interacting and deciding/transacting
- obtaining information and using it
- giving information
- personal response
- personal expression.

The task-type categories provide a means for ensuring that students interact with a range of learning experiences, participate in a type of language used in different contexts and, learn increasingly to manage the variability of context.

**The role of interaction.**

"Human learning is mediated through interaction with others; in interactions with parents, peers, friends, teachers, etc., students move into phases of thinking and speaking that they would not be able to go to alone." (Vygostky, 1934/1962 as cited in Kreeft Peyton, 1999). Wagner-Gough and Hatch considered the role conversation plays in the development of a foreign language in a students' brain because oral interactions in authentic situations are

crucial to language development (Wagner-Gough and Hatch, 1975). They showed how a conversation provides students with valuable opportunities to hear and produce the second language in ways that go beyond the simple practice of material that has been studied previously. Long (1996) uses interaction hypothesis to express that conversational interaction is the basis of language development; in other words, conversations are more than means to practice language, but a way in which learning takes place. The interaction hypothesis is the negotiation of meaning, and especially negotiation work that activates interactional adjustments by the native speaker or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways (Long, 1996, p. 151-152). Meaning negotiation refers then to how the learner's attention is focused on an relationship between what s/he knows about the target language, and what is actually happening in the second language.

Gass (2003) points out that learning can take place during the interaction, or in the negotiation. In a conversation, more fluent and competent speakers can facilitate the integration of less proficient speakers by adjusting their own language, this means that they can repeat, rephrase or constantly ask questions so the less proficient speaker can understand it. In this sense, learners will be able to access to comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981). Krashen (1981) explains that students must understand the message that is being conveyed, but this utterance must be one step beyond the learner's current linguistic competence (i). A learner of Italian may be able to understand "mi piace la machina rossa" (I like the red car), but if the teacher adds to the initial utterance "ma non mi piacciono le machine nere" (but I do not like black cars), the learner is faced with new information (i + 1) that leads to the construction of new knowledge, based on prior one.

The Interaction hypothesis points out the importance of students having the opportunity to engage in conversations with others, not only to practice what they have learned, but to acquire new knowledge and to have the social element that is important to language learning.

**Authentic language and tasks.**

About the use of authentic materials inside the classroom in order to develop a second language, many researchers believe that students learn best if they can do activities in class that bear a resemblance to situations they will face in real life. Chapelle (1999) states that these activities are commonly referred to as tasks; she further adds that there are several differences in defining this term, but that most concur with the fact that tasks must have goals and be carried out through the engagement of participants in a goal-oriented behavior. Tasks for language learners that require students to use the target language to accomplish an objective and that require communication in the foreign language can be labeled "authentic tasks".

Chapelle (1999) mentions that it is difficult to confirm which activities are really authentic, as authenticity is a complicated term. To evaluate the authenticity of a task, one must evaluate the correspondence between the language learning task in the classroom and the tasks that the learner might possibly face outside the classroom. She mentions that a task based instruction in language learning is centered on three basic aspects, input, output and the interaction between the learner and interlocutor, concepts that were discussed in the two previous sections. Second language tasks are meant to provide students with the opportunity to practice language similar to that used outside classrooms. If additionally to providing authentic language learning tasks, we can give our student an authentic audience for that task, the educational setting will be enhanced and it is more likely that learning can occur.

**Information and communication technologies (ICTs) in education.**

Throughout humanity, many technological revolutions have taken place in the different areas of life; the social, cultural, academic, economic and political circles have been affected one way or another. Hernandez Rojas (2009) mentions that since the end of the last century, we are in the midst of a new type of revolution that is originating what is called the information society (IS). The curricular and educational proposals and purposes have been modified constantly to be updated with the technological advances happening and used by this IS. Pozo (1996, as cited in Hernandez Rojas, 2009) argues that different societies

generate their own “learning cultures”, hence the case of the IS seems to have created new and complex educational demands. ICTs play a key role in the IS, they are the means to create and spread information (Tello, 2007 as cited in Hernandez Rojas, 2009); the concept of ICTs includes any telecommunication device, its hardware, software and networks (radio, cell phones, computers, satellite systems, television etc.). Nowadays, there is not point of using the term ICTs or even thinking about implementing them in a classroom if we do not consider internet as part or base for these technologies.

The Centre for Educational Research & Innovation (2001) points out that ICTs can have a deep impact on several areas of the education process such as the learning environments, the content of the learning, student empowerment and forms of communication. ICTs can impact the learning environment when they go beyond the traditional settings in which education takes place and enable the students to learn in different places –physically and virtually-, and times; this way learners and educators choose when and where to teach/learn and are not required to be present in the same room. The content of instruction can be enhanced because learners and teachers have easy, constant and independent access to a great amount of information. As expressed before, students can be empowered by ICTs by giving them the power of choice and effective means of learning. ICTs can be a way to include in the classroom different cognitive and learning styles and preferences. Finally, having ICTs in a language class to foster communication allows the students to be in contact with native or more proficient speakers of the target language and to learn about the culture without having to leave the room.

The Centre for Educational Research & Innovation (2001) offers different situations in teaching that cannot be done without technology and others that can be done better with technology.

In education, the following cannot be done without technology:

- Internet access to ever growing collections of educational resources and services.
- Input for task-based learning using fast search and retrieval software, or for research work
- Peer-group teaching/learning through distance via ICTs.

In education, the following can be done better with technology:

- Students and teachers have the choice to select their preferred learning style.
- Customized and personalized learning materials and services are available.
- The possibility of individualized tacking and recording of learning processes.
- Pupils have the opportunity of self-assessment and the monitoring of their learning performance.
- Interactive access to educational resources.

Hernandez Rojas (2009) recognizes that the numerous benefits that ICTs can bring to the classroom rely heavily on the fact that ICTs have certain characteristics that no other type of technology can offer. Coll (2004) and Hernandez Rojas (2009) offer seven characteristics of ICTs that make them relevant to the educational process: formality, interactivity, dynamism, multimedia, hypermedia, connectivity and mediation.

**Technology within ESL/EFL Teaching**

In order to better help the ESL/EFL students understand the teaching materials, teachers can use 21st century technological teaching tools to assist students enthusiastically involve in the curriculum. Some technologies, such as, podcasts, blogs, Wiki, MSN messengers, or Moodle all provide students with opportunities to notice their gaps during the second language learning. These technologies not only help the EFL/ESL students improve their four skills but also broaden their global communication with people from different backgrounds. Kung (2002, as cited in Lai, 2006) stated that educators "recognize that utilizing computer technology and its attached language learning programs can be convenient to create both independent and collaborative learning environments and provide students with language experiences as they move through the various stages of second language acquisition (p. 1). Undoubtedly, computer technology has become the effective teaching tools for helping teachers to successfully teach second language learners as well as to provide various opportunities for students to learn cooperatively.

Furthermore, Lee (2000) indicated that the rationales why educators need to incorporate computer and its attached language learning programs into second language

instructions due to computer technology will be able to provide students with experiential learning, motivation, enhance student achievement, authentic materials for study, greater interaction, individualization, independence from a single source of information, and global understanding. To be more specific, computer technology offers students multiple learning opportunities and activities to help them learn communicatively and actively. This can assist students to strengthen their second/foreign language proficiency, build their self-esteems, stimulate their learning attitudes, and even develop their own learning styles.

To sum up, through the inspiration and creation of combining computer technology and the Internet, foreign language learners not only can explore their learning processes positively, but also extend their global knowledge communicatively. According to Kung and Chuo's study (2002), the students found that learning English through ESL/EFL websites was interesting and the teaching strategies provided by the teachers were effective and efficient. All students showed positive attitudes to using the teacher-selected websites in their second language learning and considered that the Internet provided a useful tool during their second language learning. Second language teachers can integrate appropriate online reference books and commercial websites into their ESL/EFLcurriculum design to better help them create more authentic and dynamic learning outcomes.

Marek (2008) further conducted a study related to the Internet videoconferencing to improve EFL learning, the results revealed that technology can lead the EFL students to view cultural content positively, stimulate them to become active learners and make learning more dynamic, provide the EFL students with authentic materials to learn accurate American pronunciation and usage, lower their learning anxiety while speaking with Americans, and offer an individual and independent on-line environment to make them learn comfortably and enjoyably. In fact, computer technology begins to be regarded as "active partners" than "passive assistants" (Debski & Gruba, 1999). In order to enhance ESL/EFL students' learning productivity as well as stimulate their second/foreign language learning interests, teachers, administrators, stakeholders, curriculum designers, program developers, and all technological experts are encouraged to cooperate together to best develop well-organized

technological programs that combine different kinds of technologies to assist ESL/EFL students to learn second language effectively and efficiently.

Technology Enhanced Language Learning Environment (TELLE) In order to inspire students' passion for learning, it is very important to create a comfortable, enjoyable, and learner-centered environment. Classroom arrangement also plays a key role when working with students' learning attitudes and motivation towards language learning. According to Butler-Pascoe (2003), Classrooms are no longer centered only on the teacher but become learner-centered environments where students collaborate on authentic projects under the guidance of the teacher facilitator. A wide array of technology programs, websites, and communication tools support this type of collaborative learning and provide numerous opportunities for student-student and student-teacher interaction (pp. 38-39).

Butler-Pascoe (2003) further indicated that "the arrangement of desks into learning clusters surrounded by computer work stations in technology-enhanced classes epitomized the change from traditional teacher-fronted instruction to collaborative learning experiences using technology to meet student needs" (p. 40). In other words, traditional classroom arrangement appears to lack a two-way communication and interaction between teacher-student and student-student. In order to best satisfy students' learning needs as well as catch their focus on learning, a technology enhanced language learning environment (TELLE) is encouraged to replace the traditional structural classes which only allow teacher-fronted instruction. TELLE provides students with a communicative environment to work individually, with partners, or even with group members to more effectively and efficiently complete their classroom task (Butler-Pascoe, 2003). Such an optimum learning environment not only helps students to learn meaningfully and communicatively, but also allows teachers to guide students more smoothly.

**Teaching in the 21st century**

When teaching a language, teachers must consider different factors that affect the language learning process such as the students' cognitive style, learning style, age,

motivation, culture, personality, aptitude, attitude, tolerance towards ambiguity, type of work preferences and so on. Recently, another component has been added to the language learning process: “technology”.

The 2010 Statistical Abstract done by the U.S.A. Census Bureau (2010) reports that Internet use at home has gone from 18 per cent in 1997 to 62 per cent in 2007, and that seven out of ten American households used the Internet in 2009. The situation in Latin America is no different. comScore Media Metrix (2010), an online audience measurement company, reported that in this part of the continent, the global audience over 15 accessing the internet from home or work, grew 21% from May 2009 to May 2010. This represents 18 million new web users. In Mexico, the number of internet users is growing nearly at the same pace as in Latin America. During the 2009-2010 period, Mexico added 2.8 million users, increasing 20 per cent. The company points out that the average Mexican 15-24 year old user will spend 32. 7 hours online per month. The Neilsen Company (2010), a market research company, reveals in “What Americans do online that social media and games dominate the activity”, that social networking is the number one activity online, having grown 43 per cent as compared to 2009. This means that Americans spend one third of their time online, networking and communicating through social networking sites. The second activity where most time is spent is gaming online; the third place is e-mailing.

Not only do internet users take part in social networks, but also over 44% of the adult users publish their thoughts, respond to others’, post their pictures and share files. Moreover, in 2005, 57 per cent of all the teenagers that went online could be considered as “content creators” (Richardson, 2008). According to Technorati.com (2010), a blog tracking services, and The Neilsen Company (2011), a publicly held global information, media and advertising research company, as of February 16th, 2011 there are over 165 million blogs, - about 67, 000 per day- which people use “to create personal journals of their lives, build resource sites with colleagues, or filter the news of the day for audiences large and small with no need to know how to encode pages or transfer files” (Richardson, 2008, p. 2). But it is not just blogs, Richardson (2008) states that in the last two years, multimedia publishing has exploded; over 100,000 videos are being uploaded to YouTube.com every day. Millions of photos, files and

audios are online and available to anyone with an internet connection, making the web a “vast storehouse of information”.

In this era, changes that are transforming the way we relate to technology are happening every day. In this day and age, we are not limited to consume information; on the contrary, we are in a “society of authorship”. This term was proposed by Rushkoff (2004) to mean that teachers and students have the ability to contribute with ideas, thoughts, experiences, feelings, views, opinions and literally, with whatever goes through their minds, while contributing to the “larger body of knowledge that is the internet” (Richardson, 2008).

The information mentioned shows how widespread these sites and web tools are. If people and among them, students are already spending many hours a day on these sites, it seems reasonable to take advantage of them for more than just conversation and networking. These sites offer valuable opportunities to engage students, to promote participation, to enhance motivation and to improve language skills. Today, language learners and teachers are surrounded by the innovative, versatile and varied learning opportunities that the web provides. However, these tools available online are changing constantly, although there are some that remain accessible over a significant period of time, others evolve, disappear or are regularly out of service. Internet then is an evolving tool that can provide varied and accessible ways to develop the teaching process.

# III. METHODOLOGY

## TYPE AND CLASS OF RESEARCH

This research was carried out with the intention of demonstrating that the use of the internet and the exposure of students to virtual resources used as an academic tool have positive effects on the acquisition of English as a second language. Besides, this project helped to create an idea of what areas of second language acquisition are developed more during the process of teaching-learning a second language. This research was focused in the four macro skills developed while learning a second language. There was also, attention paid to other sub skills that were of very high relevance such as vocabulary and grammar. This research was carried out with the help of students of Intermediate Intensive English I, semester II-2018 of the Licenciatura en Idioma Ingles Opcion: Ensenanza in the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador. In order to get to all those results and to establish all the parameters and strategies that were involved in this research, it was necessary to choose an appropriate type and class of research to study the problematic situation and develop the research. As the type of research, an exploratory research was used in order to accomplish the objectives stated.

Based on the characteristics of an exploratory research, which are: to use previous bibliographic researches, to look into existent theories about the topic and to make use of the observation, all knowledge and opinions gathered from the theory stated above were very useful for the development of this research project. It is also important to mention that when we talk about exploratory research we need to mention that it develops the level of experience of the observer, the researcher must have an important creative and innovation capacity, and it culminates when the researcher has a clear idea of the observed phenomenon; all these characteristics were attached to the research and served very well to its development.

The use of a quantitative type of study was also implemented to carry out this research. Since the information that the research group collected was measurable the quantitative type offered great management of the process to obtain and process that

information. It is important to mention that it was necessary to go deeper concerning this topic to develop all the positive effects Internet and virtual environments as academic tool had over the acquisition of the L2. To achieve an accurate development of this investigation, the characteristics of the population as well as their behavior were analyzed during the time this study was carried out. Intensive English courses were not only observed but also they were in a certain extent manipulated; meaning that there was access to the class that some teachers gave to the students who were taking the subject of Intermediate Intensive English I. Thus, one group of students in this course was observed to check how teachers delivered the class to the students in order to know if the teacher's methodology allowed the students' learning process to become accurate or effective. As well, it was necessary to verify how the students reacted to the exposure of different web based tasks used as tools to develop English inside the classroom to make the acquisition of English easier. Both groups of students that served as the control and experimental groups were examined with a diagnostic test (Pre-test and Post-test) to verify their level of English at the beginning and at the end of the course. In this way, the use of a quantitative type of study became mandatory allowing the research group to reach the objective stated for this research.

## STUDY DESIGN

This study used a quasi-experimental design since one of the objectives was to discover the effects of the exposure to internet and virtual resources on the acquisition of English as a second language. It was also necessary to pay attention to the areas that were affected the most during this exposure. Consequently, this use of a Quasi-experimental design helped to set the sample population into two different groups: the control group and the experimental group. Those groups were formed with students belonging to the subject Intermediate Intensive English I, semester II, 2018 of the Licenciatura en Idioma Ingles. Opcion Ensenanza.

On one hand, the control group was only observed without any manipulation on the development of the class, methodology or content that teachers developed during the semester. On the other hand, the experimental group was exposed to the use of the internet

as a tool in which varied resources were implemented to develop the content of the course. It is necessary to say that the objectives of the course were not changed and were the same as the ones in the control group. However, teachers had to modify the methodology to use technology as an active part of their classes.

This study design allowed collecting information by using the observation, where instrument as the checklist were extremely important. As mentioned previously, there was a diagnostic test which was passed to both groups. There was also an alternative assessment used to measure the level students have when producing the second language. With the information obtained from the instruments and the analysis of the information obtained this research reached enough material to explain how internet as an academic tool affected the second language acquisition.

## POPULATION

**Population:**

The population of this research was formed by 228 students and 9 teachers that belonged to the semester II, 2018 of the first year of the Licenciatura en Idioma Ingles Opcion Ensenanza. From this semester the population was formed by those students enrolled in the subject of Intermediate Intensive English I, which were 9 groups with around 28 students each. The staff of teachers in charge of teaching those subjects was also involved in this population.

**Study population:**

A) Students who were enrolled in the subject Intermediate Intensive English I, which were 228 students.
B) Staff of teachers in charge of teaching those subjects. They were 9 teachers during that semester.

## SAMPLE

The research group selected a total of 57 students and 2 teachers as a sample population from the 228 students and 8 teachers that formed the total population. From this sample population, the research group formed two groups; one group was the experimental group, which was the group exposed to the use of internet as an academic tool, and it was formed by 29 students. The other group was the control or observational group; this was observed without any manipulation or interruption of their learning process, and 28 students formed it.

## SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

In this research a non-probability sampling technique was used; this technic was the convenience sampling technique. For this, subjects were selected because of the convenient accessibility and proximity to the research's development. The reason why this technique was chosen was because in all forms of research, it would be ideal to test the entire population; however, the population was just too large, and it was impossible to include every individual to be tested and to be part of the experiment in order to get the information required to create or obtain the conclusions desired. A part of that population was chosen without affecting the results or process to gather the information.

## TECHNIQUES AND RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

## RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

What this research embraced was to look for the most accurate answer in regard to the influence of Internet as an academic tool in the SLA process. This objective included particular interest in discovering the most affected areas of SLA that were influenced or affected the most with this intervention. In order to obtain accurate results and the information that could lead to this point, it was planned to perform as much testing and exposure as it can be done to achieve the research goal. Thus, it was necessary to use three

types of techniques which were the diagnostic or placement test, the alternative assessment, and the observation. These techniques were implemented in two groups selected to carry out this research.

As explained before, there was an experimental group which was exposed to the use of internet as an academic tool and it took a placement test to measure the level of second language proficiency that the students in this group had. This test was administered before being exposed to the use of internet. At the end of the research project, the experimental group was submitted again to a final placement test (post-test) to verify how much the experiment had affected in the level of proficiency they had in comparison to the group that had not been exposed to this contact or manipulation.

The second group that served as part of the population for this research was the control group. Students in this group were only observed and monitored without having any participation in the exposure to the use of internet or virtual resources apart that the ones that the teacher considered convenient for the development of the course. Even though, there was no interaction, they received the same treatment as the experimental group. The control group, which was also, students of the Intermediate Intensive English I, were submitted to the placement test (Pre-test and Post-test) to verify their proficiency level at the beginning and at the end of the course. The purpose of doing so was to find the possible differences between the two groups at the moment of acquiring the second language.

The observation was also an important element to have meaningful information. According to Oxford Concise Dictionary, observation means "accurate watching, noting the phenomenon by which they occur in the nature with regard to the cause and effect of mutual relations." The Purposes of the Observation is to enable the researcher: to gather empirical and sufficient data to supplement or verify information gathered by other means; to gather information needed to describe the aspect of a variable being studied and get directly primary data or first-hand information for a more accurate description and interpretation. Since the main objective in the observation is to focus on creating valuable and accurate record of the

population behavior and outcome, a checklist was used to observe the progress and the development of the students while this observation was carried out.

## RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The selection and implementation of the instruments to be used during this research were mainly selected by following the guide of the CEFR. The "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment" (CEFR) is exactly what its title says it is: a framework of reference. It was designed to provide a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency. The CEFR describes foreign language proficiency at six levels: A1 and A2, B1 and B2, C1 and C2. It also defines three 'plus' levels (A2+, B1+, B2+). Based on empirical research and widespread consultation, this scheme makes it possible to compare tests and examinations across languages and national boundaries. It also provides a basis for recognizing language qualifications and thus facilitating educational and occupational mobility. Therefore, the instruments used during this research follow this guideline and they are described below.

### Placement Test

The selected population was evaluated in Grammar, Listening, and Reading comprehension areas. A series of questions for each area were given based on the parameters that the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) offers. The whole test took 45 minutes and every student was taken to the Computer Center of the foreign Language Department. Any given score was provided at the end of the task. This type of test helped gather and measure the population's English accuracy and proficiency in certain topics; in other words, it gave them the result of what level they had reached so far according the course they were.

### Writing task (alternative assessment)

Writing is a productive task that involves a different kind of mental process; writing allows the students to think, to reflect, to prepare, to rehearse, to make mistakes and to find alternatives and better solutions. With the use of this instrument students were requested to write a paragraph about any random topic in order to have more information that could contribute to establish the level of proficiency students had. Each composition was checked by making use of a rubric, which provided a measure of quality of performance on the basis of established criteria.

**Observation (checklist)**

The control and experimental group were observed, and it was necessary to use a checklist as instrument to verify the progress the students had while using or not internet as an academic tool. It was formed by the criteria to be observed and marked. The purpose of this instrument was to have control of all the criteria that researchers needed to monitor or get the information that they wanted to find out. It was also made in order to ensure not to forget anything since this helped to obtain a better structure and framework for an observation.

**Websites**

Even though the following websites were not instruments to gather information, they were vital instruments and resources for the experiment of exposure to the usage of those tools in order to check how they affected and in what areas they were more effective to increase the level of performance students have in the second language acquisition process.

Among those websites and pages we could mention:

- https://www.youtube.com/
- https://www.blogger.com/
- https://moodle.com/
- https://agendaweb.org/

- https://www.perfect-english-grammar.com/
- https://eslflow.com/
- https://www.examenglish.com/
- https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/
- http://www.facebook.com/ (see limitations stage for more information about this site)

## INFORMATION ANALYSIS PLAN

From the beginning of this investigation there has been a sense of following the idea or concept that internet is becoming more and more important to the development of some skills and / or competences. It definitely fits into the development of a second language in a more effective ways. According to VanPatten & Williams, (2007), Computer technology provides learners with new and varied options for language learning through interactive tasks delivered through CD-ROMs, Web pages, and communications software on the Internet. Researchers need to reconsider any approach to second language acquisition (SLA) concerned with explaining how language development is prompted by exposure to the target language in view of the dramatic differences in language experience learners engage in due to computer technology. Virtually all theories are concerned with the role of linguistic input or the environment. In this sense, and to test this statement, the variety of resources, techniques and instruments included in this research were varied and they were all analyzed following programs and processes that could offer concrete and reliable results.

The data collected through the diagnostic tests, before and after the experiment was analyzed using Excel program; furthermore, the research team used comparative tables which contain the necessary information to compare the results from the control group and the experimental group. These results were categorized in different tables made in Microsoft Excel. These tables will show the points the students can reach, organized by ranks of one in one. They also show the scores gotten by the students and percentage of the students classified in regards the rank they match. This same process was followed in order to analyze the information or results obtained from the other instruments: observation, writing task and

interview. In addition, the research team analyzed the results in a correlational way to determine how well the variables; virtual material exposure and English proficiency level are related between them. This also provided a better idea on what areas are more affected and developed more efficiently by using those resources.

## PRESENTATION OF RESULTS / ANALYSIS OF DATA

### Diagnostic Test

**Table 1:** It presents the rank**s** where the students were categorized according to the points they obtained.

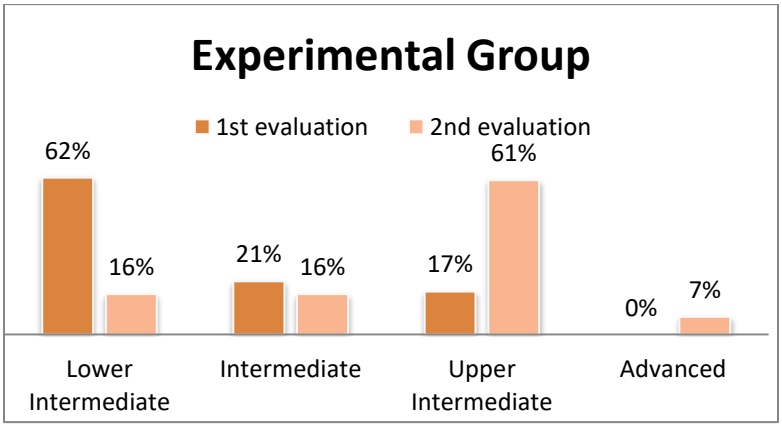
| Diagnostic Test |
| --- |

| Points | Level of the students |
|---|---|
| 0-20 | Elementary |
| 20-50 | Lower Intermediate |
| 50-60 | Intermediate |
| 60-80 | Upper Intermediate |
| 80-99 | Advanced |

**Table 2:** Diagnostic test's results of the experimental group

| Experimental Group | |
|---|---|
| **Pre-test** | **Post-test** |
| **Lower intermediate** | |
| **62%** | 16% |
| **Intermediate** | |
| **21%** | 16% |
| **Upper intermediate** | |
| **17%** | 61% |
| **Advanced** | |
| **0%** | 7% |

**Graphic 1:** It explains the comparison between the first and the second diagnostic test in regards to the experimental group



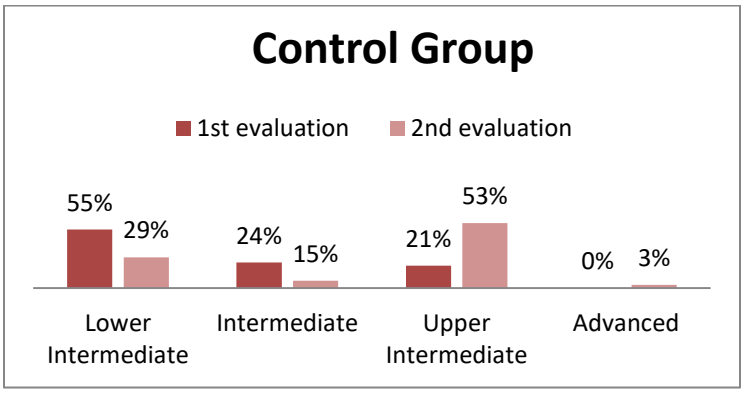

The experimental group was summited to pre and post diagnostic tests to evaluate the level of the students had before and after being exposed to the use virtual material. The results were the following: in the first evaluation the 62% of the students were in lower intermediate the 21% of them were in intermediate and the 17% were in upper intermediate. On the other

hand in the second evaluation the 16% of the students were in lower intermediate the 16% were in intermediate, the 61% of the students were in upper intermediate and 7% of them in advanced, these results showed that the use of internet as an academic tool had meaningful results.

**Table 3:** Diagnostic test's results of the control group

| Control Group | |
|---|---|
| **Pre-test** | **Post-test** |
| **Lower intermediate** | |
| **55%** | 29% |
| **Intermediate** | |
| **24%** | 15% |
| **Upper intermediate** | |
| **21%** | 53% |
| **Advanced** | |
| **0%** | 3% |

**Graphic 2:** It explains **t**he comparison between the first and the second evaluation in regards to the control group




The control group as well as the experimental group was submitted to a pre and post diagnostic tests to evaluate the level the students had at the beginning and at the end of the course. The results were the following: in the first evaluation the 55% off the students were in lower intermediate, the 24% were in intermediate and the 21% of the students were in upper intermediate, on the other hand in the second evaluation the 29% of the students are in lower intermediate 15% in intermediate, the 53% of them are in upper intermediate and 3%

of them in advanced. These results showed that the learning process from those students was as good as the experimental group.

**Diagnostic Test (Reading – Pretest results)**

**Observation Group**

| Global Grades | |
|---|---|
| Lowest | Highest |
| 3.5 | 5.7 |

**Experimental Group**

| Global Grades | |
|---|---|
| Lowest | Highest |
| 3.0 | 5.7 |

**Analysis:**

These results were obtained from the pre-test. The test was practiced before the experiment of exposure to internet material and before the observation process. It was also carried out at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. Two groups, each "A" and "B" belonging to the subject of Intermediate Intensive English II course were chosen. According to the results presented on the tables in the observation group, the lowest grade was 3.5 and the highest was 5.7 on a scale from 1 to 10. Regarding to the experimental group, the lowest grade was 3.0 and the highest 5.7. None of the students had more than 6.0.

**Observation Group**

| GLOBAL GRADES | |
|---|---|
| LOWEST | HIGHEST |
| 4.8 | 7.0 |

**Experimental Group**

| GLOBAL GRADES | |
|---|---|
| LOWEST | HIGHEST |
| 6.0 | 9.0 |

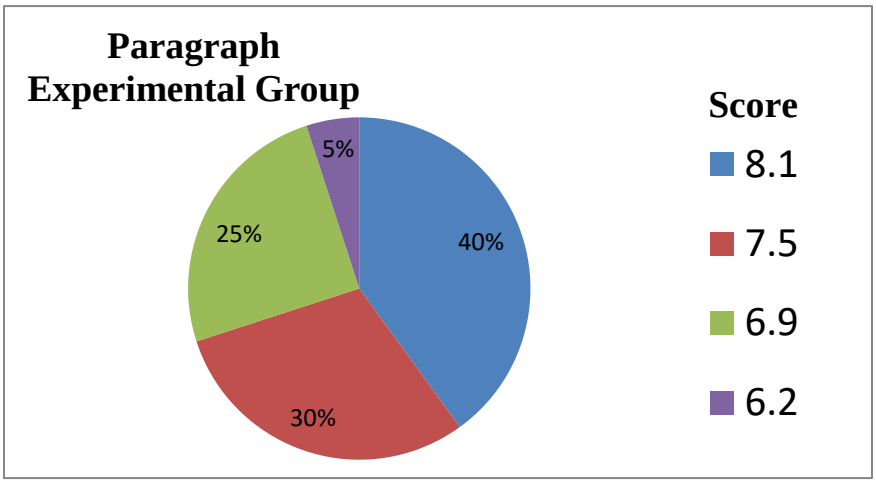
**Analysis:**

According to the results obtained in the Post-Test, the grades that are presented in the table showed that in the observation group the lowest grade was 4.8 and the highest grade was 7.0, while in the experimental group, which was already exposed to internet based

material, the highest grade was 9.0, and the lowest 6.0. With all this data it can be analyzed that the results from both groups were better in the post test; nevertheless, it is important to establish the difference between the results. The experimental group had a remarkable improvement in the post-test due to the fact that the experimental group had already received exposure to the use of internet based material.

**Paragraph**

**Graphic 3**: Each of the slides represents the percentage out of 100% in regards to the scores obtained by the students from the experimental group through the paragraph.



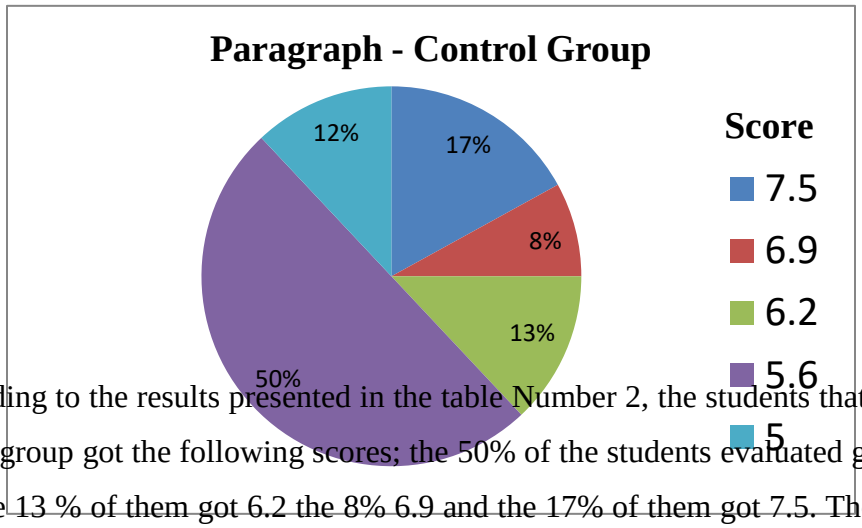

According to the results presented in the table Number 1 which are the scores the students got with the elaboration of a paragraph, the 40% of them got 8.1, the 30% of the students got 7.5 the 25% of them got 6.9 and the 5% of them got 6.2. It is important to mention that those scores were gotten based in a rubric. With these results all the students that were evaluated through a paragraph got good scores, none of them failed this evaluation.

**Table 4**: Paragraphs' results of the control group.

| Paragraph Control Group | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Points** | score | Percentage of students |
| **16** | 10 | |
| **15** | 9.4 | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **14** | 8.7 | |
| **13** | 8.1 | |
| **12** | 7.5 | 17% |
| **11** | 6.9 | 8% |
| **10** | 6.2 | 13% |
| **9** | 5.6 | 50% |
| **8** | 5 | 12% |
| **Total 16** | | 100% |

**Graphic 4**: Each of the slides represents the percentages out of 100% in regards to the scores obtained by the students from the control group through the paragraph.

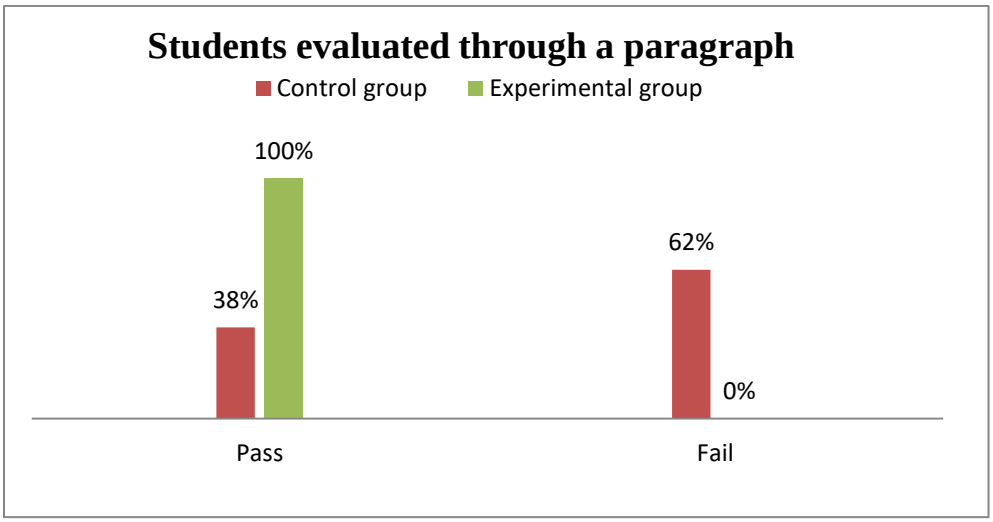



According to the results presented in the table Number 2, the students that were part of the control group got the following scores; the 50% of the students evaluated got 5.6, the 12% got 5, the 13 % of them got 6.2 the 8% 6.9 and the 17% of them got 7.5. Those grades as well as the ones from experimental group were given based on a rubric.

**Table 5:** Students from both groups that passed or failed the evaluation of the paragraph

| Evaluation of the paragraph | Control group | Experimental group |
|---|---|---|
| **Pass** | 38% | 100% |
| **Fail** | 62% | 0% |

**Graphic 5**: It shows the comparison in regards to the results from both groups. Each of the bars represent the percentage out of 100% recreating how many students failed/passed the test.




Based on the results collected from both the experimental and the control group, we can infer that the experimental group was the group which demonstrated a higher performance of the second language The 100% of the students passed the evaluation and on the other hand only the 38% of the students that were part of the control group passed the evaluation and the 62% of them failed it.

**Observation (Checklist)**

**CLASS OBSERVATION CHECKLIST EXPERIMENTAL GROUP**

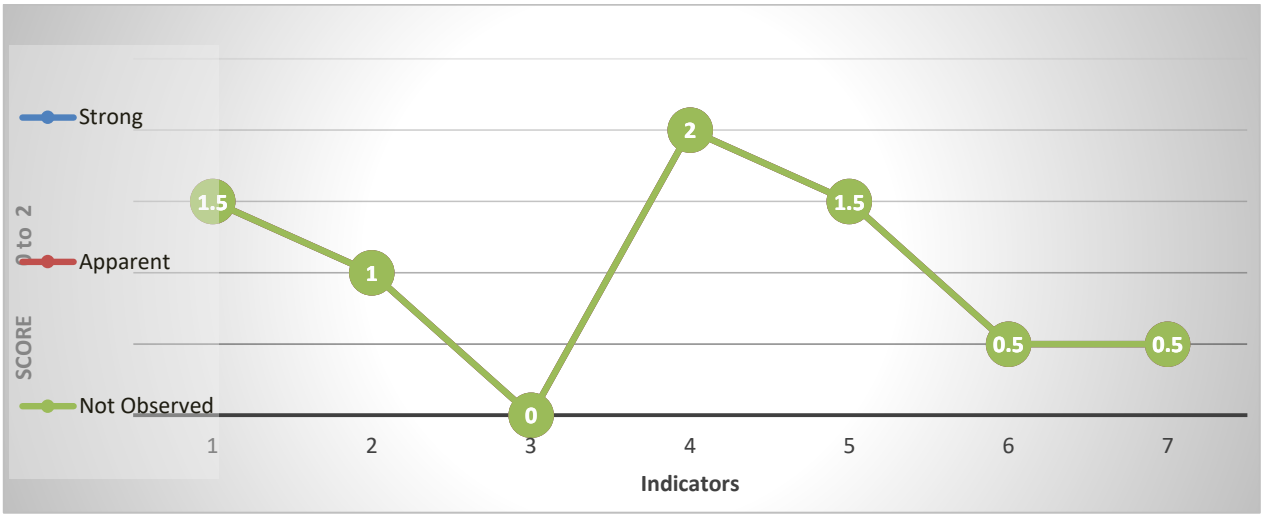
| Criteria | 0 | 1 | 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.The teacher takes enough time to explain the topic by using different resources.** | | x | |
| **2. The teacher uses material from the book to practice.** | | x | |
| **3. The teacher uses technological resources more than once in every class** | x | | |
| **4. The teacher makes students use internet based tools such as social networks, blogs and other websites to produuce the second language at least once a week.** | | | x |
| **5. The teacher uses printed material or downloaded from the web.** | | x | |
| **6. The teacher uses authentic material from the internet in the classroom.** | | x | |
| **7. The students understands and complete tasks.** | | x | |

**0 = Not observed:** The aspect of activity reached out for about 0% from 100%.

**1 = Apparent:** The aspect of activity reached out for about 1%-50% from 100%.

**2 = Strong:** The aspect of activity reached out for about 51%-100% from 100%.

**Graphic 6:** The following scale represents the scoring of the observation




Based on the observation from the experimental group, during the different observations, the results were almost the same. Taking into consideration the scale from 0-2 above mentioned, it showed that the teacher didn't explain the topics by using different resources; however, the book was used to explain more often. Also, the teacher used different technological resources only to explain, Even though the teacher did not use the resources inside the classroom, in the experimental group, the teacher was able to use the FLD lab facilities once a week and students were able to interact with material and other resources that the teacher arranged to develop the practice and sometimes production of the second language. When the teacher was not using technological resources, he was able to download and print material from the web and use it inside the classroom to reinforce the structure that students had been learning through the week. It is necessary to mention that sometimes authentic material was downloaded to expose students to expressions, idioms and vocabulary that was not included in the text book in order to help students to understand and communicate ideas in a more effective way. Most of the times, students seem to understand and perform the tasks without further questions or doubts.

**CLASS OBSERVATION (CONTROL GROUP)**

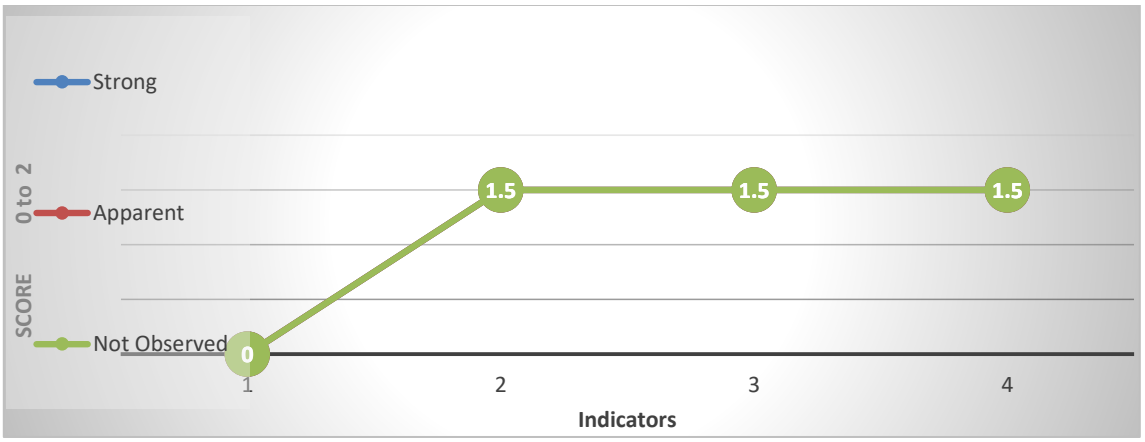
| Criteria | 0 | 1 | 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.The teacher uses technological resources to explain and practice the topic.** | x | | |
| **2. The teacher explains more than once the topic.** | | x | |
| **3. The students participate in class.** | | | x |
| **4. The students participate solving exercises.** | | | x |

**0 = Not observed:** The aspect of activity reached out for about 0% from 100%.

**1 = Apparent:** The aspect of activity reached out for about 1%-50% from 100%.

**2 = Strong:** The aspect of activity reached out for about 51%-100% from 100%.

**Graphic 7:** It illustrates how the topic was explained and practiced inside the classroom.




Based on the observation made to the control group and taking into consideration the scale of evaluation above mentioned, the table showed that the teacher did not use technological resources as a vital part of the class; however, students participated actively when solving drills and worksheets that the teacher had previously downloaded from internet. Students did not visit the lab facilities during the semester either. It is necessary to mention that the teacher did not rely only on the text book assigned for the course but also on other external resources. Mainly, those resources were printed or downloaded from the internet. Furthermore, the teacher explained more than once the topic because the teacher wanted to clarify some doubts. Also, students participated a lot in class, they asked and answered

questions. Moreover, students participated solving exercises together, and the teacher clarified errors with the whole class.

## ANSWERS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### Main Question

- What are the effects of the use of internet as an academic tool on the second language proficiency level and acquisition process of students?

According to the results gathered from the experiment, it was analyzed that the exposure to internet based material influences on the students´ proficiency level, especially in the areas of Reading and Writing. Throughout this investigation and taking into account the relationship between the exposure to technological resources and the students' second language proficiency level, an experiment with two groups from the Intermediate Intensive English II courses was carried out in the Foreign Language Department. After such experiment, the results of a placement test were compared and the results provided clear information of the different areas where internet or virtual material influenced the students´ second language proficiency level.

The two most important results taken as evidence that support the influence of the exposure to internet-based material on the students´ proficiency were the final results with the experimental group in the reading area and their performance in the alternative assessment (paragraph). Their performance in the post-test was better than in the pre-test. The improvement of this group was meaningful due to the fact that they received exposure to internet material. The same can be inferred from the results obtained in the writing test they were administrated. In addition, it is important to mention that the control group, which did not receive exposure to internet as intensively as in the experimental group, obtained a considerable improvement, but it was lower than the results obtained by the experimental group. Thus, it can be established the difference between both groups.

**Subsidiary Questions**

- **Does the use of internet, as an academic tool, influence positively or negatively the language proficiency level and acquisition process of students from Intensive Intermediate English II, Semester I-2018 at the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador?**

According to the results gathered from this investigation, the research concluded that the effects of exposing students to virtual material were positive. Also, students enhanced their reading and writing proficiency level. Furthermore, with this kind of input, the research confirmed that students were able to develop a better performance after the experiment.

- **What was the students' proficiency level before and after the experiment?**

To answer this question, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) was taken into account. Thus, the researchers concluded that both groups, the control and the experimental one, were located in the Low Intermediate Level B1. With this reference it means that both groups should have been in the Intermediate Intensive English I, instead of being in the Intermediate Intensive English II. An Intermediate Level B2 student needs to understand native speakers, the use of idiomatic expressions, among other things that are part of real language. However, it is important to mention the effects that the experiment had throughout the process of exposure to authentic material. The research team could uncover that this group achieved the quality of an Intermediate level B2. They were able to interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers possible. Their listening, grammar, reading and writing proficiency improved meaningfully. They proved to understand most TV news and current affairs programs as well as understand extended speech and lectures. Finally, their grades increased due to the exposure to virtual activities and the use of technological resources based on internet.

- **What ate the differences between the control group and the experimental group?**

Based on the investigation, the research team identified some differences between the groups; for instance, the control group obtained low results in the pre-test and then acceptable results in the post-test. It can be concluded that the traditional methodology creates improvement in the performance of students. However, it seems that students do not develop some skills to their best. On the other hand, the experimental group, which was exposed to the more virtual activities by the research team using authentic material and other resources, presented low results in the pre-test but some specific skills such as Grammar and Reading made results changed meaningfully later. Their performance was better in the post-test.

## CONCLUSIONS

This research work was made with the purpose of finding the type and scope of influence that internet resources used as an academic produces over the second language acquisition learning process. Based on the analysis of the gathered results through the different instruments used in this investigation, we can conclude that the internet as an academic tool can produce positive effects for a better understanding of a second language learning process. For example:

In the social area:

- It improves a student's confidence
- It enriches intercultural aspects
- In increases the student's motivation

In the development of skills and sub-skills:

- It improves the control and use of variety of grammatical structures
- It improves the vocabulary and enriches the comprehension of texts.
- It improves the listening performance
- It provides great help to the writing development.

However, there are some important aspects that should be clarified, so that this conclusion is 100% accurate.

First, the internet resources and virtual technologies have to be used in a controlled way. Teachers must include and prepare a package of resources and material that is applicable to the content and level of students. Secondly, there must be a constant use of the resources. Students have to become familiar with the use of these new technologies and the teacher acts as facilitator and models the correct usage of the different types of resources. Students learn all the benefits of the internet and they learn to become more responsible and proactive with

the use of this tool. Thus, they learn to practice by using the internet not only in their regular classes but also when they have spare time.

These are important points that were found and according to them it can be concluded that:

- It is necessary to include these new technologies in the development of the courses because they provide cultural, social, political and academical environments that promote and develop the second language acquisition process in a more effective way.

- The Internet as an academic tool develops all the skills and sub skill in a more effective way. This phenomenon happens because students feel more motivated to use the internet to practice. Since it is more interactive and interesting than reading a book or completing traditional exercises in the classroom, students feel more interested in the different alternatives they have to improve their English proficiency.

- The internet seems to be more helpful in the areas of reading, grammar and vocabulary; these skills and sub-skill help to improve the writing performance of students. Students learn how to use or combine variety of grammatical structures, gain a large amount of vocabulary that can improve their fluency. All these advantages created a more advance control of the writing skill which was supported by the results they obtained in the tests along the experiment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the collected results in this research; it is important to suggest some recommendations with the purpose of improving the teaching and learning process. These recommendations are aimed to students, teachers and authorities of the foreign language department of the UES.

**Students should:**

- Be self-taught, competitive and responsible with their learning process outside and inside the classroom. They should use all kinds of learning tools that allow them to achieve higher levels of acquisition of English as a second language when they are not inside the classroom. Internet is providing that opportunity and students should take advantage of the accessibility to technological resources provided by the university to develop their language acquisition more independently.

- Be cooperative with each other, not all students have the same level in the language, and those who present a high English level have the opportunity to practice the language skills by helping others who have a lower level. Besides, not all students have access to technology outside the university and sometimes they cannot use it to its best. Since others seem much familiarized and tech savvy, they should help others to use these technological tools.

**Teachers should:**

- Look for alternative tools to convey the student's learning process. Students nowadays are technologically influenced; they tend to be familiarized and interested in the technologies and alternative ways to learn. In this sense, the FLD provides the possibility to count on technology to become part of the process of et4aching and learning. The FLD has access to 3 laboratories rooms where students can not only develop their second language acquisition but also learn how to take the best of those resources even when they are not in the classroom. Teachers should make an effort of including the use of these technologies and resources to the program of their

courses or development of their subjects in order to update the methodologies used so far. This could crete more interest and motivation in students and as result it could increase the proficiency level of the second language they are learning.

**Authorities:**

- In the FLD there have been some Look forward to creating the necessary technological updates and developments in the department to guarantee the inclusion of these new technologies and resources inside the plans or programs of the subjects of the career.

## LIMITATIONS

During the investigation project, the following difficulties were faced:

- At the moment of applying the instruments, some of the students of the control and experimental group did not cooperate, and some of them helped with the research project, but they were not interested in the project.

- During the investigation the researcher had direct contact with the students of the control group, but the teacher was not involved and was not a mediator among the students and the researcher, allowing disinterest and poor cooperation on behalf of the students.

- During the development of this research project, the members of the researcher and sometimes the advisor were absents for some days because of personal or work reasons which delayed the process of the investigation.

- Some days the access to the facilitations was impossible due to activities or other inconvenient such as problems with the internet connection or electricity outages. This situation delayed or interrupted with the activities planned by the teacher and the internet as tool could not be used.

- The lack of access to certain social networks limited the access to certain activities that could be developed by the students in order to improve their oral performance.

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## ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1: Writing assessment

Instructions:

Write a paragraph from 10 to 12 lines about something that you would like to share about. It is a fee topic composition or you can choose one of the provided topics below.

Some topics you can write about are:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Your birthday | *Feelings | *Traditions |
| *Movies | *Christmas | |
| * Holidays | * Music | |

**Write it here:**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

## ANEX 2: Paragraph Rubric

| | Grammar | Sentence structure | Vocabulary | Spelling |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Excellent 4pts | Contains a range of grammatical structure with minor error that not impedes comprehension. Correct use and combination of the verb tenses. | All sentences are well-constructed with varied sentence structures (simple, compound and complex sentence) | Good vocabulary range. Usually precise and creative in word choice. | Correct spelling, even of more difficult word. |
| Good 3pts | Adequate use of the grammatical structure with some errors that not impedes comprehension. Good use and combination of the verb tenses. | Most sentences are well-constructed and there is some varied sentence structures (simple, compound and complex sentence) | Limited vocabulary range. Has adequately precise word choice. | Spelling that is usually correct on common words. |
| Fair 2pts | Basic use of the grammatical structure with very limited range and major errors that at times impedes comprehension. Few use and combination of the verb tenses. | Some sentences are well-constructed and others are fragments or run-on, there is few varied sentence structures (simple, compound and complex sentence) | Basic vocabulary range. Has adequately word choice not always precise. | Spelling errors distract the reader, misspelling of common words occurs. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Poor<br>1pt | Basic use of the grammatical structure with many minor and major errors that often impedes comprehension.<br>the use and combination of the verb tenses is limited. | Most sentences lack proper construction, there are frequent run-on or fragmented sentences. There are not varied sentence structures (simple, compound and complex sentence) | Basic to p<br>vocabulary<br>range.<br>Has limited<br>almost no<br>word choice. | equent spelling<br>rors distract the<br>er and impede<br>comprehension. |

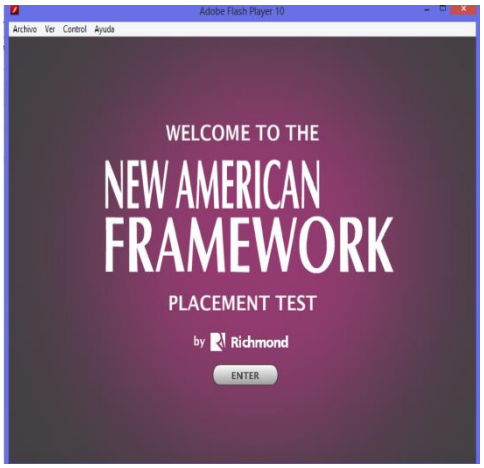
UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR

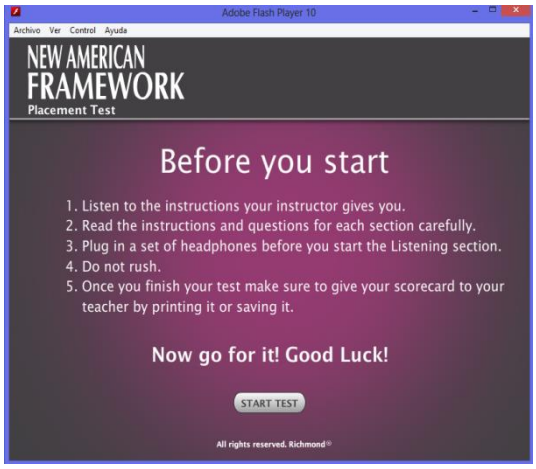
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

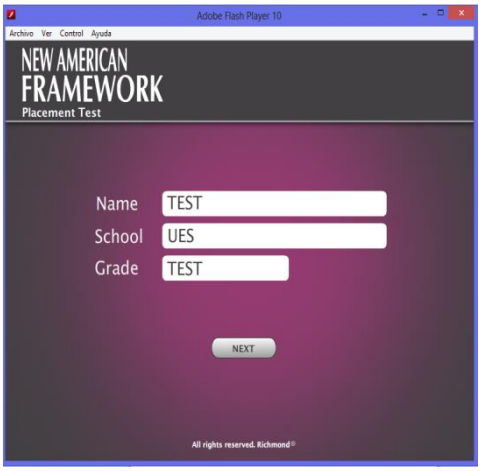
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

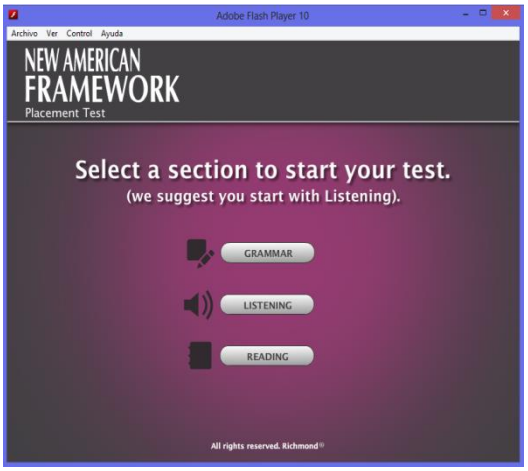
Student's Name_____

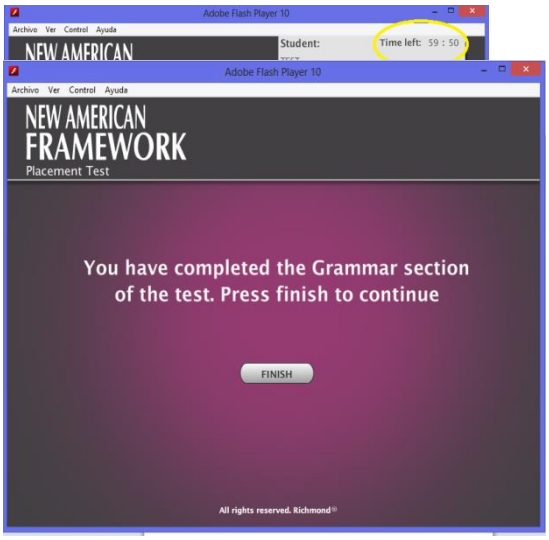
## ANNEX3: Placement test



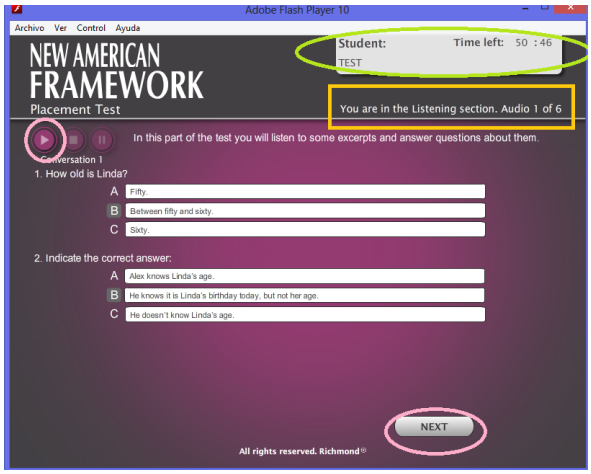




Adobe Flash Player 10
Archivo Ver Control Ayuda
NEW AMERICAN
Student:
Time left: 59 : 50
Adobe Flash Player 10
Archivo Ver Control Ayuda
NEW AMERICAN
FRAMEWORK
Placement Test
You have completed the Grammar section of the test. Press finish to continue
FINISH
All rights reserved. Richmond

Adobe Flash Player 10
Archivo Ver Control Ayuda
NEW AMERICAN
FRAMEWORK
Placement Test
Student:
TEST
Time left: 57 : 05
You are in the Grammar section. 1 to 10 questions out of 100
Mark the exact place where the word on the left should go in each sentence.
01. me
I'm Jonathan, but you can call John.
02. to
It's nice meet you.
03. is
What in the closet ?
04. do
What does your girlfriend ?
05. it
I love opera but my wife hates .
06. me
Can you help with this question ?
07. are
What you doing tonight?
08. at
I'm free eight o'clock.
09. soccer
I like very much .
10. the
He goes to school in morning.
NEXT
All rights reserved. Richmond


Adobe Flash Player 10
Archivo Ver Control Ayuda
NEW AMERICAN
FRAMEWORK
Placement Test
Student:
TEST
Time left: 50 : 46
You are in the Listening section. Audio 1 of 6
In this part of the test you will listen to some excerpts and answer questions about them.
Conversation 1
1. How old is Linda?
A Fifty.
B Between fifty and sixty.
C Sixty.
2. Indicate the correct answer:
A Alex knows Linda's age.
B He knows it is Linda's birthday today, but not her age.
C He doesn't know Linda's age.
NEXT
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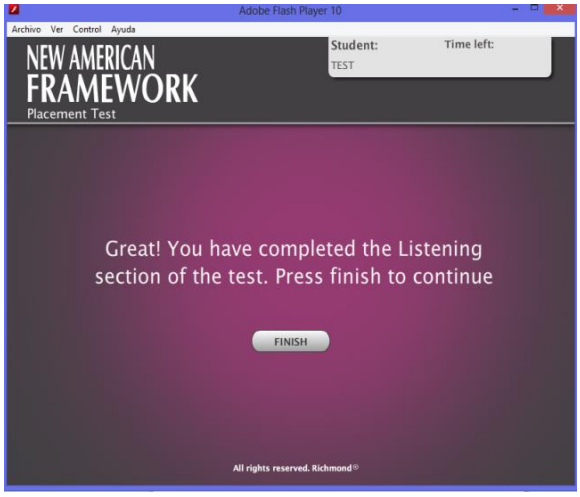
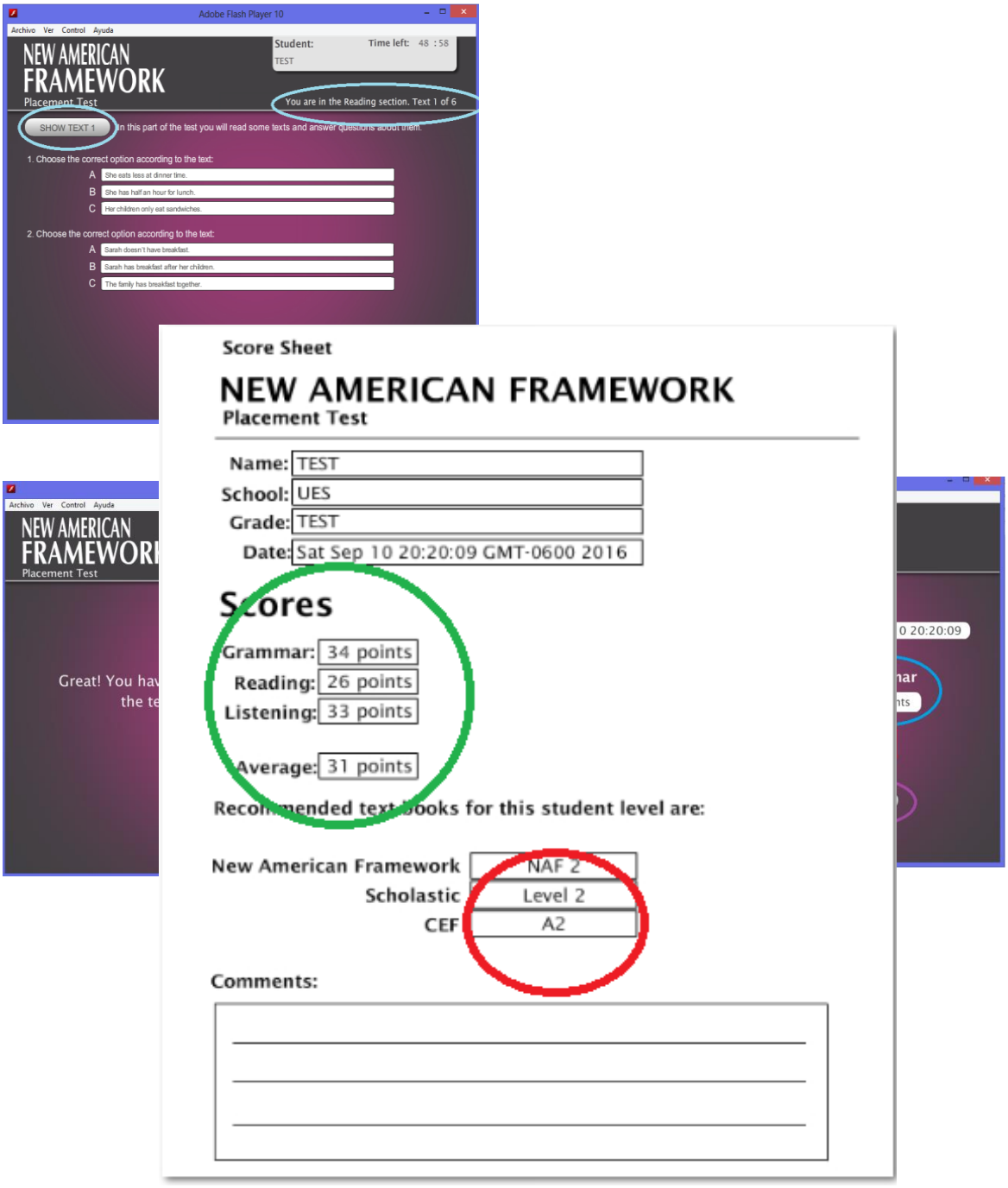

Adobe Flash Player 10
Archivo Ver Control Ayuda
NEW AMERICAN
FRAMEWORK
Placement Test
Student:
TEST
Time left:
Great! You have completed the Listening section of the test. Press finish to continue
FINISH
All rights reserved. Richmond


Adobe Flash Player 10
Archivo Ver Control Ayuda
NEW AMERICAN FRAMEWORK
Placement Test
Student:
Time left: 48 :58
TEST
You are in the Reading section. Text 1 of 6
SHOW TEXT 1
In this part of the test you will read some texts and answer questions about them.
1. Choose the correct option according to the text:
A She eats less at dinner time.
B She has half an hour for lunch.
C Her children only eat sandwiches.
2. Choose the correct option according to the text:
A Sarah doesn't have breakfast.
B Sarah has breakfast after her children.
C The family has breakfast together.
Score Sheet
NEW AMERICAN FRAMEWORK
Placement Test
Name: TEST
School: UES
Grade: TEST
Date: Sat Sep 10 20:20:09 GMT-0600 2016
Scores
Grammar: 34 points
Reading: 26 points
Listening: 33 points
Average: 31 points
Recommended text books for this student level are:
New American Framework NAF 2
Scholastic Level 2
CEF A2
Comments:

**Annex 4** Observation Checklists.

**Observation Checklist**
**(experimental group)**

Observer: _____. Date: _____ Hour: ____

Scoring guide: 0 = not observed 1 = apparent 2 = strong

| Criteria | 0 | 1 | 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.The teacher takes enough time to explain the topic by using different resources.** | | | |
| **2. The teacher uses material from the book to practice.** | | | |
| **3. The teacher uses technological resources more than once in every class** | | | |
| **4. The teacher makes students use internet based tools such as social networks, blogs and other websites to produuce the second language at least once a week.** | | | |
| **5. The teacher uses printed material or downloaded from the web.** | | | |
| **6. The teacher uses authentic material from the internet in the classroom.** | | | |
| **7. The students understands and complete tasks.** | | | |

**Observation Checklist**
**(control group)**

Observer: _____. Date: _____ Hour: ____

Scoring guide: 0 = not observed 1 = apparent 2 = strong

| Criteria | 0 | 1 | 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.The teacher uses technological resources to explain and practice the topic.** | | | |
| **2. The teacher explains more than once the topic.** | | | |
| **3. The students participate in class.** | | | |
| **4. The students participate solving exercises.** | | | |