

**UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR  
FACULTAD MULTIDISCIPLINARIA DE OCCIDENTE  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**



**UNDERGRADUATE WORK**

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WABISABI PLATFORM TO ENHANCE  
INTENSIVE INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH II GROUP 03 STUDENTS' CRITICAL  
THINKING SKILLS BY USING AUDIOS AND VIDEOS, SEMESTER I-2020 AT  
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**PRESENTED BY**

**JAIRO JOVANI JUAREZ GUERRERO  
JACQUELINE LILIANA PÉREZ MENDOZA  
SONIA YAKELY RAMOS DERAS  
KATYA MICHELLE RENDEROS ALEGRÍA  
LUIS EDUARDO VALDÉS FUENTES**

**THESIS ADVISOR**

**MASTER EDGAR AMÍLCAR PÉREZ MENDOZA**

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UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR  
AUTHORITIES



M.Sc. ROGER ARMANDO ARIAS ALVARADO  
RECTOR

DR. RAÚL ERNESTO AZCÚNAGA LÓPEZ  
ACADEMIC VICERRECTOR

ING. JUAN ROSA QUINTANILLA QUINTANILLA  
ADMINISTRATIVE VICERRECTOR

ING. FRANCISCO ANTONIO ALARCÓN SANDOVAL  
SECRETARY GENERAL

LICDO. LUÍS ANTONIO MEJÍA LIPE  
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LICDO. RAFAEL HUMBERTO PEÑA MARÍN  
UNIVERSITY ATTORNEY

FACULTAD MULTIDISCIPLINARIA DE OCCIDENTE  
AUTHORITIES



M.Ed. ROBERTO CARLOS SIGÜENZA CAMPOS  
DEAN

M.Ed. RINA CLARIBEL BOLAÑOS DE ZOMETA  
VICEDEAN

LICDO. JAIME ERNESTO SERMEÑO DE LA PEÑA  
SECRETARY

M.A. EDGAR AMÍLCAR PÉREZ MENDOZA  
HEAD OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

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## **ABSTRACT**

The project “The implementation of Platform Wabisabi to enhance Intensive Intermediate English II group 03 students’ critical thinking skills by using audios and videos, semester I- 2020 at the Western Multidisciplinary Campus of the University of El Salvador” attends to enhance and assess students’ critical thinking skills analysis and explanation by the uses of online platforms such as Wabisabi in which by the creation of audios and videos students could develop their critical thinking skills. To achieve the objectives of this project, the researchers made use of an online platform called Wabisabi in which students could enhance their critical thinking skills by taking into account its features and with this create audios and videos to develop activities that can help students to acquire more knowledge during their learning process. To reach this, the researchers have created an action plan that consists of the application of online meetings to develop them in one month by doing two meetings per week; this means eight online meetings in total.

## INTRODUCTION

The present project “The implementation of Platform Wabisabi to enhance Intensive Intermediate English II group 03 students’ critical thinking skills by using audios and videos, semester I- 2020 at the Western Multidisciplinary Campus of the University of El Salvador.” This project has objectives such as to enhance Intensive Intermediate English II group 03 students’ critical thinking skills by using the platform Wabisabi and its features such as audios and videos and to assess students to accurately use the platform Wabisabi to enhance their critical thinking skills, analysis and explanation.

One of the challenges that students face during their studies is the possibility to develop critical thinking skills such as analysis and explanation while learning a second language. These skills have been recognized as crucial to the learning process in which students must become critical thinkers, and with this, students could enhance them by using technological tools such as online platforms. In this case, audios and videos could be good features that help students to analyze and explain their learning especially in this time of virtual classes.

That is why the following project is divided into four chapters. Chapter I contains the Statement of the problem, which describes in detail the problem observed. This is based on careful observation in which the researchers could identify the necessity to develop their critical thinking skills analysis and explanation, and how this could be enhanced by online platforms. In addition, it contains the justification and scope of the problem, the research questions, and the research objectives that defined this project.

On the other hand, Chapter II contains the Theoretical Framework where some theory regarding the topic has been built to provide scientific and theoretical foundation to this project. It contains information about critical thinking and its importance in education; it also presents the importance of critical thinking skills and how they contribute to students' learning process, and finally the role of synchronous and asynchronous e-learning and online platforms such as Wabisabi.

Moreover, Chapter III includes specific details about the researcher’s project in which the implementation of Wabisabi could enhance students’ critical thinking skills by

taking into account its features with advantages and disadvantages of it. Besides, it presented an action plan that researchers planned to follow the development of the.

In addition, Chapter IV establishes the necessary conclusion and the recommendations that can help and suggest future researchers, teachers of the English Language Department of the University of El Salvador and Intensive Intermediate English II students how to continue with the project that will be conducted by the application of audios and videos in order to accomplish critical thinking skills and the uses of online platform Wabisabi in order to fulfill students and teacher's needs.

## CHAPTER I: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Today's education is expected to acquire and improve skills that can help students to be more engaged and qualified with their academic process. In this sense, it is important to take into consideration how students could learn and develop their writing, speaking, listening and reading skills in an appropriate and significant way in which they can provide a vital knowledge in order to manage the language perfectly. However, it has been identified that the development of those skills are not the only ones that help students to raise their skills efficiently. In view of this, critical thinking skills are important abilities that are quite essential to be integrated in education because they can contribute with the capacity to think critically. According to Facione (2010), the critical thinking skills are cognitive skills in which our brain works in order to read, learn, remember, analyze, interpret, evaluate, solve problems and process thoughts. In other words, critical thinking skills are human abilities that help us to respond to a variety of problems that can arise in our personal lives, but also in our learning process.

Consequently, when critical thinking skills are applied in learning a second language, students might develop a critical thought that helps them to communicate, and analyze problem-solving, evaluation and reflection which means that students are able to learn and analyze their knowledge critically. In other words, students will be allowed to use all their skills in order to fulfill their own learning process. Some experts have discovered that by applying critical thinking skills in the learning process students can be stimulated to analyze their personal experiences in which they are facing many feelings or emotions in their daily lives. That is why, thinking critically influences students to identify and create arguments on their own, and they will be able to prove evidence according to their own thoughts in order to make a comparison and contrast with what they have already learned. Based on this, students will be capable of presenting new concepts, ideas and theories by using their own reasoning. (Hall and Keynes, 2008).

Further, to think critically indicates using mental processes such as listening, categorizing, selecting, and assessing or deciding. As a result, Cottrell (2005) claims that critical thinking skills are important elements which provide a precise direction in thinking and working, and are a helping hand in determining a relationship of the information

precisely; on the other hand, a lack on the development of these skills is capable enough to carry out serious issues such as unsatisfactory appraisals at work or poor marks for academic assignments.

Likewise, it is important to consider that a proper development of these critical thinking skills, analysis and explanation is vital for Intensive Intermediate English II students' Group 03 learning process since the development of critical thinking skills brings benefits such as the skills of analyze options, paragraphs, dialogues, books, videos or any other material in different situations and explain their own points of view about topics developed by the teachers during classes. These critical thinking skills are essential to be developed by the students in order to identify and discover another way to acquire new knowledge because when students think critically, they have the opportunity to provide more reasonable conclusions about their thoughts. Moreover, according to Cottrell (2005), students get more motivation to learn and increase their self-confidence in their learning process; that is why, students are expected to enhance these skills by fulfilling the tasks they are supposed to carry out during the semester and demonstrate if their critical thinking skills are enough for being promoted to an upper level. For developing critical thinking skills, teachers must stimulate students to explore beyond their own ideas by doing activities, using materials, or tools that could help both students and teachers to demonstrate and reach class objectives.

### **1.1 Description of the problem**

In the words of Donovan and Green (2014), an authentic teaching and learning environment from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century involves that both educators and students have access to a repertoire of technological tools that help students to develop skills such as analysis and explanation; teachers can facilitate the development of these skills through an online interaction in which teachers and students can be motivated to provide clear analysis and explanations related to specific topics that are required to students think critically. Besides, it is exceptional to keep in mind the key role that synchronous and asynchronous communication foster students to think in their learning process in order to help Intensive Intermediate English II, Group 03 students to develop and improve their critical thinking skills.

Today's learning requires different ways in which students can improve their knowledge and in which they can be engaged with their learning by using new methods

technology provides. In this case, Asynchronous and Synchronous e-learning are technological techniques that are used as new ways of teaching in which students can search, express, discuss, and find benefits and results with accuracy. According to Hrastinski (2008), Asynchronous e-learning implies the uses of online courses, e-mails and discussion boards, so students can experience a flexibility in their learning process because teachers and students are creating an environment where they can upload and download documents between them. That is why, there is an extensive collaboration between teachers and students since it represents real time work. Besides, synchronous e-learning includes videoconferencing, chats and audios. He also claims that teachers can implement these resources to make students and participants engage in their learning instead of being isolated. Consequently, students are capable of keeping a communication based on different opinions in which they can improve their critical thinking. That is why these technological resources can facilitate the process of learning to implement new ways of increasing student's critical thinking.

Hitchcock (2018) defines Critical thinking as a widely accepted educational goal. Its definition is contested, but the competing definitions can be understood as differing conceptions of the same basic concept: careful thinking directed to a goal. Also, critical thinkers have the dispositions and abilities that lead them to think critically when appropriate. The abilities can be identified directly; the dispositions indirectly, by considering what factors contribute to or impede exercise of the abilities. Educational intervention has been shown experimentally to improve them, particularly when it includes dialogue, anchored instruction, and mentoring.

Withal, preparing students to be able to think critically is a challenging task, and one of the key goals for teachers is to help students to develop their critical thinking skills. Critical thinking skills are also the tools that help students to find the answers or solutions to a confusion or a problem. Moreover, it is believed that discussion and critical thinking with knowledge reside in the mind of the students, rather than a teacher transmitting knowledge to a student (Ornstein and Levine, 2006) Nearly in the 21st century, teachers are still discussing the mechanisms, outcomes, and the importance of the improvement of critical thinking skills during classes.

By the implementation of the platform Wabisabi, students might improve their critical thinking skills analysis and explanation through audios and videos and put into

practice all the knowledge they have learned during classes. Furthermore, the recognition of the importance of critical thinking skills in education and the ability to think critically have been identified as an essential life skill, and teachers are the ones in charge of creating critical thinking skills strategies that could be applied during classes to enhance students academic performance. In addition, the implementation of an online platform is necessary for the development of critical thinking skills since teachers and students can create unique learning with experiences. In this case, the use of an online platform, such as Wabisabi provides students the chances to collaborate in real time with classroom communities in which educators assign tasks, real time feedback, and inspire each other in the class to learn successfully and consciously; in education, it is necessary to innovate to create an environment of learning in which Intensive Intermediate English II Group 03 students from the University of El Salvador Western Multidisciplinary Campus demonstrate their abilities to solve problems, make analysis, provide explanations and reduce the complex information to the simplest.

During the second year of the major, Intensive Intermediate English II students are encouraged to understand and use everyday language. Even though students at this level are still making grammar and spelling mistakes, they can speak fluently and interact with others without strain. That is why, students must be ready to use the knowledge that they learned during the previous level and use it in academic context. Nevertheless, it is known that the role of the teacher inside the classroom is important to develop the critical thinking skills. In fact, the majority of teachers are encouraged to create the right environment in which the students might be conducive to think critically. Ergo, the teachers are the ones in charge of the development and the application of critical thinking skills into students. In this case, students can find out their own capacity to efficiently interpret how to figure out solutions by themselves. According to Paul, Richard and Others (1989), critical thinking is applied in the most common resources that teachers use in their classes such as lesson plans, class discussions, presentations in which students might be ready to express their own ideas by giving suggestions, opinions and reasonable answers. Hence, they also mentioned the process of creating all those resources to improve students to learn efficiently. That is called: Socratic Questioning. They also describe the Socratic Questioning as the idea that all thinking has a logic or structure. In other words, every kind of information is based on other facts. When teachers take this into account, they understand the importance of taking



seriously what students say and think, and they can stimulate them to go further in their own beliefs.

However, taking a look at how teachers develop a class in the educational system, the application of the critical thinking skills is not implemented and incorporated in their lessons. Even though some teachers work on applying the critical thinking skills in their lessons, some others do not take that much seriously. Some factors that make teachers not show interest in the development of critical thinking in their classes are the lack of students' motivation, lack of interest in learning, and also students are more focused on grades than gathering knowledge by themselves. Teachers are accustomed to only provide the necessary information just for learning a second language without any purpose on developing a critical form of thinking and its skills. In addition, students are not encouraged to go beyond their own learning. On the other hand, technology is taking an important role in our educational system, and new tools are coming up to prepare teachers and students for the future so that teachers might use all these tools related to technology to increase students' knowledge.

One of the tools teachers are taking in advantage to teach a meaningful class is online platforms. Otherwise, with the uses of online platforms, teachers can involve their students in new ways of learning since a normal class time is not enough to cover and to implement what teachers have already prepared, but the online platforms give the opportunity to be linked up with students to have an interaction outside of a classroom. Besides, with the use of them students have the opportunity to expand their knowledge by following specific directions about their tasks. Some teachers in charge of Intensive Intermediate English II, Group 03, of the University of El Salvador Western Multidisciplinary Campus expressed that the development of critical thinking skills by using an online platform is a good tool to foster students learning and to encourage them to think critically. They also expressed that even though teachers must set up a time for some activities, they can develop those activities with an online platform in extra time. That is why, according Paul et al. (1989), when students are encouraged to think, analyze and interpret information, they start giving precise and clear answers, so the uses of technology, in this case an online platform, help students apply all the information they have gotten through classes. In fact, they can have the opportunity to demonstrate another way to communicate their own opinions, beliefs, and thoughts. In this sense, the process of learning can be more significant since they will be

learning between each other by providing solutions according to what other students can contribute.

Otherwise, the implementation of online platforms represents an enormous change in teaching because it is necessary to be updated with new ways of teaching. This is not only a problem for teachers but also for students. In some cases, the main problems can be that there must be more preparation about the uses of technology to teachers, so they can make their students to be more inspired with their learning process. Also, teachers must be ready to face different kinds of situations that can affect the normal time of classes. In this case, the uses of online platforms increases the chances in which students might solve problems, investigate deeper and exchange ideas between one another. According to Project Tomorrow (2011), students from this time need a learning environment in which they can explore different contexts; with this, students are able to enhance their critical thinking because they will be engaged and their capacity to improve their knowledge will be more accurate for them. In the case of teachers, according to Donovan and Green (2014), they need to equip their students with the necessary skills that will help them to affront the 21st Century workplace successfully; thus, it is important to understand that the 21st Century is coming with challenges that both teachers and students need to accept to acquire new abilities in the learning process. Using an online platform, teachers can post a video related to a specific topic; so the students can be encouraged to show their level of knowledge to interpret ideas, comments, and different situations. Also, students will be capable enough to think critically at any topic presented in classes, so it will be possible to monitor the level of understanding in students. That is why, students will show how to think outside the box by posting videos and audios, and that will create an environment of learning in which creativity and development of critical thinking will be the reflection of their own learning.

In view of this situation, the investigators found an answer to the following questions:

1. How can Intensive Intermediate English II, group 03 students of Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés: Opción Enseñanza 's critical thinking skills be enhanced during semester I-2020?
2. To what extent does the implementation of the platform Wabisabi enhance Intensive Intermediate English II, group 03 students' critical thinking skills, analysis and explanation?

## **1.2 Justification and scope of the research**

The development of this study may contribute to enhance Intensive Intermediate English II Group 03 students' critical thinking skills, analysis and explanation by using videos and audios to improve their speaking skills. Besides, the students would participate in discussions, making videos and other activities since these could be completely necessary to be developed for any language learner. The objectives of this research were to enhance Intensive Intermediate English II group 03 students' critical thinking skills by using the platform Wabisabi and its features such as audios and videos, and to assess students to accurately use the platform Wabisabi to enhance their critical thinking skills, analysis and explanation at the Western Multidisciplinary Campus of the University of El Salvador.

Critical thinking skills are both an important element which provides a precise direction in thinking and working, and a helping hand in determining precisely a relationship of the information. The investigators had established to enhance students' analysis and explanation since the teachers in charge of the subject Intensive Intermediate English II Group 03 confirmed the lack of these skills is noticeable not only in the population considered to be taken as study but also in the next English levels.

Consequently, this investigation would be useful for forty Intensive Intermediate English II students from Group 03, and the teachers who were in charge of the subject since by causing a change in students' attitude about the importance of enhancing their critical thinking skills, students took ownership of their own language and developed self-awareness of their own improvement. Besides, students would be allowed to enhance their critical thinking skills such as analysis and explanation, through different activities that required them to think before answering by using audios in a post or to analyze the information provided by the tutor. According to the teachers in charge of Intensive Intermediate English II, group 3, this type of activities are a bridge to enhance critical thinking skills and language learning for these allow students to feel comfortable at the moment of using the language and express their ideas.

Moreover, this research would have an important influence to study the population by using different tools to gather the information needed. The interventions during the research would be carried out through diagnostic tests, interviews, focus groups, and online

sessions. The investigators would carry out this study to prepare students as part of their professional development and enhance their critical thinking skills by participating in different activities aimed at this. The people involved in this research were forty students from Intensive Intermediate English II, group 03, and the two teachers in charge of the subject.

### **1.3 Research objectives**

#### **1.3.1 General objective**

1. To enhance Intensive Intermediate English II group 03 students' critical thinking skills by using the platform Wabisabi and its features such as audios and videos

#### **1.3.2 Specific objective**

1. To assess students to accurately use the platform Wabisabi to enhance their critical thinking skills, analysis and explanation

## **CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Critical thinking**

In words of Paul, Richard and others (2003), critical thinking means that students get continually asked to think about what they learn, to try to apply their new ideas, to compare their own ideas with what they are presented in class, to practice explaining what they learned, and what they think by listening to their peers as they try to understand new ideas. Consequently, It is a way of thinking in which students do not just accept the ideas or conclusions they are surrounded to every single day, however, they show the strengths they have questioning such ideas and conclusions. Thus, students who think critically almost all of the time want to see which evidence is involved to support any argument or conclusion. In the educational field, students learn to think by thinking, learn to learn by learning, learn to judge by judging and by assessing their thinking, for instance, does this make sense? Is this clear? Is it true? Is it well reasoned? Students come to use the power of their minds to clarify, judge, and reason. This means that students with a wider critical thinking are always questioning any idea, topic or conclusion they are taught.

According to Judge et al. (2009), some of the most important skills students will need to learn are the ability to think both critically and objectively about an issue and present a well-constructed argument. This means learners who think critically tend to be more analytical and bizarre inasmuch as they have the wish to acquire more information, look for proof and of course being open to new ideas. Consequently, they seem to examine almost everything no matter if it is a problem, a set of data, or a text, they check that information to realize its meaning or multiple meanings and in this way interpret what it constitutes. Besides, critical thinkers are disposed skeptical because they have a good questioning attitude about new information with which they probably are exposed to finding they do not easily believe in whatever they are told, but it is crucial to keep in mind that critical thinkers may also be open-minded and show their modesty even if it is easy for them to solve any problem, sometimes, they tend to be objective when analyzing new ideas and state that their opinions and ideas perhaps are wrong when the evidence that they are exposed to differs to what they think since "to make my beliefs reasonable, I must evaluate not individual beliefs but, rather, large sets of beliefs" (Paul et al., 2003 P.8).

## 2.2 Critical thinking skills

The literature on critical thinking skills times back to the 1960's and endures through to the present. The world of education did not fully hold or come to a unified understanding of what critical thinking skills were until the 1990's. A researcher named Peter A. Facione directed qualitative research for the single purpose of coming to a consensus across the board to what critical thinking skills are and how they should be instructed and assessed in the classroom (Facione, 1990). In his qualitative study, Facione congregated forty-six scholars, educators, and researchers of critical thinking theory and assessment. The panel of experts encountered numerous times to debate critical thinking skills and their definitions. Facione then recorded the consensus of critical thinking skills, and has since been a leader of critical thinking skills research and publication.

Additionally, Facione (1990, 2011) illustrates that critical thinking could simply be stated as good thinking or correct thinking. By way of explanation, thinking that is not illogical. Facione terms it as, "judging in a reflective way what to do or what to believe... Critical thinking is judgment, reflective, and purposive" (Facione, 2000, p.61-62). Critical thinking skills can be fragmented into six specific faces or skills. These faces are interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation (self-evaluation). Even if there are six main specific skills, all are deep-rooted in the understanding of how people look at a question and reason with it, as well as the idea of how people receive an answer to a problem or question.

Hitchcock (2018) postulates Critical Thinking Skills as acquired abilities, as operative in critical thinking. It is not obvious, however, that a good mental act is the exercise of a generic acquired skill. He also argues against viewing critical thinking skills as generic and discrete, on the ground that skilled performance at a critical thinking task cannot be separated from knowledge of concepts and from domain-specific principles of good thinking. In addition, it establishes that a person with critical thinking skills is capable of intelligent performance.

Others (Cottrell, 2005; Donovan and Green ,2014) define Critical Thinking Skills as a way to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate (digital) tools and resources. We use basic thinking skills in everyday life, usually with little difficulty. However, many people find it difficult to apply

these same skills automatically to new contexts, such as more abstract problem-solving and academic study. This is partly because people use these skills in contexts familiar to them, they are not always sufficiently aware of the underlying strategies that they are using so as to be able to adapt them to new circumstances. The more used we are to applying skills easily in one context, the more difficult it can be to identify the underlying skills. Critical thinking skills are based on underlying sets of thinking skills such as:

- 1) Focusing attention so as to recognize the significance of fine details;
- 2) Using attention to fine detail in order to recognize patterns, such as similarities and differences, absence and presence, order and sequence;
- 3) Using recognition of pattern in order to compare and contrast items and to predict possible outcomes;
- 4) Sorting and labelling items into groups, so that they form categories;
- 5) Using an understanding of categories to identify the characteristics of new phenomena and make judgments about them.

In other words, these skills are not only useful for critical thinking in academic and professional life, but are tested as part of the procedures for selecting job applicants for interviews and teachers have the compromise in order to find how these skills can be developed and enriched by the students in both in and out of the classroom and here is online tools are good alternatives for reaching this goal.

### **2.3 The Needed Skills for Thinking Critically**

In the words of Trilling and Fadel (2009), the needed skills to be able to think critically are diverse and consist of: interpretation, analysis, inference, evaluation, explanation, and self-regulation. Specifically these are needed for being capable to:

- a) Think about a topic or issue in an objective and critical way.
- b) Identify the different arguments there are in relation to a particular issue.
- c) Evaluate a point of view to determine how strong or valid it is.

- d) Recognize any weaknesses or negative points that there are in the evidence or argument.
- e) Notice what implications there might be behind a statement or argument.
- f) Provide structured reasoning and support for an argument that we wish to make.

## **2.4 List of Critical Thinking Skills and their definition**

### **2.4.1 Interpretation**

In words of Ignatavicius (2001), interpretation is defined as taking the data given, understanding all of its significance, and then clearly replicating the information or its meaning. This skill is probably used in many classrooms already. This means that teachers habitually give students content and tutoring on a regular basis, with the expectancy of producing a piece of work that uses the content. This reproduction of the instruction could commonly be called as homework or research projects.

### **2.4.2 Analysis**

The majority of people nowadays immediately think of breaking something down into its components when they are asked for giving a definition of what analysis means; and this is how analysis tends to be officially characterized. In the Concise Oxford Dictionary (n.d.), says, analysis is defined as the “resolution into simpler elements by analyzing (opp. synthesis)”. And in the Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy (n.d.), analysis is defined as “the process of breaking a concept down into more simple parts, so that its logical structure is displayed”. The restriction to concepts and the reference to displaying logical structure are important qualifications, but the core conception remains that of breaking something down.

For Alexander of Aphrodisias (350 B.C.E/1991), analysis is defined as the converse of synthesis. Synthesis defines the path from the principles to those things that derive from the principles, and analysis is the return from the end to the principles. Besides, he said that someone analyzes when he or she goes up to the principles and the problem and then follows a specific order of those elements which are expected for the demonstration of a conclusion.



### **2.4.3 Evaluation**

Evaluation reveals the skill of finding importance or defining the trustworthiness of something or someone (Ignatavicius, 2001). An activity that tests a student to determine if a statement is reliable obliges students to use the skill of evaluation. In a few words, evaluation takes place when a student precisely has to make a judgment on the worth of the information and then line up it according to what is required at a certain time.

### **2.4.4 Inference**

According to Ignatavicius (2001), inference deals with drawing conclusions, predicting, and making new ideas from information. A real-world example of this skill reflects students watching a movie, and trying to psych out what will happen in the end. Inferring information is also called as identifying implicit information, in other quarters, understanding ideas and information that is not directly stated. Inference is closely related to deductive reasoning, because the conclusions made by the student are not directly stated in the information given.

### **2.4.5 Explanation**

Clearly maintaining the reasoning behind a decision or an answer reflects the use of the critical thinking skill explanation (Facione, 2011). Explanation displays an in-depth understanding of the background ideas, bases or reasons for a certain event, idea, or action. A student that can undoubtedly justify an answer to a question or term the process of how the student stretches to an answer is a specific demonstration of this skill.

According to Hempel (1965) an explanation shows a statement or set of statements that clarifies the details, roots, background, or principles that reinforce a particular phenomenon. This word derives from the Latin term explicatus, which means to offer reasoning for. Explanations are dominant to the discipline of science as one of the goalmouths of the discipline is to provide explanations that chief to a deeper understanding of various phenomena. Also, explanations elucidate why things work, what something is, or how things happen. They often deliver cause and effect relations, include a time sequence, and use action verbs. An explanation usually partakes five parts such as: naming or specifying the concept, describing elements or components of the concept in an appropriate

order, explaining how the elements relate or connect to each other, providing an example, and summarizing with a concluding statement.

#### **2.4.6 Self-Regulation**

Self-regulation is the one-to-one care or evaluating of oneself cognitively (Ignatavicius, 2001). Editing papers, reworking a problem, and rethinking a strategy are all examples of self-regulating activities. Self-regulation can be also defined as the ability of knowing and conceptualizing one's own pace of learning and understanding. When the skill is used correctly, students become independent and responsible for their own education.

#### **2.5 Importance of Critical Thinking Skills**

Critical thinking skills are essential to guarantee students achieve success inside and outside the classroom. Students are not only working with concepts and ideas, but also working on the concepts, and trying to see how well the concepts can be understood. By working with concepts and being engaged with them, students are understanding it all more profoundly. According to Colley, Bilics, and Lerch (2012), the skill of thinking critically is a significant feature for all members of society. With today's multinational, multicultural, and complex issues, citizens must be capable enough to go through enormous amounts of data to make clever decisions. A second purpose for the necessity to develop critical thinking skills is that many employers are in the hunt for candidates who offer critical thinking skills. Butler (2012) says that eighty-one percent of the employers surveyed demanded more critical thinking tutoring for their existing and potential staff; this demands for a transformation in the manner students are educated all around the world. There are more than classroom reasons for students to exhibit critical thinking skills. Employers are looking for candidates and potential new-hires to show these skills as well and by having an efficient development of these skills, these individuals are going to be excellent elements for the different workforces in which they decide to be part of.

#### **2.6 Development of Critical Thinking Skills**

It is important to contemplate that a suitable development of these critical thinking skills is vital for students' learning process since the development of critical thinking skills brings welfares such as the skills of analyze options, paragraphs, dialogues, books, videos or any other material in different situations and explain their own points of view about topics

settled by the teachers during classes. These critical thinking skills are crucial to be developed by the students with the purpose of identifying and discovering another way to gain new knowledge because when students think critically, they have the opportunity to provide more judicious conclusions about their thoughts. Likewise, according to Cottrell (2005), students get more motivation to learn and increase their self-confidence in their learning process; because of it, students are expected to enhance these skills by fulfilling the tasks they are made-up to perform during the year and prove if their critical thinking skills are enough for being promoted to a superior level. For evolving critical thinking skills, teachers must encourage students to sightsee beyond their own ideas by doing activities, using materials, or tools that could help both students and teachers to demonstrate and reach class objectives.

Dewey (2009) considers critical thinking skills development as a complex activity, calling for decision making in the process of meaningful and content based learning. He calls it 'reflective thinking' and describes it by means of: active, persistent, and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the reasoning which support it and the further conclusions to which it tends.

One of the procedures, directed to the enrichment of students' abilities to analyze, explain and put forward hypotheses; set problems and independently solve them is the development of learners' critical thinking skills. Among researchers, who dealt with this problem from the psychological point of view and treated it as a means for development of students' independent work skills were such researchers, as the pedagogical experts and personal from the educational area. For this development be consummate, Kopzhassarova et al. (2016) establish that teachers should instruct students to take charge of every stage of their own learning, which includes: setting goals, identifying and developing strategies to achieve such goals, developing study plans, reflecting on learning (which includes identifying problem areas and the means of addressing these problems), identifying and selecting relevant resources and support, and assessing one's own progress (which includes defining criteria for evaluating results of learning).

However, without the skills to think critically, students are ill-equipped to face many circumstances in which those abilities are required. Students are trained to memorize facts, dates, and told they will need this information for examinations with the purpose of advance to the following level (Case and Daniels, n. d.; Reeder, 2003). Yet, by teaching students to

regurgitate learning material, teachers are doing them an enormous disservice which will later teach them to only achieve an adequate amount of data to get by. It is known that higher test scores are an achievement teachers try to find, on the other hand, those scores do not always mean students are plentifully retaining the existing information. Also, learning to become critical of information and forming an opinion is essential for students to insert a new dialectic while stating their unheard opinion (Rolling, 2008). While most students form opinions and deductions which have been revealed by previous students, it is the art of deducing information which comes into play. As such, molding such skills by asking open-ended questions and placing the thinking back on the students will, in turn, bolster their proficiency and confidence. Thinking and content are a marriage in which critical thinking takes shape, thereby, lessons which are devoid of thought only prime the students for test taking (Carr, 1990).

## **2.7 Comparison of the development of critical thinking skills in the classroom and online course**

Thinking critically involves the capacity to incorporate cognitive strategies in which students can find similarities and comparisons between the knowledge they are gathering in classes and the one that they already have built during their growth. When we talk about cognitive strategies, we are talking about all those tools that are part of the learning process of any student. In this case, repetition, guessing meaning in context, vocabulary, interaction between students and teachers are the ones who help students to increase and to improve their language. Then, students can be ready to use the language in a different context or situations presented in class and they could develop activities in order to recognize and get information. However, when critical thinking is applied during the learning process, students are exposed to a new way of thinking in which they could compare and contrast ideas between them. In fact, according to Hall and Keyne (2008), critical thinking is a vital part of the academic life of each student because they can develop their English skills in an accurate way. Reading, writing, speaking and listening, which are the four principal skills in English, are necessary to be developed with precision in order to make students explore what the language brings when it is based on critical thinking.

This means that students are able to examine and measure ideas, thoughts and opinions on their own. It is primary to understand that to critically foster students to respond objectively to whatever they could be reading, writing, listening or speaking (Hall and

Keyne, 2008). In other words, the importance of thinking critically during classes is extremely needed because this foments a different attitude into students and also another perspective of what they are learning. Besides, students are allowed to think beyond their own beliefs because critical thinking is autonomous, thinking for oneself. It is known that the majority of our beliefs are acquired during the early ages, so we are accustomed to respond and to believe what we want. For this reason, when critical thinking is developed in students learning, they are able to create new beliefs, to analyze every argument and to form rational answers. In the classroom, teachers can make students show up their capacity to discover information, to make them discuss and even argue about any facts presented in class. When doing this, students will be encouraged to generate concepts based on their own understanding. According to Paul et al. (2003), critical education respects the autonomy of the students. In this case, rationality is the one of the principal characteristics that each student should be encouraged to detect during their learning. That means that their knowledge must be based on reasons and logic. Also, they express that students also are capable of making independent judgments in which they could support ideas, present new evidence and to enhance their reasoning.

Thus, it has been discovered that critical thinking skills are essential in education and they need to be applied in the classroom. When we talk about critical thinking skills, we are referring to all those cognitive skills such as analyze, interpret, inference, evaluate and self-regulation. In other words, it is a human ability that helps us to respond to a variety of problems that can arise in our personal lives, but also in our learning. When critical thinking skills are applied in the classroom, students can develop a critical thought that helps them to communicate and to think precisely, and by consequence to look for vocabulary that can express their thoughts with veracity. Also, all the information presented in class can function as an instrument of learning in which students could evaluate evidence and could make a reflection of their own thoughts. This means that students are able to learn and to analyze their knowledge in a critical way. In other words, they will be allowed to increase their capacity to interpret data and also to present and justify their arguments. It is believed that critical thinking provides teachers and students a deeper observation about any fact or material in which they could define well and give specific conclusions. Some experts have discovered that by applying the critical thinking skills in education students can be stimulated to analyze their personal experiences, in this case, students are able to seek the

different sides of an argument and also to present the strengths or weaknesses about any exchange information performed in class.

According to Paul et al. (2003), a clear example in which the critical thinking skills could play an important role during a class is in "literature class". They express that in this special subject there are many things to take into account when critical thinking skills want to be developed by teachers. Literature is a subject in which for the majority of students it represents only one thing that is to read and memorize as much as possible, but it represents more about what students could think about. When Literature is well developed in order to increase the critical thinking skills in students, there is a major percent of examination and evaluate what an author wants to transmit through a story. At this point, teachers are capable of encouraging students to go further beyond their thoughts. For example, students are able to hold an argument based on what they could analyze in a specific reading. Also, teachers could provide questions in which students can involve different details, suggestions, opinions and beliefs according to what they are reading. That is why, teachers could measure the level of understanding of each student because students will provide a different content, and the most important to show how they can support their own ideas and thoughts. However, experts mention the importance of critical thinking skills development in each subject because what it truly matters is that students can become critical thinkers, and they could have the right based on a second language.

Hall and Keyne (2008), recalls the importance of critical thinking skills in education is indispensable in students learning because what all Universities are looking for is to encourage students to be independent learners, and critical thinking is focused on it. During classes, students might face many tasks, activities or exercises in which they will not have to think critically and they will find out the answer just by remembering information they have already gotten. For example, multiple-choice questions in which it is necessary to retain information about a specific topic. Despite, when students are encouraged to create an essay or a specific report, they usually present struggles when writing, thinking and reading. It is clear that these assignments require higher order thinking skills " because the level of understanding must be developed in a deeper manner; thus, students are required to examine, analyze, provide and to resolve every detail presented in that task. This means that all the information that students are gathering throughout classes must be analyzed and manipulated by them more than memorize it. Besides, experts always mention what

Benjamin Bloom identified in the 1950s. He could identify what is known as The Thinking Triangle. In this, he explains the levels of intellectual skills in which evaluate (make judgments of value information), synthesise (combine information and ideas into something new), analyze (make a detailed and methodical examination), apply (use knowledge), comprehend (have understanding) and know (be aware, remember information) are the ones which helps students to become independent learners in all English skills effectively and also enable students to obtain a compromise not only with their work but also with their learning, in fact, the most important detail about this cognitive skills is that all of them focus on the sense that thinking implies active engagements.

## **2.8 Synchronous and Asynchronous definition and their importance in critical thinking skills**

Nowadays, new tools in education have arisen in order to give a new perspective about the learning process. In this case, technology has become one of the most important tools in the 21st Century. In every aspect of our lives, technology is playing an important role. That is why, in education it is necessary to innovate in order to create an environment of learning in which students can be able to demonstrate their abilities to solve problems, to reduce the complex information to the simplest and also in which they can be aware of new ways of learning. In this case, in the world of education, technology has changed the way that students learn and also the way that teachers teach. Thus, e-learning is the new word referring to education in which the uses of technology is being highly used for educational institutions around the world. The principal thing that e-learning looks for is integration between culture, customs, knowledge, around the world because it looks at breaking down barriers about education worldwide. The Internet has become an important tool not only for teachers but also for students to obtain available information that both can share and learn from others resources in an efficient way (Hartshorne and Ajja, 2009).

A few years ago, e-learning was something that was not well developed because the advances of technology were not so sophisticated. By consequence, in education there has always been the necessity to increase the opportunities for students to be connected and updated with new advances in learning; that is why education has been transformed in such a way that educational institutions are improving the learning process of their students. Nowadays, it is known that ICT (information and communications technology) is gaining and expanding their virtual education around the world. Thus, e-learning has become the

principal priority in the educational system; the real purpose of e-learning is to establish a better interaction between teachers and students because it can bring to them a major investment about time, information and knowledge. For this reason, e-learning gives the chance to teachers to improve the classroom learning process; for example virtual classes, video discussions and audios. According to Fry (2001), e-learning encompasses the use of the internet with other technologies in order to create new material and content that can benefit both teacher and students. With this, education can be involved more in technological platforms in which there could be a quality of learning experiences.

Taking the uses of e-learning, students can be exposed to a new type of interaction totally different from the one they have in the classroom. Also, teachers can implement critical thinking skills throughout the internet. As it is known, the critical thinking skills (as analyze, interpret, inference, evaluate, explanation and self-reflection) are all those cognitive skills which help students to have a big understanding about what is being learned during classes. Some experts have discovered that the implementation of critical thinking skills using technology enables students to think deeper and to scan beyond their thoughts. When students think critically, they actively engage in processes such as specific communication between classmates and teachers, deeper analysis of knowledge, synthesising information with previous data, evaluation and Reflection of different content presented in classes; in this way, there is a creation of right environments that engage students in these processes. Teachers can provide detailed information and make questions in order to foster student's expression and give diversity opinions, and to strive students in a variety of hands-on activities that force them to be involved in their own learning. For that reason, teachers must select activities in which students can expand their thinking and also they must engage them to describe their different point of view and respond to specific objectives for the course or assignment.

Moreover, according to Mansbach (2015), Critical thinking skills are invaluable tools that students need to be successful in their professional and personal lives. That is why, teachers can be thoughtful and purposeful about creating new ways of alternative learning that can promote lower and higher-level critical thinking skills. This can be measured by using technology to implement tasks that can bring reasoning in their thoughts and can support objectives established in classes already. They also mention some activities that can be effective in the process of developing critical thinking skills, for students could improve



their learning process. Thus, reflection activities, which is the first one, provides students go forward with their learning during the semester. In this case, Google docs is a good technological tool in which they can present a journal by applying their own knowledge and they can cite information that could be considered relevant, for teachers could make comments on their work. On the other hand, peer review activities help students to present a specific work, and they could express their ideas with details. But, the most important thing about this is that students can give feedback on their classmates' work. This process helps students to think critically because they can present arguments to their classmates' work and to discuss data in order to create an environment of exchanging ideas. A good site to develop this way to work is Canvas. This page provides opportunities to students to express themselves and also to create and design charts, wallpapers and put information about specific content. Also, there is another resource that can improve the critical thinking skills in students' work. Digital storytelling activities provide students the opportunity to record and upload videos, for students can have real-time feedback between them. It represents to students the opportunity to make presentations by using videos and images, with this, students are allowed to show their critical thinking in which they can evaluate and make a reflection of their work. GoReact is one the sources that brings the students another perspective of how to analyze and explain their own analysis about any type of material done by their own. Creating digital stories allows students to evaluate information about topics, reflect on their own thoughts and how to improve their outcomes, or analyze course content in order to internalize new knowledge (Robin, 2006). In fact, some experts consider that critical thinking skills represent the ability to connect new knowledge with previous knowledge, and this makes that students could construct ideas and concepts that they could be developing throughout their learning. With technology, critical thinking skills could be well developed because students could solve problems systematically with, thus, they could react to classmate's opinions in order to build new beliefs between them. In this case, multimedia learning can provide environments that enable students to apply knowledge in real-world contexts and in which they can make suggestions about their own experiences; that is why, critical thinking skills can be more meaningful when it is enhanced in a digital learning process.

It is important to understand that in our times, technology is changing how education is being developed because new methods have arisen in order to engage students into the e-learning world. That is why, there is a strong necessity about updating the workplace in

which teachers and students are moving on. Some experts have discovered that what is significant about the implementation of technology uses is to boost student outcomes regarding their needs in education. According to Hrastinski (2008), there are two e-learning methods that can be used for supporting new purposes in education, and also the implementation of critical thinking skills in students. In this case, some searches reflect that when this methods are applied, there is a huge result in students learning because in the traditional way learning is commonly measured by exams, but in e-learning methodology activities can be measured with activities that could increase students thinking; thus, those methods are known as synchronous and asynchronous. These concepts emphasize the flexibility about learning that teachers can have with students online or offline. In this case, students can have a combination of activities that can foster them to think in their learning process. Today's learning requires the participation in the social world in which students can be involved and in which they can create new ways of interaction in their learning by using what technology provides regarding education. Asynchronous and Synchronous e-learning methods are technological techniques which are important in teaching because teachers can provide new content related to topics studied in class, so students can share information, express their own point of view, discuss current data, and find support in classmate's opinions.

According to Hrastinski (2008), Asynchronous e-learning implied the uses of online courses, e-mails and discussions boards; students can experience another way to express themselves in order to incorporate more participants in their learning process because teachers and students can create a collaboration in which the discussion of information open the opportunity to process knowledge and to comprehend messages between them. The participation between students and teachers increases their critical thinking because in Asynchronous e-learning the environment is to determine with accuracy facts about the information posted online. Even though they can upload and download documents between them, the most important is fostering their critical thinking skills by adapting the information into their real experiences, for it represents real time work. Meanwhile, Synchronous e-learning includes videoconferencing, chats and audios. According to Kock (2005), teachers can implement this resources in order to increase communication and motivation in students because they are capable to convey a natural communication based on observing facial and body language that expresses physiological stimulation; this means, that students can feel more comfortable when they could communicate by posting videos or audios. When there

is a space in which they can improve their critical thinking, they can receive multiple reactions that will make students motivated to read, analyze and answer more according to arguments created by them. For this reason, it is possible to interpret that Asynchronous e-learning is basically a cognitive participation in which it increases a reflection and the ability to process information with accuracy; on the other hand, Synchronous e-learning is related to a personal participation that increased arousal students and motivate them to convergence a meaning to what others can express.

## **2.9 Online platform**

Many activities, tools or methods are used to teach by using technology, however, one of the technological tools that is gaining more importance in our educational world is online platforms. In fact, it is the newest way about distance education nowadays because it is a new form to develop and to create education with a major impact in the learning process. Thanks to the development of the internet in the last few years, the perception of how to teach, prepare a class and to enhance a student's critical thinking skills. What it is necessary to take into account with the uses of online platforms represents a new scenario about teaching that promotes advantages to students to become more engaged with how they learn and internalize knowledge. Thus, it is necessary to invest in a learning environment about using technology in which teachers and students could receive tutorials in order to manage the integration of e-learning in the educational system. That is why, according to Jain and Tyagi (2017), there are four rational elements that are important to take into account in the uses of technology in education; in this case, social (referring to familiarize students with technology), vocational (preparing students for jobs that require technology skills), catalytic (utilization of technology in order to improve effectiveness and performance in teaching), and pedagogical (referring to uses of the technology to enhancing learning, flexibility and efficiency in curriculum delivery).

Keane, Keane, and Blicblau (2016) explain what is fundamental in the uses of online platforms is that technological tools emphasize in students to enhance communication, creativity, collaboration and critical thinking, for all of them are essential in the 21st century. This new generation of learners needs to be prepared to identify the potential that e-learning can bring them by online platforms because students are more capable to redesigned tasks, to look for intercultural information, to have motivation to present and explain their thoughts and ideas, to be created in their work and to collaborate in the process of the development

of new knowledge. It is important to know that online platform cannot replace presential classes or to change the work in a classroom, but the advantages that e-learning and online platforms help teachers and students to applied an interaction and to create an environment of participation in which they could be capable to adapt types of information and finally the improvement in teachers and students. Obviously, online platforms represent a paradigm in teaching because it represents a new type of teaching and learn because it is not so common to have a shift in education; however, the new learning experience promotes students being actively connected with a virtual world in which everyone could develop their own learning.

In this sense, it is necessary to mention that e-learning brings benefits not only for teachers but also to students about the uses of important tools such as online platforms. Consequently, Stern (2016) explains that some years ago, there were many opportunities for teachers to create virtual classrooms, but technology was not so well developed and the software did not support information. However, this has been changing through time and now there are software that permit more capacity and power to prepare a virtual class. CMS (Course Management System) is a software that allows teachers to create, design, upload and delivery courses in which teachers could provide a new perspective about what is being taught in the classroom, and a flexibility related to exchange information. That is why, teachers can use some of the most important tools such as blackboards (online pages that help students to learn by choosing different subjects posted divided in specific courses) or Ecollage (which are specific online pages that universities create in order to take online courses). Moodle (is a virtual online classroom that helps teachers to build their specific place to develop their information) All of them are examples of all new e-learning pages that can give an extra hand to teachers in order to afford knowledge to students.

With all of this, teachers are able to post different types of information, to make schedules according to student's time, to revise content in sections, to make discussion groups, to upload exams and tasks. Thus, critical thinking skills could be part of all these activities because teachers can enhance students' motivation to go further with their own knowledge. Besides, online platforms help students to become active learners in their learning process, this means that they could be more engaged with that social process in which all of them could learn between each other. Also, students could understand the relevance about the learners' background and culture; in fact, they are able to identify and analyze different aspects of the information presented. Teachers can make students figure

out new challenges according to the topics presented in classes; as a result, students are allowed to generate an appropriate experience in which they could investigate deeper in order to address their own learning according to their needs. According to Donovan and Green (2014), it is important to recognize that implementation and the integration of technology in the educational system because students are needed to be involved in this technological-centric world in information can be reached with more facilities and also in which students can master content knowledge, and in this way they could become critical thinkers.

## **2.10 The importance of online platforms in education**

Online education provides students and teachers with the flexibility to improve and update their skills while learning. Moreover, online education serves to be a time saving and cost effective procedure for any career. Also, online education is a popular way of English teaching nowadays that facilitates teachers providing them a set of tools they might use to make their classes interactive and also help students to be open minded to different technological resources used in their learning process such as the usage of online platforms.

It is essential to define what a digital education platform is and the benefits it has in learning a second language. An online platform is a space or portal filled with educational content on a particular subject or different topics in which students have to access through a membership, but there are other options where students can jump in and learn immediately without registering. In other words, an online platform is a place that is allowed for public or private discussion and gives students the opportunity to make themselves heard while learning. Furthermore, online platforms are used as an interactive e-learning tool to motivate students and involve them in resolving single and collaborative homework tasks, Benta, Bologa and Dzitac (2014).

In words of Zhuzhu and Weiyuan (2005), an online teaching platform is a necessary component of teaching and learning. Besides, many English course books come with the access to an online learning platform full of material that helps students develop their language skills further, and this access to an online platform may be beneficial for English students who need to achieve a certain level of English within a limited time period. However, not all teachers and students are fully interested or aware of online platforms and its benefits in education. Evidently, the greatest benefit of online platforms is that it provides

students with the opportunity to extend their learning beyond the classroom, and provides a tool not only for teachers but also for students to keep a record of progress made. On the other hand, with the usage of online platforms, teachers allow students to have more ownership of their learning which helps them learn more efficiently. According to Benson (2011), controlling one's own learning process is an essential part of effective learning.

Finally, it is not always an easy task to encourage students to use online platforms and take them out from their comfort zone, indeed it is not even easy for teachers to use these online platforms as well, but online platforms have significantly changed the face of education in recent years since there has been plenty of discussion about online platforms and how they make students learning easier. Without a doubt, online platforms are a sound investment in this age and help students to improve their understanding of the knowledge they acquired, also promote problem solving and better decision-making and life application (Dwyer, Hogan and Stewart, 2014).

### **2.11 Development of critical thinking skills by online platforms**

Nowadays, in the age of technology there is a need for students to be prepared to use critical thinking skills proactively. Also, the use of online platforms provide a series of challenges and opportunities for students in order to develop their critical thinking skills. Besides, the development of critical thinking skills by online platforms bring students the quality of discernment which is one of the most important goals of 21<sup>st</sup> century education. Otherwise, this needed quality known also as critical thinking is defined as a metacognitive process that requires purposeful and reflective judgment leading to improved logical conclusions to arguments or solutions to possible problems (Dwyer, Hogan and Stewart, 2014).

Consequently, to learn how to think critically it is quite essential to know the value of the critical thinking skills and what these critical thinking skills involve. Explained by Facione (2007), the construction of critical thinking deals with six skills; First, Interpretation as being able to understand and express the meaning of different knowledge. Analysis, which focuses on identifying the intended meaning of any form of communication and is an important skill for understanding indirect statements. The third one evaluation, provides the capacity to make judgment to the validity of the speaker. Fourth, explanation, a comprehensive representation or interpretation of the knowledge that is acquired. Besides,

this skill is required if knowledge was properly understood as intended. Next, Inference, it means to bring together all the information to form a conclusion. Finally, self-regulation which means to be aware of what one is doing during the entire process. In conclusion, in order to think critically, it is reliable to keep in mind all the skills needed and put them into practice to successfully think analytically. However, according to Stobaugh (2013), to think critically is more difficult than thinking analytically.

Nevertheless, recent researches have suggested that critical thinking skills might be successfully developed through a technological environment. Huang (2012) mentioned that learning environments that incorporate technological tools into classrooms facilitate effective communication and thus enable students to develop arguments supported by evidence and eventually fosters enhanced critical thinking skills. Moreover, learning environments specially a learning a second language environment motivates students to be self-dependent thinkers (Burguess, 2009). Furthermore, critical thinking skills are seen as abilities that help students to improve the process of achieving the higher level of thinking and reasoning by using some strategies such as online platforms in order to get the needed results. In wide brief, the online platforms usage is an effective way to help students develop skills they will need to think critically, and also is a way to encourage students to get engaged in their own learning process.

## **2.12 Platform Wabisabi**

Intermediate English II students might be part of an online forum such as Wabisabi Platform to develop different contents and activities which would result of a great benefit for them to enhance their critical thinking related to the topics they are learning inasmuch as the platform provides them the opportunity to better their critical thinking skills since via this platform, they are free to provide their own points of view without having a face to face conversation with the teacher making it a more comfortable experience. Consequently, online teachers can use technology tools to create activities that help students develop critical thinking skills. On the other hand, this platform might help Intermediate English II Students reflect over the content and experiences they have according to the subject, externalize the knowledge, of course learn, and finally get more information from both their teacher and classmates.

Moreover, platform Wabisabi is a web service developed for educational institutions that aims to make easier and more comfortable the process of creating, distributing and grading assignments without using paper resources. Additionally, platform Wabisabi helps teachers adopt and use new technologies while teaching more interesting and significant topics since as it has been said before these technologies provide teachers the opportunity of developing different activities outside the classroom. Technology offers the opportunity for teachers to become more collaborative and extend learning beyond the classroom (United States Department of Education, USDOE, 2017).

Also, Students can be invited to join a class through a private code. The students have the opportunity to submit work to be assessed and reinforced by a teacher. Thus, The Mobile App, available for iOS devices, lets users upload photos and attach them to assignments, and share files from other apps. Thus, teachers can follow the progress for each student, and after having graded, teachers can return the work already checked and awesomely with comments. Besides, the activities that the teacher might develop enhance students' critical thinking skills, analysis and explanation inasmuch as they provide students with opportunities to see their learning and show their progress along the semester. For instance, digital storytelling is an excellent activity to be developed since the teacher can ask students to share an image, an audio or a video and talk about any situation they have lived in while their classmates have the opportunity of telling this person what they think of that situation being described. Moreover, a discussion forum can be done using Wabisabi to inspire critical thinking skills, analysis and explanation, since these forums allow students to communicate with their peers and teachers, answer questions explaining their understanding about a class topic, compare and contrast different ideas and opinions, implement a solution for a problematic situation, and analyze course content. For example, a discussion forum can be developed by posting a video, an image or any audio on the platform to have students watch it. Then, post questions in the forum according to the uploaded source, and finally, students can share different opinions and provide more facts having them look for more information about the topic.



## **CHAPTER III: PROPOSAL**

### **3.1 Description of the proposal**

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, new changes were gaining ground in every aspect of people's lives. People have been concerned with the fact that everything has an end, and it was necessary to get involved in these new waves of innovations that came to relate to think, live, work, and one the most important to learn. To talk about these new waves of innovations required a lot of explanation and details that probably there would not be an ending; however, to talk about learning referred to education, and the way that learning changed through the times. Thus, technology and the internet were still innovating their capacity to involve more modifications and modernism in order to go beyond their own limits, and with this, to incorporate the necessary tools that brought new ways of education. Nowadays, education transformed and adapted the way how to teach, read, write and listen into a world that can be described as e-learning. Taking into account how e-learning innovated the world of education, it would be realized the fact that technology brought huge changes in learning and how students acquired knowledge in an alternative mood. Because of that, when technology developed every single year with the chance of increased investigations in other sciences, education was seen as something traditional and old-fashion without hopes about having some updates in the learning process.

However, little by little education was involved with technology because it was necessary to work on that in order to prepare new generations about to come. Computers were one of the principal tools to be part of the learning process in which students learned how to use the principal components of them and how the programs were presented as alternative ways to keep information saved. Then, the Internet increased and changed the mode of searching information and as an extra alternative between books and documents; besides, e-mails, blogs, web pages were the path to create and share information with workers, professionals, students and common people. Finally, Social Networks, Smartphones, Apps for different uses and purposes and finally Online Platforms increased the necessity to be updated not only in education but also in others social fields. In addition, working outside of the classroom created an atmosphere of compromise in students and teachers because the opportunities to have a free interaction in an unestablished time gave

away another type of learning. What did this mean? It meant that to try out the taste of studying or investigating something at any time was fundamental, but what was more remarkable is how students and teachers could share information, details, instructions, material, news and work related to the class.

Nowadays, due to COVID-19 pandemic, all the educational institutions such as Universities, Colleges, and schools have been taking into consideration the use of educational online platforms in their curricula to bear different necessities or issues in order to take advantage of new ways of learning. For that reason, it has been considered as important that teachers increase their knowledge and their repertoire related to online platforms, their management and their benefits for them to be able to enhance students' skills with accuracy. Thus, In order to provide more options to educators, the research team decided to propose the use of the platform Wabisabi for them to take it into consideration for making the learning process during a pandemic a little bit easy to be dealt with.

Moreover, the research was addressed and expected to be developed in Intensive Intermediate English II, it was also expected for being developed in four weeks in which students will be attending to two online meetings per week where these meetings would have the objectives to enhance and assess students' analysis and explanation by the development of different online activities in order to be done by the use of the platform Wabisabi. During this research, there might be three phases, planning, first stage of action and second stage of action, that can be changed during the time this one might be developed.

### **3.2 Platform Wabisabi and its features**

Platform Wabisabi is one of the newest technological platforms that is changing the way that educators could engage and maximize students' skills. New experiences arise in the learning process and the way that students learn need to be updated every single time. In this case, the Founder of Wabisabi Learning, Lee Watanabe-Crockett, who is an Author, speaker, designer, and inspirational thinker, believes that the digital future must be the instrument that could inspire teachers to transform education in a unique experience in which creation and collaboration could be the structure of a new of teaching worldwide. In fact, what it is important to remark about this platform is the balance about the reality of digital present and future. Basically, what he explains about the sense of Wabisabi is to create a better interaction between teachers and learners as anyone usually has when there is a conversation

or a topic to talk about. With this, teachers could provide assessment to students in order to determine a better success in their learning. This platform represents another way to assess and reinforce the complex things about classes to the simplest way. In this sense, one of the purposes of the platform has also been to be a real conduit to share instant information in which users will find out learning activities that can be created by the teacher.

For a long time, traditional teaching has been the old way to learn and to acquire knowledge; however, Platform Wabisabi was created by the main idea to have a transformation of learning, and to adapt new ways of creating vital learning that can benefit not only students but also schools. One of the most important aspects that this platform is doing now is to break up the paradigm of how information must be imparted and what must be applied in the Educational world, but there has not been a complete change on it. In addition, this platform is a way to show a clear and precise learning in which students can respond to different tasks and to find a new mood of creative learning. Besides, Wabisabi brings the chance to incorporate experience into a dynamic team-based training model. The Founder, Lee Watanabe-Crockett believes that culture is part of the learning process, for he sees the big potential and exponential change that exists in corporate culture in Education and how students can enhance their capacity in a fresh virtual classroom. Breaking up the paradigms and making shifts in Education is not easy, and it requires determination and courage to innovate in teaching. For that reason, Wabisabi gives the opportunity to set up an interaction that can produce a turnover in response to developing a social sharing between teachers and students with the purpose to build a new experience of teaching for this new coming generation.

Platform Wabisabi provides different features that make its users have a comfortable experience while keeping in touch since students feel free to express their points of view without having a face to face conversation with the teacher. Therefore, teachers can use these platforms to create activities that help students develop critical thinking skills. On the other hand, students can create an account, access a class through a private code in order to display over the content and experiences they have according to the subject, exhibit the knowledge, learn, and finally get more information from both their teacher and classmates.

Hence, this platform is a web service which can be used for teachers as an aim to make easier and more comfortable the process of creation, distribution and assessment tasks

without using paper resources. Additionally, the platform helps teachers adopt and adapt the use of new technologies while making the teaching process more interesting and significant since these technologies provide teachers the opportunity of developing different activities outside the classroom.

Thus, The Mobile App, available for iOS; however, users that do not have an iOS device can easily access through the web app, it also lets users upload photos and attach them to assignments, and share files and links from other websites. In this way, teachers can follow the progress for each student, and after having assessed and reinforced, teachers can return the work already checked and awesomely with comments. This has the purpose that students can have the chance to be assessed and reinforced by their teacher.

Also, this platform allows teachers to customize the class' icon by uploading a photo from their galleries or just by choosing a predetermined one that this platform offers. Another feature is that teachers can look for students' individual work by looking in a filter the name of the student they want to know about. Besides, the platform allows users upload files in different formats as mp3, videos, microsoft office (i.e excel, word, power point), attach URLs links, and pictures, all of these can be seen in tasks that the platform allows to develop such as conversations, heatmaps, questions, portfolio entries and learning activities; conjointly, users can upload audios that can be recorded directly from the platform, this option can be easily identified in the comment section as the microphone icon. In addition, A set of stickers can be used while commenting to interact one another in order to express appreciation to students' work. All these types of files can be reused in future courses since the platform allows teachers to download the material that was presented.

Interestingly, Platform Wabisabi contains several components which help users develop assigned activities by the educators, and at the same time, these educators can create and develop tasks and activities for the courses they are in charge of. For instance, in order to fulfill both learners and educators needs, the platforms suggests the following components:

ZenStream lets users, in general, have a view from the newest to the oldest assignments they have been uploading across the course in this way students will have evidence of the work they have done. Thus, teachers can do real time assessment because they can check what students are instantly doing in their activities.

By accessing the Conversation option, both teachers and students have the chance to create conversations in order to have online discussions. Additionally, they have the option of creating a question and being answered by the rest of the class. Withal, for expressing likes and preferences about a specific topic, users can choose the option of creating a heatmap; with this option users have the opportunity of selecting between two alternatives. This component permits users to communicate opinions, thoughts, ideas, preferences, likes and dislikes.

When teachers go to the Learner work component, they are able to take a look at students' advance, and by using a filter, educators may check a specific learner's work, and by this, teachers avoid getting confused by one student's addition or entry to the rest. By doing this, teachers can assess their learners in a very individual way.

### **3.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Wabisabi platform**

Online platforms have been supporting so many of our daily activities and have become part of our personal and professional lives. Moreover, in education online platforms have aimed students to facilitate their learning process; these powerful tools ,also, have enabled teachers to teach comprehensively, and have encouraged tutors and learners to engage with each other by virtual classrooms.

Nowadays, there are plenty of online platforms designed to allow learners to develop their education such as the case of Platform Wabisabi. This platform provided flexibility to the modern educational world; besides, this platform showed many powerful learning tools that may let teachers and students have a friendly interaction among them, and not only was it created to innovate the traditional teaching method but also to provide teachers and students the opportunity to explore the technological world and the same time to use technology for educational purposes that could facilitate their learning process. On the other hand, as any other online platform, the platform had advantages and disadvantages. The platform Wabisabi could be considered a flexible educational platform; besides, Wabisabi had higher quality and was available everywhere. Also, this platform may be easy to manage and all the icons it contained are accessible, well explained and well organized. Other advantages that the platform had were that it was simple and easy to use, it was accessible to upload and download any kind of document, it was, also, designed for iOS, but if a user

might not have an Iphone, this person could still access the platform by searching in the browser the webApp that the platform displayed. Furthermore, it was an online platform that could be used to reinforce any topic studied in class through videos, comments, and activities that teachers could easily design and upload for their students. Before having access to the platform Wabisabi, the teacher in charge would have to create a class and then provide the class code to their students, and in this way, students would have access to all the activities, discussions, videos that the teacher may have previously prepared. Platform Wabisabi also could be considered safe and private since as stated before, it was required to have a code in order to be part of a determined class group created by the teacher; Moreover, students could work with images, videos, compositions, and more; thus, students could share their ideas and work collaboratively on projects.

On the other hand, even though Platform Wabisabi provided many constructive features, it had some disadvantages that students might find on it, for example, since the App´version of the platform was specially designed for iOS students who might not have an Iphone may have some difficulties trying to access to the platform because students´ devices could not work well by working with a browser; moreover, the security code students need to have in order to enter and have access to the platform lasted just a short period of time, two hours, which meant that if a student could not enter to the platform as soon as the teacher provides the security code, the student would have to wait for the teacher to create a new one. Also, the platform notifications lasted seven days and did not have notifications of page updates; finally, the platform Wabisabi was not allowed to make video conferences.

### 3.4 Action Plan

PLATFORM: Wabisabi

TIME PERIOD: 4 weeks

Stage	Action	Date	Resources and materials	Possible challenges	Involved CT Skill(s)	Time
Planning	<b>Initial Exploration</b>  <b>Approaching the field of study</b>  Finding the problem  Describing the problem  Establishing objectives  Elaborating theoretical framework  Creating plan of action and activities	   Last week of February   First week of March   Last Week of April   Second week of August	Computer  Electronic resources			
	<b>Theoretical framework</b>  Defining critical thinking and critical skills  Importance of critical thinking skills and development of critical thinking skills	Last week of April	Computer  Electronic resources  Thesis jobs  Online Articles  Online web pages			

	<p>Comparison of the development of critical thinking skills and online courses</p> <p>Synchronous and asynchronous definition and their importance of critical thinking skills</p> <p>Online platform, Wabisabi, and the importance of online platforms in education</p> <p>Development of critical thinking skills by online platform</p> <p>Platform Wabisabi</p>					
<p><b>First stage of action</b></p>	<p><b>Meeting 1 Objective:</b> To help students to accurately boost their analysis skill by the multiple perspective activity.</p> <p><b>Multiple Perspective Activity</b></p>	<p><b>1st week</b></p>	<p>Mobile</p> <p>Laptop</p> <p>App (Wabisabi)</p> <p>Computers</p> <p>Cellphones</p> <p>Internet connection</p> <p>Picture</p>	<p>Misunderstood directions</p> <p>Students might get late to class</p> <p>Students might not get the Join Code</p> <p>Internet connection problems</p>	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>1 hr(s)</p>



	<p>1. The researchers will create a portfolio entry.</p> <p>2. The researchers will upload a picture related to a specific topic previously developed in class.</p> <p>3. Students will share their thoughts by using the audio recording comment component.</p> <p>4. The researchers will let students know that their participation has been read by answering their comments.</p>					
	<p><b>Meeting 2</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b></p> <p>To enhance students the capacity to explain different assign context through making and</p>	<p><b>1st week</b></p>	<p>Mobile</p> <p>Laptop</p> <p>App (Wabisabi)</p> <p>Computers</p> <p>Cellphones</p> <p>Internet connection</p>	<p><b>1.</b> Some students could find problems uploading the video.</p> <p><b>2.</b> Some students might not have storage space in their cellphones in</p>	<p>Explanation</p>	<p>1 hr(s)</p>

<p>uploading videos</p> <p><b>Digital Storytelling</b></p> <p>1 The researchers will create a learning activity.</p> <p>2 The researches will provide directions related to the video.</p> <p>3. Students in pairs or groups will make and upload a 5 minutes video in which they will develop the topic that was previously assigned by the teacher.</p> <p>4. As soon as the students upload the video, the researchers will assess, reinforce and provide feedback to students' videos by using the comment section.</p>		Video	<p>order to keep the video.</p> <p><b>3.</b> Internet connection can be a problem to upload the video.</p> <p><b>4.</b> Some students could not have a smartphone to create the required video.</p>		
<b>Meeting 3</b>	<b>2nd week</b>	Mobile Laptop	Analysis	1. Some students could not watch the	1 hr(s)

<p><b>Objective:</b> To make students think out of the box about complex questions posted related to the video.</p> <p><b>Watch the video and Answer Questions Activity</b></p> <p>1. The researchers will both upload a video and post a set of questions by using the conversation component of the platform.</p> <p>2. The directions will be provided to make sure students know which steps to follow to complete the task.</p> <p>3. The students will complete the task by recording an audio in the comments section.</p> <p>4. The research team</p>		<p>App (Wabisabi)</p> <p>Computers</p> <p>Cellphones</p> <p>Internet connection</p> <p>Document</p>		<p>video due to lack of internet connection.</p> <p>2. Some students might not have storage space in their cellphones in order to save the video.</p> <p>3. Students do not follow directions.</p> <p>4. Students did not complete the task in the required time</p>	
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<p>will listen to each of the files to provide feedback and reinforce their analysis skills.</p>					
<p><b>Meeting 4</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To encourage students to precisely analyze and explain different topics according to the information given by researchers</p> <p><b>Posting Question in the Forum</b></p> <p>1. the researchers will create a portfolio entry in which they will present a document with questions according to a specific topic.</p> <p>2. The researchers will provide specific directions for students to follow them in order to</p>	<p><b>2nd week</b></p>	<p>Mobile Laptop App (Wabisabi) Computers Cellphones Internet connection Video</p>	<p>Analysis and Explanation</p>	<p>1. Some students could not download the document in order to read it.</p> <p>2. Students could find problems when opening the document format.</p> <p>3. Unstable Internet connection.</p>	<p>1 hr(s)</p>

	<p>complete the task.</p> <p>3. Students must provide their answers in the written form by using the comment section.</p> <p>4. The researchers will provide feedback to students in order to identify precisely students' analysis and explanation</p>					
<b>Second stage of action</b>	<p><b>Meeting 5</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To help students empower their explanation skill by using a multiple perspective activity</p> <p><b>Explaining by audios</b></p> <p>1.The research team will assign a set of topics to each student. This set of topics will be uploaded as a learning activity that</p>	<b>3rd week</b>	<p>Mobile</p> <p>Laptop</p> <p>App</p> <p>(Wabisabi)</p> <p>Computers</p> <p>Cellphones</p> <p>Internet connection</p>	Explanation	<p>Misunderstood directions</p> <p>Internet connection problems</p> <p>Students might not provide a complete explanation in the assigned amount of time</p> <p>Students might have problems while recording the audio comments in the platform</p>	<b>1 hr(s)</b>

<p>can be developed in the platform.</p> <p>2. The students will have to read the material in order to record a 5 minutes audio explaining the assigned topic.</p> <p>3. Students will upload the audio as part of a portfolio entry.</p> <p>4. The researchers will listen to students' audios.</p> <p>5. The researchers will provide suggestions by the use of audios or videos in the comments section in order to reinforce students' skill.</p>					
<p><b>Meeting 6</b></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> To help students reinforce their analysis by creating a</p>	<p><b>3rd week</b></p>	<p>Mobile Laptop App (Wabisabi) Computers</p>	<p>1. Students could not upload the video</p> <p>2. Students may have problems with</p>	<p>Analysis</p>	<p>1hr(s)</p>

	<p>video from a short free story.</p> <p><b>Short story Analysis</b></p> <p>1. The research team will make a learning activity by using the platform in which they will let students know that they have to work in pairs, look for a short story and make an analysis according to what they have acknowledged.</p> <p>2. The students will work in pairs to create their analysis that will include the main topic and their own point of view.</p> <p>3. The students will record a video which will include the required elements from point 2.</p> <p>4. The students will</p>		<p>Cellphones</p> <p>Internet connection</p>	<p>the video resolution.</p> <p>3. Students got confused and created an explanation instead of an analysis .</p> <p>4. Students could not log in the platform due to the bad internet conditions.</p>		
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upload their video in the comments section of the platform.					
<p><b>Meeting 7</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To help students improve their explanation skill by watching a video and answering questions</p> <p><b>Digital storytelling</b></p> <p>1. The research team will post a video and questions related as a learning activity in the platform.</p> <p>2. The students will watch the video.</p> <p>3. The students will answer the questions.</p> <p>4. The students will upload a Microsoft word document which contains the questions</p>	4th week	<p>Mobile</p> <p>Laptop</p> <p>App</p> <p>(Wabisabi)</p> <p>Computers</p> <p>Cellphones</p> <p>Internet</p> <p>connection</p> <p>video</p>	<p>1. Students could not watch the video.</p> <p>2. Students may have problems with the video resolution..</p> <p>3. Students could not upload the Microsoft Word document.</p> <p>4. Students could not log in the platform due to the bad internet conditions</p> <p>5. Students answered in the comments section.</p>	Explanation	1 hr(s)



<p>previously posted by the researchers and their corresponding answers.</p> <p>5. The researchers will assess, reinforce and provide feedback to each student.</p>					
<p><b>Meeting 8</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To help students empower their analysis and explanation skills by answering a set of questions from a podcast as a conversation activity.</p> <p><b>Posting Questions and heatmap</b></p> <p>1. The researchers will post both a set of questions and a heatmap related to a podcast in the conversation section that the platform offers.</p>	<p><b>4th week</b></p>	<p>Laptop App (Wabisabi) Computers Cellphones Internet connection video</p>	<p>1. Students could not understand the directions.</p> <p>2. Students may have problems with the internet connection..</p> <p>3. Students did not choose an answer in the heatmap.</p> <p>4. Students could not log in the platform due to the bad internet conditions.</p> <p>5. Students answered the heatmap without having listened to the podcast.</p>	<p>Analysis and explanation</p>	<p>1 hr(s)</p>

	<p>2. The students will listen to a podcast of a specific topic.</p> <p>3. The students will create a 10 line paragraph in order to provide their own analysis from the podcast.</p> <p>4. Finally, Students will have to select an answer in order to show their preference related to the podcast.</p>					
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## **CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 CONCLUSIONS**

#### **4.1.1 Platform Wabisabi**

Platform Wabisabi increases the facilities to enhance students skills by using its features such as audios and videos in order to make them more capable to work and learn efficiently. In the case of teachers, Wabisabi represents a new way of sharing, explaining and preparing their knowledge in order to spread specific details that can be necessary for achieving objectives, providing feedback and assessing students. Besides, this Platform offers a good environment of interaction between teachers and students for having a new way of learning outside the classroom.

#### **4.1.2 The use of Audios and Videos**

The use of audios and videos represent fundamental tools that provide flexibility during the learning process. With them, the interaction between teachers and students can be transformed into a real time experience in which collaboration and integration in learning are the principal proposes of these technological tools. Based on this, Platform Wabisabi promotes features in which critical thinking skills can be enhanced into students since audios and videos can stimulate their capacity to analyze and explain what they could acquire during their academic life and by having an engagement with this new type of communication. Finally, audios and videos facilitate the capacity to think critically into students since they constitute an authentic teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **4.1.3 Assessment of Analysis and Explanation**

The use of Platform Wabisabi and its features, audios and videos are relevant in teachers' work because the combination of these points might transport and guide teachers to follow a path for students in order to assess their capacities to analyze and explain thoughts and knowledge with accuracy. Besides, the use of this Platform enhances analysis and explanation to reach the objectives teachers have established at the beginning of their course.

## **4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.2.1 To teachers of the English Language Department of the University of El Salvador**

Teachers must take into consideration that the use of Platform Wabisabi and its features can help students to enhance and assess students' work and in this way to have a transformation in learning. In this sense, teachers must be constantly updated in order to provide different ways of imparted and teaching information by taking advantage of using technological tools such as audios and videos. It is also recommendable for teachers to make good use of online activities that can make students improve their performance and foster their critical thinking skills. Finally, teachers need to create a scenario of online interaction in which they can expand their knowledge into students in order to prepare them for the following level of English, and to bring solutions about learning, especially in this time in which Covid-19 pandemic is affecting the learning process.

### **4.2.2 To Intensive Intermediate English II students**

It is recommendable for students to see the use of Platform Wabisabi not just as a tool but also as an aid in which they can maximize their analysis and explanation. In this case, they have to be conscious about the benefit that this Platform offers and take it as an advantage for enhancing their academic performance. Besides, they should be aware that the level of English they are facing is challenging, so they must be constant with the use of technological tools such as audios and videos can bring them an extra hand to improve their skills. For instance, they have to foster their critical thinking skills by being persistent with online activities in which they can enhance their communication for gaining knowledge accurately.

### **4.2.3 To Future researchers**

Future researchers have to take into consideration not only the activities shown in this work, but also to use Platform Wabisabi and its features. It is important they include the rest of the critical thinking skills (interpretation, evaluation, inference and self-regulation) because it is necessary to identify which ones need to be enhanced and assessed in the group or level they may work with. Also, researchers must monitor students' work and responses related to their development by creating reliable tools that determine to what extent the group

is enhancing their critical thinking skills, so researchers have to find solutions based on the results they could get. In addition, it is good to keep in mind that students may not have functional or efficient devices or stable internet connection, so researchers must be ready to provide solutions to make them participate even though these problems may appear.

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