UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES



TOPIC:

THE USE OF TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES IN VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS AS PART OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES TEACHING METHODOLOGY.

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INFORME FINAL DE CURSO DE ESPECIALIZACIÓN ADMINISTRACIÓN DE AMBIENTES VIRTUALES PARA LA ENSEÑANZA Y APRENDIZAJE DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS

IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF:

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ABSTRACT

In this document, the research team is describing the newest option for students that are looking to complete their graduation process at the University of El Salvador; and that is the course of specialization in English teaching that was named: Administration of Virtual Environments for the Teaching and Learning of Foreign Languages. This one had a duration of 6 months in total and a total of 3 modules total, each module was prepared with specific topics in order to be correlated between them. Students were instructed to learn about the synchronous and asynchronous sessions not only because the course was given in that way but also because it was needed to understand how to handle both session types. Through the course the students were developing different activities such as creating an Infographic, recording a podcast and a video, creating a Google classroom and adding material that was created with the different educational applications that were studied in the synchronous classes. To conclude, the course was giving students the knowledge and resources to complete their learning process on how to manage a virtual environment while teaching a foreign language.

Key words: Online learning, Technological tools, electronic devices, Learning Management System, Foreign Languages, Learning activities, Teaching material, Online Platforms.

INTRODUCTION

Before 2020 and the global pandemic situation due to COVID-19, students and teachers were used to the physical classroom with desks, whiteboards, books, libraries, etc; and the technological resources were used, sometimes, as the last resource. Nowadays, after the chaos and many changes caused by the virus, students and teachers were forced to leave the face-toface modality and adapt themselves to a virtual environment in order to continue with their educational-work path. It was a long and hard process for the educational ministry to come up with a functional way to continue with the classes, since they decided that was better for students to continue with online classes, the University of El Salvador also took the decision to complete their semesters through virtual platforms and online activities. They also needed to decide and prepare a new option to help students on their graduation process since some of them were left behind due to the pandemic situation. The alternative that was created by the heads and authorities of the Foreign Language Department was the specialization course: Administration of virtual environments for the teaching and learning of foreign languages; in this document the research team is including a historical background about COVID-19; in addition, a review about learning theories such as behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, etc. With this content already described, the team moved on to the concept of E-learning and how it could be applied to English teaching, also in order to perform the classes in the best way possible, the participants in the course were learning about the Learning Management Systems; students discussed about Facebook groups being part of those LMS, seemed that the team have split opinions but we all agreed that Infographics are actually a legit LMS. The research team worked on the creation of a Google classroom and learned how to manage it as a virtual classroom; the course presented the technological tools for educational purposes and their foundations and principles. Also, it included the usage of tools such as Edpuzzle, Liveworksheets, Nearpod, and Kahoot! Powtoon. In a nutshell, this report is about the specialization course and what it was about: the main technological tools, their advantages and disadvantages, their expected results and their applications.

OBJECTIVES

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To describe the various technological tools learned in the specialization course entitled: Virtual Environments for the Teaching and Learning of Foreign Languages.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

To explain the use of the different technologies which can support foreign language teaching and learning

To identify which technological tools are used by teachers nowadays to develop each of the four macro skills.

To get familiar with theoretical information about technological tools for teaching learning a language and their functions.

To classify technological resources into teaching methods and the actual way to use them in teaching and learning foreign languages

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

COVID-19

The characterization of a pandemic means that the epidemic has spread across several countries, continents, or the entire world, affecting a large number of people; that was the case for the virus identified by the World Health Organization (WHO) around December 2019 in Wuhan, Hubei province China. The virus, called COVID-19, causes respiratory illnesses, high temperatures, and can manifest itself from a common cold to a severe acute syndrome (Abodunrin, Oloye & Doye & Salvador was a superior of the supe reported on Wednesday, March 18, 2020. On March 6, El Salvador's General Director of Civil Protection declared a yellow alert due to the risk of the arrival of COVID-19 to the country, just some hours after the first case was confirmed in Costa Rica. This situation alerted the Salvadoran people, "Motivating the authorities to implement strategies that are the result of an absence of antiviral treatment or vaccination" (Guo et al., 2020; Stebbing et al., 2020). Some of these strategies were promoting handwashing, keeping social distancing, restricting movement, quarantining, closure of public and private institutions, among others. The WHO, the world health organization, decided on March 11, 2020, to officially declare it a pandemic, on the same day, the executive branch, despite having no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the country, suspended classes nationwide for both public and private educational institutions for 21 days. The government of El Salvador took gradual measures in different areas, even before COVID-19 was declared officially as a pandemic, adopting more restricted measures such as the exclusion of commercial flights from countries where there was a high rate of people infected with the disease, establishing that no person from China and its regions could enter the country.

The country was already on an educational crisis way back before the pandemic situation started, a proof of this problem is that based on statistics from Internet World Stats indicate that as of December 2017, the latest date for which data is available, 57.7% of the Salvadoran population had access to Internet service through different devices and platforms, meaning that only a small percentage of students had access to continue with the new reality that it is "virtual education". The students, who suddenly had to stay at home, needed more than ever at least one digital device and an internet network, that most of the cases is being used by their whole family, to continue with the learning activities of their most enrolled subjects, through assignments, virtual lectures, and a series of overlapping homework. Besides, they have to deal with the possible effects of the pandemic on the family's health, emotions, financial concerns, and physical health. Added to this is the use of virtual environments, due to the difficulty of using the cell phone in the case of several students and the difficulties to afford a constant mobile internet expense (Melchor Sanchez Mendiola, et. al, 2020).

E-LEARNING AND LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

E-learning and Learning Management Systems are two terms that need to be taken into consideration in nowadays education. Due to the necessity of changing from in-person instruction to virtual instruction, e-learning has become a must in all the classrooms of El Salvador. According to e-student.org (n.d.), which is a specialized website for online education, "E-learning, also referred to as online learning or electronic learning, is the acquisition of knowledge which takes place through electronic technologies and media. In simple language, e-learning is defined as learning that is enabled electronically".

E-learning is not only necessary but also very beneficial during certain contexts. Because social distancing became a basic recommendation to avoid the infections of COVID-19, it was

necessary to find new means to convey information to each of the students. Moreover, it was indispensable to find new ways to transmit the educational content in the best possible ways to fit the necessities of the students. One of the benefits of e-learning is that it gives students the possibility of studying in a self-paced manner. Either synchronous or asynchronous teaching, e-learning has opened a wide range of possibilities for the students to keep up with their educational process despite the global pandemic. Another major term of great importance is Learning Management System. A Learning Management System (LMS) is a software app that is used to administer educational courses, and it is helpful to track the development of the students, provide content instruction, generate grade reports, and many other usages.

Some of the most common LMS are Moodle, Schoology, Google Classroom, and TalentLMS. These platforms are mostly employed by universities, schools, and other educational institutions all around the world. These platforms allow their users to view materials about their classes, take part in online activities, upload assignments, be in contact with their tutors, and participate in discussion forums with their fellows.

FLIPPED LEARNING

The current situation of the global pandemic has had a direct impact on educational structure. Our country was forced to change whiteboards, desks, notebooks and so much more for a computer or cell phone with internet connection so learning can continue as normal as possible. The online modality has pushed students to undertake more independent learning, and the multiple work hours have made it almost impossible for teachers to keep to a traditional methodology. Consequently, Flipped Learning has become an excellent option for teachers and students who want to apply an active methodology and maximize time. Flipped learning is based on a student-centered philosophy, an organized sequence, four key elements, and a great focus on

virtual structure. According to the Observatory of Educational Innovation Tecnológico de Monterrey (2014), Flipped Learning is "A teaching approach in which direct instruction is performed outside the classroom and face-to-face time is used for significant and personalized learning activities." Flipped classrooms give students the key role in the learning process. Teachers become guides who provide the students with meaningful electronic media and resources such as videos, digital stories, simulations, electronic books, among others that are studied out of the classroom. The students watch the videos and get ready for the following face-to-face session in which they present evidence of their learning, consolidate their knowledge through collaborative activities, and have a better interaction with the teacher.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

MODULE I - ONLINE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

This module was about the theories of learning: Behaviorism, Cognitivism, Constructivism and Connectivism. Also, the most common Learning Management Systems for English Language Teaching: Blackboard, Canvas, Edmodo, Schoology, Moodle, and Google Classroom. And, The Most popular Video Conferencing tools: Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams and Google Meet.

LEARNING THEORIES

Learning theories typically consist of statements about where knowledge originates and about how people learn. We tend to distinguish between theory (what we think and know about something) and practice (what we actually do).

BEHAVIORISM:

As its name implies, it focuses on how people behave. In simple terms, action produces reaction. In education, behaviorism examines how students behave while learning. It focuses on

observing how students respond to stimuli that, when repeated, can be evaluated, quantified, and eventually controlled for each individual.

COGNITIVISM:

Cognitive theorists promoted the concept that the mind has an important role in learning and sought to focus on what happens in between the occurrence of environmental stimulus and student response. Motivation and Imagination as critical elements of learning.

CONSTRUCTIVISM:

It emphasizes the importance of consciousness, free will and social influences on learning. The focus was to describe and explain teaching and learning as complex interactive social phenomena between teachers and students. Constructivism argues that individuals consciously strive for meaning to make sense of their environment in terms of past experience and their present state.

CONNECTIVISM:

George Siemens has been the main proponent of connectivism, a learning model that acknowledges major shifts in the way knowledge and information flows, grows, and changes because of vast data communications networks. Some principles: Learner autonomy, Openness, Diversity, Interactivity is particularly appropriate for courses with very high enrollments and where the learning goal or objective is to develop and create knowledge rather than to disseminate it.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING:

It is characterized by integrating multiple media, different languages and resources, enabling alternative technologies, and presenting information in an organized manner to fulfill its main purpose, which is the construction of learning through interaction. Most common are:

BLACKBOARD:

Blackboard is a customizable online learning tool that can replace or supplement traditional face-to-face classes for a school or any other classroom structure. Many conventional classroom functions have equivalents in Blackboard Learn, allowing students and teachers to emulate just about every physical classroom experience element.

CANVAS:

Canvas is a web-based learning management system, or LMS. It is used by learning institutions, educators, and students to access and manage online course learning materials and communicate about skill development and learning achievement.

Canvas includes a variety of customizable course creation and management tools, course and user analytics and statistics, and internal communication tools.

EDMODO:

Edmodo is a free learning management platform that merges classroom content, safe communication, and assessment with social media savvy. Students and parents can get quick answers to questions as well as stay current on class assignments and happenings via the student planner and discussion threads.

SCHOOLOGY:

Schoology is a learning management system for schools and businesses that enables its users to create, manage, and share assignments and resources. Also known as a web content management system or virtual learning environment, the cloud-based platform provides tools to manage classrooms or blended learning.

MOODLE:

Moodle is a platform for online learning that enables you to create online courses, add assignments, and keep an eye on your students' progress. It also allows you to communicate with the students and encourage communication between them in forums and discussions.

GOOGLE CLASSROOM:

Google Classroom is an educational platform designed by Google that brings students, teachers and learning materials together into one environment. Google Classroom is included as a free service for anyone with a personal Google account. It's also free for organizations using Google Workspace for Education or Google Workspace for nonprofits. In most cases, teachers and students can access Google Classroom using a Google account provided by their school.

VIDEO CONFERENCING TOOLS

Video conferencing is a powerful tool that increases student engagement and maintains lines of communication with both students and parents. While certainly not perfect, video conferencing platforms continue to improve, giving teachers more options to deliver online classroom content. Most popular Video Conferencing tools:

ZOOM:

It is a cloud-based video communications app that allows you to set up virtual video and

audio conferencing, webinars, live chats, screen-sharing, and other collaborative capabilities.

Features: Host up to 100 participants 1-1 and group meetings Unlimited meetings HD

video and audio Screen sharing Scheduled meetings Private and group chat Host controls.

SKYPE:

It is software that enables the world's conversations. Millions of individuals and

businesses use Skype to make free video and voice one-to-one and group calls, send instant

messages and share files with other people on Skype. You can use Skype on whatever works best

for you – on your mobile, computer or tablet.

Features: Up to 10 people on video calls HD video calling Screen sharing Video call recording

Interactive video chats Location sharing

MICROSOFT TEAMS:

It is the ultimate messaging app for your organization—a workspace for real-time

collaboration and communication, meetings, file and app sharing, and even the occasional emoji.

All in one place, all in the open, all accessible to everyone.

Features: 100 participants Screen sharing Video call recording Breakout rooms Whiteboard

GOOGLE MEET:

Google is making enterprise-grade video conferencing available to everyone.

Feature: Host up to 100 participants unlimited meetings Screen sharing Video call recording.

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In this module, participants designed and created an English Course on Google Classroom with its basic features; assignments, Google Slides, Quiz assignment, etc. Students also created Material for the class, to each material we created, added some material students had to complete. The participants organized the Classroom as they wanted with a YouTube video, with a PDF document, a website (link), an image and an audio. At the end of this module, it was prepared and managed a micro-teaching lesson through Google Meet. The academic activities of this module were developed online and cooperative learning emerged spontaneously, according to the requirements from the course.

MODULE II- EDUCATIONAL APPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

This module was about the theoretical fundamentals and the use of technological tools for teaching-learning a foreign language in a virtual modality. The technological tools used to teach online were: edpuzzle, flipgrid, flippity, liveworksheets, nearpod, padlet, kahoot, classroomscreen, powtoon.

EDPUZZLE

Edpuzzle is an online video editing and formative assessment tool that lets teachers cut, crop, and organize videos. But it does so much more, too.

Unlike a traditional video editor, this is more about getting clips into a format that allows teachers to engage directly with students on a subject. It also has the capacity to offer assessments based on the content, and offers lots of controls that allow for the use of video even in more strict school scenarios.

FLIPGRID:

Flipgrid is a video tool that allows teachers to post "Topics" that are essentially videos with some accompanying text. This is then shared with students, who can be prompted to respond.

The response can be made using the software's camera to create videos that are then posted to the original Topic. These videos can be recorded as many times as needed before uploading, and can have the addition of emoji, text, stickers, drawings, or custom stickers.

FLIPPITY:

Flippity is a free resource for teachers that allows for the creation of quizzes, flash cards, presentations, memory games, word searches, and more. While it can be used by a teacher as a presentation tool and work assignment, it's also a great way to get students to create their own project

LIVEWORKSHEETS:

Liveworksheets allows you to transform your traditional printable worksheets (doc, pdf, jpg...) into interactive online exercises with self-correction, which we call "interactive worksheets".

Students can do the worksheets online and send their answers to the teacher. This is good for the students (it's motivating), for the teacher (it saves time) and for the environment (it saves paper).

Additionally, the interactive worksheets take full advantage of the new technologies applied to education: they may include sounds, videos, drag and drop exercises, join with arrows, multiple choice... and even speaking exercises that the students must do using the microphone.

NEARPOD:

Nearpod helps to make any lesson interactive whether in the classroom or virtual. The concept is simple. A teacher can create interactive presentations that can contain Quiz's, Polls, Videos, Collaborate Boards, and more.

PADLET:

Padlet is a digital tool that can help teachers and students in class and beyond by offering a single place for a notice board. That's at its most basic. This digital notice board is able to feature images, links, videos, and documents, all collated on a "wall" that can be made public or private.

KAHOOT:

Kahoot is a cloud-based quiz platform that is ideal for students and teachers. Since the game-based platform allows you to create new quizzes from scratch, it's possible to be creative and offer bespoke learning options for students.

CLASSROOMSCREEN:

Classroomscreen is an online tool that allows you to display the instructions for your lesson in a clear and visual way. Choose from over 13 widgets to support your class activities and help students get to work.

POWTOON:

PowToon is an eTool that creates animated videos for personal, educational, or business/professional use. It is a free, web-based (with options to upgrade), user- friendly software that creates presentations via three simple and easy steps: writing a script, recording a voiceover, and adding visuals

In this module, students analyzed at least eight technological tools and learned their usages in the teaching-learning process in virtual environments. The research team developed

specific activities based on instructional practices, these were discussed among the module partners in order to give and receive feedback and thus be able to improve permanently during the process. The academic activities of this module were developed online and cooperative learning emerged spontaneously, according to the requirements from the course

MODULE III - DESIGN OF DIDACTIC MATERIALS FOR VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS

This module was about the use of web tools for the design of educational materials, and the elaboration of materials such as podcasts, online presentations, interactive images, videos, among others. Since it is a fundamental part of the culmination of this specialization, the research team completed an integrative task through which students applied the competencies acquired during the three modules.

PODCAST:

Podcast is an audio or visual content that is automatically delivered over a network via free subscription. Once subscribed to, podcasts can be regularly distributed over the Internet or within your school's network and accessed with a cellphone, or any portable MP3 player, laptop, or desktop computer. Podcasts were originally audio-only but may now contain still images, video, and chapters identifying major sections or ideas. A podcasting is a method for distributing any digital media file (podcast), or series of files, over the internet for playback on portable media players. Podcasting stands for Portable On Demand Broadcasting. During the module, students practiced on recording a podcast by using Audacity; a tool that is helping us at the moment of recording the audio and to edit it if it is needed. It has a lot of features such as cut, paste, copy, change the background of the audio, add music to the audio, add transitions, etc.

INTERACTIVE IMAGES:

These are images with tags or hyperlinks that support students' learning by providing them with more information through text, websites, and embedded videos. Interactive images have tremendous potential to improve communication since they allow a story to be told in a visual, creative and innovative way. They are perhaps the most effective digital content format for engaging the audience by giving them the option to navigate and zoom the picture and provide answers by clicking on an appropriate graphical object, mark a region, annotate, set an answer/comment on a given position, etc. A great tool to create this material is Genially, even though some of their newest features are for a paid subscription, the participants were able to create useful material with the free option during the module.

GOOGLE SITES:

This tool allows non-technical users to organize and share digital information on an easy-to-maintain site. Students learned that effective sites are not defined as much by their components as by whether they are achieving their purpose; some of them are:

To disseminate static information, meaning information that does not change.

To share news and other changing information, also called semi-static, since it disseminates information that changes periodically.

To provide resources related to course content, by including links to teacher -created resources and outside resources related to the curriculum

To facilitate interaction, by focusing on the curriculum and student learning.

To act as a growing repository of knowledge related to the course, also known as pedagogical memory.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The research team was able to become acquainted with the virtual learning environments that are used currently.

The research team learned how to identify multimedia resources according to the teaching-learning process that contribute and are suitable in virtual education.

The research team was able to create a virtual classroom using a Learning Management System available on the internet.

The research team was able to get familiar with theoretical information about technological tools for teaching-learning a language and their functions.

The research team learned to define the terms and principles associated with technological tools for educational purposes.

The research team was able to use technological tools to plan and develop synchronous class activities.

The research team learned how to design digital materials for use in the teaching and learning of foreign languages.

The research team learned how to use technological tools for the design of didactic materials.

The research team learned how to elaborate digital materials for the teaching-learning of foreign languages.

The research team was able to integrate tools to present content in a Virtual Learning Environment.

CONCLUSIONS

After finishing this final report, the members of the research team list the following conclusions:

Most students decided to specialize at the end of their career because the course is interactive and practical. Regarding perceptions about teaching, the participants obtained information about technological tools, programs, resources, applications to improve the learning of foreign languages. Furthermore, the research team perceives that this course presents many career opportunities in the teaching field for new graduates with well-paid jobs.

In online classroom environments, LMS (Learning Management System) reinforces teachers and students in the learning process. A standard LMS supports an inclusive learning environment for academic progress with interceding structures that promote online collaborative-groupings, professional training, discussions, and communication among other LMS users. The technology and tools which support online learning structures continue to progress. LMS compositions include a variety of media and communications tools and promote learner choice.

Technological tools can help connect teachers and students with instantaneous ease. This all is made more likely with the guidance of strong vision and leadership at all levels from teachers. For these roles, too, technology allows greater communication, resource sharing, and improved practice so that the vision is owned by all and dedicated to helping every individual in the system improve learning for students.

Finally, it is also important to mention the fact that the research team considered important technological tools as they can be used to help and support them as an extra material

for teaching, as they give a development to the four macro skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) thus realizing that they can achieve their goals in class. Taking into account that teachers have begun to use the tools that technology provides, it is the perfect time to begin to take seriously the idea that one day there may be a variety of language applications which will be capable of being introduced to the educational system, and that a better and accelerated learning method will be developed for future generations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report team has prepared a series of recommendations to the Foreign Language Department and the authorities of the School of Humanities in order to continue improving the teaching-learning experience and continue working hand to hand with the most up-to-date technological resources.

To the Foreign Language Department

- ➤ Professors should encourage students to use technology correctly. Smartphones, computers, tablets, and smart TV are elements in which students can learn easily by watching movies, TV series or even using their smartphones to install apps that allow them to practice the different contents. All this with the purpose of being exposed the majority of the time with the language.
- ➤ Professors should research what apps they can use to complement textbooks in classes like conjugators, dictionaries online, encyclopedias or grammar exercise apps that can support some topics, depending on their needs; students have to reinforce to better comprehend the course material
- ➤ Professors should continue using the different technological tools practiced in the course to improve the learning process of the students and, like this, students could continue practicing these strategies outside the classroom.

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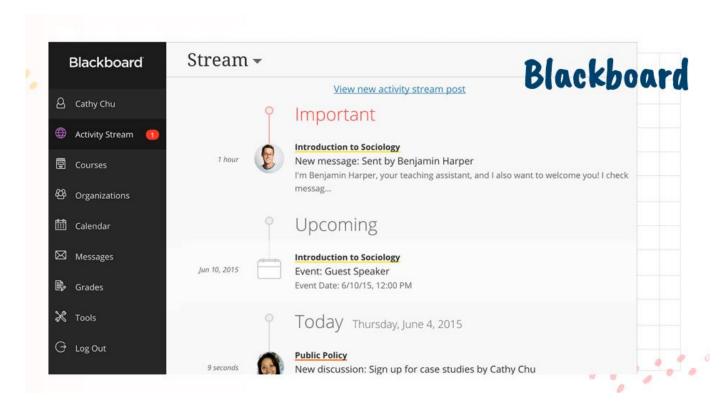
APPENDIXES

MODULE I - ONLINE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING:

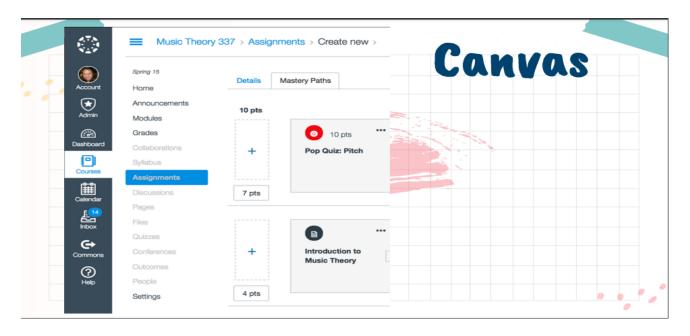
APPENDIX A

BLACKBOARD



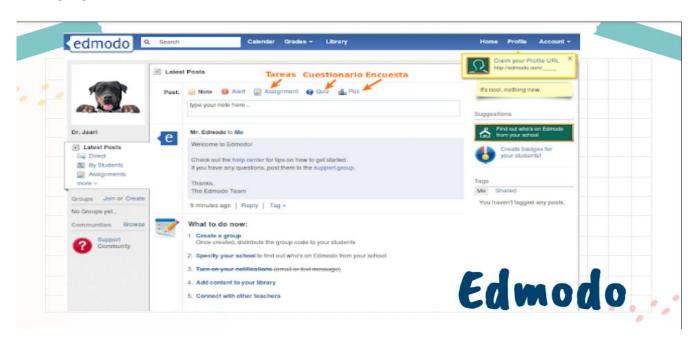
APPENDIX B

CANVAS



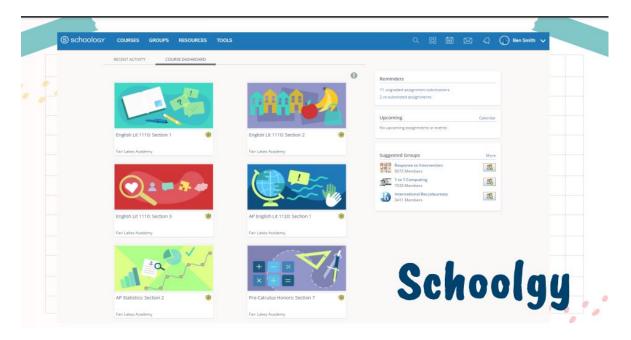
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EDMODO



APPENDIX D

SCHOOLOGY



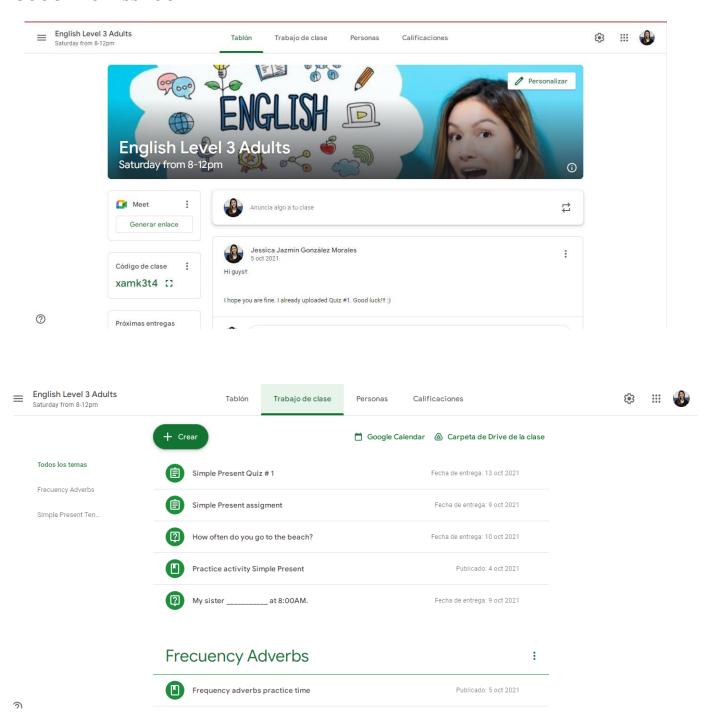
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MOODLE



APPENDIX F

GOOGLE CLASSROOM



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MODULE II - EDUCATIONAL APPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING A FOREIGN

Rafael Antonio Avilés Menjiv...

Lorena Carolina Bonilla Ramí...

Rosibel Beatriz Martinez Me...

Nancy Amanda Ortíz Cativo

(invitado)

LANGUAGE

TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS

APPENDIX G



EDPUZZLE

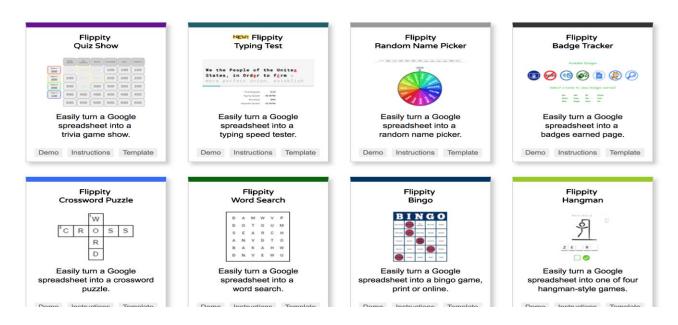
APPENDIX H



FLIPGRID

APPENDIX I

FLIPPITY

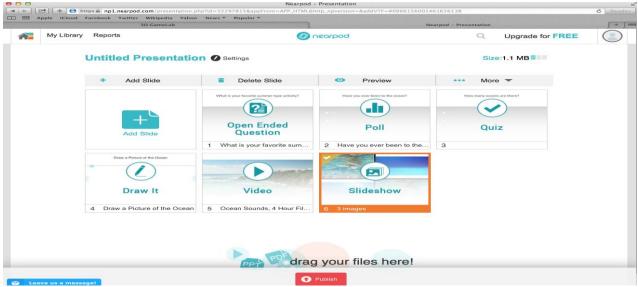


APPENDIX J

LIVEWORSHEETS

1. The sun , fire	e are examples	of				
2. The moon is not a light source, it			the	the light from other sources.		
3. are formed when lights hits an opaque object.						
4. Lights always flows in						
5. Classify the materials based on light passing through it						
			Transparen	t Translucent	Opaque	
Clear glass Butter paper	Wood metal	Mud clothes				
Coloured glass Mirror	air wax paper	smoke stone				
				**LIVEWO	RKSHEETS	

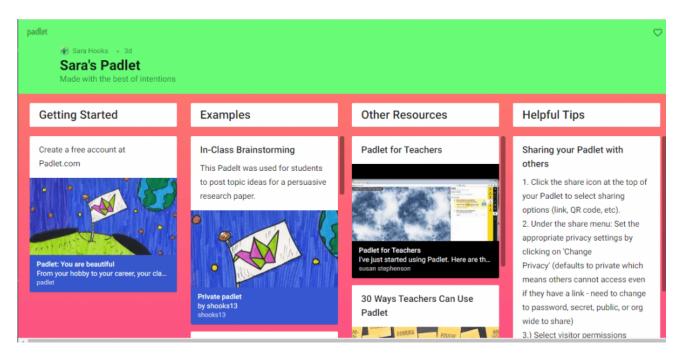
APPENDIX K



NEARPOD

APPENDIX L

PADLET



APPENDIX M



KAHOOT

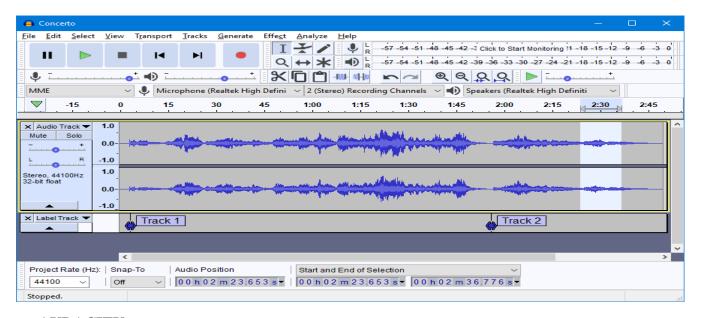
APPENDIX N

CLASSROOMSCREEN



MODULE III - DESIGN OF DIDACTIC MATERIALS FOR VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS

APPENDIX O



AUDACITY

APPENDIX P



PODCAST

APPENDIX Q

INTERACTIVE IMAGE



APPENDIX R

GOOGLE SITE

