

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



TOPIC:

TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS FOR TEACHING ENGLISH ONLINE

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**INFORME FINAL DE CURSO DE ESPECIALIZACIÓN:
ADMINISTRACIÓN DE AMBIENTES VIRTUALES PARA LA ENSEÑANZA
Y APRENDIZAJE DE IDIOMAS EXTRANJEROS PARA OBTENER EL
TÍTULO DE LICENCIADA EN LENGUAS MODERNAS**

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ABSTRACT

The internet brings new alternatives in our lives, including the virtual learning environments. These educational technologies help teachers to diversify the teaching-learning process even now the pandemic affects face-to-face classes. In addition, implement new options to develop the classes and become more interactive. The purpose of this report is to present how the specialization course of the administration of virtual environments for teaching foreign languages was developed during six months in a virtual modality and describe the different activities executed during this time from create activities to develop in class as teachers to evaluate learners. During the sessions and evaluations, there are some tools that were taught and used, such as: Flippity, liveworksheets, nearpod, Kahoot, etc and some platforms, for example Google site to have a better learning delivery. This report contains a brief description about them. At the end, this will provide what learners achieved participating in this specialization, but also some recommendations.

Key words: Virtual learning environment, virtual modality, tools, classes.

I. INTRODUCTION

The course "Administration of Virtual Environments for the Teaching and Learning of Foreign Languages" was developed with the idea of training future teachers to teach online classes. Since in the year 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic spread around the world, thus affecting face-to-face classes in El Salvador, since March of the same year teachers saw the need to continue online classes. Nowadays, online classes have become a very accessible option for students, including teachers that is why this course is developed, which is based mainly on the technological tools that are essential when teaching an online class.

This document is made up of different parts. First, the objectives are presented and wanted to be reach. Then, the theoretical framework which describes different subtopics related to the situation of the pandemic and the education before the specialization course.

In addition, this contains the description of the activities carried out. The course was developed in 3 modules, which have a logical sequence, from the simplest topics to the most extensive or complex ones. The first module was based on the three learning theories, what is an LMS, how to create an infographic and how to create a course in google classroom. The second module was based on the most common technological tools when teaching English, some of them are: Kahoot, Padlet, Nearpod, Powtoon, Flippity, liveworksheets. And in the third module students learned about Podcast, Interactive images, Google Slides, how to create a

professional video for educational purposes, and finally Google Sites, here the students demonstrated the knowledge acquired in the 3 modules

Furthermore, we expose the achievements during this course, Also, there are some conclusions.

At the end, the recommendations to the authorities of the foreign languages department and to teachers. Those advices are intended to improve the learning process and teaching in the specialization course.

II. OBJECTIVES

GENERAL

- To design material using the technological tools when teaching English language online.

SPECIFIC

- To identify which tools are suitable for teachers and students.
- To classify technological tools.
- To compare the features of 3 technological tools.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Approximately at the end of 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) identified in Wuhan, Hubei, China a type of virus which was called COVID-19. The symptoms vary from person to person. There are some infected people who don't develop any symptoms. It can cause fever, cough or difficulty breathing (Nazario, 2021)

Three months later, the general Director of the WHO (2020) announced this new disease as a pandemic. A pandemic is an outbreak of a disease that occurs across several countries, continents, or the entire world and commonly affects a significant proportion of the population (Robinson, 2022). Since this moment, the president of El Salvador decided to take some restrictions such as closing the borders for the people who came from those countries which were affected by this virus and suspending face-to-face classes just for 21 days as prevention. See appendix a.

Unfortunately, on March 19, 2020 in El Salvador, the president informed the population there is the first positive case of COVID-19. He decided to make a total closure of all areas in the country, including education in all levels. See appendix b.

Since that moment, there has been uncertainty about education. It is true that the University of El Salvador was providing a virtual education. However, nobody was trained to provide classes or receive them fully online.

The access to the internet in El Salvador

Nowadays, the importance of the internet is almost essential in our lives. The majority of the activities has relation with internet. This let us to make our lives easier. But the pandemic brought some deficiencies and problems in the education system to continue with the classes. According to Encuesta de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples (EHPM), only 23.35% of the population had access to the internet in 2019 and due to this pandemic, this percentage increased up to 45.92%. However, there were many people, in rural areas, who only had cell phones to connect to their classes. This limitation exposes the challenges that need to be addressed to continue with the classes and not to affect students' learning process in cycle I/2020.(Hernandez, 2020)

The information and communication technologies (ITC)

The introduction of new technologies has generated great opportunities for obtaining knowledge in education. Information and communication technologies (ITC) defined as a set of techniques, developments and advanced devices derived from the new tools (software and hardware), information supports and communication channels that integrate digitized information storage, processing and transmission functionalities (Pratt, 2019). They have been inserted in all areas of the society.

Education is one of these areas that can help to introduce innovative aspects in the methodology related to the teaching-learning process. The ITC favors saving money and time and provides access to education for the ones who cannot attend

in-person classes and participate in online courses. These technologies have developed different platforms and services which help to recreate teaching models, such as e-learning platforms.

Since the pandemic, people avoid having contact with others, it was necessary to find the best ways to transmit all the knowledge. This type of education is not only an extra option, but also effective learning that helps people of any age, gender and any geographical point, and it is more self-paced.

Virtual learning environment (VLE)

There is the virtual learning environment that has more interaction between tutors and students. Rodriguez points out that a virtual learning environment (VLE) refers to an educational space that is hosted on a website. It is a set of tools that facilitate learning and make up a space in which students and teachers can interact remotely and perform all tasks related to teaching without the need for physical interaction (Rodriguez, 2020).

However, the virtual learning environment (VLE) was provided to the learners as an addition to the face-to-face lectures of the higher education course. There were two different groups: the students who use these environments to facilitate the learning process and refine what they know, and the ones who don't spend too much time. It could be because they don't have the knowledge how to take advantage of this. It was the COVID-19 that demanded to use them as the only resource.

Within the benefits of this environment, Inmaculada Fernandez provides some of them, such as:

- Teachers can provide personalized learning creating differentiated learning paths and present different options to the students.

- The VLE can simplify the life of teachers to save time to grade the activities by using self-marking activities which import the grades, to monitor the students.

- This environment helps teachers to support students with any doubt, it could be instantly, they don't need to wait for the next class to resolve the doubts, and vice versa, teachers can send any important message or notification to students. The feedback can be sent immediately.

- There is more flexibility and comfort because the students can learn at their own pace dipping in and out for their understanding.

However, the VLE has some disadvantages, such as:

- Discomfort with technology: There are many people who really needed to be familiarized with technology since the pandemic demanded to be at home, to avoid contact with others.

- Limitations: The students can have many limitations, they can be that they don't have a good internet connection, they are just starting to learn how to use the internet and the platforms.

-Self-discipline. This disadvantage could be either advantage or disadvantage. There are people because it is essential that the students have the motivation necessary to sit and do the course. This type of learning is more difficult for those who are prone to procrastination.

The advances of technology demand to be aware about the challenges that education can bring, or the options the education system can provide to the students to facilitate the access to the education. (Fernández, 2022).

New modalities for degree work

Technology has made our lives easier in different areas such as business, education, and social life. In January 2016, the University of El Salvador created an agreement with the Ministry of education, in this way the university will continue contributing to the construction of a more equitable and inclusive country by expanding the opportunities to access a higher education. At that time, the University offered 4 major degrees online, such as: Licenciatura en enseñanza de la Matemática, Licenciatura en la enseñanza de las Ciencias Naturales, Licenciatura de la enseñanza del idioma inglés y licenciatura en informática educativa. This agreement helps to provide access to the education, however the majority of students were in face-to-face classes

The pandemic caused inconveniences to the students in both majors for foreign languages: Licenciatura en enseñanza del idioma inglés and licenciatura en lenguas modernas con especialidad en francés e inglés. The students, who were in the graduation process, were doubtful about how to proceed with the thesis since

the country was in a quarantine, there was no option to collect all the information. Faced with the necessary of giving a solution, in May 2020, the University General Assembly (AGU) approved Reforms to the Regulation of the Academic-Administrative Management of the University of El Salvador, which establishes modifications, in order to expand the possibilities of the degree work, in addition to the theses (Campos, 2020). Giving other options such as: research internships, specialization courses, diploma, professional practice internships. These new modalities entered into force in cycle II/2020. See appendix c.

The authorities from the Faculty of Sciences and Humanities would make the specialization course available. At the beginning of cycle II/2021, students had the possibility to study the specialization course about administration of virtual environments for the teaching and learning of foreign languages. The modality was virtual classes.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

MODULE 1.

This module was taught through Google Meets. It provided a brief introduction of the three learning theories which most contribute at the creations of instructional environments: behaviorism, cognitivism and constructivism, with the purpose of analyze the importance of the Learning Theories, students participated in a discussion forum through campus platform. Moreover, students knew the differences between synchronous and asynchronous teaching and its benefits. This module also showed the students what E-learning is about, it is defined as electronic learning that takes place through electronic materials, anytime anywhere. As well as the differences between remote education, distance education and online education.

In this module, students had the opportunity to learn about LMS (Learning Management Systems), which are software platforms that contribute to an interactive online learning environment. The functions that a LMS needs to have are: Assessment; it is a function which supports the collection and storage of tasks, where teachers can assign a grade and feedback to each learner. Tracking progress; it is a feature which allows teachers to monitor the students. Communication tools; they are synchronous tools which support one-way communications such as email boards, or wikis. Gradebook; the grade book function facilitates the way to grade, for example individual scores, students' attendance, class grades and also at-risk students' information. Security, is the feature which includes user authentication,

access verification, password integrity intruder detection. Privacy; is important to ensure that sensitive information is available to the recipient only. Some examples of LMS are: Edmodo, Sakai, Moodle, e-Educativa.

Moreover, in the module 1, students learned how to create an infographic, which is a visual representation of information, it can include diagrams, text, images and charts. (Infogram, 2022) To practice, students elaborated an infographic, they selected, analyzed and organized the information of features of 4 LMS. To do this activity students used the tool Canva.

In this module students learned how to create and organize google classroom, which is an online tool which allows teachers to create an online course where they can elaborate assignments, do activities, and share material to the class with the students, as well as grade them, here, teachers can monitor the students. Google classroom works with Google Docs, slides, Google drive, calendar, Earth, sites, slides, Gmail (Edward, 2022).

The module ended with a practice where students had the opportunity to elaborate a course in google classroom as a LMS, here students elaborated tasks, assessed the students, did dynamic activities, shared content and grade them. This activity was presented at the whole course as a real class.

This module was very important because it shows the basics of how to elaborate an online course using LMS.

MODULE 2.

Nowadays due to Covid-19 it is essential for teachers to know about educational tools and how to use in online courses and for students to know how to work in online courses, that is why, this module focused on universal design and its principles, it also focused on students and teacher role, in what teaching with technology means, and in the technologies tools that support online courses.

The universal design is the approach of including accessible features in the learning process. The first principle is based on the idea that universal design is represented in various ways and students can access any of them. The second principle provides multiple ways of expressions and students can express what they know. The third principle provides multiple means of engagement to stimulate interest and motivation for learning.

This module was also focused on student's role, in online courses students can use, forum discussion, the social networking platforms to gather information, students can present their work by using different tools and to do the activities more entertained, they can use animations, videos, blogs. As well as focusing on the teacher's role, they are the facilitators, guides and motivators for learners. Teachers have to create material for students, monitor them, grade them, they can use different technological tools learned on this module.

In the module two students knew the importance of teaching with technology, nowadays technology offers access to instructional materials as well as resources and tools to create, manage and assess the activities, in addition, students knew the

advantages and disadvantages that they have to take into account when teaching online courses.

In this module students learned about the technological tools that support online courses: Flippity, liveworksheets, nearpod, powtoon, kahoot and Paddlet. They learned the function of each tool, the advantages, the disadvantages and how to use them.

Flippity: is a free tool for teachers it works with google sheets and can be used in online courses and in remote learning, in Flippity teachers can create flash cards, word searches, memory games, presentations and also allow students to create their own project.

Liveworksheets: is a tool in which teachers can create their content over a print worksheet in PDF or word and they can transform it into an interactive activity using different styles such as drag and drop, multiple choice, join the arrows, speaking exercise and drag and drop.

Nearpod: is a tool in which teachers can create interactive lessons, it allows them to create games like memory games, time to climb, draw, and more. In Nearpod teachers can add google slides and videos.

Powtoon: is an online tool that allows teachers and students to create professional short videos. Is possible to create videos with animations, backgrounds, soundtracks, live-action videos, images and moving graphics. In order to practice, students create a video using this tool.

Kahoot: is a feature which allows teachers to create cloud-base quizzes.

Paddlet: is a digital notice board that allows teachers and students to add creative content with images, videos, links.

This module was interesting because students knew about these creative tools. Moreover, students did the practice and explored the features of each tool which helped with the knowledge and understanding of how to use them.

MODULE 3.

In this module students learned about multimedia and how It had changed the traditional teaching-learning to dynamic, in which we can involve images, videos, audios, text. To start, students learned about audios, and why they are important in online class. As well as what a podcast is. A podcast is an audio that can be taken from the internet, it can be played on any electronic device. Moreover, students learned how to create them. To practice, students created a podcast about an educational topic, they did it by recording themselves in a smartphone, then converted the audio in MP3 format, after the audio was converted students added background in Audacity application to finally upload it on SoundCloud application.

To continue, in this module students learned about the anatomy of an image, about the resolution that is basically how many pixels are displayed per inch, between more pixels per inch, more quality has the image. Students also learned about which file types best suit the image needs, for example: TIFF format is great for print, JPG for web graphics, JPEG is best for Joint Photographic Experts Group;

this is common on the internet and cameras. Likewise, students learned about interactive images, which is a creative image where buttons can be added. These buttons can reflect images, links, text, videos. In order to practice, students created an interactive image in the Genially application, the topic was the same as the podcast topic.

On the other hand, in this module students learned how to create google slides and combine colors properly. Google slide is a google platform online and offline in which people can create creative presentations, add videos, images, links. The presentations can be uploaded to the cloud and people can access anywhere anytime from any electronic device. As well as, many users can modify the same presentation at the same time. In order to practice, students created a google presentation in which images, videos, links were included, moreover students had to combine colors correctly in order to call the attention of the public, the topic for the presentation was the same as the podcast and the interactive image.

To finish, students knew how to create professional videos for a class. To create a professional video the creator needs, take into account the background color, it is better if it is only one color, also, the type of outfit and the color, as well as the accessories, and of course, the angles, the creator can choose the one that looks better. The creator needs to verify that the camera is clean and that the audio listens perfectly. To do the practice, students recorded a video with a smartphone and then edited in the Openshot application, they added background music and uploaded either YouTube or Google Drive. The topic for this video was the same as the podcast, the interactive image and the google presentation.

At the end of the three modules students put into practice what they had learned. In order to show their knowledge, students created a google site as a site for students in which the fourth activities of the module three were imbibed, as well the module one and two. The activity that was integrated for the module one was a google class room in which there were activities for students. For module two, students choose two technological tools they have learned and created activities to make the site more creative.

V. ACHIEVEMENTS

At the end of this course students were able to teach English classes online by putting in practice the technological tools that were learned in the three modules. In module one, students were capable of elaborating infographics for educational purposes, an infographic is a visual representation of content. As well as to elaborate a course in Google Classroom platform, here they were capable to share content, create quizzes, elaborate activities and assess the students.

In module two, students were able to use different tools which support the online courses. Students learned how to use Flippity; it is an interactive tool where teachers can elaborate creative activities such as word searches, flash cards, presentations, memory games and also allow students to create their own project. Students also learned how to use Liveworksheets, which is a tool in which teachers can transform a print worksheet into an interactive activity. The team knew how to use the Nearpod tool for educational purposes, which is a tool that allows teachers to create interactive lessons, where teachers can create games, add slides, videos and more. Students also knew how to use the Powtoon tool for educational purposes. Here people can create professional videos with animations, soundtracks, backgrounds, images, live actions and more. Moreover, the team learned how to use Kahoot, it consists of creating cloud-base quizzes. And finally, students knew how to create a Paddlet, which is a digital notice board where both teacher and students can add creative content.

In module three, students learned how to create a podcast, which is an audio that is available on the internet. As well as, students learned how to elaborate an

interactive image, by adding buttons where content can be added. Moreover, students knew how to create a Google Presentation for educational purposes, it consists in creating creative slides, it can be online and offline. Then, students knew how to elaborate a professional video for educational purposes, as well as use the Openshoot app and edit videos. Finally, students were capable of elaborating a website and integrating material by using the tools learned in the whole course, in order to support teaching English online.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

- The work team concludes that in recent years due to Covid-19, the online courses have increased significantly, technology has been essential when teaching English online and technological tools with educational purposes play an important role.
- Technologies have made great progress in recent years, providing tools used for academic development, the use of these tools is based on internet connectivity, within these we have digital platforms and applications, which serve as means of communication, as well as inputs and outputs of information, the volume of data storage is essential to share all kinds of content through these platforms, others have quick access and almost from anywhere if you have an electronic device and internet access.
- The use of technological tools is limited by external factors, related to connectivity issues, such as the network available in the geographical area to run the computer platforms as well as economic limitations by not being able to own an electronic device
- It is essential for teacher to be trained in the use of technological tools when teaching online
- During the course the team concludes that it is important that teachers are prepared to face any inconvenience during the course, whether it be connection problems, electronic devices not working, or tools being used not working properly.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

To authorities for foreign languages department:

- To expand the teaching staff so that the department can provide more different schedules and students requests from a properly and safely.
- To create and plan extra training workshops to get more familiar with technological platforms
- To encourage foreign languages teachers through training for classes online and face-to-face class, since this course can be in-person course.

To teachers:

- To create specific spaces during the sessions only for the interaction and participation of students, in that way the majority of the doubts will be clarify and they can dialogue about experiences.
- To develop different activities that can be done out of the classes, they will help not only to cover the topics, but also to present the interest in the students and they don't feel that the activities are extra homework.
- To include more practice in using the technological tools to reduce the time spent watching videos to prevent students from becoming distracted.

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IX. APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A. Quarantine for 21 days.

The government from El Salvador announced quarantine for 21 days. Face-to-face classes, concerts and sporting events were suspended. The picture was taken from the facebook page of Diario El Mundo

www.elmundo.sv

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APPENDIX B. Exception status

The government announced an exception status, where citizens were prohibited from moving freely. The image was taken from La Prensa Grafica Twitter.



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CIENCIA MÉDICA : 32
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+ CRECEN CRÍTICAS POR MANEJO DE LOS ALBERGUES : 8

+ HONDURAS DECRETA "ALERTA ROJA" POR 14 DÍAS : 12

+ ESPAÑA E ITALIA CON LAS MEDIDAS MÁS DRÁSTICAS : 14

Una mujer, no identificada, sufre un desmayo en la Villa Olímpica, Mejicanos, donde guarda cuarentena. Hasta ayer había unas 1,200 personas en las áreas de cuarentena sanitaria que se han habilitado en diferentes zonas del país.

LIGA MAYOR
QUEJAS POR RECORTE SALARIAL : 50

SÉPTIMO SENTIDO
MIRIAM ALDANA: "EL SISTEMA GENERAL DE LAS INSTITUCIONES DEL ESTADO PRESENTA SEVERAS PRECARIIDADES"

Total closure of international airport. First case of covid in the country. This picture was taken from Revista Disruptiva



APPENDIX C. Reforms to the academic management regulation.

Assembly approved reforms to the academic management regulation, in which specialization, internships or research work were allowed. Students can choose any of these modalities. This information was taken from Facebook page Asamblea General Universitaria-UES.

Asamblea General Universitaria-UES
22 de mayo de 2020 · 🌐

La Asamblea General Universitaria-UES (AGU), máximo organismo normativo de la Universidad de El Salvador(UES), aprobó por unanimidad reformas al Reglamento de la Gestión Académico Administrativo de la UES, respecto a procesos de graduación.

- ✓ De ahora en adelante, los egresados podrán optar por otras modalidades de Trabajo de Grado, contemplando modalidades como: Trabajos de investigación, cursos de especialización, Pasantías, Y OTRAS QUE LAS FACULTADES POR MEDIO DE REGLAMENTOS CONSIDEREN PERTINENTES PARA CADA UNA DE LAS CARRERAS, esto se reformó en el artículo 191.
- ✓ En el Artículo 203, para el caso de los trabajos de grado modalidad tesis, la presentación y evaluación de su defensa podrá ser de manera presencial o en línea.
- ✓ En el artículo 212 se contempla la reducción a una copia física del Trabajo de Grado, anteriormente se entregaban 2.
- ✓ El artículo 214 habilita a los egresados que ya tenían inscrito su trabajo de grado, a retirar dicha modalidad y optar a un cambio de la misma.

Foto de referencia.