

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



TÍTULO:

**THE IMPORTANCE OF USING TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES TO GENERATE SIGNIFICANT LEARNING
TO STUDENTS IN ONLINE EDUCATION**

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

TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF:

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ENGLISH WITH A MAJOR IN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN MODERN LANGUAGES WITH A MAJOR IN FRENCH AND ENGLISH

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AMÉRICA, OCTOBER 25th, 2023**

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TABLE OF CONTENT

ABSTRACT	4
I INTRODUCTION	5
II OBJECTIVES	7
2.1 General Objective:	7
2.2 Specific Objectives:	7
III THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	8
IV DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES	14
4.1 MODULE 1: Online Foreign Languages Teaching	14
4.2 MODULE 2: Educational Applications for Learning a Foreign Language	16
4.3 MODULE 3: Design of Didactic Materials for Virtual Environments	17
V ACHIEVEMENTS	21
VI CONCLUSIONS	24
VII RECOMMENDATIONS	25
VIII WEBLIOGRAPHY	26
IX APPENDIXES	27
9.1 Appendix A	27
9.1.1 Module 1: Online Foreign Languages Teaching	27
9.2 Appendix B	28
9.2.1 Module 2: Educational Applications for Learning a Foreign Language	28
9.3 Appendix C	30
9.3.1 Module 3: Design of Didactic Materials for Virtual Environments	30

ABSTRACT

The main idea of this project is to show and learn about the different technological resources that teachers and students can take advantage of when online classes are developed, with the only purpose of keeping and improving educational skills during this process. During the pandemic since 2020, Educational Institutions worldwide had to take actions to continue with the programs in the entire education system and force them to change from the methodology that has been used through all the years to use virtual environments. Teachers had to find different ways and tools to meet the needs in all levels, so in this final report, important information will be projected and explained about those technological resources with their theoretical and practical sessions learned in three modules that are module 1: Online Foreign Languages Teaching, module 2: Educational Applications for Learning a Foreign Language, and module 3: Design of Didactic Materials for Virtual Environments of the “Specialization Course in the Administration of Virtual Environments for Foreign Languages Teaching and Learning”.

Key words: Technological Resources, Online Classes, Educational Skills, Methodology, Virtual Environments.

I INTRODUCTION

Since Covid-19 pandemic arrived to the world, many things have changed, ones have been affected for its impact not only in people' s health but also in other areas like education, it was forced to change from face to face to a virtual modality. Classrooms become computers, all the students in the world began to learn through their computer´s screens, and in El Salvador was no exception. In March, 2020 the University of El Salvador suspended all the academic activities due to Covid-19, but classes never stopped even during the emergency that El Salvador was in. In the Foreign Languages Department, English teachers had to teach through different platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom, Schoology, and so on. Probably some teachers had the notion about how to use some or scarcely the features and the usages of the platforms, but others teachers did not know how to use it, even how to turn on the microphone or the camera or to share the screen through platform, or how to engage the students in a more dynamic class using a technological tool like Kahoot! The same experience for students, many of them did not have the knowledge how to access the class, how to use the microphone and in which moment to turn off the microphone in order not to interrupt the class that is why the Foreign Languages Department launched the Specialization Course in the Administration of Virtual Environments for Foreign Languages Teaching and Learning that was born in 2021. Now the way how to teach an English class in a virtual modality has been updated not only for English Teachers who belong to Foreign Languages Department but also for students who will be the future professionals.

For this reason, the purpose of the members of this final report is to explain the importance of using technological resources to generate significant learning to students in online education. At the same time, to describe all the academic activities comprehended from March to October 2023 carried out through the Specialization Course in the Administration of Virtual Environments for Foreign Languages Teaching and Learning.

In addition, this final report contains the objectives, a theoretical framework which develops the main topic “The importance of using Technological Resources to generate significant learning to students in online education”. Moreover, the description of three modules carried out in the Specialization Course.

Module 1: Online Foreign Languages Teaching, module 2: Educational Applications for Learning a Foreign Language, and module 3: Design of Didactic Materials for Virtual Environments. Furthermore, it exposes the achievements students have reached. After that, the conclusions and the recommendations of the members that suggest to the authorities of Foreign Languages Department.

II OBJECTIVES

2.1 General Objective:

- To explain the importance of using technological resources to generate significant learning to students in online education.

2.2 Specific Objectives:

- To describe the academic activities of the three modules carried out in a virtual modality in the Specialization Course in the Administration of Virtual Environments for Foreign Languages Teaching and Learning.
- To show the different technological resources that teachers and students can take advantage of when online classes are developed.
- To learn how to combine different technological tools to design didactic material with significant content for teaching-learning of foreign languages in virtual environments.

III THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The COVID-19 pandemic has produced changes in the teaching–learning environment in education, and has impacted learning between teachers and students. Most students had some exposure to e-learning prior to the e-learning regiment, contrasted with close to 90% of teachers having no or very limited experience. Li, S., Zhang, C., Liu, Q. (2022). That is why teachers should take into account the importance of using technological resources to generate significant learning to students in online education such as benefits, diverse learning styles, access to global resources, flexibility, and an interactive learning environment.

The internet became a great resource for original English content, but it is also a great place to find information in the form of articles, conferences, courses, and much more. The instructor has the option of giving homework to pupils via email and administering tests online. Professor can access their kids' work online at any time. Students no longer miss classes because they can access worksheets and notes from electronic online sources, view a webcam version, and whiteboards. Schools are connected through a network and collaborate on initiatives to get ready for resources online. Each school use LMSs. LMSs is an e-learning platform that provides an integrated tool set (including tools such as chat, discussion board, gradebook, e-mail, and content storage such as a digital drop box) to the online teacher and learner. Leslie (2003) defines a learning management system as:

- Software suites that enable both synchronous and asynchronous students' participation with both the learning content and with other students and the instructor.
- Systems sold in a traditional vendor model that allow institutions to run the software in their own environment and hosted services provide application service provider (ASP) style relationships.
- Software packages and hosted services when they provide at least one of the following functions:

- Tools to facilitate multiple aspects of course design, content authoring, and content management.
- Tool for administering assessments and tracking the usage from both student and content perspectives.
- Tools that structure content delivery and course progression around conventional postsecondary course units of delivery and postsecondary schedules such as terms and semesters. (p.8)

The LMS that each university or school uses is predetermined by themselves. The most common LMSs are Blackboard, Moodle, and Canvas. These are just some examples. Additionally, online learning provides access to global resources, allowing students to explore different perspectives, and expand their knowledge beyond their immediate surroundings. The flexibility and convenience of online learning also make it easier for individuals with busy schedules or geographical limitations to pursue education. Furthermore, online education fosters interactive learning environments through discussion forums, virtual classrooms, and collaborative projects, enabling students to engage with their peers and instructors regardless of physical distance. Online education is a valuable tool that enhances the learning experience and empowers individuals to pursue their educational goals.

Teaching online classes can be made more effective and efficient with the help of various tools and platforms. Here are some essential tools for teaching online classes:

1. Video Conferencing Software

Platforms for video conferencing: these platforms allow students to meet in a virtual classroom. They are very useful nowadays because students and teachers can communicate with each other from long distances. Examples:

Zoom: A popular choice for conducting live virtual classes with features like screen sharing, breakout rooms, and recording.

Google Meet: Integrated with G Suite, Google Meet offers stable video conferencing for educators.

Microsoft Teams: Ideal for educators using Microsoft 365, it offers video conferencing and collaboration tools.

2. Learning Management Systems (LMS)

Moodle: A robust open-source LMS that allows you to create, manage, and deliver online courses.

Canvas: A user-friendly LMS that offers a variety of features for course creation and management.

Blackboard: Another widely used LMS with tools for content delivery, assessment, and collaboration.

3. Content Creation Tools:

PowerPoint/Google Slides: Create engaging presentations for online lectures.

Camtasia: A video editing software for creating educational videos and tutorials.

Articulate Storyline: Build interactive e-learning courses.

Nearpod: Is a website and app-based digital tool that lets teachers create slide-based learning resources.

Powtoon: Is an online platform for creating short video presentations.

Flipgrid: is a free web and mobile app from Microsoft where educators create safe, online groups for students to express their ideas asynchronously in short video, text, and audio messages.

4. Communication and Collaboration Tools:

Slack: A messaging platform for communication and collaboration among students and educators.

Microsoft OneNote/Google Docs: Collaborative note-taking and document editing tools.

Trello: Organize tasks, assignments, and projects.

5. Screen Recording and Sharing:

Screencast-O-Matic: Record your screen to create video lectures or tutorials.

Loom: Capture and share video messages and tutorials.

Snagit: Capture screenshots and create tutorials with annotations.

6. Online Whiteboards:

Jamboard: Google's digital whiteboard for collaborative drawing and brainstorming.

Miro: An online collaborative whiteboard for visual collaboration.

Classroomscreen: Is a platform that offers numerous tools to help you create optimal learning.

7. Assessment and Quizzing:

Google Forms: Create quizzes and surveys for assessment.

Kahoot!: Gamify your lessons with interactive quizzes.

Quizlet: Create flashcards and quizzes for learning and review.

Liveworksheets: Is a tool that allows teachers to create interactive worksheets for their students.

8. Virtual Classroom Tools:

Edmodo: A platform designed specifically for educators to create virtual classrooms.

ClassDojo: A communication platform that helps teachers and students stay connected.

9. Video Hosting and Streaming

YouTube: Share and host educational videos.

Vimeo: A platform for high-quality video hosting.

10. Webinar Platforms:

Webex: Cisco's platform for webinars and virtual events.

GoToWebinar: A tool for hosting webinars and online workshops.

11. Student Engagement Tools:

Poll Everywhere: Engage students with real-time polls and surveys.

Padlet: Create interactive boards for collaborative brainstorming.

12. Online Quizzes and Assignments Management:

Turnitin: For plagiarism detection and academic integrity.

Google Classroom: Manage assignments, grades, and communication in one place.

13. Analytics and Learning Insights:

Google Analytics: Track website and course performance.

Learning analytics within your LMS: Use built-in analytics to monitor student engagement and progress. The choice of tools depends on your specific teaching needs, the subject matter, and the preferences of you and your students. It's essential to ensure that the tools you select are user-friendly and promote a positive online learning experience. Additionally, consider privacy and security concerns when choosing tools for your online classes.

Pedagogical strategies of learning in online education: It is necessary for teachers and students to know the characteristics offered by digital tools and to choose the ones that best suit their needs;

since while some serve to collaborate others are specialized in communication, information processing or to socialize content, that is, to share what was learned.

To make sure that the message is properly delivered to students, teachers must find ways to keep track of this information using all the technological tools available directed to specific purposes. It is important to encourage students to be willing to expand their knowledge and improve their competence in different areas from the beginning so they can have successful results as the main difference between studying online and studying in the classroom is that teachers are responsible for the learning environment, they need to provide the place to work, the description of learning tools, and any other items students might need, including a machine with the necessary technical requirements. It is important to mention the following concept:

Asynchronous: This refers to communication where participants do not interact in real-time. Messages or interactions are sent and received with a time delay, and immediate response are not expected. Examples include email, discussion forums, and text messaging. Asynchronous learning involves students addressing pre-recorded lectures or materials at their own pace and submitting assignments or participating in discussions.

IV DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

4.1 MODULE 1: Online Foreign Languages Teaching

The first module developed some essential aspects of teaching online. Review of learning theories, the difference between synchronous and asynchronous learning, and LMS (Learning Management System) to set up a virtual classroom.

Learning theories

The facilitator provided some information about learning theories. These theories provide insights into the processes of learning and offer guidance to educators in designing effective instructional methods.

The instructor made a presentation and then the whole class broke into small groups to discuss one theory such as Behaviorism that learning is a result of stimulus-response association, Cognitive focuses on internal mental processes, including how people think, perceive, and remember information, and Constructivism emphasizes that individual actively construct their knowledge and understanding of the world through experiences and interactions.

Synchronous and Asynchronous

Another aspect explained was the difference between synchronous and asynchronous learning. "synchronous" and "asynchronous" Synchronous communication: this refers to real-time communication where participants interact with each other simultaneously. It occurs instantly, allowing immediate responses.

- Examples include live video conferencing, phone calls, and instant messaging.
- Synchronous learning involves live online classes or webinars where students and instructors engage in real-time discussions and activities.

These concepts were explained in this module by the instructor. The instructor clarified these terms making a discussion with the whole class. Moreover, students learned about some LMSs (Learning Management Systems). The students learned about some LMSs and the differences between other applications.

The professor also explained that LMSs are commonly used in educational institutions and other organizations to create and manage online courses, track progress, deliver content, and assess performance. They often include features such as course management, assessment tools, and communication tools. LMSs provide a centralized and efficient way to deliver and manage online education. One example of a learning management system Moodle is an open-source platform that is widely used in educational institutions around the world. The professor explained some features and functionalities to facilitate online learning. Students created an infographic about LMSs in which they explained the features of each of them.

Google Classroom was another application that students learned how to use as a teacher because most of them only had worked with it as students, but in this module, they learned how this application works to deliver information, start a video meeting, feedback, and add material among other things. (Image credit: Google Classroom)



(Image credit: Google Meet)



(Image credit: zoom)



(Image credit: Microsoft Teams)

4.2 MODULE 2: Educational Applications for Learning a Foreign Language.

The second module was developed from July to August and it had a duration of eight weeks in a virtual modality. It was about the theoretical fundamentals and the use of technological tools for teaching-learning a foreign language.

The technological tools that students learned during the module were: Edpuzzle, Flipgrid, Flippity, Liveworksheets, Nearpod, Padlet, Kahoot, Classroomscreen, and Powtoon.

In this module, students analyzed the features and the functions of each technological tool and learned their usages in the teaching-learning process in virtual environments. Students received feedback by the facilitator when there was any doubt or question during the practices in order to improve permanently during the process. The academic activities of this module were developed through online sessions and cooperative learning emerged spontaneously according to the requirements from the course. The evaluation system took place in two ways: Formative Assessment and Summative evaluation. The list of technological tools that students learned to use in this module are presented below.

EDPUZZLE: As a group presentation, students selected a topic to edit a video from YouTube in Edpuzzle, adding some questions to track students' progress in class. (Image credit: Edpuzzle)



FLIPGRID: As an evaluated activity, students created a video in Flipgrid explaining step by step how to use liveworksheets. (Image credit: 1000 logos)



FLIPPITY: As an individual work, students created a Quiz Show Questions in Flippity. (Image credit: flippity.net)



LIVEWORKSHEETS: Students designed a test with some questions about general culture using Liveworksheets, to make an interactive worksheet as assignment for an English class. (Image credit: seeklogo)



NEARPOD: In groups, students elaborated some slides with a specific topic given in class to integrate in Nearpod as a different way to present a topic in class. (Credit image: nearpod.com)



PADLET: Students were asked to create in Padlet some definitions of the different widgets that Classroomscreen has such as timer, group maker, poll, timetable and so on. (Credit image: vectorseek)



CLASSROOMSCREEN: In groups, students were asked to make a draw in classroomscreen in order to make the class



guess what is the mean of the draw made by students using the widgets that classroomscreen offers. (Credit image: classroomscreen.com)

POWTOON: Students created a video in Powtoon explaining the advantages of technological tools in an online class. (Credit image: vectorseek)



DEMO CLASS: At the end of this module, students participated in a demo class using one technological tool through the platform Meet. Students demonstrated and put in practice the knowledge and skills acquired during online classes.

4.3 MODULE 3: Design of Didactic Materials for Virtual Environments

The third and final module was planned to be covered in the last two months of the specialization, September and October, aimed at those students who have concluded their academic courses and successfully completed the two previous modules. The facilitator shared theoretical and practical

knowledge to help students to create Didactic material as of: Podcasts, interactive images, online presentations, websites, by using different tools and sites: Audacity, Genially, SoundCloud, Google presentations. As in the previous modules, the evaluation system included the formative assessments and the summative evaluation, in both feedbacks were provided in order to get the targets needed to meet the expectations that were set since the beginning.

This module was designed to help students to put in practice everything that has been developed in previous months. In the first and second week, in groups students had to find a topic that can be divided in subtopics that would be used for the different assessments:

PODCAST: In the first session of this course, by using Podcast, students were able to create didactic material: audio, with their cellphones and have the opportunity to edit it in the application: Audacity. This amazing tool



provided different features, like adding music in the background. After the edition, they upload their podcast to Soundcloud, another space to integrate this type of material. The purpose of this tool was to create attractive material and catch the attention of the class.



INTERACTIVE IMAGE:

Students have learnt the importance of creating an interactive image for virtual classes, it provides a clear message in terms of the information that is being presented, it can catch the attention of the audience and at the same time generate emotional responses. The methodology to create the image

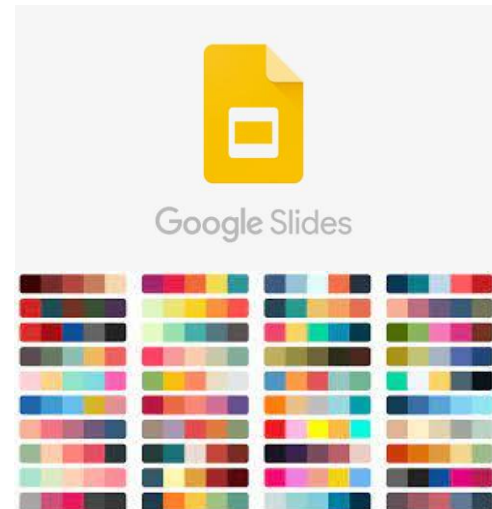


consisted in continuing to develop the subtopic used on the podcast to share more content about it.

(Credit image: genially)

GOOGLE PRESENTATION

In this class, the facilitator shared significant knowledge about how to create a functional presentation in a google site combining not just important information about the topic in discussion but also making it presentable and in a professional way using the appropriate colors, images and text. In order to get a better result, another tool was used: Color palette. (Credit image: googlesite.com)



PHOTOFUNIA:

In week number four, students learnt through videos and practicing a very useful tool to edit photos, in order to show content in virtual classes. Photofunia is a cloud-based photo editing tool that gives you a fun-filled experience. Our proprietary technology automatically identifies the face in the photo and lets you add cool photo effects and create funny face photo montages. (Credit image: Photofunia.com)



GOOGLE SITE:

The purpose of this class was to learn how to create a google site, in which students would create didactic materials using the technological tools already studied combined with the topics in development, the expectation was to upload everything: the podcast, interactive image, video and all the content, in one place. The facilitator provided videos with tutorials to create an interactive website.



WRITTEN REPORT:

The last assessment is described as the final project with the compilation of everything that has been studied in the whole specialization course, such as learning theories, the different technological tools for virtual environments, and applying this with the importance of using those resources to generate significant learning to students in online education.

V ACHIEVEMENTS

The achievements have been accomplished thanks to the result of hard work, dedication, and perseverance by students, and this could not have been possible without the help and support by the Professor in each online session during the develop of the three modules in the Specialization Course in the Administration of Virtual Environments for Foreign Languages. The achievements that were reached by students are:

Online Foreign Languages Teaching

In module 1:

- Students learned about the most LMSs that universities or school use.
- Students were able to teach using MEET conference and using the different material and tools that they learned in this module.
- Students were able to distinguish synchronous learning and asynchronous learning.
- Students learned the importance of learning theories.
- Students learned how to use Classroom as a teacher.
- Students learned how to upload videos and materials in Google Classrooms.
- Students learned how to use some tools that are included in Google such as Jam Board, and Google Slide.

Educational Applications for Learning a Foreign Language.

In Module 2:

- Students learned to define the TPACK framework which focuses on technological knowledge (TK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and content knowledge (Ck).
- Students were able to get familiar with the terms Gamification and game-based learning.
- Students were able to get familiar with the theoretical information about technological tools for teaching-learning a language and their functions.

- Students became proficient of how to use Powtoon as a tool to create animated videos.
- Students learned to identify and use the widgets on Classroomscreen as an online whiteboard to keep the classroom on task.
- Students were able to use Padlet as a free online tool to create collaborative activities.
- Students acquired a knowledge of how to create a video on Flipgrid to facilitate video discussions in an online class.
- Students gained an understanding of how to transform traditional printable worksheets into interactive online exercises using Liveworksheets.
- Students became proficient of how to use Nearpod to create interactive presentations that contain Quizzes, Polls, Videos, Collaborative Boards, and more.
- Students were able to do a demo class using technological tools in the development of a class.

Design of Didactic Materials for Virtual Environments

In module 3:

- Students acquired knowledge about the main fundamentals of using multimedia tools and how to integrate them to create content about a specific topic.
- Students learned how to create a Podcast in a creative way using Audacity, so it could be edited and uploaded in SoundCloud, they also learned how to navigate on them.
- Part of the theory was the fundamentals in how to select the appropriate images to elaborate content for teaching-learning, so students were able to apply that knowledge and create amazing compilation of images.
- Students were able to use all necessary features of the online tool: Genially, to create from scratch an interactive image with audio, text, videos etc. They found different ways to combine creativity and e-learning.

- Students were able to work in groups and practiced together in the Google Presentation site. They shared the best practices to create presentations in google as an alternative, besides PowerPoint.
- Students studied and learned how to combine the adequate colors in a presentation so everything can work together: with the background, text and pictures.
- Students learned how to navigate in google tools and create a google site to integrate everything done in previous classes. In all the sections, the professor facilitated materials to explain in an easy way how to use it.

VI CONCLUSIONS

After weeks of hard work, students reached their purpose of becoming a professional in the virtual learning environments that are used currently. Students are satisfied with the outcomes of teaching-learning process that was implemented during the Specialization Course. During the pandemic and nowadays, teachers and students learned how to accommodate themselves to the changes experienced at the moment that the teaching methodology changed to online classes.

The Specialization Course helped participants to know new technological tools that can be used to elaborate didactic materials, now they are prepared to put in practice the knowledge acquired during this process. E-learning now is considered as it can provide the same quality of education as in a face-to-face modality, since the integration of tools and a good educational program gives as a result to the students actively engaging with learning objectives. The proper use of technological tools is now considered an effective communication channel between teachers and students to obtain and increase student engagement to become more organized and achieve the goals in online education.

Finally, thanks to the Foreign Language Department, now students are able not only how to teach an English class in a face-to-face modality but also students have the opportunity to develop a synchronous class to generate significant learning, using technological resources in online education.

VII RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Department and for authorities of the school of Humanities:

- Encourage students to make use of the different tools that they learned in this course.
- Provide to the facilitator the necessary tools and in order to deliver an adequate learning experience to the participants during the whole course Implement.
- Create courses and databases with technological resources for teachers that look for maximizing the efficiency of virtual sessions.
- Create tutorials so that students are able to use various digital platforms such as: Moodle, campus UES, Google Meet, MS Teams, Zoom, etc.
- Adequate a Computer Center specialized in virtual environments.
- Provide a certificate to the students in order to attach it to the resume as an annex.
- Open more groups with different schedules.

VIII WEBLIOGRAPHY

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IX APPENDIXES

The appendixes contain the activities developed during each module and the syllabus of each one.

9.1 Appendix A

9.1.1 Module 1: Online Foreign Languages Teaching

Figure A.1

First evaluation discussion forum

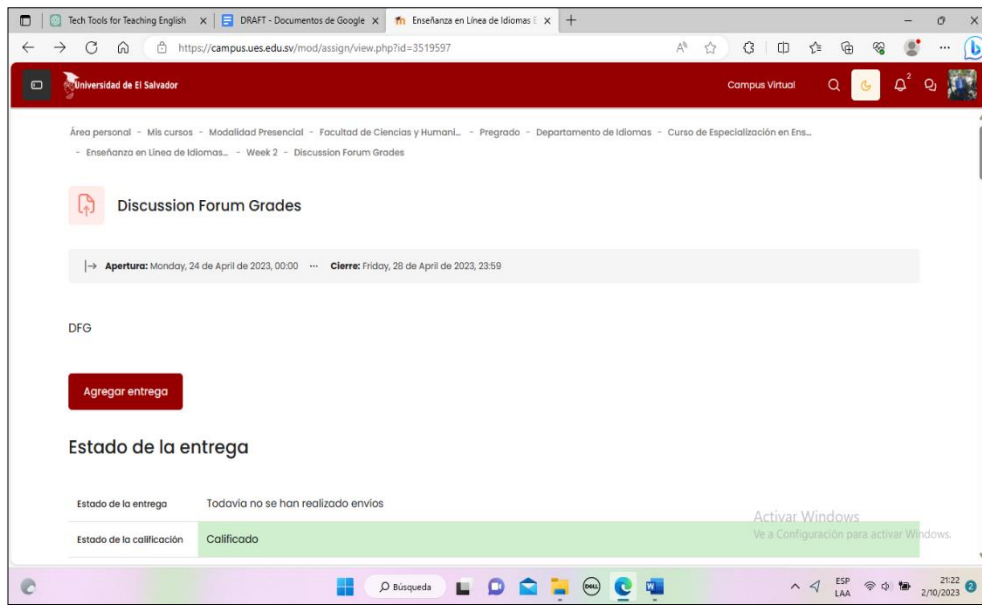
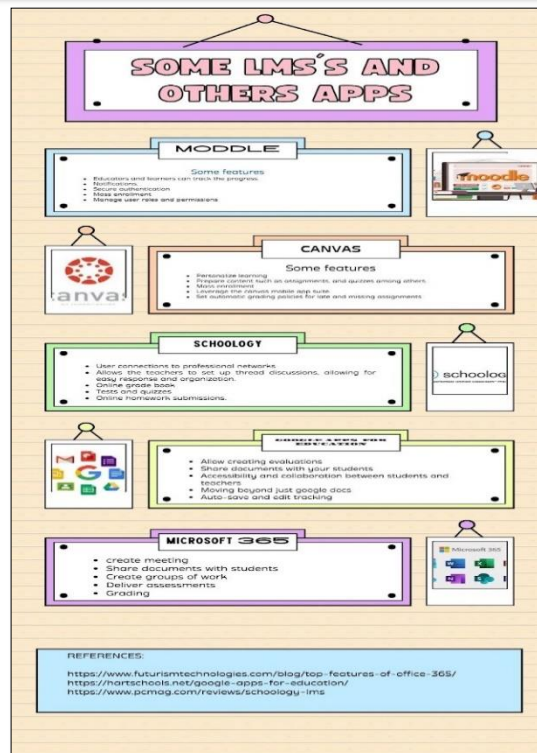


Figure A.2

Infografic evaluation



9.2 Appendix B

9.2.1 Module 2: Educational Applications for Learning a Foreign Language.

Figure B1

Campus platform screenshot.

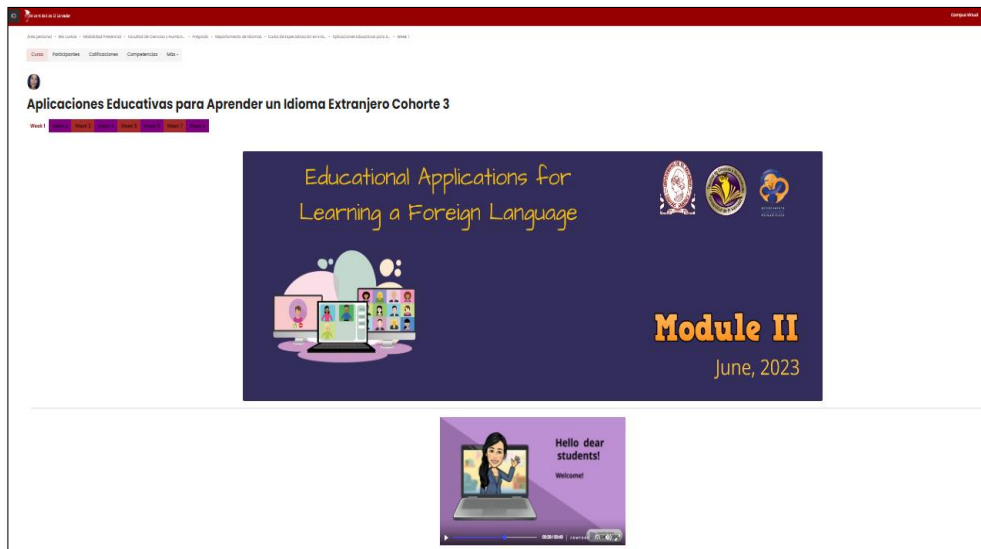


Figure B2

Infographic Evaluation

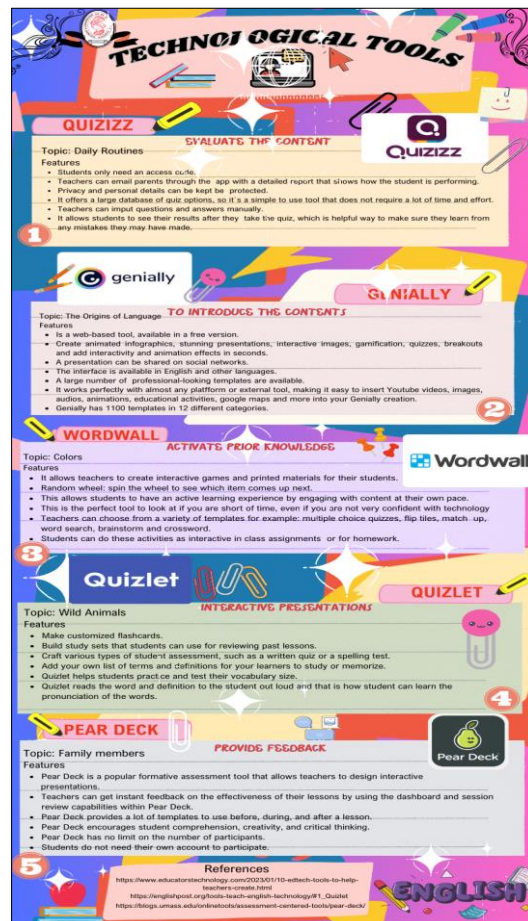


Figure B3

Video explaining how to use Liveworksheets step by step using Flipgrid.

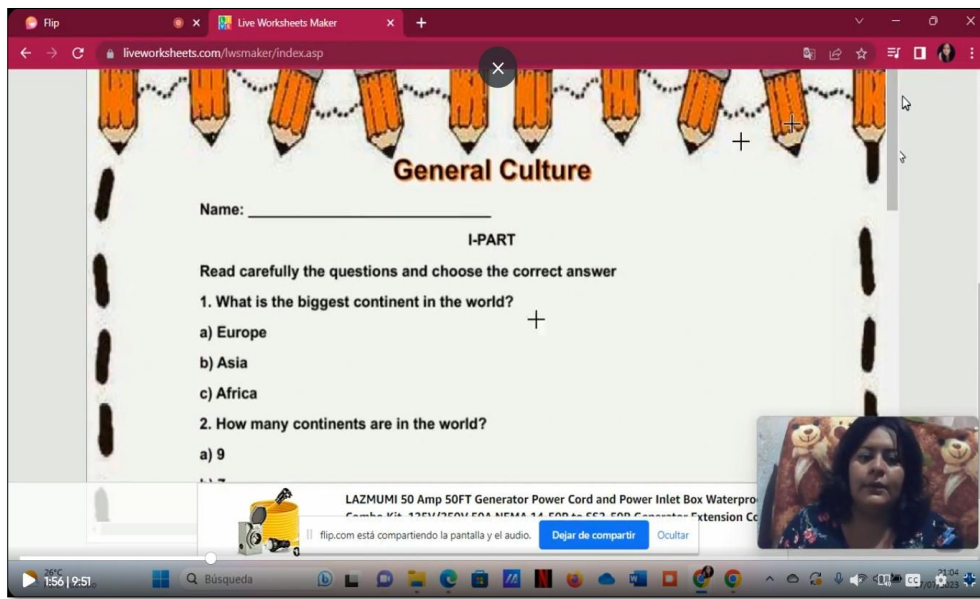
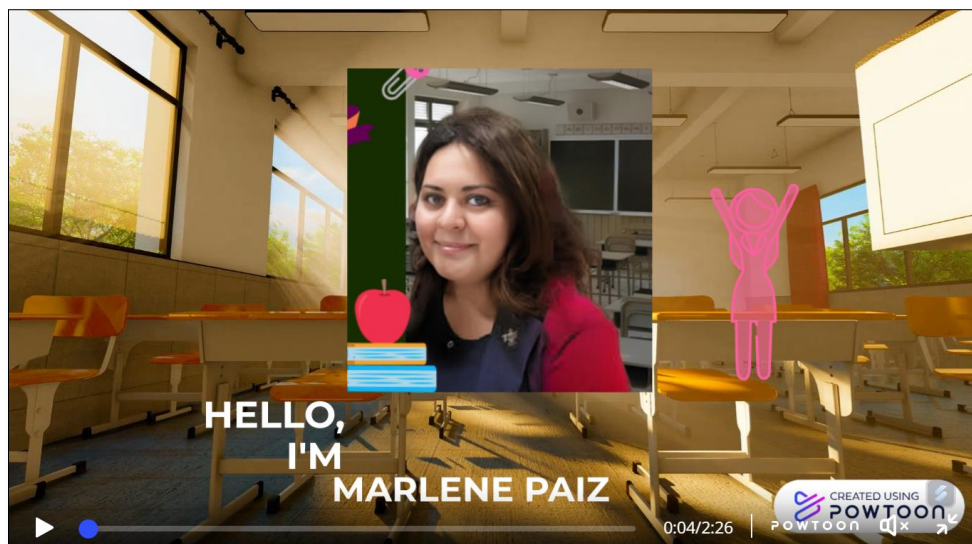


Figure B4

Video using Powtoon.



9.3 Appendix C

9.3.1 Module 3: Design of Didactic Materials for Virtual Environments

Figure C1

Campus platform screenshot of module III



Figure C2

Picture editing the podcast in Audacity.

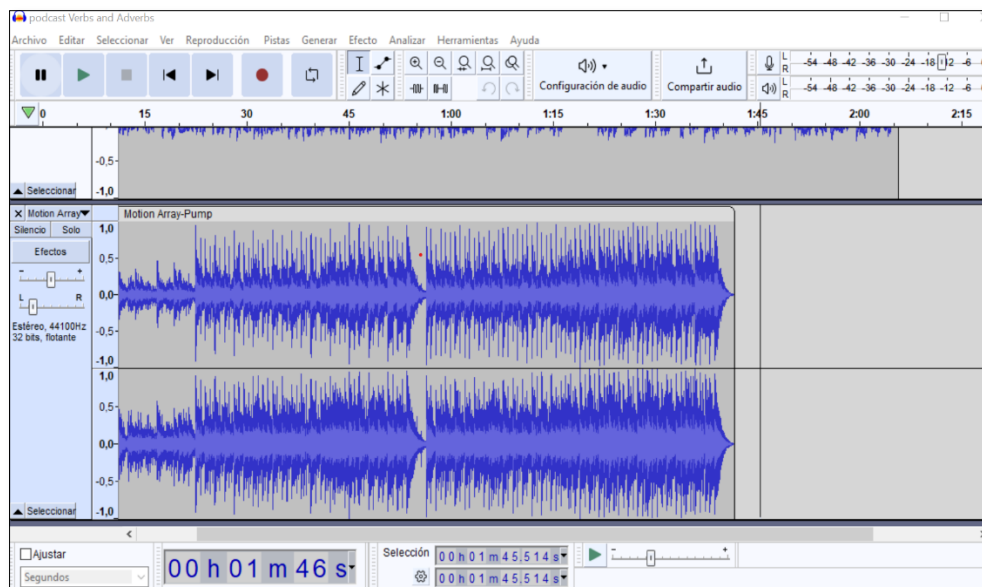


Figure C.3

Podcast uploaded in SoundCloud

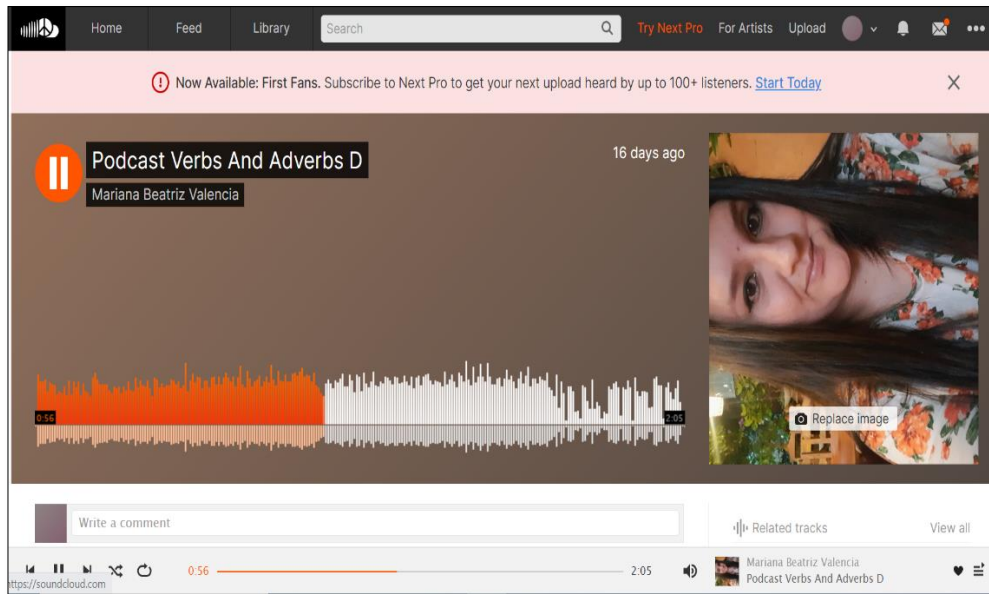


Figure C.4

Interactive image created in Genially

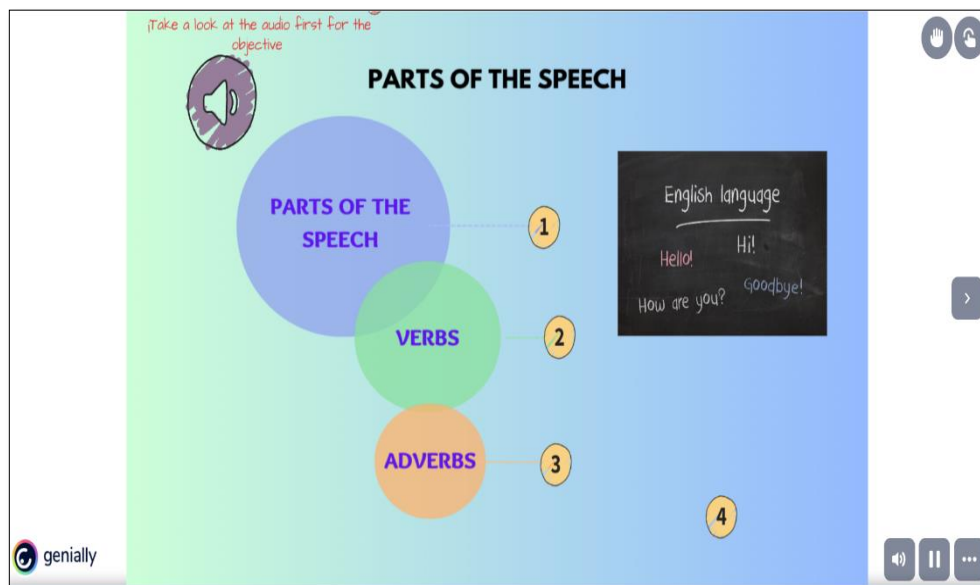


Figure C.5

Creating a Google presentation in groups during the class.

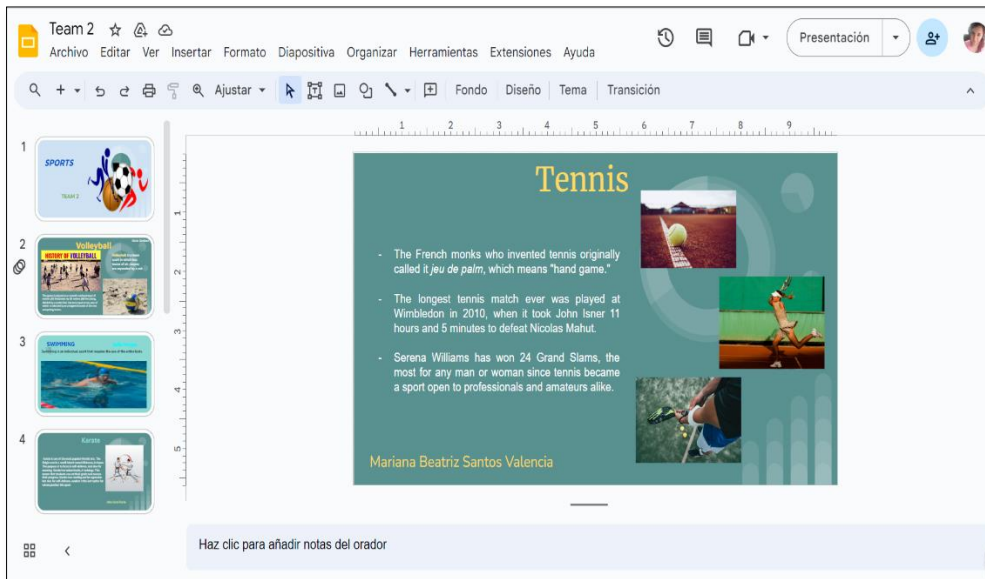


Figure C.6

Creating a Google site during the class

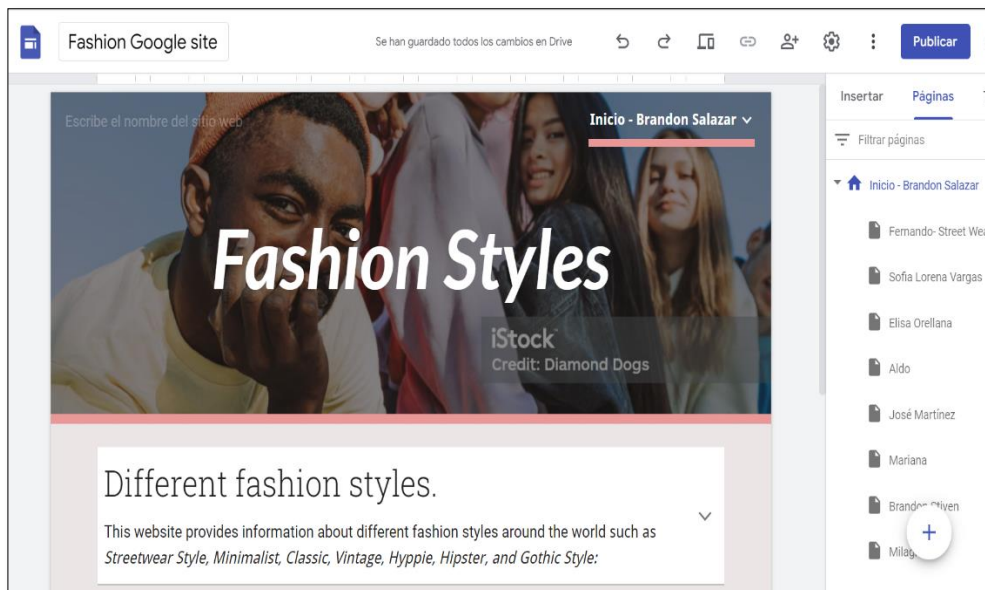


Figure C.7

Virtual class

