

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



TITLE:

Educational Platforms that Generate an Interactive Environment and Significant Learning in the Development of the Virtual Foreign Language Classes

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the use of technology has become essential for daily life. However, how to use technological tools for academic purposes seems not to be enough in the classroom yet. Therefore, the Specialization Course in the Administration of Virtual Environments for Foreign Language Teaching and Learning becomes meaningful for all those future professionals who are immersed in education. For that reason, the main purpose of this written paper is to present some educational platforms that generate an interactive environment and significant learning in the development of virtual foreign language classes. In addition, this academic report documents the valuable insights and experiences gained by aspiring EFL educators who participated in the Specialization Course in the Administration of Virtual Environments. This report presents significant information regarding educational platforms that can become useful and helpful for online environments. Moreover, in this work, the reader will find a list and brief description of some educational platforms that can help to improve non-face-to-face educational processes for both teachers and students. To sum up, individuals interested in education should read this paper to gain a better understanding of the importance of educational platforms in online foreign language classes since this will help generate more interactive and meaningful learning experiences.

Key Word: technology, technological tools, administration of virtual environments, educational platforms, online classes.

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years new technologies have had a huge impact on educational methods, and they have considerably changed the teaching techniques in each stage of education (elementary school, middle school, high school, college, etc.), for this reason, they have become extremely practical for many teachers around the world in the learning process, because they have brought the opportunity to develop many activities that in the past would have been difficult to imagine to realize them in a short period or even from home.

During the pandemic, COVID-19 in-person activities were forced to stop, to avoid the spread of the virus, and as a consequence, the institutions quickly had to find a solution to continue with the learning process, as result in the most suitable option was to switch on to the virtual classes, and the different platforms to give video conferences became popular since then because in this way students and teachers had the opportunity to interact and collaborate in real time as if they would have been in the on-site classroom, also many activities were included like virtual exams, presentations, assignments, video recordings, online forums, online gamification, etc. The University of El Salvador wasn't the exception in this new online experience, and the teacher staff and students had to face the challenge of adapting the methodologies of the traditional classes to be functional in a virtual manner.

The specialization course in the administration of virtual environments for foreign languages teaching and learning was carried out fully virtual for a long six months and has provided the students enrolled in it with many technological resources, that are helpful at the moment of creating the didactic material for teaching foreign languages and has demonstrated their crucial role in facilitating a meaningful learning process,

because they promote the teamwork, communication skills and people have the time flexibility and can access to these virtual platforms anytime and from anywhere, and in this way they can learn at their own pace and assimilate better the content in every lesson.

As a matter of fact, for teaching foreign languages in a virtual modality, is it important the approach that a teacher must have to prepare the classes and consider the most appropriate features of each educational platform to be incorporated into the classes because this will create a greater learning environment for the students. Also, in the information presented in this report, it is described how teachers need to take into consideration the most suitable pedagogical methodologies and theories of learning to be applied in each class group.

II.OBJECTIVES

2.1 General objective

To analyze the best educational platform features for teaching foreign languages and generating significant learning in online classes.

2.2 Specific Objectives

1. To describe the importance of collaborative work at the moment of developing online class activities.
2. To classify the virtual educational platforms according to the target group and the type of project to be developed in e-learning.
3. To explain the process to follow in order to create didactic material to teach foreign languages in virtual classes.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 RELEVANCE OF THE VIRTUAL MODALITY CLASSES FROM THE YEAR 2019 DUE TO THE APPEARANCE OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

Although before, the education was given mostly in a face-to-face modality. Therefore, there is a deductible deficit in the implementation of virtual tools when giving face lessons. Indeed, although certain schools and higher education institutions have taken steps to implement virtual classes, it is essential to acknowledge that they may not have been adequately equipped to address all possible challenges that could arise.

The arrival of this new event “COVID-19” significantly revolutionized the world in many aspects. The abrupt change in the educational system is worth mentioning, as it has resulted in the closure of educational institutions worldwide (NU. CEPAL-UNESCO, 2020). This necessary measure aims to prevent the widespread transmission of the virus and minimize its detrimental effects. The relevant authorities had to take or create new initiatives to prevent the teaching-learning process from collapsing. Hence, the way the classes were conducted had to be modified, so they switched from face-to-face classes to entirely online courses. According to UNESCO (2020), 191 countries in the world (98% of the world’s student population) switched to online lessons.

Many of the students experienced negative and positive stages. Those who had access to good schools with advanced resources quickly adapted to online learning, with minimal limitations, to continue their education. However, some students were at a disadvantage because either their school lacked the necessary resources, or their

teacher lacked the essential equipment or training to effectively support their educational development. The University of Valle of Guatemala (UVG) conducted research on the educational response in Guatemala and how teachers have adapted to the pandemic. This study found that only one in four teachers is prepared for online teaching and that the most qualified were those teaching in the private sector. Part of this gap is because many private schools already had classes on virtual platforms or digital books, which made the transition less complicated. Not all students anticipated this phase as an opportunity to surpass their limitations and take a positive approach. Nonetheless, both sides recognized the potential to explore new online courses and subjects.

The use of virtual media (e.g., virtual tutoring, video conferencing tools, language applications, and even online learning software) as well as educational platforms increased significantly. It is important to note that Language-learning tools also had a slight increase in the number of users. Everything revolved around "virtuality", which had a great impact on education.

In order to comply with the mandatory incorporation of online classes, it became imperative to establish virtual resources specifically designed for education, capable of effectively meeting the demands of the teaching and learning process. The initiative was also taken to provide teachers with a support tool to teach their classes in the most complete way possible. Numerous virtual resources have shown significant interest in educational platforms serving as a highly effective means to distribute academic content for student training both synchronously and asynchronously.

3.1.1 Important changes in class management, due to the transition from face-to-face person classes to online classes

Online education and face-to-face education require different methodologies and the incorporation of educational platforms. According to studies also carried out by UNESCO, a large percentage of teachers did not have enough training to develop virtual classes at the beginning of the pandemic, therefore they used the same structure as in-person classes. Then, we can't handle a virtual class like we would in an in-person class because this would limit access to technology, which goes against research-based best practices for online learning.

In this new environment, teacher training is extremely important not only to create self-confidence but also to have a functional teaching-learning process. This allows them to develop their courses in a more efficient and collaborative way.

Moreover, choosing the virtual platforms to develop the course, including asynchronous and synchronous activities, organizing time, planning activities and selecting an online evaluation system became fundamental transformations because the class management pattern that was already established was restructured in different areas. Besides that, some teachers had to make extra effort to teach the basic functions of how to use technological virtual equipment and tools, so students had the digital literacy skills to access them and not get discouraged because of how challenging it can be to try something new.

Online education goes beyond a screen with internet access. The learning method with the association of educational tools or platforms, the technological

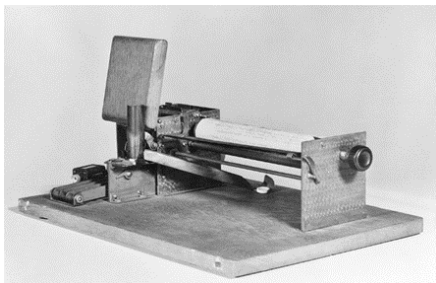
infrastructure and the adaptation of teachers have been important transition changes that pandemic and the digital era has brought.

3.2 PLATFORMS ORIGINS

In 1924, Sidney Pressey, a psychologist, presented the first learning machine. The mechanism resembled a typewriter, consisting of two compartments. The first compartment displayed the questions, while the second required the student to select one of the four options, prompting the machine to reveal the result. As long as the learner did not press the correct key, the next question did not appear. In this way, their knowledge could be reflected without the teacher's supervision.

This invention attracted the attention of many psychologists, including B.F. Skinner saw it as one of the important future contributions of pedagogical resources.

In 1990, the first virtual educational platform known as FirstClass was obtained, which included email services, online conferences, and discussion forums. The first version was not very popular, but thanks to it; much more innovative ones appeared. Nowadays, we have accessibility to these new platforms, and we can affirm the significant development they have had.



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3.3 WHAT ARE EDUCATIONAL PLATFORMS?

Educational platforms serve as dynamic virtual environments, enabling professors to engage in a myriad of educational activities. With the help of these platforms, individuals can effortlessly publish and manage their activities and materials, coordinate conferences, encourage engaging communication through open forums, and establish a central hub for addressing uncertainties. They also boast features like wikis, assignment submission, examination development, stimulating debates, real-time chats, and insightful evaluation statistics. Additionally, these platforms facilitate efficient student registration, while allowing constant monitoring of students' progress through an array of specialized tools provided by the websites.

The main function of this tool is to facilitate the creation of virtual environments to provide all types of training through the Internet without the need to have prior programming knowledge. As Fernández-Pampillón (2009) stated, the objective of virtual educational platforms is to allow the creation and management of teaching-learning spaces through the Internet, where teachers and students can interact during their training process.

They can be used to comprehensively manage distance training or as a complement to face-to-face teaching. Increasingly, this is used to create discussion and workspaces for research groups, or to implement virtual communities and learning networks on topics of common interest.

According to Sánchez (2009), virtual educational platforms have a wide variety of virtual tools to support the teaching-learning process. Those tools are:

✓ **Distribution tools**

Content distribution tools must provide a dedicated area that offers a diverse range of information. These tools offer students the ability to easily access an abundance of files in a wide range of formats, such as PDFs, TXT files, PNG images, DOCX documents, PPTX presentations, and countless others. These tools should also provide a seamless organization system that allows for the hierarchical arrangement of files through folders/directories. It must also have various ways of presenting content and information: links to files, Web pages, etc.

✓ **Communication tools and synchronous and asynchronous collaborations**

In a training activity, participants can communicate and work together: discussion forums and information exchange, chat rooms, internal course messaging with the possibility of sending messages to individual groups, wikis, diaries, and forming working groups within the group class.

✓ **Tracking tools and evaluation,**

It includes editable questionnaires for student evaluation and self-assessment, tasks, reports on each student's activity, and grading sheets.

✓ **Administration tools and assignment of permissions**

This characteristic is useful to enable assigning profiles within each course, controlling enrollment, and accessing (for example, activating or deactivating a course, enrolling system users as faculty or student, environment customization, and others.)

✓ **Complementary tools**

It is very important for a platform to have a portfolio, notepad, search systems for course content and/or forums, and other features so that students can enhance their learning experience.

3.3.1 Importance of educational platforms

The educational platforms' insertion has been a strong potential in the education field, so they have generated important changes such as the transfer of knowledge through information and communication technologies which allows the creation of new prototypes in the process of teaching and learning. Also, this inclusion has been a source of autonomy. Students get individualized learning outside of class, where they also instruct themselves, create self-confidence, learn at a desired pace. These points are very important because it makes them more responsible and at the same time committed to their own learning and besides that, develop reproductive memory as well as critical and creative thinking according to the stimulus that the teacher provides in their instructions, strategies or in their online activities.

Víctor Rea and Ana Mullo, (2018) point out that educational technology as a pedagogical model focuses on the psychological current of behaviorism, which is based on learning through stimulus and response and as a result, programmed teaching is obtained. Within virtual platforms, programmed teaching is a requirement that satisfies educators and students. Effective education through virtual platforms is framed in the following important points:

- Comprehensive education: the student is the learning center.
- Directed education: valuing the affective and cognitive.

- Student's Leadership: under the effective teacher's guidance.
- Challenges in scientific content: producing individuals capable of self-instructing in other knowledge to seek efficiency.

3.3.2 Educational platform elements

¹An educational platform needs to have the following elements to fulfill its function:

- **LMS (Learning Management System):** place where all users of the platform are integrated: students, teachers, and administrative staff. Users are introduced to the courses, where they will track their progress for the duration of the training. It has the standards established by IEEE Learning Technology Standards Committee (LTSC).
- **LCMS (Learning Content Management System):** LCMS are platforms that manage the creation, tracking, storage and distribution of e-learning content, the difference between LMS and LCMS is that the first one offers the functionalities such as the possibility of having videoconferences, webinars and forums, while LCMS only focus on content distribution.
- **Communication tools:** Encourage student participation by creating spaces dedicated to common work and the exchange of information. This is normally done through chats, forums, emails, file sharing, etc.)
- **Administration tools:** Allows the management of registrations, different access permissions within the platform for different users, etc.

¹ Plataformas educativas, Aula 1. Retrieved October 3, 2023, from <https://www.aula1.com/plataformas-educativas/>

3.3.3 Classification of virtual educational platforms

Depending on the type of activity for which they are intended, they are classified as follows:

1. **Commercial educational platforms:** Created by for-profit companies or educational institutions. They have good reliability and effective technical assistance. These tools are not free and require payment of an annual fee for successive updates. The most important ones have several specialized modules to adapt to the teacher's needs. Some of the best known are WebCT, and FirstClass.
2. **Free software platforms:** They are created without profit purposes. Some of its main advantages are the program is free to be used for any purpose, it is adaptable to any need, and it is not necessary payment to have access to updates. Some free software educational platforms are, for example: Moodle, Google Classroom, and others.
3. **Self-developed platforms:** they are completely personalized to the project's needs and have better outcomes to the educational and pedagogical needs of the project; they are not free.

3.3.4 Benefits of using online learning platforms

1. **Flexibility and convenience:** Online learning allows students to learn at their own pace and time. This is ideal for students who have busy schedules or who live in remote areas.
2. **Affordability:** Online platforms also reduce the costs and barriers associated with travel, accommodation, and childcare for learners who live far from campus or have other commitments.
3. **Personalized learning:** Online learning platforms can be customized to meet the individual needs of each student. This can help students learn more effectively and efficiently.
4. **Diversity and inclusion among learners, peers and educators:** Online platforms can reach a wider and more diverse audience of learners and foster a more inclusive and respectful learning environment. Educational platforms can also facilitate the integration of culturally relevant content, resources, and examples into the curriculum, as well as the different forms of knowledge and practice.
5. **Engagement and Collaboration:** Online learning platforms offer opportunities for students to collaborate with each other and with their

²Smart Educator (September 4, 2023). *What are the benefits of using online learning platforms?* Quora. Retrieved October 4, 2023, from <https://www.quora.com/What-are-the-benefits-of-using-online-learning-platforms>

Online Platforms for Social Work Education: Pros and Cons. (2023, September 1). LinkedIn. Retrieved October 4, 2023, from <https://www.linkedin.com/advice/0/what-advantages-disadvantages-using-online-platforms-1c>

instructors through interactive and multimedia tools and features, such as discussion forums, chat rooms, video conferencing, podcasts, blogs, wikis, quizzes, games, and simulations, that can stimulate learners' interest, motivation, and participation. This can help students develop their communication and teamwork skills.

6. **Access to resources:** Online learning platforms provide students with access to a wide range of resources, including course materials, videos, and interactive exercises. This can help students learn more deeply and retain information better.

3.3.5 Types of Educational Platforms for Virtual Environments

Most educational platforms can be adapted to give any type of topic since it contains features that complement the learning and teaching process very well. Lupión, T. (2020, August 31) declared: *“Virtual educational platforms will depend on two factors: the type of platform it is and the needs of its users. Behind each virtual educational platform there is an institution with its own way of organizing itself and its regulations.”* For this reason, it is important that the trainer analyzes the objectives he wants to achieve with his students to choose the platform that best complements his course. In this section will be presented platforms that can be used for teaching foreign languages.

In addition, some of the platforms include interactive features such as gamification that makes classes dynamic and interesting, which is essential to keep students' attention and improve their academic performance, but some do not. They just have the essential features required to fulfill the learning objectives.

★ **Learning Management Educational Platforms (LMS)**



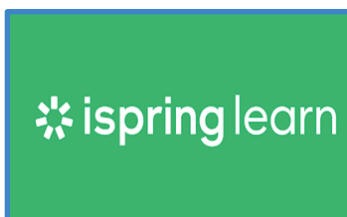
Canvas LMS is a cloud-based educational platform designed to facilitate online teaching and learning. Integrations: Adobe, Microsoft Teams, Course Creation and Management, rubrics, Calendars, Schedules, Quizzes, Analytics, Mobile apps for iOS and Android, Speed Grader

feature, integrated tools for real-time communication

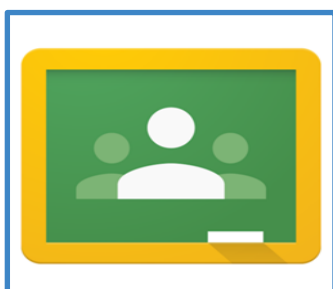


Moodle LMS (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment). As it is open source, it is customizable by educators, administrators, and learners to offer flexibility and numerous alterations. Features: Content access, managing activities and assignments with the Moodle app,

collaborative learning with Forums, Web Conferencing, and more.



iSpring Learn offers a set of features to create, deliver, track, onboard, train, and develop corporate training activities, easy content creation – interactive courses, role-plays, assessments, and video.



Google Classroom is a tool in Google Apps for Education that helps teachers create and organize assignments quickly, provide feedback efficiently, and easily communicate with their classes.



Schoolology: Designed to help schools. Improve student performance, parent engagement, and overall communication and collaboration. With Schoolology Learning, we can support student growth with individualized instruction and equitable access to learning

for every student—at home, at school, or anywhere.

Sakai is a sophisticated platform that has communication options and group-aware tools that make keeping in touch and working together easier. In addition, it lets us create and organize text, resources, quizzes, tests, assignments, links, video, collaborative work into lessons. Also, we can upload, store, and share files, and much more.



★ **Educational Course Creation Platforms (LCMS)**

Also known as Learning Content Management Systems (LCMS), they are software systems specialized in the design, development, organization, and management of educational content for educational and training environments.



Adobe Captivate: In this platform, you can distribute a course, which can be accessed by learners around the world. A learning management system (LMS) provides the following services: Track analytics, such as the number of students who have enrolled in a course, the time it takes to

complete it, scores, records of tests taken, etc.

★ Collaborative Educational Platforms

Software systems facilitate communication, interaction and joint work between students and educators. Some objectives that we can achieve by using these platforms are active learning, the construction of knowledge and the development of social and cognitive skills.



Microsoft Teams: In a distance learning scenario, Teams can work alongside several Learning Management Systems (LMS) and apps, supporting the crucial need for online lectures, discussions, and collaboration. In partnership with Teams features like meetings, live events, assignments, and more, you can keep using the same LMS



Google Workspace: It is a collection of many productivity and collaboration tools, software, products developed and marketed by Google, it includes Gmail, contacts, calendar, Meet, different spaces to create documents or presentations, chat for communication, and more interactive tools. A genial kit for delivering online classes.

★ Conferencing Platforms



Google Meet is an app for video calling and meetings across all devices. In this platform, we can find video calling features like joyful filters and effects, even create groups for collaborative work. Also schedule time to connect when everyone can join.



Zoom offers a variety of features to enhance video conferencing experience. It allows us to share tabs, virtual whiteboard, documents, access from anywhere and has functionalities such as: conference recording, collaborative tools, chat, meeting control tool, virtual background and more. It is a very complete tool for educational objectives.

3.4 INTERACTIVE PLATFORMS AS AN ESSENTIAL COMPLEMENT OF ONLINE COURSES

Interactive and gamification platforms are websites with fun elements and game design techniques in teaching and learning environments. This focuses on increasing student motivation, engagement, and knowledge retention. With the inclusion of these platforms, learning becomes more effective and attractive by presenting classes with playful activities and personalized materials according to the group being managed. In this way, we stimulate the interest and curiosity of the students.

Furthermore, many educational platforms lack fun tools to encourage students to participate in classes, as well as in the preparation of materials, it is necessary to catch the student's attention so that they do not see it as just another class “an ordinary class”, but as an “innovative class”. For all of this, it is a great idea to mix these two kinds of platforms and make classes more interesting. We present the most recognized platforms to generate an attractive and interesting environment and materials when receiving online classes. Let's look!



Kahoot is a free game-based learning platform that makes it fun to learn any subject, in any language, on any device. With this platform, we can learn and review concepts in an entertaining way, through multiple-choice questions, although there is also space for discussion and debate.

Edpuzzle is an interesting tool that allows us to edit any video to include questions, create questionnaires or add voice notes. It is a great platform to create materials.



Powtoon It is a tool with an intuitive interface, where you can create presentations and then convert them into videos. In this application, you can add drawings, images, sounds, and texts.

NEARPOD is a digital platform that allows us to create interactive presentations where students can participate in a synchronous or asynchronous way. Also, gamification is one of the innovative characteristics integrated since we can include games or activities among the theories and thus evaluate the progress of students' attention.



CLASSROOMSCREEN It is an online interactive whiteboard that includes the following features: tools for drawing and adding text, timer, work symbols, QR code, draws, poll types and clock and much more. It is perfect to start a class!

Flip is a free web where educators can create secure online discussion groups and students can answer or express their ideas asynchronously through short video, text, and audio messages.



Padlet comes equipped with a simple and comfortable interface, where the information that we add is displayed as creative sticky notes. Additionally, this resource has different platforms to organize content, as well as different features to customize a Padlet as each wall is called. It is an incredible tool for working collaboratively.

Soundcloud is an audio streaming tool, we can use it for educational platform purposes. Here, we can upload music, personalize audio or podcasts already made by us. Also, we can add comments.



IV. MODULE DESCRIPTIONS

4.1 MODULE I. ONLINE FOREIGN LANGUAGES TEACHING

In the first module of the specialization course in Administration of Virtual Environments for Foreign Languages Teaching and Learning, the students were able to learn more about the importance of the teaching work and how it is divided.

At the beginning of this module, it was presented the introduction of some of the most popular theories of learning that are perceived as a set of different frameworks that describe how each individual processes new information in a learning environment and can imply emotional components that can influence the results

Also, the students study the concept, challenges, and benefits of e-learning which is commonly divided into synchronous and asynchronous activities; the facilitator of the course provided videos, PowerPoint presentations, and group forums in order to better understand the topic and be more engaged with the content.

Due to the synchronous learning experience teachers and students were able to interact simultaneously through scheduled sessions and lectures. Besides, students had active participation in each class to show the well comprehension of the contents developed. In addition, the asynchronous side of the specialization course offered the participants the opportunity to study at their own pace because they had access to pre-recorded materials and resources.

In week 2, after studying the information related to the synchronous and asynchronous activities, the students had the opportunity to exchange opinions with

their peers in the Campus UES forum about the effectiveness or challenges of both methods during the learning process.

Moreover, the students learned how to use some of the most relevant educational platforms called LMS (Language Management Systems) which can be defined as a set of software elements that allows the user to create digital content for online or on-site courses. This type of website offers many tools that are oriented to develop activities directed to different audiences and some of them have free plans and others it's obligatory to pay according to the chosen plan. The LMS studied in the first module of the specialization course were: Moodle, Schoology, and Edmodo.

In order to analyze and better comprehend the LMS topic presented in week 4 class, the students were assigned to create an infographic using the popular graphic design platform Canva, in this activity the students had to gather information about the most important features of 3 LMS and also was mentioned why they are considered to be LMS platforms, on the other hand it was also required to include 2 platforms that are not LMS since they have only basic features that cannot be considered to be part of this category.

To continue with the course specialization program, the facilitator oversaw teaching how to properly organize a virtual class because, at the moment of developing a foreign language lesson in a real class, it will be useful to keep the order of the assignments and activities. On this occasion, the students learned more about the features of Google Classroom and how to apply them. Among the Google options are Google Docs, posting questions in forums, sharing links to websites and videos, Google Forms, the option to export Excel data, and the users are allowed to post other types of documents like PDF, word, presentations, etc.

In week 5, the students had to work in groups to develop an activity about organizing a virtual classroom using the Google platform Classroom. In this assignment, the first step was choosing a free topic to start the assembly of the different activities that will be displayed in the stream. Some of the resources added in Classroom were links to web pages, videos from YouTube, presentations, quizzes, forums, and material created for the students. Finally, the groups presented in the live class their classroom's organization. The objective of this assignment was to encourage the students to always prepare and organize their class program with anticipation to show the compromise and work quality as a teacher.

For teaching foreign language classes in a virtual modality, it's essential for a teacher to know how to use the tools that offer the video conference platforms since the main objective is to have the opportunity to interact with the learners to exchange ideas or doubts and be able to share the knowledge of the chosen topic through many resources that will be displayed during the class time. The facilitator explained to the pupils that for choosing a specific online meeting space it is necessary to take into consideration the target public (kids, teenagers, adults, etc.), the quantity of participants, the effectiveness of the platform's video and audio, and the security items. Due to this reason, in the specialization course's module I was presented with the main features of some of the most important video conferencing platforms like: Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom.

In the final activity, the students had to prepare the content to teach a real lesson for the rest of their classmates, using the video conference platform Google Meet. For this assignment, it was necessary to put into practice all the knowledge acquired in module I.

In addition, the facilitator made available to the class different resources such as PowerPoint presentations, video tutorials explaining step by step the uses of each platform, videos from the web that explained in detail every function of the tool, class practices in which the students could start exploring the functionality of the websites and be part of collaborative working.

4.2 MODULE II: EDUCATIONAL APPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

In module II, participants had the opportunity to spread their knowledge on different Educational Applications for Learning a Foreign Language. Therefore, the module was planned for eight weeks. In each week students were introduced to several contents, guided, and free practice with the main aim of getting able to know and use educational applications for teaching and learning English as the target language. Thus, below you will find a brief, but meaningful summary related to the contents and activities developed by the facilitator and students during the module.

In week 1, students were able to get a general view of the module by reading its syllabus: objectives, methodology, contents, evaluation system, and class policies. This week held great significance as it allowed students to grasp not just the structure, but also the true purpose of the module. And being introduced to the process was essential because it defined a clear way to follow during the whole module.

In week 2, participants got the needed guidelines to create an infographic related to technological tools to be used in an online class. Thus, students learn how to use Canva to elaborate the infographic with the purpose of engaging an audience and having a successful learning experience. To sum up, week 2 became significant

for all pupils because it opened resources to design innovative and creative materials for virtual classes.

During week 3, the technological tools studied were just as meaningful as the ones covered in previous weeks. Flipgrid and LiveWorksheets are both excellent examples. On the one hand Flipgrid is a technological tool that the teacher and students utilized to record their own videos in an easy and funny way. On the other hand, LiveWorksheets allowed participants to develop interactive exercises for their future classes. Lastly, learning about the use of technological tools such as Flipgrid and Live Worksheets became relevant for participants to be able to design their own videos and worksheets, instead of just googling, copying, and pasting. In week 4, participants were able to create a video tutorial and an interactive worksheet. Therefore, students created the video in Flipgrid and the interactive worksheet in LiveWorksheets. Of course, all the steps for the activity were well-detailed in the guidelines document. Thus, week 4 allowed module participants to explore the advantages given by those technological tools for academic purposes.

In week 5, learning about more technological tools continued to be the main goal of the module. For instance, studying the use of Padlet, Powtoon, and Classroomscreen became the new aim. Padlet helped participants to work in collaborative learning through the design of visual interactive walls to present personal opinions about a content posted by the facilitator. The classroom allowed participants in the specialization course to create meaningful online content for a more interactive and worthwhile class experience. And Powtoon was useful to create animated presentations and videos. To sum things up, during week 5, participants enrolled in the master of more technological tools to improve a virtual teaching-learning process. Week 6 allowed the specialization participants to elaborate on a video in Powtoon to show the advantages of using technological tools in an online class. As with the other

tools explored in the module, Powtoon joined the group of resources that for sure will help participants in their future teaching-learning experiences.

In week 7, students were introduced to more useful tools for a more interactive classroom and a more meaningful learning environment. Participants had the opportunity to explore tools such as Nearpod, Flippity, and Kahoot. Nearpod is a tool for designing interactive lessons, interactive games, interactive videos, and other activities. Flippity helps to create flashcards, interactive quizzes, games, and others. Kahoot is a well-designed platform to learn different subjects through interactive gaming evaluations. As can be inferred, week 7 was full of helpful and intuitive technological tools to improve an online teaching-learning experience.

Finally, in week 8, participants were given the opportunity to show what they had learned during module II through a final task. Therefore, the participants formulated a well-crafted lesson for an engaging online presentation conducted via Meet. All participants' presentations were meaningful because they applied technology, knowledge, and skills acquired during the whole module. In conclusion, the final task of this module aligned seamlessly with the goals and objectives established at the outset. This was since all participants were able to actively engage in hands-on learning and teaching, utilizing cutting-edge technological tools within virtual environments.

4.3 MODULE III. DESIGN OF DIDACTIC MATERIALS FOR VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS

In the beginning of the course, the professor highlighted two important formative assessments that participants would have to perform and hand in at the end of the course. A Google Site and a written report, which were explained in depth and step by step.

Besides, the facilitator started the virtual class. We learnt about the different multimedia resources that we can include as a professor to transform traditional classes into attractive and dynamic online lessons, in this way students feel motivated. As well, we knew the importance of its inclusion in virtual environments, its advantages, and the types of existing multimedia resources such as audios, videos, podcasts, images, animations, slides, and others.

Regarding audios, podcast and videos, the facilitator pointed out the different audio formats, in which the most manageable are MP3 and Mp4 and explained the podcast definition, its advantages in education and the positive results when implementing them that is one of the most important points because we encourage students to participate and get engaged with their learning. Also, videos can increase the contextualization of the context, improving authenticity and credibility. Audios, podcasts, and videos take part of the fundamental resources to capture the students' attention and humanize the relationship between the user and the machine.

In connection with images, the facilitator addressed the following important aspects of images: image and pixel definition, its uses in education, anatomy, image copyright, width and height dimensions, high and low resolutions, JPG and PNG formats among others, transparency and how we can resize an image. Both the quality

and copyright of an image are essential points to take into account when including in an online presentation.

Besides that, the teacher introduced the Genially platform with some video tutorials, where we could observe that it has a lot of tools and features that allow us to include content inside of an icon or a tab, making them interactive and animated in the visual aspect, so present information in an innovative way. As well, we learnt about planning presentations, how to define the topic, the objectives, preparing its structure and the conclusion; they are some of the steps that we, as teachers, will help us to break down tasks into smaller and make them easier and manageable. To complement the planning steps, the lecturer included design tips, using the color palette along with the font styles and sizes that best match for creating balanced and attractive content in terms of viewing. The way of how we project online presentations defines how committed we are to the teaching-learning processes.

When we are creating all these types of materials, the audience is an important point to analyze for preparing the appropriate content and obtaining positive learning outcomes.

To put theory into practice and measure the knowledge acquired during the online sessions. We performed different evaluated tasks, using different web sites and technological tools. For audio, we used M4A TO Mp3 converter to turn WhatsApp audio into mp3 format; Audacity to edit audio with music; SoundCloud, where we embedded personalized audio. For images, we utilized Pixabay and Pexels for downloading free images; Reduclmages for resizing images; PiZap photo editor for creating a collage; PHOTOFUNIA to add effect on photos; and colors.co which was

used to make color combinations; Google slides to make presentations; and Genially to create interactive images.

In the last weeks, the professor taught us how to use Google Site with video tutorials from YouTube and videos made by the facilitator for us to understand better and then, we practiced, making presentations in groups, using this platform. It is important to mention that in each session the professor always gave us feedback on the written report, examples of how the report should be written, the points to take into account, the teacher even created forums to clarify our doubts. Also, the inclusion of collaborative work and the way the facilitator structured every class, make us feel motivated and engaged with our learning process.

V. ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Participants identified the advantages and disadvantages of different technological tools for educational purposes in the field of teaching foreign languages.
2. The students acquired a great level of proficiency in utilizing a diverse range of online technological tools such as M4A to MP3 Converter, Audacity, Pixabay, Pexels, Reduclmages, PiZap, PhotoFunia, Colors.co, Genially, Google Site, and OpenShot.
3. The students were introduced to the art of video editing using OpenShot where they were able to explore and experiment with a variety of effects to create interesting videos, through this immersive experience, they not only gained knowledge of OpenShot's capabilities and how to harness them to create engaging and dynamic content but also increased self-confidence in producing professional videos using this technological tool.
4. Participants acquired valuable skills in utilizing various LMS such as Moodle and Google Classroom for managing virtual environments in foreign language teaching and learning.
5. Participants were able to get technological skills for well designing synchronous and asynchronous materials for a more meaningful teaching-learning experience.
6. Students designed didactic materials for online classes such as podcasts, interactive images, and presentations for educational purposes by exploring platforms such as Genially, SoundCloud, Audacity, among others.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

1. Virtual education is a trend that is gaining popularity. Thus, educators must understand the importance of getting updated on the use of technology for educational purposes. In addition, teachers must be prepared and willing to guide and facilitate learning by using new technologies in the classroom. To sum up, integrating these tools into daily instruction is essential for students to have the opportunity to learn, in this case, a new language effectively.
2. EFL online classes benefit greatly from educational platforms as they offer a meaningful and conducive environment for not only teaching but also learning. In fact, educational platforms are the key to promoting a meaningful teaching-learning experience for both teachers and students. For instance, the Specialization Course in the Administration of Virtual Environments for Foreign Language Teaching and Learning proves that educational platforms help teachers and students to create a meaningful virtual teaching-learning environment.
3. The administration of virtual environments requires knowledge, refinement of skills, and human and technological resources. That is the reason why the specialization course offered by the University of El Salvador benefits future language teachers by providing them the chance to develop technological abilities for their professional careers.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Knowing the importance of the topics addressed, the results obtained, and the experiences shared during the specialization course in the Administration of Virtual Environments for Foreign Language Teaching and Learning, we formulate the following suggestions addressed to the respective authorities of the language department, the teacher in charge of the course and the students who were part of this course.

1. Authorities of University of El Salvador should keep and strengthen the course through giving facilitators all the resources necessary to continue with the specialization process for future professionals in the field of teaching a foreign language online.
2. Take into consideration to integrating instant messaging tools to have versatile and close group communication
3. Consider including simple activities in advance to increase participation at the beginning of class.
4. Take into account incorporating at least two face-to-face sessions in the specialization syllabus to have collaborative work in real space, thus improving interpersonal relationships.

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SoundCloud <https://images.app.goo.gl/jqEX58T8cdqKQRk6A>

IX. APPENDIXES

Advantages of Using Technological Tools in an Online Class

Today, many people take the most out of advances in technology to streamline everyday tasks. An example of this is the importance of technology in education that considerably improves learning processes. Among the benefits of technological tools in online education, we may find:

- Encourage collaboration.
- Boost creativity.
- Provides autonomy.
- New knowledge exploration.
- Better understanding of the topics.

CREATED USING
POWTOON

The screenshot shows a Google Classroom page for a class titled "English Grammar I". The browser address bar shows the URL "classroom.google.com/c/NTUzOTQ3ODMwNTky". The page features a navigation menu on the left with icons for home, calendar, people, and settings. The main content area includes a header with "Tablón", "Trabajo de clase", "Personas", and "Calificaciones". Below this is a banner for "Feliz Día Internacional del Maestro" with a "Cerrar" button and a "Más información" link. The central focus is a large graphic with the text "Welcome to English Grammar I" and "English Grammar I". The graphic also contains the words "-ing/to...", "like", "remember", "be", "see", "Gerund", "infinite", "stop", "continue", and "would like". A red telephone booth is visible on the right side of the graphic. At the bottom, there is a "Meet" button with "Unirme" and a notification area with a profile picture and the text "Anuncia algo a tu clase".

Universidad de El Salvador Campus Virtual

Página principal del sitio
Área personal
Calendario
Archivos privados
My Courses 3

Enlace permanente Mostrar mensaje anterior

Re: Question
de Karla Marielos Benitez Pérez - Monday, 24 de April de 2023, 17:52

In my opinion the learning process in both modalities is the same because it depends on the compromise and effort that teachers and students put into practice in every lesson or assignment. In addition, I consider that in these modalities is required to know how to organize the information in an optimal way according to the student's level or needs, and in both cases, it only may vary the tools or platforms of teaching in order to create suitable materials of learning, therefore students will perceive more significant and understandable knowledge, as it stated in some of the principles of the cognivism theory of learning.

Enlace permanente Mostrar mensaje anterior

Convertidor de audio online - Co... Sube tu música y audio para on...

soundcloud.com/upload

Inicio Stream Biblioteca Prueba Pro Subscripción... Sey Najarro

Utiliza los formatos FLAC, WAV, ALAC y AIF para una mejor calidad de audio. [Más información sobre HD sin pérdida de información.](#) [Subir archivo](#)

Publicar ejemplo CONVERTED READY.mp3 1.73MB de 1.81MB subidos

Información básica Metadatos Permisos Avanzado [Ayuda](#)

Título*
One Fine Summer (2-03) 170bpm

Enlace
soundcloud.com/sej-darissa-najarro/one-fine-summer-2-03-170bpm

Género
Ninguno

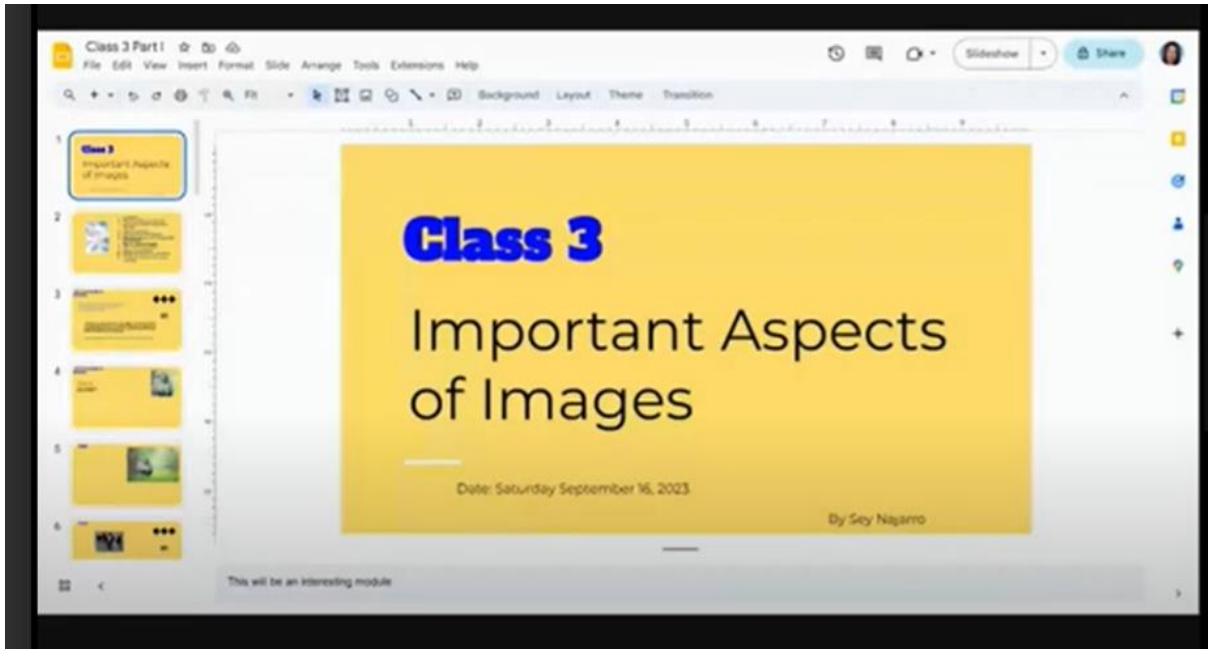
Etiquetas adicionales
Añade etiquetas para describir al género y al carácter de tu pista

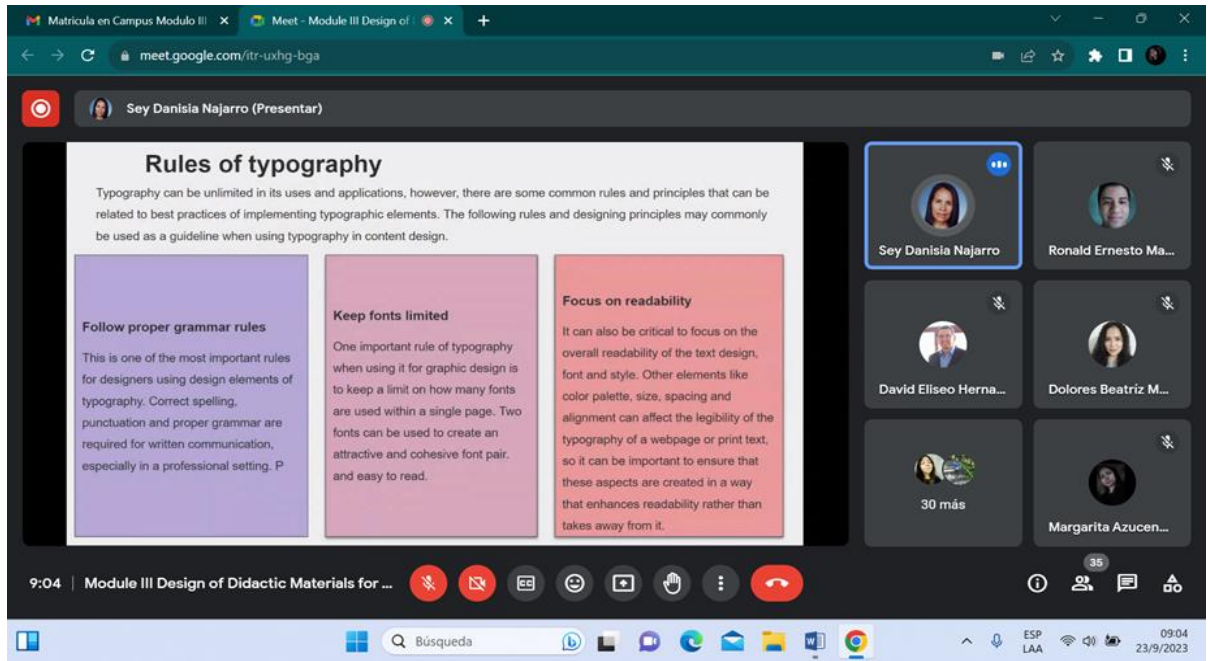
Descripción
Describe tu pista.

0:00 0:18 Sey Najarro Welcome back

23°C 13:39 28/11/2022

Sey Darissa Najarro





Copy of advantages of using technological tools in an online class_Fabricio Moral...

By mb01029 | Updated: Aug. 12, 2023, 4:50 a.m.

Slideshow Video



Sey Danisia Najarro

Yessica Lisseth Rivas Mejia

Ronald Ernesto Martinez Quez...

Cinthya Jeanneth Sánchez Valle

31 más

Jose Fabricio Morales Barrientos

más despacio al aplicar los efectos de video

nearpod Menu CODE: 2KHB7 Student Teacher

Match the pictures and the names of The Simpsons Family members.

Instructions

	Homer	Lisa		
			Marge	