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



TOPIC:

THE IMPORTANCE OF SYNCHRONOUS AND ASYNCHRONOUS CLASSES IN ONLINE EDUCATION

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IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF:

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ENGLISH WITH A MAJOR IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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

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Abstract

The purpose of this project is to analyze the importance of synchronous and asynchronous

classes in online education and. Due to the emergence of the global pandemic, the

educational system was forced to modify classes to be taken online, the foregoing made

educational institutions worldwide make a change of plan in their education methods, seeking

alternatives in their most efficient and effective technological tools. Students have to face the

new educational environment, and the different effects caused by online education. In this

work we develop the different methods, and resources learned in the "Specialization Course

in the Administration of Virtual Environments for Foreign Language Teaching and Learning"

in which useful and important topics were developed, such as Online foreign language

teaching, Educational Applications to Learn a Foreign Language and Design of Didactic

Materials for Virtual Environments. In this process, enrolled students learn the theory, and

acquire the knowledge to design and manage virtual environments for the acquisition and

delivery of learning of a foreign language. Learners also acquire comprehension in the

management of different technological tools. Furthermore, the acquisition of skills to design

digital materials with the purpose of being used in online virtual learning environments.

Keywords: Virtual Environments, online education, synchronous and asynchronous.

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I. Introduction

Online classes have become one of the main sources of education in recent years, students, and teachers have been trying to adapt to this new way to learn, and teachers create classes that make their students want to interact in their courses. The use of different educational tools that work in synchronous and asynchronous ways has risen in different virtual educational environments, creating new standards to be considered at the planning of an online class; the use of technological tools and different resources has become an important factor to be considered at the time to create and develop an online class.

As a result the importance of online education has had a transcendental impact since the global pandemic situation, the challenge for an educator is to know the balance between synchronous and asynchronous, according to the needs and capabilities of students to achieve a proper education. In El Salvador the implementation of online education has filled the gap that the recent global health emergence has left; setting the importance and impact that online educational sessions have on students, and considerations to be taken into account.

For this reason, at the University of El Salvador, the Foreign Languages Department offered the students of English Teaching Option Major that were about to finish their degrees the option of enrolling in the "Administration of Virtual Environments for the Teaching and Learning of Foreign Languages" specialization course. Along with this, the following report aims to show the importance of the implementation of the course for the development of virtual environments using technological tools to achieve meaningful teaching-learning processes for foreign languages.

II. Objectives

2.1 General objective:

To describe the importance of synchronous and asynchronous classes to achieve a significant teaching-learning process in an online education.

2.2 Specific objectives:

- To explain the importance of synchronous and asynchronous class and its application in an online education.
- To analyze the positive and negative effects of synchronous and asynchronous in an online education.
- To summarize all the activities applied in the modules for the "Specialization Course
 in the Administration of Virtual Environments for Foreign Language Teaching and
 Learning".

III. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Historical Framework

3.1.1 Distance education

Online education is in fact a great educational tool, developed to help learners to receive courses and information through internet-based technology (Bates, 1995; Moore & Kearsley, 2005). Distance education is defined by Feasley (1983) as learning that takes place, and is performed away from the instructor. This makes learning more accessible for a large group of students, defined by Verduin and Clark (1991) as "The formal education in which most of the teaching occurs when the educator and the learner are at a distance from each other (p.13). This type of education has many aspects and forms, Merisotis and Phipps (1999) point out that online education includes synchronous and asynchronous communication.

Distance education evolved thanks to the use of technological tools as a base. The history of distance education is the evolution of the use of technology. This process is called the four generations of distance teaching Moore & Kearsley, 2005, Passerini & Granger, 2000). Distance education is an old concept, with the intention to help learners that have difficulties to take class in person to different situations, this can be tracked to European Universities more than 150 years ago; since that period to the present day, and some educational process is still carried out by mail. The term distance education was coined in 1972, almost a century after the first correspondence course, by the International Council of Correspondence Education (Moore, 1990).

In the mayor forms of actual distance education, the importance of technology is a common factor, in fact with the coming of the third generation of distance education at the beginning of 1980, with the huge revolution caused by the internet; the development of technologies made possible the interaction between educators and students, in addition to the delivered content, making the access to education reach a new number of learners around the world.

3.1.2 Virtual Education

Virtual education has been defined as education through an internet connection using virtual environments that do not require any specific time or space and is a new scene for communication between educators and students (Bonilla, 2016). To make a proper online education modality, some considerations need to be taken into, like the correct technological tools, internet connection and that the content covers formative valor, that is to make an ideal environment good enough for educators and students (Marciniak y Gairín-Sallán, 2018).

With the recent global health emergence, an improvement in the development of technological tools is needed to make it possible to fulfill educational needs. Aside from the tools and LMS, other important resources were the social networks used to create study groups and learning communities. Although its use is questionable and seen with some reservations, during the global pandemic it became a highly valued resource (Robles & Sato 2020) and used by some educational institutions to provide a system of communication and delivery of lessons and tasks.

Web-based communication systems have been widely used as tools for collaboration that can support self-explanation, social negotiation, and shared knowledge construction among participants (Bonk & King, 1998; Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000; Stahl, 2000). The use of social networks were used due to the easy accessibility and low cost supposed to the learners.

Virtual education offers unparalleled flexibility and accessibility to learners. Students can access different educational materials each time as needed and participate in classes and tasks from anywhere, at any time. According to a study by Allen and Seaman (2017), online learning provides opportunities for individuals who may have geographical or time constraints to pursue education. This flexibility allows learners to balance their academic pursuits with other commitments, such as work or family responsibilities, or in the recent past for the health emergency.

3.1.3 Virtual Education in El Salvador

The University of El Salvador as an educational institution prepared an online education project a time before the health emergence with the program called "Educación en línea" in January 2016. With this educational offer, the UES expands opportunities for access to quality public higher education. Born as an option for many learners to expand their opportunities. The academic institution has a well-trained professor staff, and access to the technological tools and equipment, making a relevant impact in society.

With the rise of the global health pandemic that emerged in 2020, the University of El Salvador decided to translate their students to a virtual environment, having in consideration the health of instructors and learners, this supposed a challenge for all the participants, adjustment were needed to adapt to the new online classes, new technological tools, virtual environments and learning management systems, the new learning reality reach all educational levels.

However, the education institutions had a hard time taking in consideration the needs and possibilities of the students; due to uncertain level of technology, bandwidth or immediacy, This brought out that the duty of teachers is not only pedagogical, but now it is required that they know how to manage technological tools and LMS. The University of El Salvador offers to their students who are close to finish his English teaching or modern languages degrees an option to enrolls in the Administration of Virtual Environments for the Teaching and Learning of Foreign Languages specialization course, this makes a positive impact in the future of educators, the knowledge in virtual environments, technological tools become crucial in present days.

3.2 Theoretical framework

3.2.1 Synchronous learning

Synchronous classes refer to learning experiences and interactions between instructors and students at the same time. These classes involve chats, conversations, breakthrough tasks, discussions, and virtual meetings, this promotes active participation and has a positive impact on learners with the use of interactive elements and multimedia like videos and podcasts.

Synchronous classes benefits:

Immediate feedback: Students can receive instant feedback from instructors, for clarification of doubts

Active engagement: interactions promote active engagement and participation.

Collaboration opportunities: Synchronous classes enable students to collaborate with peers.

Instructor presence: affects learners' engagement during learning sessions, making the students feel secure to ask questions.

Synchronous learning offers several benefits for the students, promotes the sense of community, and the ability to interact at the same time between instructors, and peers create a dynamic study environment, builds trust and deeper understanding about the topics, however, it is important to knows it limitations and challenges, like the schedule, the access to technology or the bandwidth, it is important to consider individual circumstances, also preferences when we choose a suitable learning method.

3.2.2 Asynchronous Learning:

Asynchronous classes do not require real-time interactions. Instead, students access pre-recorded lectures, discussion boards, and other learning materials at their own pace. This means that the student and instructor will engage with the content at their own time through online learning tools. The instructor should propose assigned readings online quizzes or discussion boards, also guide students and offer feedback and assess them as needed. The significance of asynchronous classes can be observed through the following points:

- 1. Flexibility: Asynchronous classes offer flexibility for the students in their scheduling, allowing students to learn at their own convenience.
- 2. Self-paced learning: Students can review and revisit course materials as needed.
- 3. Accessibility: Asynchronous classes accommodate diverse learners, with no limitations in distance.

Asynchronous is a flexible approach that allows learners to engage with the learning materials at their own pace, and the flexibility to balance their learning with any other responsibilities. On the other hand, it is important to have in mind the limitations that the student must face, learners may have a difficult time without the instructor explanations, and with the lack of a structured schedule learners require showing self-discipline and motivation to fulfill their obligations.

Virtual education has revolutionized the way we learn, providing flexibility, personalized learning experiences, and enhanced collaboration. By continuously improving the technological tools and addressing the needs of diverse learners, virtual education has the potential to transform education and help learners worldwide.

3.2.3 The importance of synchronous & asynchronous classes

Synchronous and asynchronous online classes have their advantages depending on what the instructor wants to achieve and the guidance that the learner needs. Synchronous classes are ideal to interact and ask questions; an asynchronous class on the other hand allows students to reflect before asking the questions. The real importance in both approaches to online learning is to be a bridge enabling students to access online education. This mode of instruction allows for global collaboration, cultural exchange, and diverse perspectives (Hrastinski, 2008). Students can benefit from exposure to different cultures and ideas, enhancing their overall educational experience (Means, 2013).

Another important aspect is the variety in the different methods to content delivery, Students can access multimedia resources, discussion boards, and interactive modules, accommodating diverse learning preferences (Dixson, 2010). This approach ensures that students with different learning styles can engage with the material effectively, leading to improved learning outcomes (Means, 2013). During the past few years, public schools used different methods to benefit students by distributing their lessons in an accessible way,

At the present time online education has become completely viable, with many aspects like flexibility, personalized learning, and global reach. Research by Allen and Seaman (2017) indicates that online education has expanded educational opportunities for diverse populations, including working professionals, individuals with special capacities, and those in remote areas. There are many debates trying to determine the best of the two options, to answer this an analysis of the needs of the learners is needed, to have in mind intermittent internet connection, family issues, and schedules, the use of a hybrid learning approach will make a significant difference in the delivery of the content and how the student can get the most out of synchronous meetings and asynchronous material.

IV. Description of activities

4.1 Module 1 - Online Foreign Language Teaching

The first module of online foreign language teaching was about fundamental of online education and its application on the English Language Teaching: Specifically in the virtual or online teaching approach like using an LMS (Learning Management System) to set up a virtual classroom and develop asynchronous activities and use platforms like TEAMS or Meet for synchronous activities was studied.

In this module we learned about the Theories of Learning in Virtual Learning such as behaviorism, cognitivism and constructivism. These three broad learning theories provided in this module are most often utilized in the creation of instructional environments in a time when learning was not impacted through technology. But in the last twenty years, technology has reorganized how we live, how we communicate, how we learn, and the theories of learning act as a guide for the use of technology in teaching.

Students learned about Learning Management Systems that can be defined as webbased software platforms that provide an interactive online learning environment and automate the administration organization, delivery, and reporting of educational content and learner outcomes.

Learning Management Systems LMS has some features that were studied in this module which are course management, gradebook, security and privacy, communication tools, assessment, tracking progress that facilitates teachers to monitor students in every single movement.

Participants were able to identify the importance of synchronous and asynchronous classes in an online education through activities in which they could practice. Activities in the creation of guizzes, infographics, and the use of forums were studied.

4.2 Module 2 – Educational Applications for learning a Foreign Language

The second module "Educational Applications for Learning a Foreign Language" was designed with the purpose of combining theoretical foundations and technological tools to be used in the virtual teaching-learning process. Among the most important aspects studied in the module was TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge), giving the inclusion of technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge, also known by their acronyms: (TK), (PK), (CK), for the elaboration of materials and activities to achieve better meaningful learning.

The following tools in this module were studied: Flipgrid, Padlet, Nearpod, Kahoot, Classroom screen, PowToon, Flippity, Liveworksheet and Edpuzzle. It is important to know the advantages that each tool can give with the objective of being able to relate to each activity, since this can benefit in the best way both the student and the educators.

The students enrolled in the course put their knowledge of these tools into practice, showing their abilities to use them by practicing during the class. and achieving the objective in that the students took advantage of the knowledge of these learning tools in an interactive way. In addition, students noted the main objectives for developing the activities and selecting the technological tools presented in the module are listed below:

- Learning orientation.
- Introduction of contents.
- Student participation.
- To solve specific problems.
- To motivate students' interest.
- To evaluate performance.

4.3 Module 3 – Design of Didactic Material for Virtual Environments

Module 3 was designed to allow students to use different tools to design didactic materials. During this module they worked with different materials such as interactive images, podcasts, web pages, videos and online presentations, among others.

Students learned about very important tools to integrate in the last activity for the integrated task that will consist of the creation of a Google Site linked to Google Classroom every single class students collect the activities that will be useful. Also, students choose a topic and subtopics of the English area to develop in Google Site.

In this module the students learned important aspects of image in education. These images can help to illustrate class topics, serve as primary research material or be integrated into homework assignments. Also, the students learned about different sites where they can download images and sites where they can modify, resize and add effects.

Finally, a written report was elaborated in which the students should talk about their experiences and learning obtained during this specialization, in the development of the tools and activities developed in these 3 learning modules.

V. Achievements

- The team learned about the importance of synchronous and asynchronous classes in an online education.
- The students were able to develop asynchronous activities on platforms like TEAMS.
- Participants acquire more knowledge about Theories of Learning such as behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism.
- Students learned about the importance of technology that has transformed education across the globe.
- The team were able to learn how to use important tools like Flipgrid, Padlet, Nearpod, Kahoot, classroom screen, Powtoon, Flippity, live worksheet and EdPuzzle.
- Participants practiced and learned how to record a podcast and how to create interactive images.

VI. Conclusions

The importance of synchronous and asynchronous classes in an online education generated positive effects in the students that allowed them to acquire more knowledge through the Learning Management System LMS. For that reason online classes had a huge impact on teaching around the world because of the pandemic of COVID-19.

The adaptation and the importance of synchronous and asynchronous classes in an online education involve both teachers and students to achieve significant teaching-learning.

Besides that, The Specialization Course in Administration of Virtual Environments for Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages has demonstrated that it is a very good resource for teachers to improve their classes and stay updated in the field of English education.

Professionals that coursed "Specialization Course in the Administration of Virtual Environments for Foreign Language Teaching and Learning" at the University of El Salvador are more than pleasant to have the opportunity to grow in the virtual area and it is not only necessary to develop our skills, but also keep up with the innovation of technology. Furthermore, we achieve a lot of knowledge to manage technological tools and resources to develop online virtual environments for teaching foreign languages. In conclusion, online education, whether synchronous or asynchronous, offers opportunities for the expansion of learning in the digital world. These two approaches are very significant and will depend on the specific educational objectives of each course. On the other hand, well-implemented online education can offer an accessible educational experience for many people around the world.

VII. Recommendations

Once the course has ended, it is recommended to the language department coordinators the following:

- Create virtual spaces where students after classes can interact with each other and share point of views in order to obtain better results in teaching-learning and make sure that they understand what was learned in class.
- Keep in mind that online learning should be a mix of synchronous and asynchronous learning to ensure that the students have a significant teaching-learning experience.
- Develop more activities that involve both teacher and student.
- Provide workrooms outside study hours, use different interactive platforms in which the teacher and student set a specific day to clarify doubts about the content.

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https://distancia.ues.edu.sv/sobre-nosotros2

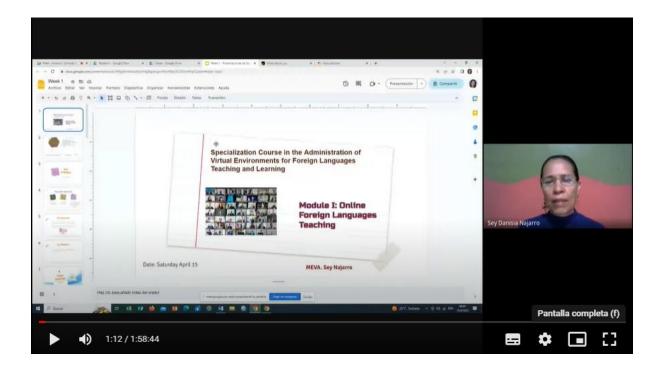
University of Waterloo Keep Learning

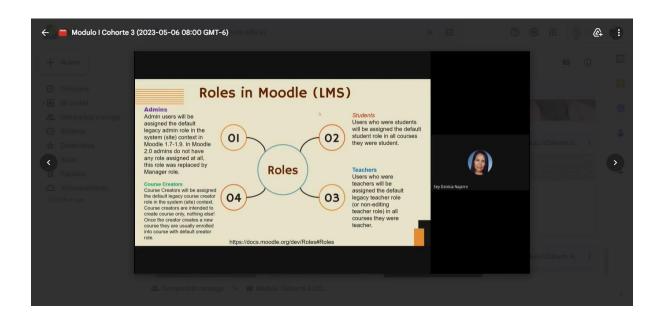
https://uwaterloo.ca/keep-learning/strategies-remote-teaching/synchronous-vs-asynchronous-online-

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IX. Appendixes

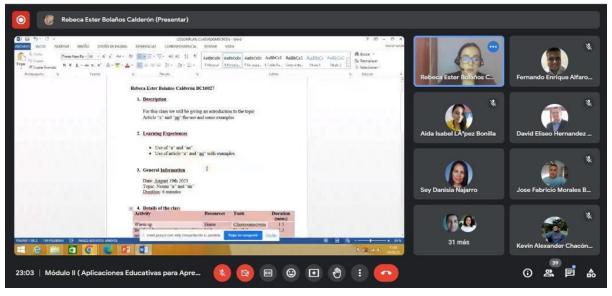
9.1 Modules' Screenshots

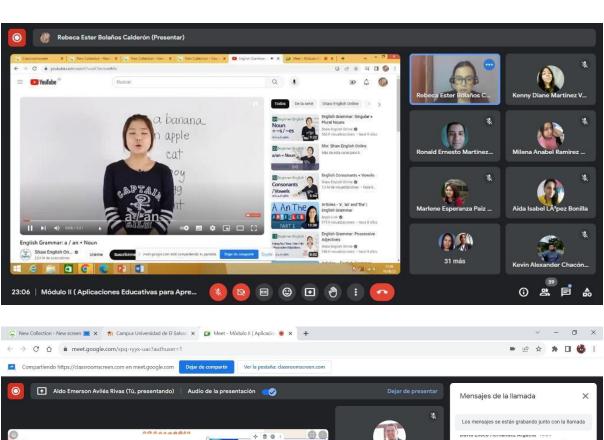


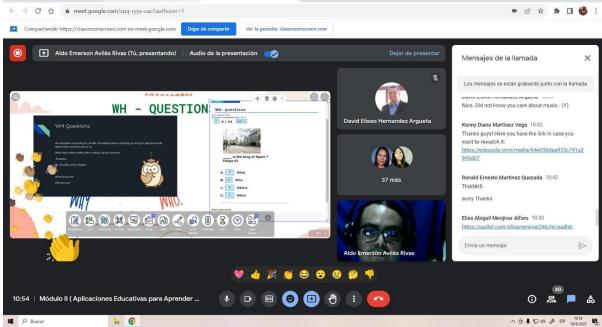


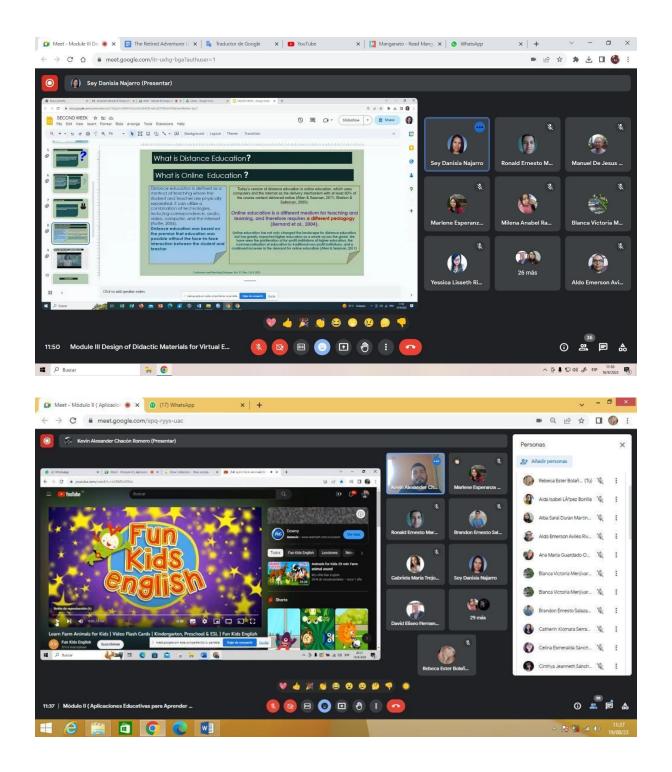


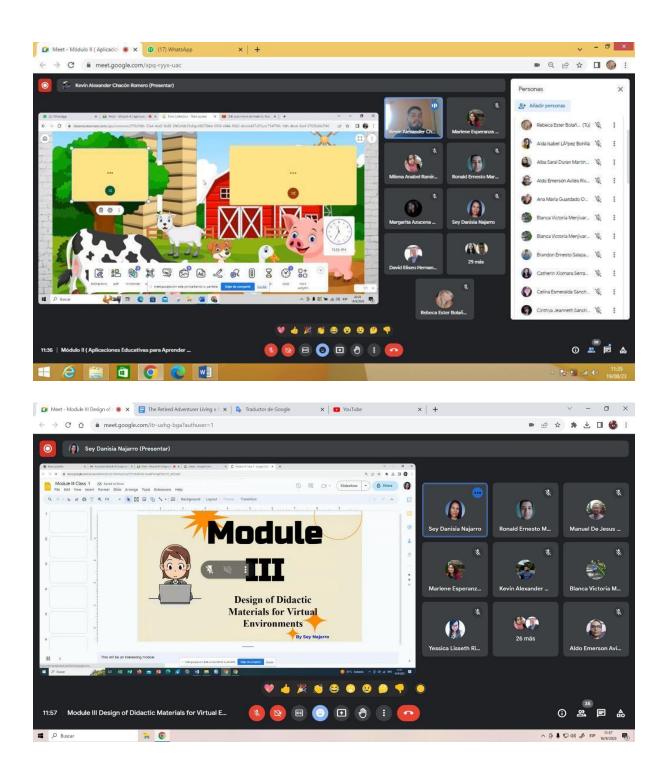


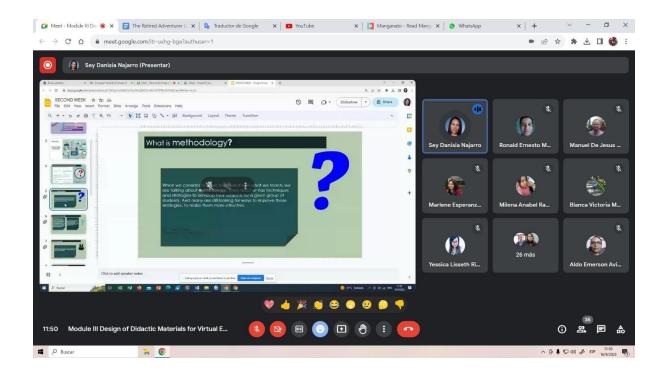


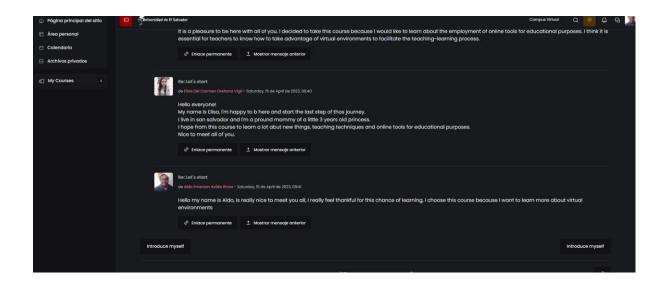


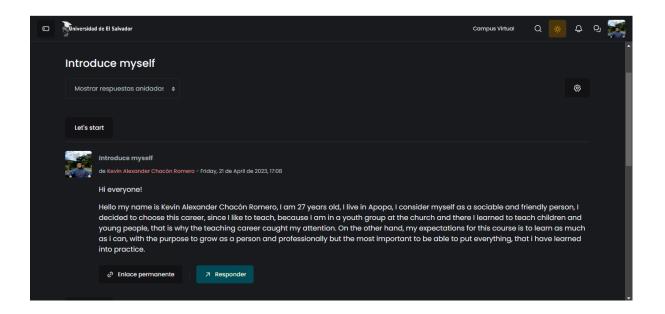


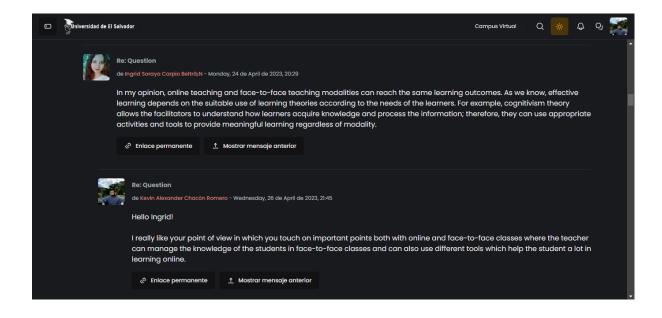


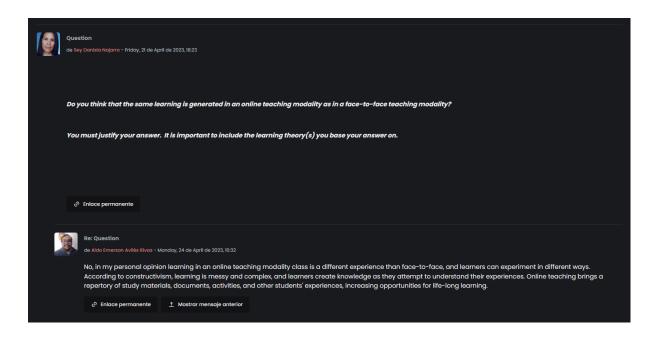


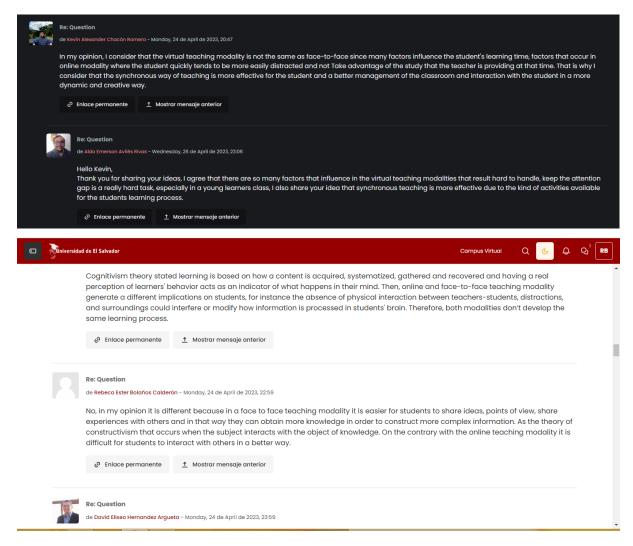


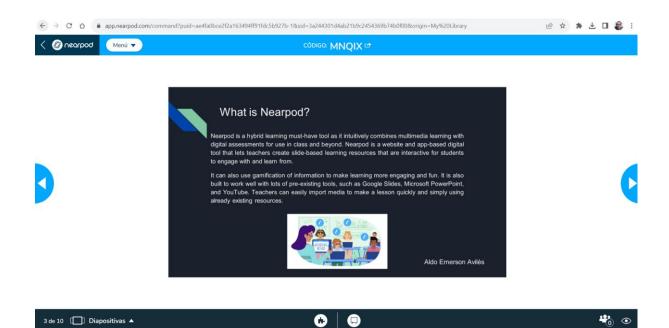












OF AND OF		UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR	grade:		
		TECHNOLOGICAL TOO EXAM	LS		
Subject:	COHORTE	п			
Teacher:	Aldo Avile	do Aviles, Aida López, Manuel de Jesus, Ingrid Carpio and Catherin.			
Students name:					
Objetive:	Measure the learning that the students have learned during the course				
Indicaciones generales	Read carefu	ally each direction and solve it as each pa	art says.		

I PART: MULTIPLE CHOICE

Read the sentence and choose the correct answer

- Technological tool for video quizzes.
 Kahoot

 - b. Google forms
 - c. Class Dojo
- Technological tool for Communication and Collaboration.
 a. FlipGrid
 b. EdPuzzle

 - c. Buncee
- 3. Features of Kinemaster

 - a. Doble screen
 b. Change color of screen
 c. Transition effects
- 4. Technological Tool for Gamification

 - a. Kahoot b. Playposit c. Padlet

