

**The Design of Teaching Materials and Strategies to Overcome Challenges Public
Institutions Face in Remote Learning.**

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Trabajo de grado para obtener el título de Licenciado en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en

Inglés

Social Practice in an Official Institution in Colombia

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Abstract

Title: The Design of Teaching Materials and Strategies to Overcome Challenges Public Institutions Face in Remote Learning. *

Authors: Jeferson Alexander Ávila Rueda, María Alejandra Bermúdez Rodríguez **

Keywords: social practicum, English teaching, English teaching methodologies, classroom management, EFL material design

Description:

The main objective of this graduation project developed to obtain the title of Licenciados en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés, under the modality of social practicum, was to provide EFL teachers from Instituto Técnico Dámaso Zapata whose students are in 6th grade, with relevant strategies and materials in order to minimize the shortcomings remote learning has presented due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the last two years. This action-research project focused its attention on the three problems that the surveys, addressed to teachers and students, yielded towards remote learning: lesson development, classroom management, and lack of resources and materials in order to generate a set of three instructional videos that propose different methodologies, tips, and pieces of advice for classroom development, as well as the generation of lesson plan blanks with materials and clear instructions for teachers to have access to at any moment and use it according the needs students might present. From this project, it can be remarked on the importance of teachers being updated with the objective of overcoming the shortcomings the future might bring and also the significance of having two perspectives of both remote learning and in-person classes in the professional field as educators.

* Bachelor Thesis

** Facultad de Ciencias Humanas. Escuela de Idiomas. Director Liliana Rocío Flórez Castro

Resumen

Título: Diseño de Materiales Didácticos y Estrategias para Superar las Adversidades que Enfrentan las Instituciones Públicas en la Enseñanza a Distancia. *

Autores: Jeferson Alexander Ávila Rueda, María Alejandra Bermúdez Rodríguez **

Palabras clave: práctica social, enseñanza del inglés, metodologías de la enseñanza del inglés, manejo de clase, diseño de materiales en Inglés como Lengua Extranjera.

Descripción:

El objetivo principal de este proyecto de grado desarrollado para obtener el título de Licenciados en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés, bajo la modalidad de práctica social, fue proveer a los profesores de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera del Instituto Técnico Dámaso Zapata cuyos alumnos cursan el sexto grado, de estrategias y materiales pertinentes para minimizar las deficiencias que el aprendizaje a distancia ha presentado debido al brote de COVID-19 en los últimos dos años. Este proyecto de investigación-acción centró su atención en las tres problemáticas que las encuestas, dirigidas a docentes y alumnos, arrojaron hacia el aprendizaje a distancia: el desarrollo de las clases, la gestión del aula y la falta de recursos y materiales con la finalidad de generar un conjunto de tres videos instructivos que proponen diferentes metodologías y consejos para el desarrollo del aula, así como la generación de formatos de planeación con materiales e instrucciones claras para que los docentes tengan acceso en cualquier momento y las puedan usar de acuerdo a las necesidades de sus estudiantes. A partir de este proyecto, se puede resaltar la importancia de la actualización docente con el objetivo de superar las carencias que el futuro les pueda deparar y también la trascendencia de tener dos perspectivas tanto de aprendizaje a distancia como de clases presenciales en el ámbito profesional como educadores

* Trabajo de grado

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Introduction

In today's world, learning and teaching English have become a very important task that most of the time takes place within the school field; the same situation happens in Colombia. However, the landscape of English language learning in this country is not well-established taking into consideration that the relevance depends on the context, the core of public and private institutions and many other factors such as education budgets, political issues, communication, among others. Besides that, the goals and competences are not always clear since there is normally a wide difference between the desired goals, the actual goals, and achievements in schools. In addition, this situation becomes more precarious when action plans do not state different ways or alternatives to accomplish the desired goals.

As it is well-known, the current global situation -the pandemic caused by COVID-19- has led to the urgency of implementing new methodologies and strategies to continue the process of learning and teaching. One of these is Remote Learning; however, and considering our own context, this modality has not been well adjusted and adapted since some communities have been relegated to fewer resources leading to poor quality in education. This becomes even more problematic when the communities own resources such as technology and internet connection, but the activities proposed for the development of the classes are not well-managed.

Having said this, in order to overcome the challenges and shortcomings that remote learning has presented in recent months, mainly affecting public institutions, this project aims to work with teachers of the English area in charge of 6th grade from Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata in which, through the implementation of didactic strategies of the language based on the suggested curriculum such as teaching education, interactive materials, and lesson plan banks, tips

for the proper use of digital tools, and the development of innovative activities and methodologies, the teaching of English as a foreign language can be promoted and well-adjusted so that lessons can become more meaningful when being developed, teachers change their perspective about the new methodologies and students acquire knowledge in a functional way without neglecting the didactic component.

The official establishment of Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata took place in 1888 along with the inauguration of Technical Education in Bucaramanga, Santander. It started working in a narrow-borrowed property that was owned by the former *Escuela de Artes y Oficios* to become independent in 1951 by Decree No. 1342 of December 28, 1950, under the name of “Instituto Industrial Dámaso Zapata”. After some decades, on October 28, 2000, by Resolution No. 12450 of the Governor's Office of Santander, the institution merged with seven concentrations of which currently four of them function as their alternate branches for the integration of a single educational institution. These branches can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Branches of Instituto Técnico Dámaso Zapata and their student population

Branch	Number of students
Sede A: Instituto Técnico Dámaso Zapata	4368
Sede B: Merceditas Carreño	136
Sede C: María Cano	370

Sede D: Jardín Nacional Popular

280

Total:

5.154

Note. This table shows the branches of the school as well as the number of students in it.

In general terms, the school is a three-social-strata public educational and technical institution with mixed-sex education located in the urban area of Bucaramanga, offering the levels of preschool, primary, secondary, and technical instruction ascribed to the Ministry of Education. Each level of education receives a weekly hourly intensity of 20, 25, and 30 hours respectively, the latter being for both secondary and technical education.

The aim of the institution is to provide quality education to children and adolescents from Bucaramanga by promoting institutional values such as respect for human dignity, democratic participation, excellence, and tolerance, among others so that graduates can be linked to higher education and the productive sector using the different technical specialties offered by the institution to strengthen the integral and physical development of the human being and their different skills, which altogether make them capable of developing autonomously in any scenario of their daily lives. Along with the mission, the institution sees itself, in 5 years' time, as a pioneer of the scientific and technological education field that enables students to have the possibility of placing themselves in the different modalities of either technical or professional level for them to reinforce the basic elements for their personal development. In addition to that, the institution follows a philosophical trend called "teleology". Ferreira (1986) defines the concept or ideas of teleology as a "Doctrine that considers the world as a system of relationships between means and ends" (As cited in Martins & Vasconcelos, 2011). The institution implements this trend in order

to overcome the different challenges the 21st century and globalization have presented in the past decades.

In the last few decades, the prominence of improving education has been a must for all nations taking into account the premise of education as a human right; however, this challenge has been hindered by the current global situation as the United Nations (UN) state that

the COVID-19 pandemic has created the largest disruption of education systems in history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents. Closures of schools and other learning spaces have impacted 94 per cent of the world's student population, up to 99 per cent in low and lower-middle income countries. (2020, p. 2)

And therefore, this is not an exception for Colombia. The Colombian National Government led by President Iván Duque announced on March 20th that Colombia would have a mandatory preventive isolation to try to mitigate the spread of the virus in the national territory. This meant the confinement of citizens in their homes, as well as the closure of borders, airports, leisure and recreation centers such as malls, restaurants, parks, discos, etc., and of course, the educational sector, sentencing hundreds of public and private institutions along with the Ministry of Education to reformulate the existing structure for education, adapting it to a new virtual methodology with even more use of technological tools known as ICTs.

In order to ensure learning continuity, the Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN), together with several institutions and educators in the country, has proposed to reformulate the guidelines and statutes that apply to education in Colombia by creating and launching new programs and digital platforms to facilitate the process of teaching and learning followed by the accompaniment of virtual classes that guarantee the practice of the academic process from home. Some of these

are: “3, 2, 1 Edu-Acción” (education content for students), “*Colombia Aprende*” (online platform to support student’s learning), “*BeThe1Challenge*” (digital app for English learning), among others. On the other hand, with the aim of getting access for the majority of the student population to these platforms, the National Government has developed aid plans for Colombian families where technological tools such as computers and tablets, as well as internet plans, are given to students who lack the necessary resources for virtual education and thus guarantee their right to quality education.

Since the use of technological resources has increased in the past few months in order to continue carrying out the scholar year, some teachers might not feel at ease when using these electronic tools which might significantly affect the quality of education. Moreover, as Aranda (2020) expresses, some teachers “may experience increasing levels of anxiety, extra pressure, and stressful situations dealing with the use of technological and digital resources”. Following this trend, students tend to feel overwhelmed by the number of assignments they must deliver throughout the academic periods, and this aspect in combination with the discomfort about the materials and activities implemented during the lessons can contribute to serious issues such as the school dropout. And thus, there is an urgent need to help overcome this subject matter.

As students of Foreign Languages Teaching with Emphasis on English, we firmly believe that we can contribute meaningfully to the process of creating strategies and materials that can benefit the two teachers in charge of the English area and consequently, sixth graders from Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata with the purpose for them to have a better experience and performance in the learning of the English language, so that the shortcomings of education and the negative feelings towards the new normality can be minimized.

1. Objectives

1.1. General Objective

To provide EFL teachers from Instituto Técnico Dámaso Zapata whose students are in 6th grade with relevant strategies and materials in order to minimize the shortcomings remote learning has presented due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

1.2. Specific Objectives

To characterize the needs students and teachers have towards the teaching of English in the current model of learning and teaching based on a specific questionnaire and interviews.

To generate a series of teacher education videos for educators in which there is a display of a variety of didactic strategies focused on the proper implementation of Remote Learning.

To create materials and lesson plan banks based on the suggested curriculum so that teachers can have access to different alternatives of English teaching.

2. Referential Framework

2.1. Theoretical Basis

2.1.1. English Language Teaching (ELT) Situation in Colombia

Throughout Colombian history, especially after the implementation of the new Constitution and the General Law of Education (commonly known as Law 15), and since the late 1990s, the Colombian Ministry of Education has sought to successfully implement a bilingual education model for public and private institutions around the country. One of the first attempts to frame language education in Colombia was The COFE Project. According to Mora, Chiquito & Zapata (2019) this project, known as Colombian Framework for English, intended to “foster a “qualitative change” (Rubiano, Frodden, & Cardona, 2000, p. 38) in preservice English teacher education, develop conceptual and practical elements in teacher preparation, and actively involve regions away from the traditional capital cities" (p.59). Regardless of its success at that time, a few years passed in order to implement a new model for bilingual education in Colombia and due to the necessity of attaining high competence levels in English in school, the government introduced the National Bilingual Program (Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo, 2004-2019). This program aimed to “have citizens qualified to communicate in English with standards comparable internationally so that they may be able to involve the country in the process of international communication, global economy and cultural opening” (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2006).

Together with the implementation of the program, many regulations for bilingual education were created in order to guide and help the process of teaching the foreign language in schools that will be discussed in the legal reference.

2.1.2. Pandemic COVID-19 and its Impact

On March 20, 2020, the Ministry of Education made the determination to close schools to avoid the spread of COVID-19 leading to short and long-term impacts. (Cáceres et al., 2020; Godsey, 2020; Lustin & Tommasi, 2020) study the reveal of inequalities the lockdown has brought to virtual education and how the lack of resources has been the most prominent problem. This has led principals and teachers to implement methodologies in a new modality to go on with the teaching process. The Global Center for the Development of the Whole Child (2020) shows an interview held with five principals and teachers ascribed to rural and vulnerable areas where they express the issues and situations that are present in public institutions during the pandemic. Among the aspects, the interviewees make emphasis on the lack of digital resources as they remark that, in Colombia, teachers are not used to working in a virtual environment, and most of them need psychological support due to stress and the amount of work they must do to reach a considerable number of students. Moreover, the results show the percentages regarding the technological resources owned by students, which are low and precarious. Although the sample of interviewees is small, this article is useful for telling the general considerations that were taken at the moment the lockdown began.

The aforementioned article can be supported by The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2020) who questions whether Colombia was ready to face the challenges this pandemic has brought. In order to do so, the authors show statistics from 2018 led by PISA with the purpose of analyzing the perceptions both students and teachers had towards the use of ICT back then compared to the current perceptions and limitations. The conclusions state that there is a wide difference between the results that were yielded in 2018 and 2020 since teachers and

students claimed that almost everything was under control with the use of ICTs, but as a matter of fact, when the lockdown began, the truth was otherwise.

Taking into consideration the studies, it can be inferred that all the different components that generate the Educational System in Colombia were not prepared for the current situation. Also, this can be assured by Valencia (2020), who concludes that

Two structural problems related to this situation can be identified, which should be solved with more effective public policies: i) the low level of real access of the population to basic technological elements and connectivity, and ii) the low capacity of teachers and schools to translate the advance of digital technologies into transformations in their educational work.

2.1.3. Remote Learning / Distance Learning

To ensure access to the entire Colombian population with difficulties in acquiring quality education, the Colombian State has adopted three modalities for formal education: Presential, Distance and Virtual Education, being the latter the main component of distance learning. The Ministry of Education (MEN) defines distance learning as the “development of educational programs that use cyberspace as a teaching and learning scenario”, in which “the learning group is separated, and where interactive telecommunications systems are used to connect learners, resources, and instructors” (Schlosser & Simonson, 2010, p. 1).

2.1.4. Methodologies, Approaches, and Strategies for Online Instruction

Among many methodologies, approaches, and strategies that emerged due to the current global situation, to guarantee the proper instruction of educational content, UNESCO (2020) has suggested 3 main strategies to be developed from different perspectives of virtual education. The

following summarizes the ones mentioned before, as well as some techniques considered to be effective when carrying out online sessions by different authors.

Technological readiness: “Includes levels of readiness in both technological capacities of digital learning platforms or TV and radio broadcasting systems to provide curricular courses remotely to all learners” (UNESCO, 2020). Here, approaches such as Web-based Instruction (WBI) in combination with techniques such as Webinars, online lectures, online educational platforms, and the like can increase the levels of students’ involvement.

Content Readiness: “accessibility to teaching and learning materials aligned with national curriculum that can be delivered through online platforms, TV or radio programmes, or used for print-based home learning”. (UNESCO, 2020)

Monitoring and Evaluation Readiness: “to monitor distance learning processes, to track the access to courses and engagement, to assess learning outcomes, and to sustain immediate distance learning responses for achieving long-term goals” (UNESCO, 2020).

2.1.5. Online Classroom Management

Classroom Management is one of the most important components of instructional processes since it guarantees the proper development of the process; Iverson (2003) defines it as “the act of supervising relationships, behaviors, and instructional settings and lessons for communities of learners” (p. 4).

For online instruction, one of the most important features to pay attention to is voice and pitch management since there is not a direct interaction between educators and students, and aspects such as body language and facial expressions are relegated to a secondary position. For this matter,

Bao (2020) suggests that “in online teaching, faculty should appropriately slow down their speech to allow students to capture key knowledge points” (p. 114). On the other hand, in comparison to in-class lessons, teachers tend to have less control of the students because of the lack of direct monitoring. To overcome this problem and ensure active participation, Bao (2020) claims that “faculty should use various methods to moderately modify students' homework and reading requirements to strengthen students' active learning outside of class” (p.114) as well as during the class. Following this idea, Natajara (2015) proposes an innovative technique in which students become leaders of the class by “actively participating as coordinators of the on-going research projects, by which they are encouraged” (p.76). Here, educators propose different projects that can be carried out throughout and outside the sessions and select students to guide them, promoting responsibility and autonomous work, both being key characteristics of proper online classroom management.

2.2. Legal Reference

Three chief documents for English teaching regulated by MEN will be considered when developing the action plan.: *The foreign Language Curricular Guidelines* (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, resolución 2343 de 1996), the *Basic Foreign Language Standards*, also known as ‘*Guía 22*’ (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2006), and the *Basic Learning Rights and Suggested Curriculum* (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2016). The first document defines and constructs pedagogical orientations for educators in order to establish the basic competences of language, as well as guidance needed for students’ needs regarding their process of learning the language. Guide 22 is a proposal of comprehensive goals and achievements of language learning for elementary and secondary schools, making emphasis on the communicative competences. The

Basic Learning Rights is the compilation of the goals students will be able to accomplish when the course finishes.

Considering the spread of COVID-19, through the implementation of Resolution 4919 of 2020, the Ministry of Education is forced to have schools and institutions closed with the objective of preventing the spread of the virus, and therefore there is the necessity to implement a different modality from the conventional one already explained in the previous section.

2.3. Ethical Aspects

Regarding ethical aspects, this project will involve the participation of both students and teachers whose names are not going to be published in order to respect and protect their privacy. Also, this project will not intend to experiment with human beings, but to contribute meaningfully to the hindrances that education has presented in the last few months.

3. Methodological Design

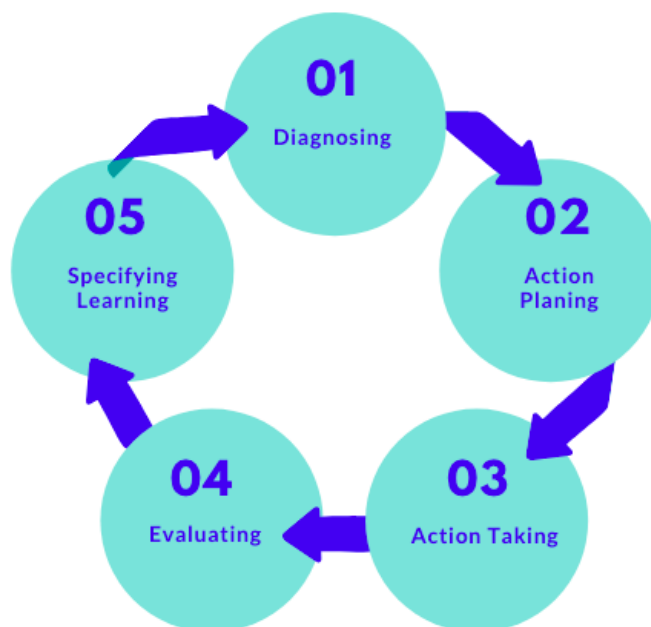
3.1. Type of study

This social project is framed within the action research methodology. Corey (1953, as cited in Cohen et al., 2007) states that “action research is a process in which practitioners study specific situations in order to evaluate, improve and steer decision making and practice” (p. 297). For that reason, it is necessary to understand students’ and teachers’ perceptions towards the new modality implemented in education in order to find specific solutions that are manifested in the development of materials and strategies.

Susman and Evered (1978, as cited in Baskerville, 1999) propose a five-stage cyclical process in order to carry out the action research approach.

Figure 1

Steps in Action Research



Note: Adapted from: Baskerville, R. L. (1999). Investigating information systems with action research. *Communications of the association for information systems*, 2(1), 19.

Figure 1 illustrates the steps to follow throughout the development of social practice. First, the diagnosis, through the implementation of a questionnaire, helps identify the main issues of remote learning. Second, after identifying the problems, it is necessary to elaborate an action plan involving different strategies to overcome the identified problems. Third, to implement the materials and strategies created in the action plan, there is the need to develop an action-taking process. Fourth, once the implementation has taken place, it is necessary to assess the process and the outcomes to see if we have contributed to minimize the education shortcomings in the new normality. During the last step, we intend to reflect on whether the implementation was effective or not and how much knowledge we have gained.

3.2. Resources and Tools

Data collection

Two types of data collection instruments were implemented to gather enough information about the structure of the new modality, the digital tools adopted for the lesson, and the perceptions both teachers and students have towards remote learning: interviews and questionnaires.

Firstly, according to Mathers, Fox & Hunn (2007), surveys designs, and questionnaires are known to be efficient in the field of action research because they “can use a random sampling technique to recruit participants, relatively small sample sizes can be used to generate findings which can be used to draw conclusions about the whole population” (p.6). Thus, they are very effective when it comes to finding out reasons for what people do, think or believe and want. For

this analysis, the questionnaire chosen was the one of a survey design type, with the use of dichotomous questions, multiple choice, Likert scales, and open-ended questions.

The other instrument was a highly structured written and oral interview addressed to a teacher in charge of teaching English in the institution. This type of interview is known to be highly structured due to the fact that it has a wording and an order of predetermined questions (i.e. questions designed in advance). The purpose of conducting the interview is to understand the teacher's attitudes, implemented methodologies, and points of view regarding the new normality in education.

Table 2

Activities design

Tasks	Purpose	Resources and Tools for the implementation	Tangible Outcome
Teacher Education Sessions - Videos	To provide teachers with a set of 3 videos.	Teachers in charge of the English area for 6th grade. Digital platforms such as Web pages for the generation of innovative and didactic digital material.	Three videos of around 15 minutes. 1. Methodologies to be implemented in remote learning and development of the lesson. 2. Tips and advice for classroom management. 3. Designing materials using educational digital

platforms, web pages and apps.

Lesson Plans	To provide teachers 'Plan de Area' for English with a lesson plan in 6th grade. bank based on the Lesson plan template suggested curriculum.	A set of 10 three-hour lesson plans.
Materials and Worksheets	To provide teachers Lesson plans with enough Access to internet resources to connection, web pages implement along such as Educaplay, with the instruction Kahoot!, among others. of topics in the new Access to Microsoft 365. modality.	Worksheets and materials for the term, attached to the lesson plans.

Note. This table shows the tasks, purposes, resources and tools, and tangible outcomes of the implementation.

3.3. Stages and Operational Phases

3.3.1. Action Plan

Table 3

Timetable

Schedule of Activities			
Stages	Activities	Date	Specifications
Stage I	Meeting teachers to schedule meeting hours as well as the application of interviews, and questionnaires.	April 25th	Meetings with teachers were held on Zoom, and continuous contact was done through WhatsApp.
	Application of teacher and student questionnaires and teacher interviews.	May 1st	
	Results Analysis and characterization of the problems to be overcome regarding remote learning.	June 1st	
	Preparation of materials and content for the teaching education videos.	June 7th	
Stage II	Video 1: Methodologies to be implemented in remote learning and development of the lesson (introduction of the topic and activities).	July 26th	Each video lasts around 15 minutes, and they were recorded and carried out virtually via Zoom.
	Video 2: Tips and advice for online classroom management.	July 27th	
	Video 3: Designing of materials using educational digital platforms, web pages and	July 28th	

apps.	
	August 1st -
Lesson plan and Materials Design.	August 14th
	August 14th
	- August
Specifying learning gained through the project.	16th
Writing the Report: Adjusting the information	August 16th
Stage III to the required template.	- 27th
	September
Submission to Thesis Director	7th
	September
Submission to CTG.	14th

Note. This table shows the stages that need to be taken into consideration during the proposed schedule.

4. Intervention Proposal

4.1. Diagnosis of the Problematic Situation

As students of the bachelor's degree in Foreign Languages Teaching with Emphasis on English at Universidad Industrial de Santander, it is mandatory to perform a series of pedagogical practices with public institutions linked to the university to enrich our professional training process, as well as to develop in the student various competences that involve personal and academic growth. These sessions are supposed to be held inside classrooms; however, due to the pandemic, the teaching practicum was requested to be done in virtual education, following the guidelines the Ministry of Education stated in order to give continuity to the teaching and learning process.

During the process of carrying out the lessons, it was noticeable there is a gap between instruction of topics and what the students are indeed receiving from them. In other words, some students do not have the same learning experience provoked by different aspects related to virtual education such as lack of resources and tools, a suitable place to receive the lessons, and the different levels of motivation. In order to demonstrate the statements, we created two questionnaires that aim at knowing the perceptions students and teachers have towards the development of remote learning sessions from Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata in 6th grade. These data collection instruments were published on the institution's platform in order to obtain a broad sampling. The faculty survey was composed of 39 questions both open-ended and closed-ended divided into five sections: demographic questions, structure of the modality, platform and digital tools, evaluation system and faculty perceptions, evaluation system, and

teachers' perceptions of the virtual modality. On the other hand, the survey for students consisted of 14 questions about perceptions of virtuality.

4.1.1. Teachers' Perceptions Towards Remote Learning

Online Instruction and Remote Learning Development.

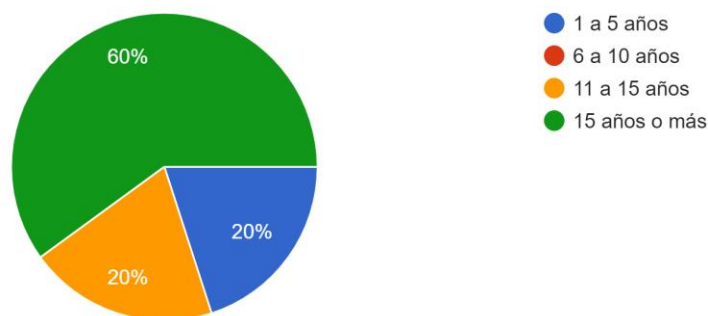
The respondents are composed of 15 teachers of the institution, from different grades and areas of knowledge such as Physical Education, English, Ethics, Mathematics, Physics and other academic areas. Also, teachers from the technical area, such as Electronics, Systems, and Industrial Mechanics. Another demographic characteristic is age. The age range of respondents is from 28 to 65. According to the surveyed teachers, the number of students varies depending on the academic area or specialty. The educators state that the specialty usually has approximately 24 students and the academic area has 36 to 40 students.

Additionally, it was pertinent to know the experience acquired by teachers in the public education sector in order to establish a correlation between the time spent teaching and the capacity acquired at the time of facing challenges in the teaching-learning process. Figure 2 shows that 60% of the teachers have been teaching for about 15 years or more in the public sector; a considerably high percentage compared to the remaining 40%, where 20% have been teaching for 6 to 10 years, and the other 20% from 1 to 5 years. Based on these results, it can be inferred that the institution's teachers are fully qualified to perform their job as educators, based on the premise that professional experience is a vital factor for quality education.

Figure 2*Educational experience in the public sector*

¿Cuántos años tiene de experiencia en la educación pública?

15 respuestas



Note. The graphic shows the years of experiences teachers have in the public sector.

Although the findings towards the teaching experience are positive, it is necessary to state that this experience is based on in-person classes, and thus they might not be ready to face the issues remote learning might present. This is one of the first identified problems after the analysis: the teachers are not trained for online instruction. This finding can be supported by the conclusion of one of the English teachers in charge of 6th grade in the Institution. During the interview, he claims that

At the beginning it was difficult because students were, ok, it was something new for everyone, especially for students, and they wanted to take advantage of the tools and misbehave. It was funny because they knew how to control everything using Zoom previously to the teachers, yeah? And they know how to write on the screen, different things, ok, I was just breathing that deeply, yes? And I didn't pay attention to that, ok, it makes things easier, ok, I didn't have an argument with students. (2020)

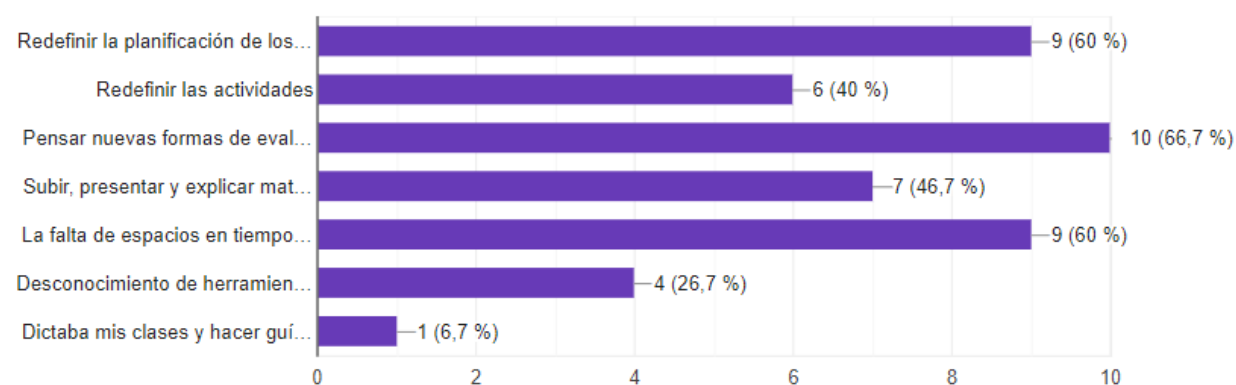
Due to the statement and to have insights on how to create a strategy to overcome this new challenge, we wanted to go deeper into the main difficulties a teacher could face when switching to a virtual environment, and therefore Figure 3 shows the main difficulties teachers face when planning their lessons.

Figure 3

Main difficulties teachers face when planning the lessons

¿Cuáles fueron las principales dificultades al momento de pensar sus clases en un entorno íntegramente virtual? Puede marcar más de una opción.

15 respuestas



Note. The graphic shows the main difficulties teachers face when planning the lessons.

Regarding the difficulties in planning classes during virtuality, 66.7% of the teachers stated that the most difficult thing was to think of new ways to evaluate the students. On the other hand, 60% said that the hardest part was redefining the planning of content and the lack of real-time spaces with the students. In addition, 46.7% said that the most complicated part was uploading, presenting and explaining the material to the students. Forty percent had problems redefining activities, 26.7% did not know digital tools for teaching, and finally, 6.7% said that teaching classes and making guides took too much time.

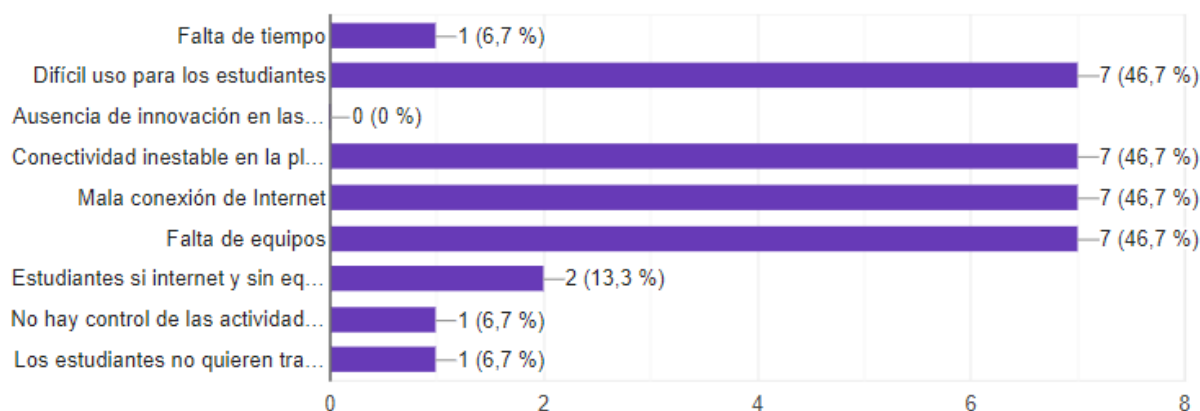
Now that we have covered the problems when planning the lessons, it is necessary to look at the action development of the classes by focusing on the main difficulties. We could find the following shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Main difficulties teachers face when carrying out the lessons

¿Cuáles son las principales dificultades que se le presentan? Puede marcar más de una opción.

15 respuestas



Note. The graphic represents the percentages of the main difficulties teachers face when carrying out the lessons.

The graphic shows some of the difficulties encountered when developing virtual sessions. 93.4% of teachers expressed that the main inconvenience that affects their classes is the poor Internet connection of the students, which generates instability on the platform. In combination with the Internet connection, another important factor with a 90.8% response from teachers is the lack of computer equipment, as well as Internet packages for students. On the other hand, 46.7% affirmed that it is possible that digital platforms are difficult for students to use, which significantly hinders their learning process. Finally, 6.7% believe that time and lack of time also negatively affect the learning process. In relation to the problem of connectivity and access to computer

equipment, the Ministry of National Education together with the country's institutions have generated aid for students with low resources, or for students who do not have a stable internet service. These aids were reflected in laptops and internet packages for these students whereas, regarding the platform usability and the difficulties it has caused, it is pertinent to obtain a set of different platforms and alternatives with easy accessibility for the teachers and students to facilitate the process of getting in touch.

Platforms, online resources and digital tools.

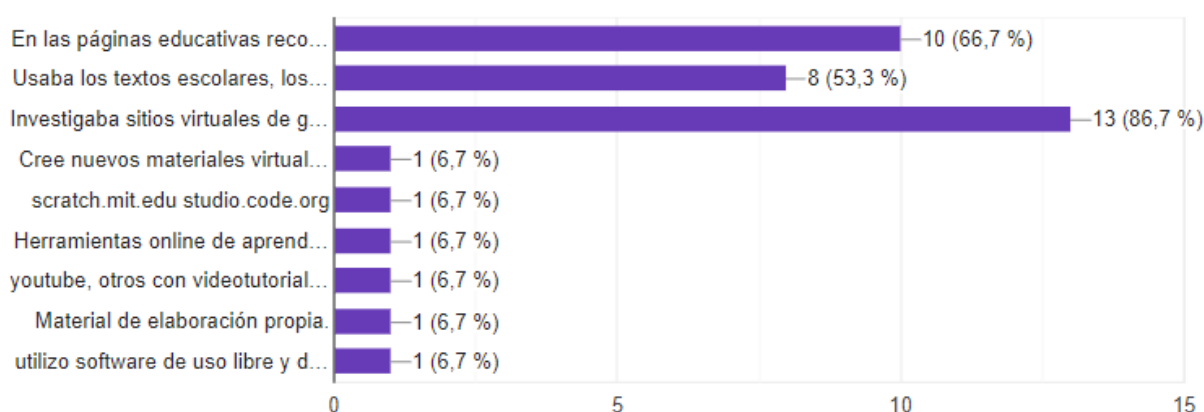
Along with the previous findings, the second problem we could identify is the lack of knowledge on how to create interactive and engaging materials and resources for online instruction. This is shown in figure 5 where 86.7% of the teachers concluded that researching virtual guide sites on the Internet and consulting with their colleagues are the main support resources. Following this idea, 66.7% researched the recommended educational pages to acquire more knowledge and be able to elaborate material. In addition, 13.4% opted for the use of other websites such as YouTube to gather enough information to ensure good content creation. However, 53.3% of the teachers preferred the use of school texts, scanning the pages to be used and sending them as image files to the students.

Figure 5

Resources used to create and implement activities in remote learning

¿En cuáles recursos usted se apoyó para diseñar e implementar sus actividades virtuales?
Puede marcar más de una opción.

15 respuestas



Note. The graphic shows the resources used to create and implement when it comes to teaching in remote learning.

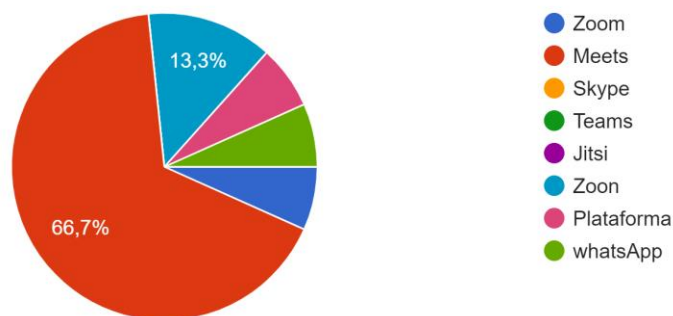
Although with the rise of the digital era, digital platforms have been developed for distance communication, figure 6 shows that 66.7% of teachers say that the platform of preference in the institution is Google Meets. However, it can be inferred from the results that teachers have the freedom to decide the interface to develop their classes since 20% of teachers opt for the Zoom platform. In addition to the above, 13.3% prefer to use other platforms such as the one provided by the institution and the WhatsApp support tool. For that reason, teachers need a display of different alternative platforms for them to choose when a platform does not fulfill their expectations.

Figure 6

Digital Platforms used when developing the lessons

¿Cuáles son las plataformas digitales que manejan para el desarrollo de las sesiones?

15 respuestas



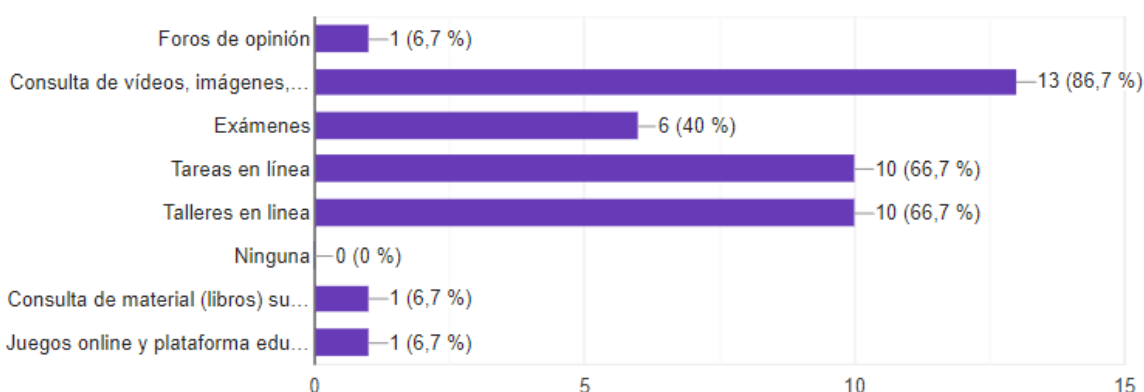
Note. The graphic shows the digital platforms that are used by teachers when developing the lessons.

After finding out the platforms teachers utilize, it was required to become familiar with the activities that take place within these online tools. Figure 7, therefore, shows the most common activities educators promote in class.

Figure 7*Platform activities teachers promote in class*

¿Cuáles de las siguientes actividades que ofrecen las plataformas promueve usted en su clase? Puede marcar más de una opción.

15 respuestas



Note. The graphic shows the platform activities teachers promote in remote classes.

In regard to the activities that teachers promote in their classes, it is perceived that most teachers (86.7%) promote the use of videos, images, texts and Internet pages during class. A 66.7% promotes the development of online assignments and workshops respectively, and 40% exams. The remaining 13.4% carry out opinion forums and consultation of materials such as books. Thus, in these results, the lack of knowledge of the various platforms and digital tools that exist for the development of classes is once again evident. Because of this, the use of these platforms is minimal, and their full potential is not exploited. There are also platforms that offer more than one possible interactive activity and that are easy to understand and operate.

Moreover, when addressing the issue of the knowledge that teachers have about the different tools they can use in their classes, it is pertinent to believe that as an educational institution, its directors are obliged to provide their teachers with guidance and basic training in the platforms adopted by the institution. With respect to the question whether the institution has provided

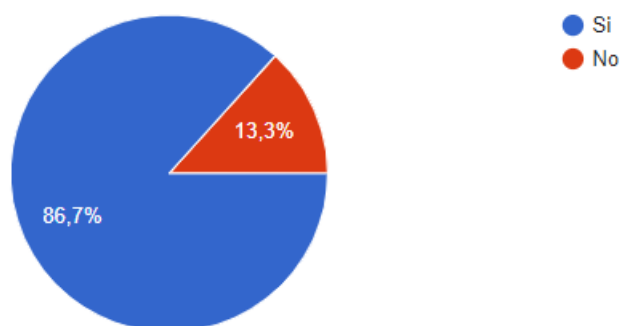
teachers with training and guidance for the management and use of digital tools, known as ICT, it can be inferred from figure 8, that the school has complied with this task. 86.7% of teachers say they have received this training compared to 13.3% who say they have not. In other words, the institution took measures for teachers to learn about this new modality in order to improve their methodologies and technological skills to meet the new learning-teaching needs.

Figure 8

Teacher's training and orientations towards ICTs

¿ Los profesores han recibido alguna capacitación u orientación para el manejo y uso de las herramientas digitales (Tics)?

15 respuestas



Note. The figure shows the percentage of teachers who have received training and orientation in ICTS.

Classroom management

About the third problem, classroom management is another aspect that needs to be paid attention to since the environment in which teachers find themselves changed completely and therefore, it needed a restructuring of the model in comparison to what they used to do in in-person classes. For that reason, it was imperative to get to know the protocol they adjusted and implemented before, during, and after the lessons. The protocol used for most teachers is the one as follows:

1. Enter the Google Meets room through the link sent by the teacher to the students. For this, they must access with their institutional email at the established time, followed by a good personal presentation.
2. Each student must have access to the microphone and camera for effective participation in the sessions. Certain rules must be followed, such as speaking only with permission, in a respectful and timely manner.
3. After an introduction to the class and doing the roll call, the teacher proceeds to explain the topic to be studied, as well as the different activities to be developed.
4. At the end of the topic explanation, the students have a space in which questions are generated on the concepts seen and consequently, the clarification done by the teacher.
5. Once there are no more questions to answer, the teacher instructs the activities to be carried out asynchronously and finally a farewell is given.

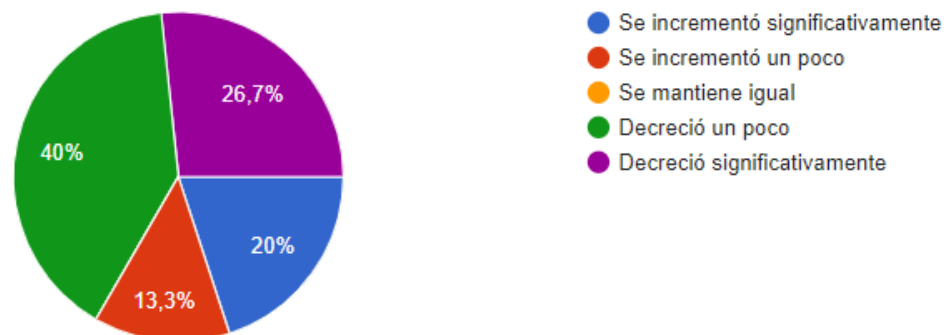
On the other hand, one of the aspects that most concerns teachers in any educational environment is student behavior. During virtual sessions, there are even more external factors that affect students' attention and therefore participation, negatively influencing their instructional process and hindering communication between them and the teacher. Figure 9 shows teachers' perceptions towards participation in virtual classes with respect to in-person lessons.

Figure 9

Teachers' perceptions towards participation in virtual classes compared to in-person lessons

¿Cuál es su percepción con respecto a la participación estudiantil en las clases virtuales en relación con las clases presenciales?

15 respuestas



Note. The figure shows teachers' perceptions towards participation in virtual classes in comparison to in-person classes.

The teachers' perception regarding student participation in virtual classes is mostly negative. Forty percent of the teachers responded that student participation decreased a little in comparison to in-person classes. Similarly, 26.7% stated that participation decreased significantly. However, the results cannot be generalized because there are factors that might influence students' daily attendance and, the population sample is limited. This can be seen in the remaining percentages in the table, which differ from those mentioned above. Some 20% said that participation increased notably, while the remaining 13.3% said it increased a little.

Once classes are over, communication is key to monitor students' process as well as the communication with parents. In other words, teachers need to keep in touch with both pupils and their relatives by using certain digital tools that make this process possible virtually. Figure 10 shows some of these tools and the frequency in which they are used by the educational community.

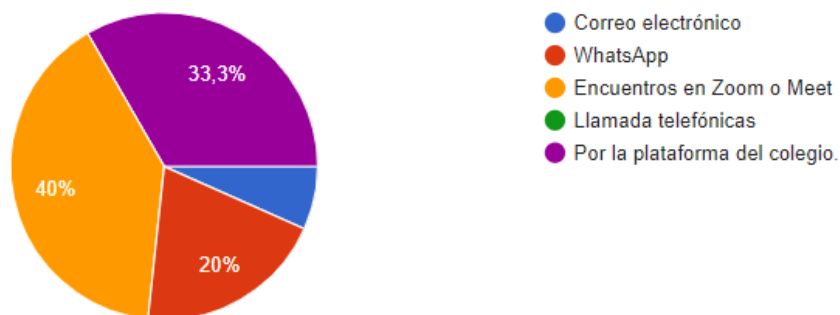
WhatsApp is one of the most common communication platforms among adolescents; however, only 20% of teachers use it as a tool for interaction with their students. On the other hand, and in the interest of making use of the tools generated by the institution, the school platform has a frequency of use of 33.3%, thus surpassing the simplest interfaces such as the one mentioned above. To conclude, the main form of interaction between teacher and student is the meetings they have frequently through communication platforms such as Zoom and Meets, making even more relevant the importance of synchronous meetings and their impact on the good development of the teaching-learning process.

Figure 10

Main way of interaction with students and parents

La principal forma de interacción con sus estudiantes y sus padres de familia :

15 respuestas



Note. The graphic shows the main way in which teachers interact with parents and students.

4.1.2. Students' Perceptions Towards Remote Learning

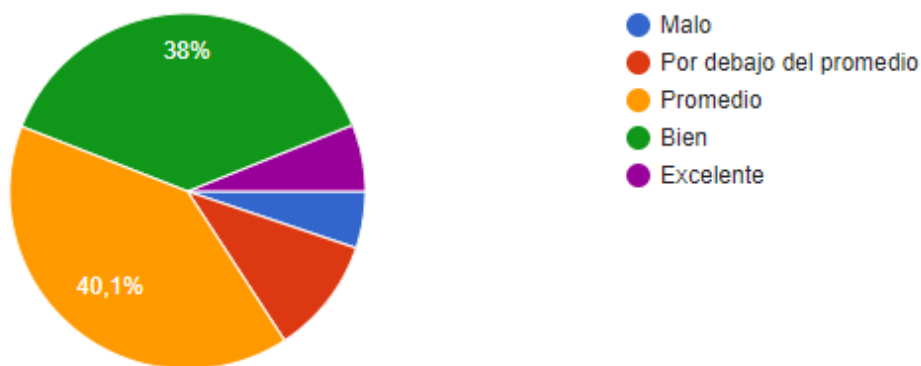
The respondents are composed of 329 students from the Instituto Técnico Dámaso Zapata. It is important to note that since the survey was published on the institution's platform, it was possible to obtain a much larger sample than the one planned with only 6th grade. This had positive

implications for the project since we could achieve a more accurate analysis of the students' perceptions towards the new virtual modality. The age range of these students is from 10 to 18 years old, with most of the population being 14 years old. The grade they were in at the time of the survey ranged from fifth grade to eleventh grade of high school, with the vast majority being in tenth grade.

To begin with, our main objective was to know the level of satisfaction of the students during the virtual class sessions and whether these sessions have in any way strengthened their academic process or, on the contrary, have affected it negatively. Figure 11 shows the general perceptions of students towards remote learning.

Figure 11

Students' general perception towards remote learning



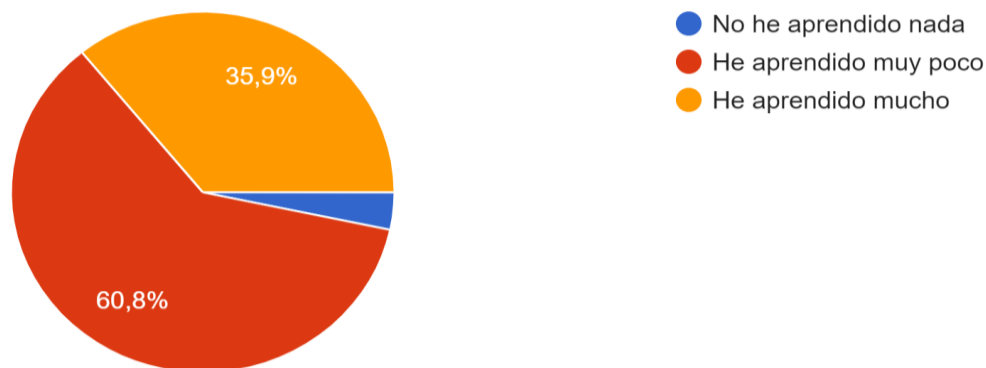
Note. The graphic shows students' general perceptions towards remote learning.

Regarding the question, 40.1% of the students consider that the general perception towards the classes is fair, 38% good, 10.6% below fair, 5.2% poor and 6.1% excellent. If we observe these results, it could be inferred that the level of satisfaction with the modality is favorable for the students, since only a very small percentage considers that their experience has been negative.

However, the situation is different when asked specifically about the level of knowledge acquired during the sessions. Figure 12 shows how much students believe they have learned in their virtual classes.

Figure 12

Acquired knowledge during virtual classes



Note. The graphic shows how much students have learnt in the virtual modality.

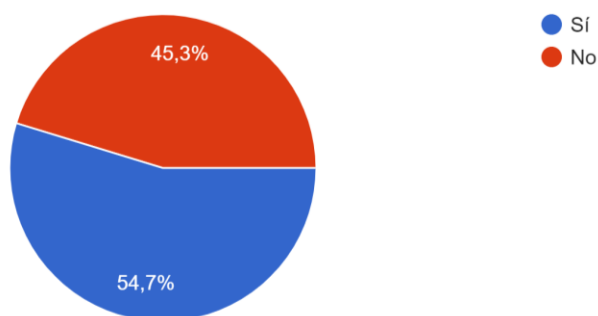
As can be seen in the graphic, 60.8% of the students consider that they have learned very little in the virtual world, while 35.9% consider that they have learned a lot; and 3.3% state that they have learned nothing. In accordance with the above, it can be concluded that this new virtual modality has negatively affected students' learning since more than half of the respondents consider that they have learned very little or nothing. The above situation is alarming due to the fact that this modality has been developed throughout the school year and becomes a great challenge not only for the students but also for the teachers as agents of the teaching-learning process.

Continuing with this idea, it could be assumed that if students feel that their learning has been little or minimal during the virtual sessions, one of the many aspects that could be affecting this outcome is the amount of knowledge or concepts taught during the sessions and the activities left

for review. It would be congruent to say that this amount could be minimal, and that is why students do not have enough material for their personal study. However, when students were asked about the academic load they received from professors during the online sessions, it was found that the academic workload has increased significantly during the online sessions, completely discarding the theory of less work, less knowledge acquired. Figure 13 shows then what the students think about the academic load.

Figure 13

Increase of the academic load in the virtual environment



Note. The figure shows the increase of the academic load in the virtual environment.

The graph indicates that 54.7% of the students surveyed feel that the academic load has increased with virtuality compared to in-person lessons. On the other hand, 45.3% of the students surveyed do not feel that the academic load has increased with virtuality. Based on these results, it can be inferred that although the difference between the two positions is low, there is an increase in the academic load negatively impacting the students' perception of the teaching-learning process. In addition to this, students who responded affirmatively to the previous question were asked to briefly explain how the academic load has increased. The most frequent answers were related to the amount of work assigned since students consider that they are assigned more work

virtually than face-to-face. Likewise, in the answers given, students emphasize that in the virtual mode they have less time to hand in their assignments, and less time for personal study. Thus, students affirm that household chores in combination with homework are a negative factor that considerably affects their optimal performance. The above can be illustrated in some of the respondents' answers:

- When the classes were face-to-face, we had much more time for the teacher to explain a topic well and thus did not leave us so much activity for home, now with the virtual classes the explanations are much shorter and we ourselves must try to research more about the topic and understand it better and then perform the activities assigned. To us, it feels more stressful to have to be aware of a platform than to be in the classroom paying attention to the teacher.
- Homework is more and we don't learn enough from it, we are more concerned about submitting assignments and getting good grades in all subjects.
- It is true that everything is a matter of discipline and organization but if we analyze, virtuality also requires a lot of commitment and not all students have the necessary means to work in this way, the load has increased because it is not taken into account that being at home requires other responsibilities such as housework. I believe that the load has increased for the same reason and because this process makes it seem that there is more time available.

4.2. Implemented Activities

After a robust analysis of the surveys and the interview to one of the English teachers in charge of sixth grade of Institución Educativa Dámaso Zapata, it was necessary to start a planning that

would solve some of the concerns the virtual education has brought to this public institution taking into consideration that this experience has been new to both educators and pupils. In order to overcome the hindrances and shortcomings, there were three implemented activities aligned to the three objectives. These activities were: questionnaires addressed to teachers and students as well as the interview addressed to the English teacher -which help us build the diagnostic of the intervention-, three instructional and educational videos, and lesson plan banks and materials.

4.2.1. Instructional videos

Thanks to the analysis of what students and teachers stated in the questionnaires as well the interview addressed to the teacher, we considered it was highly necessary to start planning the presentations with the purpose of generating ideas and strategies to share the findings collected from a thorough research done on the topic, meaning that all the information there is theory-based and well-supported by international authors and organizations. Initially, the videos were planned to be a 45-minute live presentation via Zoom in which we were going to display the ideas in 35 minutes, and 10 minutes for the teachers to share experiences and ask questions related to the subject matter, but due to the teachers' availability, it was imperative to change the plans, and thus we came up with the idea of recording a set of three instructional videos with a duration of about 9 - 10 minutes that are connected to the proper instruction of topics and methodologies, materials and interactional websites to implement during the lessons, as well as tips and recommendations when teaching in this new modality. Each video was recorded via zoom with the help of slides from Slidesgo. Since they are short videos with clear instructions, educators will have access to them whenever they feel like.

Remote Learning Lesson and Lesson Development

The first video, a twenty-three-minute clip, presents some of the existing methodologies and approaches to distance learning that are suitable for this educational era preceded by Covid 19. In order to start with the approaches, it was necessary to clarify to the teachers how this modality is seen and what are the mechanisms that together, create what is called 'Remote Learning'. According to UNESCO (2020), Remote Learning "occurs when the learner and the instructor, or source of information, are separated physically and hence cannot meet in a traditional classroom setting" (p.10). That being said, it is pertinent to point out that this method does not mean accessing an online platform and teaching a topic to a group of students; as we were taught since the beginning of the teaching career, all lessons require previous preparation in terms of content, activities, materials and resources, time, setting, among others., and online sessions require not only preparation but also acknowledgement of students' individual needs, aspects such as connectivity (access to technology and internet connection), the way the content of the lessons will be distributed and the means of constant communication with other members of the school community including students, teachers, parents, etc.

For institutions and teachers to have insights on how to properly provide continuity to the learning process in a virtual setting, UNESCO (2020) has proposed a response for this situation by creating an effective Remote Learning strategy involving an interactive approach with 4 steps. Each step was created to provide help and tools to the problems mentioned in the previous paragraph, following a logical order of development of a session. These are: *Understand and Envision*, *Decide and Design*, *Enable and Execute*, and finally *Monitor and Adjust*.

1. ***Understand and Envision.*** As teachers, we are part of the education system, and it is our duty to promote the continuity of the learning process. This is why having a clear vision of students' conditions is important for successful remote learning lessons. According to their

mental and physical state, a balance between aspects such as scope, curriculum, class pace, resources and speed must be created (UNESCO, 2020, p.17). For example:

- It is recommended to reduce the curriculum to focus on what is deemed most important but also on covering some future expectations to keep the learning process updated.
 - In terms of the class development, have students follow your pace to keep everyone at the same level, but also allow students to study and work at their own pace outside online lessons to promote autonomy and keep them connected to the topics.
 - For resources, adopt remote learning solutions such as webpages and digital platforms at the same time you create print-based materials for the students who do not have access to internet connection or tech.
 - Maintain a close relationship with families and students. Survey families to assess whether students are ready for remote learning. Contact parents through email, phone calls or social media.
 - Depending on the digital infrastructure and user capability, school systems will have different levels of digital readiness and as a result different options for remote learning. Once this information is clear, it is possible to think about implications related to the methodology of the lessons and the strategies to overcome them.
- (UNESCO, 2020, p. 17)

2. ***Decide and Design.*** Now, once you have all the parameters set for your remote classes, the next step will be to think about the best methodology to implement in your lessons. UNESCO (2020) suggests taking into account aspects such as “the practice, the material provided, the assessment process and feedback for each grade-level and subject taught”

(p.7). Here, we are going to focus on our field, which is English teaching to 6th graders.

When thinking about the development of your lesson, ask yourself the following questions:

- How can we communicate new assignments and information to students?
(mail/drop-off, TV/radio, email, online platform, adaptive software, live video conference)
- How can we teach new concepts remotely? (paper textbook, TV/radio program, unstructured supplementary service data device, recorded videos, adaptive software, live video conference)
- How can we practice skills remotely? (paper textbook/worksheets, non-adaptive software, adaptive software, live video conferences with small groups)
- How can we provide feedback and coaching remotely? (physical notes, email/message boards, online platform, adaptive software, live VC) (UNESCO, 2020, p. 7)

Once the setting of the class is done, the next step to follow is to decide how communication of the activities, teaching of topics, and their proper practice are held. Among all the tools that can be beneficial for Remote Learning, Kabdy and Narmukhametova (2021) in their research paper claim that there is one in particular that is known to be effective when transmitting instructions to students, they assure that

It is widely known that modern technologies and approaches are effective tools in distance learning. Especially, demonstrations of slide shows may be regarded as the most effective teaching devices and techniques in explaining rules, defining some issues related to the topic, introducing the theme, and so on (p.23).

In addition to this, they list the following advantages that support their previous claim about slideshow used in education:

- Slide shows focus on specific details by making a bright impression on the learners and help teachers to attract the audience. In the process of the distance learning it is significant to draw the students' attention to the studied material.
- They create effective explanations by means of schemes, diagrams, associations, and other illustrative images. In online learning most of the learners perceive information in visual way, and in this case, slide shows will help to design presented stuff;
- Growth of thinking ability of learners, while reviewing the presentation students memorize the content of the lesson and share their thoughts and opinions with their teachers and peers; Also, they create an opportunity to download and revise slide shows at any appropriate time (p.24).

Following this trend of an attractive lesson delivery for your class, it is advisable to find methods of instruction in which both asynchronous and synchronous components can be mixed. For this matter, Kabdy and Narmukhametova (2021) suggest implementing an approach called "Flipped Learning". They define it as "a type of attitude very interesting especially for learners, because the unique structure of the method is based on the change of homework and lectures. This unique approach will facilitate the teachers' work during online lessons" (p.24). In other words, during the implementation of this pedagogical approach, students explore new content related to the course outside the virtual classroom (asynchronous) by watching pre-recorded videos or reading texts. In-class sessions (synchronous) students then get into collaborative work by discussing the previous input

or completing assignments in which they can practice through active activities such as solving-problem tasks, debates, discussions, round tables, etc., all the already acquired knowledge. Furthermore, as it is well-known that in Remote Learning there might be technical problems related to connectivity and technology when teaching the class, this approach will

prevent obstacles for qualified explanation of the material due to the lack of time, and while changing the roles of tasks and lectures students will have more options to express their opinions during the lesson. In addition, while revising the lecture material at home, students will be prepared for the lesson (p.24).

When assessing your students' progress, in the Journal of the Georgia Association for Middle Level Education, Pace et al. (2020) claim that it is advisable to include "exploratory assignments, such as those involving problem-based and product-based learning" (p.8). This can be supported also by another author Wormeli (2020, as cited in Pace et al.) in his recent Webinar that assures

these tasks allow students multiple ways to demonstrate understanding. He suggests that teachers then provide feedback in the form of commentary, placing the importance on student growth rather than the more punitive act of grading, which, at this time, would not be an accurate representation of a students' knowledge, especially given the divide between students who have access to technology and those who do not (p.9).

3. ***Enable and Execute.*** In the step 3 of the approach, it is stated that having a proper online class not only involves the methodology of your classes or the materials you are going to use, but also it is very important to involve strategies to engage teachers, parents and

students and give them the tools and tips to prepare them for this modality. The third step then highlights the importance of ongoing communication and training at every level of the educational community.

For example:

- *For teachers:* training and accompaniment to deliver remote learning and support students; for example, technical training on remote solutions, instructional training, student engagement, and peer-learning; and initiatives to support mental health during this challenging period.
- *For parents and families:* equipping them to support their students and maintain community engagement; for example, providing them with a series of tips and tricks to support their students in remote learning.
- *For students:* ensuring access to remote learning (devices, internet), ensuring engagement and retention, and addressing well-being needs across spiritual and emotional, cognitive, and social, and physical dimensions (UNESCO, 2020, p.7).

Classroom Management Tips

The second clip is a nine-minute video that focuses on how teachers can organize their lessons in remote learning so that students can feel at ease in classes, also including some tips to keep students encouraged and concentrated in the new modality. This video contains two parts: classroom management tips and classroom management apps and websites. The first part reviews the study of Pace et al. (2020) who propose a set of recommendations to increase the rapport with students. Additionally, the video presents two aspects to take into consideration: online lesson organization and creating a positive culture for learning.

Regarding creating a positive culture for learning, the authors remark how vital it is for teachers to make their students learn meaningfully or gain ‘optimal learning’, thus focusing attention on details is a good idea including the appearance of the materials and the lessons themselves such as the use of suitable yet vivid colors, fonts, icons, images since they should be appealing to the students as it will certainly cause more interest and motivation to join and participate in the classes. Moreover, due to the limitation between student-teacher, the teacher should create a platform where pupils can see information about them and not only the basic one, but fun or curious facts to create the impression of having them close even though they will not see one another in real time as much as they used to when the pandemic was not present. Furthermore, the authors continue to make a strong emphasis on the affinity they should create with their pupils, and therefore, one of those aspects to maintain are the ones of non-verbal communication such as smiling, nodding which are considered to have been minimized in virtual education yet necessary to embrace it by finding different alternatives to do so. Among the alternatives, Darby (2020, as cited in Pace et al.), proposes:

1. Include announcements each week about upcoming topics and/or to review previous learning.
2. Answer students’ questions and/or online postings in a timely manner.
3. Let students know when they can meet with you, either by establishing an online office hours and/or scheduling an appointment.
4. Create and post videos that explain assignments.
5. Provide timely assessment and feedback.

6. Engage in online discussions. (2020, p. 5).

The online lesson organization, on the other hand, consists of specifying the learning goal at the end of each lesson so that the planning of the activities are correlated to the expected outcome as the minimum part to follow a logical sequence yet they particularly recommend “designating a distinct section or page on your learning platform for each of the following: class information and announcements, content, and assessments” (Pace et al. p. 4). In addition to including a format for ‘open discussions’ to boost collaborative work among pupils and educators.

As it was previously said, the second part of the video incorporates classroom management apps and websites intending to provide teachers with more access to different platforms that can ease the process of leading the class. In the first instance, there is a quote by Reinke et al. (2011) who reinforce the idea of how testing class management is for teachers and the importance it has for us to catch up with strategies to overcome the challenges this area might bring as the subject matter is not indifferent to the new normality. As soon as the quote was introduced, we proceeded to present four platforms with their own definition and use based upon the reviews and recommendations from Common Sense Education.

Firstly, ClassDojo creates a positive class environment letting students know about their values and skills such as hard-work, kindness, leadership, among others. Besides that, it gives a voice to students allowing them to share what they have learned through the lessons by adding photos and reflections to their folders, increasing parents’ involvement since the platform lets them see their children’s progress and the peaks of the class. Secondly, Bloomz:

is a learning and behavior management app and website that provides teachers with a simple way to effectively communicate between school and home. From the dashboard,

teachers can share information in a variety of ways by creating posts, events, activities, assignments, and photo albums. Parents can sign up to receive app, email, or text notifications, and teachers can control a wide variety of factors, including how parents and guardians communicate (for example, with each other or only with the teacher), what type of information goes out to families, and whether to communicate in a parent or guardian's preferred language. (Rogowski, 2021)

Thirdly, Google Classroom is a handy platform for students to share their tasks and for teachers to check them out and immediately grade and give back without going out of the website and spending too much time doing so. Finally, Socrative allows you to create quizzes, give instant qualitative quantitative and feedback, and play games. That is to say, it is “an interactive web-based student-response system (also available through iOS, Android, or Chrome apps) that can help teachers spark conversation and learning through user-created polls and quizzes” (Rogowski, 2018).

Education Tools for Teachers in Remote Learning

This is a nine-minute video whose objective is to provide a set of educational tools to help educators facilitate student learning and interaction during periods of school closure as well as aspects to keep in mind when designing materials. For a start, the video shows a table of content that displays four parts: the objective of the video, educational platforms, material design tools, and alternative resources. After that, there is a quote by Novikova (2020) who states that “interactive learning is a practical approach that helps students become more interested and learn more material, strengthening their problem-solving and critical thinking skills ". Which is a quotation that relates to the main need that teachers and students are facing in the modality of remote learning. On one hand, there are four 6 educational platforms that are suggested by

Common Sense Education (2020). Common Sense Education is a platform that provides teachers, students and parents with several materials, reviews and pieces of advice to make the biggest advantage of technology. Thanks to the information provided by the institution, we could explain the function of each platform and how teachers can make the most of it; the suggested platforms are ABCya, British Council, Flipgrid, Baamboozle, Kahoot! and Lyricstraining. On the other hand, based on the same institution, the video shows six materials design tools such as Canva, EducaPlay, Genially, Liveworksheets, Quizlet, and Slidesgo. After talking about the platforms, webpages, and apps, we took Howard and Major's work to discuss aspects to consider when designing materials.

The authors propose 10 guidelines for designing effective English materials that, although their work was done in 2004, can perfectly be adjusted to the materials created during the pandemic in remote learning. These guidelines are: first, the need to provide context and how important it is to create materials that are meaningful to pupils when including real-life experiences, cultural aspects, and first languages. Second, the interaction in terms of language that focuses on providing situations in which students can put into practice while they are out of the classroom. Third, how materials should encourage learners to become more autonomous and learn how to learn by themselves. Fourth, the importance of the materials to be linked to the scope and a clear objective. Fifth, the necessity of offering opportunities for integrated language where not only is reading and writing included, but also listening and speaking aiming at integral learning. Sixth, the authenticity materials should have and how students need to be exposed to real, unscripted passages and multimedia. Seventh, the progression of tasks based on the level and complexity of the grade. Eighth, the aesthetic such as physical appearance, the density of the text, the size of the font, among others. Ninth, it expresses how vital it is to have clear instructions to avoid misunderstandings.

Finally, the flexibility materials should have regarding students' needs. To summarize, the integration of the guidelines will make the materials more meaningful and will promote critical thinking and autonomy in students' learning process.

Subsequently, the alternative resources are a set of platforms and webpages suggested by UNESCO (2020), Pope (2020), and Rugowski (2021). In this section, we can find ClassDojo, GoNoodle, Storybird, Nearpod, and Powtoon. Finally, the video ends with the bibliographical references available for further information and credits to the scholars and institutions. Teachers will have access to the video as well as the slides that were used in it.

4.2.2. Lessons plan banks and materials

As the second objective aims at providing teachers with a lesson plan bank based on the 'Plan de Area' for English in 6th grade and having contemplated the diagnostic and the previous videos, we made the determination to plan a whole term, specifically, the third term. The lesson plan blank is composed of 10 folders, meaning that it starts from week 1 and finishes on week 10. The template of the lesson plan was designed by the pre-service teachers taking into account the main aspects for the teachers to clearly understand and follow a logical sequence when carrying out the lessons. The template contains three parts.

First, the document starts with the header. There, on the left, there is the school logo, the name of the university (since the practicum was carried out thanks to the agreement both institutions have), the name of the program, and the city; on the right, the title of the document, which is Lesson Plan - Social Practicum. The second part shows general information such as: name of the pre-service teachers, head teachers 'name, the grade, the term, number of the week, time, allotted time, topic and subtopics, and the general objectives of the lesson. The third part involves the stage

of the lesson, which includes an introductory activity, warming-up activities, activities themselves, and wrapping-up activities; on the other hand, the procedure meets the goal of explaining what teachers are supposed to follow and do at the moment of developing the class, besides that, there is another column for the resources where educators will find links, worksheets, videos, among others. Finally, the other columns belong to the required skills for each activity and how much time every activity will spend, which in total adds up to 5 columns.

Table 4 shows the topics proposed for the 10 weeks of the third term, the subtopics, and the objective for each week based on 'Plan de Area' for sixth graders.

Table 4

Lesson Plan Banks General Aspects

Week	Topics and subtopics	General objectives
1	Demonstratives Parts of the house Furniture	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognize the different vocabulary used to point out objects according to their proximity and use them in speech. - Identify the parts of the house and the different furniture found there.
2	Demonstratives Parts of the house Furniture	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognize the different vocabulary used to point out objects according to their proximity and use them in speech. - Identify the parts of the house and the different furniture found there.
3	There is / there are Yes/ No Questions Places in town	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognize the different vocabulary used to point out objects according to their proximity and use them in speech.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the parts of the house and the different furniture found there.
4	There is / there are Yes/ No Questions Places in town	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognize the different vocabulary used to point out objects according to their proximity and use them in speech. - Identify the parts of the house and the different furniture found there.
5	Imperatives Places around the city Giving directions	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognize parts of the city - Listen and follow instructions - Give directions
6	Imperatives Places around the city Giving directions	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognize parts of the city - Listen and follow instructions - Give directions
7	Simple Present Tense Yes/ no questions Jobs	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognize jobs - talk about different jobs and their activities.
8	Simple Present Tense Yes/ no questions Information questions Jobs	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - talk about general truths, repeated actions or unchanging situations - make yes no/questions as well as information questions
9	Present simple tense Routines	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognize routines - talk about their routines

10	Simple Present Tense Daily Routines Sequence of Actions	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- use then, afterthat, next, and finally to talk about their routines.- talk about their routines by following a logical sequence
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Note. This table shows the general aspects of the lesson plan banks, the number of weeks and the objectives.

4.3. Activities Assessment

Table 5

Activities Assessment

Diagnosis 1: Lesson Development and Online Instruction	
Before the Intervention	
Antecedents	From the diagnosis, in terms of the lesson development of the virtual sessions and the way in which teachers instructed knowledge and activities, it was evident the unfamiliarity of teachers and students towards the online modality; the lack of knowledge of teaching-learning methodologies that could be adapted to the modality; and a simple way to communicate with students inside and outside the virtual classroom.
Evidence	For the instruction of topics:

- Teachers introduce topics and send via email activities to be done at home. There is no evidence of collaborative work within the online session.
- Although the adjustment of the curriculum is mentioned to have been done, there is no evidence of how it was done and on which foundations they based those arrangements.
- Teachers seem to follow the same traditional method for in-person classes: topic introduction, topic explanation, practice activities.

For communication:

- There seems to be only one means of communication between students - teacher and students - students; that is the synchronous sessions they have during the week. The usage of other communication platforms such as WhatsApp and Email is also evident but without the same frequency.

After the Intervention

Objective

To provide 6th grade English teachers of the institution Técnico Dámaso Zapata with strategies, methodologies and approaches necessary for an effective teaching of topics during virtual class sessions, as well as evaluation and feedback tools inside and outside the virtual classroom; by means of an instructional video where information obtained from an analysis of different studies on Remote

Learning is compiled. All of this in order to improve the experience and performance of students in the virtual modality.

Description of the
Activities

The main activity created for this first issue is an instructional video in which the following aspects are discussed and explained:

1. UNESCO (2020) has proposed an effective Remote Learning strategy involving an interactive approach with 4 steps. These are: *Understand and Envision*, *Decide and Design*, *Enable and Execute*, and finally *Monitor and Adjust*.
2. When deciding and designing the online lesson, 3 tools are given for each stage in the development of the lesson:
 - For planning the lesson: A methodology called Flipped Learning is presented.
 - For the instruction of topics: An interactive tool called SlideShow is displayed.
 - For assessment and feedback: An approach with activities to implement and assess students is proposed.

Outcomes

Overall, the intervention of this first instructional video will help teachers in charge of 6th grade at Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata to reinforce the teaching methodologies in the English Language and, consequently, their students' performance. Most importantly, teachers and future teachers from the institution will benefit from this material as it provides specific and clear instruction

on how to proceed in a virtual environment using the strategies mentioned on the video and the insights on the implications for students and for education in general.

Completion of the task Finished

Diagnosis 2: Classroom management

Before the Intervention

Antecedents	The development of the lessons had to be improvised due to the unexpected change, and therefore everything, including communication with both parents and students, was a pilot-experiment-like experience.
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Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvisation and adjustment to the already-stated curriculum. - Participation decreased up to a 40% in virtual modality - The main way of interacting with students and parents was via Zoom, Meet, the institution platform, and Zoom.
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After the Intervention

Objective	To provide 6th grade English teachers of the institution Técnico Dámaso Zapata with strategies with an instructional video containing classroom management tips.
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Description of the Activities	For this issue, again, the activity created was an instructional video but this time, the video was focused on how to proceed in a virtual classroom and what guidelines to follow when communicating with students and their parents so that students are encouraged and concentrated in the new modality. The first part of the video reviews a set of recommendations to increase the rapport with students. Additionally, the second part presents two aspects to take into consideration: online lesson organization and creating a positive culture for learning.
Outcomes	Access to a nine-minute-video where they can review the pieces of advice to increase motivation during class and maintain a positive environment of communication with both parents and students.
Completion of the Task	Finished

Diagnosis 3: Education Tools for Teachers in Remote Learning

Before the Intervention

Antecedents	In consideration to the lack of materials due to the abrupt change of modalities, the teachers expressed the need to get acquainted with more resources in view of the fact that they were scanning documents
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and sending them through emails as well as using the most academic platforms without getting the most out of them.

- Evidence
- Teachers researched on the internet to get acquainted with platforms and websites in the urge to reach a better audience of students.
 - Teachers watched videos to get access to content where they can see how to create and design material.
 - Teachers went on scanning documents and sending them through email for the students to develop the activities and sending them back.

After the Intervention

Objective

To provide 6th grade English teachers of the institution Técnico Dámaso Zapata with strategies with an instructional video containing a set of educational tools to help educators facilitate student learning and interaction during periods of school closure. Besides that, to provide teachers with enough resources with unlimited access to implement along with the instruction of topics in the new modality.

- Description of the Activities
- An instructional video that delivers a set of six educational platforms, six material design platforms, 10 factors to consider when designing materials, and alternative resources.

- Lesson plan blanks with their respective materials for teachers to have access to whenever they want, and therefore, minimize the workload and foster the use of innovative methodologies and online resources.

Completion of the task Finished

Outcomes Teachers will have unlimited access to lesson plan blanks as well as materials that can facilitate the development of the classes, so students will have a varied set of resources that will hopefully enhance their commitment to the subject.

Note. The table shows the assessment of the activities that were carried out in the implementation of the practicum.

4.4. General Assessment of the Intervention

The following evaluation will be based on Botero & Zapata (2013) who propose four indicators to analyze the general assessment of the intervention. These indicators are: relevance, coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness.

4.4.1. Relevance

The project was established in view of the situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic which forced the Ministry of Education to have teachers and students initiate the learning and teaching

process from home on March 20th, 2020. It has always focused on the needs the education community had in these trying times, especially the teachers who never had the experience or the training to deal with an online environment. The sample and the target of the project was not ambitious but considerable to intervene. In conclusion, the project takes into consideration space and time and keeps the relevance to be developed.

4.4.2. Coherence

After a robust analysis of the perceptions teachers and students have towards learning and teaching in virtual learning, the process followed a logical sequence by focusing on three aspects and consequently, developing strategies to overcome and minimize the hindrances the pandemic brought to education. The three objectives make the general objective meet the goal.

4.4.3. Efficiency

In order to obtain a solid result for our project, it was necessary to devise, plan, create, and execute a process showing all the activities proposed for the intervention, as well as the time for proper verification of the analysis and correction of possible drawbacks. To achieve the above objective, we created a timeline of approximately 14 weeks. Here, we separated the activities by days, taking into account aspects such as the complexity of the activity and the materials or resources needed. At the beginning, our goal was to accomplish all activities according to the schedule, however, as the project progressed, it was necessary to adjust those dates and dedicate more time to activities such as data collection and data analysis. Despite this eventuality, we were able to complete the entire schedule with the activities and even had the necessary time to carry out a more thorough review of the final report.

4.4.4. Effectiveness

In order to have an overview of the effective execution of our project, this analysis should be carried out considering our general and specific objectives and the relationship generated with the diagnosis of the problem encountered. Thus, our objective was to “provide EFL teachers from Instituto Técnico Dámaso Zapata whose students are in 6th grade with relevant strategies and materials in order to minimize the shortcomings remote learning has presented due to the outbreak of COVID-19”. This process was completed by creating a series of strategies and tools for teachers that included lesson plans banks and didactic materials to use during those lessons. Additionally, three instructional videos were created so that teachers had ideas on how to proceed properly during virtual sessions. As the problems encountered were lack of knowledge on virtuality, lack of resources and materials, and unfamiliarity of platforms to establish communication and management of the online classroom, from the literature review, the activities carried out are necessary and sufficient, meaning that we truly consider our project has positively and effectively contributed to mitigate the issues presented above. Not only have we provided teachers with enough resources, but also with insights on continuing researching and digging deeper into this new educational era.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

First and foremost, during 2020 and 2021 we had the opportunity to get ready to intervene and develop classes with students of 6th from Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata thanks to the agreement both the university and the school have concerning the development of social and pedagogical practicums. The latter as a three-semester-mandatory process, and the first one as one of the available modalities to obtain the title of Licenciados en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés. Moreover, it came up because of our desire to contribute meaningfully to the shortcomings the pandemic has caused to education in general, to the process of creating strategies and materials that can benefit the two teachers in charge of the English area and consequently, sixth graders from Institución Educativa Técnico Dámaso Zapata with the purpose for them to have a better experience and performance in the English language teaching, so that the shortcomings of education and the negative feelings towards the new normality can be diminished. All in all, the initial motivation went on through the intervention and kept us going until the end of it, and therefore the desired goal was met thanks to the review of the scholars, institutions, platforms, and our knowledge in the teaching field.

Our main objective focused on providing EFL teachers from Instituto Técnico Dámaso Zapata whose students are in 6th grade with relevant strategies and materials in order to minimize the

shortcomings remote learning has presented due to the outbreak of COVID-19, followed by three specific objectives to accomplish the goal. First, the characterization of the perceptions students and teachers have towards the teaching of English in the current model of learning and teaching, based on a specific questionnaire and interviews paved the way for creating a solid diagnostic that made us review and intervene the main problems which were: lesson development, class management, and availability of tools and resources in remote learning. The following statement follows the intention of creating materials and lesson plan banks based on the suggested curriculum so that teachers can have access to different alternatives of English teaching and for that reason, we managed to plan a whole term with its materials and perfectly explain activities and procedures that teachers will have access to in a Google Drive Folder. The last objective states the generation of instructional three videos such as: Remote Learning Methodologies and Lesson Development, Classroom Management Tips, and Educational Tools for Teachers in Remote Learning. Initially, although the plan was to carry out a live presentation and share experience with the teachers, due to their availability, it was imperative to change the dynamic of this second objective and create the videos for them to have access whenever they feel like.

The experience itself was enriching. In terms of specific learning gained through this experience, as pre-service teachers, we strongly acknowledge the importance of innovating in the field of education with the purpose of making students more critical and independent when it comes to problem solving and learning to learn. Furthermore, this social practice made us realize all the aspects that need to be considered before, during, and after a lesson since any detail has a strong impact on the outcome, as well as how ready we must be in case an unexpected incident shows up in the long run. The outbreak of COVID-19 made us create new strategies and adjust the plans and ideas we were developing when the classes were merely in-person; however, having two

perspectives of the modalities of education will certainly give us more advantages in the professional field in case there are future issues related to public health or school closures.

Nevertheless, we also believe that there is room for substantial improvement intended to more grades and, if possible, expand the project that can benefit the whole institution with the aim of identifying the needs teachers and students have regarding this modality and thus, find global strategies that can benefit both teachers and students when teaching and learning English. As it was mentioned, the project was not that ambitious, but attempted to boost the quality of the three indicators that were found in the diagnostic.

On the other hand, there is also a broader concern: although the focal point of this project was to solve certain issues towards the remote learning, there is still the need to work on the students who unfortunately have not had the opportunity to be present in remote classes due to the lack of resources and infrastructures in their houses. For that reason, further analysis should be done to create different strategies that can enhance the education quality and continue reducing students' drop-out.

Finally, we encourage students of the program of Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés and people who are in general interested in teaching languages to get enrolled in the modality of social practicum to continue contributing positively to the community and exchange knowledge with experienced teachers.

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