



**UNIVERSIDAD ESTATAL PENÍNSULA DE SANTA ELENA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES
PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

**“EFL CLASSROOM ENGAGEMENT TO ENHANCE
COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS FOR NINTH GRADERS IN A
VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT”**

RESEARCH PROJECT

As a prerequisite to obtain a:

**BACHELOR’S DEGREE IN PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL
AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

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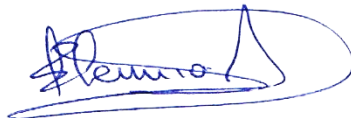
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ADVISOR'S APPROVAL

In my role as Advisor of the research paper and title "EFL CLASSROOM ENGAGEMENT TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS FOR NINTH GRADERS IN A VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT" prepared by Erick Edward Roldan Andrade, undergraduate student of the 8° Semester Major, School of Educational Sciences and Languages at Peninsula of Santa Elena State University, I declare that after oriented, studied and reviewed the project, I approve it in its entirety, because it meets the requirements and is sufficient for its submission to the evaluation of the academic tribunal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rosa Elena Niola S.", enclosed within a blue oval scribble.

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Statement of Authorship

I, Erick Edward Roldán Andrade with ID # 2450738535, undergraduate student of the State University of Santa Elena Peninsula, Faculty of Education and Languages, as a prerequisite to obtain a Bachelor degree in Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages, in my role as author of the research paper “EFL Classroom engagement to enhance communicative skills for ninth graders in a virtual environment” I certificate that this work is of my authorship, except for the quotes and citations used in this research paper.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Erick Roldan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

(Erick Edward Roldán Andrade)

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Declaration

The content of the following graduation project is my responsibility; The intellectual property belongs to Universidad Estatal Peninsula de Santa Elena.



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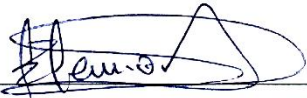
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Dedication

To God who has been my guide, strength and his hand of faithfulness and love has always been with me until today.

To my mom Enma who with her love, patience and effort encouraged me to fulfill one more dream today, thank you for teaching me with your example of dedication and courage of not fearing adversity because God is always with me.

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With love

(Erick Edward Roldán Andrade)

Abstract

The present research project aimed to determine the way that engagement strategies in EFL classes can enhance students' communicative skills while learning in a virtual environment. The research had a qualitative approach establishing two groups. The first one consisted of ten students who were interviewed using a focus group technique, while the second involved two teachers interviewed individually. In both cases, a bank of seven open-ended questions was used. The interviews were conducted via a virtual meeting. As a result of the data collection, it was possible to gain a better understanding of the participant's perspectives on the way engagement works within a virtual environment thereby enhancing their communicative skills. The analysis concludes that motivation and classroom engagement play a crucial role in English language learning, for which it is required to combine interactive activities such as real-life scenarios, use of up-to-date digital tools, and feedback. The implications of this study are significant for EFL teachers, particularly as virtual environments have become a normalized activity since the COVID-19 pandemic.

KEYWORDS: Engagement, communicative skills, virtual environment, Covid-19.

Resumen

El presente proyecto de investigación tuvo como objetivo determinar la forma en que las estrategias de participación en las clases de EFL pueden mejorar las habilidades comunicativas de los estudiantes mientras aprenden en un entorno virtual. La investigación tuvo un enfoque cualitativo estableciendo dos grupos de estudio. El primero estuvo conformado por diez estudiantes que fueron entrevistados mediante una técnica de grupo focal, mientras que el segundo involucró a dos docentes entrevistados individualmente. En ambos casos se utilizó un banco de siete preguntas abiertas. Las entrevistas se realizaron a través de una reunión virtual. Como resultado de la recopilación de datos, fue posible obtener una mejor comprensión de las perspectivas de los participantes sobre la forma en que funciona el involucramiento comprometido dentro de un entorno virtual, mejorando así sus habilidades comunicativas. El análisis concluye que la motivación y el compromiso en el aula juegan un papel crucial en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés, para lo cual se requiere combinar actividades interactivas como escenarios de la vida real, uso de herramientas digitales actualizadas y retroalimentación. Las implicaciones de este estudio son significativas para los profesores de EFL, particularmente porque los entornos virtuales se han convertido en una actividad normalizada desde la pandemia de COVID-19.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Engagement, habilidades comunicativas, entorno virtual, Covid-19.

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Introduction

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning has become a fundamental core in educational systems in recent years, particularly with the advent of technology and the availability of virtual classrooms. Online learning is a type of remote education made feasible by technical tools utilized by lone learners in their environments away from the primary educational source (Hartnett, 2016). However, it also raises questions about the abilities of students and teachers since the pandemic lockdown inevitably forced educational systems to use digital media (Çebi & Güyer (2020). The lack of online teaching experience among instructors is one of the problems with online learning.

According to Arif (2003), teachers must construct and maintain a productive classroom atmosphere by adhering to management and teaching strategies that lessen incidences of disruptive conduct from students. The real scenario is that although online learning systems provide numerous benefits over conventional, face-to-face instruction, they also have drawbacks that make learning more difficult. Lack of an oral live presentation by the instructor, lack of synchronization and matching between the course materials and their explanations, lack of contextual understanding, and lack of just-in-time feedback and interactions are some of its limitations (Wulf, 2000). However, enhancing communicative skills in students in a virtual environment depends on a strong link between students and teachers that will foster meaningful discussions that enable teachers to respond effectively to students' needs (MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2020). Al Abiky (2021) also claimed that the online environment allows instructors to collaborate to promote participation, emphasize socialization and personalization, and create a critical learning community.

With this preamble, the present investigation work will be arranged as follows. In the first chapter, the problem under study may be reviewed. This will include the support of previous research and the contrast with the Ecuadorian education curriculum. It will also be presented which were both the general objective and the secondary ones and the respective research questions as a transversal axis of the same with which it was intended to justify the research.

The second chapter explores the theoretical framework based on this research project. Here topics such as communication skills, virtual environments, and the importance of engagement concerning the quality of interaction between students in both face-to-face and virtual environments will be analyzed and explained. This will also explore the pedagogical principles supporting the subject investigated and the legal bases considered for its execution.

Chapter III will provide an extensive explanation of the methodological framework considered in the project. It clearly explains the method used, the type of research, the data collection process, the selection of study samples, and the exploration strategies and tools arranged in the process.

Chapter IV aims to put into perspective the results of exploration. The analysis presented will be qualitative; that is, the researcher's perceptions regarding the questions posed to the subjects' focus of the research will be exposed. The results will also be represented with word clouds which aim to show the similarities and approximations of answers between one participant and another.

Finally, Chapter V presents the reflections of the researcher's product of the perspectives obtained. At this point, the researcher not only shows his point of view but will invite reflection from potential readers (teachers) so that, based on the findings found, they take a position that collaborates in improving teaching-learning processes at all levels of education.

Chapter I

The problem

Research Topic

Teaching strategies and Speaking Skills

EFL Classroom engagement to enhance communicative skills for ninth graders in a virtual environment

Problem statement

Communication skills are essential to facilitate coexistence and understanding between people. As it manages to transmit ideas clearly and accurately, it is the basis for healthy coexistence and effective communication. That is the main reason why education programs for foreign language users all around the world have been promoting real interaction within their curriculums. Bygate (as cited in Toro et al., 2019) claimed that "learners, frequently, need to be able to talk with confidence to carry out many of their most fundamental transactions."

Learning a foreign language in education impacts many other essential aspects of society because of its function as a means of effective cross-cultural communication. Over the last decade, the process of teaching and learning English in Ecuador has become more influential. English as a foreign language curriculum in Ecuador states that a way to learn the language and be able to engage in a purposeful communicative interaction is accomplished through "a range of activities to support lively interaction, awakening learners' consciousness, and abilities, and creating positive engagement to support intrinsic motivation to learn English" (Lengua Extranjera – Ministerio De Educación, n.d.).

Pohan and Candra (2019) stated in more profound thought that “EFL interaction is an action that happened both verbal and non-verbal communication between teacher- students, students-teacher, and students-students during the learning and teaching processes in the classroom.”

With the arrival of the pandemic due to COVID-19, the world saw the urgent need to move its curricular activities to virtual systems to advance teaching-learning. Many countries with facilities to manage technology achieve and inclusive overcome the issue of learning in virtual environments; however, the Ecuadorian Education system needed to prepare to face the deadly virus. For generations, Ecuadorian students have grown within a system filled with surveillance, schedules, tight lesson plans, and very little independence, and all of a sudden, that was stripped away. A harsh reality that came with the virus was the closure of schools and educational centers as a safety measure that later allowed us to comply with a complete lockdown.

According to (Chaturvedi et al., 2021), education keeps facing different challenges, and educators are forced to use different resources to keep teaching and reaching students still struggling with the effects that this pandemic has brought upon the world. It was always challenging to overcome the daily obstacles of being a student or a teacher. However, now it is even worse because there is a physical and emotional void in those who daily dedicate their life to a common goal, learning. Many teachers wrongly tried to replicate the previous education model, shifting it to an online format, but sadly, it is ineffective. This situation has led, in some cases, to mass academic regression, lack of motivation, and disinterest in school subjects, so it is necessary to find new tools, methodologies, and proper engagement strategies to enhance students' performance and interaction to help them to achieve academic goals effectively.

The concept of classroom engagement (what supposes student participation in class) has been the subject of recurrent research. Investigators have tried to state the factors that promote participation to establish broad and specific criteria. Authors such as Huang et al (2019) and (Keat, et al., 2018) investigated two types of engagement: behavioral, which refers to students' participation in the learning activity in relation to awareness, effort, and persistence, and cognitive, which refers to the previous knowledge and gives predisposition⁴ⁿ that students have in front of the development of a class. To these two concepts, Reeve and Tseng (2011) added the emotional factor explaining that it refers to the interference of positive emotions, such as interest and enjoyment, as well as negative emotions, such as anxiety and frustration. Hence the importance for teachers to have a broad knowledge of the ways to engage students in the class as well as the factors that influence and that can be considered determinants for a student to be able or not to achieve their academic goals.

Problem Question

How can proper engagement enhance communicative skills and performance in a virtual EFL classroom?

Specific questions

- How effective is engagement applied to students in a virtual learning environment?
- What factors influence students' performance learning English as a foreign language in a virtual environment?
- How does classroom engagement in virtual classes impact the development of communicative skills?

General objective

To analyze the way that engagement strategies in an EFL classroom can enhance students' communicative skills while learning in a virtual environment.

Specific objectives

- To explore students and teachers' perspectives on engagement as a strategy to enhance communicative skills in a virtual environment.
- To describe classroom engagement as a tool to enhance students' communicative skills in a virtual environment.
- To reflect on the use of engagement activities to enhance and increase communicative skills in a virtual environment.

Justification

As mentioned before, the Covid 19 pandemic education changed educational systems. Students worldwide had to adapt to a new virtual environment, not only that but to a new era of education. Online education has become the new normal for students. Nonetheless, adapting and shifting to virtuality has been challenging for everyone, especially students who now need more motivation to study and sometimes find the virtual environment boring. As a result, students' academic performance has dropped, communication skills could be sharper, and, understandably, struggling with learning a foreign language in a new virtual environment which is in a rapid transition every day.

Researchers such as Chandasiri (2020) stated that learning a second language like English can be challenging in many ways, especially if there are unclear goals and a lack of the proper guidance and tools to improve students' communication skills. One of these tools is proper engagement which becomes the process smooth.

There are many different methodologies and approaches that teachers worldwide apply every day to teach English; nevertheless, it is the proper interaction and engagement that the teacher develops with the students in the class that makes the difference. This interaction needs to take place so students relate to the language through the tools teachers may use. It stops being just grammar rules and becomes motivation that impacts the students by showing them different ways to learn a foreign language (Sullivan, 2014). This research aims to describe the way that proper engagement can enhance communicative skills in a virtual environment.

This research has a relevant connotation since it aims to explore the factors that students face in virtual classes that cause a low rate of development in the process of learning the English language. This process will take on even more value by exploring and understanding the perspectives of students in the face of the problem of low development contrasted with the point of view of teachers who, from the other side of the scale, explain the limitations they deal with in classes. For this, it will be necessary to interview the mentioned sectors and inquire about their experiences to analyze them qualitatively. This will also provide insight into how teachers can effectively use engagement to improve student learning and communicative skills in a virtual classroom and set a clear panorama that could significantly improve the teaching-learning process.

Chapter II

Theoretical Basis

Understanding the dynamic of classroom engagement and its influence on improving communication skills during virtual English classes is a matter of continuous investigation since technological advances and virtual environments have gained more and more space in educational fields. Therefore, it was necessary to review the literature in which relevant terms of this research are explained. Among them are found:

Communicative skills

Communication refers to the spoken or nonverbal exchange of ideas, information, or messages. It includes listening and providing feedback, whether vocal, written, or nonverbal. Communication abilities are, therefore, essential for English learners (Wambui, 2012).

However, practicing and developing oral communication skills in a classroom can be challenging (Cheekeong, Yassin, & Abdulrahman, 2014). Three factors (teachers, curriculum, and students) are linked to problems in oral communication in EFL, according to Cheekeong et al. (2014); they claimed that teachers use inefficient methods for enhancing communication skills and do not encourage students to speak up. According to Abu Alyan (2013), the leading causes of students' poor oral communication abilities include their restricted vocabulary, lack of broad listening and reading exposure, interference from L1, and lack of confidence.

Additionally, due to the lack of confidence and desire to avoid blunders, students may be reluctant to join in class discussions. The theoretical parts of language are often prioritized in the EFL program. Considering this, learners can improve their abilities if offered quality communication opportunities (Khambayat, 2017). Besides, Khamkhien (2011) mentioned that even when students have linguistic expertise, they occasionally need help to employ the

appropriate target language in communicative circumstances. Thus, more than learning a language is required to communicate; practice is essential.

Similarly, AlSaleem (2018) asserts that mastering oral communication skills necessitates mental and cognitive processing and linguistic proficiency in vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. To help students develop their communication skills in the classroom, English teachers can use various techniques, such as talks, role plays, demonstrations, and group work (Khambayat, 2017). According to Thakur, Al Mashani, and Al Mashikhi (2019), classroom projects could help students use language more efficiently while also helping them develop communication skills if students practice using natural language.

Virtual environments

An online learning environment is known as a virtual classroom. According to Hsu, Marques, Khalid Hamza, and Alhalabi (1999), a virtual classroom is a learning system that offers the same opportunities for the teaching and learning process outside the actual boundaries of physical classroom walls (Hsu et al. 1999). Implementations of virtual classrooms through an online learning mode are often web-based (Hsu et al., 1999).

Beyond the immediate need to integrate the virtual modality at all educational levels due to the COVID-19 viral pandemic, the development of technological expertise by the teacher and the application of the teaching instruments of the virtual environment constitute a long-term demand. The necessity for instructors to receive ongoing training in adapting to an education based on online technology as a new axis of educational development for learners arises from this process.

Interaction and communication in virtual classes are strategies for enhancing communication abilities. Online courses, according to Parker and Martin (2010), let students

interact with one another just like participants would in a physical classroom; virtual classrooms can facilitate and improve communication among students if the instructor creates a highly engaging environment. Yadav (2016) stated that although communication in online classes is less robust than in traditional classes, it can nevertheless aid students in developing their skills.

Among the benefits of virtual communication is the chance to interact without needing physical presence. This includes instant messaging, video conferencing, and other similar means. Also, virtual environments enable people to communicate with each other from any location, at any time, as long as they have access to the internet; It increases productivity by allowing people to work more efficiently and effectively, reducing the need for physical meetings and freeing up time for other tasks. Virtual environments improve accessibility, enabling traveling people to participate in meetings and discussions worldwide and enabling teachers and students to collaborate (Parker & Martin, 2010).

No matter the benefits, virtual environments also present challenges. Among them could be mentioned: Technical difficulties such as internet connectivity problems, software malfunctions, and device compatibility issues; Lack of personal interaction and human connection that is present in face-to-face communication, leading to misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Difficulty building relationships as it is harder to get to know someone through a screen than in person; information overload since large amounts of information transferred could make it easier to prioritize and process information effectively (Parker & Martin, 2010).

Student engagement and motivation

Due to its direct relationship to achievement and intended goals, learner motivation has long piqued the interest of researchers and educators. Motivation is the willingness of students to participate in the process of language learning; according to Lumsden (1994), it is a term used to

describe an individual's interest and enthusiasm for academic goals and achievements, which impacts their performance and behavior. (Olson & Peterson, 2015); Student engagement involves positive student behaviors, such as attendance, paying attention, and class participation, as well as the psychological sense of affiliation with the school and the sentiment of being loved, respected, and a part of the school community (Sinclair & Sandra, 2014). Engagement includes a range of activities (behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and agentic) whose goal is to promote students' academic achievement, meet their motivations, and enable them to build learning settings that are motivationally supportive of themselves. (Reeve et al., 2019); however, to Dörnyei (2015), its absence will cause people to fail even if they possess the most exceptional ability, and strong motivation will make up for significant deficits.

Online engagement

Since the middle of the 1990s, distance education has gained popularity. It has numerous advantages, such as greater access to educational possibilities (Barbour & Reeves, 2009; Campbell & Sarac, 2018). In virtual classrooms, an essential aspect affecting students' motivation is instructor presence, defined as teaching methods that learners may observe typically in a live context (Richardson et al., 2015); (Baker, 2010). In a similar line, teachers' motivation is critically impacted by learners' lack of motivation. Şener et al. (2020) found that the second most frequently cited problem affecting teachers' experiences was a lack of learner motivation, interaction, and autonomy.

Classroom Management

In a well-organized classroom, pupils learn more because of spare more time for their responsibilities. To provide learners a chance to learn and change their behavior while keeping them relaxed and enthusiastic about studying, a teacher can behave as a manager, McBer (2000)

claims. Establishing consistently effective classroom management strategies that follow the crucial core principles is critical because they can be used as preventative and intervention methods to improve student results (Emmer & Sabornie, 2015; Everston & Weinstein, 2006).

Effective classroom management

Classroom management systems successfully increase student achievement by fostering an organized learning environment that improves students' academic skills, competencies, and social and emotional development. Classroom management methods are most effective when three fundamental criteria are followed (Brophy, 2006). Focusing on students' conduct and learning goals, identifying crucial student conduct for achievement, and encouraging student engagement and active learning are the fundamental criteria when applying management methods effectively (Brophy, 2006, pp. 39–40):

According to Arif (2003), teachers must construct and maintain a productive classroom atmosphere by adhering to management and teaching strategies that lessen incidences of disruptive conduct from students. Arif (2003) also maintains the following learning-oriented actions and activities: Maintain learners' motivation; Use reasonable restraint; Empower the students by Keeping instruction at the student level; Develop relationships; Communicate interest in all the students and increase the "engaged time" and teaching roles and routines.

Online Learning Environment

Since the introduction of the virtual classroom, students have had the opportunity to utilize Internet resources to design engaging and productive learning environments (Gabriel, 2004). As a result, a virtual classroom with improved functionality has replaced the actual classroom's features. A virtual classroom is learner-based, which is the main distinction between it and a real classroom. A virtual classroom is implemented using various internet resources such

as calendars, assessment books, quizzes, emails, instant messages, chat rooms, message boards, and file transfers, besides the availability of an enabling environment that includes learning tools, learning materials, and other resources that promotes active learning.

Classroom management has four unifying areas: creating and enforcing rules and procedures, administering punishments, fostering positive teacher-student interactions, and preserving excellent mental health (Macias, 2015). In addition, Mobit (2014) lists three components of classroom management: controlling instructor responsibilities, managing emerging classroom restrictions, and managing student motivation. Establishing course norms and procedures is similarly necessary for an online environment, but caution should be taken to avoid overdoing it for fear of alienating and dehumanizing the students (Dyer, Aroz, & Larson, 2017).

Pedagogical Basis

The present research is based on the Communicative Approach, a method of teaching foreign languages that focuses on the ability of the learner to use the language in real-life situations. It emphasizes the practical application of the language and aims to develop the learner's communicative competence, which involves not only knowledge of grammar and vocabulary but also the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in social situations (Mirzayev & Oripova, 2022). This approach emphasizes the importance of oral communication and encourages students to use the language as much as possible. Activities such as role-plays, simulations, and problem-solving tasks are used to help students develop their communicative skills.

The Communicative Approach has been widely adopted by language schools and is considered one of the most effective methods of language teaching. It has been successful in

promoting student motivation, as it provides a meaningful context for language learning and emphasizes the practical application of the language.

Communicative Language Teaching

A communicative approach to teaching can effectively convey constructivist theories of knowledge and the importance of language and communicative competencies. Richards (2006) stated the following precisions about the communicative approach to teaching:

- It is facilitated when learners are engaged in interaction and meaningful communication.
- Tasks and exercises should allow learners to negotiate to mean, expand their language resources, notice how language is used, and participate in a meaningful personal exchange.
- Real communication occurs when learners process meaningful and engaging content.
- Interaction is a holistic process that often uses several language skills.
- Effective communication and learning practices are essential for successful language learning.
- The role of a teacher in a language classroom is to facilitate learning by fostering an environment where language can be used and practiced, as well as opportunities for students to think critically about their language use and progress.

As mentioned, the communicative approach promotes communicative competence and real-life communication skills in the target language. In a virtual classroom, it can be applied as task-based activities encouraging students to work together on tasks that require them to use the target language to communicate. This could include role-plays, debates, discussions, and problem-solving activities. Also promotes interaction between students and creates opportunities for them to practice speaking and listening skills. Provide immediate correction and feedback to

students helping them to identify areas for improvement and build confidence. Incorporate authentic materials, such as news articles, advertisements into lessons to create a more immersive learning experience. Encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and actively participate in the virtual classroom by asking questions and leading discussions.

The Affective Filter

The Affective Filter hypothesis is based on Krashen's theory, which explains that "affective variables" facilitate but are not causal in learning second languages. These elements include anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence. According to Krashen (as cited in Xu, 2016), highly motivated students are self-assured, have a positive self-image, exhibit little fear, and are better prepared to succeed in learning a second language. A "mental block" that inhibits comprehensible input from being used for acquisition can be created when poor motivation, low self-esteem, and crippling fear all come together to "boost" the affective filter. In other words, while the filter is "up," language learning is hampered. Explain how you link the affective filter with your study.

Legal Basis

Constitution of Ecuador (2008)

Article 26.- Education is a right of people throughout their lives and an inescapable and inexcusable duty of the State. It guarantees equality and social inclusion and is indispensable for good living. Individuals, families, and society have the right and responsibility to participate in the educational process.

Article 27.- Education shall be participatory, mandatory, intercultural, democratic, inclusive, and diverse, of quality and warmth; promote gender equality, justice, solidarity, and peace.

The LOEI (Ley Organica de Educacion Intercultural)

Article 1.- Scope

This Law guarantees the right to education and determines the principles and general purposes that guide Ecuadorian education within the framework of Good Living, interculturality, and plurinationality, as well as the relationships between its actors. It develops and deepens the rights, obligations, and constitutional guarantees in the educational field and establishes the basic regulations for the structure, levels, modalities, management model, financing, and participation of the actors of the National Education System.

Article 4.- Right to education

Education is a fundamental human right guaranteed in the Constitution of the Republic and necessary for realizing other human rights. All inhabitants of Ecuador are entitled to quality, secular, accessible, and free education at the initial, primary, and baccalaureate levels, as well as to lifelong education, formal and non-formal.

The National Education System shall deepen and guarantee the entire exercise of constitutional rights and guarantees.

The childhood and adolescence code

Article 37: Right to education. Children and adolescents have the right to quality education. This right demands an education system that:

1. Guarantee the access and permanence of all children to basic education and adolescents up to high school or its equivalent.
2. Respect the cultures and specificities of each region and place.
3. Consider flexible and alternative educational proposals to meet the needs of all children and adolescents, with priority given to those who have disabilities, work or live in a situation that requires more significant opportunities to learn.
4. Ensure that children and adolescents have adequate teachers, teaching materials, laboratories, premises, facilities, and resources and enjoy a favorable environment for learning. This right includes adequate access to initial education from zero to five years, and therefore flexible, and open programs and projects will be developed appropriate to the cultural needs of learners.

Variables of the Study

Dependent Variable

In this project, communication skills are considered a dependent variable since they rely on classroom engagement to achieve the desired outcomes. Communication skills play an influential role in determining how effectively classroom engagement helps students to learn English in a virtual environment.

Independent Variable

In this study, classroom engagement is considered an independent variable, meaning that it is a factor that can influence the outcome of the study. By manipulating this variable, it is

possible to study its effects on students' performance and identify ways to improve and enhance communicative skills. It also provides insight into how teachers can better engage their students and create a more meaningful learning experience.

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

Research Method

This qualitative research aims to comprehend a study question from a humanistic or idealistic perspective. Provide a clear definition. The qualitative approach learns people's attitudes, interactions, behaviors, and beliefs. It produces data that is not numerical; this research will be carried out through interviews.

Research is a process for acquiring, evaluating, and interpreting data that may be relevant for addressing societal issues. It involves changing variables or ideas to produce, expand, rectify, and validate the information that can support the development of a theory or the practice of an art. Research is defined by Gary and Atkinson (1996) as a formal, systematic application of the scientific method to problem-solving. Similarly, Kakooza (2002) and Amin (2005) agreed that research must be ordered, well-planned, and organized to reach goals that involve observing, theorizing, experimenting, testing a theory or set of theories, drawing conclusions, and reporting results.

The present study was conducted following the qualitative research models. Çilesiz (as cited in Ezer and Aksüt, 2021) declared that qualitative studies strive to explain, comprehend,

and interpret the structure of a qualitative approach and how it affects individual experiences and perceptions in their contact with the world. With the previous foundations, the present interview aims to understand the perspective of both teachers and students toward the importance of engagement within the classrooms in face-to-face classes as in virtual environments.

Type of Research

The present research is a qualitative descriptive and phenomenological study.

According to Bonilla and Rodríguez (as cited in SciELO - Scientific Electronic Library Online, n.d.), the qualitative approach has as its main characteristic the interest in capturing the social reality "through the eyes" of the people being studied, that is, from the perception that the subject has of his context. Qualitative research has become a valid alternative to studying and understanding human and social phenomena, given the impossibility of "fractionating, reducing, or maiming" these realities.

On the one hand, in descriptive studies, the researcher can only assess a phenomenon's prevalence, nature, or distribution in a population at a particular period. For example, the study describes the presence of a specific factor in the people. Still, it always refers to a given time, and, more importantly, it only discusses one or more events with no attempt to establish causal links to other elements. Descriptive studies' primary distinction is that they do not attempt to show a causal connection between the phenomenon under research and any other occurrence throughout time, for which we would need to turn to an analytical study. Instead, they are content to merely "draw" the phenomenon under investigation

On the other hand, Phenomenology is considered a philosophical and methodological orientation that comes from Philosophy. Bonilla and Rodríguez consider phenomenology as "the essence of consciousness." He stated that the meaning of lived experiences could be deciphered

only through one-to-one transactions between the researcher and the objects of research, which must involve attentive listening, interaction, and observation to create a representation of reality. In other words, it intends to understand phenomena on their terms to describe the human experience as experienced by the same person or reconstruct the inner world of the knowledge of the investigated subject.

Data Collection

The present study aims to understand the effectiveness of proper interaction and engagement from both students' and teachers' perspectives. In this case, it was necessary to apply a focus group and an interview. A focus group is a research technique that is employed to gather comments and suggestions from a group of people regarding a certain good, idea, or service. The group usually consists of 8–10 individuals who are asked to share their ideas, feelings, and opinions during a facilitated discussion. An interview is a dialogue used to acquire data. In a research interview, both the interviewer and the interviewee participate in the conversation and answer the interviewer's questions. Interviews can be held in person, over the phone or other intercommunication means.

Those two techniques were used as data collection in this study and contemplate the usage of open-ended questionnaires (one for students and one for teachers), which included seven questions each. Both questionnaires were validated for professionals in the pedagogy of language teaching area. Questionnaires contemplated topics such as using communicative skills in classes, class participation, and interaction, ways of class engagement, and classroom management issues.

For students, a focus group was conducted with ten students who belonged to a private institution and were in ninth grade. Similarly, an interview was conducted with two experienced teachers who decided to participate in the investigation voluntarily.

Interviews were conducted through ZOOM meeting rooms in two different sessions (one for students and one for teachers). They were recorded in a video file to analyze the perspective given by participants. The analysis allowed the researcher to know and, at the same time, compare findings with previous studies to understand why students have a common perspective in their answers regarding the importance of engagement in classes and, on the other hand, why teachers deal with the same worries about techniques and classroom management.

Population and sample

As the present study had the participation of students and teachers, it was necessary to manage specific criteria to delimitate the participants. This delimitation is crucial since participants have different knowledge and preparation levels.

This form of sampling aids researchers in understanding the ramifications of a very particular or limited criterion and enables researchers to explore the criteria thoroughly and deliberately (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The considered criteria were, on the one hand, students' experiences in daily class development and, on the other hand, teachers' experience in the classes dealing with classroom management.

For students, it was necessary to approach a private institution's principal, who was asked to allow the researcher to contact a group of seven nine-grader students. The principal selected students randomly and referred them to the researcher through a list of ten participants.

Finally, an interview was set on a specific date and time in order not to affect students' daily activities. For teachers, it was necessary to reach out to ninth grade teachers. Two fitted the profile and participated in the interview set with the considerations of day and time.

Chapter IV

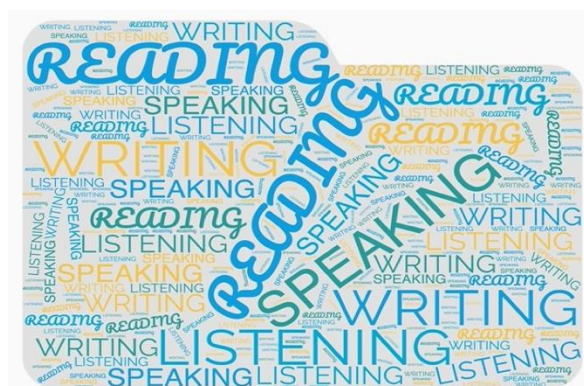
Analysis of Findings

Interpretation of data from students' focus group

A focus group was conducted with ten students consulted to get their criteria and thoughts about crucial topics within class development. A bank of seven questions was used for getting comments and standards, which were analyzed to obtain similarities and differences.

1. Do you know what communicative skills are to develop in an English class? Mention some of them.

Figure 1. The communicative skills developed in class



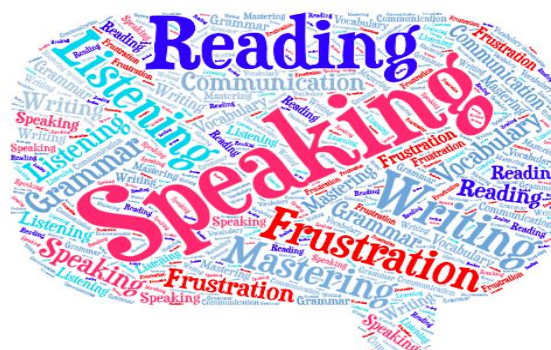
Note: Ten students answered about what was the communicative skill most developed in classes
Source: Zoom interview https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-InhigtYekLsV_Ya85jz8h0V7NqtO-K

The majority of students considered speaking as a familiar skill to use in the class; also, three answered that Listening and, in the last positions, writing and reading were mentioned. The

result demonstrated that speaking is the primary skill developed; however, it represents only 4 out of 10 Students. It is highly contrastable with postulates presented by AlSaleem (2018), Thakur, Al Mashani, and Al Mashikhi (2019), and Parker and Martin (2010), who stated that speaking needs more confidence and mastery of vocabulary to be developed. Also, Cheekeong et al. (2014) claimed that teachers use inefficient methods for enhancing communication skills and do not encourage students to speak up.

2. **Which is the most common communicative skill you use in your classroom, and how do you interact with it? Describe**

Figure 2. The most common communicative skill students use in the classroom



Note: Ten students answered about what was the most common skill used in classrooms
Source: Zoom interview https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-InhigtYekLsV_Ya85jz8h0V7NqtO-_K

Students replied that most of the time, the teacher interaction is by speaking. This skill is considered primary since it allows them to express their ideas; however, almost all mentioned that, although they try to speak, they need more time to feel secure with the answers. This kind of insecurity frustrates students and, in some cases, stops the use of the language. A couple of students mentioned that this frustration forces them to write instead of speak. Finally, some said to prefer just listening to the class because they need to be more confident speaking or writing. It is understood when comparing theorists such as AlSaleem (2018), who mentioned that to master

oral communication skills and avoid frustrations, students must be guided to process vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar.

3. **Interaction in English classes is important to learn. How much do you interact in your classes? Explain.**

Figure 3. Students rating themselves about virtual classroom interaction



Note: Ten students rate themselves about virtual classrooms interaction

Source: Zoom interview https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-InhigtYekLsV_Ya85jz8h0V7NqtO-_K

Fascinating reactions were found to this question. Students that answered to have higher levels of interaction talked about their experience learning English with perceptible confidence. The other group mentioned low interaction and poor engagement. It was also mentioned that virtual classes do not allow interaction but just become then in mere listeners. Lastly, some students prefer to avoid virtual classes since the interaction differs from face-to-face classes. It was really interesting how it was mentioned that distractors, and the internet connection, among others, turns as distractors to virtual classes. To this matter, Reeve et al. (2019) claimed that students' if learners are not provided with enough opportunities to interact, then they feel unmotivated to achieve their academic goals. This belief is shared by Dörnyei (2015), who

stands that the absence of interaction and strong motivation won't make up for significant deficits.

4. In your opinion, what are some aspects a teacher should consider applying in a virtual English class that would catch your attention and keep you engaged?

Figure 4. Aspects teachers should consider applying in a virtual English class to catch students' attention.



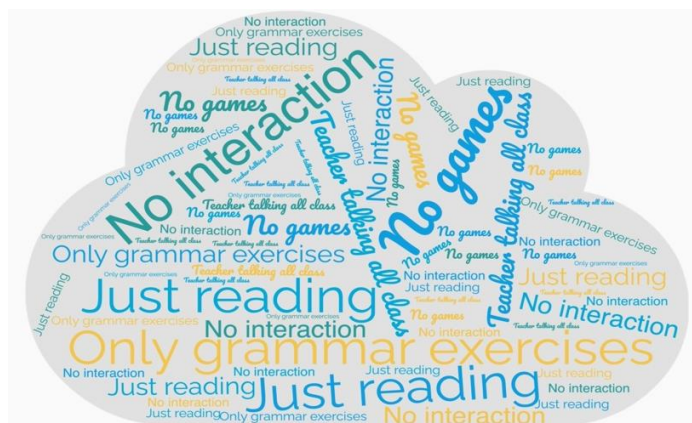
Note: Students' perspectives about what teachers should do to engage a class

Source: Zoom interview https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-InhigtYekLsV_Ya85jz8h0V7NqtO-_K

Answers to this question were concise. Students insist that the teacher should be energetic and dynamic from the beginning of the class. Students consider the class more entertaining and engaging if teachers use more interactive activities, including web resources, games, music, etc. Besides, teachers must consider that students are not only listeners. Students want to feel part of the class by doing and not only seeing. These results match with statements presented by Çebi and Güyer (2020), they support that the lack of online teaching experience among instructors is one of the problems with online learning.

5. What aspects of a virtual English class do you think should be adapted in order to prevent boredom and keep you engaged?

Figure 5. Factors that lead to a boring virtual class



Note: Students' perspectives about what factors make a virtual class boring

Source: Zoom interview https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-lnhigtYekLsV_Ya85jz8h0V7NqtO-_K

Firstly, the monotony in grammar contents, long readings with no apparent purpose, and the teacher speaking the entire class provoke a complete lack of interest. Students have a clear perspective about what makes the class boring. They were very emphatic in pointing them out. It was more interesting to listen to Ss claiming for the teacher's attention to what they do or want to say, and even more, if the teacher does not motivate Ss to respect their participation. The theory supports these results when Arif (2003) states that teachers must construct and maintain a productive classroom atmosphere by adhering to management and engaging teaching strategies.

6. How important do you think classroom management is for the teacher in order to keep the students engaged in the class?

Figure 6. Importance of classroom management



Note: Students' perspectives on the effectiveness of virtual and face to face learning
Source: Zoom interview https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-InhigtYekLsV_Ya85jz8h0V7NqtO_K

This question provokes an almost general response. All the students answer that it is better to have face-to-face classes. Most of them mentioned recurrent reasons such as distractors, problems with an internet connection, and lack of interaction. However, what caught the researcher's attention more was the idea that the teachers do not have control behind the screens. Students mentioned that during virtual classes, sometimes they were doing different activities than English, and teachers never realized.

This result matches the limitations presented by Wulf (2000), who stated that although online learning systems provide numerous benefits over conventional, face-to-face instruction, they also have drawbacks that make learning more difficult. They are listed as lack of an oral presentation by the instructor, lack of synchronization and matching between the course materials and their explanations, lack of contextual understanding, and lack of just-in-time feedback and interactions.



Note: Teachers' strategies used to keep students engaged during class.

Source: Zoom interview https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-InhigtYekLsV_Ya85jz8h0V7NqtO-_K

Although teachers mentioned that gamification is an excellent resource to engage students in the class, it worries that they also consider it as “the core” Games indeed catch Students' attention; however, games are not the core but are only a tool. Classes seem to lack a clear objective other than just gaming, enjoying, and having fun.

3. Why do you think students have low engagement in a virtual English class?



Note: Teachers' perspective on barriers that limit the improvement of communicative skills.
Source: Zoom interview https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-InhigtYekLsV_Ya85jz8h0V7NqtO-_K

In this question, teachers mentioned that engagement, shyness, and self-confidence harm learning. However, caught the researcher's attention what was said by teacher 2 when he stated, "everything is pretty new for them." In the last few years, technology has had an impressive development, and teenagers are precisely updated with this stuff, so it sounds incorrect to say that technology usage is new for students.

5. **How important do you think classroom management is to maintain your students engaged in the class? How do you usually apply classroom management?**

Figure 12. Importance of classroom management.



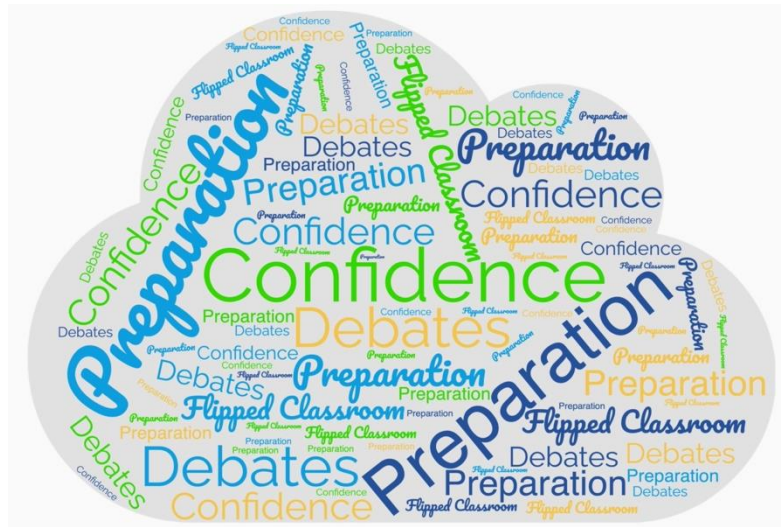
Note: Teachers' perspectives on importance of classroom management.

Source: Zoom interview https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-lnhigtYekLsV_Ya85jz8h0V7NqtO-_K

Although teachers recognize the importance of good classroom management and how it affects engagement, Teachers need to distinguish classroom management from monitoring. Teacher 2 stated that one of the activities used in class is to “monitor activities,” which is correct; however, monitoring is not the same as motivating or engaging. The teacher does not need to control the activity but encourages Ss to solve activities even if they do not have teachers monitoring.

6. What would you do to improve your student's communicative skills in a virtual environment?

Figure 13. Opinions on how to improve communicative skills.



Note: Teachers' perspectives on how to improve students communicative skills in a virtual environment.
Source: Zoom interview https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-InhigtYekLsV_Ya85jz8h0V7NqtO-K

Teachers mentioned interesting ways to improve communicative skills, such as flip class and debates; however, those activities focus on oral communication. It demonstrates that teachers usually worry more about making students talk, which is correct, but contact only occurs orally. In this scenario, teachers explore different techniques to improve communicative skills.

- 7. In your own experience, is English virtual learning more effective than traditional face-to-face learning? What would you change in both styles to make them more effective?**

Figure 14. Virtual Learning and Face to face learning



Note: Teachers' perspectives on the challenges they faced shifting to virtual education.

Source: Zoom interview https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-InhigtYekLsV_Ya85jz8h0V7NqtO-_K

Contrasted ideas were received in this question. On the one hand, teacher one mentioned a strong belief that virtual learning is effective. It must be because the teacher interviewed feels confident when using technology. On the other hand, teacher 2 prefers traditional methods. This environment gives the idea of having class control. However, just teacher number 2 included in his response the encouragement and students' needs supporting as a matter to prefer face-to-face classes.

Engagement plays a crucial role in English language learning. It requires a combination of interactive activities, real-life scenarios, community building, and feedback and support. As technology plays a more significant role in education, EFL teachers must stay current and use the latest tools and techniques to engage students and help them develop student's language skills.

Teachers and educators must encourage engagement by creating engaging and interactive learning activities, promoting collaboration, and providing opportunities for students to express themselves. Also, teachers must provide regular feedback and support to students in a virtual

EFL classroom. This can be done through individualized feedback on assignments and regular check-ins with students. Providing regular feedback and support can help students identify areas for improvement, track progress, and feel more confident in new communicative abilities. By implementing these strategies, teachers can create a virtual learning environment that promotes student engagement and enhances communicative skills. In contrast, students can improve their language skills, gain confidence, and enjoy learning.

Chapter V

Reflections of the Study

EFL students in a virtual environment require creating a positive and inclusive learning environment, incorporating technology, providing clear instructions, and offering opportunities for language use. This not only helps students learn the language but also prepares them for real-life communication in the future.

Developing this study has allowed me to explore the effectiveness and different ways teachers' motivation and engagement encourage students to enhance their speaking skills and be more engaged in their language-learning journey. I have also had the opportunity to interview

students and teachers that provided the research with insight that was not expected but that, nevertheless, it was very valuable to lean on new perspectives and leave the door open to future research.

There is certainly a life lesson learned after developing this study. As a researcher, student, and teacher, I now understand that a problem will always need to evaluate different perspectives to get a grasp of what is happening and how it could be addressed. As a student, it is important not to wait for the knowledge and desire to learn to be transmitted by someone else, but to take action and start developing it individually and have the confidence that teachers are always willing to help. As a teacher to develop strategies that allow my students to be included in a fun dynamic class and provide significant learning that boost their academic growth and improve their speaking skills learning English as a foreign language.

The problem was very clear and addressed the radical change from face-to-face to virtual education, having as factors the motivation and engagement of the students in order to improve their communication skills. However, new perspectives were conceived as the research progressed, and the literature was compared with the results of the interviews with teachers and students. These factors are very important but work only one way from the teacher to the student, and that completely changed my conceptions about the topic and motivated me to include and try different perspectives for future projects.

This topic is broad and much more complex in different perspectives than what It was presented in this project and looking into further research; there are new approaches and things that could be developed differently. Motivation and engagement are supposed to be provided by the teacher to the class, but it does not mean that these factors cannot be intrinsically produced by a student's desire to excel and learn. All of the students are different and come from

different backgrounds. However, they share a common goal, to learn. So, a different perspective for further research is developing the concept of how the educational system shapes the student's desire to learn. Motivation and engagement are just factors needed to succeed in learning a second language regardless of the virtual or face-to-face context at the time of receiving a class.

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Annexes



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CERTIFICADO ANTIPLAGIO

La Libertad, 15 de Mayo de 2023

MSc. Elena Niola - 2023

En calidad de tutor del trabajo de titulación denominado "EFL Classroom Engagement to Enhance Communicative Skills for Ninth Graders in a Virtual Environment" elaborado por el estudiante **Erick Edward Roldán Andrade** egresado de la Carrera de **Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros**, de la Facultad de **Ciencias de la Educación e Idiomas** de la Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena, previo a la obtención del título de **Licenciatura en Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros**, me permito declarar que una vez analizado en el sistema anti plagio URKUND, luego de haber cumplido los requerimientos exigidos de valoración, el presente proyecto ejecutado, se encuentra con **8%** de la valoración permitida, por consiguiente se procede a emitir el presente informe.

Adjunto reporte de similitud

Atentamente,



Rosa Elena Niola Saumartin

C.I.: 2105193676

MSc. Elena Niola
DOCENTE TUTOR



FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN E IDIOMAS

CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS
NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

MEMORANDO

REFERENCIA: PINE-058-2023

DE: ING. ELIANA LEÓN ABAD, MSc.
DIRECTORA DE CARRERA

PARA: ROLDAN ANDRADE ERICK EDWARD

ASUNTO: APROBACIÓN DE CRONOGRAMA DE SUSTENTACIÓN DE TRABAJO DE INTEGRACION CURRICULAR – MIEMBROS DE TRIBUNAL.

FECHA: 27 DE FEBRERO DEL 2023

Por medio de la presente me dirijo a usted para informarle que fue aprobado el cronograma de sustentación de los trabajos de investigación, de acuerdo al siguiente detalle:

TITULO PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN	FECHA DE SUSTENTACIÓN	HORA	TRIBUNAL	LINK DE ACCESO
"EFL Classroom Engagement to Enhance Communicative Skills for Ninth Graders in a Virtual Environment"	01/03/2023	14:00	Directora: MSc. Eliana León Abad Secretaría: Ruth Reyes Comisión UIC: MSc Xavier Almeida Tutor: MSc. Elena Niola Especialista: MSc Ketty Vergara	https://cedia.zoom.us/j/2700270364 Meeting ID: 270 027 0364

Atentamente,



Ing. Eliana León MSc.
Directora Carrera Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros

C/c Archivo

QUESTIONNAIRE (STUDENTS)

1. Do you know what are the communicative skills to develop in an English class? Mention some of them.

4 Students answered Speaking

3 Students answered Listening

2 Students answered Writing

2 Students answered Reading

2. Which is the most common communicative skill that you use in your classroom and how you interact with it, describe.

Student 1

The most common communicative skill that I use is speaking, it is important because I can understand the teacher's commands and follow them. It also allows me to let him know if there's something that I do not understand about the topic.

Student 2

In my case it is the same, speaking. I am constantly in communication with the teacher in order to understand the class and ask questions related to the class.

Student 3

I would say that the most common skill that I use is writing, I am not much of a talker and I like making sentences. I always show them to the teacher so he can check them and learn more about the structure of making sentences and be able to communicate through them.

Student 4

I always use speaking because I like to interact with the teacher during the class asking questions and getting points for class participation.

Student 5

In class I really like to communicate and talk with the teacher even if sometimes I don't know if I'm right or wrong, so for me I would say speaking.

Student 6

I agree with my classmates, speaking is the main skill because during the entire class the teacher explains and asks questions so, I have to reply with the little English I know.

Student 7

I think that you have two skills that work together during the class and are frequent. speaking and listening. How else could you start speaking if you are not understanding what the teacher says or if he does not listen to our questions or comments on the class.

Student 8

In my case I do not like speaking, but I'm really good at Listening and reading. I like to learn new words and, in the tests, my favorite section is reading.

Student 9

I have to be honest I'm not good with any of those I just listen but is not like I always understand everything, I would like to practice more and be able to understand most of the class.

Student 10

I would say listening, I always understand most of what the teacher speaks in class, but I don't know how to reply when he asks me questions, but I definitely understand what he is saying, so I reply in Spanish sometimes. It is really frustrating.

3. Interaction in English classes is important to learn. How much do you interact in your classes? Explain.

Student 1

I do like to participate in class but there are some topics that I do not feel confident enough to participate so it is not that active.

Student 2

Not much. Honestly virtual education it is not the same, you can't interact with the teacher in the same way than in a regular face to face class.

Student 3

I do not like virtual classes. I feel that I am just listening, but I am not able to participate.

Student 4

Virtual classes do not give you the same opportunities to participate and it becomes frustrating at a point where you do not want to participate anymore.

Student 5

Very little. I was always paying attention to class but I did not feel like participating.

Student 6

Not enough. To be honest most of the time I did not fully understand the activities we were doing, it was easy to get distracted.

Student 7

A virtual class is not the same as a face to face class, it is not interesting and dynamic at all so I was not that into the class.

Student 8

I did not have as much participation as my other friends. I just find it hard to interact and get all the looks from my partners in a virtual class.

Student 9

It is not the same being in a virtual class. I almost never got a chance to participate as I would have liked.

Student 10

I think virtual classes are half learning you don't really learn because there are so many distractors. So, I was barely paying attention.

4. In your opinion what are some aspects a teacher should consider to apply in a virtual English class that would catch your attention and keep you engaged?

Student 1

In my opinion the teacher should be very resourceful and didactic in order to get my attention. Use more videos and pictures to illustrate vocabulary and the meaning of words, by doing this we are having fun and learning at the same time.

Student 2

I think that the teacher should be more dynamic during the class, sometimes the topic is boring and if the teacher is not active and dynamic, we can easily get bored.

Student 3

In my opinion if the teacher wants to keep me engaged, creativity is an important tool to use in order to create interactions and do the class more interesting and fun. Virtual and online games like quizizz and liveworksheet are a good idea to use in the classroom.

Student 4

I think the teacher should be more active and make the class fun, its better if we learn doing something interesting than just grammar exercises or stuff like that.

Student 5

The teacher should consider using electronic devices and interactive websites that could give us more control on what we are learning but in a fun way.

Student 6

I think the teacher should interact more, asking questions and trying to motivate us to participate. Sometimes is just all about the book and the readings but there are fun activities to enjoy, and learning does not have to be boring.

Student 7

From the start of the class the teacher should be energetic and dynamic with us, but if he comes straight to class it becomes boring.

Student 8

I think that the teacher's energy is what motivates us to be active in the class, the tone of voice is important to keep us engaged and alert. It does not become a boring class if you have an energetic fun teacher.

Student 9

More didactic resources during the class, games that allow students to have fun while learning. Karaoke, online games, outside games or new tools that keep the class engaged to what we are doing.

Student 10

I think that the teacher should be ready to listen to the students, and not just be him or her talking during the whole class. We are part of the class too. He should care and listen about how we are feeling and if we are actually learning something before taking a test.

5. What aspects of a virtual English class you think that makes it boring and does not keep you engaged?

Student 1

For me, it is when we practice a lot of reading and writing during the whole class because it is not dynamic or fun it is just a bunch of readings that sometimes I don't even understand.

Student 2

For me the English class it is not boring. However, what makes the class boring is the fact that it is a virtual environment, and it is very frustrating not to be able to participate like before.

Student 3

What makes the class boring is having the teacher talking a lot during the entire class, and our participation is very limited and if we have questions sometimes there is no opportunity for us to ask or to practice reading or playing with our partners in groups.

Student 4

I think that the class becomes boring when the teacher does not make us part of the class and we do not have interaction among students and with the teacher. I easily get distracted because no one is actually paying attention to what I am doing.

Student 5

I think that a lot of theory and grammar exercises makes the class boring but if you add more games, songs or virtual websites, I could be more engaged to the class.

Student 6

In my opinion is the monotony of doing the same things every single class we have. There's nothing new or interesting. It is always the same. Monotony kills the energy we have to do something.

Student 7

The low interaction between the teacher and the student. If no one is paying attention to what I have to say, then I do not care about the class. How am I going to learn if the teacher does not take care of the things I do not know.

Student 8

I think that the class becomes boring every time we are focusing just in grammar, because grammar is boring.

Student 9

One of the things that I really thing the teacher should do it is to try to take interest in their students not just take attendance and then straight to the class, where is the "How are you guys?" "How is it going?" Like really take interest in their students so we can relate and feel

closer to the teacher, I think that with someone that I respect and takes interest in me is easy to learn and get engaged in a class.

Student 10

I totally agree with my friend, it is the connection, energy and interaction you have with the teacher that makes you love or hate the subject.

- 6. How important do you think classroom management is for the teacher in order to keep the students engaged to the class, and what do you think it happens if it is not applied at all?**

Student 1

The main goal of the teacher is to keep us engaged in the class, so it is very important to manage the class in a correct way so students can learn and respect the class as well.

Student 2

In my opinion it is the most important thing. We rely on the teacher to learn but sometimes is easy to get distracted. At that point is when we need a teacher that can control de class and keep it engaged to the topic.

Student 3

If the teacher is not able to manage the class, it would be a total chaos. There are many students that just go to school to play and not to actually learn, so that becomes an issue.

Student 4

I would say it is extremely important because it is up to the teacher how to start and how to end the class, not up to us. If he can't manage the class, then we won't be able to learn, but if he keeps the class dynamic fun and with respect, we will definitely see each other again.

Student 5

It is very important that the teacher keeps everyone in control if the students think that there are not rules then everyone will do whatever they want.

Student 6

If the teacher does not manage to control the class, no one is going to learn and probably everything will be chaos.

Student 7

I think the same, the teacher is responsible for our behavior, if he or she knows how to manage a group of students, then none of the students will get in trouble and will learn, but if the teacher is not engaging with the student and does not how to manage a class, that's serious problems.

Student 8

If the teacher knows how to manage the class, we will learn but if he does not, then it is a waste of time because nobody will pay attention at all.

Student 9

Classroom management is one of the most important things in the classroom not only to learn but to respect the teacher that is in front of you.

Student 10

I think the teacher sets the example when he is in charge and that help us to learn a lot. However, if he is not ready to manage you can tell me.

7. In your own experience is English virtual learning more effective than traditional face to face learning?

Student 1

I do not think that virtual learning is more effective because it does not develop the same relationship student-teacher, It is hard to connect with the teacher and to participate.

Student 2

Virtuality sets many barriers between the teacher and all of us as students, we do not get to interact as we used to, and this turns the class into a boring English lesson that you barely pay attention. So, I would rather be in a face-to-face class.

Student 3

I am confident that the traditional style is better because we do not have as many distractors as we would have attending to a virtual class in which we can be doing anything and the teacher would not notice, because we are behind a computer.

Student 4

I stay with the traditional face to face style, it is more effective because the teacher is in control and we get to participate as much as we can, we are not limited by the internet or a screen.

Student 5

I think that both styles are great but more effective definitely face to face because you get to communicate and connect with the teacher, he can take more time into explaining some things we do not understand and make sure we get it.

Student 6

I think is more effective face to face. The teacher is aware of most of the students, if you are paying attention or not, he can help you if he sees you are struggling with something you do not understand.

Student 7

In my opinion is more effective the traditional face to face learning. Many of us as students are not responsible enough to take on the challenge to be disciplined in an English, what I mean it is really easy for us to get distracted and not even pay attention to the class. However, with the teacher walking around checking everyone's progress during a face-to-face class it keeps you focused on what you have to do. You may not fully understand what you are doing, but you have the teacher there to help you.

Student 8

I totally agree with my classmate. There are some aspects of a traditional class that we can't bring to a virtual class. It is just not the same and it won't work in the same way.

Student 9

I would say the traditional is more effective. However, I think it really depends on the students, the motivation they may have to learn is what would define if they actually learn something.

Student 10

In my personal opinion I think face to face is the best way to learn and it is really effective. After a long class I am pretty sure something will stick out of what the teacher taught us. It is even easy to approach the teacher and ask if we have doubts about the class.

QUESTIONS. (TEACHERS)

1. What challenges brought Virtual Education to you as an English teacher?

Teacher 1

First and foremost, we as teachers have to unlearn what we were accustomed to and consequently, everything needed to be adapted to the virtual setting.

Teacher 2

Adapt to the new way of teaching. Using new technological tools in order to make my class more interesting.

2. What strategies do you usually use to keep your students engaged during class?

Teacher 1

I work with teenagers. Thus, the involvement of games is at the core of the class. The variety of activities keeps them on track. Music and videos get their attention, and they learn from it.

Teacher 2

I always have a new game related to the class, students like to participate having fun. It is important to have multiple tools to relate and engage our students.

3. Why do you think students have low engagement in a virtual English class?

Teacher 1

Lack of technology, knowledge and lack of self-confidence. Sometimes they are reluctant to learn because they don't feel they can actually learn.

Teacher 2

At home they can easily get distracted. Sometimes it is also about their own personality traits, some of them are shy and introverted so they don't feel like participating.

4. What factors can you identify in students that become a barrier in the process of improving their communicative skills?

Teacher 1

Classroom management is the utmost importance of keeping students engaged. One of the classroom management I apply is keeping a good rapport among students

Teacher 2

I would say shyness and lack of self-confidence. In a virtual environment everything is pretty new for them. The fact of being afraid to participate does not give them the chance to improve.

5. How important do you think classroom management is to maintain your students engaged in the class? How do you usually apply classroom management?

Teacher 1

Classroom management is the utmost importance of keeping students engaged. One of the classroom managements I apply is keeping a good rapport among students

Teacher

It is really important. I ask them to participate a lot during class and I am always monitoring their activities.

6. What would you do to improve your student's communicative skills in a virtual environment?

Teacher 1

I would use flipped classroom. By doing this, I can give previous material for self-preparation and then implement some activities that let them gain confidence in their speaking.

Teacher 2

Using debates is a good example if we want for them to express and practice their communicative skills.

7. In your own experience, is English virtual learning more effective than traditional face-to-face learning? What would you change in both styles to make them more effective?

Teacher 1

I deeply believe that virtual learning can be more effective.

Teacher 2

Traditional is more effective because you can encourage all students to participate and be there for them whenever they need us.