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MAESTRÍA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

Reporte del Proyecto Terminal de Aplicación Innovadora del Conocimiento

Providing After-School Assistance Using the Web Conferencing Tool Adobe© Connect™

Procesos de Enseñanza-Aprendizaje del Inglés en el Sistema Educativo Mexicano

María de los Milagros Cruz Ramos

Directora de Proyecto: Luz Edith Herrera Díaz

Asesora/Codirectora: Gloria del Rocío Ibarguen Ramón

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ABSTRACT

This is a report of an action research project, which investigates how a number of students perceive the implementation of after-school reinforcement sessions using a Web Conferencing tool: Adobe© Connect™. This tool allows different kinds of synchronous, real time, as well as asynchronous interaction. The report documents a teacher-initiated action research project, which made additional assistance available in a virtual environment that allowed students to interact with peers, and with the teacher. The implementation was held after school, which allowed students to work from home where they had steady Internet connectivity. The sessions were not compulsory, and eventually a second group of students, who had not been part of the original sample, requested to join the project. Participants came from a private institution and were taking classes in levels 1 and 3. I compared pupil’s perspectives on their own performance and behavior, as well as on the benefits they saw in the reinforcement sessions. Both, qualitative and quantitative data were collected through two sets of structured surveys, semi-structured interviews, and my own observation of the sessions. This observation was supported with screen captures and recordings provided by the web conferencing platform, Adobe© Connect™. The results of the project suggest that those students who participated in at least one session, recognized different benefits in attending. One of the most salient benefits participants perceived and mentioned was error correction. However, due to the students’ poor attendance, teachers interested in implementing a similar project should proceed cautiously.
INTRODUCTION

Since it seems evident for universities that an important part of preparing students to work in a globalized world means helping them learn a second or even a third language, English has become a compulsory subject in universities across Mexico. Even though universities now offer a number of language options, English continues to be the predominant choice. Most local undergraduate programs in Veracruz include at least two semesters of English, such as the ones offered by Universidad Cristobal Colón (UCC), Universidad Mexicana (UNIMEX), Universidad Veracruzana (UV), Universidad del Valle de México (UVM), and Tercer Milenio, among others.

Even when some institutions do not regard an English program as mandatory, they still offer English courses to their alumni, and even ask for an English proficiency test so that the students can obtain their degrees. Universidad Villa Rica, which has been overtaken by UVM, still works under its previous name exclusively for the Medicine and Dentistry programs. Medicine students must take a number of English courses as well as a certification exam offered by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM): CELE.

UVM, The private institution where the present project took place, has adopted a relatively new work plan after absorbing a local university with over 40 years of history. Under the new administration, English is not only mandatory in any undergraduate program, but also fundamental in providing students with the chance to study abroad. Therefore, students are facing the immediate need to succeed academically within the institution’s English program.

I identified a number of factors that seem to hinder students’ performance and place them at risk of academic failure. These factors ranged from absenteeism to students’ focusing during the class. Consequently, an innovative solution was designed to provide students with additional support in a way that would diminish the effects of the
hindering factors mentioned before. The solution consisted in holding after-school sessions in which students reinforced the topics and content already seen in class.

Following the growing trend of using technology as an aid in the teaching-learning process, this project intended to help students fulfill the demands of the English language program the institution provides, by using the web conferencing tool Adobe® Connect™. The tool I selected is used for educational and business purposes in different countries, including Mexico.

The present report is divided in five chapters that intend to present the different stages of this Action Research project; from its inception to the implications and consequences of its implementation. The first chapter deals with the general, institutional context of the project, followed by a description of the problematic situation as well as the project’s main objectives. The second chapter presents a review of the existent literature about both the area and the methods that were implemented.

The third chapter deals with the methodology followed in the design, implementation of the innovative strategy, and the data collection tools. This chapter ends with a description of the implementation. The fourth chapter presents a description of the findings, whereas the fifth chapter presents a deeper analysis and interpretation of the data obtained. The last section, conclusions and implications, presents reminders of the salient points, deductions made on the basis of what is discussed in the different chapters, as well as the limitations found in the work.
CONTEXT & FOCUS

Using web conferencing as an after-school assistance tool was firstly implemented in a private university in Veracruz. This local university, with a history of over 40 years, was recently overtaken by a bigger national university, which is affiliated to the Laureate international network. Belonging to such an important network brought several major changes in most departments within the university. For instance, in the past, the directors of undergraduate programs were in charge of the English program their students were to follow, which meant that there was no uniformity in the programs being covered or the material being used.

Nowadays, under the new management, an English department has been created and a coordinator has been appointed. As a matter of fact, this department has now become a Language department, thanks to the inclusion of a new language: French. Additionally, the programs to be followed as well as the materials to be used are now provided by a central office in Mexico City and are aligned to the Laureate International Universities’ requirements. This has brought benefits for students and teachers, who can now take part of exchange programs to any of the universities within the network.

Courses are now distributed as follows; students must now take five levels of English, each of which is 80 hours long. They take 1 hour a day over the 16 weeks the semester consists of. In the first four levels of the English program, we use the book Touchstone by Cambridge. This is a program based on a communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, which is centered in student-student interaction. The scope and sequence of the book is aligned to the Common European Framework and it provides topics that are actually relevant and related to students’ lives and interests.

The Touchstone program has young adults as a target audience. Unfortunately, due to the increase in student enrolment over the last couple of years, each English group now holds 20 to 40 students. According to Richards (2006) the ultimate purpose of CLT methods is for students to achieve communicative competence. Such competence is
understood as the ability to know when and how to use language for different purposes and functions. Needless to say, the communicative CLT goals are hard to be achieved in large groups where not only spatial, but also time constraints make student-student interaction difficult.

This assumption obeys a series or reasons. Firstly, students at this institution are usually engaged in communication via portable devices, and it is hard for them to focus on the communicative events and contextualized situations teachers try to present in class. In other words, students are so embedded surfing the Internet that they show little interest to understand grammar rules, vocabulary, and language usage. Secondly, since they are allowed to be absent a total of 15 times per semester, absenteeism rates are really high. Sometimes, they are absent because of personal reasons, but occasionally they need to be absent because of different academic activities.

Another major constraint is the time. Holding a daily 50-minute-session is barely enough for teachers and students to reach the goals of the different Touchstone levels they teach/learn. Each level is constituted by 12 units, which introduce at least one grammar point and plenty of vocabulary and useful expressions. Under the new structure, the English program is more demanding than it used to be. Even when it is possible for students with previous knowledge to take a placement test before they start the first semester of any given program, the real challenge is for those students who need to start from level 1 or 2.

As mentioned before, all students need to complete the fifth level by the time they enter the sixth semester. If they fail to do so, they are denied the right to re-enroll to their respective undergraduate programs. Thus, falling behind holds serious implications that some students are beginning to face. Some people may even think this kind of policy is too drastic, but we must not forget that the institution’s new goal is to achieve an international status. They need their students to be able to communicate in English so that they can take advantage of exchange programs and even job opportunities abroad once they obtain their degree.
In the English program last semester, I implemented a project, which, from now on, will be considered a first loop to the present one. In this previous project, I decided to focus on the inappropriate use of portable devices and Wi-Fi in class. A series of strategies and tools were implemented to help students within the groups that participated in the project become self-aware and participant of a culture of responsible mobile device usage in class. This objective was accomplished while contributing to the students’ language production and understanding.

One of the main factors that contributed to the success of this intervention was the learners’ interest, knowledge and skills in the area of devices, applications, websites and social media use. Students seemed enthusiastic to participate in the activities implemented; their behavior regarding portable devices became more responsible, and they showed an interest in using on their own the tools and applications provided by the teacher. Even though this behavior was not the same in the whole group, the general results were very encouraging.

By the end of the semester, students were able to practice and improve the use of English language through the use of the tools they seem to use most: their own laptops, tablets and cellphones. As a teacher, I enjoyed some benefits too, such as a reduction in the amount of time usually needed to prepare material for my classes thanks to the features of several of the tools used, particularly the learning management system Edmodo. However, the implementation process presented one main constraint: Wi-Fi connection instability.

In sum, the problems with the Wi-Fi along with other aspects mentioned before such as absenteeism, a tight calendar and ambitious course objectives proved the previous solution to be impractical. Therefore, students are still in need of an alternative that helps them fulfill the demands of the English language program. In my view, this alternative might be using a video or web conferencing platform after school so as to provide students with reinforcement sessions at least once a week, and observe its
functioning, which are the objectives of this project. The present research will help answer the following questions:

• How can a web conferencing platform such as Adobe® Connect™ help students reinforce what was seen in class?

• How do students perceive Adobe® Connect™ sessions?
LITERATURE REVIEW

Having learners work on a web conferencing platform can serve different purposes. Within some institutions, web conferencing sessions attempt to replace traditional instruction, or face-to-face classes. The purpose of this project is to use web conferencing as a media to help students reinforce what they have already seen in class. Under this latter view, learners need to reflect on the information they have previously received in class. On this basis, it could be said that learners would be able to construct knowledge, practice, recover and reinforce topics seen in class.

In order to construct knowledge we need to reflect on our previous experiences. This approach places learners in charge of their own learning processes and implies that they need to organize information and provide it with meaning. Gilbert (2010) explains that learning under a constructivist approach results not only from a cognitive processing of information within an individual, but also from a social aspect where the learner interacts with the context. This description alludes to the two types of constructivism: cognitive and social.

Cognitive or individual constructivism is based on the work of the Swiss psychologist epistemologist Jean Piaget. Social constructivism, on the other hand, is based on the work of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky. According to Vygotsky (Carretero, 2009), all superior psychological processes (language, rational thinking, etc.) are acquired first in a social context, and they are then internalized. As a teaching theory, social constructivism is believed to benefit all learners within a given group since collaboration and social interaction are incorporated. Adobe® Connect™ is mainly advertised as a tool that enables you to meet and collaborate online.¹

If we are to apply a Constructivist approach into language teaching we would need to make use of realistic approaches to solve real life problems, by making use of critical thinking, reflection, and social interaction. Learners of a second or third language are

¹ http://www.adobe.com/mx/products/adobeconnect/web-meetings.html
usually faced with important amounts of interaction, both among peers and with the teacher, that are intended to help them develop language. Web conferencing tools enable us to emulate face-to-face interaction via microphone and chat, among others.

According to Hatch (n.d.) one learns how to do conversations, one learns how to interact verbally, and out of this interaction, syntactic structures are developed (Ellis 2008, pp. 252). Therefore, interaction sets the scene for learning, whether this learning is implicit or explicit. Ellis (2008) also points out that Implicit learning is typically defined as learning that takes place without either intentionality or awareness, whereas explicit learning is a conscious process and is likely to be intentional. I think that asking learners to join ‘after school sessions’ can increase the level of awareness they have of their own learning process, consequently making their learning more explicit.

DeKeyser (2003) adds that explicit learning takes place via teaching, and that it can be either deductive and explicit, or inductive and explicit. The former is found when learners are provided with rules to form syntactic structures, the latter encourages students to find the rules by carefully studying examples and models. The models learners are exposed to may come from instruction or interaction when learners take part of conversations. In the case of web conferencing sessions, instruction can be provided with the aid of visual presentations, such as Power Points or Prezis; whereas learners can take part of conversations via chat or microphone. Therefore, models can be provided in different ways.

These models constitute input. There are three views regarding the role of input in language development. Ellis (1985) explains that the behaviorist view emphasizes the importance of the linguistic environment, which is treated in terms of stimuli and feedback. Contrastingly, the nativist view minimizes the role of input and explains language development as a result of the learner’s internal processing mechanisms. The third view is the interactionist, which sees languages development as a result of both the linguistic environment and the learner’s internal mechanisms.
I find the interactionist view to be really valuable since it, although indirectly, acknowledges the role of instruction and social interaction, which I would find a main priority during the actual implementation of the project. Social interaction is not only a means of obtaining input learners can imitate, it can also lead to error correction. Errors are a natural part of the learning process, and correcting them is essential in helping learners improve and continue developing language. Ellis (2008) points out that errors are corrected through a negotiation of meaning that can go from a simple request for clarification, to explicit correction from a second speaker. For the present project this would mean that errors could be corrected not only by the teacher, but also by the rest of the participants.

Lightbown & Spada (2006) assert that teachers have a responsibility to help learners improve, and that this includes the provision of explicit feedback on error. I would go even further and add the fact that feedback not necessarily needs to be provided by teachers for it to be helpful. Peer-correction is a common term for teachers around the globe and it stands for input, in the form of discourse repair (also known as corrective feedback) when peers provide it. Peer-correction is one task that can be accomplished through collaborative work. I think that learners have more opportunities to correct their peers when interacting in a web conferencing session because feedback would not necessarily need to be spoken.

Should we foster an environment of collaboration, learners would willingly provide and take corrective feedback from their peers and use it for their own benefit. The idea of collaboration within a group stresses the central role and importance of social interaction in learning. Collaborative work is one of the nodal features I want to promote among learners, as I think it can both help them become less dependent on the teacher and provide them with more practice opportunities with their peers.

One of the main advantages of collaborative work is its level of flexibility, since learners are not always expected to work within fixed groups. Neither do these collaborative groups need to be numerous, for collaboration can be performed in pairs. According to
Coelho (1992) this kind of strategy is especially effective in situations where the composition of the group is unstable, as would be a group of students seeking for additional support where attendance is not compulsory.

Thanks to technology, collaborative interaction does not necessarily need to take place in a face-to-face class; interaction can be fostered in virtual spaces as well. These virtual online tools allow learners to interact synchronously or asynchronously. Rodríguez (1999) describes synchronous interaction as that of a group of individuals working together at the same time, as they would if they were face to face. From this we can learn that asynchronous interaction, on the other hand, takes place among individuals who work at different times and are geographically scattered.

Kraut (as cited in Rodríguez, 1999) described four kinds of online interaction: planned intentional, opportunistic and spontaneous. I am interested in planned online interaction that is synchronous since it involves a higher level of organization and formality that requires participants to schedule meetings in advance. Bates (2005) distinguishes three other types of social online interaction based on who interacts with the learners: the originator of the teaching material, a tutor or instructor, or other learners.

Several educational technologies are available to perform synchronous interaction. Distinctions can be drawn among them. First, it is possible to use audio for telephone tutoring, and audio-conferencing. Second, we can use video for video conferencing where participants are able to hear and see each other. Third, it is possible to use digital transmissions for web-conferencing that allows the use of audio, video, text and other audiovisual resources to be broadcasted to all participants in real time.

All of the different educational technologies available nowadays have advantages and disadvantages. They allow users to interact in different ways and which to select will depend on several factors. For instance, it is important to think about the cost, access, technical skills and even the content to be covered. Bates (2005) warns that the real
issue is not which is the better technology but how to combine them in order to exploit the learners’ and teachers’ potential. In this particular project I need to provide students with relevant information that is presented in an attractive way so as to keep them from getting distracted.

We will focus on web conferencing technologies because they seem to be more versatile than other technologies. Cabero (2007) acknowledges the many advantages and future potential of web conferencing describing it as the tool to be used for collaborative work. Similarly, Bates (2005), highlights the fact that web conferencing makes both synchronous and asynchronous interaction possible. The truth is that on the new web conferencing platforms, such as Adobe® Connect™ and Elluminate®, it is possible for teachers and learners to interact visually, graphically and verbally.

Learners can hold group and private conversations using text chat, leave or access a session without disrupting the lesson, and even attract the attention of the teacher by simply pressing an icon that represents raising one’s hand, as it would be done in an ordinary classroom. Additional to this, teacher and learners can share their screens, documents, and even websites. The reason web conferencing allows asynchronous interaction is the fact that after a given session or meeting is over, learners can still access presentations and recorded meetings.

There are at least two types of online learning, e-learning and blended learning. Casamayor et al. (2008) define E-learning as an educational activity imparted on the Internet as well as on those platforms developed for this purpose. Amar (2008) defines it as the opposite end of presentiality; situations developed fully through remote networks. Therefore, E-learning does not involve face-to-face interaction, and can take place synchronously or asynchronously. Sometimes it is a mixture of both kinds of interaction.

Blended learning is commonly understood as a mixture of e-learning and face-to-face instruction. There is no specific proportion in the frequency of face-to-face meetings
and online interaction. Vignare (2007) comments that there are several possible definitions for blended learning. She suggests that blended learning is the combination of online interaction (mostly asynchronous) and face-to-face instruction. For the purpose of this project, I prefer to define blended learning as a combination of face-to-face instruction and synchronous interaction on a web-conferencing platform.

One of the most important factors for web conferencing interaction is material. It should be attractive and professional looking. Moreover, it needs to be relevant and appropriate so that learners can exercise different skills and sub-skills. Bates (2005) states that different subject areas will require a different balance of media. The whole potential of video conferencing could be employed in learning a language. A video conferencing platform supports audio and video to reinforce listening. Texts can be projected on the screen for reading practice; writing can be done in text chat or on a virtual board, and speaking interaction can take place thanks to the use of microphones.

The materials to be used and how to use them should be decided as part of a design stage. In this design stage, teachers can determine learning objectives, students’ needs, learning activities and consequently the materials to be shared as part of the web conference. Amador (2008) maintains that planning should highlight new material, compared to that previously learned. In addition, Cabero (2007) mentions it is also important to have learners confirm their attendance, as well as to test the equipment. I think it is also important to test the Internet connection.

Even though teachers may be expected to be skillful in the use of technology, they still need to be willing to adapt and improve their teaching practices, such as the way they provide their students with additional support. Likewise, students have an important role in the success of blended learning. According to Amador (2008) learners must take the initiative regarding their participation in the process, but more importantly she states that the pedagogic and thematic design as well as the educational technology should be appealing to them.
The information included in this chapter intends to acknowledge the validity of this project. In addition, the structure and implementation of the web conferencing sessions that are part of this intervention are based on the topics covered as well as on the work of the authors here cited.
METHODOLOGY

Design

Several authors describe Action Research as a self-reflective cycle. Chiang (2004), for instance, mentions there are at least four main stages in the cycle: identifying a situation or problem, planning a change, acting and observing the processes and consequences, and re-planning before the cycle begins again. The results of a previous action research project called “Portable Device Usage in Class to Reinforce Language Production” indicated that students engaged properly in the classwork while using their cellphones, tablets, laptops and technology as tools for learning.

However, one of the biggest limitations was the instability of wireless connections and Internet speed. Other major constraints included absenteeism and a tight calendar to cover the contents of the course. All of these factors hindered the inclusion of innovative strategies within the class time slot. Nevertheless, students’ interest in working with technology could be highlighted. In my opinion, the design of the present project was derived, in part, from the previous one. (See Figure 1) Since both studies were Action Research they were both problem-focused and teacher initiated.

![Diagram of the Action Research Cycle](image.png)
The intervention consisted in offering reinforcement after-school sessions, that intended to provide interested students with additional assistance on the contents seen in class. One of my main priorities was to continue considering students’ interest on technology; therefore I studied different platforms that would allow me to interact with learners remotely. I chose Adobe© Connect™ because it allows different kinds of real time interaction via chat, microphone and screen sharing. Implementing after school would mean having a steady wireless connection.

I decided to implement the reinforcement sessions once or twice a week. Attendance was optional and the reinforcement would imply covering the same topics seen in class under different approaches, providing additional practice and clarifying doubts. Even though the main focus was reinforcement, this design also pretended to tackle the third setback found in the previous project, absenteeism, for students who had been absent would be given a chance to receive information and feedback on the topics they had missed.

These sessions were planned to take place over eight weeks. An additional week, corresponding to the Easter break, was assigned to reflect and work on re-planning if needed. This re-planning led to the inclusion of a second group of learners who showed interest in taking part of the implementation. It must be said that this inclusion required some re-design of both the implementation and some of the tools designed to collect data.

**Specific Context**

As it has been previously established, the learners involved in the implementation study at Universidad del Valle de México Campus Veracruz. They are a group of 24 students of different majors who take 50-minute-English classes five times a week in 10 to 10 AM time slot. At UVM, each English group is typically constituted of students from at least 4 different majors. This particular 10 AM group holds students majoring in
Business Administration, International Business, Marketing, Physiotherapy, and Communication. These students are taking Level 1 of a course based on the Touchstone Program by Cambridge University Press.

Being in level 1 implies they either obtained a very low score in the English placement test the school offers at enrollment, or declined the chance to take such test. Consequently, most of them seem to lack confidence when taking part of the class activities or tests. The learners ages range from 19 to 37 years old, most of them are in their early twenties. Out of the 24 learners in the group, only 11 are taking the course for the first time, while the other 12 are taking it for the second time, and 1 is taking the course for the fourth time.

Most of them usually talk to their partners in Spanish during class and take out their cellphones or tablets in order to send text messages or access the Internet. They are never disrespectful but some of them show little interest in the class. Considering that the school sets a limit of 15 absences per semester, some are absent a lot. This particular semester, students who are absent over 13 times will fail the course. All of these factors can put their learning, and passing the course at risk. For the purpose of this report we will call them Group A.

A second group of 9 students, this time from level 3, joined the implementations on the fifth week. They take classes with another teacher, but upon learning about the project being implemented, they requested to join. Most of them had been my students in the previous semester; some of them even took part of a couple of undocumented implementations for the Portable Device Usage project. They are majoring in Physiotherapy, Communication and Graphic Design. Their ages range from 19 to 21 and all of them are taking the course for the first time. They will be called Group B.

Data Collection

Information was collected through three qualitative research instruments that went from opened to structured. These three instruments were: observation, surveys, and
interviews. The first instrument was observation. I produced field notes based on my perceptions of the behavior showed by participants during the Adobe® Connect™ sessions as well as in-class participation. Some of the aspects I commented the most were students’ interactions, accuracy to use language and performance in tasks.

The second instrument was two sets of surveys: the first of which was applied before the actual implementation started, and the second after it had ended. The first set of surveys focused on determining whether students would be both, able and willing to take part of after-school reinforcement sessions carried out using an online tool (See Appendix A). On the other hand, the focus of the second set of surveys was the impressions learners had about the web conferencing sessions carried out (See Appendix B). During the interviews, learners were asked to reflect on the utility and appeal of the sessions, among other aspects. (See Appendix C)

According to Jansen (2010), the main difference between interviews and surveys is that in interviews (also called inductive surveys) relevant topics and categories need to be identified through the interpretation of raw data. Contrastingly, in surveys (also called deductive surveys) the diversity to be studied is defined beforehand and the aim of descriptive analysis is only to see which of the predefined characteristics exists empirically in the population under study. In the current study, the population changed from the first set of surveys to the second.

The first set of surveys was given to the 24 students in the first group, whereas the second set was given to those students who took part in at least one videoconferencing session throughout implementation. The latter group included the 12 level 1 students who took part in the sessions, as well as the 9 level-3 students who decided to join the project. The first set of surveys was produced in English, and students were provided with assistance to understand the items so that they could provide answers. The second set, however, was produced in Spanish. The main reason to do this was the fact that items in the second survey were more complex and used fewer cognates.
The third instrument to collect data was a series of interviews given to a number of participants at the completion of the implementation period. I decided it would be more appropriate to have three different sets of questions for the interviews. I used the first set with students who never attended a session, a second set with students who attended sporadically and a third set with students who attended regularly. Kvale (1996) states that notwithstanding the lack of a common procedure for research interviews, an interview investigation can be outlined in seven method stages: thematising, designing the study so it addresses the research questions, the interview itself, transcribing, analyzing, verification and reporting.

In this particular case the fourth stage mentioned by Kvale, transcribing, also involved translating for the interviews were carried out in Spanish so as to make participants feel more confident and at ease. I decided that the questions in the interview would be open-ended. However, complex terms or situations could be discussed with the interviewee. Additional to this, clarification could be provided to the respondents. During their corresponding interviews, respondents were encouraged to talk freely. They were also encouraged to include as much detail as possible.

Additional to the three instruments described above, a number of means to collect data were used during the actual implementation of the activities and strategies of the innovative solution. Screen captures were constantly taken while students were engaged in different activities. The objective was to provide evidence of learner performance and demeanor. Screen captures also show the different uses and interactions the web conferencing platform supports.

In the same way, a couple of sessions were recorded to produce notes that are mainly methodological and descriptive. Those notes will intend to detail events, activities, and particular actions of participants in the group, while also revealing how people seem to have reacted to the intervention. All of the information was to be analyzed by categories, which would be decided in alignment with the problematic situation itself,
the objectives of the project, and the research questions, as will be presented in the following chapter.

**Implementation**

Before the implementation process began, learners in Group A were surveyed so as to guarantee all of them would meet the technical requirements needed for Adobe© Connect™ sessions. After it was determined that they were all viable candidates, the whole group was shown a Prezi presentation that detailed the basic steps to log into a session. These steps included retrieving the session’s link from the teacher’s class blog, accessing as a guest, asking for a turn raising hands, and controlling microphone functions.

*Typical Adobe© Connect™ sessions*

Each session could be divided into two main stages: the previous work that involved doing all the necessary arrangements, and the actual session. The day before the session I spent about an hour working on a Prezi presentation that included the most important points of the unit to be covered. The first section of Prezis included a review of vocabulary, most of the times; pictures of each vocabulary item were included along with the actual word they were depicting. Subsequent sections dealt with grammar, providing either examples or structure patterns.

The last section of the presentations provided instructions for students to engage in some kind of communicative activity. Sometimes they were asked to write paragraphs they would later read to the rest of the people in the session. Some other times they were instructed to interact with partners or prepare short presentations of a topic. All of the instructions and explanations were written in English. Sometimes videos were also inserted into Prezis. If this were the case, then the next section would provide instructions for a comprehension activity. Each session was independent from the previous one, which allowed learners to join the project at any point of the implementation.
Additional to the presentations, I had to work on creating worksheets that provided the learners with different kinds of practice. The exercises in each worksheet usually went from mechanical to semi-controlled/communicative activities. I used different types of items to emulate both the book and the exam. I chose to use these materials as a way to reinforce the two sub-skills, grammar and vocabulary. These worksheets were made available to learners during the sessions and constituted original materials.

Minutes before each session I posted a welcome message to the notes section (see Figure 2). Along with this message, a group of four to five useful expressions was included in the notes. The useful expressions were aligned to those suggested in the book, which were typically used in the class to allow interaction in English. These notes were treated as permanent information, and remained on the top right corner of the screen, above the participants’ list and the chat section for students’ reference.

Afterwards I would upload the worksheet created for the session and place a pod (small window) to share them at the center of the screen. That way when learners accessed the session I would greet them and then instruct them to download the Word
Providing After-School Assistance Using the Web Conferencing Tool Adobe® Connect™

File that contained the exercises. After 5 to 7 minutes, I would hide the file pod and projected the Prezi presentation I had previously downloaded to my own laptop. In order to do this, I needed to share my screen with them.

Since the size of the presentation was adjusted to the size of the sharing pod, I would still be able to monitor what students were commenting in the chat section, as well as if any of them had a comment or question. There were certain etiquette rules to be followed during the sessions. For instance, learners could open their microphones to make comments or ask questions only after they had raised their hands. Raising their hands meant clicking on the icon that showed a little person raising his hand.

Whenever a participant did this, the system would display the same icon next to their names. Upon seeing this, I would grant the participant permission to open his/her microphone. This was one of the ways to collect participant feedback and solve doubts. However, not everybody opted for this method. Some participants simply posted comments and questions in the chat section, which usually led to participant-participant interaction instead of presenter-participant interaction.

Sessions usually continued by having a review of the vocabulary seen in class. The Prezi presentation would usually show them a picture, after which I elicited the word. Participants would occasionally compete to provide the right word first; some other times they would take turns to name the different items being presented. I would also ask them to use the words in a sentence. When reviewing grammar, I usually started by eliciting the use and form of the structure seen in class. From there, we would move to actual exercises they allowed them to use the content in various ways.

When participants were asked to answer exercises from the worksheet, I would project the original document on my screen for those learners who were accessing from mobile devices since they would not be able to download the documents at the moment. As a matter of fact, if the system indicated someone was accessing the session from a mobile device, I had to take a minute to send that person an email.
attaching the document we were going to use. That way, even if they could not access the document in that moment, they would still follow the activities being held.

All of the activities that we carried out during the sessions were timed. I tended to give them between 3 to 6 minutes per activity. During that time span I closed my microphone and let them reflect on the work they had to do individually. Once that time was over, I used different interaction patterns to check answers. Students could be asked to open their microphones and simply read the answer aloud, they could also copy/paste it to the chat, or they could be promoted to presenters and write their answers in a new notes pod in the middle of the screen.

Participants were encouraged to give each other feedback at all times. I also encouraged them to volunteer and share their answers with the rest of the group. However, I tried to prevent more skillful students from monopolizing interaction. I also tried to keep a balance and have each individual participate at some point. Students were allowed to use Spanish during the sessions only if they considered they would not have been able to convey meaning even by making use of the useful expressions on the screen. Even though the use of their first language was not encouraged, it was not penalized either.

At the end of each session participants were dismissed and suggested to complete any exercises we had not covered from the worksheet. Yet, I made it clear that not completing such exercises would not have a negative impact on their grades due to the fact that the sessions did not represent credits. If any participants from Group A actually completed the activities, then I checked them the next day around 11 am, after their class was over. Sessions for Group B, by contrast, did not always involve worksheets since it was hard to meet those learners so as to check their work. Therefore, those worksheets were left unchecked.

A second major difference between sessions and the materials used with Group B was the fact that Prezi presentations did not focus on grammar as much as the ones for
Group A. Instead, presentations for Group B would refer them to the lessons or sections where they could consult the vocabulary for each unit. A couple of times they were even provided with lists of the most relevant vocabulary items from a given unit. Apart from this, sessions were carried out in the same fashion. A few minutes after the meeting had ended, participants would receive a link to the Prezi they had been shown.

These links directed them to the Prezi website\(^2\) where they could consult the material anytime they needed to do so. Prezi presentations were available anytime, and participants could not edit them. This feature decreased the risk of someone accidentally altering or deleting the information, making the materials more reliable and dependable. This way, by the end of the session participants would have access to all of the material seen during the sessions, and this materials related directly to what had been seen in class.

**Sessions with Group A**

Session 1

The first session took place on Wednesday, February 27\(^{th}\), which was the fourth week of the semester. We had finished covering Unit 3 from the book and we were still reviewing subject pronouns and possessive adjectives. The vocabulary seen in class was a list of words related to celebrity professions. The link to the session was posted in my class blog\(^3\). During the session students were encouraged to talk and write about their favorite celebrities using the grammar and vocabulary reviewed in the session and previously seen in class. The session started at 8 pm and finished around 9. Unfortunately only 2 learners attended.

Session 2

The second session took place on Tuesday, March 3\(^{rd}\). At learner’s request, two

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\(^2\) www.prezi.com  
\(^3\) http://milys-level1-extrahelp.blogspot.mx/
different schedules were programmed; one at 6:30 pm and another at the usual time, 8 pm. The same two participants attended the 8 pm session, and no one attended the 6:30 pm one. Some students complained saying that they had not understood how to retrieve the links to the sessions. The activities and material presented intended to help learners reinforce the structure and use of simple present affirmative statements. Participants had the chance to share and talk about their typical morning routine.

Session 3

This session took place on Monday, March 11th. This time, two new participants joined the session, so, a total of four individuals took part of a Simple Present Interrogative statement review. Participants had a chance to structure questions as well as to interview other participants in open pairs using their microphones. This time the link to the session was shared via email.

Session 4

The fourth session took place in the same week as the third. Three participants accessed the video conferencing platform on Thursday, March 14th. Two of them were regular participants and the third was accessing for the first time. Students reviewed frequency adverbs and vocabulary related to different kinds of TV shows. The three participants who attended had a chance to write about their TV preferences.

Session 5

This session took place on Tuesday, March 19th. Once more, the link was shared via email; it was not posted to my class blog anymore. The new objective was to reinforce the vocabulary and grammar seen in Unit 6, which was the last unit to cover before the first partial exam. Participants competed to type the names of the places shown on the screen as fast as possible while offering and receiving peer correction. Afterwards they worked on descriptions of their neighborhoods.
Session 6

This session constituted an exam review. It took place on Thursday, March 21st, the last week of classes before the Easter break. The session pretended to provide a short and concise review of the contents in units 1 through 6. It was the only session that placed the participants in a passive role, due to the abundant contents to cover in one hour. A total of 9 participants attended this review. The exam was held on the first day of classes after the break, on Monday, April 1st.

Session 7

The next session did not take place until Monday, April 22nd, because students were busy taking exams. Their exam period lasted two weeks. A total of 12 participants took part in the session. The topic reinforced was the verbs followed by infinitives, and clothing. Thanks to the abundance of participants it was possible to pair them up and ask them to describe what they were wearing to each other. This is the only time this feature of the platform was used.

Session 8

On April 24th, 6 participants accessed the videoconference and worked on the use of can and can’t to express ability and possibility. During this session, participants were promoted to presenters for the first time. This meant they were able to comment and modify the notes I placed at the center of the screen. I used this dynamic in order to check the answers of an exercise. Participants volunteered and took turns to become presenters.

Session 9

Sessions were interrupted after my Internet service was suspended. Therefore, it was impossible to hold a session, until May 8th. 10 participants attended the session, however two of them had to leave early. Once more, participants were upgraded to
presenters. This time they worked as a group and found logical verbs in past to complete sentences presented on the screen.

**Sessions with Group B**

During the second week of March three students from another teacher’s level-3 class approached me and told me they had heard I was implementing a new project (they had been my students during the implementation of the previous project a semester before). They asked me to allow them to take part in the project and attend sessions designed for their level. I agreed to do so after the first partial exam. Their sessions have been recorded too. Participants were also given the second set of surveys. There have been only four implementations with them, but they seemed eager to continue participating. Attendance increased consistently, from 3 to 9 participants.

The implementation of the reinforcement sessions was originally intended to last eight weeks; however, the sessions spanned 10 weeks out of which Group A took part in nine and Group B participated in five. All of the sessions took place between 7 and 9:30 pm, depending on students’ availability.
FINDINGS

This section presents the results obtained from the different tools mentioned in the previous chapter. The first section, Preliminary Analysis, presents the results of the first set of surveys. The second and third sections, Attendance and Results of Observation, present data obtained either directly from Adobe® Connect™ or from screen captures and field notes. The fourth and last section, on the other hand, presents the results of the second set of surveys as well as extracts from the interviews at the end of the implementation.

Preliminary Analysis

1. Availability and Technical requirements.

Based on the first set of surveys, I found that all of the students from group A owned either a laptop or a tablet. They also had Internet access at home, which were the two main technical requirements to work on a Web conferencing platform for reinforcement. Only one out of the 24 learners in group A claimed not to have a microphone or webcam, whereas another one claimed not to know how to use them. (See chart 1)

![Chart 1](Image)

Chart 1
Additional to that, the learners indicated they were usually online between 6 pm and 1 am. They pointed out that they only worked on the school’s Learning Management System, from 6 to 9 pm. Based on their answers, the time slot with the most activity was that 7 to 8 pm. (See chart 2)

![Chart 2](image)

2. Perception of own behavior and performance

The next six items in the survey were intended to gather students’ perceptions of their own behavior during the English class. The chart below shows their overall opinion of their behavior and performance in the English class. (See Chart 3)

![Chart 3](image)
3. Perception of after school reinforcement sessions

The last item on the first survey (See Appendix B) was intended to have learners express their perception on the usefulness of holding reinforcement sessions. 15 of the students said they would find reinforcement sessions beneficial, 6 others claimed it would be really beneficial. However, 3 learners pointed out that they did not think it would benefit them at all (See Chart 4).

One of them explained: “I think classes are more than enough”.

Based on this, at least 21 learners were expected to attend the reinforcement sessions.
Implementation Attendance

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td></td>
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Chart 5

Group A showed irregular attendance throughout the two months of implementation. Yet, there were four participants who attended most of the sessions. Group B, on the other hand, had a steady growth in attendance.

**Results of the observation carried out during the implementation**

Everything I presented in this section was based on my observations and perceptions of participant’s behavior during the sessions after studying screen captures (See Appendix D) and recordings of the sessions. The recordings were obtained directly through Adobe® Connect™.

Learners engaged in different kinds of interaction during the different sessions. All the learners in Group A made use of the chat section to ask for support or provide answers to exercises. Even when all of them opened their microphones to interact if asked to do so, only some voluntarily chose this kind of interaction over choosing the chat. By the time attendance increased, the four participants who had attended previous sessions became the ones who would raise their hands and ask for permission to open their microphones during every remaining session.
Unfortunately the other eight people who joined the sessions after the fourth week rarely took the initiative, and generally waited until I asked them to open the microphone. All of them participated actively in the chat. When I introduced a third kind of interaction, promoting them to presenters and have them contribute to the session’s notes, most participants volunteered to participate and seemed to enjoy sharing their answers on the central screen (pod). I found that the two forms of written interaction, usually lead to peer-correction.

For instance, when someone posted a wrong structure to the central notes, peers started posting possible corrections in the chat. Sometimes these corrections were provided even before I pointed out there was something wrong. Contrastingly, not once did learners provide correction to the comments their peers made through the microphone, at least not independently. Sometimes I repeated the mistake and elicited correction from the group. However, I provided correction myself most of the times, as I felt time was limited.

As for the additional exercises provided in Word files, most students answered the worksheets and took them to class the next day. Since they were not officially class activities, learners who had taken part of the sessions had to wait until the end of the class before they could get feedback. Since learners in Group B did not take classes with me, I never provided feedback on additional materials. We went over the exercises solved during the session, but we never checked the ones that were left unanswered.

**Second set of surveys and interviews.**

Both, the second set of surveys and the interviews, gathered information on students perceptions of the Adobe® Connect™ sessions, which involved different aspects from the materials and interaction to the feedback being provided. More importantly, these surveys captured students’ perception of their capability to succeed academically by passing the course. These two last tools, second set of surveys and interviews,
ultimately address whether students found the intervention beneficial and to which extent. This section includes excerpts taken from the interviews. I have translated these excerpts from their original version in Spanish.

1. Perception of performance after implementation

According to a second set of surveys, learners had no problems accessing the Web conferencing platform. There also seemed to be an increase in students’ confidence to pass the course. Most of the learners seemed to feel that besides helping them reinforce, the sessions also helped them recover content they had missed (See Chart 6). The extracts below also exemplify this perception:

B: “The sessions had an effect on my quiz results because you... the first quizzes I got low grades and when I accessed the platform, when I accessed the sessions I improved. I practiced and so”

D: “The sessions helped us because we could practice. It had an impact on quizzes. We could see, not what was going to be in the quiz, but you could see the topic and you could study”
F: “I think the session really helped me. It gave me more confidence to participate in the class the next day”

Learners were also asked to contrast face-to-face lessons and the video conferencing sessions. Most learners stated that they had been able to focus more during the video conferencing sessions and that they had understood the content better (See Chart 7).

![Chart 7](image)

Those participants who felt they had focused better during the sessions mentioned at least a couple of reasons, as shown in the extracts below:

E: “I felt at ease and it was easier to understand things because there were no distractions”

F: “I liked the sessions because I wasn’t as nervous as in class, and if I made a mistake the teacher would correct it. I really liked it”

**Materials**

All of the participants evaluated the materials presented as useful, appropriate and attractive. Adobe© Connect™ registers showed all of them downloaded the materials during the session, as it can be confirmed in the following interview extracts:
A: “I checked the materials again when I had doubts or questions. I checked the information, I could find everything there”

C: “I liked the presentations that contained the topic and keywords. It was easy to follow because it was visual. I downloaded the documents. Then I answered them, and then I took them to class the next day. I checked the materials before the quizzes because they had examples I could study. It was useful”

D: “I sometimes downloaded the material, well when I was using my computer I always downloaded it. I couldn’t download it when I was working from my cellphone. The material was good”

F: “We had Word documents where we could find exercises, and slides or presentations with the explanations of the topics [...] Sometimes I wasn’t able to attend the sessions but then I accessed and I would do the activities. I accessed after the session was already over”

Interaction

Participants perceived the tool helped them interact in different forms. They seemed aware of the different means of interaction and activities used during the implementation, which is demonstrated in the following extracts:

B: “We had to check videos and answer questions. We completed exercises”

C: “We reviewed things we had seen in class, presentations, we completed activities in Word, we worked together, and we talked on the microphone. That’s it”

F: “We could use the microphone. There was a hand you had to raise when you had a doubt and notes”
According to the survey, half of the participants’ favorite kind of interaction was talking on the microphone. Nevertheless, using the chat and the presentation screen were fairly balanced (See Chart 8).

The extracts below exemplify the different perspectives learners had regarding the different kinds of interaction.

B: “I liked to watch videos”

A: “I liked it when we had a chance to write or complete things [in the central notes]”

C: “I like to use the microphone. Different people could speak and answer activities. I liked it because it was different from using the keyboard only. We could listen to each other.”

D: “I liked exercises where we had to complete sentences or exercises using the microphone. I think the microphone is better because you practice the language”

All of the learners claimed these different kinds of interaction helped them learn from their partners’ mistakes. They also stated they had received feedback from the presenter.
B: “I would take my notebook and check what we had seen in class and what we were checking in the session”

A: “Our partners made corrections, or answered and you could see what was wrong. I think this is important”

D: “We were pointed out when we made a mistake, or sometimes other partners answered correctly and we got an explanation from the teacher” (own translation)

E: “the teacher would tell us if we were right or wrong, or we checked our partners’ answers and we could see if ours were right or wrong” (own translation)

Learners who never attended sessions.

Since only 50% of the members of Group A attended the reinforcement sessions, I asked some of the ones who did not attend, as well as a few who only attended a couple of times, about the reasons that kept them from doing so. Their answers were very varied, as we can see some examples below:

F: “I was aware of the sessions but sometimes I was not able to join access. [...] I had too much homework or I had to study for exams”

G: “I was aware of the sessions but I wasn’t able to attend any of them. I didn’t have the time, because I work in the afternoons”

H: “I wasn’t able to attend because sometimes I fell asleep and I didn’t have the time”

K: “I didn’t feel I needed the sessions”
DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS

At the start of the study I identified a number of factors, which apparently worked as distractors and seemed to diminish the quality of students’ performance in class, placing them at risk of failing the course. From these factors I decided to focus on the use of electronic devices in class and students tendency to be absent. I chose a tool that would allow learners to work with technology from home, where they were supposed to have a reliable Internet connectivity. I also based my choice on the descriptions of web conferencing technologies provided by Cabero (2007) and Bates (2005).

Considering the fact that the members of Group A were either repeating the course or showing little confidence while taking it for the first time, additional support seemed pertinent and necessary. Surveys suggested learners were able to receive support through reinforcement sessions after school. This particular group of learners was expected to perform well on a web conferencing platform due to their keenness and skills for working with technology. Moreover, survey’s results seemed to indicate that not only were they able, but also interested in receiving that additional support on Adobe© Connect™.

The schedule for the reinforcement sessions was based on the times learners indicated to be the most convenient for them. Consequently, sessions were usually held between 7 and 9 pm on days previously discussed and agreed with students. Some of the students felt that they would not be able to pass the course. This added to the fact that most learners indicated they saw reinforcement sessions as something positive and beneficial, made me think that attendance would be abundant. Paradoxically, attendance never surpassed 50% of the members of Group A.

Attendance levels became one of the first setbacks in the study. So as to deal with this factor, I modified the way of making session links available to students. Emailing the access links to each of the learners seemed to have a positive effect on attendance for
it increased significantly after I made this adjustment. Another factor that might have increased attendance was the proximity of the midterm exam. However, attendance did not remain constant in the weeks after the exam.

I found this unsteadiness disappointing. Yet, I think it is important to note that certain participants, mostly students taking the course for the first time, attended sessions regularly. In addition, at least a couple of the learners in Group A used the resources provided through Adobe© Connect™ asynchronously. This use of resources still fits a definition of blended learning, the one provided by Vignare (2007), who sees blended learning as the combination of asynchronous online interaction and face-to-face instruction.

During the first stage of the implementation, I was approached by a group of students, from a different level, that were not taking class with me, but had heard about the project. At first, I was reluctant to let them join my group, but I perceived their interest as another indication of the intervention’s possible success among different sectors of the university’s population. This assertion is supported by the fact that attendance in that second group, B, increased steadily over the five weeks they took part of the study. After the implementation period ceased, I decided to interview and survey participants from groups A and B.

The second set of surveys provided information on different areas. First of all, there seemed to be an improvement in students’ perception of their own likeliness to pass the course. I am aware of the fact that this apparent change could be regarded as a result of either the natural course of the learning process or as a consequence of the intervention. There are different reasons to believe that participants of the reinforcement sessions could have benefitted from different aspects of what a typical session involved.

As a matter of fact, interviews and surveys showed participants were left with positive impressions of the intervention. The previous chapter dealt with a general description
of the results obtained from the aforementioned methods. I will now try to dissect those results and contrast them with my own perceptions of the actual reinforcement sessions. Participants made significant comments regarding interaction during the sessions, the materials used, and the feedback they obtained from both the teacher and their peers.

As for materials, most of the participants interviewed had positive comments. Since they mentioned they would consult presentations shown during the sessions when they needed to study for a test, this could mean they found teacher-produced materials to be more reliable than class notes. It is important to notice that the notes provided to learners during class were mainly written on the board, and that Prezis were designed to resemble class notes. Nevertheless, I tried to invest a fair amount of time in the elaboration of the Prezis based on recommendation made by Amador (2008) regarding how new material should be highlighted.

During class, students were always instructed to take notes of important information provided on the board. It may be adventurous to think that students preferred presentations to traditional notes because they were available on the different devices they commonly use, but it should not be discarded either. Therefore, it seems that students found presentations adequate, attractive and useful. Most of the students who accessed the presentations in order to study had attended the sessions and this could mean they remembered the explanations provided while the material was being displayed.

Additional to the presentations, which contained explanations of the topics as well as graphic representations for key vocabulary words, Adobe© Connect™ records showed that participants actually downloaded the worksheets available in each of the sessions. They were aware of the fact that these worksheets did not constitute class work, and therefore did not grant them points. However, they solved and printed out the exercises. From my perspective this is one of the most promising attitudes in terms of commitment, interest and independence. It could also mean that these materials
helped them make their learning explicit, in at least one of the forms mentioned by DeKeyser (2003): deductive and explicit, or inductive and explicit.

Since most students pointed out that they focused better during the sessions than they did during the class, we could conclude that they were more likely to find web conferencing interaction more meaningful than face-to-face class instruction and interaction. I observed that students would participate more actively during the reinforcement sessions that they did during the class. In class, it seemed easy for them to get distracted and start chatting in Spanish. Even if they used Spanish during the sessions, their comments were topic centered.

After reading about the different forms of error correction mentioned by Ellis (2008), I knew that I wanted feedback to play an important role in teacher-student and student-student interaction during the sessions. However, I did not foresee participants would be aware of the value of observing and correcting each other’s mistakes. According to the interviews, some participants regarded feedback as one of the most relevant aspects of the reinforcement sessions. Some participants seemed particularly appealed by the collaborative strategy of error correction that involved correcting others as well as learning from others’ mistakes, which seems to have allowed them to construct and reinforce knowledge through social interaction.

I think that students’ performance in English can be improved through reinforcement sessions conducted in a similar fashion of that of the sessions that took place as part of this intervention. Low attendance rates could be overcome by constantly motivating students to take part in the sessions, instead of simply focusing on the ones that attend voluntarily. Regular sessions could prove to engage students more into attending, as they would be likely to notice changes in their own performance sooner. However it is important to remember that learners are the ones who must take the initiative as Amador (2008) mentions.
If sessions were held once a week through the whole semester, students would be provided with reinforcement for each of the 12 thematic units of the program, instead of leaving them without reinforcement sessions during exam periods. Another important adjustment would be to include the attendance to after school video conferencing as part of the grading criteria, thus making sessions compulsory. This, of course, would require support from the language department coordination. It would mean that all learners would have the opportunity to experience this kind of interaction and would not discard the sessions without even trying them once.
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The objective of the present Action Research intervention was to address the potential of implementing reinforcement sessions that are not held face-to-face but in a virtual environment. Such sessions took place after school. The schedule was the second major change in the way students, within the specific community of the study, were used to receiving additional support. Those students who decided to take part in the project, easily understood the use of the web conferencing tool Adobe® Connect™ apparently thanks to their familiarity with the use of technology and the Internet. Even though attendance was not as high as originally expected, there were some participants who showed commitment and interest in reviewing class content from home.

I found that those students who showed commitment were particularly appealed by the inclusion of visual materials that could be accessed asynchronously; this is, even after the session had ended. Producing this material required a certain level of commitment from the presenter, as it proved to be time consuming. Teachers, who might be interested in holding similar sessions, need to be aware of the time investment online work represents. One of the most salient findings of the study was the importance that students granted to working in collaboration with others by observing and correcting each other’s mistakes. I was pleasantly surprised by their comments and enthusiasm.

The study suggests that learners who participated in after school sessions perceived the work done on Adobe® Connect™ sessions as meaningful and beneficial. I believe the quality of the sessions can be improved if more importance is given to communicative tasks, rather than to the sub skills grammar and vocabulary. Adobe® Connect™ is a very comprehensive platform that makes a wide range of tools available for web conferencing, yet several of them remained unexploited. Had the implementation period been longer, I would have attempted to use those tools. For
instance, having participants share their own screens and content could have awarded learners with more independence and attainability.

Although participants of the sessions claimed to have perceived that a web conferencing platform such as Adobe® Connect™ helped them review contents, correct mistakes and improve their unit quiz grades, further research is needed to investigate the possible influence of after school reinforcement sessions using a web conferencing tool in students’ performance in graded tasks. It is important to keep in mind that the findings presented here represent a relatively small population, which was constituted by nearly one half of the target population sample. I believe that more teacher encouragement could have led to a greater attendance and engagement from participants. However, a second group taking the initiative in requesting sessions seemed to open a new window of opportunity in implementing this type of solution.

Doing this study has been rewarding as it has allowed me to increase my understanding of students’ perceptions of their own performance and interaction with others, even though it was not the original purpose of my Action Research project.

I hope the present project provides other teachers with ideas they can use in aiding their students become more confident and ultimately succeed academically.
REFERENCES


Appendix A- First survey format

Answer the questions.

1. Do you have Internet connection at home? YES NO
2. Do you own a PC, laptop, or tablet? YES NO
3. If yes, does it have a microphone and webcam? YES NO
4. Do you work on the online platform at home? YES NO
5. Do you work on the (Cambridge LMS) platform in the afternoon or night? YES NO

Around what time? ____________________

6. If you had extra help, do you think it would be beneficial? ________________________________

7. Sometimes I get distracted in English class YES NO
8. I sometimes use my cellphone, laptop or tablet while in class YES NO
9. I feel I could pay more attention in English class YES NO
10. I tend to skip English class YES NO
11. My previous experience with the language has been positive YES NO
12. I feel capable of passing the course YES NO

Thanks 😊
Appendix B- Second survey format

1. En este momento me siento capaz de aprobar el curso  
   Si  No

2. Pude acceder a las sesiones de ayuda extra
   sin problemas  
   Si  No

3. Las sesiones me ayudan a lograr un mejor
   entendimiento de los temas  
   Si  No

4. Me siento más seguro para participar en clase
   después de entrar a una sesión  
   Si  No

5. Las sesiones me ayudaron a recuperar el contenido
   de clases a las que falté  
   Si  No

6. Me concentro mejor cuando trabajo en:
   las sesiones  clase

7. Entendí más en:
   las sesiones  clase

8. Aprendí de los errores de mis compañeros
   durante la sesión  
   Si  No

9. El material presentado fue adecuado  
   Si  No

10. Las presentaciones fueron atractivas  
    Si  No

11. El profesor aclaró mis dudas  
    Si  No

12. La herramienta me permitió interactuar de
    diferentes formas  
    Si  No

13. Mi tipo de interacción preferida fue:
    Chat  Micrófono  Notas

Gracias 😊
Appendix C- Interview questions

1. ¿Estabas al tanto de las sesiones de asesoría extra?
2. ¿Sabes en qué horario se realizaban?
3. ¿Tuviste conflictos de horario?
4. ¿Qué ocurrió en una sesión?
5. ¿Te gusto el tipo de interacción que se dio en las sesiones?
6. ¿Qué fue lo que más te agradó de las sesiones?
7. ¿Dirías que las sesiones tuvieron un efecto en tu desempeño en los quizzes?
8. ¿Las sesiones te permitieron participar y obtener retroalimentación?
9. ¿El professor aclaró tus dudas?
10. ¿Corrigió mis errores?
11. ¿Descargabas el material disponible a tu computadora?
12. ¿Lo respondías?
13. ¿Utilizabas el material posteriormente?
Appendix D- Screen capture samples

Adriana Viera: picina

Adriana Viera: D: i dont no!

Anahí: the pool is large

Guadalupe: is big pool

Gabriela: the water this very blue
PROVIDING AFTER-SCHOOL ASSISTANCE USING THE WEB CONFERENCING TOOL ADOBE® CONNECT™

Simple Present

I, You, We, They, Plural  :) + V + ( )
He, She, It, Singular    :) + V s+ ( )

1.......early every morning.
My mom ________ breakfast with her friends.

Download the Word file and go to exercise 1.

Multiple Attendees are typing...
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1. DO you get up early on Sundays?
2. Who do you HAVE lunch with?
3. Where DOES your mom work?
4. DOES your best friend study with you?

DO/DOES --> Yes/No
Where --> Place
Who --> Person
What --> Activity
When --> Moment
How often --> Frequency
How much? 1 --> Price
How many?
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c. Who do you need to ask permission to do something?
d. What do you have to do at home?

e. When do you like to go to the movies?
f. How much money do you like to spend on shoes?
g. What do you like to wear to school?
h. What do you have to do today?
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Last night...

Simple past is used to talk about past experiences.

e.g. Last night, I went to the movies. Last night, I had cereal for dinner.

Common time expressions:

elenitaa: hello

miguel poblete: i m go slee?

elenitaa: i slept in my home

miguel poblete is typing...
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