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An Analysis of the Implementation of a Virtual Learning Environment to Enhance Motivation
in Sixth-Grade Students Regarding Writing Simple Sentences (Subject + Verb +
Complement)

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An Analysis of the Implementation of a Virtual Learning Environment to Enhance Motivation in Sixth-Grade Students Regarding Writing Simple Sentences (Subject + Verb + Complement)

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Abstract

This essay proposes the implementation of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) with the purpose of increasing the motivation when writing complete sentences in sixth-graders of the San Pedro de Cutris elementary school in San Carlos. As an English teacher, engaging students when writing in English can become a challenge considering the students' language level and the current educational situation in our country. The VLE created is based on the first unit theme of sixth grade from the English program established by our Ministry of Public Education which allows teachers to complement their planning. Besides, it includes attractive characters as superheroes that supervise the grammatical rules in simple sentences which guides students in an exciting journey. Overall, this paper demonstrates the usefulness of the VLE by analyzing the data collected from the students who participated in the application and their outcomes regarding motivation when writing complete sentences.

Keywords: English teaching, motivation, Virtual Learning Environment, writing skills

Resumen

Este ensayo propone la implementación de un Entorno Virtual de Aprendizaje (EVA) con el propósito de aumentar la motivación en estudiantes de sexto grado de la escuela primaria San Pedro de Cutris en San Carlos cuando se escriben oraciones completas. Como docente de inglés, involucrar a los estudiantes en la escritura en inglés puede convertirse en un desafío considerando el nivel lingüístico de los estudiantes y la situación educativa actual en nuestro país. El EVA creado se basa en el tema de la primera unidad del sexto grado del programa de inglés establecido por el Ministerio de Educación Pública, lo que permite a los maestros complementar su planificación. Además, incluye personajes atractivos como superhéroes que supervisan las reglas gramaticales en oraciones simples, guiando a los estudiantes en un emocionante viaje. En general, este documento demuestra la utilidad del EVA mediante el análisis de los datos recopilados de los estudiantes que participaron en su aplicación y detalla los resultados obtenidos en cuanto a la motivación para escribir oraciones completas por parte de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza del inglés, entornos virtuales de aprendizaje, habilidades de escritura, motivación

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Introduction

Using technology in class has increased radically in today's educational landscape. However, there are still contexts where technology and Internet access are not yet available. Indeed, San Pedro de Cutris school is an institution that has made efforts to improve Internet access, and finally, this year some improvements were made to provide better access to the World Wide Web in the classroom.

The school is located in Cutris, San Carlos, Costa Rica; there is only one group of students per grade. For the purpose of this study, the focus was on sixth grade. This group is formed by nine students; five of them are boys and four are girls. Moreover, San Pedro de Cutris school is a small institution located in a rural community. In fact, the majority of families work as farmers in pineapple fields with minimum wages, resulting in limited financial resources for non-essentials such as an Internet connection or technological devices at home. Indeed, most families have one smartphone that works with limited Internet access. Besides the deficient technological connectivity, the sixth grade group was also facing a challenge when writing complete sentences following the structure subject + verb + complement. Thus, the primary goal of this project was to inspire students' motivation through the implementation of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to improve their proficiency in forming complete sentences.

According to the Ministry of Public Education (MEP), in Costa Rica, the use of technology in class is essential to empower students to adapt to the digital world and become a global citizen (Ministerio de Educación Pública, 2016). This concept works as a framework to include a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to learn English in public schools. In fact, Jong and Tan (2021) affirmed that the use of technology to teach and learn how to write facilitates the process and "improve[s] their [the students'] vocabulary knowledge and promote meaningful learning" (p. 414). Stated differently, by integrating technology in the pedagogical process of writing, students may engage in more enjoyable interactive activities.

Furthermore, the insights about the implementation of the VLE were recorded

through the strategy for systematizing educational experiences, which Messina and Osorio (2016, as cited in Sapién et al., 2023) defined as “a form of research of a qualitative nature that provides spaces for teachers to be the systematizers of their own practice and reporters of their own experience” (p. 7). In other words, teachers can critically reflect on their own praxis by analyzing and organizing their experiences in the class. Undoubtedly, this is the main reason why I include a systematization to examine the use of the VLE in English class and its impact regarding students’ motivation to learn writing, so I can improve my teaching praxis.

Developing the Writing Skill in Primary School

Teaching writing skills has become a need in the current society since jobs are requiring competent people to write emails or text messages and fluently communicate with other English speakers. These reasons are the ones that bring importance to improve writing skills, and it is necessary to explain them to our students so they can be aware and increase their intrinsic motivation.

On the other hand, Moses and Mohamad (2019) mentioned a number of difficulties that students and teachers face when teaching and learning the writing skill. Indeed, the authors indicated that students may experience a series of challenges: “lack of vocabulary, poor grammar, poor spelling, students’ readiness and lack of exposure to books and reading materials” (p. 3386). This data show aspects that teachers should pay attention to when teaching writing in order to scaffold students’ learning. Also, these improvement aspects are usually linked to the institutional guidelines; a clear example in the context where I work is the amount of missed classes and the content reduction of the English program made during pandemic years that caused a lot of delay regarding vocabulary, spelling, and grammar acquisition in students in the English classes.

Additionally, Moses and Mohamad (2019) explained that teachers also face challenges when analyzing how “to motivate their students, [dealing with] students of diverse levels, difficult materials and time constraints to teach the students” (p. 3386). These are

details that must be taken into account when proposing strategies to teach writing. For example, the VLE² proposed and implemented in the sixth grade group motivates students by using an appealing theme which explains grammatical structures through the story of a superhero. Besides, it is recommended to include peer assessment in the activities to integrate the diverse levels in students, so peer motivation can also strengthen motivation.

To continue, writing was invented by humans mainly to communicate thoughts and feelings through time and space. It is undeniable that people's desire to learn and the teaching process should be tuned. As a matter of fact, Genç-Ersoy and Göl-Dede (2022) established in their action research that primary-school-students improve their writing skills easily when they "receive emotional support such as motivation, attitude, self-efficacy, and self-confidence with the learning process" (p. 586). These data demonstrate that motivation must go side by side with the pedagogical strategy when teaching writing skills. However, that also emphasizes that there is a strong component of self-motivation from students that acts as a variable when learning. This is why teachers can provide strategies that clearly indicate the importance of knowing that specific content, so students can relate their life with the practical use of the target language and boost their self-motivation.

Furthermore, Selvaraj and Aziz (2019) presented five theories related to teaching writing skills. The first theory is called the *Cognitive Process Theory of Writing*, and it is described as a "thinking process" in which students "use the mental process such as brainstorming, planning and organizing and it needs creativity" (p. 453). This planning and executing process represents a powerful skill that students must learn in order to write essays; however, it must be gradual and constant. In other words, students must learn step by step from early years in primary school in order to be able to write complete sentences and paragraphs in sixth grade.

The second theory introduced is known as the *Sociocultural Theory of Writing*. This theory established "human learning as a social process and how human intelligence

² Enter this link for interacting with the VLE <https://daniela02ramos.wixsite.com/writing-complete-sen>

originates in society or culture” (Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019, p. 453). Also, it is closely related to what the well-known psychologist Vygotsky, who emphasized on the importance of social interaction; indeed, Selvaraj and Aziz (2019) mentioned that “students need collaboration with peers and scaffolding from the teachers as well as peers” (p. 454), highlighting the need of exchange among students to build knowledge. For instance, the use of peer assessment when writing sentences may motivate students to fill in the exercises and improve their understanding of a complete sentence if a classmate is the one providing feedback.

The third theory described by the authors is the *Social Cognitive Theory and Self-Efficacy in Writing*. Selvaraj and Aziz (2019) explained that there are “3 main elements which are observational learning, imitation and modeling” in this theory and that “self-efficacy refers to writer’s belief in accomplishing a writing task given” (p. 454). These ideas exemplify a clever point of view which is how humans learn; in other words, people usually observe, and then people copy the steps modeled by others in order to learn an ability. Regarding writing, this theory presents clear steps to follow in which the teacher must guide the process by allowing students to observe complete sentences, and imitate how to write when the teacher is modeling the skill, so later on, students can write their own complete sentences. For example, my sixth graders needed to improve their writing skill; consequently, a plan was made following the required steps that included guided exercises to write complete sentences.

Lastly, the *Ecological Theory* is mentioned by the authors. This theory points out that teamwork and flexibility are key components when developing the writing skill. Indeed, this theory proposes that “all the characteristics of any individual writer or piece of writing both determine and are determined by the characteristics of all the other writers and writings in the systems” (Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019, p. 454). In other words, students and written products are guided and assessed by the characteristics of the group, which means that every year, every other group of students will vary the emphasis when producing written products.

The Writing Skill in the MEP English Program

Even though the English programs in Costa Rica describe a perfect path to teach and learn the foreign language at the primary level, there are variables such as time, context, students, and types of schools (multi-grade, rural, indigenous, or urban schools) that challenge teachers. For instance, sixth graders in the San Pedro de Cutris school were not able to write complete sentences, but the program indicates that they should be writing paragraphs. On top of that, children were reluctant to write by expressing that it was boring.

Consequently, it is essential to understand the principles stated in the English program from the Ministry of Public Education (MEP): “After copying, learners will do writing exercises to refine grammar and mechanics. Then they move into guided-writing where they follow a given pattern for expressing personal thoughts and ideas. Next, learners are ready to do free-writing” (2016, p. 47). Therefore, teachers should guide students depending on their level and provide strategies that boost their motivation, so eventually they can write on their own. This sequence was taken into account when proposing a proper VLE for the needs of my students in this rural school in San Carlos, by including basic grammar structures for complete sentences, and guided writing exercises.

Nevertheless, the program expects students to achieve an A2 level in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in sixth grade as a basic user of the language. Indeed, MEP indicated that a student “can use some simple structures accurately but continues to systematically exhibit basic errors (such as verb tenses, use of prepositions, articles)” (2016, p. 10). However, my sixth graders are still improving their writing skill clearly demonstrating an A1 in the CEFR, as MEP’s English program describes: “can show limited ability to use grammatical structures (e.g., punctuation, capitalization, and sentence patterns)” (2016, p. 7). This gap of knowledge can lead to many questions, such as why? What happened in the process? but most importantly, what do I need to do to scaffold my students’ knowledge?

Moreover, the English program in Costa Rica also invites teachers to motivate students to keep writing by congratulating their effort or displaying their work in class. Also,

the document stated that it is mandatory to appraise the process of writing more than the final products (Ministerio de Educación Pública, 2016). In other words, it is rewarding to foster a calm and supporting environment in class so that students can feel motivated by the process of writing and not the final outcome. This approach celebrates effort and enhances motivation and confidence in students.

On the other hand, the English program proposes sixth units about different contents. This analysis was carried out based on unit 1. This first unit in sixth grade of primary school has the scenario about “Costa Rican Heroes,” including themes such as “National Heroes and Famous People, Superheroes, World Famous People, My Hero is the Best, and I Can Be a Hero” (2016, p. 147). Also, this unit includes as writing goals the following indicators: “W.1. provide descriptions of different types of heroes [and] W.2. describe various aspects of life and achievements of different types of heroes. Can include concrete details such as what, where, and when”. Besides, as part of the grammar and sentence frame, the English program indicates the use of “simple present tense and personal subject pronouns (SVC)” (2016, p. 148). Taking into account this background stipulated in MEP’s English program, teachers must scaffold the target knowledge according to the students’ skills. In my case, even though the main goal was to describe heroes, my students were not able to write a complete simple sentence. This is the reason why the VLE was part of a remedial plan regarding writing sentences.

The Use of Virtual Learning Environments to Enhance Motivation Regarding Writing Skills

Enhancing motivation in the classroom is not an easy task for the teachers that dare to give it the significance that it should have. Indeed, teachers may be creative to include a diverse range of materials to engage students in class, for example, the use of technology in class. Certainly, using technology to motivate students brings advantages and difficulties to the teacher and students; consequently, the use of VLE as well offers benefits and challenges, too.

To begin with, there are several benefits of using technology in class to enhance motivation. Carstens et al. (2021) reported that participants in a research showed “more interest in learning when it involves technology” (p. 108). Even though this investigation was regarding math centers, the researchers proved that technology was “used by students for projects and creations, collaboration with peers or adults, reading, and other applications to enhance learning” (Carstens et al., 2021, p. 108). In other words, the use of technology intrigues students to build knowledge in class. Also, this feeling of amusement when the English teacher brings to class something unusual helps to build motivation toward the class and strengthens the teacher-student relationship which is vital since as humans we tend to pay attention to people that we value or care about.

Moreover, Kristóf and Tóth (2019) presented the idea that “when learning in the virtual space, the possibility of having comfort and fun and sharing the experience is significant” (p. 514). This thought supports the importance of including a VLE in class that motivates students by creating remarkable memories as a group (teacher and students), which validates the relationship previously mentioned and provides a horizontal exchange of knowledge, avoiding empowering teachers with the absolute truth. Indeed, the authors mentioned the relevance of creating “effective educational programs and web interfaces” (Kristóf & Tóth, 2019, p. 514). This open market for teachers to create virtual materials to promote motivation and achieve language goals is an opportunity that only a few teachers accept. An excellent example was the creation of VLE to motivate students to improve their writing skill in English.

Furthermore, Carstens et al. (2021) explicitly indicated that “technology is how kids learn in the world today and it is what they feel most comfortable using” (p. 109). This is a fact that teachers nowadays must embrace by being willing to update and invest time in a teacher training process that may never end. For instance, by learning how new apps work, teachers can provide examples on how to use the language in a real-life situation, which will motivate students to learn. Also, nowadays, it is critical for teachers to learn about the students’ interest in technology, not to compete for the kid’s attention, but to lead learners to

the joyful feeling of loving to learn and discover new aspects of life.

Another benefit of learning through the use of technology is presented by Caprara and Caprara (2021), who stated that the use of a VLE in class in synchronous sessions positively impacted the engagement of the learners in the subject besides the key role of peer interactions in the classroom. In fact, motivation through the use of technology can also influence the interactions among students, which can be emphasized by teachers by adding some simple and quick peer assessments, such as exchanging notebooks to check the classmates' work. This short activity may empower students and create a peaceful environment in which learners tolerate others' opinions and respect others' belongings. On the other hand, a VLE that includes peer activities challenges students to give their best and help others understand the content.

Even though this cannot be possible without the teachers' commitment to creating and applying technological strategies in class, which is supported by Nurhayati et al. (2023), who affirmed that the products teachers create such as videos are vital to the teaching and learning process; certainly, teachers are the experts of the needs of their students, and who could possibly create more suitable material than ourselves? Indeed, Caprara and Caprara (2021) determined in their research "that authentic, high quality VLEs are ones that have as their primary focus the communication between students and their teachers and between students and their peers" (p. 3690). This affirms that contextualizing through the use of a VLE is a powerful experience for teachers and learners since both are complementing the process from their participation.

Subsequently, every benefit from using technology sounds amazing, and when reading about it, it boosts our motivation as teachers, but we must be direct and realistic: technology can also bring some challenges. For example, time management in the class. Carstens et al. (2021) mentioned that time can be a negative aspect when teachers want to "use technology accurately and efficiently" (p. 109). It means that teachers must be concrete on how technology is scaffolding the students' knowledge regarding the target language in the best way, not only playing online games that somehow use English instructions but

online sites that strongly propose activities to achieve a language goal.

Moreover, time can restrain teachers' agenda for activities considering aspects such as electricity and basic computer knowledge. For instance, if students live in a context in which technology is not that accessible, learning how to turn on a laptop, how and when to connect it if the battery is low, how to type and use the touchpad to click, or how to log in a website requires time to learn and set. Also, establishing clear rules on how to use technology in class takes time, and teachers must schedule it before applying a VLE.

On the other hand, the challenge regarding time also refers to the time that designing, creating, and testing the VLE requires from teachers. This opportunity to grow as professionals is probably going to take time from our personal lives with our family and friends, which may represent a negative aspect for some teachers' health.

Also, a key challenge when motivating teachers and students to use technology in class is accessibility. Actually, Caprara and Caprara (2021) stated that "most schools are not equipped to create VLEs where students can thrive" (p. 3721), which limits teachers and students' motivation. For example, it is a fact that in public schools political statements have changed the use of technology. The closure of contracts with Fundación Omar Dengo³ that provided Internet access and laptops to schools in rural areas impacted directly on the teachers and students' motivation. Public education needs a critical intervention regarding the use of technological equipment to enhance appropriate learning in this technological era.

Lastly, one of the most important challenges regarding the use of technology in classes is the speed at which students can access information. Indeed, Carstens et al. (2021) explained that "there's also so much information that is incorrect or not appropriate for school. This could make it difficult for teachers to monitor" (p. 110). Consequently, teachers must guide students to identify proper websites with reliable information to include in the projects. Learning to differentiate fake from true is a skill that takes time to develop,

³ Fundación Omar Dengo was a nonprofit organization that supplied technological equipment for public schools in Costa Rica. The current Minister of Education decided to end the employment agreement on May 6th, 2023 due to apparent poor results and lack of controls (Cordero, 2023).

and if teachers are in charge of large groups, it can be even more difficult to monitor during a lesson, which may frustrate teachers.

Virtual Learning Environment: Graphy against Fragment

A virtual learning environment should consider several aspects to be created and implemented. For instance, it requires a proper design including choosing color, characters, font and format that matches with the target audience and learning goal. In other words, the choice of color must be attractive to children, but not distracting. As Amarin and Al-Saleh (2020) stated, “too much color, motion, or pattern functions as distractors making this process of visual search more difficult” (p. 47). Teachers must consider that visual input for children must lead them to interpret the VLE as something pleasant and fun; otherwise, motivation to learn will not be achieved. Even so, the VLE must maintain a balance between fun and focus.

Also, research has shown that feelings can be inspired by color. In relation to the designing of a VLE, feelings can strongly affect students’ learning process by motivating them to invest their attention in the content and create meaningful memories about the topic being studied. Amarin and Al-Saleh (2020) affirmed that “learners’ feelings about their learning tasks can be positively or negatively influenced by the introduction of color in the learning environment” (p. 47), which supports the importance of colors in the VLE. Moreover, they also explained that “it has been proven that light colors such as yellow and blue elicit positive, lively and energetic feelings” (p. 47). Consequently, in the designing process of the VLE, a light sky blue and yellow were selected for the background color with the objective of inspiring positivity and energy to learn to the students.

Moreover, another key aspect when designing a VLE are the characters that guide students in the learning process, and, of course, the story behind those characters. Fatimah et al. (2019) explained in their study of creating comic strips to enhance writing that “literature can also be used to facilitate the students enhancing their language skill” (p. 107). It is also relevant to add that characters and their stories provide a sense of belonging to the

VLE, which invites students to be and feel an active part of the learning process. In this case, learners trained along with the superhero called Graphy in order to defeat Fragment, the villain. This topic was inspired by the first unit of MEP's English program about superheroes; thus, the main character resembles a pencil which is used for writing, and the villain is called Fragment, which is an evil pencil that makes students write fragments and not complete sentences.

Furthermore, the script of this short story is based on five challenges that Graphy and the students must complete to defeat Fragment. The first challenge is called "The Beginning". In this challenge, the students meet the main characters of the VLE, and they also reflect on the importance of writing complete sentences by including real life situations, for instance, writing a WhatsApp message to a special person, considering how relevant friendship is in this pre-teen life stage of the students. The second challenge is called "The training"; thinking of the script of a comic with superheroes, they need to train their powers to defeat the villain, so in this case, Graphy reviews some grammatical rules about writing complete sentences including videos and online games. As any other opponent, Fragment attacks at the end of every rule by deleting the spaces or stealing all the ending marks, which encourages students to participate in the activities and recover all the grammatical aspects. The third challenge is called "The Search", in which students are presented with the parts of the sentence and they interact with videos, online games, and also with a worksheet that includes the identification of the parts of the sentence and their corresponding order. The name of this challenge comes from the students' mission of finding Fragment's attacks to stop him. The fourth challenge is called "The Battle" since students are about to face Fragment for the first time by writing sentences by themselves with some pictures as guidance. Finally, the participants use a small checklist to assess their classmates' sentences and to be sure that Fragment has not attacked any sentence. Lastly, the fifth challenge is called "The Last Battle" since students write sentences on their own using the same chart to self-assess their writing and later on to provide peer feedback to their classmates. This script allows teachers to reference the characters when providing feedback

to students, so the entire writing class is immersed in the discourse of the story started by the VLE.

A further aspect of relevance when creating a VLE is to incorporate diverse activities that provide opportunities to the different learning styles in the class. Indeed, there are educational resources that do not include audio in their instructions, limiting the possibility for students with some sort of disability to learn properly (Becerra et al., 2021). In this case, the VLE of Graphy against Fragment deliberately includes audios recorded by the teacher for all the instructions and events that happen in the story of the superhero. Also, these recordings allow students to follow their own learning pace since in the virtual setting students can go back and listen again, re-read, re-try, or re-watch the activity all the times required (Becerra et al., 2021), which promotes autonomy and respect for the different students.

Lastly, a VLE that is created for a target population must consider specific characteristics of the students. In fact, Real (2021) affirmed that “the DTMs [Digital Teaching Materials] should not only contain digital resources, but the ways in which they are contextualized for a specific educational use should be considered, contemplating their function and adaptability in larger units” (p. 77). In this matter, the VLE of Graphy included some peer assessments in which students were able to exchange their sentences and help their classmates by providing feedback. This contextualization was made due to the lack of Internet access of students at home, so the VLE was used in class. This provided students with the opportunity to participate and learn with technology, which as mentioned earlier, motivates their learning process.

Systematization of Experiences as a Methodological Approach

The use of systematization of experiences as a methodological approach was decided due to the relevance of self-reflection in the teaching process. Indeed, Sapién et al. (2023) said that this self-analysis is carried out by “retrospectively observing what has been done in order to identify successes and opportunities for change” (p. 3). As a result, when analyzing the use of a VLE in a sixth grade class, there are chances to document the

outcomes for future teaching interventions using a VLE.

Moreover, Sapién et al. (2023) mentioned that "the strategy for systematizing educational experiences in teaching practice consists of four stages" (p. 21). These stages were described as planification, putting into practice, evaluation, and analysis (Sapién *et al.*, 2023, p.22). With regard to the Graphy against Fragment VLE, the planning began when designing it by carefully choosing the colors, characters, structure, and content. Later on, when put into practice, the VLE was used in the sixth-grade class in San Pedro de Cutris School throughout two weeks since the learners have five lessons per week scheduled on Mondays and Thursdays. This VLE was applied in a face-to-face class since the population does not have the possibility of accessing a computer or Internet at home. Even though the VLE can be used for virtual or asynchronous classes, it was also suitable for the students in San Pedro de Cutris School. Then, the evaluation was done with the help of a questionnaire including seven questions, in which the students' experiences were compared with some observation notes taken by the teacher after each class. Lastly, the analysis was made with the collected information.

As a further matter, Rodríguez (2019) mentioned that to apply a systematization of strategies in education, there should be some characteristics from the teacher such as ability to interpret the data from the experience with great interest and motivation, to analyze the strategies carried out in class in order to strengthen them and to improve the pedagogical results by sharing the results with coworkers, so many other teachers and students can be benefited with the experience.

Results

After applying the VLE in class, data were gathered and analyzed through the use of a questionnaire of six questions. This questionnaire was completed by my students in Spanish to avoid miscommunication due to their low level of English and because the data collected were intended to be based on their opinions and their experiences with the VLE. Therefore, the results for each question are explained in the following paragraphs.

The first question was regarding their interest in learning to write in English with a character like Graphy. All nine students strongly agreed with this statement and some of the comments were: *Graphy encourages us with its games. It helps us to understand the rules to follow when writing sentences. It is fun to learn with Graphy.* As observed in question one, all students enjoyed learning with the characters designed for the VLE.

The second question affirmed the importance of writing complete sentences in our lives. The entire class strongly agreed on this relevance and their reasons can be summarized in two statements: *It is important because people can understand me. It is important so the teacher can understand what is written.* In this question, it can be seen that the purpose established in the VLE was learned by students since one of the explanations given by Graphy in the virtual material was to be able to communicate ideas through text messages or emails. Also, the influence of the teacher can be demonstrated when one participant mentioned the importance of being comprehended by the teacher.

The third question asked if the students were able to finish the activities in the VLE. Nine students strongly agreed on finishing the games, which makes a clear statement of how engaging the VLE was in their learning process. Some of the comments that the participants included were: *I finished because I want to learn. I participated because I wanted to defeat Fragment. I finished the challenges because they were fun. I finished because I want to learn English.* All these comments reflect the positive aspects of learning with a VLE in class.

The fourth question asked about the outcomes obtained by the students. Eight students strongly agreed with the statement "I can write complete sentences in English". On the other hand, one student said s/he disagreed. These demonstrated that in all classes, some students achieve the learning goal faster than others and that self- evaluation can be difficult for some children.

The fifth question requested information about the feelings students experienced when learning to write with Graphy. Two students expressed that they felt good when learning with Graphy. One student said s/he felt fun and uncomfortable when s/he lost a game. Six

students mentioned feeling happy because Graphy taught them to write, and excited to participate in the challenges; also, one of these students wrote: *I felt happy and mad with Fragment*. These emotions are valid, and they are examples of how students react toward the same activity in different ways.

The sixth question asked students what aspects they would improve in the VLE. Some of the questions were repeated, and some students stated that they would not change a thing; thus, some others wrote about including more videos, more challenges, more characters, and stories; some students even wrote to have other VLE about other topics to learn. These valuable suggestions are key to understanding the activities that they enjoyed the most and how relevant was the VLE so they asked to use the same technology for other contents.

Lastly, the final question inquired about the aspects that students dislike about the VLE. All students included in their answers that they liked everything, especially the games and videos because the material was fun and useful to learn English. As it can be seen, all of the students enjoyed the use of the VLE and there was nothing that made them feel uncomfortable. Indeed, it is relevant that students did not complain about writing in the target language as something they dislike, which means that the VLE is successful in achieving the learning goal.

The next instrument used to collect data was a teacher's diary in which ideas of improvement and some strengths of the VLE were written after the class. First of all, the time was an interesting aspect to consider, since students needed time to connect the four laptops available. In the first class, they needed a lot of help accessing the site; later on, they faced challenges like clicking and dragging objects with the mouse pad and turning the volume up or down. Also, some students required more guidance than others when developing the challenges/activities of the VLE, which affected the time stipulated to finish the content. At the end, students required about 8 lessons of 40 minutes each to finish VLE.

Moreover, something remarkable was that having students work in groups allowed them to experience peer feedback; indeed, they seemed to enjoy the games a little more

when having a classmate nearby. A fun component was playing the audios recorded by the teacher because they recognized the voice and were intrigued about how that was possible. However, the use of audios was not only positive experiences since there were classes in which students had to step outside the classroom due to the noise because all groups were in different challenges listening to different audios, videos, or games. Lastly, all the sentences written by the students were checked by the teacher and written in their English notebooks which facilitates the assessment stage of the pedagogical process and allows teachers to record the improvement of each student.

Conclusions

The creation and application of a VLE is not easy, but it is totally worth it. At the end of this process, I can conclude three main points. The first one is that students can achieve surprising goals if they are motivated. The VLE allows students to have fun while learning and its attractive characteristics encourage children to face the challenges of writing in the target language. Even though sometimes thinking about what and how to write can be boring and demanding for people, including different activities such as online games, videos, worksheets, self-assessments, and peer assessments adds diversity to the English lessons and helps students achieve the learning goals.

The second point is that designing, creating, and applying the VLE takes a lot of time. Teachers must be meticulous in their selection of the script, the characters, the learning goals, the colors, and every detail in the VLE. Also, this process requires hours of work before, during, and after the application since teachers have to analyze the content of the VLE, create it, apply it in class, and at the end, adapt the VLE with the feedback from the participants. This entire procedure can represent a setback for some teachers, but I can assure that the results are fulfilling.

Lastly, the third conclusion is related to the students' achievement of the learning goal. After applying the VLE, all the students in the group were able to write complete sentences; even though a few children still had difficulties with vocabulary or with the use of

ending marks, they all recognized the basic grammatical structures of a sentence. This fact brought the end of a successful application of technology in class that was adapted to the requirements of the Ministry of Education regarding English classes and to the needs of the sixth-grade students.

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DECLARACIÓN JURADA

Yo, Daniela María Ramos Azofeifa, cédula de identidad 402160997, estudiante de la Universidad Nacional, declaro bajo fe de juramento y consciente de la responsabilidades penales de este acto, que soy autor intelectual del Trabajo Final de Graduación Titulado "**An Analysis of the Implementation of a Virtual Learning Environment to Enhance Motivation in Sixth-Grade Students Regarding Writing Simple Sentences (Subject + Verb + Complement)**", para optar por el grado de Maestría en Educación con énfasis en el Aprendizaje del Inglés.

Heredia, a los 21 días del mes de agosto del año 2024.



Daniela María Ramos Azofeifa
Ced. 402160997

Refrendo

Los abajo firmantes avalamos el Trabajo de Graduación de la estudiante Daniela Ramos Azofeifa, cédula 402160997, que lleva como título **An Analysis of the Implementation of a Virtual Learning Environment to Enhance Motivation in Sixth-Grade Students Regarding Writing Simple Sentences (Subject + Verb + Complement)**, dado que cumple con las disposiciones vigentes y la calidad académica requerida por el posgrado.

JUAN PABLO ZÚÑIGA VARGAS (FIRMA)
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Esta es una representación gráfica únicamente,
verifique la validez de la firma.

Juan Pablo Zúñiga Vargas
Profesor Tutor
Maestría en Educación

Firmado por RITA MARIA ARGUEDAS VIQUEZ (FIRMA)
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