THE IMPACT OF THE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN THE FIELD OF STUDYING AND MANAGING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
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Abstract: *no doubt may be cast on the fact that globalization, together with the development and fast spread of the new information and communication technologies have caused significant social, economic and educational changes all over the world. The impact of the digital wave has influenced a fully integral part of our lives integrating the digital technologies to our routines at high speed.*
Keywords: *digital wave, multimedia, blog, process, digital technology, integration, graphics.*

Nowadays, our students are harnessing the new technologies and thus they learn in a new manner: they create knowledge rather than memorize and repeat content. Within this new digital environment, we, teachers, must provide our students with lessons where the outside world of emerging technologies is bridged to the classroom and act as guides. Learners should feel that they can have an online identity in networking spaces in order to increase opportunities for learning, to foster collaboration, motivation and knowledge-sharing.

The aim of this paper is to describe an experience using different ICTs in an ESP class that paved the way for the creation of an educational blog with a variety of multimedia materials, and to analyze the advantages and drawbacks of using these tools in this particular context. In the field of education, the introduction of the ICTs has brought about a paradigm shift in the teaching learning process. Background information The experience was carried out with a small group of adult students who work as administrative or technical staff at the School of Astronomical and Geophysical Sciences belonging to the 104 National University of La Plata, Argentina. They all shared the same mother tongue and English level .The course lasted four months with two-hour classes being delivered once a week. The material used included a selection of units from New English File Elementary as well as some additional online material. Therefore, at the beginning of the course students were informed that no final exam would be administered. The ongoing assessment would be based on the different tasks learners would have to perform, some of which would incorporate the use of ICTs, and they were also told that, by the end of the course, a blog would be created and they would have to post one of the texts (oral and/or written) they had created dealing with some of the topics covered in the course (personal information, description of places, historical events).

Permanent oral and/or written feedback was given to students during the course. This was possible because there were only 10 students. ICTs used in the English class as stated, one of the goals set for this course was the creation of an educational blog in which learners could present their works.

Therefore, the first step to introduce the new technologies in the classroom was to show students examples of blogs so that they became familiar with their use and characteristics. In this way, the students could see posts similar to the ones they would have to produce, analyze content, form and discuss what themes and topics could be imitated for their own presentations. In this activity, the students were capable to see in advance that when a person posts something, the message gains a highly meaningful communicative effect.

Other students respond to the posts and links to other posts may also be created, the so-called threads. We will now provide a brief theoretical background that supports the implementation of these WEB 3.0 tools and describe how we used them in the course. Google Docs This service works as a document editor that allows learners to work individually or collaboratively. One of its valuable characteristics is that both the teacher and the students keep track of the changes introduced in a text, a feature that was well in keeping with our interest in assessment for learning. As most of the students in our course already had a gmail account and the editor is quite simple to use, we thought this could be an appropriate instrument to introduce collaborative work.

The learners worked with this tool both individually, sharing the document only with the teacher, and in pairs to write texts containing personal information (introductions, hobbies, the family, job, etc.), letters and short narratives. Therefore, the works written by the students were not marked immediately; instead, mistakes were highlighted and comments were made to help students identify the kind of error; for example, tense, punctuation, verb, etc. If the solution to the mistake made was beyond the proficiency level of the learners, a complete version of how to express the intended idea was provided by the teacher and, if necessary, explained orally in class. It was then when the electronic and digital portfolios appeared. According to Barrett, an electronic portfolio is defined as 105 the compilation of portfolio items stored in electronic formats such as audio-visual, graphical, or text. Pearl and Leon Paulson created a metaphor for portfolios as a tool to construct meaning and they stated that the portfolio is a laboratory where students can construct meaning from their accumulated experience. The fast increase in the use of ICTs has most evidently had a tremendous impact on the way teaching and learning take place. The implementation of such technologies in and outside the classroom has fostered the organization of

educational environments where students are encouraged to become not only more independent but also more responsible for their learning processes, thus contributing to learner autonomy, as Benson [1, s. 24] points out.

References

1. *Benson P.* (2001). Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.