UNIVERSIDADE DE CAXIAS DO SUL

ÁREA DE HUMANIDADES

CURSO DE LETRAS-INGLÊS

JÉSSICA DALLEGRAVE DA SILVA

ADAPTING ENGLISH CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TO ONLINE CLASSES:

DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS

CAXIAS DO SUL

2020

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DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS

Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso apresentado como requisito para obtenção do título do de Licenciada em Letras-Inglês à Universidade de Caxias do Sul.

Orientadora: Profª. Ma. Samira Dall Agnol.

CAXIAS DO SUL

2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank God. Without Him, I could not have achieved my goals. Also, I thank all my family for their support, but especially to my parents, Maria and Sirino, who are the two most important people in my life. Without their support and contribution, I would never have completed this stage of my life. I have no words to demonstrate all my gratitude for them.

I am extremely grateful to the friendships I made during these years of graduation and I could not fail to mention them here: Alvaro, Nathália, Susana, Igor, Marcos, Eduarda, Bruna and Thalia, thank you for everything!

I would like to thank my friend and teacher Suelen Hahn for all the help and support.

I also have to thank all the professors that I had during these five years at the university and especially the professor Samira Dall Agnol who has guided me during this final paper process. I am immensely grateful for your help, which was essential for the development of this work. I am certain that you will inspire my professional career.

I thank you all, for everything!

ABSTRACT

Due to the new Coronavirus pandemic, several sectors had to rearrange their activities, and in the area of education, it was no different. The teachers have been reinventing themselves, since the presential classes have been suspended and, in order to continue the school activities, the classes started to be online. This paper aims to analyse how presential English classroom activities can be adapted to online English classes, with a focus on developing students' speaking skills, concerning language schools' classes. It is a fact that for many students speaking skill is the most difficult skill to learn, since they feel uncomfortable when it is necessary to have a conversation. This work also presents *Google Meet* platform, software developed by Google, as a tool to establish synchronous classes, in addition to presenting some language teaching methodologies. The methodology used to perform this work is a bibliographical research in books and articles related to the theme.

KEY WORDS: Online classes; English activities; Speaking skill; Google Meet platform;

RESUMO

Devido à pandemia do novo Corona Vírus, vários setores tiveram que readequar suas atividades e, na área da educação, não foi diferente. Os professores tiveram que se reinventar, uma vez que as aulas presenciais foram suspensas e, para dar continuidade as atividades escolares, as aulas passaram a ser online. Este trabalho almeja analisar como as atividades presenciais de língua inglesa em sala de aula podem ser adaptadas para aulas de inglês online, com o foco no desenvolvimento das habilidades de fala dos alunos, mais especificamente em escolas de idiomas. É fato que para muitos estudantes a habilidade de fala é a mais difícil de se aprender, uma vez que eles se sentem desconfortáveis quando é necessário ter uma conversa. Este trabalho também explora a plataforma *Google Meet*, software desenvolvido pelo Google no qual é possível realizar aulas síncronas, além de apresentar algumas metodologias de ensino de línguas. A metodologia utilizada para a realização deste trabalho é uma pesquisa bibliográfica em livros e artigos relacionados ao tema.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Aulas online; Atividades de inglês; Habilidade de fala; Plataforma do Google Meet;

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

With the advancement of technology and the internet, a new way of relating to people has emerged and, in addition, it has enabled access to information and communication on a scale never seen before. This action is no different when it comes to the educational context. It is now possible to learn and teach the same topic, although at a distance.

Synchronous virtual classes on different platforms are becoming more and more common, since you can learn and teach from your home or anywhere you are. Synchronous communication via video calls provides a spontaneous and interactively beneficial moment. Teachers and students who participate in a synchronous video call class are able to see and hear simultaneously in real time (HACK, 2011). Cruz and Barcia (2000, p. 4) affirm that, regarding all "the technologies used in distance learning, videoconferencing is the closest to the conventional situation of the classroom".

The main motivation to support the present work lies on the unprecedented and quite delicate moment that we are living due to the pandemic of the new Corona Virus (COVID-19). This new disease is highly contagious and before the outbreak started in Wuhan, China, in the end of 2019, this virus was unknown. Therefore, as we have never had contact with this new virus, we do not have immunity against it.

As COVID-19 is highly contagious and there is not a vaccine or medicine created with scientific proof that it works to combat it yet, one of the measures taken around the world, in addition to the use of masks, was social isolation[1], it means that people could only leave home in extreme cases and, only places considered "essential services", such as the market and pharmacy, could open in at that moment. Thus, here in Brazil many companies had to close their doors during this period, resulting in a reduction in workers' salaries and/or in their dismissals.

The area of education has been largely affected. Schools, universities and language schools had to be closed during this period and consequently the on-site

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[1] Available at: https://g1.globo.com/jornal-nacional/noticia/2020/05/11/estudo-calcula-quantas-vidas-o-isolamento-social-esta-salvando-no-brasil.ghtml. Last access: Ago 31st, 2020.

classes were suspended. In view of this situation, distance and online education has become the agenda of the moment and one of the main resources to guarantee the continuity of school activities, since education is essential although the health of students and teachers must always be first.

The focus of this paper is online classes, a format that has been adopted, exceptionally, at this moment, by universities and language schools, in order to continue the presential activities but avoiding the agglomeration and consequently the transmission of the new coronavirus.

Therefore, this work has as its central theme adapting some presential English classroom activities to online English classes to develop students' speaking skills in language schools. The decision on this theme came up against the need for teachers to reinvent themselves and reinvent their classes for this new period that we are currently living. The topic will be approached by answering the following question: *How can presential speaking activities be adapted to online classes to develop students' speaking skills in language schools?*

The Main Objective is analysing how presential English classroom activities can be adapted to online English classes to develop students' speaking skills in language schools. This will be done by following these steps, or Specific Objectives:

1) Discuss about online English teaching to develop students' speaking skills;

2) Present a language teaching methodology to ground the activities to be analysed;

3) Detail a software used as virtual classroom and their teaching possibilities;

4) Describe some strategies to adapt presential activities for online English classes to develop students' speaking skills in language schools.

The adjustment of speaking activities was chosen because for many students this is the most difficult skill to be developed and they feel most uncomfortable when it is necessary to have a conversation. There is a wide range of research that demonstrates this reality when they affirm that activities involving oral skill are the ones that most challenge English language teaching (BYGATE, 1987; TSOU, 2005).

Tsutiya (2013, p.3, our translation) gives as an example: "among the many skills that our students have, participation in activities that involve verbal communication, that is, the action of expressing their ideas orally has represented a great challenge in English language classes"[2].

The methodology guiding this paper is bibliographic research. According to Gil (2002, p. 44, our translation), a bibliographic review is developed based on already published material, constituted mainly of books and scientific articles. Although in almost all studies some type of work of this nature is required, there are researches developed exclusively from bibliographic sources[3].

The researcher needs to be alert to the authors chosen to support the study and ensure that all the information presented are from reliable sources. PRODANOV; FREITAS (2013, p.54, our translation) warn that on bibliographic review, it is important that the researcher verifies the veracity of the sources, observing the possible inconsistencies or contradictions that the work may present [4].

This paper is divided in four chapters. The first one discusses how online English teaching can contribute to develop students' speaking skills. Some advantages as well as how technologies can help in this process are discussed.

In the second chapter, a language teaching methodology is presented to ground the activities that will be analysed in the last chapter. Adopting a methodology is very important because it guides the teacher in the process to reach a certain end or to reach knowledge, with different application methods, since it integrates strategies, techniques and activities aimed at different didactic situations experienced in the classroom so that the student can appropriate knowledge.

The third chapter debates about a software used as a virtual classroom and detail its teaching possibilities. There is a wide range of synchronous and

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[2] In the original: "Dentre as muitas habilidades que os nossos alunos possuem, a participação em atividades que envolvem a comunicação verbal, ou seja, a ação de expressar suas ideias oralmente tem representado um grande desafio nas aulas de Língua Inglesa" (TSUTIYA, 2013, p.3).

[3] In the original: "A pesquisa bibliográfica é desenvolvida com base em material já elaborado, constituído principalmente de livros e artigos científicos. Embora em quase todos os estudos seja exigido algum tipo de trabalho dessa natureza, há pesquisas desenvolvidas exclusivamente a partir de fontes bibliográficas" (GIL, 2002, p.44).

[4] In the original: "Na pesquisa bibliográfica, é importante que o pesquisador verifique a veracidade dos dados obtidos, observando as possíveis incoerências ou contradições que as obras possam apresentar" (PRODANOV; FREITAS, 2013, p.54).

asynchronous platforms that universities and language schools were able to adopt for use in this pandemic period. One of these various possibilities was chosen to be explored in this session.

Finally, in the last chapter of this paper, some strategies are described to adapt presential activities for online English classes to develop students' speaking skills in language schools. In this part, six different types of speaking activities are analysed, one activity for each level of proficiency, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - CEFR[5].

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[5] Available at: https://www.examenglish.com/CEFR/cefr.php Last access: Ago. 31st, 2020.

2. DISCUSSING ABOUT ONLINE ENGLISH TEACHING TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS

Nowadays it is possible, through digital platforms, have access to education in different ways, depending on the methodology adopted. However, it is important to highlight the difference between distance education and online classes, which is the purpose of this paper.

In general terms, distance education is a type of education in which teachers and students are in different places during all or most of the time that they learn and teach (MOORE; KEARSLEY, 2011).

Keegan (1995, p.7) reinforces that:

> distance education and training result from the technological separation of teacher and learner which frees the student from the necessity of travelling to a fixed place (school, college, university) at a fixed time (school timetable, training schedule, lecture programme), to meet a fixed person (teacher, instructor, professor) in order to be trained or educated.

The LDB, in its Art 1º of Decree nº 9.057, of May 25th, 2017, defines distance education as being (our translation):

> The educational modality in which didactic-pedagogical mediation in the teaching and learning processes occurs with the use of information and communication means and technologies, with qualified people, with access policies, with compatible monitoring and evaluation, among others, and develop educational activities by students and education professionals who are in different places and times.[6]

From these definitions, we can conclude that distance education is characterized by being a teaching modality that the student and the teacher are separated by space, so, both are not, physically, in a traditional classroom.

In addition, distance education has teaching methodology and specific materials for this modality, with video lessons previously recorded for all subjects and teaching units and a tutor to answer questions, all on an appropriate platform for the

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[6] In the original: "A modalidade educacional na qual a mediação didático-pedagógica nos processos de ensino e aprendizagem ocorra com a utilização de meios e tecnologias de informação e comunicação, com pessoal qualificado, com políticas de acesso, com acompanhamento e avaliação compatíveis, entre outros, e desenvolva atividades educativas por estudantes e profissionais da educação que estejam em lugares e tempos diversos".

format, the Virtual Learning Environment, space that becomes the students' classroom.

The focus of this paper is online classes, a format that has been adopted, exceptionally, at this moment, by universities and language schools, in order to continue the presential activities but avoiding the agglomeration and consequently the transmission of the new coronavirus.

Online classes, unlike distance education, take place by videoconference, that is, they are synchronous classes with interaction between students and teacher. In addition, classes happen on the usual days and times through synchronous communication platforms.

The speaking skill, among the four skills, should be considered one of the most important, since it is through it that the student will interact socially and verbally with other cultures (UR, 1996; SILVA, 2011; KAYI, 2006). Silva (2011, our translation) considers that:

> speaking is the most used means of communication in the social environment, putting it aside in the learning of a language is a serious sin that leads to serious consequences, such as students' demotivation or even rejection by the discipline.[7]

According to (SILVA, 2019, p.8, our translation):

> teaching the speaking skill in English, as a foreign language (L2), is of fundamental importance for the student, since it is from there that the student begins to develop speaking in a foreign language, which is one of the most important skills to be developed in the scope of communication and is one of the first ones that the student has contact in the classroom[8].

Lima, Souza, Luquetti (2014, p.91, our translation) emphasize that: "in speaking, the student will develop speaking skills and understand not only the use of

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[7] In the original: "A fala é o meio de comunicação mais utilizado no meio social, colocá-la de lado no aprendizado de uma língua é um pecado grave que leva a consequências sérias, como a desmotivação dos alunos ou até mesmo a rejeição pela disciplina.

[8] In the original: "O ensino da habilidade de *speaking* (fala) em língua inglesa, como língua estrangeira (L2), é de fundamental importância para o aluno, pois é a partir daí que este começa a desenvolver a fala em língua estrangeira, que é uma das habilidades mais importantes a ser desenvolvida no âmbito da comunicação e configura-se como uma das primeiras a que o aluno tem contato em sala de aula" (SILVA, 2019, p.8).

grammar in orality, but mainly, linguistic aspects of the language and its own characteristics[9]".

In this sense, synchronous online classes can be very well explored as a great resource for teaching oral production skills (BERTIN; GRAVE; NARCY-COMBES, 2010). Tognato (2001) points out that these interactions must be spontaneous and natural, but they also need to excel for the quality and objectives proposed.

Synchronous environments, whose main characteristic is the interactivity that is generated by the almost presence of students, create a social climate that is conducive to the construction of learning communities that share common goals.

Videoconferencing is an example of a synchronous communication tool because it requires the participation of everyone at the same time, even at a distance. According to Cruz (2010), videoconferencing is a technology that enables communication between people and/or groups through the use of image and sound, and with the help of screens and microphones. The result is that all participants have the feeling of being in the same place, which reduces geographical barriers.

Personal synchronous interactions in a foreign language are essential for the acquisition and development of listening skills and oral production in a foreign language (KORMOS, 2006; LIGHTBOWN; SPADA, 2006), being extremely important as didactic and pedagogical activities for teaching and learning in a foreign language (NUNAN, 1999; WHITE, 2003).

However, Jones (2018) highlights some challenges that teachers, and even students can encounter in this process:

> Probably one of the greatest challenges is making sure everyone is happy with the technical side of the classroom. Things like making sure their audio and video is working, that they can navigate the classroom, know where the chat box is, how to raise their hand etc. It's worth dedicating time at the beginning of a course to make sure everything's working as smoothly as possible.

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[9] In the original: "No *speaking*, o educando desenvolverá a fala e compreenderá não somente o uso da gramática na oralidade, mas principalmente, aspectos linguísticos do idioma e características próprias deste" (LIMA; SOUZA; LUQUETTI, 2014, p.91).

3. LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY TO GROUND THE ACTIVITIES TO BE ANALYSED

The Communicative Approach is a way of teaching based on the principle that learning a language successfully involves communication rather than just memorizing a series of rules. Harmer (2007, p.50) says that this approach has two main guiding principles. About the first principle, the author says that: "language is not just patterns of grammar with vocabulary items slotted in, but also involves language functions such as inviting, agreeing and disagreeing, suggesting which students should learn how to perform using a variety of language exponents". The author also says that students also have to be aware of the proper use of language in different situations (formal, informal, experimental, technical, etc.). "Communicative Approach is not just about the language, in other words, it is about how it is used" (HARMER, 2007, p.50).

The second principle is that "if students get enough exposure to language, and opportunities for language use - and if they are motivated - then language learning will take care of itself" (HARMER, 2007, p.50).

The Communicative Approach argues that the basic unit of language is the communicative act rather than the sentence. The most important is the meaning and not the form. Communicative competence is the objective and not the memorization of rules. For this competence to occur, students' everyday situations must be used, so they will be able to learn grammatical forms, realizing that they are useful and can be used in everyday life.

In the Communicative Approach, grammatical perfection will not be an objective. Grammatical knowledge will not be trivialized, but the final objective is communication, and for this to occur, teaching must be based on communicative functions and the content must be relevant and meaningful to students.

Schütz (2007, our translation) explains in detail some principles of this approach:

> In the Communicative Approach, the basic unit of language, which requires attention, is the communicative act, rather than the sentence. The function is superimposed on the form and meaning and situations are what inspire the didactic planning and the making of materials. Communicative competence

becomes the objective instead of the accumulation of grammatical knowledge or the storage of memorized forms.[10]

In this sense, when it comes to how to teach a foreign language orality, there seems to be a consensus that the best way to teach, acquire and develop it is through interaction (UR, 1996; HARMER, 2001, KAYI, 2006; among other).

Kayi (2006) points out that the communicative approach and collaborative learning are fundamental in this process of acquisition and development of oral skills, since the activities corresponding to these processes are based on real daily situations and that require a lot of communication and interaction.

According to Harmer (2001) and Kayi (2006), activities such as role play, simulations, storytelling, interviews, description of figures, games of the seven errors, among others, are fundamental in this process, as they awaken creativity and the side critical of students, in addition to promoting communication, exchange of ideas, suggestions and mutual learning among our students.

Burk and Chaney (1998, p.13) say that speaking is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts". Speaking is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching, so in order to teach students to speak in the best possible way, speaking activities should contribute to the development of basic interactive skills necessary for life.

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[10] In the original: "Na abordagem comunicativa, a unidade básica da língua, que requer atenção, é o ato comunicativo, ao invés da frase. A função se sobrepõe à forma, e significado e situações é que inspiram a planificação didática e a confecção de materiais. Competência comunicativa passa ser o objetivo em vez do acúmulo de conhecimento gramatical ou da estocagem de formas memorizadas" (SCHÜTZ, 2007).

4. SOFTWARE USED AS VIRTUAL CLASSROOM AND ITS TEACHING POSSIBILITIES

During the Covid-19 pandemic, teaching through the various digital platforms with the aid of multimedia resources became part of the reality of the teaching-learning process of several institutions that used this teaching methodology little or did not use it at all (MENDIOLA et al., 2020; PASCHOALINO et al., 2020). The need to adapt in the way of teaching the new reality of the pandemic that we are experiencing, leads the educational institutions, teachers and students that compose it to adapt, choose and work with the different digital and multimedia platforms (DE REUVER et al., 2018; PASCHOALINO et al., 2020).

There is a wide range of software used as a virtual classroom, however this work aims to focus on the *Google Meet* platform, since this resource is one of the most used among educational institutions and language schools. Launched in 2017, *Google Meet* is a video conferencing tool from Google, which allows you to hold online meetings, both by computer and by mobile devices, with a maximum capacity of 250 people. An advantage that *Google Meet* has is that it is not necessary to do any type of installation to use it, as its access can be performed directly through Google Chrome and is quite simple and intuitive.

Firstly, it is necessary to access a Gmail email account. Then, on the home screen, click on the *Google Apps* icon, which is the nine little dots located in the upper right corner of the screen, as shown in the image below:

Figure 1 - Home Page.
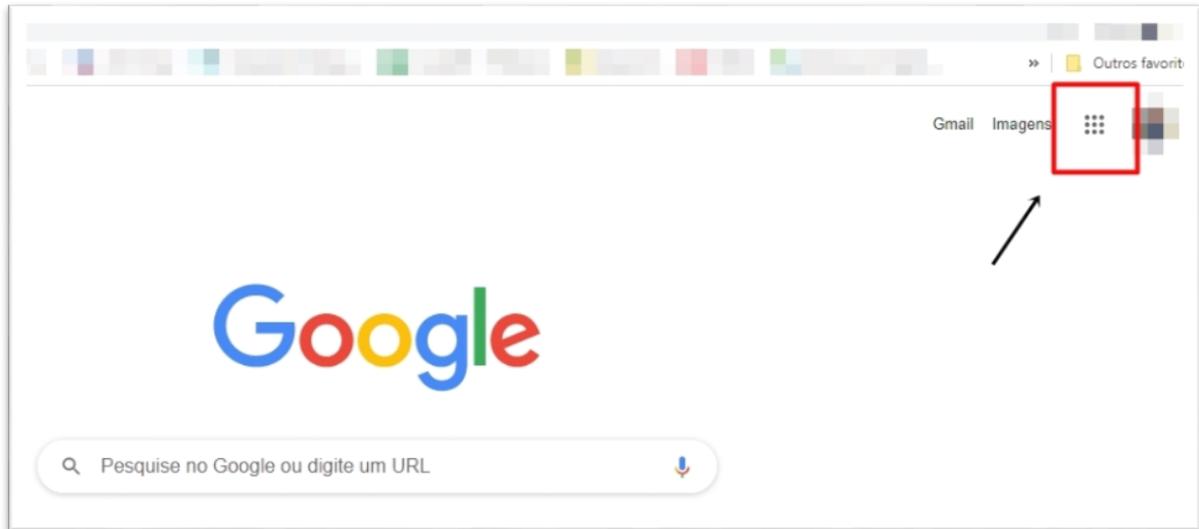
When you click on the *Google Apps* icon, all Google apps will appear, so just look for the *Google Meet* icon, as shown in the following image:

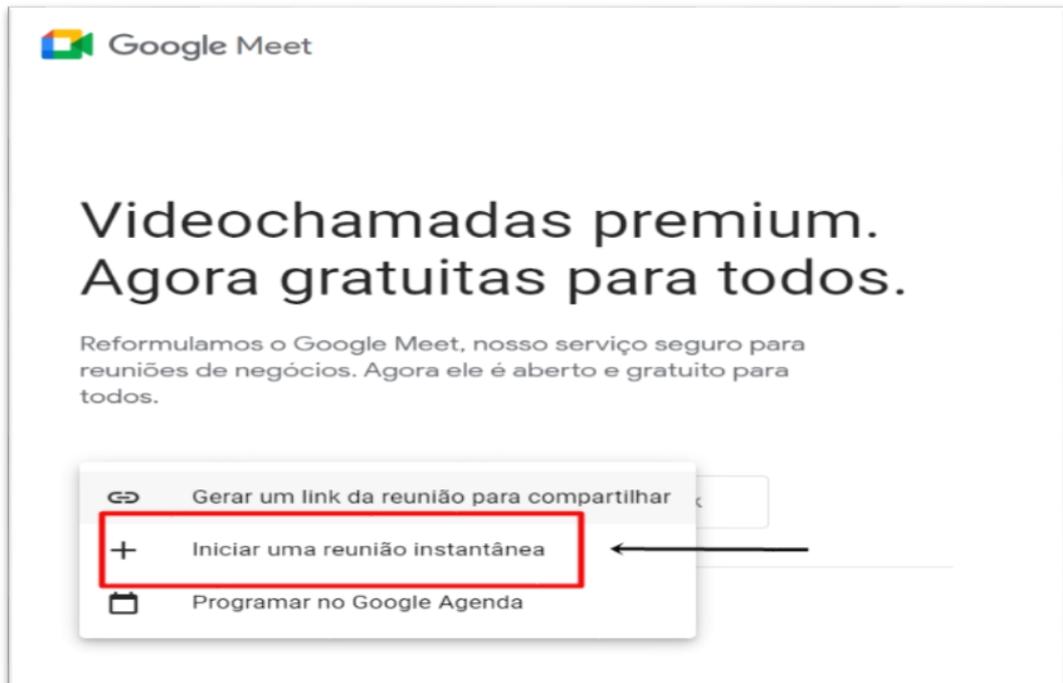Figure 2 - Google Meet icon location.
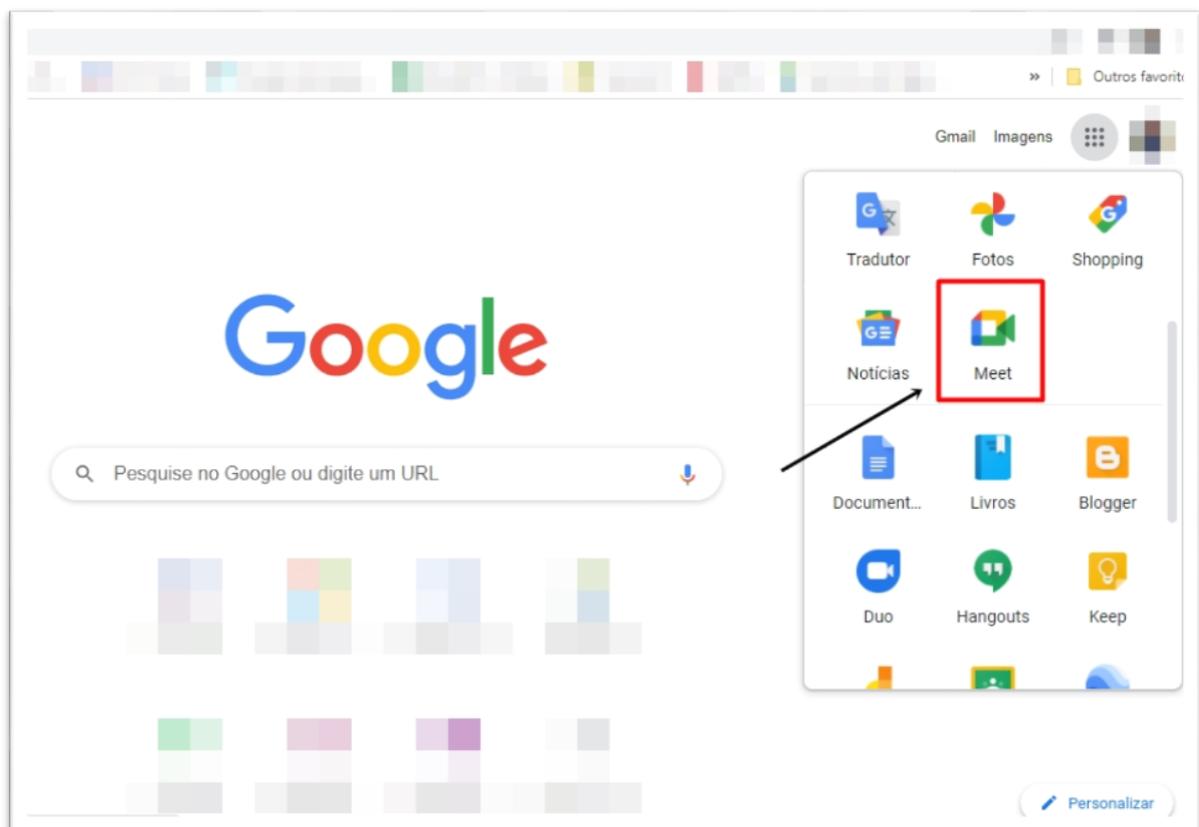
After clicking the *Google Meet* icon, the *Meet* home page will open. To start a synchronous online class, just click on the "New Meeting" button and then click on "Start an Instant Meeting", as shown in the images:

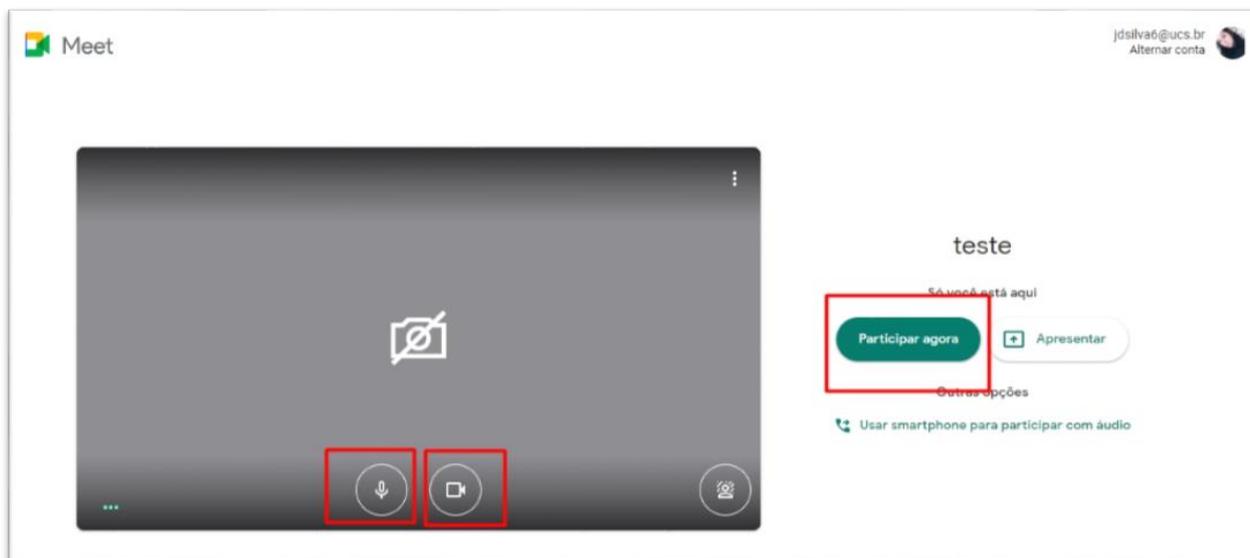Figure 3 - Google Meet home page.


Figure 4 - Google Meet home page II.

When starting an instant meeting, the page will be redirected to the virtual classroom. From now on, just enable the camera, the microphone and click on the "Participate Now" button, as shown in the image:

Figure 5 - Google Meet meeting start window.

Having created the virtual classroom, it is time to share it with students. Clicking on "Participate Now" will open the page shown below, then just click on "Copy Information on How to Participate" and the classroom access link will be copied, ready to send to students.

Figure 6 - Access link to the Google Meet classroom.
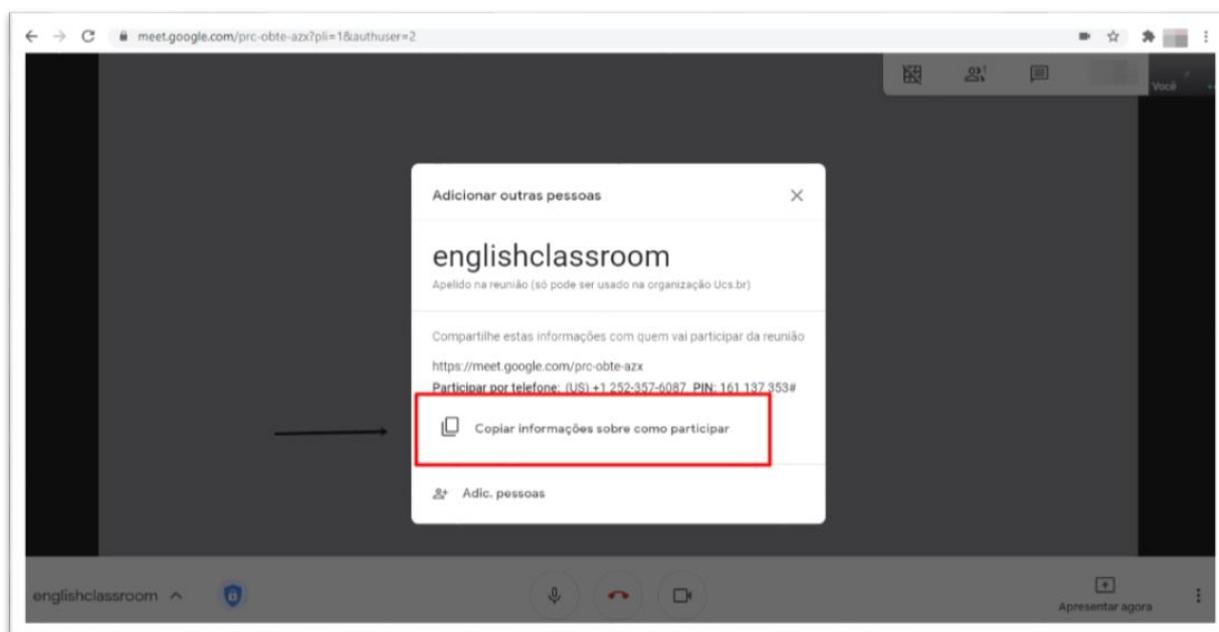
There are some features of *Google Meet* that allow you to use the tool more appropriately, according to the multiple activities that can be developed, one of them is the sharing of the screen.

If you want to make a presentation or show some image to the students, you can share the screen by clicking on the "Present Now" button, which is in the right corner of the *Meet*'s bottom bar, then select one of the desired options: share the entire screen, share just a window or share a Chrome tab.

In the sequence, the image illustrates these features:

Figure 7 - Screen sharing window.
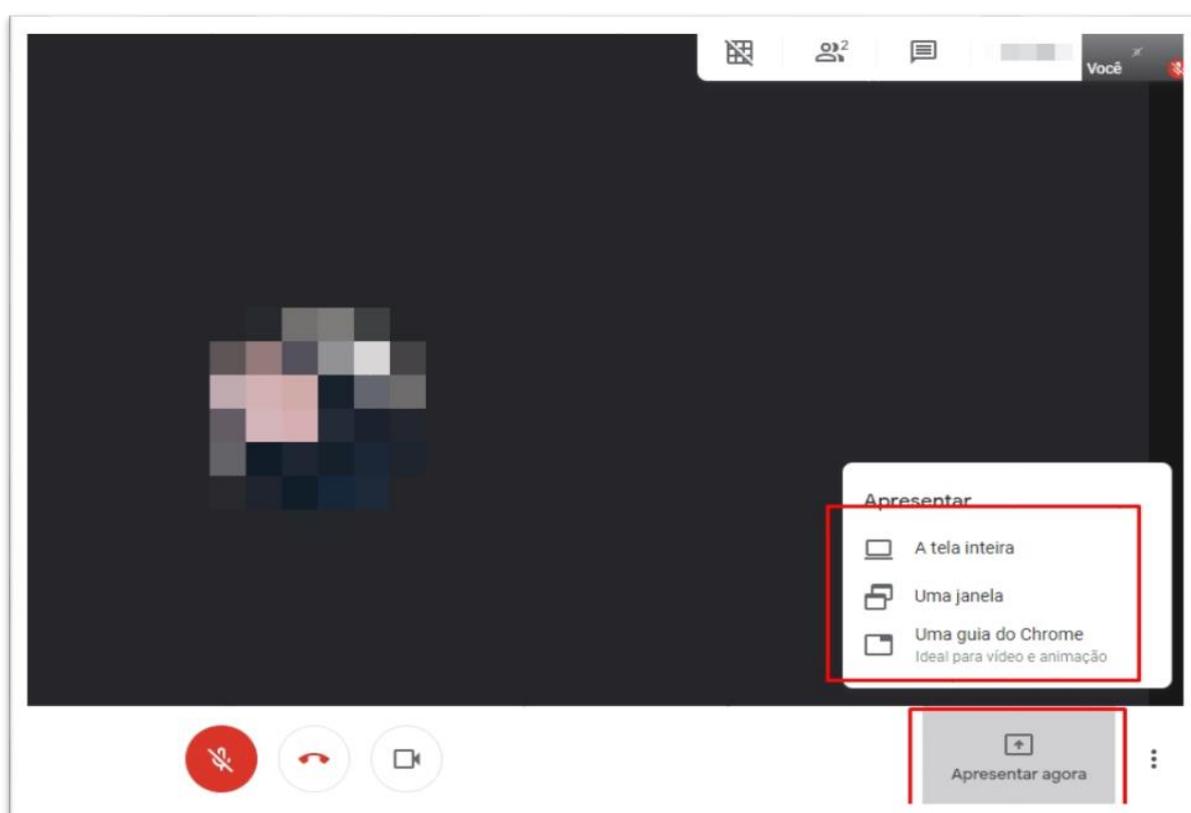
Another feature of *Google Meet* is the possibility to record the lesson, so students can access it later as well. To start recording, click on the three little dots in the right corner of the bottom bar of the *Meet* and then click on "Record Meeting". To stop recording is the same process.

The images below illustrate the procedure:
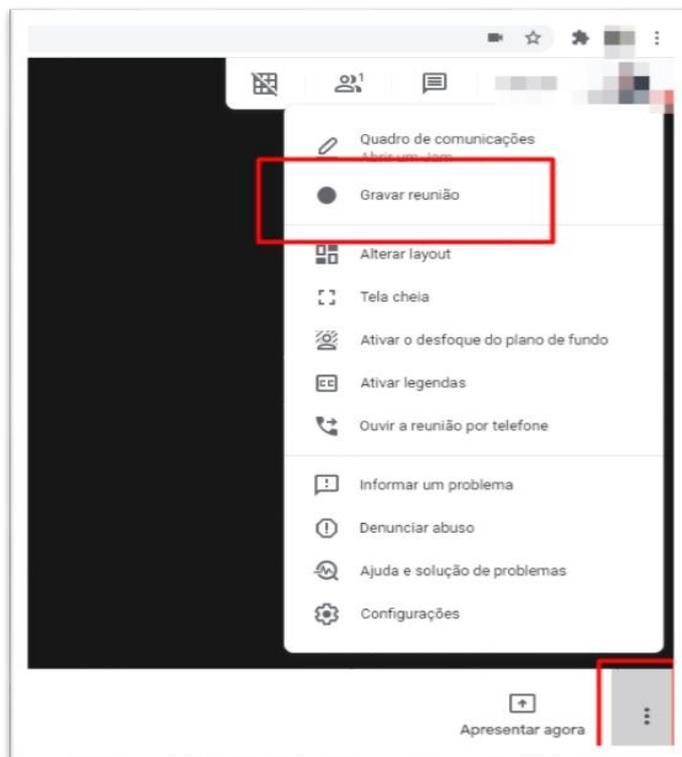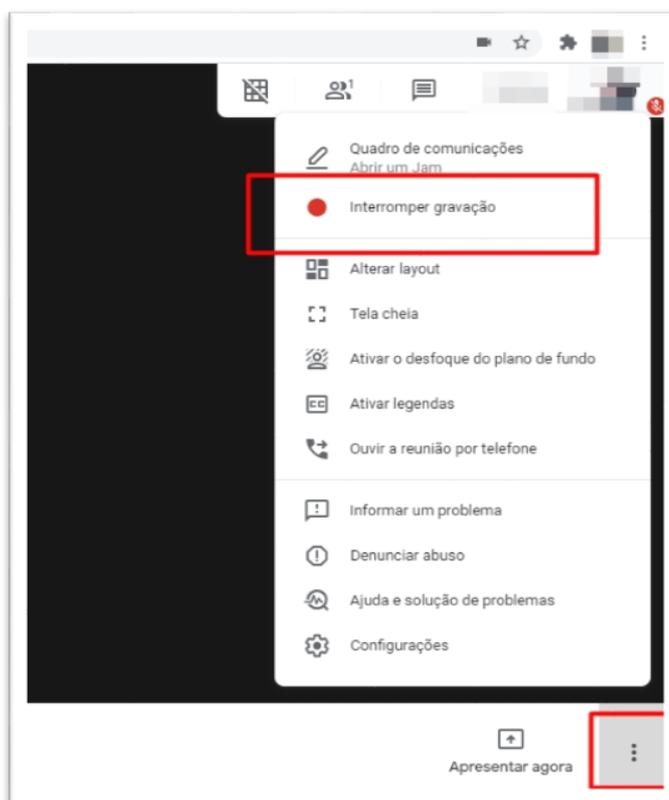
Figure 8 - Meeting recording window.

Figure 9 - Window to stop recording the meeting.

It is also possible to view and talk with students via chat. To be able to see all the people who are participating in the class, click on the "People" menu, so it will be feasible to view the list of class participants.

The following image shows the icon that must be clicked to access the list of participants:

Figure 10 - Icon to access the list of participants.
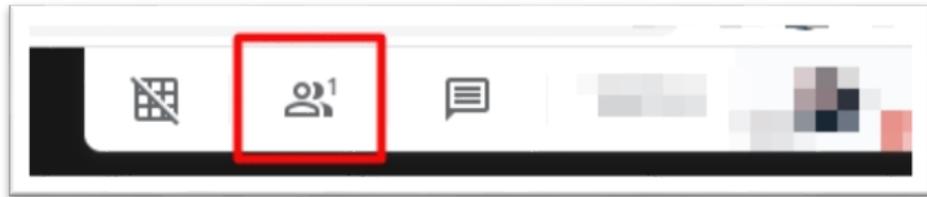
Through the chat, students in the class can interact and ask questions, without interrupting the teacher if s/he is speaking. To access the chat and view the dialogs that are being posted, just click on the icon that shows the image below. In this way, all conversations held in this field can be consulted.

Figure 11 - Icon to access the *chat*.
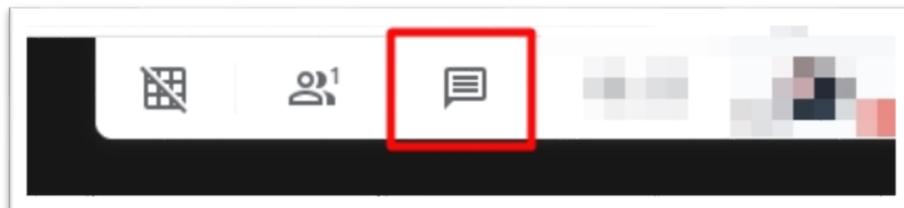
As the creator of the virtual classroom, the teacher is the only participant who can mute or remove other participants from the class. To mute a student's sound, just click on the "Mute Sound" icon ⊗ next to the participant's thumbnail. To remove a student from the class, simply hover the cursor next to their thumbnail, click on the down arrow and then on the "Remove" button ⊖ .

Through the *Google Meet Grid View* extension, it is possible to view all students participating in the class at the same time on the *Google Meet* screen. To

install it, just access the Chrome web store[11] and click on the "Use in Chrome" button. Now, the extension is already installed.

In the upper right corner, the *Google Meet Grid View* extension menu bar will appear, just click on it to format the participants' viewing settings, as shown in the image below:

Figure 12 - Procedure for locating and adding the Google Meet Grid View extension.
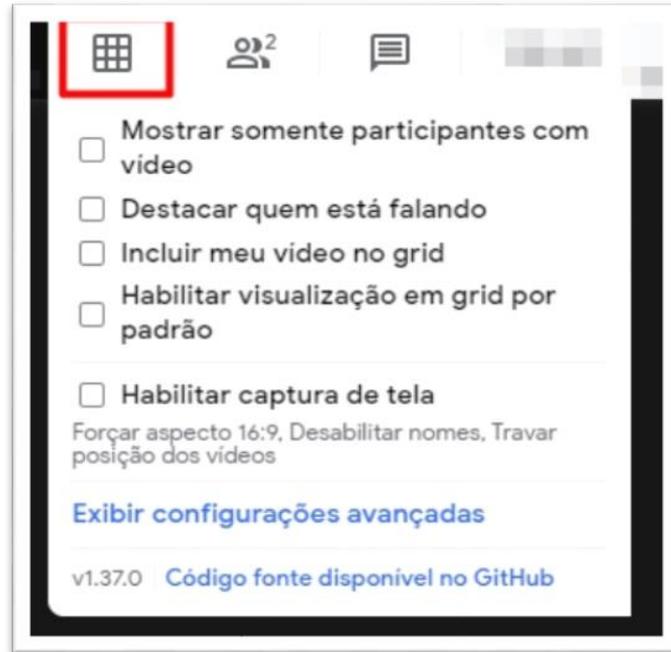
In the sequence, the image shows how the *Google Meet* screen looks like using the *Google Meet Grid View* extension:

Figure 13 - Google Meet meeting room with the Google Meet Grid View extension.
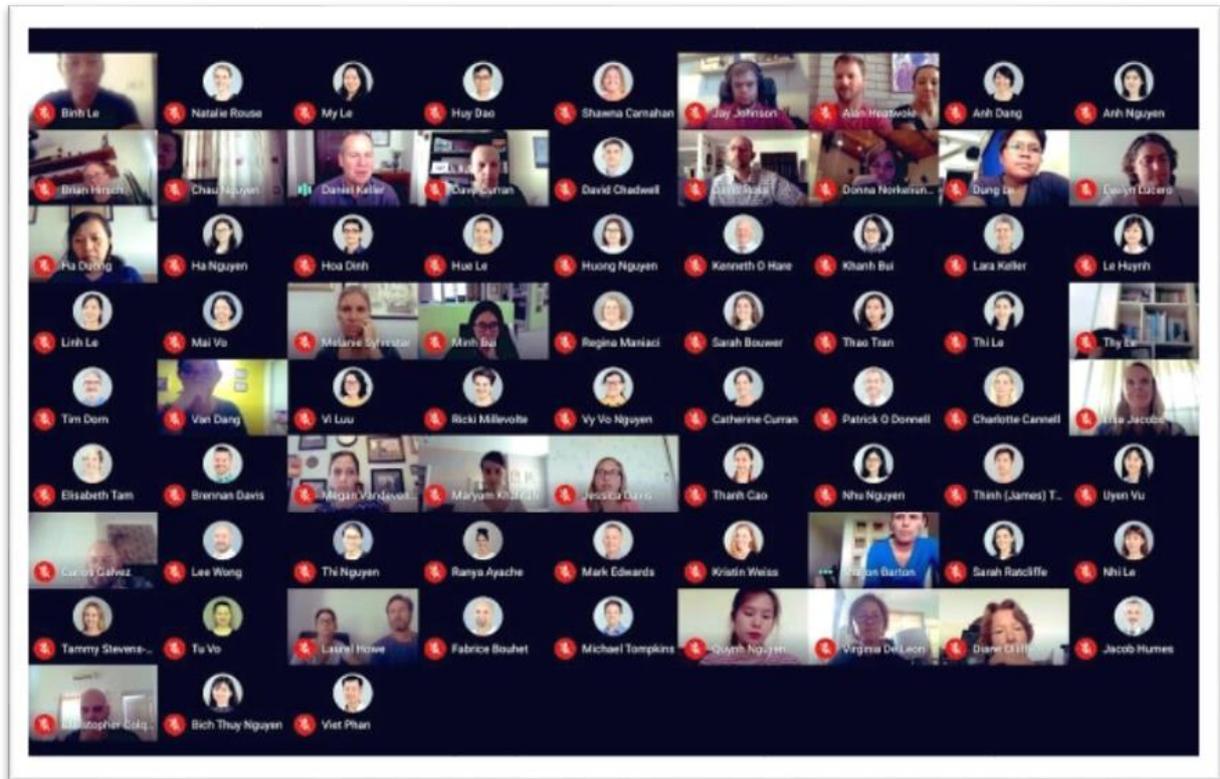
Source: Chrome Web Store.

Another *Google Meet* platform possibility is called *Breakout Rooms*. In a on-site class, there are often activities that need to divide the class in small groups. At *Google Meet* it is also possible to divide the participants of the class in groups, using *Breakout Rooms*.

First of all, it is necessary to create the link for the Breakout Rooms to later send it to the students, for that it is necessary to access a Gmail email account. Then, on the home screen, click on the *Google Apps* icon, which is the nine little dots located in the upper right corner of the screen, and then click on the *Google Agenda* icon, as shown in the image below:

Figure 14 - Procedure to access Google Agenda.
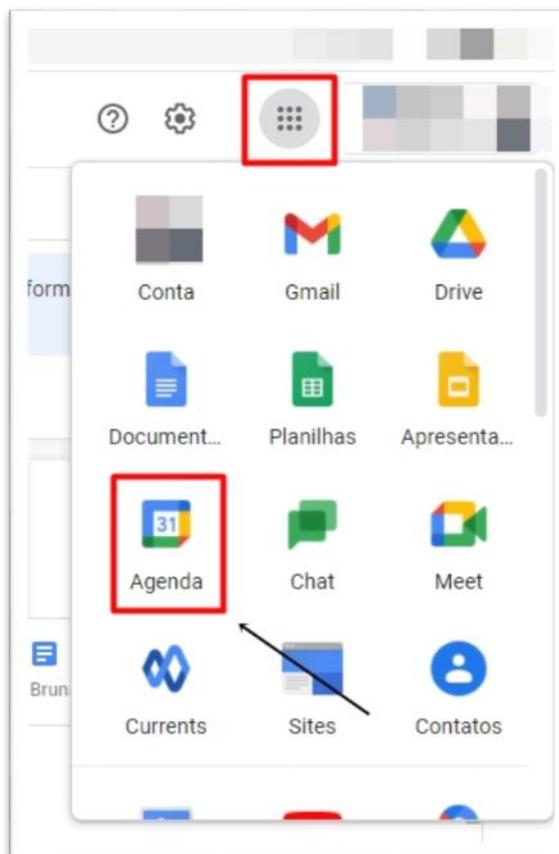
By clicking on the *Google Agenda* icon, a calendar will open in which the teacher must select the day the class will be held. Then, a window will appear as shown in the image below and then the teacher must define a name for the first breakout room, the class hour, click on "Add Google Meet video conference" and finally, click on "Save". Now the link to the first breakout room is saved in *Google Agenda*. If the teacher needs two or more breakout rooms, just perform this procedure as many times as necessary, creating other rooms on the same day and at the same time.

Figure 15 - Breakout Room creation procedure.
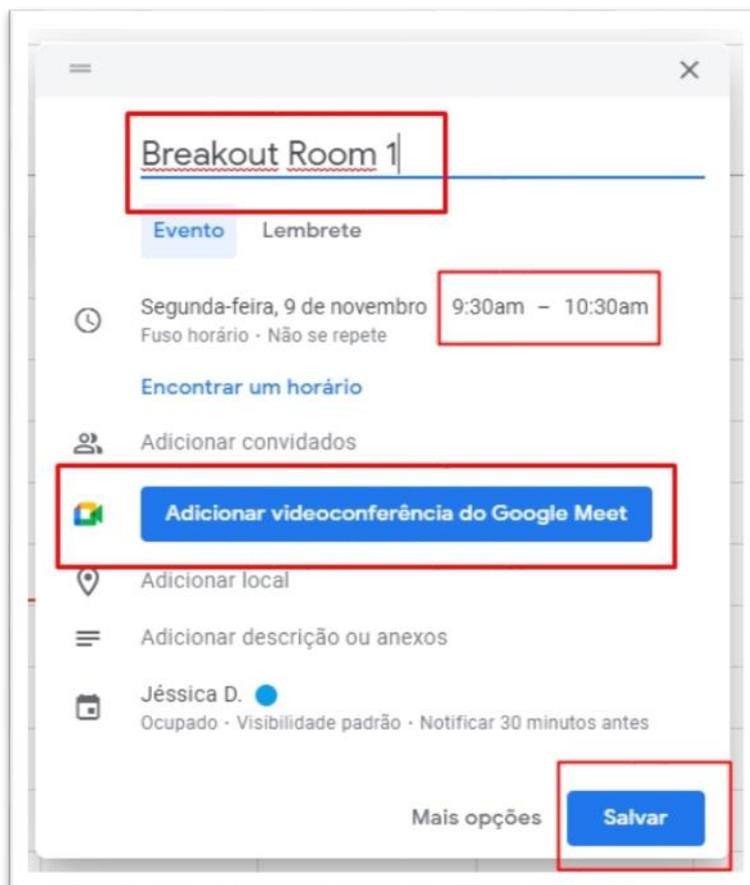
In the main classroom, with the whole class together, the teacher then divides students in small groups and sends, via chat, the link of all the breakout rooms created, and then each student must click on the link to their respective breakout room.

The teacher, as the creator of the breakout rooms, has access to all of them, this is important because s/he can be circulating among the breakout rooms as well as in a presential class.

5. ADAPTING PRESENTIAL ACTIVITIES FOR ONLINE ENGLISH CLASSES TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS IN LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

In this chapter, six different types of activities are presented, one for each level of English language proficiency, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - CEFR.

CEFR was developed by the Council of Europe as a way to standardize the levels of language exams in different regions, that is, it is an internationally recognized standard for describing proficiency in a language.

It describes language skills on a six-level scale, from A1 for beginners to C2 for those who master a language.

5.1. ACTIVITY 1

This first activity is intended for students of the first level of proficiency, A1 – Beginner. According to CEFR, students at this level are able to:

> understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.[12]

In this first speaking activity proposal, the student will be able to describe a person and talk about likes and dislikes, as well as talking about personal information. Also, the activity works with *Verb to be* and the *Simple Present Tense*.

This activity is intended for a class of around twelve students. In the classroom, each student receives a flashcard with a character from the teacher. These flashcards contain personal information about the characters, such as their name, age, profession, likes, dislikes and hobbies. In pairs, students will present the character of their flashcards to their classmates, creating a dialogue. Student A can

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[12] Available at: https://www.coe.int/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale Last access: Oct. 19th, 2020.

start by asking Student B the name of his character and vice versa. Then, the partners can discuss where each character is from and some curiosities they know about the country. Then, the age of each character, as well as the profession, the likes and dislikes and the hobbies.

In the sequence, the picture illustrates one of the flashcards. Also, it is presented a possible model for this role play:

Figure 16 - Model of flashcard.

Source: https://englishdaisies.com/en/8-speaking-activities-for-english-a1-learners/
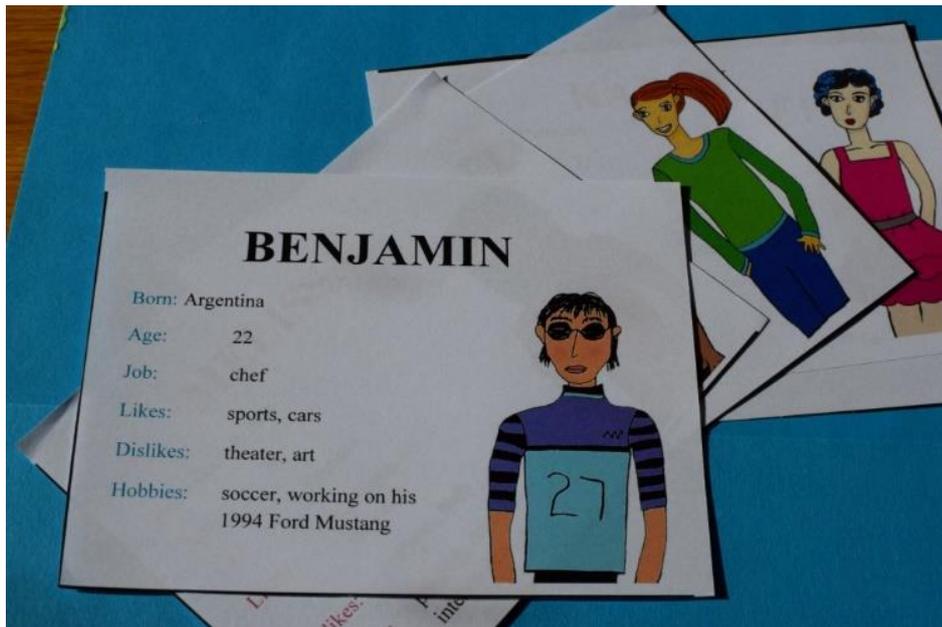
Table 3 - Model of role play.

Student A: What is your name?
Student B: My name is Benjamin.
Student A: Where are you from?
Student B: I'm from Argentina.
Student A: How old are you?
Student B: I'm 22 years-old.
Student A: What do you do?
Student B: I'm a chef.
Student A: What do you like?
Student B: I like sports and cars.
Student A: What don't you like?

> *Student B:* I don't like theatre and art.
>
> *Student A:* What are your hobbies?
>
> *Student B:* My hobbies are playing soccer and working on my 1994 Ford Mustang.

In order to adapt this activity to an online class using the Google Meet platform, the teacher sends a flashcard to each student privately, which may be via *Whatsapp*, without the rest of the class know which the flashcard is. On each flashcard there is a character, containing the name, nationality, age, profession, likes and dislikes and hobbies.

Then, students are divided in pairs and each pair goes to a breakout room. In the breakout rooms, the pairs present their respective characters, creating a dialogue. Student A can start by asking Student B the name of his character and vice versa. Then, the partners can discuss where each character is from and some curiosities they know about the country. Then, the age of each character, as well as the profession, the likes and dislikes and the hobbies.

At this stage, it is important that students take notes about the classmate's character information because, upon returning to the main room, each student will present to the big group the partners' character information.

In the sequence, is presented a possible model for this role play:

Table 4 - Model of role play II.

- In the break out room, in pairs:
Student A: What is your name?
Student B: My name is Benjamin.
Student A: Where are you from?
Student B: I'm from Argentina.
Student A: How old are you?
Student B: I'm 22 years-old.
Student A: What do you do?
Student B: I'm a chef.
Student A: What do you like?

Student B: I like sports and cars.

Student A: What don't you like?

Student B: I don't like theater and art.

Student A: What are your hobbies?

Student B: My hobbies are playing soccer and working on my 1994 Ford Mustang.

- In the main room, back from the previous dialogue, each student will introduce the character of the partner to the big group, such as:

His name is Benjamin, he is from Argentina and he is 22 years old. He is a chef, he likes sports and cards and he doesn't like theatre and art. His hobbies are playing soccer and working on his 1994 Ford Mustang.

5.2.   ACTIVITY 2

The following activity is intended for students of the second level of proficiency, A2 – Elementary. According to CEFR, students at this level are able to:

> understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.[13]

In this second speaking activity proposal, the student will be able to describe an image in its smallest details, give instructions and, in addition, ask for more information.

In an on-site class, with students sitting in pairs, each one receives an image, different from each other. The activity consists of each member of the pair trying to draw the image that the partner has. For this, the student must describe the image, with as many details as possible for the partner to be able to draw as similar as possible. The student who is drawing should also ask questions to facilitate drawing.

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[13] Available at: https://www.coe.int/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale Last access: Oct. 19th, 2020.

At the end, when both are already drawn, they must show each other as well as the original image.

In the sequence, the images illustrate the drawings that each member of the pair must draw:

Figure 18 - Image Student A

Figure 17 - Image Student B

Source: American English File 2 – Student Book.

In order to adapt this activity to an online class using the Google Meet platform, it is necessary that the teacher asks a student to leave the virtual classroom for a few minutes. Then, the teacher shows the rest of the students a picture. Students must memorize this image, photograph it or save it. When the student returns to the classroom, s/he must draw the image that was shown to her/his classmates, for this, the rest of the group must describe it in as much detail as possible. The student who is drawing can also ask questions of classmates to facilitate and be able to portray the image as closely as possible.

For this dynamic, students use the drawing tool developed by Google called *Canvas*. The student only needs to access the Canvas website[14], share the screen with the classmates and start drawing.

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[14] Available at: https://canvas.apps.chrome/. Last access: Nov. 06th, 2020.

At the end of the activity, all students must have drawn and, also helped to describe each image.

Below, the image illustrates the *Canvas* drawing tool. Also, there are some pictures options that students can draw:
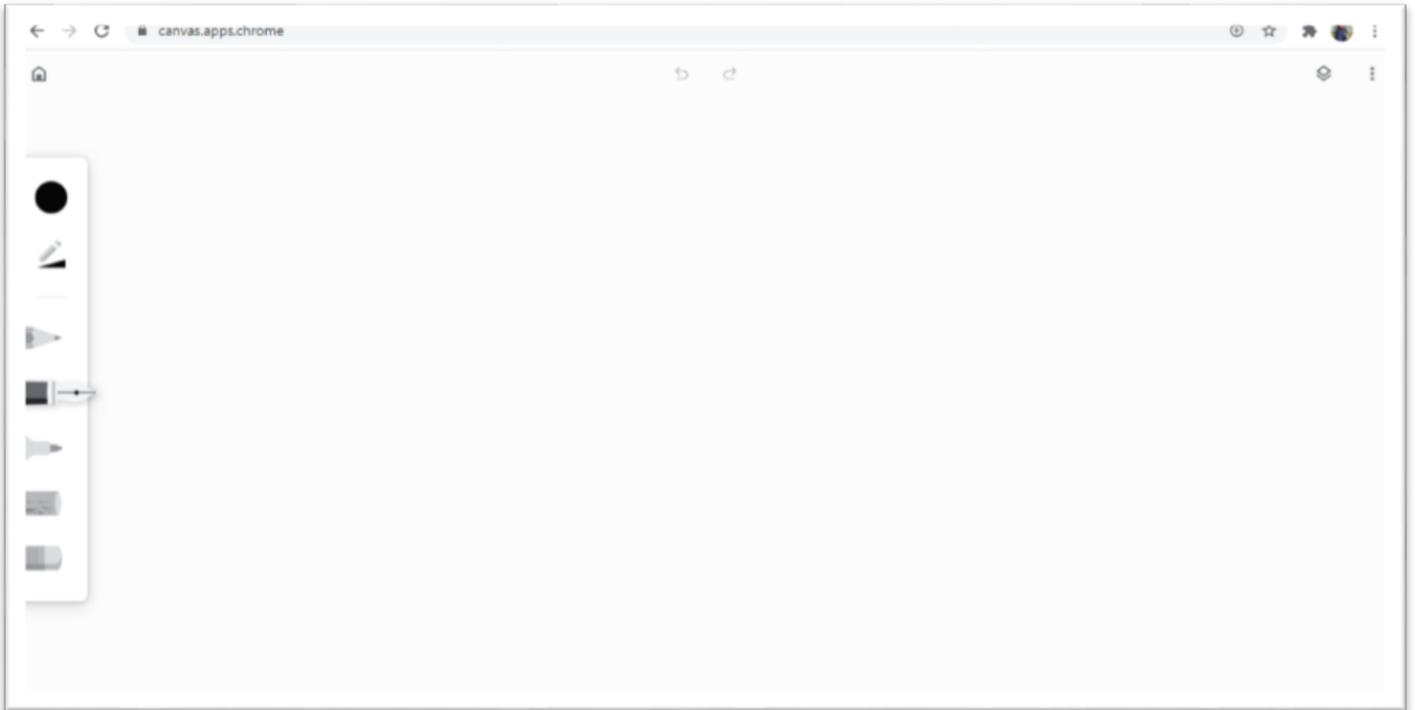
Figure 19 - Canvas tool home page.

Figure 20 - Images examples.

Source: Google Images.

Figure 21 - Images examples II.

Source: Google Images.

Source: Google Images.

5.3. ACTIVITY 3

The third activity is intended for students of the third level of proficiency, B1 – Intermediate. According to CEFR, students at this level are able to:

understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. [15]

The purpose of this speaking activity is to work with students on Housing vocabulary (furniture, appliances, ads, remodelling). The student will also be able to talk about obligations. In addition, the activity also works with the Simple Future with Will tense.

In an on-site class, to proceed with this activity, students will join in pairs. Soon after, each pair will receive the activity sheet below. Each pair will have to imagine they now will be roommates. Then, they will have to make two lists: one with the things that both of them will do themselves in the house and the other list with things that they will need to have done, that is, they are going to have to call someone to do it. They should conduct this discussion in English and using the vocabulary that the activity offers. Then, all pairs will share their lists with the big group.

In the sequence, the image illustrates the sheet with the proposed activity:

Figure 22 - Proposed activity sheet.

Discuss with a partner

You and your partner will be roommates. Make a list of what both of you will do yourselves and a list of what you will need to have done. Follow the examples.

fix the computer   do the gardening   repair the car   repair the roof   wash the dog

iron the clothes   fix the TV set   install a telephone   dust the room   mend clothes

paint the house   wash the car   change the burned lights   do the laundry

[15] Available at: https://www.coe.int/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale Last access: Oct. 19th, 2020.

We will change the burned lights.
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We will have...
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Source: Interplus 3 – Student's Book.

To be able to adapt this activity to an online class using the Google Meet platform, the teacher will first explain how the activity will work. The teacher will say that it will be in pairs and that each pair will have to imagine that now they will be roommates. So, they will have to make two lists: one with the things that both of them will do themselves in the house and the other list with things that they will need to have done, that is, they are going to have to call someone to do it.

After students have chosen their pairs, each will receive a link from the teacher to a break out room, where each pair will work. With the pairs in their respective rooms, the teacher will share a Google Docs link with each one, which will be where each pair will do the activity. Each pair will receive a different link. The pairs should discuss the activity in English and using the vocabulary that the activity offers. When all students are finished, they will return to the main room, and then the pairs will share their lists with the big group.

For this activity, it is important that the teacher circulates between the break out rooms to make sure that the interaction between students is being done in English for greater efficiency of the task.

Below, the image illustrates the Google Docs document where each pair must work. Also, a link[16] is presented that each pair will receive to do the activity:

Figure 23 - Adapted activity using Google Docs.

Activity removed and adapted from Interplus 3 - Student's Book.

5.4. ACTIVITY 4

The next activity is for students of the fourth level of proficiency, B2 – Upper Intermediate. According to CEFR, students at this level are able to:

> understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. [17]

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[16] Available at:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kc9VqtDR6UQcHtWe5f5KPh7YGYpjNm1kyBcpatq9TkU/edit?usp=sharing Last access: Nov. 25th, 2020.
[17] Available at: https://www.coe.int/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale Last access: Oct. 19th, 2020.

In this speaking activity proposal the student will be able to give advice on the approached topic, which is about different species of animals from different countries, as well as giving examples, expressing their opinion and adding more information. In addition, this activity also aims to work on some *Conditional Expressions*.

First of all, in a presential class, the student must imagine that a visitor is coming to Brazil and wants to know more about the native animals here. The student must take notes about some animals that are endangered and where we can find them, dangerous animals or other creatures and other possible risks or dangers.

That done, the student should then think of some advice he would give to the visitor regarding the notes s/he made earlier, however, for that s/he must use some conditional expressions like *if*, *unless*, *as soon as*, *in case*, *as long as* and *provided*.

The last step of this activity is done in pairs. Student B is the visitor and student A should talk about animals in Brazil and give the advice that was created previously.

The image below illustrates the proposed activity, as well as an example of conversation:

Figure 24 - Proposed speaking activity.
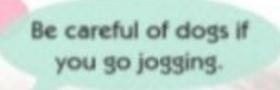
Source: Empower – Upper Intermediate Student's book

To be able to adapt this activity to an online class using the Google Meet platform, each student is given the name of a country and then they must quickly search for some species of animals from the respective country. This research must contain some animals from the country that are endangered and where they can be found, dangerous animals or other creatures and other possible risks or dangers.

After the research is done, it is time to present it to the class. In this part the students can be creative and, instead of just talking, they can illustrate their presentation in a powerpoint with images of the animals as well as the country and the place that each researched animal lives.

In this part of the presentation, the student should imagine that the rest of the class is going to her/his country and then s/he should give advice to her/his classmates regarding the findings of the research, however, for that s/he must use

some conditional expressions such as *if*, *unless*, *as soon as*, *in case*, *as long as* and *provided*. The rest of the class should also make a comment or question about the classmate's presentation.

5.5.   ACTIVITY 5

The next activity is for students of the fifth level of proficiency, C1 – Advanced. According to CEFR, students at this level are able to:

> understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.[18]

In this speaking activity proposal, the student will be able to describe her/himself as well as someone else, with the adjectives presented in the activity. In addition, s/he will be able to give her/his opinion about the topic.

For this activity, the teacher gives each student a paper sheet with a diagram containing adjectives that describe the different types of thinkers. Students, in pairs, and using the vocabulary in the diagram, should choose three adjectives that they think best describe their partner's type of thinking and three adjectives that best describe their own type of thinking. Once this is done, each student shares with the large group the three adjectives that best describe their own type of thinking and the three adjectives that they think best describe the thinking of their partner and explain why had chosen these adjectives. Then, the partner must make a comment about the chosen adjectives, saying if s/he agrees, if s/he is surprised by any choice, etc.

Below is the diagram model that each student must receive to do the activity:

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[18] Available at: https://www.coe.int/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale Last access: Oct. 19th, 2020.

Figure 25 - Diagram Model.
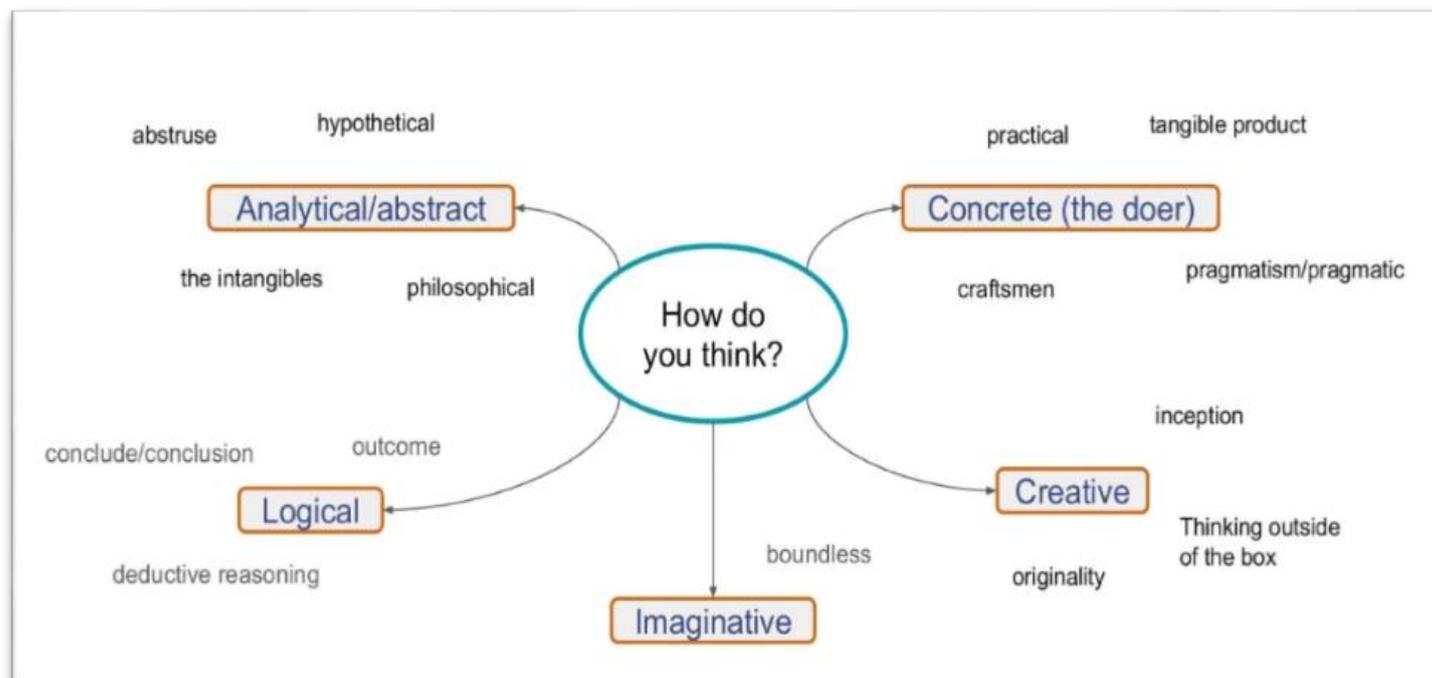
Source: TEFL Handbook.

In order to adapt this activity to an online class, students must first take two online tests. The first can be found on the Psychology.co[19] website and they must answer the questionnaire to find out if their type of thinking is concrete, analytical, abstract, logical, imaginative or creative. When finished, it is important that students take notes about their result.

The second test can be found on Play Buzz[20] website, in which they must also answer a questionnaire to find out which of the six types of thinkers each student is and how their mind works. Again, it is important for students to take notes about their test results.

After all students have completed both tests, it is time for them to share their results with their classmates. The teacher asks each one to take stock of the answers to the two tests and the students must state their opinion, whether they agree with the result or not, if they were surprised by the result, etc.

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[19] Available at: https://psychologia.co/types-of-thinking/. Last access: Nov. 12nd, 2020.
[20] Available at: https://www.playbuzz.com/randallmurphy10/which-of-the-6-types-of-thinkers-are-you. Last access: Nov. 12nd, 2020.

5.6.   ACTIVITY 6

The next activity is for students of the sixth level of proficiency, C2 – Proficiency. According to CEFR, students at this level are able to:

> understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

The purpose of this speaking activity is to discuss a specific subject. The student will be able to give an opinion on the topic, argue about their points of view, as well as agree or disagree with the opinion of the rest.

To do this activity, the student must choose a topic from the ten listed to discuss it, exposing her/his opinion. Then, the student must listen to the opinion of another classmate on another topic, still on the same subject and give her/his opinion also on the topic of the classmate. Finally, each of the students in the class should tell the rest of the class the topic they have chosen and their opinion about it. The teacher asks students who agrees with their classmate's opinion and who does not. To those who do not agree, they must explain why.

In the sequence, the pictures illustrate the topics of discussion. Also, supporting texts are presented to support the students' arguments:

Figure 26 - Topics of Discussion.

Discuss with a partner

Which polemical issues from the list would you like to discuss? Refer to the texts to support your opinion. Discuss with a partner and take notes, if necessary. Then, as a group, share your opinion.

- Cellular phones can cause cancer and other unknown diseases.
- The use of cellular phones by children is extremely dangerous.
- All mobile phones are equally dangerous to humans and should be avoided.
- Bad working conditions and bad habits can develop repetitive-motion injuries which are cumulative trauma disorders that can last a life long.
- People should stop using computers and all the new technology which can cause damage.
- It's really hard for elderly people to learn and use new technology.
- Technological devices Always have a number of useless features.
- People shoud only use cellular phones in emergencies.
- People should turn off the cell phone during movies, at theaters, restaurants, etc.
- Some people still use cellular phones just to show off.

Source: Interplus 3 – Student's Book.

Figure 27 - Supporting text.

Are kids at greater risk?

Cell phones are the coolest accessory in a teen's pocket.

But are kids who talk on cells taking more risks than adults?

A study by British scientists suggests that they be away from it. Last year's report by the Stewart Commission, a panel of experts convened by the British government too look into cell-phone use, found no precise indication that mobile phones are dangerous to kids. However, the group uncovered enough evidence to urge that children be discouraged from using cell phones and that wireless companies stop marketing specifically to kids. Since children's bones are thinner than those of adults, and their brains smaller, radiation emitted from cell phones can more easily penetrate their heads. Imagine the static you hear in your car radio as you drive past a power line. Similarly, a child's brain is still developing and is thus extremely sensitive to outside interference.

Therefore, microwaves from cell phones can affect youngsters' brain rhythms. A separate report published in November in the British medical jornal, stated that the children are more at risk than adults to suffer "memory loss, sleeping disorder and headaches" from using mobile phones. About

10 million children in the U.S. from ages 10 to 19, or 25% in that age group, own a wireless phone, according to the Yankee Group, a Boston based technology research. Think that's high? As recente studies mention, the proportion is far greater in other countries.

In Germany, for instance, the figure is 30%; in Finland, 90%. Dangerous or not, cell phones have taken off, especially in sales to kids. Children want them because they allow for Independence and sociability. Parents like the phones because the gadgets allow them to monitor their kids. Cell phone campanies have been marketing heavily to children. They offer not only visually attractive products but also special plans for children. Conversely, Disney, citing safety concerns raised by specialists, canceled its licensing deal with AT&T, which used Disney characters to help sell wireless-phone plans. The British government has called for cell phones to carry health warnings like those placed on cigarette packets and advises the

About 10 million children in the U.S. from ages 10 to 19, or 25% in that age group, own a wireless phone,...

Source: Interplus 3 – Student's Book.

Figure 28 - Supporting text II.

From the lowest – *These widely varying radiation levels all meet FCC standards.*

1. Motorola – StarTAC 7860
   SAR Rating = 0,24

2. Qualcomm – PdQ 1900
   SAR Rating = 0,2634

3. Mitsubish Trium – Galaxy G-130
   SAR Rating = 0,35

4. LG IC TP 1100
   SAR Rating = 1, 4838

5. Nokia 5170i
   SAR Rating = 1,49

6. Ericsson T28 World
   SAR Rating = 1,49

To the highest...

Source: Interplus 3 – Student's Book.

Figure 29 - Supporting text III.

CELL PHONE
ETIQUETTE

- When the person who you call answers, ask if s/he is able to talk. If not, say you call back later.

- Don't ask someone's number if you aren't close friends. Instead, ask how s/he could be most easily reached.

- Don't use it during movies, at reastaurants, in cars and other unnecessary places. Turn it off!

- If it rings while you are with friend's, be fast but not before saying "Excuse me, please."

- Do turn it off when you are having a meeting, in a conference, etc. You can check your messages later. Depending on where you are, leave it on the vibrate or lamp mode.

- Keep it in your pocket, handbag or briefcase. Why show it off?

Source: Interplus 3 – Student's Book.

Figure 30 - Supporting text IV.

Even sitting at a keyboard can cause injury

Who would have thought that sitting in a cubicle could do so much damage? A million U.S. workers lose days to repetitive-motion injuries every year, says Dr. Maureen Gaynor, who chaired a National Academy of Sciences panel on the problem. During the meeting, specialists recommended that working conditions be improved so we can avoid many cumulative trauma disorders. In fact, they insisted that everyone do a little effort so that we can keep our job from wrecking our muscles, joints and tendons. Here are some of the tips they suggested for surviving the cubicle.

Perfect posture

Small attacks on your muscles and tendons can cost a lot to your health over time.

...

Source: Interplus 3 – Student's Book.

To be able to adapt this activity to an online class using the Google Meet platform, the teacher shows students, through screen sharing, the ten topics that students must

choose one to talk about. Then, the teacher shares four supporting texts to support students. That done, students will use the Google tool called *Jamboard* to create an informative map with their ideas on their topic. With the *Jamboard* tool the student can write, add images, add sticky notes, draw, among other functions.

After each student is finished, it is time for the presentation. Each student must present their informative map, through screen sharing, giving their opinion on the subject of their topic. Then, the teacher asks the big group who agrees with the classmate's opinion and who does not. To those who do not agree, they must explain why, thus initiating a brief discussion.

Below, the *Jamboard* tool start screen:

Figure 31 - Jamboard tool start screen.
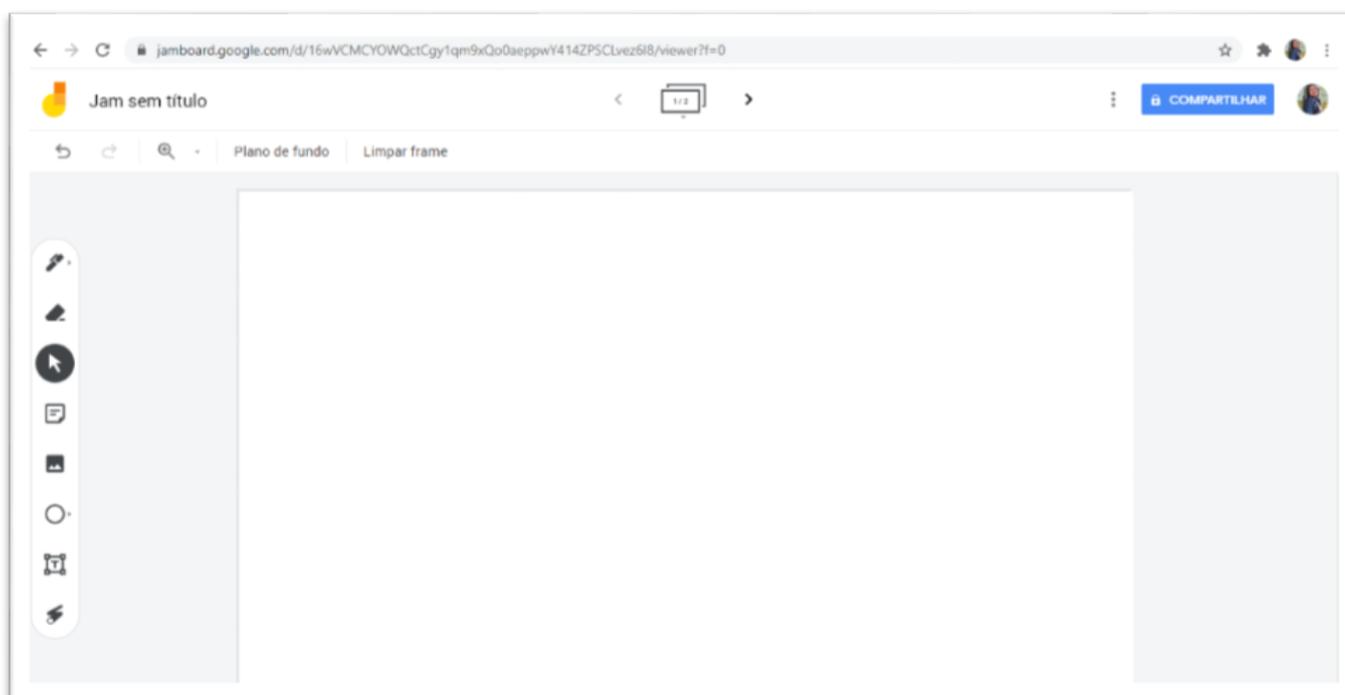
Considering that the present work aims to analyse and adapt presential English classroom activities to online English classes to develop students' speaking skills in language schools, the illustrated activities are intended for classes with around twelve students, considering that, in the majority, language schools have classes with fewer students than in a regular school, thus facilitating the execution of the proposed activities.

The activities presented aim to continue strengthening the students' oral production, since the presential classes have become synchronous online and, for this, some suggestions for adaptations have been indicated.

Except for the purpose of stimulating the students' oral production, each activity proposed to work on some grammatical point in its execution, such as the first activity. In addition to describing itself and another person, talking about likes and dislikes and personal information, the activity also works with Verbo To Be and the Simple Present tense.

As all activities were designed to be performed online, some of them used platforms and internet sites in their adaptation, as is the case of the second activity, which is accomplished through the Google app called *Canvas*.

Another activity presented that uses internet sites is the fifth, which students access the sites suggested to, then, carry out the proposed activity.

In addition, the activities were designed to be accomplished in a synchronous online class using the *Google Meet* platform, in which it is possible to divide the students in pairs, trios or small groups for certain activities, in addition to the presentation of the final result of the classes activities done by students through screen sharing, as in the case of the third and sixth activity.

All activities presented in this chapter are designed for students of the same age group, according to their level of proficiency, since the activities are distributed according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - CEFR.

6. CONCLUSION

With the social isolation caused by the new coronavirus pandemic, schools had to be closed resulting in the suspension of presential classes. Faced with this situation, teachers had to adapt to this new reality and teach their classes in other ways, even at a distance.

The present study aimed to analyse how presential English classroom activities could be adapted for online classes to develop students' speaking skills in language schools, since as we have seen this skill is, for many students, the most difficult to develop.

In order of achieving this, we started to discuss how synchronous online English language classes contribute to the development of students' speaking ability and it was possible to realize that speaking, among the four skills, should be considered one of the most important, since it is through it that the student will interact socially and verbally with other cultures (UR, 1996; SILVA, 2011; KAYI, 2006).

In this sense, it was found that synchronous online classes can be very well explored as a great resource for teaching the skill of oral production, because, according to Kormos, (2006) and Lightbown and Spada, (2006), they are essential for the acquisition and development of listening comprehension and oral production skills in LE.

After that, in the next chapter, a communicative approach was suggested to support the process of carrying out the activities that were proposed in chapter five.

One of the objectives of this paper was to present a software used as a virtual classroom and its teaching possibilities and this objective was achieved in chapter four, where the *Google Meet* platform and its features were presented.

Finally, the central theme of this work was presented in the last chapter where some presential speaking activities were analysed and adapted to the online form, with the criterion of continuing to strengthen students' oral production in addition to, at the same time, working with some grammatical point.

This study is intended for small classes of English language, aiming at the continuity of the oral production of each student. Perhaps, in future studies, it would be interesting to analyse how the activities aimed at the other three skills - listening,

reading, writing - could be adapted but applied in classes with a larger number of students. It would be very valuable to investigate how students would adapt to this change.

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