

**The Distance Education Strategy of Ministry of Public Education
during the Covid-19 Pandemic and the Adaptations in the Pedagogical
Mediation and Administrative Functions in the English Teaching Staff
of San José de Alajuela high school during 2020**

Lic. Cristian Calderón Arroyo
cristian.calderon@uhispano.ac.cr

Facultad de Educación
Universidad Hispanoamericana

MSc. Julio César Castro Miranda

julio.castro@uh.ac.cr

Facultad de Educación
Universidad Hispanoamericana

ABSTRACT

The pandemic caused by the coronavirus has generated a number of adverse situations in the different scenarios in which human beings develop. Particularly in the educational field, the pandemic caused a massive closure of educational centers that had within their operation to dictate lessons in a face-to-face manner. The socioeconomic environment of the different societies that make up Latin America, especially Costa Rica, have high rates of poverty and extreme poverty, bringing high levels of social dissatisfaction and a high degree of economic and educational inequality for the people who make up the Costa Rican civil society.

In this context, the pandemic has brought a great crisis to the educational pillar because institutions have had to suspend their lessons and migrate to more feasible alternatives such as distance education through technological platforms. This migration has brought a great paradigm shift by incorporating the teaching staff and educational communities to update their way of teaching lessons, with the clear slogan of coping in a better and timely manner the negative impact that the pandemic has had on the activities that human beings perform as the educational part.

Keywords: M.E.P, English curriculum, proficiency, approach.

La Estrategia de Educación a Distancia del Ministerio de Educación Pública durante la Pandemia Covid-19 y las Adecuaciones en la Mediación Pedagógica y Funciones Administrativas en el Profesorado de Inglés del Bachillerato San José de Alajuela durante 2020

RESUMEN

La pandemia causada por el coronavirus ha generado un sinnúmero de situaciones adversas en los diferentes escenarios en los que se desenvuelven los seres humanos. Particularmente en el ámbito educativo, la pandemia causó un cierre masivo de centros educativos que tenían dentro de su operación el dictar lecciones de manera presencial. El entorno socioeconómico de las diferentes sociedades que conforman Latinoamérica, especialmente la costarricense, tienen grandes índices de pobreza y pobreza extrema trayendo altos grados de insatisfacción social y un alto grado de desigualdad económica y educativa para las personas que conforman la sociedad civil costarricense.

En este contexto la pandemia ha traído una gran crisis al pilar educativo porque las instituciones han tenido que suspender sus lecciones y migrarlas a alternativas más factibles como lo es la educación a distancia a través de plataformas tecnológicas. Esta migración ha traído un gran cambio de paradigma al incorporar al cuerpo docente y a las comunidades educativas a actualizar su manera de dictar lecciones, con la clara consigna de sobrellevar de una mejor y oportuna manera el impacto tan negativo que ha tenido la pandemia en las actividades que los seres humanos realizan como la parte educativa.

Palabras Clave: M.E.P, Plan de estudios de inglés, competencia, enfoque.

Artículo recibido: 10. Junio. 2021

Aceptado para publicación: 16. Julio. 2021

Correspondencia: cristian.calderon@uhispano.ac.cr

Conflictos de Interés: Ninguna que declarar

INTRODUCTION

Distance education has been one of the novelties with the greatest impact in the Costa Rican educational system and the rest of the world, during the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020. It caused a series of changes in teaching methodologies since teachers had to face several new provisions emanating from the Ministry of Public Education (MEP). Those changes included long days of training, new learning strategies, the use of Information and Communication Technologies in education (ICT's), and a series of orientations to apply during that year.

Teaching in a distance learning environment means an adaptation to new styles that has positive and negative outcomes of a greater magnitude than the traditional education. Espinoza (as cited in Maddox 2015, p.3) suggests “[We should] instead consider the need to adapt to the times for the sake of the student” Every student has the right to receive quality educational attention. Therefore, the existence of various educational modalities makes the school system more flexible and efficient. This flexibility is a paramount for those who for several reasons such as financial, family, work, or disability, need to access to educational services which they would otherwise be excluded.

The disruption caused by COVID-19 in everyday life meant the missed out of millions of children and teenagers in education. The United Nation states, “An estimated 40 percent of the poorest countries failed to support learners at risk during the COVID-19 crisis, and past experiences show that both education and gender inequalities tend to be neglected in responses to disease outbreaks” (2020, p.8). The challenges faced by under developing countries with students currently out of classes has an enormous negative impact in aspects such as food insecurity, economic instability, and the increase of social issues like violence, prostitution, and drugs consumption.

Nevertheless, the new conditions imposed by COVID-19 pandemic caused the reinvention of the majority of the educational systems around the world. For instance, as soon as Costa Rica confirmed the first cases back in March 2020, the government along with the Ministry of Public Health, ordered the closure of all private and public schools in the country. Since then, teachers started to develop distance education initiatives to maintain contact with their students by using some technological tools such as WhatsApp, emails, phone calls, and virtual platforms like Google Classroom to provide

teaching material to work at home. Later on, The Ministry of Public Education (MEP) provided some general guidelines to support the continuation of teaching and learning during confinement, taking into consideration different scenarios emerged in that new reality. In addition, the official MEP's website, updated digital resources where students and teachers had easily access to interact to develop some of the curriculum objectives for the school year.

The Ministry of Public Education (MEP) has not only the responsibility to organize the educational system in Costa Rica, but also the commitment of supervising that minors receive proper education in the country, and equal opportunities to learn, regardless social conditions. It is an imperative task to focus on that in all regions of the country. In the document, "Guidance for educational intervention in educational centers before the COVID-19", states some of the following principles:

- a) Educational centers are fundamental contexts for the effective promotion of virus contagion prevention practices, not also at school but also at home and in the community.
- b) Students are active agents who can lead and disseminate both, within the educational center and in the community, valid and reliable information about the virus and the promotion of prevention of contagion. They are not simple receivers of the information.
- c) The global and pandemic situation offers a context of highly powerful learning for skill development and relevant curricular knowledge approach, which allow the students understand clearly.
- d) Students and some other people suffer worries, have anxiety, and want to know in detail what is happening in the country and worldwide. They must receive constant information, clear and according with their levels of development, as well as having spaces to express doubts, ideas, or proposal on the subject.
- e) The continuity of the educational process in case of absenteeism or partial or temporary closure of the educational center, depends on actions and specific pedagogical programs that recognize how to transcend the space of the classroom to promote the autonomy of the students' population, with the support that can be provided from homes. Experience and teaching innovation to offer didactic alternatives that can respond to the students' needs.

- f) In this context, the contribution of families is essential as partners in the actions that the Ministry of Public Education executes to guarantee the continuity of the students' educational process. (MEP, 2020a).

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the conventional education with the closure of schools at the national level. However, the Ministry of Public Education considered essential to maintain bonds between the students and the educational system. Therefore, the implementation of protocols, guidance and strategies to carry out the school year. In addition, authorities saw an unprecedented opportunity to transform the national educational system, by adding the use of virtual tools for learning purpose considering students' technological resources, and some other strategies to engage in distance education.

MEP and the implementation of new scenarios

Healthcare and lifetime measures during the COVID 19 pandemic promoted new learning scenarios. Therefore, in April 2020, The Ministry of Public Education (MEP) implemented a nationwide strategy for supporting learning at home. In this policy, they gave relevance and pertinence to the use of technological resources, and specific and contextualized actions for learning distance environments in all possible contexts, due to the circumstances implied from face-to-face model of classes to a non-face to face model, or remote contact. Based on access to technological resources and connectivity, MEP (2020b) organized the educational system in the four following scenarios to assist students:

- a) Attention to students with internet access and device at home.
- b) Attention to students who have a device.
- c) Attention to students who have technological devices but not connectivity.
- d) Attention to student who do not have technological devices.

In those variety of contexts, teachers promoted different educational experiences and mediation strategies with technical support for students with partial or full connectivity, and printed material for the ones who did not have access to technological devices or internet at home. In addition, the family contribution became essential to accompany and supervise their children in the new role of learning at home, as well as the timely completion of the assignments to provide evidence of learning. The supporting learning

at home guidance during the distance educational process had the following purposes, (MEP, 2020b).

- Design learning spaces for the students considering the context and possibilities to access to technologies or other sources.
- Avoiding disconnecting students from schools and activating all those communication mechanisms that promote their permanence in the educational system.
- Rethink the forms of pedagogical mediation to promote and generate learning from the immediate students' contexts.
- Form support networks as a strategy for professional and technical skill development.

Therefore, The Ministry of Public Education was able to provide equal opportunities, and thereby took action to ensure that most of students remained in the educational system, minimizing the impact of exclusion and the loss of short- and long-term learning. In addition, the implementation of technology in distance education, as never seen before in the country in such a magnitude, was a great achievement to support the learning process through new abilities and skills.

For the scenarios and strategies intended for pedagogical mediation in distance learning, the Ministry of Public Education states the following descriptions (MEP, 2020b).

Attention to students with Internet access at home.

- It must be characterized by a pedagogical mediation that promotes autonomous learning for the construction of knowledge, using technological tools made official by the Ministry of Education. The intention of it is carrying out learning session among teachers and students to promote construction knowledge and skill development by using Information and Communication Technology (ICT). That integrates the design of online learning activities.
- The planning of a virtual class requires strategies and resources different from those that would be face to face mode and generate autonomy and the ability to learn with the support of self-study material.
- The office 365 package was selected and particularly the Microsoft Teams platform, with free and secure access to teachers, students, parents, and caregivers. It also

allows to define profile policies and traceability of the data. This is the MEP's official communication tool.

Attention to students who have a device with limited internet access.

- The teachers used autonomous work guide as tools for planning activities with students as the previous scenario.
- The priority is given to asynchronous activities in which teachers must previously record their voice, images, or short procedures easily to distribute by different means (Facebook, WhatsApp, Teams, electronic)
- The existence of technological resources make sense when it has been previously designed and planned.

Attention to students who have technological devices, but not connectivity or technological devices.

- Educational support for the students without devices or internet: Autonomous work guides printed by subject, Infographics with topics reviews, educational games specialized to address contents readings, anthologies, and copies Retrieved in libraries.
- Educational support for the students with device but no access to internet: USB storage devices, digital autonomous work guides, specialized readings to address contents, anthologies, related audios, videos or multimedia presentations, audios or orientation videos for parents, educational games for preschool children and I cycle. In addition, in the document for supporting learning at home (MEP, 2020b) the Ministry of Public Education (MEP) established the teachers' role in the mediation strategies in distance education for the four possible scenarios, as follows:
 - Plan, prepares and develops synchronous or asynchronous mediation strategies for learning according to study programs and focusing on the current Educational Curricular Policies for the areas and levels.
 - Identify students' access to technological resources and connectivity to communicate promptly to their superiors, providing ideas and strategies to make possible the continuation of the de educational process.
 - Apply collaborative strategies between coworkers to optimize virtual tools that contribute to pedagogical mediations.
 - Inquire about trainings and self-training options offered by MEP.

- Prepares work materials and practices that guide the students during their autonomous work at home for the maximum use of the designed learning space and timely feedback to the students.
- • Request support from the immediate leadership and the pedagogical consultancies of the Regional Directorate when it is required to meet specific needs of the students 'population.
- • Participate in virtual meetings with the immediate leadership to report their progress or particular situation.

Teaching in distance education highlights the role of the teacher as the mediator of the students' educational process by the development of activities and tasks carried out in distance environments. They are also in charge of motivate ad facilitate learning experiences through virtual activities or printed material. However, the new contexts in education require teachers' preparations and student's proactivity to efficiently contribute to meeting the objectives. That means more teachers' time and dedication but also a new way of learning, improving, and updating teaching strategies.

The Autonomous Work Guide (GTA in Spanish)

As part of strategies for the new reality, the Ministry of Public Education implemented the Autonomous Work Guide in all programs, as the didactic tool in the distance pedagogical mediation during COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose was to support the continuity of the learning process by creating a standardized format and recommended activities to complete school assignments and objectives, with the support of technological devices or printed resources, according to the corresponding scenario. The Ministry of Education (2020c). The structures of the Autonomous Work Guide considered the three following aspects: planning, self-regulation, and evaluation. However, teachers were still responsible for curricular decision making in distance educational support. In other words, they needed to know the reality of each student to determine the reinforcing expected learning strategies, and when it was appropriate to start the approach to new knowledge.

Steps to follow during the implementation of the Autonomous Work Guide

Teachers were in charge of performing actions and the selection of the best scenario for each student, taking into consideration technology and physical resources Retrieved. These criteria allow them to determine the type of format (digital or physical) that

should be implemented in the assignment. Based on a previous research on students' conditions at home, teachers had to adapt the autonomous work guide in the best possible way to each context. The Ministry of Public Education through the Directorate on Curriculum Development established a template for it. The teaching and the administrative staff must ensure that the academic load offered to students is balanced considering individual characteristics, expected learning activities and suggested time for the development. It had also to consider adaptations in materials for students with disability. The teaching staff and the school management should ensure that all students have the corresponding work through digital or printed mechanism, so students must develop the work at home independently or at least with the support of a family member (MEP 2020d).

The planning and elaboration of the self-study work was a fundamental didactic tool for the distance educational process during the confinement. The Ministry of Public Education organized the mediation strategies for students to perform them efficiently in a timely manner to cover all the schools' subjects. Therefore, the administrative team along with the teaching staff create a chronogram for the delivery of the assignments and the deadline for students to complete them. The students who had connectivity and devices to perform the assessment at home received the self-study guide through the official MEP's tool, "Microsoft Team Platform" when they had synchronous and asynchronous classes during the week. However, there were some other means for sending and receiving materials such as Classroom, Facebook, Email, Google Form or WhatsApp. On the other hand, for students who needed printed material, teachers worked together, elaborating and anthology for each level with all the subjects. They also organized a monthly schedule to send and received the Autonomous Work Guide. The assignments included activities to cover the whole month, while the students with internet connection had materials every two weeks.

Having mentioned what the main reasons were for this research, it began by establishing the problematization question which was *What type of adaptations in the pedagogical mediation and administrative functions had the distance education strategy of MEP during the COVID-19 pandemic caused in the teaching staff of Liceo San José de Alajuela?*

In addition, the strategies in distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic is a challenge for each teacher in this country, and to know the adaptations made in their teaching practices during the new scenarios is one of the fundamental elements of this research. The United Nations (UN) on their report, “Education during Covid-19 and beyond” mention that from the onset of the pandemic, teachers were immediately tasked with the implementation of distance learning modalities, without sufficient guidance, training, or resources (2020.p14). The systematization of this information gives important results and reveal the reality in which some English Costa Rican educators were living for the 2020 school year.

One aspect that needs to be highlighted is that people are facing a global disease and education was also drastically affected at that level, causing teachers' adjustments to new demands in a short period of time. The International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) states that although the focus placed on the pandemic is always on students' impact, teachers also suffer significant impact at work and professionally. The majority of teachers did not have previous experience in distance education, and their institutions do not provide enough training, with all the communication media at the disposal to transform the presential classes to a virtual mode. This entry to a complex teaching modality with multiple technological and pedagogical options could result in frustration and overwhelming due to the adaptation to an educational system never experienced before without the corresponding knowledge. (IESALC. 2020).

Hence the reason for the research, that was, the reality that the teaching staff in Costa Rica had to face to carry out the 2020 school year, and that as far as possible, having less impact on learning and human formation of childhood and adolescence in this country. Also, it was important to emphasize the purpose of the research, such as the systematization of the information about the adaptations that each teacher had made during distance education, in response to the suspension of lessons due to the present pandemic. Besides that, the input that this research might represent in decision-making in the national education system to guarantee the labor rights of this very important sector in the life of the country, and the correct functioning of educational activities.

Thus, this research organized the antecedents that led to reality during a social and health situation on a global scale, which caused the suspension of face-to-face lessons

and led to the practice of other procedures to maintain the continuity of the education process. With this, it also generated various teaching modalities, applicable to the same class group; but broken according to the requirements of each student.

Literature Review

By having explained and deepened the main purpose of the research, within the theoretical framework is intended to cite some previous authors that had conducted some research to strengthen the distance methodology. It was pointed out that the isolation during this pandemic period, has become technology as the most appropriate alternative to keep the education system functional in many parts of the world. The changes to remote learning contribute to improving interactivity and collaboration between those who learn parents, and teachers. However, parents are concerned for their unpreparedness to assist their children in online learning assignments, lack of access to the necessary technology, connectivity, and economic difficulties. On the other hand, teachers' concerns are related to their capacities of conducting an online process, with their level of knowledge, the skills in the use of technology, and the access to it (2020). There is no doubt about the benefits brought out through distance education during Covid-19 pandemic with the struggles that implies to meets students' needs, when they had not been able to attend face to face classes, due to distance and time constraints. The consequences of not being prepared for this modality affected the educational system efficiency since in many cases, students ended up dropping out the schools, as the opportunity to avoid responsibilities and face new challenges. It also increased their frustrations for the expectations once undertaking at the beginning of the academic learning process, leading them up to feelings of personal and family failures. In addition, the main exponent of the qualitative and quantitative effectiveness of the school system is based on students' permanence in school, and therefore, the rarely school leaving affects the teaching staff and their value in the society perspective as the fundamental key in the modeling leaders and guidance to become better citizens for developing of their communities.

On the other side, UNESCO (2020, cited in Hyseni and Hoxha, 2020) points out some concerns reported by many countries declaring low-level of classroom technology prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a lack of preparation for an abrupt changes and expectations on how the new reality would affect the educational system. Ibid states that

the requirements for immediate adjustments to online formats were reported to increase the level of stress and anxiety among teachers in different parts of the world (2020 cited in Hyseni and Hoxha, 2020). In addition to the teaching inexperienced faced with online environment in distance learning, teachers also encountered some other problems related to the increase workload such as planning the best distance educational model to fit the students' needs. During distance education, there was an increasing trend to recognize and value the teachers' role in the transformation of the society. However, it had also caused physical and emotional implication in their life. For instance, exceeding the working hours contracted, suffering cuts in their salary, suffering pain for sickness and lost during the pandemic and scares of getting fired, Therefore, many teachers experienced mental health disorders such as disorientation, anxious, dissatisfaction and depression. Some researchers point out some other factors that can affect teachers in the process to adapting to changes in the distance learning environment. For example, privacy, economic and working conditions, authority, responsibility, level of self-satisfaction, and the time and dedication for the implementation of new models (2009 cited in Hyseni and Hoxha, 2020). It is essential to underline that teachers were trained to give classes in conventional settings not in distance learning environments. Teachers were forced to do so, and it implied physical and psychological adaptations that are no easy to adjust. Their working from home included issues such as managing the time, remembering regular breaks, organizing meetings, establishing segments to assist students, preparing virtual classes, avoiding unrelated work activities, among some others. In addition, there were also some practical issues in contents for subjects that could not be taught virtually for their nature. However, despite the short comings, the sanitary crisis generated excellent opportunities for teachers to reinforce technical competences, creativity, and innovations.

According to Flamholtz and Randle (2028 cited in Hyseni and Hoxha, 2020), some psychological factors that can influence teachers' ability to be part of the adaptation are discomfort, feeling lost, and experiencing doubt and worry when they depart from what they know, and feel comfortable to something that is unusual and uncomfortable. Some other factors include teachers' stress, accumulation of fatigue, and mental exhaustion that affects not only the resistance to change but also negatively affect their performance and level of satisfaction (Margolis and Nagal 2006 cited in Hyseni and

Hoxha, 2020). The tension accumulated by teachers to try to develop their work in unknown conditions might affect their physical and emotional dimension. Therefore, fatigue and mental exhaustion in teacher occurs because of continuous levels of stress that exceed what is bearable.

Methodological Framework

Within this chapter, it is intended to present the information based on theory and field observations done. In the Methodological framework chapter, the researcher presented the purpose of the project based on the new adaptations faced by the English teachers in Liceo San José de Alajuela, due to the implementation of distance learning strategies from the Ministry of Public Education, as a result of the confinement during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a mixed research that included quantitative and qualitative techniques to collect data and the corresponding analysis. The sources and subjects of the information had been carefully selected according to some characteristics that the researcher considered as requirements to obtain accurate findings to understand the phenomenon.

Results Presentation

Within this chapter, it is intended to represent and show the gathered information from the participants who were six English teachers of Liceo San Jose de Alajuela who answered twenty questions to know the pedagogical and administrative adaptations caused by strategy implemented by the Ministry of Public Education during the COVID-19 pandemic in the pedagogical mediations and administrative functions, in teachers of Liceo San Jose de Alajuela, during the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020. The results obtained from the survey were presented in eleven sections, according to the specific objectives described in the methodological chapter. From Part I to Part IV, the participants answered questions connected to identify aspects in the distance education strategies that forced English teachers to learn new skills in the use of ICT tools, such as experience in distance education, trainings for distance education, teachers' health effects during distance education, and the evaluation system implemented for distance education. From Part V to Part IX, the participants answered questions to describe the main adaptations for teachers to deal with the distance education strategy such as preparation, work equipment, schedules, workplace, and academic activities. Finally, from Part X to Part XI, the participants answered what were the administrative

adaptations during the covid-19 pandemic. The most relevant collected data is presented among the following statements:

- 1) Most of the teachers recognized the lack of experiences in this new methodology. Martin et.al consider it as an essential disadvantage in maintaining distance learning as classes by stating “The vast majority of teachers has both academic and professional experience, training to teach regular classes and are already used to this mode. This may generate some difficulty for teachers to teach classes of action at a distance” (2018, p.150). That also indicated the impact of changing to distance methodologies during Covid-19 might mean for teachers who were not prepared for this educational modality, considering that they only interacted with students every day at the schools. However, the fact that 33.3% had any type of distance educational experiences was probably through teaching online courses or in distance education program. It facilitated them to adapt easier to the news strategies implemented by the Ministry of Education during the sanitary crisis.
- 2) Most of the teachers realized that the training implemented by the Ministry of Public Education was not enough to help student to achieve their academic goals. For instance, UNESCO mentions that the successful integration of ICT tools in the classroom mostly depends on the teachers’ ability to structure the learning environment by organizing the way students acquire cognitive competence and manage to apply it in difference situations (2018 cited in Hernandez et. al 2018). Therefore, in order to improve skills and provide with better attention to students, as part of their challenge, teachers tried to look for different trainings in all possible websites to incorporate in their daily activities. The teachers who did not see necessary to have other trainings might have used the digital resources from the MEP’s website to cover the gaps and answer questions during the process.
- 3) The Ministry of Public Education established that the teaching staff was in charge of performing actions and the best scenario for each student, considering technology and physical resources available (MEP 2020d). Teachers had to prepare their work activities using the four scenarios. That included the preparation of the autonomous work guide, planning the lesson for virtual classes every week, evaluating the assignments, and making reports for the school management, students, and parents.

Therefore, most of teachers considered the teaching job very tiring since the amount of work was excessive and a little time to complete it.

- 4) The evaluation process implemented by the Ministry of Public Education in the English subject was formative during the first semester of 2020 through the registration of the Autonomous Work Guide and some other evidence (2020d). However, for the second semester of 2020, it was included a summative evaluation by adding a numerical value to the final students' grade. That means 55% for the Autonomous Work Guide and 45% through a summative assessment instrument (MEP 2020g). This evaluation was definitely new for teachers in Costa Rica since the Ministry of Public Education reformed the Learning assessment regulation for that purpose. The Basic learning Templates (PAB) established the main objectives to achieve during 2020. Therefore, teachers had to prioritize contents in the pedagogical tasks assigned to students. That also needed to be registered in the Descriptive Report of Achievements at the end of the semester and the year.
- 5) Most of teachers preferred the formative assessment in distance education since it goes according to the achievements, limitations, and reality of each student in order to develop self-learning. Therefore, every Autonomous Work Guide (GAB) had the Self-regulation and evaluation matrix to identify themselves their level of understanding, and the Self-evaluation of students' performance level rubric to recognize themselves the expected learning indicators reached. Every time that students delivered their job, teachers needed to record the progress and send them the corresponding feedback.
- 6) Teachers considered computers and telephones as the main tools for working remotely. The Ministry of Education, in the actions to strengthen distance education during the sanitary confinement, implemented The Microsoft Teams platform. That is described by Martin and Tap "... as a cloud app digital hub that brings conversations, meetings, files, and apps together in a Single Learning Management System, allowing its users to run it either in computers or mobiles" (2019, p.60). In addition to that, most of teachers used to have the WhatsApp application to contact students and parents to follow their progress and to send and receive assignments, when there was no connectivity at home to support the use of the platform.

CONCLUSIONS

In 2020, teachers had to relearn themselves to become designers of new learning experiences to maintain students in the school under distance learning scenarios. The researcher analyzed the adaptations developed by the English teachers of Liceo San José de Alajuela to accomplish the Ministry of Public Education strategy during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The continuation of the school system through the distance education process had some challenges to face in terms of the lack of knowledge and training in technological applications. Added to that, there were many difficulties that students experienced for not having connectivity or devices to work in the assignments at home. In this project each participant shared their experiences in distance education during the last school year, in which it seems that many of them have similar issues with their particular needs. However, the primary objective was to utilize distance education as the platform to continue the learning process, seen as an opportunity to provide a valuable teaching method, with the corresponding adjustments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Within this part, several recommendations are provided to MEP, the educational institutions, and teachers:

a) MEP:

- Expand the national curriculum for teachers to develop technological skills with the supervision and guidance of specialized professionals to support, facilitate, and guide process.
- Overcome technological barriers in education by investing in digital infrastructure and improving connectivity for the schools and the teaching staff.
- Promote at all levels and all subjects' trainings for the use of ICT tools through participatory and innovative teaching methodologies in the classroom and outside of it.

b) To educational Institutions:

- To orientate the teaching and the administrative staff for the appropriated attention to students, during distance education and changes arise during the process. For example, the use technological tools and new procedures.

- To advise the teaching staff and exchange ideas about the implementation of pedagogical mediations that favor the integral development of the students, without implying overloading of teachers' functions.
- To promote open and sincere dialogue between school authorities and the teaching staff, without neglecting the needs and circumstances that each teacher lives, and the objectives pursued by the institution to support the community, through distance educational modalities.
- To Support teaching staff initiatives to implement methodologies and procedures to make their job efficiently. For example, the use of blogs for didactic guides that promote a self-learning environment or application for recording summative evaluations and reports.

c) **To teachers:**

- To provide support for all students in distance education but especially for those who need more attention because they do not have technological resources.
- To take trainings to improve knowledge and skills that allow them to be up to date in educational procedures and technological application, to be prepared for new requirements. In this manner, teachers might avoid stress or other types of psychological manifestations for the lack of preparation in uncertain environments.
- During teleworking, teachers should maintain an organized schedule with weekly tasks to accomplish goals. In addition, they must differentiate between his personal and labor life to guarantee the accomplish of objectives during the contracted hours, so they can enjoy time with the family and friends.
- Collaborative work between peers allows teachers to analyze common issues with better criteria to resolve them. Therefore, in circumstance of a lot of pressure and work overload, the coworkers advise, or help is essential to develop new skills and vent frustrations.

REFERENCES

- Adhabi, E. Blash, C. (2017). *Literature Review for the Type of Interview in Qualitative Research*. International Journal of Education. 9 (3). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320009898_Literature_Review_for_the_Type_of_Interview_in_Qualitative_Research

- Alonazi, S (2017). *The Role of Teachers in Promoting Learner Autonomy in Secondary Schools in Saudi Arabia*. English Language Teaching 10 (7) Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317547063_The_Role_of_Teachers_in_Promoting_Learner_Autonomy_in_Secondary_Schools_in_Saudi_Arabia
- Balushi, K. (2016). *The use of online semi-structured interviews in interpretive research*. International Journal of Science and Research. Retrieved from https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/7905/bb18560ad55eb36357476c4ea2eb2df9abab.pdf?_ga=2.105944576.2099315942.1608446398-2106691066.1606324633
- Bird, d. (2009). *The use of questionnaires for acquiring information on public perception of natural hazards and risk mitigation – a review of current knowledge and practice*. Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences 9 Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/26848124_The_use_of_questionnaires_for_acquiring_information_on_public_perception_of_natural_hazards_and_risk_mitigation_A_review_of_current_knowledge_and_practice
- Canals. L (2017) *Instruments for gathering data*. Research Publishing Net. Retrieved from <https://research-publishing.net/manuscript?10.14705/rpnet.2017.emmd2016.637>
- CEPAL- UNESCO (2020). *Educación en tiempos de pandemia [Education in pandemic times]* Retrieved from https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45904/1/S2000510_es.pdf
- CEPAL (2019). La educación en tiempos de la pandemia COVID-19. <https://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/45904-la-educacion-tiempos-la-pandemia-covid-19>
- Clark, M (2004) *The conceptual and operational definition of quality of life: a systematic review of the literature* [Master Dissertation, Texas A&M University] Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/147124504.pdf>
- De Gooyert, V. Größler, A. (2018). *On the differences between theoretical and applied system dynamics modeling*. System Dynamics Review 34, (4) Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331036767_On_the_differences_between_theoretical_and_applied_system_dynamics_modeling_129

- Correa, P. Sanhueza. G (2019). *Characterization of Autonomous Work in a Chilean English Pedagogy Program: Teachers' and Freshmen's Perspectives*. Revista Electrónica Educare 23 (1) Retrieved from https://www.scielo.sa.cr/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1409-42582019000100050
- CSO (2020). *Guía de salud ocupacional y apoyo psicosocial en el ámbito laboral en el marco de la emergencia sanitaria por la pandemia del Covid-19. Pandemic. [Health occupational guide and psychosocial support in the labor scope in frame of the health emergency for the Covid-19 pandemic]*. Retrieved from https://www.cso.go.cr/documentos_relevantes/manuales_guias/00%20GUIA%20SALUD%20OCUPACIONAL%20COVID19.pdf
- Deb. R. (2015). *Application of ICTs in Teaching-Learning Process*. International Research Journal of Interdisciplinary & Multidisciplinary Studies. 1(7). Retrieved from <http://oaji.net/articles/2015/1707-1442037069.pdf>
- Duhalde, M. (2020). *Teleworking for teachers*. Retrieved from https://www.ei-ie.org/en/woe/homepage/woe_detail/16732/%E2%80%9Cteleworking-for-teachers%E2%80%9D-by-miguel-duhalde
- Fallas, I. Zuñiga, M. (2010). *Estudio de las Tecnologías Digitales de la Información y la Comunicación en la Educación Costarricense [Study of the Digital Information Technologies and communication in Costa Rican Education]* Estado de la Nación.
- Faradila, D. Pramodya, D. Wei, L. Fatima , S. (2017). *Clerical work for school teachers: A burden or a responsibility?*. Journal of Humanities, Language, Culture and Business. 1 (3). Retrieved in http://www.icohlcb.com/images/Articles/vol_1_No.3/Paper-043-.pdf
- Fernandez, A. (2020). *Efectos de la COVID-19 sobre el sistema educativo costarricense [Effects of COVID-19 on the Costa Rican educational system]*. Delfino. Retrieved in <https://delfino.cr/2020/08/efectos-de-la-covid-19-sobre-el-sistema-educativo-costarricense-i-parte>

- Filardi, F. Castro, R. Fundao, M. (2020). *Advantages and disadvantages of teleworking in Brazilian public administration: Cadernos. EBAPE.BR* 18 (1) Retrieved from: https://www.scielo.br/pdf/cebape/v18n1/en_1679-3951-cebape-18-01-28.pdf
- Fox, N. (2009). *Using Interviews in a Research Project*. The NIHR RDS for the East Midlands. Retrieved from https://www.rds-yh.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/15_Using-Interviews-2009.pdf
- Hernández, R. (2018). *Propósitos y Representaciones* 5 (1). Retrieved in <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1139346.pdf>
- Hernández, R. Cumpa, R. Rodríguez, S (2017). *New Ways of Learning: Teacher Training in the Use of ICT's*. *Propósitos y Representaciones* 6 (2). Retrieved in <http://www.scielo.org.pe/pdf/pyr/v6n2/a14v6n2.pdf>
- Hyseni, D. Hoxca, L. (2020) *The impact of COVID-19 on education and on the well-being of teachers, parents, and students: Challenges related to remote (online) learning and opportunities for advancing the quality of education*. Retrieved in https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341297812_The_impact_of_COVID-19_on_education_and_on_the_well_being_of_teachers_parents_and_students_Challenges_related_to_remote_online_learning_and_opportunities_for_advancing_the_quality_of_education
- Kaliyadan, F. and Kulkami, V. (2019). *Types of Variables, Descriptive Statistics, and Sample Size*. Indian Dermatology Online Journal 10(1), 82–86. https://doi.org/10.4103/idoj.IDOJ_468_18
- International Labor Office (2020). *Teleworking during the COVID-19 Pandemia and beyond*. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/-ed_protect/protav/travail/documents/publication/wcms_751232.pdf
- Johnstone, T. (2015). *Questionnaires and Surveys*. Research Methods in Intercultural Communication: A Practical Guide. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316228107_Questionnaires_and_Surveys
- Levin, K. (2006). *Study design III: Cross-sectional studies*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Kate_Levin/publication/7222561_Study_Design_III_cross-sectional_studies/links/00463530cc57333de4000000/Study-Design-III-cross-sectional-studies.pdf

- Maddox, W. (2015). *Adapting to a Virtual Learning Environment* (Doctoral Dissertation, Antioch University). Retrieved from <https://aura.antioch.edu/etds/197/>
- Majid, U. (2018) *Research Fundamentals: Study Design, Population, and Sample Size*. URNCST Journal. 2 (1). Retrieved from <https://urncst.com/index.php/urncst/article/view/16>
- Martin, L. Tapp, D. (2019). *Teaching with Teams: An introduction to teaching an undergraduate law module using Microsoft Teams*. Innovative Practice in Higher Education 3. (3) Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332964592_Teaching_with_Teams_A_n_introduction_to_teaching_an_undergraduate_law_module_using_Microsoft_Teams
- Martins, M. Torres, A. Silva, V. (2018) *Distance education: advantages and disadvantages of the point of view of education and society*. Dialogia. 29. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328032761_Distance_education_advantages_and_disadvantages_of_the_point_of_view_of_education_and_society
- Martínez, J. González, D. Pereira, R. Rangel, R. Bastos, J. (2015). *Sampling: how to select participants in my research study?* An Bras. Dermatol. 91 (3). Retrieved from [http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0365-05962016000300326&lng=en&nrm=iso>](http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0365-05962016000300326&lng=en&nrm=iso) ISSN 1806-4841. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/abd1806-4841.20165254>
- MEP (2020a). *Orientaciones para la intervención educativa en centros educativos ante el COVID – 19 [Guidance for educational intervention in educational centers before the COVID-19]* Retrieved from <https://www.mep.go.cr/sites/default/files/page/adjuntos/orientaciones-intervencion-educativa.pdf>.
- MEP (2020b). *Orientaciones para el apoyo del proceso educativo a distancia [Guidance for distance educational support]*. Retrieved from https://www.mep.go.cr/sites/default/files/orientaciones-proceso-educativo-distancia_0.pdf

- MEP (2020c). *Política en Tecnologías de la Información del Ministerio De Educación Pública. [Information Technology Policy of Ministry of Public Education]* Retrieved from <https://www.mep.go.cr/sites/default/files/politica-tic.pdf>
- MEP (2020d). *Pautas para la implementación de trabajo autónomo en la estrategia, Aprendo en casa. [Guidelines for the implementation of autonomous work in the strategy, “I learn at home”]* Retrieved from http://www.ddc.mep.go.cr/sites/all/files/ddc_mep_go_cr/adjuntos/pautas_para_la_implementacion_de_las_guias_de_trabajo_autonomo_07-05-2020vf.pdf
- MEP (2020e). *Circular DM-0032-07-2020.* Retrieved from <https://www.drea.co.cr/sites/default/files/Contenido/CIR%20DM-0032-07-2020-1Sobre%20Informe%20Descriptivo%20de%20logro.pdf>
- MEP (2020f). *Circular DM-0041-09-2020.* Retrieved from <http://recursos.mep.go.cr/2020/sitioartes2/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CIRCULAR-DM-0041-09-2020-19-de-setiembre-Final-VAC-rev-Giselle.pdf>
- MEP (2020g) Lineamientos técnicos para la evaluación de los aprendizajes en el segundo periodo 2020 [Technical guidelines for learning evaluation in the second period 2020] Retrieved from http://www.ddc.mep.go.cr/sites/all/files/lineamientos_tecnicos_para_la_evaluacion_de_los_aprendizajes_en_el_segundo_periodo_2020_final_ajuste_detce.doc
- MEP (2020h) CIRCULAR DDC-0671-07-2020. Retrieved from <http://www.lenguajevirtual.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/DDC-671-07-2020-Circular-Aclaracion-Plantilla-de-aprendizaje-base-2020-DA.pdf>
- MEP (2020i) Plantilla digital del PIAD para el INFORME DESCRIPTIVO DE LOGRO I SEMESTRE 2020 [*PIAD digital template for the ACHIEVEMENT DESCRIPTIVE*]. Retrieved from https://dgec.mep.go.cr/sites/all/files/dgec_mep_go_cr/adjuntos/presentacion_herramienta_piad_informe_descriptivo_de_logro_i_periodo_2020_0.pdf
- MEP (2020j) Propuesta plan estratégico tecnologías de la información Ministerio de Educación Pública [*Information technology strategic plan proposal Ministry of*

- Public Education]. Retrieved from <http://mep.go.cr/sites/default/files/plan-estrategico-tecnologia-informacion-peti.pdf>*
- National Library of Jamaica (2013) *Evaluating Primary and Secondary Sources: An online tutorial.* Retrieved from <https://nlj.gov.jm/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Evaluating-Primary-and-Secondary-Sources.pdf>
- Niglas, K. (2014). *How the novice researcher can make sense of mixed methods design.* International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches 3(1). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271150775_How_the_novice_researcher_can_make_sense_of_mixed_methods_designs
- Oltmann, S. (2016). *Qualitative Interviews: A Methodological Discussion of the Interviewer and Respondent Contexts.* Forum: Qualitative Social Research 17 (2) Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304876962_Qualitative_Interviews_A_Methodological_Discussion_of_the_Interviewer_and_Respondent_Contexts
- Ponto, J. (2015). *Understanding and Evaluating Survey Research.* Journal of Advance practitioner in oncology 6. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286445115_Understanding_and_Evaluating_Survey_Research
- Reeves, S. Kitto, S, Goldman, J (2013). *Ethnography in qualitative educational research.* AMEE Guide 35 (80). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/243964702_Ethnography_in_qualitative_educational_research_AMEE_Guide_No_80
- Sadeghi, M. (2019). *A shift from classroom to distance learning: Advantages and Limitations.* Sadeghi International Journal of Research in English Education. Retrieved from: <http://ijreeonline.com/article-1-132-en.pdf>
- Shan, J. (2013). *ICT in Education: A Critical Literature Review and Its Implications.* International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology.9 (1). Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1182651.pdf>

- Simon, M. Goes, J. (2013) *Scope, Limitations and Delimitations*. Dissertations and scholarly research. Retrieved from <https://ders.es/limitationscopedelimitation1.pdf>
- Sympathonia, S. (2016), *Teachers' experience of Information and Communication Technology use for Teaching and Learning in Urban Schools* (Doctoral Dissertation, University of South Africa). Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/79171214.pdf>
- Sotheby's Institute of Art (2020). *Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Sources*. Retrieved from <https://sia.libguides.com/c.php?g=521408>
- Showkat, N. and Parveen, H. (2017). Non probability and probability sampling. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319066480_Non-Probability_and_Probability_Sampling
- United Nations (2020). Policy Brief: *Education during COVID-19 and beyond*. Retrieved from: https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf
- Wiley, J. (2014) Data collection and sampling in qualitative research: does size matter? JAN Editorial. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/jan.12163>