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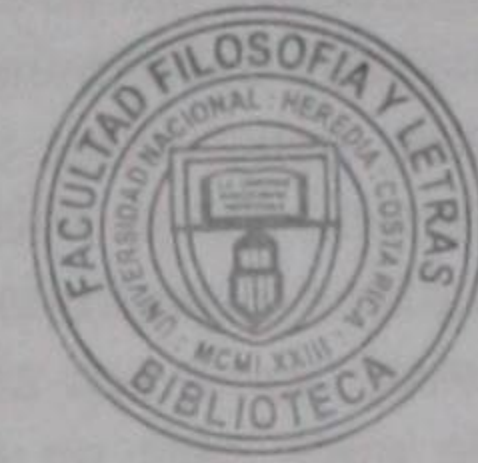
***EFL Professors' Perceptions and Intentions Towards the
Integration of the Tools Offered by the UNA Virtual Program
in their Teaching Praxis at UNA Brunca Campus***

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Resumen

Esta investigación enfoca de manera primordial el uso, o desuso, de las herramientas ofrecidas por el programa UNA Virtual el cual se encarga de incentivar la utilización de las Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación (TICs) en ambiente educativo de la Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica. Asimismo, el estudio identifica y explica los factores que intervienen para que dichas herramientas tengan una limitada integración en la práctica educativa de los docentes de inglés como segunda lengua de la sede Regional Brunca. A su vez, se identifican y analizan las percepciones de los estos profesores en relación con el uso y la importancia que tienen para ellos y su práctica docente el Internet y las herramientas educativas basadas en éste. Para ello se consideró un grupo de once profesores que impartieron algún curso en el bachillerato en la enseñanza del inglés en esta sede de la universidad durante el segundo ciclo del año 2011. Finalmente, se realiza una propuesta de plan de acción para promover el uso de dicho programa y sus herramientas la cual responde a las necesidades derivadas del estudio.

Palabras clave: Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación (TICs), tecnología educativa, herramientas basadas en Internet, instrucción basada en Internet, utilidad de la tecnología, percepción de los profesores en relación al uso de Internet, actitudes hacia la tecnología, factores limitantes en el uso de la tecnología, Programa UNA Virtual.

Trabajo presentado para optar al grado de Maestría en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas con Énfasis en Inglés como Lengua Extranjera para Alumnado Adulto, según lo establece el Sistema de Estudios de Posgrado de la Universidad Nacional. Heredia. Costa Rica.

Abstract

This research primarily focuses on the use or lack of use of the tools offered by the UNA Virtual program which is in charge of incentivizing the utilization of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the teaching and learning environments at Universidad Nacional of Costa Rica. In addition, the study identifies and explains the factors affecting in some way the integration of Web-based tools in the teaching praxis of a group of EFL professors at the University's Brunca branch campus. Moreover, it identifies the perceptions of these professors in regards to the use and importance of Web-based tools in their teaching praxis. For this purpose the population chosen was a group of eleven ELF professors who were teaching in the Bachelors' of English teaching at UNA Brunca Branch in the second semester of 2011. Finally, there is a proposal of a plan of action to promote the use of this program and its tools that responds to the needs unveiled throughout the study.

Key words: Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) , educational technology, Web-based tools, Web-based instruction, Usefulness of technology, Professors' perceptions in regards to the use of technology, attitudes towards technology, technology and the teaching praxis, encouraging factors to use technology, discouraging factors to use technology, UNA virtual Program.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- EFL:** English as a Foreign Language
- ICTs:** Information and Communication Technologies
- WBI:** Web-Based Instruction
- WBT:** Web-Based Tools or Internet-Based tools
- UNA:** Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica

INTRODUCTION

The advent of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the fast growth of the Internet offer multiple opportunities for English-as-a-Foreign Language teachers (henceforth EFL teachers) to innovate and improve their instruction. Nevertheless, there are many instructors around the world who do not make use of computer technology even though its availability, familiarity and sophistication increases every day. Costa Rica's higher education is not the exception to this reality. This is a very risky scenario considering that at this educational level future professionals are being formed and they will have to be ready for a job market where technology skills are highly valued.

There is no doubt that teachers play a major role in promoting and integrating new technologies in teaching and learning. Nevertheless, this integration might be limited sometimes by a series of factors of different sources. In general terms, teachers' lack of the information and skills required for integrating new technologies is a relevant issue. Other teachers might be skeptical of the advantages of new teaching practices compared to traditional ones. Other sources of fears are more related the trustworthiness of technology or the lack of interest and commitment shown by professors.

In addition to teachers, school authorities also have a responsibility to take. They are to lead initiatives if they expect their faculty to use more technology in their teaching. Careful planned actions towards a higher integration of technology are in the hands of administrators. They should be in charge of enhancing changes in their own institutions.

This paper starts by presenting the problem and its importance for the field of language teaching and learning and the establishment of the objectives and research questions that guided this investigation. After this, there is a thorough revision of the literature that helped understand the phenomenon in a better way. The section about methodology provides clear explanations

about the methodological orientations and steps that allowed the researcher to answer the research questions. The following section is the analysis of the data in which the professors' perceptions of the use of Web-based tools and the UNA Virtual program in their teaching praxis are described. Finally, the paper presents a chapter for conclusions and one for recommendations which includes the proposal derived from this study in the form of an action plan.

I. THE PROBLEM AND ITS IMPORTANCE

The central issue inspected in this study is that, on one side, today's technological generation demands teachers to integrate Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in their instruction, but on the other side, many teachers are not fully taking advantage of the tools that are available and provided to them by their institutions. Particularly, this research aimed to identify why EFL professors at the Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica in its Brunca Branch Campus are not integrating the Web-based tools offered by the UNA Virtual Program in their teaching praxis. It also intended to propose an action plan to help solve or minimize the problem and favor a better incorporation of those tools.

Challenges in adapting, integrating and promoting the use of technology constantly increase and educators should be ready to face them. Meloni states that "Technology will not replace teachers...teachers who use technology will probably replace teachers who do not" (1998, 10). It is important that teachers be able to trespass the barriers for the adoption of modern technologies for they might be at risk of becoming obsolete or distant from the exigencies of a modern world. In the advent of a technological century, the use of modern technologies and virtual learning seems to be a convenient, promising option for professors to enhance their students' interest and knowledge, especially when it comes to higher education and second languages.

The first motivation for this study was originated while the researcher was conducting a diagnostic interview for a course in the master's program in Second Languages and Cultures at Universidad Nacional about two years ago. For this study, 13 professors in the English department at UNA Brunca branch were asked about their experiences using virtual tools (Web-

Based or Internet-Based tools) in the classroom and the great majority responded that they did not have much experience in the area.

Today, two years after this preliminary interview was carried out by the researcher the panorama has not changed much. Even though UNA Brunca branch campus has various resources and facilities available for its professors to use virtual tools in their courses, the tools offered by UNA Virtual are not being used. Hence, there was a need to investigate and find out what aspects are intervening in this phenomenon.

This study contributes to the Language Teaching field because it provides new knowledge about the EFL Professors' perceptions and intentions in regards to the use of the Tools offered by the UNA Virtual Program at Universidad Nacional Brunca Campus. It also provides a contextualized view of the issue and new insights for its understanding. In addition, the research proposes an action plan that responds to the specific needs and areas of attention emanated from this research in order to promote the use of the tools offered by UNA Virtual in the EFL professors' instruction particularly in the Bachelor's in English Teaching.

Objectives

General Objective

- To analyze the UNA Brunca Branch' EFL professors' perceptions and intentions towards the use of the tools from UNA Virtual Program and the factors affecting the integration of those tools in their teaching praxis in order to propose an action plan that could help mitigate the problem.

Specific objectives

1. To determine Brunca Branch's EFL teachers' perceptions about the usefulness and ease of use of Web-based tools in their teaching praxis.
2. To determine Brunca Branch's EFL teachers' perceptions and intentions about the potential integration of the tools offered by the UNA Virtual program in their teaching praxis.
3. To explore the factors affecting the EFL professors' potential integration of the Virtual tools offered by UNA Virtual in their teaching praxis.
4. To establish the EFL professors' perceived needs in regards to the use of the tools from UNA Virtual in order to propose an action plan that could help mitigate the problem.

Research questions

1. What are the EFL professors' perceptions about the usefulness and ease of use of Web-based tools in their teaching praxis?
2. What are the EFL professors' perceptions and intentions in regards to the potential integration of the tools from UNA Virtual program?
3. What factors are affecting the EFL professors' potential integration of the tools offered by the UNA Virtual program in their teaching praxis at UNA Brunca Branch Campus?
4. What are the ELF professors' perceived needs in regards to the use of UNA Virtual that should be contemplated in an action plan that helps mitigate the problem?

II. FRAME OF REFERENCE

This section provides an overview of the literature and theory that help support this study and facilitate the understanding of the main aspects of the phenomenon studied and discussed in this research project.

Internet and English Teaching

Due to the fact that the Internet was originated in the United States, nowadays most of the information that is available through this means is in English. Experts say that this is one important reason why the Internet has become a very rich source for instruction and a convenient tool for English language teaching (Teeler and Gray: 2000, 3; Mubireek: 2001, 4). These qualities make of the Internet not only an efficient communication technology, but also a fundamental tool for ESL teaching and learning. Nevertheless, it also increases the need to observe and carefully examine the impact and transcendence of technology in the field of English as a Second or Foreign Language, and to establish the needs still present in the area.

The Internet has also changed the way people see the world and has influenced a great number of areas such as communication, science, arts and others. Education has not escaped from its influence. Jalobeanu et al place the origins of Internet-based education back in 1840 with distance education. The authors state that two decades later and because of the creation of the Internet and the incorporation of computers into schools, evolution of distance education has been notorious and the number of institutions offering Internet-based courses, and degrees has increased greatly (2003, 23). This fast growth in the tendencies toward a more technological education involves great responsibility from educational institutions that need to plan strategies to respond to the demands that these tendencies bring with them.

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There are unique traits that make the Internet different from other media and particularly influential for the language teaching field. One of its most remarkable characteristics has been simply regarded as “many to many” because of its interactive nature being an open medium that allows participation of different actors. Servon states that “unlike other media used to deliver information, television and newspaper for example, the Internet allows users both to respond to what exists and to produce their own material relatively inexpensively *if* they possess the skills and access necessary to do so” (2002, 3). In teaching and learning environments the virtues previously mentioned propitiate the necessary conditions for the enhancement of self-confidence, self-training and continues education.

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is one of the most significant areas of innovation in language education technology. Ever since it was introduced in the 1960s, it has changed along with the way teachers view language teaching. One clear definition to help understand the term is given by Egbert and Petrie who present it as “learners learning language in any context with, through, and around computer technologies” (2008, 4). CALL should be understood as a process and, as such, it involves different variables. Learners, context, language tools, activities as well as teachers and peers have a role to play in the success of this process.

Different perspectives to understand and define the evolution of CALL have been identified throughout its history. For instance, Kern and Warschauer propose the existence of three: the structural perspective, the cognitive/constructivist perspective, and the sociocognitive perspective (2000, 1). They represent the changes faced in the conceptions of teaching and learning of second and foreign languages starting with the grammar translation method to a more recent communicative approach in language teaching. It shows how CALL has been able to adapt and evolve side by side with teaching visions and trends. It is this adaptability which turns

it into the ideal educational tool of modern times for it fits a great variety of teaching and learning styles and philosophies.

Web Based Instruction (WBI) and Second or Foreign Language Learning

The concept of Web-Based Instruction is perhaps one of the most significant ones in this research because it encloses the kind of instruction mediating while using Internet-based tools. Ritchie and Hoffman define Web Based Instruction as "...a hypermedia-based instructional program which utilizes the attributes and resources of the World Wide Web (WWW) to create a meaningful learning environment where learning is fostered and supported" (qdt. In Khan: 1997, 6). Teaching and learning through WBI is not as different from classroom instruction in that their main purpose is to acquire knowledge and be able to use it. They do differ, however, in the vast alternatives for instruction found in the web which facilitate the learning process and make it more meaningful.

It is possible to observe the interconnection between this vision and Ausubel's theory of meaningful learning. His theory is based on the principles of constructivism and establishes that meaningful receptive learning occurs when new meanings are presented through meaningful material to the learner (2000, 1). The Internet helps create these meaningful environments given the amount of information and resources available which are not all the time accessible in textbooks. Moreover, learners can explore the information for general or specific purposes having chances to choose what really interests them or works for them.

In addition to meaningfulness is authenticity. Much of the material and information available in tools such as Internet is authentic which means it was not created for teaching. Berge and Collins state that "unlike that designed especially for textbooks, the language used on the Internet is predominantly authentic, not to mention that the Internet potentially fosters the shift

from the traditional teacher-centered classroom to the much desired student-centered classroom” (qdt. in Baniabdelrahman, Fahmi and Fahmi: 2007 par.1). Not only the Internet content provides a genuine source of language, but it also helps professors focus their instruction more on the learner and less in themselves. Therefore, the class becomes less teacher-centered.

WBI is founded on some fundamental characteristics, being interactivity one of the most important ones. Jalobeanu et al state that students not only interact with each other and their tutors but also with the Web itself (2003, 39). This interaction facilitates the use of different teaching methods and approaches such as Community Language Learning (CLL). The basic premise in this method is that “Learners become members of a community --their fellow learners and the teacher-- and learn through interacting with the community. Learning is not viewed as an individual accomplishment but as something that is achieved collaboratively” (Richards and Rodgers: 2001, 94). The environments created through the use of Web-Based activities promote learners’ cooperative skills and group learning in the classroom and outside of it.

Another example of a method that can be promoted through the use of WBI is Community Language Learning. The principles supporting this method fit the wide spectrum of possibilities available in web mediated instruction. Some of the principles of this method are transferable or applicable in web-based environments. One example is the principle that “learners learn language through using it” (Richards and Rodgers: 2001, 172). From sending a message to a pen pal to researching material for a course, there are numerous possibilities for learners to use the language constantly in the web.

Exchanges and activities using the web vary and abound. As explained by Jalobeanu et al, the fact that WBI is *multimedial* (using text, graphic, video among others) gives learners not only opportunities to listen and read material in English but also to write and even to have *synchronous* communication (in real life and at the same time) with people who can be miles

away (2003, 39). As a result of all these possibilities learners are able to explore naturally, creatively and mostly authentically in activities that favor their language construction and improvement.

Other theories of second language acquisition support the use of web-based tools for instruction. On her part, Ellis refers to the role of interaction in second language acquisition as a means for the participants to engage in what she calls negotiation of meaning. She states that Learners involved in this interaction can soon be correcting their own errors (1997, 46). Interaction is a very important part of web-based instruction, too. It occurs in different moments and ways (i.e. with the computer, with the web, with peers and with instructors). This interactivity helps learners acquire the language in ways that they may not have in the common classroom.

There are different benefits derived from this interaction. Some experts have summarized these benefits into “opportunities for negotiating meaning, obtaining enhanced input and directing attention to linguistic form” (Egbert and Petrie: 2005, 55). The learner benefits from his or her own experiences but also with the experiences of others with whom he or she interrelates in the Web-based environment which helps them improve their language in a dynamic way.

Teacher's Use of Internet

It is not easy to define or established well grounded statistics on the quantity and quality of Internet integration in teacher's methodology and instruction. As Teeler and Gray portray it, telling how many teachers use the Internet for teaching purposes or how many use it for language teaching is, in fact, a very difficult task because many of the statistics and numbers are based mostly on guesswork or surveys (2000, 5). What can be said, however, is that the Internet is used

for a very extensive list of purposes in English Language Teaching (ELT) “development, updating language skills, finding materials, learning about computer applications, keeping in touch with friends and colleagues, teaching, working on class projects and activities, and just having fun” (5). The Internet is definitely being used and this use increases as computers become more frequent in schools around the world.

The growing use of this tool has a series of implications for teachers, particularly those who are not digital natives. It offers teachers new and rapidly changing possibilities for their instruction, but the effectiveness of computer technology and the Internet does not depend only on the medium but on the way people use it. Some obstacles in this regard are presented by Kuo:

However, developing a technology proficient teacher is not an easy task. It involves many complex works, such as striving for funding to purchase technology equipment and software, establishing school technology support system, designing appropriate technology assisted curricula, and recruiting professional technology educators. (2008, 5)

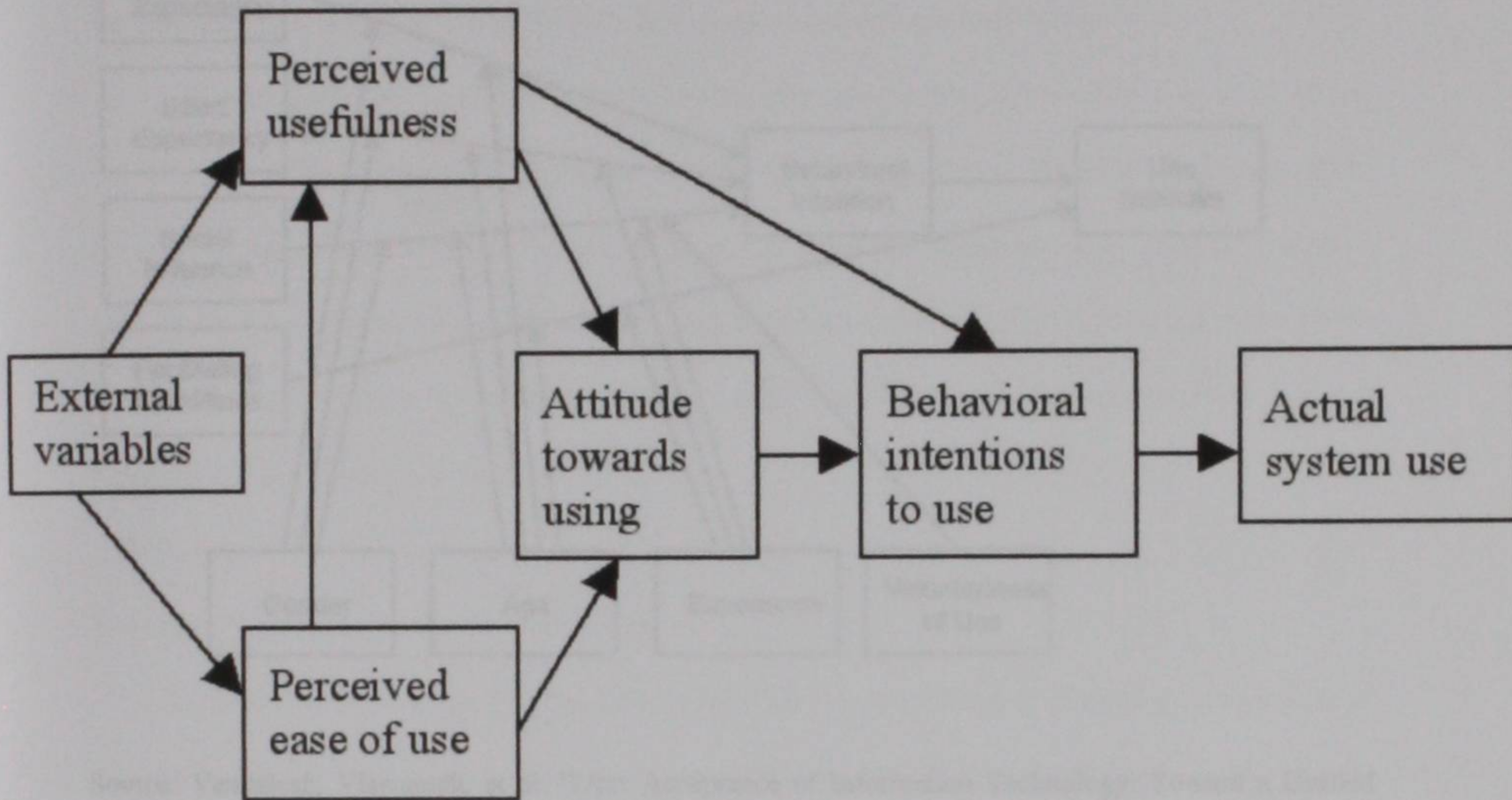
As can be seen, factors affecting the use of technology are of all kinds: from administrative matters to curricular incompatibilities. Some other relevant factors intervening in the adoption and acceptance of ICTs in instruction will be developed in the subsequent sections.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

To help explain and better understand the reasons why some people use technology Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw developed a model called TAM or Technology Acceptance Model in 1989. The model is shown in Exhibit 1. As can be seen, the creators believe there that two variables: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of technology directly influence the people's attitudes towards a computer technology and the behavioral intentions to use it. In other words, the attitudes regarding certain type of technology, Internet for example, intrinsically

depend on how useful or easy to use the person considers it. These formed attitudes will, eventually, determine the behavioral intentions to use the technology which in the end is reflected in its actual use.

Exhibit 1. Technology Acceptance Model

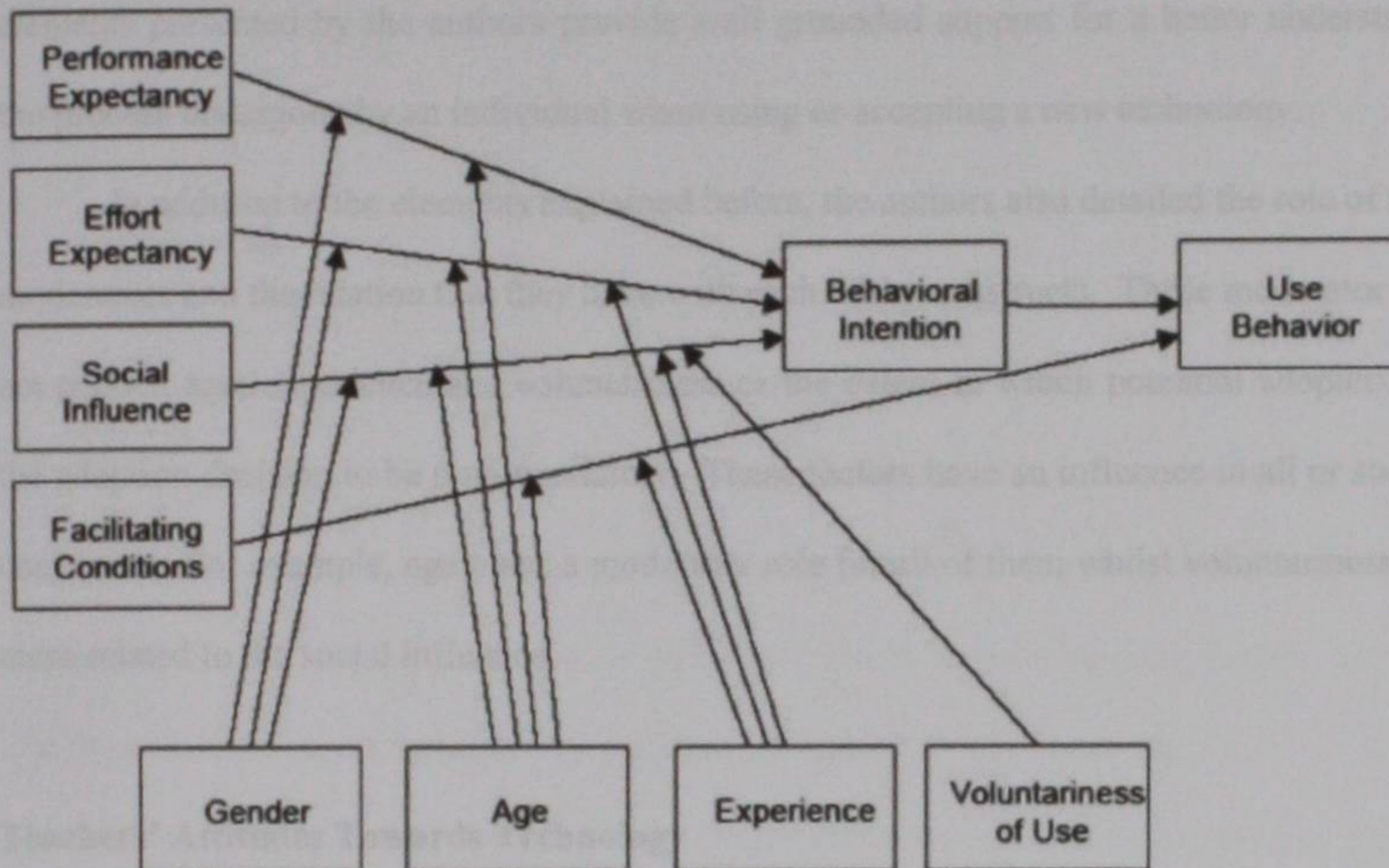


Source: Davis, Fred, Richard Bagozzi and Paul Warshaw. "User Acceptance of Computer Technology: A Comparison of Two Theoretical Models," *Management Science* 35 (1989): 982-1003.

Clearly, the preceding model provides a useful illustration of some possible factors mediating in the process of accepting and, hence, incorporating new technologies in everyday life. The same model might be used to understand teachers' reception and integration of new

technologies in their teaching practice. Nevertheless, the TAM did not remain unchanged since first proposed more than twenty years ago. Exhibit 2 shows its evolution.

Exhibit 2. Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)



Source: Venkatesh, Viswanath, et al. "User Acceptance of Information Technology: Toward a Unified View." *MIS Quarterly* 27.3 (2003): 425-478.

The model proposed in 2003 tries to integrate preexisting models to explain the acceptance process. It theorizes that from all constructs that may be significant in the intention of use or use of a given technology there are four that seem to play a major role in acceptance. Venkatesh et al state that three constructs are linked to behavioral intentions to use technology: performance expectancy (The degree to which an individual believes that using the system will help him or her to attain gains in job performance), effort expectancy (the degree of ease

associated with the use of the system), social influence (The degree to which an individual perceives that important others believe he or she should use the new system). The fourth construct is facilitating conditions (The degree to which an individual believes that an organizational and technical infrastructure exists to support use of the system). This one is not linked directly to behavioral intention but to the use behavior (2003, 445-454). All the four elements presented by the authors provide well grounded support for a better understanding of the process undergone by an individual when using or accepting a new technology.

In addition to the elements explained before, the authors also detailed the role of some key moderators and the relation that they have with each of the constructs. These moderator variables are gender, age, experience and voluntariness or the extent to which potential adopters perceive the adoption decision to be non-mandatory. These factors have an influence in all or some of the constructs. For example, age plays a moderator role for all of them whilst voluntariness of use is more related to the social influence.

Teachers' Attitudes Towards Technology

Another crucial aspect that has been referred to when explaining technology integration in education deals with teachers' attitudes. Categorizations for attitudes have been largely studied and discussed. For instance, Ramanair and Sagat categorize them into the cognitive, the behavioural and the affective. The first one represents the "users' thinking," that is, the opinions of what they consider positive or negative about using technology. The second one is the affective category which deals with feelings and emotions experienced using technology; and the last one, the behavioural category, deals with actions (2007, par. 9). At different levels teachers' attitudes are linked to their integration of technology in their instruction and the identification of those attitudes is very important before conducting research on educational technology.

The simple addition of a technological device to an educational context does not guarantee by any means that the learning process will change to be more successful. On the contrary, it might get in the way if not used properly. Levin and Wadmany affirm that “teachers have the most impact on the quality of technology use in schools and therefore, factor relating to teachers are more frequently cited as influencing technology use in schools” (2011, 237). Consequently, any effort made to explain phenomena related to the integration of any technology in education might not be separated from understanding the roles played by the teachers.

There are reports on different studies that show that teachers have a very crucial role in relation to ICT and its effect on pedagogy. For example, the work of Moseley and Higgins concluded that successful use of ICT is linked to teachers’ attitudes “teachers who have positive attitudes towards ICT itself will be positively disposed towards using it in the classroom” (qtd. in Mumtaz 2000, 328). Knowing this, it is evident that promoting a good disposition towards technology is a factor that contributes to successful results in teaching experiences. Here lies the importance of incentivising positive practices concerning WBI for example.

Professors’ attitudes towards technology might be influenced by several aspects and circumstances. Holden and Rada establish that teachers’ personal factors such as subject matter, gender and teaching experience are very linked to classroom technology usage. They also declare that higher levels technology acceptance are related to a higher willingness to change their teaching practices to use technology (2011, 348). The analysis of these personal factors becomes crucial when trying to understand why some tools such as the ones offered by UNA Virtual are rejected or accepted.

Teachers' Perceived Relevance of Technology for EFL Teaching

There have been concerns in relation to the real impact that technology has in the acquisition of knowledge. Butler and Sellbon concluded in an study conducted with university professors in Illinois that some of them question the impact of technology in learning because "Very few journals summarize the results of well-run experiments on the impact of technology, and little useful scientific information is available in the web" (2002, 26). Many skeptical facilitators are not easily convinced that using technology and Internet will have much greater benefits than traditional instruction. Considering this, it is very important that universities encourage assessment to verify the value that technological tools can bring to the teaching and learning process.

It is important, hence, that universities set specific incentives for teachers to know exactly how to use ICTs. In this regard, Afshari et.al suggest that institutions must develop a vision that guides the integration of these tools:

Users of technology must have a fundamental belief in the value of innovation or the innovation is doomed to failure. Teachers must have opportunities to study, observe, reflect, and discuss their practice, including their use of ICT, in order to develop a sound pedagogy that incorporates technology. (2009, 83-84)

Evidently, setting clear purposive visions of benefits and beliefs behind ICT integration in the school will facilitate the adoption of those tools.

Technology/Internet Reliability

Reliability is another important issue that has been considered as a hindering factor for technology use in education. Constant break downs, software malfunctions, or outdated software were some of the aspects teachers refer to when discussing this point (Butler and Sellbon: 2002,

23). It is difficult to motivate teachers to implement Computer-Assisted activities when they do not trust technology. It is important for them to feel that the activities they design can be successfully put into practice without having to be always ready with a backup plan in case technology fails. Butler and Selbon also suggest that authorities should purchase highly reliable devices and they provide constant maintenance (2002, 24). Guaranteeing access to updated modern equipment and software can have a direct effect in teachers' confidence and willingness to use technology in class.

The UNA Virtual Program

Fundamental for this research is the understanding of the UNA Virtual program and the philosophical and methodological foundations that ground it. Castro places the origins of the program in the year 2002 when the Program for the Development and Applications of New Technologies in the Academic Processes (PRODAPA for its initials in Spanish) is instituted. It represents the first step for the university's strategy in this area. In 2004, the program changes its structure and is called NOVUS from the Latin word new. Finally, in 2005, NOVUS becomes UNA Virtual and its first goal is the establishment of policies for the incorporation of ICTs in the academy (2010, 4). These changes show the evolution of the program and the efforts made by the university in order to stimulate the use of technology.

The program is founded upon UNA's principles and Pedagogical Model (Modelo Pedagógico). Castro refers to three moments in which the connection of the program to the principles previously mentioned are reflected:

- The function of technologies as a means to facilitate interaction among professors, students and learning contents.

- At UNA teaching presumes the existence of alternative learning environments supported with new technologies.
 - Technologies of information and communication become a changing agent that influences the pedagogical work and the relationships between pupil-educator and educator-pupil.
- (2010, 7)

Clearly, UNA Virtual is a vital instrument for the university to reach its goals of adopting technologies for the implementation of innovating teaching and learning practices in the institution. The program has not only focused on the teaching area, but also on the outreach and investigation areas.

Programs such as UNA Virtual become a facilitating instrument for university teachers in their academic praxis. At this level educators are required to be protagonists of the educational process promoting the development of aptitudes and skills in their students for investigation, invention and discovery. For Universidad Nacional, teachers must be the enhancers of knowledge construction in their pupils guarantying a truly integrative learning (Modelo Pedagógico, 2006). Literacy in Technologies is one of the most cherished skills of today's world. Hence, university professors must implement practices that respond to the realities they are immersed in. Technological innovations are a good example of what they are expected to do.

III. METHODOLOGY

This section explains and details the methodological orientations and procedures followed to carry out this research. In this section the researcher provides the necessary information for the reader to know the line of thought that guided the research process as well as the methods utilized to accomplish the objectives set at the beginning of the investigation. The researcher also provides a clear picture of the context and actors involved in the process.

Research Design

This research made use of qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, but the study took an overall qualitative phenomenological design. Bodgen and Biklen refer to this type of designs as those intended to recognize the people's perceptions and meanings attributed to any specific phenomenon or experience (qtd. in Hernández, Fernández and Batista: 2006,712). What makes this design valuable for this investigation is that the participants' experiences become the center of the analysis. EFL professors' views towards the phenomenon are the focal point upon which this research is grounded.

The scope of this research project starts as descriptive. The goal of this type of investigation is to "describe phenomena, situations, contexts and events to detail how they are and how they are manifested" (Hernández, Fernández and Baptista: 2006, 102). In addition, and considering that this study also intended to unveil explanations for the phenomenon taking place, it took an explanatory scope during the course of the research.



Context of the Study

This study was conducted between the months of August and November of the year 2011 at Universidad Nacional Brunca Branch Campus in Pérez Zeledón. English is taught in all majors in the campus at a conversational or instrumental level and it was the only foreign Language taught at the moment of this investigation. The language department is in charge of providing English courses to all programs. The strongest EFL instruction is focalized in the Bachelor's of English Teaching and an associate's program in English where evidently most EFL professors work. Most EFL personnel come from the Costa Rican southern region and reside in the Pérez Zeledón canton.

This campus is located in the southern zone of Costa Rica about three hours from the capital San José. The Brunca Region includes six cantons: five from the province of Puntarenas and one from San José. It has an estimated population of 300, 000 people. The region has been declared the poorest in Costa Rica with strong limitations in different areas such as production, investment policies, infrastructure and tourism development (Jara: 2011, par. 5). This scenario reveals the important role of institutions such as UNA which are a good option for students in the area to be able to study and obtain a job.

The region presents a wide variety of economical activities. The main economical activity in the region is the agriculture of products such as coffee, sugar cane, corn, rice and oil palm. Cattle raising and fishing are other economic activities of high impact in the region. In addition to these activities, tourism is also developed mostly in the coast areas of Osa canton where there are beautiful beaches and two national parks ("Región Brunca," Wikipedia the free encyclopedia). Moreover, the presence of a duty-free zone in Golfito canton represents an important source of income for the local residents.

The Brunca branch was created in 1973. The historical brief in its web site states that the branch was known as a regional section at that time, but today it has two sub campuses: one in Pérez Zeledón and the other one in the Corredores canton. The estimate number of students enrolled in the Pérez Zeledón campus in the second semester of 2011 was of about 1000 students. The majority of the students come from the different cantons of the region which indicates that the main goal of the branch is being achieved: guarantee that quality educational opportunities can be accessed by all sectors of Costa Rican society based on the concept of “the necessary university” that supports the philosophy of the institution.

Researcher's Role and Status

The researcher in this study is an EFL professor at UNA Brunca Branch and by the time she carried out this investigation, she had worked there for eight years, since 2004. She is colleague of all participants included in the study. It is also possible to say that she is part of the population since she was working in the Bachelor's of English Teaching during the second semester of 2011. Nevertheless, and to avoid bias, she did not complete any instrument and stayed as objective as possible during the data collection process.

Her status as a colleague EFL professor at Brunca branch favored the study in different ways. For example, she had access to the professor's schedules and other documents such as the curriculum of the Bachelor's in English Teaching. Another advantage was the constant contact she had with the participants which made it easier in most cases to contact and meet them. In addition, the closeness of the relation between participants and researcher facilitated the process of data collection for they were more open and cooperative.

It is a personal interest of the researcher to develop her skills and knowledge in regards to technology and Educational Technology as well. She has considered herself not to be very

skillful in this area. However, she is a believer in self-training and self-development and most of what she has learned and developed in this area is due to this quality. In regards to Internet-mediated tools in the class and Internet-mediated English Learning, she believes that they represent the future in regards to teaching trends. Even when Costa Rica is far behind many industrialized countries, she thinks that in Central America this country is privileged because its current educational policies tend to be more technology oriented.

With this scenario and perspectives in mind, the researcher started to question herself why if the first time she heard about the UNA Virtual program was four or five years ago, today there are not major initiatives for its implementation at Brunca branch, especially when it comes to the English department. With a great deal of assumptions and doubts she planned on conducting this study with the basic premise of responding to that query.

Her role during the study was that of a listener and observer. At the beginning it was difficult for her to stay away from pre assumptions as to what the answers to her question might be particularly, because the research design of the study called for the participants' view of the reality and not for the researcher's pre-conceived interpretations. Hence, she let the data collection instruments do the work of unveiling the truth and respond to her inquiries. After the process, she proved some of her pre-assumptions to be wrong, but was happy to confirm that there are other supporters of her beliefs and that there is a brilliant future for Internet-based Instruction in the Brunca branch.

Participants

The study included eleven ELF professors who were teaching in the English Teaching Major at UNA Brunca branch during the second term of 2011. It did not include teachers who were only teaching English for specific purposes in other majors at the university or those

exclusively teaching in the associate's program in English. There were three male and eight female professors with ages ranging from 26 to 40 years. A total of five professors held tenure positions while the other six did not. The teaching experience of the participants ranges from four to more than ten years.

At the time of this investigation, one of the participants had a licentiate degree in Applied Linguistics while the other ten had master's degrees in different areas distributed as follows:

Second Languages and Cultures 6 professors

Translation English-Spanish 2 professors and

Linguistics 1 professor

Literature 1 professor

Criteria for Selecting the Participants

Participants were chosen based on a purposive sampling that used pre-selected criteria relevant for the study. It was a homogenous sample in which participants share a profile or characteristics (Hernández, Fernández and Baptista: 2006, 567). For this research all members of the population were considered for the study: eleven EFL professors who were teaching courses in the Bachelor's in English Teaching during the second semester of 2011 were asked to be part of the study. They completed a questionnaire intended for EFL professors given by the researcher and they were also orally interviewed. In addition, some professors were observed while using technology in the class and a group of five professors participated in a focus group.

Other Sources of Information

Other sources of information were the authorities from UNA Brunca Campus who were consulted for aspects regarding promotion and implementation of UNA Virtual in the Branch Campus. In this respect, an interview with the dean of the campus was carried out. In addition, the coordinator of the UNA Virtual project at UNA main campus in Heredia was also questioned about the current state of the program particularly for the Branch Campuses.

Important documents and artifacts were collected and inspected as well. For example, the curriculum for the English Teaching Major, the university's Strategic and Global Plans and the university's Pedagogical Model. The university's web page was also a valuable source of information.

Data Collection Instruments

In this section a careful description and examination of the data collection methods and instruments used during the process is given. The purpose and procedures for the administration of each of the instruments are also provided in order to support the reliability of the study. Additionally, the section provides details on how the data were treated and codified for analysis.

Questionnaire for EFL professors

A questionnaire intended for professors was given in a printed version or via-email to all participants in the research. It consisted of four parts and included close ended as well as open ended questions. The first part of the questionnaire was for demographic information for aspects such as gender, teaching experience, academic degree and age (items 1 to 5). The second part was called integration of web-based tools in instruction. Participants responded to questions related to their experience using computers and internet, their knowledge about the UNA Virtual

program, and their use of other Web-based tools. They also graded their literacy in using Internet-based tools (items 6 to 11).

The third part of the questionnaire consisted of a Likert scale type questionnaire in which participants described their level of agreement to 27 statements provided. They had to select the option that best reflected their opinion in each of the statements. The possibilities given were strongly agree (SA), agree (A), partially agree (PA), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). The purpose of this section was to establish the EFL professors' perceptions of the use of Internet-based tools.

Finally, the questionnaire presented the participant with four open ended questions mostly concerning their opinions about UNA Virtual. They were asked about the possible advantages and disadvantages they saw in using the tools offered by this program. They were also required to give their opinions about the future of Internet-Assisted Language Teaching at the Brunca Campus.

One-to-one personal Interviews with Professors

An oral semi-structured interview was conducted with the participants to analyze the concepts and insights in regards to the topic in a deeper way. This was used to reinforce the information gained from the questionnaire and obtain new key information for the study as well. Participants were contacted by the phone and in some cases using a social network like Facebook or e-mail to set a proper date and time to have the oral interview. The researcher had some general questions planed to guide the conversation and follow up questions were made if necessary to obtain more information when required. Interviews were recorded to guarantee that no valuable information was lost. Recordings were later transcribed for further analysis.

Structured Non-participant Class Observation

In order to observe some classroom interaction with some kinds of technology a structured non-participant observation instrument was used. The instrument has a first section for general aspects of the class observed (i.e. time, course, number of students, etc). Then it includes a section for writing the kind of technology being used and the main topic of the lesson observed. At the end the observer has space to write down a brief description of the class and determine the level of technology integration in the class. The instrument was intended to help the researcher identify some common types of technology used in different classes as well as the role of the teacher and students while using a technological device. The selection of classes to be observed was based on schedule compatibility of participants and researcher.

Focus Group

A focus group was carried out with the purpose of constructing a group understanding of some aspects relevant to the phenomenon from the perspective of the participants. Another goal of this data collection technique was to support the validity of this study. Gibbs establishes that "the main purpose of focus group research is to draw upon respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in a way in which would not be feasible using other methods, for example observation, one-to-one interviewing, or questionnaire surveys" (1997 par. 5). On the basis of this assumption, the focus group fulfilled one of the most important premises in this study which was the description and understanding of the phenomena from the point of view of each of the participants and from the point of view of the group of participants.

The focus group session was carried out in the researcher's domicile. In order to invite the participants, a careful process was followed. First, an e-mail was sent to all of them to know their possible availability for attending the session on a Sunday in the month of September.

Realizing that many of them were not available in that particular date, the focus group was postponed for the next Sunday in October 9th. Again another e-mail was sent to all participants with the formal invitation for the activity, a brief explanation of its purpose and the agenda. During the week before the activity participants were contacted personally or by phone to confirm their attendance. Six of them accepted the invitation, but one of them could not attend the session for some last moment personal inconveniences.

The activity itself was organized to last two hours; from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Participants were invited to be in the place one hour before it began to share lunch. The researcher was in charge of mediating the activities and discussion. A series of questions and tasks were used to obtain the data. The session was videotaped to ensure that key information was not missed. Photo ethnography was also used to document the meeting.

Interview with other Key Informants

Two interviews with key informants were programmed for this research. At the beginning the researcher planed on interviewing orally the coordinator of the UNA Virtual program. In the course of the research and in light of a series of time constraints, geographical barriers and schedule limitations, it became impossible to set a face-to-face meeting. Hence, the guide for the interview was sent to the informant through e-mail for him to answer the questions stated in the instrument. The interview consisted of 16 open-ended questions in Spanish that intended to clarify what UNA Virtual is and the scope and objectives of the program. A very important objective of the instruments was to explore the influence of the program in the Brunca Branch.

A second interview was conducted with UNA Brunca branch's dean. He accepted to be interviewed in relation to the topic of this study: The use of UNA Virtual in the campus. One face to face conversation was set at the dean's office. The inquiries were oriented to the impact of the

project and the efforts made by the institution to promote its use. He was also asked about Brunca branch's future intentions and perspectives in regards to the integration of the tools offered by UNA Virtual Program.

Analysis of the Data

For the questionnaire parts I and II, all answers were tallied and frequencies were found. For part number III (the Likert scale type sections) intended to obtain the professors' perceptions about Internet-based tools codes were assigned to the different items according to the type of information they provided. The perceptions were divided into perceived usability and perceived ease of use.

The interviews with teachers were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Subsequently, different units of analysis were chosen. In this case, every participation made by the interviewee constituted a unit of analysis. Then emergent patterns, categories or significant quotes were looked for and coded to compare then to the information from the questionnaire and other instruments.

In the case of the Focus group, the sessions' main aspects and outcomes were written down. The video recordings were transcribed and used to support relevant aspects of the research. During and after this process, patterns of information, categories, and important quotes were selected and highlighted to be correlated with other data available.

For all open-ended instruments and data: focus group, open ended questions from the questionnaire and the one-to-one interviews, the researcher utilized a coding system in order to categorize the most significant aspects. Exhibit 3 exemplifies the coding system used in the process:

Exhibit 3. Coding System for the Qualitative Data

Code	Meaning	Type of Information
WBT/PU	Professors' Web-Based Tools perceived usefulness	Positions, feelings, dispositions and ideas as to the usability of Internet-mediated tools.
WBT/PEU	Professors' Web-based Tools Perceived Ease of Use	Positions, feelings, dispositions and ideas as to ease of use of Internet-mediated tools.
WBTC/EF	Web-Based Tools in the class: Encouraging Factors	Factors that motivate or favor the use of Internet-based activities in the class.
WBTC/DF	Web-based Tools in the class: Discouraging factors	Factors that prevent the use of Internet-based activities in the class.
UV/PI	UNA Virtual: professors' intentions.	Future/present intentions of EFL professors in regards to the use of UNA Virtual.
UV/PP	UNA Virtual: Professors' perceptions.	Views, appreciations towards the program
UV/EF	UNA Virtual: Encouraging Factors	Teacher's perceived Factors that motivate the future use of UNA Virtual
UV/DF	UNA Virtual: Discouraging Factors	Teacher's perceived Factors that prevent the use of UNA Virtual

Source: The researchers' own design. October 2011

Limitations

There were some limitations found in the process. One of them occurred when collecting some of the data collection instruments. For instance, while some of the participants answered and returned back the questionnaires very quickly, others spent more time; hence, it was necessary to remind them constantly and it delayed the process of data analysis for it was necessary to have all instruments together. Something similar happened with the interviews because some participants had more availability than others and the researcher had some difficulties to set a proper time for meeting them. These inconveniences were overcome by insisting and constantly asking the participants for their cooperation by means of text messages, calls or in person.

The focus group also had its limitations. Whilst the initial ideal number of participants planned for the focus group was of 6 to 8 (more than half of the participants), in the end only five

could attend. Unfortunately, the day of the meeting some of the professors who had confirmed their presence had personal and family situations that impeded them to be part of the activity. Because of this, the researcher ensured that those who did attend participated as openly and deeply as possible. Also the information obtained in this activity was compared, contrasted and validated with the rest of the data collected so that it could be used to support the rest of the findings.

IV. RESULTS

This section contains the main outcomes of the analysis of the data obtained throughout the study. Exhibits and quotes are used to illustrate and support the findings. Participants quoted or mentioned have been assigned different names to assure their anonymity. The results were divided into different categories that are clearly labeled.

4.1 EFL Professors' Perceptions about Web-based tools (WBT)

The first topic presented is the EFL professors' perceptions about the use of Web-Based Tools or Internet-Based Tools particularly in regards to their usefulness and ease of use. The study proved that WBT have a very important role in teachers' lives and that they are perceived as a significant and necessary component of participants' everyday tasks.

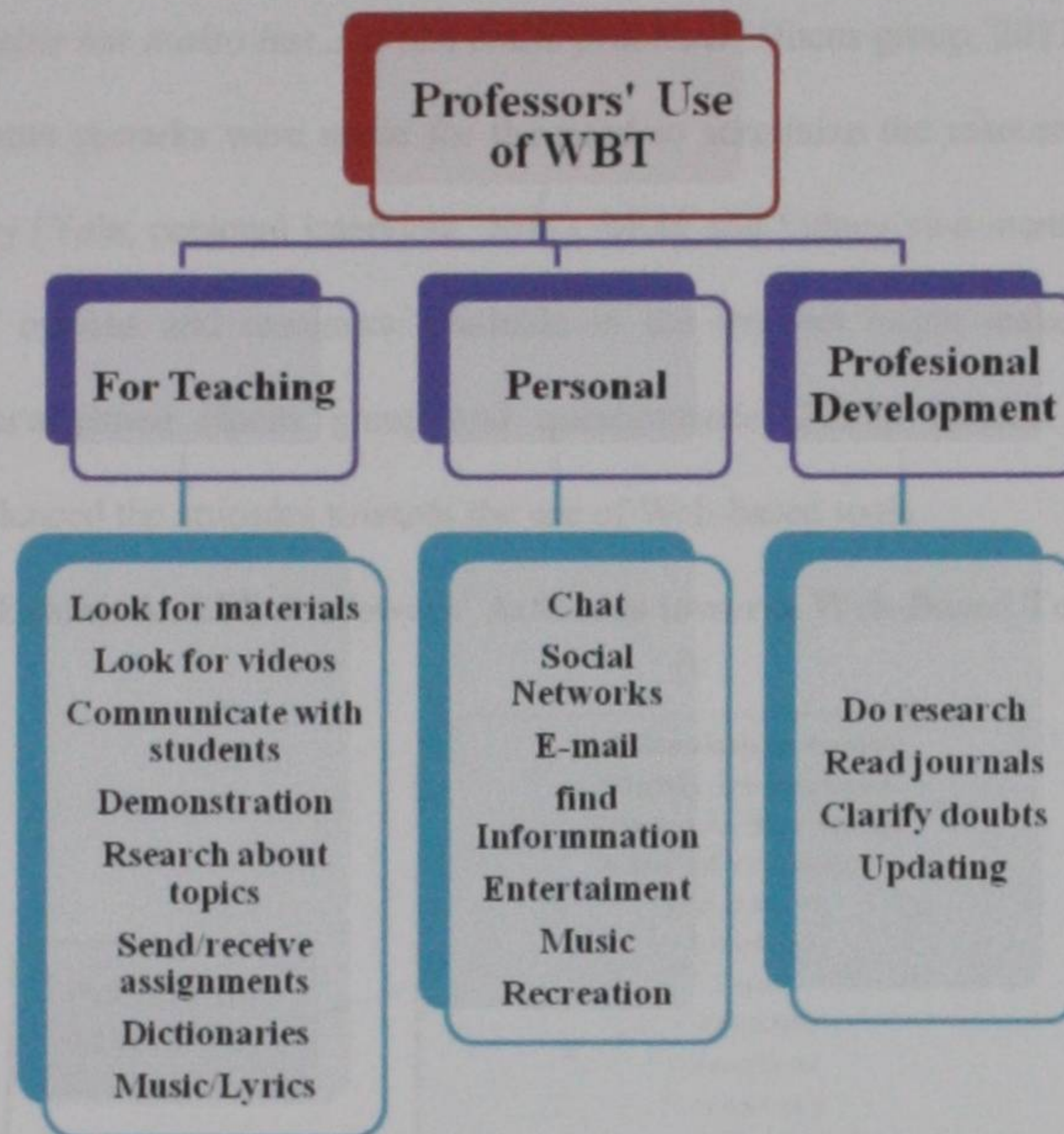
Perceived Usefulness

Technology takes an important part on professors' everyday duties and it is highly valued. All of them manifested to use Internet on a regular basis for different purposes. Different areas of the participants' lives are strongly influenced by the use of these tools: the personal, the instructional and the professional.

The instructional (Internet for teaching) and the personal dimensions have the most weight. Participants invest a significant part of their time searching for materials for their classes, videos to introduce, illustrate, exemplify or contextualize class topics and also music or lyrics. Another common use, though not all do it, is the e-mail or social networks (i.e. Facebook) to communicate with students. Sending and receiving assignments and class materials is also common. The personal dimension shows that professors do not differ from regular users of

Internet which use it for communication and enjoyment purposes. The third dimension shows how technology contributes to professors' independent professional development, too. Exhibit 4 shows examples to illustrate this category.

Exhibit 4. EFL Professors' Common Uses of Web-based Tools

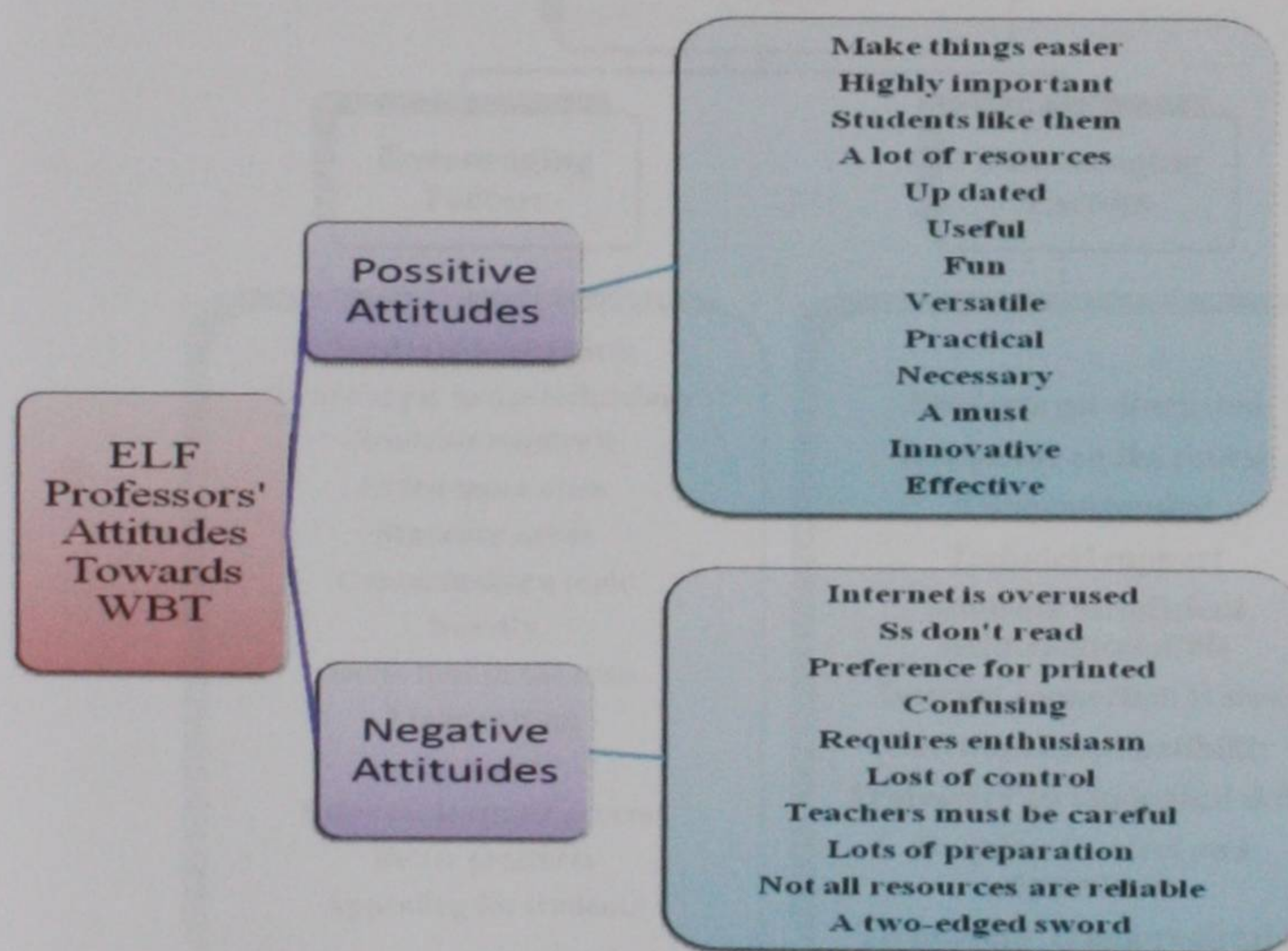


Source: Analysis of Interviews, questionnaires, and focus group, 2011

Attitudes towards the use of Web-Based tools were also identified in the analysis. Clearly, positive attitudes towards WBT were predominant over negative ones. Different comments given by the participants evidenced how professors perceive these tools as necessary. For example, Clare stated: *"Us without technology? I can't imagine, Right? Our future teachers without technology?...We need to take advantage of all these tools in the classroom, so I would say that it's something that is necessary"* (personal interview, 2011).

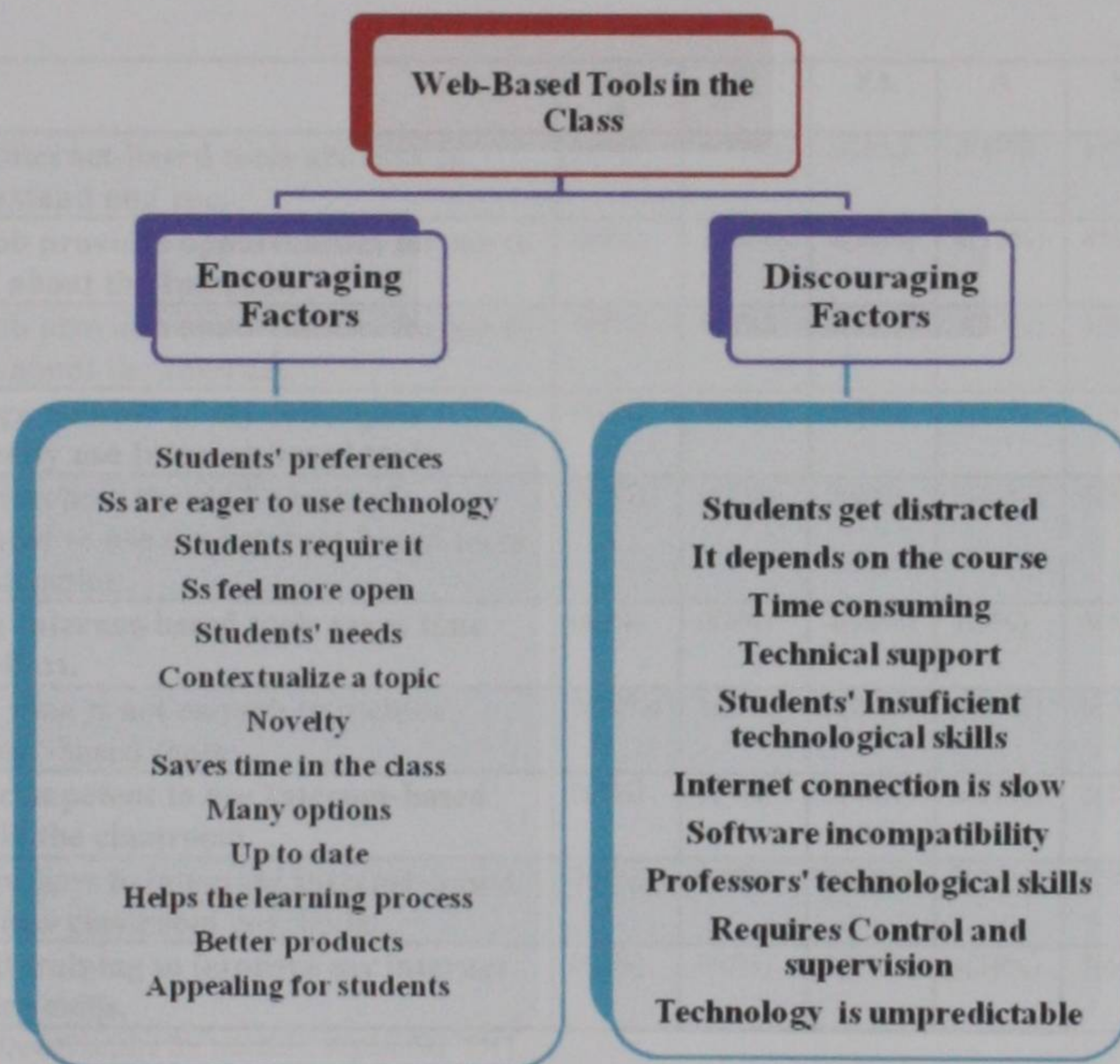
Nevertheless, there were also some negative attitudes, though they were not generalized. For example, comments made by four participants highlighted the need for professors to be careful when using the Internet and all tools based on this means. Liza commented that *[Internet-based tools] it's a two-edge sword. Teachers who use them must be really prepared or careful, so it is like it has benefits but it also has... it can cause problems*" (focus group, 2011). In the same line of thought, some remarks were made for the need to scrutinize the resources in order to guarantee reliability (Yale, personal interview, 2011). Ming and Sidney also manifested that the wide spectrum of options and resources available in the Internet might make users to get confused and overwhelmed (focus group and questionnaire, 2011). Exhibit 5 shows the constructs that evidenced the attitudes towards the use of Web-based tools.

Exhibit 5. EFL Professors' Attitudes towards Web-Based Tools



The last aspect in regards to the perceived usefulness of WBT deals with their actual integration in the classroom. Encouraging as well as discouraging factors for the use of WBT during class time are perceived. Encouraging aspects are mostly related to students' needs and preferences. Learners play a major role in professors' motivation to use Internet-based activities in class. On the other hand, discouraging factors deal mostly with technology itself, its reliability and technological skills required to use it. Six of the eleven professors manifested at some point that the Internet connection or functioning of technology is not always reliable. Another frequently mentioned factor is pertinence. In other words, participants believe not all courses are appropriate for the integration of WBT. Exhibit 6 synthesizes this category.

Exhibit 6. WBT in the Class: Encouraging and Discouraging Factors



Source: Analysis of interviews, questionnaires and focus group, 2011.

Perceived Ease of Use of WBT

This category represents the perceived ease of use of WBT expressed by professors. In the questionnaire professors were given a series of statements they had to mark according to their level of agreement SD (strongly disagree), D (disagree), PA (partially agree), A (agree), SA (strongly agree). The items intended to measure professors' perceived ease of use of technology (in this case web-based tools) showed very balanced results. WBT are considered neither very difficult nor very easy to use. When given the statement "Internet-Based tools are easy to use and understand," five of the professors responded positively, three remained neutral, and only three disagreed manifesting that they are a not easy(see Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 7. Table of Professors' Perceived Ease of Use of WBT

	SD ↓	D	PA	A	SA ↓
The Internet-based tools are easy to understand and use.	0(0%)	3(27%)	3(27%)	4(37%)	1(9%)
My job provides opportunities for me to learn about the Internet.	0(0%)	1(10%)	4(36%)	2(18%)	4(36%)
My job provides opportunities for me to teach about the Internet.	1(9%)	0(0%)	6(55%)	3(27%)	1(9%)
A large number of my colleagues currently use Internet-based tools.	0(0%)	1(9%)	1(9%)	3(27%)	5(45%)
EFL teachers should be trained/ educated to use the Internet-based tools in instruction.	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	2(18%)	9(82%)
Using Internet-based tools saves time and effort.	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(36%)	1(9%)	6(55%)
Class time is not enough to include Internet-based tools.	2(19%)	3(27%)	3(27%)	3(27%)	0(0%)
I am competent to use Internet-based tools in the classroom.	0(0%)	1(9%)	5(46%)	3(27%)	2(18)
I know how to integrate Internet-based tools into classroom curricula.	0(0%)	0(0%)	7(64%)	3(27%)	1(9%)
I need training to improve my internet literacy skills.	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(36%)	7(64%)

Source: Questionnaire for teachers, September 2011.

Teachers also perceived that their jobs offer some opportunities for them to learn about the Internet, when presented with this statement, most of them partially agreed, agreed or strongly agreed. Results changed a little when asked if their jobs provide opportunities to teach about the Internet, but even then results inclined to the positive side. Most of the professors also considered that a large number of their colleagues are currently using Internet-based tools.

Nevertheless, participants expressed that in order to integrate Internet-based tools in their instruction, it is necessary to be trained. Even when most affirmed to have some knowledge on how to integrate WBT in their classroom or classroom curricula, the great majority expressed that training is needed to improve their Internet literacy skills. Another important remark in this section is that only three of the participants think that class time is not enough to integrate WBT. On the contrary, five of them disagree with this and think that class time is enough to integrate Internet-based tools.

4.2 UNA Virtual Program

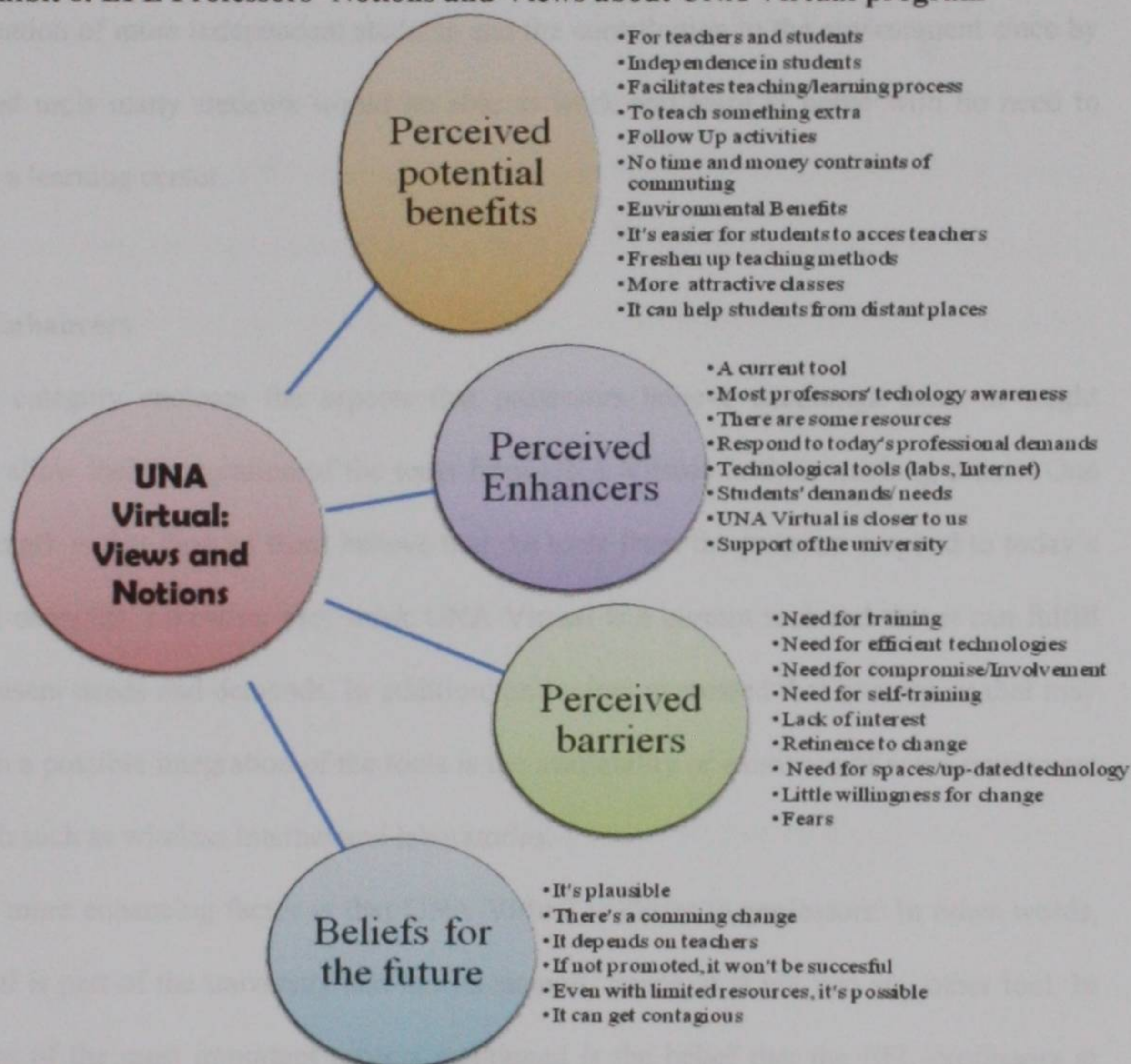
The second general topic to be discussed in this section is the UNA Virtual Program and the potential implementation of their tools. Even though there is a generalized low level of knowledge or certainty about what UNA Virtual really is and the possibilities it offers, professors at Brunca campus showed their expectations, their notions, their beliefs, their thoughts and even their fears in regards to this program.

EFL Professors' Views about the UNA Virtual Program

At the beginning of this study, during the questionnaire, 6 of the 11 participants responded to have none or little knowledge about the existence of the UNA Virtual program and what it was

about, which was reconfirmed during the interviews. Actually, only two of the eleven professors said that they had attended some workshops, but none of them have used any of the tools after this. Nevertheless, all of the participants without exception manifested, at some point or another, willingness to learn about the tools. In general terms there are positive expectations in regards to the potential implementation of the program and the benefits it might bring. Only a couple of professors seemed more skeptical or less enthusiastic. Exhibit 7 shows the main categories emerged in this topic.

Exhibit 8. EFL Professors' Notions and Views about UNA Virtual program



Source: Analysis of interviews, questionnaires and focus group (October, 2011)

Perceived Potential Benefits of the UNA Virtual Program

Among the potential benefits that participants constantly mentioned perhaps the most popular was the idea that it can be beneficial for the learning process. Teachers as well as students will be benefited with the integration of virtual tools in instruction according to them. In addition, the tools might be used for different purposes such as follow up activities, extra class and warm up activities or before the class activities. One example is given by Miley a participant who expresses that students can have more possibilities to access teachers out of the class through the use of virtual communication (personal interview, 2011). Other significant benefits are the formation of more independent students and the contribution to the environment since by of web-based tools many students would be able to work and learn at home with no need to commute to a learning center.

Perceived Enhancers

This category encloses the aspects that professors believe encourage them or might facilitate or allow their integration of the tools from UNA Virtual in their teaching praxis. One aspect to remark is that most of them believe that the tools from the program respond to today's professional demands. Likewise, they think UNA Virtual is a current tool and that it can fulfill students' present needs and demands. In addition, professors expressed that one aspect that may contribute to a possible integration of the tools is the availability or existence of some equipment in the branch such as wireless Internet and laboratories.

One more enhancing factor is that UNA Virtual is closer to professors. In other words, UNA Virtual is part of the university and has its support; hence, it is not just any other tool. In addition, one of the most important aspects mentioned is the belief that the EFL professors at

Brunca branch are showing more technology awareness. Some said that this positive attitude shows that many professors want to learn how to use technology more in their instruction.

Perceived Barriers

Even when there are mostly positive hopes for the program, possible barriers are also present. The number one barrier mentioned by all the participants is the need for training. It is not very likely that the tools be used by this group of professors without prior better training. A second perceived need is that of more efficient technologies. Even though the professors believe that there are some technologies available in the branch, they also believe that more and better devices must be provided. Better spaces and infrastructure were some other aspects mentioned.

When consulted about the preceding issues the Brunca branch' dean Mr. Geovanni Jimenez said that there have been some trainings for UNA Virtual, but the impact of the program has been slow. He thinks one reason is the current generational process among professors. Many of them have not faced the ICTs revolution yet which might create some resistance to them. Another reason is that there has not been a clear need to use Virtual tools in the branch. On the other hand, even when he thinks accessibility to technology may be a barrier, he thinks it is not justifiable because most people in the university have access to wireless Internet. However, he does believe that time is a constraint. Professors must find the moments to access and learn about the resources because UNA Virtual is a very varied platform.

The coordinator from the UNA Virtual program also referred to the existing barriers. According to him the impact of the program in the different branch campuses of UNA has been relatively low. He thinks there have been some important but not permanent experiences and one of the main reasons is the distance from the branches. There is a lack of presence of the program that affects its integration into the different majors and courses (Castro: e-mail interview 2011).

Other barriers that were identified cannot be considered merely physical or technical. They are more related to the teachers themselves. For example, five of them considered that in order to integrate tools like the ones offered by UNA Virtual, professors must get involved and be committed and motivated to invest the necessary time to get informed about the opportunities available. The lack of interest or reticence to change current teaching practices can represent an obstacle, too.

This last aspect was supported by the dean and the coordinator from UNA Virtual program. Mr. Willy Castro from UNA Virtual believes resistance and fear might be obstructing a better integration of the program not only in the branch campuses but in the university in general (e-mail interview, 2011). Likewise, Brunca branch's dean expressed that one latent threat present in the campus is the lack of interest from the academic staff on trying to use the different tools (personal interview, 2011).

Finally, some fears regarding the use of virtual teaching were identified. For instance, one participant expressed her concern for the idea that one day virtual teaching might replace class instruction. Hence, only one professor might be needed to do the work two or three professors used to do. Yale said that students might become very dependent on Internet and they will read less magazines or newspapers or other sources. Liza expressed that some teachers are afraid of losing the control of the class. In the case of Sook In, she is more concerned with the effect of Web-Based Instruction in personal contact *"but what I don't like it is that it is like... I don't know how to say this... like separating people more. You know? Like it is not personal contact: face-to-face contact and it is very important for me"* (personal interview, 2011).

Beliefs for the Future

Along the research the participants' predictions or thoughts about the future of the UNA Virtual program in the Brunca campus were notorious. It is possible to say that all professors perceive the future of Internet-Mediated English Teaching as very plausible. Some believe there have been some changes in the past years that foresee a positive future for this type of instruction. For example, Dan commented: *"teaching is evolving and language teaching is evolving faster and I think that in a few years we're gonna be using those tools here"* (personal interview, 2011).

Java believes that, in spite of the limited resources available at the moment, it is possible to integrate the tools and Jim said that if the tools start being used, it can get contagious. In other words, professors will start spreading the word and sharing experiences so that others can get interested. Other comments were more related to the students:

Clare: *"Students are waiting for this renovation on teaching practices right away, so I anticipate very good responses from the students and teachers at UNASRB"* (questionnaire, 2011).

Liza: *"We have to approach students and technology is the best way to approach them, to talk their language and their language is one of technology, so hopefully we're gonna use technology more"* (personal interview, 2011).

Nevertheless, some impressions given by the participants reveal that the integration success of the tools depends on the teachers. This was also supported by the dean of the branch. As stated in the previous section, if professors do not show interest and engagement in the process, it will fail. In addition to professors' willingness, there is also a need for a better promotion of the program. In this regards, the authorities from the institution have a crucial role.

When consulted about the future of the UNA Virtual program in Brunca branch, Mr. Jiménez showed a positive position. He could expect more access and more frequent trainings. He also hopes that in the future the branch can originate its own bi-modal courses with the help

of the program. He is also hopeful, that more young professors and students will join the efforts and benefit from the initiatives.

The UNA Virtual's coordinator confirmed a need for further improvement in the promotion of the program. He thinks that there is a need for a very well defined plan (short term and long term) with clear objectives and with responsible people who can make it possible. According to him, the program is now in a process of renovation and it is important to integrate the branch campuses in this process to know their vision and contribution (e-mail interview).

During the focus group in which five of the eleven participants were present they elaborated a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) of the Brunca campus and de EFL language department in light of a possible integration of the UNA Virtual program. This analysis was carried out in order to picture the current state of the branch as perceived by the participants. The results are presented in Exhibit 9.

**Exhibit 9. SWOT Analysis for a Potential Implementation of UNA Virtual at UNA
Brunca Branch.**

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment and human resources • Available training • Resources • Empathy for students' and teachers' needs • Knowledge • Guidance • Availability of technological tools • Capacity for self-learning and self-training • Concern for the future • Willingness of some teachers to change • Everybody is invited to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little information • Teachers haven't been trained • Space • Availability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet access/use is becoming more widespread • More resources available to improve teaching • People working with us • More tools which are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • easy to use • neat • fast • cheap • innovative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professors' lack of interest and involvement • Poor/insufficient technical support • users' lack of skill and/or preparation • Swift, difficult to keep up with technology

Source: Focus Group with UNA Brunca branch's EFL professors, 2011.

This analysis helps reconfirm the aspects discussed in previous sections. Professors who participated in the elaboration of this chart recognized the presence of more strengths and opportunities than threats and weaknesses concerning the potential integrating the tools offered by the UNA Virtual program in the English Teaching Major at Brunca Campus. Once more, it is evident that the availability of some resources and the professors themselves as human resources are vital for the success of the program. On the other hand, as it has been said before the lack of training and information become the major weakness at this point. One interesting point highlighted by this group was that what can be seen as an opportunity on one side, might turn into a threat on the other side. They said that the increasing availability of new, modern, fast and innovative resources is an opportunity. Nevertheless, this almost endless scope of possibilities turns into a threat because it is difficult for teachers and institutions to stay up dated with the changes.

Mr. Jimenez agreed in most of the aspects mentioned by the participants. He believes that the installed internet capacity of the branch allows professors to make use of different virtual tools. He believes that one weakness might be the digital gap existing in Costa Rica that has to do with some students having more access to computers and Internet at home than others. Nevertheless, he thinks that the university provides the conditions for its students to access these resources in the school, especially now that language laboratories are based on computers.

One weakness he perceives is the teachers' lack of desire to get involved and participate. He thinks that the university should try to motivate professors and convince them that UNA Virtual offers current tools. Nonetheless, he thinks there are still some conceptual, time or decision limitations on the part of the academic staff.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

This section presents a discussion of the findings of the study and the answers to the researcher questions set at the beginning of it. It is divided into four main sections aiming at clarifying the most relevant aspects inspected in the investigation.

What are the EFL professors' perceptions about the usefulness and ease of use of Web-based tools in their teaching praxis?

In regards to perceived usefulness it is possible to affirm that in a generalized way the population under study found Web-based tools to be highly important in their jobs. There are many areas of the professors' lives that are directly influenced by the use of the Internet and tools based on this means. Nonetheless, the professional part is perhaps the most dependent in this kind of tools. From simple basic uses of the Internet as an information source to more complex applications of it, the data demonstrated that Web-based tools are believed to be very useful and greatly valued. This is a reliable predictor of a possible success of the integration of new web-based tools such as the ones offered by the UNA virtual program.

In regards to the perceived ease of use of Web-based tools it does not seem to be a strong predictor of success as is the perceived usefulness. Professors were not inclined to affirm that Web-based tools were difficult to use, but they did not affirm that the tools are very easy either. Though opinions were divided in this regards, the results did show a tendency towards a positive perception. Mostly, the data revealed that integrating this kind of technology is feasible and most teachers are willing, even eager, to learn how to use it.

What are the EFL professors' perceptions and intentions in regards to the potential integration of the tools from UNA Virtual program?

As to the UNA Virtual program, the major obstacle for its integration at the moment has been the relatively scarce information professors have of it. Due to factors such as the little promotion of the tools or a low need for virtual teaching in the Brunca branch, the program and its components or possibilities are not well known among the participants. Nonetheless, the professors do have some expectations and intentions in regards to the potential implementation of the program in their teaching praxis.

Most participants perceived the tools as a good option that might respond to the present needs and demands of students and teachers. There are several potential benefits for the teaching and learning process. Most professors showed enthusiasm and good expectations in regards to the latent advantages of UNA Virtual. This forecasts a positive future for the program in the Brunca branch if it is well promoted by the coordinators of the program and by the branch's authorities as well. This could be done through the implementation of a more aggressive strategy that could help promote more awareness about the potential benefits of the program and built more confidence among the professors who might be interested in implementing it.

The future success of the UNA Virtual program in the Brunca campus depends on teachers and on a better support of it. The study revealed that in general terms the participants showed interest to learn about the program and the possibilities it offers. Encouraging factors such as the support of the university, and the positive attitudes shown by most of the professors are good predictors. There is a belief that the program will be used and implemented more in coming times especially because most professors are becoming more aware of the importance of educational technology.

What factors are affecting the EFL professors' potential integration of the tools offered by the UNA Virtual program in their teaching praxis at UNA Brunca Branch Campus?

Teacher-level Barriers

Integrating ICTs into teaching and learning might turn into a complex process that may encounter a number of difficulties or barriers. Such is the case of the UNA Virtual program in the Brunca branch. The latent barriers found in the study were located in two main levels. The first one is the teacher-level barriers or those related to the teachers themselves. Obstacles at this level include the teachers' resistance to change current teaching practices and negative attitudes. This happens mainly when a teacher is used to certain teaching approaches that they have used for many years and it originates some level of rejection to new ones. Shifting from classical approaches to more technology oriented ones is not easy for professors.

A second barrier is the lack of interest of some professors which is related to the previous one. Nevertheless, the lack of interest does not imply a rejection of technology-based teaching practices but simply an indifferent stand towards them. The third barrier acknowledged was the lack of teacher competence. It may include technology competence in general or just lack of competence in the use of UNA Virtual tools.

One more aspect is the need for self-training practices among teachers. Some participants believe that in order to improve technology skills teachers need to look for their own ways to learn. Professionals need to show curiosity about technology, commitment and involvement. Nevertheless, becoming familiar with new technologies requires time and effort. And many times busy teachers do not have the time even when they might have the interest.

School-level Barriers

School-level barriers identified in the study included as the first and most relevant one the lack of effective training on the tools offered by UNA Virtual. In order to be able to decide whether the UNA Virtual tools are useful for their teaching purposes, professors must know first what they are about and how they work. Without pertinent prior training, professors will not be able to see any advantage of the tools.

A second school factor limiting the use of UNA Virtual and other WBT in general is the reduced accessibility to up-dated and trustworthy technological resources in the branch and the need for technical support. To guarantee a higher success of the program in the branch the institution should make efforts to guarantee the optimal resources. It does not mean that technology does not exist. There are technologies available that serve as a good start but they should be constantly up-graded to respond to the fast changes of today's world. Also the access should be guaranteed for all EFL students and teachers.

What are the ELF professors' perceived needs in regards to the use of UNA Virtual that should be contemplated in an action plan that helps mitigate the problem?

The first need in order to have a successful implementation of the UNA Virtual program in the Brunca Branch is the provision of effective training. Professors need to know the basic aspects of the program for them to decide whether it is beneficial for them or no. Second, teachers believe that there are still some aspects to improve in regards to the resources and technical support available in the branch. The results also call for a change in some professors' negative attitudes. Teachers must be more open to explore and experiment new teaching methods that incorporate technology more in the class.

There is also a need for motivation particularly from the authorities. Communicating and promoting the tools is important, but raising awareness on the importance of using them is decisive. The administration should work on generating attractive initiatives for the use of UNA Virtual and transmitting its potential benefits for teachers and students. Some of the initiatives might include feedback sessions with other EFL professors from other campuses of the university who have worked with UNA Virtual in the past. The sharing sessions might be done through video conferencing so that there is no need to travel from one branch to another.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section the researcher provides alternatives to approach the issue inspected and to respond to the most relevant needs emerged throughout the study. There are specific suggestions for the EFL professors and considering that the participants constantly mentioned that the authorities could have a higher impact in the promotion of the UNA Virtual program, it was proper to provide a few suggestions for them as well.

Recommendations for the Authorities of the Brunca Branch

The first step to be taken is improving the communication and alliances with the UNA Virtual program in order to propitiate spaces for learning more about the opportunities that the program offers. Stimulating the teachers' involvement in the trainings is part of the possible contributions from the administrators and it does not imply major economical or time investments.

Because of the limited economical resources of the Brunca branch, it is not very feasible for the institution to assign paid time for anyone to develop initiatives on virtual teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the efforts must be focused on identifying the professors who show a genuine interest in the potential benefits that UNA virtual can bring them. The identification of these "innovators" can be done by means of an instrument or through the coordination of the English department. After spotting the enthusiasts or risk takers, authorities could motivate them to start creating experiences and initiatives by guaranteeing their support and guidance at every moment.

One of the initiatives to be promoted is the adaptation of one of the course syllabuses in the English Teaching Major and the associates program in English at Sede Brunca to implement the use of one of the tools from UNA Virtual. This can be a pilot course that can be taught with

the help of UNA Virtual simultaneously in the two programs. Once the first course has been taught implementing UNA Virtual, it is also important to socialize the results with the university community so that others can see the benefits and learn from the obstacles found.

Because technology integration sometimes requires curriculum adaptations, the authorities should also be open-minded to changes and innovation as well. In other words, if for example the use of virtual instruction requires for alternative evaluation practices (not the typical paper test), the authorities should not discourage professors who want to use them. Many times those who reject the use of new technologies for instruction (i.e. teachers, students, administrators) might want to get in the way of those who believe in them. This can be minimized by supporting projects and activities that aim to promote the use of Web-based technology in the class.

Recommendations for the EFL Professors

The first recommendation for participants is to try to look for more information about the UNA Virtual program and its components. Perhaps not all of them might think the program can have a great impact in their teaching, but they should at least know basic aspects about it. If until now there have not been many trainings, it is necessary that they participate in any forthcoming workshop or session brought to the branch. Showing interest in learning is the first step.

A second recommendation for the professors is to try to create spaces for them to share experiences related to their teaching practices with other colleagues. In this way, more people will benefit from each other's knowledge. For example, if someone cannot attend trainings on UNA Virtual others can share the information they were given. As one of the participants said the word can get spread and more people will be influenced.

It is also important to promote technology awareness among the university community and professors can take a crucial task to accomplish this. Nevertheless, in order to do this they must be aware of the relevance of technology themselves. Another action teachers can take is to keep constant communication with the UNA Virtual program itself by means of its web site so that they remain informed of the updates or new projects available in the program.

The next part of this section provides a model of promotion of the UNA Virtual program in the Brunca branch translated into a plan of action that responds to the needs emerged from this study.

Plan of Action

A. Introduction

The common visions and needs derived from this investigation are translated in this plan of action into concrete action lines to ensure the use of ICT-based tools in response to the goals of the university's Global Plan and Pedagogical Model by promoting the incorporation of the UNA Virtual Program in EFL instruction at UNA Brunca branch campus. This plan is an attempt to help overcome the barriers for the adoption of the program in this campus and provide pertinent alternatives to approach the issue.

All stakeholders have an essential role to play in this process. The branch's authorities have a leading part in planning and developing strategies that orient the academic staff towards a better use of new technologies. The commitment and involvement of the branch's faculty is equally important for the actual implementation of concrete actions in the class or in their instruction. People from the UNA Virtual program should also support and accompany the initiatives originated in the different sectors of the university community. Hence, all of them must work hand in hand to guarantee more possibilities for the success of the UNA Virtual Program.

B. Objectives

The main objectives of this Plan of Action are

- To promote the use of the Web-based tools offered by the UNA Virtual in the teaching praxis of a group of EFL professors at UNA Brunca branch.
- To address new challenges of the Information society and its demand for more technology oriented teaching practices.

C. Action Lines

C1. The role of the Brunca branch's authorities

1. An effective planning and promotion of the trainings offered by the UNA Virtual program is vital in the developing awareness of the importance among the university community.
2. Guarantee the spaces and time for more professors to participate in the trainings. This includes the permission to attend the trainings and a proper communication of them.
3. Establishment of strategic alliances with the coordination of the UNA Virtual program and an active participation in the process of renovation it is going through. This will guarantee more involvement on the part of the branch and more possibilities to contribute to the improvement of the program.
4. Identification of groups or individuals among the academic staff where the tools offered by UNA Virtual can have a greater impact or acceptance, taking into account professors' enthusiasm and willingness to use ICTs into their class instruction. Younger professors can be considered as well as those who show a major inclination for technology innovation.

5. Work hand in hand with UNA Virtual and with academic personnel in any attempt to innovate and use the new technologies.
6. Supervise that the access and quality of technological resources in the branch be always the most optimal considering the possibilities of the institution.

C2. The Role of the EFL Professors

1. To show interest in the integration of ICTs in their instruction and class pedagogy.
2. To get informed and be proactive about the tools offered by the institution they work for.
3. To become promoters more than critics of current teaching practices when they benefit students and society in general.
4. To start using the tools offered by UNA Virtual so that they can develop new teaching and learning experiences in the Brunca branch that allow them to test the potential benefits or draw backs of the tools. This with the purpose of generating feedback for the program and for the institution as for what needs to be done or what is being done right.
5. To identify the courses inside the curriculum offered at UNA Brunca branch which might have a greater benefit from the integration of the Tools offered by UNA virtual.
6. To evaluate by themselves the potential benefits or disadvantages of UNA Virtual for their own teaching practice and not wait until they are told what to do. For this, it is necessary to take a more self-training stand towards technology itself.
7. To maintain a constant healthy communication with the branch's authorities and with the people from UNA Virtual to keep informed of the changes and forthcoming upgrades of the program as well as to participate actively of those changes.
8. To be willing to share their inquiries and experiences with the rest of the university community.

C3. The role of the UNA Virtual program

1. To work hand in hand with the branch campuses to guarantee a higher participation of these actors in the direction that UNA Virtual program takes.
2. To continue innovating in the areas of Information and Communication Technologies in education so that the initiatives they create can reach more and more people in the University.
3. To create specific strategies focused on expanding their scope in the branch campuses. Those strategies should center on the specific needs present in the branches and at the same time should aim at overcoming barriers such as distance from the main campus in Heredia.
4. To accompany any arising effort or attempt to incorporate more the program in the branch campuses.

D. Follow up and Evaluation

1. Professors as well as authorities must work together to create spaces for sharing experiences, lessons learned and expectations emerged from the implementation of the tools offered by UNA Virtual. This could be done by setting feedback sessions or any other gathering in which professors and authorities can get involved and express their opinions and concerns freely.
2. Constant motivation is vital to ensure the permanence of the efforts and the success of the experiences originated in the branch campuses. One motivation teachers can receive is the support for them to socialize their experiences inside or outside the campus by means of attending conferences or workshops about educational technology or related topics. Another way to motivate professors is by always assuring them the access to the technological resources available in the branch. In addition, professors may be

encouraged to elaborate technology-related projects to participate in different bidding processes carried out by the university so that they can finance their projects and activities.

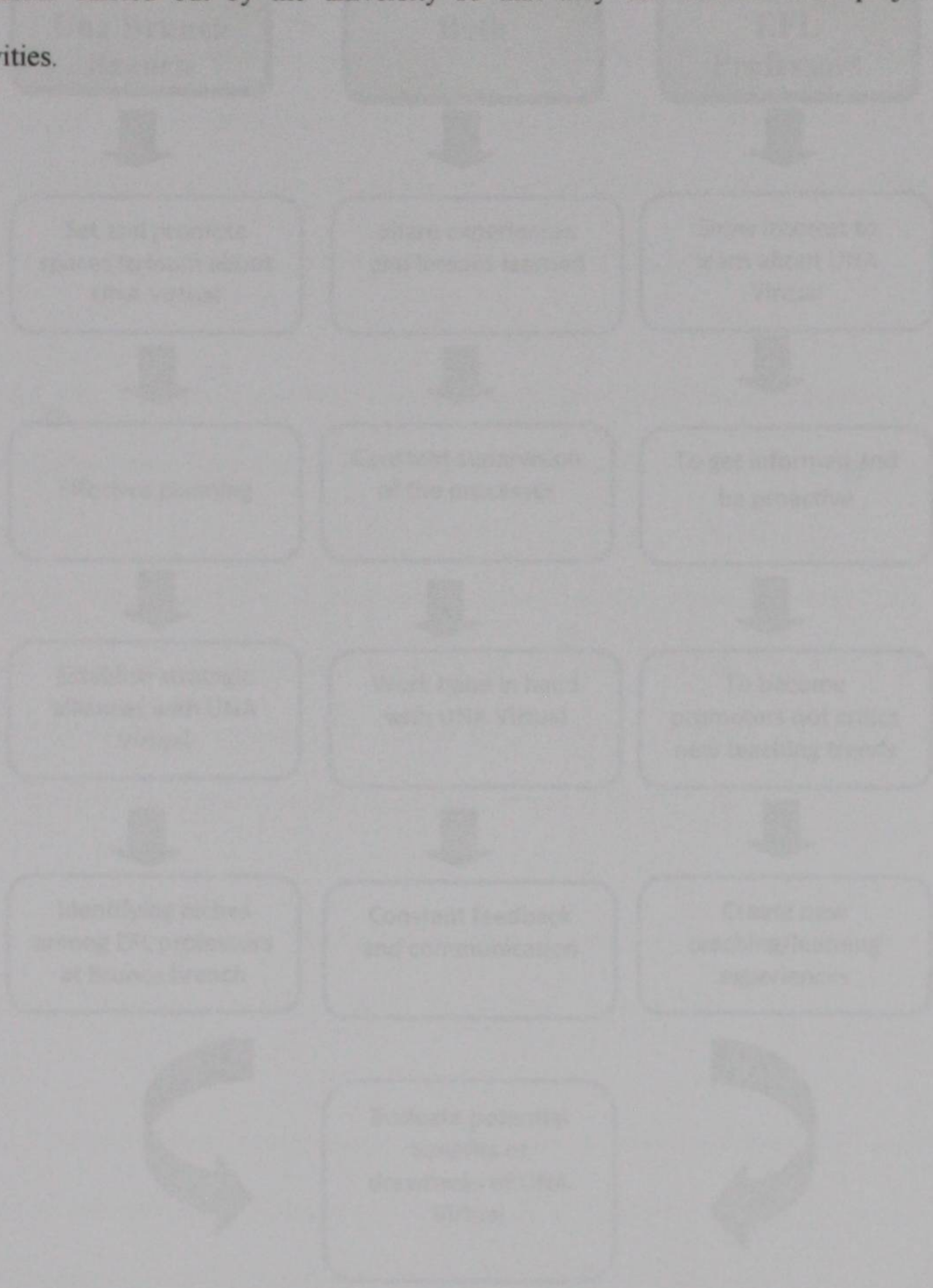
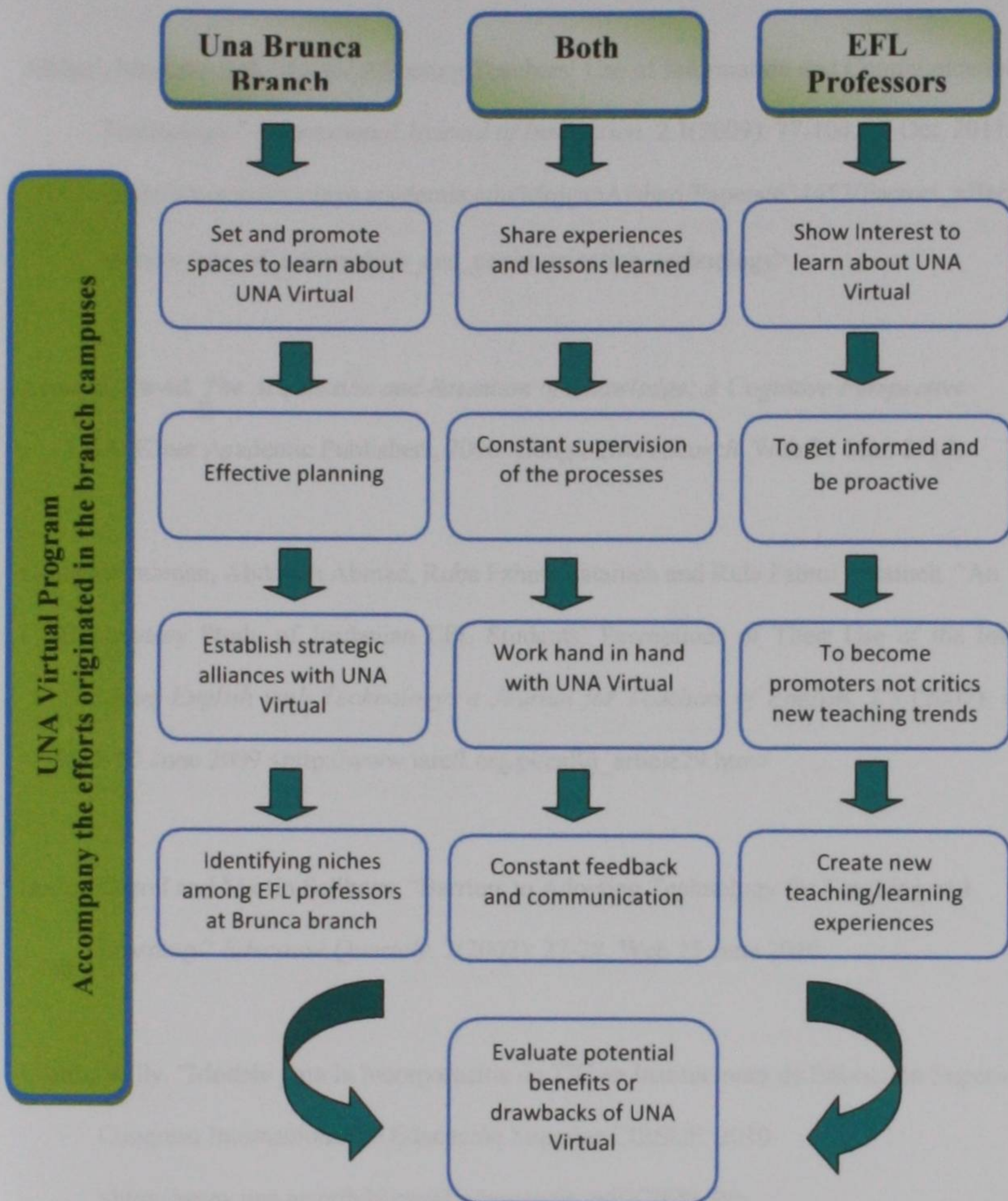


Exhibit 10. Model for the Integration of the UNA Virtual Program at Sede Brunca



Source: The researcher's own creation, 2011.

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ANNEX

ANNEX 1:

NAME CODING FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

Annex 1: Name coding for the participants

The following table shows the name-coding of the participants and the corresponding instructions applied to them.

Name	Initials	Gender	Age	Marital Status
George	GD	M	24	No
Fred	FD	M	24	No
Steve	SD	M	24	No
Clare	CD	F	21	No
Jan	JD	F	24	Married
Lucy	LD	F	21	No
Mary	MD	F	22	No
Sue	SD	F	24	No
Mary	MD	F	24	No
John	JD	M	24	No

ANNEX 1:

NAME CODING FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

Annex1: Name coding for the participants

The following chart shows the name coding of the participants and the corresponding instruments applied to them.

Given name	Questionnaire number	One-to one Interview	Observation number	Focus group*
Google	001	#7	No	No
Dan	002	#1	No	Yes
Java	003	#8	No	No
Clare	004	#11	#2	No
Jim	005	#5	#3, #5	Yes
Liza	006	#3	#7	Yes
Ming	007	#2	No	Yes
Sidney	008	#9	# 4	Yes
Miley	009	#6	No	No
Yale	010	#10	No	No
Sook In	011	# 4	#1, #6	No

ANNEX 2. QUESTIONNAIRE INTENDED FOR EFL TEACHERS AT UNA SEDE BRUNCA

MAIN OBJECTIVE

1. To identify the perceptions of EFL professors at UNA Brunca Campus toward the use of the Web-based tools offered by the UNA Virtual Program and the factors affecting the integration of those tools in their teaching practice.

Specific objectives

1. To determine Brunca Brunca EFL professors' perceptions about the integration of internet and Web-based tools in their teaching practice.
2. To establish the factors affecting the EFL professors' integration of the tools offered by UNA Virtual in their teaching practice.

PROCEDURES

1. Test the instrument with one ... **ANNEX 2.** ... modify possible problems.

2. Make direct copies of the instrument for all participants.

QUESTIONNAIRE INTENDED FOR EFL TEACHERS

AT UNA SEDE BRUNCA

3. Copy of the instrument ...
4. Distribute the questionnaires to participants ...
5. Collect the instruments filled.
6. Analyze the data. Start coding of answers.
7. Establish units of analysis.
8. Find emerging patterns.
9. Establish possible categories.
10. Compare and contrast data with other existing data.

ANNEX 2. QUESTIONNAIRE INTENDED FOR EFL TEACHERS AT UNA SEDE BRUNCA

MAIN OBJECTIVE

- To identify the perceptions of EFL professors at UNA Brunca Campus towards the use of the Web-based tools offered by the UNA Virtual Program and the factors affecting their integration of those tools in their teaching praxis.

Specific objectives

1. To determine Brunca Branch's EFL professors' perceptions about the integration of Internet and Web-based tools in their teaching praxis.
2. To establish the factors affecting the EFL professors' integration of the tools offered by UNA Virtual in their teaching praxis.

PROCEDURES

1. Test the instrument with one possible informant and modify possible problems.
2. Make physical copies of the instrument for all informants.
3. Contact personally, by the phone or via e-mail each participant and provide them with a copy of the instrument (digital or printed according to their preference or convenience), explain its purpose and request their cooperation to complete and return it as soon as possible.
4. Collect the instruments filled.
5. Analyze the data. Start coding of answers.
6. Establish units of analysis.
7. Find emerging patterns
8. Establish possible categories
9. Compare and contrast data with other existing data.

Dear professors:

The following is a questionnaire containing close ended as well as open ended questions to collect information about the EFL teacher's perceptions in regards to the integration of virtual tools (web-based or internet-based tools) in their class instruction and methodology.

The study focuses on the use or integration of the virtual tools offered by the UNA Virtual program. The information provided here will be used exclusively for research purposes, and your anonymity will be guaranteed at every moment of the research.

Feel free to provide in depth and honest answers to every one of the sections in this instrument. The richness of your insights on the topic will benefit the results of the study.

PART 1. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Your gender? Male Female

2. How old are you?

20 to 25 years 26 -30 years 31-35 years 36-40 41 or more

3. What is the highest academic degree attained?

PhD Masters Licenciatura Bachelor's

4. What is your area of specialization?

5. How long have you been teaching English?

1-5 year(s) 6-10 years 11-15 years 16 years or more _____

PART 2. INTEGRATION OF WEB-BASED TOOLS IN INSTRUCTION

6. How long have you used computers?

One year or less 2-5 years 6-9 years 10 years and more

7. How long have you used the Internet?

do not use it One year or less 2-5 years 6-9 years 10 years and more

8. Have you ever attended any training course, workshop or seminar on using the virtual tools offered by UNA Virtual?

Yes (go to 8.1 and 8.2) No (go to 8.3 and 8.4)

8.1 If your answer to 8 was **Yes**, please specify the number of hours and /or days:

days _____ hours _____

8.2 If your answer to 8 was **Yes**, were you satisfied with the training course(s)?

Yes No

8.3 If your answer to question N.8 was **No**, what is the main reason (s) for preventing your participation?

No courses available Distance to training courses

Lack of time No Interest

Other: Please specify _____

8.4 If the answer to question N.8 was **No** but you get a chance, will you take a training course to learn how to use the Virtual tools offered by UNA Virtual?

- Yes No

9 Have you ever used any of the virtual tools offered by the UNA Virtual Program in your classroom?

- Yes (go to 9.1) No (go to 9.2)

9.1 If your answer to question N.9 was **Yes**, which ones have you used?

- Virtual classroom Concept maps
 The teacher's web site Virtual Portfolio

9.2 If your answer to question N.9 was **No**, which ones would you like to use in you class?

- Virtual classroom Concept maps
 The teacher's web site Virtual Portfolio

10. Do you use Internet-based activities in your classroom for teaching purposes?

- Yes (go to 10.1 and 10.2) No (go to 10.3)

10.1. If your answer to question N.10 was **Yes**, how often do you use Internet-based activities in your classroom?

- Very often (more than three times a week)
 Often (once or twice a week)
 Sometimes (once or twice a month)
 Rarely (once or twice a semester)

10.2 If your answer to question N.10 was **Yes**, what types of Internet-based activities do you usually use in your classroom? Tick all items that apply.

- Crosswords encyclopedias e-mail quizzes
 Games on-line dictionaries puzzles text chatting
 Video conferencing voice chatting web surfing
 Other: Please specify: _____

10.3 If your answer to question N.10 was **No**, what are the main reasons preventing the use of Internet-based activities in your class? Tick all options that apply.

- Your limited computer skills Your limited interest
 Limited computer facilities Limited time
 Students' limited English ability Students' limited computer skills
 The nature of the courses you teach Limited training
 Others: Please specify _____

11. How would you grade yourself as an Internet-based tools user?

- _____ very skillful
_____ somewhat skillful
_____ not very skillful
_____ Poorly skillful

PART 3. TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE INTERNET-BASED TOOLS

INSTRUCTIONS: please write and "X" in the box that best describes your level of agreement with each of the following statements. Use the following table to decide your answer.

SD= Strongly disagree	D= disagree	PA=Partially agree	A= Agree	SA= Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

	SD ↓	D	PA	A	SA ↓
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Use of the Internet-based tools increases my social prestige. (PU)					
2. Use of the Internet-based tools increases my job performance. (PU)					
3. Use of the Internet increases my access to information. (PU)					
4. The Internet-based tools are easy to understand and use. (PEU)					
5. My job provides opportunities for me to learn about the Internet.(PU)					
6. My job provides opportunities for me to teach about the Internet. (PEU)					
7. A large number of my colleagues currently use Internet-based tools. (PEU)					
8. Internet-based tools have the potential to enhance ESL instruction. (PU)					
9. EFL teachers should be trained/educated to use the Internet-based tools in instruction. (PEU)					
10. Using Internet-based tools saves time and effort. (PEU)					
11. The Internet offers opportunities for new teaching techniques. (PU)					
12. Internet-based tools fit well into my curriculum goals (PU)					
13. Internet- based tools can make learning English easier and more efficient. (PU)					
14. Internet-based tools can be used to teach pronunciation and speaking (PU)					
15. Internet-based tools can be used to teach grammar (PU)					
16. Internet-based tools can be used to teach reading and writing. (PU)					
17. Class time is not enough to include Internet-based tools (PEU)					
18. Internet-based tools fit my students' learning styles and level of Internet expertise. (PU)					
19. I like to know about resources available on the Internet for EFL instruction(PU)					
20. Using the Internet-based tools makes teaching more interesting. (PU)					
21. Using Internet-based tools in teaching fits my personal preferences. (PU)					
22. Internet-based instruction can replace class (face-to-face) instruction (PU)					
23. Students will be more attentive to Internet assisted English language classes(PU)					
24. I am competent to use Internet-based tools in the classroom (PEU)					
25. I know how to integrate Internet-based tools into classroom curricula (PEU)					
26. I would like to use Internet-based materials in my classroom as much as possible. (PU)					
27. I need training to improve my internet literacy skills. (PEU)					

PART IV. OPEN QUESTIONS

Please answer the following questions. Provide thoughtful deep answers that clearly reflect your ideas towards the topic. Your cooperation is of great value for this investigation.

- 1. What do you think are the advantages of using the virtual tools offered by UNA Virtual program in your classroom?

- 2. What do you think are the disadvantages of using Virtual tools in the classroom?

- 3. What do you think of the future of the use of Internet- Assisted language teaching at UNA Sede Brunca?

- 4. Do you have any comments on the use of the Virtual tools offered by the UNA Virtual program for the teaching of English as a foreign language here in Sede Brunca?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

Annex 3. Structured-Non Participating Classroom Observation Tool

General objective

- To record data from EFL teachers' class use and interaction with technology.

Specific objectives

- To classify common kinds of technology used by EFL professors in the class.
- To identify common uses of technology by EFL teachers at UNAM Mexico Branch.
- To establish the role of the teacher in the interaction with technology in the class.

ANNEX 3.

STRUCTURED-NON PARTICIPANT CLASSROOM

OBSERVATION TOOL

- The main objective of the observation is to record the class interaction with technology.
- The first section of the instrument is devoted to recording general aspects of the class being observed such as the name of the teacher, time and length of the observation, date among others.
- After that, there is a section to record aspects related to the lesson itself such as content or topic, grouping, etc.
- On a second page the observer writes a short description of the class.
- Finally, there is a section to check the level of technology interaction, the use of technology by the teacher and students.

Procedures for the observation

1. Define the schedule feasibility for observation.
2. Check the access to each of the classes defined on step one.
3. Contact the professors in charge of those classes in order to ask them whether they make use of some technology in their class.
4. Request their permission for the observations.
5. Visit their class and complete the observation form.
6. Analyze the data gathered.

Annex 3. Structured-non participant Classroom Observation Tool

General objective

- **To record data from EFL teachers' class use and interaction with technology.**

Specific objectives

- **To identify common kinds of technology used by EFL professors in the class.**
- **To identify common uses of technology by EFL teachers at UNA Brunca Brnach.**
- **To establish the role of the teacher in the interaction with technology in the class.**

Description of the instrument

- ▣ The instrument presents guidelines for specific aspects of the class interaction with technology to be observed.
- ▣ The first section of the instrument is meant for recording general aspect of the class being observed such as the name of the teacher, time and length of the observation, date among others.
- ▣ After that, there is a section to record aspect related to the lesson itself such as content or topic, grouping, etc.
- ▣ On a second page the observer writes a short description of the class.
- ▣ Finally, there is a section to check the level of technology integration, the use of technology by the teacher and students.

Procedures for the observation

1. Define the schedule feasibility for observation
2. Check the courses taught at the times defined on step one.
3. Contact the professors in charge of those courses in order to ask them whether they make use of some technology in their class.
4. Request their permission for the observation.
5. Visit their class and complete the observation form.
6. Analyze the data gathered.

Structured Classroom Observation on the Use of Technology



1. General information of the class

School: <i>Universidad Nacional</i>	
Teacher:	Course:
Gender male _____ Female _____	
Class Size (est.) at the time of observation:	
Observer:	Date:
Lenth of observation From _____ to: _____	

2. The major content or topic of the lesson:

3. Technology (hardware and software) and/or Instructional Materials In Use:

4. Student Groupings (single, small, large, etc.) and Interactions:

5. Number of Computers in this Classroom:

6. Use of technology/audio-visual resource:

- a. To develop conceptual understanding
- b. To learn or practice a skill
- c. To collect data
- d. As an analytic tool (e.g., spreadsheets or data analysis)
- e. As a presentation tool
- f. For word processing or as a communications tool (e.g., e-mail, Internet, Web)
- g. For assessment
- h. For conversation enhancement
- i. To create awareness

7. Degree to which teacher is employing direct instruction (circle number):

- Low/None (Students are working independently and/or in student groups)
- Medium (Some teacher direction of the entire class, but half or more of the time as above)
- High (Teacher-directed instruction. Lecture, presentation, etc.)

8. **Brief Description of Classroom Activity/Lesson:**

<i>Technology Integration</i>		
Not used	No use of computer or related technology for productivity (e.g., word-processing, electronic portfolios), communications (e.g., e-mail, videoconferencing), research (e.g., Internet searches, CD-ROMs), or problem-solving/decision-making (e.g., spreadsheet, Computer Aided Design) is observed.	<i>Comments:</i>
Add-on	Limited use of computer or related technology by students and teacher. The use of the technology is simplistic, not well integrated into the lesson, and does not support learning in a meaningful way.	
Partially integrated	Moderate use of computer or related technology by students and teacher. Technology is used in a single way for productivity, communications, research or problem-solving/decision making to support learning.	
Fully integrated	Extensive use of computer or related technology by students and teacher. Technology is used in multiple, complex ways that promote learning through productivity, communications, research or problem-solving/decision making.	
<i>Teacher's Technology Use</i>		
Not used	The teacher did not use any computer or related technology.	<i>Comments:</i>
Presentation	Teacher uses technology to make a presentation via a slide show, web pages, or other means. The teaching style is teacher centered.	
Demonstration	Teacher uses technology to show students an activity that they will be doing themselves. The teaching style is teacher centered.	
Assisting students	Teacher helps the students with their use of technology. The teaching style is student-centered	
<i>Students' Technology Use</i>		
Not used	No students used any computer or related technology.	<i>Comments:</i>
Single application used	Only one type of software application is being used by students (e.g., students all word-processed an essay).	
2 or 3 applications used	Two or three different application types are being used in the classroom at one time (e.g., one group are word-processing an essay, while another group is doing an Internet search).	
4 applications used	Four or more different application types are being used in the classroom at one time (e.g., The class is producing a newsletter and group one is doing an Internet search, group two is creating graphics, group three is word-processing text, group four is laying out in DTP).	

ANNEX 4. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH EFL PROFESSORS AT UNA BRUNCA BRANCA

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To identify the EFL professors' perceptions and teaching practices in use of the tools offered by the UNA Virtual Campus and the factors affecting the integration of these tools in their teaching practice at UNA Branca Branca.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

- To describe Branca Branca's EFL teachers' perceptions about the integration of Virtual tools offered by the UNA Virtual Campus in their teaching practice.
- To describe the factors affecting the EFL teachers' integration of the tools offered by the UNA Virtual Campus.
- To describe the professors' perceptions about the factors affecting the integration of Virtual tools in their teaching practice and how they are being managed.

ANNEX 4.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH EFL

PROFESSORS AT UNA BRUNCA BRANCA.

The purpose of this instrument is to collect information from EFL professors at UNA Branca Branca about their use of virtual tools offered by the UNA Virtual Campus. The instrument consists of a set of questions and a list of topics to be discussed. The questions are divided into two groups: general questions and specific questions. The general questions are related to the professors' perceptions about the use of virtual tools in their teaching practice. The specific questions are related to the factors affecting the integration of virtual tools in their teaching practice. The instrument is intended to be used as a guide for the interviewer during the interview. The interviewer should use the instrument to collect information about the professors' perceptions and teaching practices in use of the tools offered by the UNA Virtual Campus.

PROCEDURE FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE INSTRUMENT

- Contact professors to ask them for an individual interview
- Identify and prepare the interview
- Read the instrument and the questions
- Ask professors for permission to record the conversation
- Apply and record the conversation
- Transcribe the conversation
- Code units of analysis
- Draw categories
- Describe and describe with examples

Annex 4. SEMI- STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH EFL PROFESSORS AT UNA BRUNCA BRANCH.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To identify the EFL professors' perceptions and intentions towards the use of the tools offered by the UNA Virtual Program and the factors affecting the integration of those tools in their teaching praxis at UNA Brunca Campus

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

- To determine Brunca Branch's EFL teachers' perceptions about the integration of Virtual tools offered by the UNA Virtual program in their teaching praxis.
- To determine the factors affecting the EFL professors' integration of the tools offered by the UNA Virtual program.
- To explore the Professors' intentions in regards to the future integration Internet-mediated tools in the teaching and learning of English in the Brunca Campus.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENT

The interview is used to obtain confirmative, corroborative supportive or even new information from EFL professors at UNA Brunca Branch after they had completed the questionnaire.

Some basic general questions were planned to ask professors. The first questions were general, introductory questions for the interviewee to start feeling comfortable. Subsequent questions led to information related to Internet-based activities to finally get to the main topic which was UNA Virtual.

A question was included at the end to know the professors' perspectives about the future of Internet-mediated teaching and learning at Brunca Branch Campus

PROCEDURE FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE INSTRUMENT

- Contact participants to ask them for an individual interview
- Set a day and place for the interview
- Meet the participants for the interview
- Ask participants for permission to record the conversation
- Apply and record the conversation
- Transcribe the conversation
- Code units of analysis
- Derive categories
- Compare and correlate with existing data

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

1. How long have you used Internet?
2. What do you use Internet for?
3. Do you use Internet in the classroom? If yes, how do you describe your experience?
4. What can you say or what do you know about UNA Virtual?
5. How do you see the future of Internet-Assisted Language teaching and learning in the Brunca Brach Campus?

Annex 5. INTERVIEW WITH THE EXPERT FROM UNA VIRTUAL

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this instrument is to know the perspective of the coordinator of the UNA Virtual program in regards to the impact and the factors affecting the integration of this program in the University.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To know the perspective from an expert from UNA Virtual in relation to the impact of the Program at Faculty level.
2. To establish some possible factors affecting the EFL professors' integration at the

Annex 5.

INTERVIEW WITH THE EXPERT FROM UNA

PROCEDURE

VIRTUAL

1. Contact the coordinator of the UNA virtual program via e-mail or by the phone to set a date for a personal meeting. If a personal face to face interview is not possible a telephone interview will be set.
2. Carry out the interview in the place previously set (or by the phone). The interview must be done in the informant's native language which is Spanish for it is not certain to the researcher whether he speaks English or not.
3. Ask the informant for consent to record the conversation.
4. Record the interview and take notes on the most relevant aspects discussed.
5. Transcribe the interview.
6. Analyze the data.

Annex 5. INTERVIEW WITH THE EXPERT FROM UNA VIRTUAL

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this instrument is to know the perspective of the coordinator of the UNA Virtual program in regards to the impact and the factors affecting the integration of this program in the University.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To know the perspective from an expert from UNA Virtual in relation to the impact of the program at Brunca Brunch.
2. To establish some possible factors affecting the EFL professors' integration of the Virtual tools offered by UNA Virtual in their teaching praxis.

PROCEDURE

1. Contact the coordinator of the UNA virtual program via e-mail or by the phone to set a date for a personal meeting. If a personal face to face interview is not possible a telephone interviewed will be set.
2. Carry out the interview in the place previously set (or by the phone). The interview must be done in the informant's native language which is Spanish for it is not certain to the researcher whether he speaks English or not.
3. Ask the informant for consent to record the conversation
4. Record the interview and take notes on the most relevant aspects discussed.
5. Transcribe the interview.
6. Analyze the data.

GUIA PARA LA ENTREVISTA ORAL CON EL EXPERTO DEL PROGRAMA UNA VIRTUAL (ESPAÑOL)

1. ¿Cuál es su función en el programa UNA Virtual?
2. ¿Cómo describiría en términos generales el programa UNA Virtual?
3. ¿Cómo describiría los alcances del programa UNA Virtual?
4. ¿A quién está dirigido el Programa UNA Virtual?
5. ¿Cuáles son los objetivos del programa?
6. ¿Qué ofrece el programa a los docentes de la universidad?
7. ¿Podría referirse a cada uno de las herramientas ofrecidas por el programa?
8. ¿Cómo puede un docente hacer uso de las herramientas?
9. ¿Cuáles son las características de los docentes que participan y se vinculan al programa?
10. ¿Cuál ha sido el alcance del programa en las sedes?
11. ¿Nota usted alguna diferencia entre la utilización del programa entre la Sede Central y las Sedes Regionales? Si es así, ¿Cuál es esa diferencia? ¿en su opinión que factores pueden promover esa diferencia?
12. ¿Cuáles son las proyecciones del programa hacia las sedes en el futuro?
13. ¿Qué pasa específicamente con la sede Brunca?
14. ¿En una escala de 1 a 10 evalúe el grado de dificultad para que un docente pueda llegar a utilizar las herramientas promovidas por el programa?
15. ¿En su opinión, Que factores pueden intervenir en la utilización o no utilización de las herramientas ofrecidas por UNA Virtual?
16. ¿Existe actualmente algún estudio o estadística llevada a cabo por ustedes en relación a la integración de las herramientas virtuales de UNA Virtual en la Universidad?

**GUIDE FOR THE ORAL INTERVIEW WITH THE EXPERT FROM UNA VIRTUAL
(ENGLISH VERSION)**

1. What is your role in this program?
2. How would you describe in general terms the UNA Virtual program?
3. How would you describe the scope of the Program?
4. To whom is the program intended?
5. What are the main objectives of the program?
6. What does the program offer to the teachers?
7. Could you refer to the Virtual Tools offered by the program?
8. How can a teacher make use of the tools offered by the program?
9. What are the characteristics of the teachers that participate in the program?
10. What has been the impact of the program in the university's branches?
11. Do you notice any difference between the main branch and the regional branches? If so, which ones? In your opinion, what factors can contribute to those differences?
12. What are the projections of the program in the regional campuses in the future?
13. What happens specifically in the Brunca branch?
14. In a scale from 1 to 10 evaluate the difficulty for a teacher to make use of the tools offered by the program.
15. In your opinion, what factors contribute in the use or no use of the tools offered by UNA virtual?
16. Is there currently a study or statistic carried out by this program about the about the integration of the virtual tools from UNA Virtual in the university?

Thank you for your valuable cooperation

ANNEX 5. Protocol for the interview with the UNA Brunca Campus' Dean

Key informants are always important sources of information to consult, guide or assist the research process at any point. In the case of this study, the researcher considered important to interview the branch's dean in order to know the administrator's perspectives in regards to the main topic of the study. The main objective of the interview was:

- To describe the administrator's perspectives in regards to the impact of the UNA Virtual Program in the campus.

ANNEX 6.

PROTOCOL FOR THE INTERVIEW WITH THE

UNA BRUNCA CAMPUS' DEAN

Considering that the informant has a very demanding administrative position in the campus, it was necessary to find an opportunity for the interview with him before April November, it was not necessary to wait for a long time for it.

Before the interview, the researcher established with the dean the purpose and nature of the interview and requested the necessary permission for recording the information. The interview was conducted in Spanish since it is the dean's mother language. Even when he can communicate in English, the use of Spanish guaranteed better answers and the possibility to obtain more accurate information. The researcher had planned some guiding questions. The following was the tentative guide for the interview:

ANNEX 6. Protocol for the Interview with the UNA Brunca Campus' Dean

Key informants are always important sources of information to orient, guide or enrich the research process at any point. In the case of this study, the researcher considered important to interview the branch's dean in order to know the administration's perspectives in regards to the main topic of this study. The main objective of the interview was

- To determine the administration's perspectives in regards to the impact of the UNA Virtual Program in the campus.
- To establish, from the administration's perspective, UNA Brunca branch's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for a higher use of UNA Virtual.

Contacting the informant

Considering that the informant has a very demanding administrative position in the campus, it was necessary to set an appointment for the interview with him before hand. Nevertheless, it was not necessary to wait for a long time for it.

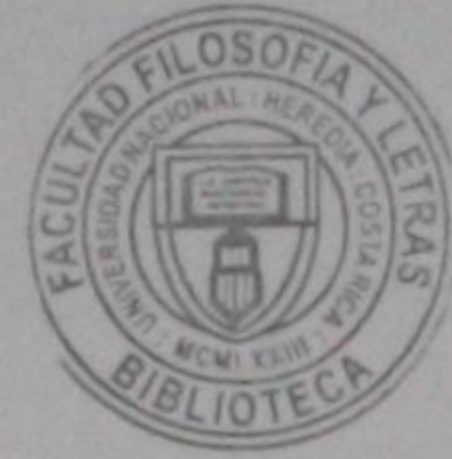
Before the interview, the researcher established with the dean the purpose and nature of the interview and requested the necessary permission for recording the information. The interview was conducted in Spanish, since it is the dean's mother language. Even when he can communicate in English, the use of Spanish guaranteed deeper answers and the possibility to obtain more accurate information. The researcher had planned some guiding questions. The following was the tentative guide for the interview.

Spanish Version of Questions

1. Desde la perspectiva de la administración de la sede, ¿Cuál ha sido el impacto o el alcance del programa UNA Virtual aquí en la sede regional Brunca?
2. Históricamente desde que se creó UNA Virtual como programa, ¿cuáles han sido los esfuerzos por su divulgación en la sede?
3. Desde su perspectiva ¿cómo evaluaría usted el nivel de dificultad de la utilización de las herramientas de UNA Virtual?
4. Si intentáramos hacer un FODA de la sede para la implementación de UNA Virtual, ¿cuáles considera usted que son nuestras fortalezas en la sede para una mejor integración del programa? ¿Cuáles debilidades? ¿Cuáles oportunidades? ¿Cuáles amenazas?
5. De acuerdo a su experiencia y de acuerdo a lo que usted podría conocer del programa de la carrera de Bachillerato en la Enseñanza del Inglés y de UNA Virtual, ¿qué impacto cree usted que podría tener el utilizar las herramientas de UNA Virtual en el Bachillerato?
6. ¿Qué viene? ¿Que está dentro de los planes inmediatos de la universidad en lo que se refiere a la UNA Virtual?

English Version of the Questions

1. From the perspective of the Brunca campus' administration, What has been the impact of the UNA Virtual program here at branch?
2. Since UNA Virtual was created as the program in 2005, what have been the efforts to promote its integration in the branch?
3. From your perspective, how would you evaluate the level of difficulty for the use of the tools offered by the UNA Virtual program?
4. If we wanted to do a FODA analysis of the Brunca campus for the implementation of the UNA Virtual program, what are the strengths, what are the weaknesses? What are the opportunities? What are the threats?
5. De acuerdo a su experiencia y de acuerdo a lo que usted podría conocer del programa de la carrera de Bachillerato en la Enseñanza del Inglés y de UNA Virtual, ¿qué impacto cree usted que podría tener el utilizar las herramientas de UNA Virtual en el Bachillerato?
6. ¿Qué viene? ¿Que está dentro de los planes inmediatos de la universidad en lo que se refiere a la UNA Virtual?



ANNEX 7. FOCUS GROUP WITH PARTICIPANTS

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
CAMPUS ORAZ DE MO
ESCUELA DE LINGÜÍSTICA Y CIENCIAS DEL LENGUAJE
MINISTERIO DE EDUCACIÓN, CULTURA Y DEPORTE
CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIONES EN SEGUNDAS LENGUAS

INVESTIGADOR: LILLY ZERCA VARGAS
TEL: 2229 0902

ANNEX 7.

FOCUS GROUP WITH PARTICIPANTS

FOCUS GROUP

*UNA's EFL teachers' perceptions and intentions regarding
the integration of the tools offered by the UNA Virtual
program in their teaching units at Bracon Branch.*

OCTOBER 2011

ANNEX 7. FOCUS GROUP WITH PARTICIPANTS

**UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
CAMPUS ONAR DENG O
ESCUELA DE LITERATURA Y CIENCIAS DEL LENGUAJE
MESTRIA EN SEGUNDAS LENGUAS Y CULTURAS
CURSO: INVESTIGACION EN SEGUNDAS LENGUAS**

**INVESTIGATOR: LESLY ZÚÑIGA VARGAS
ID: 1 1099 0091**

FOCUS GROUP

UNA's EFL teachers' perceptions and intentions regarding the integration of the tools offered by the UNA Virtual program in their teaching praxis at Brunca Branch.

OCTOBER, 2011

1. Focus group methodology

The investigator conducted one focus group designed to elicit perceptions from the EFL teachers who work at UNA Brunca Branch. This focused group was carried out on October 9th, 2011. A total of five of the eleven participants in the research attended the session. This focus group was in addition to other data collection instruments the researcher used throughout the study.

Focus groups are widely used in marketing research around the world. In the case of social research, this method has also raised its popularity in recent years. It provides researchers with a valuable source of information which cannot be obtained easily through other means. Gibbs clearly expresses the qualities that make this method significant for this particular research:

The main purpose of focus group research is to draw upon respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in a way in which would not be feasible using other methods, for example observation, one-to-one interviewing, or questionnaire surveys. These attitudes, feelings and beliefs may be partially independent of a group or its social setting, but are more likely to be revealed via the social gathering and the interaction which being in a focus group entails. Compared to individual interviews, which aim to obtain individual attitudes, beliefs and feelings, focus groups elicit a multiplicity of views and emotional processes within a group context. (1997)

2. General objective:

To identify the ELF professor's perceptions and intentions towards the integration of the tools offered by the program UNA Virtual in their teaching praxis at Brunca branch.

3. Specific objectives:

- ✗ To identify the participants' perceptions and intentions towards the use of Internet and Internet-based activities in their teaching praxis.
- ✗ To develop a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the language department at Brunca branch in regards to the integration of the tools offered by UNA Virtual.

4. Selection of participants

The criteria for selecting the participants intended to have voluntary participation. All of the eleven professors working in the Bachelor's of English Teaching and who took part of the study were invited. The researcher expected to have at least five of them as a minimum. At the end the researcher accomplished the initial goal because five was the number of participants who could actually attend the session.

Participants were contacted by e-mail in the first place to ask about their disposition for attending the focus group session in a Sunday, considering that during the week it was almost impossible to gather due to job compromises and schedule incompatibilities. The first attempt was not very successful so the researcher postponed the day of the session one more week and this time she set it for October 9th. A second e-mail was sent to all professors confirming the date and time of the meeting. This mail also included the tentative agenda of the activity and a

personal kind invitation to share lunch at the researcher's house for it was recently built. It was also going to be an opportunity for the researcher's colleagues to know her new residence. The researcher took advantage of this situation to motivate participants to come to the focus group and it seemed to fulfill its purpose.

During the week before the focus group, the researcher contacted personally or over the phone all the participants and confirmed six of them for the activity. Two more were not very certain of attending so the researcher took them into account any way. At the end they did not attend. From the six participants that were more certain of attending only five arrived in the end. One of them called the researcher the morning of the gathering to tell her that she had a sad family inconvenience and for that reason she was not able to be present.

4. Place and time of the activity

The researcher's house in Pérez Zeledón. Sunday October 9th 2011.

5. Duration of the activity:

The focus group took approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes, but the first 30 minutes were used for the participants to share lunch together.

6. Resources:

- Pencils
- Erasers
- Folders
- Copies of handouts
- Paper
- Markers
- Tape
- Computer/camera for audio taping

Other resources

- Coffee
- Snacks
- Lunch for participants
- A take home memory or present for each participant

7. Procedure for the focus group

- a. **Welcoming.** Participants are welcomed and shown the house as well as the meeting room they are going to be using. They also share lunch which was planned to be before the session began.
- b. **After lunch,** participants are given their session folders with their corresponding names. Each folder contained the agenda of the activity, the guidelines and handouts for the different activities, an eraser, a book marker and a strip of paper with the quote they would analyzed in the warm up activity.

- c. **Setting the rules and methodology to be followed (5 min).** The moderator, (in this case the researcher) explains the rules to be followed in the activity, reads the agenda and explains the participants that the session will be recorded for further analysis.
- d. **Warm up activity (10 min).** Participants analyze a quote related to the topic of the study and then they share their opinions. Then the researcher makes a wrap up of the main aspects discussed.

“Technology will not replace teachers...teachers who use technology will probably replace teachers who do not” (Meloni, 1998).

- e. **Individual work completing unfinished sentences (40 min).** Participants are given a worksheet with three unfinished sentences that they had to complete with the words, phrases, adjectives, etc. that they thought best completed each idea.

1. **Internet in the class...**
2. **Integrating Internet-based activities in my class methodology...**
3. **In order to integrate the tolls offered by UNA Virtual I...**

- f. **Getting to know general aspects of UNA Virtual (15 minutes).** Participants are provided with a handout containing a summary with the most relevant aspects related to the program and its projects. They also visit one of the Professor's web sites created with the help of the project “Sitio Web Del Profesor” which is also part of UNA Virtual

- g. **Carrying out a SWOT analysis of the UNA Virtual program(30min).** Participants are divided in four groups. They mostly work individually; only one pair is made because there are five participants. Each of them assigned one of the components of the SWOT analysis, a piece of paper and markers to write down their ideas in each of the cases. Each of the participants explains their ideas to the rest and the whole group discusses the learning gained in the activity.

1. **Strengths**
2. **Weaknesses**
3. **Opportunities**
4. **Threats**

- h. **Closing discussion and final comments and thanks.** The mediator wraps up the main aspects discussed in the last activity and then she thanks the participants for their attendance

- i. **Coffee time:** participants and researcher share a coffee and snacks together. Here participants are given homemade bread in a bowl that is meant to be taken home by the participants as a present for their kind cooperation



MODERATOR'S GUIDE FOR THE FOCUS GROUP

Lunch	Participants share lunch before they start the activity
Moderator introduction, thank you and purpose	<p>Moderator introduces himself or herself and thanks the participants for attending the focus group.</p> <p>He/she explains the reasons and the intended goals of the activity.</p> <p>It is very important to clarify that the intention of the activity is not to convince the participants of anything or judge them in any sense.</p> <p>He/she tells the audience that the activity will last for about two hours.</p> <p>She/he remarks that they will start with lunch that will be served soon. She/ explains that the activity begins after lunch at 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Moderator introduces the recorder which is the person recording the activity.</p>
Setting the rules	<p>Before the discussion starts the moderator states the following rules to consider during the focus group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Participants need to talk once at a time and let others state their points without interruption. ✓ They do not have to provide answers to all the inquiries, but everyone's opinions are very important and it would be excellent if they can express their views at one point or another as the discussion progresses. ✓ They need to know that this is an open discussion and they can feel free to comment on each of the aspects discussed. ✓ There are no "wrong answers," just different opinions. Participants can say what is true for them.
Warm up	At the beginning the mediator gives the participants a quote for them to read and reflect on.
Reflection	<p>"Technology will not replace teachers...teachers who use technology will probably replace teachers who do not" (Meloni, 1998).</p> <p>Participants will express their opinions and ideas about the quote.</p>
First activity:	<p>During the activity participants are given some unfinished sentences that they complete with their ideas I regards to the use of Internet-based tools and activities.</p> <p>They write down their ideas and then share with the rest.</p> <p>At the end of the activity the group makes conclusions.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Internet in the class...</p> <p>To integrate the tools offered by UNA Virtual I ...</p> <p>A summary is made at the end.</p>
Visiting a web site from an old friend	<p>Participants will be given a handout with a summary and explanation about most of the tools and projects in UNA Virtual. They will be given time to read them and discuss them.</p> <p>Participants will visit one of the professor's websites available in el Sitio Web del Académico.</p> <p>The audience will look an example of one of the possibilities they have for creating a web site. The web site belongs to one of the professors from the School of Literature and Language Sciences at UNA in Heredia.</p> <p>They will have time to ask questions and discuss.</p>
Activity	Participants will work in four teams to analyze the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats present at UNA Brunca branch

SWOT	campus for integrating Internet in instruction. Participants will present their ideas to the rest. Participants will be given a chance to discuss their ideas or add new ideas.
Wrap up	The mediator will summarize the main points discussed in the focus group and she will highlight the main conclusions obtained.
Coffee time	

Schedule

INVITATION TO PARTICIPANTS

DATE	ACTIVITY
September 28, 2011	Send an e-mail to all participants in order to know their availability and disposition to attend the focus group set for October 9 th
October 3 rd and October 4 th	Give invitations to all the participants.
October 5 th and October 6 th	Send text messages to all the participants to remind them of the activity.
Friday October 7 th	Call participants to confirm their attendance

LOGISTICS

DATE	ACTIVITY
Saturday October 1 st	Buy folders Buy presents for participants
Saturday October 8 th	Buy snacks for the coffee break Buy food for lunch Confirm with the recorder for his attendance

FOCUS GROUP AGENDA

AGENDA		AGENDA	
11:30 a.m.	Welcoming participants	11:30 a.m.	Welcoming participants
12:00 m.d.	Lunch	12:00 m.d.	Lunch
1:00 p.m.	Introduction	1:00 p.m.	Introduction
1:10 p.m.	Activity 1. Warm up	1:10 p.m.	Activity 1. Warm up
1:20 p.m.	Activity 2. Perceptions on the use of	1:20 p.m.	Activity 2. Perceptions on the use of
1:45 p.m.	Internet in the class.	1:45 p.m.	Internet in the class.
2:00 p.m.	Conclusions on activity 1.	2:00 p.m.	Conclusions on activity 1.
2:10	Visiting UNA Virtual	2:10	Visiting UNA Virtual
2:40 p.m.	SWOT on UNA Virtual	2:40 p.m.	SWOT on UNA Virtual
2:50 p.m.	Conclusions on the activity	2:50 p.m.	Conclusions on the activity
	Wrap up		Wrap up
3:00 p.m.	Coffee time	3:00 p.m.	Coffee time
AGENDA		AGENDA	
11:30 a.m.	Welcoming participants	11:30 a.m.	Welcoming participants
12:00 m.d.	Lunch	12:00 m.d.	Lunch
1:00 p.m.	Introduction	1:00 p.m.	Introduction
1:10 p.m.	Activity 1. Warm up	1:10 p.m.	Activity 1. Warm up
1:20 p.m.	Activity 2. Perceptions on the use of	1:20 p.m.	Activity 2. Perceptions on the use of
1:45 p.m.	Internet in the class.	1:45 p.m.	Internet in the class.
2:00 p.m.	Conclusions on activity 1.	2:00 p.m.	Conclusions on activity 1.
2:10	Visiting UNA Virtual	2:10	Visiting UNA Virtual
2:40 p.m.	SWOT on UNA Virtual	2:40 p.m.	SWOT on UNA Virtual
2:50 p.m.	Conclusions on the activity	2:50 p.m.	Conclusions on the activity
	Wrap up		Wrap up
3:00 p.m.	Coffee time	3:00 p.m.	Coffee time

ACTIVITY 1. Please complete the following statements with ideas, words, phrases, adjectives, examples or comparisons that you consider proper in each case.

1. Internet in the class

2. Integrating Internet-based activities in my class methodology.....

3. In order to integrate the tools offered by UNA Virtual I...

SUMMARY GUIDE OF UNA VIRTUAL PROJECTS

UNA Virtual

El Programa UNA Virtual creado en la segunda mitad de 2005, tomando como referente histórico el Programa NOVUS

Su objetivo principal es:

- Promover la innovación académica mediante la integración crítica, reflexiva, creativa y propositiva de las Tecnologías para la Información y la Comunicación.

La incorporación de TIC en los procesos académicos y el quehacer del Programa UNA Virtual se basan en lo establecido en el Modelo Pedagógico de la UNA:

- En la Universidad Nacional la docencia universitaria presupone entornos de aprendizaje alternativos que se apoyan en las nuevas tecnologías.
- Creatividad que permita la innovación, así como la utilización de medios, estrategias y recursos de enseñanza en los procesos de mediación pedagógica.
- Función de las tecnologías como medio que facilita la interacción entre profesores, alumnos y contenidos de aprendizaje.

La Universidad Nacional, como institución innovadora en educación superior ha decidido integrar los recursos tecnológicos como medios de apoyo para el proceso educativo que permitan generar iniciativas innovadoras necesarias para el desarrollo de un país de cara a una sociedad del conocimiento

En el Plan Global Institucional 2006-2010, en el apartado de Ciencias y Tecnologías se establece: "La inserción de nuevas tecnologías en la educación y en la vida familiar que hace que las nuevas generaciones incorporen capacidades de utilización de los recursos tecnológicos cada vez más complejos"

Y más adelante plantea: "La acción de la Universidad Nacional en esta área consistirá en consolidar equipos de trabajo en programas interdisciplinarios que contribuyan a cerrar la brecha tecnológica mediante la búsqueda de adaptaciones tecnológicas al contexto de pequeñas unidades productivas"

.....

PORT @ FOLIO
ELECTRONICO

En el proceso de incorporación de Tecnologías para la Información y Comunicación en los procesos educativos en la UNA y después de un proceso de investigación y pruebas pedagógicas y tecnológicas, se promueve el uso del Portafolio Electrónico.

La perspectiva del portafolio electrónico supone una estrategia metodológica evaluativa guiada con objetivos previamente establecidos, donde la mediación de contenidos y la forma de aprender por parte de los estudiantes se evidencia de forma individual y colectiva. De esta forma, en la UNA se consideró oportuno iniciar con un plan piloto en al menos dos unidades académicas de diferentes

áreas de conocimiento, a saber: Escuela de Bibliotecología y Documentación y la Escuela de Literatura y Ciencias del Lenguaje.

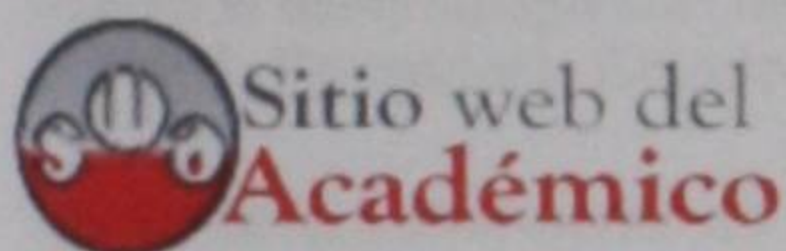
En particular, el trabajo desarrollado por los estudiantes fue recolectar intencionalmente un conjunto de evidencias que permitieron demostrar el grado de avance de su propio aprendizaje y según objetivo planteado por el o la docente. Estas evidencias fueron presentadas por medio de archivos y recursos digitales; lo anterior con logros significativos para el desarrollo integral del aprendizaje.

El uso del Portafolio Electrónico es apto para cualquier disciplina en el tanto el docente, tenga claramente establecidos los objetivos de aprendizaje que supone deberán alcanzar los estudiantes. Paralelo a ello se dan las condiciones para evaluar de forma sistematizada el crecimiento y el desarrollo individual de cada estudiante. El aporte individual demostrará el avance que el estudiante logra en cada asignación, igualmente los aportes generados por los demás estudiantes se pueden socializar, estableciendo una forma de trabajo colaborativo.



La Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica les da la más cordial bienvenida a la Comunidad de Práctica UNÁgora, grupo de académicas y académicos de la UNA que aprenden, construyen y comparten conocimiento, experiencias y situaciones sobre procesos de innovación académica por medio de enfoques pedagógicos centrados en el estudiante con una integración efectiva de las TIC.

Desde el año 2008, se conformó un grupo de docentes universitarios que interactúan en un espacio compartido en la web, se comunican y establecen relaciones profesionales y de amistad cuando intercambian información, historias, experiencias personales, laborales de tal forma, que construyen conocimiento, se promueve el diálogo reflexivo, exploran nuevas posibilidades, resuelven problemas difíciles, y crear nuevas oportunidades para el beneficio mutuo y mejorar su práctica pedagógica.



El Sitio Web del Académico es un Proyecto del Programa UNA Virtual, que ofrece a los académicos de la Universidad Nacional la creación fácil, rápida y gratuita de su propio Sitio Web.

Este recurso puede ser utilizado por los docentes e investigadores universitarios como un medio para dar a conocer su perfil, sus experiencias e investigaciones tanto nacionales como internacionales por medio de Internet.

Además permite crear espacios para la discusión pública, entre colegas, estudiantes, o académicos de diferentes instituciones.



El proyecto de Comunidades de Práctica Virtual, nació con el propósito fomentar los procesos de incorporación de las Tecnologías para la Información y Comunicación en la docencia universitaria de las Sedes Regionales de la Universidad Nacional, no sólo con procesos de capacitación sino de puesta en práctica de experiencias y mediante la creación de una comunidad de docentes

que colaboran en torno al tema, desarrollando una cultura real de colaboración y una red de apoyo y difusión. La creación de la comunidad de práctica inicia con un proceso virtual de formación docente y actualmente se está desarrollando la estrategia de sostenibilidad de esta comunidad.

El término Comunidad de Práctica proviene de teorías basadas en la idea del aprendizaje como una participación social. Esto se refiere al proceso de aprendizaje social que ocurre cuando las personas que tienen un interés común, colaboran por un amplio período para compartir ideas, valores, creencias, lenguaje y formas de hacer las cosas (Wenger, 1998).

Una comunidad de práctica es un grupo de personas que comparten una preocupación, un conjunto de problemas o un interés común acerca de un tema y que profundizan su conocimiento y pericia en esta área a través de una interacción continuada (Coto, 2008). En ese sentido ese grupo de personas comparten enfoques, aspiraciones situaciones y necesidades sobre temas establecidos.



Los mapas conceptuales tienen su origen en los trabajos que Joseph Novak y sus colaboradores de la Universidad de Cornell, Estados Unidos realizaron a partir de la Teoría del Aprendizaje Significativo. Estos autores comparten la idea, ampliamente aceptada en la investigación educativa realizada durante los últimos años, de la importancia de la actividad constructiva del alumno en el proceso de aprendizaje, y consideran que los conceptos y las proposiciones que forman los conceptos entre sí son elementos centrales en la estructura del conocimiento y en la construcción del significado. Los mapas conceptuales son por tanto un medio de visualizar conceptos y relaciones jerárquicas entre conceptos. La capacidad humana es muchos más notable para el recuerdo de imágenes visuales que para los detalles concretos. Con la elaboración de mapas conceptuales se aprovecha esta capacidad humana de reconocer pautas en las imágenes para facilitar el aprendizaje y el recuerdo.

Se propone además la integración de un recurso tecnológico, que facilite, promueva, dinamice y motive el aprendizaje con mapas conceptuales. Se decidió por utilizar el CMAP Tools desarrollado en el IHMC, Pensacola, Estados Unidos.

El uso de la herramienta de Cmap Tool es apto para cualquier disciplina en el tanto el académico, tenga claramente establecidos los objetivos de aprendizaje que supone deberán alcanzar los estudiantes bajo la guía de él mismo. Un mapa conceptual es, por tanto, un recurso esquemático para representar un conjunto de significados conceptuales incluidos en una estructura de proposiciones que tiene por objeto representar las relaciones significativas entre los conceptos del contenido (externo) y del conocimiento del sujeto.



El Centro de Recursos Digitales es un espacio Web donde el académico de la UNA podrá encontrar recursos disponibles en la red pero de forma organizada, según el área de su interés. Está organizado por Facultades y escuelas, por lo que será posible encontrar recursos en las áreas en las que se desempeña la Universidad Nacional. Encontrarán desde documentos que apoyen su labor, hasta enlaces para formar parte de redes de académicos, software gratuito, Bibliotecas Digitales y Virtuales, enlaces a revistas electrónicas y físicas y otros recursos disponibles en Internet.

El Centro de Recursos Digitales inicia con una base de recursos, pero es importante la participación de la comunidad universitaria para enriquecerlo, esperamos los aportes de todos.

PHOTOETHNOGRAPHY OF THE FOCUS GROUP



Photo1. Participants completing the unfinished sentences in the worksheet given for activity 2. October 2011(taken by the researcher)

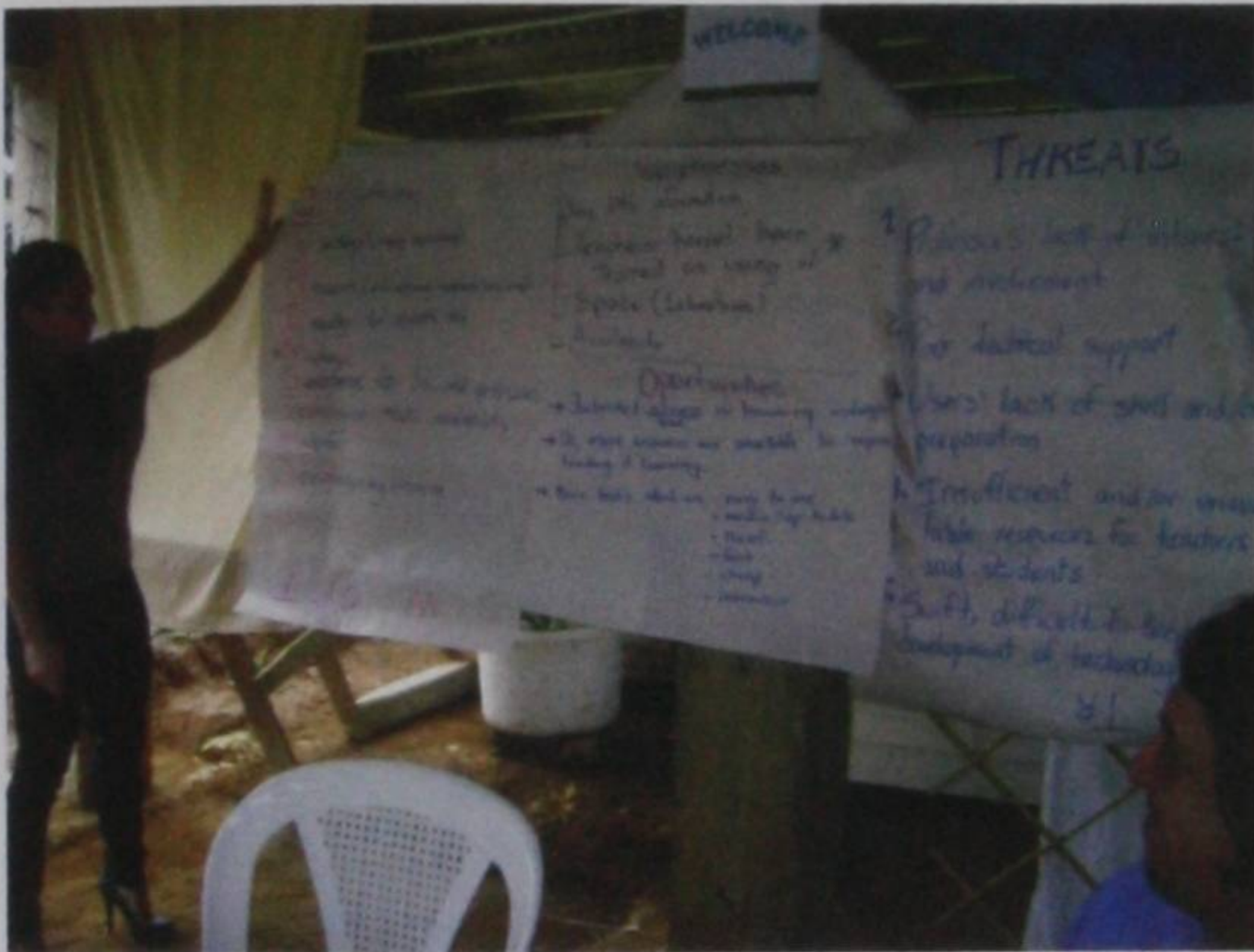


Photo 2. Participants presenting their ideas to the group. October 2011 (Taken by the researcher)

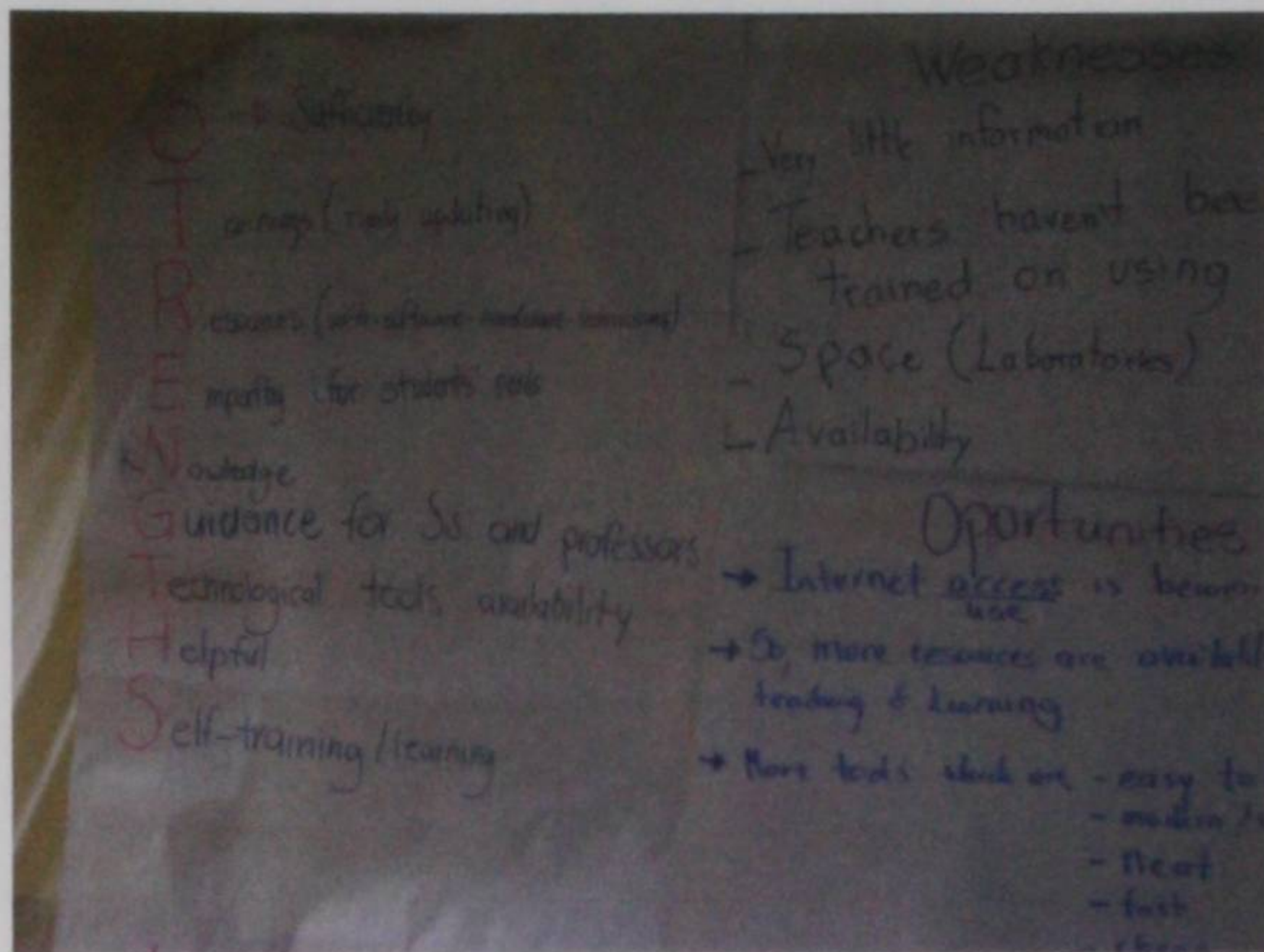


Photo 3. Final posters created by the participants. October 2011
(Taken by the researcher)

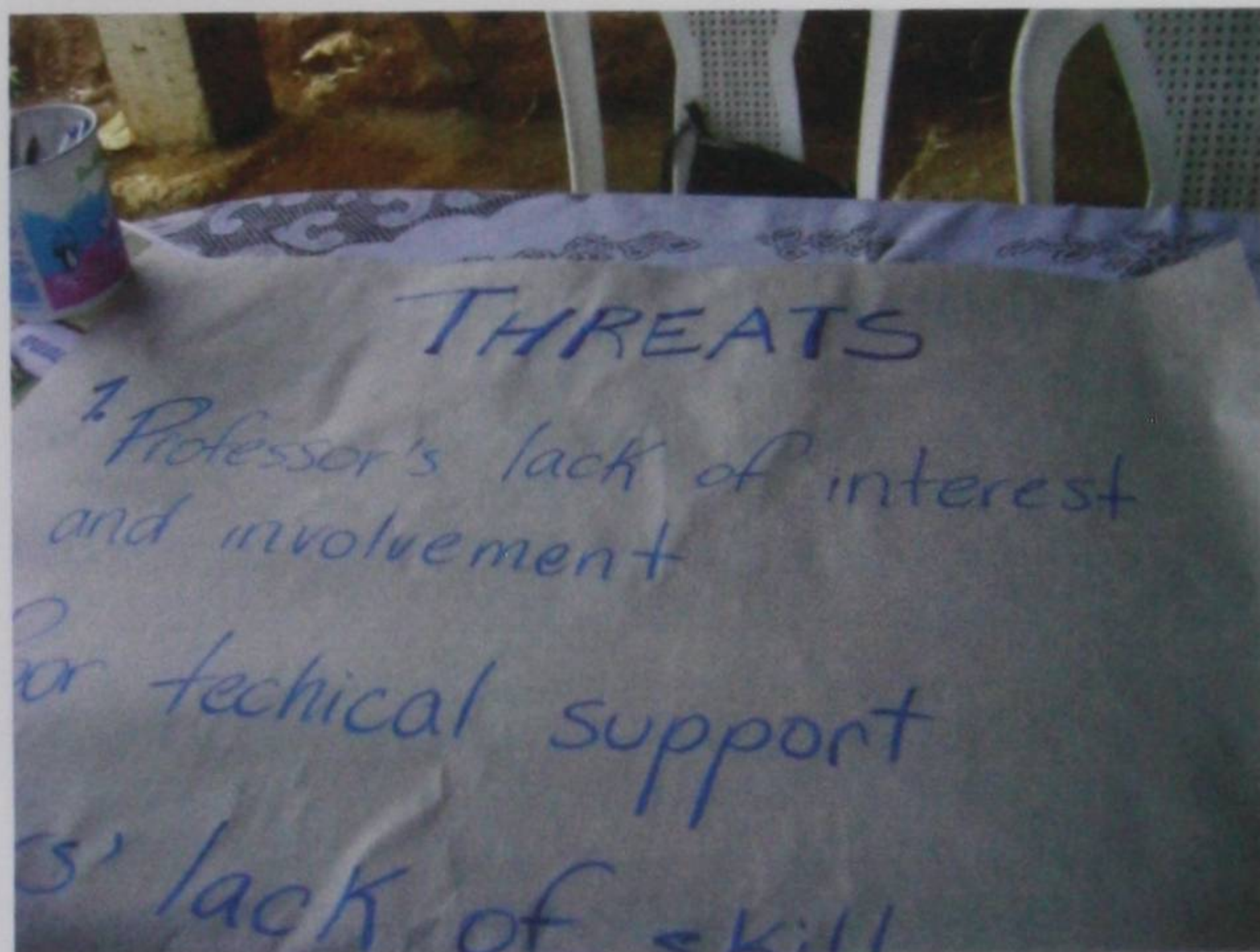


Photo.4. Participants developing working with threats. October 2011
(Taken by the researcher)



SIDUNA



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