



Teaching and Assessing EFL Productive Skills with ICT in Distance Learning at a Higher Education Level

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Abstract

Teaching a foreign language at a distance learning university conveys a constant search for solutions to help students develop their productive skills with the help of ICT as well as to help teachers assess those skills. Within the framework of the European Higher Education Area, at the UNED all subjects include some type of continuous assessment tests, generally optional, to check students' progress and develop the competences established in the syllabus. The type of evaluation is set up by the teaching team of each subject and may consist of objective test, essays, case studies, oral presentations, among others. These continuous assessment tests are corrected by the tutors at the associate centre, according to the correction criteria established by the teaching team. Our students enrolled in the subjects Inglés Instrumental III-VI in the English Studies Degree at the UNED can choose to be assessed through a mid-term activity that consists of an oral presentation. The purpose of the present study is to assess the usefulness of a free software used to record an oral activity to be sent to their tutor for assessment. By doing this, the presence of oral activities in distance learning contexts could be strengthened and mid-term activities redesigned in our courses. A group of students (N=10) participated in this pilot study. Students a) answered an online pre-test questionnaire about their beliefs on continuous assessment in general and more specifically at the UNED, b) familiarized themselves with some free software in order to complete the task, c) planned and recorded an oral activity to be sent to their tutors for assessment, d) answered an online post-test questionnaire. After analysing the results of this study, some pedagogical implications are drawn for the teaching/learning of foreign languages and other subjects in distance education contexts in higher education.

Keywords: *Assessing, productive skills, distance learning.*