

Temple University Languages Department

Temple University is a public research university based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

With 40,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students enrolled at the university, Temple is among the world's largest providers of professional education (law, medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, engineering, and architecture), and prepares the largest body of professional practitioners in Pennsylvania. The university has a main campus in Philadelphia, along with various campuses across Pennsylvania and international campuses in Tokyo and Rome.

With multiple campuses and students from 127 countries, Temple is a multicultural and multilingual community. **All students enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts at Temple, encompassing over 30 majors, are required to complete the second level of a foreign language course, as well as at least one Global/World Society course.**

Extempore at Temple

Extempore has been used at Temple since the Fall Semester of 2018, and was used in over 35 sections of Spanish language courses during the Spring 2020 semester. Each section had approximately 24 students and was located on either the main campus or the satellite campuses in Pennsylvania, and Tokyo, Japan. The courses consisted of three hours of synchronous classroom lectures and one hour of asynchronous lab work each

week. Graduate student TA's led the classroom sessions to gain understanding of language acquisition and teaching experience, while adjunct professors monitored the lab sessions.

Extempore was well-suited to facilitate the asynchronous lab sessions, as course curriculum can easily be adjusted for linguistic variety (regional dialects) and to complement the class sessions. While the three hours of class time are vital and reflect a more "realistic context," the Extempore-facilitated lab is important because it eliminates external factors and helps manage cognitive load, as instructors can customize the input, including authentic resources.

Temple's Dr. Joshua Pongan requires that each instructor in the program record their own prompts in order to maximize student engagement, and expose students to as many speakers from as many different backgrounds as possible.

Extempore provides a platform for high precision, low stakes activities, which is difficult to achieve in the classroom.

Search for a Learning Platform

To accommodate all students, the department searched for an asynchronous platform that could be used to provide students with pointed feedback while facilitating student production. Extempore was the perfect tool for the situation, as almost all students had access through mobile phones or laptops and

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could work around limited internet bandwidth to asynchronously participate in class activities.

Temple discovered Extempore in the summer of 2018 while looking to update their language labs by bringing them online. The language lab was a standard aspect of language courses that consist of a three credit class section and one credit lab section. Colleagues had also referred Dr. Pongan, the Online Language Course Coordinator, to Voicethread. While Voicethread is a powerful tool, it did not align with the course objectives, particularly for introductory level courses. Extempore proved to be very flexible and could be easily adapted to meet the needs of individual courses.

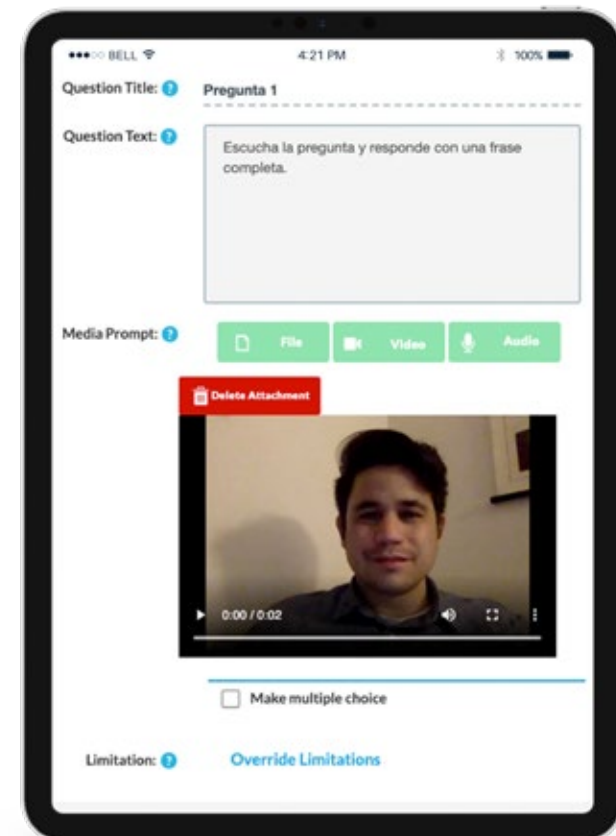
Initial Rollout Process

The rollout of Extempore at Temple in the fall of 2018 coincided with the transition to doing remote online labs as well as the university-wide switch to the Canvas LMS platform. While it was a lot to take in at once for instructors, there was a short learning curve for Extempore. The faculty found it intuitive and welcomed the ease at which they could assign activities and give feedback. They have particularly appreciated the bespoke URL Extempore creates for schools, which allows for creating instructor accounts automatically linked to the Temple account, as it makes it really easy to get new faculty started.

Adapting to Distanced Learning and Further Adoption

Since the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic in mid-March of 2020, Temple has been working to implement concrete

strategies for distance learning while working around significant considerations. The university is large and has well-developed infrastructure, but it is a public university with students from diverse backgrounds. At first, the language department encouraged instructors to recreate class through Zoom, but soon discovered that it was not the best option. Not all students had laptops or optimal internet access, so it was difficult to mandate four hours at a time in online classes. Since Extempore had been previously used in F2F and Hybrid Learning environments, the expanded use for Distance Learning was relatively seamless.



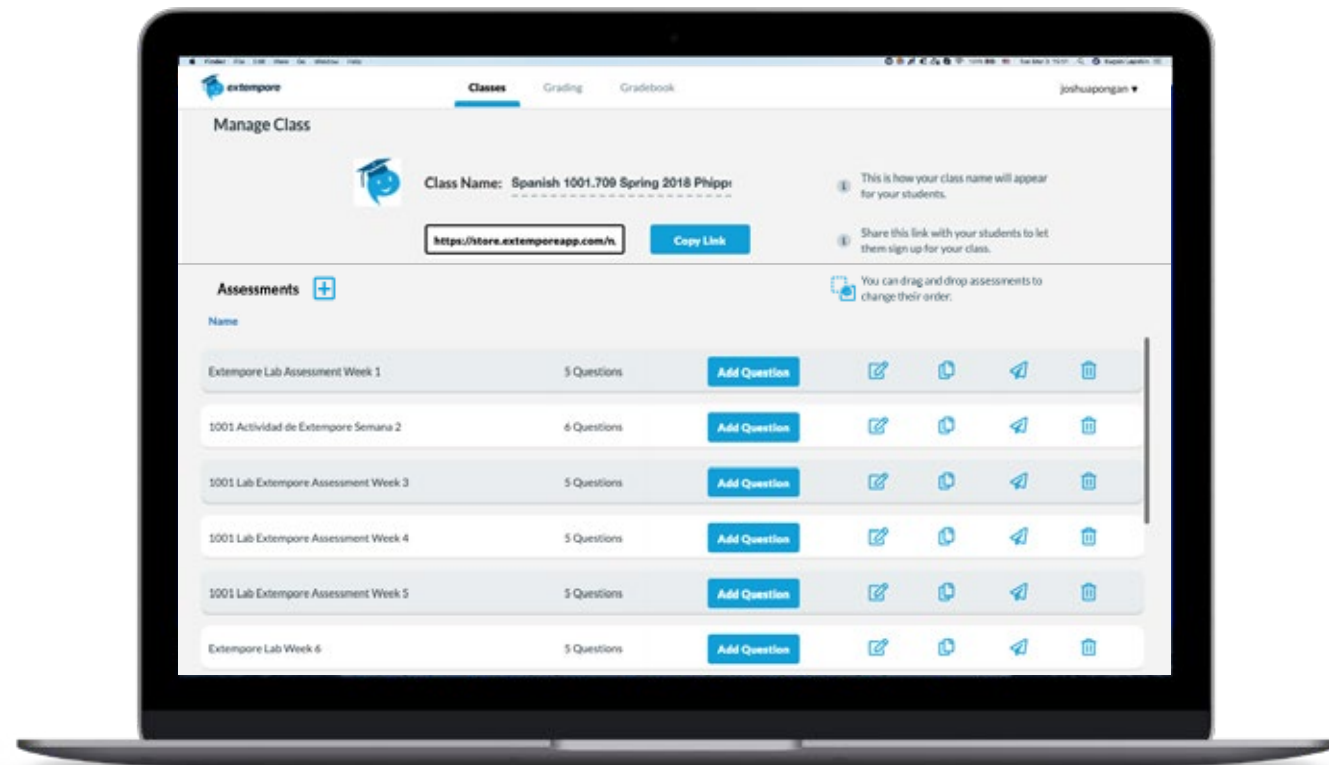
Extempore Activities

Initially, instructors created assessments with questions regarding the course textbooks. As they got more comfortable with Extempore as a platform, they began to upload files as input and create their own unique assessments. Instructors found that Extempore allowed students to show the linguistic abilities that they'd developed, and went beyond simply reproducing textbook content. They especially liked the ability to create open-ended questions.

Extempore compliments the classroom by giving students confidence and promoting risk-taking in a low stakes environment.

Feedback

Instructors used a variety of forms of feedback, ranging from individual responses to submissions to cumulative numerical





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grades for assessments. They often utilized the ability to give audio feedback, appreciating the speed and convenience of simply recording their own voice to respond to student work. Feedback through Extempore was very helpful to students, as they could receive pointed feedback for each of their responses.

Instructor Perception of Extempore

Initially, some instructors were unsure of Extempore's capability and saw it more as a platform to assign simple class work online. However, after giving feedback to students they began to better understand how it contributes to students learning. They like that they no longer have to go into the language lab, and have much more flexibility with their assignments.

The language department faculty was impressed by the support they received from Extempore. They found that the platform had a useful help center to direct people with questions to and the support team was "super responsive" when needed.

"In the last two years there have been no technical problems to solve. It's just a smoothly running intuitive system. You know what your goal is, it's concrete and so there aren't holes. It makes it easy for us." - Joshua Pongan, PhD, Online Languages Coordinator.

Student Perception of Extempore

Students at Temple have found Extempore easy to navigate and approach. Instructors say they have demonstrated a quick learning curve, and that they are really engaging with class

activities. Overall their experience has been flexible and easy. Students cite the privacy and low anxiety of assessments on Extempore as major benefits. They feel like it has helped them improve their skills and often mention Extempore as a positive aspect of the courses in student feedback forms.

Future Use

After a successful implementation of Extempore in introductory level Spanish classes, Temple will be expanding its use in the future. According to faculty, one course that will particularly benefit from the addition of Extempore is a Translation and Interpretation class for Medical Spanish. Eventually, the language department will look to apply Extempore to more undergraduate language courses.

Additionally, Dr. Pongan plans to incorporate more group assessments into the classes where Extempore is used, in order to enhance the interpersonal component in the program.

Future Development Requests

Extempore relies very heavily on customer feedback to help us progress with product development. We prioritize input from our actual users to ensure we can advance the product. Temple's feedback in this regard has been invaluable since they started using the platform. As future requests, Temple faculty wanted to see multiple choice questions and written responses added as additional assessment features. Both items have since been added by the Extempore team. They also requested a "thumbs up" functionality to quickly grade assessments. The Extempore team is working on adding this feature before Fall 2020.