Get your students to talk with the speaking practice app

University of North Georgia

UNG
UNIVERSITY *of*
NORTH GEORGIA™

The University of North Georgia (UNG) is a public university in the University System of Georgia.

With nearly 19,000 enrolled students, it's the sixth-largest public university in the state of Georgia. Within UNG, there are five campuses which collectively offer over one hundred bachelor's and associate degrees, including thirteen master's degrees and one doctoral degree. UNG is also known for its 696 students that are involved in the university's ROTC program, giving it the designation as "The Military College of Georgia." The university is one of six senior military colleges across the United States.

UNG is unique in that all enrolled students must take foreign language in order to graduate. The 2 departments of Modern Languages and Spanish & Portuguese offer classes in 12 languages, 10 of which are classified as strategic languages by the DLNSEO. UNG offers undergraduate Degrees in 5 languages (Spanish, French, Arabic, Chinese & Russian), 11 language minor programs as well as a Chinese Flagship Program and a special emphasis on other strategic languages such as Arabic, Chinese and Farsi.

Extempore at UNG

UNG started using Exempore in the Fall-2018 semester, with the initiative to find an alternative to SANKO-based activities. Today, Extempore is utilized by over 1,000 students per semester in the Spanish and Italian courses with arrangements to expand into other foreign languages offered at UNG.

The Language Lab Director at UNG, David Hair stated, "It was my predecessor, Mariana Stone who initially implemented this technology at UNG. She was the previous Lab Director with 10+ years at UNG and developed the Language Lab from the dinosaur it was to how dynamic it is today."

> The university's use of Extempore is truly innovative, as it combines the best that the cloud has to offer while keeping the face-to-face component that is so critical to effective learning.

Beginning-level language sequence students at UNG, are required to complete monthly speaking practice activities. Exercises are linked from the D2L platform (UNG's LMS), students are offered the option to complete them in person with a lab assistant in the lab space, -or do them on Extempore off-site. Most of the students choose to complete their exercises on Extempore at home on their personal devices.

Student response types were set originally to audio only, but the program is shifting more and more towards video responses. Combining it with Extempore Timers, video assessments make it easier to ensure spontaneity of the student's response and to prevent students from getting external assistance. That way the instructor can control the environment to ensure students are kept academically honest.

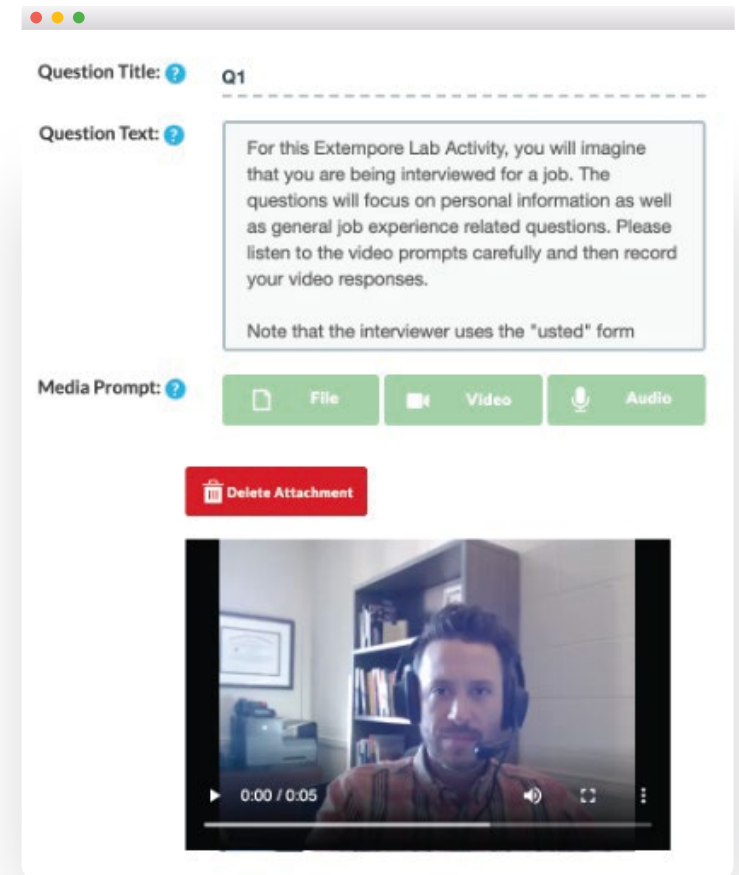## Get your students to talk with the speaking practice app

All student submissions are reviewed by a team of about 40 available lab-assistants. These are either advanced students enrolled in the language being taught, or native speakers with formal training in the language. Feedback is provided to the student in Extempore, either through written comments or as a video or audio commentary. As the instructors provide feedback, the student will have the luxury of having a portfolio within their student account to allow them to review and see growth throughout the semester.

After completing their activities, students are required to attend a "check-in" meeting with a lab-assistant in person. In this meeting, the lab assistant and the student will jointly review the student's submission and the assistant's feedback and develop a plan for improving communicative skills

> **This method truly combines the convenience and power of Extempore, building a portfolio of student responses, while maintaining an interpersonal component.**

Extempore is mostly used with traditional face to face classes, but a few professors at UNG are piloting Extempore with their online classes. Online language teaching is one of the key reasons schools utilize Extempore across the US and abroad.
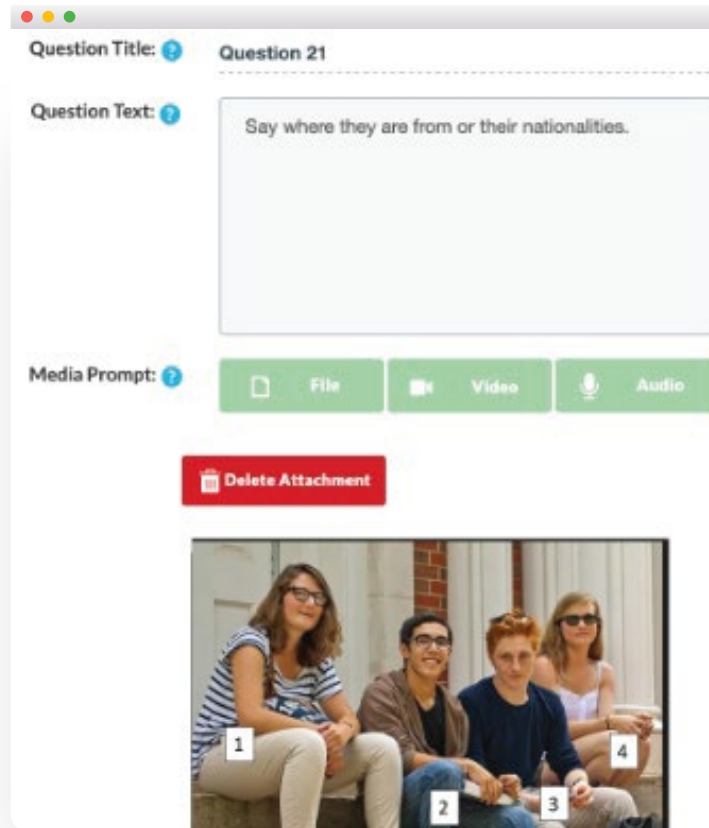

Question Title: Q1

Question Text: For this Extempore Lab Activity, you will imagine that you are being interviewed for a job. The questions will focus on personal information as well as general job experience related questions. Please listen to the video prompts carefully and then record your video responses.

Note that the interviewer uses the "usted" form

Media Prompt: File | Video | Audio

Delete Attachment

0:00 / 0:05

David Hair, UNG's Language Lab Director, utilizing Extempore's video prompt for more advanced students.

Extempore activities

UNG's Extempore activities are real-life scenarios (job interviews, as an example), for more advanced students and simple question/answer pairs for more elementary students. All activities use a simple rubric which each individual instructor can customize, depending on what they want their students to focus on. (Pronunciation/Fluency; Comprehension; Grammar are a few examples of what they evaluate)

Elementary Spanish Question

Students at UNG submit around 70,000 recordings per semester, averaging 30 recordings per student per month.

Rollout process

Since Extempore is being used as a language lab alternative, the rollout process for UNG was simply a matter of ensuring that all computers in the lab had compatible versions of internet browsers.

All Extempore activities are linked from UNG's D2L platform (UNG's LMS). Students create an account (or re-use their account from previous years) by accessing the class link in D2L and then complete the assessments as they become available, either in one of the 3 physical computer labs on the 3 university campuses, or on their own time, using their own device. (Smart Phone or Personal Laptop)

Future plans

While use of Extempore at this institution is already pretty extensive, the faculty and staff at the language labs have plans to add more types of activities, and expand to other languages. These plans involve:

Using group assessments:

Extempore Rooms (the ability to create group assessments where students can interact with each other asynchronously, in a chatroom-like environment) was released early Fall 2019. UNG will start piloting group assessments during the summer semester of 2020.

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Self Reflection Activities

Another area of expansion for UNG next year will be to incorporate self-reflection activities into their Extempore class workflow: since students have access to their submission and their instructor's feedback on the same page, after the completion of one assessment, a new one will be set up incorporating reflections on the feedback.

Written Responses

The ability to submit written responses was added to Extempore late Fall 2019. The UNG Language Lab plans to incorporate these into their workflow as a way to complement the students' oral submissions. Written activities will be incorporated at the end of each semester in order to gauge progress and encourage continued communication in the target-language.

Using GIFs and other prompts

The school uses recorded video and image prompts in most of their questions. For future semesters, there are plans to incorporate GIFs and other types of prompts to include an element of fun and increase student engagement even more.

Proficiency Research

While this is done unofficially by various instructors by simply comparing student submissions from earlier in the year with recent submissions and evaluating progress, Mr. Hair and his team have plans to formalize this research, using Extempore's repository creates a digital portfolio for the students. "This before and after snapshot could be shown to the students, whom will be shocked by how much they've improved," says Mr. Hair.

> **"We see students get faster and faster at responding on Extempore as the school year advances."**
>
> *-Kasi Ives: UNG Language Lab Coordinator-Oconee Campus*

Student Perception of Extempore

As stated above, students are offered the option of completing their speaking activities face to face or on their own with Extempore. The vast majority choose Extempore, and complete the activities on their mobile devices.
As Mr. Hair explains, "they see the most anxious students choose Extempore first in order to avoid speaking face-to-face, but as the school year goes on, more and more students sign up from a broader range of student types."

> **"Extempore is very popular with students because it's so convenient for them."**
>
> *Daniel Noh, UNG Language Lab Coordinator-Gainesville Campus*

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. UNG's feedback in this regard has been invaluable, since they started using the platform. As future requests, Mr. Hair and his team would like to see the ability for students to request through the mobile app for a question to be unlocked if they locked themselves out by mistake, as well as a deeper integration with their D2L platform. Both items are being actively worked on by the Extempore team.

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