# Agenda 2030: Challenges in the Application of the Sustainable Development Goals in University Teaching

## Agenda 2030: Desafíos en la aplicación de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible en la enseñanza universitaria

VICENTE JAVIER LÓPEZ MATE
DOCTOR EN ESTUDIOS LITERARIOS. PROFESOR ASOCIADO DE
DIDÁCTICA DE LA LENGUA Y LA LITERATURA EN LA UNIVERSIDAD DE ALCALÁ

**Abstract**

After the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in 2015, the elaboration of an action plan that arises from the classrooms with a view to raise students' awareness without undermining the teaching of the chosen subjects is imperative. This research collects the difficulties found, as well as the solutions reached in the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals in the teaching of the subject History of English-Speaking Countries which belongs to the degree in English Studies of the University of Alcalá.

**Key words:** Sustainable Development Goals, research, teaching innovation, Higher Education, english.

**Resumen**

Tras la celebración de la cumbre de Cumbre de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Desarrollo Sostenible en 2015 se ha hecho imperativo la realización de un plan de acción que surja desde las aulas con el fin de concienciar a los alumnos sin desvirtuar la docencia de las asignaturas que han escogido. Esta investigación recoge las dificultades encontradas, así como las soluciones alcanzadas en la introducción de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible en la docencia de la asignatura Historia de los Países de Habla Inglesa perteneciente al grado en Estudios Ingleses de la Universidad de Alcalá.

**Palabras clave**: Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible, investigación, innovación docente, educación universitaria, inglés.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

From 25th to 27th September 2015, more than 150 world leaders belonging to all the member states of the United Nations gathered in its headquarters, located in the city of New York, in the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit. In this meeting, the leaders debated and analysed the worrying global situation and decided to put into practice a new international plan entitled *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by 2030,* in which 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets were passed as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This plan aims at reaching an agreement to fulfil the Goals in a period of 15 years. The 17 goals which were passed by the members of the UN and which are reflected in the meeting records of The General Assembly include a series of ambitious measures to improve social and environmental conditions, which will result in the improvement of the quality of life of all the people of the world:

1. No poverty: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

2. Zero Hunger: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

3. Good health and well-being: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

4. Quality education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

5. Gender equality: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

6. Clean water and sanitation: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

7. Affordable and clean energy: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

8. Decent work and economic growth: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

10. Reduced inequalities: Reduce inequality within and among countries.

11. Sustainable cities and communities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

12. Responsible consumption and production: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

13. Climate action: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact.

14. Life below water: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, sea and marine resources for sustainable development.

15. Life on land: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity.

16. Peace, justice and strong institutions: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

17. Partnerships for the goals: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global partnership for Sustainable Development. (United Nations, 2015)

The SDGs were ratified two months later at the 2015 Paris Conference on Climate Change as the Paris Agreement. Truth to be told, during the next four years, the results were not as optimistic as they were originally expected due to the slowness and low impact caused by the measures, as Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals Report from 2019, commented:

> Four years after signing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, countries have taken action to integrate the Goals and targets into their national development plans and to align policies and institutions behind them. The Sustainable Development Goals

> Report 2019 uses the latest available data to track global progress on the SDGs and to take stock of how far we have come in realizing our commitments. The report shows that, while advances have been made in some areas, monumental challenges remain. The evidence and data spotlight areas that require urgent attention and more rapid progress to realize the 2030 Agenda's far-reaching vision. (Zhenmin, 2019, p. 3)

Having less than 10 years ahead to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, evidences showed the impossibility to reach the agreed goals with the measures taken. Thus, the world leaders of the member states of the United Nations gathered in the SDGs Summit held in New York, from 21st to 23rd September 2019 in order to review the terms agreed. Eventually, they concluded that it was necessary to apply for a decade of action and results in favour of sustainable development. To undertake this labour, they agreed that it was required to activate the necessary funding so that the institutions of each nation could have the Goals fulfilled by 2030. In this summit, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, encouraged all the sectors of the society to join forces so they could work in a decade of action in three levels: Working together to secure greater leadership, more resources and smarter solutions for the SDGs; Local action: Embedding the transitions we need in the policies, budgets, institutions and regulatory frameworks of governments, cities and local authorities; and people action: Generating an unstoppable movement of youth civil society, media, private sector, unions, academia and more, all pushing for transformation.

As a result of this situation, the elaboration of an action plan that arises from the classrooms with a view to raise students' awareness without undermining the teaching of the subjects of the specialty chosen is imperative. In this way, echoing António Guterres's words, a group of teachers from the Department of Modern Philology of the University of Alcalá decided to create the Agenda 2030 Working Group[1], which was entitled

---

[1] As it is explained in the guide for groups creations of the University of Alcalá, the GTA2030 are conceived as stable collaboration entities between members of the university community and, where appropriate, between these and external entities organized around common lines and principles to promote initiatives and projects aimed at the SDGs development in the fields of own resources management, teaching, research and/or knowledge transfer.

«Promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals through Higher Education: Humanities and Social Sciences»[2]. This research collects the difficulties found, as well as the solutions reached in the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals in the teaching of the History of English-Speaking Countries subject which belongs to the degree in English Studies of the University of Alcalá, and which was taught from September to January 2020/2021.

## 2  OBJECTIVES TO ACHIEVE

Higher education institutions play a key role in order to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals so, for this reason, they are integrating the SDGs into their academic syllabus (Lozano, et al., 2015). They can get closer to the students of any degree or field of study. Thus, it is relatively easy to reach every university student through the different approaches suggested by the 17 SDGs. As a consequence, higher education institutions have the duty of taking a leading role which helps to deeply change society and the perspective the SDGs have been approached so far with the purpose of developing and sharing ideas with future generations (Aktas, Whelan, Stofferd, Todd & Kern, 2015). According to Sustainable Development Solutions Network Australia/Pacific, «Higher education institutions are in a unique position in societies because they are neutral and trusted stakeholders within them» (SDSN, 2017, p. 8) This perspective is equally shared by UNESCO «The greening process has to be backed up by all relevant stakeholders on an institutional, national and global level (three-tier approach). For this purpose, close dialogue and cooperation between all actors of the education system is necessary» (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2013, p. 7).

To pursue this purpose, a change that motivates cooperation between governments, organizations, institutions, departments and eventually professors is obviously essential. This is the reason why there is a need to modify the way lessons are taught and create the required tools to conduct this

---

[2]  This is a translation made by myself due to the fact the original name is «Promoción de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible a través de la Educación Superior: Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales».

change in order to encourage students to support sustainability (Hoque, Yasin & Sopian, 2022).

Precisely, one of the main problems that has been spotted in the scientific literature is the lack of published results in the integration of the SDGs in Higher education institutions (Findler, Schönherr, Lozano, Reider, & Martinuzzi, 2019) Hence, this research gives the chance to implement the principles under the GTA2030 was constituted and draw the relevant conclusions of this research. Once this activity starts, its main aim lies in informing and, making students aware of the importance of SDGs in their own lives and in their future to come, which is even more significant. Thus, students are intended to get personally involved in the fulfilment of those goals and, by this means, start a real change that arises from the classrooms with a view to creating the necessary impact to reach the goals suggested in the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, this purpose is linked to the fourth goal and the professors' commitment to offer students a quality of teaching.

## 3. TEACHING METHOD

### 3.1 Setting

This research in a group of History of the English-Speaking Countries subject was conducted during the 2020/2021 academic year for the very first time and this is the reason why the quality of the results was strictly theoretical. To contextualise the starting point, 59 students aged 18-24 and who were in the first year of the degree in English Studies have taken part in this research. A remarkable fact is that two Erasmus students coming from England and France, as well as two students who studied primary and secondary education in foreign centres, specifically in Germany and the USA, have also participated in the research. Nonetheless, despite the fact that the context and framework where each of the students come from are heterogeneous, they all share a certain passion towards the English-speaking countries.

### 3.2 Approach

The integration of the teaching of the Sustainable Development Goals in the History of the English-Speaking countries subject implied making

changes in the approach of the teaching as it has been planned so far. The purpose of this process of teaching innovation required a series of adjustments in order to avoid that the incorporation of the SDGs was forced or, even worse, distorted the learning objectives that students should fulfil to consider the subject academically assimilated with regard to its assessment. Thus, «for education to be transformative in support of the new sustainable development agenda, 'education as usual' will not suffice. Learning should foster thinking that is relational, integrative, empathetic, anticipatory and systemic» (UNESCO, 2016, p. 34).

The teaching of any subject related to history is bound to be taught as lecture-based due to the existence of a certain level of initial unawareness by the students. This fact is even more significant when the subject does not relate to the history of the country where the students come from, as so is the case of this subject. Nonetheless, the traditional teacher-centred approach is not a particularly effective method in many occasions due to the fact that this kind of teaching is not appealing enough to many students, especially in the field of Higher Education. Consequently, a teacher-centred approach offers «a management system that orients students toward passivity and compliance with rigid rules undercuts the potential effects of an instructional system that is designed to emphasize active learning, higher order thinking, and the social construction of knowledge» (Brophy, 2006, p. 40). These are the reasons why this type of approach was rejected in favour of a more convenient one which could take advantage of the heterogeneity of the group to benefit from the opinions voiced in the sessions of debate. Hence, it was more evident that the proper choice was a student-centred approach, which fostered students' active participation and critical thinking. Thanks to this type of approach, regardless of students' ideas or opinions, the teaching of the SDGs could be adjusted to the focus of interest of any of them in an individual way and share it as a group, too:

> Student-centered learning is effective for every member of the classroom, because it takes into account their diverse learning needs and greatly increases their retention of both knowledge and skills. Moreover, it emphasizes that learning requires active engagement by the students, so it works to engage students in learning. Students gain confidence in themselves as they take on new responsibilities. Student-centered learning enables students to

> develop the necessary workplace skills. It encourages innovation and creativity through deep learning and requires students to think about their learning, and about the issues and the problems. The student learns to be responsible for his own learning and actions. The student learns about things and likes working with others, team building, developing skills and how to be independent. (Kutumba Rao, 2020, pp. 132-133)

The flexibility of this type of approach was notably beneficial in the case of this particular subject since it was contemplated for the first semester in the degree in English Studies. For this reason, students did not know each other previously and this subject helped them exchange opinions and create bonds between them.

With the aim of including the Sustainable Development Goals in the lessons of history in a natural way, the teaching method followed was based on the implementation of workshops composed by modules of research and debate about the achieved knowledge, as well as their own experiences. To do so, a diachronic vision of the problems faced by the SDGs in the History of the English-Speaking countries was carried out during the lessons in order to establish the basis to make students understand that the origin of a historic problem affects them nowadays.

### 3.3  Assessment

The students were asked to elaborate an assessable research project in the last part of the academic year. The reason of this assessment method lays on «Project work gives students the opportunity to develop their strategies for tackling research questions and scenarios» (Race, 2009, p. 39). This project would worth the 10% of the final mark of the subject and it would work as the conclusion of the knowledge acquired during the semester. To elaborate the project, they were given complete form freedom. They were encouraged to be creative and express themselves as comfortably as possible about how one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals has historically evolved in an English-speaking country and its projection into the future. They were previously told that the best contributions would be shared on the Twitter account of the GTA2030 as «Innovative Teaching incorporates technology in to teaching learning methods to create a rich learning experience for students

and a rewarding teaching experience for faculty» (Khairnar, 2015, p. 869). Moreover, research has shown that the use of technologies and collaborative learning improve the communication between students and faculties s (Laird & Kuh, 2005). When the deadline ended, the classification of the type of form chosen by the students to elaborate their SDGs Project was the following:

**Figure 1**

*SDGs assessment classification*
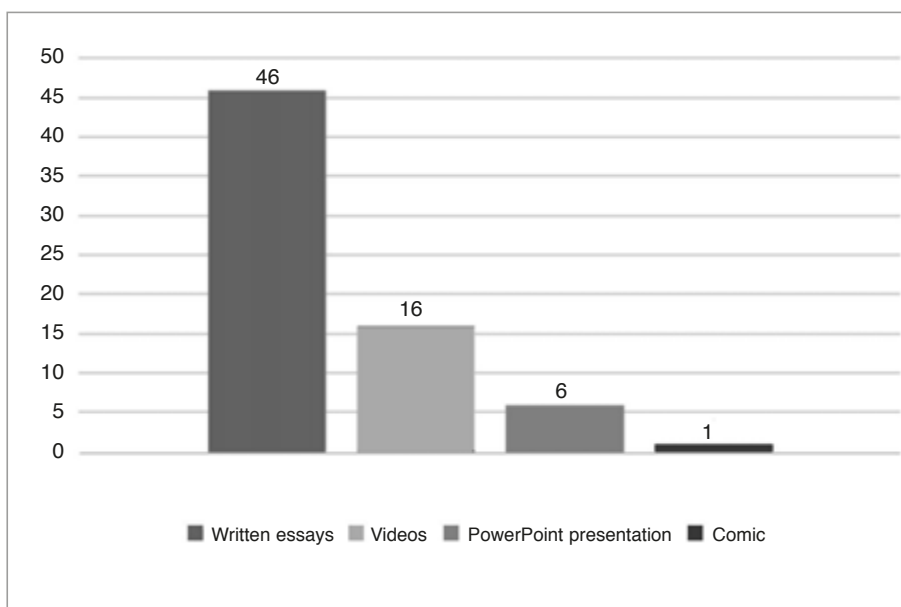


The range of the classification was 46 written essays, 16 videos, 6 PowerPoint presentations and a comic out of the 69 samples collected. In order to assess them, it was necessary to design a rubric which served as a central and egalitarian axis because of the heterogeneity of the samples received. The three items which regulate the assessment are: the veracity of the facts presented; the fulfilment of the suggested objectives; and the originality of the chosen topic.

Another remarkable characteristic to bear in mind after having analysed the samples of the projects is the students' choice of the countries in order to elaborate their research projects. The information collected can be observed in the graphic that follows:

**Figure 2**

*Countries chosen by the students*
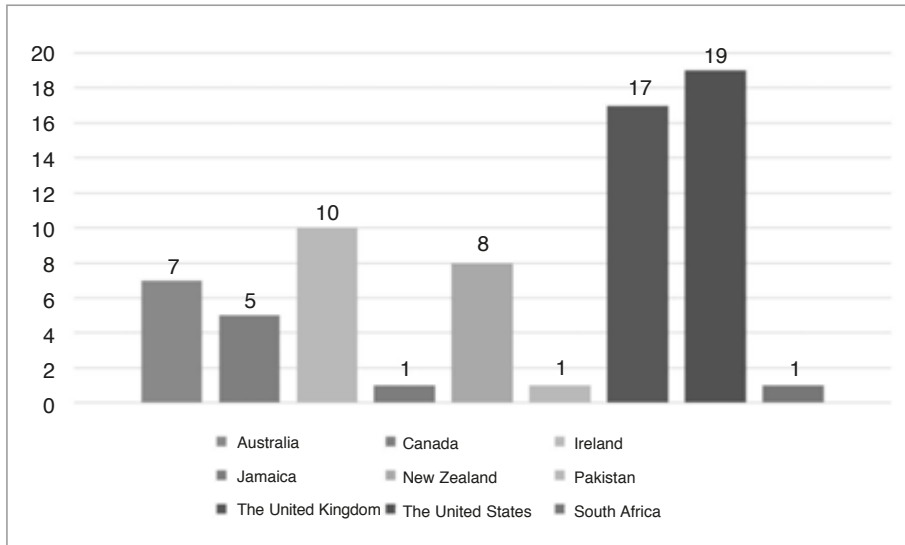


To base their projects on, students predominantly chose The United
States (19), followed closely by United Kingdom (17) and Ireland (10).
The fact of these three countries being the most popular ones among stu-
dents was foreseeable to a certain extent. On the one hand, it is
irrefutable that the first countries that come to everybody's mind when
English-speaking countries are referred to are the USA and the British
Isles, since these are the countries with the vast majority of English
speakers. On the other hand, it is necessary to consider that, as they are
students in their first year of university, their decision of studying the
degree in English Studies has been based on their predilection for or
bond with both the culture of some of the most well-known countries and
the English language. It is worth stressing that such countries as
Jamaica, Pakistan and South Africa were barely chosen by the students,
with one student each.

Eventually, another analysable factor is the variety of the Sustainable
Development Goals selected by the students in order to elaborate their
projects. The information compiled is shown in the graphic that fol-
lows:

**Figure 3**
*SDGs chosen by the students*
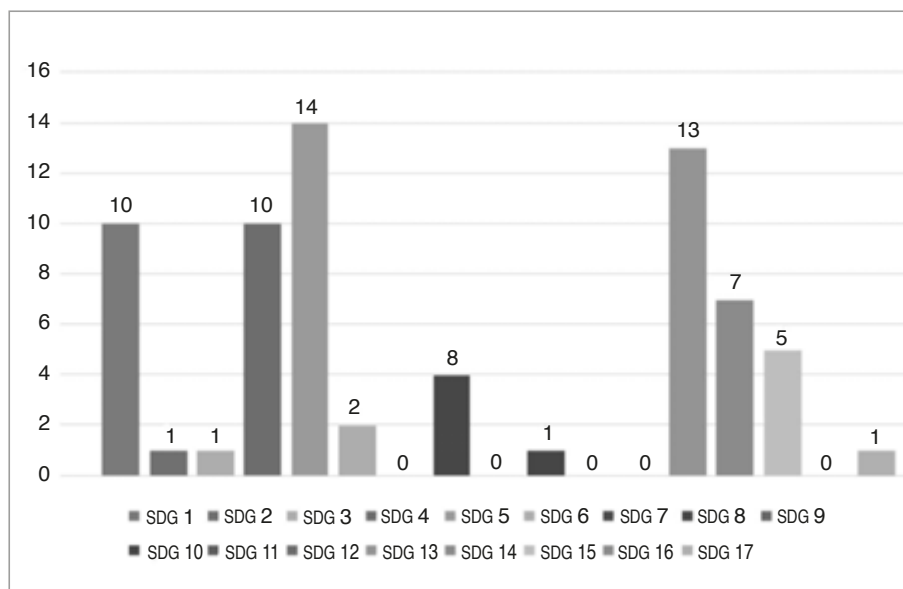


The SDGs chosen by a greater number of students were Gender equality (14), Climate action (13), No poverty (10) and Quality education (10). The popularity of Gender equality among students was certainly reflected during the sessions of debate and this fact may have probably influenced on its selection. However, it is worth stressing that five SDGs were not represented by any of the students. In this case, Affordable and clean energy, Industry, innovation and infrastructure, Sustainable cities and communities, Responsible consumption and production and Peace, justice and strong institutions could not draw students' attention despite the possibilities of development when covering this range of issues.

## 4. CHALLENGES FOUND

When a plan to integrate the teaching of the Sustainable Development Goals to the History of English-Speaking Countries subject is established, three challenges or main problems can be found.

The first challenge consists in outlining a teaching plan that includes in a diachronic way the historic consequences which have created the necessity

of these Sustainable Development Goals with a special attention in the English-speaking countries. The reason of this specification is found in the fact that this is a subject in the degree in English Studies. The teaching of history sometimes causes what is known as a historical distancing among students. This concept is a metaphor to explain how people situate themselves between the past and present (den Hollander et al., 2011). It is common that professors find a lack of connection or incompatibility between the facts taught and the students, since they can neither sympathise with the events nor notice that our current reality is nothing but the consequence of those events. Nonetheless, this is not a new problem caused by current society. In fact, it is widely known by university lecturers and history teachers and historians in general, as Phillips states:

> The idea of historical distance is hardly new. On the contrary, historians have staked a great deal on the idea that distance gives us the detachment we need to form a dispassionate view of the past. Indeed, this distinction between supposed objectivity and blind prejudice has often been seen as the divide between cultures that are capable of modern historical perspectives and those that are confined to religious or ideological irrationalism. But we need not press the question this far to recognize the ideological weight carried by the idea of distance — or the potential benefits that may come from liberalizing our conception of this powerful idea. (Phillips, 2015, p. 32)

In order to solve the problem of distancing in the classroom, the association of the historicity of those Sustainable Development Goals to the topics with a recurrent presence in the society to which the students belong was required. To set a specific example in relation to the Gender equality goal, it was suggested a topic which was contemporary enough so that all of them could easily relate. Teaching was led to make them aware of the fact that the struggle for equal rights for men and women of the current Feminism is nothing but the consequence of the emptiness and apparent oversight of the relegated figure of women in the liberal state. It extends until the 20th century and it was firstly manifested by Mary Wollstonecraft, the author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, who reports the situation from a defending perspective, which is an essential part of Feminism. Students were taught the evolution of the Feminism movement, from the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention to the appearance of the first suffragists, led by Emmeline Pankhurst. This fact helped them to understand the intersec-

tionality which Feminism has evolved nowadays. This particular example leads them to know which the origins of such a current topic are and lays the foundation to substantiate it in a more critical way due to the fact they have already had a solid basis to build their reasoning.

The second challenge lies precisely in the creation of an atmosphere of communication and work between the students, which is comfortable and comprehensible enough, and which favours critical thinking and debate. The origin of this challenge arises from two points mainly. On the one hand, as this subject is taught in the first semester of the first year of the degree in English Studies, the students were immersed in the process of getting to know each other. On the other hand, they were originally inhibited when making voluntary or entirely subjective contributions under the fear of being judged. As a matter of fact, this fear or insecurity has been specially boosted due to the global pandemic of Covid-19, during which teaching in Spain was inevitably replaced to an online version, which resulted in evident lacks in the quality of teaching as well as a regression in sociability and a noticeable individualism in the students' character. If this fact alone was considered a potentially meaningful drawback to take into consideration, previous knowledge about Sustainable Development Goals was utterly decisive, as it can be observed in the figure below:

**Figure 4**
*Students with previous SDGs knowledge*
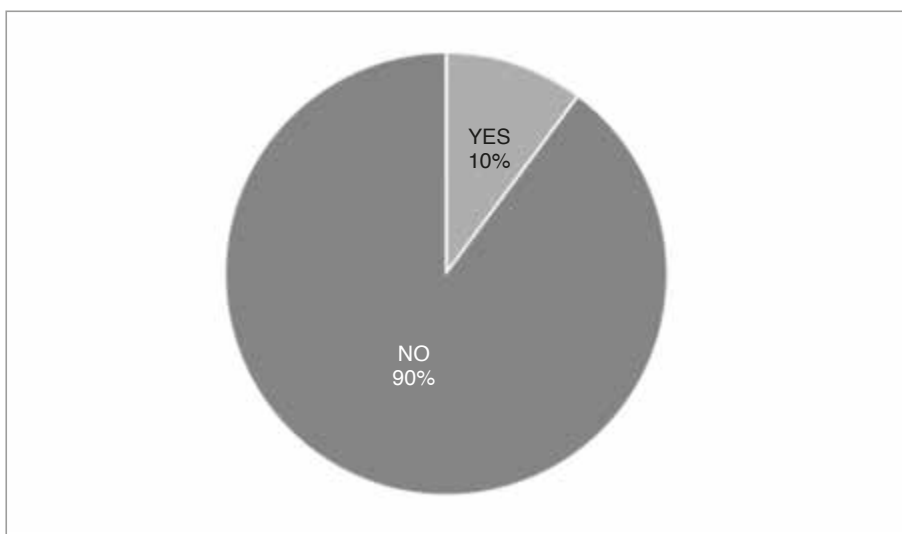
Thus, only 6 out of 59 students initially knew the existence of the SDGs. This large percentage of unawareness avoided precise communication and a sufficient degree of understanding to build solid ideas and well-founded opinions. On one hand, the SDGs knowledge problem was solved with a combination of lecture and the self-research in order to do the assessment task I have asked them as part of their final grade. On the other hand, the problem of the lack of participation was avoided with a selection of hot topics to debate in the sessions so that nobody could remain indifferent and they were willing to participate and share their own point of view. A meaningful example was found during the debates about the historic evolution of the LGTB rights. Some students raised their personal experiences defending the importance of a space in classrooms as well as the fact of being taught by members of the LGTB community. A student stated that «it is not necessary to be an ancient Roman so that the professor can explains how the Roman Empire's invasion in England was». Such comment generated a certain degree of controversy and it led to a debate about if it is really necessary to be a member of the collective in order to inform and make know the problems to achieve equality of rights. The selection of this debate in particular, as well as its development, attained students' involvement in an effective way which ended up creating the desired atmosphere of debate for the following sessions.

The third and last challenge is to integrate the results obtained by the students in the assessment process due to the heterogeneity of the samples received. Although the specific results found in the samples made by the students will be discussed hereinafter, I can anticipate that, as the students were free to use the format, they desired in order to set out their own conclusions, the creation of a specific and more flexible rubric to account for the quality of their contributions was needed. So, as it is mentioned before, the three items which regulate the assessment were the veracity of the facts presented; the fulfilment of the suggested objectives; and the originality of the chosen topic.

Most of these challenges could be foreseen during the subject planning and solutions to each of them could be anticipated likewise. Nevertheless, students' heterogeneity and the characteristic nature of the sessions of debate entailed a certain degree of dynamism and flexibility in the resources needed to prepare these sessions. Finally, every single challenge found could be

solved, which facilitated the satisfactory fulfilment of the objectives suggested at the beginning of the academic year.

## 5. CONCLUSIVE RESULTS

Once this research has concluded, a series of conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the information obtained. The integration of the Sustainable Development Goals in Higher education is absolutely possible, but it requires a joint effort on the side of the institutions, organizations and professors. This effort will be futile if professors do not feel supported by the institutions and the latter do not grant the appropriate tool to execute their task. Likewise, educators need to commit to the integration of the SDGs in their teaching, without undermining the competences students have to acquire. Institutions must accomplish this deal so that students and, by extension, society benefits from this symbiosis. Higher Education Institutions must serve as knowledge lighthouses where students cannot only acquire information but also the tools to research and assimilate the necessary skills to make the world a more sustainable place:

> Education for sustainable development aims at enabling everyone to acquire the values, competencies, skills and knowledge necessary to contribute to building a more sustainable society. This implies revising teaching content to respond to global and local challenges. It should also promote teaching methods that enable students to acquire skills such as interdisciplinary thinking, integrated planning, understanding complexity, cooperating with others in decision-making processes, and participating in local, national and global processes towards sustainable development. (HESI, 2021, p. 3)

Additionally, Higher Education Institutions can offer a wide range of branches of knowledge. Within its ranks, world-renowned researchers of every single known fields are found, which gives them the potential capacity of looking for new solutions and divulging their findings. This fact, apart from being a privilege, needs to be a responsibility that turns them into those nucleuses with the power of being the driving force that motivates the change towards a more sustainable society. This commitment is gathered in the SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. This duty might be complicated if profes-

sors decide to accept it in an individual way. This is the reason why the creation of working groups is very advisable since the joining of several professors who share the same goal will ease the change and will create a greater impact. This fact is translated into the possibility of reaching a bigger number of students who are ready to accept what it is agreed in the 2030 Agenda.

In the integration of the SDGs in the teaching of the History of the English-Speaking Countries subject, a change of approach to adapt to the specific needs has been convenient. As it dealt with first-year-students in the degree in English Studies, it was essential to foster students' participation and critical thinking in order to reach a greater degree of immersion and compromise with the SDGs. As a result, the traditional teacher-centred approach did not meet the requisites of this situation. A student-centred approach was followed instead and the results were very positive. Consequently, students' interest and commitment could be boosted thanks to a teaching which was guided to achieve students' participation and be geared towards their involvement in history. The students initially started as a group of people who had a certain common passion towards the English-speaking countries, who did not know each other and had little or no previous knowledge about the Sustainable Development Goals and their historic evolution. When the semester came to an end, the group of students had conveniently evolved, built ties among them and a basis to reason their ideas. Hence, it notably contributed to the creation of a critical thinking and an active attitude in the students.

The combination of different types of technology in the teaching of the subject has positively favour students' acceptance and the assimilation of the SDGs. Therefore, «teaching with technology engages students with different kinds of stimuli involve in activity-based learning. Technology makes material more interesting» (Khairnar, 2015, p. 869). It is notorious that students' involvement with the SDGs was awarded with the 10% of the final mark in the subject as long as the project was properly elaborated. Nevertheless, most of them were more thrilled by the fact that their contributions could be posted in the GTA2030 official Twitter account of the University of Alcalá. The use of social media introduces a dynamic relationship between students and their learning process as they include tools they use in their daily routine and those which are part of their academic, and consequently soften de lines among them (Rutherford, 2010).

Among the most used methods in the teaching of the subject, the sessions of debate were undoubtedly the most accepted ones by the students. Thanks to this type of strategy, a better degree of acceptance and sensitivity in students has been achieved. Furthermore, students registered their satisfaction with this type of teaching rating it with a 9.2 out of 10 in the anonymous survey of professors which is carried out at the end of the semester. The teaching of history usually generates a certain level of tedium among students due to the historical distancing and the impossibility of accepting that our current society is nothing but the consequence of those historical events which are explained throughout sessions. Nonetheless, the application of workshops to collect the necessary information which gave them the required tools to debate with well-founded arguments was a success when reaching the skills suggested at the beginning of the academic year.

Another remarkable result is the information obtained in the samples of the SDGs projects. Despite the fact that students had freedom of format to elaborate their projects, a vast majority of them chose the essay as the method to express themselves. Only 25 out of 69 students opted for a more visual option. The reason of it could be found in the habit of elaborating their projects as essays throughout all their lives as students as «in some subjects, assessment is dominated by essay writing (Race, 2009, p.80). The choice of the countries and the SDGs on which their projects are base is also noticeable. The USA and the SDG 5: Gender equality are the topics which concern most students. These results are an indicator of the concerns of a generation and, as a consequence, to direct the efforts towards that direction.

## 5.1 Limitations

The greater limitation of this research has certainly been the time. The teaching of History of the English-Speaking Countries only lasts a semester. If the mere fact of compressing all the history of these countries in only six months is a hard task, being able to induce the SDGs in the syllabus without distorting the teaching of the subject is a challenge. Having a whole academic year to teach the subject would have given more possibilities of delving into certain topics and covering others which, due to this lack of time, were rejected during the planning of the teaching. A solution that

could help would be receiving an education about Sustainable Development Goals throughout their preuniversity education due to the fact that most students were unaware of their existence at the beginning. Thus, sessions could be better leveraged since students had well-founded information of the SDGs.

Another limitation derived from the teaching lies in the assessment. Although the results of the research have been positive, it is still wondered until to which extent the fact that the samples received have been the consequence of a requirement to pass the subject has influence on it. Hence, a valued idea is to set the assessment of this innovation project out to the students as optional, whose only award was to post them in the social networks of the GTA2030 and, by this means, to give them visibility in an academic platform.

Finally, in order to measure the impact of High Education Institutions on the SDGs it would necessary to discover what is already being done (Calles, 2020) and it would essential for the evaluation, follow-up and attainment of the SDGs (Choi et al., 2016; Gusmão Caiado et al., 2018).

## 5.2  New Avenues

The results of this research have been both positive and satisfactory. This is the reason why new avenues arise when this activity is planned to be repeated in the years to come. One of the facts that students have emphasised is their enthusiasm when combining teaching and social networks. Nowadays, the most famous social networks among students are TikTok, BeReal and Instagram, and in the case of the first one, it has become the most popular of the social media platforms (Brooks, 2021). All these platforms share the possibility of being more visual, as they prioritise the sharing of images and videos. Nonetheless, these use of these three social media platforms have been taken in less consideration that Twitter in relation with its educational potential (García-Suárez & Trigueros-Cervantes, 2015) The use of one or more social tools could be used to engage students' interest, and subsequently the spend more quality time on their academic activities (Kennedy, 2000). The dynamism is one of the main characteristics of these social media, so it allows to students to become active participants instead of passive consumers (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007). As the GTA30, we decided to extend our radius of action to these platforms in

order to arouse a greater interest among students and, ultimately achieve that a bigger number of people are informed and cooperate to reach the goals of the 2030 Agenda. The adaptation of these new learning experiences will help to address the necessities of today's learners (Baird & Fisher, 2006; Christensen, Horn, & Johnson, 2008) as students are the future leaders and legatee of technology (Leal Filho, et al., 2018).

Other new avenues come from the possibility of modifying some of the topics raised during the sessions with a view to drawing students' attention to those SDGs with a lower popularity in the light of the samples received, such as the SGD 8: Decent work and economic growth or the SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions. By this means, the problems which seem to catch less attention from the new generations could be voiced. This fact becomes really important due to the fact all the SDGS are inter-connected and it is not possible to achieve one without achieving the others (Egron-Polak, 2016). The results reached in this research are considered to be a resounding success and it is positively valued the repetition of this teaching innovation project in the academic years to come the repetition of this teaching innovation project in the academic years to come is positively valued.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Aktas, C. B., Whelan, R., Stoffer, H., Todd, E., & Kern, C. L. (2015). Developing a university-wide course on sustainability: A critical evaluation of planning and implementation. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *106*, 216–221. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.11.037

Baird, D. E., & Fisher, M. (2006). Neomillennial user experience design strategies: Utilizing social networking media to support «Always On» learning. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, *34*(1), 5-32.

Brooks, K. J. (2021, December 23). TikTok tops Google as the most visited website on the internet. CBS News. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/tiktok-google-facebook-social-media-internet/

Brophy, J. (Ed.). (2006). History of research. In C. M. Evertson & C. S. Weinstein (Eds.), *Handbook of Classroom Management: Research, Practice & Contemporary Issues* (pp. 5-32). Lawrence Erlbaum Publisher.

Calles, C. (2020). ODS y Educación Superior. Una Mirada Desde la Función de Investigación. *Revista Educación Superior y Sociedad (ESS)*, *32*(2), 167–201.

Choi, J., Hwang, M., Kim, G., Seong, J. & Ahn, J. (2016). Supporting the Measurement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 11 through the Use of National Urban Information Systems and Open Geospatial Technologies: A Case Study of South Korea. *Open Geospatial Data, Software and Standards, 1*(4), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40965-016-0005-0

Den Hollander, J., Paul, H., & Peters, R. (2011). Introduction: The metaphor of historical distance. *History and Theory*, *50*, 1-10.

Egron-Polak, E. (2016). *Educación 2030: implicaciones/desafíos para la educación superior*. https://bit.ly/3FkRFBl

Findler, F., Schönherr, N., Lozano, R., Reider, D., & Martinuzzi, A. (2019). The Impacts of Higher Education Institutions on Sustainable Development: A Review and Conceptualization. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, *20*(1), 23–38. doi:10.1108/IJSHE-07-2017-0114.

García-Suárez, J., Trigueros-Cervantes, C., & Rivera-García, E. (2015). Twitter como recurso para evaluar el proceso de enseñanza universitaria. *Universities and Knowledge Society Journal*, *12*(3), 32–44.

Higher Education Sustainability Initiative. (2021). *HEI assessment for the SDGs-Vol 2: For higher education institutions participating in assessments*. https://bit.ly/3YJ4897

Hoque, F., Yasin, R. M., & Sopian, K. (2022). Revisiting Education for Sustainable Development: Methods to Inspire Secondary School Students toward Renewable Energy. *Sustainability*, *14*(14), 1-18.

Kennedy, C. (2000). *Implications for new pedagogy in higher education: Can online technology enhance student engagement & learning?* (Doctoral dissertation). University of California at Berkeley.

Khainar, C. M. (2015). Advance Pedagogy: Innovative Methods of Teaching and Learning. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology, 11*(5), 869-72.

Kutumba Rao, N. (2020). Advantages and disadvantages of student centered learning. *Research Journal of English and Literature (RJELAL): A Peer reviewed (Refereed) International Journal, 8*. 132-34.

Laird, T. F. N., & Kuh, G. D. (2005). Student experiences with information technology and their relationship to other aspects of student engagement. *Research in Higher Education*, *46*(2), 211-232.

Leal Filho, W., Raath, S., Lazzarini, B., Vargas, V. R., de Souza, L., Anholon, R., Quelhas, O. L. G., Haddad, R., Klavins, M., & Orlovic, V. L. (2018). The role of transformation in learning and education for sustainability. *Journal of Cleaner Production., 199*, 286–295.

Lozano, R., Ceulemans, K., Alonso-Almeida, M., Huisingh, D., Lozano, F. J., Waas, T., Lambrechts, W., Luckman, R. K. Hugé, J. (2014). A review of commitment and implementation of sustainable development in higher education: Results from a worldwide survey. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *108*, 1–18.

McLoughlin, C., & Lee, M. J. W. (2007). Social software and participatory learning: Pedagogical choices with technology affordances in the Web 2.0 era. In *ICT: Providing Choices for Learners and Learning. Proceedings Ascilite Singapore 2007* (pp. 664-675). https://bit.ly/42eorhl

Phillips, M. S. (2015). Distance and Distances in our View of the Past. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association Revue de la Société Historique du Canada, 26*(2), 32-40. https://bit.ly/4083u65

Race, P. (2009). *Designing assessment to improve physical sciences learning*. Higher Education Academy.

Rutherford, C. (2010). Using online social media to support preservice student engagement. *Journal of Online Learnign and Teaching*, *6*(4), 703–711.

SDSN Australia, New Zealand & Pacific Edition. (2017). *Getting Started with the SDGs in Universities: A Guide for Universities, Higher Education Institutions, and the Academic Sector*. https://bit.ly/3FpMTCQ

UNESCO, UNEVOC. (2014). *Greening TVET: Qualifications needs and implementation strategies*. Report of the UNESCO-UNEVOC virtual conference. 12-16 November 2013, Bonn. https://t.ly/bS-7

United Nations. (2015). *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015*. UN General Assembly, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1. https://www.refworld.org/docid/57b6e3e44.html

Universidad de Alcalá. (n. d.). *Guía para la constitución y reconocimiento de los Grupos de Trabajo Agenda 2030 en la UAH*. https://www1.uah.es/pdf/noticias/voluntariado/docs/Guia-grupos-GT.pdf