

THE EFFECT OF A PROPOSED EDUCATIONAL UNIT IN DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP BASED ON BLENDED LEARNING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS AND AWARENESS OF 3rd GRADE SECONDARY STUDENTS

Hanadi Ahmed Shamikh Al-Mufarrij

Abstract

The present research aimed at identifying the effect of a proposed educational unit in digital citizenship based on blended learning on the development of English language skills and awareness of 3rd grade secondary students in Jeddah. In order to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses, the researcher adopted the one group quasi-experimental design. The research population consisted of all 3rd grade students in Jeddah Third Secondary School. The sample consisted of 30 students who were considered as the experimental group of the research. The research was carried out by applying a pre-post test of critical reading and writing skills as well as a pre-post scale of digital citizenship awareness. The statistical analysis of data showed that there was a positive effect of using the educational unit on the development of students' critical reading and writing skills and their digital citizenship awareness after studying the proposed unit. The research recommended the use of blended learning in English language teaching besides the traditional method to increase interaction between students and teachers inside and outside the classroom. The research also emphasized the importance of increasing teachers' training to infuse real life issues and problems in their classes to increase students' awareness and participation.

Key words: digital citizenship, blended learning, skill, and awareness.

Introduction

The revolution of digital communication, the widespread of the internet use and technological applications, and the easy accessibility to data assets reported beneficial outcomes among people and on the whole society. However, the negative impact of such disobedience utilities with ethical tenets, legitimate controls, and standard principles that regulated life had become very clear (Algaaid, 2014).

Nowadays, students are communicating with digital strangers who constitute an unmistakable solid threat. They are browsing suspicious sites, and it is becoming virtually infeasible to monitor every website they visit. Furthermore, it is difficult to supervise every person they communicate with or correspond with because of the spread of tablets and smart phones. They are unquestionably having the most vigorous impact on our students. We are yet to say whether the effect is negative or positive if we instruct and guide students about the risks of mishandling communication technology (Algaaid, 2014).

Along with the wide spread of technology and its applications, most of the websites in the internet are using the English Language. It is the language of scientific sites, technological applications and digital games. Therefore, students need to develop their English language skills especially critical reading and writing as they are the tools to communicate and contact with others online and to understand what is being read or what to write. The researcher made use of these resources which were the internet website and what is related to it as Digital Citizenship in developing these two skills by adapting an attractive content that was claimed for the development of critical reading and writing skills.

Using English language in most of the digital applications and the online communications stressed the importance of mastering the English language and, its skills. This phenomenon put a heavy burden on English language teachers toward expanding students' understanding of different concepts related to their daily life such as digital citizenship and information awareness about the proper use of technology. Technology and the lamentable utilization of cell phones and personal digital devices in schools became a challenge to the teachers, which intrigued a serious question – what can the teachers do about the expanding and incrementing quandaries that emerged from the utilization of these devices? Most schools are attempting to react by confronting these issues and putting directions and regulations including the felicitous and inopportune utilization of technology. In some western societies, the application of these regulations demonstrated a circumscribed impact on responsible behaviors while dealing with technology. The useful approach to stop these quandaries depends essentially on providing students with information, instructing intelligent considering, and putting the directions that will permit students to comprehend the best possible method for utilizing technology (Ribble&Bailey, 2007).

No doubt, spreading awareness of digital citizenship among family members and relatives as well as among students is a serious need that ought to be transformed into tasks and projects to support the common society and the media establishments' creativity. One of the instructive objectives in Saudi Arabia for secondary schools is ensuring the abilities of students as well as guiding them towards edifying instructive Islamic objectives and developing their scientific exploratory and mental thinking. Moreover, education aims at empowering students in the development of research, experiment, and systematic tracking. The appropriate utilization of resources, the adaptation of the right strategies in studying, and instilling the positive understanding will help students to confront the negative conceptions and the misleading deceptive ways. The concise schooling relies on the proper instructions and upraising of individuals in families and educational establishments (Ministry of Education Website, 01/01/1437). Therefore, it is becoming imperative to search for instructing strategies that will help the teachers, particularly English language teachers, in most cases, because most of the applications and websites the students are using are in English to develop their students skills with the best available methods. For instance, students frequently need to register and fill forms in many websites in the English language, even programs and applications need a good level of the students reading comprehension and writing skills. Therefore, mastering English language skills is becoming a requirement to be able to access websites and to comprehend the read texts whether they are instructions, terms or forms.

Blended learning (BL) is a method of learning that requires the students' serenity in light of the fact that whatever they learn must be to their benefit (Abu Zaid, 1982). This proposes that students ought to master the English language skills particularly perusing and composing in light of the fact that the utilization of the cyber world and the websites that the students customarily use requires a decent grasp of the English language to create learning and seek information. In integration, reading without fully understanding or indicting any erroneous information could lead to negative results or exposure for the student himself. Surveys proved that there is a relationship between digital vigilance, the fulfillment of digital citizenship, and the utilization of technology. The more individuals utilize modern technology the better conscious they become on understanding the fundamentals of the digital citizenship (Alzahrani, 2015). The first paragraph of the paper is the introduction. In the introduction the paper informs the reader what the topic is.

The Research Problem

Although critical reading and writing skills are very important, the level of students in school is still very weak (Abdel-Raheem, T.,2009). Therefore, these two skills need to be developed urgently because they are the tools to comprehend and communicate carefully with the written texts on different websites and applications. If students understand the language and if they are able to write correctly and to read critically, they will be able to deal successfully with the dangers they may face while using the internet which could be a result of the misunderstanding and the wrong interpreting of what they read and write in English. This misunderstanding could be used against them or may reflect negatively on their life. The researcher thought of using the content of (Digital Citizenship) to develop the two skills based on the theories which suggest that the students will be more interested in what they learn if the content is related to their real life and dealt with authentic problems they may face then, the main goals of learning will be achieved.

Furthermore, the teaching of digital citizenship in schools is suggested by numerous professional researchers such as Ribble, &Bailey (2014) as it may help to answer the fundamental questions in the present research which are as follows:

- 1- What is the effect of a proposed educational unit in digital citizenship based on blended learning on the development of the English language critical reading skill of 3rd grade secondary students?
- 2- What is the effect of a proposed educational unit in digital citizenship based on blended learning on the development of the English language critical writing skill of 3rd grade secondary students?
- 3- What is the effect of a proposed educational unit in digital citizenship based on blended learning on the development of the digital citizenship information literacy awareness of 3rd grade secondary students?

Research Objectives

This research is attempting to achieve the following goals:

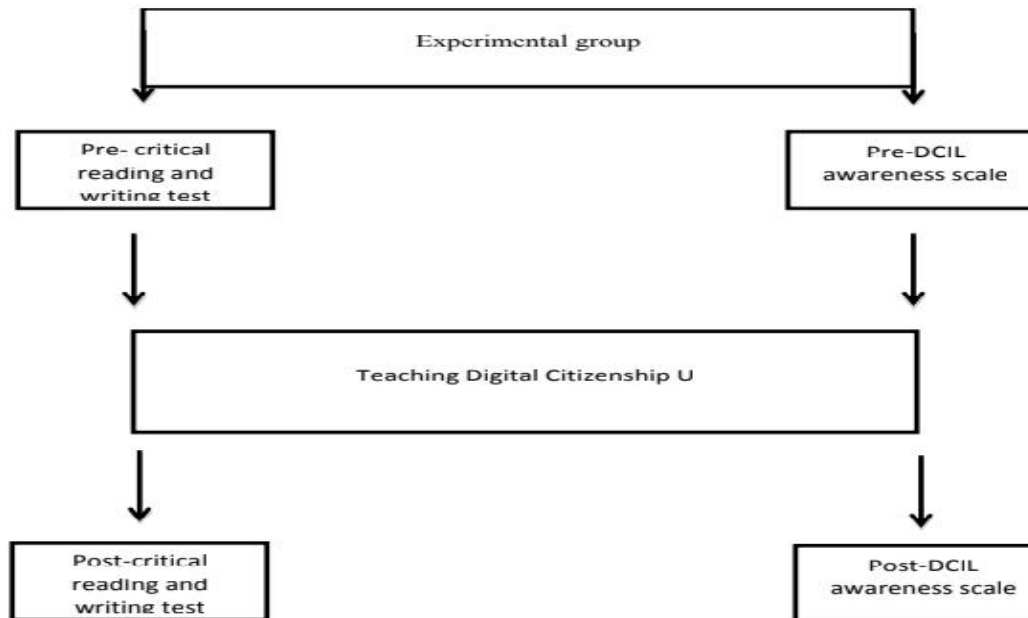
- 1- Adapt the proposed educational unit in digital citizenship based on blended learning in order to develop English language skills and information awareness of 3rd grade secondary students.
- 2- Identify the effect of the proposed educational unit in digital citizenship based on blended learning on the development of English language skills of 3rd grade secondary students.
- 3- Identify the effect of the proposed educational unit in digital citizenship based on blended learning on the development of information awareness of 3rd grade secondary students.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This research adopted the one group quasi-experimental design to assess the effect of using the proposed unit of digital citizenship based on blended learning on developing the skills of English Language (EL) (critical reading and writing) and on the development of the awareness (DCILA) of students of the 3rd grade in the 3rd Secondary School in Jeddah .

Figure 1 Research Experimental Design



Research Variables

There are two variables for the research; the independent variable which is the proposed Unit of digital citizenship based on blended learning and the dependent variables that are the EL skills (critical reading and writing) and the students' DCILA.

Research Sample

The Sample of the research consisted of the students of the 3rd grade at the secondary stage in the 3rd Secondary School in Jeddah. The researcher chose the subjects involved in this research purposefully. The sample included 30 female students in the 2nd semester of 1436-1437 h. The students' level in English skills was average but in IL of digital citizenship was very weak noticed from the pre-application of the tools.

Research Tools & Materials The materials consists of

The proposed Digital citizenship Unit with the title (Digital Citizenship. It's Not One Week, its 24/7. 365).

The unit is adapted by the researcher.

The tools composed of

Critical Reading & Writing Tests

IL Awareness Scale

Research Procedures

- After reading and searching extensively about Digital Citizenship, and how to develop the EL skills of students and develop their awareness of IL, the researcher designed a unit based on blended learning to develop reading and writing skills, especially critical abilities. The unit contained some tasks that need to use digital technology inside and outside class; the lessons were taught on-line. With 2 hours daily and 5 sessions per week, the lesson was given to the experimental group for a period of two weeks.

- The pre-test and the pre-scale were given to the experimental group before studying the unit.

- To ensure that the participants in this research realized the nature of the research, the researcher met with the experimental group, and a scheme was given to the students about the aim of the research, its objectives, and its procedures. The researcher discussed the concept of digital citizenship with the sample and notified them to use their digital devices inside the class during the two weeks.

- The researcher taught the unit using face-to-face and English Language teaching methods with the help of (<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/educators/digital-citizenship>), for extra practice of reading and writing to achieve the goals and objectives of each lesson. Therefore, the researcher used EDMODO classroom, to connect with the experimental group outside the school.

- At the end of the unit and after conducting the experiment, a post-test and a post-scale application were given to the experimental group to assess the unit effect on the sample's performance.

Results and Discussion

A statistically significant effect of building up the EFL aptitudes, particularly persuasive and critical writing, resulted of teaching the proposed unit of digital citizenship in light of the blended learning technique. Building up the awareness skills of the IL of students also concurred with similar outcome. These results coincide with other related researches of similar theme such as the study of (Gozalves, V. 2011), and (Alzahrani, A. 2015) which were mentioned in the related studies.

Regardless of the short two-weeks-experiment, the outcomes of teaching the unit were exceptionally positive. Such experimentations enhanced the subjects' accomplishments in the skills of reading and writing, as well as expanded their consciousness of advanced DCILA. In addition, it proved to be convenient to use blended learning techniques to educate students and help them accomplish the objectives of this examination as mentioned in (Mslmani, M. 2015) and (Sharaf, S. & Aldamardash, M. 2014). From these outcomes, the study can answer the questions of the research, "What is The Effect of a Proposed Educational Unit in Digital Citizenship Based on Blended Learning on the Development of English Language Skills and Awareness of 3rd Grade Secondary Students?"

The researcher adapted a unit containing five lessons that discussed the nine elements of digital citizenship using the blended learning approach that mentioned in the website of Common Sense and made some modification to cope with the Saudi schools environment. A smooth interaction between the researcher and the students inside and outside the school was established with the help of mixing the traditional face-to-face teaching and the new electronic methods using the new technology, which is based on the constructivism theory.

The lesson's objectives were achieved in the tasks, exercises, videos, and photos that were used. The context of the lesson was a kind of guided practice and free performance, which the researcher created online using EDMODO class. The variety of the tasks empowered the critical thinking of students, which motivated them to peruse, compose, examine, and evaluate issues and situations with solving problems. At last, the content of the unit contained a considerable measure of directions and advices that helped the subjects expand their awareness of IL of digital citizenship and its related ethics. As studied in (Ibrahim, D. 2014) and (Amer, A. 2015).

The researcher developed critical reading and writing tests and designed DCILA scales to measure the impact of the unit on the development of the EFL skills and the IL awareness of the experimental group. The findings of pre-post-applications of perusing and composing aptitudes demonstrated that the teaching of the unit helped improve the students' critical thinking skills; therefore, their scores in the post-tests were higher than the scores of the pre-tests and that agrees with the studies of (Abdel-Raheem, 2009) and (Amer, A. 2015). Moreover, the results of the pre-post-scale-measures indicated that the awareness of the students became higher in the post-tests than in the pre-tests. The rate of the entire tests and scales demonstrated that the effect of the unit was acceptable in building up the consciousness of the subjects, which is the principle objective of the research to expand the subjects' moralities when managing the digital world. Nonetheless, teaching the proposed whilst using blended learning can enhance the subjects' EFL skills and their DCILA. These findings can strongly support the research hypotheses for using this unit as a very effective tool to teach EFL skills and develop the IL awareness in schools and English classes.

Table 1. The comparison between 3 changes regarding Digital citizenship, Reading, and Writing

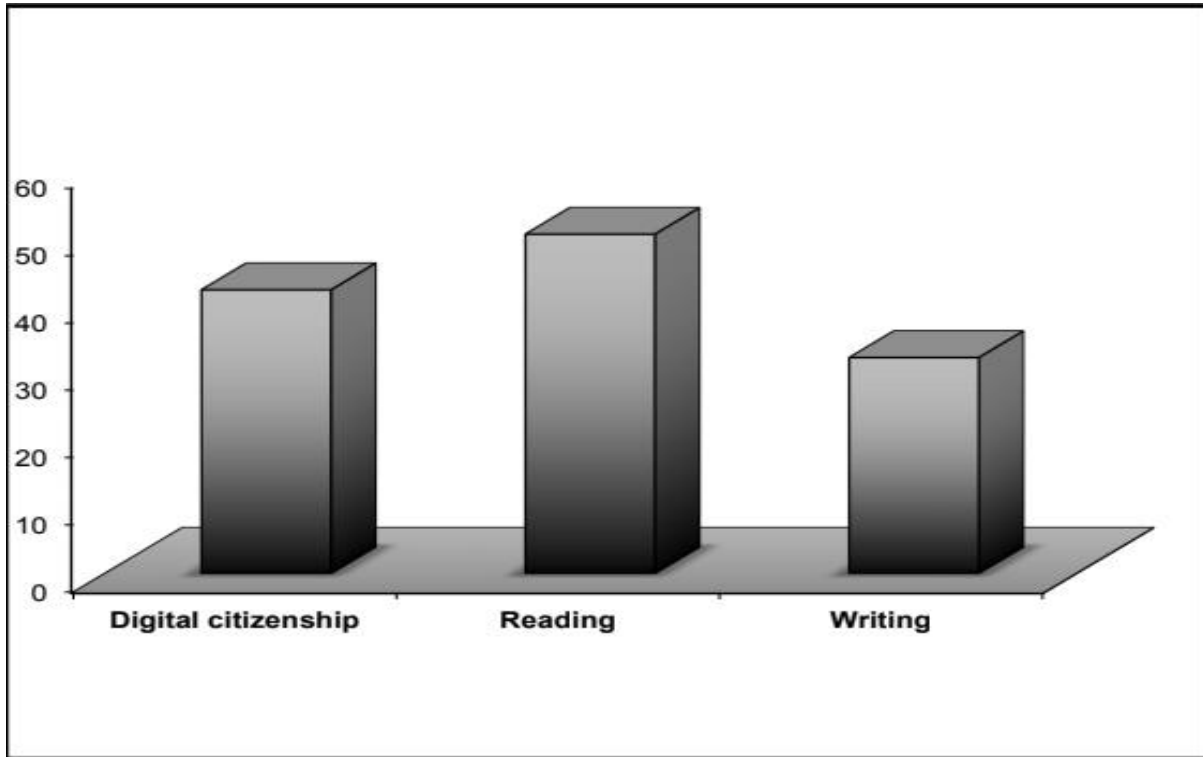


Figure 1. The comparison between 5 changes regarding Digital citizenship, Reading, and Writing.

Conclusion

Digital citizenship is a crucial aspect of communication nowadays, because of the huge revolution of digital technology and the need for using it as a part of our life. It is used intensively everywhere, such as at home, in schools, libraries, markets, and even on the streets. As a result, decision makers at the field of education are forced to create various methods to instruct students, especially the youngsters, on the ethical and adequate ways to use this technology. Therefore, they plan some programs to tackle such topics as well as to increase the students' critical thinking, which helps them evaluate situations and solve numerous problems.

Using technology and interacting via the internet requires using English Language intensively, so the researcher decided to design a unit in digital citizenship based on using the BL approach. The researcher believed that teaching such skills in English classes would help achieve the aim of developing EFL skills and strengthen the students' awareness of IL of digital citizenship.

	% of change				Kruskal-Wallis Test	
	Range	Median	Interquartile Range	Mean rank	X ²	P-value
Digital citizenship	-13.64 : 133.33	50.00	47.84	42.09	7.97	0.02
Reading	-16.67 : 1300.00	66.67	89.29	50.31		
Writing	-100.00 : 500.00	0.00	116.67	32.07		

Throughout this research, the researcher attempted to answer three main questions:

- 1- What is the effect of the proposed educational unit in digital citizenship based on blended learning on the development of English language Critical Reading Skills of 3rd grade secondary students?
- 2- What is the effect of the proposed educational unit in digital citizenship based on blended learning on the development of English language Critical Writing Skills of 3rd grade secondary students?
- 3- What is the effect of the proposed educational unit in digital citizenship based on blended learning on the development of IL Awareness of 3rd grade secondary students?

Accordingly three hypotheses are suggested as follows:

- 1-There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level 0.05 between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-post-critical reading test.
- 2-There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level 0.05 between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-post critical writing test.
- 3- There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level 0.05 between the mean of the scores of the experimental group in the pre-post- scale of DCIL awareness.

The research followed the quasi-experimental-design, to examine the effect of the proposed educational unit in digital citizenship based on blended learning on the development of the English language skills (Reading and Writing) and IL awareness of 3rd grade secondary students. The research sample was one experimental group of 30 students who were taught the unit by using the BL method in addition to the traditional way of face-to-face interaction. The research materials and tools consisted of the unit, the pre-post-test of reading, the pre-post-test of writing, and pre-post-scale of the IL awareness.

The research hypotheses were refuted by using pre-post-reading-test and pre-post-writing-test to explore the effect of teaching the unit on developing the reading and writing skills of the students. Likewise, the last hypothesis was refuted by using the pre-post-scale of DCIL awareness to measure the effect of teaching the unit on developing the IL awareness of the sample. The differences between the pre-post- critical reading-tests, pre-post-critical writing-tests, and pre-post-DCIL-awareness in the students' performance were the results of the effect of the independent variable which was the teaching of the proposed educational unit of digital citizenship. The researcher taught the unit using face-to-face and Electronic Learning teaching methods with the help of <https://www.common sense media.org/educators/digital-citizenship>, for extra practice of reading and writing to achieve the objectives of each lesson. Therefore, the researcher used EDMODO classroom, and connected with the experimental group outside school. After teaching the unit and conducting the experiment, a post-test and a post-scale were applied to the experimental group.

Summary of the Results

In this research the researcher used an educational unit of digital citizenship based on BL to measure its effects on the development of EFL skills of the students (critical reading and writing) and the development of the student awareness of IL of digital citizenship. The findings and results refuted the 3 hypotheses of the research that there were statistically significant differences at the significant level 0.05 between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-post – critical reading tests in favor of the post- reading test. In addition, there were significant differences at the significance level 0.05 existed within the mean of the scores of the experimental group in the pre-post-critical writing-tests in favor of the post-writing-test. Furthermore, there were significant differences at the significance level 0.05 existed within the mean of the scores of the experimental group in the pre-post-DCIL awareness-scale in favor of the post-DCIL awareness scale.

Finally, the researcher noticed a positive effect of teaching digital citizenship based on BL, on the development of EFL skills (critical, reading, and writing), and on the development of the students' IL awareness that had been addressed in the research.

Perspectives

After discussing the results of the research, the researcher came out with a number of recommendations that might help developing EFL skills and Students' DCIL awareness:

- 1-Combining blended learning and face to face interaction teaching in the classroom with teaching EFL skills to increase interaction between the students and their teachers inside and outside school
- 2- Providing classrooms with the necessary equipment to facilitate teaching and to make digital teaching and learning more effective
- 3- Training the teachers to teach digital citizenship consolidated with the content they teach because by teaching Digital citizenship the students will be good digital citizens who can use technology ethically

- 4- Encouraging the Ministry of Education (MOE) to design a curriculum that concentrates on these kinds of real life issues and topics to teach at schools because discussing these kinds of issues such as Digital Citizenship increase and develop students motivation to learn English Language and be perfect in its skills so they can apply the language they learn in subjects consider important to them and related to their real lives
- 5- Encouraging teachers to use various teaching approaches that motivate and develop the students' critical thinking
- 6- Commencing to teach digital citizenship and how to manage technology and data ethically from early classes
- 7- Increasing the IL awareness of the students by training them to search and to solve problems that provide them with long-life learning experiences

Suggestions for Further Research

After conducting the research, the researcher realized that there is a need for further research in this field of digital citizenship awareness and EFL teaching and learning such as:

- 1- Further researches are recommended to assess the effect of the Digital Citizenship unit on the development of other EFL skills, such as listening and speaking.
- 2- Researches are required to evaluate the effect of integrating digital citizenship in the content of the main curriculum of English Language in schools for better awareness and outcomes.
- 3- Recommended further research for assessing the effect of this Digital Citizenship unit on developing the ability of the students to discuss and solve problems in a creative way.
- 4- Recommended further research on the effect of a proposed unit of digital citizenship based on BL on long-life learning.
- 5- In this research, the educational unit was based on the BL. Further research is recommended on digital citizenship using various methods of teaching such as the flipped class room or using the strategies of thinking routines.
- 6- Recommended further research about a proposed program of digital citizenship for English language teachers to develop their awareness and teaching methods.
- 7- Recommended further research about the effect of using social media applications on the development of FL skills and motivating students to learn.

References

- Abdel-Rahmeem, T. A. (2009). The Effect of Using Technology –Based instruction on the Reading skill and attitudes towards English as a Foreign Language of Saudi University Students. ksa : Arar University .
- Abu El-Magd, M. (2011). The Effect of a Blended Learning Based Program on Developing the Students' English Language Skills at the Faculty of Commerce. Egypt: Ismalia Faculty Journal.
- Al-Zahrani, A. (2015). Toward Digital Citizenship: Examining Factors Affecting Participation and Involvement in the internet Society among Higher Education Students. jeddah .KSA: Canadian Center of Science and Education .
- Association of College & Research Libraries 2012. (2016, May 15). Retrieved from Characteristics of Programs of information literacy that illustrate best practice: A guide line.:<http://ala.org/acrl/standards/characteristics>.
- Bangert- Drowns, R. L., Hurley, M. M., & Wilkinson, B. (2004). The Effect of School-Based Writing to Learn Interventions on Academic Achievement. (Vol. 1). Review Education Research.
- Campbell, B. (n.d.). What is literacy? Acquiring and using literacy skills. Australasian Public Libraries and Information Services,3,149-152, 1990.
- Dongherty, E., Billings, L., Robert, T., & Hattie, J. (2015). The Better Writing Breakthrough: Connecting Students Thinking and Discussion to Inspire Great Writing. Alexandria: Va: ASCD: Virginia. Edonton Catholic School. (2015, 12 1). Retrieved from EDONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOL: www.ecsd.net
- Eisenberg, M., Lowe, C., & Spitzer, K. (2004). Information Literacy: Essential Skills for the Information Age (2nd ed.). Libraries unlimited I.
- Ercegovic, & Zorana. (2008). Information Literacy: Search Strategies, Tools & resources For High School Students and college (2nd ed.). Columbus, OH: Freshman.Linworth Books.
- Jensen, D. Lapp, & J. Squire, Hand book of Research on Teaching the English Language arts (pp. 365-387).
- Garcia, R., Ramirez, A., & Rodriguez, M. (2014). Media Literacy Education for a New Prosumer Citizenship. Spain : Media Education Research Journal
- Goatly , A. (2000). Critical Reading and Writing: An Introductory Coues book. London: British Library Cataloguing in Publication Rata. .
- Goodwin, B. (2013). The 12 Touchstones of Good teaching.

- Gozalves, V. (2011). Education for Democratic Citizenship in Digital Culture. Valencia (Spain): Scientific Journal of Media Literacy, ISSN.
- Harmer, J. (2001). How to Teach English. Essex: Addison Wesley longman Limited.
- Irving, C., & Crawford, J. (2004, 2010, 2013). The Right Information: Information Skills for 21st century Scotland. Scotland: Scottish Information Literacy Project.
- Kurland, L. (1994). Trauma and multiple sclerosis. Ann Neurol American Neurological Association.
- Lau, J. (2016, May 15). International Federation of L.A 2006. Retrieved from Guideline on information Literacy for Life long Learning :<http://www.ifla.org/files/information-literacy/publications/ifla-guidelines->
- Levine, A., & Reves, T. (1985). What Can the Foreign Language Teacher Teach the Mother Tongue Reader? Reading in A Foreign Language (Vol.1).
- Lloyd, A., & Talja, S. (2010). Practising Information Literacy: Bringing Theories of Learning, Practice and informational Literacy Together. Waggawagga, N.S.W: Center of Information Studies.
- Milheim, W. (2006). Strategies for the Design and Delivery of Blended Learning Courses . (6 ed.). Education and Delivery Technology.
- Mossberger, K., Tolbert, C. J., & McNeal, R. S. (2008). Digital Citizenship -The Internet , Society and Participation. (Vol. 4th edition). Britain: MIT Press, Cambridge Mass. context During Normal Reading. American Educational Research Journal, 2(24), 237-270.
- Ribble, M. (2013, 12 1). Digital Citizenship –Using Technology Appropriately. washington DC: Library of Congress Cataloging -in - Publication. Retrieved from www.digital
- Ribble, M., & Bailey, G. (2007). Digital citizenship in schools. Washington DC: Library of Congress Cataloging-in- Publication Data.
- SCONUL. (2007). The Seven Pillars of Information Literacy model. Retrieved November 3, 2015 from http://www.sconul.ac.uk/groups/information_literacy/sp/model.html Retrieved October 28, 2016
- Sullivan, M. (2010). Information Decision Using Data Custom Edition for Broome Community College. Mishawaka in USA: Pearson.
- Taylor, T. (2009). 100% Information Literacy Success. Bosten: Words Worth Cengage Learning.
- UNESCO. (2016, May 15). Towards an Info Literate Society. Retrieved from UNESCO: <http://www.unesco.org>