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

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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 marvels of utilizing digital technology had spread a great deal in all aspects of life in the Saudi society, from typical correspondence to business dealings, which turned into an apparatus to make life less demanding. However, the frail and impotent training in schools as well as the lack of having rules and guidelines on the proper use of advanced technology are the main reasons for the improper exploitation of the web (Gracia, R.&others, 2014). Furthermore, the absence of data proficiency (Digital citizenship Information Literacy) that helps people to utilize technology in a felicitous way results in the improper peruse, composition, and comprehension of data. This comprises inadequate management within the circumscriptions and framework confinement and system of digital citizenship.

Subsequently, the requirement for educational support emerges in planning and outlining certain units, activities, and training programs that prepare and train students on how to comport in a most proficient method to carry on in a worthy innovative way. It is an advanced innovation on what the guidelines and duties of utilizing digital technology are as part of the digital community. In addition, the training programs ought to indicate to students the correct values and estimations of digital citizenship. They should also provide advanced instruction on

how to maintain a strategic distance from the negative utilization of the English language information (Sharaf, S. &Aldamardash, M. , 2014).

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?

With the current trends towards developing the EFL skills of students and amending their critical mental conceiving, this research reflects its significance in the following:

1- It will open the way for many researches and studies on Digital Citizenship and on how to merge it with educational curriculums through BL.

2- It will provide a framework about digital citizenship, BL, and the significance of integrating it with the curriculum.

3- It will provide a framework about critical reading and writing skills of EFL, information awareness, and their development using BL.

4- It will help curriculum designers to design units about digital citizenship in EFL to improve the language skills of (critical reading and writing).

5- It will provide teachers and researchers with tools to measure the development of reading and writing skills of EFL, and to measure the information awareness of the students.

6- It will provide a unit in digital citizenship in English Language based on BL that can be integrated with the English curriculum in schools.

7- It will help teachers develop the critical thinking skill of their students.

To determine whether the proposed unit in digital citizenship has any significant effect on developing EFL skills (critical reading and writing) and the digital citizenship information literacy awareness (DCILA) of the students, the three following hypotheses had been tested:

1- There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level 0.05 between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre- and the 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- and the post- critical writing test.

3- There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level 0.05 between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre- and the post- scale of digital citizenship information literacy awareness.

Methods
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 .

Figure1: Research Experimental Design
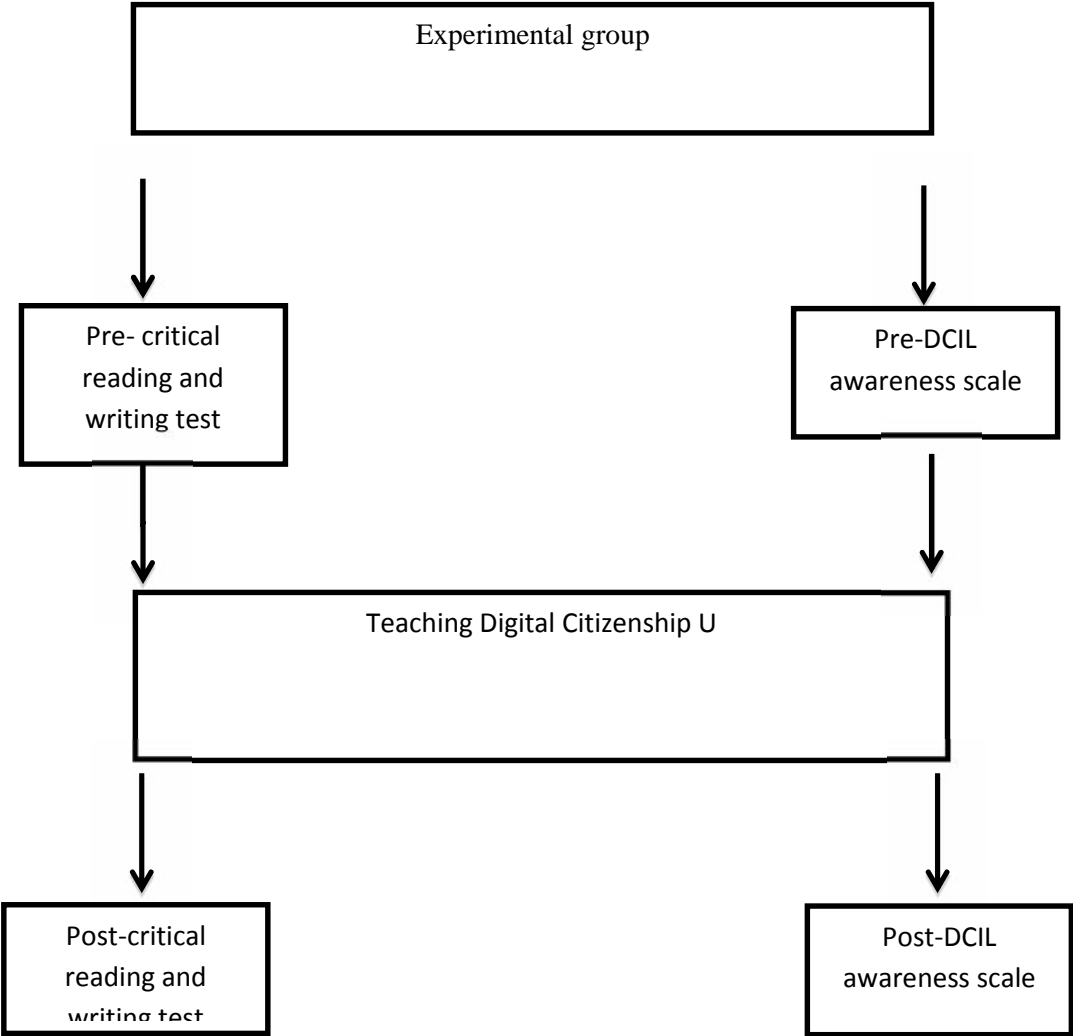
Research Procedures

- 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. (Appendix 2)

- 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.commonsensemedia.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

The main goal of this research was to develop the EFL skills of the sample, especially critical reading and writing, and the IL awareness of the students. To verify that the purposes are fulfilled, the results of the hypotheses are discussed in this chapter.

The researcher used the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) – to collect and analyze data, to verify that all aims and motives are fulfilled, and to examine the consequences of the speculations, which shows a significant discussion and interpretation of the factual examination of information and theories.

The researcher divided the analysis and discussion into three main areas of importance:

1- The performance of the sample in the pre-post-test of reading

2- The performance of the sample in the pre-post-test of writing

3- The performance of the sample in the pre-post application of the test and scale of IL awareness

To test the first hypothesis, the researcher used Paired T-Test and Eta Squired (η^2) to assess the statistical differences between the sample mean scores in the reading test before and after applying the unit

Table (1): The change in the mean scores between the pre and the post reading tests

	Reading			Difference		Paired T-test	
	Range	Mean ± SD		Mean	SD	t	P-value
Pre	0 - 11	5.33 ± 2.98		-3.93	2.89	-7.46	0.00
Post	1 - 15	9.33 ± 3.59					

Figure (2) The Mean of Scores of the Sample in the Post-Reading

Table (1) and figure (2) show a significant change between the pre- and the post-reading tests, where t=7.46 and P-value 0.01. The scores in the pre-test ranged from 0 to 11 by Mean ± SD 5.33±2.98 and in the post test from 1 to 15 by mean ± SD 9.33±3.59.

-The results indicated a positive effect of applying the unit of digital citizenship based on blended learning, on the
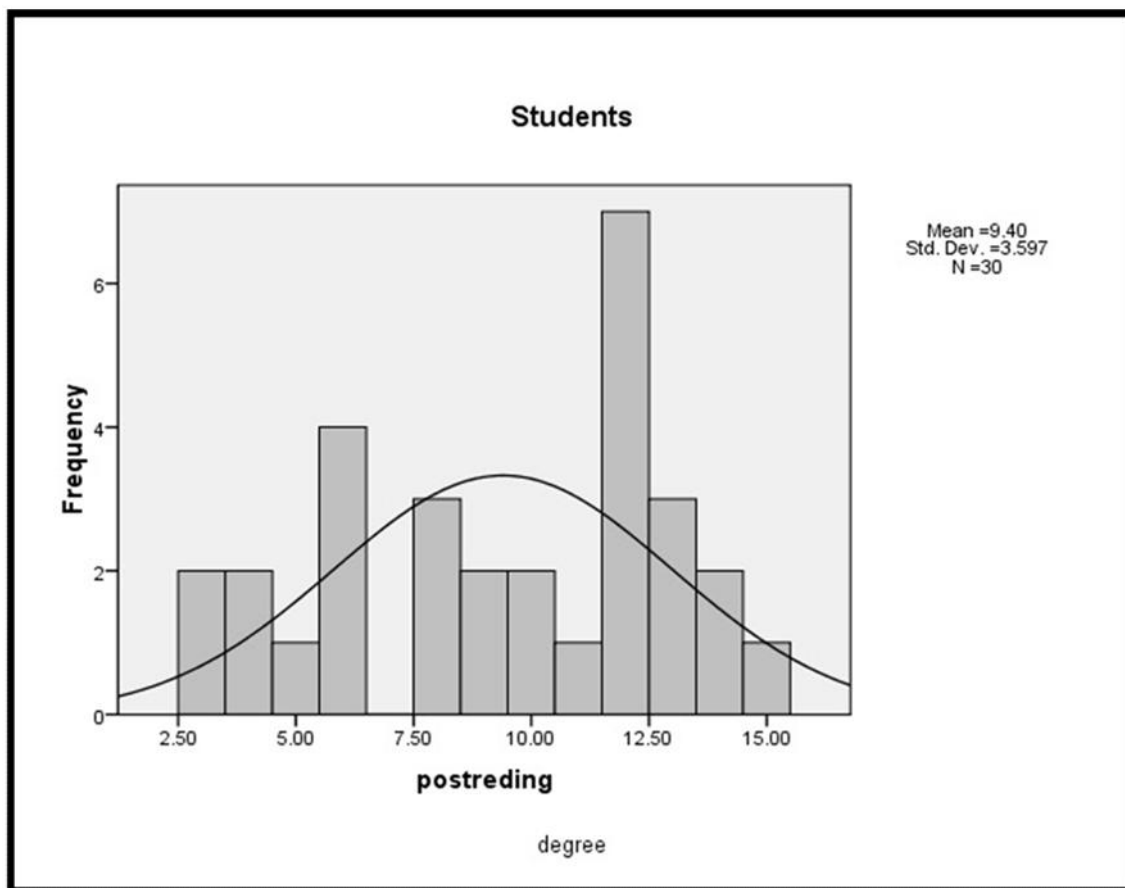
development of the critical reading skill.

- The table presented the result of (η^2), which indicated a positive effect of using the unit on the improvement of the reading skill of the experimental group, where (η^2) = (0.375) which is regarded as an acceptable effect according to (Cohen) who mentioned that the effect can be strong if the result is > 0.14.

Based on these results, the first question was answered and the hypothesis was refuted as it asserts that there were no statistically significant differences at the significance level 0.05 in the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-post-reading -tests.

To test the second hypothesis, the researcher used Paired T-Test and Eta Squired (η^2) to show the statistical differences between the mean scores of the sample in the writing test before and after applying the unit

Table (2):- The change between pre-post-writing-test

	Writing			Difference		Paired T-test	
	Range	Mean ±	SD	Mean	SD	t	P-value
Pre	0 - 6	3.50 ±	1.943	-1.00	2.07	-2.65	0.01
Post	0 - 6	5.27 ±	1.23				

Table (2) shows a significant change between pre-post-writing test, where t=2.65 and P-value=0.01. The scores in the pre-post test ranged from 0 to 6 with a Mean ± SD 3.50 ±1.943 in the pre writing test and aMean ± SD 5.27±1.23 in the post-writing test which means it was higher in the post writing test.

-The results indicated a positive effect of applying the unit of digital citizenship, based on blended learning, on the development of the critical writing skill. And that the differences between the mean scores of the experimental group in the post- writing test are higher than the mean scores of the pre-writing test.

- The table presented the result of (η^2), which indicates a positive effect of using the unit on the improvement of the writing skill of the experimental group, where (η^2)= (0.318) which is regarded as an acceptable effect according to (Cohen) who mentioned that the effect can be strong if the result is > (0.14).

Based on these results, the second question was answered and the second hypothesis that assert that there were no statistically significant differences at the significance level 0.05 in the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-post-writing –tests is refuted.

To test the third question, the researcher used Paired T-Test and Eta Squired (η^2) to show the statistical differences between the sample's mean scores in the awareness scale before and after applying the unit.

Table (3):- The change in the pre and post scores of the scale of Digital citizenship

	Digital citizenship			Difference		Paired T-test	
	Range	Mean ±	SD	Mean	SD	t	P-value
Pre	0 - 31	18.26 ±	8.05	-8.67	5.47	-8.68	0.00
Post	12 - 37	27.36 ±	7.11				

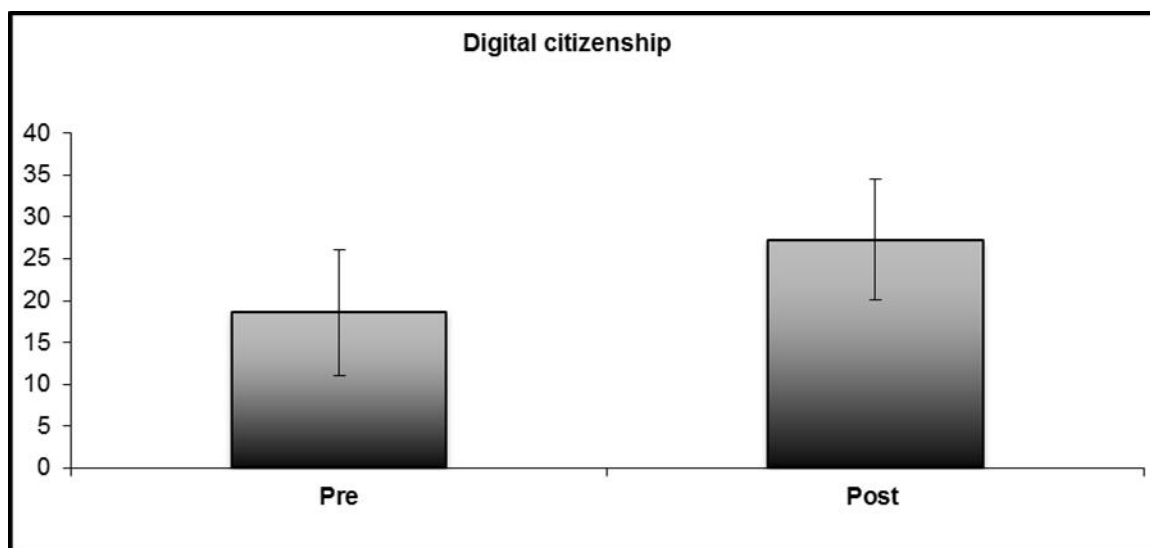**Figure (3):-The change in the pre and post scores of the scale of Digital citizenship**

Table (3) and figure (3) show a significant change between the pre-post-scale application of digital citizenship students' scores, where t=8.68 and P-value=<0.01. The scores in the pre-scale ranged from 0 to 31 by Mean ± SD 8.67±5.47 and from 12 to 37 by mean ± SD 27.36±7.11.

-The results indicated a positive effect of applying the unit of digital citizenship which is based on blended learning, on the development of the level of awareness of the experimental group specially the Digital Citizenship.

- The table presented the result of (η^2), indicated a positive effect of using the unit on the improvement of the awareness of the experimental group, especially the Digital Citizenship IL, where (η^2)= (0.271) is regarded as an acceptable effect according to (Cohen) who mentioned that the effect can be strong if the result is > (0.14).

- Figure (3) showed that the mean of scores of the experimental group in the post-scale application are higher than the mean of scores of the pre-scale-application.

Based on these results, the third question was answered and the hypothesis was refuted as it asserts that there were no statistically significant differences at the significance level   0.05 in the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-post-scale application.

Results 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.

Summary and Recommendations

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.

Recommendations

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 citizen ship 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 EFL skills and motivating students to learn.

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