

Digital Literacy

Online Learning under COVID-19 Lockdown

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Abstract

The 2020 pandemic outbreak changed the lives of people globally in different ways: psychological, social, economic and educational. New terms have entered the use of daily language: social distancing, self-quarantine, the digital divide, etc. In the field of education, the outbreak of COVID19 forced schools worldwide to close, parents to work at home, and students to attend virtual classes. We now talk of online teaching, distance learning, hybrid learning, and remote learning transition. This paper aims at studying whether these changes mark digital literacy via studying Lebanese high-school students' perception of online learning under COVID-19 lockdown. A questionnaire of 10 items aiming to identify the students' educational psychological, social and emotional reactions to the online experience was distributed to EFL Lebanese high-school students in different areas in Lebanon. One hundred and twenty four students reacted to the questionnaire. Fifteen of these were interviewed to share an open-ended discussion on the second academic year of online learning. Based on the findings, the conclusion was made on whether we are living in the age of digital literacy.

Key words: *Digital Literacy, online learning, the digital divide, EFL students' perception, teacher training*

Introduction

The outburst of the coronavirus in 2019 pushed schools to close and teachers to acquire remote 'online' learning plans and skills in a short period of time. This fact has brought forward different points of view about the effect of online teaching on education itself as well as on the stakeholders, teachers, students and parents. One view is that not all teachers were prepared to meet this sudden and widespread challenge. In a survey of more than 1200 US teachers, more than half (57%) reported they did not feel ready to make remote and online learning easy (Ascione, 2020). The other view is that if pedagogic concepts are identified and used as a basis for educational technology-driven plans, they will have a positive effect (Al-Khatib, 2011). A number of studies have delved into the discussion of this debate, but the impact of this change on students specifically in the educational system needs to be identified. Do they feel their educational gain maintained, their psychological and emotional state stable, and their social contact sustained? Above all, does the challenge mark the age of digital literacy in a new education era? Digital literacy is defined as "the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills." (Marijke 2013, 106)

Statement of the problem

This study reflects on the Lebanese educational system in the two scholastic years 2019-2020 and - 2020-2021. Schools in Lebanon closed their doors in March 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 spread after a series of interruption since October 2019 resulting from protests against the economic deterioration (Save the Children, 2020). Schools had to transit to online learning and this created a .number of challenges to the stakeholders-school administrators, teachers, students and parents. As schools closed, over 1.2 million children were affected in schooling in Lebanon, including public, private, semi-private, and UNRWA schools (Inter-Agency Education Cluster, Save the Children, 2020; UNICEF 2020).

In this educational and social turmoil, little attention has been oriented towards students' experience in and point of view about distance learning. Many learners struggled in their first experience of online learning and in the use of technology, especially in asynchronous learning (Burns, 2020).

Students were excluded workshops and conferences related to the study of the impact of distance learning on the quality of their learning and accessibility of education (Abu Moghli & Shuayb) (2020). This paper attempts to bridge this gap and address the problem of how the new educational challenges are affecting the students and their perception of the type of learning they are subjected to.

Purpose of the study

The main aim of this research study is to find out whether English as a foreign language (EFL) students' perceptions of online teaching and learning lead to the confirmation of the age of Digital Literacy. To answer this question, a survey of Grade 10 and 11 Lebanese EFL students is used to detect the challenges the students had to face. The survey aims to answer the following questions

1. To what extent do students perceive online learning as interesting?
2. To what extent do students perceive that their personal and social life is affected by online learning?
3. To what extent do students perceive online learning as educationally beneficial compared to at-school learning?

Review of the Literature

The literature on online learning is huge. A number of studies and articles about the positive and negative aspects of online teaching and learning have been published as a consequence of schools being forced to adopt this kind of educational mean at the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic and confinement, and the closing of schools in March 2020. This section presents views about the benefits and challenges of online courses, the requirements for its success, i.e. preparing all the stakeholders for it, and digital literacy as the likely outcome of this type of learning.

Advantages and disadvantages of online learning

Various studies highlighted the benefits of online teaching. Al-Khatib (2011) studied the impact of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) in project research among senior students of linguistics in an open education system. The participants used virtual forums to facilitate dialogue and debate and their performance was recorded quantitatively and qualitatively for two consecutive semesters. She reported cognitive, reflective, analytic, synthetic, dialogic, technical and sociocultural benefits and concluded that the goal should be to support the learner-centered experience (Al-Khatib, 2011). Moreover, Montgomery College (2021) stated that online courses are convenient and flexible. They offer home education, more individual attention, real world skills, life-long learning, and financial benefits. Moreover, they help learners to meet interesting people and connect to the global village, and teach self-discipline.

On the other side, the challenges of distance learning arise. A main concern was parents can help their children in remote learning. Parcak (2020) suggested reference to Maslow's hierarchy of needs and ensuring the basic needs of clothing and food before worksheets. A couple decided to pause schooling for their Grade One child as they worried more about his safety and happiness. They provided him formal education at home, enriched the learning through their talk about their fields of specialisation 'in appropriate language', his interaction, and supplements- books educational videos and documentaries (Parcak, 2020). A related problem was that some parents could not offer one-to-one help to their children who had special needs. Mrs. Amirault, for example, did not cope well in working through her 14-year-old autistic son's lessons and at the same time care for her other children. This fact relates the issue of inequity in special-education services and whether remote learning violates civil rights (Reilly, 2020) which will be discussed below.

A parallel aspect to the parents' involvement is the students' feeling about online learning. Burns (2020) reported the students' concern about the excess of technological platforms, absence of interaction, and thus the quality and success of online learning were questioned. She warns that the schools' use of technology alone is not enough; it needs to be paralleled with mapped out curricula and design of a balance between face-to-face and online learning. An additional caution is that

distance learning, specially in developing countries, considers the total educational process only from the technical side which allows information to be transmitted from the teacher to the receiver. This makes the educational institution a feeding tool reduced to the computer, and the human being as a 'cold' technical brain only receiving information. On the other hand, the human sciences such as philosophy and anthropology, are being washed out by the technological brain. These sciences struggle to maintain human dignity and values that are not possibly created by a robot (Bou Fadel 2020). Moreover, Montgomery College (2021) stated that online courses require more time and good time-management skills, and offer learners more freedom than they can handle and chances to postpone. They require learners to find their own path to learning, be more independent and active, and create a sense of isolation by not having an instructor to guide the learners to stay on task.

At the technological level, the issue of equality and digital justice by not excluding or discriminating anyone is raised (Helmi, 2020). The possibility of having information technology enhancing teaching and learning is confirmed in all disciplines. The gap in people having access to technology for socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, geographic, age or gender reasons is referred to as the digital divide (Block, 2010; Mossberger, et. al 2003). A 41-year old teacher who was comfortable using technology was not concerned that teachers did not get formal training for online instruction but that some students did not have internet access. He worried that “this is going to exacerbate the inequity that already exists” (Adams, 2020). The English teacher did not worry about how to teach them note-taking or essay-discussion. Instead, she worried that more than half of her Grade Nine students did not have the needed technology- computers and Internet access- to access the virtual classes at home (Reilly, 2020). The school offered some of them the available laptops, but hard copy learning packets for others. Schools were caught in the digital divide separating students who have Internet access and those who did not. This led some school administrators to end online learning (Reilly, 2020). Visser (2013) concluded that today people with limited access to technologies, such as home connection, or lack digital literacy skills, such as the use a computer or the Internet, are at a social and economic disadvantage.

The following section focuses on the requirements for online teaching, namely getting teachers ready via training and having students and their families prepared for it

Preparing the stakeholders

When schools closed in March 2020, there was not enough time for teachers to get trained for an online learning program. Some teachers received a couple of days of training and few others had a couple of weeks. Teachers counted on parents' and students' understanding while they should have received thorough training over a period of time before starting teaching online (Adams, 2020). Burns (2020) noted that they still accomplished outstandingly with no notice. Ideally, according to Adams (2020), schools abide by the online learning standards combining live instruction synchronous and work that students can do on their own asynchronous. Synchronous learning involves attending class sessions virtually, i.e. from a distance, with the teacher and classmates regularly. The class is scheduled so students need to be committed. They have readings and assignments to complete on their own and be ready to participate in the class discussions or give presentations. In asynchronous learning, students do not need to be online with the teacher and classmates. They have the advantage of flexibility that allows them to access readings and materials and do the homework assignments at any time, but this does not mean that it is any less demanding (Scheiderer, 2021).

When learning to teach online, educators should receive training through an online course so they experience what a distance-learning student is. The shift has been easier for schools that had embraced technology before the shutdown, and some have put more thought and time into the rollout of online learning (Adams, 2020). Braddock (2020) suggested means for teacher trainers and managers to prepare for teaching online. Teachers can be supported through weekly meetings to share their experiences and get opportunities to rehearse speaking activities with colleagues acting as students. They have to use online resources to develop online teaching skills, and reassure the learners' parents of a safe online environment and ask for their support in the new methods of teaching, learning and assessing using asynchronous platforms. Teachers should be guided to audit their teaching skills and be supported in lesson planning, using online tools, materials and assessment, and setting homework tasks. Braddock (2020) cites a survey by the British Council

,that recommended the online teachers' needs to be supported with online platforms and tools .formative and summative assessment procedures, and classroom management and activities Parallel to teacher training, Burns (2020) suggested student preparation for them to succeed in the move to digital instruction. They are to be guided in (a) technology training such as keyboarding, logging in, using email, and file management, (b) personal characteristics such as motivation, time management, and self-regulation, and (c) productivity skills such as strategies for effective reading and writing in an online medium. Moreover, Burns (2020) called for equitable education for all students offering- besides the online medium at home and access to technology- routines policies for attendance, participation and grades. Additional .assistance is to be provided to parents who lack the linguistic or digital skills via workshops

Digital Literacy

All the above discussed factors lead to the rise of the concept Digital Literacy. The word *literacy* refers to the ability to read and write (Karpa, 2011). Ayhan (2016) suggested that literacy differs by community and time and can be generally considered as traditional, modern, and digital literacy. The concept of literacy expanded considerably by the end of the 20th century. Digital literacy now plays a central role in seven out of the sixteen literacy indicators (Karpa, 2011). In the 21st Century, emerging digital media forms allow communication to be more distinguished than ever before (Heick, 2021). Loewus (2016) poses the question whether digital literacy is “the consumption, creation, or communication of digital material” or whether it is a particular digital tool, and whether technology skills fall under the digital-literacy umbrella. Digital literacy incorporates a broad range of skills. She added that it includes, besides reading and writing, reading on a Kindle, assessing the validity of a website or creating it, and sharing YouTube videos (Loewus, 2016).

Digital literacy includes the use of online media content for information gathering. This requires the implementation of a variety of cognitive-thinking strategies for the synthesis of the information and sometimes the integration of visual media (Eshet, 2004 in Visser, 2013). It is the ability to direct our digital world by using the skills of, besides reading and writing, technical and critical thinking skills and the use of smartphones, personal computers and e-readers to find, evaluate, and communicate information (Microsoft, 2021).

Heick (2021) identified four principles of Digital Literacy: (1) comprehension- extracting implicit and explicit ideas from media, (2) interdependence- one media form connecting with and supplementing others, (3) social factors- sharing. "Who shares what to whom through what channels can... create organic ecosystems of sourcing, sharing, storing, and ultimately repackaging .”media", and (4) curation- resisting data overload and “digital hoarding. Meanwhile, Spires (2021) considered digital literacy as having three buckets: (1) finding and consuming digital content, (2) creating digital content, and (3) communicating or sharing it. It is now necessary for primary, secondary, or post- secondary school faculty and staff to have technology skills to perform administrative, creative, and educative tasks and to communicate with the outside world (Osterman, 2013). Digital literacy helps learners acquire skills to succeed. For example, they learn to access easily the immense amount of available information and manage it to use in their personal lives and in keeping up with the diverse networks around them (Karpa, 2011).

Vanek (nd) stated that the teachers have to support the attainment of academic content goals and support learners’ resilience, to nimbly use technologies efficiently. They have to make sure that learners possess basic computer skills that have to be reinforced by plenty of supporting experiences. She advised that the skills- critical thinking, communication, Processing and analyzing information, Self-awareness, problem-solving, and navigating systems that are important in content areas could support digital literacy development if they are integrated into the educational goals. To teach Digital Literacy skills in the classroom, teachers have to support foundational computer skills first then apply them, teach the vocabulary of computer skills, integrate technology in and out of class, emphasize access to devices and Internet access and use relevant technologies themselves so that learners become at ease with them.

Though ‘digital literacy’ is now the current term used in education, others- such as digital literacies, new literacies, literacy and technology, multi-literacies, information communication technologies (ICT) literacies and 21st century literacies- are used to reflect the numerous aspects (Loewus, 2016; Visser, 2013; Osterman, 2013).

The Lebanese Context

Besides the pandemic hit, Lebanon witnessed political turbulences in October 2019, so the educational system was already threatened by limitations for a smooth or rather normal academic year. When schools closed in March 2020, they had not prepared themselves, their staff and teachers for a new phase of administering online learning. The teaching faculty was not trained, teaching materials were not adapted nor created, and most importantly students and parents were not aware of the procedures they would face next.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in Lebanon, adopted three types of classes: lessons through the TV to support the students who sit for the end-of-year official exams, online courses which were hindered by a number of barriers such as long hours of power cuts and slow internet, and traditional classes (UNESCO. COVID19, 2020; Jawad, 2020). Abu Moghli and Shuayb (2020) conducted a study on 678 teachers, students and parents who responded to an online survey about distance learning in three Arab countries- one of which is Lebanon .

Results showed that the majority of the forty seven surveyed students from various sectors- public, private, UNRWA and informal education in all three countries -stated that they have some type of internet connectivity. In Lebanon, the survey included 47 students (in Lebanon, 50% reported a reasonable connection to the Internet). It is worth noting that the students from private schools stated that they have good or very good Internet connection, while UNRWA and public school students stated that connectivity is weak to good; none of the students from UNRWA schools who participated in the survey said that they have a very strong connection. Concerning the devices that the students have at home and would use for their online education, the majority of the students in the three countries indicated that they own a personal smartphone (%67)- often used as a medium for education by teachers; either do not own a tablet (%57), laptop (%45) or a personal computer (%63); or have a shared device at home: tablet (%13), laptop (%24), personal computer (%15). In Spite of the interrupted connectivity and frequent cut off in the electricity supply, the majority of the students indicated that they continued their education. As with the teachers, the students used mostly social media as a source of information, a way to access education material and communicate with their teachers .(Abu Moghli & Shuayb, 2020)The most negative impact reported by most

students in the three countries was the social. They missed their friends and teachers; 20% reported feeling bored; 15% decline in their performance; and 15% reported started doing other things such as reading & cooking (Abu Moghli & Shuayb, 2020). A number of other impact was on the students' learning capacity, physical, mental and emotional wellbeing as a result of long hours (6 hours) of zoom classes since a large part of the curriculum was moved online specially in many private schools. This had also a negative impact on teachers in general and more so those who are parents and their children are at home. (Abu Moghli & Shuayb, 2020)

The Study

Starting from the purpose of the research, 'which is to identify Grade 10-11 EFL students perceptions of the online learning experience, the research study was conducted in the second semester of 2020-2021, which was the second year of online teaching. It implemented a survey of students' perceptions of online learning and used the quantitative and qualitative methods for collecting information. The process of implementing the survey research followed the steps: a) decision on survey questions, b) identifying the target audience, c) sending out the survey, and d) analyzing survey results.

Instruments

.Two instruments were constructed to collect data

i. a closed-ended questionnaire for a larger sample was used to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire comprise ten questions with a three point Likert scale: 3 Agree and 1 Disagree. The statements are of three categories: the first is about the students' liking or disliking of the online learning specially in comparison to 'normal schooling' (statements 1-5), the second is about how it affected their relation with other people- family and friends (statements 6-7), and the third is about their perception of the educational influence of online learning compared to at-school learning. (statements 8-10)

ii. an open-ended interview for a more restricted sample was used to collect qualitative data. To obtain details about specific issues related to the students' experience in online learning evident in the responses to the questionnaire, .four questions were written

The concepts for the items were brainstormed with two EFL teachers and a pilot study was carried out on ten students to test the questions. As a result, some terms and sentence structures were amended to clarify the meaning to the students. For example, the word 'restricted' in sentence 2 was changed to 'freer', 'family' was added to 'personal life' in sentence 6, 'with friends and peers' was added to 'social life' in statement number 7, and 'assessment' to 'evaluation' in the last statement.

Participants

The target population was high school students in Grades 10 and 11; it was believed that their maturity level and language comprehension and expression was fit for such a survey. Grade 12 was excluded as the students sit for the end of school national test and their schedule and curriculum was tight. The subjects were 124 students who responded fully to the questionnaire and fifteen who replied intelligibly to the interview.

Methodology of research

The medium of conducting the survey research is online which has become one of the most popular survey research methods today. Besides the fact that the students are confined at home and the best way to reach them is online, the cost is extremely minimal and the responses gathered are accurate and anonymous. Permission was taken from a number of schools to contact their grades 10 to 12 students via the school platform for the purpose of the research. Some schools did not respond at all; three replied apologising as the time and conditions were not suitable, and seven schools replied positively. The students were reassured that their response is confined to the purpose of the research and it would not affect them at school in any way. The following statements were added at the beginning of the two instruments: *Learning online has been a new experience for you. It is an obligation now as long as COVID19 is still spreading. Express your opinion about this type of learning. Your response does not affect you in any way.*

Two weeks were given as a limit to receive responses, after which the responses were gathered. For the interview, students were instructed to kindly reply to each question in 2-3 minutes in a short paragraph each.

Findings and Analysis

Students' responses to the questionnaire

The students' responses on each question were tabulated and analysed to identify patterns in the subjects' feedback on online learning compared to 'normal schooling' where they are physically present in the classroom. The results of the students' questionnaire are presented in the following table in rounded-up percentages of students' response to each of the ten statements and the number of responses out of 124 between brackets.

Table 1 *Students' responses to the questionnaire*

<i>The items</i>	<i>A-3</i>	<i>N-2</i>	<i>D-1</i>
.I enjoy learning online .1	%64 (79)	%10 (12)	%27 (33)
.I feel free of anxiety in an online learning class than a normal class .2	%51 (63)	%7 (9)	%42 (52)
.I wish to go back to 'normal' schooling .3	%48 (60)	%6 (8)	%45 (56)
.I was more at ease in 'normal' schooling .4	%40 (50)	%9 (11)	%51 (63)
.I prefer learning online to the physical presence at school .5	%39 (48)	%7 (9)	%54 (67)
.Online learning affected my family life positively .6	%57 (71)	%8 (10)	%35 (43)
Online learning affected my social life with friends and peers .7 .negatively	%52 (65)	%7 (9)	%40 (50)
.I learn more in 'normal' at-school learning than in online learning .8	%72 (89)	%5 (6)	%23 (29)

.I interact in an online class better than in 'normal' schooling .9	%56	%10	%34
	(69)	(13)	(42)
I am more satisfied with the way I was evaluated in online learning than .10	%35	%23	%42
.in at-school learning	(44)	(28)	(52)

The participants' responses to the first group of statements about the students' liking of the online learning came as follows. More than half of the participants (64%) responded positively that they enjoy learning online (Statement 1). Half of them reported that they feel anxiety-free in an online class (Statement 2). This number coincided with the same number disagreeing to the fourth statement about feeling more at ease in 'normal' schooling. However, it is interesting to note that 60 out of the 124 students (48%) responded 'Agree' to the third statement about their wish to go back to 'normal' schooling. Neutral responses to the three statements ranged between 8 and 10. Moreover, less than half, 48 students (39%), agreed to the fifth statement that they prefer online learning and disagreed that they prefer online learning. Neutral responses were 6% and 7% respectively. 54%

The data show that though almost half of the respondents enjoy online learning and feel less stressed, half would prefer to resume school presence. This means that the students' enjoyment of online learning does not overrule their choice of school attendance which is a reflection of their concept of a normal teaching/learning situation where they are physically in the formal school setting, in a classroom, at their desks, with teachers and peers.

As to the effect of online learning on the students' contact with people, 57% of the respondents agreed to statement number 6 about online learning affecting their family life positively and 35% disagreed. There were 10 neutral responses (8%). However concerning their social life, 52% agreed it was negatively affected with their friends and 40% disagreed (Statement 7). This is explained by the fact that confinement to home lead the family members to be in contact with each other which the students enjoyed. On the other hand, not being able to hang out with friends and peers is seen as undesirable, thus the relationships were perceived to have been negatively affected. There were neutral responses (7%) 9

As to the third category of statements that dealt with the educational setting, results showed that more students have positive perception about learning more in 'normal' schooling (72%) (Statement interacting better (56%) (Statement 9) and the evaluation they received than in non-online ,(8 learning (42%) (Statement 10). The neutral response for the latter was quite high (23%) in 'comparison to other statements (5% and 10% respectively); this reflects either students .carelessness or their ignorance about the educational evaluation

,Data show that most students regarded 'normal' schooling more positively in terms of learning interaction, and evaluation. This reflects a mature kind of perception specially when seen in relation .to the first category of statements that reflected a positive attitude to online learning

The students' response to the interview

.The results of the interview with the 15 students are presented per each question

The first question was: *Is online learning beneficial? Are you learning the required concepts as you should? Have you acquired the skills needed for online learning? Or do you feel you are not learning all what you need to efficiently?*

Most of the 15 respondents answered positively about online learning being beneficial. They expressed their satisfaction from the concepts they have learned and their appreciation of the teachers' effort. However, 11 out of the 15 elaborated that school teaching reached out to more students and covered more of the content in relation to the yearly curriculum. A good number elaborated that they learned to use the platforms to access the learning documents and to post their assignments without much coaching. They added that they did not receive personal feedback on their assignments as they did in school. The students' response came parallel to those of the first category of statements in the questionnaire. Two pointed out that they or some of their classmates had difficulty in sharing the laptops with their siblings or parents. They wished for all to have access .to laptops, electricity supply and to be trained to use the facilities

The second question was: *Is online learning interesting? Do you find that the kind of tasks and activities are motivating in the learning process? Or do you feel you are bored because of the lack of direct contact with your teacher and classmates?* Fourteen respondents wrote that they online

learning was interesting. Some added that it was fun to use their laptops and smart phones to learn instead of using books and notebooks. "The tasks and activities were motivating. We wanted to learn more. Many exercises were fun." Three respondents mentioned that the activities were sometimes disrupted by instability of power or wifi supply. Some wrote that they did not miss their teachers as they could see them on the screen, but miss spending good times with their classmates !outside school

The students' responses contributed information about their liking of online learning. It is the new .teaching approach with new activities that attracted the students to enjoy this type of learning

-The students ' response to the third question was quite similar to the responses in the questionnaire *How do you compare online learning to the physical presence at school? Do you wish to go back to 'normal' schooling? Or are you satisfied with online learning? Why or why not?* All respondents expressed their preference to being physically at school. Some of them reported that though they are learning 'well' and enjoying being behind the screen 'muted' or 'unseen', but being in their classrooms was fun. A few added that at the beginning- referring to the previous year- learning online was novice and maybe exciting, but the second year they felt it was somehow boring and not motivating enough! Following up to the response to the previous question, it seems that though the students were attracted by the type of online activities at the beginning, they got used to the newness' in the following year. This lessened their enthusiasm and led them to- among other' .factors- to prefer being at school

Question number four was: *How has online learning affected your personal and social life? Do you feel you are more free during the session as you can hide yourself? Has it influenced your relationship with the family members and/or your friends? If yes, how?* Most students replied that their contact with the family members became more intimate than before and specially than the previous academic year. "A while after confinement I started finding time to have meals with Mom and Dad as much as possible. I wanted to watch TV with my siblings in the evening and comment on the programs. We learned to cook together and that was great fun." Such responses reflect that the students replaced or made up their need to be in contact with their friends by spending more

time with their families. Some added that they managed to see their friends when the strict lockdown was lifted but a few expressed their fear to fall ill

.After presenting the findings, the four research questions are here addressed

Research question one: *To what extent do students perceive online learning as interesting?* (items

The students reported that online learning is interesting and the activities are enjoyable but the (5-1 majority reported they interact more and better in a 'normal' schooling from an online class

Research question two: *To what extent do students perceive that their personal and social life is affected by online learning?* (items 6-7) Students in general reported that their social life with their friends is negatively influenced but with their families positively so

Research question three: *To what extent do students perceive online learning as educationally beneficial compared to at-school learning?* (items 8-10) A good number of students reported they learn more and interact better in 'normal' schooling than in online learning. They were also more satisfied in at-school evaluation

Limitation

The study is limited to the number of schools contacted, but taking into account the problems faced in the country such as the economic situation and poor supply of electricity power, the response from 7 schools was satisfactory and could represent schools that were not reached. Moreover, the self reported survey as a tool to collect data has the disadvantage of the respondents' bias or exaggeration. This limitation was counteracted by leaving the subjects identity anonymous

Conclusion

The study aimed to conclude whether digital literacy is the product of online learning that was enforced on the stakeholders as a result of the pandemic in 2019. It employed a survey of Lebanese EFL students in Grades 10 and 11 via the two instruments- a questionnaire and an interview. The aim was to identify their opinion about learning online, whether they found it interesting, determining social relations and beneficial specifically in comparison to normal schooling

The results showed that students learned to use the media for the educational purposes. They enjoyed the online learning experience and related activities but appreciated the school presence learning

.more at the same timeThe fact that they and got used to the kinds of activities with time leading to boredom necessitates the constant upgrading and creativity of teaching methodology, techniques and materials. -The mixture of the two types of online teachingsynchronous and asynchronous- is necessary to provide the learners the utmost benefit of education which will meet their needs and learning skills.

Now, it is the duty of educators in the ministries of education and schools to design the curricula .to provide the type of learning and the material that best suit the learners' abilities and preferences This matches Al-Khatib's (2011) and Burns's (2020) recommendations of having well structured curricula self-centered programmes. The teaching experience is a precious resource to support remote teachers' growth. The skills that teachers implement in face-to-face teaching can be applied to online teaching with some modification. This necessitates training for the teachers in the various techniques used in teaching online to attain the utmost benefit for the students' education. Through conferences and workshops, they can share the positive practices as well as the difficulties to support each other in developing expertise and confidence. These recommendations support those .of Adams (2020) and Braddock (2020)

The fact that students learned to use different platforms and acquired technological skills shows that we are in the digital age of learning. Students can now easily access the Internet and the media applications to get information in any field. Technology can be the energy that provides learners with equitable access to educational opportunities irrespective of geographical, social, and .economic factors making education a lifelong process (Block, 2010; Mossberger, et. al., 2003) Students need to be trained- like teachers- to face the abundance of tools and platforms used in online learning. This coincides with some of Burns' (2020) andKarpa's (2011) .suggestions Learners should be coached to know the use and advantage of each and to censor the intake of the .available data. This monitoring helps in their academic as well as personal life

Finally, there is an urgent need for the stakeholders to fill the gaps of inequity to allow all learners to access the digital resources. A safe and inclusive online environment with the same opportunities for learning has to be offered to all the students. Moreover, they need to be directed towards inquiry learning and not to be directed by technology (Bou Fadel, 2020; Spires et al., 2017). They are to be

urged to develop critical evaluation through a thoughtful and evaluative mind when they come across digital content. Digital literacy encompasses the simple extreme of accessing online media, to gaining information, using and comprehending it to the other extreme of creating and sharing it. Learners are already into the digital learning whether they chose to or were forced by the outbreak of the virus and the start of online learning. It is definitely the age of digital literacy and the stakeholders in the field of Educations need to be ready for it.

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