

Pre-service Teachers' reflection on Teaching English for Young Learners Course and their Perspectives towards Meeting the 21st Century Skills at Hebron University

Mohammed Abdel Hakim Farrah *

Abstract

One of the important issues in learning is quality standards. Recently, many studies discussed the importance of meeting the 21st century skills to ensure the quality of the teaching and learning process. A few studies have used 21st century skills to evaluate their courses. This study looks at the extent to which a Teaching English for Young Learners course offered by the English Department at Hebron University, Palestine, met the 21st century skills. Studies on language courses using the 21st century skills are hardly known, as evidenced in the literature review. This study marks the first time such skills have been used to evaluate a language course. A quantitative research methodology was employed. Data was obtained through a questionnaire. It was completed by 38 students who attended the Teaching English for Young Learners course. 21st century skills were: (a) critical thinking skills; (b) creativity and innovation skills; (c) communication skills; (d) collaboration skills; (e) self-direction skills; (f) global connection; (g) local connections, and (h) the use of information communication technology (ICT). According to the participants, the course met the 21st century skills in varying degrees; the use of information communication technology (ICT) (M=4.62); collaboration skills (M=4.42); communication skills (M=4.38); Critical thinking skills (M=4.22); self-direction skills (M=4.08); Creativity and innovation skills (M=3.98); global connection (M=3.96; and local connections (M=3.85) respectively. The results obtained from the open-ended part of the questionnaire showed that the students felt that the aspects

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related to 21st century skills were achieved as the course presented for them a unique opportunity for practical application such as group presentations, collaborative activities and microteaching. Additionally, the participants found the course to be an amazing course that contributed to their professional growth. Finally, the participants described the course and its activities as enjoyable practical, useful, delightful interesting creative, meaningful, entertaining, valuable, practical, helpful, joyful, inspiring and informative. This research demonstrated the usefulness of the 21st century skills in measuring the quality of a Teaching English for Young Learners course.

Keywords: 21st century skills communication; collaboration; self-direction; (f) global connection; (g) local connections, and (h) the use of (ICT)

دراسة تقييمية لمهارات القرن الحادي والعشرين من خلال مساق اللغة الإنجليزية للأطفال

محمد عبدالحكيم فراخ

ملخص

تعد مستويات الجودة من القضايا ذات الأهمية فيما يتعلق في مجال التعليم. وفي الآونة الأخيرة تناولت العديد من الدراسات أهمية توفر مهارات القرن الحادي والعشرين وذلك لضمان جودة التعلم والتعليم. والغرض من هذه الدراسة هو النظر في مدى توفر مهارات القرن العشرين في مساق تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية للأطفال المعد من قبل قسم اللغة الانجليزية في جامعة الخليل. ومن خلال استعراض الدراسات السابقة في مجال البحث تبين أن هناك عدداً ضئيلاً جداً، لا يكاد يذكر. ولقد تم استخدام منهج البحث الكمي في الدراسة. وقد تم الحصول على البيانات الكمية من خلال إعداد استبيان وزع على طلبة المساق البالغ عددهم 38 طالباً وطالبة. واشتمل الاستبيان على مهارات القرن الحادي والعشرين التالية: (ا) مهارات التفكير الناقد (ب) مهارات الابداع والابتكار (ج) مهارات الاتصال (د) مهارات التعاون (هـ) مهارات التوجيه الذاتي (و) مهارات التواصل العالمي (ز) مهارات التواصل المحلي (ح) مهارات استخدام تكنولوجيا الاتصالات والمعلومات. وبناء على نتائج الاستبيان، فإن المساق طبق مهارات القرن الحادي والعشرين بدرجات متفاوتة: استخدام تكنولوجيا الاتصالات المعلوماتية (م = 4.62) ؛ مهارات التعاون (M = 4.42) ؛ مهارات الاتصال (M = 4.38) ؛ مهارات التفكير الناقد (M = 4.22) ؛ مهارات التوجيه الذاتي (M = 4.08) ؛ مهارات الإبداع والابتكار (M = 3.98) ؛ اتصال عالمي (M = 3.96) ؛ واتصالات محلية (M = 3.85) على التوالي. وقد أظهرت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من خلال الاسئلة المفتوحة من الاستبيان أن الطلاب شعروا بأن الجوانب المتعلقة بمهارات القرن الحادي والعشرين قد تحققت كما تمكنوا من الاستفادة من فرصة التطبيق العملي مثل العروض التقديمية للمجموعات والأنشطة التعاونية، بالإضافة إلى ذلك، وجد المشاركون أن المساق ساهم في نموهم المهني.

الكلمات الدالة: مهارات القرن الحادي والعشرين، التفكير الناقد، الابداع والابتكار، مهارات الاتصال، التعاون، التوجيه الذاتي، التواصل، تكنولوجيا الاتصالات والمعلومات.

Introduction

There is a need to teach and assess 21st century skills. Many initiatives have been taken to promote 21st century skills in secondary and tertiary institutions. Great numbers of institutions are moving toward 21st century skills and this makes evaluation necessary. Evaluation helps decision makers to make informed decisions. Moreover, it helps them make sense and create the value of learning. The main objective of evaluating programmes is to offer decision makers with adequate information that help them make informed decisions concerning the effectiveness of the offered courses. Accordingly, actions should be taken to ensure improvement in teaching and learning. This can be achieved by excellent preparation and evaluation processes that would create constructive change. In order to create this change and to cope with the 21st century skills, there is a need for learning tasks that are engaging, motivating, enjoyable and meaningful. Cator (2010) suggested that the 21st competences involve "collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking and problem-solving." This means that learners should be exposed to curricula that foster literacy and 21st century skills that give them confidence to succeed in foreign language classrooms and to learn language meaningfully. It is evident that there is a need to fully integrate the 21st century skills into the EFL classrooms to produce learners who are suitably equipped with the 21st skills. This necessitates curricula changes with new learning outcomes that focus on digital literacy, critical thinking, innovation and creativity, inquiry skills, social interaction, and local and global engagement. Learners should be exposed to meaningful and applicable learning where reflection and application lead to deep learning. Learning should be connected to learners' real life needs where activities, concepts, and skills practiced in the classroom are put into practice in the work fields. Research suggests that workplace sets a priority on skills such as digital literacy, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and collaboration (Gaston, et al., 2010). Thus, developed curricula should be engaging, relevant, and involve different genres in order to genuinely meet the needs of 21st century learners. To develop the conceptualization of skills for the measurement instrument, Ravitz, Hixson, English and Mergendoller (2012) conducted extensive review of sources like the international Innovative Teaching and Learning study (Shear, Novais, Means, Gallagher,

& Langworthy, 2010). They also drew upon the Deeper Learning framework from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (2010), and Partnership for 21st Century Skills (p21.org). Accordingly, Ravitz et al (2012) used the following framework of definitions in their study.

Figure 1: Definitions of 21st Century Skills

- **CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS** refer to students being able to analyze complex problems, investigate questions for which there are no clear-cut answers, evaluate different points of view or sources of information, and draw appropriate conclusions based on evidence and reasoning.
- **COLLABORATION SKILLS** refer to students being able to work together to solve problems or answer questions, to work effectively and respectfully in teams to accomplish a common goal and to assume shared responsibility for completing a task.
- **COMMUNICATION SKILLS** refer to students being able to organize their thoughts, data and findings and share these effectively through a variety of media, as well as orally and in writing.
- **CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION SKILLS** refer to students being able to generate and refine solutions to complex problems or tasks based on synthesis, analysis and then combining or presenting what they have learned in new and original ways.
- **SELF-DIRECTION SKILLS** refer to students being able to take responsibility for their learning by identifying topics to pursue and processes for their own learning, and being able to review their own work and respond to feedback.
- **GLOBAL CONNECTIONS** refers to students being able to understand global, geo-political issues including awareness of geography, culture, language, history, and literature from other countries.

- LOCAL CONNECTIONS refers to students being able to apply what they have learned to local contexts and community issues.
- USING TECHNOLOGY AS A TOOL FOR LEARNING refers to students being able to manage their learning and produce products using appropriate information and communication technologies.

(Ravitz, Hixson, English and Mergendoller, 2012, p. 3)

In brief the main objective of this research is to study the degree to which Ravitz et al. (2012) suggested framework is being incorporated in the Teaching English for Young Learners course as perceived by the students in the course under study at the English Department in Hebron University.

Background to the Study

This study was conducted at the English Department, in Hebron University, Palestine. The English Department offers bachelor and Master degrees in English Literature and Teaching Methods. Teaching English for Young Learners (TEYL) is one of the elective courses for the students. This course aims to provide students with the theoretical and practical aspects of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL). It focuses on the principles of teaching English to children at the elementary level. Cognitive, psychological and social differences between young and older learners are emphasized and the influence of these differences on language learning is highlighted. More specifically, the course addresses issues related to theories of learning, teaching academic and digital literacy skills, the learning strategies of young children, teaching-learning activities, the classroom methods and techniques to be used when teaching English to young learners; the development of games, songs and visual materials and their use in teaching and assessment of young English learners.

TEYL is about preparing future-to-be teachers to real life experiences. Accordingly, future-to-be teachers have to find certain topics that are pertinent teaching English for young learners. They are required to read

about and present them. Moreover, they need to make critical reviews and write a research term paper about by the end of the semester. Students are examined through a variety of tasks set throughout the course (portfolio, reports, presentations, discussion, reflection, micro-teaching, and take home final exam).

TEYL is a student-centred course where students are expected to find the source materials necessary to complete their presentations, and term papers. The course provides them with lots of useful suggestions and links to guide them to the resources that may help them and encourage them to be independent learners. Students are guided to choose their topics within the following proposed module. Each student chose a certain topic to present and to write about a term paper. The instructor made sure that the selection of the students cover all the topics in the module. This includes:

- Defining Young Learners: cognitive and affective characteristics
- Learning styles and Mixed ability options
- Vocabulary Teaching in YL classes
- Teaching Reading & Writing in YL classes
- developing critical thinking skills
- storytelling and reading comprehension
- Grammar Teaching in YL classes
- Speaking skills & Listening skills
- The role of pictures and stories in YL classes
- The role of drama, films and technology in YL classes
- English language songs, games and rhymes
- Classroom management with YL: Classroom atmosphere, classroom safety, classroom discipline
- Lesson planning
- Alternative assessment

The online TEYL course is divided into 14 modules. Each module begins with a text that relates to the module, followed by a series of tasks. The tasks are for self-study and to encourage students to practise what they have learnt in the classroom. The course encourages students to use the ICT tools in preparing their topics and writing their papers. Throughout the course, students were directed to useful sites to aid their learning process.

In this study, the researcher examined whether the TEYL met the 21st century skills framework that was suggested by Ravitz et al. (2012). Moreover, he examined pre-service teachers' experiences during the course.

Statement of the Problem

There has been a rapid increase in the number of studies that call for incorporating the 21st century skills in language teaching and learning. However, little is known about the extent to which the 21st century skills are met. The researcher decided to evaluate one of the offered courses at the English Department in Hebron University to get insight from the students about their perceptions. Research such as this would add to the information on the quality of the teaching methods courses and their contribution to language instruction.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to examine the Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) course and to assess its perceived effectiveness by evaluating it against Ravitz et al (2012) suggested framework as established in the literature for 21st century skills. The framework included the following skills: (a) critical thinking skills; (b) creativity and innovation skills; (c) communication skills; (d) collaboration skills; (e) self-direction skills; (f) global connection; (g) local connections, and (h) the use of information communication technology (ICT). Moreover, the study examined pre-service teachers' experiences during the course.

Research Question:

The research question of the study is:

1. To what extent has the (TEYL) course met the 21st century skills suggested by Ravitz 2012?
2. How do pre-service teachers describe their learning experiences through Teaching English for Young Learners course?

Significance of the Study

Future students need to be equipped with the necessary 21st century skills that prepare them to their future careers and workforce. This puts great influence on educational institutions to incorporate the 21st century skills in the learning process. This requires changes in the curricula and adoption of novel methods of knowledge transmission. The success of such curricula depends on the extent to which the 21st century skills are available in such programmes. The results of this study are important for students as well as for instructors and administrators who would like to develop and implement new courses. Additionally, the findings are beneficial to institutions interested in designing, developing, delivering and evaluating new offered courses. Understanding the 21st century skills that are important in the learning and teaching process would assist educators and decision makers to meet the needs of the learners and provide them with the 21st century skills they deserve.

Literature Review

(a) Critical thinking skills;

Several studies suggested that in order to aid learners to excel, there is a strong need to guarantee that they attain the required critical thinking and 21st century skills to be successful (Kessler, Bikowski & Boggs, 2012). In learner-centered classes, learners should be deeply engaged in thoughtful inquiry and critical thinking. Their teachers' role becomes that of a stimulator, moderator, and guide. Instructors must discover creative means to promote critical thinking skills and impart their content knowledge and learning in an engaging manner. When learners are involved in active

learner-centered and engaging tasks, their class involvement increases and critical thinking skills are promoted.

(b) Creativity and innovation skills;

Several studies suggested that creativity and innovations are necessary 21st century skills (El-Murad and West 2004; Sawyer 2006; Pellegrino & Hilton, 2013). Research recognized the role of ICT in fostering innovation and creativity in learning and teaching (Brečko, Kampylis & Punie, 2014). Learners should be prepared for the challenges of society and the workforce before leaving universities. Therefore, they need to know how to constantly create and innovate. Maker (2004) believed that experimental studies conducted on means of improving creative thinking successfully increased student academic achievement.

(c) Communication skills;

Effective communication is crucial to future to be teachers who should be able to communicate clearly and effectively. Pellegrino and Hilton (2013) believe that communication is a vital 21st century skill that facilitates teamwork. Arum (2011) believes that equipping students with higher critical thinking skills and effective communication is necessary to achieve the goals of higher education. Additionally, the flexibility afforded by the availability of the technological devices makes learning possible from any location at any time. Learners can network and communication and develop social skills and relationships.

(d) Collaboration skills;

There is an agreement that collaboration accepted as a skill is necessary to attain meaningful and effective results. Problem solving requires teamwork and collaboration. When learners are required to give group presentations that encourage them improve their ability to communicate and collaborate. Several studies highlighted that collaboration has positive effects on student learning (Surowiecki, 2005; Light (2001).

Surowiecki (2005) emphasizes the importance of collaboration as learners from different backgrounds meet together to discuss ideas and make more smart choices. When learners put collaborative efforts in a certain task, they expand their knowledge and create more holistic results than their individual efforts. According to), collaboration improves the research skills of learners. Van Boxtel, et al. (2000) believe collaboration allows students to offer explanations of their understanding, which can help them restructure and expand their knowledge. Moreover, the presence of technological enhances learning facilitate enable various kinds of communication, interaction, and collaboration, among learners.

(e) Self-direction skills;

Self-directed learner is about students taking responsibility for their own learning to find out knowledge. Several studies suggested that the most successful learners are those who have great level of consciousness about their own knowledge level and take responsibility over their own learning processes (Butler & Winne, 1995). Successful learners engage in self-directed learning experiences. Therefore, learners need to direct and regulate their own learning (Glance, Forsey, & Riley, 2013).

When learners are self-directed, their learning become more self-motivated, collaborative, and ongoing and the teaching learning process becomes meaningful as learners foresee that they achieve their goals and are engaged in tasks that are meaningful to their everyday lives (Slepkov, 2008). Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman (2010) clarify that self-directed learners learn to monitor and regulate their approaches to learning. Furthermore, the digital tools encourage learners to take more responsibility in directing and managing their own education.

(f) Global connection;

Future to be teachers should be able equipped with the skills that enable them to make global connection and work globally in the workforce within different nations, and cultures (Ravitz et al., 2012). With the rise of technology in the past decade, it has become increasingly clear that collaboration is necessary for students and employees to meet the global

connection requirements (Tindowen, Bassig & Cagurangan, 2017). The surge in using technology has the potential of increasing global connection via the amount of exposure to formal and informal English learning opportunities (Trinder, 2017). This exposure may yield benefits such as helping learners to use information or ideas that come from people in other countries or cultures and promoting learners' intercultural awareness. This may result in creating meaningful intercultural encounters for learners.

(g) Local connections;

Wenger (1999, p. 4) believes that all people are members in diverse communities of practice. Wenger explains that participation among the members of diverse communities "refers not just to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities". Aceto et al. (2010, p. 6) believes that members of online communities "learn by making and developing connections (intentionally or not) between ideas, experiences, and information, and by interacting, sharing, understanding, accepting, commenting, creating and defending their own opinions, their viewpoints, their current situations and their daily experiences".

(g) The use of information communication technology (ICT).

Several studies recognized the role of ICT as a main promoter to innovation and creativity in instruction and training and for learning in general (Brečko, Kampylis & Punie, 2014). ICT tools allow several types of communication, interaction, and collaboration. Lubart and Guignard (2004) believe that the use of technology help people think in creative and divergent ways in order to address new types of problems.

Enochsson and Rizza, (2009) observed that: Teacher trainers who use ICT innovatively contribute to their own professional development. Moreover, they keep extensive contacts with colleagues and experts in the area of ICT. According to Davis (2004) and Sadik (2008) the use of technology enables learners to create final products like digital storytelling. According to them, this offers learners with the opportunity to advance self-authoring and identity construction while they are learning language and 21st century skills. According to Wasson et al (2003) collaborative, computer-based learning atmospheres may contribute to inspire inquiry-based learning among learners.

In this study, the researcher used the established framework in his evaluation of the course under examination (Teaching English for Young Learners).

Methodology

The present section discusses the population, research instrument, procedure, developing the questionnaire and its reliability.

Participants

The participants were 38 students enrolled in the (TEYL) course offered in the first semester of the academic year 2017-2018. They were in their final year of four year bachelor degree in English Literature and Methods of Teaching English at the English Department in Hebron University, Palestine. The age of the students ranged from 21 to 22 years, and 36 of them were females and two males.

Instrument:

Data Collection Procedures:

To get an in-depth understanding for the perceptions of the participants in the (TEYL) course, data were collected by the researcher through a questionnaire administered by the end the course (See Appendix I).

The questionnaire revolved around eight 21st century skills. Each 21st century skill consisted of five to seven items. The questionnaire consisted of 46 statements using Likert's 5-point scale, (1= Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, 5= Strongly Agree). To get the participant to describe their experience they were asked open ended questions in the second part of the questionnaire to reflect upon their experiences.

Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

The validity of the questionnaire was examined against the degree to which its statements mirrored students' attitudes towards the 21st century skills. The questionnaire was given to two experts from Hebron University. They commented on the questionnaire and recommended some changes on the questionnaire format, consistency of the tenses, and pronouns. Their suggestions were incorporated and necessary changes were made in the final questionnaire. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was tabulated. The result showed that the overall Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of the questionnaire is high ($r = 0.88$) indicating a very high degree of internal consistency, and therefore presenting a considerably reliable instrument.

Results

First, the results of the General Question are presented, and then followed by the details for each skill.

To what extent has the (TEYL) course met the 21st century skills?

The major question aimed to reveal to what extent the (TEYL) course met the 21st century skills. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were calculated for the whole questionnaire items answer the major question as shown in Table 1.

Table (1) Descriptive statistics of the entire questionnaire

No	21 ST CENTURY SKILLS	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient	Mean	Std. D.
1	Use of ICT	.78	4.62	.527
2	COLLABORATION SKILLS	.80	4.42	.634
3	COMMUNICATION SKILLS	.80	4.38	.675
4	CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS	.74	4.22	.590
5	SELF-DIRECTION SKILLS	.80	4.08	.704
6	CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION SKILLS	.75	3.98	.742
7	GLOBAL CONNECTIONS	.77	3.96	.820
8	LOCAL CONNECTIONS	.80	3.85	.914

Table (1) shows that the participants believe that the course met the 21st century skills in varying degrees. They are organized from the skills that got very high rating starting with the use of information communication technology (ICT) (M=4.62); collaboration skills (M=4.42); communication skills (M=4.38); critical thinking skills (M=4.22); self-direction skills (M=4.08); and ending with the less met skills creativity and innovation skills (M=3.98); global connection (M=3.96; and local connections (M=3.85) respectively. It aims to answer the research questions of the current study. It can be seen that of the eight skills, the participants felt that the use of ICT was the most met skill (mean=4.62) followed by collaboration (mean=4.42); communication (mean=4.38), critical thinking skills (mean=4.22), and self-direction skills (mean=4.08), respectively. On the other hand, the global connection skills (mean=3.96) and local connections skills (mean=3.85) were perceived to be moderately met.

Detailed Findings Related to The 21st Century Skills.

This section presents a thorough discussion of each 21st century skill by answering the following sub-questions:

1. To what extent does the (TEYL) course meet critical thinking skills?

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was produced for this skill and was found to be at 0.74 , which is considered to be reliable.

Table (4:5) Means and Standard Deviations for the Critical Thinking Skills

No		N	Mean	Std. D.
	CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS	38	4.22	.590
3	The Course allowed us to summarize or create our own interpretation of what I have read or been taught.	38	4.55	.602
5	The Course allowed us to develop a persuasive argument based on supporting evidence or reasoning.	38	4.29	.654
2	The Course allowed us to draw our own conclusions based on analysis of numbers, facts, or relevant information.	38	4.16	.547
6	The Course allowed us to try to solve complex problems or answer questions that have no single correct solution or answer.	38	4.13	.623
1	The Course allowed us to compare information from different sources before completing a task or assignment.	38	4.11	.388
4	The Course allowed us to analyze competing arguments, perspectives or solutions to a problem.	38	4.11	.727

Number of Items = 6

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.74

As table (4.2) shows, the findings of each statement in the critical thinking skills received very high rating with statement number three (summarize or create our own interpretation of what I have read or been taught) scoring the highest rating (M=4.55). This is in line with Ravitz et al (2012) where the same skill received the highest rating (4.03).

2. To what extent does the (TEYL) course meet creativity and innovation skills?

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was produced for this skill and was found to be at 0.74, which is considered to be reliable.

Table (4:3) Means and Standard Deviations for the Creativity and Innovation Skills

No		N	Mean	Std. D.
	CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION SKILLS	38	3.98	.748
11	The Course allowed us to create an original product or performance to express our ideas	38	4.13	.935
7	The Course allowed us to use idea creation techniques such as brainstorming or concept mapping	38	4.11	.831
9	The Course allowed us to test out different ideas and work to improve them	38	4.03	.677
8	The Course allowed us to generate my own ideas about how to confront a problem or question	38	3.82	.692
10	The Course allowed us to invent a solution to a complex, open-ended question or problem	38	3.82	.609

Number of Items = 5

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.75

As table (4.3) shows, the findings of some statements in the creativity and innovation skills received high rating with statement number 11 (create an original product or performance to express our ideas) scoring the highest rating (M=4.13) and some statements received a moderate to high rating such as statement 10 (M=3.82) (invent a solution to a complex, open-ended question or problem).

3.To what extent does the (TEYL) course meet communication skills?

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was produced for this skill and was found to be at 0.80, which is considered to be reliable.

Table (4:4) Means and Standard Deviations for the Communication Skills

No		N	Mean	Std. D.
	COMMUNICATION SKILLS	38	4.38	.675
13	The Course allowed us to convey my ideas using media other than a written paper (e.g., posters, video, blogs, pictures, flashcards, realia, etc.)	38	4.58	.642
14	The Course allowed us to prepare & deliver an oral presentation to the teacher or others	38	4.53	.557
15	The Course allowed us to answer questions in front of an audience	38	4.39	.638
16	The Course allowed us to decide how I will present our work or demonstrate my learning	38	4.39	.638
12	The Course allowed us to structure data for use in written products or oral presentations (e.g., creating charts, tables or graphs)	38	4.05	.899

Number of Items = 5

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.80

As table (4.4) shows, the findings of each statement in the communication skills received very high rating with statement number thirteen (convey my ideas using media other than a written paper (e.g., posters, video, blogs, pictures, flashcards, realia, etc.)) scoring the highest rating (M=4.58).

4. To what extent does the (TEYL) course meet collaboration skills?

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was produced for this skill and was found to be at 0.80 , which is considered to be reliable.

Table (4:5) Means and Standard Deviations for the Collaboration Skills

No	COLLABORATION SKILLS	N	Mean	Std. D.
		38	4.42	.634
17	The Course allowed us to work in pairs or small groups to complete a task together	38	4.76	.541
18	The Course allowed us to work with other students to set goals & create a plan for our group.	38	4.52	.646
20	The Course allowed us to present our group work to the class, teacher or others.	38	4.50	.725
22	The Course allowed us to give feedback to peers or assess other students' work (presentation)	38	4.28	.611
21	The Course allowed us to work as a team to incorporate feedback on group tasks or products.	38	4.26	.644
19	The Course allowed us to create joint products using contributions from each student.	38	4.23	.633

Number of Items = 6

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.80

As table (4.5) shows, the findings of each statement in the collaboration skills received very high rating with statement number seventeen (work in pairs or small groups to complete a task together) scoring the highest rating (M=4.76). This is line with Ravitz et al (2012) where the same statement received the highest rating (4.21).

5. To what extent does the (TEYL) course meet self-direction skills?

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was produced for this skill and was found to be at 0.80 , which is considered to be reliable.

Table (4:6) Means and Standard Deviations for the Self-direction Skills

No	SELF-DIRECTION SKILLS	N	Mean	Std. D.
		38	4.08	.704
24	The Course allowed us to choose own topics of learning or questions to pursue.	38	4.39	.754
25	The Course allowed us to plan the steps we will take to accomplish a complex task.	38	4.26	.723
29	The Course allowed us to use peer, teacher or expert feedback to revise our work.	38	4.23	.675
26	The Course allowed us to choose for ourselves what examples to study or resources to use.	38	3.97	.787
27	The Course allowed us to monitor our own progress towards completion of a complex task and modify my work accordingly.	38	3.97	.677
28	The Course allowed us to use specific criteria to assess the quality of our work before it is completed.	38	3.89	.763
23	The Course allowed us to take initiative when confronted with a difficult problem or question.	38	3.84	.546

Number of Items = 7

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.80

As table (4.6) shows, the findings of each statement in the self-direction skills received moderate to very high rating with statement number 24 (choose own topics of learning or questions to pursue.) scoring the highest rating (M=4.39).

6. To what extent does the (TEYL) course meet global connection skills?

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was produced for this skill and was found to be at 0.78, which is considered to be reliable.

Table (4:7) Means and Standard Deviations for the Global Connection Skills

No	GLOBAL CONNECTIONS	N	Mean	Std. D.
		38	3.96	.820
30	The Course allowed us to study information about other countries or cultures	38	4.05	.803
31	The Course allowed us to use information or ideas that come from people in other countries or cultures	38	4.05	.898
33	The Course allowed us to understand the life experiences of people in cultures besides our own	38	4.00	.735
34	The Course allowed us to reflect on how my own experiences and local issues are connected to global issues	38	4.00	.838
32	The Course allowed us to discuss issues related to global interdependency (for example, global learning trends, global learning contexts)	38	3.73	.828

Number of Items = 5

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.78

As table (4.7) shows, the findings of each statement in the global connection skills moderate to high rating with statements number 30 (study information about other countries or cultures) and 31 (use information or ideas that come from people in other countries or cultures) scoring the highest rating (M=4.05). This is line with Ravitz et al (2012) where the same statements got a high rating.

7. To what extent does the (TEYL) course meet local connections skills?

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was produced for this skill and was found to be at 0.80, which is considered to be reliable.

Table (4:8) Means and Standard Deviations for the Local Connection Skills

No	LOCAL CONNECTIONS	N	Mean	Std. D.
		38	3.85	.914
36	The Course allowed us to apply what we are learning to local situations, issues or problems	38	4.00	.805
35	The Course allowed us to investigate topics or issues that are relevant to our local community	38	3.94	.928
39	The Course allowed us to respond to a question or task in a way that weighs the concerns of different community members or groups	38	3.94	.928
37	The Course allowed us to talk to one or more members of the community about a class project or activity	38	3.76	.942
38	The Course allowed us to analyze how different stakeholder groups or community members view an issue	38	3.63	.970

Number of Items = 5

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.80

As table (4.8) shows, most of the statements in the local connection skills received moderate to high rating with statement number 36 (apply what we are learning to local situations, issues or problems) scoring the highest rating (M=4.00). This is in line with Ravitz et al (2012) where the same statements received the highest rating within the local connection skills.

8. To what extent does the (TEYL) course meet the use of (ICT) skills?

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was produced for this skill and was found to be at 0.78, which is considered to be reliable.

Table (4:9) Means and Standard Deviations for the Use of ICT

No	Use of ICT	N	Mean	Std. D.
		38	4.62	.527
41	The Course allowed us to select appropriate technology tools or resources for completing a task	38	4.78	.413
44	The Course allowed us use technology to help us share information (e.g., multi-media presentations using sound or video, presentation software, blogs, podcasts, etc.)	38	4.76	.430
40	The Course allowed us to use technology or the Internet for self-instruction (e.g., videos, tutorials, self-instructional websites, etc.)	38	4.73	.446
45	The Course allowed us use technology to support team work or collaboration (e.g., shared work spaces, email exchanges, giving and receiving feedback, etc.)	38	4.60	.495
46	The Course allowed us use technology to keep track of our work on extended tasks or assignments	38	4.57	.500
42	The Course allowed us to evaluate the credibility and relevance of online resources	38	4.50	.725
43	The Course allowed us use technology to analyze information (e.g., databases, spreadsheets, graphic programs, etc.)	38	4.42	.683

Number of Items = 7

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.78

As table (4.9) shows, all of the statements in the use of ICT skills received extremely high rating with statement number 41 (select appropriate technology tools or resources for completing a task) scoring the highest rating (M=4.78). This is in line with Ravitz et al (2012) where the same statements got the highest rating within the use of ICT skills.

4.2. Pre-service teachers reflection on their learning experiences through Teaching English for Young Learners course.

To examine the students attitudes towards the course, they were asked to answer the five questions in the second part of the questionnaire. They are:

A. Which aspects of the Teaching English for Young Learners course were perceived as the most useful for you?

Most of the participants highlighted very interesting aspects in the course. They talked about the importance of the theoretical part and the practical part of the course. According to them, "in the theoretical part the instructor introduced, facilitated, and then applied the material in an intelligible dynamic way". In addition to that they were interested in the practical part of the course where "there is the unique and beneficial practical application that included the individual and group presentations, collaborative activities and microteaching. These aspects increased their motivation, self-confidence and added to their overall knowledge regarding teaching English to young learners. Other participants mentioned that using visual and authentic material provided them with many techniques and methods which enable them to become successful teachers. Furthermore some students discussed how classroom activities developed their critical thinking skills and increased their creativity. Finally, some students highlighted the importance of giving them the opportunity to use their own resources and materials on how to teach songs, games, pictures. All the above mentioned were facilitated by the use of the technological tools. Overall, they believed that the course helped them a great deal to improve their pedagogical skills as soon-to-be an English teacher. One of the students explained: "To illustrate, the alternative assessment approach that was discussed in the classroom helps a great deal to build and create

various kinds of activities and methods for examining students' real level and their abilities for accomplishing different kind of tasks, away from the traditional ways."

B. How do you perceive your professional growth as a result of the Teaching English for Young Learners course?

According to the participants, the course was very useful and an amazing course as it contributed to their professional growth. They think they will be good teachers as the course taught them a lot of useful things. One of the participants explained "teaching young learners isn't an easy task, and it requires a great deal of creativity and energy. Moreover, the course taught me that teacher's readiness and creativity are important factors in both teaching and learning processes." Another participant added that the course was a very useful course because it is "full of new ideas, instruction and strategies that help me in my practical life such as using flashcards, realia , cartoons, storytelling, videos, powerpoint, games, songs ...etc. It offered me a large experience for dealing with young children in school. Another participant added that she learned many of fruitful and interesting things that contributed to her professional growth and will consider them in her practical life of teaching. She added that this course taught her that she must have clear purpose and achievable goals in her course, and she should choose suitable ways depending on the number of students, timing, and the classroom. In addition, I learnt from this course how to motivate my student using different ways such as using games, reward, praise, etc. The micro-teaching presentation gave them a lot of insights that are going to help them in their professional life. Finally, one student concluded that she learnt different methods and techniques that she can use them in the teaching process such "as using group-work, games, video, songs, etc, the process of learning became enjoyable and useful, and I learnt a lot of this course, because we did not take a similar course before. As a result, this course contributed to promoting my teaching skills."

C. Write at least two things you will start, stop, and continue doing based on what you learned in this course.

As a result of this course, most of the participants reported that they will start using beneficial songs, interesting movies and educational games when teaching young learners English. Others reported they will start thinking of creative ways to motivate young learners to learn more by using

rewards, praise, realia, flashcards, cartoons and pictures, and some modern techniques in teaching English to young learners such as, videos, songs, and real objects related to the lesson in order to make it easy, simple, understandable, and enjoyable. Finally, some students mentioned that they will start using alternative assessment tools to evaluate their students such as presentations, portfolio, or projects.

On the other hand most of the participants reported that they will stop following traditional teaching methods and teacher-centered classes. They will stop over correcting all of the students' errors. They will stop being very strict with their students or too formal and try to be fun and casual when teaching young learners English. They will stop traditional evaluation methods and paper tests.

Interestingly, most of the students reported that they will continue using a number of things as a result of this course. All of these things are student-centered and highly motivating to students. Accordingly, they reported that they will continue using games, songs, realia, visual aids, puppets, videos and storytelling when teaching young learners English. They will continue using inquiry collaborative learning. They will continue applying peer and group work when teaching young learners English. They will continue motivating learners by using reward and positive praise when teaching young learners English. As one of the students said, she will "try to create a relaxed atmosphere, and meaningful communication, where young learners communicate during the lesson. I will choose and use appropriate strategies and ways depending on the number of the students, proficiency level, cultural context, timing, and the classroom setting."

D. Write three adjectives to express your opinion about your experience in The Teaching English for Young Learners course.

Most of the students wrote three adjectives to describe their experience in the course. The adjective enjoyable is used more than 17 times. Adjectives like: practical, useful, and interesting, are used more than ten times by the students. Finally, adjectives like beneficial, delightful, exciting, and informative are mentioned more than five times. Finally, adjectives like

wonderful, motivating, educational and creative are mentioned more than three times.

E. Write three adjectives to describe the presentation that were presented by your classmates in The Teaching English for Young Learners course.

Most of the students wrote three adjectives to describe the presentations that are presented during the course. The adjective interesting is used more than 13 times. Adjectives like: creative, meaningful, and entertaining, and useful are used more than ten times by the students. Finally, adjectives like valuable, practical, helpful, joyful, and informative are mentioned more than five times. Finally, adjectives like inspiring, educational, eeffective, and beneficial are mentioned more than three times.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that students responded positively toward the implementation of the 21st century skills in the TEYL course. The students indicated through the quantitative data that the course met the 21st century skills in the following order: the use of information communication technology (ICT) (M=4.62); collaboration skills (M=4.42); communication skills (M=4.38); Critical thinking skills (M=4.22); self-direction skills (M=4.08); Creativity and innovation skills (M=3.98); global connection (M=3.96; and local connections (M=3.85) respectively. This means that the students used ICT and communicated collaboratively in groups in learner-centred sessions that encouraged them to have self-directions and enhanced their creativity and critical thinking skills. The global and local connection skills were met moderately. This means that future courses should pay more attention to them in order to meet all the 21st century skills at higher levels.

The open-ended questions revealed that the students identified several aspects to be very beneficial for them in the course such as the practical part of the course where "there is the unique and beneficial practical application that included the individual and group presentations, collaborative activities and microteaching. They believe that such aspects contributed to the increase in their motivation, and self-confidence.

Additionally, the participants found the course to be an amazing course that contributed to their professional growth as the course taught them a lot of practical things that increased their professional readiness and creativity in their practical life of teaching. The micro-teaching gave them a lot of insights that are going to help them in their professional life. Finally, as a result of the beneficial aspects and its contribution to their professional growth, the participants described the course as enjoyable practical, useful, delightful and interesting, are used more than ten times by the students. And they described the presentations as the micro-teaching sessions as interesting creative, meaningful, entertaining, valuable, practical, helpful, joyful, inspiring and informative.

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Appendix I

The purpose of this questionnaire is to measure you're your experiences in in the Teaching English for young learners Course and your attitudes towards the 21st century skills and the extent you perceived they were present in the course. Please read the statements carefully and answer PART I and PART II

Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous.

Gender:	Female		Male		
Current GPA:	65 – 74		75 – 84		85 and above
Major	English (Methods)		English(Literature)		

PART I: Please, tick (✓) the appropriate box.

PART II: Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by putting a tick (✓) in the appropriate box using the scale given below

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree					
1	5	2	3	4					
No	CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS								
1	The Course allowed us to compare information from different sources before completing a task or assignment.								
2	The Course allowed us to draw our own conclusions based on analysis of numbers, facts, or relevant information.								
3	The Course allowed us to summarize or create our own interpretation of what I have read or been taught.								
4	The Course allowed us to analyze competing arguments, perspectives or solutions to a problem.								
5	The Course allowed us to develop a persuasive argument based on supporting evidence or reasoning.								
6	The Course allowed us to try to solve complex problems or answer questions that have no single								

No	CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS						
	correct solution or answer.						
CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION SKILLS							
7	The Course allowed us to use idea creation techniques such as brainstorming or concept mapping						
8	The Course allowed us to generate my own ideas about how to confront a problem or question						
9	The Course allowed us to test out different ideas and work to improve them						
10	The Course allowed us to invent a solution to a complex, open-ended question or problem						
11	The Course allowed us to create an original product or performance to express our ideas						
COMMUNICATION SKILLS							
12	The Course allowed us to structure data for use in written products or oral presentations (e.g., creating charts, tables or graphs)						
13	The Course allowed us to convey my ideas using media other than a written paper (e.g., posters, video, blogs, pictures, flashcards, realia, etc.)						
14	The Course allowed us to prepare & deliver an oral presentation to the teacher or others						
15	The Course allowed us to answer questions in front of an audience						
16	The Course allowed us to decide how I will present our work or demonstrate my learning						
COLLABORATION SKILLS							
17	The Course allowed us to work in pairs or small groups to complete a task together						
18	The Course allowed us to work with other students to set goals & create a plan for our group.						
19	The Course allowed us to create joint products using contributions from each student.						
20	The Course allowed us to present our group work to the class, teacher or others.						
21	The Course allowed us to work as a team to incorporate feedback on group tasks or products.						
22	The Course allowed us to give feedback to peers or assess other students' work (presentation)						
SELF-DIRECTION SKILLS							

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No	CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS						
23	The Course allowed us to take initiative when confronted with a difficult problem or question.						
24	The Course allowed us to choose own topics of learning or questions to pursue.						
25	The Course allowed us to plan the steps we will take to accomplish a complex task.						
26	The Course allowed us to choose for ourselves what examples to study or resources to use.						
27	The Course allowed us to monitor our own progress towards completion of a complex task and modify my work accordingly.						
28	The Course allowed us to use specific criteria to assess the quality of our work before it is completed.						
29	The Course allowed us to use peer, teacher or expert feedback to revise our work.						
GLOBAL CONNECTIONS							
30	The Course allowed us to study information about other countries or cultures						
31	The Course allowed us to use information or ideas that come from people in other countries or cultures						
32	The Course allowed us to discuss issues related to global interdependency (for example, global learning trends, global learning contexts)						
33	The Course allowed us to understand the life experiences of people in cultures besides my own						
34	The Course allowed us to reflect on how my own experiences and local issues are connected to global issues						
LOCAL CONNECTIONS							
35	The Course allowed us to investigate topics or issues that are relevant to our local community						
36	The Course allowed us to apply what we are learning to local situations, issues or problems						
37	The Course allowed us to talk to one or more members of the community about a class project or activity						
38	The Course allowed us to analyze how different						

No	CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS					
	stakeholder groups or community members view an issue					
39	The Course allowed us to respond to a question or task in a way that weighs the concerns of different community members or groups					
	Use of ICT (technology, LCD, videos, Powerpoint) for Learning:					
40	The Course allowed us to use technology or the Internet for self-instruction (e.g., videos, tutorials, self-instructional websites, etc.)					
41	The Course allowed us to select appropriate technology tools or resources for completing a task					
42	The Course allowed us to evaluate the credibility and relevance of online resources					
43	The Course allowed us use technology to analyze information (e.g., databases, spreadsheets, graphic programs, etc.)					
44	The Course allowed us use technology to help us share information (e.g., multi-media presentations using sound or video, presentation software, blogs, podcasts, etc.)					
45	The Course allowed us use technology to support team work or collaboration (e.g., shared work spaces, email exchanges, giving and receiving feedback, etc.)					
46	The Course allowed us use technology to keep track of our work on extended tasks or assignments					

Part II:

1. Which aspects of the Teaching English for Young Learners course were perceived as the most useful for you?
2. How do you perceive your professional growth as a result of the Teaching English for Young Learners course?
3. Write at least two things you will start, stop, and continue doing based on what you learned in this course.
4. Write three adjectives to express **Abdel Hakim**'s your opinion about your experience in The Teaching English for Young Learners course.
5. Write three adjectives to describe the presentation that were presented by your classmates in The Teaching English for Young Learners course.