Blended Learning in the Literary Criticism Course

التعلم المدمج في مساق النقد الأدبي

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Abstract

This study investigated the performance and attitudes of students in the literary criticism course towards online learning engagement. The participants of the study included sixty English major students. There were two sections: one control while the other is experimental. The study used both pre and post tests and pre and post questionnaires. A 25-item questionnaire was used to assess students' attitudes towards this experience. The results revealed that the experimental group had very positive attitudes toward using the online learning platform in learning English literature courses. Moreover, the study showed that there were statistically significant differences found on the attitudes towards the Online Learning Platform (Moodle) in the Literary Criticism Course favoring the experimental group. Similarly, the post-test revealed that there were statistically significant differences in the performance of the students favoring the experimental group. The researchers concluded the study with a set of recommendations.

Keywords: Blended learning, student-centered class, literature, educational technology, literary criticism, language skills, motivation.

ملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في فحص أداء الطلبة ومواقفهم في مساق النقد الأدبي نحو المشاركة في التعلم المدمج. وشملت عينة الدراسة ستين طالبا وطالبة في تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية مقسمين إلى مجموعتين المجموعة الأولى ضابطة بينما الآخرى تجريبية. واستخدمت الدراسة كلا من الاختبارين القبلي والبعدي وبالإضافة لذلك استعمل الباحثان الاستبانات القبلية والبعدية مكونة من 25 بنداً لتقييم مواقف الطلبة تجاه هذه التجربة. وأظهرت النتائج أن المجموعة التجريبية أبدت مواقف إيجابية جداً تجاه استخدام منصة التعلم المدمج عبر الإنترنت في تعلم مقررات الأدب الإنجليزي. كما أظهرت الدراسة وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في اتجاهات المنهاج التعليمي عبر الإنترنت (مودل) في مقرر النقد الأدبي لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. وبالمثل، فإن الاختبار البعدي كشف عن وجود فروق ذات دلالات إحصائية في أداء الطلاب لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. واختتم الباحثان الدراسة بعدد من التوصيات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعليم المدمج، مركزية الطالب في التعلم، النقد الادبي.

Introduction

Blended learning entertains various teaching techniques, including educational audio-visual tools, and other supplementary resources which include and are not limited to, threaded discussion and quizzes that motivate learners. When learners are involved, their scopes of attention, curiosity and enthusiasm towards learning and progress are increased. Blended learning allows for this engagement for it enables learners to access tremendous amount of extra materials and sources for self-study and to enhance a personalized study plan. Therefore, students are provided with innovative means to be involved in ingenious training. Learners who are highly motivated and have the desire to learn are normally described as strategic learners who are responsible for their learning and progress. Weinstein et al. (2006: 315) emphasized that learners should "have a greater responsibility for generating and maintaining their motivation over time."

Zimmerman (2000) illuminated the importance of learners' active participation in their own learning, through the management of behavioral, emotional, cognitive, attention, and environmental resources in the service of achieving desirable learning goals.

Technological means enable learners to have a full scope for the learning process in the foreign language classroom, because they provide a social context where linguistic and paralinguistic features such as body language, gestures, facial expressions, tone and pitch of voice aid in conveying the meaning.

Harmer (2001) stated that such devices enable learners to see language-in-use as the aforementioned paralinguistic features provide valuable-meaning clues and aid learners to see beyond what they are listening to, and thus enable them to have in-depth interpretation to the text.

Consequently, learners become motivated, as real life is brought into the classroom, where language and content are presented in a more inclusive communicative context. Thus, learners show eagerness when they are provided with opportunities to experience language-in-use, mainly when this is combined with stimulating tasks (Harmer, 2001). Harmer (2001) mentioned two benefits for online videos: Cross cultural awareness and the power of creation. Thus, according to him, videos enable learners to experience certain situations (body language, food, clothes, etc.), far beyond their classroom. Additionally, learners are given opportunities to use videos to create memorable and enjoyable production. The task of video-making enables learners to see themselves performing things authentic tasks and thus can provoke creative and communicative uses of the language. Similarly, Cameron (2001) emphasized that such resources offer a bulk of information and richness of cultural input and contextualization is not otherwise possible in the classroom. In the same line, Nurulhady (2010) reported that such combination of regular and online course provides some alternatives to handle the limited time and maximize learners' level of participation, creativity and engagement in drama class beyond classroom regular meetings with richness of resources.

What is Blended Learning?

Several researchers defined blended learning as incorporating face-to-face and online learning to attain more appealing and beneficial

experiences (Thorne, 2003; Farrah, 2014; Bowyer & Chambers, 2017). Boelens et al. (2015: 5) defined blended learning as "learning that happens in an instructional context which is characterized by a deliberate combination of online and classroom-based interventions to instigate and support learning." Thorne (2003: 15) defined blended learning as "a way of meeting the challenges of tailoring learning and development to the needs of individuals by integrating the innovative and technological advances offered by blended learning with the interaction and participation offered in the best of traditional learning." This indicates that blended courses aim to spread learning beyond the classroom environment and provide prospects for learners to reflect, interact, and engage with the learning material.

Learners can access the online platform at their own leisure, on their own time. Therefore, blended learning increases the quantity and quality of interaction among learners. It provides them with the opportunity to learn in an active and collaborative learning environment. And this is strongly rooted in social constructivism where learning is based on social interactions of learners (Vygotsky, 1962: 93).

Krashen (2007) maintained that utilizing internet learners are encouraged to surf the Internet and read what they are interested in. O'Leary (1998: 23) states that technology "helps learners to have control over the learning process". Brown and Voltz (2005: 1) state that "educational materials that have been effectively designed will facilitate the achievement of desired learning outcomes for students". Liao (2005) recognized that using technology collaboratively is usually more effective than individual use. According to Zainal (2012: 234), teachers' knowledge and skills in using Information Communication Technology (ICT) in class are very effective benchmark in the integration of ICT in English language teaching classrooms for there is a "dynamic relationship between teachers' technological, pedagogical and content knowledge".

Beetham et al. (2009: 24) suggested that learners discovered that technology is essential, because it offers meaningful choices about how they learn, with and without ICT. They add that:

Learners are attached to their technologies, emotionally and in terms of personal organization and practice: they benefit from being able to use personal technologies and access personalized services in institutional contexts. Learners are creating their own learning spaces, blending virtual with face-to-face, and formal with social. Informal collaboration is widespread, often facilitated by technology that is under learners' ownership and control.

The previous views illustrate the outcry for further studies related to the use of the blended learning content and methodology in language learning settings. To the researchers' best knowledge; there is a general dearth of motivational studies pertaining to the use of blended learning in the literature courses. For example, Sivapalan and Wan Fatimah (2010) discovered that technology utilization in literature learning enhanced the learners' interest to learn. Zamri and Nur Aisyah (2011) investigated the perceptions of group students towards the use of a multimedia application in the learning of novels. They reported that the system was able to expand teachers' teaching style and attract the students to learn literature.

Similarly, Taha and Ming (2014) explored the impact of an Online Support System for learning Literature (LitOSS) on a group of Malaysian students with the aim of improving the learners' motivation to learn English literature through a blended learning environment. The online system included seven literary topics covering various literary genres such as poems, short stories and novel, presented in the forms of online text-based materials, graphics and videos. Taha and Ming (2014) concluded from the study that the online system significantly improved learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn literature due to its highly motivating design. They also discovered that the system promoted learners' self-efficacy and control of learning.

Statement of the Problem

One of the fundamental factors in learners' success is their active engagement in the learning process. The tools that instructors use in classroom affect the teaching/learning process; they are not only

increasing their efficiency at teaching tasks, but are also opening up diverse means of interaction with learners that enable them to stimulate their critical thinking and enhance their creativity. Using technology in numerous fields has been so effective and valuable for educators to achieve certain objectives related to language learning and for those who are learning literature. Unfortunately, traditional teaching methods hardly create this active participation. The technological advancement can be applied in order to achieve better learning outcomes. To be more effective in the literature classroom, lecturers need to frame and to plan their classes in new ways. For example, they need to empower learners in their studies of literature. An active technique to do this is helping learners utilize technology in their classes. The use of technology in literature courses has not yet been empirically explored in Palestine to a satisfactory level. Despite the time limitations of the study, one academic semester, it is expected that outcomes will contribute in some investigative manners on the effect of blended learning on literature classrooms.

Research Questions

1. Are there statistically significant differences in the attitudes of students in the control group and the experimental group?

2. Are there statistically significant differences in the performance of students in the control group and the experimental group?

3. What are the attitudes of Hebron University students towards using technology in Literary Criticism course?

Significance of the Study

Learners have the potential to learn faster and easier if technology is part of the teaching strategy. When lecturers integrate technology into teaching literary courses, with a specific choice of "Literary Criticism" to be the subject of the experiment, they can provide enhancements for all learners and satisfy their needs. Studies on blended learning and interaction are rare in this field, which makes this study to be significant. This study is the first empirical study conducted in Palestine on the effect

of using technology in literature classrooms at the university level. This study is timely and relevant to the Palestinian higher education institutions, curriculum designers, and instructors. The results of this study would be vital to language educators who are concerned with interactivities and technologies particularly, in teaching the literary criticism courses. Moreover, this paper will definitely have important implications on English language teaching in general and teaching literature courses in particular.

Literature Review

Rationale for Using Literature to Develop Language Skills

Abuzahra and Farrah (2016: 23) stated that "students believe that using short stories in the EFL classroom is beneficial in enhancing the language skills, personal development and reflection and cultural understanding and tolerance". They concluded that "using literature in general and short stories in particular in EFL classroom can develop and enhance students' critical thinking, imagination, creativity, language structure and acquisition and cultural awareness". They explained that "The authenticity of the literary work, the richness of the language, the scope of imagination and creativity and the process of critical thinking, are just a few advantages for using literary genres in the language classroom." Additionally, Lazar (1993) stated that literature would motivate learners and help in developing their interpretative abilities. Carol (1998: 24) called for a "complementary relationship between source language research and computer assisted language learning (CALL) practice to create successful literature learning".

Dörnyei (1994) argued that there are various factors for individuals to learn a language. Accordingly, teachers need to take actions to deepen learners' learning experience by encouraging them to have clearly defined goals, and increasing the interest by learners in the course content that includes tasks which are comprehensive and are more likely to motivate an interest in learning.

Blended Learning in Teaching Literature Courses

The opinions and views reviewed in the previous section illustrate the importance of using literature to develop language skills. Similarly, various studies proved that blended learning has important advantages on developing language skills, motivation and cultural understanding. Additionally, the reviewed literature provides strong evidence that use of virtual technology can support learning, teaching, and can enhance the ability of learners to learn effectively (Garrison and Vaughan, 2008; Beetham, McGill & Littlejohn, 2009; Farrah & Tushyeh, 2010; Farrah, 2011; Helm, Guth, & Farrah, 2012; Zainal, 2012; Higgins et al., 2012; Farrah, 2015).

Jain (2012) pointed out that using ICT would help in research in various fields of English literary genres and can revolutionize the way the genres are seen, taught and thought of as it can offer additional support and additional resources to the traditional teaching. ICT would support learners in their comprehension of the text and would improve their proficiency. Additionally, it maximizes their involvement and maintains high motivation among them. It can encourage and keep the students attracted for ICT tools work at different levels. Jain concluded by demonstrating that English literature can be made engaging by the use of audio-visual devices, web resources, playing of movies or staged plays, online glossaries, dictionaries, thesaurus, and other related materials.

Utilizing technological advancement could bring a revolution in the world of pedagogy and particularly teaching literature courses. It could change the views of both instructors and students about teaching and learning literature. It was found that virtual learning increases learners' interest in learning. Higgins et al. (2012) concluded that such learning can be effective for lower ability learners, where they can have intensive practice, and get a greater motivation to learn.

Philip and Nicholls (2007) analysed and reflected on the design and implementation of an online theatre studies course. They concluded that a fully online course can be as engaging, interesting, and innovative as any course designed for more traditional settings.

Similarly, Sahni (2016) integrated certain ICT tools during a literature class and found that the tools used were very effective and supportive and can promote teaching English literature. He concluded that English literature could be integrated with ICT and can be taught with ease to meet the needs and interests of learners. He suggested conducting extra research to support pedagogical use of ICT for improving teaching of English literature.

According to Amiri et al. (2012) information communication technology (ICT), computer-mediated communication (CMC) and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) have initiated new possibilities into the classrooms. They deem that teaching and learning are facilitated as an outcome of the application of technologies. In their paper, they discussed the extent of enhancing the teaching of English language and literature through ICT and VLE. They emphasized the benefits of using technologies in teaching and learning. They stated that learners learn faster and easier than before due to the use of cyber technologies as they provide an interaction between language learners and teachers or peer to peer internet connections. Moreover, cyber technologies have always been interesting and enjoyable to learners. They concluded that language and literature learning does not only occur in the classroom and should not stop after the learners leave the classroom. In order to aid learners to enjoy and learn language effectively, they encouraged instructors to begin interactive language and literature classes and to create their own web based activities.

Elley (2015) examined the efficiency of using the blended learning method in a literature class. She adopted a learner-centred approach in teaching literature (sonnets). In her approach, blended learning balanced the responsibility of the learning process to both the teacher and student. She found that the learners were more engaged and resourceful in interpreting the content. Harrison et al (2004) reported statistically significant findings, connecting higher levels of ICT use with achievement**.**

In a sociocultural study, related to the zones of proximal development, Haugestad (2015) investigated utilizing blended learning in

a course of English Literature and Culture with the aim of examining how the use of blended learning may promote and encourage learning. He pointed out that blended learning is motivating and engaging to learners. It also has the potential of challenging and developing learning in some fields and in collaborative environments. Thus, the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1962) is expanded in this computer-mediated communication practice, due to the social interaction that took place. In his study, blended learning was examined, Haugestad (2015) demonstrated that students increase their learning and knowledge by taking part in digital activities where they over time relate and collaborate. He concluded that his study aided him to attain more insight into how learners increase their motivation and abilities to learn English and English literature in a blended classroom.

Bellows (2017) in an article entitled "An Experiment in Blended Learning: Bringing Poetry in America for Teachers into My Classroom" described her experience in teaching "Poetry in America for Teachers: The City from Walt Whitman to the popular culture, Hip Hop, in a blended course. She organized her class with the intent to analyze the course content at a deeper, more interactive level. She referred to her experience as an organic process that stretched her students' fantasy towards the sky and made the work less arduous, less frustrating, and more enjoyable.

In summary, the reviewed literature provides strong evidence that use of blended learning can increase learners' motivation and level of interest and thus support learning and teaching and improve the ability of students to learn effectively; support learning accomplishment; maximize collaboration and interaction among learners; and provide support to reducing the challenges faced by some learners.

Methodology

The present section discusses the population, research instruments, and development of the questionnaire, the questionnaire content validity and its reliability, course material and the procedure of the study.

Population

The population in this study involved sixty Hebron University English majors enrolled in the first semester of the academic year 2015/16. The participants are in the third and fourth year of their study. There were two groups of participants registered for the same Literary Criticism Course and distributed over two sections; one experimental and the second is control. The experimental group comprised 31 students and the control 29 students. It is worth mentioning that both groups shared the same instructor.

Research Instruments

In order to fulfill the aforementioned objectives and to reveal the influence of the program on the attitude and the performance of the students, two research instruments were used in this study; specifically, the researchers used pre and post questionnaires (see Appendix A & B) and pre and post-tests (see Appendix C and D). The pre and post questionnaires included statements that examine the students' attitudes towards blended learning. The pre questionnaire is intended to ensure that the students in the control group and the experimental group hold almost similar attitude towards blended learning. The post questionnaire aims to see whether there are significant statistical differences in the attitude of the students after the intervention. Additionally, the pre and post tests were carried out. The pre-test aimed at examining if there are any significant differences in the students' competence before starting the blended course. The post-test, however, aimed to see if there are any significant differences or improvement in the groups' performance after the intervention. The questionnaires were developed in consultation with an expert from the Faculty of Education. Detailed description for the instruments is presented below:

The Questionnaires

There were two questionnaires: a pre-treatment questionnaire (see Appendix A) and a post-treatment questionnaire (see Appendix B). Both used a 5-point Likert scale (5 = *strongly agree*, 4 = *agree*, 3 = *neutral*, 2 = *disagree*, 1 = *strongly disagree*). The pre and post questionnaires

consisted of twenty-five statements developed to prompt somehow relevant information about the learners' attitudes and expectations from the blended course.

Reliability of the Questionnaire

The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was tabulated. The analysis indicated an alpha coefficient of .90 and .92 respectively on the pre/post questionnaire indicating a very high degree of internal consistency, and therefore presenting a considerably reliable instrument.

The Course and the Material

This course is a survey of the principles governing the creation, appreciation, and valuation of literature as they have developed over the centuries, especially as defined and redefined during the contemporary period.

Objectives

1. To study the works of specific major critics through the ages.

2. To study major critical literary theories and apply them when reading, writing and analyzing literature.

3. To examine the literary components of various genres styles, using critical thinking.

4. To emphasize the technical skills of reading, writing and analyzing literary works.

The course begins with a survey of major figures in the development of a critical theory of literature. The emphasis will be on the careful reading of primary theoretical texts, with attention as well to historical and social contexts. This survey will include Plato, Aristotle, Sidney, Dryden, Johnson, Wordsworth, Emerson, Arnold and Eliot. Also, there will be reflection on critical approaches to literature such as, the traditional, the formalistic, the mythological and archetypal, the exponential and others.

The Procedure of the Study

The duration of the course is one academic semester or 14 weeks. The classes meet twice a week and the duration for each session is 75 minutes. Students were asked to read the given assignments and to pay specific attention to the era, philosophical, historical and cultural approaches to the text assigned. Also, they were to blog and to post their questions, views and comments in a very specific time agreed upon during class. Their comments should exceed a hundred words and all of them are required to blog and post their comments. In the meantime, the instructor will interact with groups and post assignments, responses and explanations to certain comments by students.

The Tests

Two tests were used in the study: a pre-test and a post-test (see Appendix C and D). As mentioned before, the pre-test aimed at identifying if there are any significant differences in the students' performance before starting the blended course. The post-test, however, is oriented towards examining any significant differences or improvement in the groups' performance after joining the blended course. A t-test was carried out to ensure that the students in the experimental and control groups have the same attitudes towards the online learning platform (Moodle) in the Literary Criticism course. This was carried out using the pre-questionnaire. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table (1): t-test for Equality of Means.

	Group	N	M	SD	T	df	Sig.
Attitude Pre-Q	Experimental	31	3.42	.38753	-1.240	58	0.220
	Control	29	3.59	.60016			

The t-test reveals that the students in the two groups (experimental and control) have almost the same attitudes towards the Online Learning Platform (Moodle) in the Literary Criticism course as shown in Table 1 and no significant differences at α = 0.05 were found.

Similarly, in order to ensure that the two groups (experimental and control) possess similar linguistic and content knowledge, a pre-test was

implemented to ensure that the two groups were equivalent competence-wise as shown in Table 2.

Table (2): t-test for Equality of Means.

	Group	N	M	SD	T	df	Sig.
Pre-Test	Experimental	31	29.74	6.52159	.802	58	0.426
	Control	29	28.6	3.88600			

As seen in Table 2, the two groups (experimental and control) have almost similar linguistic and content knowledge. This means that the two groups have the same level of competence before starting theblended course.

Results

In this section, the results of the post questionnaire are presented and discussed followed by the results of the post-test.

Results of the Post-Questionnaire

The following section aims at answering the first question of the study as reflected in the post-questionnaire.

1. Are there statistically significant differences in the attitudes of the students in the control group and the experimental group?

A t-test was carried out to determine change over the fourteenweek treatment period in the attitude of the students in the experimental and control attitudes towards the Online learning Platform (Moodle) in the Literary Criticism course. This was carried out using the post-questionnaire. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table (3): t-test for Equality of Means.

	Group	N	M	SD	T	df	Sig.
Attitude Post-Q	Experimental	31	3.88	.26723	5.786	58	0.000
	Control	29	3.19	.58987			

Table 3 reveals that there are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.005$) found on the attitudes towards the Online Learning Platform

(Moodle) in the Literary Criticism course favoring the experimental group.

2. Are there statistically significant differences in the performance of the students in the control group and the experimental group?

The goal was to decide whether there is an improvement in students' performance by the end of the semester. This was done by a post-test to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in the performance of the students in the control group and the experimental group. For this, a *t-test* on the difference between the mean pre-test and post-test scores for both groups was used as shown in Table 4.

Table (4): t-test for Equality of Means.

	Group	N	M	SD	T	df	Sig.
Post-test	Experimental	31	33.84	2.89939	3.113	58	0.000
	Control	29	31.20	3.62904			

Table 4 reveals, there are statistically significant differences in students' performance at (α = 0.005) on the post-test favoring the experimental group.

3. What are the attitudes of Hebron University students toward using technology in Literary Criticism course?

In order to answer the above question, descriptive statistics were calculated to examine the views towards online collaborative activities as perceived by the respondents. See Table (5) for the calculated means of items and their standard deviation for each statement.

Table (5): Means and standard for all items in the questionnaire.

No	Statement The online learning platform (Moodle) …	M	SD
7	motivated me to have a greater responsibility – for myself.	4.30	0.60107
1	fostered exchange of knowledge, information & ideas.	4.25	0.71842
11	increased the quality of collaboration.	4.22	0.65089
13	improved my skills and competence.	4.20	0.47292
5	stimulated my critical thinking skills.	4.18	0.68313
9	gave me the opportunity for social interaction.	4.15	0.68313
2	through (Moodle), my peers provided me with useful feedback.	4.12	0.65746
6	enriched my creativity.	4.10	0.54674
10	allowed me to appreciate others' opinions.	4.10	0.54674
12	allowed me to get effective feedback from my instructor.	4.10	0.60464
4	made problem-solving easier.	4	0.57361
8	enhanced my communication skills.	4	0.62905
20	was effective in uploading assignments.	4	0.51222
25	helped me to reflect on what I learn.	4	0.51222
3	strengthened knowledge retention.	3.98	0.59749
14	overall, the Online learning Platform (moodle) was a worthwhile experience.	3.95	0.59749
15	enhances my computer literacy.	3.95	0.59749
18	was a convenient tool for meaningful learning.	3.90	0.65089
21	provided me access to information and learning material.	3.78	0.39622
19	was consistent with language/literature learning courses.	3.70	0.71842
23	motivated me to study hard through using various educational resources like videos, pictures, educational links etc.	3.70	0.65418
17	should be encouraged.	3.70	0.762
24	strengthened my personal attributes and abilities.	3.65	0.71692
22	made me enjoy learning English.	3.65	0.78288
16	was a waste of time.	2.38	0.71542

Table 5 reveals that learners show very positive attitudes toward using the online learning process in learning literary courses.

Discussion

The results of the study show that the learners are satisfied with the online learning experience. This is illustrated through most of the items that received high ratings with item 7 getting the highest rating (m=4.30). It is followed by items, 1, 11, 13, 5, 9, 2, 6, 10, and 12 that had a very high agreement among the respondents. This means that the experience motivated the learners to have a certain responsibility; increased the quality of collaboration among them and gave them the opportunity for social interaction and fostered exchange of knowledge, information and ideas. Moreover, the results indicate that the experience improved their skills, competence and their critical thinking ability. Additionally, the experience helped learners to receive useful and effective feedback from their peers as well as their instructor, and this allowed them to appreciate others' opinions and contributed to their creativity.

There are other items that received high level of agreement among respondents. These items are 4, 8, 20, 25, 3, 14, 15 and 18. This means that the learners believe that the experience made their problem-solving skills easier and enhanced their communication skill. Moreover, the blended environment helped them in uploading assignments and assisted them to reflect on what they learn and to strengthen knowledge retention. As a result, they considered it a convenient tool for meaningful learning andfor enhancing their literacy in computer use. Finally, they considered it a valuable experience.

The items that gained a moderate agreement are 21, 19, 23, 17, 24 and 22. This means that the online environment provided them access to information and learning material and is consistent with language/ literature learning courses. Moreover, it encouraged them to be more focused on their learning process through using various educational resources like videos, pictures, educational links etc.; strengthened their personal attributes and abilities and made them enjoy learning English

and thus they held the opinion that such experiences should be encouraged.

Regarding item 16 (*is a waste of time*), it gained the least a agreement. This is a very positive point, for it means that the respondents do not agree that the online experience is useless. This is evidentin the high agreement with the other items, where they found the experience to be motivating, enjoyable and worthwhile.

The findings of this study reveal that blended course have solid advantages. This is in agreement with a number of studies. For example, O'Leary (1998: 23) points that technology "helps learners to have control over the learning process." Codde (2006) emphasizes that learning is most active when it occurs as a result of a *collaborative* effort. Field (2005) stresses that effective learning takes place when the teacher communicates effectively with his students and gives them timely and appropriate *feedback*. This is in agreement with Brown (2000: 7) who stated that "students need to be able to look with new eyes at the work they have undertaken, to understand the reasons by which assessment decisions have been made and to look for ways of remedying defects and supplying omissions.'' Likewise, Francis (2012) deemed that while we are moving from teacher-centered to learner-centered approaches to teaching and learning, learners should have great *responsibility* for their learning.

Moreover, the results of the study is in coordination with Sahni (2016) who concluded that English literature could be integrated with ICT and can be taught with means to meet the needs and interests of learners. Similarly, it is in agreement with Amiri et al. (2012) who stated that learners learn faster and easier than before in an interesting and enjoyable way as they are encouraged to begin interactive language and literature classes and to create their own web based activities. Finally, it is in agreement with Philip and Nicholls (2007) who concluded that such online courses can be as engaging, interesting, and innovative as any course designed for more traditional settings.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Online learning and technological resources enable learners to have a comprehensive scope for the learning process in the foreign language classroom, as they facilitate a multidisciplinary perspective on learning and open new opportunities which technology offers to education in general and to the literary criticism course in this study in particular. As the study revealed, technological resources have the potential to present an added beneficial effect by providing the motivation for further research to take place in this challenging, yet fascinating learning environment. They offer learners more responsibilities and improve the quality of collaboration among them and offer the opportunity for social interaction and foster exchange of knowledge, information and ideas, thus bringing increased levels of spreading and sharing of knowledge. In addition, online resources frame the nature of communication and collaboration between the learners on the one hand, and between them and their instructors on the other. Consequently, they receive effective feedback from their peers as well as their instructor and this allows for appreciation of others' opinions. The study also explored the perceptions of the learners toward the usage of the online learning Moodle in the Literary Criticism Course. Most of the respondents expressed their satisfaction and agreed that technology is beneficial. Based on the results of this study, the two researchers recommend the following:

1. Similar studies should be carried out on utilizing technological tools in teaching English literature courses and other courses at other Palestinian universities.

2. The English Department should encourage English majors to establish their own websites, whereby they share their experiences and discuss their difficulties.

3. English language instructors should use online technological resources for a range of objectives.

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Appendix A: pre questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to measure the students' attitudes towards online Platform (Moodle) in Literary Criticism class. Please read the statements carefully and answer PART I, and PART II. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous.

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

A- Gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male	
B-Year of study: ☐ Third ☐ Fourth	
C- Current GPA: ☐ 60 – 69 ☐ 70 – 79 ☐ 80-89 ☐ 90 and above	

PART II: *Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your views about* online Platform (Moodle) in Literary Criticism class *by putting a tick (✓) in the appropriate box using the scale given below.*

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly agree

         1   2   3   4   5

No		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) fosters exchange of knowledge, information & ideas.					
2.	Through The Online Learning Platform (Moodle), my peers provided me with useful feedback.					
3.	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) strengthens knowledge retention.					
4.	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) makes problem-solving easier.					
5.	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) stimulates my critical thinking skills.					
6	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) enriches my creativity.					
7.	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) motivates me to have a greater responsibility – for myself.					
8	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) enhances my communication skills.					
9	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) gives me the opportunity for social interaction.					
10	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) allows me to appreciate others' opinions.					
11	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) increases the quality of collaboration.					

No		1	2	3	4	5
12	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) allows me to get effective feedback from my instructor.					
13	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) improves my skills and competence.					
14	Overall, The Online learning Platform (Moodle) is a worthwhile experience.					
15	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) enhances my computer literacy.					
16	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) is a waste of time.					
17	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) should be encouraged.					
18	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) is a convenient tool for meaningful learning.					
19	The Online Learning Platform (Moodle) is consistent with language/literature learning courses.					
20	The Online Learning Platform (Moodle) is effective in uploading assignments.					
21	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) provides access to information and learning material.					
22	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) makes me enjoy learning English.					
23	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) motivates me to study hard through using various educational resources like videos, pictures, educational links etc.					
24	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) strengthens my personal attributes and abilities.					
25	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) helps me to reflect on what I learn.					

Appendix B: post questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to measure the students' attitudes towards online Platform (Moodle) in Literary Criticism class. Please read the statements carefully and answer PART I, and PART II. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous.

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

A- Gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male	
B-Year of study: ☐ Third ☐ Fourth	
C- Current GPA: ☐ 60 – 69 ☐ 70 – 79 ☐ 80-89 ☐ 90 and above	

PART II: *Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your views about* online Platform (Moodle) in Literary Criticism class *by putting a tick (✓) in the appropriate box using the scale given below.*

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly agree
           1   2   3   4   5

No		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) fostered exchange of knowledge, information & ideas.					
2.	Through The Online learning Platform (Moodle), my peers provided me with useful feedback.					
3.	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) strengthened knowledge retention.					
4.	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) made problem-solving easier.					
5.	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) stimulated my critical thinking skills.					
6	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) enriched my creativity.					
7.	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) motivates me to have a greater responsibility – for myself.					
8	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) enhanced my communication skills.					
9	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) gave me the opportunity for social interaction.					
10	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) allowed me to appreciate others' opinions.					
11	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) increased the quality of collaboration.					
12	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) allowed me to get effective feedback from my instructor.					
13	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) improved my skills and competence.					
14	Overall, The Online learning Platform (Moodle) was a worthwhile experience.					
15	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) enhanced my computer literacy.					
16	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) was a waste of time.					
17	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) should be					

No		1	2	3	4	5
	encouraged.					
18	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) was a convenient tool for meaningful learning.					
19	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) was consistent with language/literature learning courses.					
20	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) was effective in uploading assignments.					
21	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) provided me access to information and learning material.					
22	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) made me enjoy learning English.					
23	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) motivated me to study hard through using various educational resources like videos, pictures, educational links etc.					
24	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) strengthened my personal attributes and abilities.					
25	The Online learning Platform (Moodle) helped me to reflect on what I learn.					

Appendix C: Pretest:

1. Discuss the traditional approach.
2. How can you apply the traditional approach on "Young Goodman Brown"?
3.
    A. Differentiate between the psychological approach and the mythological one.
    B. What are the limitations of the psychological approach?
4. Discuss "Ocular deception" and the formalistic approach as shown in "Young Goodman Brown".
5. Discuss the exponential approach as presented in "To His Coy Mistress."

Appendix D: Post test

1. Discuss the different kinds of discovery as seen by Aristotle.
2. Discuss thought & diction as presented by Aristotle.
3. Discuss the views of the Greeks and the Romans on the poet.
4. How did Sidney see Plato?
5. Discuss the types of poetry as seen by Sidney.