Graduate Students' Reflections on Technology in Language Learning and Teaching: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract
This study aims to analyze the experiences and perceptions of a group of graduate students regarding an MA Technology in Language Learning and Teaching Course at Hebron University, Palestine. Specifically, the study addressed the aspects of the   course that were perceived as the most useful for them and how graduate students perceive their professional growth as a result of the course. The study took place during the second semester of the academic year 2016/2017. The researcher employed a qualitative research to achieve the aims of the study. The participants wrote reflective journals and described how the course integrated theory and practice. The results revealed that the students benefited from the different elements of the course. Particularly, they benefited from the practical projects. The experience helped them in their professional development. Finally, the students offered a number of suggestions for improving the course. The researcher concluded with a set of recommendations.

Key words: language learning, presentations, practical projects, reflection, technology

Introduction

Learners can use reflections to describe certain learning experiences and how they contribute to their professional growth. Bright (1996) believes that reflective practice is one of the active processes that is considered important and relevant to the understanding of ongoing action where learners are offered with opportunities to improve their learning practices. Similarly, Hennessy (2014) contends that the reflective process helps learners learn from their experiences and relate their insights to theoretical perspectives in order to synthesize from experience.

Reflection is considered an active process intended to achieve better understanding and development; thus, it is likely to bring about professional growth. Schön (1983) categorizes the reflective practices into two main parts: (1) reflection on action, where learners or teachers appraise past experiences; and reflection-in-action, where learners or teachers reflect during the time of teaching. Similarly, for his process-oriented approach, Dörnyei (2001) identifies three distinctive phases for motivation which include the following: (1) the pre-actional phase, (2) the actional phase, and (3) the post-actional stage. The pre-actional phase refers to defining clearly stated goals and tasks to be pursed in the second language (L2). The actional phase refers to accomplishing tasks. In the post-actional stage, learners reflect on their learning experiences and future goals. Accordingly, learners are likely to experience the processes of stating goals, reflecting on their learning experiences, and selecting effective strategies to pursue in the future to develop their learning outcomes.

According to Bright (1996), reflective practice is a dynamic process which is significant and appropriate to learning. When learners are involved in reflective practices, they can shape their learning, advance their practices, and ensure the accomplishment of more effective outcomes.

Reflection allows learners to respond, recognize, observe, evaluate, and review the learning process. Therefore, Richards and Lockhart (1994) believe that individual educators can have vital contributions to the learning process by presenting their views with respect to what creates successful learning. In a similar vein, Mezirow (2000) believes that learning takes place when the individuals assume their responsibility over learning by critical thinking and reflection that lead to plans that achieve better learning outcomes. Accordingly, the reflective practice will lead to what is considered a disposition to enquiry (Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998).

Literature Review

Several studies revealed that technological applications create a principally conducive atmosphere for a number of 21st century skills such as collaboration, communication, critical thinking, creativity and innovations, and self-direction (Balanskat et.al. 2006). In fact, the greater use of technology demonstrates that 21st century people are exposed to and practice much more critical thinking skills than they did a century ago. Technological tools provide students with many opportunities such as retrieving, interpreting, and generating novel ideas. Consequently, students may develop important skills such as critical thinking, creativity and innovation, collaboration and communication, and self-direction. Koehler and Mishra (2008) argue that creative incorporation of technology necessitates that educators should remain "continually creating, maintaining, and re-establishing a dynamic equilibrium between each component (p. 20)" Effective access and creative use of information form the foundation for lifelong learning (Andretta, 2005). Watson et

al. (2008) contend that technological tools will change all the methods of educational forms in the 21st century. McFarlane (2001) observes that information and communication technologies (ICTs) have the potential to favorably influence a variety of effective learners' traits such as solving problems, thinking critically, and managing information.

In a qualitative case study, Burhan-Horasanlı and Ortaçtepe (2016) examined in-service EFL teachers' reflective practices in a graduate course. Based on their analysis of individual interviews and reflective discussions, they concluded that EFL teachers can gain advantages from reflective practices when they assess their teaching practices.

Bobrakov (2014) conducted a study to examine teachers' perceptions of incorporating practice and theories in action research. According to him, action research aids learners to use theories for reflection on practical activities. In his study, the participants remarked the significance of research skills for evaluation and reflection of practical activities.

Accordingly, the present study aims to reveal students' experiences in a Language Learning and Teaching course that were perceived in their reflective journals. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the following questions were posed to explore the learners' experiences:

Research Questions:
1. Which aspects of the MA Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course were perceived as the most useful for them?
2. How do MA students perceive their professional growth as a result of the Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course?
3. What suggestions do MA students have for improving the Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course?
4. What adjectives do the MA students use to express their feelings about developing a digital book and other applications in the Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course?

Methodology:
This present study aimed to identify and present the reflections of graduate students in a Technology in Language Learning and Teaching Course.
The MA in Applied Linguistics and Methods of Teaching English program which is conducted by the Department of English, Hebron University, offers Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course.

A qualitative research design was used in this study. This design allows the participants to reflect their point of views and experiences during the course understudy. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) the qualitative research design is rich, stimulating, and thought-provoking in a number of ways. According to Janesick (1999), reflective journals are one way of gathering data in qualitative research.

Participants
The data in this study were gathered at The English Language Department, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Hebron University, Hebron, Palestine. The participants were 14 graduate students in a

Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course offered in the second semester of the academic year 2016-2017. The age of the students ranged from 23 to 35 years, and ten of them were females and four were males.

Data Collection Procedures:
To understand the experiences of the graduate students in the Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course, the researcher collected data through reflective journals. One of the required assignments was the submission of reflective journals by the end the Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course. The students were asked to describe their experiences during the Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course. The students were guided by a number of questions to help them reflect on their experiences (Appendix A).

Procedure
As the thematic analysis is generally used in qualitative research, the researcher analyzed his data of the reflective journals through building emerging themes. Consequently, the researcher categorized the themes into groups that fit together and fulfill his aims for examining the participants' experiences. After in-depth reading of the reflective journals, the researcher reconnoitered their content following several steps.

1. The reflective journals were categorized into four parts.
2. Every part answered one specific question of the four research questions of the study.
3. The researcher identified, categorized and organized the central emerging themes in each part of the reflective journal. Parallel themes are placed together.
4. Finally, the data were interpreted. Discussion, inferences and conclusions were drawn.

Findings
The researcher read, reread, identified, categorized, and compared participants' responses and found main areas that helped in answering the four questions of the study:

1. Which aspects of The MA technology in language learning course were perceived as the most useful for them?
The respondents expressed their deep satisfaction with the course and this is evident in their response to this question where they a number of key ideas/themes/concepts were developed and identified in the reflective journals. They expressed many valuable aspects of the course. Most of the students identified key aspects such as practical projects (web page construction, electronic books, and research paper), websites evaluation topics/materials and presentations, discussion and online responses. These were the most frequent themes that emerged in response to the first question.

a. Practical projects (web page construction, electronic books, research papers)
Another aspect of the course that the fourteen participants perceived to be useful is the practical projects. This included constructing web pages and designing electronic books and writing research papers. It is clear that most participants had very high degree of agreement about the usefulness of this task. They reflected on the practical projects as they helped them to be equipped with the necessary technological knowledge that they need in their classrooms. The aspects of the

practical project (web page construction, electronic books, writing a research paper) gained their significant role for the teachers exposing to practical experiences while constructing their webpages, designing their electronic books and writing their research papers. Such projects were very useful to them for several reasons such as;

- Teaching them a lot of technical as well as artistic designing techniques never known before and made acquainted them with the technological tools that they need to use in their classes.
- Acquiring the skills of designing and producing some educational websites and materials.
- Helping them to build certain projects that are suitable for their classrooms.

Due to these reasons, they perceived it to be valuable for teaching and learning. Moreover, the participants who chose to write a paper instead of a practical project found the paper to be very useful. They perceived it to be useful as it helped to gain both theoretical knowledge and practical training on writing research papers. This indicates that writing a research paper is seen as a very helpful tool in the classroom as it contributed to developing their research writing skills.

In short, the above-mentioned findings reveal that all participants highlighted the usefulness of the practical projects that included designing and constructing web pages or electronic books and writing research papers. So, the participants talked about putting the theoretical part into practice and accomplishing real practical projects.

b. Websites evaluation

Another aspect of the course that 12 out of the 14 participants perceived to be useful is website evaluation. Regarding the website evaluation, there was a high degree of agreement about the effectiveness of this task. They reflected on the websites they evaluated.

Website evaluation is perceived to be the second most useful aspect of the course. According to the participants, it has several benefits:

- Finding a lot of new and useful websites that they can implement and use as great supplementary resources for their students and that help them in their MA program. The websites that they were exposed to through the course were very beneficial and really expanded their knowledge in this field.
- Knowing many educational websites and distinguishing authentic websites from unauthentic websites.
- Offering them enough experience to design and create a learning website.
- Enabling them to provide their students with authentic resources that can help them develop their language and other life skills.

This means that the participants became aware of the importance of certain websites as the task helped them to be exposed to new websites designed for helping them as teachers with a lot of engaging and appealing activities.

c. Topics and presentations

There was a consensus and harmony among the participants that the topics and presentations were among the most prominent aspects in the course. Twelve participants out of fourteen listed the topics and presentations as one of the most useful aspects of the course. Twelve participants mentioned the covered topics and their own presentations, as well as the presentations delivered by their classmates, were useful. They found the topics and the presentations useful as

they offered them with great benefits. They described the course content and the presentations as a valuable and interesting and the materials that were covered up-to-date, rich, clear, comprehensive, authentic, and relevant. They added that topics are useful and meaningful in this course. This contributed to making the lectures student- centered where each student has to do two power point presentations. The topics were interesting and authentic. They were comprehensive and covered all their needs. Moreover, during the course, they enjoyed learning about the different teaching theories, approaches and methodologies that were proposed by the other colleagues' presentations. While answering students' questions and responding to the presentation, they developed their critical and creative thinking skills, language skills, and the 21st-century skills.

Within reflecting on the usefulness of the presentations, the students reflected on a number of beneficial aspects and some of them reflected on what happened in the stage of preparing for the presentation, during the presentation and after the presentation. The presented topics combined theoretical knowledge and the practical experience that allowed them to employ all the information about computer assisted language learning (CALL)**.** Moreover, they indicated that topics and presentations were among the most appropriate resources for teaching as expressed by them. In short, the presented material and the presentations exposed student to a variety of theoretical as well as practical knowledge in the field of technology in language learning and teaching and resources, and the greatest notable thing is putting the theoretical part into practice.

d. Class discussion and online responses

Other aspects of the course that many participants perceived to be useful were the classroom discussion and online responses. There was a high degree of agreement about the effectiveness of this task.

Class discussion and online responses were perceived to be among the useful aspect in the course. According to the participants, the class discussion and online responses were extremely valuable as they encouraged them to read a lot and critically respond to different interesting topics. The participants reported sharing experiences and information effectively. One student elaborated by saying, "*I also benefited from the discussions that occurred with my professor and colleagues and I think it will help me improve my teaching style*." Another student added, "*I also can't miss the important role that the responses had on my way of looking at things differently, when I wrote responses, it wasn't just about answering a certain question, but it was also about critical thinking and effective methods in learning*." Other students opined that they benefited a lot from the discussion inside the class and the online responses about several useful web applications such as, blogs and wikis, software programs such as grammar checker and asynchronous and synchronous computer-mediated techniques.

In short, the findings indicate that the discussions among the participants inside the class, the online responses to other students' presentations and questions were very useful and beneficial as it offered them with the opportunity to express opinions, ideas and thoughts.

2. **How do graduate students perceive their professional growth as a result of the Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course?**

A number of key ideas/themes/concepts were developed and identified by the students in their reflections upon their experience in the Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course. The participants revealed many good aspects of their profession. The following aspects emerged: Effective preparation and use of power-point presentations, practical projects and employing technological devices, class management strategies (changing roles, saving time, learning centered activities), and expanding knowledge and critical thinking skills. The researcher will present them one by one starting with those that were mentioned repeatedly:

a. **Effective preparation and use of powerpoint presentations**

There was a consensus and harmony among the participants that the course equipped them with tools to prepare effective power point presentations reveals. The participants emphasized the usefulness of their own presentations as well as the presentations delivered by their classmates. Within reflecting on the usefulness of the presentations, the students reflected on a number of beneficial aspects and some of them reflected on how effective preparation and use of powerpoint program makes it easier and more interesting for them. Thus, this aspect contributed to their development on the professional level. This is evidenced by their statements that showed they have grown professionally as a result of the power point presentations in the course:

- They became competent in using power point presentations and other technological devices and well-prepared to apply what they learned to develop themselves and their students.
- Using the powerpoint program made it easier and more interesting for their students**.**
- They became more familiar and knowledgeable about the effective use of power-point presentations in learning and teaching inside the EFL classroom
- Using technology in the process of teaching facilitates the pedagogical process.
- They became aware of the potential applications that can be used in their classrooms.
- Preparing and delivering powerpoint presentations shaped their professional identity and helped them stand and talk in front of the public
- Creating digital books adding videos, audios, texts, powerpoint presentations, photos, and extra links for more information helped the teacher and the learner move the process of teaching toward student-centered method.
- Answering students' questions and responding to their presentation has developed their critical and creative thinking and expanded their four language skills and the 21st-century skills.

In short, the participants favored the presentations as they helped them to shape their identities as teachers and equipped them with creative teaching methods that they acquired from the various readings as well from their colleagues during the discussions that took place in the class.

b. **Practical projects and employing technological devices**

Another factor that appeared frequently as a major contributor to their professional growth is the practical projects and employing technological devices. It is mentioned by 11 students.

When the participants emphasized that practical projects contributed to their professional growth. It added to their experience, productivity, creativity, knowledge, personality, confidence, and qualifications as expressed by one of the students:

"*What I knew about technology is just using computers and search on the internet. I didn't know how to employ mobile phones as a tool to learn and teach English. I have found that it is very useful since mobile phones are available with every student.*"

Another student added, "*the idea of planning a learning website will make a significant change in the teaching-learning project which makes English lessons more appealing for students.*"

This means that the course provided them with the following benefits:

- Gaining a variety of teaching skills that will be helpful in their future career.
- In addition, all the projects were excellent in developing the students' abilities to study. Accordingly, they will use their projects and borrow from their colleagues work to encourage their students to study.
- They felt feel more prepared to continue in the rest of this wonderful learning experience of the Master's Program in Applied Linguistics.
- The use of technology throughout the semester changed their perspective towards using technology in the classroom. They became ready to include technology in teaching language because it makes the language learning experience more productive.
- They felt that the websites evaluation assignment was very effective because they developed their searching and critical skills and acquired the basic criteria to evaluate CALL resources.
- The project helped them promote autonomous learning, learner-centeredness, and problem-solving skills.
- Facing some challenges while preparing the projects and solving the problems made them grow technologically and professionally.
- This course gave them novel ideas about using technology inside classrooms and the theory behind that.

One student elaborated on how the practical experience benefited them: "my practical experience in designing web pages with my classmate, Samaa', was enjoyable and of great value. Internet-literacy we invested granted me further skills that I can use in the world of the public relation when presenting educational achievements and strategies. Utilizing I-spring application added to my presentation skills that I usually use to attract the attention of public community and prepare the audience to approve changes adopted by the Ministry of Education. Our practical experience of designing the webpage "Teachers for Change" and the virtual interactive class was full of challenges. It was difficult for us at the beginnings to establish new work. However, we persist on constructing new work of inter-disciplinary goals depending on our little experience and classroom discussions. It was difficult for us to include English language teaching material of 21st century due to its relation to further issues of technology. A supervisor for technology subjects helped us to select appropriate software after we recognized the use of each and finally we could successfully decide the functions of each based on file extensions. Things have gradually become clearer and exciting after we become familiar with functions of technical file extensions. We got interested in creating sketches and games for Fourth Graders via I-spring application. It was a very fruitful

experience that really could improve our critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication to elaborate content for Fourth Graders. We always kept thinking what attract leaners attention and engage them into better learning context."

Other students summarized why practical projects were perceived by them to contribute to their professional growth:

"As a result of this course, I am now much more productive, and I have learned a range of new technological skills, including Microsoft powerpoint and how to do Android application for smartphones."

"Developing digital books, android applications and educational websites helped me as a student in this course to grow professionally."

"When I used this application with my students, the results were amazing and surprising. Weak and shy students who never participated got motivated and participated in using the application. As a result of using this application with my students, most of the students recognized the new unit's vocabulary not like the previous units. In the end, this course (Technology in Language Learning and Teaching) is very beneficial and useful in my carrier as a teacher."

In short, most participants listed the practical projects as factors that contributed to their professional growth. The practical projects contributed to shaping the students identity and teaching profession. They learned novel methods based on practical and empirical research that and this helped them improve their teaching styles and practices. As a result, they described it as a valuable teaching project that resulted in great works. The practical projects equipped them with practical methods and strategies, and most importantly putting the theoretical part into practice and thus contributed to their professional growth.

   c. **Class management strategies (changing roles, saving time, learning centered activities)**
        Another factor that appeared frequently as a major contributor to their professional growth was class management strategies.

A second aspect of the course that perceived to promote professional growth is class management strategies. Most participants highlighted the role of class management strategies in prompting their professional growth.

   The participants highlighted how the course helped them in class management. It helped them in saving time, changing roles as well as using interactive experiences and promoting collaboration among their students:

   • They have the ability to create their own educational material in a short time and low cost.
   • They have been stimulated to develop their students' communicative skills and critical thinking by using technology.
   • Their vision of using technology in language learning field has become broader.
   • This kind of collaboration has developed my sense of active collaboration.
   • The first goal is to support my students' collaboration and provide them with interactive experiences. The second one is to transform my teaching processes from being teacher-dominated to student-centered. The third goal is to focus on developing my students'

critical thinking. The fourth one is to provide my students with the 21st-century skills where student practice and develop their four skills significantly. The fifth goal is to take the individual differences and students' needs and interests into consideration. The seventh one is to make the learning process a continuous one that does not stop at the limits of the curriculum and the limits of school hours. Finally, to use all technological devices even the very simple one.

- Using the powerpoint program makes it easier and more interesting for students.
- Integrating technology will save time.
- Using technology makes learning fun and valuable.
- Moreover, using technology enhances motivation, collaboration and interactivity in all students especially those with low abilities and motivation.

This means that the participants believe that the course contributed to their professional growth as they started using better class management strategies by developing interesting activities and managing classes effectively.

d. Expanding knowledge and critical thinking skills

Developing critical thinking appeared to be one of the major factors that added to their professional growth and expanded their knowledge. Most participants emphasized the role of the course in stimulating their professional growth in terms the major benefits were revealed by the participants are:

- The course expanded their knowledge about the possibilities of technology in the EFL classroom. They became prepared to use a lot of technological resources inside their classes.
- The course contributed to broadening their understanding of the potential of CALL in their classes. Now, they are using technology almost in their classes.
- They are motivating their students, saving time and moving toward a student centered class.
- They empowered their knowledge with critical thinking and judging the work of others.
- They became capable of producing more and performing much better as a result of this course. After discussing many CALL resources during this course, they felt that they became well prepared to apply what they learned to develop themselves and their students.
- It made them expert in using online collaborative writing and other skills to use in their future career.
- It prepared them well for the challenges that they might face during work.
- They become knowledgeable about the importance of technology in language learning and teaching. Thus, as teachers, they decided to transfer their repertoire of this course to their colleagues as well as their students. For instance, said that they are going to expose their students to tools used to teach and learn using technology and they are going to show their students the websites done by other colleagues in order to change their attitudes, attract their attention and make them eager toward learning through technology.
- They felt that the course improved their professional capabilities in the sense that it made me experiences what it would be like to step into the shoes of a teacher and teach students through the use of computer programs.

- The course developed their experiences as MA students as this course developed their ability to explore the web looking for authentic materials for their students and using technology and appealing up-to-date activities
- They gained some confidence to use and technology in the classes.
- The course enabled them to diagnose the teaching and learning context after integrating technological devices as initiative reforms to reinforce modern teaching methods in the 21st-century.

3. What suggestions do MA students have for improving the Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course?

The participants offered a number of suggestions to improve the Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course. These suggestions are pertinent to the number of assignments, more practical projects and technical training workshops, prepare better labs. The suggestions are:

a. Reducing the number of assignments and increasing the practical activities

Regarding the number of assignments, the students have a number of suggestions. Some participants suggested reducing the number of assignments as they did not have sufficient time and faced challenges in preparing two presentations. They elaborated that focusing on a certain task will help each of them to explore the great value and benefit a lot. They added that they need more practical activities and watching more educational videos.

b. More practical projects and technical training workshops

Offering more practical projects and technical training workshops is one of the suggestions that most of the participants called for. The suggestions regarding this aspect can be summarized in the following points:

1- Creating websites instead of carrying out theoretical research papers
2- More practice
3- Conducting training workshops on how to make a teaching website or electronic book
4- Having field trips to local schools to see what elements of CALL are available and what elements are not.

c. Preparing better labs

Regarding the labs, the students have a number of suggestions.

The suggestions revolved around preparing better labs to be better equipped with the technological devices and internet resources (constant availability of internet connection).

4. What are adjectives that the MA students used to express their feelings about developing a digital book and other applications in the Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course?

The participants expressed their feelings about the course by mentioning more than 152 adjectives (Appendix B). There are adjectives like interesting and enjoyable which are mentioned by more than eight participants. Other adjectives like novel, authentic, creative and amazing are mentioned more than four times. Finally, a number of adjectives are mentioned more than three times like motivating, comfortable, challenging, cooperative and innovative.

Some students chose to describe the course in a form of a paragraph. One of the participants wrote:

The idea of developing a digital book or making educational websites is very much beneficial. I was very interested and amused by my colleagues' projects. I found that they were careful and brilliant in their choices of the materials concluded in the electronic books or the educational websites. Electronic books are attractive, courageous, wonderful, and easy to use. It is also helpful for students as it provides them with information in a funny and enjoyable way. Creating websites to treat certain weaknesses in students' achievement in the class is another great idea to help our students to become a better learner. For example, my colleague Nasser created a wonderful website. The website he created is colorful and full of training materials worksheets, educational games, and song. In my opinion, this course prepared us to become bright teachers who use modern ways of solving our students learning problems. I was really very much interested in this course and I gained great information that will help me in my teaching process in the future. I feel happy and interested to watch our great outcomes in this course. I feel proud to be one of the students in this course. I feel fortunate and grateful for my professor for his great choice of the material he prepared. I feel strong, thoughtful, and responsible in my coming experiences in teaching.

Another student wrote a similar comment:

Although it was a challenging experience for us to accomplish accumulated duties at a particular time, it was an enjoyable and fruitful experience for Samar and I. We could finally establish interesting application and trustworthy webpage that includes the essential knowledge required for integrating modern educational tools. However, we included other past methods of interactive teaching and learning because there are some schools are not equipped with newly-invented tools of educational technology. Our significant project considers teachers' development and includes interactive digital material that can reinforce students' abilities. This new project can be described as a constructivist, creative and effective for autonomous learners.

Discussion

The analysis of the reflective journals revealed a number of interrelated themes. Throughout their reflective journals about their experiences in the course, the students identified a number of themes. Most of the students identified key aspects   such as: practical projects (web page construction, electronic books, and research paper), websites evaluation topics/materials and presentations, discussion, and online responses. The most effective theme as perceived by the participants is that of *practical projects*. All of the participants without exception mentioned practical projects as one of the most useful elements in the course. Most of the participants felt that the practical projects and website evaluation equipped them with the necessary technological knowledge and exposed them to effective teaching methods and strategies, classroom management strategies.

Additionally, most of the participants mentioned that the covered topics and their own presentations, in addition to the presentations delivered by their classmates, were useful and of great benefits. They described the course content and the presentations as a valuable and interesting experience and the materials that were covered were up-to-date, rich, clear, comprehensive, authentic, and relevant. They felt that the covered materials helped them develop their critical and creative thinking strategies and equipped them with the 21st-century skills.

In addition to identifying good aspects of the course, the students, described how the course contributed to their professional growth. This finding is in line with other studies (Burhan-Horasanlı & Ortaçtepe, 2016; Farrell, 2013) that emphasized the importance of practical projects in developing students' identities as teachers and preparing them to practice in real-life teaching situations.

The students identified a number of issues that contributed to their professional growth such as effective preparation and use of Power Point presentations, practical projects and employing technological devices, class management strategies, and expanding knowledge and critical thinking skills. Accordingly, there was a consensus among the students that the course helped them prepare effective Power Point presentations as they became competent in using presentations and other technological devices. This resulted in shaping their professional identity. Additionally, the students felt that through the practical projects, they gained a variety of teaching skills that will be helpful in their future career. In addition, all the projects were excellent in developing the students' abilities to study. Accordingly, they felt that the various projects helped them in their teaching profession. They learned novel methods based on practical and empirical research which helped them improve their teaching styles and practices. As a result, they described it as a valuable teaching project that resulted in great works. The practical projects equipped them with practical methods and strategies, and most importantly putting the theoretical part into practice and thus contributed to their professional growth.

Furthermore, the students felt that the course contributed to their professional growth in terms of offering them effective classroom management strategies. Most participants highlighted the role of class management strategies in prompting their professional growth; the participants believed that the course helped them in class management. When the students were asked to offer some suggestions to improve the course, they suggested reducing the number of assignments, offering more practical projects and technical training workshops, and preparing labs that are rich with technological devices and internet resources. Finally, the students described their experience in the course with many positive experiences such as interesting, enjoyable and many others.

Conclusion
It is evident from the experiences of the students in the course that they benefited from the different elements of the course under study. They benefited from the practical projects and the experience helped them in their professional development. It is a clear finding in this study that the participants liked the practical aspects of the course such as developing and evaluating websites that help them to enhance their instructional activities. Interestingly, one of the most significant points from this study entails that the more the students are offered opportunities to practice in real contexts, the wider the possibility their identity and profession as teachers is developed. On the other hand, the participants believed that the course can be improved by increasing the practical projects and reducing the number of theoretical assignments. Based on the results of the study, it is strongly recommended that future course focus more on the practical aspects in such courses as they are more appealing to students and contribute positively to the learners' professional development.

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Appendix A

1. Which aspects of the graduate Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course were perceived as the most useful for them?
1. How do graduate students perceive their professional growth as a result of the Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course?
2. What suggestions do graduate students have for improving the Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course?
3. What adjectives graduate students used to express their feelings about developing a digital book and other applications in the Technology in Language Learning and Teaching course?

Appendix B: A summary for the most frequent adjectives

Interesting	9		Helpful	2		Attention- grapping	1
Enjoyable	8		Time and effort saving	2		Critical thinking provoking	1
Amazing	7		Enthusiastic	2		Enlightening	1
Creative	7		Brilliant	2		Fabulous	1
Attractive	5		Educational	2		Fantastic	1
Effective	5		Beneficial	2		Fruitful	1
Courageous	4		Encouraging	2		Happy	1
Delightful	4		Engaging	2		Independent autonomous	1 1
Energetic	4		Interactive	2		Informative	1
Constructive	4		Wonderful	2		Inquiry-based project	1
Fun	4		Trustworthy	2		Marvelous	1
Novel	4		Challenging	2		Professional	1
Authentic	4		Comfortable	2		Rich	1
Useful	4		Motivating	2		Routine breaking	1
Cooperative	3		Curios	2		Thought-provoking	1
Innovative	3		Great	2		Trustworthy	1
Trustworthy	3		Practical	2		Unusual	1
Challenging	3		Significant	2		Well-designed	1
Comfortable	3		Stimulating	2		Well-implemented	1
Motivating	3		Curious	2		nice	1
Total						**152**	