

Teaching Refugees from Arabic Middle East to Use Technology through Blended Learning

Research Proposal

by

Amelie Hanna

Amelie.hanna@outlook.com.au

Mob: 0404 131312

Research Background:

There are increasing numbers of refugees who were arrived to Australia, from less-developed countries. Many of those refugees face challenges in the transition to more advanced educational system and teaching / learning style. Previous research has mainly focused on the language and/or cultural barriers, but less has focused on the ICT skills that the refugees are lacking – and without developing such skills, the developing of language and literacy skills would remain of issue – since most educational institutions have moved to student-centered style of learning. Moreover, computer (or ICT) classes that community centres are providing to refugees to develop their ICT skills are mainly conducted in English – which would make it different for the refugees to build their skills quickly considering the language challenge they already facing. The delay in developing the ICT skills not only cost money for funding integration programs, but also cost time – where refugees lose years or months in their preparation for the appropriate level of study.

Research Questions:

Main Question

Will blended teaching of ICT skills, both online & face-to-face, in a mix of Arabic & English languages to refugees from Middle East achieve better learning outcomes from those who received the teaching totally in English?

Subsidiary Questions

To be able to answer the research main question, I will need to answer a number of subsidiary questions:

- 1) What criteria I should use to identify my study sample between the control group from the study group? How can those refugees be recruited?
- 2) What ICT skills that are required for the refugees to learn?
- 3) How I develop the profile for each refugee (in terms of language skills & ICT skills)?
- 4) How can I conduct the teaching (both online and face-to-face)?
- 5) How can I assess refugee's learning of ICT skills?

These above subsidiary questions will be answered throughout the research, and the collective answers of those questions will help in answering the research main question.

Research Objectives:

- 1) Assessing ICT skills of refugees from Middle East Arabic countries to stand on their ICT literacy.
- 2) Enhancing and developing the ICT skills of refugees from Arabic Middle East countries.
- 3) Identifying the differences between using two teaching strategies (mix of Arabic & English and English only), to determine which strategy is more efficient.
- 4) Identifying limitations & barriers in applying the findings to refugees from non-Arabic countries?
- 5) Suggesting practical recommendations for community centres and government programs who are concerned with enhancing the integration of refugees from Middle East in the society.

Proposed Methods:

- 1) Face-to-face questionnaire will be used to build personal profile for each refugee.
- 2) Practical ICT Test, to develop the picture of ICT skills for each refugee.
- 3) Observation: while performing the face-to-face ICT teaching, observation notes will be collected about refugee engagement & progress in ICT lessons.
- 4) Log-files Analysis: analysis of refugee interactions with the online learning materials will be assessed to determine their achievement, development & progress.
- 5) Final Test: Practical Test will be conducted for both groups to evaluate refugees achievement in relation to developing their ICT skills.
- 6) Feedback survey: At the end of the ICT sessions, refugees will be requested to answer a survey (can be printed or online) to report their experience during the sessions. Answers will be analysed to draw a bigger picture about this study trial.

Expected Outcomes:

- 1) Time-saving in teaching ICT skills by bi-lingual (Arabic & English) ICT instructor.
- 2) Saving cost of lengthy ICT sessions – when avoiding the delay resulted in lack of English understanding.
- 3) Creating the awareness among refugees from Arabic Middle East countries about the fundamentals of integration and success in their new home country of Australia.
- 4) Ease the cultural chock when they receive their basic ICT skills from someone from their background culture.
- 5) ICT sessions conducted in two languages not only help in developing ICT skills but also develop their English language skills.
- 6) Refugees, by the end of the ICT sessions, be able to write their CVs, which will make them market ready and develop their confidence.

Researcher Profile:

I have qualifications and more than 15 years of experience in the field of e-Learning Technology & Information Technology. I am experienced in e-Learning Instructional Design – using different Learning & Content Management Systems (LMS & CMS) and other web, media & graphic applications, such as Moodle, Chamilo, Drupal, and Joomla. I am fluent in English & Arabic, and have the experience in teaching in both languages, both online and face-to-face. I also have the experience in using mixed research methods (quantitative & qualitative).

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