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Faten A. Zahran   
Horus University, Egypt

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# The Impact of ASSURE Model-Based Program on EFL in-Service Preparatory Teachers Teaching Skills and Digital Literacy Skills

Faten A. Zahran

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## Abstract

Though a number of studies addressed the current needs in EFL teachers' training, a main research gap yet to be addressed is investigating the efficacy of the professional development of in-service teachers using an instructional model and its actual impact on students. Through using three instruments -designed by the author- that included: (a survey of EFL teaching skills, a teacher knowledge test, a digital literacy skills scale, a teacher performance assessment analytic rubric), this study attempted to determine the impact of ASSURE model on EFL in-service preparatory teachers teaching skills and digital literacy skills. The results indicated that z-values of the teachers' knowledge test, teachers' digital literacy skills scale and teachers' performance assessment rubric were significant. ASSURE model proved to be helpful in developing EFL preparatory teachers teaching skills and digital literacy skills.

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## Introduction

Nowadays online learning environment internet-integrated platforms and applications are used for delivering courses material, teaching and doing exams. Therefore, developing teachers' digital literacy skills that is the base for developing learners' digital skills is a need. Professional development of teachers is the pillar of increasing the quality of teaching and learning process. Modern technology-based training programs are needed in order for English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers to keep with the up-dates in new teaching approaches, new educational platforms, new methods of assessment and changes in both teaching methods and course syllabus.

Marais and Meier (2004) indicated that teaching practice refer to all experiences that student-teachers gain from actual training inside classrooms. While the professional development of teachers is the training that enable in-service teachers to develop their knowledge and skills needed to improve the teaching and learning process, and overcome learners' problems (Mizell, 2010). Teaching practice is an integral part of student-teachers training in Egypt. However, due to the recent changes in technology, teaching methods and assessment, it is crucial for EFL Egyptians in-service teachers to be trained on new approaches and strategies that help them develop their teaching skills. El-shazly (2020) indicated that teachers who do not follow organized and suitable plan for teaching and evaluation usually focus on delivering the content subject rather than increasing learners' skills.

Teachers also find difficulty in dealing with obstacles that may happen during teaching process. Furthermore, in

their study, Liza and Andriyanti (2020) reported that most EFL teachers are unprepared for integrating technology inside classes because of the lack of adequate digital literacy skills. Fitriah (2017) added that teachers' digital literacy skills are restricted to technical skills and they lack the ability to use technology in teaching. Darling-Hammond et al., (2017) and Heller et al., (2012) confirmed the significance of focusing on teaching methods that include using models in the professional development of teaching skills. They indicated that instructional models give teachers a clear image of putting a lesson plan, determining students' needs and giving feedback. According to Cam and Kiyici (2017) and Maher (2020) the challenges that EFL teachers face in using technology inside classrooms can be overcome if their training programs are equipped with technological-based teaching methods.

### **Context of the Problem**

A pilot study was conducted by the author to find out the factors that could affect the experienced teachers' skills and performance such as, their willingness to participate in professional development activities, the types of professional development activities they would like to pursue, their teaching skills, their digital literacy skills and their knowledge of ASSURE model to provide evidence for the current study problem. The author interviewed 20 EFL in-service teachers at Mansoura College Language Schools and their supervisors. It was found that 87 % of EFL teachers had less or no accurate basic knowledge about the ASSURE model, 85 % of the participants had professional growth plans, 75 % of the participants were willing to make use of technology in the classrooms. The pilot study showed a need for conducting a study to develop EFL teaching skills and digital literacy skills for EFL in-service preparatory teachers. Based on the results of the pilot study and the review of EFL studies related to teaching skills and digital literacy skills (e.g., El-shazly, 2020; Liza and Andriyanti, 2020; Maher, 2020) that indicated the challenges which EFL in-service teachers face during improving teaching skills and digital literacy skills it can be concluded that using technological-based instructional model in the current study might enhance EFL in-service preparatory teachers teaching skills and digital literacy skills as well.

### **Statement of the Problem**

EFL in-service preparatory teachers need to develop their knowledge and performance in teaching skills and digital literacy skills. Therefore, the author recommends using ASSURE model as a technique that may possibly develop teachers' teaching skills and digital literacy skills.

### **Questions**

- 1- What are the features of a proposed ASSURE model- based training program that develop teaching skills and digital literacy skills?
- 2- What is the effectiveness of using ASSURE model in developing EFL in-service preparatory teachers' teaching skills?
- 3- What is the effectiveness of using ASSURE model in developing EFL in-service preparatory teachers' digital literacy skills?

## **Significance**

1. Helping EFL in-service teachers improve their skills in: conveying clear rules and expectations regarding students' behavior at appropriate times, monitoring students' behavior carefully, dealing with misbehavior with positive and negative reinforcement and using ICT as a management tool.
2. Helping EFL in-service teachers improve their digital literacy skills.
3. Enriching literature concerning the effectiveness of ASSURE model in enhancing EFL teaching skills and digital literacy skills.
4. Giving EFL program designers documented evidence for the impact of using ASSURE model.

## **Hypotheses**

1. There is statistically significant difference at the  $\leq 0.05$  level between the mean ranks of the experimental pre- and post- test scores in the teaching knowledge skills in favor of the post- test.
2. There is statistically significant difference at the  $\leq 0.05$  level between the mean ranks of the experimental pre- and post- scale scores in the digital literacy scale in favor of the post- scale.
3. There is statistically significant difference at the  $\leq 0.05$  level between the mean ranks of the experimental group on the pre-post administrations of the teaching skills performance analytic Rubric.

## **Delimitations**

1. A sample of EFL in-service preparatory stage teachers at Mansoura College Language Schools (N = 20).
2. The following EFL teaching skills: conveying clear rules and expectations regarding students' behavior at appropriate times, monitoring students' behavior carefully and dealing with misbehavior with positive and negative reinforcement, and using digital literacy skills.
3. The first semester of the academic year 2022/2023.

Subdivide text into unnumbered sections, using short, meaningful sub-headings. Please do not use numbered headings.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Teaching Skills**

According to Kyriacou (2007), teaching skills are defined as all activities and practices that teachers do to support students learning. El-Shazly (2020) defined it as the activities that teachers do inside and outside the schoolrooms to engage students in the learning process in order to improve learners' performance. Teaching skills are operationally defined as teachers' ability to use instructional model for planning the teaching activities with the aim of improving their teaching skills and consequently developing the quality of the teaching and learning process.

### **The Importance of Developing In-Service Teachers' Teaching Skills**

Reaching the professionalism level in the teaching process necessitates continuous training. Kavak et al., (2012) as well as Giraldo (2014) investigated the impact of professional development training programs on in-service teachers' performance. The observations and questionnaires that were used in their studies showed that in-service teachers performance was enhanced due to training. Furthermore, teachers had positive attitude towards their training programs. Wong (2011) and Lieberman & Miller (2014) stated six bases for the significance of professional development for in-service teachers: (1) being aware of strength and weakness points, teachers can make use of skills they have and develop the skills that are needed, (2) attending training workshops help teachers improve their skills in teaching as well as in language itself. Discussions, reading materials and speaking that happen during training help teachers improve their language skills, (3) being involved in a case study and classrooms problems solving discussions help teachers gain new skills that enable them solve their students' problems inside classrooms, (4) being aware of new approaches in teaching help teachers to positively and easily respond to any changes in language teaching methodology, (5) getting promotions are based on the professional development, and (6) being involved in professional development strength the link between research results and actual practices of teachers inside classrooms.

### **Digital Literacy skills**

Digital literacy was defined by Heitin (2016) as the intellectual and technical skills capabilities that enable learners to use communication technology sources to find, analyze, evaluate and create educational content. Digital literacy is operationally defined as training EFL in-service preparatory teachers in order to use technology in teaching and improve their abilities to search, analyze, use and develop online material. Preparing EFL teachers for teaching using modern technologies requires training student-teachers as well as in-service teachers for building and improving their digital literacy skills. However, a number of studies (e.g., Elstad & Christophersen, 2017; Rasmitadila et al., 2020; Kulal & Nayak, 2020; Husain et al., 2021) indicated that both pre- and in-service teachers are not being sufficiently equipped with the adequate level of digital literacy skills. Moreover, Rahayu and Wirza (2020) as well as Klapproth (2020) examine teachers' perception of online teaching during Covid-19 pandemic. They confirmed the necessity of developing teachers' digital literacy skills in order to be ready for teaching based modern technology. A number of scholar (e.g., Yang, 2020; Rahayu & Wirza, 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020; Kulal & Nayak, 2020; Husain et al., 2021) stated that online learning is not an easy process for both students and teachers. They indicated that current teacher training programs do not give adequate attention to the professional development of digital literacy skills. Consequently, many students do not use technology properly in learning.

### **Importance of Developing Teachers Digital Literacy Skills**

Vuorikari et al., (2016) and Elstad and Christophersen (2017) listed 10 traits that digital teachers can accomplish:

- (1) basic skills that include the ability to make use of computer and software,
- (2) search that include the ability to access different sources of information,
- (3) download that include the ability to download information,

- (4) navigate that include the ability to learn and apply internet strategies,
- (5) classify that include the ability to organize information,
- (6) integrate that include the ability to compare and assemble information from different resources,
- (7) evaluate that include the ability to judge the relevance and objectivity of the information,
- (8) communicate that include the ability to transfer thoughts through different online means,
- (9) cooperate that include the ability to participate in learning based digital technology, and
- (10) create that include the ability to construct web pages and develop teaching materials using online tools and software.

It is crucial to teach students the skills that will enable them to cope with the development of information technology. In view of that, equipping teachers with digital skills is of great significance. Serezhkina (2021) assured the positive consequences of improving teachers' digital literacy skills on their students. Digital teachers can: (1) help themselves develop their use of technology in teaching, choose proper educational applications and tools, improve their digital teaching methods, and (2) help students to use online learning resources, search engine, educational platforms and application (Ghosh, 2020).

### **Models of professional development of In-Service Teachers Teaching Skills**

The three models used in professional development programs for teachers include: (1) standardized teacher professional development that include intensive workshops and training sessions for providing teachers with the same knowledge regardless the differences between the process of learning in each educational phase, (2) site-based teacher program that addresses local educational problems that teachers encounter during applying the new teaching methods, (3) self-directed teacher program in which teachers participate in the training by sharing ideas, material and discussions about educational problems and solutions (Pelgrum and Law, 2003; Gaible and Burns, 2005). Prihatmi, Istiqoma and Anjarwati (2020) suggested using ASSURE model in designing lessons plan and teaching. They indicated the advantages of using the ASSURE model that include: (1) using technology in teaching process, (2) improving all language skills and (3) the availability of implementing the model in all educational phases. ASSURE model can help teachers improve their teaching skills and in turn impact the learning outcome (Xia and Li, 2022). Based on the review of related studies, it could be concluded that professional development of in-service teachers' teaching skills is an indispensable factor of increasing teaching process efficacy and improving their students' skills and knowledge. It could be also anticipated that using ASSURE model might possibly improve EFL in-service preparatory teachers' teaching skills and digital literacy skills as well.

### **ASSURE Model**

ASSURE model was created by Heinich et al. (2002). The stages of the ASSURE model are shown in Figure 1. ASSURE model as shown in figure 1 consists of six phases: (1) analyzing learners, (2) determining the educational objectives, (3) choosing material and teaching method, (4) using educational technology that is the base of the model, (5) making sure of learner participation and (6) evaluation and revision that include the evaluation for the sake of achieving the educational goals, the transferred knowledge and skills and the efficacy of method and the

utilized media. ASSURE model is an instructional design that help teachers analyze their learners needs, set goals, choose proper method and materials, evaluate performance and revise. The model concentrates on using media and technology in designing educational activities and enhancing learning processes. ASSURE model operationally defined as an instructional method used for training EFL in-service preparatory teachers to improve their teaching skills and digital literacy skills.

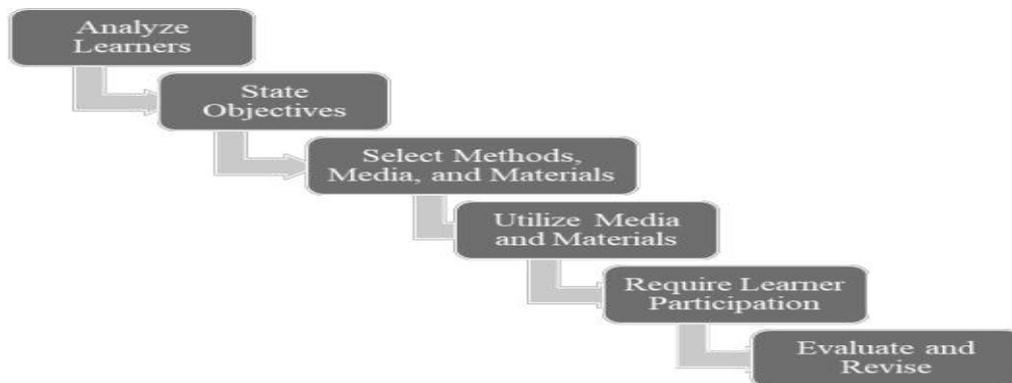


Figure 1. The ASSURE Model (Heinich, Molenda, Russell and Smaldino, 2002)

### The Advantages of Using ASSURE Model

Kazanci-Gül, Altun & Yabas (2020) investigated the impact of ASSURE model on learners critical thinking, technology literacy and their academic performance. The researchers also examined teachers and students' attitude towards using ASSURE model. The results indicated the positive impact of using ASSURE model on improving learners' technology literacy as well as academic performance while there was not any impact on critical thinking skills. Additionally, both teachers and students had positive attitude towards ASSURE model. Aktas (2015) confirmed that ASSURE model helped teachers to determine their students' needs and difficulties. Besides it helped teachers develop their technology knowledge. The advantages of using ASSURE model include:

- (1) the participation of learners in teaching and learning process,
- (2) all the learning components as students, learning goals, activities, strategies and technology are included, and
- (3) the evaluation for each phase in the model and the assessment of the whole teaching and learning process (Prihatmi, Istiqoma and Anjarwati, 2020).

Muammar, Harjono, and Gunawan (2017) and Sundayana (2019) added that ASSURE model positively impact the learning process, develop learners' problem- solving skills and independence. Al-Khattat, Habeeb, and Mohammed (2019) stated that using ASSURE model instructional design aims at producing effective instruction and increasing the quality of teaching and learning process.

## Method

### Participants

The participants were a group of 20 EFL Preparatory stage teachers at Mansoura College language schools. They

participated in the experiment voluntarily (random selection was not easy because the author did not have a big number of teachers to choose randomly). They were eight males and twelve females. The participants aged from mid twenty's to late forty's. Their experience ranged from two years to twenty years. The author has chosen that school to implement her experiment for some justifications: (1) Horus university where the author works and Mansoura College Schools are owned by the same Board of Trustees, Consequently the author offered some facilities by the school administration, (2) Mansoura College language schools is located in the author's hometown; accordingly, it is easily reached.

### **Design**

One-group pretest-posttest design was applied. Teachers' knowledge and performance were pre-examined through a knowledge test and a teacher performance assessment analytic Rubric. Furthermore, a pre digital literacy skills scale was used to examine teachers' digital literacy skills. ASSURE model was used in the training program. Then, the group had a post knowledge test, a post teacher performance assessment analytic Rubric and a post digital literacy skills scale.

### **Instruments**

For achieving the study aims, the author organized the subsequent instruments:

- 1) A Survey of EFL teaching skills.
- 2) A teacher knowledge test.
- 3) A digital literacy skills scale.
- 4) A teacher performance assessment analytic Rubric for assessing EFL teaching skills performance of the preparatory teachers during their actual teaching practices inside classrooms.

Validity of the instruments were proven through jury validation. Alpha Cronbach was used to measure the internal consistency for the teacher knowledge test and digital literacy skills scale. The value of alpha coefficient for the teacher knowledge test was 0.704, which means that the test is reliable. The value of alpha coefficient of the digital literacy skills scale was 0.697, which indicates a high value of the scale reliability.

### **The Program: ASSURE Model for Improving EFL Preparatory Teachers Teaching Skills and Digital Literacy Skills**

#### ***Objectives***

An educational training program based ASSURE model was designed for improving teaching skills and digital literacy skills. The EFL teaching skills survey and related literature were made use of in designing the training program.

#### ***Description, Duration and Content***

The program was designed based on the principles of ASSURE model, the teaching skills survey and related

literature. The training program aimed at developing EFL in-service Preparatory stage teachers' teaching skills and digital literacy skills. The program was applied through eight workshops and an introductory session and a final session. The ASSURE model-based training program started with an introductory session to explain to the participants the general guidelines of the program, such as: aim, needs, objectives, content, time, strategies, procedures, tasks, teaching/learning techniques, benefits, and evaluation method that would be used. Each skill was tackled in two workshops, one for the theoretical background and the other one for knowledge application. The program continued for one semester- 12 weeks (October, November and December) during the academic year 2022/2023 from 9/10/2022 till 29/12/2022.

### ***Evaluation***

Two types of evaluation were applied in the program: formative and summative. Formative evaluation was conducted for the purpose of assessing learners' gradual progress in teaching knowledge base of the selected skills, digital literacy skills and feedback on their overall performance in each session based on the rubrics that allowed participants to evaluate their overall work throughout the program. Formative evaluation took place on three levels; self-evaluation, group evaluation and the author evaluation according to the criteria of success mentioned in the rubrics. Summative evaluation was conducted through estimating the effect size of the ASSURE model-based training program on developing EFL in-service preparatory stage teachers' specified teaching skills and digital literacy skills by comparing the results of the pre-post administrations of the knowledge test, digital literacy skills scale and the teacher performance analytic Rubric.

### **Results and Discussion**

To answer the questions of the study, the three hypotheses were tested. In order to verify the first hypothesis, Wilcoxon test of nonparametric statistics that calculates paired groups was used (as  $N < 30$ ). Table 1 shows the z-values and the statistical significances of the differences between the pre-post administrations of the knowledge test of the treatment group. Table 1 shows that z-values of the teacher Knowledge test were significant. Hence, the program was effective in developing the participants' knowledge of the ASSURE model and the teaching skills under investigation.

The development in teachers teaching skills might be a consequence of training using ASSURE model. Considering both: (1) the difficulties that face teachers in putting a plan for teaching and evaluation besides challenges concerning dealing with problems that happens during teaching and (2) the recommendations of using suitable model in teaching as reported by several studies (e.g., Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; El-shazly, 2020; Maher, 2020), the author of the current study trained EFL preparatory teachers using ASSURE model that helped them put convenient lesson plan in light of their students' needs. Moreover, it helped them use technology, give feedback and develop their performance and knowledge. This result goes in line with Aktas (2015) and Al-Khattat, Habeeb, and Mohammed (2019) who assured that ASSURE model assisted teachers to improve their teaching skills, develop their technology knowledge and effectively deal with their students' needs and difficulties.

Table 1. Comparing the Performance of the Treatment Group on the Pre-post Administrations of the Knowledge Test

Skills	Ranks	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	z value	Sig.
ASSURE Model	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210	3.31	0.05
	Ties	0	-	-		
	Negative Ranks	0	0	0		
Rules	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210	3.11	
	Ties	0	-	0		
	Negative Ranks	0	0	0		
Reinforcement	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210	3.23	
	Ties	0	-	-		
	Negative Ranks	0	0	0		
ICT	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210	3.20	
	Ties	0	-	-		
	Negative Ranks	0	0	0		
Total	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210	3.41	
	Ties	0	-	-		
	Negative Ranks	0	0	0		

The effect size of the program on teachers' performance was calculated as presented in Table 2. Table 2 shows the effect size of using ASSURE model on teachers' knowledge of the ASSURE model and the three teaching skills under investigation. All values exceeded 0.50. This result goes in line with Kazanci-Gül, Altun and Yabas (2020) that confirmed the positive impact of using ASSURE model on improving teachers' knowledge of teaching skills and digital literacy skills as well.

Table 2. The Effect Size of the ASSURE Model-based Training Program in EFL Teachers' Knowledge of the Model and the EFL Teaching Skills under Investigation

Skills	z value	$\eta^2$	Effect size
ASSURE Model	3.31	0.83	High
Rules	3.11	0.79	
Reinforcement	3.23	0.80	
ICT	3.20	0.80	
Total	3.41	0.84	

For testing the second hypothesis, Wilcoxon test was used as showed in Table 3. Findings in Table 3 indicates that the total z value for digital literacy skills was significant. This result could be interpreted that ASSURE model impacted teacher digital literacy skills. Creating a learning environment where teachers can use effective teaching models and design online-based learning activities and quizzes based on students' needs necessitates trained teachers who are able to determine learning objectives, decide the suitable teaching method and use technology skillfully. Using educational technology is the base of ASSURE model. The author of the current study trained

EFL preparatory teachers how to make use of all Microsoft applications such as stream, PowerPoint, one note, one drive, calendar, teams, outlook and forms. Teachers have been trained how to create quizzes, communicate with their students, set online meetings, receive assignments and send feedback through Microsoft applications. Therefore, it can be confirmed that ASSURE model enabled EFL in-service preparatory teachers to develop their digital literacy skills. This result goes in line with Kazanci-Gül, Altun & Yabas (2020) that confirmed the positive relation between using ASSURE model and the development of digital literacy skills.

Table 3. Comparing the Mean Ranks of the Treatment Group on the Pre-post Administrations of the Digital Literacy Skills

Digital Literacy Skills	Ranks	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	z value	Sig.
	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210		
Total	Ties	0	-	-	3.46	5
	Negative Ranks	0	0	0		

The effect size of the program on teachers' digital literacy skills was calculated as presented in Table 4. Table 4 shows that the effect size of using ASSURE model on digital literacy skills exceeded 0.50. Based on observing teachers' actual performance inside classrooms, it was noted that their use of Microsoft teams in teaching has improved. They have become able to use Microsoft forms to do online quizzes, set up virtual classrooms, record students attendance, upload educational material, track students' progress and send them feedback.

Table 4. The Effect Size of the ASSURE Model-based Training Program in EFL Teachers' Digital Literacy Skills

Digital Literacy Skills	z value	$\eta^2$	Effect size
Total	3.46	0.87	High

For verifying the third hypothesis, Wilcoxon test was used as showed in Table 5. Results in Table 5 indicates that the total z value of the teacher performance assessment analytic rubric was significant. Going through the analysis of the obtained results of the pre-post administrations of the knowledge test and the teacher performance assessment analytic rubric, it became evident that the ASSURE model-based training program was effective in developing knowledge and performance of the model and the three specified teaching skills. ASSURE model helped teachers to follow organized lesson plan and instructions. Besides it helped teachers determine their students' needs and problems that in turn aided teachers improve their performance.

The effect size of the program on teachers' performance was calculated as presented in Table 6. Table 6 shows that the effect size of using ASSURE model on the three teaching skills under investigation exceeded 0.50. The teacher performance analytic rubric was used to assess the EFL preparatory teachers' levels of performance in actual classrooms before and after applying the training program to measure ASSURE model potential impact on the participants' performance. Each participant was observed and assessed by the author for two continued sessions before and after applying the training program. The author sat at the back of the classroom, observed the performance of every teacher and marked it according to the marking system provided in the assessment rubric.

The training enabled teachers to create an encouraging learning environment, plan learning tasks, use ASSURE model effectively, determine their students' needs and solve their problems. It was found that training based ASSURE model positively impacted teachers' performance inside classrooms. This result goes in line with Al-Khattat, Habeeb, and Mohammed (2019) that confirmed the positive impact of using ASSURE model on improving teachers' performance.

Table 5. Comparing the Performance of the Treatment Group on the Pre-post Administrations of the Teacher Performance Assessment Analytic Rubric

Skills	Ranks	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	z value	Sig.
ASSURE Model	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210	3.20	
	Ties	0	-	-		
	Negative Ranks	0	0	0		
Rules	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210	3.14	
	Ties	0	-	0		
	Negative Ranks	0	0	0		
Reinforcement	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210	3.35	0.05
	Ties	0	-	-		
	Negative Ranks	0	0	0		
ICT	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210	3.62	
	Ties	0	-	-		
	Negative Ranks	0	0	0		
Total	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210	3.57	
	Ties	0	-	-		
	Negative Ranks	0	0	0		

Table 6. The Effect Size of the ASSURE Model-based Training Program in EFL Teachers' Performance of the ASSURE Model and the EFL Teaching Skills under Investigation

Skills	z value	$\eta^2$	Effect size
ASSURE Model	3.20	0.81	High
Rules	3.14	0.81	
Reinforcement	3.35	0.83	
ICT	3.62	0.87	
Total	3.57	0.85	

## Conclusion

The related literature revealed the efficacy of ASSURE model on improving teaching performance and technology literacy. For that reason, the relation between using ASSUIRE model and developing teaching performance and

digital literacy skills was examined in the current study. Using ASSURE model aided in-service teachers to follow instructional steps that helped them create a resourceful learning environment. It enabled teachers to plan teaching activities and choose the teaching method based on their students' needs. ASSURE model helped in-service teachers to keep their students involved in the teaching learning process. Furthermore, it supported the use of educational technology. Consequently, EFL in-service preparatory teachers' teaching skills and digital literacy skills were developed. Accordingly, with reference to the current study results, the future teachers professional training programs should be designed based on ASSURE model as it is a resourceful model that supports the use of educational technology. Moreover, future studies are needed for examining the impact of ASSURE model on language skills and critical thinking. Future studies are also needed for investigating the impact of ASSURE model on enhancing teachers' self-efficacy.

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### Author Information

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**Faten A. Zahran**



<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-8615-7490>

Associate Professor of ELT and Head of English

Language Department

Horus University

New Damietta

Egypt

Contact e-mail: [faten\\_zahran\\_7@yahoo.com](mailto:faten_zahran_7@yahoo.com)

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