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A piece of information that is shared can go a long way.

Foundation Program The English Department Newsletter

Issue No. 3 - Fall Semester 2005



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(Gloria Steinem-Issues Across the Curriculum,1977)

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(bbc.com)

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EDITOR'S NOTE



'The great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.'

[Shakespeare – Hamlet]

We couldn't agree with Hamlet more. We all ultimately recognize that true fulfillment can never be easily achieved. We believe that life is essentially a continual process of trying

to improve, and we should delight in every single step of progress we can make. The baby you saw in the previous two issues is still in its "swaddling-clouts", but coming along steadily and nicely. It has been nurtured by us all, the English Foundation staff, with time, effort and thought, especially by those of you who enthusiastically contributed to its continuity and progress in various ways. Like a nightingale, it is now singing beautifully; like a flower, it is blooming and flourishing.

With this issue, the Newsletter has acquired a new stance and profile. Simplicity and elegance are now in vogue, both in the quality of paper being used, the cover design and layout; matt paper instead of glossy paper; and one color, brown, has been used, in four different shades, graded as 100%, 70%, 40%, and 20%. Of course, there is always a lot of work behind the scenes helping to put each issue of the Newsletter in shape. In acknowledging the help we have received in this respect, we must thank, in particular, the External Relations Office; Director, Ms Zeina Al Azmeh, and her staff, Ms Sheika Al-Kaabi, Mr. Medhat Mustafa, and Mr. Mohammed Al-Sheik. We must also thank them for the personal interest they took in the Newsletter from the beginning, and for always enabling us to have access to first-hand material for the "University News & Events" section.

In the University Section, we have given an account of the End of Fall Semester University Convention, where the President and the Higher Administration met with the faculty and staff, reviewing and

discussing achievements and challenges in the Fall Semester, in an atmosphere of democracy and transparency. This is in addition to two important achievements, namely, the accreditation given to the Faculty of Engineering by ABET, and the 'Memorandum of Understanding' signed by the University and Microsoft Corporation to boost IT in the University. However, the University continues to diversify and progress in many ways, and with the huge amount of work involved in implementing the Reform Plan, we cannot afford, given space constraints, but to be selective in reporting University news and events.

The most important event which took place at the beginning of the Spring Semester was the launching ceremony of the University's new logo, which is symbolic of the University's vision and mission. We apologize for not being able to provide a comprehensive coverage of the event as the Newsletter was at the time going to press. However, a brief account of the event is given on page 6. You can also view some pictures of the ceremony on pages 2 and 45.

This issue has a different focus. It is essentially more academic in orientation. The Assistant Co-coordinators' Reports summarize the English Department's academic activities in the Fall Semester, including an account of the newly formed "Student Support and Teacher Professional Development Committee", with its Student Centers and Teacher Resources Centre. Development and innovations in curricula, testing, administration, and the Humanities (Active Committees) are clearly reflected in these reports.

More to the tale: There are eight academic articles, dealing with important issues in teaching and learning and closely related to the curriculum: "A 'Hasty' Look into NorthStar" by Dr. Ahmed Abdulla, "A Guide to Evaluation of Teaching Materials" by Dr. Ali A. Hussein, and "Curriculum Development: Portfolio, Tests and Exams Assessment" by Abdul Moniem M Hussein. Leslie Butler has written about a personal teaching experience, suggesting how the teaching of dictation could be carried out, regularly

and for a short period of time, in the MM lab. He has also written about a real-life personal learning experience. Dr. James Moody's article offers insights into the teaching of writing, one of the most problematic of all aspects of the curriculum, using a structured approach. In "Learning Strategies and Autonomy", Dr. Kourosch Lachini emphasizes the significance of learning strategies as the key to successful teaching and learning – how successful teachers and learners actually achieve their goals. In "Freedom to Learn", Dr. Semmar explains how Rogers' (1969) person-centered theory, as related to counseling, could be applied to educational settings, and how he (Dr. Semmar) employed a pretest-posttest, control group design, based on this theory, to study the effects of teachers' responses to second language writing. Our Director, Dr. Khalid Al-Ali, in a first-hand research paper addresses the issue of "Consanguinity (relationship by birth in the family), and Associated Socio-Demographic Factors in the Qatari Population". Besides being informative, it is an excellent piece of Scientific English writing.

A new section has been introduced this time, "The Garden of Verse". We have published here some poems written by two of our colleagues, Dr. John Morris, and Amr Saleh who has also supplied some educational jokes.

As usual, Bino Sarah Paul demonstrates her wonderful skills in reporting the English Department's news and events, laboriously collected throughout the semester and well-documented with dates and photos. Mu Mu Winn, in spite of her demanding duties as level supervisor, has helped with the selection and editing of the Student Section, which has come out this time with a variety of students' writing supplied by the writing teachers. The section also includes students' projects implementing the curriculum in real life, facilitated and supervised by our colleagues: Ridha bin Rajeb, Tasneem Kureishi, and Saras Subbaraman.

Finally, I take up my pen again, knowing that you have had a long journey through our serious sections, to select for you some light-hearted material, in what I have labeled "Miscellanea". Sit, relax and enjoy. Happy Spring Semester.



Welcome: Mary Lanaghan joined the Newsletter staff towards the end of the Fall Semester. We welcome Mary on board.

Abdul Moniem



At the logo ceremony



Dr. Humaid Al-Midfa, Vice-President for Administrative Affairs, speaking at the event



UNIVERSITY NEWS & EVENTS

HIGHLIGHTS

{By Abdul Moniem M Hussein}

END OF FALL SEMESTER MEETING

{ A Translation }

Achievements and Challenges in Fall, 2005

Perspectives and Plans for Spring, 2006

The University of Qatar organized a general meeting on Monday, 16 January, 2006, where the Higher Administration met with the University faculty and staff. The President of the University, the Vice-Presidents and the Director of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning addressed the audience, reviewing and evaluating what had been achieved in the Fall Semester. They also spoke about their perspectives and plans for the Spring Semester. This was followed by a useful and healthy discussion that lasted for about two hours, focusing on all University issues and concerns, and difficulties and challenges encountered throughout the previous semester, as well as those which might be envisaged in the future.

Her Excellency the President of the University, **Professor Sheikha bint Abdulla Al-Misnad**, presided over the meeting. She stressed that the primary aim of such meetings is to keep the University faculty and staff informed of the reform processes, and to enhance the university principles of effective communication, transparency and partnership among its various components, in so far as sharing of thoughts and ideas, and the carrying out of duties with responsibility is our way to develop and progress. We are all expected to get involved in and contribute to University reform and innovation, as set down in the Reform Plan.

Dr Humaid Al-Midfa, Vice-President for Administrative Affairs, briefed the meeting on the steps taken in the previous semester to implement the Enterprise Resource Planning Project or Oracle e-Business Suite. He stated that the Program is now in its final stages of application. He explained that this program has been adopted to make our job easier by enabling us to develop well-defined policies and efficient procedures required for the daily operations of the University's affairs. He added that the University of



Qatar has been the first institution to comprehensively apply the Oracle System. Dr. Humaid also spoke about the financial and administrative policies and what has been achieved in this respect. He subsequently went on to explain the new system of staff salaries and the pay raise that is to be given to the latter backdated to April, 2005, after being approved by the Board of Regents. Then he proceeded to explain the different types of contracts the University signs with faculty and staff, both Qatari and non-Qatari in the light of the University's autonomy, and independence from the Ministry of Civil Services. Dr. Humaid also spoke about the University's

future plans for the commercial development of part of its extensive campus. He mentioned that the University has been given approval to build five complexes; two of which are now under construction. These include the building of a self-contained complex comprising a full-range of classrooms, as well as a modern complex of restaurants to offer full services to both students and staff on the Women's Campus. There are also plans for other buildings, including a central library designed according to international standards, a research centers complex and a new building for the College of Economics and Business.

Dr. Sheikha bint Jabr Al-Thani, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, gave in a lengthy and comprehensive speech an account of the University's achievements in the field of academia. She stated that the University has recruited efficient and expert faculty and staff to pursue the application of the reform plan; the programs have been thoroughly reviewed, aligned and updated, and student activities have witnessed a substantial and qualitative move ahead. She subsequently spoke in detail about the accreditation the College of Engineering received from ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology). This "Substantial Equivalency" recognition accords the College of Engineering Programs the same minimum requirements as similar



accredited programs at United States Universities. Dr. Sheikha further spoke of the unique partnership between the University of Qatar College of Education and the University of Texas through the Primary Education Diploma Program, and the partnership with Weill Cornell Medical College. She also mentioned that a number of the University Colleges have received financing for Chairs offered by national and international corporations. She also expressed her appreciation of the activities of the students of the College of Law for their richness and diversity. She concluded with an announcement of new programs and courses to be offered in the future.

Summary of the Academic Guidelines

- * Implementing the best teaching and learning practices.
- * Establishing a rich academic environment, co-operative with and responsive to educational institutions in the country, such as SEC, EC, and other sectors, namely, the industrial and service sectors.
- * Aligning the academic programs with international standards
- * Attracting highly qualified faculty and staff, diversified enough to enrich and add value to the academic endeavours.

* Innovative student activities of excellent academic value.



* Effective communication with students, faculty and staff.

Dr. Mohammed Abdul Wahid Al-Hamadi, Director of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, spoke about what has been accomplished in the context of the Reform Plan. These accomplishments included the improvement of the Human Resources policies, the preparation of the University corporate

brochure, the establishment of the Office of Research Database, the completion of the University Database, the development of the Admission and Registration systems, academic systems, financial planning, and other procedures related to office work.

The meeting concluded with an open and fruitful discussion that lasted for about two hours, in which faculty and staff discussed, inquired, expressed their thoughts and opinions and offered suggestions. The President, the Vice-Presidents and the Director of Research and Planning, explained, and clarified various issues that arose.

Finally, the President stressed that with our joint and concerned efforts and sound communication, in an atmosphere of transparency and democracy, we can always achieve our set goals. "We are aiming to get everyone on board, and we are counting on you to help us to do so," the President concluded.

The Wheels of Reform are Moving Steadily Fast ABET AWARD 'BIG BOOST' FOR UNIVERSITY

[Adapted from Gulf Times]

The award of Substantial Equivalency Accreditation, by the US-based Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) for University of Qatar's Programs in Chemical, Civil, Electrical, and Mechanical Engineering, is a big step in achieving future goals.



"This recognition is a big boost to our

efforts to make the College of Engineering a leading institution of its kind in the region," Dean Dr Nabeel Hassan al-Salem and Assistant Dean (Academic Affairs) Dr Hassan al-Fadala told a press conference convened to explain the salient features of the accreditation.

The ABET accreditation is under the EC 2000 criteria, the current standard that programs offered by US universities are required to achieve. "This is a much more stringent criterion, compared to the previous guidelines, and we are very happy and proud that we could achieve this," they said.

Apart from Qatar University's Engineering Program, certain programs by the UAE University were the only ones in the GCC countries to be evaluated by ABET using the EC 2000 yardstick.

"The 2004 list of substantially equivalent programs names only 20 universities in the world achieving this distinction," Dr al-Salem and Dr al-Fadala observed while describing the ABET accreditation as a truly unique distinction.

ABET, established in 1930 as a recognized US accreditation board for college and university programs in applied science, computing, engineering, and technology, accredits only programs and not degrees, departments, colleges, or institutions.

While ABET does not accredit programs outside the US, it evaluates them by institutional request, in order to determine if they are substantially equivalent to ABET-accredited programs and to make recommendations for program improvement.

"I wish to put on record our wholehearted appreciation to the support extended to the College of Engineering by the President of the University Dr Sheikha Abdulla al-Misnad and other officials during our preparation for the accreditation," Dr al-Salem said. He also thanked senior officials for their contributions.

THE UNIVERSITY OF QATAR SIGNS MOU WITH MICROSOFT CORPORATION

[Press Release {External Relations Office} – Adapted]

The University of Qatar signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Microsoft Corporation in Doha, on November 22nd, 2005. In the presence of Her Excellency Professor Sheikha Al-Misnad, the President of the University, Dr. Humaid A. Al-Midfa, Vice-President for Administrative Affairs and Mr. Ali Faramawy, Vice- President, Microsoft EMEA, signed the MOU. As part of the MOU, this major player in the field of IT will invest in preparing the University of Qatar to become Microsoft certified and an operational IT Academy as well as providing the university with Microsoft technologies.

"We look forward to working with Microsoft on a variety of projects to promote the expertise of our faculty and the administrative capabilities of our staff. And as a primary objective we seek to enable our students to gain valuable skills and knowledge, and get to grips with the most recent and advanced computer technologies which will prove invaluable when they are out in the job market," the President said.

This agreement aims to empower students and faculty members by providing them with the latest Microsoft technologies. Microsoft will deploy an e-learning solution pilot project at the University and will brief staff and students on these new technologies.

"We trust that our work with Microsoft will enable us to create more opportunities for students at the University. This MOU will enable us to prepare our students for the requirements of the labor market when they graduate. We believe that the experience they will acquire while working with the latest Microsoft technologies will give them an advantage over others," said Dr. Humaid.

Speaking at the MOU signing ceremony, Mr.

Faramway said, "We are delighted to be part of this important project with the University of Qatar. Qatar figures prominently in our global strategy, and we believe that it can set an example in the Middle East. We also believe that with the state-of-the-art IT services, the University of Qatar will set the example that other players may follow."

"Microsoft has always been a key player in developing the educational sector in Qatar. We are constantly looking for more means to boost IT education here. Working with visionary institutions such as the University of Qatar, makes our job much easier," concluded Mr. Faramway.



The Reform Plan Revisited

Three Fundamental Principles of the Reform Project

[Autonomy Decentralization Accountability]

(Adapted from Qatar University
Reform Project - An Overview)

Autonomy: This was the first step taken – the cornerstone of the Reform Plan - to lay the basis for the subsequent reform processes. It aimed to make the University an autonomous institution with a board of Regents that directly reports to HH the Emir. It signifies that the University is authorized to govern itself in all respects.

Decentralization: This is the second principle that drives the reform process. It means that program, department and college administrators are delegated the power that enables them to make their own decisions within the framework of the University policies, procedures and operating principles.

Accountability: Decentralization necessitates that new mechanisms of accountability must be implemented to provide a system of checks and balances. With the freedom to make decisions comes the need for assessment and evaluation of the level of performance achieved. Therefore, there is a need for new policies and procedures to evaluate faculty, administrators and staff and to control budgets, as well as to review policies and procedures and to implement the outcomes of assessments and evaluations.



UNIVERSITY NEWS & EVENTS

QATAR UNIVERSITY

'Changing for You'

(A PRESS REPORT - From 'The Peninsula' & 'Gulf Times')

The University of Qatar, the first major and only national university, launched its new corporate identity at a grand ceremony at the University Campus on February 6, 2006.



The new logo, marking a major milestone in the history of the University, was unveiled at the event, attended by members of the Board of Regents, senior officials, faculty members and student representatives. The new logo was launched under the moto "Changing for You."

"The new identity represents the cornerstone of the university's reform project," said **Dr. Humaid Al Midfa**, Vice-President for Administrative Affairs, while speaking on behalf of **Dr Sheikha Abdulla Al Misnad**, the President of the University of Qatar, who happen to be abroad.

In a message read out at the event, the President said:



"To many of us this may just seem to be a change of image, but its significance stems from its symbolism of the substantive development that this university continues to undergo. As

a national university with progressive institutional methodologies and aspirations, we must respond to the demands of the modern age."

Dr. Sheikha bint Jabor Al Thani, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, said the new logo represented the dynamism of the university to match the flow of information and new trends and laws in the education system. She added that the visual identity change heralds a new era of development and progress for this University.

While the logo clearly represents the award-winning architectural design of the university, the sandy colours are inspired by the Qatari environment, said **Zeina Al Azmeh**, Director of External Relations, while explaining the meaning and implications of the logo. The presence of the digit 1 in the shadow between the two blocks symbolises QU's status as the first, largest and major university in Qatar. The juxtaposition of the Islamic ornaments in one block



and parallel lines on the other is meant to represent the university's focus on combining heritage with progressiveness. The parallel lines also represent the university's alignment with national goals. The logotype in English and Arabic reflects a university that is both solid, established and

student-friendly through the selection of a modern, youthful and attractive Arabic font, explained Zeina.

Mohammed Abdul Aziz Al Sulaiti, a student of the College of Law also spoke representing the 9,000 students of the university.

The speeches were followed by the official unveiling of the logo, which the audience received with loud applause. The new designs of various colleges of the university were also unveiled on the occasion, each college being represented by a distinctive colour pattern.



A new English website of the university was also launched for internal testing and feedback. The website will be available for external audience by the end of this month.

The new corporate identity launch was supported with a full range of quality brochures.

A Word from the Head of the English Department

Dr. Madani Othman

The English Department is an academic support unit that offers intensive English courses to prepare the students of the University of Qatar to communicate effectively in English-medium colleges.

In accordance with the University mission and vision, the FEP aspires for high quality education by adopting up-to-date pedagogical knowledge and technology building up a technology-rich learning environment, and creating an instructional environment which fosters learner autonomy.

In doing so, the Foundation English Program's (FEP) intent is to provide instruction and create a learning setting of internationally recognized standards.

Although the FEP is new, it has made conspicuous achievements in a number of areas over the past one and a half years. These successes are manifested in the detailed curriculum and syllabus, administrative structure and decision-making processes, and the creation of a mainly learner-based environment.

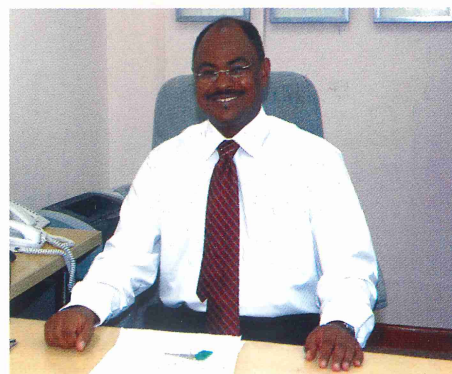
All this has been made within a general policy and strategy to build up a learner-centered setting in which all (teachers and learners) collaborate to maximize the learners' achievement by boosting the students' motivation and attachment to the program. This policy makes it more conducive for learners to take responsibility for their own learning and thus play a more active role in the teaching-learning situation.

In continuation of our endeavor to create this situation, the plan for the coming two years is an attempt to augment the necessary infrastructure and resources.

Within the short time since the commencement of the program in Fall 2004, The English Department has made some major leaps towards success.

The FEP has a written curriculum, which is periodically updated. The curriculum includes observable performance objectives for the four levels of instruction. In addition, it specifies the

criteria for advancement from level to level and for completion of the program, as well as the methods for evaluating student performance.



The curriculum and methodology used reflect current knowledge in the field of ESL, and are compatible with the goals of the program.

An elaborate administrative structure has been set up. This administrative organization ensures the participation of all faculty members in the decision-making process. Despite the considerable number of faculty members (89), there has been no serious deficiency in communication among faculty, nor between faculty and the academic coordinators/supervisors of the program. Thanks to the e-communication channels!! The introduction of intranet (expected to start in Spring 2006) will make communication among faculty stronger and focused.

The Foundation Program is in the process of establishing a teacher resource centre, which will provide additional resource materials to enable teachers to draw from the best sources in the field of ESL in order to meet the widest range of needs. The FP has also started an ambitious plan for establishing a Writing centre to help students and faculty in its departments improve their writing skills.

The establishment of SILC will certainly help the Department in achieving its objectives and serve its mission since it promotes faculty-student communication, as well as helping students to develop self-learning techniques and take responsibility in learning. The Centre will provide, additionally, counseling services.

Action Plan for 2006

1. Faculty

a. Professional Development

* Continue to provide opportunities for faculty professional development and growth to ensure faculty members are professionally knowledgeable and technically proficient.

b. New Teacher Orientation

* Help new faculty to become familiar with program goals/learning outcomes, curriculum, syllabus, and policies and procedures.

* Continue to recruit high quality faculty and develop an attractive professional development plan.

2. Student Support Services

a. Student Independent Learning Centre (SILC)

* Create a more solid learner-centered instructional environment

* Continue to consolidate and enhance student/teacher communication and student exposure to language by incorporating more e-learning techniques

* Provide high quality instruction taking into account a variety of student needs and learning styles

b. Counseling

* Help students overcome various challenges that they may encounter during their university studies by acquiring tools to successfully cope with them

c. Student Involvement in Decision-making

* Continue to involve students in decision-making to help them recognize their role in the mission and the vision of the program

d. Orientation

* Continue to help students to become familiar with program details, policy and procedure.

3. Measurement of Success

a. Accreditation and Recognition

* Attain international standards in course offerings, instruction, program administration, and student/teacher support

4. Instruction and Courses

* Continue to support and enhance appropriate academic standards (evaluation of the program by means of portfolios, curricula and syllabi review and by responding to the accreditation agency (CEA)

* Enhance student success by investigating and researching poor achievement

* Continue giving increased attention to testing and assessment to achieve the best international standards in approach and techniques as well as to help improve the program.

5. Outreach

* Consolidate and expand the Department's outreach program

Program Assessment and Future Planning

In addition to the research projects, institutional program assessment is one of the main tools for developing the program. Plans will be based on program assessment. The first self-study is intended to be conducted at the end of the academic year 2006-2007 (as can be seen in the following action plan). This will help the administration to review the program, evaluate its stated goals and purposes, measure accomplishments to date as well as make adequate plans for the future.

However, the FEP is part of the University. As a result, it participates in the institution's evaluation schemes and procedures. The FEP will also seek assistance in program evaluation from appropriate sources such as related professional organizations, specialists in the field, and outside advisors. The review will be in the form of a complete internal audit report.

The review will involve

* Faculty's review of program (committees' work)

* Involvement of Stakeholders (Colleges and Departments Served, and alumni)

The success of this plan depends on the effort of the faculty, who have been taking a leading role in all the achievements made.

ASSISTANT CO-ORDINATORS' REPORTS

Progress Report on the Curriculum

(Dr. Muawia Mohamed Abdel Majeed)
Assistant Coordinator-Curriculum
Development

This is a brief progress report on the various curriculum activities.

Syllabi and course outlines

1. Syllabi have been distributed to all teachers and level supervisors. Based on discussions and recommendations made in a joint meeting with the teachers and the Asst. Coordinator for Testing, the syllabus has undergone several updates. It is now up to the level supervisors and their teachers to update their respective syllabus as they deem fit.
2. The teaching of Dictation was discussed in a joint meeting with the Asst. Testing Coordinator. A recommendation was made to teach dictation in levels 1 & 2 starting next semester.
3. Teachers and Students received the Course Outlines in good time before the start-up.

Teachers' orientation on NorthStar

1. Asst. Coordinators gave the new teachers a comprehensive Power Point Presentation on all aspects of the curriculum
2. NorthStar publishers gave a presentation on the highlights of the series with comments and clarification of specific aspects of the Student's Book and the Teacher's manual. Teachers aired their concerns and posed questions about several sections of the series.

Books for teachers and students

1. Books and other teaching materials were distributed to both teachers and students during the first week of teaching.
2. Almost all books and materials were received and distributed to users except Level 2 (Intermediate) Reading/ Writing Teacher's Manual. Arrangements have been made with the Educational Technology office to make copies of the Test CDs. Photocopies of units 1 & 2 of the Manual have been made and given to the level teachers. This process will continue for the rest of the units.
3. Units 1 & 3 of Level 3 (High-Intermediate) and units 1 & 6 of Level 4 (Advanced) have been removed from the syllabus on account of their being culturally inappropriate. Alternative units have been received from the publishers. These units will be used at the end of the semester if time permits.
4. Since we are no longer teaching TOEFL preparation skills to students in Levels 3 & 4, the TOEFL stock will be transferred to the Continuing Education Office to use the books in their TOEFL preparation courses. A letter to this effect was sent to parties concerned.



Multimedia labs & equipment

The labs are now fully operative.

1. The new version of Focus on Grammar CDs hasn't arrived. We are still unable to locate the order for this item. In the meantime, we are using the old version of the FOG CDs installed in all labs.

2. The following needs have to be met in order to facilitate smooth running of labs/ classes and to enhance independent and

interactive learning:

- a. Ceiling-mounted Video Projector and VCR in each lab
- b. Supply more Audio CD/ Cassette Recorders (for teachers)
- c. White board markers and erasers
- d. Lab technicians to be available for evening classes
- e. SANAKO system to be installed in the new labs on the men's campus. (This system is already installed in Al Bidaa Labs).

Feedback on NorthStar series

Based on the findings of this evaluation, the curriculum will be reviewed and changes made in two stages. Minor adjustments that will enhance current materials and lead to maximizing learning will be implemented next semester (Spring 06). Substantial structural changes to the program, if needed, will be implemented by Fall 2006. This report summarizes main findings and includes suggestions and recommendations for curriculum improvement. In addition to this, comments and recommendations from the Students-Teacher Committees are cited. The report comprises 3 sections: Aims of the Evaluation, A Summary of Findings and Recommendations; and the Details of Feedback by Level.

1. Aim of the End-of-First Semester Evaluation

- * Identify major strengths and weaknesses of the Foundation English program;
- * Adjust the syllabus to introduce necessary modifications and alterations by the beginning of Spring semester 06;
- * Plan introduction of structural changes to the program, if required, by Fall 2006
- * Use lessons learned to enhance learning, teaching and curriculum development.

2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations (all levels)

The evaluation form consists of four sections, A, B, and C. In section A of the evaluation, each of the four levels of the English Program is thoroughly

assessed; however, the summary in this section is meant for those who would like to get the general picture for all levels combined. Should you need detailed information about a other levels, you may ask for a copy from the Curriculum Coordinator. Section A of the evaluation for each level consists of 16 elements with a 4-point scale to assess how evident these elements are a feature of the materials. (0= not evident, 1= some evidence, 2= evident and 3= very evident).

The elements encompass numerous aspects of NorthStar materials- range and variety of academic topics , learning tasks and opportunities, difficulty of materials, the handling of skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, thinking and learning skills, academic skills, achievement tests, multimedia, and NS Website. The majority of respondents in all levels are of the opinion that the Achievement tests need to be used only as a teaching/ learning tool and for review purposes. They should not be part of summative assessment of the students' performance.

In Level 1, the number of respondents is 14. They scored an average of 74.5% positive attitude toward 15 elements. Respondents asked for in-house material to supplement grammar and vocabulary. A recommendation is made to replace units 6 &7 with more appropriate units. Spelling, dictation and pronunciation need to be emphasized

In Level 2, the number of respondents is 14. They scored an average of 77.4% positive attitude toward all 16 elements. A recommendation is made to replace units 7 (Joking Around) & 8 (Fashion) with more appropriate units. Spelling, dictation and pronunciation need to be emphasized.

In Level 3, the number of respondents is 8. They scored an average of 85% positive attitude towards all 16 elements. Supplementary topics, more connected to the local environment, are required to facilitate learning. The speaking section should be enhanced with adequate guidance. A special task force should look into the speaking sections with view to providing supplementary materials where needed

In Level 4, the number of respondents is 9. They scored an average or 92% positive about all 16 elements. NorthStar series is considered comprehensive. The four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking are very well integrated. The topics are generally thought to be interesting. Students are interested in doing research independently and presenting the information to an attentive audience. However, too much is expected to be covered per semester. A strong recommendation was made across the board that the TOEFL cut-off points be raised for Level 3 and 4, or the Department should devise its own placement tests.

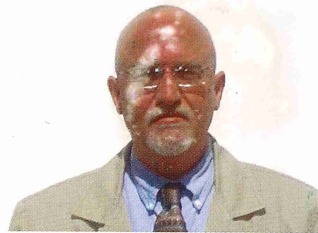
Report – Administration

(Robert Kennedy)

Assistant Co-coordinator

Administration

Reporting directly to the Head of the English Department, I perform a variety of administrative



and staff support duties. This semester, this included new department staff orientation. With the arrival of 29 new staff members, I was kept busy answering (at least trying to answer) many of their questions relating to the process of settling in to their new jobs in the English Department and the University.

Another aspect of my job has been the attempt to organize the department's e-communication procedures, and to this end I can report that most department staff members are now regularly accessing and using their Qatar University e-mail accounts. New personal computers in all staff offices have greatly enhanced our e-communication capabilities. Staff scheduling, trouble-shooting staff member office computer problems, working with the department's support staff, and serving on the department's Academic Board have also been major components of my position this semester.

Routine administrative tasks have included writing and editing departmental documents related to policy and procedure; helping the Assistant Co-ordinator (Testing) in producing examination invigilation schedules; editing recruitment advertisements; arranging with the office staff the distribution of student questionnaires on staff performance; and dealing with the day-to-day operational activities of the English Department.

So far, it has been a very challenging, yet a very interesting year for me in the English Department.

'Testing & Assessment' Report

(Justin Richards)

Assistant Coordinator - Testing

'Testing & Assessment' had 3 main goals for this semester:



1. To improve the procedure for writing and distributing exams.
2. To introduce/develop new assessment tools for use in the classroom.
3. To develop feedback mechanisms so that

procedure and testing/assessment materials can be improved.

A handbook was produced containing general information about class assessment & an initial outline of policy & procedure. Achievement tests following the North Star teacher's manual were implemented. A new approach to grading the writing portfolio was introduced in combination with the North Star writing activity book.

A testing committee was formed to formulate and coordinate policy. Two sub committees were formed. The writing sub committee produced the banding system for the writing portfolio, a banding system for the writing in the final exam and a questionnaire to assess the efficacy of the writing portfolio. The class assessment committee produced a questionnaire to assess the efficacy of the achievement tests. This committee is currently working on a system for assessing student participation/attitude in class. This is in conjunction with a document describing what we expect from students in class - to be given to the students at the beginning of each semester. These should be introduced in the Spring semester.

A feedback form was produced to allow teachers to report on the mid term exams and this feedback was given to test writers. In response to some of the problems faced with the mid terms the following measures were taken:

1. A new 'shift' system was introduced allowing different levels to sit exams at different times. This effectively increases our resources, allowing more space in each exam room, while reducing the pressure of dealing with large numbers of students at the same time.
2. Exam review boards were created to act as proof readers for all exams and to help with off-setting.
3. A testing & assessment room has been allocated. This should allow a more centralized system for

collating and distributing the exams to be implemented.

A great deal of work still needs to be done in all areas of testing & assessment. This is an on-going process. Policy, procedure and exams will continue to be refined based on committee and teacher feedback. A new, more comprehensive, handbook will be issued at the beginning of next semester in an attempt to establish clearer guidelines for teachers to follow. I would like to end by thanking all those involved in testing & assessment this semester: members of the committees, test writers, exam reviewers, those involved in recording the listening tapes and last, but certainly not least, level supervisors.

A Report on Student Support & Teacher Professional Development

(Wafa Ammar)

Assistant Coordinator - Student Support & Professional Development



The Student Support & Professional

Development committee was formed at the beginning of the fall term at the request of the Department Head, Dr. Madani Othman. This committee comprises of

three sub-committees: A Student Support sub-committee, a Professional Development sub-committee and a Student & Teacher sub-committee.

The Structure and Functions of the Student Support Committee

Thirty-two teachers, including the coordinator and the student counsellor, assist in the preparation and monitoring of the two new Student Learning Centres. The main task of the members of this committee is to:

- * help students make the most effective use of the facilities provided in these centers;
- * guide students towards the appropriate sections ;
- * produce/develop worksheets and materials for all four levels in the Foundation Program;
- * organize weekly/monthly extracurricular activities for students such as an open forum debate, a film screening, etc.;
- * encourage and supervise students in the production of a Student Newsletter or Journal;
- * encourage students to read in English as much as possible;
- * provide help for weak students in a tutorial corner to do course- related tasks with particular

emphasis on writing skills;

- * Provide students with test-taking tips for their departmental and TOEFL exams.
- * raise student awareness and encourage them to become more reflective and/or creative (e.g. writing book reviews, writing short stories, etc.)
- * create an online magazine for students;
- * recommend books and publications for the resource center.

Some of the sub-committees/ services provided are:

- * Student Counselling Services:
- * Student Learning Centres
- * Professional Development Committee
- * Student/ Teacher Committee

The Structure and Functions of the Professional Development Committee

Thirteen teachers including the coordinator have agreed to become members of this Committee. Why do we need professional development? Many educators argue that our world is changing so rapidly that people need to retrain several times during their working life due to the need to keep abreast of developments in their field. In education the changes are enormous. As such, there is a radical need to equip teachers with tools to develop themselves. Establishing a Teacher Resource Centre is one such tool.

The Foundation Department has now a Teachers' Resource Centre (TRC) located in Common Room A in the Women's Foundation Building, which contains books on the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching, learning and assessment, and, supplementary books. In addition, there will be a room equipped with a TV, a VCR, a cassette CD player and all the audio-visual materials for teachers to prepare and view the materials appropriate for their students or for the extracurricular activities.

Workshops for the Teachers

Another tool for professional development is organizing presentations, seminars and workshops for the lecturers. The English Department sees that any means to promote a more robust program for the exchange of experience and ideas about the theoretical and methodological aspects of teaching is welcomed.

Many instructors have offered to hold workshops and give presentations for the academic year 2005-2006.

Schedules have been prepared to invite two guest speakers, to send lecturers to regional and international conferences, to develop an on line resource centre, and to plan and prepare for a projected International Symposium to be held at the University of Qatar.

The Humanities Program

Active Committees

(Fatma Alyan)

Assistant Coordinator

Humanities



The Humanities Program comprises three committees: a curriculum committee and two testing committees, one for course 0-811201 and another for course 0-811202.

The Curriculum Committee

Before the semester begins the Curriculum Committee writes down the goals and objectives of each course in accordance with the university policy. Based on these goals and objectives the committee prepares the course description and the course outline. The committee also participates in preparing in-house material for course 0-811201 and revises it every semester based on feedback from teachers and students. The committee also decides on the material to be taught and selects the books for course 0-811202. Furthermore, the committee helps in curriculum development by preparing supplementary material for students based on test results in addition to the supplementary material which is prepared and selected from various sources at the beginning of the semester. Carefully chosen web sites are also given to students at the beginning of the semester to enhance self-learning.

Testing Committees 0-811201& 0-811202:

The two testing committees make separate decisions on how to assess students' achievement in conjunction with the curriculum committee. Before the semester begins members of both testing committees meet to decide on how to assess students' achievement in each course. Specifications for the projects to be done by students throughout the semester are also agreed upon and a complete

guide for teachers and students is prepared by each committee and distributed to both teachers and students to ensure uniformity of assessment. As for tests and exams committee members write down the rubrics for the achievement tests to be given in class by each teacher as well as the common midterm exam and the common final exam. Members of each committee also write down the exam questions, get feedback from other teachers and modify questions accordingly. Before common exams are administered each committee meets to agree on a common marking scheme and prepares the answer key to be used by teachers while marking the exam papers.

Besides preparing the specifications for the tests and exams, writing down exam questions and revising them, and preparing the answer key for the common midterm exam and the final exam, members of each committee prepare a sample of possible question types for the exam to be given to students to reduce test anxiety and to ensure that students are familiar with different question types. The sample also serves as a short revision thus giving students the chance to discover their areas of weakness before the exam. This gives students the chance to seek help from their teachers before taking the exam. Finally, in an attempt to achieve a positive washback effect, exam results are analyzed and ways of improving students' performance on tests and exams are discussed with members of the curriculum committee, who in turn prepare the necessary material to help students acquire the desired skills and knowledge.

In conclusion it can be seen from the above description of committee work that although committees are independent, they work in close conjunction with each other to achieve the required standards set by Qatar University.

University Requirement English Courses

English 811201-1

English 811202-1

(Dr. Mohammad Fawzi)



Students who successfully complete or are exempted from the English foundation program will have to take, in sequence, two university requirement English courses: 811201-1 and 811202-1. These two courses

aim at promoting advanced academic skills. E 210201-1 promotes professional oral interaction in discussions, debates and oral presentations. E 210202-1 aims at developing writing skills to help students produce a term paper of about 3000 words in printed form.

Course E811201-1 is designed to help the students achieve academic oral communication to the standard required at university level. It is a three hour per week course. The main focus of the course is on advanced speaking skills. The course builds on the knowledge the students have acquired from the English Foundation Program. The syllabus consists mainly of activities and exercises that provide essential academic skills in speaking.

"Group Discussion" is the first activity in this course. At least six group discussion sessions must be held. The topics are chosen according to the interest of the students. The second major activity is the "Oral Presentation". This activity is designed to enable the students learn the strategies of planning, preparing and delivering a 20-25 minute oral presentation related to their major fields of study.

Course E811202-1 aims at enabling the students to express themselves coherently in writing. It is a three hour per week course. The main focus of the course is on academic writing skills. The course builds on the knowledge the students acquired from the previous course 811201-1. The syllabus consists of activities and exercises that provide the necessary and common skills for academic university studies.

By the end of this course students should be able to sort out information, construct a preliminary bibliography, write a thesis statement and an outline for a term paper, write the first draft, and finally produce the final draft.

In short, the two courses are designed to develop group and independent learning on the part of the students. The courses also promote critical thinking skills and help the students to avoid plagiarism.



ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

NEWS AND EVENTS-FALL 2005

Prepared by Bino Sarah Paul

Appointments

Dr. Madani Othman has been appointed as the new Head of the English Department and Coordinator of Programs. He started his duties at the University of Qatar in 1996 as the Coordinator of English for the Science Program in the ELTU. Before reaching his current position, he held the posts of Curriculum and Testing coordinator, Administrative Coordinator, Professional Development and Student Support Coordinator in the English Department.

According to the new organizational plan of the English Department the following appointments were made:

Assistant Coordinators

Dr. Muawia Abdulmajid- Curriculum
Mr. Robert Kennedy -Administration
Mr. Justin Richards -Testing
Mrs. Wafa Ammar – Student Support & Professional Development
Mrs. Fatma Alyan - Humanities

Level Supervisors

Mr. David Ingels- Level 1
Mrs. Mumu Winn- Level 2
Mrs. Salwa Gammal- Level 3
Mrs. Claire Conroy – Level 4

Dr. Mohammed Fawzi, a member of the English Department has been nominated as its representative in the Foundation Program's Budget Committee.



and administrative staff were introduced. Short guides and important forms for all new faculty members to review and complete were distributed.

Also attending this meeting was Mr. Javeed Muhammad, Head of the ITC. He reviewed the various aspects of the University's IT infrastructure, including the new staff internet and e-mail accounts.

The new lecturers were then addressed by the Head of the English Department, Dr Madani Othman. Curriculum asst. coordinator, Dr. Muawia Abdulmajid, presented a brief outline on the functioning of the department. Administrative asst. coordinator Mr. Robert Kennedy, Testing asst. coordinator Mr. Justin Richards, and Student Support & Professional Development asst. coordinator Mrs. Wafa Ammar also spoke on this occasion.

It is worth mentioning here the special efforts made by the Human Resources Department of the University under the directorship of Dr. Hind Jolo. The team arranged YAHALA - a session for introducing new faculty to the University .The HR Department gave all necessary support for the new staff and ensured that all of them signed their contracts soon after they joined the university. The Housing Department steered by Mrs. Fatma al Baker provided excellent accommodation in Al Gharafa for all the new recruits. The English department also appointed mentors for the new staff in order to help them settle in.

30 New Faculty appointed

The English Department underwent a major expansion at the beginning of the academic year 2005-2006. With teachers from Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Egypt, India, Iran, Tunisia, U.K. and U.S.A.



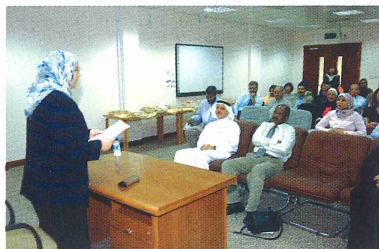
joining the department, its total strength has gone above 80. Several meetings were organised by the Foundation Program and the English Department to welcome and familiarise new English Department faculty members.

On September 5th a meeting was organised for them by the Foundation Program Director, Dr. Khalid Al Ali. He welcomed all new staff to the University and to the Foundation Program. He also answered questions from the new faculty regarding housing, transportation, and other concerns. Leading faculty

Ms. Lulwa al Mansoori and Mrs. Jennifer Beadon were appointed as secretaries in the Department of English. Ms. Lulwa is a graduate from QU.

Farewell

Mrs. Amna Saud Al-Thani, the head of the English Department, resigned from her position in the end of Spring 2005. A meeting was organised to honour her and Dr. Khalid al Ali, the Director, Foundation Program, presided over the function.



Mrs. Salwa al Gammal speaking on the occasion

He spoke about the various contributions Mrs. Amna had made to develop the ELTU into the present day English Department. Dr. Madani Othman, her successor gave her full credit for the success of the Department. Mrs. Salwa al Gammal, a staff representative expressed thanks for the good leadership skills shown by Mrs. Amna. A token of affection and remembrance was presented.

Mrs. Amina Janahi and Mrs. Tifla al Thani, long time secretaries of the English department retired at the beginning of Fall 2005. The Editorial Board thanks them for their innumerable services and wishes them all the best in their retirement.

Conferences & Workshops

On 13 September 2005 Pearson Longman publication did a workshop on the NorthStar series of books, an innovative four-level, and integrated-skills series for learners of English as a Foreign or Second Language. An expert from the publication gave a model class based on one of the units. Teachers discovered more about the books and discussed the merits and demerits of the various components present



in the series.

Mr. Aladdin Halwani, sub coordinator, Multimedia conducted workshops based on the Multimedia syllabi used in various levels. He explained the essentials on how to run Planet English, FOG, Gap master and Story board. Teachers successfully tried out these programs during the practical session.

E- Learning workshops: The week of December 12, 2005, QU faculty members were treated to a

highly informative workshop on the subject of e-learning at university level.

The first day's material consisted mainly of a broad introduction to key theories underlying the fields of artificial intelligence and cognitive tutors. Presenting these ideas was Dr. Ken Koedinger, Director of the Pittsburgh Science of Learning Center. He drew upon concepts from educational and cognitive psychology to give a brief yet fascinating overview of the reasoning behind today's latest educational technology.

The second and third days of the workshop saw the participants separating themselves into hands-on interest-based break-out groups that took place in various computer labs on campus. These groups were subject-specific, and the subjects were generally mathematical or scientific in nature (e.g., statistics, causal reasoning, biology, etc.). Faculty members were encouraged to attend the group most closely related to their field. (Reported by Eileen Plumb)

Interested parties can find more information on this topic at the following web addresses: <http://actr.psy.cmu.edu>, www.institute4learning.org/develop.html



www.learnlab.org, www.cmu.edu/oli

In a presentation on 'PowerPoint in the English Class' on 4th January 2006, Mr. Aladdin Halawani spoke of the rapid progress in information technology and nanotechnology, and its impact on the learning situation. Rather than using the chalkboard or the whiteboard as the only teaching tool, the modern language teacher is viewed as someone who goes into class with a laptop and uses a data show to project on the screen his/her multimedia content through PowerPoint. PowerPoint is today regarded as one of the most important teaching tools. One of the most compelling things about PowerPoint is its ability to display animated slides and graphics. Various language skills and subjects can be taught through PowerPoint. Apart from its basic function of putting together presentations, PowerPoint can be utilized for teaching writing, grammar and vocabulary moving from one slide to another. He gave a demonstration on how one can even orchestrate richly complex multiple media elements on a slide and breathe life into one's classes.



Dr. James Moody conducted a Departmental

Seminar on 4 December 2005 on TEACHING READING AS INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION.



Mr. Joseph Harrison, a member of the English Department presented a workshop on "Create your own website-Learn Microsoft FrontPage" on Sunday 18th December.

Testing Workshop

On the 2nd and 3rd of January, 2006, the staff of the English Department conducted a testing workshop organized by the Professional Development Committee. The speakers were Dr Abdel Halim Abo Jalalah, Elizabeth Crittenden, Ahmed F Selim, Dr Kouroush Lachini, Roger Barlow, and Kambiz Qadam Kheir.

Some of the topics presented were:



In 'Testing & Assessment: Theoretical Framework', Dr. Abdel Halim Ali Abo Jalalah addressed the area of testing and reviewed the theoretical framework of testing and assessment. He also reflected on areas related to the testing system currently used in

the Department with the intention of focusing on various possibilities of improvement in the testing arena of English language instruction in the department.

Elizabeth Crittenden gave a workshop on 'Cloze Procedures', which provided a brief background to cloze procedures; how to author a cloze test or activity and a hands-on experience with a variety of examples. The benefits and pitfalls of cloze exercises as an assessment tool were discussed. A list of references and websites were provided.



In Assessing Writing through Portfolio Workshops: 'Application of Rhetorical Theory to Hands-On Portfolio Assessment Implementation' Ahmed F. Selim posed the question of whether our goal is to "test" writing or to "develop" writing? It defined the Foundation Unit as a "Developmental" program rather than a "Remedial" program and thus a perfect fit for portfolio assessment. Results from a teacher survey on the current form of portfolio assessment were presented.



Kouroush Lachini in a presentation on 'MC Items' made an attempt to brush up the audience's passive knowledge on the steps of test construction and administration, structure of an MC Item, and distractor types. Some issues like the purposes of assessment, how to avoid assessment flaws, objective vs. subjective scoring were also touched upon. The principles of MC items construction were grappled with through an inductive approach and it was followed by some remarks on and methods of Item Analysis.



Sports

(supplied by Ridha B Rejeb)



Musa Jomat, an administrative staff member of the Foundation Program won the Table Tennis Match for Faculty

and Employees in the final against the Arts & Science College which took place in the Student Activity Building,(Men's Campus) on Wednesday 30 November, 2005.

The First Competition in Water Polo for Students, Faculty & Staff took place on Sunday, Dec 18, 2005 by the Sport Section -under the auspices of the Student Activity Department.

1/ Mr. Aladdin Halwani is a regular player in all tennis tournaments organized by the University of Qatar, despite his busy schedule. He always finds time for his hobby in order to stay in shape.

2/ Mr. Kahlid Mahmoud, Mr. Kambiz Ghadam as well as Mr. Naguib Sanoussi and Ahmed Selim took part in a basket ball open game in which both students and teachers took part. It was a great opportunity for basket ball fans to get together and they have more events in store for the upcoming Spring 2006.

3/ Abdellatif Messikh decided to join the Water Polo team, he excelled along with Foundation students and played to win.

4/ Mr. Khalid Mahmoud is a number one table tennis player, so far nobody has been able to beat him .We all wish him victory in the future tournaments.

More news

The Foundation students team early this month (Dec 2005) took part in a soccer tournament organized by

the University Student Activities Department : The Foundation Team lost the first match versus the Education

College and drew versus the Engineering College. Unfortunately , the team did not score enough goals to qualify for the Semi-Final and the Final. However, we are still proud that the team has a first class player Mr. Faycel Shaibi (M19) who plays in the Qatar National Team .So Guys DO NOT GIVE UP.

Ridha Ben Rejeb is an English Instructor in the Foundation Program. He is also a Soccer Referee Instructor and Inspector registered with the Qatar Football Association.



The Foundation Faculty members took part in the current Soccer tournament organized by the University Sports Activity Department from Dec 18th till Dec 27th, 2005. Unlike last year the team was disqualified after a tight game with the Finance Department of the University of Qatar. However, the tournament was a good event and an opportunity for the faculty members of the Foundation Program from different departments: Old timers and novices to get together.

Coming soon in Spring term 2006 :

- On campus Marathon
- Volley Ball tournament
- Basket ball tournament
- Table Tennis tournament

If you want to know more about sports activities or joining any of the Foundation's existing teams , please do not hesitate to contact :

Ridha Ben Rejeb
Mob. 531 8519
Off.Tel.Ext. 6249
Off. WFB 238
email: ridhabr@qu.edu.qa

Online Resource Database Overview

The online resource database represents a compilation of teachers' supplementary materials, handouts, pictures, etc. It serves two purposes. The main objective behind it is to facilitate the teaching process by teachers sharing their knowledge and

benefiting from each other's past teaching experience. It helps teachers share practical ideas they could use in the classroom and provides them with a wide range of activities.



It has several other positive attributes. Since all the activities are online, they can easily be modified and adapted in order to focus on and deal with learners' specific problems more comprehensively.

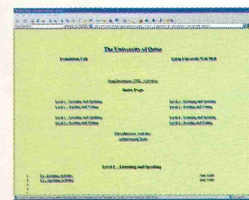
Another reason for having the online resource database is that students themselves would benefit from more interesting, diverse and comprehensive lessons and wide-ranging materials.

It has a team-building aspect, too. It can become a space in which teachers join efforts and work in collaboration as a team towards tackling various linguistic problems their students have in common.

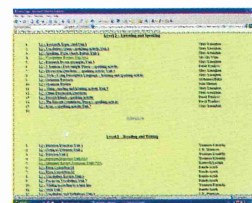
On the university scale, such a database would also contribute to the further development of the Foundation Unit. Having such a permanent collection of tested and proven materials (and expanding and refining it, of course) would definitely lead to the more effective and better performance of the individual teacher in class.

Here we go. Let's make it as simple and practical as possible!

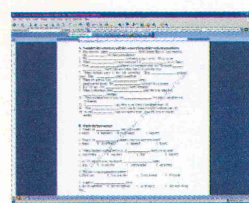
This is the index page of the Online Resource Database.



Just a simple click on any of the links will take you to the activities sorted by levels and skill areas. For instance, we click on Level 2 – Listening and Speaking.



Then another click on a desired link will take you to the very activity..... which you can easily copy, paste on a blank document and modify the activity the way you want it, or just print it if you like it the way it is.





STUDENT SECTION

This selection of students' work represents some of the best efforts made by Foundation students to create pieces of writing for their portfolio, an important activity in the writing component of the English Foundation Course at all four levels. Although it has not been possible to print all the pieces of writing contributed this term, we are grateful to all student contributors for showing their enthusiasm and interest. We would like to thank both the students and their teachers for the hard work involved in the process of developing and creating these writings.

Mu Mu Winn, Student Section Editor.

Life After University

By Nasema Hassan Abdeen

(Course: 812001 - Teacher: Lyrma Ingels)

How exciting it is to be graduating from the university and moving into the next stage of your life! You have the whole world at your hands. Now your friends are asking the question "What are you doing next?". You probably don't have a very clear idea yet. You put all your heart into graduating and now you have to decide what to do for the rest of your life. Some people know from early age, what they want to be and how they plan with their lives.

Not all of us are so sure of our plans. Many people start thinking about their life after college but most of them change their minds after they finished. Every time somebody asks me what I will be going to do after university, I make up a new answer. Most probably, what I want to do next in my life is to have job offers, couple of living options and a lot of important decisions.

Around millions of young people graduate every year. A few travel, some get jobs but most work and get married in Qatar. The great thing to all of these is that, you become whatever and whoever you decide to be after university.

City Life and Country Life

by Aysha Mohammed Al Baker

(Course: 812001 - Teacher: Lyrma Ingels)

Last year, I went to India. This paragraph compares and contrasts life in New Delhi and Punjab. First, I arrived in New Delhi, the capital of India. I stayed in a five - star hotel for two days. The room had nice furniture and the hotel service was excellent. The buildings in New Delhi are modern and tall. Most people speak English. The shopping there was expensive but of high quality. In this city, you find different items, different cultures and people.

Then I went to Punjab, a small province North of India where I stayed in a four - star hotel. It was small but with friendly staff. Punjab is very green because plants grow everywhere. People there are

simple and friendly. Food is delicious and cheap, but few people speak English. Shopping there was cheap but things and gifts were few. Most of the buildings are old and small. Despite all of these, I like this province as well as New Delhi and I would like to go to India again.

Boys and Girls

By A. Abdullah A H Ali

(Course: 812002 -Teacher: Abdul Moniem M Hussein)

There are similarities and differences in the ways boys and girls are treated in my home culture. First, they are treated similarly in upbringing and education. They both go to schools and universities. They work and get married. In the present time girls can go shopping and drive cars. Now girls with more education and better earnings have more opportunities than in the past.

Next, the differences. Boys and girls aren't equal in some ways, but I think they should be. Boys are not given the same amount of chores, like in the house work. They think it is girl's job. Girls cook, clean, and do all the work in the house. Also, some families don't let their girls go to work or to find jobs. In addition, parents tend to be more protective of girls than boys. They think girls should stay at home and they should not go out a lot or alone. Some people prefer boys than girls. They believe that boys are better and they help the parents more than girls.

Finally, I think boys and girls should be treated the same and they should be given love equally, so they don't end up hating each other.

Quackery

By Hind Aqeel

(Course: 812002 -Teacher: Abdul Moniem M Hussein)

I had cancer when I was sixteen years old. I traveled with my family to many countries to cure myself of this disease. The doctors tried very hard to help me and they gave me many different medicines to destroy these cells that had cancer but they didn't succeed and I was getting worse. I heard about quacks and their products. They are supposed to

have discovered some herbs to help people that the doctors can't cure. The victims come to the quacks and buy these products from them, but in the end they often find that all these quacks are liars and they can't help them at all.

Some people think that these products have only one advantage; it is these products that give victims some hope to cure themselves of diseases. Others think that these products have many disadvantages; the quacks steal money from people and also some of their products are very harmful.

I decided not to try any product that is quackery, because quacks are liars. I would continue my treatment and ask god to help me recover.

Gender

By Ayaa Suleiman Hedaya

(Course: 812002 - Teacher: Tasneem Kureishy)

If I could create my own culture, I will prefer it to be without gender differences, because in our culture we have a lot of gender differences, such as men can hold high positions like a president of a country but a woman cannot. Another thing is that women have to work outside the house and inside the home. On the other hand, when men come back from their work, they just want to relax and do nothing. In my imaginary culture, I think it would be easier if we didn't have gender differences because women can do everything that men do and I know that women can do some things better than them. I think if a woman becomes a president of a country there will be no wars. I don't like men to control our lives because we can do many things better than them.

Tourism in Lebanon

By Mashaal Al Mutawa

(Course: 812002 - Teacher: Tasneem Kureishy)

Lebanon is the most beautiful and perfect country I have ever visited. It's near Syria and Palestine. I went there more than four times. Lebanon is a country where lots of tourists go because of its scenic beauty. Tourism helps Lebanon but on the other hand, it hurts it too. I am going to talk about both these issues in this essay.

Lebanon is a very famous country and it's full of tourists. Last year and the year before, I saw lots of tourists because Lebanon has many tourist attractions like Balbeck, the museum of famous people, Beiteddine, Soldier Street, Jeita Caves and The Big rock which is called Al Rawsha. Of course, there are more tourist attractions, but these are just a few of them.

Tourism helps Lebanon by the money that it brings, and which is used for building hotels, restaurants, shops etc, and it improves the country's economy. Secondly, people get jobs in these restaurants, shops and hotels. They also get jobs in building projects for hotels etc. Finally, tourism helps improve businesses like the hotel business, airlines,

and building industry.

In my opinion, while tourism helps Lebanon, it also hurts the country. First, the use of water and electricity increases. Secondly, tourists increase the traffic and the country becomes very crowded. Finally, tourism causes everything to become expensive.

In conclusion, I want to say that although tourism hurts the country, it is still good for the country. Maybe the reason for my opinion is that I am a tourist myself.

The Lion Man

By Abdulla Ahmed Al Agha

(Course: 812002 - Teacher: Benjamin Crace)

A long time ago, when the sky was raining fire, it put down something great and special on the earth. Something no one had ever heard about.

This something was the "Lord Lion"-- half lion and half human.

The story began beside The River after the sky rained fire.

The Lion Man came down.

With living breath he woke up to be the lord of the earth.

The Lord Lion then walked to many places in order to know his ally and his enemy.

At sunset the Lord Lion returned to The River to drink water,

He knew if he drank water from The River, he would become half human.

In the morning he woke up and he saw his hair was changing.

Then his body became half human.

After that he walked to his castle, which was near The River.

When the Lord of Lions arrived, he began to plan how to war with another clan.

He was planning his own war when he heard the footsteps of soldiers coming into his castle.

They said in one voice "The fearsome Lion King is alive!"

One of them saw this as the chance to begin The War.

The Lord Lion then took his armies to fight the Viking Dragon clan.

The Lord Lion won this battle and continued fighting to the death to make his kingdom great.

The Worst Field Trip in My Life

By Shatha Abu Mahmoud

(Course: 812003 - Teacher: Elisabeth Szewczyk)

A disaster can affect us for life. Last week was the worst week in my life; I was on a field trip in Pakistan when a dreadful earthquake occurred. We had taken the trip to study the conditions of poor people in Kashmir. Each day we went out and

interviewed different people. That dreadful morning, the weather was quite bad; it was sweltering and somewhat humid, so we all felt tired and rather sleepy. We decided to stay at the hotel and rest. Later that afternoon, after lunch, we went out to continue our interviews. Unfortunately we couldn't do our work; because the weather had suddenly changed; the sky was reddish-black. The howling winds were full of gritty yellowish sand. As a result, the visibility was very poor and sand got into our eyes. We couldn't do anything so we decided to return to the hotel. A few hours later, while we were in the lobby having tea, we felt a mild tremor. It alarmed us and we became worried and nervous. We turned on the radio to find out what was happening. A news presenter said that a very big earthquake had occurred. That news made us feel panicky and very frightened.

Later that evening, we saw something terrifying. The sky was very dark, and there were strong wild whirlwinds. Some people sitting in the hall went up to their rooms to avoid the sand. Other people felt that their life would end between one moment and the next, so they wanted to spend their last moments with their children, staying close beside them. They hid under the tables, clutching their children tightly to them.

A few hours later another stronger, earthquake struck. This tremor occurred on the hotel grounds. People began crying and screaming louder than before. I panicked; I didn't know what to do. Suddenly the tremors became stronger and faster, I watched terrified parents trying to keep hold of their children. Then suddenly, the hotel split into two. The chandeliers and the pictures started falling on our heads. We all were stunned, our faces white with fear. By midnight the quake was over, the tremors had become weaker. People started looking for their missing family members and friends under the rubble. It was a very difficult, long and painful operation; there was carnage everywhere. People were helpless; they couldn't do anything because they were in an impossible situation. They all were confused, nervous and completely distraught. All they could do was cry, scream and ask Allah to spare them. My group also suffered because one member had been killed and another was in critical condition.

The following day I went back to the quake area with my group. The sight that greeted us was terrifying: blood, carnage, and bodies everywhere. Many buildings had fallen onto their occupants. Trees had been uprooted and cars had been demolished. Many animals had also perished. I couldn't stand there without doing anything, so I began to help rescue and search teams by looking for missing people. I got supplies, food, water and first aid. Until now I can't believe how I could do that incredible job. I did everything mindlessly; I

gathered my strength and all my power to avoid screaming or crying.

One week later, after living through those horrible moments, we returned home to our country, locking all the painful scenes into our memory, hoping Allah would take care of the victims, especially Muslims. It had been such a dreadful experience for all of us, I will never forget it. I learned that life could end at any moment, so one must be prepared for Judgment Day.

Fatma Al Mohannadi: An Inspiring Woman **By Alaa Ahmed Al Yousef**

(Course: 812003 - Teacher: Elisabeth Szewczyk)

Fatma bint Ahmad Al Mohannadi was an extraordinary woman. She was born on the 25th of July, 1945 into a poor Bahraini family. Her father had a small clothing shop. When Fatma was thirteen years old, her father died. Fatma had five younger brothers and two sisters and her mother didn't work so now there was no-one to support the family. Fatma's mother was bereft after the death of her husband. She didn't know what to do and where she would get money to live on. A few months later Fatma's mother developed cancer and died.

Fatma was very sad. Fatma was the oldest child so she was now head of the household. She worried constantly about her younger brothers and sisters. To have enough money to live on, she decided to sell her father's shop. Unfortunately the money was not enough so she decided to work and study at the same time. Everyday, after she finished school, she looked for work. Eventually, a few months later, she found a job in a library. Fatma was ecstatic.

Fatma spent her life working and studying until she graduated from Issa Girls' High School. She wanted to study at a university in America but she had to think about her brother and sisters so she didn't go. While working in the library, Fatma learnt lots of things. She loved reading and writing stories. She also liked the people who visited the library. One day she decided to write a short story. That was how she began her writing career. Fatma wrote about her family and what had happened to them after her father died. She decided to publish the story in a magazine called "Al Arabia". Fatma was surprised at the readers' reaction. Lots of people liked her story and so she began writing another true story. Soon she became famous.

Ten years later, Fatma received an offer to publish a book of her stories. In October, 1999 she traveled to London with lots of hope to carry on her studies. Sadly, however, her dreams were never realised because she had a road accident and died. Fatma worked very hard writing her stories and books. Her death saddened many people who had known her. Fatma was a good example of a courageous woman who managed to accomplish many things despite the obstacles in her life.

Project Work by Students

Tree planting

Level 3(0-812003) Foundation Program Men, Group M8 and M12 along with their teacher **Ridha Ben Rejeb**, implemented the curriculum in real life. Tree planting an activity which goes hand in hand with North Star Unit 6 "You will be this land", which is about Environment protection. The students were very excited to practice what they learnt.



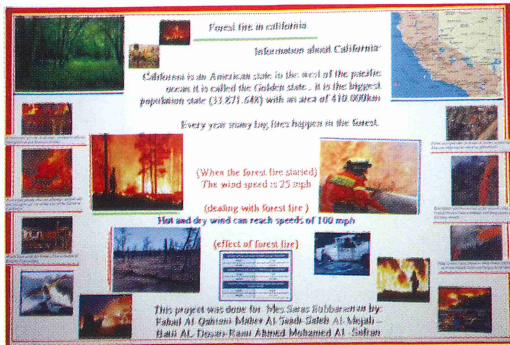
On December 15, 2005, Level 2 (0-812002) **Groups 24 and 25** -Foundation Program Women of **Tasneem Kureishy** made charts and gave brief presentations on Geography and Animal Life, Climate and Vegetation, and



The Scientific Importance of the Continent of Antarctica, based on the NorthStar (R/W). The students displayed their charts and spoke briefly about the topics. The Head of the English Department Dr Madani Othman, the Curriculum Assistant Co-ordinator Dr Muawia Abdulmajid and Level 2 Supervisor Mu Mu Winn were present. They were very impressed by the confidence demonstrated by the students and their expressions and pronunciation. The students were applauded for their effort and were encouraged to continue their hard work.

Pioneering work by my class of Fall 2005

Group 3, of level 3 (0-812003) Foundation Program Men taught by **Saras Subbaraman** researched on a topic as part of a group activity related to their curriculum. This class of 25 investigated some of the most recent natural disasters and prepared a report in the form of collage work as charts and posters. The topics were: Tsunami of 2004, Hurricane Rita, Hurricane Katrina, Recent forest fires in California.

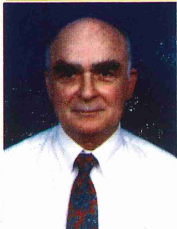


The students worked extensively on their report which included the following information.

- * Date , type and description of the disaster
- * Visuals of the disaster (photos, drawings, paintings)
- * Aftermath (what happened as a result of the disaster; for e.g. an amazing survival Story, a description of the damages and losses)
- * Statistics (people injured or killed, monetary amount of damage)



THE GARDEN OF VERSE



Poems by John S. Morris

Reflections, 1947

On evenings when the sun was warm
and voices floated through the air,
I would go out to Brink's place where trees
shed their skins and long shadows
snaked through weeds toward Spring Creek,
drifting quiet onto the slow stream.
And there, with a girl's shy grace, the deer
would come, their bodies trembling, their eyes
grown dark and wonderful with passivity.
They would step into the brief clearing, hooves
in soft loam, and bow to the water.
And oh, from the cover of deep silence,
the forest dreamed long centuries of seasons
and when they nuzzled the sun, old leaves stirred.

Doggerel, 1965

My billious dog
who usually resorts to grass
in such cases, has digested
A Handbook for Poets

I hope he barks in time.

October's Poem

You have seen these hills green,
then yellow, then bare. The sun
fall on and mellow the season,
changing all for whatever reason.

All's undone: the mountains, the seasons,
even the sun. All cycles' return, returns.
And so, whatever now is to come,
you have seen before, have known.

Let it be done.

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 1980

Winter bleeds magenta. The sky
banked with orange, pales. Now night falls.
The afterglow, freighted with fish and oil
oozes into alleys. Dust scrapes, swirls
in dry whispers; palms clash like swords.
The Red Sea heaves,
then, like the cries of children
abandoned, the day's last calls
drift
toward the wilderness.
Contrition engulfs Jeddah.
Everywhere,
the holy hush in prayer
and darkness sprawls.

Doha, 2003

High winds from the Gulf tonight,
dust sandbagging the sky; the sun
still roseate on high thunderclouds
and the trees, trembling. A scene
uncommon as clay in this wilderness
and one promising winter rain. The air,
charged with expectation, reeks,
and wave on wave washes in the war.
Lightning licks,
clouds are lit, low and black and elegant:
near, too near. Dry lightning, dry wind,
dry rain falling upward to darkness again.

All of these poems are copyrighted
And have been previously published :
Jeddah, Saudia Arabia (Grand Prize Winner) Poetry.com
Reflections, Best College and University Poetry, Dell
Publishers

Doggerel, Lost Roads Publishers
October's Poem, Lost Roads Publishers

The Ant & The Grain

A Poem by Amr Salah



WHY TEACHERS GO GRAY

Jokes supplied by Amr Salah

It was a battle of survival.
The ant shivered under the load
of the one and only grain of wheat.
Pain and agony were all she could feel
but deep inside she felt something sweet.
That was what she dreamt of at that moment,
And all the empire of ants could hear her heartbeat.
She never knew that there were
millions of grains on the threshold.
She held the grain tight and was ready
to fight for it till she was weak and old.

Then, she witnessed those hills of grains
Everywhere: up and down, left and right.
Those were like feasts for her eyesight.
Who cares about a one and only grain now?
The grain slipped from her and rolled to one corner.
And her heart started dancing and singing
"Which grain or grains would she take?"
is a question that kept in her mind ringing.
Her dazzled eyes couldn't decide for her
And before she realized it,
came the shock that she couldn't bear.
The wheat barn owner came with a big broom
To sweep all those scattered grains
and announce the ant's doom!

The beautiful fanciful heaps of wheat
were a short-lived dream.
And to find the one and only grain now
was her only hope and faint gleam.
She searched and searched, but she couldn't find
the only source of happiness that was left behind.
She felt lonely, miserable and empty-handed,
And the grain was there in the corner,
lonesome, sad, emotionally torn and retarded.
The ant passed by the corner, but didn't see the
grain.
And the grain crying, considering calling on her,
but kept himself in the dark corner lain.
And said to himself:
"You preferred illusion to reality,
so you deserve the pain!!"

TEACHER: How old were you on your last birthday? STUDENT: Seven.
TEACHER: How old will you be on your next birthday? STUDENT: Nine.
TEACHER: That's impossible. STUDENT: No, it isn't, Teacher. I'm eight today.
TEACHER: Didn't you promise to behave? STUDENT: Yes, Sir.
TEACHER: And didn't I promise to punish you if you didn't? STUDENT: Yes, Sir, but since I broke my promise, I don't expect you to keep yours.
HAROLD: Teacher, would you punish me for something I didn't do?
TEACHER: Of course not. HAROLD: Good, because I didn't do my homework.
TEACHER: Why are you late? WEBSTER: Because of the sign. TEACHER:
What sign? WEBSTER: The one that says, "School Ahead, Go Slow"
TEACHER: I hope I didn't see you looking at Don's paper. JOHN: I
hope you didn't either.
GARY: I don't think I deserve a zero on this test.
TEACHER: I
agree, but it's the lowest mark I can give you.
MOTHER: Why did you get such a low mark on that test?
JUNIOR: Because of absence. MOTHER: You mean you were absent on the day of the test? JUNIOR:
No, but the kid who sits next to me was.
TEACHER: Well, at least there's one thing I can say about your son.
FATHER: What's that? TEACHER: With grades like these, he couldn't be cheating.
TEACHER: In this box, I have a 10-foot snake.
SAMMY: You can't fool me, Teacher... snakes don't have feet.
HYGIENE TEACHER: How can you prevent diseases caused by biting insects? JOSE: Don't bite any.
TEACHER: Ellen, give me a sentence starting with "I". ELLEN: I is...
TEACHER: No, Ellen. Always say, "I am." ELLEN: All right..... "I am
the ninth letter of the alphabet."
TEACHER: Max, use "defeat," "defense," and "detail" in a
sentence.
MAX: The rabbit cut across the field, and defeat went over defense before detail.
BOY: Isn't the principal a dummy! GIRL: Say, do you know who I am?
BOY: No. GIRL: I'm the principal's daughter. BOY:
And do you know
who I am? GIRL: No. BOY: Thank goodness!

ACADEMIC ARTICLES & TEACHING EXPERIENCE

A STRUCTURED APPROACH TO TEACHING WRITING

Dr. James Moody

Of all aspects of the curriculum, writing is one of the most problematic. There are difficulties in teaching and in learning. For teachers, the challenges can seem burdensome, and for students the frustrations can be discouraging. It is tempting simply to assign topics and then have students get on with the job. Assignments are marked, corrections duly made and perhaps discussed in class, and then the assignment is forgotten. With such an approach, at least students are getting some practice. But it is practice in only one aspect of what is really involved in writing. Writing is more than just "writing".

In my experience, among teachers writing tends to be the least popular part of the syllabus. Other than the fact that evaluation and assessment are time-consuming, there seem to be two main reasons for this. First, writing is not a single discrete skill but an amalgamation of most of the other aspects of an EL program. Students need, for example, not only to know but also to apply rules of syntax, morphology, and lexis, while at the same time also using principles of cohesion, coherence and organization. The second reason follows from this: writing is really a process involving several stages, rather than a single activity.

It is this last point I wish to pursue. When we are faced with a formidable problem, one response is to break it down into its component parts and try to solve them one by one. Thus, in teaching writing, I have tried to use the following ten-step strategy with my students.

Steps in the Writing Process

1. Choose

- a type of writing or genre (usually this is chosen by the teacher or the textbook): e.g., a description of a person

- a specific topic: e.g., my friend Maha

2. Read as many examples of this genre as possible

3. Decide on a format (general structure or framework) for this genre, based on the reading you have done in step 2).

4. Brainstorm: that is, collect and list information about your topic from any of the following resources

- your own ideas and observations
- reading (books, newspapers, internet, etc.)
- talking to and/or interviewing appropriate people

5. Make a detailed plan, by organizing the specific information from the list (step 4) according to the format (step 3)

6. Prepare a draft, paying attention to



- grammar
- vocabulary
- spelling
- punctuation
- clarity of handwriting
- linking words and expressions
- paragraphing
- topic statements

7. Proofread and edit the draft as many times as possible.

8. Prepare a final draft and turn it in.

9. Study and understand the teachers' comments on the returned assignment.

10. Learn from your errors (the next assignment providing evidence for this).

When I have presented this framework to students, a typical reaction is that I am stifling their "creativity". My response has been that there are places in this process to be creative. In step 3, students are engaged in deciding on a format to use in light of their reading. (This is usually done as a class activity, based on passages provided by the textbook and other examples of the genre found by students themselves.) In steps 4 and 5, they are making creative judgments about the collecting and processing of information in relation to a format.

It is important to distinguish the list of points which are a result of brainstorming in step 4 from the plan in step 5. For comparison, I use the simple example of a grocery shopping list with my students. The items in this kind of list are ordered just as we happen to think about what we may need; milk, oranges, tomatoes, apples, mineral water, potatoes, juice, cucumbers, bananas. But a more efficient shopper might change her list into a plan, which would save time as she moves from one section of the supermarket to another:

I. Fruits

A. oranges B. apples C. bananas

II. Vegetables

A. tomatoes B. potatoes C. cucumbers

III. Drinks

A. milk B. mineral water C. juice

The difference between the list and the plan is, of course, that in the latter the information is organized in terms of a format (step 3), based in this case on the sections of a supermarket. Ideally, the plan should be in the form of an outline (with main and supporting points) and not in sentences. At this stage, the writer is not concerned specifically with the skills under step 6.

A large proportion of class time is spent on discussing how to convert the list of randomly chosen items collected during the brainstorm into a detailed plan, by means of the format. A simple formula is: I(nformation) + F(ormat) = P(lan).

In doing this, students are prone to two types of misunderstanding. First, they may try to use a format without a plan. When this happens, they would logically have nothing to say except what is in the general headings: Fruits, Vegetables and Drinks in the shopping example. Or Face, Body, Clothes, Character in a description of a person. In other words, they are confusing the type of information with the information itself, or a question with its answer. Without the specific points from step 4, we could not produce a meaningful, informative essay. (The only sentences we could write from the format alone would be in the nature of: "She has a face" and "She wears clothes".) The format is the same for everyone in the class, but the plan is unique to individual students.

At the other extreme students may try to use only the raw information collected in step 4, without putting it into the structure of a format. This happens especially when students copy sentences directly from written sources, which are often organized in a different way. (An entry in an encyclopedia, for example, may follow a much more discursive format than the one a student is likely to be using in an essay.) For a conscientious student, the brainstorm is likely to produce more information than will finally be used. We can never say everything about a topic, and what we decide to leave out is just as crucial as what we put in. The "raw" information, then, needs to be "cooked" by processing it through the format. A student copying unprocessed material in an essay is like a housewife serving her family a dinner of raw, frozen chicken still in its plastic wrapping.

On the other hand, in fitting relevant information from the brainstorm into the format, a writer may

discover that what was collected during the brainstorm is incomplete and that more details are needed. In step 5, the attempt to organize information may make the writer see that something needs to be added. Steps 3, 4 and 5, then, should be seen as interactive, and the writer may need to go back and forth between them in order to create a usable plan. In fact the more time spent on making a plan, the better the final product is likely to be. It is easier to change a plan, than it is to rewrite a completed draft. For this reason, the teacher should see and comment on the plan first. It can be corrected, revised, worked over until the student is prepared to write the first draft.

Teachers may feel, however, that their main task is to improve students' writing in all the ways listed under step 6. I would suggest that the emphasis on planning in steps 1 to 5 frees the student and permits her to pay more attention to step 6 skills at the proper time. If a detailed plan has been made, then she does not have to concentrate on either what she is going to say or on how it is organized. She is then able to think more carefully about grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.

Proofreading and revising are crucial. In assessing an assignment, teachers ought to be dealing with errors from ignorance rather than mistakes from carelessness. Everyone's time is wasted in marking careless mistakes. Only the student can know this crucial difference between an error and a mistake in her own work. Thus, the more often an assignment is proofread and corrected, the less likely it is to contain mistakes. And the more time left between readings the better, because then students are more likely to be reading what they actually wrote than what they think they wrote. Serious students may want to reread their draft eight times, concentrating separately on each of the skills under step 6.

The submission of the final draft, though, is not the end of the story. Students should be asked to keep and study all returned assignments. Through knowing the specific problems on one assignment, they can improve on the next one. (This is one reason why turning in late assignments should not be allowed.) Errors in writing are not only inevitable but also necessary. However, students need to be aware of them in order to avoid them in future. One of the best ways to prepare for a writing exam is to reread and study all marked assignments.

Is this too structured an approach to writing? Perhaps. But I would suggest, returning to the point about creativity, that such a framework does provide a way to get students thinking for themselves yet functioning within certain restrictions. Experienced writers do often effectively break the rules. But this is only because they know the rules and have gained their experience through following them.

A Guide to Evaluation of Teaching Materials

Dr. ALI AHMED HUSSEIN

INTRODUCTION

Teaching materials show considerable variety in content, language view, sequence, task requirement, etc. The following format for evaluation contains suggestions as to the type of items/questions with which you might approach such materials. This format consists of five main criteria for evaluation of teaching materials: specifications, content, methodology, the learner and the teacher. Each criterion has been broken down into a number of items/questions that may be considered in this respect.



1. SPECIFICATIONS

Under this, the following items may be considered:

- title, author, publisher, date/ place of publication,, target audience, length
- time span : total number of hours
- physical appearance of materials : typography, layout, diagrams, clarity, contents, page arrangement, activities arrangement, whether physical appearance enhance/ detract from learner's motivation
- evidence of having materials being tested prior to publication
- physical resources: realia, furniture, A/V, special equipment, Internet , other resources desirable for the materials to be successfully used.

2. CONTENT

With regard to content, the following items/questions may be considered for evaluation:

- lexis , structure, functions, skills, tasks that the materials set out to teach
- evidence that the author offers for the materials selection eg is it based on needs analysis?
- sequence : criteria followed in sequencing, any inconsistencies?
- subdivision of contents: inter-related , random, ..etc
- revision units: periodic, cyclic, etc
- gradation criteria: thematic, level of difficulty
- type of materials: rigid, adaptable, to what extent can content and sequence be modified to fit a specific situation? Are the materials a closed set; or can they be used as a springboard for language learning activities beyond the materials?
- continuity: reinforcement from one unit to the

next, continuity of context, continuity of task.

3. METHODOLOGY

The materials may imply the kind of methodology that can be used. So the following items/ questions about the relationship between materials and methodology may be considered in evaluation:

- implicit view of language that the materials incorporate about methodology: structured set of syntax, lexis, functions, etc
- are materials founded on a particular theory of language learning or are they eclectic?
- opportunities for variation and diversity of procedures
- activities: individual, paired, small group, whole class. Are these activities essential, permitted, not mentioned, not possible...?
- exercise-types: extensive/ limited range, graded, innovative...
- construction of materials: designed to be worked out from A to Z? Is to-and -fro leapfrogging possible?
- progression pace: standard ;or are learners allowed to progress at different pace

4. THE LEARNER

The learner is also deemed to be an important factor in materials evaluation. So the following is some of the information sought about the learner for whom the materials are tailored .

- appropriateness of the materials to the target learner in terms of the following:
subject speciality, age, communicative needs, learning style, available time, motivation etc
- learner's role: passive, vessel-to-be-filled, respondent, participant, initiator, problem-solver
- knowledge: knowledge of the world/subject-matter that the learner is expected to bring to the materials
- materials' impact on learner: pleasurable, motivating, boring ..etc

5. THE TEACHER

The items listed under this criterion are intended to deal with the type of teacher capable of teaching these materials as assumed by the materials themselves .

- type of teacher: capability of using materials confidently and productively
- knowledge: general knowledge; knowledge of specialist subject- matter if needed
- ability: to handle small group work, preparedness to improvise a teaching procedure when none is available
- role: fountainhead -of-all-knowledge, facilitator, counselor, ...etc

e. freedom of teaching: are the materials flexible and allow freedom of individual teaching style, or just designed to be "teacher-proof"?

f. materials impact on teacher: pleasurable, challenging, boring...etc

A 'Hasty' Look into 'NorthStar'.

Dr. Ahmed AbdAlla Mohammed



1. Introduction:

1.1 The Scene

The purpose of this study is twofold: a) to report a list of quick first observations on 'North Star', being in its maiden use by the English Foundation since the commencement of the present semester (Fall - 2005); and b) to pave the way for subsequent comprehensive and more rigorous material evaluation of 'North Star', following the progress of teaching the series.

The study is labeled 'Hasty', and this is simply because it really is! It is hasty for a couple of variables: a) the very limited time of experimenting the teaching of 'North Star', a bit over a month by the time of writing this article, and b) the very minute data applied as a basis of this study, which is only confined to the first 3 units of the listening/speaking intermediate coursebook, where I had the opportunity of teaching so far. Notably, the 3 units are a part of a total bulk of 80 units, comprising the whole series, (4 levels, per 2 books each, with 10 units in a book).

The question that naturally follows from above would then be: is there an urgent need within the above shortage of time and data to rush into evaluating materials at this stage? In other words, isn't it premature for carrying out material evaluation within the circumstances?

1.2 Rationale

In general, teaching material is evaluated prior using it, (predictive evaluation), and/or post teaching it, (retrospective evaluation). The former is usually done with the purpose of selecting the right material for a particular group whereas the aim of the latter is to arrive at some sort of decision regarding the material, e.g., improving it, [further detailed in, e.g., Sheldon 1988, Allwright 1981, Ellis 1997, Ginger 2001].

In case of the English Foundation, despite the adverse limitations above, the driving forces underlying the evaluation of North Star at this stage are yet numerous: a) North Star is newly introduced in the English Foundation, and so, there is an urgent need to see and to share information among the staff and the University authorities regarding its

progress, b) material evaluation is not a one-off process; it is rather an ongoing process parallel with the teaching operation itself, (Hutchinson and Waters 1987) ; besides, evaluating material right from the outset, particularly of a new textbook, would mean laying the basis prerequisite for an accumulation of a data bank of information with regards the progress of teaching it, c) furthermore, North Star monotonously retains the same format across the whole coursebooks of the series; reducing, thus, the risk of generalizing the findings from an examination of one book (or part of it) into the other(s).

In response, the rest of the article briefly reports observations derived from the first 3 units of the student book: 'North Star: Listening and Speaking, Intermediate.' The report falls under 2 main subheadings: Format and Organization is reported under 2.1 below, and Content in 2.2.

2. North Star: Pros. and Cons:

2.1 Format and Organization

Altogether, the books in the Series look quite attractive, appearing in a pleasant rich-coloured shape, gloss paper, very well design, photos occasionally added and very carefully distributed: the title page of each unit usually has quite an impressive one. All in all, quite an appreciable highly professional effort is clearly exerted on the format, design and organization of the books. The typing is very clear, easy for the eyes to follow and almost error-free if we ignore 3 minor typing errors detected; incidentally, one per each of the 3 units under investigation, as follows: [errors underlined]

Unit 1, Page 2, Line 1: Think of an ad that that you have seen or heard recently.

Unit 2, Page 30, Line 13: Question 3- Do you enjoying doing an extreme sport?

Unit 3, Page 41, Line before last: reassures the victim the he's telling the truth.

In organization, each book comprises 10 units, occupying between 15 - 20 pages, and presented in 4 parts: 1/ Focus on the Topic, 2/ Focus on Listening, 3/ Focus on Vocabulary, and 4/ Focus on Speaking. In other words, each language component is shown as a separate entity, albeit within the same unit, which could have been more powerful for language practice had these components been integrated in some way.

Subheadings are used throughout; in fact, there are quite a few of these, seen on each single page with no exception, a maximum of four is seen on pages 28 and 41. A further complication is added through the system of numbering these subheadings. Numerical, alphabetical and blank labeling all appear in a somewhat confusing manner; e.g. the four components comprising a unit are numbered , further side-headings could appear with alphabets (p. 2) or blank (P. 16, 17, 21,54), again rubric is

numbered, and any other more bold titles are left blank. It sounds strange, for instance, that the rubric under the subheadings is numbered, (Page 38), but the titles under the subheadings are not (Page 39)! The point to focus here is that the use of three types of labeling (numbers, alphabets, blank) in a book already plagued with the overuse of subheadings, totaling 72 in the 3 units under evaluation, makes a consistent sorting out a difficult task.

2.2 Content

This part is divided into two main areas of investigation: a) Thematic Representation, reported in 2.2 A, and Language Functions in 2.2 B below.

2.2 A: Thematic Representation

Each unit in North Star appears under a selected theme. The themes are, on the whole, popular, interesting and could fairly provide a matrix for language practice, e.g. the three units under study discuss: Advertising, Risky Sports and Fraud, respectively. Each topic is presented in a pair of listening texts, e.g. Listening One in Unit Two is "A Journal of a Mountain Climber", Two, "Sensation Seekers"; later the two parts are related, with quite a reasonable involvement of the student in a critical thinking. For instance, the question requesting the student to link the previous example is: Is the climber in Listening One a "sensation seeker"?

As expected, the examples within the themes are drawn from American context. This does not indicate cross cultural instances because the topics are mostly universal, though it might present unfamiliar examples such as the list of sports/games offered on Page 34 which is mostly unknown to my students. Another (controversial?) point of ethics on the theme of Unit Three 'Too Good to be True' is the presentation and discussion of 'fraud' to newly enrolled university students, teenagers, which might appear to be premature.

2.2 B: Language Functions

The major problem, however, of North Star in relation to university students is that the series almost suffers from an absence of functional language, (e.g. descriptions, comparison and contrast, cause and effect). On the assumption that the target situation of our students is to pursue their academic subjects via English medium, then, no doubt, practicing language functions marks the flagship of their needs to studying English.

This should in no sense be interpreted as a call for abandoning the teaching of the Series. In fact, a change of syllabus at present should be ruled out from the stance that: a) the Department has run several changes of syllabus over the past few years. Stability counts. b) though North Star lack functional language, most of the units have the ingredients to inject language functions, e.g. Unit 1, on Ads., provides an instance of practicing 'Comparison and

Contrast': TV ads. to Radio's, Advertising on the Air versus Written. Unit 2 tolerates 'Descriptions': The Mountain Jeniffer climbed, Any other mountain or natural site, Describe the Process of Climbing. Processes could be introduced in Unit 3: the Stages Con Artists Follow to Make their Victims Pay Money. c) the post foundation programme, the last course of English at the University, provides a fairly adequate practice of language functions, both spoken and written, d) finally, there is always a chance of supplementary work, which is actually indispensable to adjust commercial textbooks material to match the list of claims of the group using the course, (see also: Goodman and Takahashi 1987 and Swales 1980).

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Learning Strategies and Autonomy

Dr. Kourosh Lachini

Introduction

"Second language teaching in this post-method era has moved away from the quest for the perfect teaching method, focusing instead on how successful teachers and learners actually achieve their goals" (Long & Richards, 1990).



Learning strategies are significant mainly because of four reasons (Wenden, 1985). First, learning strategies are the key to learner autonomy. Implicit in these descriptions of why strategies are used are some of the problems that learners may need to resolve as they manage or self-direct their language learning, e.g., how does this grammar structure work? What does this word mean? How can I remember it? What do I say if I want to apologize? How can I get people to understand what I mean?

Self-reports of second language learners have demonstrated that learner strategies are techniques used to deal with these problems (Wenden, 1985).

Second, one of the goals of L2 training should be the facilitating of learner autonomy. The idea of helping L2 learners become autonomous takes the notion of "Facilitating language learning "one step further. So far, classroom implementation of this latter objective has focused on methods and materials that allow learners to deal with the affective, motivational, and socio-cultural factors that may inhibit learning. Teachers have also learned to substitute teacher-centered activities with group activities so that learners may participate more actively and learn from one another. Facilitating the development of learner autonomy takes these efforts one step further by helping L2 learners to develop a repertoire of strategies that will enable to deal with their own learning needs and problems once a language course is over. One pre-prerequisite for autonomy on the part of the learner is an awareness of the need to complement exposure and formal classroom learning with independent learning activities and an acceptance of the more active role that this implies. A second attitudinal obstacle to learner autonomy can be learner's belief that they cannot learn on their own.

Third, learner strategies are a source of insight into the difficulties of unsuccessful L2 learners. Findings of research of good and poor learners in L1 and L2 suggest that strategies should also be taken into account as we try to understand and help resolve the difficulties of apparently unsuccessful learners (Omaggio 1978, Pearson 1984). Training strategies (Wong, 1982) has further demonstrated the importance of knowing about and using strategies. One of the notions that has emerged from these studies is that ineffective learners are inactive learners. Their apparent inability to learn is, in fact, due to their not having an appropriate repertoire of learning strategies.

Fourth, Teachers should become attuned to their students' learning strategies. To determine to what extent their L2 student's language difficulties are, in fact, due to a limited or inappropriately applied repertoire of strategies, teachers will need to become sensitive to how their students approach the task of language learning and to the beliefs they hold about it. So, it will be necessary for teachers to develop procedures for systematically assessing the sophistications of their student's strategies as they relate to various aspects of language learning and language use. Learners must learn how to do for themselves what teachers typically do for them in the classroom.

The Latest Model of Learning Strategies

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) within an overall model of L2 learning based on cognitive psychology defined three types of learning strategies used by L2

students Meta-cognitive Strategies (Strategies involve planning and thinking about learning , such as planning one's learning , monitoring one's own speech or writing , and evaluating how well one has done.), Cognitive Strategies (involve conscious ways of tackling learning , such as note-taking, resourcing (using dictionaries and other resources) , and elaboration (relating new information to old), and Social Strategies (mean learning by interacting with others, such as working with fellow-students or asking the teacher's help).

Learning to manage the process of learning involves being aware of what one is doing, or being able to bring one's mental processes under conscious scrutiny and thus more effectively under control. This awareness is called metacognition (Flavell 1976). He believes that metacognition accompanies all learning. He states "When I realize that I am having difficulty in learning something, I have entered into metacognition."

Instructional Models

The first instructional model in first language contexts has been developed by Jones et al. (1987) who called it The Strategic Teaching Model for instructing learning strategies. It is based on cognitive learning theory and seeks to develop autonomous learners through scaffolding instruction, in which the teacher at first provides extensive support in showing students the learning strategies that will help them learn more efficiently; and then gradually reduces the support so that students learn to be independent learners.

On the basis of these assumptions of STM, teaching becomes an active thinking and decision-making process in which the teacher is constantly assessing what students already know. This model also identifies three recursive phases for instruction: preparation, presentation, and application/integration.

Another model is the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA). It is an instructional program for students who are preparing to participate in mainstream academic content instruction (Chamot and O'Malley 1986, 1987; O'Malley 1988). In CALLA, students are taught to use learning strategies derived from a cognitive model (metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective) of learning to assist their comprehension, retention, and use of declarative and procedural knowledge underlying the academic school curriculum. The three components of CALLA (topics from the major content subjects, development of academic language skills, and direct instruction in learning strategies) have been integrated into an instructional sequence with five recursive phases of instruction (preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation, and expansion activities) acting as a lesson plan model that provide students with a variety of learning experiences to

develop content knowledge and processes, academic language skills, and practice in using learning strategies to become self-regulated learners.

Some Suggestions

I advocate a larger role for learning strategies and metacognition in the curriculum to combine them with the learning of the subject-matter and subject specific skills

* Teach in context: Teaching should focus heavily on building up extensive bodies of knowledge that will help students to interpret new materials that they encounter.

* Teach general strategies: Teaching should encourage general strategies of reasoning and thinking that have application across the curriculum.

* Teach mediation strategies: Teach specific and explicit skills such as techniques for organizing and remembering information (visual imagery, self-questioning, networking, re-grouping of information etc.

* Teach meta-comprehension: Try to help students to become aware of learning processes and to call deliberately on their most effective strategies. Encourage students to monitor and organize their own comprehension processes.

* Teach social/affective factors: Encourage the students to raise questions in the classroom without hesitations and ask them to learn in group

Final Note

As Duffy (1982) observed, the 'strategies are the secret algorithms of learning.' At the same time, effective learning is not a matter of age or years of experience (Nisbet and Shucksmith, 1986). They also believe that intelligence may not have any specific role in learning strategies enhancement, "some apparently intelligent people can be remarkably unintelligent in their approach to learning" (p. 7). So a successful learner is one who has learned how to learn.

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Curriculum Development

Portfolio, Tests & Exams Assessment

(by Abdul Moniem M Hussein)

1. Writing Portfolios



Definition

A student's portfolio is a collection of pieces of writing that the student has produced throughout the semester in a particular level of his/her English course of study.

The Rationale for a Portfolio Assessment

Many an expert in the fields of Genre Perspective, ESP and New Rhetoric has stressed the usefulness and validity of portfolio assessment. This can be summarized here as follows (Paltridge 2001):

- * Portfolios can effectively replace end-of-course examinations, as they are fairer for students and give a better view of their learning and their accomplishments.
- * Portfolios allow a more complex view of complex activities and therefore have a higher level of validity than have single, isolated instances of evaluation.
- * Portfolio assessment provides an opportunity to draw together objectives and process models of evaluation by focusing on both the process and product of learning.
- * It also provides a context in which assessment is regarded not merely as a means of measuring results but also as an aid to learning.
- * Portfolio assessment allows students to see that first responses, although valid, need not be final ones.
- * It makes teachers allies of their students in that they work with their students to help them achieve their best performance possible.
- * It also enables students to demonstrate their potential for future development.

Main Features of Portfolios

Ann Jones (1995b) describes the main features of portfolios as follows:

* Portfolios should be put together over a period of time.

* Portfolios should normally contain no more than five items (and can, in some cases, be based on one larger piece of work).

* Items in portfolios should reflect the goals and objectives of the program.

* Portfolios should encourage learners to reflect on their learning.

Contrary to traditional approaches to the teaching of writing, which are obsessed with "product" at the expense of "process", and hence sever the link between the processes of learning and learning outcomes, NorthStar writing objectives equally stress both the process of writing and the end product. If we hold this ground, though processes of learning are far more difficult to teach and assess than products, and obviously time-consuming, we should be able to chart our students' progress towards the goals of learning as expressed by the syllabus and the course objectives, and therefore provide them with opportunities to succeed in developing their writing skills, especially those students who hardly have more than an elementary level of proficiency.

My calling here is for an assessment criterion that maintains the balance between process and product, rather than one that focuses only on the end product. As for portfolio assessment, we are already on the right track. (Testing & Assessment - Teacher's Handbook - 2005):

Division of marks: Process: 5 Product: 5

Number of graded assignments: 5

However, I should like to suggest a few more things as to how we might proceed further when assessing our students' portfolios, based on (Paltridge 2001):

The teacher

- provides detailed feedback when the work is returned to the student.

- provides a provisional grade for each piece of writing.

- gives the student the opportunity to revise his /her work for an end-of-course presentation. This should include no more than five items, selected by the student to represent his/her best performance. The final grade is given on the basis of the revised and edited portfolio presentation, and in the light of the feedback given.

So, my suggestion is: First, to give a provisional grade. Second, to involve students in selecting their own pieces of writing for inclusion in their portfolios for end-of-course presentation, and for which they get their final grade. Involving students in the selection of pieces of writing they have produced is important, as the ability to recognize the value and quality of one's work is a useful aspect of learning and can help students develop positive attitudes

towards their work.

End-of-Course Assessment

Consequently, end-of-course assessment could be articulated to the students in a statement such as the following:

(Two) weeks before the end of the course you are required to present a portfolio of the best (five) pieces of work you have produced during the course. You should include only pieces of work you have been given feedback on and you have revised on the basis of this feedback.

Your portfolio should include any five of the following items:

- an opinion paragraph - a descriptive paragraph
- summary and responsive paragraphs - a folktale - comparison and contrast paragraphs
- an opinion essay - a descriptive essay - an expository essay. (Reference: NorthStar Intermediate Writing Activity Book). Topics from the "Writing Topics Section" of the NorthStar Intermediate Reading & Writing Book can also be included.

2. Tests and Exams

A glance at the writing questions in the Achievement Tests, and the Mid-Term and Final Exams reveals that students are required to write only a final draft (product), without being required to go through the process of writing (prewriting, first draft, second draft, and final draft). By doing so, we are likely here to experience the benevolent inertia of a "just let them write" attitude, and there is a very real danger that we will be drawn back in the direction of standardized tests. In fact, the best thing to do is perhaps to replace the Mid-Term and the End-of Course Exams with Portfolio Assessment as the sole criterion for assessing students' writing as mentioned earlier, in that it is fairer for students and can give a better view of the students' learning and their accomplishments. However, if we maintain the present assessment procedure, the criteria relevant to students' achievement should be closely related to the objectives and the approach underlying the teaching and learning of the NorthStar writing activities, these being in my view, "process writing combined with a genre-based approach to writing development". This means, in terms of assessment, focusing on the purpose of the text, the generic structure of the text: beginning, middle and end and text type, appropriate content (topic-specific), the main language features of the text, that is, grammar and vocabulary related to the text (for example, the use of the present tenses in descriptions and the use of the passive in scientific reports, or the past tenses and dialogues in narratives), together with the correct use of cohesive devices and the mechanics of writing. Therefore, I suggest we insist that students perform the process of writing (prewriting, organizing, revising and editing) before they write their final product in order to reflect understanding

of the different processes involved in writing appropriate texts, a major objective of the NorthStar Reading and Writing component. Accordingly, we should apply the same criteria of assessment, as for Portfolio, to the Mid-term and Final Exams. (Division of marks as on the writing sheets).

Student Writing Sheets

To help students organize their writing portfolios, I suggest the use of four sheets of paper for every Portfolio writing activity. Students should be asked to make as many copies as necessary and keep in their files for use throughout the semester. Students should also be provided with at least three sheets of paper for their Tests and Exams.

[The student writing sheets are available with the Level Supervisor. Please feel free to use them if you like.]

Freedom to Learn

Dr. Yassir Semmar

When I can accept the fact that I have many deficiencies, many faults, make lots of mistakes, am often ignorant where I should be knowledgeable, often prejudiced when I should be open-minded, often have feelings which are not justified by circumstances, then I can be much more real Besides, my willingness to be vulnerable brings forth so much more real feelings from other people who are in relationship to me, that it is rewarding (Rogers 1969, 228).

"Freedom to Learn" is a title of a book written over three decades ago by an American Psychologist, Carl Rogers. Rogers (1969) discussed how his person-centered theory, as related to counseling, could be applied to educational settings. He asserted that certain attitudinal qualities ought to be present in the teacher-student relationship in order for significant learning to take place. "Freedom to Learn" has had a constructive influence on my undergraduate and graduate studies in psychology and linguistics as well as my teaching career.



Rogers (1951) maintained that every individual has an inborn, self-actualization tendency or motivation towards becoming the best he or she can be through a process of growth and change. He also emphasized that an educational environment leads to substantial learning when the threat to the learner is decreased to a minimum. How can this threat be minimally reduced thus rendering the learner more motivated and engaged in the learning process? Rogers (1951, 1969) believed the teacher

or facilitator ought to possess the following three qualities that are vital to the facilitator-learner **relationship**:

1. First is unconditional positive regard, which is an outgoing, positive feeling without reservations and without evaluations. It means not making judgments; it "involves as much

feelings of acceptance for the [student's] expression of painful, hostile, defensive, or abnormal feelings as for his expression of good, positive, mature feelings...The [student] is thus freely allowed to have his own feelings and his own experiencing" (Rogers & Truax, 1967, p.103). The effects of unconditional positive regard result from the providing of an environment in which it is safe for a person to be herself, and to talk about her experience, without fear of evaluation, judgment, or rejection.

2. Rogers (1969) referred to congruence as a state in which a person is "transparently real," willing for others to see through and into his inner experiencing. The congruent person is honest, sincere, authentic, and spontaneous. A congruent moment occurs "when a deep realness in one meets a deep realness in the other" (p.232). Congruence, or genuineness according to Rogers, facilitates trust. Genuineness suggests that a congruent educator serves as a model of openness to experience, making a learner feel safe in trusting her own experience. When confronted by the person who trusts and knows his own feelings, and who is sincere in expressing them, the individual comes to trust and express his own feelings—congruence fosters congruence. Only when two individuals meet one another with an attitude of congruence can a true interpersonal encounter take place.

3. The third quality is called empathic understanding; it is a special kind of understanding that consists of two activities: The empathic state—an intimate sensing of "the [learner's] private world as it were your own," and empathic communication—a verbal expression of the understanding that comes out of the empathic state (Rogers, 1957). Unconditional positive regard, congruence (or genuineness), and empathic understanding constitute the three main tenets of Rogers' person-centered theory.

Relying on Rogers' person-centered theory, Semmar (1999) employed a pretest-posttest, control group design to study the effects of teachers' response to second language writing. Participants of this study consisted of 18 ESL students enrolled in the Writing Proficiency Examination (WPE) preparation course at California State University, Long Beach. The WPE is an exit writing test that both undergraduate and graduate students must pass in order to graduate. Participants were randomly selected and assigned into one of the following three conditions: Participants in the first condition (control group) received no feedback from the writing instructors (although after the study was completed, this cohort did receive one-on-one feedback about their

writing). Group 2 (first experimental condition) participants received a 20-minute standard conference with a teacher. During the teacher-centered, standard conference, teachers simply outlined students' grammatical and content errors and dictated the corrections. Group 3 (second experimental condition) participants received a 20-minute student-centered interactive feedback (SCIF) conference with a teacher whose task was to create an interpersonal climate where the student feels safe and willing to actively discuss what he or she might do to improve his or her writing; the teachers provided no immediate answers but directed students towards their own answers.

The author found that when students received the SCIF, they improved their writing more than those who received the standard conference feedback. The former type of feedback was marked by the unconditional positive regard, genuineness, and empathic understanding, which teachers had shown towards students. These three interpersonal qualities, which are regarded by Carl Rogers as critical for significant learning to take place, were not representative of the standard conference, which was characterized by the teacher-centered feedback. Actually, students' re-writing worsened when they received teacher-centered feedback.

When learners are appreciated and valued for who they are, for their feelings, their opinions, and their potentials; when the teacher or facilitator is a real person, being what he or she is, entering into a relationship with the learner without pretense; and when teachers possess the ability to understand their student's actions and reactions from an internal frame of reference, significant learning will most likely begin to emanate in our classrooms.

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CONSANGUINITY AND ASSOCIATED SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS IN THE QATARI POPULATION



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Key words: Consanguinity, cousin marriages, socio-demographic factors, Qatar.

Running headline: Consanguineous marriages in Qatari population

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore the association between socio-demographic factors and consanguineous marriages in Qatari population. This was a cross-sectional population-based study conducted in the State of Qatar during the period of January to May 2004. A multi-stage sampling design was used and a representative total sample of 1800 Qatari females aged 15 years and above was included in this study. Data on 1515 (85.8%) Qatari national families who gave their consent for the study were obtained. The rate of consanguineous marriages in the sample was found to be 54% with 95% estimated population confidence limits 52.4% to 55.6%. The socio-demographic factors considered were: husband's age, her own age, husband's and own educational levels, husband's occupation, her own occupation, housing conditions, husband's parental kinship, her own parental kinship and kinship between the spouses. Consanguinity is more common for women with educated husbands (secondary or university / high) than for women with less educated husbands. The results indicated that the frequency of consanguineous marriage significantly increased when husband's educational level was higher ($p=0.003$). The distribution of relationship between spouses over the two generations of the study group and their parents are presented. The incidence of consanguineous marriages among the parents was 62.7% and 66.6% for the women and their husbands' respectively and the overall incidence was 64.4%. The parallel patrilineal marriage is obviously the favored practice when considering the parents' kinship distributions. The results of stepwise

multiple logistic regression analysis for the occurrence of consanguineous marriages showed that the wife's education, the husband's education and parents' consanguinity status only were significant associated variables.

INTRODUCTION

Consanguineous marriage is common in many parts of the world [1]; in Pakistan [2,3], India [4,5], South Asia [6], most Middle East countries [7,8] and North Africa [9] it is considered socially supportive. Consanguinity rates are different in different countries [1,10]. This difference is usually related to religion, race, socio-cultural factors and isolation of the society.

One of the salient features of the culture of people in the Middle East and Gulf Countries is the preference for marriage to relatives. Traditionally, the ideal wife for a young man was the daughter of one of his father's brothers; next in order of preference would be other first cousins. If none was available and suitable, then the young man would be expected to choose from more distant relatives. A population-based sample of couples from Beirut [10, 11], showed that the frequency of consanguineous marriages (25% on the average) rose when educational level of husband lowered, and occupational level of husband lowered. In general, the highest rates of consanguineous marriages are reported in more traditional rural areas and among the poorest and least educated sections of society [9,12]. However, consanguineous marriage is preferred at all levels in Gulf Countries like Saudi Arabia [13], Kuwait [14] and United Arab Emirates [15,16], Yemen [17] and Sultanate of Oman [18].

No recent information on demographic and socio-economic characteristics in the preference for first cousin and second cousin marriages is available in the Qatari population, and furthermore, the existing data are contradictory. Consanguinity rates vary from one Gulf country to another according to race, tribe, isolation of the society, economic class and secular exposure. In order to provide some evidence on this debatable issue, an assessment of the demographic and socioeconomic impact on consanguineous marriage in a population-based sample from Qatari population is presented.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

STUDY DESIGN

This is a cross-sectional population-based study conducted in the cities of Doha and sub-urban areas in the State of Qatar. The survey was performed to study the association between socio-demographic factors and consanguineous marriages.

DATA COLLECTION

A representative sample of 1800 Qatari women aged 15 years and above was included in this study which was conducted between a period from January to May 2004. All information was based on prospective interview by physicians and qualified nurses.

A multi-stage sampling design was developed using an administrative division of the State of Qatar into 22 Health Districts of approximately equal size in terms of number of inhabitants.

A standard format questionnaire was designed for the purpose of including information about the following categories: the socio-demographic characteristics of the population surveyed according to whether the marriages were consanguineous or non-consanguineous. The socio-demographic factors considered were: the woman and her husband's ages, husband's educational level, the subject's educational level, occupational status of the woman and her husband, housing conditions, husband's parental kinship, the woman's parental kinship and kinship between the spouses.

Subjects were drawn from antenatal and gynecological clinics and immunization centres in Doha City and semi-urban areas. Selected nurses from the antenatal, gynecological and immunization centres were instructed to structurally interview and complete a questionnaire for a consecutive series of Qatari females aged 15 years and above attending their clinics until the required number was reached in each stratum.

DATA ANALYSIS

The statistical Package Program [SPSS] [19] was used for statistical analysis. In this study Chi-square test was used to ascertain the association between two or more categorical variables. In 2x2 tables, the Fisher exact test (two-tailed) was used instead of Chi-Square, in particular, when the sample size was small. Student's-t test (two-tailed) was used to determine the significance of difference between two continuous variables. Logistic regression [20] was used to adjust for potential confounders and to rank order the importance of factors (determinant) for consanguinity. The level $p < 0.05$ was considered as the cut-off value for significance.

RESULTS

Questionnaires with a letter of explanation were distributed to the 1800 women living in urban and semi urban areas. Of these, 1515 women agreed to participate (84.2%) and gave their consent for the study. The rate of consanguineous marriages in the sample was found to be 54% with 95% estimated population confidence limits 52.4% to 55.6%.

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the population surveyed according to whether they were consanguineous or non-consanguineous marriages. As can be seen from this table the data indicated that there were statistically significant differences between consanguineous and non-consanguineous marriages with regards to maternal age ($p=0.043$), educational level of subjects ($p<0.001$), educational level of husband ($p<0.001$), occupational level of subject ($p<0.001$), occupational level of husband ($p=0.024$) and housing conditions ($p<0.001$).

Table 2 presents the distribution of relationship between spouses over two generations. The incidence of consanguineous marriages is quite high - 54% of all marriages among the subjects, and respectively 62.7% and 66.6% among the parents of the subject and husband, and was 64.4% overall. Three hundred and ninety six parents of the study group and three hundred sixty five parents of their husbands who were consanguineous (out of 632 and 548, respectively) married their offspring to consanguineous partners as against 422 out of 883 (47.8%) and 453 out of 967 (46.8%) non-consanguineous marriages in the parents of the control group and their husbands respectively. The differences are significant in both groups ($p<0.0001$).

The results of stepwise multiple logistic regression analysis for the occurrence of consanguineous marriages are presented in Table 3. The results of stepwise multiple logistic regression analysis for the occurrence of consanguineous marriages showed that age, wife education, husband's education and husband's parents consanguinity status were the only significant associated variables as a significant confounding variables, while other variables were dropped from the model [Table 3].

DISCUSSION

In the present study the rate of consanguineous marriage was 54% which is considered rather high compared to other parts of the world [2-12]. It seems that the results are more consistent with the consanguinity rate found in Gulf countries [10, 13, 14, 17] and Pakistan. Social, economic and geographical influences are important determinants. Unlike what is widely thought, Islam does not advocate or encourage consanguineous marriages. In Kuwait, similar trends were observed, with consanguinity rates among Kuwaitis [14] in 1983 being similar to the published rate in 1968.

In Saudi Arabia [13], the incidence of consanguinity in the urban population is very high and has not changed significantly even among the younger generation. The rate of consanguineous marriages (54.3%) among the Kuwaiti population [10,14] was

very high compared to other populations, but was similar to that seen in the Saudi population [13]. In other Middle Eastern countries like Egypt [22] and Lebanon [7,11] the incidence of consanguineous marriages in the general population was found to be 28.96% and 25% respectively.

However, the comparison of the two generations in terms of cousin marriage preferences suggests the continuation of the same pattern in the two generations. The most common has been and still is Type I parallel cousin marriages. The only difference is that Type IV ranked second in this generation and Type III in the previous generation. The overall extent of cousin marriages has remained the same. Similar results are reported by other authors [23,24]. Even in Beirut [25] where consanguineous marriages are relatively less frequent (25%) the contribution of first cousin marriages (57%) is relatively very high and is comparable to our figures in this generation (52%) and in the previous generation (56.1%). In Pakistan [26] also, parallel first cousin marriages dominated, unlike in India [27] where cross cousin marriages were preferred.

Although the trend has been shown to be towards a decrease in endogamy, probably related to modernization, in Beirut, Lebanon [7], such a trend did not exist in the state of Qatar. On the contrary the trend seemed towards more endogamy. Interestingly in Birmingham, England, the trend for consanguineous marriages among young Pakistanis in Birmingham was more than among older Pakistanis, a paradox that defied explanation [28]. A Japanese [29] study described a substantial decrease in consanguineous marriages during the period 1942-1983. In Japan [29] the fall was from 13% in urban and 21% in rural areas to 2.9% in urban and 4.3% in rural areas between 1947 and 1972.

This study also looked at other factors that may contribute to the high consanguinity rate in the country. In this study it was decided that the stepwise multiple logistic regression analysis was more likely to give a better indication of the contribution to consanguinity of each of the independent variables. The age, wife and husband's education and their parents' consanguinity status only were found to be significant variables. Overall, the association of consanguineous marriage with low social class shown in some studies does not support the interpretation that endogamy is actuated mainly by desire to retain family property intact [11,15,16]. The persistence of endogamy in an urban context, despite the diminishing importance of the larger family as a property group calls for other explanations.

In conclusion, this study has shown that consanguineous marriages tend to propagate themselves and the husband's education and occupation is an important contributor to the incidence rate of consanguinity. The impact of such rate of consanguineous marriages on health status need to be further investigated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was funded by a Grant #12 / 0004 from Science Applied Research Center (SARC), University of Qatar and supported by Hamad General Hospital & Hamad Medical Corporation, Doha, State of Qatar.. I would like to thank Professor Abdulbari Bener for the statistical analysis and valuable advise and information which have improved the presentation of paper.

Table 1. Socio demographics of the female population surveyed by consanguinity

Variable	Non Consanguineous		P Value
	Consanguineous	n(%)	
Frequency	818	697	
Age group(Years)			
Mean-SD	38.8-9.6	39.78-9.5	0.043
<25 years	67(8.2)	40(5.7)	
26-35 Years	192(23.5)	162(23.2)	NS
36-45 Years	323(39.5)	263(37.7)	
>45 Years	236(28.9)	232(33.3)	
Body mass index			
Mean-SD	31.2-6.3	32.0-7.2	0.025
<20 (Underweight)	16(2.0)	13(1.9)	
20-25 (Normal)	107(13.1)	108(15.5)	NS
25-30 (Over weight)	229(28.0)	179(25.7)	
>30 (Obese)	466(57.0)	397(57.0)	
Education			
Illiterate	407(49.8)	264(37.9)	
Primary	233(28.5)	158(22.7)	<0.001
Secondary	107(13.1)	153(22.0)	
University/Higher	71(8.7)	122(17.5)	
Husband s education			
Illiterate	289(35.3)	226(32.4)	
Primary	259(31.7)	184(26.4)	0.001
Secondary	185(22.6)	173(24.8)	
University/Higher	85(10.4)	114(16.4)	
Occupation			
Manual	16(2.0)	20(2.9)	
Sedentary	131(16.0)	156(22.4)	<0.001
House Wife	653(79.8)	489(70.2)	
Retired/Not working	18(2.2)	32(4.6)	
Husband s occupation			
Manual	91(11.1)	99(14.2)	
Sedentary	571(69.8)	441(63.3)	0.024
Retired/Not working	156(19.1)	157(22.5)	
Type of house			
Villa	183(22.4)	224(32.1)	<0.001
Apartment	80(9.8)	55(7.9)	
Traditional house	26(3.2)	16(2.3)	
Semi villa	529(64.7)	402(57.7)	

NS=Not significant

Table 2. Consanguineous marriages among population surveyed according to parental consanguinity.

Relationship between spouses	Subjects parents		Husband s parents		Overall	
	Yes n(%)	No n(%)	Yes n(%)	No n(%)	Yes n(%)	No n(%)
Consanguineous	396(62.7)*	422(47.8)	365(66.6)*	453(46.8)	761(64.4)*	875(47.3)
Non Consanguineous	236(37.3)	461(52.2)	183(33.4)	514(53.2)	419(35.6)	975(52.7)
Total	632	883	548	967	1180	1850

n=Number of individuals
* p<0.001

Table 3. Results of stepwise logistic regression to predictor the incidence of consanguineous marriages in Qatar

Independent variables	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	p-value
Age	1.03	1.02-1.04	<0.001
Wife s education	1.74	1.49-2.02	<0.001
Husband s education	0.82	0.70-0.95	0.008
Parents consanguineous	1.51	1.21-1.89	<0.001
Spouse parents consanguineous	2.03	1.61-2.57	<0.001

Qatari K-12 English Curriculum Standards

Implications for English Education at College Level

Dr. Abdul Gabbar Al-Sharafi

Education Institute
Supreme Council of
Education

**Education for a New
Era-The Independent
Schools in Qatar**



The main features of these

new era schools are

- * **Autonomy:** schools are publicly funded but independently run by operators, subject to contracts
- * **Accountability:** objective and transparent assessment system that holds schools responsible for students' success
- * **Variety:** different kinds of schools and instructional programs
- * **Choice:** over time parents will be able to select the schools that best fit their children's needs

Development of Curriculum Standards [CS] was based on:

- * **Context Analysis:** to identify needs and the country's direction
- * **International Benchmarking:** to align CS with international expectations
- * **Localization:** to ensure that CS reflect Qatari values and culture and are relevant to the needs of Qatari students
- * **External Review:** to ensure consistency of scope and sequence across grades and subjects, age appropriateness and clarity of structure
- * **Finalization:** refinement of CS and translation

English Curriculum Standards: Aims & Expectations

"The overall aim of the English curriculum standards is to enable students to develop skills in English to a level commensurate with that required for entry into the workplace, further or higher education, where English is the medium of communication or instruction." The approaches used are a Lexical approach, a Skill-based Approach and the Learning of Language through Language Use.

The exit expectation is that by grade 12 Advanced, students should develop English language skills to an upper -intermediate level equivalent to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Competent User level 6. The equivalent score in the international Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is 550.

The Structure of the English Curriculum Standards comprises of three main strands. They are:

1. **Word Knowledge:** Starting with 70 active words in KG gradually increasing to 3500 in 12F and 4500 in 12A along with Phonemic Awareness, Phonics and Spelling knowledge
2. **Listening and Speaking:** To listen and respond, to develop speaking strategies and to speak [to communicate] and interact
3. **Reading and Writing:** To develop reading strategies, to read and respond, to develop writing

strategies and to decompose written texts.

English Curriculum Standards

The peculiarity of the CS is that they don't prescribe the following:

- * A particular textbook
- * A particular teaching methodology
- * A specific method of assessment

English CS Support systems are Exemplary Lesson Plans, Schemes of Work, Training Packs, Classroom Visits, Professional Development, School Support Organizations, College Literacy Expectations, Noticing and Manipulating, Active Reading, Paraphrasing, Summarizing, Analyzing, Critical Thinking, Synthesizing,

Authoring and Composing. All these skills and competencies are developmental, social and individual

Evidence from English Curriculum Standards:

Noticing and Manipulating

As early as Grade 2

- * 8.2. Students predict what might happen in a story on the next page, IDENTIFY and point to key words, FIND the names of characters in the text, NOTICE recurrence of words

Grade 6

- * 8.2. Students begin to structure their OWN writing into paragraphs to organize and sequence texts into meaningful sections WITH THE READER IN MIND

Grade 12Advanced

- * 7.1. Students demonstrate understanding of how authors choose language to influence readers, how narratives are differently structured, and how the point of view in narratives varies and can be manipulated for effect.

Active Reading

Grade 8

- * 6.5. Students take an active approach towards reading by relating texts to their own experience, posing questions and seeking answers, anticipating and imagining events, questioning and commenting on ideas, empathizing with characters, and generalizing from examples.

In Grade 9 students are introduced to the concept of genre requiring them to set different expectations as readers:

- * 6.4 Students recognize contexts, purposes and features of formal English through reading, for example, notices, announcements, letters, reports, essays and critical reviews, noting particularly:

increased distance and impersonal style

Providing Clues in the Text to Help Readers

In Grade 12 Advanced

* 9.2. students provide clues in the text for readers to signal forthcoming actions, events, draw the reader to predict and make assumptions and lead towards a conclusion

Paraphrasing

In Grade 8

* 4.4. students paraphrase or seek alternatives for unknown words

Summarizing

In Grade 6

* 9. 7. Students write notes to summarize a written text in simple telegraphic form

In Grade 8

* 5.1. students relate and summarize main points in sequence using some key words

In Grade 10A

* 5.5, 5.11, 7.3, 9.5, 9.7 students summarize a number of genres

Analyzing

In Grade 8

* 5. Students use a range of typical organizational and linguistic features of texts to ANALYZE and make inferences about the texts

In Grade 10A

* 6. Students use active comprehension strategies to ANALYZE and infer meanings

In Grade 12A

* 7. 6. students ANALYZE the use of figurative language

* 7. 7. students analyze texts in relation to rhetorical structure

Critical Awareness

In Grade 10A

* Students compare texts, form and present critical opinions of narrative, persuasive and discussion texts

In Grade 11A

* Students identify and critically understand emotive and persuasive language and how it is used to manipulate perceptions by using a number of critical reading strategies

Synthesizing

In Grade 9

* 7.5. students synthesize information from at least two sources

In Grade 10A

* 7.6 students synthesize information from at least three sources

In Grade 12A

* 7.4. students synthesize information from a range of sources

Authoring or Composing

In Grade 9

* 9.2. students construct a coherent story plan

In Grade 11A

* 9.4. students argue for or against a particular view on an issue of topical or personal interest



* They structure the argument clearly with ...

In Grade 12A

* 7.4. students include accurate details of sources for acknowledgement, reference and crosschecking

What does this mean?

Research shows that: Students who are proficient in LGP still need at least 5 years to master the LAP (Duran et al., 1998; Garaway, 1994; Wretsh, 1991).

Implications of the Curriculum Standards are

- * to sustaining Academic Rigor
- * to hold High Expectations
- * to engage in Quality Interactions
- * to support High Relevance
- * to develop Quality Curriculum

Conclusion

In order to develop the best type of education system in Qatar, the Qatari K-12 English Standards Document and the Qatari K-12 English Standards of Implementation are constantly reviewed and updated by experts.

"Teaching Tips" - Dictations in the Multi-Media labs

{Leslie Butler}



Last semester, in the Multi-Media labs, I found my level-4 students were starting to get bored with the set material. Separately, in writing class, I had noticed that otherwise able students were positioning commas incorrectly and often merging the indefinite article 'a' with the next word. In hand-written form, it was often difficult to be sure when these mistakes were being made and difficult, too, to demonstrate them. I therefore started to use some Multi-Media time for dictations in which I focussed on punctuation and spacing, besides any other spelling and

grammar points I had found to be causing difficulty.

This proved very successful. Because the appearance of the typed script is so much clearer than anything handwritten, I was able to see at a glance when a mistake had been made and to show it to the students. To concentrate on the main problem areas, I used mildly artificial but light-hearted sentences such as, "A lot of students have been making a certain mistake again and again, despite their teacher's instructions. Indeed, a few students always make it and this is making the teacher very angry." Etc etc.

There was a marked improvement in spacing and punctuation over the semester which I felt was a good return for about twenty minutes a week and I hope to repeat the sessions next year. I understand that there are to be other demands on Multi-Media time next semester. Nevertheless, until our classrooms are full of computers, I do think the lab is the best place for dictations.

A Story

(Leslie Butler)

About seventy years ago, in a school in England, a teacher remarked that perhaps people don't all see things the same; maybe we even see colours differently. His adolescent students all laughed and marked their teacher down as an odd ball.

At least one of those students thought about the remark later and saw some truth and implications. Many years later still, he repeated the story to his young son, me. Now, I know enough about physics, biology and psychology to be pretty sure we do all see colours the same, but that's not the point. The remark prompted me to think about different perspectives and constructions and thus made me, perhaps, a little more reflective and tolerant than I otherwise might have been.

And I think about that when I'm struggling to get students to grasp new concepts. I also think about, with humility, ideas that didn't sink into my own head until years after I'd encountered them in a classroom or a book. Some things take time. Decades, even. And I have a cautious confidence that some of the points my students aren't grasping now will become meaningful to them at some future time.

Not that that will do anything for my pass rates.

MISCELLANEA

(Selections from different Readings)
by Abdul Moniem M Hussein

Quotations

For yesterday is but a dream,
And tomorrow is only a vision:
But today well lived
Makes every yesterday a dream of happiness,
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day.

[Sanskrit Proverb]

Pursue not the outer entanglements,
Dwell not in the inner void;
Be serene in the oneness of things,
And dualism vanishes by itself.

[From "On Trust in the Heart"]

[by Seng-t'san (d. 606)]

Not for ever can one enjoy stillness and peace.
But misfortune and obstruction are not final.
When the grass has been burnt by the fire of
The steppe, it will grow anew in the summer.

[A Mongolian wisdom]

A great rock is not disturbed by the wind;
The mind of a wise man is not disturbed
By either honour or abuse.

[Sree Buddah]

How am I to understand myself? How am I to understand other people?

These two questions every human being – with rare exceptions – asks herself/himself through most of her/his life. The rare exceptions are the people who know the answer to the first of these questions, at least to a significant extent. But everyone asks the second, sometimes in wonder, often in despair.

Historically – in the development of the human race and in the life of an individual – these questions

constitute the starting point of, and initial impetus to, psychological investigation.

[The Psychology of Self-Esteem by Nathaniel Branden – 1969]

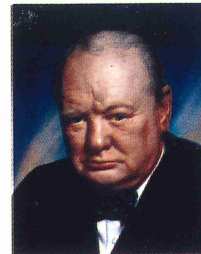
A Story with a Moral

There was a merchant in Bagdad who sent his servant to market to buy provisions and in a little while the servant came back, white and trembling, and said, Master, just now when I was in the market-place I was jostled by a woman in the crowd and when I turned I saw it was death that jostled me. She looked at me and made a threatening gesture; now, lend me your horse, and I will ride away from this city and avoid my fate, I will go to Samarra and there death will not find me. The merchant lent him his horse, and the servant mounted it, and he dug his spurs in its flanks and as fast as the horse could gallop he went. Then the merchant went down to the market-place and he saw me standing in the crowd and he came to me and said, Why did you make a threatening gesture to my servant when you saw him this morning? That was not a threatening gesture, I said, it was only a start of surprise. I was astonished to see him in Bagdad, for I had an appointment with him tonight in Samarra.

[From: To Cut a Long Story Short - by Jeffrey Archer, 2000]

Winston Churchill on school examinations

The subjects which were dearest to examiners were almost invariably those I fancied least. I would have liked to have been examined in history, poetry and writing essays. The examiners, on the other hand, were partial to Latin and mathematics. And their will prevailed. Moreover, the questions which they asked on both these subjects were almost invariably those to which I was unable to suggest a satisfactory answer. I should have liked to be asked to say what I knew. They always tried to ask what I did not know. When I would have willingly displayed my knowledge, they ought to expose my ignorance. [My Early Life (The Reprint Society)-Reader's Digest, Feb., 1988]



Pablo Picasso

[The twentieth century artist who received the greatest renown]

[Adapted from Reader's Digest - Feb., 1988]

"Give me a museum and I'll fill it," Picasso said with his mischievous little smile, shortly before his death, at the age of 92, in 1973.



The Sumptuous museum that has been devoted to the Spanish-born artist in the Hotel Sale, is one of Paris's loveliest seventeenth century mansions. Picasso's challenge has been met.

"Wasn't Picasso the only artist of his time who could so fully warrant a museum devoted wholly to his art?" Marie-Laure Besnard-Bernadac, curator, remarked.

Picasso left 1,855 paintings and sculptures, and thousands of drawings, valued at the astonishing sum of 102 million pounds sterling.

How Dr. Robert Edwards Met His Wife

Dr. Robert Edwards, whose research contributed to the birth of the first test-tube baby, met his future wife, Ruth Fowler, when both were studying genetics in Edinburgh. "One night," he recalls, "I asked Ruth to come with me to a concert. Afterwards I told her something of my background and my determination to succeed. Among the scientists I particularly admired and considered my models, I told her, was Ernest Rutherford, who evolved the theory that the atom is not indivisible but consists of a nucleus around which electrons revolve in planetary orbits.

"Ruth was smiling at me faintly. Perhaps I might be pompous. 'I am Rutherford's granddaughter,' she said. [Reader's Digest - November, 1982]

Jokes

Holidaymakers

A party of German holidaymakers was being taken on a coach tour through the English countryside. With Teutonic thoroughness, they checked their watches at each stop and complained bitterly if they were so much as one minute behind schedule. When the coach pulled up at one historic site, the guide announced, 'Ladies and gentlemen, this is Runnymede. Under that historic oak tree over there, the famous Magna Carta was signed.'

'Ven did zis take place?' asked one of the Germans.

'1215,' replied the guide.

With a glance at his watch, the German exclaimed, 'So! Ve haf missed it by seven minutes!' [The World's Best Holiday Jokes-Edward Philips, 1993]

A motorist in the West Country

A motorist on holiday in the West Country stopped his car and asked a local farmer, 'Could you tell me how far it is to Exeter?'

'Well,' said the farmer, scratching his head, 'it's about 24,997 miles in the direction you're going, but if you turn around it's about three miles.' [The World's Best Jokes]

My Son

"Fourth floor, please," said the passenger to the lift operator.

"Here you are, son."

"How dare you call me son!"

"I brought you up, didn't I?"

A Gentleman's Word of Honour

"If I lend you money," the banker said, "what security do I have that I will get it back?"

"Won't you be satisfied with a gentleman's word of honour?"

"Well, come back with the gentleman this afternoon and you shall have the Money."

NOTICE in the classified -ad section

"ELEPHANT FOR SALE. \$3,000 (Please add \$5,000 for postage and packing.)"

"Don't buy any more hotels!"

A travelling salesman submitted his expense account. Stabbing at it with his finger, the boss demanded, "What's this big item?"

"Oh," said the salesman, "that's just my hotel bill."

"Well," said the boss, "Don't buy any more hotels!"

[Reader's Digest-Nov, 1982]

What Do You Think ?

By convention there is color, by convention
sweetness,

By convention bitterness, but in reality there are
atoms

And space.

[Democritus 460 (?) – 370 (?) B.C.]



Language Food for Thought

{Selected by Abdul Moniem M Hussein}

[From; Wardhaugh – 1998]

Ronald Wardhaugh poses here some important questions for language users, especially language teachers. After reflecting on these questions, you might as well decide you want to write an article for the Newsletter on language variation. Please do so. We look forward to your contribution.

1. Languages contain a great deal of varieties. What evidence can you cite to show some of the varieties? Consider, for example, how many different ways you can ask someone to open a window or seek permission to open the window yourself because the room you are in is too warm. How many ways can you pronounce variants of *and*, *do*, *of*, and *for*? When might *Did you eat yet?* Sound like *Jeechet*? What did you do with the words and sounds? Do you speak the same way to a younger sibling at home over the breakfast table as you would to a distinguished public figure you meet at a ceremonial dinner? It is almost certain that you do not. What are the differences, then, in the linguistic choices you make? Why do you make them?

2. An individual can use language in a variety of ways and for many different purposes. What might cause a speaker to say each of the following? When would each be quite inappropriate?

- a. Do you think it's cold in here?
- b. The airport, as fast as you can.
- c. I do.
- d. I leave my house to my son George.
- e. How strange!
- f. Can we have some silence at the back?
- g. What a beautiful dress!
- h. Will you marry me?
- i. Do you come here often?
- j. Keep to the right, please.

Do you know of any grammar book that tells you

when to use (or not to use) each of the above? Would you describe your knowledge of when to use (or not to use) each as a matter of competence or of performance? (In thinking about this you might consult just about any discussion of Chomsky's work on linguistic theory.)

3. Do you always agree with people you know about the 'correct' choice to make of certain linguistic forms? What do you, and they, regard as the correct completions of the tag questions found in the following examples? (The first is done for you.)

- a. He's ready, isn't he?
- b. I have a penny in my purse, _____ ?
- c. I may see you next week, _____ ?
- d. I am going right now, _____ ?
- e. The girl saw no one, _____ ?
- f. No one goes there any more, _____ ?
- g. Every one hates one another _____ ?
- h. Few people know that, _____ ?
- i. The baby cried, _____ ?
- j. Either John or Mary did it, _____ ?
- k. Each of us is going to go, _____ ?

What kinds of difficulties did you find in completing this task? What kinds of agreements and disagreements do you find when you compare your responses to those of others? What do the standard grammars have to say about correctness here? How would you advise students learning English as a foreign/second language concerning this particular problems?

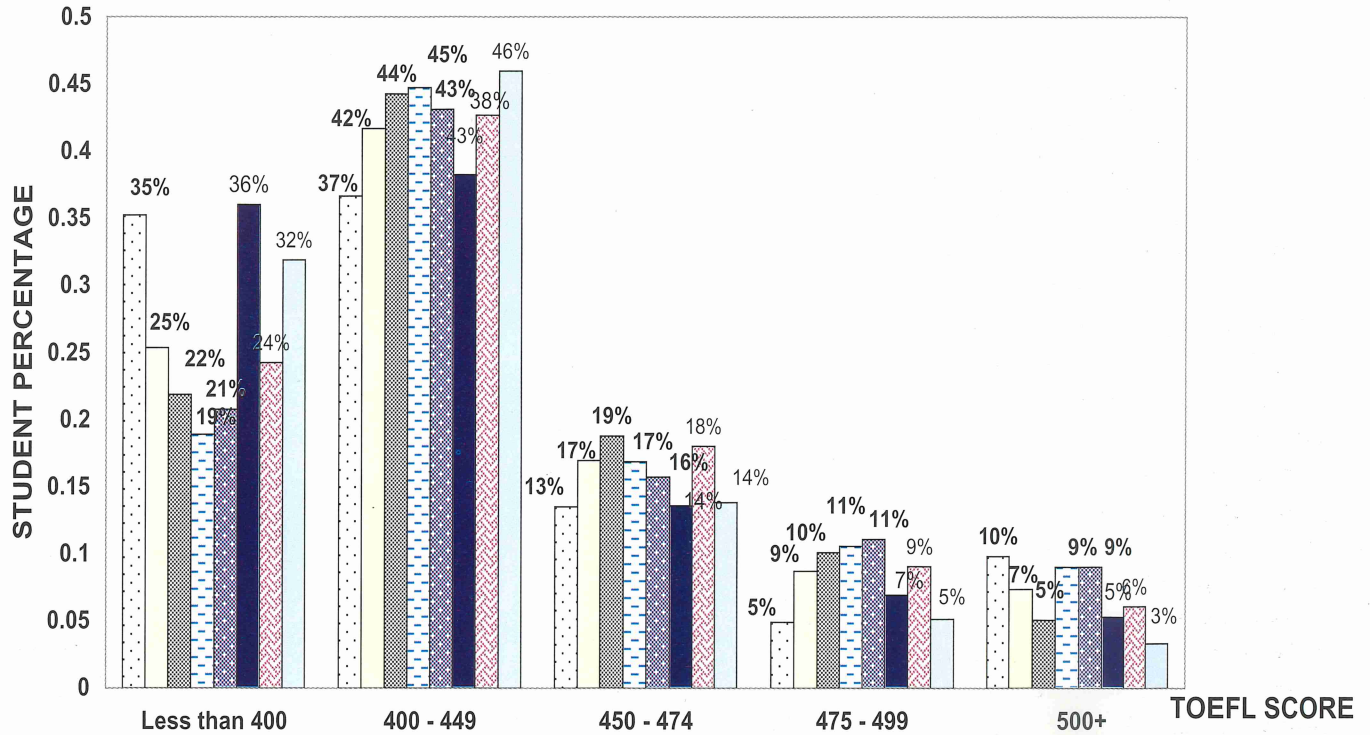
4. Hudson (1996) says that we may be impressed by the amount of agreement that is often found among speakers. This agreement goes well beyond what is needed for efficient communication. He particularly points out the conformity we exhibit in using irregular forms, e.g., *went* for the past tense of *go*, *men* for the plural of *man*, and *best* for the superlative of *good*. This irregular morphology is somewhat inefficient; all it shows is our conformity to rules established by others.

How conformist do you consider yourself to be as far as language is concerned? What 'rules' do you obey? When do you 'flout the rules,' if you ever do?

TOEFL RESULTS

(Supplied by Hind Jaber - The Foundation Program)

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT ON TOEFL TESTS (MALE/FEMALE)
(Sept. 2004 -Jan. 2006)



07-SEPT 04 TOTAL 838
 25 - DEC 05 TOTAL 667
 16 - JAN 05 TOTAL 357
 23 - APRIL 05 TOTAL 588
 16 - JULY 05 TOTAL 777
 04-SEPT 05 TOTAL 1436
 26 Nov.05 TOTAL 1205
 21 Jan. 06 TOTAL 703



Mrs. Saras Subbaraman with her students
In the English Language Classroom
(See page 21)



**Dr. Khalid Al-Ali Addressing
the faculty
& Staff Members
at
The End of the Fall Semester
Meeting**

**Snap Shots
From
The English Dept.
Events & Functions**



**Dr. Madani Osman, the Head
of the English Department
Addressing Faculty at the End
of Semester
Level Meetings**

Testing Workshop



UNIVERSITY OF QATAR
'Changing for You'
'Launching the new Corporate identity'



