



Foundation Program

The English Department

Newsletter



Issue No. 6 - Spring 2007

(From the Sushi Day)



(From the Flower Festival)



The Japanese Flower Festival & The Sushi Day
At QU Women's Foundation Building

H.E. The President of the University and the Director of the FP Welcome H.E. the Japanese Ambassador



H.E. Mrs. Yoko Horie, Wife of the Japanese Ambassador, Opens the Flower Festival

knowledge that is known only to a few can be used only by a few. A piece of information that is shared can go a long way.

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{Knowledge that is known only to a few can be used only by a few}

(Gloria Steinem - Issues Across the Curriculum, 1997)

{A piece of information that is shared can go a long way} bbc.com

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Editor's Note

Focus

This time I wish to deviate a bit from the norm and change the focus of my word to write a bit academically.

I have recently read an interview (Forum, April, 2004), conducted with Professor James E. Alatis, the First Executive Director of TESOL, and who is often called 'The Father of TESOL', and I thought I could share some of his views on ELT and education with our readers.

*On Running out of Vocabulary:

Dr. Alatis was in a taxicab in Greece one day trying to make conversation with the driver. He said, "What kind of *carro* is this?" The driver stopped the car in the middle of the street and said, "This coach? This limousine? This automobile? This is not a *carro*. That over there is a *carro*," and he pointed to a donkey drawing a cart.

*Advice to teachers:

"Be professional. Get a good education. Provide service. ... Quality teacher education is still the heart of the matter. What teachers need is linguistic sophistication, pedagogical soundness, and cultural sensitivity. ... Teachers must have a good education, and they need to be able to go the extra mile, as the late Harold Allen used to say, to do things socially and extracurricularly and belong to their professional organization."

***When asked:** "Does that put any kind of burden on the teacher, going beyond their preparation and education to the social and professional service?", he said: "It does and unfortunately, we as a profession have not been well recognized." However, he added that the psychic rewards from teaching languages are just immeasurable, and people who enter this field are that kind of idealistic people.

***When Asked:** "So training is crucial?", he said he used the expression *education* (not training) deliberately. He added, jokingly, he had been known to say, "Training is for dogs; education is for people."

This Issue

"..., but it looks like a book," a softly spoken remark I have heard from H.E. the President of the University, and from a lot of faculty. I couldn't agree with them more. Their remark was just the trigger we needed to improve the design of the Newsletter. This time we have obeyed them. Of course, change should be expected – innovation and creativity should always be there, at the forefront. However, it took us so long to set up the scenario for the change. First, we asserted the use of thinner paper in the previous issue, but the real kick-off for this issue was when one of the magazines I sometimes read struck me as the right shape and size. So I asked the Executive Manager, Mr. Majdi, at the printing press to kindly increase the width of the



Newsletter and use even thinner paper. As a result, the Newsletter has now slimmed to this size and amount. We also could not at once determine the ultimate layout of the exact position of everything to be included – could not at once discover the perfect balance of the various elements. You know, it is the work of amateur journalists and not that of the professionals of long experience, though not without the artistic and intellectual dimensions to it. However, we have been able to portray special new design features – a huge range of colors and photos, and a lot of material mostly printed in 'font 9'. The End result: an exquisitely refined issue, light in the hand and pleasing to the eye. So please, read and enjoy.

This issue has more to it than meets the eye. There is a lot of information in there. In the 'University News & Events Section', you will read about the new executive positions approved by the Board of Regents, Dr. Sheikha bint Jabor's word on 'Research-Driven Education', and the University's first summer school for potential freshmen. A focused and lengthy "Student Section" includes this time, besides students' course writing, students' creative writing. Coverage of the Foundation Program and the English Department news and events provides key events: TESOL Arabia-2007, workshops and presentations conducted by the English Department faculty, both locally and at the Dubai Conference, and the Flower Festival and the Sushi Day. Take a walk through the garden and please your mind's eye with the splendours of the grass and the glory in the flowers: read the articles, an interview, From Bob to Boss, Reports from Level Supervisors, the poetry competition, standardized tests and many more, and marvel at the photo gallery on the cover pages.

Finally, taking the task of editing this Newsletter, I have been ably supported by my colleagues on the editorial board: Mary Lanaghan, who organized some of the materials and photos, Ala Halwani, who prepared the English Department News & Events, Eileen Plumb, who prepared the Student Section as well as TESOL Arabia Conference, and Anthony Heron, who took the burden of proofreading at the spur of the moment.

Our thanks are due to our colleagues who provided us with a plethora of beautiful pictures: Allyson Young, Anita Ghajar-Selim, Lassana Gassama, Bino Sarah Paul, Reem Khalid, and the University photographer, Mustafa Omira. And we are also grateful to our designer, Zahir Hussain, at the printing press, for taking great pains designing our Newsletter.

And may I reiterate some phrases I used before: 'Believe me it is vacation time, and a vacation it should be after the hectic time we have had. Wish you a nice and relaxing vacation. See you back safe, healthy and fit for another fruitful academic year... and hopefully not too broke!'

Abdul Moniem



Board of Regents Meeting

(From the Office of the President)

The Board of Regents of Qatar University held its second regular meeting for this academic year on June 25th, 2007. The meeting was presided by H.H. Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, the Heir Apparent and the Chairman of the Board of Regents of Qatar University.

The following decisions were made concerning higher executive positions at the University:



1. To renew the appointment of
Professor Sheikha Abdulla Al-Misnad as the President of Qatar University for another four-year term.

2. To renew the appointment of
Dr. Humaid Abdulla Al Midfaa as Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer for another four-year term.



New Positions Created

1. The position of Vice-President for Student Affairs.
2. The position of Vice-President for Institutional Planning and Development.
3. The position of Vice-President for Research.

Appointments



To appoint **Dr. Omar Al Ansari** as the Vice-President for Student Affairs.



To appoint **Dr. Mohammed Al Hammadi** as the Vice-President for Institutional Planning and Development.



To appoint **Dr. Hassan Al Derham** as the Vice-President for Research.

New Program Established

To establish a "**Dawa and Mass Communication**" Program at the College of Sharia and Islamic Studies. Students will be admitted to this Program as of Fall 2007.

Qatar Tribune Nation

Sunday, July 1, 2007

120 students to get feel of university life

(Tighisti Fesshaye)

DOHA For the first time, the Qatar University is offering a summer school programme this year to help Grade 10 and 11 students get a feel of the University life that awaits them. Sixty male and sixty female students from various local schools will participate in the four-week programme, which will include a package of learning, recreation and exploration activities.

The Students Affairs Vice-President, Dr. Omar al Ansari, and Abdulla al Mansoori, the Director of the University's Career Services Office, announced the launch of the University Summer 07 Programme on Saturday at the University's Ibn Khaldoon Hall.

"The programme, to run from July 22 to August 16, will help students identify the fields of study which they aspire to pursue once they reach university level. It will develop their potential and talents through activities prepared by a number of academicians and experts," said al Mansoori.

With the objective of building linkages between the university and its future students, the programme will provide a training opportunity to orient students towards academic institutions in general. "QU Summer 07 will give these students a chance to know what it means to be a student at a university by introducing them to different facilities and services provided here. This is a first attempt, but we are very optimistic," said al Ansari.

The programme includes a variety of activities and basic training in English language, science and computers. Students also have a chance to indulge in sports, media and social activities for

two to three hours every day as well as participate in workshops and training courses in different areas. Moreover, every Thursday, students will visit various institutions in the country, to learn about how they operate as well as find out job opportunities.

Though summer is traditionally not seen as the time for activities, QU has still decided to go ahead with the programme this year. "It is true that many students leave the country during the summer months. But I am sure we will be able to reach our target of 120 students."

The registration fee is QR 1500. Students have to write a one-page statement on their reasons for joining the programme as well as provide a letter of approval from their parents / guardians while applying to join QU Summer 07. At the end of the programme, students will receive a certificate of attendance.

Organisers of the programme are anticipating QU Summer 07 will serve as a bridge between the university and its future students. Al Ansair said, "The objectives is for students to leave with a different mindset about QU and the academic opportunities it offers."



Mr. Abdulla al Mansoori,
the Director of the
University's Career
Services Office

Dr. Omar al Ansari,
Student Affairs
Vice-President

No university can claim to be realizing its vision unless it is successful in promoting innovative thinking and institutionalizing fair and objective reasoning as well as supporting an enquiry-based teaching environment while encouraging open intellectual debate.

As declared in Qatar University's Mission Statement, equipping our students with a quality education ensuring life-long and independent learning is a major goal of all programs offered at the University. This mission can be attained as a result of research oriented teaching and by incorporating research results and innovative methodology in the day-to-day classroom environment.

As a means of achieving the above, QU has drawn up a Research Policy and developed a strategy encompassing a wide range of Research Grants to be allocated to each and every one of the University's constituent colleges. By offering such research-driven education, QU is aligned with the vision of His Highness the Emir, who has allocated some 2.8% of the nation's revenue to research.

The Undergraduate Research Experience Program



research projects related to Qatar's specific national needs. The program promotes "learning by doing" and "hands-on" research activities on the part of undergraduate students. Students will acquire

experience in research in collaboration with faculty members and postdoctoral members of the university community as well as graduate students, fellow undergraduates and research professionals in Qatar.

I was overwhelmed with pride and joy when the QNRF announced the results of the

UREP

which indicated that the highest-scoring proposal in the competition involving 101 research proposals was one from Qatar University. Professor Qutaibah Malluhi will head a research project involving four students entitled "A System for the Automatic Gathering and Intelligent Analysis of Doha Traffic Data".

My joy is further compounded by the fact that QU has reached new heights in areas of instructional innovation and focused academic programs as well as various other accomplishments

in the spheres of research and campus life, I do not have any doubt that we are becoming known as a University that truly prepares learners for the workplace and for leading fulfilled lives – a University that is on the move, is responsive to the community that it serves and which is committed to quality and improvement every day and in every program. Here are some figures that demonstrate the achievements of our faculty members and students:

- * Out of 61 research proposals which secured grants from the QNRF 31 came from QU.
- * 4 out of the 5 top-rated proposals came from QU and were rated Excellent.
- * 31 QU faculty members are actively involved in these projects with their undergraduate students.
- * 65 young QU students are "learning by doing" and getting their first research experience.



(UREP), an initiative of Qatar Foundation's Qatar National Research Fund, has as its aim to engage undergraduate students, under the supervision of faculty members of all the universities in Qatar, in

University News & Events



We have much to be proud of, but, also, much to aspire to. The UREP competition cycle began this spring, with the third cycle scheduled to commence this coming Fall. We have to be prepared and ready to build on the success we have achieved.

In a general presentation at QU scheduled Sunday, April 8th, 2007, the QNRF announced the "First Annual National Priorities Research Program Grant Cycle". The National Priorities Research Program is the largest grant funding activity of the QNRF and the primary means by which the QNRF addresses key national, regional and global needs through research as well as to pursue research opportunities in those areas in which Qatar has had a comparative advantage.

I would like to emphasize the importance of the NPRP which promotes a culture of research and encourages collaboration. I am glad that the NPRP was received



with the same appreciation and enthusiasm as the UREP, and that QU has been as successful in obtaining the lion's share of winning research proposals as it did in the UREP.

Presentations

Dr. Sheikha invited faculty, staff and students, especially senior students, to attend two Presentations; organized and delivered by Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) to introduce their second round of requests for proposals (RFP) in the "Undergraduate Research Experience Program" (UREP) to be followed by question-and-answer forums.

The presentations were held twice:

* **First Presentation:** Sunday, April 8th, 2007
at 9:00 a.m.

* **Second Presentation:** Sunday, 8th April, 2007
at 11:00 a.m.

The presentations were attended by a huge audience, and were extremely successful. A lively discussion ensued. Dr. Sheikha commented that the presentations were a great opportunity for all of us at the University to enrich the project and move forward to the implementation phase.



National Priorities Research Program

Qatar National Research Fund 'QNRF', a member of Qatar Foundation, announced the launching of the first cycle of its flagship program, the National Priorities Research Program "NPRP", with a total fund available of US \$10 million which offers funds from US\$20,000 up to US \$250,000.00 per year for a period of up to 3 consecutive years for the successful proposal.

QNRF invited research proposals from academia and professionals in universities; research centers and organizations in the public or private sectors; within or outside the State of Qatar; and from all scientific specializations (Engineering, Science, Medicine, Humanities, Social Sciences and Arts).

Research proposals must be submitted according to the guidelines outlined in the Request for Proposals "RFP" document published on the QNRF website: www.qnrf.org

In this regard QNRF organized three public presentation to highlight eligibility and guidelines for this fund.

The Transition from Teacher to Administrator Academic Year 2006/2007



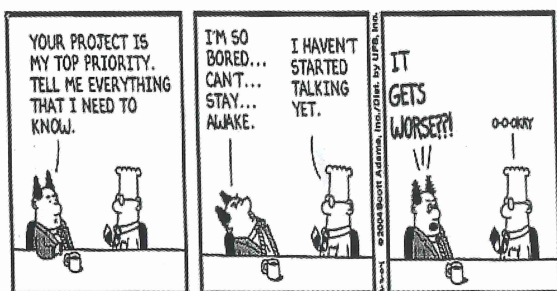
This is not a purely original title, but one borrowed, adapted and resourced from a presentation at TESOL Seattle in March 2007 (with the consent from the authors/presenters), originally entitled "From Buddy to Boss: The Transition from Classroom to Administration". (Timothy Cauller, Britt Johnson, Molly Lewis, Tarana Patel). Although I was unable to attend this session, my colleague Mrs. Mu Mu Winn picked up a copy of the handout distributed in the hope that it would provide me with some insight into the difficulties and dilemmas I had faced, and continue to face in my on-going transition from teacher to administrator.

After careful consideration of the offer from the Foundation Program Director, Dr. Khalid Al Ali, to become the new English Department Head for the Academic Year 2006/2007, I accepted, thinking that I would be prepared to take on the workload, the stress, the frustrations and the associated pain inherent in this position. I was wrong. I was not prepared. Upon accepting the offer, I first turned for advice to colleagues I have known for a long time and whose opinions and viewpoints I respect. These included Dr. Khalid Al Ali, the Program Director; Dr. Maha Al Nabhan, Math and Computer Department Head; Dr. Madani Othman, the previous English Department Head; current and former department co-ordinators, level supervisors, and a variety of different faculty members – both old and new. I also reviewed the literature available on the subject; A Handbook for Language Program Administrators, (Christison, M.A., and Stoller, F.L. (Eds.) (1997), Berkeley, CA: Alta Book Center Publishers) and Department Heading for Dummies (author/s unknown) have both proved very useful. Other sources of advice came from a wide range of articles, and emails from and conversations with individuals far and wide in similar circumstances.

To those I specifically asked for guidance, advice and help – I thank you. To those I didn't ask – but who took it upon themselves to provide it anyway – I thank you as well.

At the end of any particularly stressful day, I always had my 'Dilbert' desk calendar (copyright Scott Adams, Inc. 2006) to turn to for a laugh. It somewhat eased the daily stress and strain of trying to manage a department of 100+ staff and 2000+ students.

A Faculty View of the Department Head



The Department Head's Management Style



This past academic year has been a mixture of both pleasure and pain for the majority of us. For most, I trust, more pleasure than pain. For me, the pleasures have outnumbered the pains 10 to 1. For this, I thank each and every member of the Foundation Program, the English Department, the Math and Computer Department, and all our students – anyone and everyone who has contributed to making this year an overwhelmingly enjoyable and positive experience for me.

To the staff who will be leaving us this year, I wish you all the best. To the new staff joining us in September, I welcome you to the Qatar University Foundation Program English Department. I look forward to a very positive and enjoyable year for all.

Robert Kennedy, Head of the Foundation English Department

At the Foundation Program

(by Abdul Moniem M Hussein)

The Flower Festival and the Sushi Day

(Text adapted from two issues of Qatar Tribune, pictures added)

Girl students at the Women's Foundation Building, Qatar University, hosted two events in the Spring Semester: The Japanese Flower Festival and the Sushi Day.

The Flower Festival



On the Flower Festival, the Foundation English students exhibited Japanese poems. These poems are called 'Haiku', or a specialized form of Japanese poetry, that uses flowers as metaphors to celebrate changing seasons. Haiku poems depict human feelings and experience in tune with nature, using simple language. The poems were said in Japanese, together



with their translations in Arabic and English, against a backdrop of beautiful floral images. H.E. Yoko Horie, the Japanese Ambassador's wife, was taken by surprise: "I'm really amazed. The exhibition is simply wonderful. And the girls welcomed me with the traditional Japanese greeting of 'Konnichiwa'," she said. Yoko Horie had visited the University

before when her husband H.E. the Ambassador of Japan



donated books to the University. (This event was covered in the Foundation English Newsletter-Issue 3). Horie also added that the Japanese and Arabs were possessed by a love for poetry. "This lends a sense of connection to the two languages, and brings the two cultures closer."

The Japanese Anime Club, though formed only in December, is already one of the largest clubs at the University. "We have around 20 members now. The girls themselves took care of



the Flower Festival, selecting the backdrops and translating the poems," said Dr. Simone Evans, an English lecturer and supervisor of the Club. Before the day of the festival, the Club organized a competition to arrange the entries requiring the translation of Japanese poems into Arabic. Student Fatma

Ahmed, who translated many poems, said, "I love translating these poems, ... and I enjoyed doing it."



The Sushi Day

At the second event, the Sushi Day, also organized by the Anime Club, the Japanese Ambassador to Qatar, H.E. Masahiko Horie and the Director General of the Department of Public Diplomacy at the Japanese Foreign Ministry and other guests, were welcomed to QU Foundation Program by Professor Shiekha bint Abdulla Al-Misnad, the President of the University, and Dr. Khalid Al-Ali, the Director of the Foundation Program.



The Ambassador and the guests were surprised to see a mini-Japan at the University of Qatar. The young lady members of the Anime Club had brought many cultural aspects of Japanese culture under one roof for their guests: food, chopsticks, and traditional games. The efforts of the young members were also appreciated by H.E. the President of the University.

H.E. Ambassador Horie said, "It gives me immense pleasure to see many Qatari University students have a deep interest in Japanese culture and they seem to be enjoying every bit of it."

The members of the Anime Club had also organized traditional Japanese games such as Pokuri and Kendama. In Pokuri one has to run through an intricate web of bamboos, and, in Kendama the participants spear a small soft ball. The students, staff and the guests also tried their hands at Kendama and Koma – the Japanese game of Wrestling, using small wooden spinning tops.



"The Japanese Anime Club is the brainchild of The Foundation Program. Such clubs will enable students to understand and appreciate other cultures better," said Dr. Khalid Al-Ali, the FP Director.



In appreciation of His Excellency's contributions in promoting Japanese-Qatari bilateral relations, H.E. the President of the University said, "He is instrumental in creating awareness about Japanese culture and has played a leading role in strengthening the relationship between Qatar University and Japan."



English Department News & Events



Prepared by Aladdin Halwani

On 13th and 14th April, 2007, a high profile linguistic event took place in the College of the North Atlantic in Qatar – The 2007 Qatar TESOL Conference.



The theme of the conference was Challenges & Solutions in EFL.

College of the North Atlantic-Qatar hosts the Second Annual Qatar TESOL International Conference



Instructors in the English Department at Qatar University played a key role in the conference by giving workshops and presentations that ranged from addressing the particular solutions that ELT professionals in the Gulf and beyond have found to meet the changing needs of EFL learners in using state-of-the-art technology in the classroom to enhance collaborative e-learning.

The English Department spared no effort to offer logistic and administrative support to turn the conference into a success story. Dr. Kourosch Lachini was the Conference Program Coordinator. Dr AbdelHalim Abo Jalalah was on the steering committee. In addition, there were a number of instructors who were mentors and helped presenters at the conference, as well as a host of enthusiastic instructors who received, supported and guided the conference attendees. Among these instructors were Berta Huszar, Amer Yacoub, Elizabeth Szewczyk, Zain Al Mumen, Eileen Plump, Mary Lanaghan, Shireen Maghraby and many others.

Six presenters at the conference were from the English Department, Qatar University: Jane Hoelker, Fatima Zumrawi, Alicia Cunkdell, Frank Thor, Joseph Harrison, and Aladdin Halwani.

Jane Hoelker's presentation was about How to Write That Winning Proposal. It focused on how a presenter can turn that great idea into a winning proposal.



Dr Fatima Zumrawi's presentation was about Pushing Listening to the Forefront. She explored research results about listening and new teaching technologies and applications in the classroom.



Alicia Cundell's presentation was about How Teachers Can Help Students Retain. She considered principles in learning based on brain research.



Frank Thor's workshop was about Creating an Interactive PowerPoint Presentation. He explained how to use hyperlinks and action buttons to create an interactive PowerPoint presentation.



Joseph Harrison's workshop was about Integrating e-learning into Schools and Institutions of Higher Education. In this workshop, attendees took part in a number of useful 'hands-on' activities that would kick-start the e-teaching.



Aladdin Halwani's workshop aimed at helping English Language teachers create their own website, upload their course documents and create hyperlinks.



Qatar University Foundation Unit presented a three-day **ELT Mini-Conference** from February 6-8th, Tuesday through Thursday. The theme was Transitions in Teaching. A panel of educators and student teachers kicked off the mini-conference with a panel entitled, "Nonnative English Speaking Teachers' English Language Needs." **Dr. Zohreh Eslami**, Assistant Professor of ESL Education in the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture in the College of Education at Texas A & M University in College Station began the session. Eslami addressed several issues including the language proficiency of NNESTs and some strategies that can be used to develop their

English language proficiency.

Dr. Malatesha talked about the language-related issues he has observed among pre-service teachers such as spelling and literacy issues. The students on the panel discussed what they learned at the English Foundation Unit and how that experience helped them prepare for their future positions as English language teachers in Qatari schools. Almost 50 sessions were scheduled. IT workshops were so popular that participants had to reserve a seat in advance.



Instructors from the English department at the Mini-Conference

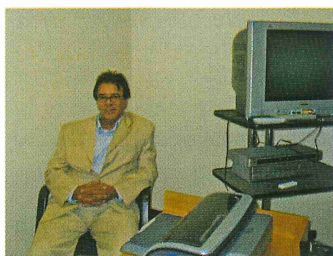
Among the speakers in the Mini-Conference were Joseph Harrison, Dr. Kourosh Lachini, Jane Hoelker, Hank Grimes, Costandinos Demetriades, Kevin Rooney, Amr Saleh Hammam, Peter MacFarquhar, Ahmed Selim & Benjamin Grace, Alicia Cundell, Khalid Ismail, James Moody, Amer Yacoub, Mark Heyne, James FitzGibbon, and Aladdin Halwani.



Joseph Harrison

Joseph's presentation was entitled Blackboard: Possible Perks & Pitfalls. He talked about ways an instructor can benefit from Blackboard as an

e-learning tool in students' courses.



Mark Heyne giving a workshop on Blogs in the Mini-Conference

Mark Heyne and James Fitzgibbon focused on the practical requirements of using weblogs in the classroom and also gave an overview of

language and linguistics related blogs available on the net.

Instructors at the Mini-Conference

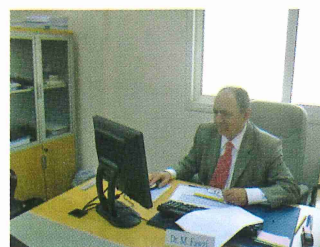
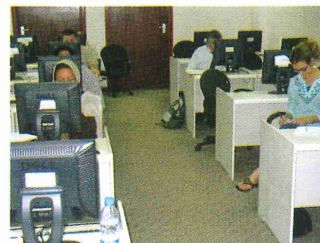


Aladdin Halwani giving a workshop in the Mini-Conference



The workshop was aimed at helping English language teachers become familiar with Microsoft FrontPage so that each faculty member can create his/her website.

Dinos's workshop on Flash Macromedia



Dr. Mohammad Fazwi

Post-Foundation News

* For the first time in the English Department, Blackboard online academic Suite has been used in the post-Foundation Courses and awarded 10 marks in course 202-1. Its various functions were explored. The Discussion Board in particular has had a wide appeal among students, as it involves creative writing.

Reports from the Level Supervisors

Foundation English, Level 1

(Amr Salah Hammam - Supervisor)



This is an integrated Basic/Low Intermediate level course that develops students' receptive skills (reading and listening) and productive skills (writing and speaking), reviews basic knowledge and use of grammar and vocabulary, and encourages independent learning and critical thinking. Classroom learning is reinforced with a variety of Multimedia

programs and special websites for supplementary materials and self- assessment.

"If A is success in life, then A equals X plus Y plus Z. Work is X; Y is play; and Z is keeping your mouth shut." Albert Einstein (1879 - 1955)

As much as I hate to disagree with Einstein, this is the last thing we do in Level 1. We simply speak up everywhere: in our meetings, across levels and whenever represented. I once heard a teacher saying this:

"Oh, you know what? I am so lucky this semester. I am teaching Level 1. Easy!!! Just a couple of rules, simple vocabulary and short paragraphs. Now, thinking about complicated grammatical structures that I had to teach students last semester, I can safely say, Hasta la Vista" says one L1 teacher to his colleague.

I will not discuss the fallacy of the previous quote but I would rather go beyond it to the idea of whether or not levels are sequentially segregated. Most teachers would perceive the different levels separately. For me, I can't divorce our work from other levels' work at all. Levels build on what the previous level/s have achieved and prepare the students for the coming one/s. For Level 1, this is a bit of a challenge as we do not have a predecessor level. Level 1 teachers need countless ways to prepare students coming straight from high schools to cope with university life- let alone study skills that they were never exposed to or familiar with. Working closely with other levels- particularly Level 2- is one of our main duties that we take seriously.

In level 1, we are trying to follow curriculum and testing regulations and instructions. However, we also have to work on curriculum and testing issues that are L1 specific and are difficult to be adopted from documents that mean to address all levels generally. To achieve this, we are engaged in some activities and continuous assessment processes:

a) Periodical Assessment Questionnaires are sent to L1 teachers seeking information/ opinions about different projects and/or tasks such as the Writing Portfolio, Reading Projects and Presentations. These questionnaires are analyzed in full. Then we send our recommendations to the relevant coordinator: testing or curriculum, to introduce any changes

based on the questionnaire analysis and the follow-up recommendations. To illustrate, last semester, L1 teachers showed a number of reasons why they thought the Reading Project needed modification and changes to suit Level 1 students. We did introduce some changes. We will re-evaluate the process once again at the end of the semester.

b) In our level, we promote innovative ways of teaching. Most of the teachers function in a network exchanging supplementary materials, news and sometimes even pedagogical ideas. Our emblem is to achieve good results with our students not through old traditional methods that depend on memorization ...etc but through giving them something to learn for a lifetime. It's not what people eat, but what they digest that makes them healthy. It is not what they earn but what they save that makes them rich. It is not what they remember but what they understand that makes them learn.

c) To be in line with changes introduced to the curriculum, we are piloting two series of books this semester to assess the possibility of using them later. This semester the piloting process is short and limited. We think after limiting our options to one series-if any- we may go big on the piloting next semester.

d) Though not required by the Department, L1 Supervisor is keen on getting feedback on his performance. He developed a questionnaire about how his performance was during Fall 06 semester. The questionnaire was anonymous; L1 teachers did not have to write their names to secure honest replies. Questionnaire results were enlightening for L1 Supervisor.

Future Plans:

A man is not finished when he is defeated. He is finished when he quits. - Richard Nixon

We had some challenges last semester. Problems with photocopying, some teachers leaving suddenly, and problems getting members to join L1 curriculum group are just a few. These never discouraged us from trying to overcome obstacles as they appear down the road. One of the principal merits we have in the Department is that we get instant support and help from the Department management whenever sought. Management personnel are always sympathetic, helpful and open to constructive ideas.

This definitely helps us to set our future plans more easily. The following are some of these:

a) Piloting materials: As previously mentioned, and thanks to the curriculum coordinator who is always resourceful, we are planning to do a big piloting plan next semester. If one of the book series we are piloting now proves to be tentatively acceptable, we will verify this next semester.

b) SM collection with Faculty Support: We have a number of supplementary materials that are helpful for L1 teachers whenever the need to use them arises. A project monitored by Faculty Support group is re-shaping these materials to be more handy and better organized.

c) PD Level 1 specific: It may sound as a not-very-attractive idea, but Level 1 students need special handling as far as materials, teaching methods, interactive teaching....etc are concerned. The idea of having a Level 1-specific PD is lurking until we make sure of the feasibility of the idea.

d) More cooperation with L2: As mentioned before, I am always keen to take decisions after checking with the L2 Supervisor to avoid overlap and duplication. This ensures a smooth transition from Level 1 to Level 2. Just a thought that hasn't seen the light: I am thinking of maybe organizing one meeting a semester that allow L1 and L2 teachers and supervisors to meet and discuss mutual problems that we can work on together. I haven't proposed the idea to the L2 Supervisor yet.

In conclusion, I would like to explain that all our activities and future plans are derived from the fact that we endeavor to assist our students and offer the best performance as much as possible. The following quote is what always keeps us going:

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires." - William Arthur Ward

Foundation English, Level 2

(Mary Lanaghan - Supervisor)

With the largest number of teachers and students, Level 2 naturally has a very diverse and multi-talented group. We had a very productive year and it's an honor to share the news on behalf of the group.



Level 2 Curriculum Group

The Level 2 Curriculum Group was established to develop curricular materials helpful to the Level 2 teachers. This group, which included David Hess, Elisabeth Szewczyk, Mohammed Bakri, and Dr. Muawia

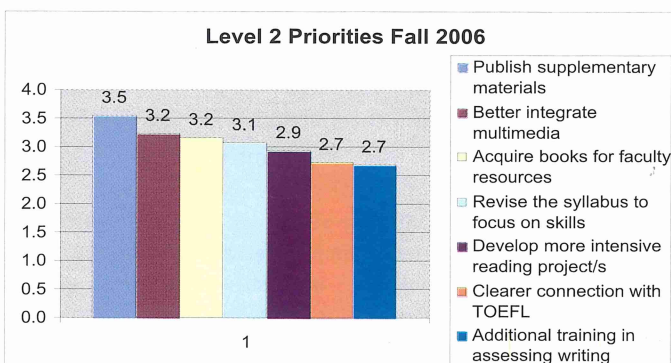
Abdulmajid, gets credit not only for contributing to the collective achievements of Level 2, but for significant independent contributions as well.

Identifying Priorities

At the start of the first semester, the Level 2 Curriculum group discussed the need to identify priority projects upon which to focus our efforts on behalf of the teachers. We consulted teachers informally and developed a short survey asking teachers to rank various initiatives that had been suggested as worthwhile.

The results of the survey, summarized below, helped us identify areas in which to best direct efforts to meet faculty needs.

Faculty were asked to rate each proposal on a scale of 1-4, where



4 top priority

3 very good idea

2 might be helpful

1 could manage without

Reading Project Materials

As a result of the introduction of a new Reading Project this year, teachers were asked to suggest suitable articles or stories to share with their colleagues. Teachers were extremely generous in responding to this request. Jon Savery, for example provided some excellent non-fiction articles. Ahmad Hazratzad elevated our sights with several stories adapted from Shakespeare. Simone Evans scanned materials relevant to Arab women. Hala Hadba launched a new generation of "Chicken Soup for the Soul" lovers, and Anita Ghajar-Selim pointed us to her own website, which, we discovered, just about "has it all."

Elisabeth Szewczyk presented an innovative Reading Log project that she developed for her own students and which is currently being piloted by other teachers.

The Reading Project remains in development, and we look forward to hearing from teachers such as Olga Thomson and Kei Lutalo who have done innovative work in the area of reading during the second semester.

Supplementary Materials Development

Clearly, the sharing of supplementary resources is a great strength of our teachers. Two years ago, teachers were asked to begin submitting materials to supplement the new curriculum. To-date, hundreds if not thousands of creative materials have been shared among colleagues. Significant contributions came from the curriculum group as well as others. Allyson Young's "Cockroach" materials will live on in Level 2 lore for some time to come. Abir Ja'afar, Anita Ghajar-Selim, Daniela Tzenkov, Hala Hadba, Joe Harrison, Khalid Moumen, and Mumtaz Hussein have all contributed useful work to benefit their colleagues.

Supplemental Materials Website

With the constantly growing number of supplemental materials being shared, the importance of selecting, editing, and distributing relevant, high-quality materials has grown, and we were fortunate that one of the teachers in our level, Theresa Mattingly, was able to use the Level 2 materials to pilot a website (www.eflcorner.com) that was subsequently implemented department-wide. Dave Hess working with Theresa, has played a key role in selecting and editing the Level 2 materials for the website, and Shireen Maghrabi has made an innovative proposal for organizing and indexing the materials for the future.

Writing Moderation and Rubric Development

Although a few of us had participated in "writing moderation" sessions before, and many of us were keen to understand how to standardize writing assessment for our own context, the writing moderation session held during the first semester was new for many of us, including myself, and I am grateful to teachers such as Simone Evans, Tony Heron and Bino Sarah Paul who attended an optional session the week before the moderation to discuss how it could best be conducted so as to make it as useful and valid as possible.

Syllabus Revision

Throughout the Fall semester, suggestions for changes to the syllabus were collected and, at the end of the semester, a list of proposed changes was circulated by email to all teachers for their comments and additional suggestions. A new syllabus was drafted and final decisions regarding the syllabus were made at the start of the new semester.

For the spring semester, updates included

- * A new syllabus format to comply with university standardization,
- * A shift in focus of the syllabus away from the textbook to the skill objectives themselves.
- * The inclusion of assessment rubrics within the syllabus distributed to students
- * More descriptive rubrics for Writing Portfolios and Oral Presentations

New changes have already been suggested for next semester and they will be duly considered as well.

Day to Day Service

"Everyone can be great because everyone can serve." – Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sometimes one person does something helps many in some way. Positive actions have a cumulative effect, even if sometimes we don't take the time to mention them. I would like to mention just a few of them:

- * Thanks to Khalid, Mumtaz, and Abir for helping with the curriculum questionnaire.
- * Thanks to Anita for helping figure out my new CD burner, which went on to burn supplemental CDs for everyone.
- * Thanks, Ridha, for making sure that male students had a VCR in their lab last semester.
- * Thanks, Zain, for loaning your copy of the L2 video to the lab so that others could borrow it.
- * Thanks to Tony for taking care of Olga's students until she arrived.

Future Aspirations

"Because no best is quite so good you don't conceive a better" (e. e. cummings, 95 poems)

We are a rapidly developing program that will continue to set our sights high, reviewing our objectives and our progress, making new strides. Future proposals within Level 2 include:

- * Reviewing and piloting new textbooks, particularly for reading and writing.
- * Additional development of the Reading Project
- * Continue working on consistently applied standards for applying of Level 2 writing rubric
- * Identification and development of original materials clearly targeted for course objectives
- * Review of course objectives and methods for assuring and assessing outcomes

Duties, Plans and Activities at Level 3

SalwaEl-Gammal, Supervisor

I've been working with my group on curriculum development at L3 for almost two years. We've tried to address the weaknesses in the course books, propose, discuss and implement solutions in order to meet the students' needs.



When we first used the NorthStar series as course books in the Fall Semester 2005, we realized the need to supplement the textbooks to meet the course objectives. I proposed a long term action plan for an ongoing curriculum

development beginning from the Spring Semester, 2006. The plan focused on developing skill-based supplementary materials, introducing more language exercises / activities, and promoting critical thinking skills. The plan was outlined as follows:

A. Reading

- * Produce fast reading, theme-based comprehension passages to improve the students' reading speed.
- * Introduce vocabulary in context with exercises for each unit to help students assimilate the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- * Develop reading and vocabulary quizzes to assess students' progress.

B. Writing

- * Use strategies to reinforce students' autonomous learning.
- * Develop exercises related to essay writing skills; i.e. topic sentences, essay organization, model essays for various writing functions.
- * Produce exercises related to writing mechanics and editing.

C. Speaking

- * Introduce debates to develop the students' critical thinking and speaking skills.
- * Propose tools other than the oral presentation to assess speaking.

D. Listening

- * Train students in note-taking and listening to lecture-type texts.

All L3 staff worked as a team on the plan and contributed more ideas such as producing glossaries and cross-word puzzles. As a result, we now have for teachers' resources of over ninety skill-based exercises, worksheets, quizzes and reading texts, all of which have been made available recently on the QU website.

With regards to reading skills, the timed reading practices have helped the students improve their reading rate to some extent. This has been reflected in their performance in exams and standardized tests. It is hoped that better reading speeds can be reached at L4 and with extensive reading practice. The vocabulary worksheets, exercises and quizzes have also proved to be of great help to students in developing all

language skills.

Contemporary Topics 2 was piloted for lecture-type listening and was found to be useful for note-taking and listening comprehension. It is now being used as a supplementary listening textbook with NS.

Two important pilot projects were conducted at L3 last semester- "classroom debates" and the "reading project." Concerning "classroom debates", we felt the need to introduce more engaging and motivating activities to the students. There was also a need to replace some of the speaking activities in NS which the students did not find interesting and couldn't relate to, due to their exclusive focus on American culture. Besides, the objectives of the debates were aligned with the course objectives. These were defined as:

- * developing speaking skills
- * developing critical thinking skills
- * promoting autonomous, cooperative and collaborative learning
- * enhancing listening and argumentation skills
- * consolidating persuasive writing

The plan was conducted in two phases: a preparation phase in which the necessary documents were produced re criteria for assessment, timing and formatting of debates, debate student protocol, topic handouts, and an implementation stage in which the project was piloted in a standardized way in 50% of the groups.

An evaluation phase followed. The staff reported that the students were highly motivated in conducting the debates. This came as no surprise since the students had the chance to develop the critical thinking skills necessary to express and exchange opinions as well as to defend their views. As the activities helped them go beyond knowledge to application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation, they became highly interested in the debates. The CC approved adding debates as part of the curriculum starting from the Spring Semester, 2007.

Extensive reading practice was another successful project conducted across all levels last semester. At L3, teachers worked independently or with their students to find interesting articles and short stories appropriate for the level. At the end of the semester teachers reported on the material with regard to its suitability and the students' interest. All materials and feedback have been collected and are now the basis of the L3 article / short story bank.

Concerning future plans at L3, there will be two main level tasks for next semester: the revision of the course objectives and syllabus based on faculty and students survey feedback, and the piloting of new textbooks to find more appropriate materials to match the revised objectives. In addition, since most staff will have finished their Bb training course, we'll try to develop and share materials for online learning. In my view, the significance of this medium as a tool to supplement classroom teaching cannot be underestimated and I can foresee the importance of its use in the near future. We also have two proposals for extracurricular activities related to environmental protection. These activities will give students hands-on experience in the conservation of the environment,

one of the topics covered in the syllabus.

As a level supervisor, I also have other duties in the Department. Being a member of the English Department Board, I try to assist in the implementation of the objectives set up by the Department and to contribute to the development of program content and delivery. In addition, I help in the evaluation of class observation for new staff and teacher's appraisal portfolios for both new and returning staff.

As a member of the Testing Committee, I get involved in the decisions made concerning assessment and testing in the Department. I also assist in the process of test writing and reviewing of exams for the level. My job is to give a hand to a team of test writers and reviewers to produce L3 exams.

My duties in the Curriculum Committee can be briefly outlined as writing and updating the L3 course syllabus in accordance with the University's guidelines and policy. I also take part in designing and conducting the teachers' and students' needs analysis questionnaires. Working with other members of the Committee, I also assist in revising the curriculum and in reviewing level objectives and students' learning outcomes.

Foundation English, Level 4

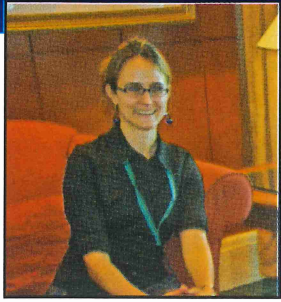
(Berta Huszar - Supervisor)



Any organization is only as good as its employees and I have been very fortunate to have had a very pleasant and professional group of teachers to work with this year. Thanks to their support and guidance, I feel we have been able to work well as a team.

My primary role as the Level 4 Supervisor has been coordinating the various necessities of the level and forwarding on important messages from the Coordinators. Another rewarding role has been mentoring teachers through the strengths and weaknesses of the material. There is always something to do whether that means looking over exams, arranging for level-wide photocopying or actually putting together the Reading Project with the help of team members. It has been a busy year full of meetings and discussions on how to make the program better. Change is never easy, but we must persevere in order to offer the best that each of us can. The coming year should see new books being piloted in the course, with the intention of finding books that better suit the academic needs of Level 4 students. With completion of the Blackboard course, hopefully instructors and students will be able to have more information at their fingertips and encourage all on a path of life-long learning. I look forward to building on my knowledge of the past year to achieve an even better coming year.

Student Section



Prepared by Eileen Plumb
Student Course Writing

Level 1

My Summer in Sudan

Hajer AbdulMonem al-Fadeel, Level 1

Teacher: Mary Williams

Last summer, I went to the Sudan. I visited my aunty and stayed with her in her country. It's a beautiful place to relax and rest from the work. During the day, we helped my aunt work. I tried to milk the cow, but I couldn't do this because it was frightening. Also, I raised these sheep and fed the animals in a farm. In the farm we saw very beautiful views; some people milked the cows and others collected the crops. After that, we went back home.

In the street, I saw that the people didn't use a lot of cars. Instead, they rode animals to go far away. To near places, though, they walked all the time. Some women sold goods under the shade of trees. Also, the children went to school early and during the break, the didn't stay at school – they came back home and ate breakfast there. I felt happy and relaxed in this country. I love it very much, and I would like to live in this country forever.

My Holiday

Dalal al-Naemi, Level 1

Teacher: Mary Williams

Last holiday, I went to Mecca to do al-Omra. First, we went to al-Meqat; Muslims go to this place first before they go to Mecca because they must take a shower and wear the clothes. The men wear special white clothes, and the women wear any kind of clothes in any colour. They, they pray there.

After that, we arrived in Mecca and went to al-Masjed al-Haram and saw al-Kaaba. When you see al-Kaaba and all the people around it, you will feel very relaxed and happy. We went around al-Kaaba seven times, and saw many many kinds of people there.

Next, we went to al-Safa and al-Marwah, which are two long lines that Muslims walk on seven times while reading the Qu'ran. The men can jog, but not the women because if they jog, maybe a part of their legs will appear. After finishing, we cut a small part of our hair and then prayed the evening prayer.

Finally, we went to the hotel, took a shower, and ate dinner. In Mecca, there is a place to get water called the Zamzam

Well. It is located in al-Masjed al-Haram, and we took lots of bottles of water from there. When we arrived home, we felt very relaxed and happy.

Level 2

Hello London: The Movie

Zabihullah O. Bismellah, Level 2

Teacher: Zain al-Moumen

Last month I saw Hello London, a cultural Indian movie, and it was the best movie I have ever seen. It won the prize for Best Indian Movie in 2005; I saw it in the most popular movie theatre in Kabul City.

The story of this movie is about Miss Shalpa. She has lived in London since 1998, and she forgets her country and culture and doesn't like to have relations with Indian people there. She always prefers British people over Indian people. During the course of the movie, robbers steal Miss Shalpa's money from her house. Then, her life becomes full of problems. When she tells her story to her British friends, none of them want to help her, but when she calls her Indian friends and tells them about what happened, all of them come and help her right away. At the end of the movie, she becomes penitent about how she was behaving before.

I like this movie for some important reasons. First, the main idea of this movie is about native country and culture. Second, this movie describes for you how to save your native culture if you live out of your native country. Also, it tells you not to try to find happiness by imitating other cultures, because you will look good just with your culture – never with others. As a result, it is very important to follow your native culture in life.

My Lovely Brother

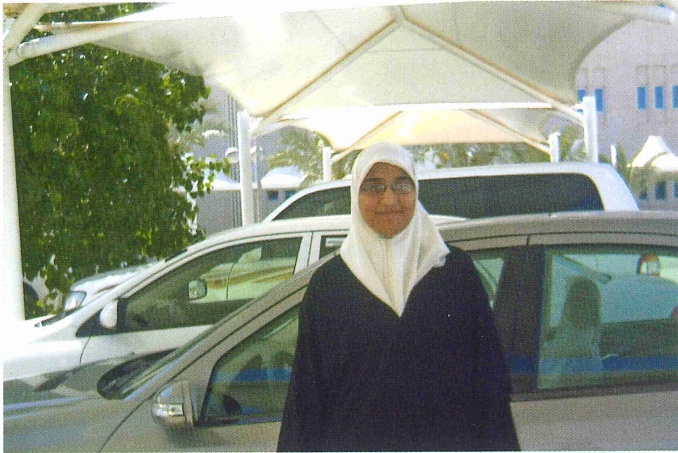
Esraa Mohamed Ahmed Mahmoud, Level 2

Teacher: Khalid Noaman

Kareem is my younger brother. He is 17 years old, and studying engineering in MUST in Cairo. He is taller than me, and his personality is really special and distinct from others of the same age. I love him because he supports me in my whole life, and always stays with me if I face any problems. He is my friend when I need a friend, and my father if I need him to be my father. I always call him in Egypt to be sure that he is fine. Kareem never gets angry if I make a mistake, and he always tries to help me fix it.

One day, I called Kareem to tell him that I wanted to die and I didn't want to live anymore. He talked with me and made me feel much more relaxed. He left his college that day and came to me. I don't know how, but he solved my problem and made me feel good. I will never forget what Kareem did that day. He is such a kind and intelligent person – I hope to find a

person who is a photocopy of Kareem to be my husband one day.



Flowers at the Japanese Embassy

Fatma Saleh Abdullah al-Sowidi, Level 2

Teacher: Mary Lanaghan

On Wednesday, May 30, the Japanese Club took a trip to the Japanese Embassy, and we went with our teachers and friends. It was an amazing trip. We rode to the embassy by bus, and when we entered the embassy, the man who received the guests asked us to put our signature in a big guest book. In addition, the ambassador's wife received us and welcomed us.

The ambassador's wife showed us some types of flowers that were in her house. Then she explained how to make a beautiful bouquet of flowers. After that, she gave us some flowers and told us to try to make a beautiful bouquet for ourselves.

The students hurried up to take the most beautiful types of flowers to make a nice bouquet. Japanese vases are not like



the normal vases. They had water and pointy spines to fixate the flower in a beautiful shape. We learned how to cut the

flowers and how long to make them for each type of vase.

After that the ambassador's wife walked around and gave the girls her comments, and at the end she gave each of the girls a small gift and the photographer took some photos as souvenirs.

Finally, we returned back to the university. It was a wonderful trip and we took a good lesson on how to make a nice bouquet of flowers.

Jarir Trip

Noura Mohamed Ahmed Altaheri, Level 2

Teacher: Mary Lanaghan

Last Wednesday, our class had a useful trip to Jarir to do some practice. It was a very interesting trip, and I learned a lot of information.



This trip was from my university, and I went with my English teacher and my friends at ten o'clock in the morning. We heard some music in the bus while we were going to Jarir.

When we arrived, my English teacher said that students should go together in pairs, and I was with my friend Basma.

Basma and I collected some information about the English books, magazines, and newspapers. The men who were working in Jarir were very helpful, kind, and friendly. They were helping us to find some books or anything we needed. We bought some interesting books, and each of us received a complimentary gift from the store as we were leaving.

Before this trip I did not care about books or reading anything. I thought reading and books were very boring, but when I went to Jarir and saw the books there, I started feeling that I wanted to read all those books, so I have decided to go to Jarir after the final exam and buy a lot of books and movies to read and watch. I think it will be interesting for me and I will improve my English language.

Finally, I thank my English teacher for taking us to Jarir, and I want to thank the staff at Jarir for helping us.



Fun at TESOL Arabia Conference-Dubai

Level 3

Quiz Competition

Tasneem Kureishy, L3 Instructor

Reading/ Writing

Since innovations are the order of the day, I introduced my students of Level 1 W-3 and W-2 to a new concept of learning through a Quiz Competition. I scheduled this quiz for Monday the 11th of June, deliberately keeping it at the end of the semester so that the students would find it helpful in their revision before the final exams, since the quiz was totally course-based. All the questions were based on the units covered through the semester, from Northstar Basic to Low Intermediate Reading/Writing and Listening/Speaking texts. I also included questions on the vocabulary, spellings and grammar that the students had studied. There were 6 rounds of questions: the Visual Round (with pictures projected on a screen with the help of the data show that the students had to identify), the Grammar Round, the Spell-Well Round, the Vocabulary Round, the Sports Round, and finally, the Hot Seat Round. The students found it interesting and tried their best to answer as many of the questions as possible. There was close competition between the two groups (W-2 and W-3). In the end, the efforts of the students were rewarded in the form of prizes, which they well deserved. Ms Amy Gates, R/W Teacher of W-2, obliged me by keeping the scores, and Mrs. Mumu Winn, the Foundation Curriculum Coordinator, kindly agreed to be present through the quiz and give away the prizes to the competitors at the end.



Donating My 3 Ts

Naela El Rahmany, Level 3

Teacher: Lyrma Ingels

No one can deny that donating is one way to make you happy. You can donate your 3 Ts: time, talent and treasure. In this essay, I will talk about my experience in donating the 3 Ts and how this has affected my life.

The first is donating treasure. Most people do this kind of donation by giving money, extra food, old or used clothes, or furniture. I do this because the Prophet Mohammed encouraged us to donate money to the needy and poor people.

He said that if someone donates a part of his money, he will receive more than what he donates. This is true with my experience at school. I decided to share a part of the school money that my father gives me every week. After four months and during the Eid, I received a big amount from my relatives as Idia (an Eid gift). It is more than I donated! This experience encouraged me more to donate every month from my weekly pocket money. I truly feel satisfaction because of the idea that I am helping the poor.

The second thing that is donated by people is time. Everyone can do volunteer work, especially young people because they are active and full of energy. My experience in volunteering started in high school when some blind students came to our school to finish their education. The school administration chose a group of students to help them. I was one of those chosen to help with their studies by making things easy for them without letting them feel different from us. This activity made me feel so happy, and encouraged me to do more volunteer work because I am making a difference in a person's life.

The last thing that people donate is talent. Many people have skills and they do not know how to make use of them. My experience with my sister proved that a person need not have a special talent to donate to the needy. My sister does not like mathematics because she has always faced problems when studying this subject, so I sat with her and explain the lessons to her. I like math and I am very interested in this subject. For me, explaining things to her is easy and quite enjoyable. Doing this made my sister feel comfortable in this subject.

In conclusion, donating the 3 Ts (time, talent and treasure) is important for others and me. In part, I do these things for myself because this makes me happy; on the other hand, this makes other people happy too!

A Wish that will Never Come True

Elham Abdal Wahab Ahmad , Level 3

Teacher: AbdulMoniem Hussein

Everyone has the right to wish and dream about anything. There is no law stopping anyone from wishing. People can wish for anything they want; sometimes, the wish comes true, but other times it doesn't. I have a wish, and I hope it will come true in the very near future: I hope that their won't be any country occupied by another country. As a result, every country would be able to live freely and independently. Every year, when I blow out the candles and cut my birthday cake, I make this wish. . . it's very strange that my wish isn't coming true at all. In fact, the reality has started to be the opposite of my wish.

In other words, the number of countries which are occupied

is increasing – and, of course, the number of wars as well. I have started to feel useless because I want to help this world to get better and better through my wish. Every time I try to wish, the opposite of my wish comes true. I've started to think that I'm a bad person, or maybe my existence brings evil to the world. From the moment I first thought that, I decided to stop wishing for anything.

As a result, I stopped having birthday parties. I thought that maybe if another person (a good person) made this wish, it might come true. In other words, I felt that I was not a good person, or at least not suitable for this wish. I decided to suggest this wish to my friends in their birthday parties. In that case, maybe the wish will connect to someone perfect and suitable in one way or another.

After waiting a couple of years, I realized that nothing happened – instead, things continued to get worse. In a word, it became very messy; the wars have increased in a scary way that nobody could ever have imagined. I have realized that I am not the cause of this wish's failing, and I've started to allow the guilt to drop away and feel a little happier. At the same time, though, I feel sad and desperate. The cause of these emotions is the fact that the world around me is being damaged and I can't do anything to stop it. I feel weak and powerless when I see my loved ones and other people being killed every day. I hope that someday, someone will approach me and say, "I can finally make your wish come true." I think, though, that this day will never come. . .

The Causes and Effects of Global Warming

Noora Saeed al-Marri, Level 3

Teacher: John Carey

Earth is the most beautiful planet, and you can see its beauty from every angle. Unfortunately, it will not always be the same for long if human beings keep polluting the Earth. The most dangerous problem for the human beings in this time is global warming. Global warming has a negative effect on the whole world. Because of this dangerous situation, we must cooperate to find a solution, and make people realize the extent of the problem.

Global warming is the increase in the Earth's temperature, which affects life on Earth in a dangerous way. Unfortunately, many people do not know the reason for it or how to handle it. In my opinion, the main reason for it is human beings. Humans have started cutting down trees, which are responsible for managing the Earth's heat as well as producing oxygen, in order to build cities. Cities have large numbers of cars and factories, which produce a high amount of carbon. This affects the ozone layer that should protect the Earth from the negative effects of the sun's rays. The hole in the ozone layer allows the sun's rays to enter and increases the heat on

Earth.

Humans must find a solution for this problem. One of these possible solutions is to replace the polluted cities with eco-villages which are more balanced between the needs of the environment and of the citizens. Another solution is to set laws to make factories and companies use filters in order to filter out the poisonous gases. Human beings must never forget that the Earth is their home and they must take care of it.

Global warming is not a new problem, but it gets worse day after day. The main reason for this problem is human beings, which are also the only solution. If people care more about this problem, it will disperse after a few years. There are many things people can do in order to protect this Earth, but the first step to finding a solution to a problem is to realize that you have one.

Level 4

Alcoholics and Organ Transplant

Abdulla Saud al-Thani, Level 4

Teacher: Dr. AbdelHalim Abu-Jalalah

No one knows what will happen in the future. So, everyone should keep himself in good condition and save his health. This means that a person's life and health are in his own hands.

Everyone is responsible for his organs, which were given by God. Alcoholics are people who became addicted to alcohol by drinking a lot, and should not be eligible for organ transplant.

Why? This is because they abused their bodies by their hands. So, they should be responsible for that. On the other hand, there are other people who deserve these organs because of real sickness. It is not a big deal if we medicate these people, but not in the same way as those who have become sick naturally, without abusing themselves. All of that is due to the limited number of organ donors.

In conclusion, we can say that every one is responsible for his own life. Secondly, alcoholics should not be eligible for organ transplants because they abused their bodies. Finally, there are people who need these organs – people who didn't abuse their bodies.

The Motorcycle

Bedour Hamad al-Qahtani, Level 4

Teacher: Berta Huszar

Everybody has had a bad experience in their life. I have too, and I can't forget this moment of my life. When I was eleven years old, my family and I went to the desert to camp,

and spent a good time there. My cousin had a motorcycle, and he wouldn't let anyone ride it. He was selfish because he didn't let anybody touch his toys or anything that belonged to him. Because I hated his character, I took all his stuff, which made him very angry and cry. After that, my mother punished me, but not real punishment – just enough to make him stop crying.

My real story is not about that, though; it's bigger than my cousin's character. When we were in the desert, he drove his motorcycle (as you know already, he didn't let anyone else touch his stuff). I decided to touch ALL his things one by one. When he stopped to drink water, I followed him and jumped on the motorcycle. Then I drove it fast – very fast. I remember he cried and threw stones at me. Because I was frightened, I didn't look in front of me. I just kept looking at him, until suddenly I looked up and there was my family sitting in the path. I found I couldn't control the motorcycle and crashed into a big tree full of thorns. Luckily, nothing happened to me.

Asian Games

Ebrahim Mabrouk

Teacher: Saras Subbaraman

Our apologies for accidentally omitting this submission from the last Newsletter.

My name is Ibrahim. I'm 22 years old and from Mauritania. When I heard about volunteering in Asian Games, I went directly there and applied as a volunteer. They called me for an interview and asked me some questions. I worked in WAG (West Asian Games) in the uniform section. It was a nice chance to prove that I could do this job.

I worked for one month then they gave me a certificate for this event. From that time they started calling me for every event like: Book Fair, data- cleaning, call center, etc. until finally they asked me to be a supervisor in uniform. They asked me because I had experience in how to use their system and behave with customers. I accepted this, but I wasn't the only supervisor - we were around 10 people. We started working on Sep. 27th and we were the first venue that started. We worked hard, but at the same time we had a lot of fun.

In that time I got more things for my life. I met a lot of people from different cultures, I learned how to be control myself and the others if any problem happened. I had the best time ever in one year. All I want to say is: thank you, Qatar, for giving us a chance to do something to prove that we love Qatar so much... and see you in 2016!

Post-Foundation

The Prankster: A Narrative Essay

Bappy Mohamed Ahsan, Post-Foundation, English 2

Teacher: Ms. Sophie Bukhari

Kids are very naughty and mischievous. They love to play pranks with others. Some do not have any idea on how their pranks might affect others. Just for fun, they tend to vandalize properties and get away with it. This is the story of one such kid who was the biggest prankster his neighbors had ever seen.

Adam was a 10-year-old kid who was known as the wicked and the meanest kid on the block. Until he was 7, his neighbors loved him like their own son. But when he grew up to be 10, things changed; even the friendly neighbor's dog began to hide beneath the table when Adam was around. Adam was always up to something. Because of him, the flowers had to be put in place, fixing the porch lamp was something that the McCartney's had to do every month, the gardener became tired of fixing the lawn and the broken mailbox hadn't been fixed for the past three months.

One evening Adam's friend Eva came over to his house. He decided to play a new prank on his neighbors to impress her. He went downstairs to the garage and found a box of firecrackers behind the old shelves. He asked Eva to get him a box of matchsticks. He looked over the fence and saw no one on sight, jumped over and hid behind the back door. His face was lit up and he knew what he was going to do. Eva brought him the matchsticks. He took out all the firecrackers, lit a matchstick and shouted, "RUN". Just then everyone heard a big bang! There were firecrackers everywhere. But one went right through Mr. James McCartney's living room. After a while, smoke started coming out of the room and guess what? After a few minutes the entire house was on fire. Adam just stared at the house and realized what he had done. Mr. James' house was in flames, and there was nothing Adam could do about it. But the good thing was that the McCartneys weren't at home; they were out watching a baseball game. Fire engines came right away and fought the fire for two whole hours. By then, almost every single piece of furniture in the house had been destroyed.

Adam was grounded for the rest of the month and his father had to pay for all the damages. Since that day, he has stopped playing pranks on others and learnt a valuable lesson.

Teaching Children

Mohamed Qassas Post-Foundation, English 2

Teacher: Aladdin Halwani

People usually look for the best, either qualitatively or quantitatively. They try to find an appropriate way to teach their children and guide them to a good life. Some people believe that teaching children can be done either actively (by asking questions) or passively (through listening and watching). I think that people should follow the first method.

The first reason is that the children's habit is to be active throughout the day, which means they are always playing and running up and down in accordance with their natural tendencies. As a result, you can't control them easily since their nature is to do whatever they like, so it is somewhat impossible to teach them through listening or watching.

The second reason that I agree to teach them is by asking questions where you can make them interact with you by giving them sweets or small gifts. Medically, doctors advise that if you want your children to obey, try to drag them from a way they like.

The last reason that children should be taught by asking questions is that there is a Chinese proverb which states: "Tell me and I will forget; show me, and I may remember; involve me, and I will understand." This is obvious evidence for my assertion in involving children in order to let them understand.

Consequentially, connecting children by asking questions and communicating with them is the best way of teaching, rather than having them simply listen and watch.

The Western Curse on Our Identity

Nouf al-Suwaidi Post-Foundation, English 2

Teacher: Eileen Plumb

Globalization is simply making the whole world a small village where everybody in every country shares the same ideas, styles of clothing, types of favorite music and everything else. This might be very noticeable these days in Qatar. The huge influence and effect made by Western culture on our small society that was once light is a fact right now. This essay will discuss the reasons why this influence is so negative on our culture, especially in terms of cultural identity and its effect on teenagers and youth.

Any nation's real treasure is its culture. This influence that changes everything – starting from the way people decorate their homes, moving to the way people dress, and ending in the way people celebrate – is taking our identity away from us. Every single thing is starting to look, act or seem Western. Ten years ago, people were more related to their

culture, but now we feel extremely happy when we see something related to it. The new generations know nothing about our past, but everything about Walt Disney and Disneyland.

Teenagers and youth of today are the decision-makers of tomorrow. When we compare between this generation and the generation that came before it, we see a huge difference. The way of talking, dressing and even living is different. This is not all; when it comes to morals, we find that this generation does not have much of them at all. There are really too many examples of this fact; one of these examples is the showing of respect for older people that the past generations used to demonstrate. The lack of this respect these days shows in a big way.

Finally, if this trend continues at the same rate, we will soon find ourselves in a new Western culture, but in the East. The world will turn into one big Western culture that everyone melts into. We should start working right now to stop this from happening, as it will bring nothing more than complete destruction of everything we love.

Student Creative Writing

Lost

Khalidah Abdullah, Level 2

Teacher: Daniela Tzenkova

One day I went to the mountains with my father, brother and uncle. We walked, walked and walked, maybe for two hours. We found many palm trees, small pools of water and the dead body of a fox. While walking, we put our water under a tree and continued walking. When we finished climbing, I told my father that I, my brother and my uncle were going to take the water and go home before him. But unfortunately, we couldn't find the water, because we were lost!

We started walking for half an hour. The weather was hot and sunny; I told my brother and my uncle to wash their faces with the water. Then I started thinking how we could go home. So I climbed a mountain to look at the area around us. As a result, I saw the main road. I was very happy because I knew how to go home from this road. I told my brother and my uncle that we were going home now. I took them and went home. When we arrived home, my mother told me that my father had thought that we were at home, but when he arrived home and didn't find us, he returned to the mountains to look for us. Then when he came back and he saw us, he asked us, "Where were you? I looked for you everywhere, but I couldn't find you at all." In the end, everybody was at home, and we were happy.

Pain of Love

Akuma - Post-Foundation English - Level 2

Teacher: Sophie Bukhari



There was once a beautiful little high school girl called Kasumi. She was a genius, and always took full marks in the exams. She had nice long dark brown hair; her knowledge could challenge even that of the professors.

One bright beautiful day, Kasumi woke up early to prepare a new school semester. She took her books and her notebook, and went downstairs. She ate her breakfast, then hugged her mother. "Good morning, mom," she said.

"Wow - you seem so energetic today! So you are going to school, aren't you?" her mother replied.

"Uh-huh, I loooove school, and all my friends there, too," she replied, smiling. Then she walked to the door. "Okay, Mom, good-bye" she said.

"Take care, honey, and be careful from strangers and cars," came the answer.

"Ok Mom, don't worry about me," she replied. She left her house with her big bag, which was filled with books and school stuff. While she was walking to school, she was talking to herself: Will I meet a boyfriend this year? A boyfriend who only cares about me? A boyfriend who is only for me? A boyfriend who cheers me up when I am down? I hope I meet that boy. The boy of my dreams. . .

She arrived at her school early, so she went to her locker to put her books inside. Then she saw her old friend. "Hey Sakura, long time no see," Kasumi said.

"Yeah - where have you been?" Sakura said.

"I've been at home reading books and writing stories; you know me," Kasumi replied.

"So you always read books, huh? As usual, nothing has changed in you. Oh yeah, by the way, this summer I met a guy at the beach and he moved to this school, because he loves me," Sakura said.

"Oh, so you have a boyfriend?" Kasumi replied.

"Yeah, and he's so handsome and attractive and kind and everything," Sakura replied.

"Nice," Kasumi said.

"Thanks. Hey, what about you? Did you meet a boyfriend this summer?" Sakura said.

"No, I am too shy to meet a guy, and besides, I don't know how," she replied sadly.

"Hey Kasumi, do you know why boys don't like you? Because

you are a book-lover and a geek," Sakura said laughingly. Kasumi did not say anything back to her, so she took her books and she headed to her class. At recess, she took her meal and started looking around for a place to sit.

"Hi girls, may I sit here please?" she asked a table full of girls.

"No place for losers here," the girls replied rudely.

"Okay, thanks," Kasumi said sadly. She did not find anyone who welcomed her to join them, or even gave her an empty chair to sit on. Therefore, she went to a corner, sat next to the wall and started eating her meal sadly. As soon as she had finished eating, she went to the school garden and sat on the grass - hoping a boy would come to talk to, but it did not happen.

While she was sitting on the grass, a bunch of bad people came up to her. "Hey, worm, where is your BOOKFRIEND?" they said, laughing. She ran to the bathroom and started to cry. After a few minutes, the bell rang and she went to her class. When school finished that day, she took her books and left the school angrily, without saying good-bye to her classmates. She did not even talk with anyone. While she was heading back to her home, she spoke softly to herself: I didn't meet the guy of my dreams today, it is only the beginning, and if is that hard without a boy, what I am supposed to do if I don't meet him? Hey, cheer up, Kasumi, you'll find him sooner or later. . . she had begun to smile as she arrived at her house. "Hi Mother, how are you?" she said.

"Oh, Kasumi, I'm good - what about you, my little angel? How was school?" her mother said.

"Ahh, it was terrible, as always" she said. Then she went upstairs to rest.

The next day, Kasumi woke up after a great dream. Her room was clean and tidy, and she had a shelf full of books. Kasumi was happy and cheerful as usual, so she took a nice hot bath. After that, she went downstairs, where her mother had cooked a nice tasty breakfast. "Good morning, Mom! Yay, what a nice smell - what is that, Mom?" she said.

"Good morning, my angel. Oh, this is a special breakfast just for you, my love," her mother replied.

Kasumi hugged her mother tightly & kissed her. "Thank you Mom, you are the greatest mother in the whole world. No, not greatest, you are the most greatest mom in the whole cosmos!" she said.

"Hey honey, stop it, you are making me blush," her mother said. "Okay Mom, I have to go to school," she said sadly.

"Aww, I know that you are looking for a boyfriend; I hope you'll find him today, so cheer up," her mother said.

She went out. The weather was cloudy and cold, and the birds were singing. She passed by a park where she saw little kids playing, and she felt so happy that she stopped to watch them for a few minutes. Then she continued her walk to the school.

As she was walking, she saw a handsome person wearing a black high school uniform. When she saw him, her heart became warmer and started to beat faster. Surprisingly, he was looking into her eyes. From happiness, she did not know what to do or what to say, but the only thing that she could do was. . . smile at him. He smiled back at her and waved. She did not believe that this was happening to her; it was as if a dream was coming true.

When she arrived at school, she could not wait to tell her friends about what had happened to her. "Hi Sakura, how are you? Guess what just happened to me this morning!" she exclaimed.

"Hi - what happened? Wait, let me guess, you saw a flying book, right? No, wait, a biology book asked you out for a date, right?" Sakura replied jeeringly.

"Oh, nothing happened, don't worry. I thought you were my best friend, but all my true friends moved to another school and only bad people are still here," she replied angrily. Then she went to her class. Most of her classmates do not like her because she was super intelligent beloved by all the teachers in the school. Also, she always got full marks & rewards.

After the bell rang, she went home as fast as she could to tell her mother about what she had seen that morning. She hugged her mother tightly. "Hi mom, I'm home. How are you? How's your job?" she asked.

"I'm fine, honey, and work was PERFECT. You seem very happy today; what happened, my dear angel? You met a boy of your dreams?" her mother queried.

"Well, you could say that. While I was walking to school, I saw a handsome high school boy. He was looking at me, and kept looking. I felt so warm, and my heart started to beat very fast. Unfortunately, I didn't know what to do, but I smiled and he smiled back - and he waved, too!! I was like, oh my God, he stole my little heart," Kasumi said.

"Awww see, I told you. Sooner or later you'll meet your boyfriend, your dream," her mother replied happily.

"Tomorrow I will wake up early to go to the same place where I saw him, and I will try to be brave enough to talk to him. I hope he loves me, or likes me, or at least cares about me," she said.

"I hope so, my angel. Now go upstairs and change your clothes and come back. I have a surprise for you," her mother said.

She hugged her mother tightly. "Oh Mother, you don't have to buy gifts for me, but I love surprises. See, you are the most greatest mom!" Kasumi said. She changed her clothes and opened the gift. It was a nice golden necklace that said: I LOVE U. She held it with her two small hands, and she started to cry, still hugging her mother tightly.

to be continued. . .

My QU Experience

Abdelrahman Mohamed Ismail

Post-Foundation, English - Level 2

Teacher: Sophia Bukhari

My name is Abdelrahman Mohamed Ismail. I am a student in Qatar University, and I am sixteen years old. In this article I would like to share my first impressions of Qatar University. When I first got accepted at Qatar University, I was still fifteen years old. So, I was shocked that I was accepted in this university at this very young age. I began thinking: if I go there, will the older students bully me and treat me badly or make fun of me like any other freshmen students, or not? I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to make any friends.

At first, I thought it wouldn't be a good idea to join the university, but my parents told me to have a campus visit during the registration period in August and see if I liked it or not. When I went there, I found that the university staff members were very caring and helpful in many ways. So, my first impression was not that bad after all.

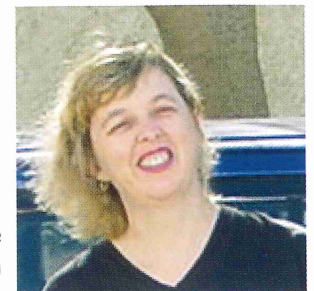
On the first day, I spent sometime in the Student Activities Building, which turned out to be a very entertaining place. The students asked me with whom I came; I just told them that I was student in the university. When I said this, they were shocked and began asking me about my age and from which school I graduated.

I told them that I entered the Egyptian Language School when I was about three and half years, and I studied there till third preparatory. Then, I took the IGCSE secondary certificate which I finished in two years, and after that I applied to the university and was accepted.

Now, I have finished the first term in the university and this is my second one. During this period, I have found that the people are very friendly, loving and cheerful. I began making new friends, and now everybody is accepting that a sixteen-year-old boy is with them in the university. At the end, I thank the university for accepting me and letting me have the honor to be a future Qatar University graduate.

The Poetry Competition

Allyson Young
Student Services
Co-ordinator
Foundation Program
English Department



We had an enthusiastic response to the student poetry competition run by the Foundation English Student Learning Centre last April and May. The competition was for both male and female students and restricted to students from Humanities, English Foundation and Post-Foundation. Dr Fouad Hassan, published poet and chief

translator for the QU President's office, was our judge, and had the very arduous task of going through 90 entries. Themes of the poems included love, protecting the environment, Qatar, nature, family, friends, and war. We have 20 winners. Our first prize for the male students is an MP3. Our first prize for female students is a digital dictionary. All 20 students will be invited to a special lunch to receive their prizes.

First Place: Hussain al-Thaiban

It's Over

For me it's okay
If you want to go or stay.
No matter what you say,
It's over for your play.
So get out of my way,
Because I have to make my day.

Second Place: Mohamad AbdulHamied

Oh, Planet!

Oh, planet in the space of love!
Oh, stars, shine inside my heart!
When I see the moon, I see it twice.
Your moon, and the moon in the sky.
When I loved you, I forgot myself:
My name and address.
Oh, planet in the space of love!
Oh, stars, shine inside my heart!

Third Place: Walid Ali

My Love for Animals

My love for animals has inspired me to write this poem.
They loved to play in the wild.
Now they are captured and put away in cages,
For the pleasure of man.
What of their freedom? of their lives? their nature?
Who gave man the right to capture?
To perish the lives of the weak and innocent?

Runners-up: Hamad al-Subaie

Sara

Sara,
So pretty, so lovely
Kuwaiti in her accent,
Saudi in her standing,
Bahraini in her walking.
Gazelles are jealous of her.
I really love her,
And love those who love her.
My love.

Abdullah Ahmad al-Asha

Beautiful Nature

Beautiful nature,
The sky turns blue,
The day shines again,
The trees say hello,
The sun smiles,
And the mountains stay still
The soul flies away,
The birds fly with it.
In perfect harmony.

Ayedh al-Qahtaini

Flowers

Flowers,
What should we do if they go?
It will become a problem.
If flowers go far away
How can the branches play?
It will become a problem.

Nasser Faraj Dalmouk

Through My Mobile

"I want you and need you".

I have these words,

And selected them for you.

If you are not sure of my love,

Take my phone and read the menu.

You will see your number.

Always there in 'dialed' and 'received' calls.

(You will also find other people's calls unanswered).

Abdullah Mohammed Abdullah

Qatar

Camel owners,

Money owners,

Pearl divers,

Farmers,

Fishermen,

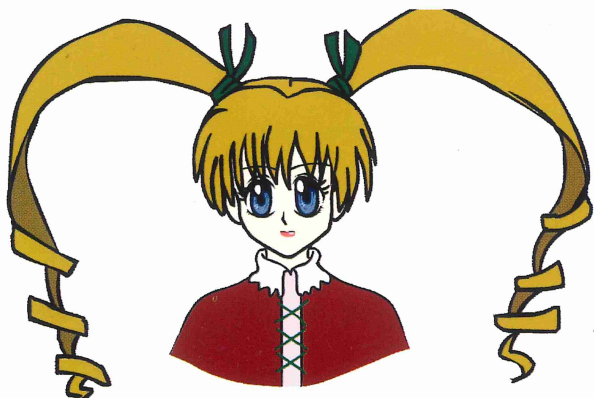
Life with energy,

Without sadness.

My heart,

My country.

Qatar.



Thank You for reading our section

Standardized tests administered by the Foundation Program

Prepared by Mrs. Bino Sarah Paul, Standardized Tests Coordinator, Foundation Program, QU

The Standardized tests that the Foundation Program [FP] administer are TOEFL iBT (Educational Testing Services, USA), TOEFL -ITP (AMIDEAST, USA), PCAT (Harcourt Assessment, Inc. USA) and American Petroleum Institute Tests (API, USA).

Of late, the Foundation Program under the leadership of the FP Director, Dr Khalid Al Ali, is going ahead with a proposal to bring IELTS (British Council) to QU. FP also has started to launch the Business Language Testing System (BULATS), a Cambridge University test, for the QU HR Department.



American Petroleum Institute (API) Test

– an eight hour long exam, for Mechanical engineers from the Oil and Gas Industries in Qatar is conducted once every three months at Qatar University (QU). QU is the only testing center for these tests in Qatar.

PCAT - Qatar University delivered the first Pharmacy College Admissions Test (PCAT) on May 19, 2007. The QU Pharmacy Program, in collaboration with the QU Foundation Program and Harcourt Assessments, USA, successfully delivered the first PCAT ever held in the Middle East. The second PCAT will be administered on 20th October 2007.

Institutional (ITP) TOEFL

In the academic year 2006-2007, approximately 8,000 examinees appeared for 5 ITP TOEFL. The demand for the paper based TOEFL continues as it is one of the exemption/entry tests required for FP students to enter the QU colleges.

International internet-based (iBT) TOEFL

The iBT TOEFL was launched on 28 April 2006, after certification of QU as a test center by the Educational Testing Services (ETS), US, the test provider. Almost 30 TOEFL iBT tests were delivered successfully and the ETS observer who conducted an on-site evaluation of the site remarked on the excellent testing conditions and student-friendliness of the test center.

Business Language Testing System (BULATS)

BULATS, a Cambridge University test delivered by the British Council is making its way to the QU test directory. This computer-based test focuses on evaluating the English proficiency of the new recruits to QU. The Foundation Program coordinates with the QU HR Department and has agreed to deliver the test and report the scores.

Interview with Hicham Benjelloun

Conducted by Ridha ben Rejeb, Foundation Instructor & Senator

Since its inception in 2004, the Foundation Program has strived to equip its students with the necessary tools to cope effectively with their new college environment. As part of the Foundation's self-assessment process, we met with Dr. Hicham Benjelloun from the College of Business and Economics in an attempt to follow up on the progress of our first group of Foundation students in their academic pursuit.

RbR: Thank you for accepting our invitation to the interview.

Dr.H: It's a pleasure.

RbR: Could you introduce yourself to our readers?

Dr. H: My name is Hicham Benjelloun, and I hold a Ph.D in Finance from the University of North Texas in the U.S. I have been an Assistant Professor of Finance since Fall, 2005. Specifically, I teach Corporate Finance and Investment as well as Principles of Finance and Statistics.

RbR: What are the specific pre-requisites for a student to attend your course(s)?

Dr. H: I would say: skills in business, math, statistics, and financial accounting. Also, computer skills such as excel and other programs related to finance and management; and, of course, proficiency in English (as all of our courses and projects are conducted in English). Last, but not least, interpersonal skills – it is always an advantage to be outgoing, outspoken, pro-active and have the ability to take the initiative.

RbR: What have been the main challenges you've encountered in the past with students in your courses?

Dr. H: Hmm. . .primarily, their poor language skills. Speaking was always the worst part; they often would try to use Arabic in class to express themselves, though I never speak Arabic with them - not even outside of class. Reading books in English was another challenge, accompanied by a serious lack of proficiency in writing - to the extent that I often couldn't understand what they were trying to say.

Another barrier was their lack of familiarity with new

technology; they had very little knowledge of computer skills, and didn't know how to use even basic software programs. Another big obstacle impeding their studies was the weakness in critical and analytical thinking; they were used to relying on rote memory, and this combined unfavorably with their often very introverted personalities. As a result, they were always embarrassed to express their points of view or to speak openly in public. In the event that they had to give a PowerPoint presentation, they would usually read directly from the slides, with no presentation skills. Also, they had no clue of how to

draft the outline of a report, or conduct an action research project.

RbR: I understand that the first group of Foundation Program students having fully completed has made its appearance in your classes this academic year. What comments can you make about the performance of these students?

Dr. H: First of all, their English language skills

have improved a great deal. In general, they seem to be more confident, and have acquired the skills necessary when addressing a large audience. They are showing greater extroversion and taking more initiative in class. They are pro-active in asking questions and seeking clarification, rather than complaining about the fact that they didn't understand my course. I now often communicate with my students via e-mail, and they reply with decent English. They have a good idea of what is required from them as students; hence ,their study skills have also improved. They have a much better idea of how to implement hands-on skills such as creating outlines, conducting research, and writing summaries and reports.

RbR: What about their computer and math skills?

Dr. H: We often use excel in class, and I have noticed that they are familiar with most of its features. This is the first time that I haven't had to spend time teaching them the basics of excel (except for advanced applications like statistical



functions and data analysis). As for math, they seem to be comfortable with university-level algebra and calculus. Overall, there has been a marked improvement in all aspects of the basic skills necessary for successful university scholarship.

RbR: Very interesting. Could you make any comments or suggestions for the faculty here in the Foundation Program English Department?

Dr. H: Keep up the good work. We are already starting to notice favorable results. I think the majority of my departmental colleagues would agree with me on this. Hmm. . . I would specifically ask you to focus more on the following areas: promoting learning independence, applying critical thinking (as opposite to relying on rote memory), report-writing, and presentation skills & techniques. It would also be a good idea to emphasize the development of language functions such as asking for permission, making requests, excusing oneself, etc.

RbR: Do you have anything to suggest to our fellow colleagues in the FP Computer and Math Department?

Dr. H: Keep doing more of the same; to be more specific, when it comes to computer skills, I would say that because using excel is such a challenge, you could dig a little deeper and teach them about excel's more complex functions (such as using charts, tables, diagrams, and graphs). You may want to introduce the students to some computer programs such as PASCAL (for business), FORTRAN (for engineering), MINI-TAB and MATHEMATICA (a combination of math and statistics). Finally, knowledge about other programs to help our students solve equations or do linear programming would be useful.

As for math - so far, so good. If I could make a suggestion, I would recommend an introductory course for university-level math that matches up with different university curriculum requirements (rather than high school math). I would specifically suggest MATRIX algebra and linear programming integration, derivatives, and differential equations. For statistics, I would say that basic statistical distribution, probabilities, and hypothesis testing would all be very useful skills for our students.

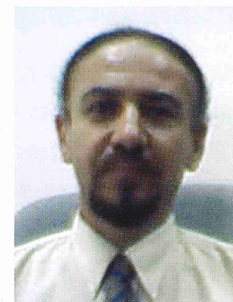
RbR: This has really been an eye-opening interview. Thank you very much for taking time out of your busy schedule to talk to our Foundation Newsletter readers .

Dr. H: you're welcome, and please keep doing more of the same.

If you have any further questions or queries for Dr. Hicham, you are welcome to contact him at Hbenjellou@qu.edu.qa

Star like words

Startling words usually stand as vivid manifestations of human experience and individual genius along the ages and throughout cultures. They stunt us as we sail our eyes over the surface of their stone letters to shape the infinite number of loose but cutely lined images and pictures.



* Build today, then strong and sure, with a firm and ample base, and ascending and secure, shall tomorrow find its place.

* If you will be steadfast on the path to which your feet have been guided, you will find the treasure of life, a never-ending stream of help, healing, and happiness.

* Individual commitment to group effort- that is what makes a team work, accompany work, a society work, a civilization work.

* Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.

* No action is too small; no choice is insignificant; together they are the brush strokes that create the final masterpiece of our design.

* Beauty though nice, melts like ice in the beholder's eyes as time flies.

* One morning, I looked in the mirror and couldn't see my face. I then hurried to the lovely pond for an answer. There my hidden face came up to the surface more handsomely than ever.

* When a real man cries, tears get enshrined and wrapped in his soul's gown and will never be seen till the end of time.

* "By developing balance in your life, you will increase your energy, motivation, and your sense of satisfaction. In short, your happiness." So:

* Take Time

"Take time to think;

it is the source of your power.

Take time to play;

it is the secret of your youth.

Take time to read;

it is the foundation of your knowledge.

Take time to dream;

it will take you to the stars.

Take time to laugh;

it really is your best medicine.

Take time to pray;

it is your touch with almighty God.

Take time to reach out to others;

it will give your life significance."

Teachers' Tips & Experiences

(by Leslie Butler)

"Some people pay money to holiday in places like this"



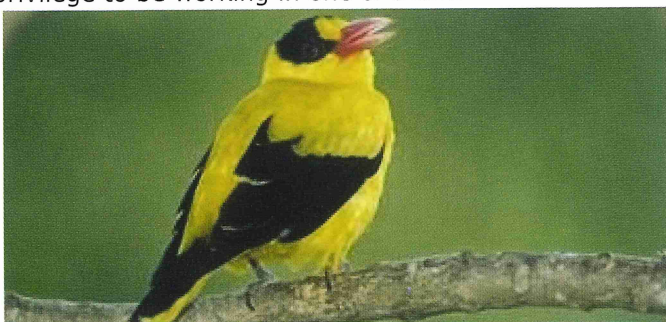
The Campus at Weekends

Twice now, and with full official permission (Thanks again, Lulwa, for arranging things), I've taken a group of ramblers from the Qatar Natural History group for a Friday morning walk around the campus.

I don't want to cause problems for the security guys, but I think everyone should check out what a nice place the campus is, and maybe look around when things are quiet and student-free. The design won awards for the architect when it was built, and although the University no longer uses the buildings in the eco-friendly way that was intended, the modern-traditional Arab style is still very pleasing. It seems to me, too, that he caught a fine balance between imposing and intimate. And you've seen how prettily the stained glass plays on the walls in the women's library? Well, in the right light, the windows are just as nice on the outside.

The architect did more than create nice buildings. The wadi by the main gate was largely preserved, along with what looks like traditional farm-terracing on the Doha side. The shady mini-park there goes unnoticed by many staff and students as they speed to the exit, but it's well worth a stroll and a sit-down amongst the bushes and flowers, wild and cultivated. The scents on the last walk were lovely. Not much for bird watchers perhaps, though I've seen kestrels and Bee-eaters overhead, Francolins, Crested Larks & Hoopoes on the ground, Silverbills and Palestinian Sunbirds in the bushes, and, once, a Golden Oriole in a tree. Anyway, doves, sparrows, bulbuls and mynahs might be too common to notice, but they provide a background music I never tire of. And parakeets are fun to watch.

Trouble is, it's a bit difficult to relax and appreciate such over-familiar beauty when you're scurrying to a class, composing a last-minute lesson plan. (As if!) That's why it's so nice to come here at a weekend, or linger after classes. Qatar has few enough 'nice' places, so it's a privilege to be working in one of them.



"Just like the one I saw on the Women's Campus".

USING E-MAIL WITH STUDENTS

Leslie Butler

This semester, I used the University's newly enhanced internet capacity to exchange emails with my Grammar & MM students. This was more instructive than successful and I'd like to share something of what I learned.

My Discoveries:

- * Very few of our students use email, in any language.
- * Our students don't seem to be more motivated by electronic teaching than by conventional methods.
- * All that personal typing they try to hide in the MM lab is 'chat', and whether in English or Arabic, it's recklessly spelled, incoherently brief, and content-free. It provides no incentive to find words or expressions, and so is educationally valueless.

Despite all that, I'm going to try using email exchanges again next year because I think they can have teaching benefits; and because I think students' unfamiliarity with electronic communication is a failing that needs to be addressed.

What I've been doing

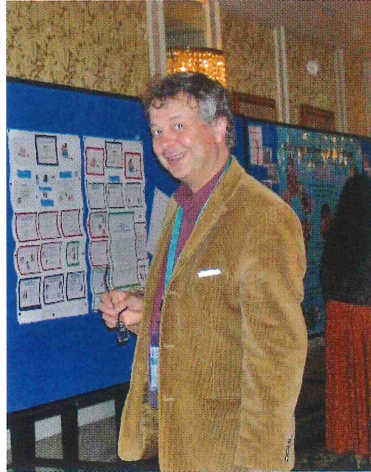
Ever since I was allowed into a QU computer lab, I've used MM time for typing and writing practice. Computer work allows focus on particular grammar points, plus the neglected difficulties of spacing and punctuation, because it's much easier for both teacher and student to see and amend symbols on a computer screen than on a sheet of paper. Regular dictations and dictoglosses at the computer quickly produce improvements in basic writing skills, as I've reported before. (I also note evidence from the UK that computer use can improve writing skills, and perhaps educational attainment generally.)

However, because dictations etc are so artificial, there's a danger of giving students a sense that such activities are just a game, unrelated to real communication. That's true of all grammar lessons, of course, unless a comprehensible and engaging schema is established. The nice thing about exchanging emails is that it doesn't just establish such a schema, it is such a schema, and one that students need to be familiar with. Furthermore, emails are customarily short, which gives authentic reason for sharp focus and rapid feedback.

So, what I initially tried to do was establish email exchanges with students, and then bring in friendly comments about their most obvious mistakes, as per a technique recommended by Scott Thornbury somewhere. The students had to read and respond to

my personal comments in this authentic context, and thus they had an Integrated Task involving Autonomous Learning and Negotiation For Meaning. Smart, eh? Trouble is, it didn't work all that well.

I tried to answer their emails immediately, during class, so that the language issues were still fresh, and also so that I could identify and speak to the stragglers. That's not possible with large groups, of course, as it's desirable for the teacher's response to be perfect in every detail, and that slows down a mediocre typist such as myself. (If I did go wrong, I invited them to Spot the Deliberate Mistake.) Fortunately, fast action isn't absolutely necessary, as emails don't go away.



Besides attempting rapid feedback, I tried to keep my messages formal, as a model for letter writing. Yes, I know emails are usually casual in style, but formal exchanges are often necessary, and I think our students should be familiar with those conventions. Besides, formality requires accuracy.

Some students immediately got the idea from a gentle hint and sent me self-corrected responses. However, most required firmer prodding and renewed, focussed questions, while for the weakest or most confused students, I had to intervene at the screen. "Can you see the difference between my sentence and yours?" "Should that space be there?" "Is that one word or three?" Microsoft's Word's Spelling and Grammar checks do not help weak students working alone, as I discuss elsewhere. Sometimes, I was rewarded with perfection, but, more often, the revised version had more mistakes than the original. (Mind you, I've seen that happen with exam reviews.)

I therefore can't claim that the subtle, authentic approach was widely successful. The format, as well as the idea of gently negotiating for meaning, was unfamiliar to the students, and few related well to what I was trying to do. Consequently, I had to fall back on more conventional teacher-type questions and corrections.

Nevertheless, I felt there was progress. One useful side effect was finding students who had never before accessed their university email accounts. (This was Level 2, by the way!) Once I'd exchanged messages with them, (having arranged to have their passwords renewed, in some cases) I could at least say that I'd drawn them into the University's communication system, and thus the world of email, for I found that although our students are familiar with chat sites in Arabic, a surprisingly high proportion have never used emails or forums. (You can see some of my questions and their responses about this on the Forum page of Dinos's www.englishw.com.) Spending class time on the mechanics of email communication is therefore in accordance with our goals of preparing students for

University courses, it seems to me.

My Conclusions:

- * Dictations and other typed exercises are definitely helpful to students' awareness of grammar and punctuation, but they have to be formal and teacher-centered.
- * Many students are unfamiliar with email, but this is a good reason for using it in class, as it's something they need to become acquainted with.
- * Because most are unfamiliar with the format, email-based exercises work only with a few students at first. In addition, many are not yet ready to "negotiate for meaning", or work independently, and still require guidance in the MM lab, as elsewhere. However, this is a reason to continue to introduce indirect, communicative teaching methods, such as email exchanges, as it is part of our mission to encourage them to become more independent.
- * Internet Chat is engaging but not useful.
- * Forums, such as those on Dinos's www.englishw.com, encourage self expression and thus motivate students to find and acquire language. However, only a few will do this, and because messages there are open to public view, error correction may not be appropriate.
- * Using email exchanges to directly or indirectly comment on students' writing can be a useful addition to a teaching repertoire.

Students' Use of Microsoft Word's 'Spelling and Grammar' checks. Some Problems

Leslie Butler

Like all Writing and MM teachers, I encourage students to use Microsoft Word's 'Spelling and Grammar' checks (Spell Check), in the hope of persuading them to work independently and leave me in peace. However, I'm seeing big problems, especially for our weaker typists.

Going around the screens in the MM labs, I've often noticed that very strange text attracts no red or green lines at all. I've experimented with this, and although the results are inconsistent, what seems to happen is that the system just gives up on a text that has too many odd spacings or capital letters. The following errors particularly go unnoticed:

- * Excess spaces between words.
- * Misplacing punctuation marks against a following word without an intervening space.

* Errors in text that has been set in a variety of fonts. (Something a lot of students like to do.)

* Neglecting full stops. This is more likely to prevent green highlighters appearing in the preceding text than to attract a highlight itself.

* Neglecting paragraphs. Green lines are often not triggered until the ENTER key has been pressed, and so do not come on in some short texts.

Add in the fact that Word recognizes few Arab names, and it's hardly surprising that weak students just ignore the warning signs. They have no idea how to interpret them.

I sympathise. According to my screen now, 'spacings' is wrong, and you'll have noticed the number of academic terms that Spell Check queries. (Bill Gates never finished his degree, so waddya expect?) Worse, whilst the system queries common verb-less phrases and sayings, grammatically plausible nonsense goes unmarked, because grammar is all it cares about. (A lesson there for all of us!) Try: "When I do on my spear thyme", "I say no, and I meant know!" and "Check what they're and say me."

I'm not the first to notice this, of course, and there's a review of the problems as pertaining to high level students at

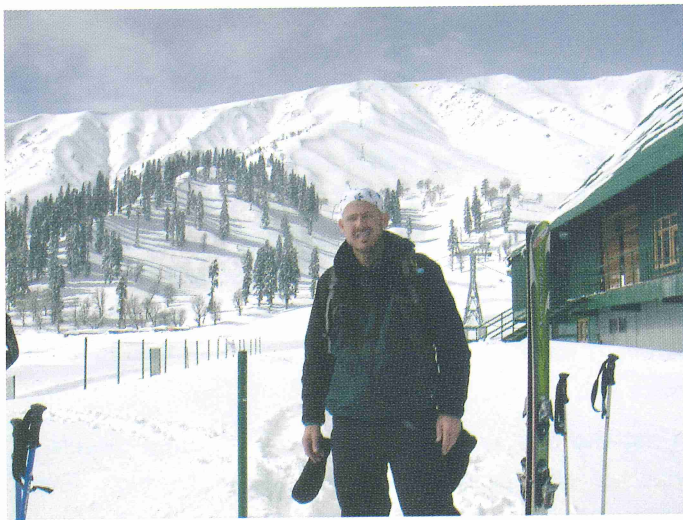
<http://faculty.washington.edu/sandeep/check/>.

Spell Check is a useful tool, nonetheless, and sometimes it is enough to ask a student, "Can you get rid of those coloured lines?" In respect of the problems described above, I have a few simple suggestions, and would be pleased to hear more:

- * Insist students use conventional fonts and formats. (They can covert to something fancy after they've got the language right).
- * Make it clear that Spell Check is useful but not to be relied upon.
- * Tell them about full stops and spacing, because Spell Check won't.
- * In class, visually monitor what they're doing and be ready to help where Spell Check doesn't do the job.
- * Don't expect a low level student to be able to make constructive use of Spell Check in independent situations. That's an advanced skill they'll have to be led towards slowly.

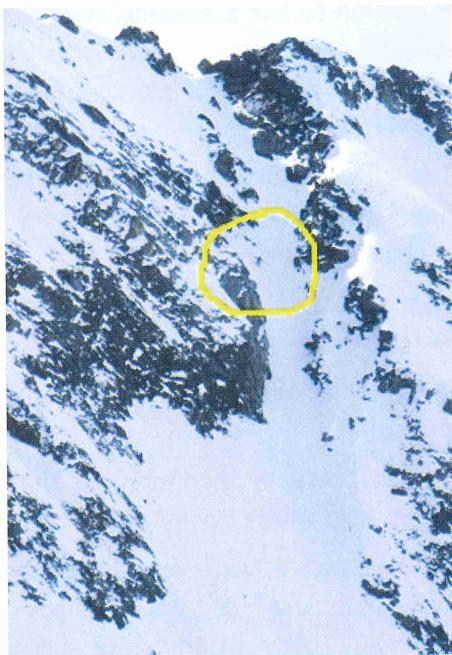
My Himalayan Adventure — David Hess

After having skied in Iran and Lebanon (and even indoors in Dubai), I was looking for a new and exotic place to ski in Asia and found one in the Himalayas of northern India. I knew there was skiing in India, but until very recently, the scope of that skiing had been quite limited. That all changed however in May 2005 when the resort of Gulmarg, in the Jammu-Kashmir state of India, opened a gondola reaching to nearly 4000 meters (over 13,000 feet) thereby transforming the resort overnight into the highest lift-served ski resort in the world.



Looking towards the summit from 10,000ft/3000m

The word "extreme" probably captures the Gulmarg skiing experience better than any other. First of all, skiers and snowboarders are now coming from all over the world to Gulmarg because of the powder snow. It is known to have some of the deepest and most consistent powder snow in the world. What I experienced surely lived up to this reputation! The day I arrived it began to snow and for 3 _ days, it kept snowing. By the end of the storm over 2 meters of snow had fallen on the upper mountain.



One of Gulmarg's most extreme lines! (I circled a skier _ down the chute)

Being a Californian skier, deep powder wasn't something I got to ski very often – but in Gulmarg, I either had to adapt or stay in the lodge. At times, I found myself skiing powder to nearly my waist!

Not only do people come because its "deep" but they also visit Gulmarg because its "steep" - steep, long, powder runs in every direction. As much as I love to ski 'the steeps' (as we used to say), I admit that I felt quite out of place as a 40 year-old, surrounded by professional snowboarders and extreme skiers half my age who had all come to Gulmarg to push their limits. I knew these types of skiers existed, because I'd seen them in the magazines – little did I know that I would get to eat and ski with these world class professionals. I thought I was 'into' skiing, having in years past skied as many as 20 days in a season. I was surrounded by skiers and snowboarders that literally ski 100-150 days a year, every year.

Something I was not prepared for was the danger factor – translation: I thought Gulmarg was a lot safer than it actually was. I had assured my wife that they had adequately trained avalanche patrol, and that I would be skiing with an experienced guide. The avalanche patrol however was not allowed to use explosives which meant that their ability to adequately prepare slopes was actually quite limited. One Norwegian ski patroller even told me that due to their inability to use explosives to a make the terrain safe, that he would NEVER consider any of the slopes in Gulmarg as truly free from considerable avalanche risk. In addition, my Kashmiri ski guide was a strong skier, but not nearly as experienced as I had been led to believe.



This is NOTHING like Doha!

On our first morning as I was being outfitted with special powder skis, I was also trained how to operate an avalanche beacon (an electronic beeping device) which would assist others in finding me if I happened to be caught and buried in

an avalanche. I was also fitted with a special backpack with a snow shovel – to dig others out if needed. I also found that EVERYONE pretty much skis with a special winter sports helmet – something I did not have, but surely wanted!! Basically, all this made me quite nervous. I went to Gulmarg to ski some incredible slopes, but I really didn't go to risk my life. I spent a lot of time in the first couple of days thinking about this.

2 weeks before I arrived, an Australian skier lost his life in an avalanche. 2 days before I arrived, two others (including the man who organized my trip) were caught in another avalanche and thankfully ended up on top of the slide. Almost the entire time I was there, 3 skiers were trapped in the backcountry and were only found on the day before I left – with the assistance of both the ski patrol and the Indian military.

It was only on my final day that the top of the mountain was opened, and because several avalanches had already slid, the skiing was very safe. I had one of the greatest days of skiing in my life – from the summit we could see Nanga Parbat (8125 meters) in Pakistan – the world's 9th highest mountain. All of the horror stories I was thinking about those first couple of days were quickly forgotten as me and my guide, and only about 25 other skiers and snowboarders made descents of nearly 1000 meters off the top.

In the end, the trip ended up being so much more than a mere ski trip. I met dozens of incredible Kashmiris. I saw one of the highest mountains in the world. I was chased by a pack of wild dogs which I had to literally beat off with my ski poles. I saw wild snow monkeys. I ate incredible Kashmiri dishes. And I even witnessed miracles of healing.

Would I go back? When I left, I said to myself, "no way, it is just too risky". Why am I sitting here writing this thinking I'll be back in Gulmarg some day? Will I? Not if my wife reads this!



Can you find the non-Indian national in this photo?

Foundation English Program Hosts Student Hostel Residents in Round Table Discussions

Linda Wettlaufer, CEA Accreditation Project Coordinator

April 22, 2007

As part of the CEA Accreditation Project self-study, Foundation English Program students living in Qatar University's student hostels participated in Round Table Discussions in Ibn Khaldoun Hall on Monday, April 2 (men) and Tuesday, April 3 (women).



Faculty volunteers ate lunch with the students at round tables of eight and facilitated discussions related to living conditions in the hostels. The purpose of these discussions was to

give hostel residents chances to express their opinions in friendly, constructive conversations. CEA requires student housing to be clean, safe, comfortable and livable, and they require multi-level, including student, involvement in the self-study.



(Pictures credited to Dr. Hani)

“The Urge to Know”: A True Story in Online Training

(Published in Blackboard Academic Bulletin Newsletter, June 2007)

(by Joseph Harrison, English Lecturer, Qatar University)

What's New in Blackboard Training?

A short bus ride from Manchester, buffeted at the eastern end of an industrial conurbation against the windswept moors and hills of the Pennine Ranges, lies the old, Roman market town of Colne. I was born there. Working-class to the core, we knew our place, we knew our station. At eleven years, we were tested at school. The future held few surprises for we, the children of mothers toiling in the cotton mills and fathers mining the coal underground. All were destined for the same. At the ripe age of eleven, wave after wave of working-class children were tested on the 3 R's, scholastically divided into their respective career paths, and a few semesters later, summarily despatched to the jobs of their mothers and fathers.

Fifteen years passed, working semi-skilled jobs. Then one day a political window of opportunity opened. Mature-aged students were encouraged to apply for university places. It was 1982, in Hobart, Tasmania, Australia. Entering university was like a dream come true for me. A Master's Degree was conferred upon me in 2001, at the University of Western Australia in Perth. It was time to spread my wings. Even at this time it had become clear to me that there was an interminable amount of wastage in education. I clearly envisioned the emerging technology as a solution to counter the wastage and a tool to level the playing field between the "haves" and "have-nots." I became seriously interested in the use of computers and their role in the future of education.

From Chalk to Blackboard

I was already well ahead of the average college instructor in terms of computer literacy when I arrived in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2002. After a first semester teaching a very dry course to some very disinterested young Saudis using a good old-fashioned whiteboard, blackboard and chalk combo, the head of the English department asked me if I would be interested in developing and delivering a computerized freshmen English composition course. This was a great challenge for me and one which I seized with great alacrity.

During the next three years, I built on my existing skills, producing and facilitating complete online courses in the computer lab. I used the LCD projector and screen and the Internet to develop the students' writing, research and study skills and to conduct all the tests online with Internet connectivity. I had in fact created the quintessential paperless classroom in an isolated town in the Arabian peninsula. I sadly lacked support, but nonetheless read widely of the eclectic worlds of e-Learning, distance and online learning, WebCT® and Blackboard® and so on, which were seemingly worlds away from me.

By 2005, I had arrived at a professional impasse. I was stale from digitally marking thousands of online essays without the proper tools. What I needed was a fresh challenge. The opportunity came by way of Qatar University which was investing huge funds into upgrading its technological infrastructure. Quite by accident I discovered that the university had a trial version of the Blackboard Academic Suite™ 6.3 on its server. I immediately charged to a fax machine around the corner and subscribed to Blackboard Training's Certification Series. I worked very hard and four months later gained the Blackboard Instructor status. This was a smart move as no one could use Blackboard even though we all knew about it. I was able to invite faculty members to undertake a Blackboard Training course which proved to be extremely successful. I'd worked assiduously during the online training with Blackboard and I'd been well-trained by people who are good at what they do.

Blackboard On Board

Less than a year later, I have continued to try and improve my Blackboard skills. In 2007, I have undergone further online tuition with Blackboard's instructors and completed the two-module Advanced Series. I am somewhat independent and highly motivated so online learning is particularly agreeable to me. The director of the Qatar University Foundation Program was extremely pleased with this initiative on my part. In recent times, the entire campus has been wired for the Internet, faculty and students given laptops, and Qatar University bought a



three-year licence for the Blackboard Academic Suite, Release 7.1.

Our department consists of more than 100 English faculty and over the last few months we have had an urgent need to ready them for Blackboard. Already pushing the envelope on various teaching and PD assignments, I was tasked with supplying an action plan to remedy the challenges posed by the sudden introduction of new technologies. I was in a quandary, not quite knowing how I could find the time to meet so many deadlines. By coincidence, I was working evenings on Blackboard's second module in the Advanced Series, **"Taking Professional Development Online."** This module of study carefully guides the learner through five different research and development stages and finally produces a comprehensive plan for an Online Professional Development Course. The readings are extensive but well-chosen and very informative. I enjoyed reading them and at the end produced a very solid piece of work.

At exactly the same time that I finished my Blackboard course, I was receiving urgent e-mails from my PD manager seeking an action plan for an online Blackboard training program. Within 24 hours, I was able to produce an action plan that helped to consolidate my position as the pioneer of Blackboard training programs at Qatar University and lifted my confidence and profile in the eyes of my managers and peers.

During this time, I have given five Blackboard workshops and presentations at mini-conferences and an International conference. In June I will give a 60-minute Blackboard workshop at the MELTA 5th Asian EFL International Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – the largest conference of its kind in Asia, with approximately 10,000 visitors. My inherent passion and energy for learning is bearing fruit in so many ways. It has been helpful to me to have the capable people at Blackboard on board.

For More Information

Interested in following Joe's path? Click here for more information. To learn about other online training options at Blackboard, please visit the Blackboard Training Web page.

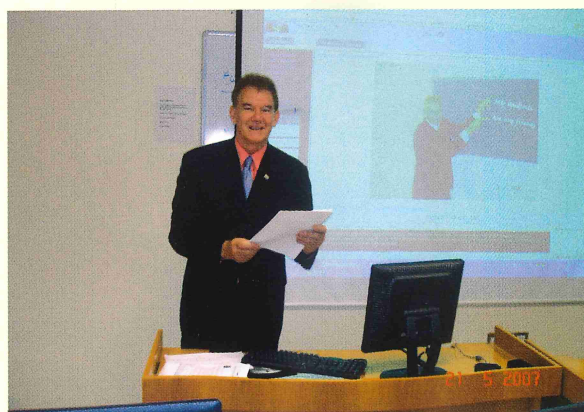
Joseph Harrison is an English Lecturer at Qatar University in the State of Qatar with special interests in computer-assisted instruction. He currently coordinates several professional development activities, including training programs and provides Blackboard LMS support to the department's faculty members and staff.

How to Write Well

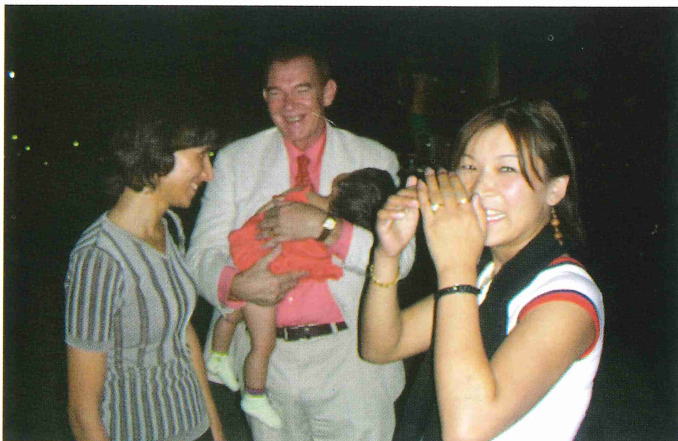
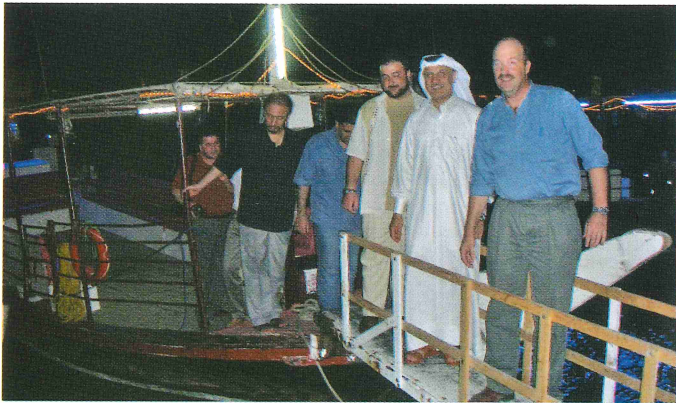
(by Joseph R. Harrison)

If you haven't seen it before, here it is again.

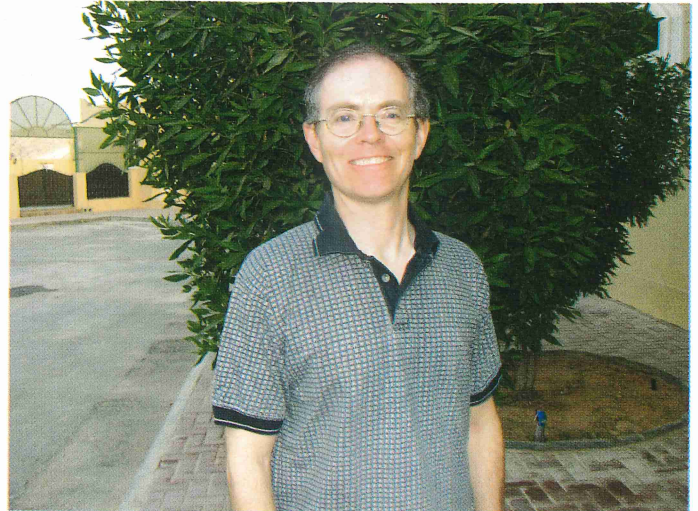
1. Avoid alliteration. Always.
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. Avoid clichés like the plague. (They're old hat.)
4. Employ the vernacular.
5. Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
6. Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are unnecessary.
7. It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
8. Contractions aren't necessary.
9. Foreign words and phrases are not apropos.
10. One should never generalize.
11. Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "I hate quotations. Tell me what you know."
12. Comparisons are as bad as clichés.
13. Don't be redundant; don't use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous.
14. Be more or less specific.
15. Understatement is always best.
16. One-word sentences? Eliminate.
17. Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.
18. The passive voice is to be avoided.
19. Go around the barn at high noon to avoid colloquialisms.
20. Even if a mixed metaphor sings, it should be derailed.
21. Who needs rhetorical questions?
22. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.



Foundation Program Boat Ride (Pictures provided by Anita Ghajar-Selim)



MULTI-MEDIA VOCABULARY ACTIVITIES by Kevin Rooney



For his project work for Foundation English student Services, **Kevin Rooney** has set up a web site which currently specializes in providing students with practice activities for the North Star vocabulary items. These items are assessed in the mid-semester exams and the final exams. Each computer in the Student Learning Centre has a link to these tasks. This is an enjoyable way for the students to repeat and learn new words.

The following activities have been provided for all units in all levels of the English Foundation program:

Drag and drop – students match vocabulary items to their definitions.

Concentration - students test their memories while completing word and definition matching.

Speed matching – students test their spelling and response time in identifying word meanings.

Word web – students test their ability to spell and recall the meanings of words when given definitions.

Multiple-choice – students use the targeted items to complete gapped sentences.

Cloze – students use the targeted items to complete a gapped text.

These activities help students build their vocabularies by providing them with multiple encounters with targeted vocabulary items. Research has suggested that between five and sixteen encounters with a word are needed before it will enter a learner's long-term memory (Nation, 2001).

References

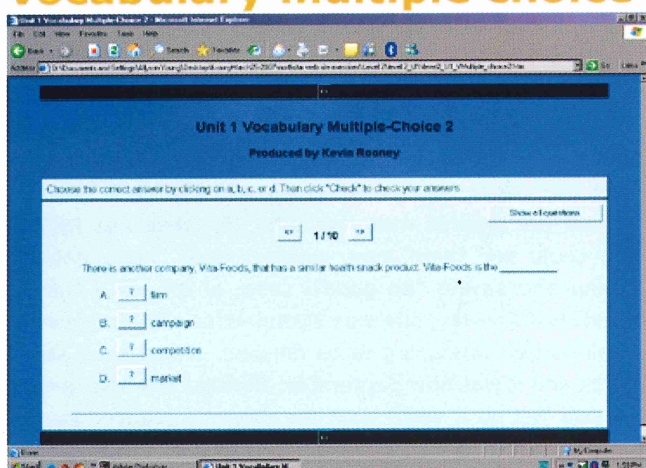
Nation, I.S. P. (2001). *Learning Vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

North Star vocabulary activities

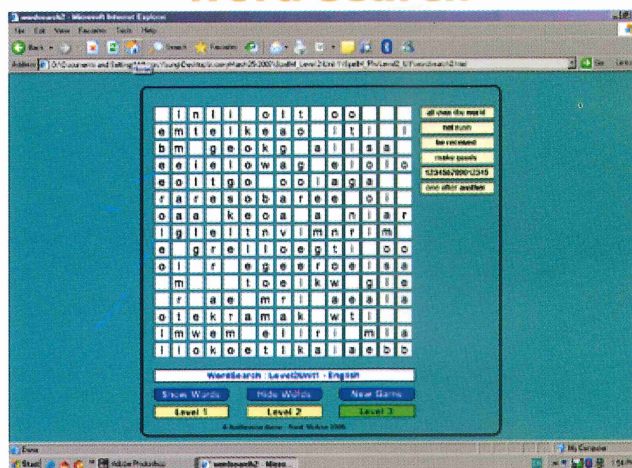
<http://faculty.qu.edu.qa/krooney>

Do you want to practise your Northstar vocabulary? Come to the Student Learning Centre. On each computer there is a folder called NorthStar Multimedia Activities. Click on it and you will find lots of multimedia activities, which are fun. If you have internet you can study at home.

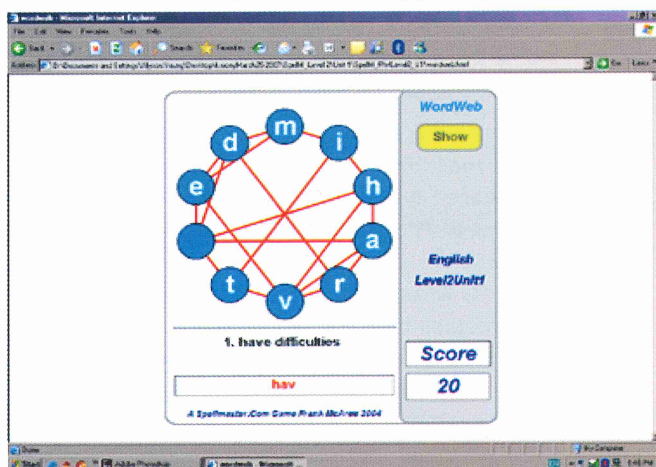
vocabulary multiple choice



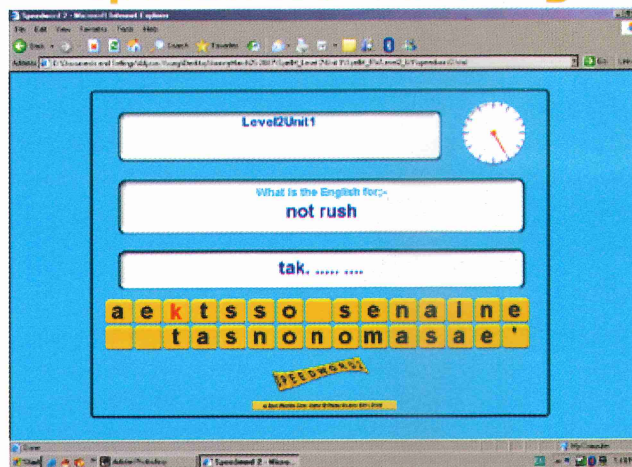
word search



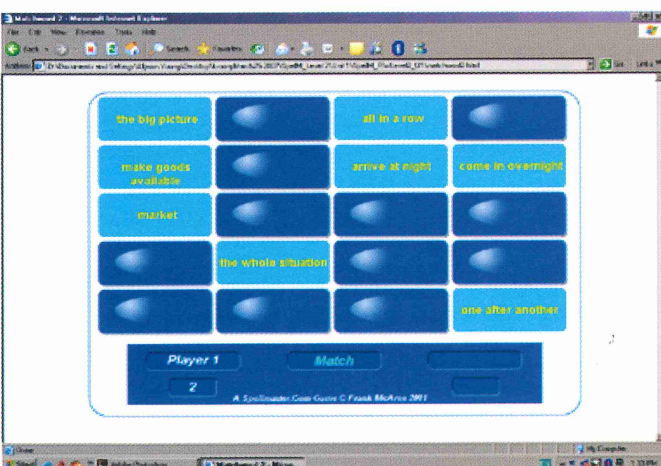
word web



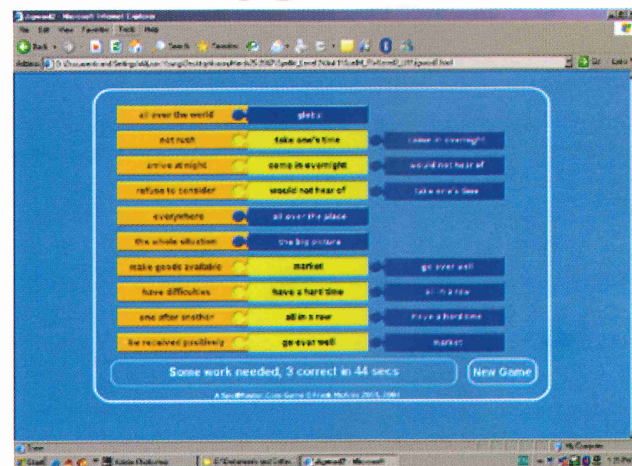
speedword matching



concentration



jigword



Pilou's Adventures of Pilou

A series of adventures
(by James FitzGibbon)



Adventure the First

Perhaps this one would stop. The evening sun was just visible through the tree-line. The fields were deep green. Pilou could see where he had come by making his eye follow the road that snaked through this landscape and up over the hill. It had just been raining and, although he was wet through, he enjoyed the smell the earth – newly wet – was giving off. If he was going to reach his village in time for tomorrow, he would have to get a lift now. He was a grey figure, stationary, by the side of the road, but strangely enjoying his situation.

He decided to walk on and could see the sky, heavy with moisture, getting dark. It was bruising. He thought that that was a good expression. Like blood flowing around a wound; like a crab-apple lying on the ground. Darkening. Wet leaves lay by the side of the road. Water trickled. And crows cawed in the trees, reaching out branches into the brooding, bruising winter sky.

Then, suddenly, a vehicle stopped.

"Where you going, mate?" said a good-natured face.

Pilou thought if the man was not going by his village he would select one as close as he could. As it turned out, the driver was not going anywhere near, forking off just before a town that Pilou knew had a train station. He could catch a train from there and then a bus or something to where the ferries left from. Pilou said a name to which the man heartily appended

"Jump in"

The man asked where Pilou was off to. Pilou said. The man asked why Pilou was off there. Pilou told him. The moon hovered above the tree-line, spreading that silvery light Pilou loved so much. He moved down in his seat to see where the shadows the moon cast. He thought of that song "Moonlight shadow" and, for some reason, the idiomatic expression: "Once in a blue moon". How did that come about? Had someone seen a white moon, a yellow moon? But not a blue moon. Pilou thought of the person saying "I'll do it when next the moon is yellow". To which another person said – probably his wife – "Ha! You mean the next time the moon is blue!" Pilou pictured a cosy domestic scene, a fire burning, a husband warming his socks. There was a storm outside and the drain-pipes were rattling. The light of the lamp by the window was reflected in the uneven pane of glass. Over the

man's shoulder, a woman was rubbing her hands down an apron and was obviously angry. She couldn't see the fairness of her slaving around the house while he, unemployed, only read the paper, as far as she could see. Her friends had warned her against marrying John (for that was his name). She could see them now, wagging their index fingers and tutting and saying "no good'll come of it!" As if they really cared. Ha! Anyway, she was asking when the bird-table in the small garden was going to be finished. It had been started in March and it was now September. Perhaps she was quite right. He said "I'll do it when next the moon is yellow". Maybe this saying was akin to "a month of Sundays". "I'll do it next Sunday". "Ha! More like a month of Sundays. Meaning about thirty times seven times as long. Good as "never do it", which was what was meant. The same as "when the cows come home". Home from where? Why cows? Why did they go? Why would they be so reluctant to come back?

Pilou didn't know the answers to these questions. He thought he'd ask the man driving, but he probably wouldn't know either. Pilou looked out of his side-window. It was completely dark outside now. Pilou thought he should try to open some sort of conversation with the man driving. After all, he was giving him a lift. When there is a gap in the conversation – or there are more gaps than conversation – in French, one could say "L'ange passe" (an angel is passing by). This is a particularly nice, genteel sort of expression, the like of which is not in English. It's as if the very grace of the angel would over-shadow all things not quite as important. Pilou pictured her linen cloth, brilliant white (or could be unbleached cotton), fluttering in the breeze of her (him) moving briskly along. She (definitely her) would pass between two men, who were chewing the fat. They would look very surprised when their words were drained from them. Like by some huge sucking force. And she would pass on by, nonchalant. Perhaps they were "chewing the cud". This is another rustic expression. "What are those two men doing there in the corner (of an eighteenth-century rural landscape)? "Oh, vem, whoi they're jus chewin' the cud" what is 'cud'? It sounds like the curdled part of the milk that is chewy in texture. Or some chewy, unimportant by-product of some old-fashioned rural process to make something useful. Dunno, thought Pilou. He could ask the man driving, though he might think he was crazy if he asked what it meant. Then again, why should he think he was mad? But Pilou thought better of it anyway.

The vehicle entered a small town and Pilou asked where they were. The man driving told him. The man added that it was

just beyond the half-way point to where Pilou wanted to go. It was the town where he and his family used to go to buy the things they could not get locally. It used to be a big day for them: getting up before the crack of dawn and having the quick, but scrumptious breakfast his mother used to prepare the evening before. Pilou wondered why the expression was "crack" of dawn. Did the day begin with a large ripping noise? No. Pilou had heard the word "crack" refer to some fun, some enjoyable thing; perhaps it referred to that. And certainly Pilou enjoyed getting up before daybreak: the smell of the grass, pendulant with dew, in the transition seasons and sometimes summer, snow in the winter months. Especially the latter, when all the world was muffled and silent and the light of the new day stretching fingers of brightness across the virgin landscape. No: light didn't come in 'fingers', just a gradual brightening. Sometimes Pilou could hear a lone wolf crying in the hills. That was an eerie sound. Usually he could hear the cock crow and the 'dawn chorus' starting up from the birds that lived in the trees and bushes. Definitely, always sound accompanied this time. Perhaps this was the 'crack'. Anyway, after breakfast, he and his two sisters and parents would crowd into the small horse-drawn cart and set off down the hill to the sea. It was some way. By now, the sun was up, playing with the crests of waves on the sea. The sound of small, in-land birds would be replaced by that of the gulls, lazily gliding on the thermals far over-head and crying out their greetings to the new day. But the thing Pilou enjoyed most was the freshness of the air, or rather the new salty, sea-like smell the waters brought to it. They would approach the small village, perched on the waters' edge and see the fishermen come in, with their tobacco pipes and yellow, plastic clothing. The jetty was made of wooden planks and over these the cart would rumble, into the always-waiting ferry. When the boat set off, Pilou would enjoy the wind off the sea, made stronger by their motion. And the waves would dance and ripple in the dark-green of the waters.

When they got to the other side – a journey of some 35 or so minutes – what they saw was always much less appealing. For this was where the Industry began, with its corrugated roofs and pistons driving on the wheels of the factories. And, after that, the long, long drive to the town. The only interesting sight on this stretch was about half-way on this road, when they passed a gnarled oak, which spouted two stems, or trunks, into the soil.

Now, with the man driving beside him, Pilou looked for this tree. He couldn't see it. Maybe it had been cut down or had been over-grown. He was sure it was just on the road. When the new, tarmacadamed road had been constructed, maybe it had been cleared away, something from Nature that was no longer needed. The new thoroughfare had been designed to feed the town that had consumed voraciously its way into existence, its passage from the dark hollows of ruralism to the glistening halls of urbanity. Or, at least, that was what the new Mayor, or Elder, had said at the time.

No: it had gone. Shame! It had been the only interesting sight on an otherwise flat landscape. Now, this new road, idled its way through the land that although green, was nothing compared to the sea-scapes etched in Pilou's mind.

Brouhaha over Pirahã!

(by Mark Heyne)



The big excitement for language watchers this semester was discussion of a language used by a small tribe in Brazil which showed barely any concept of number and precious little idea of time.

In his paper "Cultural Constraints on Grammar and Cognition in Pirahã," Daniel L. Everett of the University of Manchester UK reported of the Pirahã language, which he describes as a cacophonous singsong, "Pirahã culture constrains communication to non-abstract subjects which fall within the immediate experience of interlocutors. This constraint explains a number of very surprising features of Pirahã grammar and culture: the absence of numbers of any kind or a concept of counting and of any terms for quantification, the absence of color terms, the absence of embedding, the simplest pronoun inventory known, the absence of "relative tenses," the simplest kinship system yet documented, the absence of creation myths and fiction, the absence of any individual or collective memory of more than two generations past, the absence of drawing or other art and one of the simplest material cultures documented."

In this the Pirahã language departs from what were long thought to be essential features of all languages. Up till now many defend the widely accepted theories from Chomsky, according to which all human languages have a universal grammar that form a sort of basic rules enabling children to put meaning and syntax to a combination of words. Whether phonetics, semantics or morphology -- what exactly makes up this universal grammar is controversial. At its core, however, is the concept of recursion, which is defined as replication of a structure within its single parts. Without it, there wouldn't be any mathematics, computers, philosophy or symphonies. Humans basically wouldn't be able to view separate thoughts as subordinate parts of a complex idea. There wouldn't even be subordinate clauses which are responsible for translating the concept of recursion into grammar. Renowned US psychologist Stephen Pinker believes that if the Pirahã don't form subordinate clauses, then recursion cannot explain the uniqueness of human language -- just as it cannot be a central element of some universal grammar. Thus Chomsky would be refuted.

A report in Der Spiegel elaborates: "Their language is

incredibly spare. The Pirahã use only three pronouns. They hardly use any words associated with time and past tense verb conjugations don't exist. Apparently colors aren't very important to the Pirahã, either -- they don't describe any of them in their language. But of all the curiosities, the one that bugs linguists the most is that Pirahã is likely the only language in the world that doesn't use subordinate clauses. Instead of saying, "When I have finished eating, I would like to speak with you," the Pirahã say, "I finish eating, I speak with you."

Equally perplexing, in their everyday lives, the Pirahã appear to have no need for numbers. During the time he spent with them, Everett never once heard words like "all," "every," and "more" from the Pirahã. There is one word, "hói," which does come close to the numeral 1. But it can also mean "small" or describe a relatively small amount -- like two small fish as opposed to one big fish, for example. And they don't even appear to count without language, on their fingers for example, in order to determine how many pieces of meat they have to grill for the villagers, how many days of meat they have left from the anteaters they've hunted or how much they demand from Brazilian traders for their six baskets of Brazil nuts."

The debate amongst linguists about the absence of all numbers in the Pirahã language broke out after Peter Gordon, a psycholinguist at New York's Columbia University, visited the Pirahã and tested their mathematical abilities. For example, they were asked to repeat patterns created with between one and 10 small batteries. Or they were to remember whether Gordon had placed three or eight nuts in a can.

The results, published in *Science* magazine, were astonishing. The Pirahã simply don't get the concept of numbers. His study, Gordon says, shows that "a people without terms for numbers doesn't develop the ability to determine exact numbers...There are not really occasions in their daily lives where the Pirahã need to count," explains Gordon.

In order to test if this prevented members of the tribe from perceiving higher numbers, Gordon set seven Pirahã a variety of tasks. In the simplest, he sat opposite an individual and laid out a random number of familiar objects, including batteries, sticks and nuts, in a row. The Pirahã were supposed to respond by laying out the same number of objects from their own pile. For one, two and three objects, members of the tribe consistently matched Gordon's pile correctly. But for four and five and up to ten, they could only match it approximately, deviating more from the correct number as the row got longer. The Pirahã also failed to remember whether a box they had been shown seconds ago had four or five fish drawn on the top. When Gordon's colleagues tapped on the floor three times,

the Pirahã were able to imitate this precisely, but failed to mimic strings of four or five taps.

Gordon says this is the first convincing evidence that a language lacking words for certain concepts could actually prevent speakers of the language from understanding those concepts.

His findings have brought new life to a controversial theory by linguist Benjamin Whorf, who died in 1941. Under Whorf's theory, people are only capable of constructing thoughts for which they possess actual words. In other words: Because they have no words for numbers, they can't even begin to understand the concept of numbers and arithmetic.

Eventually Everett came up with a surprising explanation for the peculiarities of the Pirahã idiom. "The language is created by the culture," says the linguist. He explains the core of Pirahã culture with a simple formula: "Live here and now." The only thing of importance that is worth communicating to others is what is being experienced at that very moment. "All experience is anchored in the presence," says Everett, who believes this *carpe-diem* culture doesn't allow for abstract thought or complicated connections to the past -- limiting the language accordingly. Living in the now also fits with the fact that the Pirahã don't appear to have a creation myth explaining existence. When asked, they simply reply: "Everything is the same, things always are." The mothers also don't tell their children fairy tales -- actually nobody tells any kind of stories. No one paints and there is no art. Even the names the villagers give to their children aren't particularly imaginative. Often they are named after other members of the tribe which whom they share similar traits. Whatever isn't important in the present is quickly forgotten by the Pirahã. "Very few can remember the names of all four grandparents," says Everett.

Everett expects criticism. His findings challenge the influential theory that all spoken languages draw on common grammatical rules. Proponents of that premise believe that the human brain comes equipped with grammar networks, as a biological consequence of Stone Age evolution. Instead, Everett champions an approach that held sway in the first half of the 20th century. Influential anthropologists and linguists of that era argued that cultural values mold how people talk, just as a language's expressive power shapes a culture's traits. If that's the case, basic elements of grammar can differ from one culture to the next, and cultural and social forces continually alter the fundamental rules of language.

"It took me 27 years to work up the courage to say these things about Pirahã grammar," says Everett.

[1277 words] Mark Heyne

The Validity of ESP as an Approach to ELT

(By Abdul Moniem M Hussein) ...

ESP developed at a time when fundamental revision of our view of language and language learning was taking place. Lacking a long tradition which might give some stability, ESP has frequently been a hotbed of conflict – the Wild West of ELT.

(Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 154)

So what is ESP? How does it differ from other forms of ELT? And to what extent is it valid as an approach to ELT?

Widdowson (1985) argues that there is no significant difference between ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and GPE (General Purpose English): *'an ESP course is in one sense no more specific in its purposes than is one designed for GPE teaching'*, and he goes on to say that where ESP and GPE differ is *'in the way in which purpose is defined, and the manner of its implementation.'* In a GPE course the aim is to develop *'a general capacity for language use'*, whereas in an ESP course the aim is to develop *'a restricted competence to cope with a specified set of tasks.'*



Hutchinson and Waters (1987), in line with Widdowson, define ESP by stating what ESP isn't - stressing the communality of language and learning. The following is a summary of their definition:

* ESP is not a matter of teaching 'specialised varieties' of English. Although there are certain features which are typical of the target situation, this should not be allowed to obscure the far larger area of common ground that underlies all English use.

* ESP is not just a matter of Science words and grammar for Scientists, Hotel words and grammar for Hotel staff and so on. There is much more to communication than just the surface features.

* ESP is not different in kind than any other form of language teaching. Although the content of learning may vary, the processes of learning should not be any different for the ESP learner than for the GPE learner. Hence for Hutchinson and Waters, 'ESP must be seen as an approach not as a product. ESP is not a particular kind of language or methodology, nor does it consist of a particular type of teaching materials. Understood properly, it is an approach to language learning which

is based on learner need' (1987).

In fact, the learning-centred approach advocated by Hutchinson and Waters is a significant breakthrough. They draw our attention to the fact that 'we must look beyond the competence that enables us to perform, because what we really want to discover is not the competence itself, but how someone acquires that competence' (1987).

Mary Schleppegrell (1991) in (Selected Articles - Forum 1989 - 1993), describing a general approach to ESP program, states that 'where English students are adults with a common general interest in learning English, an English for Specific Purposes approach is often the most motivating and effective.' She justifies this as follows:

The common factor in all ESP programs is that they are designed for adults who have a common professional context in which to use English, content knowledge of their subject area, and well developed learning strategies.

(Schleppegrell, Forum, 1989 - 93)

'These students characteristics,' she believes 'are the basis for the two important aspects of ESP course design ... its focus on the learner and on task-based activities that are designed to reflect some real use of English outside the classroom.' And she goes on to say that: The specific purpose, or content focus, helps identify vocabulary and other language components and the context in which they are used. In other words, ESP courses do not use artificial tasks that teach arbitrary vocabulary and drill grammatical structures out of context.

Robinson (1991) relates ESP to the important developments which have influenced ELT in general.

ESP is a major activity around the world today. It is an enterprise involving education, training and practice, and drawing upon three major realms of knowledge: language, pedagogy and the students'/participants' specialist areas of interest. (Robinson (1991)

According to the ideas expounded about the nature of ESP and its capacity to accommodate recent developments in ELT, we can safely say that ESP is one of the best approaches in the teaching of English. Understood properly, it is my contention that it is

dynamic, creative and an effective approach. It is also my believe that ESP shows a capacity to effectively accommodate the recently developed concept of the genre analysis more than any other form of ELT can do. In this respect, Peter Master (1997) provides a justification for the use of models in the teaching of EST (English for Science and Technology), in that the advantages of using models relate to the creativity they can potentially stimulate.

ESP shifted the overemphasis on process back to a legitimate concern of product, primarily because it reminded us that the world want products and does not particularly care how they were created. The concept of genre analysis has shown us that there are prescribed forms for us in technical writing, and that in order to be accepted into the occupational subculture or discourse community, those forms must be adhered to.

(Peter Master, Forum Vol. 35, No. 4, 1997)

Master's view is close to Swales' (1986). Swales draws our attention to the importance of equipping ESP teachers with skills necessary to help them function optimally as members of their discourse community, and in their turn to help their students to become full participating members of their relevant discourse community. One way of performing this role, he points out, is through understanding of the forms and functions of genres of written academic discourse. For Swales, the object of teaching a genre, is to present students with a prescribed sequence to follow, but to translate the communicative needs of the student into discourse strategies. By the same token, Thomas Huckin (ELT Documents: 128: 69) argues that 'general communicative competence is as important as technical competence,' and he proposed 'generalised' ESP as the most relevant and useful type of ESP.'

However, in my opinion, ESP is highly valid as an approach to ELT. It is a breakthrough in ELT as it helps students, according to their needs, to use English for practical purposes. Hence, current concerns in ESP, according to Robinson 1991), are with the 'content with which the ESP must be involved - the subject matter which ESP students have to study and work through English.' As recommended by the International Conference on ESP, Colombo, Sri Lanka, April 1 - 5, 1985, materials should be made more interesting and topics not necessarily be too discipline-related. It was also felt by the contributors to the Conference that methodologies - and materials - needed to be creative and problem-solving in nature and that attention must be paid to the significance of sociocultural factors in ESP programme design and implementation. In line

with this, according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), ESP teachers need to arm themselves with a sound knowledge of both theoretical and practical developments in ELT in order to be able to make the range of decisions they are called upon to make. All ESP teachers are pioneers who are helping to shape the world of ESP.

And finally, Mary Schleppegrell (Forum, 1991) reminds us: *'But no teacher who is not creative will undertake an ESP class.'*

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A Poem
by Anna Romano
Lecturer - Foundation English
Spring in a Palestinian
Fruit Grove

Slender slices of green hope
Orange Melodies
Lemon Patterns on the ground
Walnuts of time
Gifts from Splintered Spring:
Another peace deal hits the dust

Using Oil on Canvas

(by J. Savery)



In 1888 and using oil on canvas, the artist van Gogh painted fifteen sunflowers in a vase. Why fifteen? I'll leave that enigma to the movie industry.

The "vase", in fact, appears more like a

rustic earthenware jug, half ochre and glazed. Together with the sunflowers - often grown for agricultural reasons - it lends clues to the circumstances that surrounded this work: painted in Arles, France which is an ancient southern town close to an expansive delta region (one of Western Europe's largest) watered by the river Rhône and called the "Camargue".

These ragged blooms have been rather untidily dropped, stems first, into the container, casually placed on a flat surface. The blooms are hardly arranged: merely the sort of homely, hastily assembled display mounted in a summer, rural household. Picked and promptly thrust into a vessel of water.

The jar's upper part is the colour of the surface it stands on and broadly of those of the flowers. The wall behind is coloured to match the jar's lower portion. The colours here are so juxtaposed as to contrast: one reversely mirrored against the other. But though they differ, they never fall out or clash. There is harmony there. No discord. The use of distinguishable but related colour in this way provides agreeable, interesting discrepancy - the eye switching readily and satisfactorily from one hue to the other - whilst lending the picture an overall and lively, colour unity. The colours - and the subject they portray - are consistent in earthiness. They lock the otherwise dispersed forms into a single motif. The work is emphatically, colourfully at one with itself.

Notice too the texture of paint and the brushwork. Paint has been almost coarsely applied using perhaps stiff bristles - possibly a Filbert brush - that leave marks. Short, impatient strokes or daubs that fill the canvas. Painted spontaneously and Alla Prima, allowing the bristle lines vigorously to pattern and lend textural vitality to otherwise unremitting areas of almost uniform pigment. The eye, as if contemplating a roughly plastered wall, is captivated and intrigued by



the irregularities. Van Gogh was soon to go mad and the nervous intensity and urgency of his brushwork here, so artistically expressive, may be the visible inscriptions of his deteriorating mental condition. Brushwork almost trembling and agitated by approaching lunacy.

If a combination of texture and colour provide interest, so too does line. There is asymmetry as the surface's (perhaps of a table or a shelf) edge divides the picture well below its imaginary central horizontal. Observe how this division is neatly interrupted by the lozenge shape of the jar which, bridging the whole image's lower and upper portions, binds them together. But the interrupted line is not broken though, for the indigo demarcation of the jar's two colours completes it. Line and shape fulfil different but complimentary purposes here: to separate and to tie together. Simultaneously to discriminate and to unite.

But for this skilful though mitigated horizontal asymmetry, the central, vertical positioning of the flowers might seem unimaginative and clumsy: separating the picture into two visually unsatisfactory halves. As it is, this error is avoided and the forms are perfectly balanced. The austere propriety of strict, vertical near symmetry is relaxed by a lively and disobedient, wayward horizontal much lower down. By this, the composition's firmly defined areas are upright but dynamic. Bold but subtle. Unequal but poised. Segregated but never separated. Orderly but unconventional.

Since there is no perspective - no vanishing point drawing the eye to the distance - the whole image seems almost two dimensional. There's an interesting abstract quality about the work: an arrangement of almost flat shapes. However, a hint of shadow rescues it from this two dimensionality; and so with that and the paint's vigorous, almost fibrous surface the entirety enjoys depth after all. The sunflowers become as we know them to be: tangible and existing in the round. Tactile. Real.

Van Gogh used a limited palette here - siennas, umbers and ochres - but to masterly effect. A simple composition; a limited palette; geometrical integration; texture; an elementary choice of subject and the reduction of some complex natural designs - the sunflowers - to almost abstract shapes; but, judging by the money that's changed hands over it he, with the minimum of materials, executed an exceptionally powerful artistic statement that's stood the test of time.

Now you try it!

Action Research

or Formal Research: Is it a dilemma at all?

(by Dr. Kourosch Lachini)

Purpose

The purpose of this brief article is to cast light on those neglected aspects of the distinction between Action Research (AR) and Formal Research (FR) which have misled and perplexed novice teachers or those who have not been trained to conduct research in the field of EFL. This article argues that while action research, being local and specific, is a very good means to enhance every individual teacher's quality of teaching, Formal Research by itself not only does so, but also enhances the whole discipline for being generalizable and global. FR is definitely an immense contribution to human epistemology and should be highly valued and respected (Wallace, 1998). Moreover, the majority of well-established scientific events accept papers for presentation and publication if a more serious formal research has been conducted and reported. There is also another concern by those who do not have a clear image of the distinction between AR and FR. They falsely imagine that if research is not conducted on local subjects and contexts, it will be less valuable. They actually neglect the fact that an FR is context-free, as its results are applicable to any situation. This is what we call the generalizability of FR that AR lacks.



Introduction

There are a variety of different approaches to professional development for language teachers. Richards and Farrell (2005) believe that there are eleven different procedures that can be used to facilitate professional development in language teaching: workshops, self-monitoring, teacher support groups, journal writing, peer observation, teaching portfolios, analysis of critical incidents, case analysis, peer coaching, team teaching, and action research. This article intends to make a clear-cut distinction between action research as a means to develop faculty members professionally and formal research that is primarily concerned with the enhancement of the prestige and caliber of a higher education institutions on one hand, and human epistemology on the other.

Differences Between Formal Research and Action

The following table (Mettetal, 2001) clearly demonstrates the differences between action and formal research.

TOPIC	FORMAL RESEARCH	ACTION RESEARCH
Training needed by researcher	Extensive	On own or with consultation
Goals of research	Knowledge that is generalizable	Knowledge to apply to the local situation
Method of identifying the problem to be studied	Review of previous research	Problems or goals currently faced
Procedure for literature review	Extensive, using primary sources	More cursory, using secondary sources
Sampling approach	Random or representative sampling	Students or clients with whom they work
Research design	Rigorous control, long time frame	Looser procedures, change during study; quick time frame; control through triangulation
Measurement procedures	Evaluate and pretest measures	Convenient measures or standardized tests
Data analysis	Statistical tests; qualitative techniques	Focus on practical, not statistical significance; present raw data
Application of results	Emphasis on theoretical significance	Emphasis on practical significance

As the above table indicates both formal research and action research aim to increase knowledge and understanding, but they differ in important ways. Mettetal (2001) identifies ten ways in which action research typically differs from formal research.

1. Training needed by the researchers

Most researchers need extensive preparation before they are able to use formal research methods skillfully. Individuals who conduct quantitative research studies need to be skilled in using various measurement techniques and inferential statistics. By contrast, most education practitioners can carry out action research, whether on their own, in collaboration with colleagues (Sagor, 1992), or with the aid of a research specialist.

Research Goals

The goals of formal research are to develop and test theories, and to produce knowledge that is generalizable to a broad population of interest. Action research, by contrast, has the goal of contributing to the preparation of education practitioners (Mayo, 2003).

2. Method of identifying the problem to be studied

In formal research, problems for investigation usually are identified through a review of previous research. In action research, however, educators investigate those problems that they perceive to be interfering with their effectiveness.

3. Procedure for literature review

In formal research, an extensive literature review, focusing on primary-source materials, is necessary. The review is needed in order to give the researchers a thorough understanding of the current state of knowledge about the problem being investigated. For action research, researchers need only to gain a general understanding of the area being studied. Hence, a more cursory literature review, focusing on secondary sources, is usually adequate.

4. Selection of research participants

In formal research the researchers aim to investigate a representative sample of the population, so as to increase the generalizability of their findings and to eliminate sampling bias as a factor confounding the meaning of the findings. Action researchers, however, do their research with the students or other individuals with whom they typically work.

5. Research design

Formal research emphasizes detailed planning to control for extraneous variables that can confuse the interpretation of the results. Rigorous controls also are used in qualitative research, especially in checking the credibility and trustworthiness of the data that are collected. Thus the time frame for carrying out formal research typically extends over a period of many months. Action researchers, by contrast, plan their procedures less extensively and move quickly between data collection, interpretation, and modification to their practice. They may use narrative, such as folktales, poems, or anecdotes, to describe their research. Little attention is paid to control of the situation or elimination of sources of error or bias. Because the researchers are personally involved, bias typically is present (Patterson et al., 1993). However, unless extreme, it is not generally viewed as a problem, because the results are intended for use primarily by those very researchers.

6. Data-collection procedures

Researchers who do formal studies, particularly quantitative researchers, attempt to collect their data using valid and reliable data-collection methods. Action researchers, instead, often use convenient methods of data collection (e.g., observing or talking with students) and available measures, such as those routinely administered during classroom instruction (e.g., conventional classroom tests). Sometimes the only measure utilized in AR is merely a

checklist of student concerns. This measure could not be subjected to extensive testing to determine its reliability or validity.

7. Data analysis

Formal quantitative research often involves complex analysis of data, but raw data rarely are presented and tests of statistical significance are usually emphasized. In formal qualitative research, the researcher engages in careful, reasoned analysis of case data to determine their consistency with the theory on which the research is grounded. Most action research, however, involves simpler analysis procedures, with a focus on practical significance rather than statistical significance (Richards and Lockhart, 1994). In addition, the subjective opinion of the researchers often is weighted heavily. Examples of action research involve only general observations that are not quantified or grounded in theory.

8. Application of results

Researchers who do formal research emphasize the meaning and the theoretical significance of their findings and possible directions for further research. They may discuss the practical implications of their results. However, action researchers report their findings mainly in an effort to clarify how the findings might affect their own work and to inform their colleagues about the possible implications for professional practice. They usually do so without reference to theory or concern for careful replication of the original research procedures.

9. Reporting of the research

Formal research is usually written, professionally reviewed, and, if accepted, published in a report or journal or presented at a conference. However, action research is commonly shared informally with colleagues.

Final Remarks

The immediate responsibility of any educational leader should be the encouragement of both action research and formal research among faculty members. Although action research is a very good practice for doing more serious formal research, it should not under-estimate the value of formal research. Faculty members need support and encouragement to be involved in a more rigid treatment of research. Research of any sort is an indispensable component of any educational institution and the universal recognition of these institutions is highly dependent on the number of formal research being reported by their faculty members regardless of the place and scope of their research.

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TESSOL ARABIA - 2007

(Prepared by Eileen Plumb)

Conducting a Poster Session at TESOL Arabia

Alicia Cundell

Being accepted for a poster session at TESOL Arabia is



like having someone say: 'your proposal caught our attention, but we've never heard of you'. It's that grey fuzzy zone between the usual crowd and the rejected presenters. So what exactly is a poster session? It's essentially all the facts and practical tips of a presentation packed onto a 3 X 4 foot posterboard (which I tenderly transported

through numerous security checks as hand 'luggage' on my flight to Dubai), hopefully in a clear and aesthetically pleasing display. I soon learned that a poster needs far more preparation than a workshop - it requires careful consideration of space, colours, fonts and graphics in order to ensure readability and attractiveness. My poster was based on the workshop I had run at the QU mini-conference called How the Brain Learns.

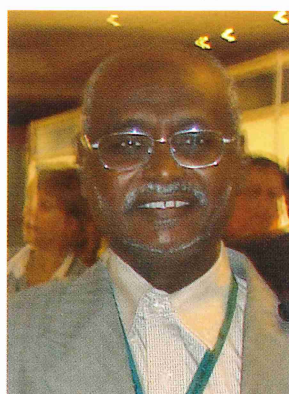
I was very pleased with the finished product until I arrived at the conference and saw the first two posters on display in the poster hall; they were professionally printed in bright, beautiful colours on huge poster paper. Mine looked amateur in comparison, but I was still proud of my hard work and effort. In the end, there was a wide variety of posters - each ranging in content, attractiveness and professionalism. I'd like to think mine was somewhere in the middle - I suppose that what counts in the end is what people got out of it. I felt I had included all the salient points, along with practical tips and a hand-out (which are like gold at these functions!).

All posters were left up for the duration of the conference, but presenters were assigned a specific time to stand next to them and be available to answer

questions. The poster hall was not located in a particularly high-traffic area, which meant that traffic was generally limited to those who sought us out. What I enjoyed most about the poster format session was that I could talk to people individually, which you can't usually do in a workshop format. I had the great pleasure of talking to many people about the benefits and challenges of applying a number of the principles discussed in my poster. This format also made it less nerve-wracking - not many people are comfortable presenting in front of a crowd of strangers at such a big event. In the end I was pleased with the overall experience, but hope that next time I'll graduate to the 'big league.'

Some Reflections on TESOL Arabia, 2007

Dr. Ali Ahmed Hussein



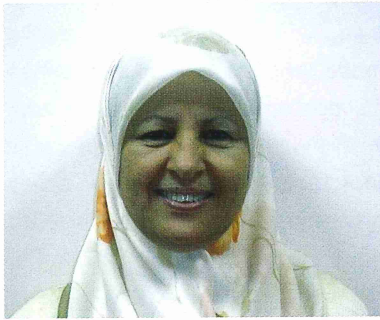
TESOL Arabia 2007 offered us as EFL/ESL/ELT/ESP teachers and practitioners an invaluable opportunity to refresh and update our knowledge in the field of the ELT profession. The

conference could be characterized by its diversity, variety and density. The conference program was squeezed into three short days, but, undoubtedly, much more time would have been needed for participants to be able to cover all its activities. Many teachers, for example, who were keen to attend several sessions being presented simultaneously were not able to do so. Instead, they kept rushing from room to room in an attempt to attend the first section of one session, then the middle section of another. . .and then rushing again to catch the concluding portion of a third session, and so on. There was also very limited time to cover all the sections of the huge Book Exhibition and the varied activities presented by the IT village. We were also presented with the great opportunity to meet some famous figures in the field of Linguistics and ELT, as well as to re-connect with former colleagues and

students who were participating in the conference. On the whole, I think that TESOL Arabia 2007 was an amazing and unforgettable event!

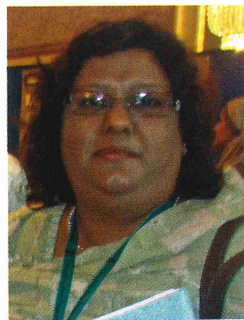
TESOL Arabia 2007: Master Teacher Certificate

Dr. Fatma Abujalala
Mrs. Sophia Bukhari



TESOL Arabia is one platform which not only holds a world class conference, but also provides professional development courses to professionals who wish to enhance their teaching proficiency. The Master Teacher Certificate, which ran over the three days of the conference, was designed to provide the participants with up-to-date, state-of-the-art knowledge about the teaching profession. The twelve sessions were delivered by renowned experts and focused on the latest theories and practices in teaching, in addition to the skill areas of ELT. Six lecturers from the QU Foundation Program English Department attended the sessions in order to earn the certificate. It was essential for the participants to attend at least eight sessions out of twelve. Some key issues, like new developments in teaching reading, the Vygotskyan social-cultural approach to learning, discovering teaching context through story-telling, and working with the Academic Word List were discussed at length.

Attending these sessions was a fruitful experience. It provided the opportunity to mingle with other professionals and share their experiences and ideas. Undoubtedly, we gained new friends and opened our eyes to new trends in ELT.



A good example of the sessions we attended was that of Susan Stempleski from Columbia University Teacher's College, USA, who presented a memorable session on using video materials in the classroom. In

this video-illustrated talk, Susan highlighted the role of video in language teaching, and how it can be most effectively used to maximize language learning. We would like to encourage other colleagues to participate in such courses offered by TESOL Arabia.

Presenting at TESOL Arabia

Dr. Kourosch Lachini

TESOL Arabia International Conference (Dubai, UAE) is always a very well-organized and well-attended convention. Presenting at this annual conference has always been thrilling for me since I can not only share my research results with my colleagues and learn from them, but also meet with my friends and renew my friendships and connections. In addition, it revitalizes all the zest and zeal that any teacher needs to possess to proceed with his career.



This year (2007), like last year, I had the privilege and honor to represent the Foundation Program in this conference. I am really grateful and indebted to our respected Foundation Program Director, Dr. Khalid Al-Ali, and the English Department Head, Mr. Robert Kennedy, for agreeing to support me financially.

My presentation was actually the same accepted to be presented in the TESOL Convention 2007 in Seattle, Washington. It was an attempt to investigate if the restoration of nominal, verbal, and clausal ellipsis (Halliday and Hasan, 1976) into the text has any impact on the comprehensibility, and, hence learnability of the reading comprehension passages by Foreign Language learners. I discussed a research project in which four different reading passages (each focusing on one category of elliptical construction) were administered to 160 intermediate language learners. The resulting statistical analyses indicated that the restoration of clausal and verbal ellipsis had a significant impact on the subjects' reading comprehension ability. The restoration of nominal ellipsis also improved the comprehensibility of the texts, though not significantly. I also embarked on some pedagogical implications of this study and

note. This session took me back to my own school days spent in India in English medium schools that were the remnants of the British / European colonial heritage. In those days, most learning materials for teaching English language and literature either came from overseas or were based on British culture and stories (perhaps an exception being something akin to an excerpt from Kipling's Jungle Book!). Linking English language learning to the learner's language and culture has indeed come a long way – even from the days that I spent doing my graduate degree in TEFL in an American institution in Egypt in the 1990s.

Cultural Tips

“When in Rome, Do as the Romans Do”

(by Khalid M. Ismail)



Under the request of a colleague to write about cultural differences that might cause some misunderstanding among our colleagues themselves or with their students, I find it useful and interesting to write about some of the critical issues (red lines), or behaviors that might lead to

unwanted problems. I still remember that poor teacher who showed his male students a picture of his wife in a bikini on the beach trying to tell them something about his family life. The embarrassment and pain were huge on both sides. Another colleague whispered to me that he stopped standing close or behind his female students, as he used to in his home country, to follow up their on the spot needs; this caused him some uneasy feelings on the females' side in addition to some unpleasant comments which he couldn't understand, but he could feel as negative.

Qatari culture is relationally oriented, a fact which can cause some misunderstanding, as an American colleague once said, not being a task oriented one like the West. One morning I entered my office and said 'hello' to my officemate and his American friend, no one replied to me. I was completely upset and offended. I interrupted their conversation and asked them why they didn't reply to me. The answer came as; “We didn't see you as we were involved in conversation.” Then I asked, “You didn't see me coming in!!?” He said, “Yes, we are task oriented people (we focus on one thing at a time).” I said then that we were not machines, and that in Qatar or the Arab world in

general such a behavior could be interpreted as an insult or degrading to an Arab; and the man really appreciated my comment.

Here are some other incidents to mention a few. One of the male teachers wanted to shake hands with his female student. He was shocked to find the students step back and leave quickly without a word. This happened because simply we males don't shake hands with girls or ladies. Another American teacher was quite upset when he lent his calculator to an Arab colleague and the latter didn't bring it back to him after he finished with it. So he sent him a strong SMS. The fact was that the Arab teacher came twice to the American teacher's office to hand it back personally with a big word of thanks, which is again part of our culture, and that it was not decent to leave it on his desk or in his mailbox without a “thank you.” The American teacher then understood and really appreciated the point.

One of my colleagues once told me that he noticed a feeling of uneasiness from his students while he was putting his hands in his pant pockets. I agreed with him and explained that such a posture shows that you look down at your students. That same colleague saw me the next day, looked me in the eye, and didn't say hello, or greet me, or even give me the chance to greet him. Again I told him that such a thing was not normal or even acceptable in our Arab culture unless there was a kind of argument between us.

In the end, it is better to closely study, notice, and understand such cultural differences that might cause some unintended misunderstanding and even pain when we are in a culturally different society.



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FROM THE EDITORS TO EVERY ONE

Have a nice vacation.

concluded that teachers should not take these ellipses for granted as learners' comprehensibility would be highly influenced by them both in reading and listening.

I hope that I will be able to represent our rapidly developing program in the upcoming convention in Seattle as well, and be a good representative of our hard-working, efficient, and enthusiastic team of teachers who are making every effort to approximate perfection.

TESOL Arabia: An Interesting Session

Reem Khalid Abu-Shawish

One of the interesting presentations I attended this year at TESOL Arabia was called

Confession: Students Have Cheated in my Classroom by Kathy Farrell. The lecturer started by saying that academic dishonesty always has been and always will be a problem - technology has just made it more sophisticated. Then, she explained some ways of cheating, like wearing a long-sleeved shirt,

making notes on the desk, sitting next to a friend and even wearing a hat! There are also some more sophisticated methods for cheating, like using crib sheets, mobile phones, digital watches, electronic dictionaries, pockets, signals and bottles of water!

According to some students, using crib notes, turning in someone else's work, writing papers for others and using a paper mill are all considered serious ways for cheating. However, plagiarizing small passages, collaboration and getting test questions from someone who already took the test are all NOT considered serious ways of cheating by students.

Some factors that encourage students to cheat could include the fact that few students ever get caught, many students don't cover their papers during tests, and some instructors even leave the exam room during the test!

Then the lecturer talked about some factors that motivate academic dishonesty, such as both academic and non-academic external pressures: unfair professors, lack of student effort and adherence to other loyalties (to their peers rather than academic ethics).

Why should we care about this issue? Teachers and students have to care about cheating for student and staff morale. Cheating can affect students' future behaviour, and furthermore, students who cheat may get scholarships and better opportunities than others who didn't cheat. Ultimately, of course, we must protect the reputation of our institution and earn the

confidence and respect of the public.

At the end of the session, the lecturer gave us some suggestions to prevent cheating, which included increasing the number of proctors, not recycling old tests and exams and using multiple versions of tests. I found this presentation to contain valuable and relevant information - and it certainly gave me a lot to think about!

TESOL Arabia 2007: A Session That I Found Interesting

Sushma Das

One goes in and out of a large number of sessions while in attendance at a 2-3 day conference of this nature. Occasionally, one may not be able to attend some sessions that one marks up on the schedule in advance for various reasons, e.g. limited seats,

advance registration, etc. Here, too there were some sessions I would have liked to attend but could not since they were restricted to certification program registrants...but, that is another story! Among the sessions that I liked and found useful was one entitled The Storyteller Project by Diane Carter.



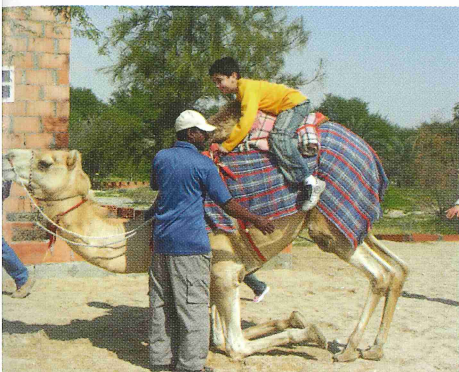
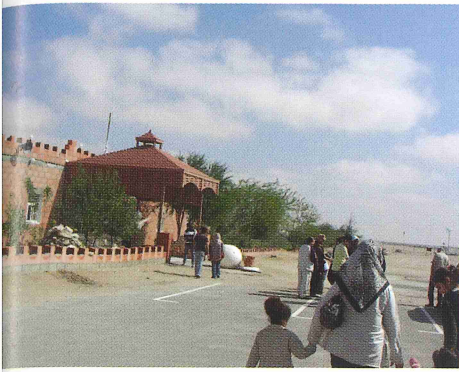
Carter's storytelling concept drew from the experiences of the language and culture of each individual student in the class. She began her project by telling a story herself. She then asked each student to draw on the ideas they have grown up with, and then to present the chosen story (on the topic designated by her) both in the native language and in English. The dual process helped the students to think and then write more coherently in English. Carter went on to describe design of clay sculptures depicting animals in the stories - something that we cannot really do in QU due to time constraints. However, we can easily substitute sculpting with asking students to draw and paint or cut and paste pictures to reinforce English language learning.

I have tried out some of the ideas already in my Level 2 Listening / Speaking classes, and found that student interest was aroused and held by this method. Students were given an assignment which required them to find a fable or folk tale from their own cultures. They shared their stories in English during class, and then the students were encouraged to ask questions. The class ended with a brief discussion on interesting aspects of the stories.

In retrospect (to conclude this review) : an encouraging

The Foundation Program at Shahania

At the Farm



At the Museum



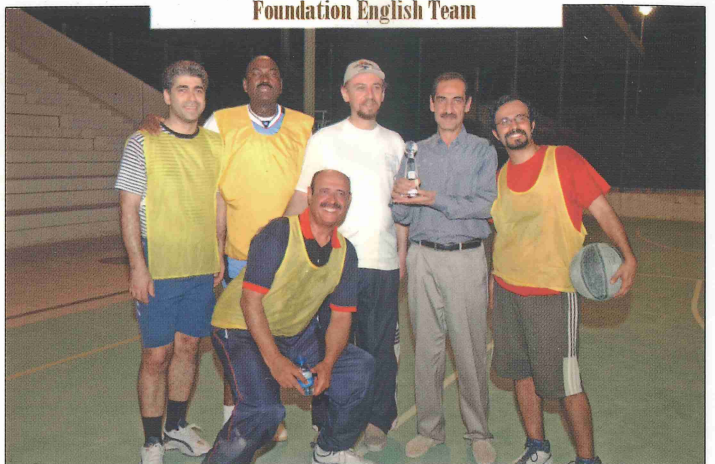
Foundation English Old Hands at the Ball

Losing to students of Engineering Team of Basketball

Students of Engineering Team



Foundation English Team



The Throw-in Contest

(Ahmed Selim, Foundation English, Wins First Place)

