

# FP Jareeda

## Welcome to Issue 24

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James Scotland, Chair of the Foundation Program's Newsletter Committee, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

Welcome to issue 24 of the Foundation Program's quarterly newsletter, FP Jareeda.

In this issue, you can read about Qatar University's 6<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on English Language Teaching. There is also an article which takes a deep dive into the plenary session given by Professor Scott Thornbury. In an FP Jareeda first, there is an Arabic version of this article.

Also contained within this issue

are articles about Mr. Conan Kmiecik and Mr. Indrit Bulku's presentation at the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), a math competition which was organized by the FP Student Affairs Office, and a short story competition. I urge you to read the tremendously imaginative winning entry of the short story completion.

I hope that you enjoy reading issue 24.



James Scotland: Photograph courtesy of Ahmad Hazratzad

## QU 6<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on English Language Teaching

James Scotland, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

The Qatar University (QU) Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE), under the Deanship of General Studies, held its 6<sup>th</sup> Annual International Language Teaching Conference, *Changing Roles and Expanding Responsibilities of ELT Teachers in Post-Covid Era*, from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> of November, 2021.

For the second year in succession, the FPDE annual conference was held virtually, via the

online platform WebEx. Attendees joined from all over the world to listen to world-renowned plenary speakers as well as to participate in various seminars, panel discussions, and workshops. They were able to listen to English language experts, ask thought-provoking questions, share and discuss ideas, and participate in workshops with fellow English language instructors, educators, and linguists.

For the sixth consecutive year since the inception of the conference, the number of attendees has grown. This year, approximately 11,500 people from a total of 105 countries attended the sessions. Owing to a collaboration with the Training and Educational Development Center, more than 700 teachers from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) attended the event.

In total, there were 90 sessions. This included one plenary session, five featured sessions, and one featured panel discussion. The presenters originated from 53 countries, including Algeria, Brazil, Canada, China, Columbia, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Morocco, New Zealand, Pakistan, Poland, Qatar, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey, Syria, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

The conference offered a wide range of sessions that addressed the current reality of teaching English in a post Covid-19 era. Many sessions addressed familiar

topics such as assessment, collaborative learning, critical thinking, project-based learning, fostering student autonomy, providing effective feedback, student engagement, and teaching online. Some of the more innovative sessions addressed topics such as the intersection between philosophy and the mental health of language teachers, how to address the affective needs of learners, and how to promote a growth mindset within learners.

Qatar University President, Dr. Hassan Rashid Al-Derham, gave the opening address, saying, "I am delighted to welcome everyone today to the Qatar University sixth annual international conference on English language teaching. The international conference usually brings together prominent educators, language experts, key presenters, and best practitioners from the field of English language teaching and research. This type of conference is an important pathway for both academic and professional development of Eng-

lish language teachers. This is an opportunity to exchange and share the best practices in teaching English in different contexts from all over the world."

This was followed by a welcome from Dr. Hezam Al-Awah, Director of Foundation Program. Dr. Al-Awah explained that, "Currently, English language instructors have to acquire the additional skills necessary to effectively perform their teaching and learning duties in the classrooms. This includes, but is not limited to, technology and interpersonal relationships. The pandemic has therefore redefined the roles that instructors play in the classroom and has thereby increased their responsibilities beyond the traditional classroom context. The current conference will address this theme by showcasing current practices in different parts of the world. Such an exchange of ideas will add value to the education which is delivered in classrooms."



Dr. Hezam Al- Awah, Director of Foundation Program, Qatar University: Screenshot courtesy of Dr. Hezam Al- Awah

The plenary session on the first day was given by Professor Scott Thornbury, a well-published author in the English Language Teaching field. Professor Thornbury's session titled, *Ed Tech: Hype or Hope*, questioned the actual impact of the use of digital technology in L2 learning. Given that many educators are now more aware of how to utilize technology within their teaching, Professor Thornbury's session was very thought provoking.

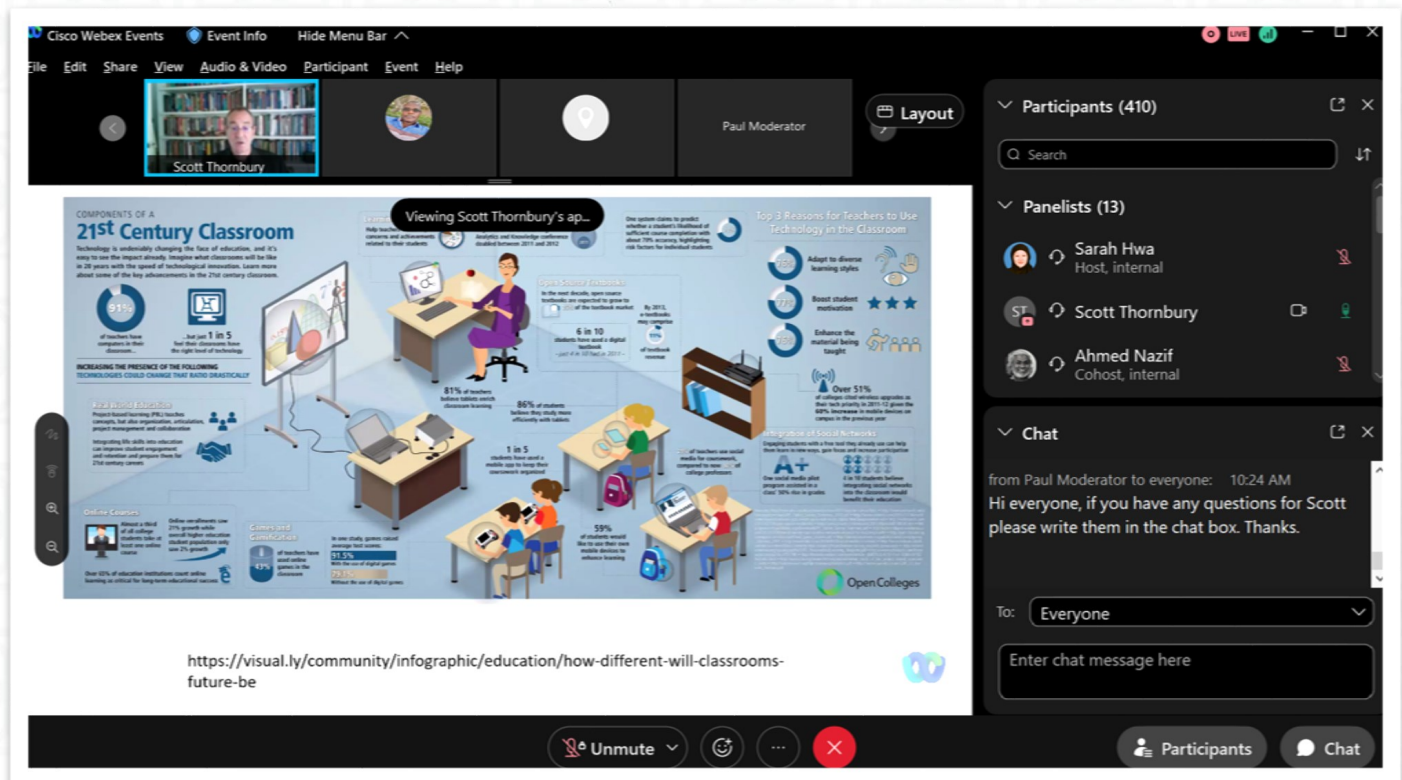
A featured session by Christine Coombe, an Associate Professor of General Studies at Dubai Men's College in the United Arab Emirates, and Kashif Reza, a Lecturer of English at Qatar University's Foundation Program, was titled, *Characteristics of Effective TESOL Teachers*. This session encouraged TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages) practitioners to consider what makes them effective teachers.

A session by Dr. Mohammad Manasreh, a Lecturer of English at Qatar University's Foundation Program, and Naima Sarfraz, a Lecturer of English at Qatar University's Foundation Program, was titled, *Employing Higher Order Thinking Skills to Develop Students Entrepreneurial Capacity*. In their session, Dr. Manasreh and Ms. Sarfraz explored the meaning of entrepreneurial education, arguing for an expansion of the term 'entrepreneurial' to include the activities of starting a project and solving problems.

The three-day international event was a resounding success. The FPDE Conference Committee, under the Committee Chair, Dr. Okon Effiong, had been planning the event and working relentlessly behind the scenes for months. Behind the organizing team is the ever-supportive Dr. Hezam Al-Awah, Director of Foundation Program.

Dr. Effiong commented on the impact of the conference, stating, "Our conference has remained the biggest professional development event for English language teachers at all levels of instruction in the State of Qatar. By hosting this event annually, the Foundation Program is providing an essential service to both the English language teaching profession and the local community."

Since its inception six years ago, the Qatar University annual international conference on English language teaching has gone from strength to strength, gaining both regional and international recognition for its provision of professional development opportunities for English teachers. It is expected that the global impact of this conference will only increase in the forthcoming six years.



Scott Thornbury presenting: Screenshot courtesy of James Scotland

## Scott Thornbury: Ed Tech: Hype or Hope?

Academic Excellence & Professional Development Committee, Foundation Program

On November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE) under the Deanship of General Studies at Qatar University (QU) had the privilege to host a [plenary session](#) by the renowned Professor Scott Thornbury at *Qatar University's 6<sup>th</sup> International Virtual Conference on English Language Teaching*. A native New Zealander, Professor Thornbury has a Master of Arts (M.A.) in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) from the University of Reading. Professor Thornbury also has more than 30 years of experience in English language teaching and teacher training in Egypt, the United Kingdom, and Spain. His writing credits include several award-winning books on language and language teaching methodology. Additionally, he is a series editor for the Cambridge Handbooks for Teachers, and a co-founder of the Dogme ELT (English Language Teaching) group.

Thornbury presented a session titled, *Ed Tech: Hype or Hope*. In his session, he argued that online teaching was a useful strategy during the Covid-19 pandemic, but that education should now return to normal classrooms. He pointed out that even before the pandemic forced much of education online, there had been many glowing predictions for advancements in educational technology, including machine learning, wearable technology, and personalized adaptive learning.

Thornbury asserted that claims that technology will revolutionize language learning have come round "again and again". The 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom was supposed to be a high tech "wired classroom with all manner of technical tools". In the past, classroom televisions and language labor-



Scott Thornbury presenting: Screenshot courtesy of James Scotland

atories were touted by education authorities and became widespread. Unfortunately, the positive predictions of how these technologies would revolutionize language learning were never borne out. According to Thornbury, the cycle of hype and hope for each new technology, and then the resulting disappointment is perhaps the biggest lesson educators can learn from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Thornbury argued that digital technologies have been used primarily as 'information tools' rather than 'learning tools'. He pointed out that language education is less about the transfer of information and more about putting that information to communicative use, adding that digital technologies are a poor substitute for human interaction. Thornbury said that it has become more and more apparent that wired students use technology to distract themselves from learning.

According to Thornbury, nothing predicts a student's grade point average (GPA) better than how much time that student spends with professors. Educators, he said, need to be "very suspicious of predictions which say education is changed forever, that we do not need to go back to real classrooms because we have been so successful teaching on Zoom or whatever". He added that an online classroom is not "a substitute. It's been fantastic..., but it is not the real thing. We do need to go back to the real classroom, and universities that are replacing their lecture halls and their seminar rooms, etc. are doing their learners a great disservice. Language use takes place in physical, social, and bodily spaces: the learning of language should take place there too." Professor Thornbury delivers a convincing argument against the over-reliance on technology.

## تكنولوجيا التعلم: فقاعة أم أمل؟

استضاف قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بالبرنامج التأسيسي في عمادة الدراسات العامة بجامعة البروفيسور الشهير سكوت ثورنبيري، بصفته المتحدث الرئيسي للمؤتمر الافتراضي الدولي السادس للغة الإنجليزية بجامعة قطر. البروفيسور النيوزيلندي سكوت ثورنبيري، حاصل على درجة الماجستير من جامعة ريدينج البريطانية ولديه أكثر من ثلاثين عامًا من الخبرة في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية وتدريب المدرسين في كل من مصر والمملكة المتحدة وإسبانيا. حصلت الكثير من كتبه الموجهة للمدرسين حول اللغة الإنجليزية وأساليب تدريسها على العديد من الجوائز، بالإضافة إلى مساهماته القيمة في سلسلة كتب جامعة كامبردج المتخصصة في مجال أساليب تدريس اللغة، وهو أيضا مؤسس مشارك لمجموعة كامبردج لتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية.

ناقش البروفيسور ثورنبيري في الجلسة الافتتاحية موضوع "تكنولوجيا التعلم: فقاعة أم أمل؟" حيث وضع أن التدريس عبر الإنترنت كان استراتيجية مفيدة أثناء جائحة كوفيد 19، ولكن مع انحسار الجائحة الآن يجب أن يعود التعليم إلى الفصول الدراسية الواجهة. وأشار إلى أنه حتى قبل أن يجبر الوباء الكثير إلى اللجوء للتعلم عبر الإنترنت؛ كانت هناك العديد من التوقعات المتوهجة للتقدم في تكنولوجيا التعليم، بما في ذلك التعلم الآلي الذاتي، والتكنولوجيا المحمولة والمتنقلة، والتعلم التكيفي المتخصص، والأدوات الرقمية للمساعدة في تعزيز نجاح واستمرارية الطلبة.

كما أكد البروفيسور ثورنبيري أن الآراء الفائلة إن التكنولوجيا ستحدث ثورة في تعلم اللغة قد تكررت "مراراً وتكراراً" إذ كان من المفترض أن يكون الفصل الدراسي في القرن الحادي والعشرين عبارة عن "فصل دراسي عالي التقنية مزود بجميع أنواع الأدوات التقنية الحديثة". وأستذكر أنه في الماضي كانت المؤسسات التعليمية تروم للفصول الدراسية المتلفة والمختبرات اللغوية مما ساهم في انتشارها على نطاق واسع. لكن لسوء الحظ، لم تثبت صحة هذه التنبؤات الإيجابية كيفية إحداث هذه التقنيات ثورة في تعلم اللغة. ثم أردف البروفيسور ثورنبيري أن حلقة الضواء والأمل لكل اختراع تقني جديد تنتهي عادة بخيبة الأمل الناتجة من رفع سقف التوقعات غير الواقعي والحماس الزائد والمتحيز؛ وربما أن هذا هو أكثر الدروس فائدة يمكن لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية استخلاصه من تجارب القرنين العشرين والحادي والعشرين.

بين البروفيسور ثورنبيري أيضا أن "التقنيات الرقمية قد استُخدِمَت في المقام الأول باعتبارها وسائل نقل معلومات بدلاً من وسائل تعلم". وأشار ثورنبيري إلى أن تعليم اللغة لا يتعلق بنقل المعلومات بقدر ما يتعلق بوضع تلك المعلومات في الاستخدام التفاعلي التواصلي، مضيفاً أن التقنيات الرقمية هي بديل رديء للتفاعل البشري. وأضاف ثورنبيري إنه قد أصبح جلياً أكثر فأكثر أن بعض الطلبة أخذوا يستخدمون وسائل التكنولوجيا لأغراض التسلية وإلهاء أنفسهم عن التعلم أكثر من استخدامها للتعلم. علاوة على ذلك، تُظهر الأبحاث أن وجود الهاتف المحمول بين يدي الطلبة قد يساهم في تشتيت انتباههم، وأردف أنه من الواضح للغاية أن العديد من خبراء التكنولوجيا في "سيليكون فالي" قد أصبحوا يحدون من استخدام منتجاتهم ويرسلون أطفالهم إلى مدارس النخبة حيث يُحظر استخدام الهواتف الذكية واللوحات الرقمية وحتى أجهزة الكمبيوتر المحمولة.

وفقاً للبروفيسور ثورنبيري، لا شيء يمكن أن يحدد المعدل التراكمي للطلاب أكثر من مقدار الوقت الذي يتفاعل فيه هذا الطالب مع الأستاذة. وقال إن المدرسين يجب أن يكونوا "مرتابين للغاية من التوقعات التي تقول إن التعليم قد تغير إلى الأبد وأنا لسنا بحاجة إلى العودة إلى الفصول الدراسية الحقيقية؛ لأننا كنا ناجحين جداً في التدريس على منصة زوم أو أي منصة أخرى". وأضاف أن الفصول الدراسية عبر الإنترنت ليست بديلاً مرادفاً للفصول الدراسية الواجهة، لقد كانت رائعة... لكنها ليست الواقع".

نحن بحاجة إلى العودة إلى الفصول الدراسية الواجهة، أما الجامعات التي استبدلت قاعات المحاضرات وغرف الندوات الخاصة بها، وما إلى ذلك، بالتعلم عن بعد فهم قد يتسببون بضرر كبير للطلبة المتعلمين... إن استخدام اللغة يحدث في البيئات المادية والاجتماعية والجسدية: وفي هذه البيئات أيضا يتعلم الطالب اللغة.



# A CETL Presentation: Cross-disciplinary Ideas and Activities for Entrepreneurial Education

Conan Kmiecik, Course Lead for ENG 252, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

On Monday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Conan Kmiecik and Mr. Indrit Bulku, both course leads and instructors from the Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE), presented *Cross-disciplinary Ideas and Activities for Entrepreneurial Education*. This presentation was hosted by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) during Entrepreneurial Education Week.

The two presenters shared information on how to incorporate entrepreneurial education into their curriculum. They explained the basis of entrepreneurial education, covered how the FPDE embedded courses currently integrate it into their content and assessments and offered ideas and activities that courses from other disciplines can employ to make use of entrepreneurial education.

“When Qatar University intro-

duced the Entrepreneurial Education,” Conan explained, “the misconception many instructors had was that entrepreneurship meant starting a business. “I am a biology professor; what do I know about starting a business?” However, if you look at the etymology of the word entrepreneur, it is a 19<sup>th</sup>-century French word that means ‘one who undertakes a project’. It is only because of recent usage in the media that the word is associated with individuals like Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg, or Elon Musk.”

“There are many types of entrepreneurs,” Conan continued, “who practice entrepreneurship by not focusing on starting a for-profit business. There is social entrepreneurship, green entrepreneurship, and digital entrepreneurship. Moreover, many academics

have been implicitly entrepreneurial throughout their career, for example, building multi-step research projects, organizing conferences, or creating student organizations. Ventures like these require entrepreneurial skills and competencies. Most academics are entrepreneurs in the broader definition of the word.”

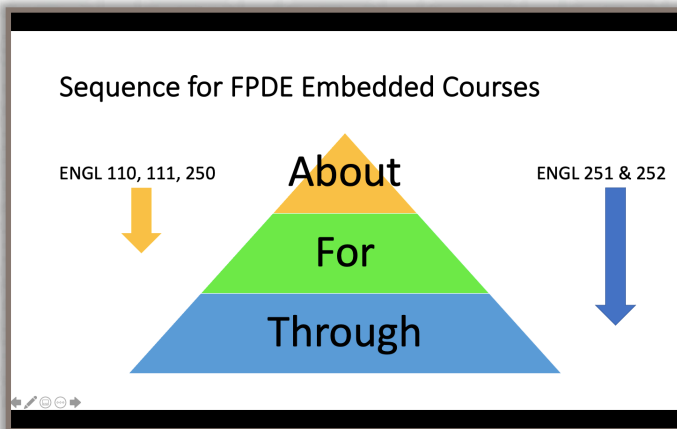
Once Conan opened up the meaning of the idea of entrepreneurship to the audience, it was easier to make the case that all Qatar University (QU) professors and instructors could play a part in the entrepreneurial development of the university’s students, no matter what the subject is. The two panelists then discussed how the FPDE had infused entrepreneurial education into its embedded course curriculum.

Using examples from the customized embedded course textbooks, Indrit shared information about how the introductory embedded courses, English 1 (ENGL 110) and English 2 (ENGL 111), incorporated entrepreneurship education ‘about’ and ‘for’ in the course content and activities build English language knowledge. The intermediate course, English for Communication 1 (ENGL 250), serves as a bridge

to the high intermediate courses, English for Communication 2 (ENGL 251) and English for Business Communication (ENGL 252), which can infuse entrepreneurship education ‘through’ into their course content and activities.

Conan, course lead for ENGL252, shared details about the course’s multi-step Entrepreneurship Project that requires students to learn about entrepreneurship and develop a business idea for the local or regional market. Indrit, the course lead for ENGL 251, explained that the course was piloted to develop students’ entrepreneurial behaviors, attributes, and competencies.

Despite the QU Entrepreneurial Education Excellence Theme being a recent university initiative, the two presenters hoped that session attendees, no matter what their area of expertise, saw themselves playing a role in the entrepreneurial development of QU students. If the FPDE and its English language instructors can partake in the theme and innovate their practices, so can instructors from other fields.



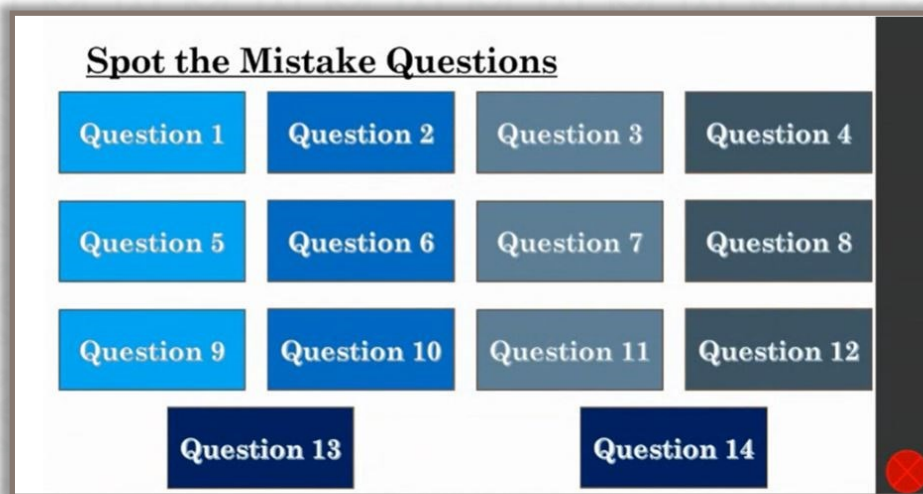
Sequence for FPDE embedded courses: Visual courtesy of Conan Kmiecik

## Spot the Mistake Math Competition

Susan Saafan, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

The Foundation Program (FP) Extra-curricular Committee and the Math FP Success Zone held their online team competition, *Spot the Mistake*, on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2021. The event's aim was for students to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to an everyday context. The competition involved challenging students to spot and explain various mathematical mistakes in a variety of contexts. Twenty-two female participants and ten male participants were separated into teams who took part.

The competition was held separately for male and female students. Mr. Muneer Alwadi hosted the male competition, and Mr. Raed Marabeh hosted the female competition. The mistakes were algebraic errors that are frequently made when solving equations and simplifying rational expressions. Participants were also asked questions involving terminology. After each question, the moderators provided students with feedback. The winners were awarded certificates.



The layout of the questions: Visual courtesy of Raed Marabeh

The competitors and audience enjoyed the competition and left very appreciative comments in the chat-box. Mr. Abdelaziz, committee co-chair, is already planning his next creative project; he commented, "Students were engaged, and the language and problem-solving skills were wonderful to observe. I believe we should have hands-on activities to explore more

math facts for the next competition."


There was a lot of competition amongst the female students. The winning students were Najlaa Al-Sahel, Saeeda Al-Marri, Sahar Ahmed, Sohaila Mohamed, Almaha Al-Basti, Maryam Al-Hammadi, Noor Al-Kaabi, Alanoud Alyafei, and Jumana Al-Qahtani.

There were three winning male students. The winners were Ali Elfihail, Firas Fatnassi, and Hamza Darwish. Ali Elfihail stated, "Firstly, I would like to start by mentioning how well the competition was put together; it was very competitive, and that's what made it an enjoyable experience. At first, our team was losing, but as the questions got harder, we really wanted to win. We had to do a quick 'hot question' to determine the winning team, and I managed to answer it and got our team to first place."

The FP Extra-curricular Committee is already writing questions for next year's event.

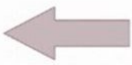
**Spot and correct the mistake in the following mathematical sentence**

1



$$-(\sqrt{-x+1})^2 = -x-1$$

$-(x+1)$



A question from the competition: Visual courtesy of Raed Marabeh

# Business for English Communication Entrepreneurial Panel Discussion

Conan Kmiecik, Course Lead for ENG 252, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

Although Qatar University (QU) courses have returned to on-campus classes, some innovations from the three semesters spent online continue. For example, in Business for English Communication (ENGL 252), the course team introduced an online panel discussion with local entrepreneurs to provide students with the opportunity to learn from the experiences of the panelists. This event is the first step in the course's Entrepreneurship Project and reflects QU's interest in promoting entrepreneurial thinking among students.

On October 11<sup>th</sup> and October 13<sup>th</sup>, the ENGL 252 team organized another round of panel discussions as the course students engaged with what it means to be an entrepreneur and what it takes to develop a business idea into an actual

business. The panel discussion is a collaboration with the [Bedaya Center for Entrepreneurship \(BCE\)](#). Mr. Ahmed Al Saygh from the BCE provides local entrepreneurs from their network for this event. Both panel discussions were moderated by Mr. Easton Phidd, a lecturer in the Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE).

The panelists for the male discussion included Mr. Ghanim Al-Sulaiti, a young Qatari entrepreneur passionate about promoting a plant-based lifestyle; Dr. Abdulmohsin Alyafei, Co-Founder & Chief Operating Officer of Cwallet, which offers digital financial solutions to low-income and unbanked migrant workers; and Mr. Bader Al-Saadi, the founder and current CEO of Quake Sportswear, the first Qatari athleisure

wear brand in Qatar

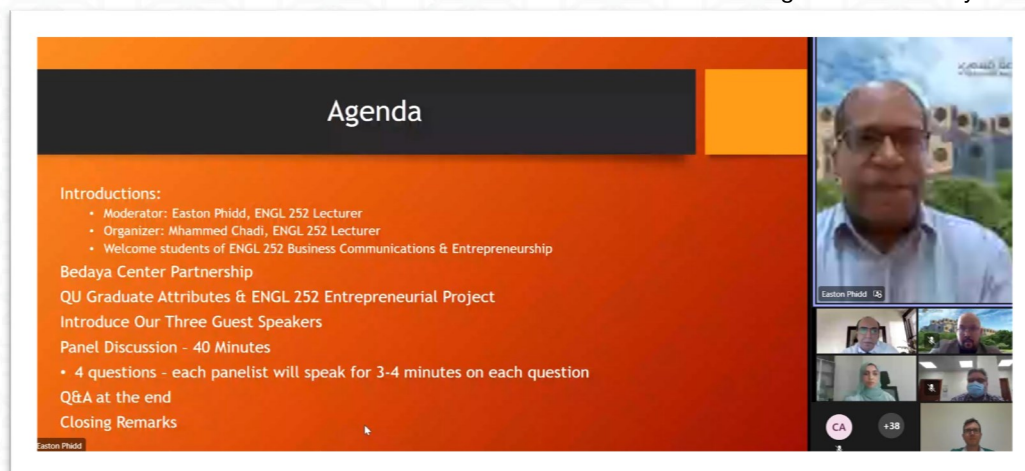
The panelists for the female discussion included Ms. Fatima AlQaedi, the Founder of Ello and Head of Media and PR at Lusail circuit Sports Club; Ms. Khadeja Ahmed Al-buhaliqa, who started her first business when she was 18 and is the founder of several companies; and Ms. Maryam Abdulla founder of Rebalance Lifestyle Development Consultancy.

Before the pandemic and the shift to online classes, this event would have been held in person. However, the busy QU calendar of events and the disparate class schedules of students would have posed obstacles to student attendance. By hosting the panel discussions online this semester, the course team was able to mitigate the university's

closure due to the graduation ceremony and dovetail the online event with the temporary return to online classes during the week of the event.

Like the qualities of an entrepreneur that the instructors encourage throughout the Entrepreneurship Project, the course team embodies and models flexibility, creativity, and innovation when faced with challenges. For, wherever there are obstacles, there are also opportunities.

Throughout the pandemic, education had to pivot to deal with lockdowns and distance learning. Yet, despite the return to face-to-face learning, some aspects of distance learning will prove more convenient and ideal, fostering a hybrid learning environment. Events like the ENGL 252 Entrepreneurship Panel Discussion will likely remain online for the foreseeable future as health, safety, and ease of participation are important concerns.



Mr. Easton Phidd announcing the agenda of the female panel discussion: Screenshot courtesy of James Scotland



# Short Story Competition

Michele Downie, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

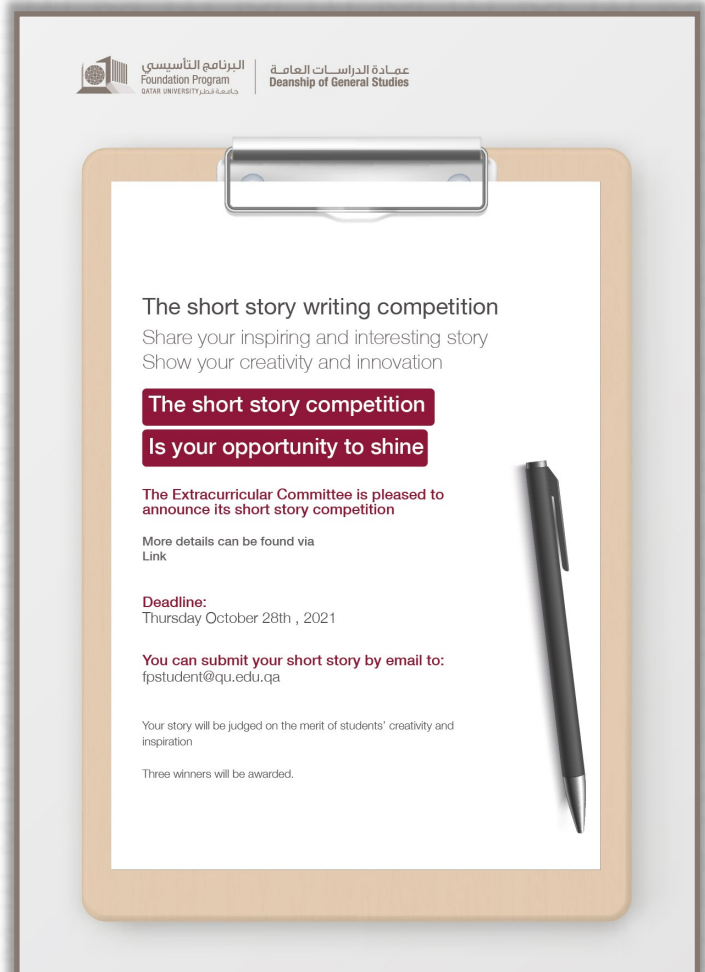
On 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021, the Foundation Program (FP) Extracurricular Committee announced its annual Short Story Writing Competition. All students from foundation-level and embedded courses were encouraged to participate. Participants were asked to write a narrative or story of connected events, either actual or imaginary, with a word limit of 750 to 1000 words. The competition also allowed students to experiment with a different form of writing which is not included in the curriculum throughout the semester. For students, it offered freedom of expression in writing and a chance to participate in something novel and inspiring.

The event was organized by Ms. Shamsa Al Rushaidi, Chair of the Extracurricular Activities Committee. Two other committee members, Ms. Nafisa Halane and Mr. Sanad Magwar, were assigned to judge the short story entries.

The short story entries were judged and evaluated based on students' creativity and originality, rather than strictly on grammar or spelling. Twelve female students participated in the competition. A panel of three teachers judged the stories, and after much deliberation, three stories were announced as the first, second and third place winners.

On 16<sup>th</sup> November, the winners' names were emailed to all foundation and embedded students through the FP Student Affairs Office. All students who entered received participation certificates. The first place winner was Hind Bader, followed by Dana Al Marzouqi in second place, and Lolwa Al Medadi came in third place. When asked about her experience, Hind Bader stated, "I really enjoy writing, so I enjoyed this competition! Experimenting with literary devices to see what would be effective was a fun process. I'm usually hesitant to share my writing, so submitting it also helped me build confidence. This was fun to do either way!"

Ms. Al Rushaidi stated, "I'm really impressed with the students' ability to write these stories concisely. Not only did they meet the requirements, but they also wrote with a very beautiful imagination and a high level of language proficiency. They all deserve recognition." The Extracurricular Activities Committee is currently planning more events that will allow students to showcase not only their English writing skills but also their creative talents. Below is Hind Bader's winning entry.



البرنامج التأسيسي  
Foundation Program  
QATAR UNIVERSITY قطر جامعة

عمادة الدراسات العامة  
Deanship of General Studies

The short story writing competition  
Share your inspiring and interesting story  
Show your creativity and innovation

**The short story competition**  
**Is your opportunity to shine**

The Extracurricular Committee is pleased to announce its short story competition

More details can be found via  
Link

**Deadline:**  
Thursday October 28th , 2021

You can submit your short story by email to:  
fpstudent@qu.edu.qa

Your story will be judged on the merit of students' creativity and inspiration

Three winners will be awarded.

## The Crow's Truth

By Hind Bader

SLAM! I jump up. The gust chills my bones.

It was just the sound of the wind slamming the window shut. My breathing and heart rate slows as relief washes over me. It is quickly overtaken, however, by irritation as I allow my body to fall back to bed.

Breathe in. Cool air circles my nostrils as my lungs fill with pressure. Hold. The silvery moonlight bleeds through the curtains, bouncing off the walls to create a soft iridescent glow. Breathe out. My chest falls with escaping breath, and my anger rises with each passing second that I'm still tortured by wakefulness.

How many more sleepless nights can I take? How much more fighting against my own body? How much more pleading, crying, screaming?

I told myself I wouldn't depend on "it" anymore, but how much longer can I take this? I know it's bad for me but... it's okay if it's just a little bit this time, right? I know I said that last time too, but this time, I'm stronger. This time, I really do need this. I just need to feel okay for even just a second.

Inching to my closet, my guts fill with painful anticipation. The wind begins to howl at the window with the rising cacophony of tree branches crashing at the walls. I wince as I take another step forward, my muscles aching. The distance between seems to extend. Another step. Pain shoots up my body. The sound of the wind seems to reduce to the whirring of a melancholy choir of spirits. My fingertips caress the handles, savoring the cold metal on my skin. It'll be okay this time, right? I told myself that it's okay if I just indulge myself a little...

It creaks open with a gentle tug. My vision fills with the warm glow of "it".

The portal.

I step through, feeling the bittersweet venom of addiction fill my skull, my lungs, my veins. Binding with every cell of my being, giving me that feeling – sweet,

sweet relief.

Green. Viridian green leaves at the top, and lively emerald green grass at the bottom. The blue sky peeks between the leaves, filtering through blessed beams of sunlight. The soft blow of the breeze sends the leaves susurrating the whispers of secrets that only an old forest would know. I inhale deeply, a soft smile forming on the corners of my lips. The grass tickles my bare feet as I mindlessly stroll between the trees, entering a gentle trance.

"Caw!"

That ghastly crow looks down upon me from the canopy, which strangely... seems to have elevated to an intimidatingly towering height since I last noticed. How deep into the forest did I walk?

"Back again already? Now this is just pathetic," it mocks with its distorted voice, bitterly laughing.

"Go away," I retort as I start walking away, numb to its insults at this point.

"I set low expectations for you and you still disappoint me. You're weaker than anyone I've ever seen before, weaker than I even thought was possible," a bird's beak can't smile, yet I can still hear the sadistic joy in its voice.

"You're not real," I say as I continue walking, unfazed still; though its voice seems to follow me.

"I'm only as real as everything that's giving you pleasure about this place. You either accept it's all real, or it's all fake."

"You don't get to decide for me."

"Don't I? Then go on, go ahead. See what happens. Reap what you sow, coward. It'll only provide me with more farce to pitifully laugh at," it works itself up into a berating rage as it speaks, worked up by my lack of emotional reaction. As soon as it's done speaking, it simply disappears.

"Good riddance."

With that out of the way, I begin to attempt slowly easing myself back into the trance. Yet I somehow can't. I hope the crow didn't have an impact on me this time. The crow's words are so cartoonishly cruel that it's difficult to take them to

heart, especially after the millionth time of hearing it try to throw together any mean word that could potentially hurt me. So, that can't be what's stopping me from relaxing, right? Perhaps...

Perhaps it's that strange ominous hum, buzzing through the gaps between the trees. The static raises the hair on the nape of my neck.

Perhaps it's the darkness that has befallen the forest; though I can no longer see the sky and ascertain the reason, as the trees are too high up and therefore drowned in the dark. My stomach starts to stir.

Oh god... it's getting bad again... Why did it start so soon this time?

I turn in the opposite direction and start walking in large, quick strides. I'm fairly certain I walked in a straight line forward so if I just turn back and walk that way, I should find it fairly soon... right?

That's what I thought, at least, but it feels like I've been walking for an eternity at this point. Darkness only grows, causing me to panic and break into a sprint.

My heart races as I run through the seemingly shrinking gaps between the trees. The branches start to grab me with their sharp claws as I shove between them. I turn and run in random directions. I can't hear my thoughts. I can't see. The buzz turns into a screech.

There it is! The glow of the portal is unmistakable in the pitch black darkness. I sprint and leap towards it. The trees reach out and grab me – clawing at my skin – frantically trying to pull me in...

But I made it.

I crash onto the floor of my bedroom, sore and full of scratch marks. I limp through my room. Defeated and downtrodden, I feel the pain shoot through my body as I crash onto my bed. My heavy eyes start to shut.

CRACK! Lightning strikes, shocking me awake. Awake again.

# Speakers from the Bedaya Center Coach Students on Entrepreneurial and Business Skills

Conan Kmiecik, Course Lead for ENG 252, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

From October 31<sup>st</sup> to November 3<sup>rd</sup>, representatives from the [Bedaya Center for Entrepreneurship \(BCE\)](#) visited sections of English for Business Communication (ENGL 252). In total, the representatives spoke to 11 sections of the course or approximately 275 students. The purpose of this guest speaker opportunity was to inform the students majoring in Business about the center's resources and network of contacts that can help with the development of a new business for the local Qatari market.

At the time of the visits, the ENGL 252 students were in the midst of a project which develops the skills needed for entrepreneurship. For the project, students formed teams and developed a business idea related to a tourism opportunity during the FIFA World Cup 2022. The tourism theme was suggested during a meeting between Mr. Ahmed Al Saygh, Senior Entrepreneurship Advisor from the BCE, and ENGL 252 team members. Though the students were still developing their business ideas, the ENGL 252 team felt it was important for students to think be-



Visual courtesy of the Bedaya Center for Entrepreneurship

yond the course project and imagine themselves at the next step of their entrepreneurial journey.

Guest speakers from the BCE included Mr. Ahmad Al-Saygh, Senior Entrepreneurship Advisor; Ms. Hanane Hanzi, Senior Business Development Officer; Ms. Ola Abdulla, Development Officer; and Ms. Ruqaya Alsada, Content Creator. Each speaker spoke for about 30-40

minutes to each of the 11 sections. The guest speakers talked about the need for Qatar to diversify its economy and gave an overview of the services offered by the BCE.

The BCE is a frequent collaborator with the ENGL 252 team. Most recently, during the Fall 2021 semester, the BCE provided two panels of local Qatari entrepreneurs for the ENGL 252 Entrepreneurial Panel Discussions. In addition, representatives from the BCE served as judges during the Entrepreneurial Competition. The ENGL 252 team is extremely grateful for the continual collaboration opportunities with the BCE. Both stakeholders are committed to the goal of developing the next generation of Qatari business creators.

The ENGL 252 team hopes that someday, a student who has completed the Entrepreneurship Project will turn their business idea into an actual business. By informing students about the BCE, this hope is likelier to one day become a reality.

## What do we do?

- One-on-one business advising session
- Organize networking sessions
- Connect to market opportunities
- Entrepreneurship & business-related workshops
- Educational content for entrepreneurs
- Bedaya Station Services



Visual courtesy of the Bedaya Center for Entrepreneurship

## Students Discuss the World Cup Qatar 2022

Tiffany Dyson, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

To encourage student participation and inclusion, the Foundation Program (FP) Extra-Curricular Committee organized two separate online roundtable discussion events for Qatar University (QU) male and female students on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of October 2021. The discussion topic was *World Cup Qatar 2022*, moderated by committee member Mr. Hamid Delfi. Students were encouraged to share their thoughts on several points about the upcoming event.

The initiative's main objective was to facilitate an opportunity to improve English language and speaking skills. The event brought together many students and created a common platform for all to communicate and interact.

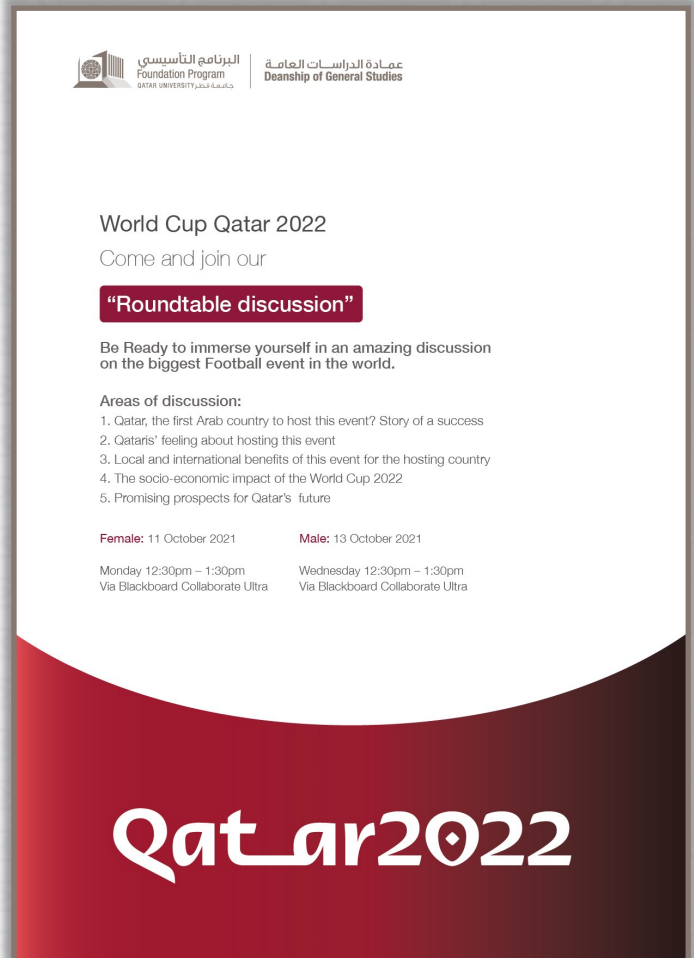
Two attendee comments about the FIFA World Cup 2022 are given below:


"It [the World Cup] might help us in other aspects. Other than [the fact that] it's a sportsmanship event, we will have lots of economic benefits, tourists, [and more] places with affordable prices for all--for basically citizens and also expats and visitors [...] It will help in most aspects. I'm sure about it." --Muneera, an October 11<sup>th</sup> attendee

"Hosting the World Cup will be a good opportunity for other national teams' countries. Forty years ago, no Arab countries had a good opportunity to win a cup, which will improve our national team's [chances] to be in the finals or better places in that event. Also, after finishing the World Cup, Qatar will be prepared [to host] any sports event, such as the Asian Cup or other important events in the future." --Monsur, an October 13<sup>th</sup> attendee

Committee chair, Ms. Shamsa Al Rushaidi, concluded the sessions by thanking the students for their participation and lauded Hamid for his expertly executed moderation. Participants were requested to complete a survey. There were 68 respondents. Results conveyed that the session met their expectations, and 62 respondents mentioned that they would like to participate in similar events. The survey also showed that 100% of the respondents found the roundtable discussion well organized.

Given the success of this event, the Extra-Curricular Committee is already planning similar initiatives for the Spring 2022 semester.




 البرنامج التأسيسي  
 Foundation Program  
 QATAR UNIVERSITY جامعة قطر

عمادة الدراسات العامة  
 Deanship of General Studies

World Cup Qatar 2022

Come and join our

**"Roundtable discussion"**

Be Ready to immerse yourself in an amazing discussion on the biggest Football event in the world.

Areas of discussion:

1. Qatar, the first Arab country to host this event? Story of a success
2. Qataris' feeling about hosting this event
3. Local and international benefits of this event for the hosting country
4. The socio-economic impact of the World Cup 2022
5. Promising prospects for Qatar's future

Female: 11 October 2021      Male: 13 October 2021

Monday 12:30pm – 1:30pm      Wednesday 12:30pm – 1:30pm  
Via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra      Via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

**Qatar2022**

# English for Business Communication Bi-Annual Fall 2021 Entrepreneurial Presentations Competition

Conan Kmiecik, Course Lead for ENG 252, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

On Wednesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, the English for Business Communication (ENGL 252) team organized its Bi-Annual Fall 2021 Entrepreneurial Presentations Competition for female students. This virtual event included Qatar University's Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE), the Center for Entrepreneurship in the QU College of Business and Economics, and the Bedaya Center for Entrepreneurship and Career Development. Close to 100 people attended the event.

The Entrepreneurial Presentations Competition is connected to the ENGL 252 Entrepreneurship Project. The ENGL 252 Entrepreneurship Project requires teams of students to create new business ideas for the Qatari market. The Entrepreneurial Presentations Competition provides three teams of students a chance to present their business ideas to a panel of judges and a wider audience from the university.

Course instructor Mr. Mhammed Chadi organized this semester's competition. The course lead, Conan Kmiecik, served as the event's moderator on Microsoft Teams. The course co-lead, Mr. Issam Affaneh, served as survey organizer and presentation coach for each of the three



The judges of the female Entrepreneurial Presentations Competition as well as the ENGL 252 lecturers: Screenshot courtesy of Conan Kmiecik

teams.

The panel of judges included Mr. Ahmad Al-Saygh, the Entrepreneurship Manager at Bedaya Center; Ms. Eatidal Al-Qatami, the training manager at the Center for Entrepreneurship and a lecturer at the Department of Management and Marketing at the CBE at QU; and Ms. Khadeja Ahmed Al-buhaliqa, a local entrepreneur who has started three businesses, including HENKS garden.

Three teams of students presented their business ideas. They had 6-10 minutes to present, and following their

presentation, each judge asked one question. The event allowed participating students to demonstrate their English language abilities, apply their knowledge from business college coursework, and gain exposure to experts in the field of entrepreneurship.

In respect of the cultural values of female Qatari students, the competition was not broadcast, nor were the identities of the participating students shared beyond the event. The business ideas that the three teams presented were:

Lawsagla – A business that will offer henna booths for tourists

Daline – A business that allows visitors to customize abayas

Motça – A business offering entertainers rental services in Doha

The team behind Lawsagla won first place according to the audience poll and judges. Regardless of the placing, the ENGL 252 team was pleased with the quality of the presentations, the involvement of its judges, and the turn-out for the event.

# The True Value of CEA Accreditation

Stephanie Pinnacle, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

We have been working with the CEA (Commission on English Language Program Accreditation) for 15 years. Many wonderful colleagues and CEA representatives have been involved in making changes to our program, visiting our university, writing and evaluating our self-study report, and continually auditing our procedures. A few previous articles in this newsletter detail our accreditation history. First, however, I would like to reveal the actual essence of accreditation. The truth is we are all involved in the accreditation process, and it means so much more than a hard-earned stamp of approval. Accreditation is really about our relationship with CEA and our freedom to change.

Over the years, I have noticed that institutions view CEA with trepidation, especially during site visits because CEA judge and evaluate us. After a lengthy reporting period, CEA swoops in for three days to observe, check boxes, and write notes in a sequestered room. This can be daunting, but they follow assessment protocols to ensure that they are being fair. The lead-up to an accrediting decision can be stressful for any institution. However, as a former site-visit reviewer for CEA, I want to reveal the relationship that develops between the commission and the institution it is accrediting. It is similar to the ideal teacher-student dynamic in the classroom. As teachers, we try to be mentors, guiding our students, encouraging them to work hard to meet expectations and showing them that mistakes are part of the development process. We are patient and caring. CEA does exactly that.

In initial meetings, they establish trust with the institution and show them how the accreditation process occurs. Then, they set the expectations, the standards, with ample description. In addition, they re-

main available throughout the self-study period, offering workshops and guidance. They also allocate a reasonable period for the institution to make improvements and gather evidence to showcase its program in their report.

The CEA site reviewers spend months learning about our program and us. At the site visit, they meet the people with whom they have been communicating, verify information, and collect additional information. They then forward their final recommendations to the council. Essentially, CEA is our teacher, and we are the students. When it comes to exam time, the teacher might look stern, but they are still caring and hoping that their students will succeed.

Knowing the rationale behind accreditation helps to put their feedback in perspective. CEA accredits us because they want to help our institution and promote the English as a second language (ESL) field globally. However, it is the relationship that we develop with them that matters the most. They are mentors whom we can trust. Although we feel vulnerable presenting our report as a student does when handing in their work, we know that they have our best interests in mind. This process allows us to see their feedback as constructive and gives us a chance to self-reflect and improve.

The aim of accreditation is not to achieve perfection, as nothing is ever really perfect. Instead, it is to establish and follow a procedure for continued development. Institutions are encouraged to modify and change their courses regularly. Of the 44 CEA Standards for English Language Programs and Institutions, the last two, Program Development, Planning and Review, are the most important. They allow institutions to adapt to the ever-changing world



Stephanie Pinnacle speaking at the accreditation gala: Photograph courtesy of Stephanie Pinnacle

and reshape courses accordingly. The annual review and modification standards enable us to put procedures in place to implement current practices and meet the current needs of the students, university and community in an informed manner. Accreditation is all about moving forward to enable our students to be successful. Getting an 'A' from CEA is certainly nice, but not the end goal. Continued self-improvement is our shared objective.

Our relationship with CEA over the years has been extremely fruitful, nurturing and positive for our program. We have established a valuable relationship with them, and they have given us the tools to maintain success. Just like the strategies and skills we practice with our students in the hopes that they will apply them in course assessments, we also hope that our teaching will encourage students to continue to learn.

To know more about CEA Accreditation, please visit: <https://cea-accredit.org/>

## History of English Language Teaching at QU: The Kennedy Years Part 3 - CEA Accreditation

Elisabeth Szewczyk-Méziane, Former Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

In November 2009, Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) paid a site visit to the Foundation Program (FP) premises to verify the Foundation English Department's (FED<sup>1</sup>) self-study report and to determine whether the fifty-two requisite CEA standards were being met. The review team conducted interviews with faculty, students and administrators as well as visited classrooms during the site visit. The review team also wrote a post-visit report and conducted a financial review. Their decision would be announced in April 2010, so the first few months of 2010 were fraught with tension and anticipation for FED stakeholders.

The late Linda Wettlaufer, the first CEA Project Committee coordinator, worked extremely hard to get the accreditation project started. Her successor, Justin Richards, and the FED Accreditation Committee, which included Stephanie Pinnacle and Roger Barlow, spent several stressful years to ensure that the FED met the requirements of the self-study standards. One significant result of the self-study was a complete curriculum overhaul revised to focus on outcomes-based curricula which would better serve FED students.

The hard work and endeavors of the Accreditation Committee paid off. In April 2010, The FED at Qatar University was accredited by CEA for the period of April 2010 to April 2015. The FED had to pledge to uphold CEA standards for English language programs and institutions. The FED was the first department at Qatar University (QU) to gain international accreditation and like all the innovations introduced by the department, the QU administration took note and made their own plans to pursue university-wide accreditation.



Presentation of 5-year Accreditation Certificate with QU President Prof Sheikha Abdulla Al-Misnad, CEA Executive Director Theresa O'Donnell, and Foundation Program (FP) Director Dr. Khalid Al-Ali, September 27, 2010: Photograph courtesy of Stephanie Pinnacle

It was a proud moment for the whole FP. Dr. Duly, on 27th September 2010, a gala celebration was held at the Sheraton Doha Hotel to celebrate this momentous event. Special guests included Dr. Shaikha Al Misnad, President of Qatar University, Dr. Shaikha bint Jabor Al Thani, Qatar University Vice President and Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Teresa O'Donnell, CEA Executive Director, Dr. Judith Hanson Community College Qatar (CCQ) Dean, Dr. Khalid Al Ali, Director of the Foundation Program, and Mr. Robert Kennedy, Head of the FED. Stephanie Pinnacle acted as Master of Ceremonies to welcome guests and faculty.

Dr. Shaikha Al Misnad proudly stated:

“On behalf of Qatar University, we recognize the hard work and efforts of Dr. Khalid Al Ali and his faculty and staff ... and congratulate them on their success. This is, indeed, a great accomplishment. Accreditation is

critical to Educational reform in Qatar as it will provide a stronger foundation for the success of our future generations in the global arena. ... We are proud of the Foundation Program team and confident that they will provide an increasingly positive experience for our students.”

Since being accredited, the Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE) has continued to raise the bar for standards in professionalism in English language teaching, materials innovation, and collaborative learning.

### Acknowledgements

Thank you to Stephanie Pinnacle and David Ingels for sharing their memories.

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE) was known as the Foundation English Department (FED) from 2004 to 2012.

## Faculty Focus: Dr. Chabi

Susan Saafan, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

**Dr. Chabi:** I grew up in Morocco, Casablanca, and my father, a great believer in education and the first to inspire me, allowed me to choose where I wanted to study. I opted for Canada and stayed there until 2004. I initially studied engineering but realized I enjoyed applied mathematics more and made the switch. My professor, Dr. Donald Trim, who managed to simplify this discipline and make it relatable for me as a student, also inspired me to teach. I truly believe 'a nation's wealth lies in its education'.

**Interviewer:** What is your role in the FPDM?

**Dr. Chabi:** I have been with the Foundation Program since 2004. I started as a course coordinator, and in 2007, I identified the need to work with students who were not yet ready to cope with a university-level math program; so, the Student at Risk Committee was born. I have also worked as an academic coordinator. For example, in collaboration with my fantastic team of colleagues, I created the math placement test and established the Math Support Team (MST).

**Interviewer:** What are the challenges for the FPDM?

**Dr. Chabi:** Firstly, students can find math boring and abstract, and so, with the help of the FP Math Success Zone (MSZ), we developed approaches and materials to make it more relevant and enjoyable. Secondly, we need more time to teach and help students to practice and reinforce their learning.

**Interviewer:** In light of the present COVID situation, are there other challenges FPDM teachers face?

**Dr. Chabi:** Math is a lock-step process, and I am concerned that if students do not grasp the basic concepts of a course, they will not be able to master the later stages either. It is challenging online to check how well students have grasped those initial concepts as we cannot, as in a face-to-face class, read body language or accurately gauge student reactions.

**Interviewer:** How do you encourage students to be creative?

**Dr. Chabi:** Creativity is important, and this is why our teaching team, assistants, and MSZ guide students to understand how math concepts can be applied to their own lives through crea-



Dr. Mohamed Chabi: Photograph courtesy of Dr. Mohamed Chabi

tive problem-solving. We also started a math competition to challenge students' content knowledge and critical thinking skills. This annual competition started first with only Qatar University students, but now other university teams, such as Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar, have joined in as well.

**Interviewer:** What do you enjoy most about your job?

**Dr. Chabi:** When I make a difference in someone's life by helping them learn how to learn, and that magical moment when a student says, "Oh! Now I understand!"



# Faculty Focus: Sophia Bukhari Post-Foundation Program Pioneer

Elisabeth Szewczyk-Méziane, Former Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

**Interviewer:** Please tell me about yourself.

**Sophia:** I am from Bhopal, India. I received my education in Bhopal, the city which is famous for the 1984 gas disaster. I am one of the survivors of that horrific event which claimed many lives. I arrived in Qatar in 1990; since then, Doha has been my home.

**Interviewer:** Let's move on to your teaching career.

**Sophia:** My first teaching job as an English language teacher was in a secondary school in Bhopal. Then, I moved to Qatar. I soon found a job in Doha as an English language teacher at Ideal Indian School, one of Qatar's most well-established Indian schools. Later, I taught at Bright Future International School for four years and then left to become a stay-at-home mum.

**Interviewer:** When did you start teaching at Qatar University?

**Sophia:** I joined Qatar University in 2001. I was assigned to teach Business English in the English for Business program, teaching both male and female students. It was a wonderful sub-program, and I thoroughly enjoyed teaching these courses with my pleasant colleagues and supportive coordinator, Dr. Muawia Abdulmajeed. The program offered three levels of Business English, and we had a fifteen hour-teaching week. English Business instructors shared a large communal office space on both campuses, which was a great boon professionally and collegially. Our students were focused and worked hard as they had clear career goals, and many wanted to seek jobs at corporations, or in the private sector, or start their own business.

In Fall 2004, the English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU)<sup>1</sup> became the Foundation English Department (FED), so we all had to move to the offices in the new premises of the Women's Foundation Building (D05). Because of my experience in teaching advanced English students, I was assigned to teach in the Post-Foundation Program (PFP). It was a major adjustment: our workload increased to seven 3-hour classes for a total of 21 hours a week, a big jump, and a lot more work. The PFP offered two courses, Post-Foundation (PF) English 1 and English 2. PF teachers had a lot of freedom in both courses to select topics, design, and choose their teaching material. English 1 was essentially a speaking skills course focusing on discussion, debate, and speaking competency. We would discuss such topics as women and work, driving licenses for women, early marriage,



Sophia Bukhari: Photograph courtesy of Sophia Bukhari

divorce, and studying abroad. These are still relevant topics today. English 2 was a writing skills course, which required a 3,000-word term paper. Students were asked to choose a topic of interest to write on. They were taught rudimentary research skills and basic essay writing. Many students did not have internet access in those days, so they had to go to the library to research their topic. One issue was plagiarism, which was rampant, so our task of assessing essays for originality was difficult.

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE) was known as the English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU) until 2004.

<sup>2</sup> The Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE) was known as the Foundation English Department (FED) from 2004 to 2012.

**Interviewer:** What other developments ensued in PF?

**Sophia:** In Fall 2007, Ms. Eileen Plumb and I met several QU deans about the skills they would like their prospective students to have upon admission to their specialization. Their suggestions and requirements helped us write new, more prescriptive syllabi for the PF courses. English 1 became a reading/writing course, which required students to write two five-paragraph essays. A book called *Destinations* also became part of the course requirements. This book taught skills in paraphrasing, sentence structure, summarizing based on reading texts, and essay writing. English 2 introduced a theme-based textbook, *Sourcework: Academic Writing from Sources*. Students reviewed texts on such topics as globalization, heroes, and birth order theory. They were required to write two term papers: the first was an 800-word essay based on a theme from the book, while the second was a 1200-word referenced research paper related to their major. They were taught to use APA referencing and source information from an established journal. To help facilitate writing this paper, students were encouraged to use the QU Library database of research papers, journals and articles. I continued to work in PF until 2014, when I decided to request a program change.

**Interviewer:** Which program did you join?

**Sophia:** I started teaching Foundation Writing Workshops, run by Berta Hussar and Abir Ja'afar, and Integrated Core courses, which Mr. Chris Jones coordinated. I really enjoyed teaching both of these; it was a wonderful change. It was also an opportunity for me to help rectify some of the chronic language problems I noted students had in PF courses. This background experience was particularly useful in teaching the writing workshops where I devised lessons and worksheets to help students be better prepared for the demands of the two PF courses. I still

teach foundation courses today, and I am very happy to continue to do so.

**Interviewer:** What do you like best about teaching in the FPDE?

**Sophia:** A lot of things. I feel we are like one big family; FPDE is a very collegial place; everybody is willing to help and support each other. It is a happy work environment where teamwork plays an important role in getting things done. We have excellent professional development (PD) opportunities to hone our teaching skills. One thing I really enjoy doing is conducting class trips to various venues. I am also pleased with the wonderful student societies and activities we have had over the years. Our Student Services team is fantastic. The FPDE has become much more transparent, more accessible, more professional, and much improved in recent years. One great thing is our IT support team; Mr. Mohammed Afinas never fails to come to one's aid cheerfully, and Sarah Aw is always ready to help. I have watched the FPDE grow, develop, and improve in the past 17 years, as it goes from strength to strength and innovation to innovation. Now, more than ever, our program caters to the very diverse needs of our student body, so we can better help them develop their English language skills and become independent learners. It's a great place to work.

**Interviewer:** Do you have any advice for your colleagues?

**Sophia:** All I can say is that I am very proud to be a part of the FP. I appreciate all the support, advice, and collegiality of our wonderful FPDE team.

**Interviewer:** It has been a pleasure to talk to you, Sophia. Thank you for sharing your memories.



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