



University of Qatar



Foundation Program

The English Department Newsletter

Issue No. 2 – Spring Semester 2005



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.

The English Department Newsletter
{English Department Foundation Program}
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(Gloria Steinem - Issues Across the Curriculum, 1977)
{A piece of information that is shared can go a long way.}
(bbc.com)

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Graduation Ceremony

June 2005

A Message from the President To The University Faculty, Staff and Students On The Reform Project



Message Highlights

{by Abdul Moniem - Chief Editor}

Her Excellency the President of the University, Prof. Sheikhha Abdullah Al-Misnad, has recently briefed the University faculty, staff and students on the Reform Project in a message which first appeared in a special issue of "Al-Haram Al Jamie" [The University Campus] Newsletter. The overriding purpose of Her Excellency's message is to establish fundamental principles for University performance in the light of the Reform Plan. A basic principle she stresses and reiterates is "effective communication between and within the entire population sectors of the University; administration, colleges and departments, and students, based on a culture of democracy, transparency and trust, and unfailing responsibility in carrying out individual and corporate tasks and duties". In this respect, the University Administration shall always take the lead in making available and disseminating up-to-date information on the status-quo of the Reform implementation at the level of both its short-term and long-term goals.

The Reform Plan was prepared by a joint committee, comprising a University academic and administrative team and a team of international experts, and was approved by HH the Emir. Implementation of the plan became effective from the beginning of the Academic Year 2004 / 2005.

Three Major Strands of the Reform Plan:

- Autonomy
- Academic Reform &
- Administrative and Financial Reform

Autonomy

HH the Emir issued a decree in the summer of 2004 granting the University Autonomous Status. Accordingly, the Board of Regents was formed under the presidency of HH the Heir Apparent, and soon steps were taken to realize this autonomy. In May, 2005 the process of transferring financial matters from

the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Civil Services and Housing was completed. Now the University has oversight of its entire budget and overall financial transactions, as well as administrative and academic independence.

Academic Reform

Perhaps, the most noticeable achievement has been in the academic field. Major reforms were approved following intensive and lengthy discussions and consultations with the bias of innovating and developing the academic programs to raise educational standards. Also there was reviewing of the academic rules and regulations with the view of improving them to keep pace with the Reform Plan. This would, of course, ensure that University of Qatar graduates are well-equipped for their professions, are able to pursue higher education, and capable of contributing effectively to their community and the world at large. To achieve these goals, the academic programs were streamlined in terms of the credit hours needed for the successful completion of University studies. Also the number of major and minor subject combinations offered, and the type of multidisciplinary programs needed were additionally specified. At the level of organization, the Colleges of Humanities and Science were merged and a College of Law was established. In realization of all these far reaching goals, a sound and major decision has been taken to give the University international status. Now the process of accreditation is in the mould, covering all aspects of the University academic system and its organizational structure.

The President assures students that all measures taken to promote the University administrative and educational growth are to their benefit, and that they are going to be given all opportunities to succeed in their studies. She also urges faculty and staff to do their best to help students alleviate their worries and solve their problems through sound counseling and advisory sessions.

Administrative & Financial Reform

A major change at the administrative level is the implementation of the policy of decentralization. More powers have been delegated to the Colleges and Departments with greater demands placed on them to be held responsible and accountable for their performance. Deans of Colleges and Heads of Departments are required to professionally involve faculty and staff in decision-making, through discussions yielding useful input and recommendations that contribute to the development of their respective Colleges and Departments. "Success can only be achieved when our practices break from routine and become an on-going process of innovative and creative work, based on dedication and the spirit of team work".

To improve administrative efficiency, new offices were established. The four major offices among these are the Human Resources Department, the Office of Finance, the External Relations Department, and Information Technology, with a Director appointed for each office. It is believed that administrative performance will improve when we rely more on advanced technological means in carrying out our duties, such as electronic student registration and records, financial record keeping and library services.

Challenges

The President expressed her confidence that the reform plan would bring about the hoped-for results, though long-standing habits and practices cannot be changed overnight. "We just have to be patient and face the challenges, expecting setbacks and obstacles. However, with our joint efforts and collective mind-set, and by maintaining effective communication, and balancing authority with responsibility, we can successfully achieve our set goals."



EDITOR'S NOTE

The publication of the first Issue of our Newsletter was a far from pleasant experience for the editors. Delays in publication had set our plans back about two months. However, we managed after all to produce the first issue – and a nice one at that. This phase has now been closed and although there is still a long way to go, at least some progress appears to have been made. The process is running its course and our conviction is that our publication worries can be summarily brushed aside, hopefully, once and for all. From now on the University's newly-established Department of External Relations will take the responsibility of outsourcing the designing and printing. Wow! We are now the proud possessors of a Newsletter.

Dear reader, it goes without saying that everybody needs a cheer group, and our cheerleaders are those of our colleagues who expressed and reiterated their appreciation of the first issue of the Newsletter, and who gave their comments and suggestions for improvement. You begin to see how attractive people become when they open up and share their feelings and opinions. This has given us a sense of tremendous relief and enabled us to push through whatever barriers that have come our way. We no longer have to worry about the quality of our work. Thank you. You have been most kind. We would also like to thank those of our colleagues who responded promptly and enthusiastically when we put out our call for the 2ND Issue and made myriad contributions. A special thank-you goes to the Head of the English department, Mrs Amna Saud Al-Thani, who has always been available to us, helping in so many ways, caring and encouraging. Her gift for us in appreciation of our work, the symbolic beautiful bouquet, offered during the English Department End-of-Year Meeting was most gratifying. Thank you. We feel deeply honoured.

This Issue has a different feel. Apart from our regular sections, the President of the University's message to the staff adds greater lustre to this Issue. In her message, Her Excellency briefs the staff on the status-quo of the Reform Project, highlighting the major issues of the reform. Her message first appeared in "Al-Haram Al Jamie" Newsletter. In this Issue, the Editor presents the President's Message under the title "Highlights". In her word for the 2ND Issue of our Newsletter, the Head of the English Department writes about the Department's new system of co-ordination and stresses the policy of carrying out our work in a systematic, democratic and transparent manner. In a two-hour interview, Prof. Gregory Freeman, the Foundation Program Consultant, opens up to the editors and speaks about a number of important issues concerning his mission at the University.

This Issue is also packed full of interesting material with the scope of the academic-oriented articles expanded, reflecting some of the educational practices emerging from the teachers' actual experiences and insights gained from their ELT

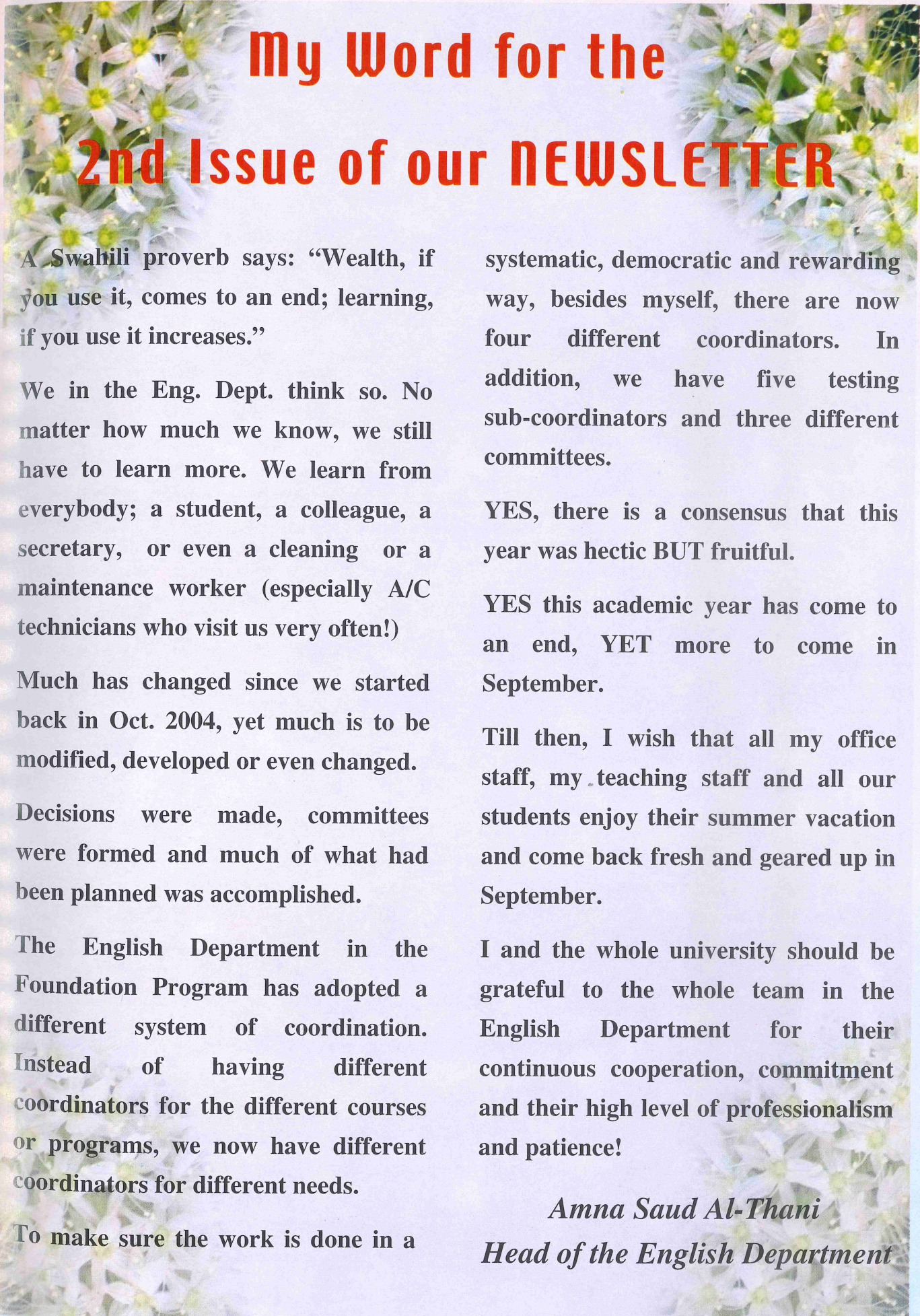
background. Dr Muawia, the Curriculum Coordinator, has written an important document, in the form of a lengthy work paper, putting together a set of basic principles and guidelines to direct our teaching and curriculum development activities in the upcoming course - NorthStar. Please read it and prepare your comments and suggestions to use for further discussion with Dr Muawia and the Curriculum Committee. The Humanities Coordinator, Fatma Alyan outlines the Humanities English courses; their objectives, content and assessment.

Dr Mumtaz has written a pithy article, discussing the role of socio-cultural factors in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign / second language. "Ten Steps for Developing Argumentative Essays" relates Dr Fawzi's own teaching experience with the writing courses at the University. Marlee Terry tells her very interesting story of becoming a teacher of English. Her journey from Northern US near the border with Canada down to Mexico City by train, car and a bus with chickens pecking in the aisles is fascinating. Magdalena says in her article: "Is Self-Esteem Good for You?", that effort, work, and above all else, self-criticism ought to be stressed in education as well as in psychology. As a newly-introduced testing system, the Institutional TOEFL Test is not without problems. Raed specifies the problem areas and suggests solutions. Abullatif Messikh is persuading us to embark on business. Can we? Abdullatif says: "Yes. Open an English Centre". Read about his English school in Algeria and his Taekwondo Training Course at the U of Q. Ala Halwani writes about "Portfolios" as a modern tool of on-going assessment. "Why is Pronunciation Teaching important?" In this article Abdul Moniem argues for the pronunciation model and performance targets we should aim at for our EFL / ESL students. Bino as usual opens her diary of News and Events, so meticulously recorded and documented with dates and photos, and writes about the TESOL Conference in Dubai. Mu Mu, the Student Section Editor, has received plenty of good writing from the students to the extent that she had to extend the three pages initially reserved for this section.

And the garden continues to bloom and display more of its beautiful flowers: amusing letters presented by Dr Fatma Abu Jalalah illustrate how language used inappropriately can drastically affect meaning; a poem by Reem Khaled; tips and quotes by Dr Ali Hussein; the concept of time by Gigi Cocoli, and many more.

Hi all, believe it or not, it is vacation time, and vacation it should be after the hectic time we have had. Wish you a good vacation. See you back, safe, healthy and fit ... and hopefully not too broke!

Abdul Moniem



My Word for the 2nd Issue of our NEWSLETTER

A Swahili proverb says: "Wealth, if you use it, comes to an end; learning, if you use it increases."

We in the Eng. Dept. think so. No matter how much we know, we still have to learn more. We learn from everybody; a student, a colleague, a secretary, or even a cleaning or a maintenance worker (especially A/C technicians who visit us very often!)

Much has changed since we started back in Oct. 2004, yet much is to be modified, developed or even changed.

Decisions were made, committees were formed and much of what had been planned was accomplished.

The English Department in the Foundation Program has adopted a different system of coordination. Instead of having different coordinators for the different courses or programs, we now have different coordinators for different needs.

To make sure the work is done in a

systematic, democratic and rewarding way, besides myself, there are now four different coordinators. In addition, we have five testing sub-coordinators and three different committees.

YES, there is a consensus that this year was hectic BUT fruitful.

YES this academic year has come to an end, YET more to come in September.

Till then, I wish that all my office staff, my teaching staff and all our students enjoy their summer vacation and come back fresh and geared up in September.

I and the whole university should be grateful to the whole team in the English Department for their continuous cooperation, commitment and their high level of professionalism and patience!

Amna Saud Al-Thani
Head of the English Department

UNIVERSITY NEWS

by Abdul Moniem Hussein



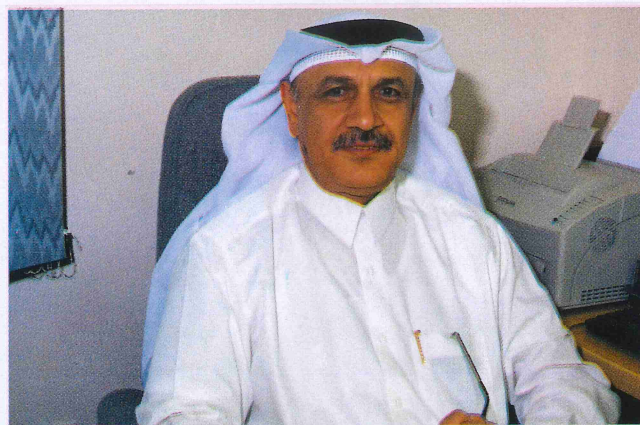
The University's Financial and Administrative Independence

"The Reform Project will have positive impact on the University of Qatar graduates", says Dr. Humaid.

Dr. Humaid Abdulla Al-Midfa, the Vice-President for Administrative Affairs, announced that the University has started to take its first steps towards implementing its financial and administrative independence, effective from the Spring Semester, 2005. He added in a special meeting with "Al-Haram Al-Jamie" Newsletter that the University has now prepared its staff to cope with the new changes by offering them a six-week training course in the "Oracle Computer Program". Dr. Humaid also pointed out that the Administrative Development Plan, prepared by an expert company, includes a comprehensive system for improving the work conditions for the University staff in order to carry out their duties effectively. Asked about staff redundancy, he explained that there is a current staff surplus, and that some staff have been made redundant for this reason, and not because of job inefficiency.

Dr Khalid Al- Ali Appointed Member of the Board of Regents at The Arabian Gulf University

In a letter addressed to Her Excellency the Qatari Minister of Education, Dr Sheikha Ahmed Al-Mahmoud, the President of the Arabian Gulf University in Bahrain, Dr Raff'a Obeid Ghabash, expressed her appreciation of the nomination of Dr Khalid Al-Ali, the Director of the Foundation Program, the University of Qatar, to represent the State of Qatar as a member in the Board of Regents at the Arabian Gulf University. Dr Kkalid started his new job effective from 4 January, 2005. Dr Ghabash also expressed her confidence that Dr Khalid would enrich the work of the Board with his experience and opinion and contribute to



achieving the University's set goal, i.e. at the development and the growth of the Arabian Gulf communities.

Quotes

Teaching is stressful in the best of circumstances. As a journey without maps, it can be destructive of the vital self - confidence of the most competent and experienced practitioner. *(Susan Hunston - University of Birmingham, 1994)*

One of the most pleasurable tasks associated with child - rearing involves initiating a child into the world of books - an introduction that has life long value. *(Richard Scarry - Writer of Children's Books)*

Ability to think will accrue to you from good habits of study.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

“NEWS & EVENTS”

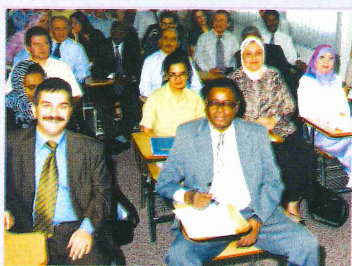


by Bino Sarah Paul

News

Spring 2005 started with a meeting called for by Mrs. Amna Saud al Thani, Head of the English Department on 6 February 2005 in order to chart out various activities for the semester. Four new posts were created for the smooth functioning of the Department. They are the Administrative coordinator- Dr. Madani Othman, the Curriculum coordinator-Dr.Muawia M Abdulmajid, the Testing coordinator - Mrs. Wafa Ammar and the Humanities coordinator, Mrs. Fatma Alyan. The head also announced the names of various sub-coordinators for different levels. Level 1- Justin Richards, Level 2- Robert Kennedy, Level 3- Berta Huszar, Level 4-John Morris. Teachers were asked to sign in according to their preference for the committees of Student/Institution Orientation, Development, Curriculum, and Testing.

On Monday 6th of June, the Head of the Department called for the end-of the -year meeting of the English Department. In the meeting which was short and sweet, the Head, Mrs. Amna al Thani, congratulated the staff for their hard work. She also announced that the results of the students in the academic year



Spring 2005 were excellent and that the effort of the staff and the extra care taken by the coordinators made this possible. Mrs. Amna thanked all the Coordinators and sub coordinators for their great effort, support and enthusiasm. Mementos were given to those who are leaving

the Department for good. The head also presented a gift to Dr. Gregory Freeman, the consultant of the English Department. She also congratulated the Chief editor and the Vice- editor of the English Department Newsletter for their effort and success in bringing out the first issue.

The Foundation Program's end of the year meeting was organized on Monday 6th of June, with great pomp and splendour. Dr. Khalid al Ali spoke on the achievements of all the three departments working under the FP. He congratulated the teachers for putting in the maximum effort and working hard. He also thanked the Head of the Departments for their meticulous effort and support throughout the year. Dr. Khalid thanked Dr. Gregory Freeman, the consultant of the English Department for all his guidance and support. Dr. Freeman hoped that his Report will help to raise the standard of the Program. The meeting was followed by a grand buffet.

Conferences, Workshops and Seminars.

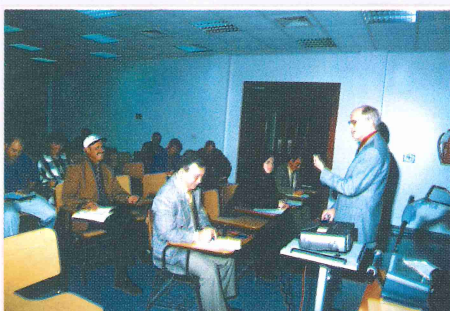
A workshop on The use of PowerPoint in the English class was conducted by Mr. Aladdin Halwani, an instructor of English. The workshop consisted of two stages-the viewing stage and the hands-on stage. Apart from its basic function of presentations, the use of PowerPoint in teaching writing, grammar and vocabulary was discussed. Teachers were successful in creating their own presentations during the practical session. It was an excellent experience for the participants, as it involved a lot of practicals.

A workshop on Microsoft Excel was conducted in collaboration with the Computer Center. Engineer Nazar Hussein taught

teachers to create record sheets on Excel Spreadsheets.

☞ A seminar on the Teaching of critical thinking was conducted on February 15, 2005 by Mr. George Wilcox, Regional English Language Officer, US Embassy on the importance of teaching critical thinking in the classroom. The possibilities and process of including Critical Thinking in the English Language Curriculum and the different methods of teaching thinking skills were discussed.

By learning to think critically students can develop abilities of reasoning, problem-

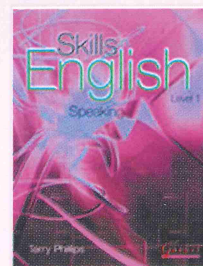


solving, decision-making and inventive thinking. The speaker stressed the importance of developing critical thinking skills from the elementary school upwards.

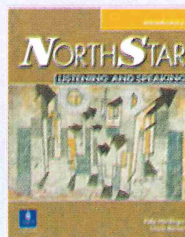
☞ Dr. Cyril J. Weir, Professor in ELT, Director of the Centre for Research in Testing, Evaluation and Curriculum in ELT, Roehampton University, Surrey gave lectures on two days about teaching and testing reading, based on his book “Language Testing and Validation: An Evidence-Based Approach.” He evaluated various tests used for the measurement of language abilities. He also discussed ways for constructing them. According to him, they should be made on a coherent validity framework based on the latest developments in theory and practice. His innovative book, on language testing, deals with all key aspects of language test design and implementation. It provides a road map to effective testing, based on the latest approaches to test validation.

☞ Garnet Education, an educational publisher based in the UK arranged a session for familiarization with, “Skills in English” an

ambitious and extensive course which develops the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking at the higher education level. This new course is for students who are studying or will need to study in the English medium, i.e., pre-essional students.



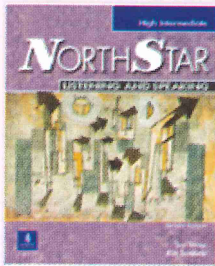
☞ Pearson Longman publication representative, Michelle Cresswell gave a workshop on the NorthStar series, an innovative four-level, integrated-skills series for learners of English as a Foreign / Second Language. The series is divided into two strands: listening/speaking and reading/writing. There are four books in each strand, taking students from Basic to Advanced. The two books at each level explore different aspects of the same contemporary themes. The idea is that students get involved in the theme—really explore it from different angles—and at the same time develop language skills. The representative spoke of the benefits of integration which are numerous. First, it is more interesting and more natural. You can deal with ideas and questions as they arise out of the material. Also, the lessons can be more varied, and the treatment of the theme can be deeper. Secondly, it allows for reinforcement of



vocabulary, grammar, and ideas. If you are involved with the same theme, a certain body of language will naturally keep coming up—you simply need certain words, structures, and functions to talk or write about.

An integrated skills approach builds in the natural redundancy of language needed for acquisition to take place. Teachers discussed the merits and demerits of the various components. The listening material for the two higher books is from radio broadcasts of several kinds—interviews, reports, conversations, call-in shows, and so on, while

the material for the two lower books is adapted from or based on similar programs. The readings come from magazine and newspaper articles, short stories, and excerpts from novels. The authors looked far and wide for interesting, sophisticated and varied texts. Again, nearly all of the material is authentic for the two higher levels, and adapted for the two lower ones. There is a grammar section in each unit, with examples, concise explanations and exercises related to the theme. The grammar presentations and activities also review and recycle this theme-based vocabulary. In addition, the grammatical points in the listening and speaking strand are useful for discussion, while those from the reading and writing strand are more useful for writing. Each grammar section is keyed to a unit of the corresponding level in Focus on Grammar, so teachers and students can easily refer to Focus on Grammar for further practice. Students get complementary material and lots of skills practice in each unit. This adds variety and interest, too.



Donald Freeman director of the SIT Center for Teacher Education, Training, and Research, in the US, presented a workshop on Reading in the EFL/ELT classroom on March 14, 2005 in the LAS building, Education City, Doha. The methods of selecting textbooks and the organization of materials inside the books were discussed. Dr. Freeman talked about problems confronted by students while trying to locate the content. The focus of the seminar was on the techniques teachers can use for evaluating, exploiting and adapting current textbooks and curricular materials.



Q TEN held its Second International Conference on Integrating Technology into the

EFL/ELT Classroom. The half day conference was on April 30, 2005 from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm in the LAS building, Education City, Doha. English teachers from across the Gulf region participated. The conference hosted 17 speakers from Oman, UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The primary speaker was Mr. Mark Algren, director of the Intensive English Program of the American University of Sharjah, UAE. Teachers from the English Department, Foundation Program of Qatar University actively participated in workshops and discussions.



A seminar on Pragmatics and Reading: "Towards a Teaching Methodology" by James Moody was conducted on Sunday 5th of June 2005. James Moody teaches at Qatar University and has been Professor and Head of English Departments at universities in Zambia and Papua New Guinea. He has written a series of ESL textbooks for Southern Africa. He has written approximately 25 papers concerned mainly with ELT and sociolinguistics.

In the seminar he discussed traditional EFL reading and the pragmatics of a reading lesson. Traditional EFL reading is based on a text followed by a series of comprehension questions. Because of this format, what the teacher does is likely to center more on explaining meaning and testing comprehension than on imparting reading skills. Thus, reading is typically taught as a product rather than a process.

On the other hand, the pragmatics of

reading is problematic. Compared to conversation (the paradigm for pragmatic discourse) reading seems remote from any real interaction: the reader and writer are normally separated by time and space and unknown to one another. What is required in order to restore the reading experience to its pragmatic status in the classroom is a reconstruction of the implied "conversation" that takes place between writer and reader. The paper examines the rationale for such an approach and then suggests a methodology.

☞ On 5 June '05, Leslie Butler, a member of the English Department, in a paper on Competence-based Assessment pointed out the problems in the present exams system. According to him they are flawed and not well related to the students' competency.

The proposed solutions for these problems are based on a simplified but comprehensive assessment of competence. All testing should take the form of short production and comprehension exercises, evaluatively assessed.

Proposed Solution in Detail:

1. Foundation English should be geared directly to the students' study needs at undergraduate level.
2. It follows from Point 1 that assessment for passes or exemption should be competency - based.
3. Therefore, the only two important assessment questions are:

I. Is this student ready to take credit courses?

II. If not, what sort of help is needed?

4. Competency assessment should take the form of a short essay, a reading interpretation exercise and an interview.

5. The same procedure could be used for both final assessment and entry-level placement. The format and range of topics could be standardised and published, thus making exam preparation easy and cheating redundant.

6. Grammar exams, mid-term exams and B - B+ distinctions should not be part of the testing procedure. If the University needs letter-grades, we could base these on our competence awards, fine-tuned in respect of classroom work.

Ⓜ Dr. Fuad Khalil, a former member of the English Department has recently been nominated "International Poet of the Year" by the Poets'

Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the USA. Over the past several months the society has been reviewing the thousands of poems



submitted to them. On his accomplishment, the International Library of Poetry will publish the biographical information on a page dedicated entirely to Dr. Fuad Khalil, in The International Who's Who in Poetry.

® Ms. Abeer Mousa, a Bachelor of Science Degree majoring in Computer Science, from Qatar University, has joined the Foundation Program. Previously she worked for four years as an International Test Administrator and Security Manager at Prometric – Thomson Learning (administrating international Computer Based ETS Exams such as:



TOEFL, GRE, GMAT, and USMLE). She also worked for two years as Math and Statistics Lab Administrator at the Math Department (Qatar University). Her duties include administrative work for the Institutional TOEFL Test, and Computer Programming or Computer related work for the FP.

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OBITUARY

It is with profound sadness that the Editorial Board has learned of the untimely demise of

Dr. Ron Hardaker,

longtime Coordinator of English for Engineering, in England in June. Dr. Ron, as he was popularly known, was a much liked and respected member of staff. He enjoyed his fourteen and a half year stay in Doha for the many opportunities it offered him for outdoor activities, particularly windsurfing. He is survived by his wife, Emma, also a much liked and respected former member of our Department, his son, Ben, and daughter, Helen, to whom we extend our deepest sympathies.



Interview with Prof. Gregory Freeman

Conducted by Abdul Moniem M Hussein &

Bino Sarah Paul

Professor Gregory Freeman, a senior English Fellow from the USA, has been commissioned to work as consultant for the Foundation Program to help in developing the Program and promoting teachers' expertise. In a lengthy conversation, he spoke recently to the Newsletter's Chief Editor and Vice Editor. Here is the full text of this conversation.

** Please introduce yourself to the readers of the Newsletter.*

I am from Colorado, the United States of America. I am under a programme with the US Government: The English Language Fellow Program, which is a ten-month worldwide program funded by the Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and currently administered by World Learning/School for International Training. The program places experienced teacher trainers and recent TEFL/TESL Master's degree graduates in all regions of the world at universities, teacher-training institutions, ministries of education, and other related language education institutions for a ten-month assignment to assist with the improvement of English teaching capacity around the world. Since 1992 more than 800 English language professionals have taught and conducted programs in over 110 countries. I, too, was on a one-year programme, but the President of the university asked me to extend my grant, so it was extended for one more year.

** And what about your teaching career?*

I started my teaching career by accident. I come from a middle class family. When I was a university student with BA in Political Science, I ran out of money. I needed a job and I got one in a primary school. I worked as a teaching assistant because of financial need. I liked those children and the school. I helped small children in their

class and playground. I decided one day I will be a teacher.

Later I was given an internship in relation to Political Science. But after my graduation, I joined the US Government Program as a member of the Peace Corps. I was very young and I went to Iran as an English teacher.

As part of the program, I joined a school in Iran, near Afghanistan, with minimum facilities, in a small mountain village called Kuhsorkh, very beautiful with lovely students and kind people. It was a wonderful experience which I still cherish. It was my first international adventure.

** When did you take your Master's Degree?*

I loved teaching, and I was getting along with my students. But as I didn't know the methodology of teaching, I decided to continue my education to become a good teacher. So I took my MA in TESOL to learn the methodology and techniques of teaching.

Soon I finished my Master's and later got a US Fulbright Scholarship and went to Al Minia in Egypt, where my daughter, Emily was born. I taught as a Teacher Trainer in Al Minia University. The students were excellent and hardworking.

** And where did you go from there?*

Then I went to Malaysia, to teach in an American University under the Malaysian government. The students were fantastic, most polite, hard working and kind. I was teaching an advanced course to 40 students.

Then I was in Japan to teach some aspiring diplomats American and the Western culture for two years. They were very hardworking. As they were perfectionists, it was very embarrassing for

them to do the speaking course. But I broke the ice and they became excellent speakers. Those days were amazing. The Institute was located in a National Park, a very beautiful area. I started my days drinking coffee and watching the beauty of Mount Fuji from my small but beautiful Japanese cottage. I still treasure those memories, especially walking in the beautiful campus with my two-year old daughter.

*** Further education and PhD?**

Then I went back to Florida State University. I did my PhD in Multi-cultural and Multi-lingual education with a minor in Education and Development, which was a fascinating topic. Then I got a job in the University of Colorado. Until now I have to go there periodically. So since then, I go back and forth.

*** What is your mission at the University?**

I was working in the Ministry of Education on an evaluation program with the Office of the Inspector of Education and I saw all types of schools from primary to middle to secondary. Before I was leaving I wanted to see the end result. So the U.S. Embassy arranged a visit to the University of Qatar. I met Dr. Sheikha al Misnad the President of the University. She asked me my opinion on education in the country. I was very direct and I expressed what I felt, especially, when it comes to the matter of taking responsibility of a certain situation.

She agreed with my opinion. She enquired about my schedule in US Embassy and found that I was leaving. So she asked me to renew my grant and join the University of Qatar to write a complete report on the Foundation Program. She asked me to write a comprehensive report on the strengths and weaknesses of the Foundation Program. Before I leave I will submit the report which has a lengthy list of recommendations to improve the situation.

*** Why do we need this report and is one year enough for doing it?**

The Foundation Program is going to be evaluated next year. A US organization, an Accreditation Committee is going to evaluate the Foundation Program to see whether it has International Standards.

There is a series of steps the program should do to get accredited.

The team will evaluate various aspects of the English Department next year.

They include:

the course, the teachers, the equipment, the process

of course design, how textbooks are selected, the faculty involvement in the selection of books,

libraries, teacher resource materials, textbook selection process and whether old, new, men and women teachers are involved in the selection of books and piloting the books. In my opinion this year books were not appropriate for an academic program. Whenever a book is to be taught, piloting is a must to get an accurate understanding. The Accreditation committee will also conduct confidential and private interviews with the teachers. The University is going to make serious changes.

The new committees organised by the English Department is a good first step towards this. But the committees' structure should be expanded and they should have clear missions and clear responsibilities and should be strengthened because teachers need to have more input in the decision making.

*** This year, teachers feel the pressure of the 20 hours per week teaching load. Can we expect to go back to 15 hours as before?**

The university is going to look seriously into this matter.

When the teachers have a lot of work for example, to make reports, they need a lot of release time. Here in this program a lot of work is expected from the faculty, so in order to have quality work teachers should be given release time. For every student who comes to the university this program decides whether the student is to enter in college or kicked out.

As it is the foundation program, if it is not good their life is going to be affected negatively.

There should be enough equipment, good resource materials, supplementary material and library. Can you tell parents that the university has all the facilities for their sons or daughters to pass and perform well? I don't believe in telling the people concerned that everything is simply wonderful. At my age, with my experience, education and background, I just can't say that everything is perfect here.

*** As literacy is a shared experience, how do you foresee the relationship between the English Department and the colleges that teach in English?**

As English is the medium of instruction in colleges, there should be a link between them and the English Department. A paragraph in the report made in the beginning of the Foundation Program talks about the link between them. It has to come from the Administration to the Foundation Program. The English instructor should know

what kind of English the students should know when they reach those colleges.

When I asked the students, they told me that they didn't read the textbook. They study the handouts and the possible questions. They know the exams are based on the lecture and handouts not really based on the text, so they will never read and get to know the book. They concentrate only on the listening skill, so they don't improve their reading skills. They only need the listening skill.

** What do you think of the English courses currently taught?*

The books currently used are social and conversational English.

I think "New Headway" was an unusual choice of academic English.

It is for social or travel purposes. So it is certainly not for a student who needs academic English.

The ESP Courses were changed, but the reason for changing the courses is still not known to me. The concerned people told me that the faculty of the colleges will take care of that.

They will teach the words or vocabulary needed. How can a faculty member who teaches, for example Physics, teach English?

Teachers of English are never considered as professionals. We are equal to Physics teachers or Biochemistry teachers even though our content is not that heavy. We are professionals and what we teach might look easy. But it is a total error and disrespect towards us. What we do as language teachers is totally different. We are acting, interacting, creating and counselling. We are doing great things and people underestimate the complexity of our job. People underestimate how difficult our job is.

There should be a link with these professors, who teach freshmen and the English Department. They should be trained how to teach in the medium of a second language. I have done similar courses in the University of Colorado. It was a radical one. All the faculty teachers were given a workshop on how to work with second language learners. One of the roles of the English program there was to find whether they have adequate English level and if it

was found insufficient they were trained to teach in the medium of English.

When the students do badly the blame is on the Foundation Program that it hasn't prepared them. So the faculty should be seasoned to teach in English and the English teacher should train the faculty members.

** Do you think that your report will have some impact on the future of the Foundation Program?*

I feel it is my job and my moral obligation to write a fair report. It is their choice to decide whether to

use it or not, but I cannot leave this place on June 20th on KLM flight without telling them the truth.

They might think that I am a trouble maker.

They will read it, it is their chance, and they have to do a lot of work if they are serious about it. Things move here in a much slower pace.



I hear a lot about change and more change, but when coming to the point of making certain decisions which are very crucial they are slow and waste a lot of time. Decisions for next year are to be made by now.

** Do you think TOEFL is really reflective of the students' standard?*

Well I think it is not a perfect test. But for this institution it has to be a standardised test. I don't think the Department can make an exit test because such an amount of work, task and effort cannot be done by the staff. Even though the midterm and final have no weight you work a lot on it.

Test writing is an art, so it needs a lot of expertise and effort. It is the hardest part of language teaching. The English Department teachers are writing quality tests, as the program is having evaluation in order to accredit the Department for the outside world; it needs a standardised exit test. No other university in the country will accept an in-house test. There will be some positive changes in TOEFL itself.

An instructor does 20 hours of teaching. He knows the level of his students.

It is frustrating to see the best student in the class do badly in the test and the worst student comes out with the best TOEFL score.

You will think how in the world they get such a score.

The students are in a dilemma, whether they study the text or prepare for TOEFL. They are given two messages and they are in two directions. It is also frustrating, and basically telling the students "What I teach is useless for you but you should come everyday" makes the students think about staying back and focus on TOEFL.

The only thing the teachers can say is that the English they teach in the classroom can help them for the TOEFL exam. Academic English should also be given importance, why then there is a lot of focus on TOEFL?

** Don't you think that the English courses must be compulsory?*

I would agree to the idea. TOEFL is not an indicator of academic success. It enables us to check the language ability. It is an indicator of language aptitude.

The students should make a serious study of English with lectures; intensive reading and writing and note taking. I have seen the schools here and what they have there. The gap between the schools and university is big. That is why I recall a point made by some one I respect. That person came to me and said that the students need Academic and Psychological counselling to make this transition from school to the university smooth. The situation is different in the university, they are independent learners. They need a strong foundation year. They need psychological support also.

Students coming from government schools to the university undergo a cultural shock.

** Tell us about TESOL San Antonio, Texas. What was it about? And how successful was your recruitment mission?*

Our job there was to interview many qualified teachers. I have interviewed more than 100 people. I looked at their CVs and rejected 75%. After the interview 50% were rejected, and finally I took 20%. That means 30 more teachers are joining us in the next Academic Year. Regarding their

qualifications, they have their Post Graduation in MA- TESOL. I did not insist on a BA in English. It cannot be mandatory especially in the Western society where they change their professions. People should not be penalised for doing so.

** Non-native speakers feel insecure about their future as the University is hiring mostly native speakers at the moment. What would you say in this respect?*

Quality people were recruited regardless of their nationality. In my opinion a non-native speaker can be as effective as and sometimes more effective than a native speaker. I don't think just being a native speaker is enough to put someone ahead of someone else. I really will not work at a university that would not hire non-native speakers. For example in U.A.E., they told me that I could not hire non- native speakers and I resigned. Because I think it was racist. I don't think it is good. You look at people when they come for an interview. I listen to non- native speakers more carefully when they speak during the interview and read their CVs more carefully and closely to see their

standard of writing, obviously judging them. I do the same with native speakers. When I have native speakers with mistakes in their CVs, I send them back with covering

letters pointing out their mistakes. Non-native speakers with language ability can be much more effective in a classroom. They can be role models for the students. Teachers can tell their students that they themselves are native speakers of Arabic who studied English and chose Teaching of English as their profession. So if they can learn and perform well, the students also can.

** Apart from observing classes, are there other methods of teacher evaluation which can be more effective?*

More evaluation can be done on future committee work, and professional development work. New ways of evaluation can be used, not just based on one day evaluation of teachers while they are teaching. Other methods like students evaluating the teacher, peer observation, and teachers



evaluating themselves by videotaping their lectures and watching privately, are very useful. This is the best type of Professional Development, just to watch own teaching and come up with your own plans to improve. Video cannot lie and it is much more effective than being watched by someone. The presence of the evaluator changes the dynamics of the class. Some people do better than normal, may be their one time best. Even the student- teacher relationship is affected. Students look at me trying to perform. Some times the teachers hate the whole idea, they become nervous. They can even teach a topic they have already taught. They can use a certain type of lesson which is more successful. No one has lost their job because of the evaluation, but there was a strong rumour. I couldn't continue the evaluation since I had to be in the recruitment committee.

** What do you think is the effect of students' level of motivation on the teaching and learning of English?*

It is a major factor. In order to acquire any kind of knowledge, you need motivation. It is a critical thing. During the interview I asked the new teachers how they were going to motivate the students. The problem is we have a 'fail safe society' here. If you do not pass the Foundation you will be given a chance to study something else. In a society, the fear of failure itself is a great motivation.

If you don't have the fear of failure you are not really motivated. That is the truth. I hope this country which has started the reforms in Education comes out well. They have a better chance of succeeding. Here they are honest, courageous and admit that they have a problem, and they are trying to sort it out. Students should realize that the reward of education is not just to pass the exam, but something more than that.

** What advice can you give to the teachers?*

My advice is very clear. The teachers should take a chance, give feedback to the administration. Let them know your expertise and I think the input of the teacher is crucial to the success of the Foundation Program even if on the small administrative issues or on bureaucracy, or even smaller things. You can approach the authorities with problems but along with solutions. It is a professional obligation. They should behave professionally in order to be treated professionally.

** Tell us about your family.*

My wife Janet was an English teacher, and changed her profession, and became a university librarian at the University of Colorado. We were

married 26 years ago. We met in Iran when we were teachers of English. She is a real traveller. She loves travelling. My daughter, Emily, is a university student of International Relations, specialising in Middle East Politics. She wants to work for the UN. She is very hardworking and very dedicated. I think she has an open view of things as she has seen many cultures and known people from many cultures and has studied with international students.

** What are your future plans?*

I am either going back to the University of Colorado or to Kurdistan. There are some good universities in Kurdistan.

But I have an unusual offer. I have a very close American - Kurd friend. He has invited me to join him there. It is very tempting, especially the beautiful mountains. The language is similar to Iran, and the culture similar to Iraq. I have always been fascinated by those people. It will be another adventure.

** How do you find life in Qatar?*

I have explored this country. I have a map of Doha and I have checked out all the roundabouts in Doha. Last year I took a taxi and checked off almost all the roundabouts in the map so I can say I knew Doha.

This year I have a car, so I try to go to all the cities.

I visit very traditional and very old tea houses in Doha. I like to go there. I know lots of Iranians who work in the Souq. I know Farsi, so I can speak to them. I know a group of Iranian men who make handicrafts, working for the government. So whenever they hold an exhibition I go and visit and sit with them. They make lots of things like rugs and pottery. So I do a lot and try to learn something new. I do a lot of exercise morning and evening daily. Some days I go for long walks. I am a good runner, a jogger, I love professional tennis, and I read way too much. I am glad to be in Doha for the second year. I have enjoyed the people here.

I have no regrets.

** Are you a pessimist or do you approach life with pleasant expectations?*

I think I am a realist. I am very honest. Initially people find it very difficult to work with me, but later they realize that I was "honest." I value my independence a lot. When I leave this country I will have mixed emotions.

Thank you Prof. Freeman for your openness and for giving us invaluable moments of your time. We wish you all success.

STUDENT SECTION

Note: We regret that not all of the interesting and excellent pieces of writing contributed by students could be included in this column. However, we hope to use some of these in future issues. We would like to express our appreciation and thanks to the student contributors for their enthusiasm and hard work, and to the teachers who provided guidance and inspiration.

Mu Mu Winn, Student Column Editor.



Mu Mu Winn

Photography

by Anas al-Ansari

(Course: 811109, Teacher: Ameen Al Hemyari)

Taking photos is one of my favorite hobbies because I enjoy it. I like to take photos of every thing. For example my friends, cars, buildings, scenery and every thing I see. Every picture I take reminds me of an event. For this reason, I find photography one of the best ways to remember past events. There are many kinds of cameras but I find Sony the best, especially the 5 mega pixel for beginners and professionals. Some people use mobiles cameras. I think it is good for fun but if you look for quality you must buy a digital camera.

These are some pictures I have taken.



The first one is of a plant in the desert. We eat it. I used a Sony Ericson S700i with 1.3 mega pixel. The second one is of camels in the desert. I used a Samsung 3.2 mega pixel. The last picture is of my university. I used a Sony 5 mega pixel.

The Different Reasons for Travelling

by Faisal Ali Al Othman

(Course: 812002, Teacher: Tasneem Kureishy)

Life is a journey and we are all travellers, travelling through it. We travel from one place to another. There are many reasons for this. We may travel to get an education. We may travel in search of relaxation. We travel to attend international conferences. We also travel to visit relatives or friends.

Firstly, we travel to receive education from international universities. If I get a higher degree, it will change my life in many ways. I'll have a good job, which will give me a good salary. And I'll get respect from the people and the community. Also, I can serve my country in international events. Moreover, I'll know the difference between our culture and other cultures.

Travelling also provides relaxation. We can travel to another country and have a change of environment. And it gives us a clear perspective on life and people. So we can realize who is good and who is bad. We have an old saying that goes like this- "Travelling discovers, human behaviour." Also, travelling binds you close to your family, because all members of the family will share in any experience.

Another purpose of travelling is to attend international conferences on business and trade. We can establish our business in other countries, and know about the trade culture there. It is very useful and important.

Finally, there is an important purpose which our religion instructs us to fulfil. It is to visit our relatives and keep in touch with them. Also it's very humane. Your relatives help you and you help them. This will forge a strong bond between us all.

Travelling, therefore helps us in different ways, and makes our life richer through experience.

My Favourite Leisure Activities

by Sulaiman Mohammad Thahir

(Course: 812002, Teacher: Tasneem Kureishy)

There are a few things which I indulge in if I have free time and they are reading, watching movies and swimming. These three activities are essential for me because these could change my mood and make me feel better after a hard day.

First of all, when I am free I like to read. Reading moves the mind to another world. It takes the reader on a sight seeing tour. Reading also increases knowledge and it introduces the reader to new worlds, fields of science and arts and it helps you to improve your thinking and your attitude in life. It isn't important what I read, so long as I read many things like magazines on computers, politics, cars and medical journals. I like also to read books on art, poetry, biographies and scientific articles on the Internet.

Secondly, I like watching movies whether by going to the cinema halls or watching them on movie channels on T.V, or on the DVD. It makes me feel better while I am watching. When I watch a movie in the cinema I feel that I am acting also in this film and it's very amusing for me. Sometimes,

the films tell you about wars, tragedies, achievements, biographies of famous people, etc.

Thirdly, I like swimming. I like swimming in pools more than in the sea or rivers or lakes. Swimming is a very useful sport for my body because while I am swimming, I exercise every part of my body. Swimming makes me very active and ready for anything. So after I return from the swimming pool, I don't feel sleepy. It makes me forget my problems and grief. I advise everybody to swim.

As you can see, these are my favourite hobbies. I do them because I enjoy them and get a lot of relaxation as well.

My Favourite Car

by Mohammad Anwar

(Course: 811109, Teacher: Tasneem Kureishy)

Nowadays, cars are of great importance and play a major role in our lives. There are many cars categorized according to different concepts. Japanese cars, especially those produced by Toyota Motors, are excellent. My favourite car is the Toyota Camry. It has advantages in shape and size. It has a good engine and gives good speed. It also has a beautiful interior and has a good price.

A Toyota Camry has both a sporty and a luxurious body. It has a smooth curve that gives it a beautiful look from a distance. Also the resistance of the air doesn't affect its performance because of the well designed aerodynamic body.

A Camry's engine is powerful. It has a good resistance to the hot weather in the Gulf. Also it has a smooth and quiet engine. Gear change is also smooth and easy.

The interior of a Camry has many advantages. There are two air conditioners, one in the front and one at the back. The cassette player is very nice with the surround sound effect. The Toyota Camry is excellent for its great price and performance. It costs QR. 69,000 and is worth every bit of it.

I think a car with all these advantages is very suitable for the Gulf weather and for those people who don't want any mechanical failures.

Online Learning

by Authman Osama M. Ali

(Course: 812002, Teacher: Tasneem Kureishy)

Online learning is a new way of obtaining education. It has many advantages. First of all, online learning helps disabled people. They can get information from home without having to travel. Secondly, it helps ladies who stay at home to spend their time learning something useful like cooking, interior decoration etc. Moreover, it helps working people who don't have time to attend classes. They can get information online after work. This will help them get a degree for promotion in their jobs. Also, online learning is cheaper if you want to get a degree from a university from the US or the UK. It is also convenient for people who live far away from the college to study from home. Therefore, online learning is highly beneficial for this generation.

The Internet

by Aisha Saeed Al Essai

(Course: 812002, Teacher: Dr. Madani Othman)

I started to learn about the advantages and disadvantages of the Internet when I began to use it. Now I can understand everything about the Internet.

First of all, through the Internet I can get a lot of information on any topic in a short time without any effort. Also, I can do some projects with companies which are on line, so I can earn some money. In addition, I can study many subjects and I can also get connected with other people and exchange information.

On the other hand, the Internet has some sites, which contain information or pictures that have a negative influence on people. Because I'm a Muslim I have to avoid these unsuitable sites, because they can have a bad effect on me.

Finally, I think we should know how to make use of the Internet wisely, in good ways.

Celebrations of Eid Al Adha

by Samah Atif

(Course: 812003, Teacher: Lyrma Ingels)

Every year Muslims celebrate Eid Al Adha for

four days. They have new clothes and buy a lot of sweets especially for the guests. During this occasion, the most important thing is to buy a sheep one week before. This sheep is fed with lots of food until it gets bigger and bigger. Then, this is slaughtered on the first day. The meat is given to the poor people, relatives and people who live in the neighbourhood.

In Qatar, we have different festivities, such as beautiful fireworks on the Corniche, big sales in many stores and different kinds of shows around the city. The children are especially very happy because they play with each other all the time without worrying about studies or waking up very early.

I hope that all days will be like Eid because every Eid brings smiles to every person.

My First Special Journey Abroad

By Nour Jourdat Shaat

(Course: 812003, Teacher: Lyrma Ingels)

Flying across the blue is always a beautiful thought. Last year, my family decided to go to Syria because we had heard so much about this country. Also, my oldest brother studied medicine there.

On the 15th July 2004, my family and I went to Syria by plane. The flight took 2 hours from Doha to Damascus. When we arrived, we went to a famous hotel and luckily, it was downtown. The day after we arrived, we went with friends to a famous restaurant. It's called Al Kamal Restaurant. The food in this place was delicious.

We stayed in Syria for two weeks. Everyday, we went to the souq. There are many souqs in Damascus like Al Hamidya, Al Salhea and Al Hamra. I bought many things including gifts for my friends and myself. Two days before we left, we went on a trip to Kaseyon Mountain near Damascus. This mountain is very beautiful. We could see very nice views from the mountain and I will never forget these pictures in my mind. When I left Syria, I cried because I felt this place is a great country.

I hope to go back to this beautiful country. I also want to tell everyone to visit Syria to enjoy its natural beauty.

A Wonderful Childhood Memory

by Jumana Munir Yusef, F3/7

(Course: 812003, Teacher: Elisabeth Szewczyk)

I remember the day I met my father again after not seeing him for a whole year. My father is an archaeologist so he often works in different countries. He had gone abroad to work while we remained behind in Iraq. One day he phoned us to tell us that he was now actually in Jordan and we would be able to meet him there quite soon. I was very happy and excited.

We got ready for the long bus trip to Jordan. The day we left, we first went to my grandfather's house. My aunts had prepared some cakes, sandwiches and Iraqi sweets for our journey. Later that day, my grandfather and my mother's uncle drove us to the bus station. There were a lot of people around so we had to quickly say good-bye to my grandfather. Sadly, that was the last time I ever saw my grandfather.

I was confused and a little bit sad to leave my relatives and my home behind, but I felt happy about going to see my father. I had missed him so much. The bus left the station, my mother and my brother slept but I couldn't sleep because I was so excited. On the bus I sat beside a woman who loved children so she kept talking to me. I really liked her because she reminded me of my aunt who lives in Dubai.

The trip to Jordan was long and nerve-wracking. When we arrived at the border, I was exhausted and afraid of all the people there, especially the soldiers. Six hours later we were allowed to cross the border and finally we were in Jordan. I felt so relieved. We continued to Amman. I was excited about seeing my father again. Finally, the bus stopped at the station in Amman. Because of the delay at the checkpoint, I thought my father might not be there, but I heard someone calling my name. I didn't see anyone except a man with a big smile; then suddenly, I felt someone hug me. I turned around; it was the man with the smile. I was stunned!! It was like a dream. The man with the smile was my father but he had changed so much! My father had become much older and thinner. But I still felt that he was the same person, my dear father, that I had missed and needed so much.

I think I will never forget this day because it was so

emotional. I have promised myself that I will never leave someone I love because it can be so painful. I know, because I have experienced such pain.

My Worst Night

by Husain Aziz Ramadany

(Course: 812003, Teacher: Aladdin Halwani)

The worst night I have ever spent was on a train traveling between Orpesa-Delmara and Madrid, in the south of Spain. It was a hot sticky night in August and my friend and I decided to travel overnight on the nine o'clock train so that we could save money by sleeping on the train. No sooner had we arrived at the station, things started to go wrong. When we joined the queue for tickets it was moving so slowly that we felt sure that we would miss our train. Fortunately, with only two minutes remaining, we managed to buy our tickets and rushed down the platform towards our train.

As soon as we opened the door of the first carriage we realized that this was not going to be a very comfortable journey. The entire carriage, including the corridor, was chock-full with young soldiers who were obviously traveling to the South to do their military service. With difficulty we made our way down the train until, at last, we found a space in the corridor at the end of the last carriage. Clearly we had a lengthy, uncomfortable night ahead. By this time it was ten past nine and our train should have left ten minutes before. However, the guard and his friend were enjoying a cigarette together on the platform as if they had all the time in the world. When I asked one of the conscripts if he knew why there was a delay, he told me that some of the signalmen had gone on strike "just out luck".

Eventually, just after two o'clock in the morning, the guard blew his whistle. As the train set off, all the soldiers started to cheer and applaud ironically. During five hours waiting we had made several friends from the military travellers and had long discussions with them about Islam to pass the time. After that, we tried to sleep using our rucksacks as pillows, but it proved impossible. Every ten to fifteen minutes, just as we were dozing off, we were woken up by somebody climbing over us to reach the toilet. In the end we gave up trying to sleep and spent the rest of the night playing cards with the soldiers. I feel it was the most exhausting night in my life.

ACADEMIC SELF-MANAGEMENT: OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

PLEASE, PRINT OUT AND USE

Dear Student

This is an Objectives and Outcomes Sheet, or a DOUBLE 'O' SHEET, which is designed to help you monitor your progress in English.

In the Objectives section, you should specify what the goal (aim, target) of the lesson is. Your teacher should always clarify that at the beginning of the class! If he/she doesn't, remind them to do so. For instance, the objective may be "learning how to write general and/or specific supporting sentences" or "identifying advantages and disadvantages of globalisation". There may be one or more objectives, depending on the unit you study at a given point in time.

In the Outcomes section, you will write what it is exactly that you actually learnt in class (or while doing your homework). It is advisable that you divide this part into three separate segments: NEW WORD(S), NEW IDEA(S), NEW SKILL(S).

The New Words you have learnt may include global, competition, uniform, patterns, governments, etc. In the New Ideas part, you may want to mention democracy, openness, free trade, etc. Some of your New Skills may be writing relevant supporting sentences with examples to back up the topic of a paragraph, etc. This exercise has been devised to help you organise your notes which will make revising for exams much easier. Try it – it is optional – but if you do, please, let your teachers know what you think of it. Your feedback is much needed and will be greatly appreciated.

COURSE :

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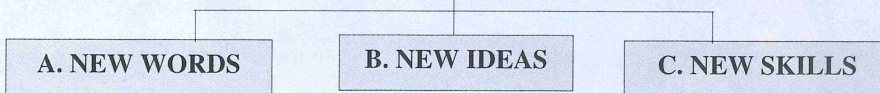
WEEK : UNIT (title) :

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OBJECTIVES :

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____

OUTCOMES :



- A. _____

- B. _____

- C. _____

By Magdalena Rostron

TESOL ARABIA conducted a three day conference

on Teaching, Learning and Leading on March 9-11, 2005 in Dubai, UAE. A Job Fair also was organized in conjunction with the conference. Plenary Speakers were: Alan Maley, Donald Freeman, Ron White, Denise Murray, Jack Richards, Mary Ann Christison, Kathi Bailey.

Featured Speakers were: Adrian Holliday, Mary Lou McCloskey, Neil Anderson, Linda New Levine, Salah Troudi, Adrian Palmer, Terry Lamb, Nic Underhill, Abdulla Al-Abandi. Affiliate Leader Speakers were: Stephen Ryan (JALT) Jose Carmona (Sunshine State TESOL) Hyo Wong Lee ((Asia FL). Many teachers from the English Department attended the TESOL conference. Some of them have shared their views on the conference.

Dr. Muawia Abdulmajid - Curriculum coordinator

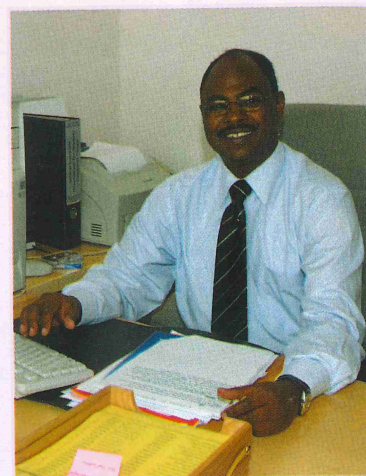
“The concept of Toast Masters, the learning and the activities were very interesting. The student participants were doing extremely well. There were many types of parallel lectures. On the whole it was OK. Some of the topics chosen by the speakers were not very academic, but the sidelines were more interesting. For example we had a chance to meet the publishers and to compare notes with teachers from other institutions. By going to such conferences and meeting EFL teachers, we know where our department stands. We can evaluate



ourselves and see whether or not we are going in the right direction. It is always good to exchange your experience with someone else in the same field.”

Dr. Madani Othman, Administrative coordinator.

“It is a gathering of people interested in or in the profession of teaching of



English as a Foreign Language in the Gulf area. The main purpose of the meeting was to communicate to teachers and share their experiences. The papers were not very research-oriented, but mainly personal experiences. Some talked about their experience in trying new methods or materials in a particular classroom. Technically speaking it can help in professional development.”

“I was interested in text linguistics and CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning). But I got fascinated in Corpus Linguistics. Two teachers from Turkey did a workshop on the teaching of reading and grammar on the basis of corpus linguistics. I tried the idea and it worked out well in my class. The grammar items in the text can be taught using the method of corpus linguistics, by guiding the students to guess and discover things by themselves. Other attractions were the Publishers stands and the book fair. It is good for decision makers to go and have a look at the array of books available.”

“When compared to the different universities in the area, my impression is that we are in a good position. Comparison

of ideas and notes is another benefit of the conference. TESOL is not only a conference but also something more valuable than that. People should be prepared to stay back there all day and get the best out of it. I would encourage teachers to go, listen, share and learn from other institutions, materials, and books. It is not very expensive and well worth it. If the Foundation Program sponsors teachers as a part of professional development, teachers can benefit from it. Teachers should be sent with a specific mission, such as to compare evaluation methods, curriculum development and testing systems."

"First of all many people may not be very interested. There should be certain specifications to select the participants. We have to give a fair and equal chance to all teachers. In order to provide equal opportunity for all the staff we can use a point system, which is a clear system of evaluation. What I would do is try and choose the sub coordinators from among people who are actively contributing to the growth of the department and professional development activities. To overrule all kinds of weakness, people should have a clear idea on the system of evaluation, and know on what points they are evaluated so that they try to get the maximum out of it."

Dr. Fatma Ali Abu Jalalah a staff member- "I was offered a chance by the US Embassy and found that to be a good experience. It was well organised and of good standard. Given a chance I would go again. There were many sessions, but 'Reading in the unpredictable context' by Denise Murray, 'Textual analysis -tools for evaluating curriculum texts' by Terry Miles, 'Teaching top-down reading skills' were excellent sessions. The book exhibitions, the IT Village, the poster

sessions were also interesting."

Shireen Maghraby has a lot to say about the TESOL Arabia 2005. She found it as a professionally rewarding experience.



"I have been waiting for the chance to attend the TESOL Arabia annual conference since it is known to attract a number of featured speakers and prominent figures in the field of EFL. The long-awaited chance finally came this year when I was granted paid leave by the University of Qatar to go to the Conference which was held in the ever vibrant city of Dubai from 9-11 March."

"The presentation topics were generally interesting and varied in content. They addressed many of the issues that are of close relevance to EFL specialists worldwide. One of the presentations I liked was that given by Professor Neil Anderson, a former TESOL President. The presentation, titled "From Egg Crate to Omelete: making Teaching Public," focused on certain steps that a teacher can follow to make her/his teaching public. Anderson uses the 'egg crate' metaphor to refer to a teacher's ego, and whatever goes inside a classroom, which is kept private. However, the presenter advocates transcending the limited boundaries of the classroom and making our teaching public through procedures ranging from networking with teachers in other parts of the world, giving a quiz or a test to a fellow colleague to review, to just discussing a classroom problem that you are facing

with another teacher.”

“The Book Exhibition was, in my opinion, one of the highlights of the conference. There were many stalls representing big names in the field of ELT publication. I found, along with other conference attendees, “Al-Batraa” bookshop to be one of the best stalls, and it was continuously busy with browsers and buyers. This is because of the wide range of topics that were put on display. The Exhibition also included representatives of universities who provided brochures of the TEFL courses and degrees their institutions are offering, like the American University of Sharjah, the American University in Dubai, and the British University of Exeter.”

“I believe that attending the TESOL Arabia Conference was generally a fruitful experience. The organizing committee had put so much effort into making the conference a success. The most important benefit is that it is a meeting place for educators to talk, discuss, share, or even complain; to meet old friends and win new ones. My advice to future participants living outside the Emirates is to make hotel reservations way in advance and also to pre-register for the conference because it is discounted, and easier than queuing for an hour to complete the on-site registration.”

Reem Abu-Shawish, a staff in the English program for Humanities-
“The conference was good. It helped to acquire more knowledge about TESOL and let others



know more about the University of Qatar. It was really a meeting place where people from different countries with different experiences exchanged knowledge. Even though the workshops were not all that great, the book fair was very good indeed. ‘Use of Portfolios in the Writing Classroom’ was something new for me, as we never use that technique in Humanities. So it was a good chance for me to get to know more about it. I certainly recommend the TESOL conference to all my colleagues as it is not just a conference but something more.”

Reported by Bino Sarah Paul



Friendship

Everyone needs at least
one good friend;
One who means a lot,
and who can share secrets
and feelings
that might otherwise be
locked up and afraid to come out.

Everyone needs someone
who cares –doesn’t hide it:
someone to face the new times ahead,
to share the wonders they will bring,
to confront whatever trials
they may hold and
to ease the down moods.

I would rather have a friend
Than a painting
Or a poem
Or a song...
For a friend
is all these,
and so much more.

Susan Polis
(supplied by Reem Khalid)

Finding My Calling as an English Teacher

by Marlee Terry

I never planned to become an English teacher. It just happened because of a casual offer. A “friend of a friend” told me that if I ever wanted a job in Mexico City teaching English, she would connect me with the director of a language school there. The director would consider anyone with a Bachelor’s Degree who could speak English. I thought about it for 30 seconds and told her that, yes, it sounded like just the job I was looking for. The connection was made!



From my home in the northern US near the border of Canada, I made my way south via train, bus and car to El Paso, Texas and the Mexican border. There I started the 30-hour bus ride to Mexico City. What a trip! We stopped in every small, dusty village along the way. I found it hard to sleep with the comings and goings of passengers -- and all the chickens pecking in the aisles. Trying to communicate, I found my single year of high school Spanish inadequate. However, I luckily met someone on the bus who translated when I needed help.

Once in my hotel in Mexico City, I reflected on how to get to work the next day. Because I didn’t understand the bus system -- nor trust myself to explain where I wanted to go to a taxi driver -- I decided to get up early and commute on foot. I walked across quiet, early-morning Mexico City with a map and compass in hand. I covered the distance to the school in about 90 minutes of brisk walking. Along the way, I passed famous landmarks like “The Angel” and “Diana the Huntress” that would soon become old friends. I watched the city awaken, and was happy to be independent of the rapidly increasing traffic.

As I walked, I reflected on my expectations for my new job. In a phone conversation before leaving home, the director had told me that I would have a week of training before teaching. I looked forward to observing classes that first

week. Unknown to me, I would be in for quite a surprise.

My new director, Joanna, greeted me warmly. She told me she was extremely happy to see me. One of her teachers had just quit. That seemed like good news: my services were needed. Then came the bad news. She asked me to take over the woman’s classes that day!

I started to panic. How could I possibly do that? I had never taught ESL before.

Joanna reassured me. “All you need to do today is talk to the students. Get to know them and get them to speak to you.” I thought it over. After traveling so far, how could I say no? I took the plunge.

Although I was nervous, I soon found my first day of teaching a genuine pleasure. The students, and their motives for learning English fascinated me. I had many questions to ask them about Mexico and Mexico City. Class time flew that first day and most days that followed. I soon realized that I loved working with my students and that, in fact, the job didn’t seem like work at all....

As the days passed, my confidence grew and I knew I was clearly making a difference for my students. Between classes in the teachers lounge, I discussed teaching methods with the more experienced teachers. After a fantastic year teaching in Mexico, I knew I still had much to learn, and craved a much stronger command of the ESL field.

I decided to make English teaching my career and returned home to pursue a master’s in TESOL. Since then I have worked with students from cultures all over the world, and have enjoyed every day of it, but I will always be grateful for the warm reception I received that first day in Mexico -- and my decision to give ESL teaching a try.

Editor’s Note: We’d love to read and publish your English teaching story. You can submit it to us at fu.endeptnl@qu.edu.qa

THE TOEFL TEST: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

by Raed Ghalib

I. Preface

The TOFEL Test identifies the English ability of students who use English as a second language. Approximately one million people take the TOFEL test each year. Most colleges and universities in the USA and Canada require TOFEL scores from international students who apply for admission. Colleges and universities in many other countries also require TOFEL scores. Some certification agencies, governments and scholarship programs also use TOFEL test scores. The University of Qatar is one of the universities, which requires the TOEFL test from all students entering the university as degree-seeking students before they start their studies in different fields to demonstrate that they have the English language skills necessary for academic study. Students who want to enter their colleges in the University have to make a 500+ score on the TOEFL test or a 450+ score and complete all Foundation levels. A large number of our entering students couldn't make 500+ score on the TOEFL test; therefore, there was a need for preparation courses for the TOEFL test to higher the proficiency standard.

The Continuing Education Unit runs four preparation courses for the TOEFL test in each academic year. They are tentatively



scheduled as follows:

This Unit offers these TOFEL Preparation Courses for students of various levels, from lower-intermediate to advanced level. Here, I've suggested the following 4 levels:

A. Pre-TOEFL Preparation:

Students review basic grammar, build vocabulary and develop reading and listening skills. Students also do some practice TOEFL tests.

B. Intermediate TOEFL Preparation:

Students learn TOEFL test strategies while enhancing their reading, writing and grammar skills. Students also do practice TOEFL tests.

C. Advanced TOEFL Preparation:

Although the content is similar to Intermediate TOEFL, it is more advanced. Material studied in Intermediate TOEFL is not repeated in Advanced TOEFL.

D. Super TOEFL:

Emphasis is on developing Computer Based Test (CBT) strategies. Students also enhance their vocabulary and writing skills. Much of the time is in the computer lab.

This proposal offers a solution to many of the various problems experienced by our students

Semester	Starts	Ends	Hours
Fall	After Ramadan	Six weeks	60
Spring	Feb. 27th	April 7th	60
Summer	June 12th	July 14th	72
Summer	July 17th	August 18th	72

by requiring that they be better prepared for the TOEFL test and the study in English when they begin their academic programs.

II. Discussion of specific problem areas.

Taking the TOEFL test can be an extremely challenging experience. Most universities have a minimum entrance score of 550. The range of grammar, reading and listening skills required to do well is enormous. One of the biggest challenges for teachers and students is identifying the correct areas to focus on in the limited amount of time available for preparation. In this feature, it is my pleasure to suggest some solutions to problems faced by our students when they sit for the TOEFL test.

Listening:

Teaching listening skills is one of the most difficult tasks for any ESL teacher. This is because successful listening skills are acquired over time and with lots of practice. It's frustrating for students because there are no rules as in grammar teaching. Speaking and writing also have very specific exercises that can lead to improved skills. This is not to say that there are not ways of improving listening skills; however, they are difficult to quantify.

Teachers should encourage their student to get a film, or listen to an English radio station, but not to watch an entire film or listen for two hours. Students should often listen, but they should listen for short periods - five to ten minutes. This should happen four or five times a week. Even if they don't understand anything, five to ten minutes is a minor investment. In my opinion, this is the best preparation for this part of the test because there students have to understand short conversations about some general topics and afterwards they have to answer questions about the contents of these conversations. Students can of course also watch news channels, but I think it's more fun to watch movies and so it is easier to motivate students. However, for this strategy to work, students must not expect improved understanding too quickly. The brain is capable of amazing things if given time; students must have the patience to wait for results. If a student continues this exercise over two to three

months their listening comprehension skills will greatly improve. In addition to this students have to understand all the skills, strategies, and practice given in the Longman Preparation Course or any other book which helps them to prepare for the test.

Reading:

There are different types of reading skills that our students should be aware of

1. **Skimming:** reading rapidly for the main points
2. **Scanning:** reading rapidly to find a specific piece of information
3. **Extensive:** reading a longer text, often for pleasure with emphasis on overall meaning
4. **Intensive reading:** reading a short text for detailed information

These different types of skills are used quite naturally when reading in a mother tongue. Unfortunately, when learning a second or foreign language, students tend to employ only "intensive" style reading skills. I have often noticed that students insist on understanding every word and find it difficult to take my advice of reading for the general idea, or only looking for required information. Students studying a foreign language often feel that if they don't understand each and every word they are somehow not completing the exercise.

Thus, when approaching an English text, students first identify what type of reading skill needs to be applied to the specific text at hand. In this way valuable skills, which students already possess, are easily transferred to their English reading.

The use of contextual clues can also be one of the best ways to improve students' reading skills. Realizing that a text can be understood in a general sense by using contextual clues can go a long way towards helping students cope with increasingly difficult texts. At the same time, the use of contextual clues can also provide a means by which students can rapidly increase their existing vocabulary base.

I think reading some English novels is very recommendable to get into the language and increase their vocabulary. I can also recommend reading English newspapers or magazines.

SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS IN TEACHING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

by Dr. Mumtaz Hussain

The approach of the teachers in teaching English, and those of the learners in learning it, may be the same everywhere, but there are typical responses on the part of pupils which differ from society to society. The learners from a society whose own language is not widely spoken have a very high proficiency even if there may be no great pressure on them to learn the foreign language. In such cases it hardly matters whether a teacher is more qualified or else is very efficient because even better qualified teachers, with more efficiency, have failed to obtain the same results in other societies with different circumstances. There is also no proof that some people have a gift for languages. The fact that the socio-cultural factors have a very deep influence on individual learners becomes more clear if we compare the societies where learning a foreign language is regarded favourably and those where it is regarded with indifference or even hostility. A teacher, therefore, may be helped or hindered by factors beyond his or her own control. The overall achievement of a teacher in such cases will, obviously, be poor no matter how hard he or she tries. In societies where the attitude of people is positive, even a less efficient teacher may produce better results. Again, the attitude of certain target groups may be hostile towards a particular language and favourable towards another. In such a case the same people may achieve a higher degree of proficiency in one language and quite the opposite in another. There may be other factors too, but it can be difficult for a pupil to make the considerable effort required for learning a language, in this case English, if the society to which he or she belongs is hostile to the people who speak English.

Socio-cultural factors are also closely associated with the status of the target language in the learner's own country. It depends on whether English is being taught there as a 'foreign language' or as a 'second language'. Whereas 'foreign language' means that it is not used for any normal day-to-day social interaction in the country where it is being learnt, 'second language' means that without being the native language of any social group in the country, it is very commonly used for such purposes as the conduct of commerce, industry, law, administration,



politics and education. Methodologically speaking, progress in the language class-room will differ according to whether the learners belong to the former or the later group.

Two of the three countries where I have taught English, namely Pakistan and Nigeria, use English in their daily interactions thus the learners there belong to the later group whereas the students of the third country, Saudi Arabia, whose own language is widely spoken and where English is not used in daily interactions, belong to the former group. In the second language group, especially if the target language is used as the medium for the teaching of other subjects, the learner is not only able but obliged to use the language while he or she is in the process of learning it. This gives him or her advantage over the foreign language learner. This advantage is very evident if one gets the opportunity of teaching in the countries of both the groups. The natural conclusion which can be drawn from this comparison is that the edge one group has over the other is due to the fact that they belong to different societies, where English is learnt as a second or foreign language and where the learners have different attitudes in learning this language.

It is also likely that the age at which an individual begins to learn the language will be more determined by the status of the language than by any other factor. The proficiency reached in learning English as a second language, it has been observed, is much higher than that reached in learning it as a foreign language. In some cases it reaches the level a learner reaches in learning his or her mother-tongue. Living in the company of native speakers, he or she is obliged to use their language and, if other factors are equal, he or she should be able to learn rapidly and reach a higher level of proficiency than either the foreign- or the second- language learner. The major factor, in this case also, is social and cultural, which is what makes the difference. In fact, a learner's social background plays an important role in the language learning.

This process of learning is hindered in societies which have hostile opinions towards the language. These opinions have already affected the learning of English as a foreign or second language by the time they begin learning.

Ten Steps for Developing Argumentative Essays

by Dr. Mohammad Fawzi

Writing essays is one of the major activities in the writing courses offered at the English Dept. in the University of Qatar. In these courses, students are usually asked to write various types of essays:

- * descriptive essays,
- * narrative essays,
- * expository essays,
- * instructive essays, and
- * argumentative essays.

It was observed that many students face difficulties when they write essays in general and argumentative essays in particular. The aim of this article is to present suggestions for the students on the techniques needed for developing argumentative essays in order to facilitate their job and enable them to produce these essays.

1. Selection of topic

Generally speaking, in writing an essay, the writer starts with an idea or a concept he has wondered about, or he gets an idea, perhaps from reading or discussion. Writing is a way to record information and demonstrate knowledge. It remains a crucial means of communication in the academic world and in the rest of society as well.

In order to change the reader's mind, or change his behaviour, the writer in an argumentative essay clearly attempts to persuade the reader to identify with his point of view. Accordingly, the student should select a topic which he can argue for. In other words, the selected topic must enable him/her to fulfill a purpose or deliver a message with the purpose of convincing his reader.

2. Free writing

Try to start with a free writing activity, that is, writing with out attention to grammar, style, or spelling. Keep fingers to keyboard, or keep pen to page, and write for ten minutes whatever you can think of about your topic. Then review your notes and try again with a more focused view of some aspect of the topic you have in mind.

3. Brainstorming

Write down ideas, images, possible directions-anything that comes to mind about your topic- in a list down the page, rather than in the continuous flow of the free writing. Review your list and try

again, focusing on something interesting that came up with in the brainstorming.

4. Review what you have written

Do you see possibilities to focus on? Do you see connections or angles you didn't think of before? If so, do another session of brainstorming exercise on the focused area. Then review the topic and see if it looks promising for further development. Afterwards, try to devise a tentative core point or hypothesis.

5. Consider your own biases

After you have developed a tentative focus, write out all of your biases or preconceived notions about the topic. An argument implies an opposition, so take care to look at both sides in your structuring of your argument.

6. Construct a dialogue between the two sides.

Personify each side of the argument and have the two sides debate the issue. That is assign a position or a personality to each side, and let them argue for a while, with you writing the script.

7. Develop a thesis statement

While working with one of the previous methods, you will find that one or more areas of focus emerge. This will help you to develop a tentative thesis statement. By thesis statement, we mean the core or the main point being argued for and supported. A thesis statement in an argumentative essay seeks to argue for a certain position or point of view, not merely informing but pushing for some change in the attitude on the part of the reader.

8. Organize and draft the essay

After generating yet more information, through free writing and brainstorming, think about how you might break down or analyze the parts of your topic. Draft out the major divisions or aspects of your topic on paper or on screen. Review your topic divisions and consider whether all the parts closely related to the primary question or the thesis statement. Keep in mind that the material should be divided into three main sections for the essay: the introduction, the main body, and the conclusion. Try always to use a formal academic style when you write the first or final draft.

9. Revising the draft

After you get the basic structure of the rough draft down, review the logic of your argument. Thesis and support must remain connected and mutually reinforcing. Review your draft and determine if you need more evidence or if you should cut out parts that do not seem relevant. Peer feedback at this stage can be useful. Exchange drafts with classmate and try to give each other feedback on the thesis, basic structure, and supporting evidence. Then revise your essay as needed to attend to criticism from you peer. Accept feedback, but use your own judgment in deciding how much and what advice to take.

10. Produce the final draft

You should certainly spell check your paper if you are using a computer to write it, but remember that the computer do not find all errors and lapses in your style that your draft may have. Peer feedback is also helpful for detecting errors that you may not find, since at this point in the draft your eyes may see what they expect to see rather than what is on the page. You and your peer should both go over your paper in detail, attending to issues of style, appropriateness of language and proper syntax. Finally, add any references you used at the end of the essay.

TEXT TYPES AND THE SKILL OF READING

Many applied linguists believe that reading is a communicative process which depends on three main factors:

- (1) the linguistic knowledge obtained by the reader,
- (2) his/her background knowledge and
- (3) the type of text he/she is reading.

These three factors play a crucial role in helping the reader to negotiate, interact and interpret the message of the writer. The aim of this article is to examine two text typological models with the purpose of looking into possibilities of making use of them in increasing the ability of our students in comprehending written texts.

Werlich (1983) and Hatim (1986) consider knowing the text type as a crucial factor in comprehending what we read and; therefore, they tried to invent taxonomies of text types with the purpose of facilitating the job of the reader.

Werlich (1983) correlates the context of situation with the text yielding the foci which in turn yield text types. He observes five dominant contextual foci which can be found in all texts.

1. The focus on factual phenomena in the spatial context yields descriptive texts.
2. The focus on factual or conceptual phenomena

in the temporal context yields narrative texts.

3. The focus on the analysis into constituent elements or synthesis from those elements of concepts of phenomena possessed by the communicants yields expository texts.

4. The focus on the relation between concepts of phenomena that communicants possess yields argumentative texts.

5. The focus on the composition of the observable future behaviour with reference to phenomena yields instructive texts.

In his model of text types Werlich distinguishes five typical thematic text bases, then he assigns structural description in terms of linear sequencing. For example, the instructive text base unit can be reduced to structural constituents of a simple action demanding sentence as:

Do not stop!

P [V INF + DO +NOT]

The thematic expansion of the above thematic text base unit will constitute the instructive text type. According to Werlich's line of argument, different text types are classified in accordance with the presence or absence of certain syntactic patterns. However, such an argument is not conclusive, since there are cases where the prescribed syntactic pattern does not prevail through a given text type. Mohammad and Abdul Majid (2002) believe that Werlich's attempt to classify texts is valuable, but it is not comprehensive enough to cover all types of texts.

Hatim (1984) in his text-typology reduced the five types suggested by Werlich into three basic text typological foci as the controlling system with a number of text types. This text typological clarification is as follows:

1. Exposition, which can be divided into descriptive focusing on objects and relations in space; narrative, focusing on concepts and relations.
2. Argumentative, this can be overt argumentation (editorials) or covert (propaganda). Both forms are conceptual expository + evaluation.
3. Instruction, this aims at the control of future behaviour either in instruction with option as in (advertising), or in instruction with no option as in (treaties).

The difference between this typology and that of Werlich lies in the fact that (EXPOSITORY) IS CLASSIFIED BY Werlich as a text type while it is conceived of as a text typological focus by Hatim. This, in fact, makes Hatim's classification more practical to handle.

IS HIGH-SELF ESTEEM GOOD FOR YOU?

by Magdalena Rostron

If you are active, confident, open-minded, trusting, optimistic, friendly and successful – chances are you enjoy what is known as high self-esteem. If, on the other hand, you are pessimistic, fearful, suspicious and critical of others, but never of yourself, and show a tendency to being victimised – you will probably be classified as suffering from low self-esteem. The mechanism responsible for reinforcing both attitudes is a kind of psychological perpetuum mobile. Thus, people with high self-esteem boost it even higher by observing the positive effects of their own actions in the personal, intellectual and social spheres of life, while those, whose self-esteem is low, are stuck with a perhaps ill-founded, but increasingly entrenched conviction of their own inadequacy. As a result, they hardly ever seem to achieve success, which in turn brings about more negative and self-denigrating thoughts.



Until very recently, low self-esteem has been viewed very negatively by psychologists, psychiatrists and educationalists alike. It has been linked with failure as well as aggression, violence, and, ultimately, crime, whereas self-assurance and self-confidence have generally been seen as guarantees of high achievement and prosperity in all areas of life, and as such have been deemed extremely desirable characteristics.

Consequently, a whole self-esteem building apparatus has been devised to help out the poor souls, whose perceived social and personal deficiencies could be neatly blamed on and explained by their lack of self-confidence. Social workers and psychotherapists have been working round the clock dealing with a whole range of unfortunate low self-esteem cases, from failing school students all the way down to convicted criminals, trying to rebuild their confidence and persuade them to believe in their own worth, despite of what they have or have not done that led to their academic, psychological or social problems in the first place.

In education, it has long been taken for granted that a student's positive self-esteem should be reinforced regardless of his or her real achievements. In school sports events, all participants would be rewarded simply for taking part and not for winning. In many primary schools children have been trained in ways of expressing their self-satisfaction and uniqueness. The "I feel/am good! I feel/am great! I feel/am wonderful" mantra could be heard not just in psychotherapy sessions, but in school classrooms, too. And all those efforts have been undertaken in order to achieve that ultimate objective – personal high self-esteem,

apparently indispensable in order for a human being to lead a gratifying and fulfilled life.

Recent psychological research indicates, however, that such an uncritical and simplistic view of high self-esteem may be misleading, if not altogether false. In fact, some experts indicate that it is not low self-esteem that is the source of people's bad or outright criminal behaviour, their incompetence, and non-performance, but quite the opposite – often the core of their problems is their unreasonably high self-esteem.

~~Carol Dweck, a distinguished psychologist specialising in issues of personality~~ If you are active, confident, open-minded, trusting, optimistic, friendly and successful – chances are you enjoy what is known as high self-esteem. If, on the other hand, you are pessimistic, fearful, suspicious and critical of others, but never of yourself, and show a tendency to being victimised – you will probably be classified as suffering from low self-esteem. The mechanism responsible for reinforcing both attitudes is a kind of psychological perpetuum mobile. Thus, people with high self-esteem boost it even higher by observing the positive effects of their own actions in the personal, intellectual and social spheres of life, while those, whose self-esteem is low, are stuck with a perhaps ill-founded, but increasingly entrenched conviction of their own inadequacy. As a result, they hardly ever seem to achieve success, which in turn brings about more negative and self-denigrating thoughts.

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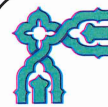
Carol Dweck, a distinguished psychologist specialising in issues of personality development, has conducted a simple experiment involving a number of students who were asked to fill in a personal questionnaire designed to evaluate their level of self-esteem and self-confidence. The students' next task – seemingly unrelated – consisted of writing a free essay, which was then "marked" by other people. In fact, each essay was given a similar, extremely negative assessment (for instance, "I have never read a worse essay in my life"). In the final stage of the experiment, the students were told to play a computer game allowing them to administer electric shocks to the person that had "evaluated" their composition. It turned out that the students, who scored high on the self-esteem test, gave the strongest shocks to the people seen as very critical of them.

Dweck drew a surprising conclusion from the results of her experiment and stated that it is not low self-esteem that pushes people to commit criminal acts or contributes to their social and personal problems, but rather it is their unrealistically high self-esteem, especially when it is perceived as being under threat.

Her view is still too radical to be generally accepted, but a growing number of psychology specialists seem inclined to agree with Dweck's thesis. One of the reasons why it is increasingly considered plausible is the fact that in the past no importance was attached to the accuracy of high self-esteem in relation to the person's actual achievements and capabilities. Due to the prevailing view of high self-esteem as a universal remedy for crime, alcoholism, drug abuse, school drop-out rate, and even unemployment, many children and adults alike have been offered an unrealistic and inadequate assessment of their conduct and applauded merely for the sake of making them "feel good" about themselves.

However, giving out unearned praise and empty compliments despite a lack of effort and success is just as counterproductive as not offering any reassurance or support whatsoever. Positive self-evaluation is normally a result, not a source of achievement in life. A child should therefore be first taught to gain knowledge, make progress in sports or social relations, and only then expect his or her self-esteem to grow accordingly. A dose of self-criticism is also a vital ingredient in attaining a satisfactory level of realistic personal self-esteem. Without the input from one's critical faculties, there can be no positive change or growth in any direction.

Therefore, those with genuine self-esteem problems should be given assistance in attaining good results in the flawed areas of their life, instead of being presented with artificial constructs of undeserved self-satisfaction, more akin to self-deception than accurate self-assessment. Effort, work and, above all else, self-criticism ought to be stressed in education as well as in psychology. It is particularly important that people who fail to succeed in life should be encouraged to learn from their mistakes and rectify the areas of their behaviour or thinking that have caused problems in the first place.



SELECTED QUALITY TIPS AND QUOTES



Compiled by

DR. ALI AHMED HUSSEIN

1. Quality is not an act. It's a habit. (Aristotle)
2. Quality is never an accident. It's always the result of intelligent efforts. (John Ruslin)
3. Quality is the battleground of tomorrow!!
4. The thickness of the Quality manual is inversely proportional to its effectiveness.
5. Don't go through life, grow through life. (Eric Butterworth)
6. Our greatest glory consists not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall. (Confucius)
7. People forget how fast you did a job, but they remember how well you did it. (Howard W Newton)
8. Professionalism means consistency of Quality. (Frank Tyger)
9. All problems are "treasures"!!!
10. We want good Parts not just good Charts!

* For more of these quotes, you can visit the site:
<http://www.communicationcenter.com/bestquotes/quality.html>

My English school in Annaba, Algeria

by Abdellatif Messikh

Do you dream of starting your own school?

Well, your best dream could be your worst nightmare!

Main Reason for Writing

“When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.”

Key dates and events:

* 1999: I borrowed money from a friend to purchase school furniture and start business.

* 2001: Although I was managing/running probably the fastest growing EFL School in Algeria I wasn't able to pay my taxes.

* 2003: closed down CELT and joined the university of Qatar

* 2004: I paid my taxes!

The aim of this report is to figure out what happened between 1999 and 2003.

Introduction

Mr. Abdellatif Messikh is writing an in-depth report analysis of his personal entrepreneurial adventure of starting an EFL center in Algeria, without any prior training program in management and/or administration and without receiving neither assistance nor any financial and/or moral support from any national and/or international academic institution.

Topics discussed and analysed

* Bureaucracy

The report deals with and/or analyzes the vicious circle of bureaucracy and the major bureaucratic obstacles/hurdles facing the entrepreneur in starting his own business

* The university's role

The report analyses the relationship between the university, the private sector and the market place and how to bridge the gap between them.

The university should strengthen the connection between the academic and development sectors so that graduates can make a positive contribution rather than become a burden on society. So we have to prepare our students to meet international standards in our educational institutions.



* Recruiting and Training

The first step is selecting the right employees. The new recruits should have good communicative skills, a positive attitude, willingness to learn, and ability to work in teams. The training aspect is the best long term investment.

* Business ethics

Can you be ethical and competitive? The report discusses the ethical conflicts which confront leaders and managers in conducting business with honesty and integrity in a competitive environment.

* Leadership, Management and Culture

The report discusses the qualities that business leaders and managers should have to succeed in business and endure the physical hardship and mental anxiety.

The lessons I learned from this experience

1. Academic achievement (pedagogical, educational and the training aspects) alone does not necessarily ensure a success in business.
2. The managerial issues depend to a large degree on social, cultural, political, and economic factors which lie outside the manager's control.
3. A language center is not only an educational institution concerned with the educational and training aspects but it is also a business dependent on student enrolment and concerned with costs
4. There are numerous practical skills that the director must develop: accounting, economics, “tax avoidance” techniques...etc.

Conclusion

After 5 years of hard work from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., literally grounded from dawn to dusk, No vacation, Debts and taxes and Health problems: (stress, overweight, knee problems, back problems, stomach upset, necessitated several trips to doctors) I finally made the journey safely back to the world of academia, the university!

Recreational Activities : Taekwondo training course at The University of Qatar gymnasium

Mr. Abdellatif Messikh (Black Belt, 3rd Dan) volunteered to give a free Taekwondo training course at The University of Qatar gymnasium. The trainings are on Sundays and Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Two

faculty members, one personnel member and a dozen students are regularly attending the classes.

What is Tae Kwon Do?

“Tae Kwon Do is one of the most systematic and scientific Korean traditional martial arts, which teaches more than mere physical fighting skills. It is a discipline which shows ways of enhancing our spirit and life through training our body and mind. It is also a modern sport that has gained an international reputation, and stands among the official games in the Olympics.”

Picture of Mr. Abdellatif Messikh (Black Belt, 3rd Dan) with his Master Man Seob Kim (Black Belt, 5th Dan and Military 1993 World Champion)

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Picture of Mr. Abdellatif Messikh (Black Belt, 3rd Dan) with his Master Man Seob Kim (Black Belt, 5th Dan and Military 1993 World Champion)



English at its best!

Compiled by **DR. FATMA ABO JALALAH**

1. A Candidate's application:

"This has reference to your advertisement calling for a typist and an accountant- Male or Female"... As I am both for the past several years and I can handle both, I am applying for the post.

2. An employee applied for leave as follows:

"Since I have to go to my village to sell my land along with my wife, please sanction me one week leave."

3. Another employee applied for half day leave as follows:

"Since I've to go to the cremation ground and I may not return, please grant me half day casual leave."

4. A friend of mine had written a leave letter to the headmaster:

"As I am studying in this school I am suffering from headache. I request you to leave me today."

5. A family friend of ours told an incident of his friend's letter:

"I am suffering from fever, please declare holiday to school."

6. Another leave letter written to the headmaster: "As my headache is paining, please grant me leave for the day."

7. A covering note says: "I'm enclosed herewith...."

8. Another leave letter written to administration department:

"As my mother-in-law has expired and I am responsible for it, please grant me 10 days leave."

9. An actual letter written for application of leave:

"My wife is suffering from sickness! And as I am her only husband at home, I may be granted leave."

10. Letter writing:

"I am in well here and hope you are also in the same well."



The Importance of Pronunciation Teaching: The Pronunciation Model and Performance Targets

by Abdul Moniem M Hussein

Abstract

Until recently, pronunciation teaching has been unpopular with teachers and has been treated as a rather outdated activity or coming as an after-thought. However, there has been renewed interest in the teaching of pronunciation over the last two or so decades. This article emphasizes the importance of pronunciation teaching, and focuses on those aspects of pronunciation which are considered more important: the 'suprasegmentals' and 'voice quality setting'. It also suggests a pronunciation teaching approach and argues for the pronunciation model and performance targets we should aim at for EFL/ESL learners.

1.0 The Importance of Systematic Pronunciation Teaching

Dalton & Seidlhofer (1994: 3) define pronunciation in general terms as '*the production of significant sound in two senses: First, sound is significant because it is used as a part of a code of a particular language ... Second, sound is significant because it is used to achieve meaning in context of use.*' It is evident that when we speak we are likely to give a great deal of information about ourselves. Being both individuals and members of groups, we simultaneously express ourselves and relate to others, and by doing so we convey not only indications of social but also of individual identity. Indeed, language is a social phenomenon, and in order to achieve a level of performance necessary for effective communication, adequate time and effort should be devoted to pronunciation. '*High adequacy in lexis and grammar can be negated by incompetence in the signaling phase, when the prime medium is speech.*' (Gimson, 1989: 312).

Until recently, pronunciation teaching has been unpopular with teachers and has been treated as a



rather outdated activity or coming as an after-thought; relegated, for instance, to the role of a filler in an ELT lesson. More evidently, it is often equated with the introduction of new language with the teacher or cassette as a model. It has also been claimed in the literature that pronunciation teaching makes learners try to sound like native speakers of RP and that it does not facilitate communication (Roach, 1991: 1).

But Roach criticized this attitude for being misguided as such a claim mixes up models with goals. However, there has been renewed interest in the teaching of pronunciation over recent years. It is believed that dealing systematically with the teaching of pronunciation is important and it should be integrated into the language as a whole. This does not, of course, imply that explicit pronunciation teaching ought to be part of each ELT lesson as pronunciation is pervasive in every language activity. What is important is that teaching should not proceed in the form of boring drilling that emphasizes the individual sound segments of a language. '*In general, the areas of rhythm, word stress, and sentence stress are high priority areas for all learners*' (Kenworthy, 1987: 123). There is also a very important aspect of English pronunciation which has not been given the merit it deserves: voice quality setting. It has been argued that voice quality setting should be integrated in pronunciation teaching on the ground that languages differ in voice quality settings and that voice quality setting underlies all vocal output. '*If a learner can be trained to abandon the long-term settings of his or her native language and switch to those of L2 to "get into gear" as Honikman (1964) called it, then this long-scale adjustment will facilitate small-scale changes needed in the articulation of vowels and consonants of the language.*' (Brown [ed] 1992: 13).

1.1 Major Considerations for Pronunciation Teaching

No doubt, pronunciation teaching presents particular difficulties. Unlike grammar or vocabulary which can be selected, ordered and utilized for teaching purposes, pronunciation can prove to be formidable for such progressive treatment. However, there ought to be some sort of systematic pronunciation teaching, and to do so, it is important for teachers to proceed according to priorities. This would, of course, raise major considerations for language pedagogy, and hence questions [such as those raised by Gimson (1989)] about the teaching of pronunciation which would require adequate answers.

- * What pronunciation model should be set for EFL / ESL learners?
- * What pronunciation goals?
- * What aspects of pronunciation are more important?
- * What approach to the teaching of pronunciation is appropriate?

I shall attempt to discuss these issues with reference to Qatari students at tertiary level, namely, at the University of Qatar.

1.2 The pronunciation Model

The groups of students I am teaching are Qatari students at the University of Qatar, who are in the age-group of 18 years and above, and whose native language is Arabic. The English courses they are pursuing are of a dual nature, proceeding from general English to more ESP-oriented academic courses. Of course, like most courses recommended for foreign students studying British English, it is based on and almost entirely deals with RP as a model, though some American textbooks are taught. There is also explicit emphasis on teaching the differences between American English and British English whenever the situation arises.

RP stands for 'Received Pronunciation' and it is used to describe a prestige social variety of English which has its roots in the south-east of England. It is the accent which has always been prescribed for foreign students. The most obvious reason given in favour of RP is that it is the accent that has been most fully described and materials are readily available. It has also been said to be a regionless accent which is widely used and understood. But in powerful discussion, Brown (1992: 2-3) argues that there are stronger arguments nowadays

against RP as a pronunciation model than for it. These arguments can be summarized as follows:

- * The prestige of RP has declined dramatically over the last few decades and RP accent may nowadays lead to stigmatization and even vilification.
- * From a phonetic point of view RP is not an easy accent to master compared to General American or Scottish English
- * Even generous estimates put the figure of RP-speakers at less than five million worldwide.
- * Many learners have no intention of mastering an RP accent, since they have no reason to wish to identify themselves with a native RP-speaking community.

Although RP has come under much criticism, its use as a worldwide pronunciation model still continues for various reasons. John Wells (1991: 108) thinks that a 'redefined RP' which takes account of recent changes is '*the only practical pronunciation model for the Br [itish] E [nglish] - oriented EFL learner*'. A similar point of view, which is a call for a wider-based RP, is also expressed in Gimson (1989: 315 - 316): '*RP must be regarded as an evolving mode of pronunciation ... that a new label should be applied to the model. General British (GB) has been used and may in time supersede the abbreviation RP.*'

1.3 The Performance Targets

Coming to the question of what performance level in pronunciation should our Qatari students aim at, I should first say that the status of English in Qatar hovers between EFL and ESL status. It is true that English is neither the official language nor is it the medium of instruction in education (though recently recognized as important for higher education), but it is generally considered as necessary for socio-economic success. Consequently, most of the Qatari students learn English for practical reasons: to get better jobs or to pursue their education in English-speaking countries such as Britain or the United States. One could also say that for particular students the goal may be, for one reason or another, to acquire native-like pronunciation, but for the majority of learners, I believe the aim should be to achieve what Kenworthy (1987) calls '*comfortable intelligibility*'. Although '*intelligibility*' has never been clearly defined, Kenworthy's (1987: 13) definition is worth quoting: '*Intelligibility is being understood by the listener at a given time in a given situation*', and

explaining this further she goes on to say that in practical terms this means we are aiming for something 'close enough' or for 'counts of sameness'. The same view is expressed by Dalton & Seidlhofer (1994) in a passage which is worth quoting at length:

What is needed, it seems ..., are models to approximate to rather than norms to imitate. Knowledge about discourse tells us that appropriacy is a more important criterion for intelligibility than correctness. This view accordingly shifts the emphasis away from native speakers as yardsticks of 'correctness' to teachers taking informed decisions as to what is desirable and feasible in order to meet the needs of specific learners.

[Highlights added by the writer of the article]

We might as well want at this point to consider what aspects of pronunciation are more important and what approach to the teaching of pronunciation is appropriate.

1.4 Important Aspects of Pronunciation

Contrary to the traditional approach to the teaching of pronunciation, where the concern has been mainly with the production and mastery of a full set of contrasting sound segments (phonemes), there is now increasing concern with the teaching of the 'suprasegmentals' (stress, rhythm, intonation), and of late concern to incorporate 'voice quality setting' in pronunciation teaching. 'Voice quality setting' is another way of describing the accent of a speaker. According to Esling & Wong (1983) voice quality settings are 'the long-term postures of the larynx, pharynx, tongue, velopharyngeal system and lips, as well as long-term laryngeal configurations reflected in the diverse phonation types'. It follows from this that voice quality should be conceived of in a broad sense, as the characteristic auditory colouring of an individual speaker's voice (see Laver, 1980). According to this broad interpretation, even among native speakers, there may be important differences in voice quality. Therefore, we have to look for features of voice quality which are common to all speakers of a certain variety of language. Nevertheless, there are some problems associated with the description and teaching of 'voice quality setting' (see Jenner in Brown [ed] 1992: 38) which can be summarized as follows:

* Generally, voice quality setting has not been studied widely or systematically. It is the least investigated of

the three strands of the medium (segmental features, features of voice quality setting and features of voice dynamics). (See Abercrombie 1967: 88 – 91).

* Voice quality setting is the result of life-long habits, and so it is difficult to modify.

* Since it is through voice quality that an individual is recognized, there is, in some individuals, an in-built reluctance to change.

However, what is important is to identify those general features of pronunciation which underlie all the separate sounds of a language and which enable us to suggest ways of developing a more authentic English voice quality.

1.5 Suggested Approach and Teaching Techniques

It follows from our discussion of what aspects of pronunciation to emphasise that our students need advice and practice on certain aspects of pronunciation. The question is whether to follow a bottom-up approach (teaching the segments first and then working up towards the suprasegmental units), or a top-down approach where the above procedure is reversed. However, the bottom-up / top-down direction should not be rigidly adhered to. What is important for teachers is to proceed according to priorities that may best suit their particular situation. (See Bryan Jenner's [1992] suggested list of priorities). As the top-down approach represents a more communicative perspective in language teaching, according to Jones & Evans (1995), 'it should begin at the broadest level of phonology, that of voice quality'. They suggest an activity which involves four tasks: 1. warm-up 2. Practice 3. Role-play and 4. Reflective discussion. The idea is to have students say isolated sentences with different voice qualities, after which other students guess what emotion or meaning the speaker is trying to express and then identify the different aspects of voice quality. Also, Jenner suggests some observation and training exercises to develop the use of the vocal muscles in a particular way. He suggests three observation exercises:

1. The stiff upper lip.
2. The Andy Cap syndrome and
3. The mobility of the larynx.

The aim of these exercises is to sensitise students as to how English speakers use their organs of speech. After the observation phase, students do programmed exercises to develop some of the features of the English

voice. These include training on how to use the tongue, the lips and how to produce the distinctive vowel length in English. There are also exercises to develop a whole-body approach to relaxation as the salient characteristic of the English voice is laxity. Of course, there are other techniques which can be selected from pronunciation books and teachers can also devise their own exercises.

Conclusion

I have argued in this short article for the importance of systematic pronunciation teaching and the pronunciation model to approximate to (RP), and the performance level to aim at with reference to the needs of foreign students (Qatari students in our case). I have also suggested an approach to the teaching of pronunciation, and some techniques for developing habitual use of the vocal muscles in an English-like way. The focal point in this article has been an emphasis on the teaching of the suprasegmentals and the inclusion of voice quality setting in the teaching of pronunciation. This is actually well-justified since voice quality encompasses so many aspects of phonology, it provides a useful point of departure for pronunciation teaching. What remains, however, is that since voice quality setting has not been fully investigated, we need to do more research in this area.

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What's Wrong with Time?

by Gigi Cocoli



These days almost everybody seems to complain about time. I'm sure you always hear these words around "I'm too busy," "too many things to do", "time is flying" and of course, the most famous one: "I'm stressed out".

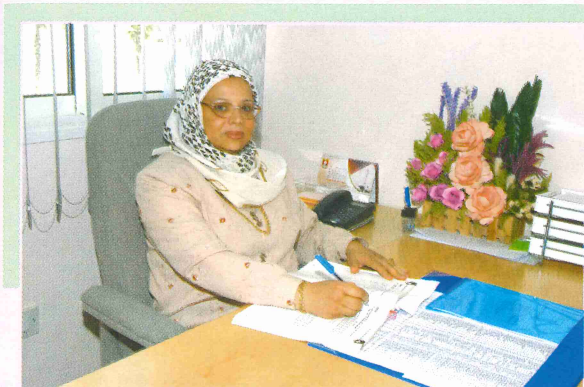
There is a proverb about time saying: Time is money. Time is so important simply because it is our life and our future. That is why we are trying our best to control it and use it wisely, as much as we can, otherwise, it will pass by fast and then we will regret losing it.

In the past, people used to travel by camel, on horseback and by carriages but they still had time for everything. Nowadays, we travel by plane, which is supposed to save us time but it seems we never have enough time especially for our kids, friends and neighbours.

When you think about it you end up asking this question: Is there something wrong with time?

Of course not, we still have the same 24 hours a day which our grandfathers and grandmothers used to have but since everything has changed thanks to these wonderful inventions: electricity, the telephone, computer, cell phones and cars etc, people have changed too. They have become busier, and at the same time less relaxed and satisfied.

In fact, our life is not simple any more. The more advanced the technology we have, the busier we will be and sometimes frustrated too.



University Requirements The Humanities Program

by *Fatma Alyan*

The College of Arts and Sciences offers students who are studying Arts, Education and Sharee'a two university requirement courses which are non foundation three hour credit courses. The aim of these courses is to prepare students for reading reference material in English with the help of a dictionary.

Course One:0-811201:

0-811201 is the first English course which students take during their four years of university education. It is a one- semester course comprising three hours of instruction per week and is intended for freshmen students who have successfully completed their general school education and who have satisfied the admission requirements of the university. It is a combined study-skills and grammar course of which the immediate aim is to bridge the gap between school and university English learning and to prepare students to embark on a subsequent reading/vocabulary-based course. Hence, it reinforces and extends knowledge of grammar structures and terminology, as well as focusing on the effective use of the dictionary, a skill very much needed in the study and learning of English. By the end of the course students are expected to have easy access to different kinds of basic information included in a dictionary, to recognize, understand and use basic sentence structure and patterns and basic grammar terminology and to use contextual clues to guess the meaning of new words in a short reading text, or alternatively, find the correct meaning in a dictionary.

Course Two:0-811202:

The second course, English 0-811202, is a reading The main objective of this course is to develop students' reading comprehension and to help students acquire

vocabulary in context. The course emphasizes the reading skills of scanning previewing and predicting, guessing word meaning from context, as well as identifying referents and main ideas. By the end of the course students are expected to extract basic information from charts, illustrations, and timetables, demonstrate ability to preview reading texts and predict what will follow, identify the topic and main idea of a paragraph or a passage, use simple clues to guess meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary, demonstrate increased ability to learn new vocabulary from context, develop strategies for reading faster, and demonstrate comprehension of short stories and articles by answering a variety of question forms. Students are also expected to show mastery of these skills by applying them to a text of their own choice.

Assessment:

Students take two progress tests, one before the midterm exam and another before the final exam. Both tests are 15% of the students' grade. The midterm exam is 20% and the final is 50%. Before the final exam, the students have to submit a small project synthesizing what they have mastered during the course. This project is 5 % of the students' grade. Teacher's assessment of the students' participation in class activities is 10%.

The Future:

In the near future, all students in the Colleges of Arts, Education and Sharee'a are expected to join the new foundation program which is now offered to the rest of the students at Qatar University.



Portfolios

by Aladdin Halwani

Two types of portfolios can be distinguished: a paper-based portfolio and an electronic portfolio.

A. A Paper-based Portfolio

It is a purposeful collection of student writing over time that shows the stages in the writing process a text has gone through and the stages of the writer's growth. Portfolios are being compiled nowadays in a way that shows evidence of a student reflection and student self-monitoring.

A portfolio can be regarded as a modern tool of assessment. It is an ongoing process which includes the student and the teacher judgments about the student's progress using non-conventional methods (Hancock, 1994). A portfolio serves as an alternative form of assessment. Teachers can collect information about how students are processing and completing authentic tasks. The advantages of a portfolio as an assessment tool are as follows:

1. It highlights a student's performance over time
2. It focuses on a student's strong points rather than on his/her weaknesses.
3. It explores various aspects of a student's performance, such as style, language proficiency and educational backgrounds.
4. It reflects tasks typical of classroom and real-life settings.

A portfolio forms a departure from the traditional measures of writing ability. It enables students to spend time selecting their subjects, deciding on their viewpoints and collecting materials to include in their essays, rewriting and revising before finally turning in their essays.

Five characteristics typify a model, paper-based portfolio (Moya & O'Malley, 1994). They maintain that a portfolio must display comprehensiveness and be predetermined, systematic, informative, tailored and authentic.

The paper-based portfolio has been utilized as an assessment tool by the Department of English at Qatar University since 2003. The department has allocated a percentage of 10% of the course work grade.

B. An Electronic Portfolio

Two types of portfolios are recognized, a student portfolio and a teacher portfolio.

1. A Student Portfolio

It is a collection of student work demonstrating effort, progress and achievement. It provides a clearer picture of student performance than can be obtained from more

traditional forms of assessment. An electronic portfolio uses multimedia technology, enabling students to collect and organize portfolio artifacts in many media forms (text, graphics, audio, video) with hypermedia links. An electronic portfolio can be published on CD-Recordable discs or on the Internet.

The advantages of electronic portfolios over paper-based portfolios are as follows: (Barrett, 2005)

- "1. Makes student work in many media accessible, portable, examinable, widely distributable
2. Makes performances re-playable and reviewable; it is important to see more than once.
3. Hypertext links allow clear connections between standards and portfolio artifacts
4. Creating an electronic portfolio can develop skills in using multimedia technologies
5. A teacher with an electronic portfolio will be more likely to have students with electronic portfolios.
6. It is easier to manage the portfolio process, especially storage, presentation, and duplication."

2. A Teacher Portfolio (professional portfolio)

A teacher portfolio helps faculty members document their achievements and activities including research and service. It can promote better teaching, develop fresh thinking about education, and encourage personal and professional growth. Teaching portfolios enable faculty to reflect on their teaching goals, methods, materials, as well as student/teacher relationships. The materials that may be included in a teacher portfolio are teaching materials (presentations, syllabi, activities, etc.), sample student documents, reflections, video/audio teaching samples, and professional development (professional activities, research, teaching innovations, grants, portfolio etc.) In this sense an electronic portfolio, according to the American Association of Higher Education, is intended to be comprehensive and representative of the breadth and depth of experience rather than being an archive of all professional work.

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Preliminary Curriculum Development and Teaching Guidelines Work Paper

by Dr. Muawia M Abdelmajeed

"Competent teachers with non-discouraging personalities using non-defensive methods and techniques, who cherish their students and hold them in unconditional positive regard, are the best teachers. If you don't like people, don't become a teacher." Alatis, James E.

Introduction

In their presentation of their materials, guiding principles and educational vision, *NorthStar* publishers have made many claims and suggestions for teaching and learning (*hereunder typed in italics*) to which I have added my own comments, quoting research findings where possible. I hope to share the content of this preliminary work document with the members of the Curriculum Committee for further discussion and insights. The objective of this activity is to put together a set of basic principles and guidelines to direct our teaching and curriculum development activities in the upcoming course, hoping this will develop into a more dynamic and institutionalized teaching/ learning and curriculum development vision in the long run. All the *italicized* texts are direct quotes or summaries from *NorthStar* Student Books and Teacher Manuals. In addition to the basic skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, the document discusses correction in oral work, grammar, vocabulary, study skills, multimedia and the proposed extracurricular functions.

*According to the publishers, NorthStar is based on *five principles:*

- 1. The more profoundly student are stimulated intellectually and emotionally by what goes on in class, the more language they use and retain.*
- 2. Second-language learners, particularly adults, need and want to learn both the form and content of the language. To accomplish this, it is useful to integrate language skills with the study of grammar., vocabulary, and American culture.*
- 3. Both teachers and students need to be active learners. Teachers must encourage students to go beyond whatever level they have reached.*
- 4. Feedback is essential for language teachers and learners. If students are to become better able to express themselves in English, they need a response to both what they are expressing and how they are expressing it.*



5. The quality of relationships among the students and between the students and teacher is important, particularly in a language class where students are asked to express themselves on issues and ideas.

Until you and your students bring life to it, a book is silent and static, a mere possibility.

Comment

Tell me and I'll forget

Show me, and I'll remember

Involve me, and I'll learn. (Chinese proverb)

I cannot think of any teacher who would not agree with most, if not all, of these principles; the trouble is how to make them work. Too much focusing on students' mistakes and errors on the part of teachers affects students' motivation negatively. The teaching environment can be made much more interesting and less threatening by applying more student-friendly evaluation methods. One way of doing this is by putting more emphasis on students' successes instead of their failures and imperfections.

The following features are usually associated with an effective learning environment:

- * The program goals and learning outcomes reflect students' needs
- * Students are actively engaged in stimulating meaningful individual, pair and group work activities that help them achieve the learning objectives

successfully

* Learning should not be based solely on teacher-generated or commercial materials but it should also encourage students to contribute to material production in the form of student-fronted presentations, research, interviews etc.

* The teacher facilitates but not entirely controls the learning process; given proper guidance, students can lead and organize their learning activities

* Assessment includes both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced evaluation

* Teacher constantly trains students on **how to learn**, not just teach .. teach

* Classroom atmosphere is one of mutual respect and cooperation

* **Extra-curricular** activities that encourage reading for pleasure, participation in English clubs, publication of students' writing products etc. enhance learning tremendously

* Teachers reflect on their teaching individually or collectively

* Vocabulary worksheets and exercises on **metalinguage** are given to students to facilitate understanding of words and phrases used in directions, exam rubrics etc.

* Students are trained on the use of **paraphrase** and **summaries** right from the initial stages of their learning experience

Listening and Speaking:

Pronunciation syllabus in the Listening and Speaking strand focuses on topics such as stress, rhythm, and intonation.

In the Research Topics section, the listening and speaking integration is most clear and relevant as students are asked to conduct projects such as surveys or in-person and telephone interviews and then integrate ideas from these sources into their own oral presentations.

Correction in Oral Work - oral correction is needed on two levels: form and content to help students close the gap between what they want to say and what they are able to say. A variety of oral correction techniques are suggested by the authors:

* **On-the-spot correction:** Nonverbal gesture (body language, writing the errors on the board etc.) can be used to indicate that a correction is necessary.

* **Individual note:** Writing down individual student's errors on a chart.

* **Collective notes**

(See more of these ideas, approaches and techniques in the Teacher's Manuals and introductory pages of Student Books of / in the listening/speaking and Reading/writing strands)

Comments

Recent research argues that language constitutes only 1 percent of the information in human speech. **Rhythm, speed, pitch, intonation, timbre, and hesitation phenomena** have been identified as the most important meaning-bearers in speech (Lotz 1963). Another researcher noted that "the average American speaks for only 10-11 minutes a day, and that more than 65% of the social meaning of a typical two-person exchange is carried by nonverbal cues" (Birdwhistle 1974). The implication of this to teaching listening is obvious: we need to put more emphasis on extra-linguistic and supra-segmental features of speech.

A judicious amount of structured and unthreatening correction in oral work is a must. The suggested techniques, specially Individual Notes and Collective Notes are highly recommended. Unlike open individual oral correction that may create a feeling of humiliation and embarrassment, anonymous collective notes create an atmosphere of privacy, empathy and mutual trust. Students often take them seriously and act positively on them; the public, collective but anonymous nature of these techniques has a multiplying effect on all students.

The Research Topic section in NorthStar is a great opportunity for real life and virtual (Internet) interaction. I think teachers should encourage students not to miss any opportunity to engage in **research activities**. To motivate them to do this, students must be made aware of the importance of these activities for enhancing learning effectiveness. The activities themselves have to be purposeful and have clear objectives. Activities may include the following: Internet/ library search, interviews with academic and non-academic staff e.g., (administrators, other students, key persons in business and industry, government personnel, visitors to the universities etc). Interaction outside the classroom is definitely welcome for change and variety. It is also a great source of motivation and a booster of morale. Moreover, these activities help in confidence building and encourage meaningful class participation. All it takes is adequate pre-planning specially in the case of field trips.

Reading and Writing: The two listening or reading selections in each unit present contrasting viewpoints to enrich students' understanding of content while building language skills.

The companion Writing Activity Book leads students through the writing process with engaging writing assignments. Skills and vocabulary are reviewed and

expanded as students learn the process of prewriting, organizing, revising and editing.

Approach to Reading and Writing :

NorthStar supports the approach that learning to be a good writer means learning to be a good reader and vice versa.

(See more of these ideas, approaches and techniques in the Teacher's Manuals and introductory pages of Student Books of / in the listening/speaking and Reading/writing strands)

Comments

It goes without saying that writing is the most difficult language skill, and that is why most students struggle so much with it. Perhaps, this situation justifies putting a bit more emphasis on the **mechanics** of writing in the **beginner's and intermediate** levels of English. The learners' dilemma with writing continues even in the higher levels although the trend now in writing, especially in higher levels, is to focus attention on the **content and process** of writing. Several writing specialists argue that when students are not focused on grammatical errors, but are instead writing freely or trying to write what they think they want to say, they develop **confidence and a sense of power** over the language that none of the other skills is likely to produce until the students are very well advanced in their language studies.

For advanced writing, the emphasis is now on the **rhetorical context** in which these students are writing. Next, there is the new emphasis on the content of student writing. Teaching writing no longer means simply having students do grammar exercises in writing; it no longer means having students manipulate alien texts that have no special meaning for them. Instead, now students are writing about what they are interested in and know about. For the most part, writing is easiest to do and is likely to have the highest quality when the writer is committed intellectually to express something **meaningful** through writing.

Part of the rhetorical context and part of the content of student writing is determined by who the **audience** of the writing is, and what the **purpose** of the writing is. It is easier for students to write assignments in which students have an idea **why** they are writing and **who** will be reading their writing than writing to the general public or some obscure readership. A readily available and perfectly legitimate **audience** besides their teachers is their fellow classmates, **e-pals**, visitors to their homepage (if they have one) or even other students in school or college.

If students are always and only writing for their teacher, there is the risk that they will simply try to

guess what the teacher wants and deliver that without committing themselves intellectually to what they are writing. In other words, they will complete the assignment without caring about what they have written. If they are not committed to what they are saying, they will not take risk with the language; they will stick to what they know they can say "writer-based" prose rather than trying to find a way to say what they want to say i.e. "reader-based" prose (Leki, 2004).

There is now also emphasis on **publishing** students' work. Students are much more likely to be willing to exert energy in their work if they think someone else will read it or even simply if their work is treated as important in itself, worthy of publication and the attention that publication brings. So here students' edited newspaper look-alikes, web publishing, and e-mail messages are invaluable and should be seriously considered.

"Writing classes have changed. They have become more humanistic, more friendly, and more fun. Students and teachers are more relaxed; they work together; they collaborate." (Leki, 2004)

Thematically-Based Units: NorthStar engages students by organizing language study thematically. Themes provide stimulating topics for reading, writing, listening, and speaking. When two or more language skills are integrated, language learning is apt to be more authentic, natural, and motivating. Integrating skills offers more opportunity for recycling and reinforcing key vocabulary, grammatical structures, and ideas. As a result, students have more occasions to assimilate information and language, thereby facilitating learning.

Comments

I generally agree. Lack of thematically-based materials was one of the negative aspects of New Headway. However, we do need to adapt and/or use alternative materials in a few cases if the topic or content is not very appropriate for the local environment. One aspect of improvement in this series, compared to the New Headway, is the synergy between skills. The reading texts fill a gap in students repertoire of basic general knowledge, which will hopefully make writing relatively more accessible as what they have learned in reading will provide relevant input to writing. Furthermore, the research section at the end of each unit is expected to stimulate them to tap Internet and/ or other sources. The same goes for the listening and speaking strand.

Content-Rich Grammar Practicer: Each thematic unit integrates the study of grammar with related vocabulary and cultural information. The grammatical structures are

drawn from the listening or reading selections and offer an opportunity for students to develop accuracy in speaking or writing about the topic.

Approach to Grammar:

Content drives the organization of the grammar syllabus. Accordingly, students have opportunities to encounter and work with grammar structures in authentic contexts. The purpose of the Grammar section is to enable clear and accurate discussion and writing about the unit theme. Grammar is taught both inductively (through discovery) and deductively (through explanation).

Comment

Given recent emphasis on classroom interaction and group and pair work, much recent literature on language teaching methods as well as textbooks for learners have tended to upgrade the importance of activities for meaningful use of the new language and downgrade the contribution made by exercises that emphasize practice of grammar rules.

However, since the research literature is not conclusive on this issue i.e., direct teaching of grammar, we would be well advised to lay the **emphasis on meaningful use**, but also to inject a little bit of direct teaching of grammar. After all, many of our students will only feel secure with more rule-governed learning. As a matter of fact, many teachers and applied linguists (for example Wilga Rivers) still believe in direct teaching of grammar with some reservation. "When you say you don't teach grammar, you mean you don't stand there and give didactic explanations of grammatical rules. But teaching grammar doesn't have to be like this." (Rivers, 2004).

Vocabulary: Students are introduced to key, contextualized vocabulary.. They also learn idioms, collocations, and word forms to help them explore, review, play with, and expand their spoken and written expressions.

Vocabulary is taught both directly and indirectly. In the listening and speaking strand, the focus is on idiomatic and informal expressions that are common in spoken English.

Comment

Studies in lexical phraseology runs counter to the Chomskian premise that sentence creation is largely innovative, and suggest that only 'a minority of spoken clauses are entirely novel creations' and that memorized clauses and clause-sequences form a high proportion of the fluent stretches of speech heard in every day conversation... The number of memorized complete clauses and sentences known to the mature English speaker probably amounts to "hundreds of thousands"

(Pawley and Syder 1983). The implication of that to teaching is perhaps to deal with language not only in word, collocation units, or idioms but even in larger chunks.

The Longman Dictionary of American English, which will be issued to students next Fall semester (level 1), includes useful vocabulary building tips and numerous vocabulary learning techniques. For example, most pages of the dictionary contain a thesaurus inset table. The picture dictionary (pages A2-A12) includes pictures and vocabulary of animals, body, kitchen verbs, food, musical instruments, sounds, verbs of movement (hands), verbs of movement (body), sports, office, and car. The Learner's Handbook with Workbook Exercises and Answer Key (pages A13-A74) features essential dictionary skills, Vocabulary Building exercises, exercises on collocation, prepositions and idioms, a Writing Guide that contains Capitalization and Punctuation, Writing Essays, Writing Letters and E-mails, Writing Resumes and Cover Letters, Word Building (prefixes, roots and suffixes). The contains Nouns, Quantity, Verb Patterns, Prepositions, Modal Verbs, Intensifiers and Articles. The Communication Guide includes Requests, Advice, Suggestions, Agreeing, Disagreeing, Complaining, Conversation etc.

The accompanying CD includes an Integrated Thesaurus with extensive exercise bank, all example sentences pronounced and a photo picture dictionary, sounds and video. Teachers should encourage their students, when necessary, to use the CD during the Multimedia lab hours and at home.

Study skills: Critical thinking skills, such as synthesizing information, supporting answers with evidence from reading, hypothesizing another's point of view, recognizing personal attitudes and values, identifying assumptions, analyzing author's purpose etc..are practiced throughout each unit, making language learning meaningful.

Unlike in the past, when methodology was not responsive to learner's style and learning strategies, teachers now invest a lot of time on "strategopedia" i.e learning strategies. Most current teaching materials, including NorthStar dedicate a sizable portion of the curriculum to *learning strategies, learning styles and critical thinking*. Teachers are strongly encouraged to raise students' awareness of these skills and to enhance students' knowledge and application of negotiation of meaning, expressing opinion, discriminating facts from opinion etc. It is only through mastering these skills that students not only master micro-level listening, speaking, reading and writing skills but also *macro-level*

discourse features of communication. Research findings suggest that strategies can indeed be taught to language learners, that learners will apply these strategies in language learning tasks, and that such application does produce significant gains in language learning (O'Mally and Chamot 1990).

If you think of the learning environment as a three-dimensional process comprising the teacher, the learner and the materials, I personally believe the decisive factors in learning success are to do with the teacher/ *facilitator* (emphasis on facilitator), the learner and the materials, in this order. Materials don't teach, anyway!

Multimedia worksheets for the video are available on NorthStar Companion website: <http://www.longman.com/northstar>. The Companion also includes resources for students and teachers such as additional vocabulary activities, Web-based links and research, and correlations to state standards.

Comment

Because it is largely a hands-on task, novel, game-like, exploratory and involves a lot of problem-solving, computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is expected to boost motivation for a wide base of students provided it is well planned and purposeful. It also offers a valuable source of self-access study adapted to the learner's level. Computer programs, such as Focus on Grammar provide immediate feedback for error identification and self-correction. Above all, CALL programs enhance learner autonomy and provide a great deal of privacy to the learner away from peer pressure, public embarrassment and anxiety.

Teachers should not overlook the importance of the Internet and the E-mail for developing writing. The Internet is an indispensable source of background knowledge, and the e-mail can be utilized for purposeful/ interactive writing. The audience or readership can be the teacher(s), classmates or friends. E-mail presents an alternate and innovative version to the old pen-pal practice. Another advantage of using the e-mail is that the students acquire the skill of word processing.

Words of wisdom on teaching and learning

1. Teach students not materials.
2. Students don't care how much you know until they know how much you care
3. A teacher is one who makes himself progressively unnecessary. (Thomas Carruthers)

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A Portrait of the Teacher as a Sportsman {Bruce Pearson}



Teachers like people in any other profession have interests and hobbies they pursue outside of work. Working in the expatriate community of Doha, Qatar is an interesting mix of nationalities, ethnic backgrounds and languages. Here at the University of Qatar we have teachers who are into music, acting, fitness and sports to name a few things.

Bruce Pearson is an American instructor who was born and raised in the Chicago area of Illinois. A native Midwesterner, he got involved in sports when he was at the tender age of six, living in a small town on the Ottawa River in community called Deep River, Ontario, Canada. There he was

As a young adult, Bruce participated in a number of other sports. He played football (soccer) for several years and also was a track and field man in college. After university, he ran distance races, running in numerous 5 and 10 kilometer races. He even did two 42-kilometer mountain marathons before his knees and ankles started bothering him. He also did some ski racing, played basketball and some floor hockey.

However, it wasn't until he moved to the Arabian Gulf six years ago that he played his first Gaelic and Rugby football. In 1999, Bruce and his newly



enrolled in the Mt. Marten Ski Club and learned to slide down hills strapped to two wooden skis. This was his first sporting experience. Later, back in America, he took swimming lessons and learned to play American Football, a game that involves blocking, tackling and carrying an oval shaped ball. He also learned to play baseball and basketball. He decided he didn't like baseball after almost getting his nose broken by a line drive hit by a batter, so he decided to take up the rougher sport of American football instead.

As a teenager, some friends talked him into going out for the local team and so he played American football for six years, playing tight end on offense and defensive end on defense. After his high school team on three conference championships, he retired from the game because he was too light to play in college and university. In the American sports of football and basketball being tall and heavy and is almost mandatory to be successful. It is also extremely competitive.

wedded wife Esperanza moved to the United Arab Emirates, living in its only inland city, Al Ain. It was there as a teacher at the Higher Colleges of Technology for women that he found out from some colleagues that Al Ain had a local rugby team called the Al Ain Amblers. After watching a match he decided to train with the team, playing his first match with them in October of that year. Al Ain played teams from Dubai, Abu Dhabi and later Sharjah. He played for Al Ain for three years. While playing for them he heard about teams from Abu Dhabi and Dubai playing in a real league and traveling throughout the Gulf to play other teams. He wanted to be a part of that, but never dreamed it would happen.

Many American Football players turn to playing rugby when their gridiron days end. That is why rugby is widely played throughout the United States, at the university and amateur level. The reason it's not known is that it's mainly played as a club sport in the university and there are no

professional leagues. Ex-American Football players turn to rugby is because it's still a contact sport like the gridiron game. It still involves running, tackling and some blocking. In fact, there are a lot of similarities because the American game evolved from rugby. But in rugby, players don't wear all the body armor that football players do. Rugby is also not as violent a contact sport as football, but it can still be a rough game and players get injured. Rugby is more physically demanding than football. You don't have huddles between plays, and it requires a lot more endurance and stamina than football. In rugby every player gets the chance to carry the ball, where as in American Football only a few players called running backs and receivers get to run or catch the ball. There are set plays in football, but in rugby its is a more free flowing game like soccer. However, there are a lot of similarities to the game to make it attractive to football players. Football is a young man's game, but in rugby you can play at a lot older age. It's not uncommon for players to play rugby in their 30s, 40s and even 50s. Also, size isn't as essential in rugby as it is in American Football.

In 2002, Bruce moved to Qatar. He knew that Doha had a rugby team and he wanted to be a part of it. He started attending training in October and played for the Doha veterans (ages 35 and older) in the Dubai 7s tournament, the first tournament of the International rugby circuit. The Doha Vets team won their division and made it to the semi-finals before being eliminated. He made the traveling squad and played in his first Gulf League road match in Bahrain in February of 2003. He also played in other matches that year in Oman and Dubai. Gulf War II shortened play for the rest of that season. Last year, he was able to play in most of their league games and they finished second in the league. This year the Doha first XV finished in the middle of the league.

Bruce plays the forward position known as a prop. He has also played the center position known as a hooker. The forward pack is like the blocking lineman in American Football. The line of scrimmage where the opposing teams face each other and block each other is called the scrum. This occurs when the team carrying the ball drops it. The running backs are called flankers, fly halves and wingers. They are the ones who usually score points known as tries. Sometimes, the forwards score as well. The forward's main job is to get possession of the ball and get it to their backs to score tries. To achieve this they scrum, do lineouts (where a ball is thrown in when it goes out of bounds) get possession of the ball, run with it,

block in support of their tackled players and tackle opposing ball carriers. There are 15 players to a side, compared with 11 for American Football and soccer. There are also 10 a side and 7 a side for tournaments that play abbreviated games. A game for 15 a side consists of two 40-minute halves. The players wear shorts, knee socks, boots, jerseys with numbers, mouth guards and any extra protection, such as kneepads, body armor or scrum caps.

Rugby requires a lot of hard work and commitment. There are two training sessions a week lasting an hour and a half. In it are conditioning, contact work such as hitting bags and tackling, running through formations, scrumming and agility drills. Games are usually on Friday afternoons or evenings, but sometimes they are on Thursday evening or during the week. There are nine teams in the Arabian Gulf Rugby league and each time plays 8 teams at home and away for a total of 16 games. In addition, there are Gulf Cup games by elimination and the Dubai 7s tournament, which takes place in early December each year. There are teams in Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, three teams in Dubai, one in Abu Dhabi and another one in Sharjah.

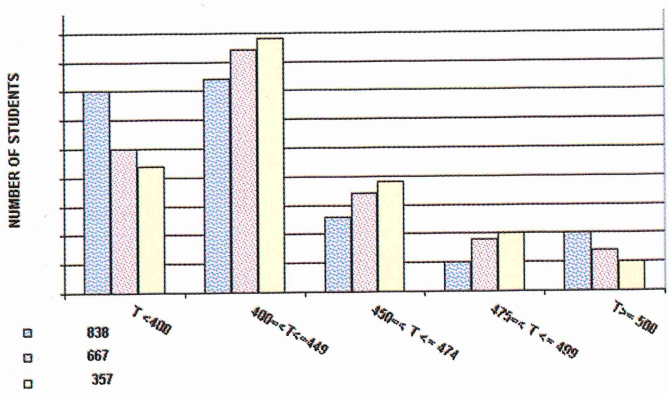
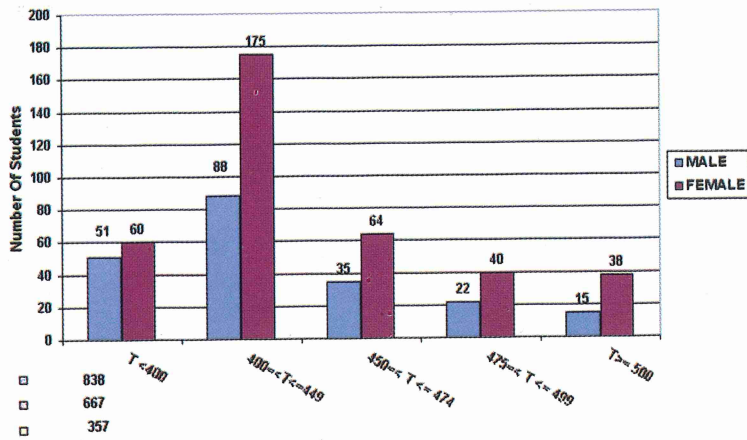
Doha home matches are played at the rugby club, which is next to Doha College, just off Salwa Road. Players show up 1-2 hours before the game, get taped, do a warm-up and have a pep talk before the kickoff. For road trips, players meet at the airport 1-2 hours before flying. After landing, they clear customs and are met at the airport by a hosting team representative, taken to the rugby ground and get ready for the match.

Despite the roughness of the game, there are surprisingly few serious injuries, mostly bumps and bruises. Once a player starts bleeding they are immediately removed from the game. Medical care is quite good. After the game begins a round of socializing. Players who tackle and hit each other during the game socialize with each other afterwards. Being a part of the rugby club is being a part of a fraternal organization. After the match, their meals are free. When an overnight stay is required, players stay for free in five-star hotels. Doha plays its final four games of the season, starting the middle of April. Doha travels to Dubai twice and hosts another Dubai team and a team from Kuwait. The Chairman's game is a friendly played at the end of the season followed by a dinner. The annual team banquet, the Oval Ball is held the end of May.

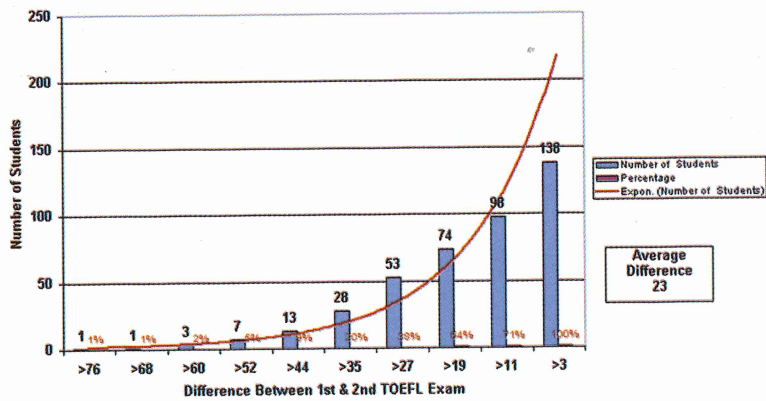
There are also two women's teams. They play round robin seven a side tackle rugby tournaments at each of the league.

TOEFL RESULTS

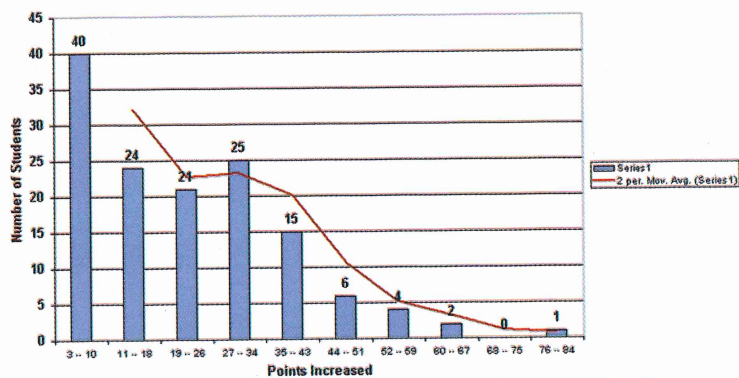
STUDENTS ACHIEVEMENT ON TOEFL TEST (23 April 2006)



Foundation Students Achievement Difference in 1st & 2nd TOEFL Exam



Difference Between TOEFL Administrations



English Department – Snap Shots

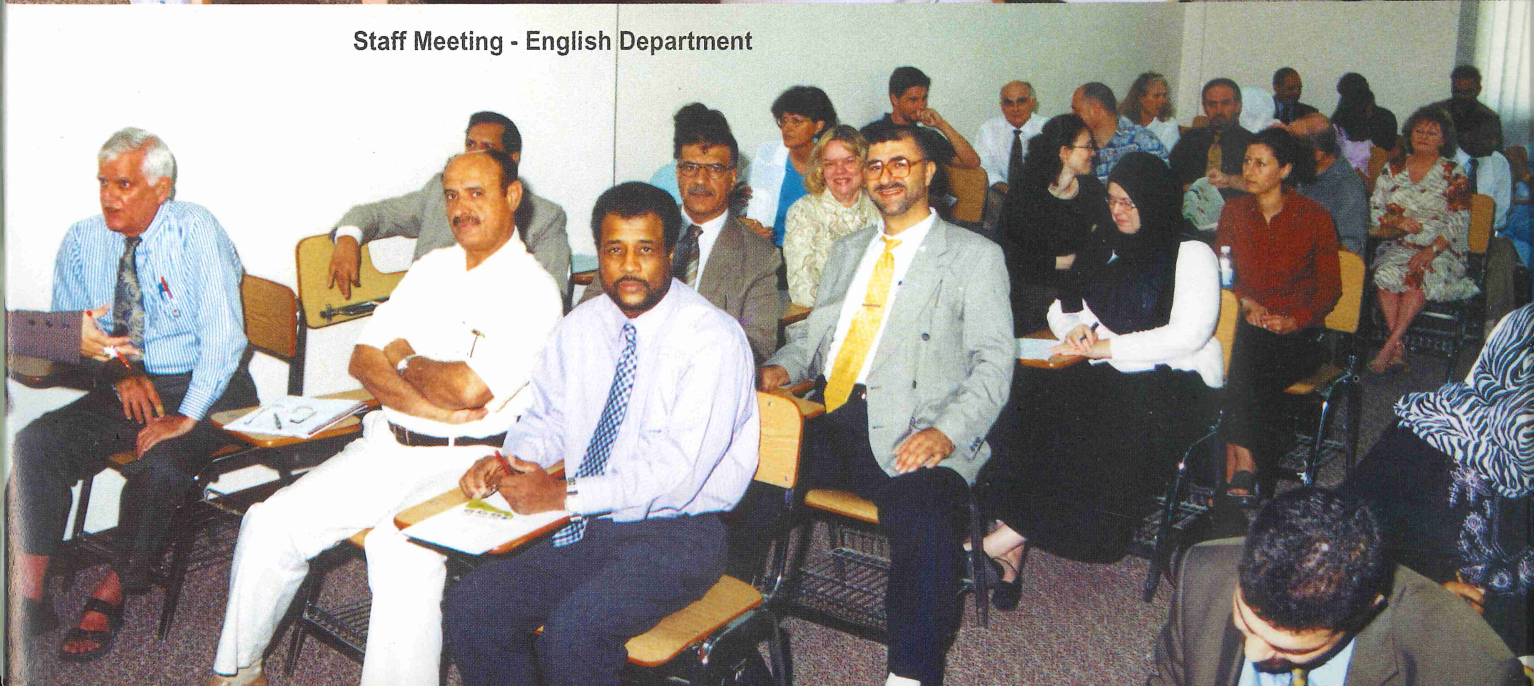


The President of the University, Prof. Sheikha Al-Misnad, launches the 1st Issue of the English Dept. Newsletter.

Staff in the English Dept. Lounge



Staff Meeting - English Department



A photograph of a modern, multi-story building with a distinctive architectural style. The building features a central tower with a grid of vertical slats. The entrance is a large, open space with a dark, recessed area. The building is surrounded by a green lawn and a low white wall with red flowers. A black and white striped pole is in the foreground. The sky is clear and blue.

**University of Qatar
Entrance to the Men's Main Building**