





Accuplacer Workshop
(A Computer-adaptive battery of tests
designed for the
FP English Department)



Promote an environmentally clean QU Campus
Use the
colour-coded
Recycling waste bin stations

Supervisor

Mark Watson

Editor

Abdul Moniem M Hussein
(amhussein@qu.edu.qa)

Assistant - Editors

Eileen Plumb

Dr. Sahbi Ayari

Administrative Assistant

Lulwa Al-Mansouri

Proofreader

James FitzGibbon

Photographers

Ahmad Haxratxad

Mustafa Omira

Graphic Designer

Samidda B Malalgoda
(Qatar National Printing Press)

Web Site Address
<http://foundation.qu.edu.qa/fp/newsletter>
e-mail: fpnl@qu.edu.qa

CONTENTS

Editor's Note	1
University Highlights	2-6
Foundation Program News	7-8
English Department News	9-10
Student Activities	11-22
Maths & Computer Dept. News	23-26
More English Dept. News	27-30
New Arrivals	31
Dream Vacation Destinations	32.....

The Foundation Program Newsletter
Issue No. 9 - Fall 2008/9

Knowledge that is known only to a few can be used only by a few.
(Gloria Steinem - Issues Across the Curriculum, 1997)
A piece of information that is shared can go a long way.
(bbc.com)

Editor's Note

Welcome to the 9th issue of the Foundation Program Newsletter. This Newsletter is the joint venture of the Foundation Program affiliate departments: the English Department and the Math & Computer Department. It is meant to keep you abreast of the FP news, events and activities, and it is also designed to appeal to a wider audience, both inside and outside the University. However, there are always shortcomings and setbacks as much as there are opportunities for improvement. In this respect, we would like to apologize if we have been wide of the mark and made the mistake of not including some of the contributions submitted to us. We would also like to draw your attention to the fact that we cannot guarantee that all contributions submitted will be printed, and that we reserve the right to edit materials as we see necessary.

We are now already half way through this academic year and there are a host of new and exciting events happening here at the University as a whole and in our FP, and it is our pleasure to give you a taste of all of these. Highlighted in this issue are some of the important events happening at the University; most importantly: the Annual Convocation, in which the University honoured and recognized outstanding performance of faculty and staff and the 'Thank-you Ceremony' held for 'Al Serdal' team. 'Al Serdal' is the Academic Information Systems Project which is meant to help create a more interactive environment throughout the University. A major event was the 'Annual Gas Processing Symposium', prepared and organized by QU, and attended by major gas companies and scientists and experts in the field of natural gas worldwide.

In our FP, we have had the honor of a three-day visit by a team of academics from the University of Bahrain. The purpose of the visit was to explore the QU Foundation Program with the objective of establishing a similar program at the University of Bahrain.

Both FP Departments continued, as usual, with their professional development programs: in-house presentations and workshops, receiving renowned visiting lecturers from abroad, and some faculty members also traveling abroad to present and give lectures.

The FP is constantly investigating opportunities to expand the depth and breadth of its mission and vision; to create conditions conducive to student success. In this context, curriculum development and extra-curricula activities are high priority. In the Maths & Computer Department, a web application that allows on-line registration (MEE) has been developed, and in collaboration with the Office of Faculty and Instructional Development, several 'Blackboard' workshop sessions were offered to faculty members from different university colleges with the objective of enhancing the teaching / learning process.

A lot more has been going on in the English Department. The Department hosted a visit (1st- 5th November, 2008) by Teresa O'Donnell, Executive Director of the Commission on English Language Programs Accreditation (CEA). The Department began the process of seeking accreditation by CEA in February, 2006 by successfully passing CEA's eligibility review.



Since then, the Department has been a beehive of activity, interpreting and applying CEA's standards. On the 'Testing & Assessment' front, Dr Janna Fox from Carleton University, Canada, gave a five-day presentation and workshops to the 'Testing & Assessment Committee' members. "Developing Quality Classroom Tests" was a Presentation/Workshop conducted by visiting Dr Deena Boraie of the American University of Cairo, Egypt. Now, the English Department has finished the process of piloting a computer-adaptive battery of tests (Accuplacer), designed to place English learners in appropriate language courses in the FP. The next step would involve determining the cut scores for each level. Watch this space for expected further developments of Accuplacer! .

Thank-you to everyone who contributed to this issue. Special thanks go to the 'Student Services Committee', led by Coordinator, Allyson Young. We feel so privileged to print their work, which is a reflection of most of the student activities in the Department. Thanks to Ahmad Hazratzad who compiled this 'Student Services' section and provided most of the photos used in this issue. Thanks are also due to Sylvie Raymond for her beautiful 'Dream Vacation Destinations', and for preparing the 'Aspire Field Trip', and to Mustafa Omira, the University photographer, for the photos he provided.

And welcome to James FitzGibbon (proofreader), Lulwa Al-Mansouri (administrative assistant), and Ahmad Hazratzad (photographer), who joined the Newsletter Team this semester. Their efforts are highly regarded and appreciated. It is wonderful to see the Newsletter grow and become more diverse and popular.

We hope all our readers find this issue an enjoyable read. See you back from your 'Dream Vacation', ready for a new round of fruitful and enjoyable work.

Abdul Moniem



UNIVERSITY HIGHLIGHTS

(selected & slightly adapted from 'Campus Life', a publication by QU External Relations Department.) (Pictures added)



A view of Qatar University Campus

QUALITY IS OUR FOCUS Qatar University Annual Convocation

"Quality, not numbers, is our focus when we review our successes".

"We are reminded of our mission, which is to create a model university where our students build their skills, knowledge and character to enter a marketplace that is highly competitive, regionally and internationally."

[The President of the University, Prof Skeikha bint Abdulla Al-Misnad]



The Honored and Recognized:
Dr Ali Al-Ayari - The Foundation Program -the Excellence in Teaching Award.
Dr Eiman Zaki - College of Education - Merit of Award for Outstanding Faculty
Mr Mert Atilhan - Department of Chemical Engineering - Research Award
Mr Omar Al-Jilani - Senoir Recruitment Officer - Employee of the Year Award
Wadha Al-Sulaiti - female graduate and History Major, College of Arts & Sciences - Young Alumna of the Year Award
Mohammed Sadoon Al-Kuwari - male graduate, Department of Mass Communication (CAS) -Young Alumna of the Year Award.



Her Excellency, the President of the University, Prof Skeikha bint Abdulla Al-Misnad, attended the Qatar University Annual Convocation, held on September 17th, 2008. This event included the presentation of AWARDS for excellence in:

Teaching - Outstanding Faculty - Employee of the Year - Research, and Young Alumna of the Year.

During the event, the work of both academic and non-academic staff was honoured.

"You stand as leaders in the approach and execution of your work and reflect the values of the University," said Dr Sheikha bint Jabor Al-Thani, Vice-President and Chief Academic Officer.



[Newsletter: "Congratulations!! We are proud of you all, and we wish you the best of luck in your future endeavours."]

Special Congratulations to Dr Ali Ayari of the Foundation Program



The Foundation Program Faculty and Staff congratulate Dr Ali Ayari, the Foundation Math Program Coordinator, for receiving the Excellence in Teaching Award during the QU Annual Convocation 2008 Ceremony.

The Newsletter wishes to congratulate him in achieving this academic year's award!

NOTE - For the coming academic year: the University has decided to grant this award to those individuals who have achieved excellence in teaching through "Online Instruction".

Al Serdal Ceremony

Qatar University held a thank-you ceremony for the Al Serdal team. 'Al Serdal' is the name given to the Academic Information Systems Project at Qatar University.



[VP for Administration and Finance Dr Humaid AL-Midfa & SunGard General Manager, Mr Mathew Boice at the Ceremony]

The term 'Al Serdal' refers to the captain of the pearl diving ships in the old days in the Gulf. As explained by Dr Saif Al Sweidi, the Project Manager, it means and indicates leadership, entrepreneurship, confidence, responsibility, and success. More than 200 staff and students contributed to the project.



VP Dr Saif Al Sweidi

'Al Serdal' project started in September, 2006 and has been completed successfully recently. The ceremony was attended by QU leadership,

administration representatives, faculty, staff and students, as well as members of SunGard Higher Education, the University's partner company, that provided software, strategic consulting, and technology management services.

Excerpts from the Ceremony Speeches

"This is not the end of the project; this is a contribution of the modernization of our services to benefit the whole QU community." [Dr Saif Al-Suweidi, VP and Manager of the Project]

VP Dr Omar Al-Ansari

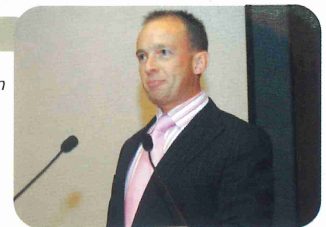


"The project is part of the commitment of QU to create a more interactive environment throughout the institution. 'MyQU' services emanated from Al Serdal and has contributed immensely in maximizing the potential and skills of faculty, staff and students alike." [Dr Omar Al-Ansari, VP for Student Affairs, speaking on behalf of Prof Skeikha bint Abdulla Al-Misnad, the President of the University]

NOTE: The University launched its 'MyQU' portal in March, 2008, as part of Al Serdal Project.

Mr Mathew Boice

Manager,
Sun Guard Higher Education



"This is a marvelous blueprint for what QU has in its mission and vision. Al Serdal provides QU community with a level of collaboration which allows people to work together in different ways. A key aspect of the project is the post-implementation assessment which allows for review, user feedback and facility to improvise changes."

Annual Gas Processing Symposium



Apparent, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, between Jan. 10-12, 2009.

Qatar University Gas Processing Center organized the First Annual Gas Processing Symposium under the patronage of His Highness the Heir

The symposium addressed challenges and opportunities in the field of Gas Processing including but not limited to design, operation, safety, and environmental sustainability.



*His Excellency
Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah*



At the opening ceremony, speeches were delivered by His Excellency Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Energy and Industry, and by Qatar University President Prof. Sheikha bint Abdulla Al Misnad.

Goals of the Symposium:

- * To be the leading symposium on gas processing while promoting Qatar as the "Gas Capital of the World".
- * To showcase accomplishments of the Gas Processing Center at QU and other researchers in the industry.



*Qatar University President,
Prof. Sheikha Abdulla Al Misnad.*

The speakers at the plenary session were Dr. Hassan E. Alfadala, Gas Processing Center Founder, Advisor & Symposium Chair; Mr. Faisal Al-Suwaidi, Chief Executive Officer, QatarGas; Mr. Hamad R. Al Mohannadi, Managing Director, RasGas Company Limited; and Mr. Alexander Dodds, President & General Manager, ExxonMobil Qatar.

Conference Proceedings will be published in a book by Elsevier Publishing. This book will be the first in a new series called "Advances in Gas Processing". Elsevier Publishing, as the world's leading publisher of science and health information, serves more than 30 million scientists, students, and health and information professionals worldwide.

The symposium was held at the Ritz-Carlton, and was sponsored by Qatar Petroleum, Qatargas, RasGas and ExxonMobil.

A press conference was held on Sunday, January 4, 2009 in preparation for the symposium. It was attended by QU Vice President for Research Dr. Hassan Al-Derham, Conference Chairman Dr. Hassan Alfadala, GPC Director Dr. Fadwa El-Jack, and Engineer, Omniah Abdel-Gawad.

Qatar is one of the largest producers of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), which is now an important addition to the world's energy supply, and is becoming an increasingly critical factor impacting both economy and environment.



The Symposium program included:

January 10: Pre-symposium workshops
(two Parallel Workshops)

January 11: Main Theme: LNG
(Plenary & Keynote speeches)

January 12: Technical Presentations on all
technologies in parallel sessions

January 13: Site visit to the world's largest LNG
plants



Two winners of the Children GAS Contest with the President of the University

Four QU Female students to Louisiana University

[Translated from 'Campus Today' – an Arabic publication by QU External Relations Department]

Four female students from the Media Program at Qatar University traveled in January, 2009 to Louisiana University, USA, funded by the (MEPI) grant, to study four courses (12 credit hours) over the Spring Semester. The students are: Nour Abu Assi, Layla Juda, Mariam Alsahli, and Haidie Makkadi.

In the scope of this grant, a course of Global Communication was taught jointly by QU and the University of Louisiana via video-conferencing. Dr Saadia Malik of QU taught the course together with a faculty member from Louisiana University. 15 students from both universities enrolled on the course. The course was made available online and conducted interactively by the students from the two Universities.



The Students with Dr. Sheikha bint Jabor Al-Thani,
VP for Academic Affairs & Chief Executive Officer



Students meeting with Dr. Sheika bint Jabor



Dr. Saadia(middle) with the students



The Environment Another step in the recycling initiative

Under the patronage of Qatar University President Prof Sheikha bint Abdulla Al Misnad, Qatar University student-led Environmental Club, in cooperation with Doha Municipality, recently launched another step in its campus-wide recycling project, which includes recycling paper, glass, plastic and aluminum.



Through this initiative, Doha Municipality provided several color-coded recycling waste bin stations to be placed on QU Campus. During the launch, Reem Al Hajri, a student and President of the Environmental Club at Qatar University, spoke about the importance of taking care of the environment, as referenced in the Holy Quran.



Dr. Nora Al Thani, Dr. Mariam A. Al-Maadeed, and Mr. Jay Trimiar of QU have been advising the Environmental Club at Qatar University. They firmly believe that the "great aim is to raise a new generation of Qatari nationals and residents who are excited and aware about Global Issues and the environment in which they live."



The launch meeting was also attended by Dr. Khalid Ali, Qatar University's Foundation Director. The Foundation Program sponsored the reintroduction of UNESCO's 'Rashid and Dana the Recyclers' educational program. A declaration to start co-operation with UNESCO-Qatar, Qatar Friends of the Environment Centre, and the Dubai-based Luckey Establishment, was signed by Dr. Khalid Al-Ali, on behalf of the University, at a press conference in March, 2008.



Together with the Doha Municipality, the newly-initiated Biological and Environmental Sciences Program, and the student-led Environmental Club, the University has become a truly environmentally-friendly waste-conserving academic community.



Foundation Program News & Events

[Translations from different sources]

Bahrain University Team Visits Qatar University

The FP at Qatar University was honoured by a three-day visit by a team of four academics from the University of Bahrain. The team was comprised of Dr Khalil Shubbar, Dr Khalil Al-Kubaisi, Dr Munwir Al-Shammari, and Dr Hishami Al Rawi.

Welcomed by Dr Khalid Al-Ali, the FP Director, the honourable guests were given a full account of the Program's mission and vision, and its programs and activities. The visit also included a tour of some of the University colleges and departments to find out about students' performance after their completion of the FP.

The purpose of the visit was to explore the QU Foundation Program with the objective of establishing a similar program at the University of Bahrain. Future co-operation is envisaged between the two universities.

Mr Khalil Rohani, a Board Member



In a letter from the Editor, Mr Clayton Barrows, Mr Khalil Rohani of the FP Math & Computer Department, was appointed member of the editorial board of the *'International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Administration'*.

The appointment will be for the next three years. Mr Rohani has contributed several ad hoc reviews for the journal over the past couple of years. Congratulations!!

The College of Sharia Forum

This semester, the College of Sharia organized a forum for the discussion of the 'Genetic Code' from the point of view of both science and religion. Dr Khalid Al-Ali, FP Director and lecturer in the Biological Studies Program, together with Dr Ali Al Muhammadi, lecturer in the College of Sharia and Islamic Studies, held the platform. Dr Khalid gave a definition of the genetic Code, its applications, and the history of its discovery. Dr Al-Muhammadi focused on the religious side and explained the extent to which we can rely on the genetic Code to decide family affiliation.



They Had a Day to Remember !

The FP Basketball Team recorded its first win in the University College League Final against the College of Engineering on 30th December, 2008. They beat their rivals, who had held the cup or the last three years, 44 — 42.

Congratulations!! We are proud of you.



(see more sports pictures on pg 10)



Submitted by Bino Sarah Paul

ACCUPLACER ESL is a computer-adaptive battery of tests designed to place English learners in appropriate language courses. ACCUPLACER ESL, developed by the College Board, is an assessment tool for English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL).



ACCUPLACER ESL consists of five components: Sentence Meaning, Language Use, Reading Skills, Listening, and WritePlacer ESL. Courses into which students could be placed on the basis of ACCUPLACER ESL performance include ESL and developmental courses in English.

Each of the multiple-choice components of ACCUPLACER ESL is an untimed computer-adaptive test. Any combination of tests may be administered alone or with other tests of the ACCUPLACER system.

ACCUPLACER ESL Reading Skills

The Reading Skills test evaluates comprehension of short passages. There are 20 questions to this test. The content of the passage is varied and deals with a variety of subjects including the arts, human relationships, physical science, history, social sciences, and practical situations.



ACCUPLACER ESL Language Use

The Language Use test measures grammar and usage. There are 20 questions to this test. It contains questions in two formats: completing a sentence by filling in a blank with the word or phrase from the choices given, and choosing a sentence that best combines two given sentences.

ACCUPLACER ESL Workshop

Mr. Jonell Sanchez, the Director of Academic Outreach & Program Development, The College Board, USA, on 3rd and 4th December 2008 steered a workshop on the new ACCUPLACER I3 platform and explained the features of the new platform.

Mr. Sanchez's workshop for QU faculty and the Regional users provided insights into the academic and operational parts of the exam.

ACCUPLACER ESL Sentence Meaning

Sentence Meaning assesses the understanding of word meanings in one or two-sentence contexts. There are 20 questions to this test. The sentences draw from the content areas of natural science, arts/humanities, human relationships, history, social sciences, and practical situations.



ACCUPLACER WritePlacer ESL

This is to accurately assess the fundamental writing skills. This test measures the ability to write effectively, which is critical to academic success.

ACCUPLACER ESL Listening

ESL Listening is a listening assessment-allowing you to listen to all parts of the test, including the answers. Candidates will be assessed on their ability to listen and understand one or more people speaking English - not on their ability to read English.

The conversations take place in a variety of settings, for example a computer lab, the library, shopping, in a restaurant, reading the newspaper, and performing tasks at work.

ACCUPLACER ESL –the New Placement Test

The Foundation Program aspires to use ACCUPLACER ESL as a placement test for determining the English proficiency of students and place them in various levels of Intensive English Programs according to their scores in the ACCUPLACER test. In order to decide the placement levels for QU students, ACCUPLACER ESL was piloted at QU. Foundation Program students across various levels were chosen to take the pilot test and the English Department is in the process of determining the cut scores for each level.



English Department News & Events



Visiting Lecturers in the Foundation Program English Department



Amr Salah
Testing & Assessment Coordinator

Testing and Assessment Workshop [7th – 11th September, 2008]

Janna Fox, PhD

*Associate Professor
School of Linguistics and
Applied Language Studies
Carleton University, Canada*

Dr. Janna is an Associate Professor in The Department of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Carleton University. She has a long list of Professional Honors. Her current Research Interest is language assessment in first and second languages among others. She has two books published, one edited along with many chapters in different books. She has different articles published in Refereed Journals and Conferences. She has also got some major encyclopedia articles, instructional videos, and many papers presented at a number of conferences. She has taught undergraduate, and post-graduate courses. She has also supervised some theses and research essays.

Presentations & Workshops Schedule

* Day 1: September 7

- Introduction to trends in teaching testing and curriculum design
- Needs Analysis
- Test Purpose,
- Test Construct and Test Specifications

* Day 2: September 8

- Report on the Outcomes of Needs Analysis
- Developing test specifications and test items

* Day 3: September 9

- Evaluating the Quality of test items

* Day 4: September 10

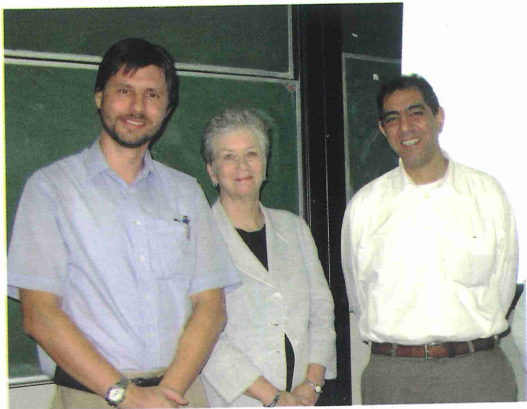
- Developing and Marking

* Day 5: September 11

- Trends in Assessment
- Issues in language testing and assessment:
when test purpose does not match test use



**Visit of Dr. Teresa O' Donnell Executive Director of Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA)
[1st – 5th November 2008]**



Justin Richards, Accreditation Coordinator with Dr. Teresa & Dinos

The visit consisted of a presentation covering CEA's mission and how CEA standards apply to the Foundation English Department. All English Department faculty attended.

Coordinators, level supervisors and Accreditation Project Group members attended a workshop held over two mornings which addressed interpreting and applying the standards.

Further meetings were held with the Head of the English Department, Robert Kennedy, the Foundation Program Director, Dr. Khalid Al-Ali and the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Sheika Bint Jabor Al-Thani.

**Designing Quality Classroom Tests
[Presentation/Workshop by Dr Deena Boraie]
[1st & 2nd December 2008]**



On 1st and 2nd December, 2008, Dr. Deena Boraie of the American University of Cairo, Egypt, conducted a presentation/workshop on 'Designing Quality Classroom Tests'.

The main target of the workshop was to provide participants with the knowledge and skills they need in order to discuss, in an informed way, the key concepts in language testing of validity, reliability and fairness, and to develop and administer quality classroom tests.

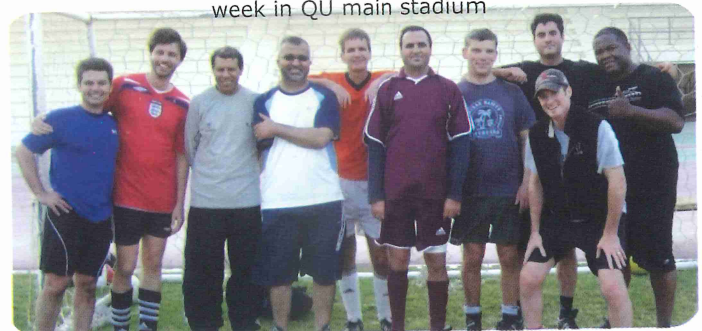
Dr Boraie teaches assessment and testing to MA students in the Applied Linguistics program at Cairo University. She is also a member of the Board of Directors of TESOL, Inc.

MORE SPORTS PHOTOS

FP Team Wins QU College League Basketball Final



A group of foundation teachers from Math & Computer Department and English Department playing football twice a week in QU main stadium





* The Doha Debates (A student report)



Allyson Young
(Student Services Coordinator)

My name is Majd-alden. I'm a Sudanese student at Qatar University in my second academic year. I've been attending the series of Doha Debates since the beginning of my studies at Qatar University. The first time I heard about the Doha Debates was in a meeting which was presented by The Doha Debates team at Qatar University.

The Doha Debates series really lived up to my expectations, because of the controversial issues they represent that concern the Arab world. They host important decision-makers and politicians that have an influence in the Arab world and globally. What distinguishes the Doha Debates is that they give opportunities to the public, especially to school and university students, to express their opinions and debate those who are specialists in Arab affairs.

As a university student, I have learned a lot from the different social and political issues that the Doha Debates present. Personally one of the most important debates, of which I attended with great interest was the one regarding Darfur in my country, Sudan.

The Doha Debates are interesting and enlightening and so, I would like to encourage all students to participate in them. They would have the opportunity to present their opinion, and to express the Arab global voice to the world. Let us strive for the best for the Arab world.



Majdalden Emad
(Foundation English Level 4)

* Peer tutor sessions

The New Foundation English Peer Tutor Program (male students)

[by Allyson Young & Anna Sempek]

The Foundation English Peer Tutor Program has been established on the male campus to create a student friendly learning environment for Foundation students and Post-Foundation students.

The peer tutors are high level QU undergraduate students. They offer assistance and support with English, on a weekly basis. Peer tutor sessions are held every day in the morning and in the afternoon. The five peer tutors were carefully selected through an interviewing process. Foundation English Student Services ran tutor training sessions for them. These sessions included training in areas of general writing and IELTS speaking.

Not only do our peer tutors offer Foundation students help with their English, but they also assist Post-Foundation English students. They worked with Post-Foundation students on the recent Doha-wide competition run by QTEL, in which students were asked to write essays on Qatarization. (Two of our Post-Foundation students won prizes).

Student attendance of the peer tutor sessions has been high and it has also been constant. Our peer tutors have remained enthusiastic and shown themselves to be very committed to the program. Consequently, we are very pleased with the first semester of our peer tutor program.



Umer Javed - Peer Tutor



Anna Sempek - Lecturer

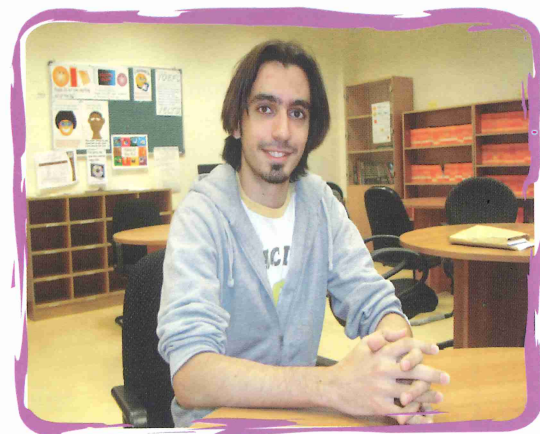
Student *Bappy Ahsan's* Report

My name is Bappy Ahsan. I'm a Civil Engineering student. I attended The American High School. My TOEFL marks allowed me to skip Foundation.

I have been teaching English on the peer tutoring program for 2 to 3 hours a week during the last semester.

Most of the students who come to me are Level 1 and Level 2 Foundation students. I have helped them with their grammar, reading and writing. I have also assisted students in IELTS, TOEFL, short essay writing, book summaries, report writing, and contest writing.

I think it is a brilliant idea to eliminate the gap between student and teacher by introducing tutors. I hope next semester to have the opportunity to do more tutoring hours. I find students delighted to have their fellow students teach them. Some are even willing to do their writing homework during the tutoring hours! (We, of course, guide them and never do the homework for them).



Interview with student

Bisher Al-Homsi

Question: Tell us about yourself.

Answer: My name is Bisher Al-Homsi, and I'm a student in the College of Business. During my academic life I have had the chance to take many courses in English in different learning centers and programs. Generally, I love meeting and helping people.

Q: Tell us about the Peer Tutoring Program.

A: The Foundation English peer tutor program has the purpose of creating a comfortable environment for Foundation students to practice their English with other students and peers, whom they may feel more comfortable with than in class.

Q: How often do you tutor?

A: Two hours a week, but I stay with a couple of students longer if need be.

Q: How long have you been doing this?

A: Nearly two months.

Q: Tell us about the students you tutored.

A: The students who put in the time and effort with us in the Learning Center are worth respect and care from us. They liked being in a different environment than class. They like meeting with us and working on their language skills.

Q: What are their needs?

A: They basically need to practice their English by speaking more than they do in class, but most of them are concerned with preparing for their IELTS and TOEFL exams, especially the speaking and reading parts.

Q: How do you feel about peer tutoring?

A: I love tutoring, and I love being with the tutees and motivating them to do their best. Also, I have had a chance to use my English a lot, which I enjoy.

ENGLISH FP STUDENTS VISIT AL JAZEERA STUDIOS



Heshmi with the students in the Studios

* Practice Exams



A Practice Exam Session with Kevin (sitting) & Lassana (standing)



Report on the morning IELTS and TOEFL Practice Exams

by Zain Al Moumen

IELTS / TOEFL practice exam program has been running since the start of our Foundation Program five years ago. Students learn about the exams through student word of mouth, as well as through publicizing done by Foundation English Student Services. This takes the form of posters distributed by us and teachers download the information on Blackboard for the students to see. These tests are usually marked by a high turnout of students year after year. Students come voluntarily, in their own free time. The practice tests last from 2 to 3 hours. The fact that there is a regular high turnout shows that the students see it as an important tool in helping them achieve their objectives. We also give the students feedback forms to get their comments.

This semester we conducted two IELTS practice exams, one on Thursday 27, Nov. 08, and the other on Wednesday 10, Dec. 08. The first was for the men with a turnout of 45. The second was for the women with a turnout of 55 students. The IELTS practice test consists of testing two skills which are reading and listening. Students can learn about speaking and writing through the tutorials conducted by The foundation English Student Services committee. We are now having a higher turnout for IELTS test takers than we did in the past because we believe students are becoming more aware of the test options they have in order to finish the Foundation Program.

As for the TOEFL exam, we conducted one practice test, on Wednesday 22, Oct 2008 for the women and a test on January 8th for men. Students are tested on the three skills of reading, listening and grammar/written expression. The Paper TOEFL remains very popular with students.

Report on the afternoon IELTS and TOEFL Practice Exams

by Kevin Rooney



Lassana and I gave a practice TOEFL test to women on October 22 and a practice IELTS test on December 10. We gave a practice IELTS exam to men on November 27. And on January 8 we gave a second practice TOEFL test to women. It was administered by Khalid Noaman and Zain Al Moumen. The practice tests we administered were given during the afternoon and immediately followed the morning practice TOEFL/IELTS sessions conducted by Khalid and Zain.

In general, we have had an average of approximately 50-60 students attend the exams. The turnout for the women's sessions has been a little higher than the men's. The students do the reading and listening sections of the TOEFL and IELTS. They are provided with the answer sheets after they finish and are thus able to calculate their score on the spot or after they leave.

Report

by *Amer Yacoub*

English Foundation students have to successfully pass IELTS or TOEFL in order to pass the English Foundation course. Therefore many students are very keen to work hard on IELTS and TOEFL through IELTS or TOEFL training.

The Foundation English Student Services offers training to students in the form of IELTS and TOEFL tutorials. I was assigned this year to participate in these tutorials. Giving IELTS speaking tutorials has been a piece of cake to me because I have taught IELTS before. On the other hand, I have never taught TOEFL and thought it would be a bit of a headache. However, it turned out to be an enjoyable experience because I learnt new things and shared what I have learnt with my students.

The students were assigned two sections of the TOEFL paper to practice each tutorial and another two sections to complete for homework. The IELTS speaking tutorials took the students through the full IELTS speaking exam. I usually had 4-6 students, from all levels, and they attended the tutorials on a regular basis. The students were highly motivated and completed all assigned tasks and homework.



Report

by *Peter MacFarquhar*

During the fall term of 2008, I have been assisting students prepare for the TOEFL exam twice a week in the SLC area of the Women's Activities Building. These help sessions are open to all students in the Foundation Program, and are generally well attended. During a session we usually take up one of the three skill sections of the TOEFL test, and consider in detail the types of questions found there and strategies for answering them. This is then followed up with robust doses of practice, first in the SLC and then by the students individually at home.

For example, the most frequently requested skill area of the test is the reading section. Most of the students seem to feel that this one is the most difficult for them, and the hardest one to complete in the time allowed. What we work on here is enabling students to recognize different types of reading questions and where to look for the answers to them. In this way we try to significantly reduce the amount of material a student actually reads in order to answer a question, which can save them considerable time and allow them to complete more of the test successfully.

Most students who attend these sessions find them useful, and return regularly. I would encourage all students who are concerned about the TOEFL exam to take advantage of this opportunity. However, I would also suggest that students should not wait until their last term and the last few months in the program to do so. I do think that focused practice can help students to raise their test scores, but it does take some time to become effective.



IELTS Speaking and Writing Tutorial Progress

by *Matt Carey*

The IELTS Speaking and Writing Tutorials for this semester were a great success. The IELTS speaking tutorial that was held on Sundays in the Men's Foundation Building saw a regular attendance of three to five students. The IELTS writing tutorial in the Student Learning Center averaged around eight to ten regular attendees. I am also very happy to announce that two of the female attendees, Sirin Mohammad Nasir and Yosra Semir Nasri were able to pass the IELTS exam and exit the Foundation English program. It was great to work with them and to see all of their hard work pay off. The IELTS Tutorials are well worth the effort. I encourage any student, who is serious about passing the IELTS exam, to attend these tutorials. We hope to have many success stories in the future.



IELTS Speaking Tutorials

by *Heshmi Hamadi*

The IELTS speaking tutorials are one of the many classes offered to students from different levels in Qatar University to help improve their fluency in the speaking skill, and help them prepare for the IELTS external exams. My session has been scheduled every Monday morning from 9:30 to 10:30 in the SLCA Building for shift 2 students.



Continued...

Over the 3 months, most of the female students who showed up belong mainly to levels 2 and 3. However, there were occasionally students from other levels, and even occasionally from Post-Foundation.

One of the main reasons, if not the main reason, for students to attend these speaking classes is, according to them, to pass the IELTS exam and thereby being able to move out of Foundation and into their specializations. Another reason for a few other students is to improve their speaking skill and fluency in English, so they can stay and study in an English speaking country.

The first 2 to 3 weeks of my IELTS speaking sessions were marked by an extremely high attendance. More than 20 lady students signed up and attended each time. These students were very lively and motivated. They replied to questions, took part actively in the speaking practice exercises, and often many of them came to me at the end of the class and asked lots of related-to-IELTS exam questions. Unfortunately, however, the tutorials were suspended for about 2 weeks because our original location proved too small and there were complaints about noise. After the room confusion, the number of attendees fell dramatically down to an average of not more than 5 to 6 every week.

Overall, I can safely venture to say that the IELTS speaking tutorials were really very helpful and a good guide to many of the regularly-attending students. They learned about lots of strategies to apply in the exam, gained confidence in participating in little talks and interviews, and could ultimately produce and perform exam-like tasks. At times, I took recordings and we evaluated them together in class.

Running a weekly TOEFL Tutorial

by Gigi Cocoli

As part of my volunteer efforts, I run a TOEFL tutorial every Thursday at the Men's Learning Center. I started teaching and assisting students at the Center on October 23rd 2008. I regularly meet with six of them between the hours of 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. The six students were initially assessed at Level 3 with one of them having completed Level 4. Even though the latter student completed Level 4, he still hasn't passed the TOEFL.

During my initial assessment of their reading abilities, I found that they all had difficulty with the reading section of the TOEFL and they asked for my help in this regard. Since then, I have brought the students copies of TOEFL reading passages with different kinds of questions.

During the reading exercises, I teach them how to scan, skim, and guess a word's meaning from context. I also teach them techniques on how to answer Main Idea, Inference, Reading Comprehension and Detail Questions.



Gigi with her students

I assign them some homework by asking them to complete reading exercises using a number of reading tests that I provide them in advance. I have given them advice on how to improve their language skills and how to be better prepared for the TOEFL.

The TOEFL Tutorial

by Sidi Ahmed Mohamad



My name is Sidi Ahmed Mohamad. I am from Mouritania. I am in level 3. I can't wait until I pass the TOEFL. When I saw ads everywhere about a TOEFL free tutorial, I felt happy and joined the Learning Center right away. I

always go to the Learning Center to improve my language skills and to practise speaking English with native speakers and the teacher. It's a challenge for me, but I do my best. We meet with teacher Gigi Cocoli on Thursday every week for one hour. She is very nice and helpful. I wish our teacher could meet with us more than once a week at the center. I really appreciate what the Learning Center does for us.



Suruchi with her TOEFL tutorial group



IELTS Writing Tutoring

by Ra'ed Ghalib

In the fall 2008 semester, I ran 2 IELTS Writing Tutoring sessions on a weekly basis. One session with female students and another with male students. On average 40 girls attended the female sessions and 15 boys attended the male sessions, (which was, of course, a very big number of students in both sections). And furthermore, the attendance for both groups was constant.

The students were at a variety of levels (1-4). During the classes, students were given assignments and extra Internet activities. They also maintained a writing file and they generally kept up-to-date with their assignments. They were asked and showed how to sign up for online IELTS resources. They started practicing the Test online using the resources available on those websites. I taught the writing skills by following the integrated skills (reading and writing) approach with a student-centered style. I conducted practice tests and the results ranged from Band 4 to Band 7.

Overall, and despite the large numbers, the tutorials went smoothly and well. Students were good and friendly and seemed to enjoy the writing tasks; and very importantly, they worked hard.



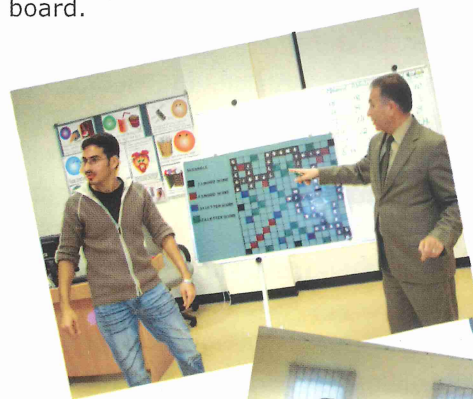
Scrabble Sessions

by Shehab Majid

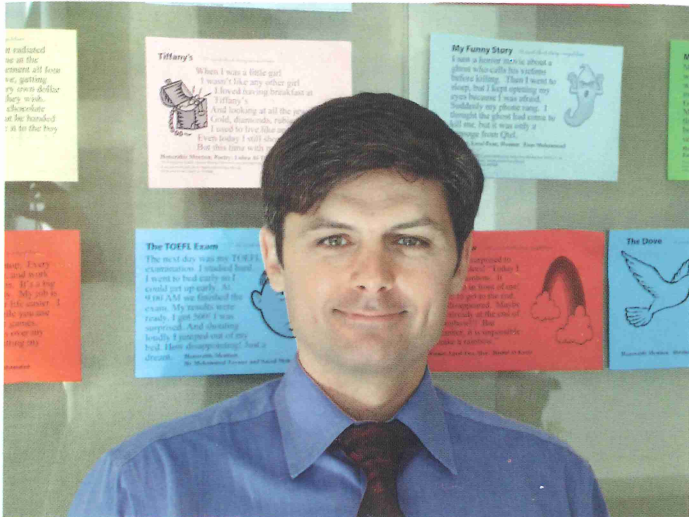
This is a report about the board game sessions we have facilitated throughout the spring semester 2008. 11 male groups and 10 female groups have attended the activities. During the scrabble sessions both male and female students had a great time competing to win the game. We usually start the session by explaining the rules on the board and then show the students some examples. This orientation is usually for 5-10 minutes. Then, the students are divided into teams of four or three, depending on the attending number of students. During these sessions the students are encouraged to provide nouns, adjectives, prepositions and all parts of speech. They can also provide verbs in the simple present/past, gerund and past participles. The students were also encouraged to make other derived words. The teachers watch the students playing and monitor the game. All participating teachers have agreed that the activities are very motivating. The students have an opportunity to see their teacher in a different context i.e different from the classroom context. This will definitely help build some closer rapport between the teachers and the students. After each session the students were asked to give their feedback orally.

All the students stressed the need for more games and /or similar sessions. As for the more advanced level groups, the students were very competitive. We have cases where some students challenged other groups when they disagree on the spelling of a word. Some students questioned other words ,created by other groups that they are not familiar with. They also asked for the meaning or the part of speech. On one occasion with level one male students one team placed on the board the word POWER then the next team added a prefix EM making it EMPOWER then a third group added ING making it EMPOWERING. That was brilliant.

Sometimes the teachers introduce some new ideas to the game such as allowing the students to use their dictionaries and also we let the students exchange tiles to create new words. Only two of the groups from level one were involved in playing Boggle, a board game where the students should provide as many words as possible in a given time from a set of letter tiles placed on the white board.



David Pearson's Short Story Competition



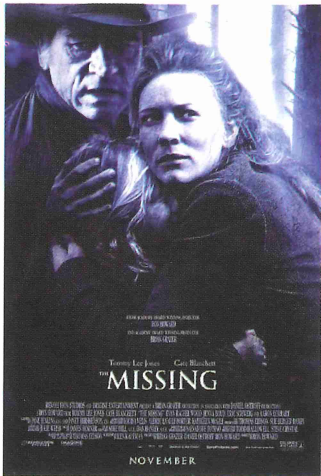
David Pearson

Could you write an interesting or funny story in exactly 50 words? Many of the students in the English Foundation Program can. We held a 50 Word Short Story Contest this Semester and received hundreds of entries. Many of the stories were excellent, and the hardest part of the contest was deciding who to choose as the winners. We finally chose 9 winners, two from each of our 4 levels, one from the men's classes and one from the women's classes. The 9th winner received a special award for the best 50 Word Poem. We created this special award because a number of students entered 50 word poems. We were very pleased with the efforts of the students and hope to make this contest a regular event.

Student Services Clubs

Movie Club

by Ozgur Pala



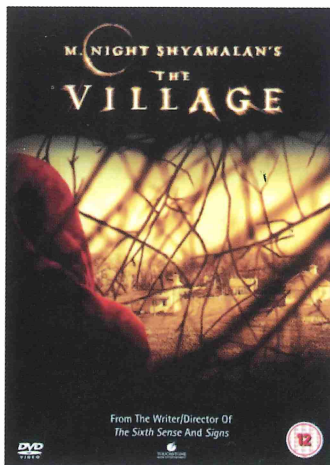
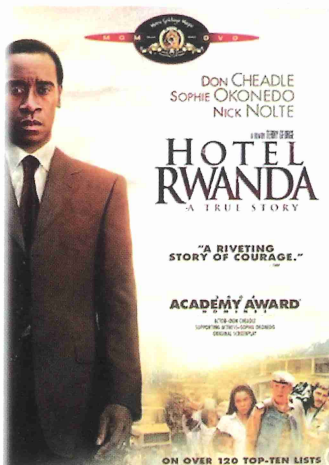
Students at the Foundation Program enjoyed some carefully-selected award-winning movies this semester. The Movie Lab ran in the Science Building Auditorium every other week with an average attendance of about 30 students. Movie Lab teacher Mr. Ozgur Pala said that four movies were shown this semester: The Missing, My Big Fat Greek Wedding, Hotel Rwanda and The Village. Student and teacher reactions after the movies demonstrated that they liked the movies and they wanted the Movie Lab to be up-and-running next semester as well.

* Most students' and teachers' favorite was by far My Big Fat Greek Wedding. Foundation students watched the experiences and feelings of a girl from a very traditional Greek family getting married to an American man.

* 'The Missing' showed them the courage and bravery of a mother whose daughter was kidnapped by a gang on the American-Mexican border during late 19th century.

* Most teachers, who took their classes to Hotel Rwanda, thought that it was a very relevant movie in that we are living in an age of genocide and our students needed more understanding of this issue.

* Students and teachers who liked thrillers gave a thumbs up to The Village, the final show of the semester. Mr. Ozgur Pala said that the Movie Lab is going to show more movies, that are relevant and interesting, in the Spring semester, 2009.



Japanese Club

By Matthew Vetrini

The Japanese Club, besides its regular meetings, had two big events both connected to the Kimono Show sponsored in conjunction with VCUQ and the Japanese Embassy. The first event was the Kimono Show held at the Japanese Embassy. At this event, students and other guests were shown not only the various kinds of kimono styles, but were also given chances to see how kimonos were handmade and painted. Students and guests were also invited to try on yukata, or cotton summer kimono. At the second event, students from Yamaguchi University School of Fashion met Qatar University female students to discuss fashion. The Japanese students were particularly interested in different types of abayas.

Japanese Club Testimonial Questions 1

Matthew Vetrini interviewing Rouda Al Kuwari

(Text written by Rouda Al Kuwari)

1) Why are you a member of the Japanese Club?

Because I'm interested in learning the language and the culture of Japan and everything related to it. I might continue my education in Japan.

2) How long have you been a member?

Since Fall 2007, my first semester at QU.

3) Does the club help with your studies? If, so in what way?

Well, it helps because I can participate in events and stuff. It helps in debates and discussions in some courses when talking about some topics related to culture.

4) Why is it important to know about other cultures?

It's good to know the differences and common things between cultures. It helps you to understand other people and interact with them, especially when you think that one day we are going to work and meet other people from different cultures.

5) Why in particular are you interested in Japan?

I like everything about Japan! I like the history, sport, culture, entertainment, education, and economy

6) What things would you like the club to do in the future?

Visit Japan with the club

(after taking Japanese language classes)

That every girl could be friends with another Japanese girl who is interested in Qataris so we can exchange thoughts and teach each other our language

Participate in Japanese embassy events.

Work more with Japan-GCC Student Friendship Association.

Japanese Club Testimonial Questions 2

By Athanoof Nasser

1) Why are you a member of the Japanese Club?

Because I want to learn more about the Japanese culture and traditions.

2) How long have you been a member?

About 2 months ago.



3) Does the club help with your studies? If, so in what way?

Yes, because it can distract me from the pressure of studying and I can have fun while helping others.

4) Why is it important to know about other cultures?

To know how to communicate with other people and learn about their traditions.

5) Why in particular are you interested in Japan?

Because it's an amazing culture.

6) What things would you like the club to do in the future?

Movie night, a Japanese language tutoring course, anime-drama-manga discussions, trips.

Japanese Club Testimonial Questions 3

by Noor Al-Ghanim

1) Why are you a member of the Japanese Club?

Because I'm interested in Japan and every thing which is related to it.

2) How long have you been a member?

2 years.

3) Does the club help with your studies? If, so in what way?

No.

4) Why is it important to know about other cultures?

To know the way of life and now people around the world live.

5) Why in particular are you interested in Japan?

It's because of watching anime that I started to like Japan.

6) What things would you like the club to do in the future?

No idea.



Photography Club



By Ahmad Haxratxad

The Photography Club has been very popular with female students. This last semester, we had a meeting once a fortnight in The Women's Activity Building, and every alternative fortnight, we went on a field trip to take photos. At the meetings, we discussed such topics as good composition, lighting, macro photography, taking photos indoors. I showed students Power Point presentations on various aspects of photography. We also prepared for the next field trip. And we looked at and discussed the student photos from the last field trip.

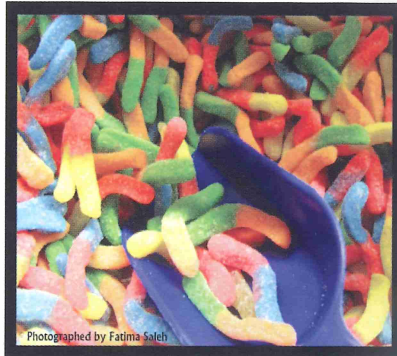
In total, we went on 4 field trips. These were to:

- * Villaggio Shopping Center (indoor photography)
- * A plant nursery (photography of plants)
- * The Equestrian Club (animal photography)
- * Souq Waqif (street photography)

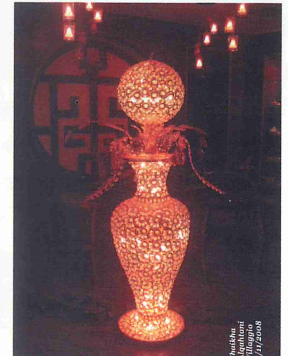
The students really enjoyed themselves, improved their English (as all our photography discussions were in English), and I believe they have become better photographers.

What was interesting was that on our trips, while a few students may have just come for the fun, the vast majority took great care in getting the right photo, often applying what we had discussed in class to the practice. For example we looked at photos on a PowerPoint of flowers sprayed with water to get a fresh, just rained-on look. When we went to the nursery, some students found ways to lightly spray the flowers (with permission, of course). And some lovely quite professional-looking photos resulted from this. The photography club will continue next semester. And since our students are producing such high level photography, we will aim at having an exhibition and a photography competition.

Villaggio Trip Photos



Photographed by Fatima Saleh



Shahin Villaggio 4/11/2008

The Plant Nursery Trip Photos



Souq Waqif Photos



Equestrian Club Photos



A Field Trip to Aspire

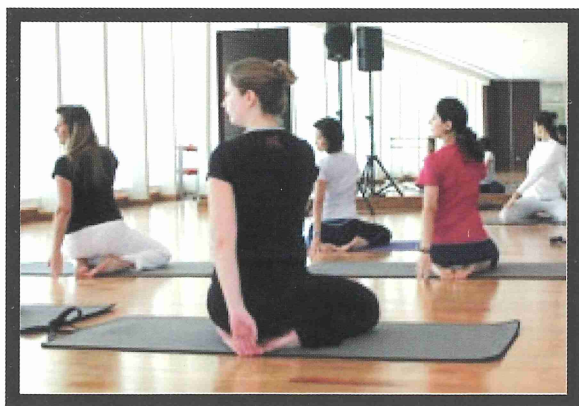
Written by Carmel Underwood; Prepared by Sylvie Raymond

On Sunday morning, November 23, 2008, twenty-two female English Foundation students climbed onto a bus and sped off to the Aspire Active Ladies Fitness Club to experience firsthand the fitness programs Aspire has to offer. The students were greeted by Ms. Khayria who issued them keys to lockers for their personal items and showed them to the changing rooms. The students stored their regular university clothes, bags and mobiles in the lockers and met Ms. Khayria in a large room covered with blue mats. She began the program by discussing the importance of exercise in achieving overall good health, and then launched into a group of warm-up exercises, followed by a good 45-minutes of exercise games and mini-competitions. Students were broken up into teams and given a tunic of red, blue, green or yellow and competed in relays and games that tested their physical coordination and motor skills.



After a short rest and plenty of bottled water provided by the Aspire program, students had a quick tour of the facilities and joined a regular exercise class called "Leg, Buns and Tums" taught by Helena, one of the professional fitness instructors at Aspire. In this 50 minute class, the students stretched and toned their bodies using large exercise balls and elastic bands. Exhausted, hungry and thirsty, the students then piled back into the bus and headed back to Qatar University for a well deserved lunch!

Here are some student reflections on the energizing day.



I went to the Aspire trip. I did many exercises, and I feel tired but it is good. I enjoy that too much! *Nouf Ahmed Al Wehaimed*

We went to Aspire trip with my class. And we did some exercise and I enjoy it. Also I don't forget this day!

- Sarah Mohammed Al Nasser

We did the exercise in Aspire. It was very fun. I really enjoy in the Aspire and next month I will join. *- Karima Al Rayami*

I liked Aspire a lot because of the lovely building and the amazing décor. Also the people who trained us were so nice. The swimming pool was big. We enjoyed the trip so much with our teacher and the students. *- Bashaer Abdullah Fakhroo*

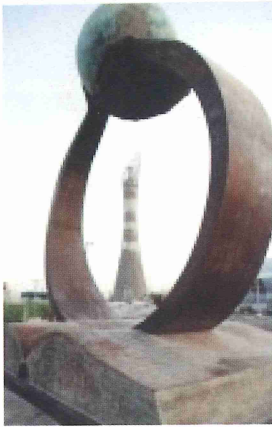
I went to the Aspire building in a nice trip. I take two classes, one for exercises, and it's hard for me to do these exercises because I stopped one year from sport and the other class is for aerobics. It's interesting class for me and when I finish this class, I went to the bus back to the university.

- Nehal Mohammed

First in Aspire we played with our trainer, Ms. Khayria and after that we did the exercise with another trainer, but I don't remember the name of the exercise. I enjoy Aspire!

- Nayla Ali Al Mulla



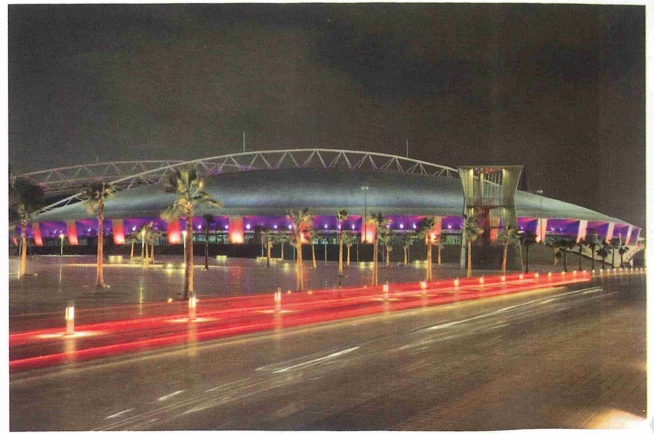


Three weeks ago I went to the Aspire building on a lovely trip. I took two classes there, one for the exercise - it was so hard - and the other for Aerobics. It's interesting class. I will take classes for the month of January.

- Sarah Salah Al Marri

Three weeks, I went to Aspire with many students. It was a nice trip, but a short trip. I learned a good and useful exercise. After the visit to Aspire, I want to go back and take more classes.

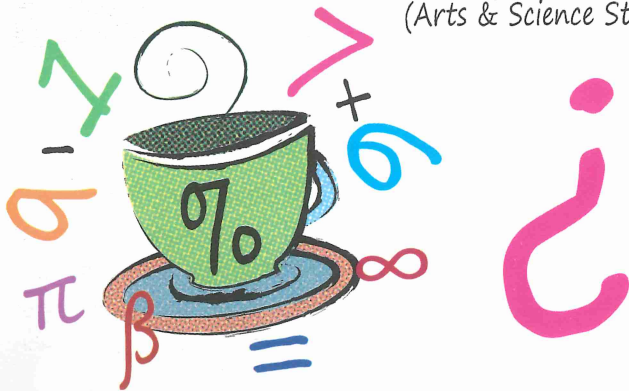
- Hajir Al Hajri



Math Is Not Really My Cup Of Tea!

Written by: Lolwa Al Naimi

(Arts & Science Student)



Most of us love math in lower classes, but the subject gets uninteresting and difficult as we move on. Why is this so? Why do we dislike this subject later? Let's look at this and find out!

The thought of a math test can make you sick from the pit of your stomach, and you'd rather bunk college the entire day!. For some students, math is like a nightmare, but why does math appears scary? Is it that some people really do not have the brain for it? Is it because of the math teacher?

Math for foundation students is "a big problem" but not for all of them. F.A, a foundation student in math said, "Well, I can't say that I like or I dislike math because it's like any other subject. Math is not a difficult subject for me: we just need to understand it. Then when I asked her about her marks in math, she said, "Even though I got 85.5%; I didn't like my mark very much, because I really wanted to get an "A" and I blame my teacher for that. The only problem I face in math is I misunderstand my teacher sometimes.

N.K, another foundation student in math said, " Well, I like math a little , because math is an interesting subject. The only difficulty in math is that it has a lot of information and ideas to grasp. I've studied math(3) and (4). I failed at first in both of them, but then I got a "C" in math(3) and I got a "B" in math(4). But the only one I blame in this is myself, because I really was careless in math. When I asked her about her teachers in math, she said, "My math teachers were all good and I understood every thing."

What do teachers of math have to say to the problem faced by the students. Mr. Wolfgang, a foundation teacher in math said, " I think the students feel that math is difficult, because they don't have a good base in math. What I mean by that is that schools do not always offer a good educational level in the subject. Therefore students may have some difficulty in it. But, I think math is interesting for some of my students but performance also depends on the students themselves. I asked him if he faced any problem with these students. He said, "The biggest problem I face with my students, is that they use memorizing methods and in this subject it's all about understanding". At the end of the interview, he gave some advice for those students, "If they have difficulty in a subject, they should use different methods of study or come regularly during office hours. They have to overcome their fears".

Mr.Chabi, another math teacher, said, "Students assume that math is difficult for two reasons: first they don't know how to study math and second, the education system is a problem. What I mean is that High School necessities are different from university performance. Therefore, to help the new foundation students, more students should be involve with more experience. When I asked him if math interests his students he said, " I think math is interesting for my students. However, we use math in our life and math is not only about solving a problem". He said, "The students think that they have a math phobia. Many beginners base their experience on what first year students tell them. But their statement is wrong. Beginners have to make their own experience. At the end of the interview I would give a good peace of advice for the students, "They have to know how to study, not only for math, but for many other subjects also. They also have to learn Time Management and to understand when outside help is necessary. Some students feel shy to ask and also don't go to tutors' office hours. Students should overcome these aspects".

So far, we heard the student's and the teacher's opinion. Finally, I want to give you my opinion also because I've been a math student, I had a good experience and all I have to say is that you have to learn how to understand the subject not memorize it you must go to your teacher to discus your problem with maths and I am sure that will help you.



Winners of the Keyboarding Competition

The Math and Computer Program at the Foundation Program held a thank you ceremony for the winners of the keyboarding competition. The ceremony was attended by Dr Khalid Al-Ali Foundation Program director, Dr Maha Nabhan, Head of Math and Computer Department, and Dr Arslan Ayari Computer coordinator. The competition was open to all QU students, but most of the participants were from the Foundation Program. Over fifty male and female participants took part in the first round of the competition, while only eighteen of them made it to the semifinals. First place winner: Abdallah A. Shakir with 53 WPM speed and 99% accuracy, second place winner: Almutasim A Alsamari with 48 WPM speed and 97% accuracy and the third place winner: Hanin N Bader with 46 WPM speed and 100% accuracy.

Blackboard workshops II at OFID, Office of Faculty and Instructional Development



Blackboard

In collaboration with the Office of Faculty and Instructional Development (OFID), the Math and Computer Department conducted several Blackboard workshop sessions for the second year. The aim of these workshops was to build upon what had been achieved in the past workshops and to strengthen the impact on teaching performance. Many follow-up sessions were provided to many faculty members from different colleges at Qatar University.

The facilitators were: **Dr. Sahbi Ayari/Math Instructor and Mr Ajmal Chauman/Computer Instructor.**

Mini Exam e-Registration (MEE)



Ko Ko Aye

MEE is a web application that allows online registration by functioning as a web server. It accepts and responds to the requests made by the users. MEE consists of three domains, Student, Teacher and Administrator.

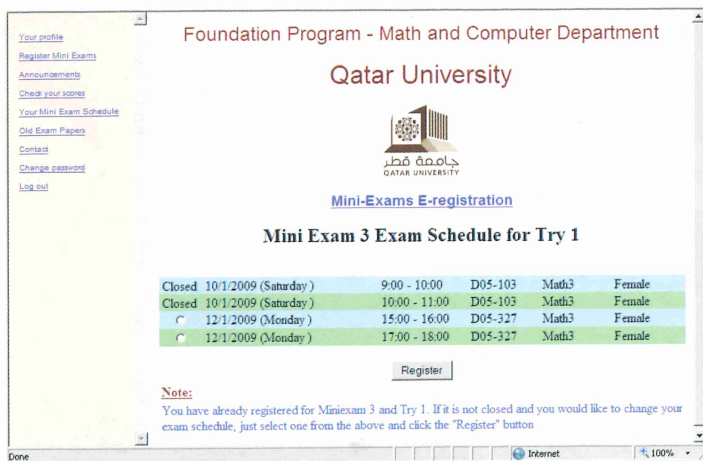
MEE will also allow teachers to easily create exam schedules and make them available in a few minutes from anywhere and at anytime. Finally, the administrator can add announcements, and generate an exam attendance sign up sheet in two clicks. To enter student scores is fairly simple, teachers can view the student's records, such as score for each exam, registration status for each schedule, and venue, time and date for each mini exam.

Benefits of employing MEE

Students can register from anywhere and at anytime, even 3 hours before an exam. Within a few clicks, students can change exam schedules from home or from labs; also they can check grades, announcements and download exam materials online without difficulty.

Student Domain

The left panel consists of links, which will reflect different functions, such as viewing announcements, registration schedules, checking marks, and so on. The following are some screen snapshots for certain functions.

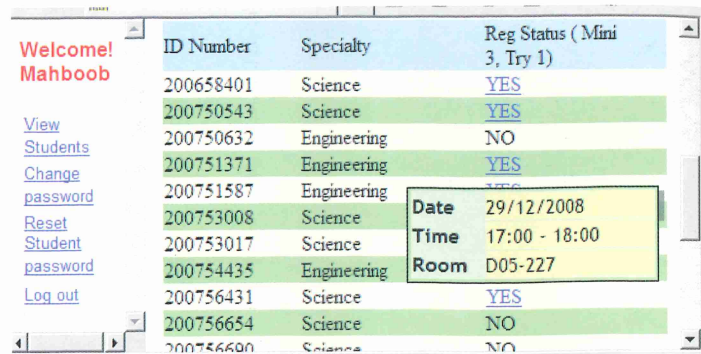


Administrator Domain

This domain is designed to control all the administrative jobs regarding the Mini exam, such as posting exam schedules, editing and deleting exam schedules, entering student scores, setting deadlines, activating a particular mini exam, uploading student data to the MySQL database, creating student sign up sheets, adding new announcement, and creating the teacher accounts and sending them to their emails. Besides these functions, the administrator can view all the student records. The following is a screen snapshot for certain functions.

Teacher Domain

The teacher domain has the least functionalities. The teacher can view only his /her student records and reset the student password.



In this snapshot, the teacher was checking the mini exam 3 registration status.

About MEE software:

Developer Name: Ko Ko Aye
 Department: Math/Computer, Foundation Program, QU
 Technologies employed: Java, JSP and AJAX
 Version No.: 1.0
 Backend database: MySQL

Professional Development Reports - 2008

Compiled by Judith MacKinnon



Dr. Sahbi Ayari

Fall semester 2008 saw a decade of interesting and useful Professional Development events taking place in the Foundation Program beginning on Tuesday October 28th, 2008 when Dr. Sahbi Ayari spoke about "Designing & Developing Pool Based Tests on Blackboard". Dr Sahbi said "using Blackboard can enhance the teaching and learning experience by employing the Internet as an e-learning platform". He mentioned that Blackboard enables a forum for discussion and integrates activities inside and outside the classroom. A great feature of this event was the accompanying hands-on workshop led by Dr Sahbi, in which the participants got to jump start their learning curve to design, modify and import a pool of questions to Blackboard, create and deploy a pool based test, explore various test and assignment options, as well as key features and revision of students' test answers.

PD events spanned the entire month of November commencing on the 2nd with "All about Making Blackboard Online Exams" presented by Mr Hamud Abdulkadir. This workshop focused on the Blackboard test manager tool that provides a "wizard" type interface to guide instructors step-by-step through the process of creating an online graded quiz or test. Under the guidance of Mr Hamud, the attendees were able to try their hands at creating online exams using Blackboard Test and Pool tools, customizing weights of the tests and score type, and discussing Blackboard online exams' best practices.



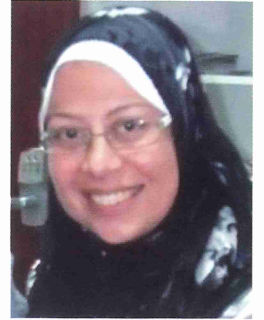
Mr Hamud Abdulkadir



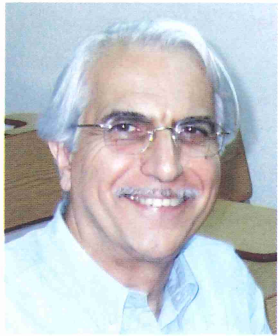
Mrs Saeda Nouri

Two days later on 4 November, Mrs Saeda Nouri led a workshop on "Managing your Gradebook in Blackboard". Gradebook is a module of Blackboard that is used to record and post students' grades for tests and assignments. It is excellent in terms of convenience, time saving and confidentiality for the students and the teachers. In Mrs Saeda's workshop, opportunities to use these major features of Gradebook led to familiarization with adding Gradebook items, weighting grades, managing the items, modifying the settings and entering scores.

On Sunday 9 November, Mrs Noran Adel Emara conducted a workshop about NetMeeting. NetMeeting permits the exchange of information with friends and students, collaboration on projects, teaching a class, and delivery of presentations. During Net Meetings, one can jointly create documents, spreadsheets, or other files and share them with other computers. In addition, one can send files to one or all meeting participants. Mrs Noran discussed several NetMeeting features including hosting a meeting, placing calls, joining a meeting, and sharing programs in a meeting.



Mrs Noran Adel Emara



Dr David Minbashian

Adding fractions and the LCD were the main focus of Dr David Minbashian's PD event. In his rigorous presentation, a way of using various number lines in aiding student understanding, and incidentally, he obtained a new way of defining rational numbers to be considered. Dr David said "it is quite possible for students to calculate everything without understanding anything, similar to how a computer follows algorithms. Understanding comes when students are able to make a connection between their calculations and other areas, say geometry and physics. While pictures are worth a thousand words and, as such, are a great aid in understanding, they are notoriously difficult to calculate with, and hence, lead to the rise of analytic geometry and algebraic geometry. But the ease of calculations should not lead us to lose sight of the connection."

Completing the round of November workshops, once again Dr Sahbi Ayari encouraged guests in his workshop on "Designing & Deploying Assignments, Tests and Surveys in Blackboard" to create tests using the pool manager. Dr Sahbi presented some basic features of Blackboard including how to create or modify the assessment tools such as test, assignment and Survey and how to incorporate Blackboard tests and surveys into course activities. Finally Dr Sahbi led a discussion that focused on the pedagogical practices that help deliver secure and effective online assessments and surveys.



Dr Sahbi Ayari



Dr M. Ali Ayari

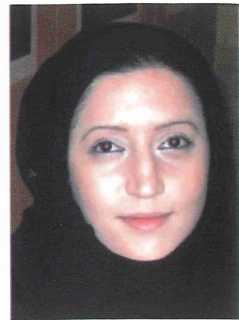
Dr M. Ali Ayari held a seminar on 2 December that looked at the opportunity provided by Blackboard for teachers to use blended learning to supplement and enhance their regular classroom instructions with online material, assessments, different assignment styles, and collaboration through discussion and email. Dr Ali's thesis was "technology is only used as a tool that could help in developing student's creativity and promoting the learning process." In this seminar, Dr Ali proposed an example on how the vast array of tools available in the Blackboard platform could be used to meet different learning styles of students and to keep them engaged in the course.



Mr Mahmoud Syam

"A test is a way of finding out what a student knows. Therefore test content should be coordinated with instruction content. This helps to ensure test validity. The purpose of a test is not to trick a student but to determine competency. A good test gives an indication of what they have learned or not learned and thus the teacher knows what to correct, stress and/or strengthen." With these premises on 16 December, Mr Mahmoud Syam led attendees at his seminar "Writing a Test" to define the test, know the steps of writing a test, know the types of questions, and learn some skills in writing a test.

The topic of the final PD event of 2008 suggested that the classroom lecture is a special form of communication in which voice, gesture, movement, facial expression, and eye contact can either complement or detract from the content. Mrs Maysoon Swailem mentioned that the skilled lecturer uses a variety of approaches to involve students, maintain interest and avoid a repetitive teaching style. She went on to discuss some techniques to make a lecture more effective and concluded by providing some examples to clarify some techniques mentioned in the session.

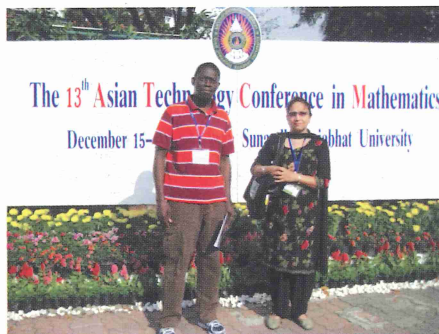


Mrs Maysoon Swailem

International Conference

Conference on Mathematics, Bangkok, Thailand

Isaac Mulolani & Jaishree Malhotra



The 13th Asian Technology Conference in Mathematics, Dec.15-19 hosted by Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in Bangkok, Thailand. The theme of the conference was,

Enhancing Understanding and Constructing Knowledge in Mathematics with Technology. The event had over 400 participants from over 33 countries around the globe providing a rich pool of researchers, academics and educators. This was a most interesting event as far as conferences that I have attended go because of the varied number of participants. There were teachers from primary, secondary and the higher education sectors. It was a prime atmosphere for collaborating across these areas as well comparing notes on common problems, challenges and effective implemented solutions. There were presentations on various aspects and the conference workshops demonstrated some of the most current trends in technology for mathematics and educational technology. Dr Jaishree and I participated in a series of hands-on workshops in Maple which were extremely helpful in demonstrating its capabilities. There were several other workshops given that were designed to help participants get their feet wet with Autograph, Maple, Cabri3D and video capture tools. There was also a visit to a Thai primary school where Geometer's Sketchpad is used as a tool in teaching mathematics. It was a very illuminating and enjoyable time for all of us.

Conference on Interactive Computer Aided Learning, Austria

Mr. Mohamed Soliman attended the International Conference on Interactive Computer - Aided Learning that was held in Villach, Austria from Sept. 23 to Sept. 26, 2008. Mr. Soliman presented last semesters' Computer Program achievement in exams' delivery in "Designing and Implementing an Automated Assessment for a Program with a Large Number of Students", by Mohamed Soliman & Dr. Arslan Ayari.



Feedback from the conference audience has shown the importance of automating assessments given the number of students in the foundation program of Qatar University. Automating assessments in other projects worldwide despite the challenges is ongoing in several other places and resonated in importance with this effort. Mr. Soliman has also chaired a session titled: Adaptive and Intuitive environments.

Invitation of Foundation Program New Faculty

The director of the Foundation Program Dr Khalid Al ali has invited new faculty and their spouse for a Ramadan Sahoor evening at the Ritz Carlton hotel. The purpose of this invitation is to welcome new faculty and to get to know each other.



More News & Events in the English Department

A Course in Conversational Arabic

Mohammad Fawzi, Ph.D

Coordinator of UR & Adjunct Courses

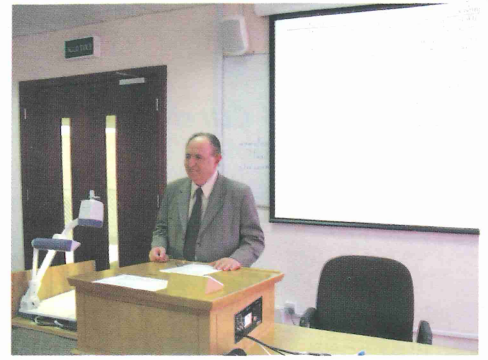
Some English speaking teachers at the English Dept./Foundation program showed interest in learning Arabic. This encouraged me to organize a beginner's conversation Course in Arabic for them. The course was from 26th October 2008 to 28th December 2008. It was held once a week for a total of 9 hours.

The course was attended by a number of English Language teachers from the Dept of English: Ahmad Hazratzad, Roger Barlow, Anna Sempek, Tasneem Kureishi, Bani Sharma, Daniela Tzenkova, Azlifa Ahmed, Ana Didovic, Sushma Das, Alice Kim, Clint Mitchell, Ahmed Salim, and Allyson Young.

The emphasis in the course was on every day language used in the Arab Gulf Countries. Expressions, dialogues, and learning tasks based on real life situations gave the trainees confidence to speak and helped them to communicate with each other naturally. Following the pair and group-work technique for language teaching, I gave the trainees more opportunities to practise the language and made them feel sure of the Arabic they would like to use in their daily life.

I would like to thank all the teachers who attended the course and above all Clint Michell, Ahmed Salim and Allyson Young who assisted in organizing and teaching the course. I would like also to thank Mariam Al Neami and Abeer Mahmoud for helping me to type the lessons.

Much gratitude is also due to Dr. Khalid Al Ali , Director of the Foundation Program, and to Robert Kennedy, the Head of the English Dept. for their approval to organize the course.



Dr Khalid hands over certificates to the Arabic Course Participants



Post-Foundation Students Succeed in Qtel Contest

by Eileen Plumb

Recently, the Qtel telecommunications company in Doha sponsored a writing contest: they asked students at local institutions of higher education to write a 5 - 7 page paper on the topic of Qatarization, for which the grand prize is 15,000 QR (in addition to a number of smaller prizes). Though the final winners have not yet been announced, the Foundation Program English Department is very proud to state that, of the 4 contest finalists from Qatar University, 3 of these were Post-Foundation students during the Fall 2008 semester: Ms. Safrina Latheef just completed Dr. Mohammed Fawzi's Post-Foundation English II course, Mr. Amir Sheikhani and Ms. Fathima Mona Thowfeek were both Post-Foundation English I students at the time of the contested Ms. Yousra Samir, the other finalist, completed her Post-Foundation studies several years ago. We wish all four finalists the best of luck in the final stages of the contest - we know they will make us proud!



ENGLISH DEPARTMENT IN-HOUSE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ICT and the QU Curriculum [Dinos Demetriades]

Dinos Demetriades started the Fall 2008 semester with a presentation to all English Department faculty entitled ICT and the QU Curriculum. The presentation outlined the changes to the Multimedia Curriculum, which would essentially be replaced by a focus on reading, writing and project work in the form of the Integrated Skills Project (ISP). Dinos explained the rationale for the changes, and gave some ideas for the ISP. He also demonstrated some of the new programs on www.englishw.com, such as the practice reading exams and vocabulary exercises, which students could use in their homes.

During the semester, Dinos and Aladdin Halwani led a number of ICT training sessions on how to use Safe Assign, the university's anti-plagiarism software. Safe Assign has not only proven to be extremely useful in allowing teachers to identify wholesale copying of texts, it has also given the students a powerful e-learning tool that allows them to directly compare their attempts to paraphrase with an original text. It also acts as a motivational tool in that students can see how much of their text is copied in percentage terms. Students actually enjoy editing and resubmitting their texts because they feel a sense of pride and achievement when an acceptable percentage is reached.

Presenter: Stephanie Pinnacle
Presentation: The Writing Process Techniques for Successful Peer Conferencing
October 8, 2008

Getting students to write can be difficult at times, but getting students to review and revise their writing is quite another challenge. Peer conferencing can be one of the most difficult steps in the writing process for both student and teacher. This workshop began with a discussion of the benefits, problems, and student perceptions of peer conferencing. I emphasized and explained the need for a structured peer-conferencing format in order to establish an environment in which students can collaboratively question, discuss, and challenge their writing. Also, I introduced various approaches to peer-conferencing, such as using simple techniques, creative materials, forms, and technology.

The presentation was attended by approximately 15 participants. I reviewed the steps in the writing process and introduced a variety of ways in which teachers can encourage students to peer-conference. A variety of ideas, forms, and activities can be read, downloaded, and printed from: <http://peerconferencing.wetpaint.com>. I also showed the participants a private class Wiki on which my students posted, peer-conferenced, and edited their essays.



Presenter: Kevin Rooney
Presentation: Sound Chunking for Oral Presentations

October 13, 2008

Foundation students sometimes have trouble speaking intelligibly when giving oral presentations. This often stems from an inability to speak in comprehensible chunks. This workshop involved participants in completing a computer-based activity that can be used to assist students in properly chunking their oral presentation and by identifying pause points and stressed words.

Presenter: Patrick Murphy
Presentation: Writing Across Borders
The Influence of 1st Culture on 2nd Language Writing
October 14, 2008

Participants first watched a 20-minute documentary, "Writing Across Borders," on international students' writing at Oregon state University and discussed its relevance to the situation of second language writers at QU. Wayne Robertson's video, "Writing Across Borders" offers unique and deeply personal perspectives on the challenges students encounter when writing in English as a second language, as well as the implications for teaching and assessment. After watching the video, participants engaged in pair and small group discussions on themes of particular interest. The video led one participant to question what our goal is as composition teachers in the Foundation Program. Is it accuracy? Quality of content?

The central message of the film challenges teachers to recognize and appreciate that students do not come to their classes as blank slates with respect to writing. Having learned to write in their native

languages, they have engrained values and assumptions about writing which may differ from the values and assumptions their teachers hold about writing in English. What kind of attitude is appropriate on the part of the teacher when students do not conform to the cultural expectations embedded in the modes of writing we teach? "Writing Across Borders" not only promotes self-inquiry and professional development, but also provides a tool for prompting dialogue with students regarding their development as writers in English.

Presenter: Ozgur Pala
Presentation: Developing Arab Students' Critical Thinking Skills
November 2, 2008

Effective Academic English performance requires a high level of critical thinking skills. However, in their home countries, many Gulf Arab students do not develop these skills. The presenter examined how critical thinking is handled in Gulf Arab schools. Then, he suggested techniques for introducing and developing critical thinking skills.





Presenter: Patrick Murphy
Presentation: Teaching Debate
a Tool for Oral Communication
and Didactic Assessment
October 24, 2008
Anadolu University, Turkey

I developed this workshop based on the training I received through Qatar Debate as well as experience teaching debate in Foundation English Level 3. I am interested in debate as a second-language teaching tool since oral debate capitalizes on the communicative strengths of Arab students and provides a platform for teaching essential "cognitive academic language proficiency skills." Most importantly, the debate format puts students in an authentic communicative context in which content and quality of ideas takes precedence over attention to linguistic forms. Examples of debate coaching games and activities were demonstrated and described in handouts. Participants evaluated alternatives for group formation, topic selection, preparation time, and practice activities as well as discussing the challenges of implementing debate coaching in an English for Academic Purposes classroom

Although assessing debate requires training and practice, we can draw on the competitive debate tradition and adapt it for the second language teaching context. I believe the advantage of using debate as an oral assessment is that debate is an intrinsically heuristic activity. Students acquire language proficiency and critical thinking skills in the act of debating. Debate is a didactic form of assessment rather than merely a snapshot of general proficiency. The workshop focused on the benefits of debate for students' speaking skills, active listening and note-taking skills which are essential parts of effective debating, thus maximizing learning time for all debate participants. The demonstration concluded by identifying ways in which debate skills could reinforce other academic skills, such as essay writing.

The Accreditation Process and the Revised Curriculum (2008 - 2009)

Presentation by Justin Richards and Mu Mu Winn
30th October, 2008



The Foundation English Program has been involved in a self-evaluation process since it began applying for accreditation from the CEA Commission on English

Language Program Accreditation) in 2006. In an attempt to provide a clearer picture of the accreditation process and the effect it has had on the Foundation English, the Curriculum Coordinator gave a presentation to all Foundation English Department staff on Thursday,



Justin & Mu Mu



30th October, 2008. After providing some background information on the Foundation Program, the presenters highlighted the CEA standards regarding curriculum, and the process of identifying deficiencies and addressing them. Important developments, such as an outcome-based curriculum and a revised mission statement, were discussed. The revised curriculum was presented through several documents stating exit goals, learning outcomes, the proficiency scale, and scope and sequence. The discussion also focused on ongoing modifications to the syllabus at each level, such as the integrated skills project, the revised program structure, and the introduction of common quizzes. Included in the presentation were some projections for the program's future and an invitation to faculty for more involvement in the curriculum development process by responding to a curriculum survey planned for the last week of December 2008.

Presenter: Dr. Kourosh Lachini
Presentation: A Spreadsheet Approach
to Test Quality Analysis
November 18, 2008



The purpose of this workshop was to display how using a spreadsheet can be a very practical contribution to analyzing a test, with items statistically norm-referenced testing (NRT) or criterion-referenced testing (CRT). The focus here was on CRT, and item analysis in language testing would be applied in terms of item facility analysis, item discrimination analysis, item quality analysis, difference index, the B-index, and CRT item selection. In addition, language test scores need to be interpreted. Here, issues like standardized scores, Z scorers, T scores, and CEEB scores would be discussed and the hands-on activities will fully demonstrate how a spreadsheet approach would be helpful in giving the required data for the ultimate decision-making purposes, especially when we are dealing with a high-stakes testing situation.

Presenter : Lyrma Ingels
Presentation: A Concept Approach to the Test of Gram
November 27 - 30, 2008



Most tests of grammar focus on the surface structure of the language; i.e., discrete points. A concept approach to the test of grammar measures the deep structure of the language; i.e. the basic concept. This tests the fundamental understanding of the grammatical structure – the meaning. Likewise, it employs thinking skills such as comprehending multiple choices, interpreting choices, making inferences, deciphering the true meaning of the choices and identifying the correct answer among others. A battery of tests has been conceived, designed and administered to show its relevance. The results of these are evaluated against a final TOEFL structure test and the results of the mid-term and final exams, to show any pertinent relationship.

Presenters: Patrick Murphy & David Coupland
Presentation: Teaching and Coaching Foundation Student Writers
13th November, 2008



David & Patrick



This workshop investigated the differences between teaching writing and coaching the writer. Attendees were made to reflect on these differences and examined the advantages and disadvantages in both approaches in assisting the writer. Specifically the presenters examined the limitations of the feedback and the constraints of the coaching role. They demonstrated current innovations in modes of response (MS Word features and Wikis). The workshop aimed to heighten awareness of our teaching/coaching practices, leading to an improved learning/writing environment for the writer.

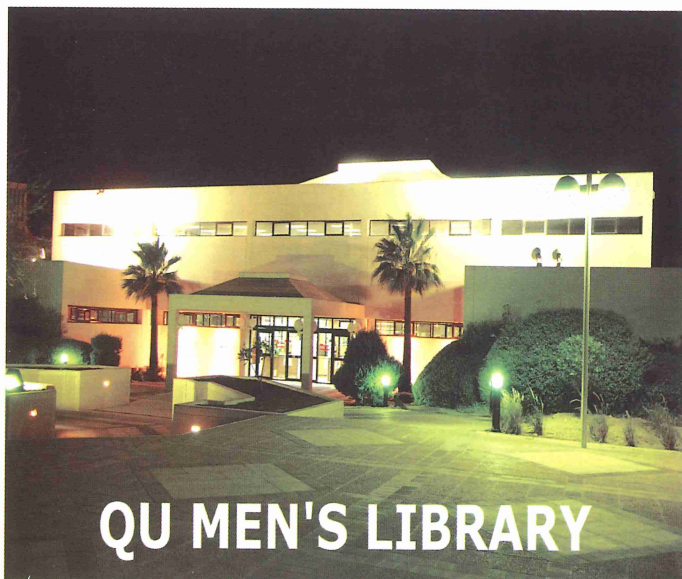
Presenter: Allyson Young
Presentation: Material Design Using Adobe Photoshop

This presentation was a hands-on introduction to Adobe Photoshop. Photoshop is software used to manipulate bitmap (photo) images. For the teacher, this program can be used to enhance the look of PowerPoint presentations, web pages and Blackboard images.



Presenters: QU Library Staff
Presentation: E-library Orientation
Session - 23rd October 2008

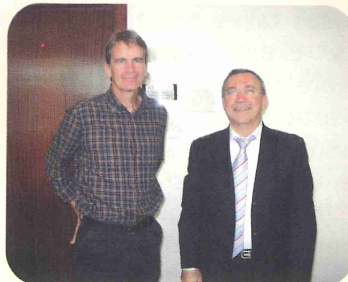
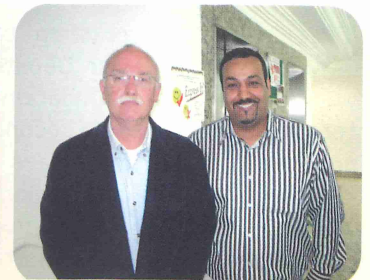
How to access the extensive QU database of on-line journals.



QU MEN'S LIBRARY

NOTE; The Library Information Systems (Millennium) went live on Sunday 18th January, 2009.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT END-OF-TERM STAFF GET-TOGETHER



FOUNDATION PROGRAM

New Arrivals

Prepared by Eileen Plumb



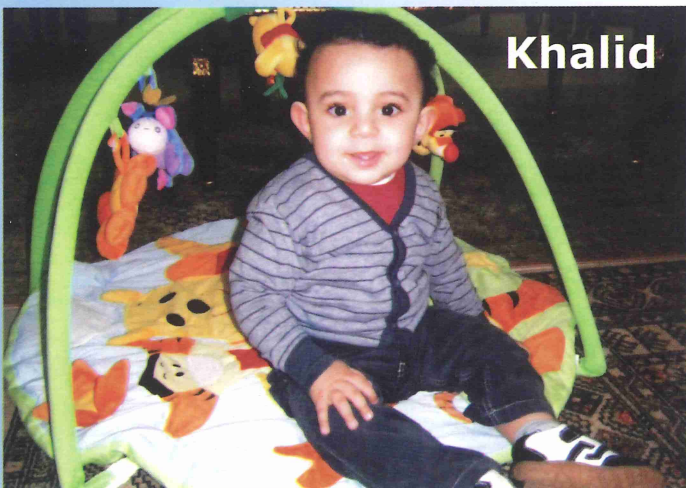
Every semester, we are proud and happy to welcome new members into the Foundation Program family – both new staff here at Qatar University, and new arrivals in the homes of our faculty and staff members. The past months have been no different. Our family has grown once again!

First, our newest member here at the Foundation Program English Department Office is Mariam al-Nuaimi, who has been with us since early November, 2008. Before coming to Foundation, she was a middle school English teacher for two years at the Omar bin al-Khatib Independent School for Boys (brave woman!). She has lived in Doha her whole life, and graduated from Qatar University with a Bachelor's Degree in English Literature in 2006.

Ms. al-Nuaimi is happy in her new position for many reasons. She likes the fact that she deals with a variety of challenging situations every day, and she also enjoys working with interesting people from all backgrounds (that's us!). She loves studying, and has recently earned her International Computer Driving License. Currently, she is doing self-study of IELTS materials. In the future she plans to return to university to earn her Master's Degree in TESOL. We're sure she'll be an excellent addition to our stellar office administration team here in English Foundation.

And now on to new arrivals of another kind...

Reem Khalid is back with us once again, after she and Iyad Nayef Abu-Baker became the proud parents of **Khalid Iyad Nayef**, born at the Credit Valley Hospital in Toronto, Canada, on January 19, 2008 at 4:30 in the afternoon. We can already wish him a happy first birthday!



Khalid



Khalid & his Sisters

Mohammed Ebrahim al-Nasser was welcomed by Mrs. Jumaia al-Abdullah and her husband on August 18, 2008 at 10:00 in the morning in Hamad Hospital in Doha. Jumaiah will be joining us again in early February.

Dana Hanan al-Atassi arrived to happy parents Salman and Youjung al-Atassi in Hamad Hospital in Doha, on September 15, 2008 at 12:35 in the wee hours of the morning.



Dana

Mary & Khaled el-Mereedi welcomed little **Layla Khaled el-Mereedi** on October 31, 2008 at 4:55 pm, at Southern Ohio Medical Center in Portsmouth, Ohio. We'll be happy to have Mary back with us next semester!



Layla

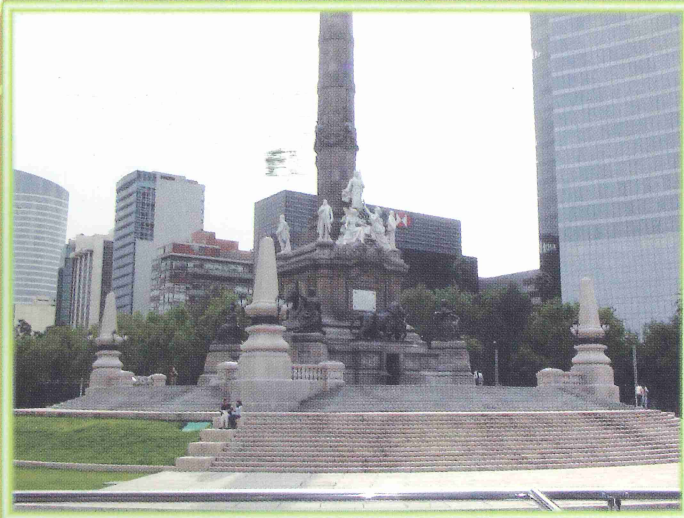


Dream Vacation Destinations

Compiled by Sylvie Raymond

How exciting! How maritime! They really had a great break in the sun!

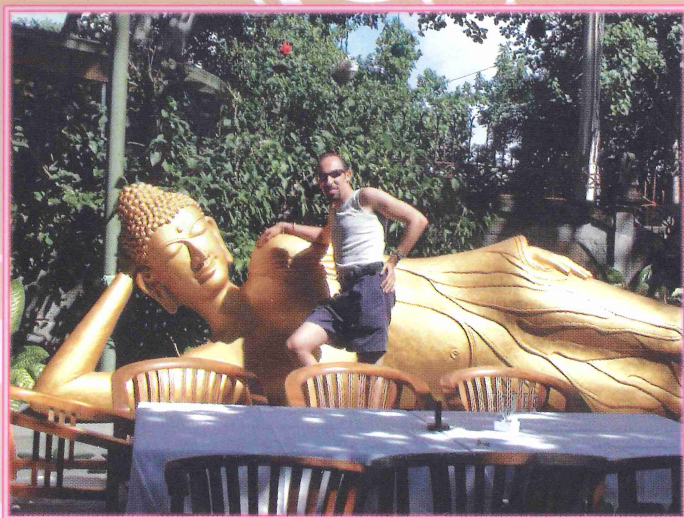
[Editor]



Angel of Independence - Mexico - Amr Salah



Isla Contadora - Panama – Sylvie Raymond



Buddha - Bali - Amr Salah



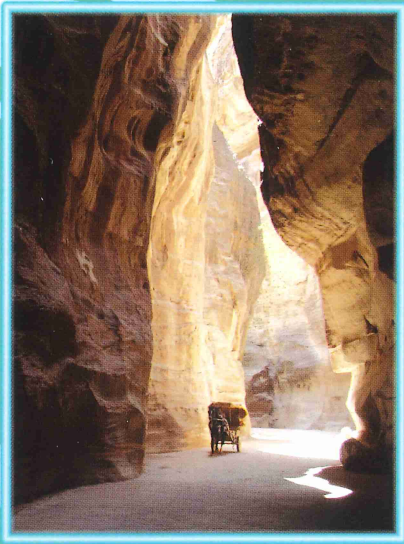
Kuala Lumpur Sky Bridge - Ahmad Hazratzad



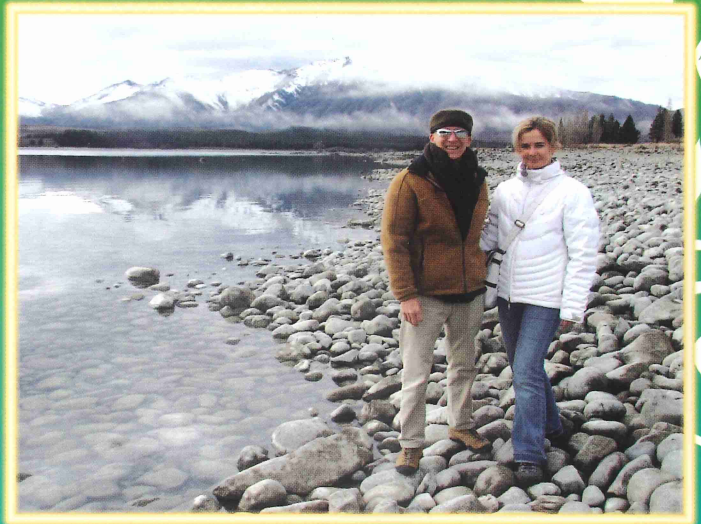
Boats at anchor in Qatar - John Tribuna



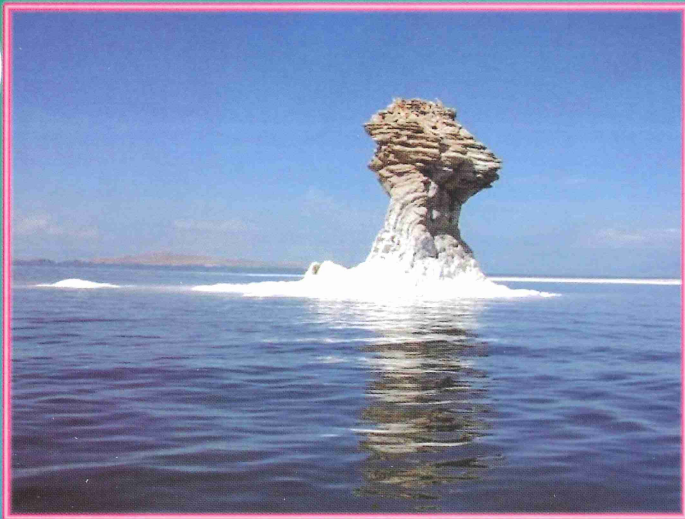
New Zealand - Anna & Benjamin Sempke



Main entrance to Petra - Sylvie Raymond



New Zealand Lake Tekapo South Island Benjamin & Anna Sempek



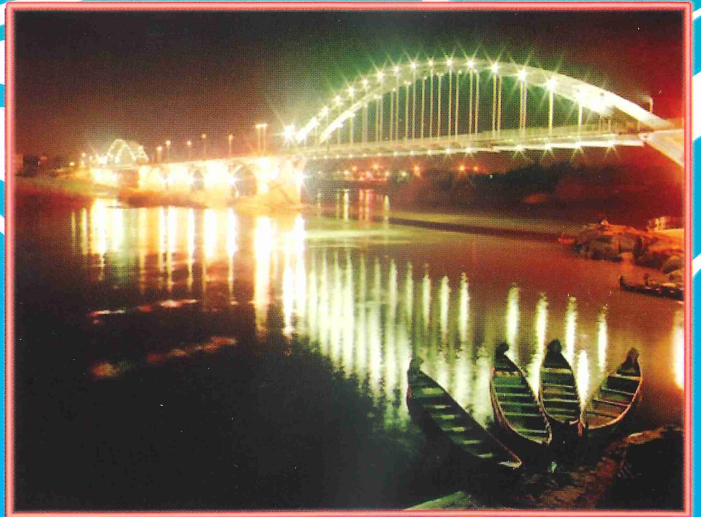
Oroumieh Salt Lake - Iran - Ahmad Hazratzad



Ramesh's family & relatives Madhya Pradesh - India



Starfish Beach - Panama - Sylvie Raymond



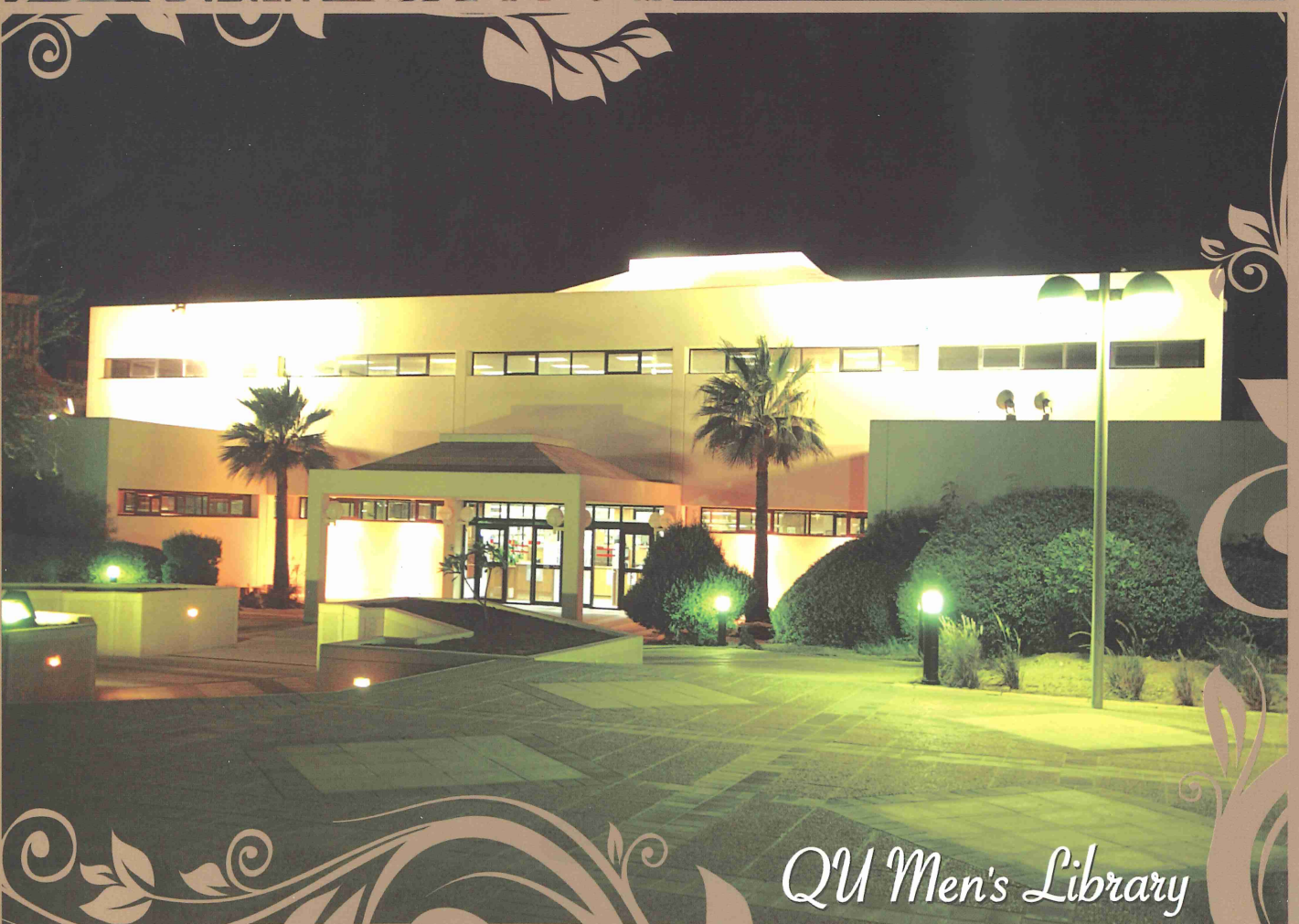
White Bridge - Ahwaz - Iran - Ahmad Hazratzad



Hala Hadba's family in Syria



A View from QU Campus



QU Men's Library