1st MEC TESOL Conference

Book of Abstracts

English in changing local and international contexts

29th March 2018

Middle East College
كلية الشرق الأوسط

2018
MEC TESOL
Conference

Conference Programme

8:00 – 9:00	Registration	
9:00 – 9:05	Recitation of the Holy Quran National Anthem	
9:10 – 9:20	Welcome Remarks	**Dr. Kiran GR** Conference Chair Dean, Middle East College
9:20-9:35	Inaugural Speech	**Dr. Halima Saleh Al Badwawi** Asst. Director General for Academic Affairs Ministry of Higher Education
9:35 – 9:40	Message from the Chief Guest	**Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrooqi** Deputy Vice Chancellor, PG Sultan Qaboos University
9:40 – 10:10	First Key note Speech	**Dr. Abbas Ali Rezaee** Department of English Language and Literature, University of Tehran, Iran
10:10 – 10:35	Coffee break	
10:40 – 12:40	Parallel Sessions 10:40-11:00 Presentation 1 11:00-11:20 Presentation 2 11:20-11:40 Presentation 3 11:40 – 12:00 Presentation 4 12:00 – 12:20 Presentation 5 12:20-12:40 Presentation 6	6 presentations / 4 classrooms (total – 24 presentations)
12:40 – 1:40	Lunch	
1:40 – 2:10	Second Key note Speech	**Dr. Victoria Tuzlukova** Center for Preparatory Studies Sultan Qaboos University
2:10 – 3:30	Parallel Sessions 2:10-2:30 Presentation 7 2:30-2:50 Presentation 8 2:50-3:10 Presentation 9 3:10 – 3:30 Presentation 10	4 presentations / 4 classrooms (total- 16 presentations)
3:30 – 3:40	Summary of Findings / Deliberations	**Dr. Tareq Al Damen** Conference Secretary Head of Centre for Foundation Studies, MEC
3:40 – 3:45	Closing Remarks / Vote of Thanks	**Dr. Ahmed Nawaz** Conference Vice Chair Asst. Dean, MEC
Distribution of Certificates		

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MESSAGE FROM THE CONFERENCE CHAIR, DR. KIRAN G.R.

On behalf of the MEC TESOL Conference Organizing Committee, I feel greatly honored and privileged to welcome you to our First Conference on 'English in Changing Local and International Contexts' at Middle East College, Oman.

With the changing teaching and learning scenario, TESOL professionals need to take up the challenges encountered in our dynamic and international classrooms. This Conference is committed to bringing together ELT practitioners, researchers, and curriculum developers by providing them opportunities to share research findings, and discuss solutions to address these challenges. Most importantly, these deliberations will help us envision future developments in research and pedagogy.

Today's programme includes two keynote and three parallel sessions comprising 40 paper presentations and workshops.

Prepare yourself to be challenged, excited and inspired.

It's my pleasure to welcome you to the First MEC TESOL Conference.

Dr. Kiran G. R.
Dean
Middle East College

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Conference Chair   Dr. Kiran G.R, Dean of Middle East College

Conference Co-Chair   Dr. Ahmed Nawaz Hakro, Assistant Dean for
                                        Research and Innovation, MEC

Conference Secretary   Dr. Tareq Al Damen, Head of Centre for
                                        Foundation Studies (CFS) ,MEC

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CHIEF GUEST

DR. RAHMA IBRAHIM AL MAHROOQI, DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR, PG RESEARCH AND STUDIES, SULTAN QABOOS UNIVERSITY, OMAN

INUAGURAL SPEAKER

DR. HALIMA SALEH AL BADWAWI, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, OMAN

1ST KEYNOTE ADDRESS

DR. ALI ABBAS AL REZAI, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, *UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN, IRAN*

'CALL' FOR CHANGING OUR LANGUAGE TEACHING PERSPECTIVE

Due to many factors in modern world, our local and international contexts have changed drastically. One of the vibrant manifestations of change in the necessity of the use of modern technology in education as it has also become an indispensable part of our today's everyday life. Nowadays, nothing, or at least very few, can be done without the employment of computers. Modern digital facilities are vastly utilized for various purposes from a basic search to very serious investigations, and from simply playing a game to conducting highly sophisticated statistical analyses. Computers, in all their forms and capacities should be used in education, language teaching/learning being no exception. In the same vein, our changing local and international contexts urgently beg for a more profound look at such facilities in education. A significant concern of an applied linguist, then, should be the extent to which these can be employed in translation, language teaching, and language learning. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is the area most directly related to the use of computers in language education. As early as 1997, CALL was briefly defined by Levy as "the search for and study of the applications of computer in language teaching and learning" (p. 1). There is a wide range of information and communication technology applications and approaches to teaching and learning foreign/second languages in CALL. The range is from the "traditional" drill-and-practice programs, which was the main concern of CALL in the 1960s and 1970s, to its more current applications: virtual learning environment, and Web-based distance learning. It also extends to the use of corpora and concordancers, Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), and, more recently, mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). These are rather new developments in teaching languages. Because they have gained widespread acceptance among scholars, experts, and practitioners, many programs have already been devised leading to the proliferation of its extensive popularity. Therefore, experts should deem it necessary to become more familiar with the importance of modern technology in education, to come to closer affinity with the significant improvements of CALL through cultivating its history, theories, and principles, and to show cases of the techniques used for teaching language skills.

2ND KEYNOTE ADDRESS
DR. VICTORIA TUZLUKOVA ,FACULTY, SULTAN QABOOS UNIVERSITY, OMAN

21ST CENTURY TEACHING AND LEARNING: FOCUS ON QUALITY LANGAUGE PEDAGOGY AND MOTIVATONG STARTEGIES

This key note speech addresses the need to ensure that higher education in Oman is suitably adapted to equip students with effective skills, which are regarded key requirements for a successful professional career in the 21st century, and draws attention to the importance of these skills. More specifically, it involves the audience in careful examination of how the English language classroom can be facilitated and suitably adapted to equip students with 21st century skills and focuses on quality language pedagogy, motivating strategies and pedagogical conditions necessary for building and extending students' skills through English language learning.

AHMED F. SHOEIB
AL BAHA UNIVERSITY, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

MALE AND FEMALE EFL TEACHERS' CONSCIOUSNESS OF SELF-DISCLOSURE: A CASE STUDY FROM AL BAHA UNIVERSITY, KSA

Teacher self-disclosure (TSD) is a communication strategy that may positively affect students' learning by encouraging them to participate effectively in EFL/ESL classroom activities. In addition, it can be considered an L2 teaching method that can increase learners' engagement and language learning outcomes. Given its context-sensitive and culture-dependent nature, TSD topics, purposes, and considerations may, however, vary a lot cross-culturally. This study had two objectives: to investigate EFL University teachers' consciousness of suitability of TSD and to find out differences and similarities between male and female EFL teachers' conceptions of the relevance of TSD to successful L2 teaching. In order to achieve these objectives, the Appropriateness of Teacher Self-Disclosure Scale was administered to EFL teachers (30 females and 30 males) from the Foreign Languages Department at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of Albaha University, KSA. Results of the current study revealed (a) the extent to which EFL teachers considered TSD topics, purposes, and considerations to be proper or improper, (b) concurrence and indifference between male and female teachers' conceptions of TSD, the objectives and purposes TSD achieves in classroom settings, and (c) considerations the teachers take into account when practicing TSD. The study suggests that EFL teachers can use TSD as a teaching and career development tool to improve student learning but cautions that they should keep alert to its influences in culturally-sensitive educational settings.

DR. ARTURO G. PALAMING
SUR UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OMAN

STUDENTS' COMPETENCE IN COMPOSITION WRITING: TOWARDS A PROPOSED INTERVENTION STRATEGY PLAN

This descriptive quantitative-qualitative case study aimed to report findings with regard to (a) students' competence in writing English compositions at levels of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics accuracy and (b) an intervention strategy plan devised for enhancing students' writing competence as well as instructors' approaches to teaching English writing. To this end, the student participants were requested to compose five descriptive essays which were, afterwards, rated independently by three English teachers using Jacobs et al. 1981's ESL Composition Profile. The descriptive quantitative-qualitative research design was used to obtain the pertinent data. A case study was conducted to get the desired qualitative data that supplemented and strengthened the statistical data gathered.

However, calculation of the average mean scores and standard deviation in the five components of the students' writings indicated that the strengths of most of the students were in the organization and language use (grammar), whereas their weaknesses were in content development, vocabulary, and mechanics. The case study likewise suggested similar results. Using the data as basis, an intervention strategy to enhance students' writing competence in the five components was proposed and designed for classroom application.

Some strategies included to enhance students' language use and organization of ideas were peer editing, selective peer editing/proofreading with highlighting of errors, using graphic organizers, and essay diagramming. To enhance their content development, vocabulary, and mechanics components in writing, strategies such as adding details to complete an essay, providing the four bases checklist, giving ample time for prewriting, facilitating collaborative writing, using word learning reinforcement, showing good writing models, using semantic feature analysis and paired word questions, preparing punctuation marks worksheets, conducting student-teacher conferences, and use of authentic texts were included in the intervention plan.

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DR. ASFIYA KHAN
MIDDLE EAST COLLEGE, OMAN

INFLUENCE OF ORAL COMMUNICATION TASK-TYPE AND LEANER VARIABLES ON USE OF PLANNING AND EVALUATION STRATEGIES BY OMANI EFL LEARNERS

Several studies on Omani EFL learners have reported lack of communicative competence required for further academic or career success (Al- Mahrooqi & Asante, 2010; Al Shaqsi, 2012). Hence, the purpose of this paper was to examine the influence of oral communication task-type and learner variables on language learner strategies used by the Omani EFL learners at the tertiary level .Within the context of three oral communication tasks, this paper reports on the usage of two categories of language learner strategies: planning strategies and evaluating strategies used before and after task performance, respectively. The three oral communication tasks used in this study were designed based on Robinson's (2005) Triadic Componential Framework: Picture Story Task, Abstract Art Description Task, and Information Gap Task. A task-based strategy questionnaire was administered immediately after the performance of each task to gauge the use of planning and evaluation strategies. Further, participants' perceptions of tasks in terms of task difficulty, their interest, self-efficacy, and future motivation were captured through a reflective questionnaire. The findings focus on the influence of the nature of task, gender, proficiency, and perceptions on the planning and evaluation strategies used by Omani EFL learners.

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AZIZA AMIR ALI & ANITA TERESA BOGGU

MAJAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OMAN

THE IMPACT OF A TECHNOLOGY-EMBEDDED CLASSROOM ON STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Recent developments in technology have heightened the need to integrate technology into regular classrooms to provide students with varied opportunities to participate and learn autonomously. It has been observed that in traditional classrooms, students tend to depend heavily on the teacher as the sole giver of knowledge and hesitate to express their points of view largely due to either low self-esteem or lack of language to convey their standpoints. This paper analyses the impact of ''Socrative'' on students' confidence in classroom participation. The samples consisted of forty-seven Level 1 undergraduate students who were given a Likert scale questionnaire to measure their level of satisfaction with using ''Socrative'. Students were given both physical and online activities to evaluate their anxiety about various tasks. Above 50% respondents-stated they preferred online quizzes compared to regular pen–and-paper tests. 49% declared they were of the opinion that online tests would improve their grades. Overall, the respondents expressed more confidence and less anxiety when dealing with online activities. The findings may be beneficial to teachers wanting to instill confidence in shy or reluctant students and trigger their classroom participation with innovative educational technologies.

DR. DAISY LAMIS, PRAMILA KUNHUNNI KRISHNAN & ALIYA PARVEEN
MAJAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OMAN

PROMOTING LANGUAGE SKILLS INTEGRATION IN A VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Technology has an upper hand in the learning process since it breaks the monotony of traditional teaching. Technology based learning is very interactive as it is student-centered and enables students to take the responsibility of their own learning. Students who participate in a virtual environment can be transformed from passive learners to enthusiastic learners. This is made possible through an exploration of how teachers can make their subject matter more accessible to students. When students are encouraged to make meaningful connections and engagement in learning language skills, technology may very well be infused with the teachers' own approach to teaching. The research aims to present the practices of teachers teaching English modules to Level 1 students of Majan University College, Oman. The current teaching practices and strategies are blended with the use of the college's online virtual environment, well-known as the Majan Online Virtual Environment (MOVE). It is a platform for teachers to create forums for students to have synchronous discussions related to the content. One of the common teaching strategies of English teachers is honing the students' internet search skills when it comes to writing assignments, or simply practicing the skills of reading and writing through the use of technology.

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ELIOT WRIGHT BIO,
MUSCAT UNIVERSITY, OMAN

CREATING A CONSTRUCTIVELY ALIGNED FOUNDATION PROGRAMME IN THE SULTANATE OF OMAN: OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS SO FAR

Creating a useful, relevant and engaging Foundation Programme is not an easy or straightforward task. Those involved in the decision-making process and curriculum design must meet the needs and concerns of various stakeholders as well as ensuring the Programme produces 'degree ready' students well prepared to undertake a bachelor degree taught through the medium of English. This paper will provide observations, reflections and details of how the speaker has created a high-quality-constructively-aligned Foundation Programme in the Sultanate of Oman which is being quality assured and externally examined by Aston University, UK.

ERIKA VAN WINDEN

MILITARY TECHNOLOGICAL COLLEGE

READING CIRCLES: READING CAN BE A SOCIAL ACTIVITY

Reading is often considered a solitary activity which students can do during a quiet session inside the classroom or complete at home. Furthermore, it is often the role of the teacher to facilitate post-reading discussions. Perhaps, then, it is high time that reading was considered a social activity; as well, it can be an opportunity for teachers to step back and, more relevantly, for students to become the leaders of the classroom. This interactive workshop aims to demonstrate how Reading Circles can be implemented in TESOL classrooms at the university level. Participants will be familiarized with what Reading Circles are, how they are organized, what benefits they may very well offer in addition to what problems can occur and how to avoid them. The final ten minutes of the workshop will be dedicated to an open discussion between participants and the presenter.

DR. GEETALI DEORI
OMAN MEDICAL COLLEGE, OMAN

THE ROLE, IMPORTANCE AND IMPACT OF SPELL CHECK

The influence, variety and easy availability of technology in today's classrooms have not only transformed but also broadened the scope of teaching, learning and usage of the English Language. One of the interesting aspects of this prism is the 'negligible' role of spellings in learning and teaching. Teaching skills like reading or writing, spelling is either part of "other" mechanical skills or is "completely" overlooked. On the other hand, students find English spellings difficult, confusing and *not* important at all. Besides, students find the different rules of spelling often confusing and "irrelevant". This view gets validated when students have the option to submit a *typed* assignment or *use* an app in class to help pronounce a word. However, in an exam set-up the results are disappointing. Recent studies have shown that in order to write effortlessly, students need to be good with spelling, otherwise they are limited to using the words which they can spell. Also, social media and advertisements influence students and their spelling skills. With the advent of word processing and spell checkers, spelling skills among students are increasingly becoming questionable. Students no longer have to "identify" spelling errors but are automatically made aware of them with just the click of a button. The present research aims to analyze the importance of spelling, its impact on writing and the overall impact of S*pell Check* on student writing.

JAMEL TERZI ALIMI
MIDDLE EAST COLLEGE, OMAN

FACULTY'S PERCEPTIONS ON, AND EXPERIENCES WITH, ADULT LEARNERS: A QUANTITATIVE INVESTIGATION

Higher-education institutions across the Sultanate of Oman are experiencing an unprecedented change in student demographics particularly due to the continued influx of learners aged 25 years and older. Evidences on teacher reactions, perceptions, and behaviours as to the presence of adults in previously younger student-dominated classes have, so far, remained largely anecdotal. The purpose of this quantitative survey-based study was, therefore, to attempt to look into the beliefs and educational experiences of lecturers with respect to nontraditional students, taking a private college in Muscat, Oman as a case in point. Two central questions were addressed: (A) How do the faculties under investigation view the presence of adult learners in their mixed-age classes? and (B) What instructional challenges, if ever, do the participants identify regarding such a presence? Results showed that the quasi-totality of the participants (N= 49 males and 37 females) welcomed the presence of adult learners in their multi-age classes. Findings, nonetheless, revealed that such an overwhelmingly positive standpoint seemed to suffer the following downsides: (a) the complexity of experiences that the faculty members had previously lived with adult students, (b) the pre-conceived judgments that the majority of them would still enter adult-mixed classrooms with, and (c) the challenges in accommodating teaching methods to the needs of this student demographic. Implications of these findings for future research and for faculty development are discussed.

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KREMENA KRUMOVA

ARAB OPEN UNIVERSITY, OMAN

IT'S *YOUR* TURN!

As language tutors, our expectation of ideal students is that they would be active, lively, ready to participate and eager to learn. But the sad reality is that students are despondent, anxious, sometimes disinterested and unmotivated. What shall we do to bridge this gap between the ideal and the reality? Well-devised strategies and activities, which enhance the learning experience, make the task of teaching a surprisingly easy task. This practical presentation will focus on grammar and vocabulary games for the students in order to boost their confidence, trigger their willingness to participate, and ensure a conducive learning atmosphere.

During the presentation, participants will take part in these activities and games, which will hopefully help them harvest ideas and adapt activities to suit their own classrooms. Participants are expected to actively participate in this presentation, implying that they are students themselves.

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DR. LARYSA NIKOLAYEVA
MAJAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OMAN

ROLE OF GUEST LECTURER IN RESEARCH PROPOSAL WRITING: PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS

Current research focuses on the experience of undergraduate students in a Middle Eastern college on attending guest lectures at the initial stage of preparing their dissertation. Here an attempt to apply the constructivist approach to teaching the subject of Research Methodology is made by using a technique of multiple guest lecturer sessions by the department working in different areas of linguistics to familiarize the students with the research interests of their tutors. This paper is an attempt to find out students' attitude to the sessions, their (sessions) benefits and drawbacks in terms of identifying a feasible topic, choosing an appropriate methodology and presenting a hypothesis of the proposed research as well as increasing their level of motivation towards academic reading. Students' feedback was collected at the end of each session to identify advantages/disadvantages and extent of helpfulness of the practice through a questionnaire consisting of both close ended and open ended questions. The data was analysed with the help of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The results of the survey demonstrated the importance of guest speaker presentations for project writing as well as their (guest speakers') positive impact on students' motivation. Moreover, they helped to identify the preferred approaches to conducting the sessions that are related to students' personal attributes and attitudes as well as the dis-preferred ones.

LEOVIGILDO LITO D. MALLILLIN
GULF COLLEGE, OMAN

LANGUAGE NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR ENGLISH CURRICULUM VALIDATION

This study aims to identify the language needs for English curriculum validation in the tertiary level. This is to identify the language requirements to improve the English language of the learners. The descriptive method is utilized in the study. The sample comprised 349 students who were selected on the basis of their age, gender, years of studying English, and exposure to watching movies and television programmes. The learners were given a standardized set of examinations to test their competencies in listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, identifying errors, and using language correctly. Multiple regression is used to analyse the results of the test.

Results showed that identifying errors, writing skills, correct language usage, reading skills and listening skills were significantly affected by the respondents' profile since the computed P-value is greater than the significance level of 0.05. However, speaking skills and vocabulary skills show that they are not significant to the profile of the respondents.

MANGALA G. RAJ
MIDDLE EAST COLLEGE, OMAN

M-READER AS A STIMULATING AND CHALLENGING TOOL FOR EXTENSIVE READING: TEACHER PERSPECTIVES FROM OMAN

Moodle-aided reading has been quite recently introduced as a promising tool for enhancing extensive reading (ER) in ESL/EFL settings. Despite the plethora of studies carried out in many parts of the world, there seems to be little or no research on the views and acceptance tendencies of ER teachers concerning M-Readers in the Sultanate of Oman. The present survey-based, exploratory investigation was meant as a humble attempt at filling this serious gap in research, by taking reading skills teachers at a higher education institution in Muscat as participants. It was specifically guided by the following questions: (a) What challenges and benefits do reading skills faculty members perceive in M-Readers? (b) What future do they prospect as to M-Readers in their current institution and beyond? This study found that the majority of the surveyed faculty welcomed e-readers as a dynamic element within the reading environment with particular potential to enthusing reluctant readers and those with special or linguistic needs. It also revealed that a considerable proportion of them grudgingly concede to the fact that reading using this form of technology appeals to the "e-generation" and may succeed in making reading a pleasure. The study discusses the views unveiled and concludes with relevant recommendations.

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MARCUS RICHEY

MODERN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND SCIENCE, OMAN

## GHOSTS AND THE MACHINES: ADDRESSING THE NEW PLAGIARISMS
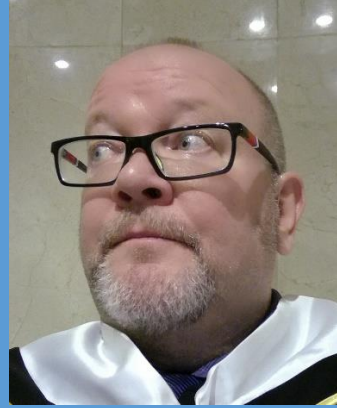
For this presentation I will examine the rise of machine-driven plagiarisms, such as paraphrase generators and translation apps, which are decidedly more fluent than they used to be. I will demonstrate how these methods are used by students and explore the complicated ethical terrain they involve. Ghostwritten plagiarism will be added into the mix, which is easy and cheap for our students to use, and like the machine-driven variety, creates original content outside the scope of online checkers like Turnitin to detect. The 'Fraud Triangle' model, borrowed from financial studies, will be applied to literary plagiarism for what illumination and inspiration it can offer. I will empathetically consider the mindset from which students employ these methods, attempting to understand the world they've grown up in. I will offer examples of 'authorship-discrepancy' from my own students and present research findings regarding their confessed attitudes involving these methods of English-text generation. After the establishment of practices and attitudes, I will turn to the possibility of solutions, exploring what options teachers can choose from when suspecting plagiarized work of this nature. I will suggest a bold method by which certain forms of authorship fraud might be documented and used in student-assessment. I will also touch upon software development aimed at combating this problem, such as the stylometric analysis program Signature. I will draw a distinction, though, between what solutions would be short-term control-oriented vs. longer term answers aimed at addressing the bigger-picture need to stress the process of writing over the final product.

DR. MARIAM TUFEKCHEYAN & MR. KAMAL SALAH BALLOUMI

HIGHER COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, *OMAN*

DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS THROUGH SONGS AS AUDIO MATERIALS
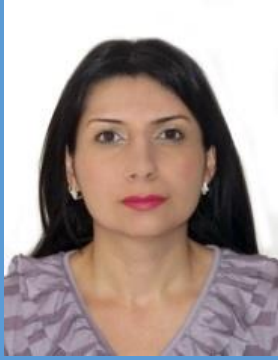
Motivating teenage students belonging to a foreign culture to learn English could be a difficult task for many EFL practitioners. Difficulties may be explained in relation to the teacher, the learner, the material or a combination of two or three of them. While much has been said about the target culture and how cultural issues related to English language songs taught to Arab students may hinder any effective use of songs in an English language class, very little has been produced which highlights the supportive elements and the attractive aspect of using songs as a medium for teaching English to students of Arabic background.

This workshop explores how fruitfully songs could be utilized to create a spontaneously exciting and entertaining setting by transforming the classroom into a "singing stage" where students acquire the language and practice it individually and in groups without inhibition. The entertaining nature of teaching English through songs is not the only encouraging element in using songs in an EFL setting. This paper highlights benefits in relation to the themes of the songs taught, the structure of the language of songs and the structure of the foreign language itself. Discovery of and openness towards Anglo-Saxon culture could be a supportive factor to learn English and a benefit to Arab learners who get to know more about English-speaking countries through songs. Analysis of results of a questionnaire distributed to Foundation students from the Higher College of Technology in Muscat and from the workshop attendees would most expectedly give a clearer idea on how far songs could be exploited in an EFL classroom in Oman. Today's findings are only stepping stones from which ongoing research would definitely highlight novel ideas on the usefulness of songs in an EFL setting.

DR. MEENALOCHANA INGUVA
SULTAN QABOOS UNIVERSITY, OMAN

EFFECTIVE USE OF BENCHMARKING: THE CONTEXT OF CENTRE FOR PREPARATORY STUDIES, SQU, OMAN

The purpose of the paper is to share the benchmarks developed for the GFP courses offered at the Centre for Preparatory Studies, Sultan Qaboos University and discuss the challenges faced in meeting the benchmarks.

A set of standards developed to enhance language teaching and learning in one context cannot be applied to other contexts. From the teaching/learning perspective, bench marking is viewed as a criterion by which to measure something, for instance a standard.
In the Omani context, benchmarking has been developed to provide clarity on the national standards expected within each curriculum area at each level. The OAAA document clearly states the expected standards in higher education in Oman. They set out clear lines of progression in computing, English   and mathematics and across all other curriculum areas.

This paper first examines the standards set by the TESOL and describes the process of developing benchmarks. Benchmarks in each curriculum area are designed to be concise and accessible, with sufficient detail to communicate clearly the standards expected for each curriculum level. In this process, four broader aims and objectives of teaching were discussed and arrived at. These are, language objectives, language learning objectives, process objectives and non-language objectives. Based on these objectives level descriptors were drafted for each level/course. These descriptors are used as benchmarks.

Finally, the challenges met while implementing the English language curriculum to meet the benchmarks will be discussed. One insight gained is an awareness of what benchmarking is and what it is not.

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DR. MEENALOCHANA INGUVA & DR. VICTORIA TUZLUKOVA
SULTAN QABOOS UNIVERSITY, OMAN

STRUCTURING THE CURRICULUM: GENERAL EDUCATION PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS MATTER

The aim of this presentation is to involve the audience into a discussion about how core principles and standards of General Education can be effectively used for curriculum design and structuring. The discussion is placed into the context of the Foundation Program offered by the Centre for Preparatory Studies at Sultan Qaboos University.

Although there is much literature related to the concept of General Education that was constructed as a response to both the need to strengthen the coherence of curriculum for it to reliably serve as a medium that educates people, attends to their experiences and feelings, and the need to enhance the quality of higher education teaching and learning (Austin, 2011), this understanding is still new in the context of English language teaching in Oman.

The presentation first outlines key standards and principles of General Education intended for empowering our students and developing them as personalities, and then it explores to what extent Foundation English language courses impart them. Here, it reports the results of the study that utilized the archival research methodology (L'Eplattenier, 2009) to analyze the Foundation Programs' standards and curriculum documents in relation to such core standards and principles of General Education, as breadth of knowledge, critical thinking, integration of knowledge and social responsibilities. At the end of the presentation, the advantages of integrating General Education principles and standards are discussed as well as future directions to improve Foundation English Language Program curriculum to empower students in Oman with the knowledge, skills and values needed to build a better world.

MOHAMMED IBRAHIM FAROOQ & YEVETTE MATHEW
MAJAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OMAN

USING PADLET AS A VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT TOOL

Nowadays, technology is infusing classrooms with digital learning tools, and increasing student engagement and motivation. It also accelerates learning beyond the walls of a classroom. Actually, the key point in using a tool depends on the level of users and also the type of activity. Padlet is a tool that can be used for teaching vocabulary and writing lessons. It can be very useful if it is used according to the content being taught and level of the student cohort. This presentation will deal with: how to use Padlet in the classroom; how academically valuable ideas can be exploited by using Padlet; and how Padlet can be used by students and teachers. Padlet reaches as far as your imagination. It is us who make an educational application really powerful by using it creatively. It could also be used for brainstorming on a topic, statement, project or an idea. Smart teachers use padlet to create live question banks, to gather student's work, to conduct group writing tasks and also spelling tasks.To conclude, the use of Padlet enhances student engagement and helps them to become autonomous learners. It helps them to produce results beyond their expectations. Using Padlet is a long–term investment of time and money, as once an activity is created it is easy to engage students inside and outside the classroom.

DR. MUHAMMAD AKRAM

GOVT. POSTGRADUATE COLLEGE, BUREWALA PAKISTAN

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CRITICAL THINKING AND LEARNING ENGLISH

This study investigates the relationship between critical thinking and English learning ability of non-native learners. Drastic changes have taken place in the field of language learning and teaching. There exists a series of psychological variables which may expedite the learning process. Learners' thinking style also plays a very crucial role in learning a foreign language. Critical thinking (CT) has an undeniable role to play in teaching and learning a target language. CT is a reflective process that focuses on the precision of the decision to believe something. Non-native students are plagued by non-critical thinking skills. This study explores the relationship between perception of critical thinking skill and EFL learners' English proficiency. It aims at finding which skill of critical thinking predicts the learners' language ability. Critical Thinking Inventory (CTI) was administered to 248 participants and the results were analyzed by using SPSS (XX).The study shows that incorporation of critical thinking in teaching plays a pivotal role in learning English.

NOURA RASHID AL KALBANI & FATMA JUMA AL ALAWI
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, OMAN

TWENTY COMMON TESTING MISTAKES FOR EFL TEACHERS TO AVOID

Even though alternative forms of assessment are growing in popularity, most teachers still depend on testing to measure achievement and proficiency in language learning. Even the best teachers may need some help in constructing reliable test items. Moreover, almost any language-instruction program requires the preparation and administration of tests and it is only to the extent that certain common testing mistakes have been avoided that such tests can be rightly utilized for selection, diagnosis or evaluation purposes. In this paper, a list of common testing problems are discussed which have been drawn from wide experience with tests prepared for the classroom and may therefore be representative. It is intended as a kind of checklist to serve as a guideline for EFL teachers in the preparation of their own examinations. These twenty common mistakes were first outlined in Grant Henning article (1982). These have been grouped into four categories as follows: general examination characteristics, item characteristics, test validity concerns, and administrative and scoring issues. Five specific mistakes have been identified under each of these categories. One example from real tests has been provided for some of the mistakes. While some overlap may exist in categories of mistakes and methods of remediation, the authors believe that each of these mistakes constitutes a genuine problem which, if resolved, will result in fair and reliable language tests.

DR. NOR ADRIAN M. PALAMING & ROMMEL P. MANZON
SILVER JUBILEE PRIVATE SCHOOL& INTERNATIONAL MARITIME COLLEGE, OMAN

CORRELATION OF STUDENTS' READING HABITS TO THEIR VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE AND READING COMPREHENSION

A descriptive-correlational design is used in this study to determine the relationship of students' reading habits and their vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Students' reading habits are described in terms of preferred reading materials, the frequency of reading, time spent in reading, the purposes of reading and reading preferences wherein they were asked to answer a checklist of questionnaire on reading habits. The stratified random sampling method was used. In this study, two instruments were used to gather data: a survey questionnaire and a two-section test on vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. The survey questionnaire gathered the data on the following aspects of reading habits of the students namely: reading materials used, frequency of reading, time spent in reading, the purpose of reading and reading preferences to assess what reading habits the students possessed. For the second part, the first component was the vocabulary knowledge through context clues, synonyms, antonyms, verbal analogies and recognizing definition to determine the meaning of the italicized word in the sentence. A 50-item multiple choice test on vocabulary was prepared by the researchers. A modified twenty item - multiple choice reading comprehension test was the second component which was prepared by the researchers which served as an instrument to measure the students' reading comprehension. It carried a reading passage wherein the students identified the main idea from the text. The reliability and validity of the instruments used were carefully considered. Before the administration of the research instruments, the researcher conducted a dry-run and asked experts in reading to comment. From the gathered data, the relationship of the three variables was established.

MR. PRAVEEN ALLURI

MAZOON *UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OMAN*

ENHANCING ELT THROUGH FILMS IN GENERAL FOUNDATION PROGRAM

ELT through films in General Foundation Program is a practical research paper which aims at exploiting of new technologies in English Language Teaching in order to develop linguistic competence and learner autonomy of students in the General Foundation Program(GFP). Research in communicative approach to language has shown that competence in oral and written language grows as the learners actively use the language in and out of the classroom. The purpose of this research paper is to engage learners in activities that demand their autonomous participation. The research is carried out across different levels and groups in the GFP. The research data collected is empirical and qualitative in nature. The activities based on films expose the learners to authentic language input, help them to learn how language operates, and challenge them to use the language independently. The rich visual imagery, the action and gestures of the films provide the students with multi-sensory input (Arcario, 1993). Infusing technology into education serves a variety of purposes in language teaching. The observation of cultural aspects such as customs and humor or culturally specific use of the language such as idioms helps to understand the function of the language. An innovative and a resourceful teacher can facilitate improved results in not only developing students' linguistic competence but also promoting their higher order critical and reflective thinking skills. Hence it is suggested that a judicious selection of digital materials along with several learner-friendly tasks should be incorporated in the curriculum of language teaching.

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MS. PRIYA MATHEW, PROF. HILARY NESI & DR. BENET VINCENT
MIDDLE EAST COLLEGE, OMAN & COVENTRY UNIVERSITY, UK

NOMINALIZATIONS IN CASE STUDY TEXTS IN THE OMANI CORPUS OF ACADEMIC WRITING-CIVIL ENGINEERING (OCAW-CE)

Nominalization is widely acknowledged to be a distinctive feature of academic writing, and a powerful linguistic device. It exploits grammatical metaphor to achieve communicative purposes such as conciseness, stance, cohesion and impersonality. Within the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework it is explained as a kind of metaphorical re-construal, by which processes (e.g. *transform*) and qualities (e.g. *capable*) are transformed into entities (e.g. *transformation; capability*). We need more investigations of the use of this linguistic feature in university texts, especially to uncover the problems faced by students when writing in specific disciplines and producing specific genres This paper describes the use of nominalization in a sub-corpus of Case Study texts taken from the Omani Corpus of Academic English-Civil Engineering (OCAW-CE), and then compares nominalization use by Omani and British university students with reference to a sub-corpus of the British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus containing Case Studies from Engineering. The study used a formal identification method (Biber 1988) which counted as nominalizations nouns with the suffixes *–ity, -ment, -ness, -tion*, to retrieve concordance lines containing nominalizations from the two corpora. This quantitative method was, however, complemented by qualitative analysis of nominalization functions and patterning. The findings show that Omani and British students used nominalization to almost the same extent, but in rather different ways. The talk will discuss some of the problems that the Omani students faced regarding nominalization, taking examples from their texts. It will also suggest some pedagogical interventions to help Omani student writers use nominalizations more appropriately.

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DR. RADHIKA LAKSHMI. S.N
MIDDLE EAST COLLEGE, OMAN

INTRODUCING E-PORTFOLIOS TO PREVENT PLAGIARISM

There are many effective tools available to make learning interesting in an EFL classroom. One such tool is an e-portfolio. This session will give teachers an idea on how to incorporate technology in learning and will demonstrate how e-portfolios support assessment in a language classroom. E-portfolios serve as a pedagogical tool to prevent plagiarism as it is one of the authentic ways to assess the students' performance during the course and also to ensure that assessments are explicit, valid and reliable. Plagiarism could be prevented to a large extent by introducing the students to new forms of formative assessment that involve timely feedback from the module instructor during the course. Thus, introducing e-portfolios at tertiary level can bring about a transformation in teaching, learning and assessment that could effectively contribute to the students' academic success.

The study explores the piloting of e-portfolio in English for Special Purposes course for undergraduate students at a private college in Oman as part of their formative assessment in order to prevent plagiarism and also to motivate the learners to showcase their coursework in a digital format. A qualitative and quantitative survey was conducted to evaluate the efficacy of the practice in ESP module and the results of the study indicate that the learners seem to have recognized the learning potential of e-portfolios, as their response to the coursework is quite encouraging.

RAHMA ABDULLAH RASHID AL AMARI & NUSAIBA SHUKRY AL SULAIMANI
MODERN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS & SCIENCE, OMAN

PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS AT THE STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER AT MCBS: TUTORING SESSIONS AND TUTORIAL LABS

No one can deny the invaluable advantages of the performance enhancement programs (e.g., tutoring sessions and tutorial classes) at an academic institution. Running such programs, either individualized or in groups, holds a promise in its outcomes as they have proven to be effective in catering to learners' needs, improving learners' autonomy and confidence, and helping students at risk. Students at risk of failing have the tendency to give up the moment they feel like they stand no chance of passing. Similarly, average or well-performing students may suffer from finding systematic proper guidance and support when needed. To address this concern, the Student Success Center at the Foundation Program in MCBS offers individualized tutoring (walk-in sessions) and group tutorial classes (remedial sessions for repeating students) for the purposes of being there for students and helping them meet the learning outcomes and their academic goals. These sessions are given by students' own teacher, other departments, or their trained peers. In this presentation, we will reason why tutoring and tutorial sessions are the fundamental components in the Foundation programs. Then, we will familiarize the audience with the process and procedures we designed for tutoring and tutorial classes, share students' feedback about them and results of the effectiveness of these programs on tutee's academic performance. We end the presentation by addressing the undertaken challenges and areas for improvement. Data is collected through Tutees' progress form reports, students' feedback forms, and a case study.

REEJA RIYAZ
MIDDLE EAST COLLEGE, OMAN

DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC: A SCAFFOLDING TECHNIQUE USING PASS TO IMPROVE FOUNDATION STUDENTS' LANGUAGE SKILLS

Disparity between time frame and linguistic improvements expected in the one year foundation programme, offered to develop English language proficiency of Omani EFL learners, has always been an issue among students and teachers, especially in a mixed ability classroom environment. Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) were introduced among Foundation Level 1 students as a supplemental instruction to scaffold learning enhancement as part of a diagnostic clinic where students were encouraged to identify their learning preferences and weakness areas. PASS provide informal opportunities to work together, review notes and understand core concepts of a taught lesson for students. The study evaluates the use of PASS and its effectiveness in diagnostic clinic sessions from student perspectives. It also analyses the impact of PASS on students' performance in writing skills. Foundation Level 1 students' feedback was taken through questionnaires and interviews and their writing skills improvement at different stages were also recorded. Findings indicate that PASS as a scaffolding technique provided a different learning experience to students and genuine opportunities for them to improve their linguistic skills.

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DR. REEMA SRIVASTAVA & MOHAMMED RASHID
MIDDLE EAST COLLEGE, OMAN

WHO IS AT EDGE - TUTOR OR TUTEE?

Benjamin Franklin said, "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn."

The shift from teacher-led to student-centered classes has been hailed as a milestone in order to foster learner autonomy and productive learning. Peer tutoring or peer assisted learning is an effective instructional strategy that involves active and interactive participative learning process resulting in a deeper understanding of concepts for both 'Tutors' and 'Tutees'. The effect of peer tutoring on students' achievement, particularly, the benefits of peer tutoring for tutors were examined in this study conducted at a private college in Oman. The study investigates the performance of the peer tutors and their tutees in the General Foundation and Undergraduate Programmes through an online survey, personal interviews and in-class performance. The results revealed some interesting benefits for both the 'Tutors' and the 'Tutees'. For the 'Tutors' it was a bolstering experience as it led to increased knowledge and skills; self-confidence; and a sense of responsibility. The 'Tutees' on the other hand developed – (i) a better liking for the subject concerned; (ii) better cooperation skills among their peers; (iii) increased motivation to study a particular subject; (iv) better communication Skills; (v) better stress management; and (vi) confidence. Peer tutoring is seen as a great advantage to gain learner autonomy to reap the full benefits of academic life by nurturing innate talent and abilities.

DR. RUEL F. ANCHETA
GULF COLLEGE, OMAN

THE READING ABILITY OF EFL LEARNERS: THE CASE OF SELECTED LEVEL 3 STUDENTS OF GULF COLLEGE

This study was conducted to analyze the reading ability of EFL learners which focused on the comprehension skills of Level 3 students of Gulf College enrolled in the first semester of the Foundation programme in the academic year 2016-2017. The aim of this study is to find out the level of reading comprehension of the students and identify what factors contribute to poor comprehension skills and come up with an intervention to help students of Level 3.

In an effort to determine the reading comprehension of the Level 3 students, the researcher used a descriptive method of research and purposive sampling technique. A diagnostic reading test was administered to the two batches of Level 3 students under him and all these students were the respondents of the study. These groups of students were given a teacher-made reading test to identify their comprehension ability in terms of noting details, inferring, predicting outcomes, getting the main idea, and vocabulary building.

Result showed that 78 percent of the students are poor in predicting outcomes and getting the main idea. Inferring is also another skill that have low scores at 75.6 percent followed by vocabulary building and noting details with 56.2 percent and 53.6 percent respectively. This implies that the students have not developed their higher order thinking skills in reading and that most of the Level 3 students are struggling readers. Their comprehension ability needs to be reinforced.

MRS. RUQAYA AL SALEHI

HIGHER COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, OMAN

TEACHING VOCABULARY DIFFERENTLY

Research has shown that second language readers depend greatly on vocabulary knowledge and the lack of that knowledge is the major difficulty for L2 readers to overcome (Huckin, 1995). McCarthy (1990: viii) states that: "[n]o matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meaning, communication in L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way". I strongly believe that teachers should have a variety of activities so that a vocabulary lesson doesn't become boring. The activities covered in the presentation will help students to improve other skills. The presentation will cover different fun activities such as "semantic Maps" which mainly reflect students' thoughts on words that arise to mind when they perceive them. This is splendid because it motivates prior learning. Also, "Word Pairs" in which students are given words in pairs and are asked to guess if the words are alike, contrasting, go together, or are unconnected will be discussed. Another one will be the "Act it out "activity where students take turns acting out one of the vocabulary words, while the other students guess the word. The next one will be "Write a Story" which is one of the best ways for students to remember words while using them in stories. In addition, the "Sorting Hat" activity will also be introduced where students have to sort words into categories. Finally, Comic Strip Word Activity" which helps students imagine the words that are being taught will be taken up. It helps in understanding. Most interestingly, the audience will be shown pictures and videos done in my classes!

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DR. SAMIA NAQVI
MIDDLE EAST COLLEGE, OMAN

CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATING ACADEMIC SOURCES IN ASSESSED ASSIGNMENTS: A CASE OF ARAB EFL LEARNERS

Integration of academic sources is an essential component of academic writing. It adds authenticity to the work, indicates that the student has read extensively, and upholds academic integrity of the written piece. However, according to the author's experience of teaching undergraduate level EFL students, using academic sources and citing references effectively is one of the most daunting features of academic writing. Therefore, this study investigated the challenges faced by students in citing academic sources while composing research based reports and, by the same token, the reasons behind them. A mixed method approach was used where data were collected through student questionnaires, student focus groups, interviews with faculty members, and students' assignment reports. The participants included 97 undergraduate-level Engineering students enrolled in three sessions of an EAP course called *Communication Skills*. The paper reports on the details of the research-based assignment and the measures used by the author to support students in integrating sources in the report. It was observed that the students found integration of academic sources as the most problematic requirements and features of the assignment. The data revealed that these challenges are direct consequences of students' linguistic backgrounds; lack of appropriate writing skills; difficulty in comprehending articles due to the technical jargon used; and high word count of the academic papers. In response to that, the author strongly recommends the incorporation of academic literacies in the curricula of specialist courses as well as prompt, closer collaboration between language instructors and core specialists. Though this study was limited to the students of a specific course, it is hoped that the findings will help other EFL and EAP instructors apprehend the crux of the issue and devise effective strategies to overcome the above mentioned challenge.

SHAHZAD AHMAD, DR. FAIZ SATHI ABDULLAH & MR. YUNUS IBRAHIM
*AL ZAHRA COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, OMAN*

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME…: EXPLOITING LITERARY TEXT IN THE ESL/EFL CLASSROOM

The paper argues that literature provides authentic materials for language learning, in addition to other real world texts (cartoons, advertisements, or multimodal texts downloaded from the Internet) that may be used in the classroom in three fundamental ways. Hence, the paper aims to demonstrate how literary texts can be employed in the ESL/EFL classroom to facilitate language acquisition and related critical skills, preferably at the pre-intermediate stage and above. Text selections from three popular novels were analyzed using TALO (Text as Linguistic Object), TASP (Text as Stimulus for Production), and Johns and Davies' (1983) TAVI (Text as Vehicle of Information) as frameworks to design language learning activities. Source texts were selected from Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*, Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and Martel's *Life of Pi* in view of these novels' current salience in the literary world to address key research questions: 1) What reading skills and sub-skills can the literary texts help develop among ESL/EFL students? 2) What aspects of grammar can students highlight in the texts? 3) How can the texts be used as reflections of social reality to generate discussion of critical issues among students? The fact that the novels here selected have been produced as films that the learners could also watch in whole or part is expected to stimulate further critical appreciation. The paper concludes that the value of such informed use of any literary text is that it exploits the literature-language nexus to provide the synergy for student learning in the ESL/EFL classroom now, beyond, and forever.

SOHEIL ATASHIAN & KHAIRIYA HAMOOD AL-BAHRI
UNIVERSITY OF NIZWA, OMAN

TOWARDS ARAB STUDENTS' GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN ACADEMIC WRITING AND THEIR PERCEPTION
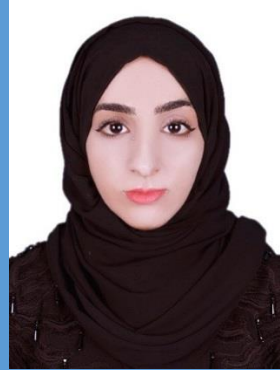
Writing plays an integral role in the academic life of students opting to study English majors. Background study reveals that 'grammar' is one of the most significant challenges to students' academic writing performance. Data in this research was collected from 200 students of B.A. in Education (with the sub-major in English) at the University of Nizwa. Their writing samples were analyzed for grammatical mistakes they had made, and then an interview was conducted. Students' feedback was looked into against their actual mistakes in writing. Finally, the sources of these errors were investigated and some solutions are proposed.

STEPHEN PELLERINE

MILITARY TECHNOLOGICAL COLLEGE, OMAN

ALTERNATIVE PEDAGOGIES AND APPROACHES FOR TEACHING LITERACY IN THE 21ST CENTURY CLASSROOM

This presentation provides an overview of 21st century literacy instruction, offering alternative approaches. For this presentation "literacy", in the 21st century sense, primarily for English Language Learners, includes conventional reading and writing while explicitly embedding elements of digitization (i.e. basic computing skills, inclusion of images, and online collaborations) in TESOL contexts. A variety of ways will be proposed that centre on collective and collaborative learning models aiming to develop the collective intellect of the learning group.

The emphasis of this presentation will be to shed light on a range of activities that may be interventions transferrable to various educational contexts. The presenter has tested and carefully considered learning theories supporting such interventions with a wide range of proficiency levels of English from non-literate, vulnerable populations of internal migrants in Ethiopia to highly proficient graduate students at both Harvard and Columbia Universities.

Methods trialed, for example, include: authorship initiatives, integrating visual arts, and scaffolded writing projects. A key to successful initiatives is going beyond the classic teacher-student relationship and giving students a "real" audience, as far-reaching as possible.

Many tangible examples will be given for illustrative purposes. These samples were gathered from ethnographic field work carried out 1) in the UAE and Ethiopia with low-level ESL students, migrant workers, whom volunteered for ELL training, in addition to 2) intermediate ESL leaners in Media and Engineering Programs within the UAE, and 3) advanced ESL learners at Harvard University's intensive summer ESL program. Artifacts and data had been collected and suggestions made aimed at a range of levels that although aimed at ESOL specifically, yet are easily transferable to various academic fields and disciplines.

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DR. SUSAN JONES
MIDDLE EAST COLLEGE, OMAN

ANTECEDENT INTERVENTIONS FOR ARABIC COLLEGE STUDENTS

The question of the use of behaviorism in the classroom is intensively debated. My colleagues and I are multinational and find behaviors like tardiness, talking in Arabic in the class and the use of cell phones to be inappropriate. My goal was to attempt to eradicate these by initiating an antecedent intervention.My baccalaureate is in psychology of which behaviorism is a fundamental concept.

Its main proponents are: Pavlov (classical conditioning) whereby a stimulus establishes the desired response, Edward Thorndike and John B. Watson (comparative behaviorism) who documented observable behavior and Skinner (radical behaviorism) who researched operant conditioning. Pavlov used animals to validate his theories, Thorndike and Watson studied elementary children and Skinner, as well. The latter is of particular interest because he used antecedents and consequences to change behavior.

While antecedent interventions have been implemented with some success at elementary levels, mine was intended for post-secondary Arabic students. While other psychologists strictly reinforced positive behavior, mine also targeted negative behavior which according to radical behaviorism should have been eradicated within weeks of the course commencement.

I used three colours of tokens: red, white and blue. Then I explained my rules to my students: speak English, no mobiles phones unless the teacher approves, completion of assignments, punctuality and respect for others. The red token was negative, the white was positive 1 and the blue was positive 2. If one of the rules was broken, I placed a red token on the student's desk. Any attempt to answer with a sentence or reading was presented with a white token. When the student demonstrated better responses, I not only awarded a white token but I removed the red one. If the student had an outstanding response, then I awarded a blue token. Within weeks, I no longer awarded red tokens.

To monitor my Antecedent Intervention, I recorded the token daily, administered a questionnaire, kept a journal and conducted a focus group interview with my students. Students ranging from low proficiency to high proficiency were asked to discuss the antecedent intervention. Participants in my session will be familiarized with my antecedent intervention and will walk away with novel strategies and techniques they can themselves utilize confidently in their own classes.

DR. TAREQ AL DAMEN
MIDDLE EAST COLLEGE, OMAN

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF M-READER IN PROMOTING EXTENSIVE READING AMONG ARAB EFL LEARNERS

Extensive reading (ER) is extremely important for EFL learners as it helps them build vocabulary and develop their reading comprehension skills. However, getting Arab EFL learners to engage in ER might be a very difficult task especially when they lack motivation and enthusiasm. Therefore, the current study was an attempt to explore the effects of online ER tools such as M-reader on Arab EFL learners' motivation to read extensively and autonomously. The study was conducted on first year college students enrolled in the General Foundation Programme at a private college in Oman where M-reader was introduced for the first time. M-reader is a free online tool which helps educational institutions to manage extensive reading. It supports students to read and understand graded readers by taking online quizzes which are available in its database. A mixed-method approach was used in collecting data through student questionnaires, focus interviews conducted with the top readers, records of students' reading progress, and samples of motivational strategies used by the researcher such as e-mails and videos. Findings revealed the learners' attitudes towards the online extensive reading approach as well as the discrepancies in feedback on whether they have developed an autonomous reading culture following exposure to M-reader.

DR. TONY WATERMAN
ROYAL AIR FORCE OF OMAN

MAKING LEARNERS SUCCESSFUL SPEAKING-TEST TAKERS

Delegates are engaged throughout the workshop. First, delegates review their own experiences taking test as learners and then they consider their preparation for and conducting of tests as teachers. The workshop highlights the range of speaking tests learners may have to take during their English language learning career starting with placement tests and culminating in high stakes examinations such as IELTS or TOEFL. The range of English courses types having tests is also covered: general English; English for academic purposes (EAP); and English for specific purposes (ESP) amongst others. A review of academic literature follows covering key areas of concern for teachers preparing their learners for speaking tests including: domains of speaking; aspects of effective speaking; and attributes of successful learner speakers. Proceeding from theory to practice, delegates discuss the importance of having and covering clear teaching objectives and learner outcomes by implementing a systematic approach to test preparation which focuses on the requirements and criteria of the target speaking test. The presenter advocates publishing assessment criteria so learners realize what they need to produce. There follow several example activities which can fulfil roles both as practice and test material thereby constructing a seamless transition from test practice to test performance. A checklist is then presented covering teacher actions which facilitate greater learner success with all test-types. The workshop concludes with key aspects of successful test preparation followed by delegates' questions.

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DR. TULIKA MISHRA & ABDEL SEID HAMID
MAJAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

PROMOTING LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH LITERATURE: AN ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

As language lecturers, the authors have observed that learners fail to grasp the linguistic elements due to lack of reading habits. Hence, the need of innovative methods to promote reading was felt. Literary texts can provide the basis and environment for a variety of linguistic activities (Lazer, 1990). This paper proposes to identify the importance of literary texts in enhancing students' linguistic abilities like comprehension; investigating lexical items; grammar and sentence structure; metaphorical use of language; idioms; author's tone; and cohesive devices. The proposed study intends to explore the value of literary texts in order to enthuse and motivate the language learners through literature. In this study, learners will be introduced to literary texts for language learning along with enhanced high- order thinking skills, which is the core learning outcome of any subject

Two Short stories were selected, namely, "The Gift of the Magi" and "The Necklace" for the study. A number of questions were framed, for example, "What does the word "Desolate" mean in "The Necklace" by Maupassant?" ,"Which part of speech is it?" and given to the participants. Data was collected from 15 participants. Questions ranged from linguistic elements, like, grammatical structure, vocabulary, general comprehension and interpretation. The data was analysed through qualitative methods, basically tests, and the result showed a vast improvement in the participants' structural and metaphorical understanding of words and phrases in context. The findings and recommendations would be shared and discussed during the course of the presentation

VALERIE ANN LEWIS

AL MUSAANA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, OMAN

INCORPORATING STUDENT LEADERSHIP SKILLS ON CURRENT PRE-SESSIONAL EFL FOUNDATION PROGRAMMES

Omanisation in education must correlate with the needs of the national business community. The knowledge-oriented economic success of Oman posits strong youth workforces equipped not only with relevant and efficient skills for the workplace but also appropriate qualities, attitudes and mindsets that demonstrate initial professionalism and accountability. How to achieve this goal? Let's find and plan routes to provide open spaces in the classroom learning experience for students to lead activities so that they become more accountable for the quality and practicality of their learning. A cognitive apprenticeship model emphasizes the dynamic exemplar role of the teacher in consciousness-raising, training, priming, modelling, demo-ing leadership mindsets and patterns of planning as evidenced in the very way she teaches and transmits lesson activities. 'Student leadership' is implemented by delegating peer roles for students to group-lead in the preparation, creation, planning and implementing of their in-class activities based on curricular content. Students need to struggle with and invest in ideas and demonstrate responsible, innovative behaviours by planning and orchestrating the procedures of explaining, guiding, exploring, documenting, displaying, presenting curricular content from their prescribed course books / worksheets. They need spaces to share what they have learnt and discovered openly and publicly in a responsive classroom arena with their peers within constructive guiding parameters set by the teacher. Prompting students to bring course objectives alive with more willingness and inspiration in handling language input and output will establish a more intellectualized college culture. This approach links to effective Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) skills acquisition.

DR. VAN LOUIS LO, ASMA ALAUFI AND SAMIR MOHAND,
MIDDLE EAST COLLEGE, OMAN

LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN AUTHENTIC SETTINGS: A CASE STUDY OF FOUNDATION LEVEL STUDENTS IN OMAN

The paper concerned itself with unveiling the impact of learning English Language through the implementation of an authentic task-based method, dubbed English Souq (or Market English), currently employed at a higher education institution in Muscat, Oman. The present mixed-method study specifically aimed to find answers to the following research questions: (a) How do General Foundation Programme students assess the English Souq initiative? (b) What challenges, if ever, do the English Souq participants face during the simulation of the activity? And (c) What impacts do they state the English Souk has on developing their oral communicative skills? The results obtained via a survey administered to fifty GFP English Souq participants as well as focus interviews conducted with eight voluntary subjects were mapped against the views of six GFP teachers. They revealed a high degree of common satisfaction amongst the student and faculty respondents with the aim and intended outcomes of the English Souq approach. They also indicated that the innovative practice had a positive correlation with developing learners' language skills, irrespective of the challenges they faced during the enactment of the activity. Implication of these and other issues for further investigation are discussed.

Parallel Sessions (Morning)

10:40 – 12:40

Session 1 (IBR 105) ICT for Language Learning	Session 2 (IBR 106) Academic writing	Session 3 (IBR 107) Communication strategies	Session 4 (IBR 109) Curriculum design
10:40-11:40			
Session Chair: *Dr. Zlatinka Kovacheva* *Middle East College*	*Session Chair:* *Mr. Eliot Wright Muscat University*	*Session Chair:* *Dr. Tulika Misra* *Majan College*	*Session Chair:* *Mr. Kerrin Felix Burnell* *Sultan Qaboos University*
10: 40 to 11:00			
Introducing ePortfolios to prevent plagiarism *Dr. Radhika Lakshmi. S.N*	Nominalizations in Case Study Texts in the Omani Corpus of Academic Writing-Civil Engineering (OCAW-CE) *Ms. Priya Mathew, Prof. Hilary Nesi, & Dr. Benet Vincent*	Influence of Oral Communication Task-type and Learner Variables on Use of Planning and Evaluation Strategies by Omani EFL Learners *Dr. Asfiya Khan*	Alternative Pedagogies and Approaches for Teaching Literacy in the 21st Century *Stephen Pellerine*
11:10 to 11:20			
Promoting Language Skills Integration in a Virtual Learning Environment *Dr. Daisy Lamis, Pramila Kunhunni Krishnan, Aliya Parveen*	Role of guest lecturer in research proposal writing: perception of students *Dr. Larysa Nikolayeva*	Making Learners Successful Speaking-test takers *Dr. Tony Waterman*	Structuring the Curriculum: General Education Principles and Standards Matter *Dr. Meena Luchana Inguva & Dr. Victoria Tuzlukova*
11:20 to 11:40			
The effectiveness of M-reader in promoting extensive reading among Arab EFL learners *Dr. Tareq Al Damen*	Challenges of Integrating Academic Sources in Assessed Assignments: A Case of Arab EFL Learners *Dr. Samia Naqvi*	Learning English Language in Authentic Settings: A Case Study of Foundation Level Students in Oman *Dr. Van Louis Lo, Asma Al Aufi & Samir Mohand*	Language Needs Analysis for English Curriculum Validation *Leovigildo lito d. Mallillin*

Session 1 (IBR 105) ICT for Language Learning	Session 2 (IBR 106) Academic writing	Session 3 (IBR 107) Communication strategies	Session 4 (IBR 109) Curriculum design
11:40 to 12:40			
Session Chair: *Dr. Joseph Cuarteros* *Gulf College*	*Session Chair:* *Dr. Nizar Al Bassam* *Middle East College*	*Session Chair:* *Ms. Pooja Om Prakash* *Scientific College of Design*	*Session Chair:* *Dr. Ankita Joshi* *Middle East College*
11:40 to 12:00			
Enhancing ELT through Films in General Foundation Program *Praveen Alluri*	The Role, Importance and Impact of Spell check *Dr. Geetali Deori*	Male and Females EFL Teachers' Consciousness of Self- disclosure: A Case Study of Al Baha University, KSA **Ahmed F Shoeib**	Incorporating Student Leadership Skills on Current Pre-sessional EFL Foundation programmes *Valerie Ann Lewis*
12:00 to 12:20			
Using Padlet as a Vocabulary Development Tool **Mohammed Ibrahim Farooq, Yevette Mathew, Majan**	Towards Arab Students' Grammatical Errors in Academic Writing and their Perception **Soheil Atashian, Khairiya Hamood Al-Bahri**	The Reading Ability of EFL Leaners: The Case of Selected Level 3 Students of Gulf College **Dr. Ruel F. Ancheta**	Faculty's Perseptions on, and Experiences with, Adult Learners: A Quantitative Investigation *Jamel Terzi Alemi*
12:20 to 12:40			
Developing writing Skills through Songs as Audio Materials **Dr. Mariam Tufekchyan & Kamal Saleh Balloumi**	Students' Competence in Composition Writing: Towards a Proposed Intervention Strategy Plan **Dr. Arturo G. Palaming**	Reading Circles: Reading can be a Social Activity *Erika Van Winden*	The Relationship between Critical Thinking and Learning English **Dr. Muhammed Akram**

Parallel Sessions (Afternoon)

2:10 to 3:30

Session 1 (IBR 105) ICT for Language Learning	Session 2 (IBR 106) Vocabulary Development	Session 3 (IBR 107) Peer Assisted Language Learning	Session 4 (IBR 109) Curriculum design & Language through Literature
2:10 to 3:30			
Session Chair: *Ms. Deepali Bhatnagar* *Middle East College*	*Session Chair:* *Mr. Tony Waterman* *Royal Air force of Oman*	*Session Chair:* *Mr. Suleiman Adawi* *Middle East College*	*Session Chair:* *Mr. Roby Varghese* *Waljat College*
2: 10 to 2:30			
Technology Embedded Classroom on Students' Participation *Aziza Amir Ali & Anita Teresa Boggu*	**It's your Turn!** *Kremana Krumova*	Autonomy through Guided Discovery *Fazilat Jahan*	Creating a Constructively Aligned Foundation Programme in the Sultanate of Oman: Observations and Reflections so Far *Eliot Wright*
2:20 to 2:40			
Ghosts and the Machines: Addressing the New Plagiarisms *Marcus Richey*	Correlation of Students' Reading Habits to their Vocabulary Knowledge and Reading Comprehension *Dr. Nor Adrian M. Palaming & Rommel P. Manzon*	Who is at the Edge- Tutor or Tutee? *Dr. Reema Srivastava & Mohammad Rashid*	Benchmarking: The Context of Center for Preparatory Studies, Oman *Dr. Meena Lochana Inguva* Promoting
2:40 to 3:00			
M-Reader as a Stimulating and Challenging Tool for Extensive Reading: Teacher Perspectives from Oman *Mangala G. Raj*	Teaching vocabulary Differently *Ruqaiya Al Salehi*	Performance Enhancement Programs at the Student Success Center at MCBS: Tutoring Sessions and Tutorial Labs *Rahma Abdullah Al Amari & Nusaiba Shukri Al Sulaimani*	Language Learning through Literature: An Analysis and Evaluation *Dr. Tulika Misra & Abdel Seid Hamid*
3:00 to 3:20			
Antecedent Interventions for Arabic College Students *Dr. Susan Jones*	Twenty common testing Mistakes for EFL Teachers to Avoid *Noura Rashid Al Kalbani & Fatma Juma Al Alawi*	Diagnostic Clinic: A Scaffolding Technique Using PASS to Improve Foundation Students' Language Skills *Reeja Riyaz*	A Rose by any other Name… : Exploiting Literary Texts in the ESL/EFL Classroom *Shahzad Ahmed, Dr. Faiz Sathi Abdullah & Yunus Ibrahim*

Selected papers will be published as proceedings in the Arab World English Journal (AWEJ).

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MEC TESOL
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Middle East College

1st MEC TESOL Conference
29th March 2018
English in changing local and international contexts