

# FP Jareeda

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## Welcome to Issue 28

Mondher Chaabane, Chair of the Foundation Program's Newsletter Committee, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

Welcome to issue 28 of the Foundation Program's newsletter, FP Jareeda.

In this edition, you will read about the successful Qatar Math Day and the exceptional FP Entrepreneurial Showcase event. You will also find a plethora of articles about the events and projects coordinated by the FP Students Affairs Office. These include mainly competitions, Al-Qabas Program and the remarkable animated movie and story publication at the National Museum of Qatar.

This issue also sheds the light on the thought-provoking and engaging training workshops conducted by Dr. Sara Cushing for the Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE).

You will also read various intriguing and entertaining articles about the use of educational technology and the importance of sleep.

Finally and as part of the FP's efforts to acknowledge faculty contributions, you will find an interesting and informative interview with one of the best tech-savvy lecturers in FPDE, David Bartsch.



Dr. Mondher Chaabane: Photograph courtesy of Mondher Chaabane

I hope that you will enjoy reading our latest newsletter and we wish you a lovely summer break!

## The Third Qatar Math Day 2023

Hayat El Samad, Assistant Director for Student Affairs, Foundation Program

The Third Qatar Math Day conference was held on January 26, 2023. The conference was co-organized by Qatar University (QU) Foundation Program Department of Math (FPDM), the Deanship of General Studies, and the Depart-

ment of Mathematics, Statistics, and Physics (MSP) in the College of Arts and Sciences in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Qatar (MOEHE). Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) funded the confer-

ence, which aimed to develop scientific knowledge, the exchange of experiences and research in different math fields, and to support mathematics education in the country.

The Third Qatar Math Day opening ceremony was attended by many key figures from MOEHE and QU. Among the attendees were Mrs. Maha Alruwaili, Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs at MOEHE, Prof. Ibrahim Al-Kaabi Dean of General Studies, Prof. Ahmed Elzatahry, Dean of College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Hezam Alawah, Director of the Foundation Program, and Prof. Rana Sobh , Dean of College of Business and Economics.



Opening speech of the Third Qatar Math day 2023: Photograph courtesy of QU Public Relations Office



Attendees of the Third Qatar Math day 2023: Photograph courtesy of QU Public Relations Office

Dr. Mohamed Ben Haj Rhouma, Head of Department of FPDM, thanked everyone involved in making the Third Qatar Math Day a success. In his speech, he said, “I recall addressing you during the Second Qatar Math Day on this very platform about the importance of math at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak. Math models provided essential tools for predicting trends and managing the pandemic.” He then expressed his deep gratitude for being able to hold the conference again to gather math teachers and researchers to exchange expertise and best math teaching practices, and advance research in the field of mathematics.

The event included various talks, seminars, and workshops that focused on the latest developments in math education, and ways to employ the correct educational methods to advance the process of learning and research in mathematics. The conference invited international speakers from Finland, Oman, Kuwait, and the USA, and local speakers from MOEHE, Weill Cornell University, and QU. Plenary sessions discussed innovative learning environments and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) education in Finland, and the utilization of mathematical modeling in the field of epidemiology, specifically the correlation between malaria and the increase in HIV transmission.

According to registration records, there were 350 participants; this included presenters and attendees from QU, teachers from government schools, and students majoring in mathematics. The conference was a one-day comprehensive program that included two keynote speakers, seventeen seminars, and seven workshops addressing mathematics education, and pure and applied mathematics. A panel discussion explored the topics of education in the fields of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and STEAM.



Math Day workshop in progress: Photograph courtesy of QU Public Relations Office



# AI-Qabas Program 2023

Hayat El Samad, Assistant Director for Student Affairs, Foundation Program

Under the theme “For a Successful University Experience,” Qatar University’s Foundation Program (QUFP), under the Deanship of General Studies and in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE), launched AI-Qabas Program 2023 from February 5 to February 21, 2023 for the fifth year for high school students. Participation included 330 female and male high school students.

AI-Qabas Program educates high school students from grades 10 and 11 about university life and the skills required to succeed in their university studies and improve their English and math skills to enhance their successful enrollment in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and health majors at Qatar University. It also showcases QU’s learning environment to attract students.

AI-Qabas Program 2023 was offered over a period of three weeks. Weeks 1 and 3 included QU campus school visits; while virtual sessions were held during the second week. Fifteen schools participated in QU campus visits where 165 male and female students attended different sessions. Students participated in activities that raised awareness about math, English and critical thinking skills in “Braniac” and “Math Café” sessions. To simulate the work environment, students participated in relevant workshops such as “Let’s Design an App” and “Fashion Entrepreneurs”.

Testing strategies were emphasized throughout the AI-Qabas Program. Participating students received links to sample math and English tests prior to their campus visit. On arrival, students attended sessions regarding test-taking strategies for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), American College Testing (ACT), Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and QU placement tests. In collaboration with Qatar University’s Career Development Center, two sessions were held to raise awareness about career planning. Finally, some students participated in class visits to experience the learning environment in Qatar University.



High school students participating in AI-Qabas Program: Photograph courtesy of QU External Relations Department

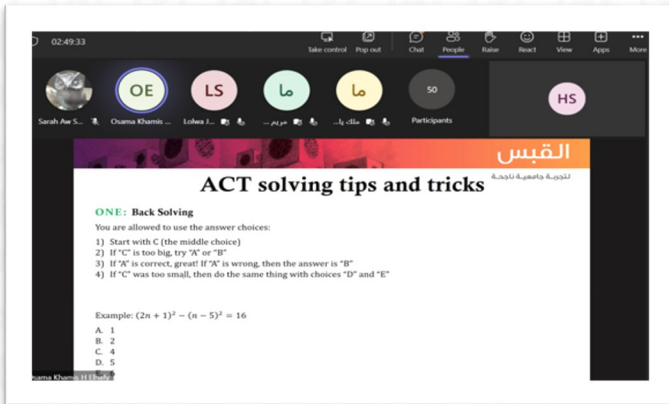


AI-Qabas Program workshop: Photograph courtesy of QU External Relations Department



AI-Qabas session about test taking strategies: Photograph courtesy of QU External Relations Department





Virtual session about ACT test: Visual courtesy of Ms. Hayat El Samad



QU Testing Center international exams and placement test: Visual courtesy of Dr. Walid Masoud, Manager of QU Testing Center



Al-Qabas students from Omar Bin Khattab High School: Photograph courtesy of Omar Bin Khattab High School

Al-Qabas Virtual Program was held over two days, with two virtual sessions delivered per day via Microsoft Teams. Sixteen FP faculty and staff members participated in organizing and delivering the program. As a result, 160 students attended the Al-Qabas Virtual Program. Sessions included various interactive and engaging activities that develop math and English language skills such as “Young Writers” and “Let’s Listen”. In addition, students benefited from test taking strategy sessions targeting skills required to pass IELTS and math-standardized tests, ACT and SAT.

To enhance successful enrollment in the university, QU’s Enrollment Outreach and Engagement Department presented a session about the admission requirements, dates and policies for QU and various QU colleges. In addition, Dr. Walid Masoud, Manager of Qatar University Testing Center, talked about different international exams and placement tests required for successful enrollment in STEM.

Al-Qabas Program 2023 presenters created active and engaging sessions for the students as evidenced in the high number of student entries, comments and answers per session. In addition, the student’s survey showed a high satisfaction rate among students regarding how much they benefited from the sessions and college visits, and how Al-Qabas program contributed to their knowledge about different skills development.

Students’ feedback from an anonymous survey included comments such as the following:

“It was a great and unique experience. I received a lot of information about studying at the university level, planning for my studies and admission requirements for Qatar University.”

“The visit to Qatar University was very useful since it included a lot of active and engaging sessions, beneficial information in addition to meeting QU students and connecting with them.”

“Al-Qabas offered one of the best experiences because I was able to gain a good amount of information regarding math and English testing. I highly recommend adding more sessions and making the program longer.”



## FPDE hosts External Trainer on Assessment Sponsored by the Fellow Program, Department of State

Susan Saafan, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

The Academic Excellence & Professional Development Committee, with the cooperation of the US Embassy, arranged training sessions led by Dr. Sara Cushing, Professor and Chair of Applied Linguistics at Georgia State University, from January 15 to 26<sup>th</sup>, filling the brief hiatus between the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters. Dr. Cushing conducted six different sessions in the morning with a repeat session in the afternoon aimed at supporting English faculty in the areas of assessment, and informing teaching and writing test items. Dr. Cushing also met with representatives from the Testing Assessment Committee (TAC) and course leads to discuss assessment and course management.



Dr. Sara Cushing : Photograph courtesy of Ahmad Hazratzad



FP colleagues workshop discussion : Photograph courtesy of Ahmad Hazratzad

The first of the two overarching aims of the series of workshops for faculty was to promote awareness of the role of statistical analysis principles in understanding test scores and how to utilize this acquired knowledge to improve the quality and reliability of test item writing. The workshops aimed to be hands-on sessions during which data output on test items was analyzed, and discussed in small groups. In addition, Dr. Cushing touched on aspects of statistical analysis principles and application within Foundation Program language testing settings in the context of learning English as a foreign language.

The second aim of the workshops was to focus on how to promote teaching practices in writing classes through assessment. Promoting student interaction through assessment, preparing, using and modifying rubrics, and how to respond to various learner behaviors and giving more student-friendly writing feedback were topics tackled during the second week of Dr. Cushing's workshops.



Group discussion: Photograph courtesy of Ahmad Hazratzad

Dr. Cushing also offered all course leads tailor-made, specific one-on-one sessions as she had been asked to provide feedback on pacing elements in writing syllabi and on writing course rubrics. The Foundation Program faculty expressed their sincere appreciation for Dr. Cushing's efforts and expertise and the opportunity given by the US Embassy by sponsoring her visit. As David Bartsch, an FP English lecturer, commented, "We all need to be reminded of the fundamentals from time to time. The workshop served as a useful and timely reminder and refresher of how to effectively gain insights from our assessments and how to more effectively craft our assessments to adequately gauge student learning".

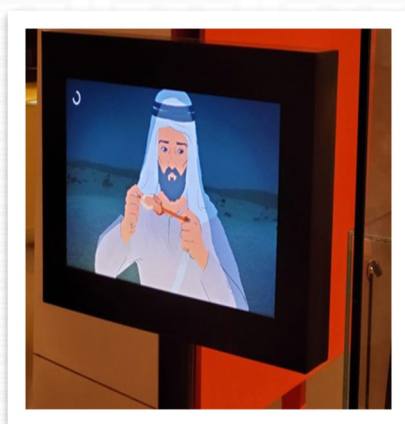


Dr. Sara Cushing & FP faculty : Photograph courtesy of Ahmad Hazratzad

## FP Project Culminates with Animated Movie and Story Publication at National Museum of Qatar

Jeff Maggard, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

On 26<sup>th</sup> October 2022, Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE) administrators and faculty attended the grand opening of "On the Move", an exhibition at National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) that was designed to teach World Cup visitors and Qatar's residents about the lives of nomadic cultures in Qatar, Mongolia and Central Sahara. The exhibition was opened by H.E. Sheikha Al-Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani along with other dignitaries and experts on nomadic cultures. The exhibition ran from 26 October 2022 through 14 January, 2023.



Animation Screenshot : Visual courtesy of Charles Fullerton

The exhibition included an animated movie called, "He Who Doesn't Know the Falcon Roasts It", which was orally collected from Qatari elders by FP student Taleb Mohammed Al-Athbah, and edited by FP faculty and administrators. The print version of this Qatari folktale is published in the opening chapter of *On the Move: Reframing Nomadic Pastoralism* (edited by Lila Abu-Lughod).

The book begins with the foreword by H.E. Sheikha Al-Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and is followed with the introduction by H.E. Sheikha Amna bint Abdulaziz Al Thani.

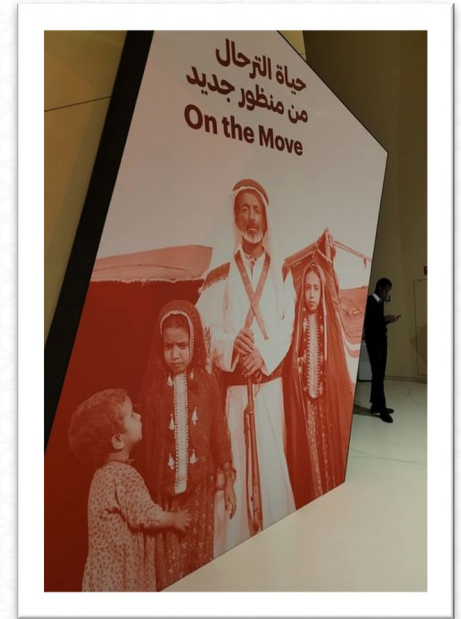


The articles are written by the exhibition's curators: Professor Lila Abu-Lughod, Department of Anthropology, Columbia University; Tania Al Majid, Associate Curator of Social History and Ethnography, National Museum of Qatar; Dr. Anja Fischer, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna; and Dr. Elizabeth Turk, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge.

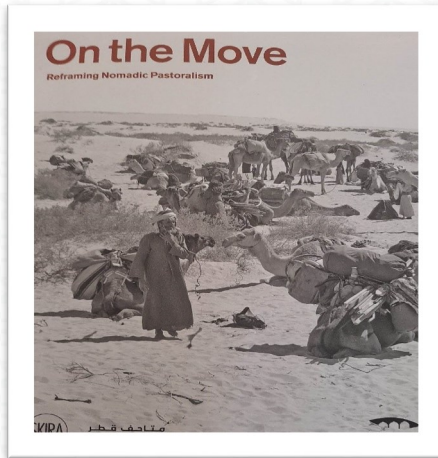
Management Team, the FPDE's Cultural Awareness Team Committee was established with the primary objective of developing FPDE students' language skills by teaching students how to collect and disseminate information about Qatar's intangible cultural assets. Specifically, the focus was for students to orally collect Qatari folktales from their families and publish them in a variety of forms.

From 2016-2018, approximately 100 Foundation Program students were trained by FPDE faculty members in oral storytelling collection methods and narrative writing methods. During this time, students collected nearly 50 folktales. They benefitted from this project by developing their language skills, cultural knowledge, research skills, narrative writing skills, bilingual literacy, translation skills, critical thinking skills, collaboration skills, and project management skills.

As an integral part of this extracurricular project, FPDE faculty worked with student authors to edit and refine the stories for publication. At the end of the initial editing phase, 19 stories were determined to be suitable for publication. In 2018, National Museum of Qatar approached the Foundation Program (FP) Management Team and expressed their interest in collaborating with the Cultural Awareness Team with the goal of future publication of the stories and permission was granted to move the project forward.



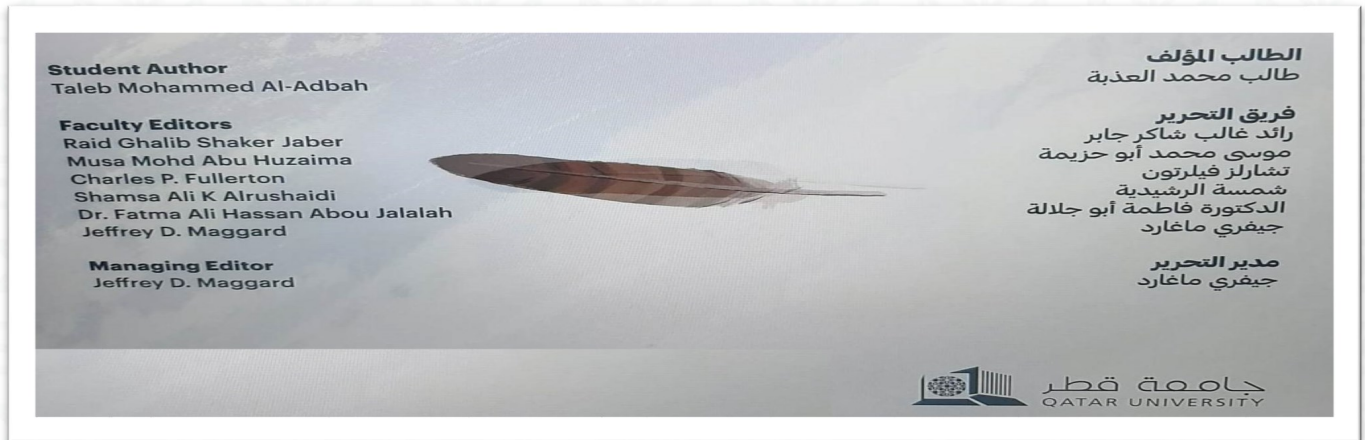
On the move exhibit entry: Visual courtesy of Charles Fullerton



Book cover: on the move: Visual courtesy of Qatar Museums

The production of the animated movie and publication of this story by NMoQ are the culmination of several years of work by the Foundation Program's effort to preserve intangible Qatari heritage. In 2016, under the guidance and support of the Foundation Program's Senior

The Cultural Awareness Team Committee wishes to extend their gratitude to the following members at NMoQ, Dr. Alexandra Bounia, Senior Museum Development Specialist; Evangelia Patmali, Human Science Exhibitions Researcher; and Professor Lila Abu-Lughod, Department of Anthropology, Columbia University. At Qatar University, the project would not have been successful without the never-ending support of Hayat El Samad, FP Assistant Director for Student Affairs, and Dr. Hezam Al-Awah, Foundation Program Director.



Animation credits: Visual courtesy Jeff Maggard

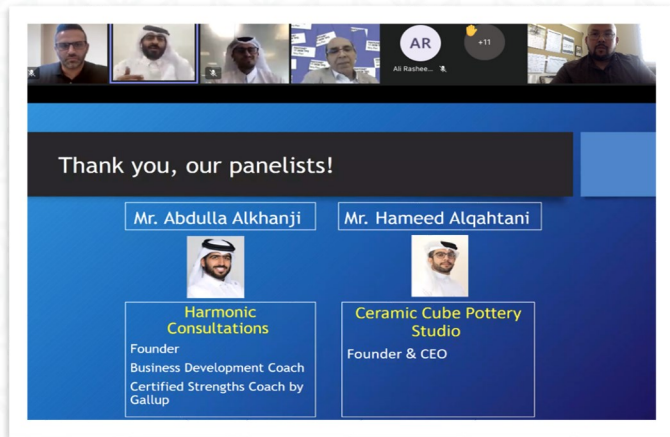
# The Foundation Program Department of English Entrepreneurial Panel Discussion

Conan Kmiecik, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

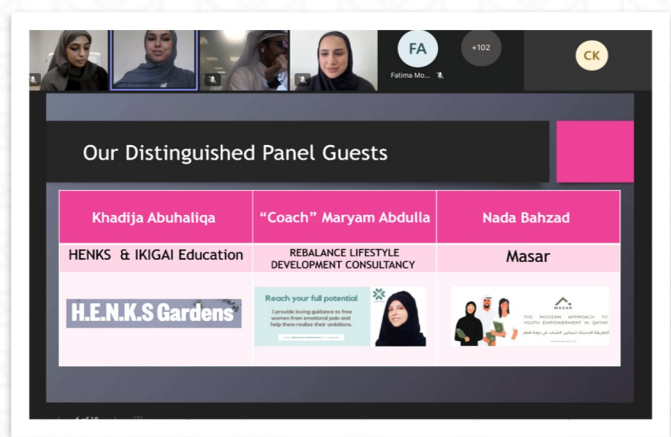
At Qatar University (QU), Entrepreneurial Education is one of the university's Excellence Themes. QU is keen on inspiring the next generations of Qatari entrepreneurs. Accordingly, to facilitate this university theme, in ENGL 252: Business for English Communication, for the past three years, the course team has conducted an online panel discussion with local entrepreneurs to provide students with the opportunity to learn from the experiences of the panelists. This event is the first step in the course's Entrepreneurship Project and reflects QU's interest in promoting entrepreneurial thinking among students.

On October 17 and October 19, 2022, the ENGL 252 team organized another round of its panel discussions as the course students engage with what it means to be an entrepreneur and what it takes to develop a business idea into an actual business. The panel discussion is a collaboration with the Bedaya Center for Entrepreneurship (BCE). Ahmed Al Saygh, Senior Entrepreneurship Advisor at the BCE provides local entrepreneurs from their network for this event. The discussion also represents Dr. Hezam's, the Director of the Foundation Program, and FPDE leadership's ongoing support and guidance for ENGL 252 events.

On October 17, the panelists for the male discussion included Abdulla Alkhanji, founder and CEO of Harmonic Consultations, and Hameed Alqahtani, founder of Ceramic Cube Pottery Studio. Harmonic Consultations solves complex technological challenges with a powerful blend of technology and management expertise. Ceramic Cube creates bespoke pottery, offers training sessions in pottery making, and sells all the needed tools and materials to create clay works. The moderator for this panel discussion was Issam Affaneh, the co-lead for the course.



Male panel discussion screenshot: Visual courtesy of Conan Kmiecik



Female panel discussion screenshot: Visual courtesy of Conan Kmiecik

On October 19, the panel discussion for female discussion included Khadeja Albuhaliga, who started her first business when she was 18 and is the founder of several businesses; Maryam Abdulla founder of Rebalance Lifestyle Development Consultancy; and Nada Bahzad, the founder of Masar, an online platform focusing on online services for youth empowerment through personal and career development. The moderator for this panel discussion was Maimuna Aghliw, a teaching assistant in the Foundation Program.

It is the goal of the ENGL 252 course team to connect its course content with the experience and advice shared by the entrepreneurs participating in the panel discussion. If students can relate what they are learning in class with the testimony from the panelists, then hopefully the students can see how entrepreneurship is possible for them. While course instructors want students to engage with course content and improve their English proficiency, the instructors also want students to start imagining their own entrepreneurial trajectory so that someday they can serve on a panel and speak to the next generation of potential entrepreneurs.



# Foundation Program's Entrepreneurial Showcase Marks a Post-Pandemic Milestone

Conan Kmiecik, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

On May 10th, Qatar University's (QU) Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE) ENGL 252 course collaborated with QU's College of Business and Economics' (CBE) Center for Entrepreneurship and Qatar Development Bank (QDB) to host an on-campus Entrepreneurial Showcase Event. This highly anticipated event brought together 60 teams of female students and 13 teams of male students from the Business English course, who presented their innovative business concepts created for the Qatari market.

While the Entrepreneurial Showcase Event used to be held each semester, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a transition to virtual formats, making the Fall 2019 showcase the last face-to-face gathering. Therefore, the revival of this event by the Business English course team was met with great enthusiasm as it offered students a valuable and high-quality learning opportunity once again.

The Entrepreneurial Showcase Event represents the culmination of the Business English Entrepreneurship Project, an initiative that challenges student teams to leverage their business acumen and enhance their English communication skills while devising business ventures for the Qatari market. During the event, students showcased their business ideas through captivating displays and engaging presentations, reaching out to a diverse audience comprising university members and business professionals.

This event stands as a testament to the FPDE faculty's commitment to innovative teaching practices, promoting critical and entrepreneurial thinking, as well as fostering collaborative teamwork. Throughout their academic journey, QU students are encouraged to refine their English language skills by undertaking extensive research, drafting comprehensive plans, engaging in negotiations, and delivering compelling presentations to captivate their audience.

Distinguished attendees at the showcase included Dr. Rana Sobh, the Dean of CBE; Dr. Saeed Albana, the Director for the Center for Entrepreneurship; Dr. Hala Hadba, the FP Associate Director; representatives from QDB; and numerous local entrepreneurs. Faculty members from both CBE and FPDE were also present, commending the students for their passion and self-assuredness demonstrated while presenting their business ideas. Throughout the event's two-hour duration, a panel of judges comprising faculty members from FPDE, the Center for Entrepreneurship, and QDB carefully evaluated all participating student teams.

The event's success owes itself to the dedication of the course team, the collaboration of its partners, and the unwavering support from Foundation Program management. Looking ahead, the Business English course team has plans to continue organizing Showcase Events every semester, striving to enhance the quality of student business ideas, ultimately inspiring graduating QU students to embark on their entrepreneurial journeys.



Entrepreneurial showcase for males: : Photograph courtesy of Ahmad Hazratzad



Entrepreneurial showcase for females: : Photograph courtesy of Ahmad Hazratzad



## Extra-Curricular Committee Photography Competition 2022

Susan Saafan, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

The Extracurricular Committee ran its photography competition in 2022 to afford students the chance to showcase their creative talent. Students were invited to submit work capturing a memorable moment in any way they saw fit. The entries had to be submitted along with an accompanying short written description by October 16, 2022.

The judges scored the photographs for their originality and creativity as well as on technical aspects such as skilled execution using lighting, composition, color or text.

The judges were also looking for photographs that were engaging in subject and original in concept. Additionally, the writing pieces were scored for content, organization, vocabulary, and grammar. Accordingly, the following students submitted winning entries; Hafsa Allahbakash, Aisha Adaaiki and Amna Adam.

Taking first place was Hafsa Allahbakash's photo and poster with a close-up of Hafsa and her sister's fingers forming a heart-shape framing the Al Khor Corniche in the background. Hafsa wanted the heart to symbolize how fully she and her sister love and complete each other.



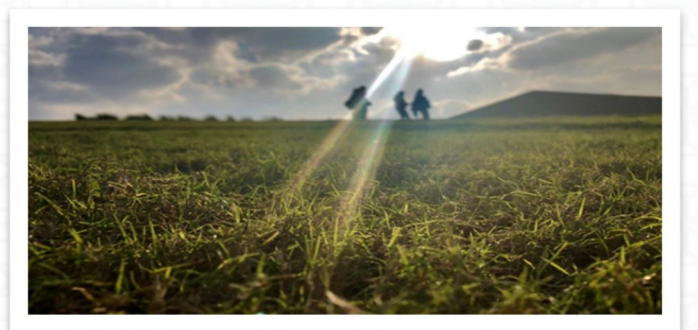
Hafsa and her sister: Photograph Courtesy of FP Extracurricular Committee & Hafsa Allahbakash

In second place was Aisha Adaaiki's photo entry, which focused on "Alhamali", the tradition of elderly male porters working in markets like Souq Waqif. This is a part of Qatari culture and heritage that Aisha considers to be "a symbol of ultimate simplicity".



A porter in Souq Waqif: Photograph Courtesy of FP Extracurricular Committee & Aisha Adaaiki

Amna Adam's winning entry showed Amna and her high school friends strolling in Katara Park. Amna described the photo as evoking "bittersweet" memories of when she and her friends would relax in the park discussing their future, all the time aware of the transient nature of those moments.



Katara Park: Photograph Courtesy of FP Extra Curricular Committee & Amna Adam

The competition drew a lot of student interest, giving the judges a wide selection of entries to decide on. As one of the winners Amna commented, "As someone who finds delight in taking photos of pretty much anything in my way, I couldn't refuse to partake in this competition... and I look forward to experience it again in the future."



# Unleash Your Creativity: Foundation Program FIFA World Cup Poster Competition

Zulfiqar Ahmad, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

Qatar University's (QU) Foundation Program held a poster competition in October 2022, themed around the FIFA World Cup that took place in Qatar. The competition was organized by Foundation Program (FP) Extra-curricular Committee. It was open to all FP students, and there was a great turnout with many talented and creative submissions.

For the competition, students had the opportunity to showcase the beauty and diversity of life in Qatar through their creative designs and messages. Whether they created a poster highlighting the country's traditional customs and culture, or focusing on its modern amenities and attractions, the possibilities were endless. In addition, the design could include a poem or a message welcoming visitors to Qatar and encouraging them to explore and experience the country's rich heritage and culture. Another option was to design posters about their favourite football team, describing the team's history and achievements, in about 200-300 words.

The students could choose to design their posters either individually or in a maximum of two persons. They had the freedom to hand draw or use digital media and had until October 16<sup>th</sup> to submit their entries. A special panel judged the posters based on several criteria, including content, relevance, coherence, clarity, accuracy in language, design, and originality to announce the winners: Shamima Anower and Takia Ullah, Maha Al-Maadheed, Fouzia Shaheen and Ahmed Mohamed. While reflecting on her participation, Fouzia Shaheen commented, "The FIFA World Cup 2022 was one of the most marvelous experiences ever". Ahmed Mohamed, another competition winner, commented, "Creativity is contagious, so pass it on."

The competition was a huge success in providing students with a great opportunity to showcase their creativity, while promoting the country's unique culture and traditions to visitors. A wide range of designs, possibilities and a chance to be recognized inspired and motivated our students to create outstanding posters.



Winners of the Foundation Program FIFA World Cup poster competition: Visual courtesy of FP Extra-curricular Committee

## Qatar University Counselling Center Hosts Events for Woman's Health Day

Tiffany Dyson, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

In collaboration with Foundation Program (FP) Student Services, Qatar University's (QU) Counseling Center recently held its 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Women's Health Day event to promote mental health awareness among students. The event occurred on March 7 and was attended by students, from more than 20 sections of different subprograms, eager to learn more about how they could take care of their mental well-being.

The event's main purpose was to inform the students of the QU Counseling Center's services as a personal and academic support resources. The event included a


presentation on the various counseling services offered by the center and an introduction of the staff members available to provide assistance.

In addition to the informative presentations, the event also featured a light brunch buffet for attendees to enjoy. This provided a relaxed and informal setting for students to mingle and chat with the Counseling Center staff members.

Guest speakers from the Counseling Center also delivered talks on a range of mental health topics, including stress management, anxiety, and depression. In

addition, the speakers shared their knowledge and experience in the field of mental health, providing valuable insights and advice to the students in attendance.

Overall, the event was a great success, with many students expressing their appreciation for the opportunity to learn more about mental health and the services available to them at Qatar University. The Counseling Center and FP Student Affairs Office hope to continue raising mental health awareness and supporting students throughout the academic year.



- Stress ● Anxiety
- Depression ● Challenges
- Marital & Family Problems

- Communication Skills
- Resilience ● Self-Reflection
- Healthy College Life Balance
- Individual Counseling and/or Group Support
- Positive Thinking

Screenshot from QU Counselling Center homepage: Visual courtesy of <http://www.qu.edu.qa/students/success-and-development/counseling>



## Foundation Program's Second Our Voices Public Speaking Contest

Mohammad Hosam Al Nahas, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

The Foundation Program's second Our Voices public speaking contest took place on 26<sup>th</sup> October (for male students) and 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 (for female students). The event was organized by the Foundation Program's Special Needs Committee and coordinated by Mr. Mohammad Hosam Al Nahas, the former Committee Chair. This event provided special needs students with an opportunity to participate alongside their mainstream peers in a public-speaking contest in which students gave individual presentations on topics of their choice.

The objective of this competition was to ensure the inclusion of special needs students, giving them a chance to develop their speaking and presentation skills, and build their self-confidence and motivation. Once registered, each student was assigned a tutor who provided training and support through one-to-one preparation sessions, dedicated to addressing their needs.

This year, there were 17 participants who gave presentations on a range of interesting topics, including self-confidence, technology, being human, and dealing with life's challenges, as well as a poem on the Holy Quran. In particular, one student delivered a short talk on what he considered to be man's biggest enemy, namely, anger. He highlighted the causes and effects of anger in society, recommending a number of anger-management techniques. Meanwhile, Abdullah, who won the first prize, talked about what students should do when faced with major challenges during their university lives, citing a few examples and reflecting on his own experience. He ultimately inspired the audience with his determination, motivation, and tale of perseverance. After receiving his award, Abdullah remarked: "I really liked how participants were competing to win first prize. Last

year, I came second, but first this time. I was surprised. It's a great feeling."



Mohamed Hosam Al Nahas with Abdulla, the first winner of our Voices Speaking Contest: Photograph courtesy of Sidi Chaikh, Public Relations Office

Some of the participating students also helped stage the event, taking on positions of leadership and assuming other roles in the competition. For each of the two events, two students served as master of ceremonies (MC), while a few acted as judges (though the main judges were members of the Special Needs Committee). The scoring criteria covered the content, organization, and delivery of the presentation's content, coupled with the presence and language use of the presenter. Prior to the contest, the participants had a chance to practice with their tutors for two to three weeks.

The winner of the female competition, recounted her own success story, whereby she had managed to overcome a major challenge through faith and patience. This proved to be an extraordinary source of inspiration to the audience.

The response from the audience of students and faculty staff was very positive. Ms. Haya AlKuwari, representing the Qatar University Inclusion and Special Needs Support Center, lauded the event, remarking: "I was very pleased to see how successful our students were. Thank you for creating this opportunity." Suzanne Mohamed, a lecturer at the Foundation Program, added: "It was truly wonderful to see how the students felt empowered while presenting on topics that they were passionate about. I enjoyed every moment of it and was inspired by their confidence and determination."

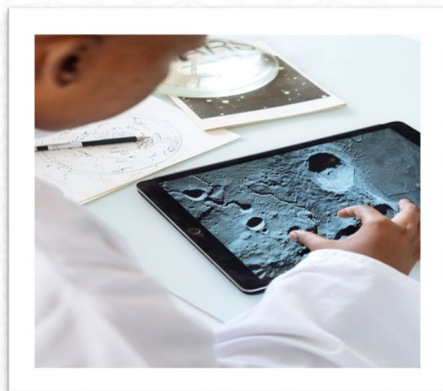
The ability to deliver an effective presentation is an essential life skill that Qatar University's students will most certainly need in the long term. Not only do they get to improve their language skills in the process, but they also learn to use paralinguistic features such as body language, gestures, facial expressions, and tone and pitch of voice to convey their message more effectively. Additionally, preparing for a presentation is a practice task in itself, which serves the same goals. Most significantly, it would seem that involving students in the running of events and allowing them to take charge teaches them about responsibility, as well as giving them a chance to refine their skills. As a result, they will be better equipped to become future leaders in their communities.

I think nothing in the whole world is more rewarding to teachers than watching students grow, become more competent, self-sufficient, more productive and better contributing to society. This event gave us the pleasure of witnessing all of that, and more.

# Educational Technology: Some Thoughts about Its Use

Paul Ames, Lecturer of English & Co-chair of Newsletter Committee, Foundation Program

In 2021, with the world in the grip of COVID-19, educational technology strode forward as teaching's "knight in shining armour", allowing the learning process to continue. Educational technology had saved the day. In the same year, at Qatar University's Annual Virtual Conference, the plenary speaker Scott Thornbury made a comment about technology that appeared to be in discord somewhat with what was happening then in the world of education. Thornbury opined that technology should only be used in the classroom for tasks and activities that cannot be done face-to-face with the teacher.



Educational technology is everywhere:  
Photograph courtesy of www.pexels.com

For years now, globally, there has been a deluge of information confirming the merits of educational technology – conferences, seminars, workshops, professional development sessions and an abundance of literature supported by solid research. The common consensus of all this information suggests very strongly that students are more engaged in their learning when they use technology because their learning is enhanced. It sounds simple, but, as we know, it isn't. Your head starts to hurt if you ask yourself simple questions like, 'Which technology should I use?' Or 'How often should I use this technology?' Perhaps more pertinently, 'Does this technology really enhance my students' learning? How?' and 'How do I measure that enhanced learning?'

There are other considerations. Imad (2015) asks if teachers are actually proficient in the use of the technology. If not, does the teaching institute provide adequate teacher-training for its use? (Pourhosein et al, 2015). Does the teacher know how to combine suitable teaching techniques with the integration of the technology? (Solano et al, 2017). Technology changes rapidly – how do teachers keep pace with this and know which updated technology is the best to

achieve the teaching aim? (Carrier et al, 2017). Gholamina (2014) claims that valid pedagogical programmes for the use of technology are scarce. Mohamed (2014) claims that time spent by teachers learning to apply the technology would be time better spent teaching actual language skills.

Thornbury's view was not denigrating the use of educational technology. Rather, it was asking us, as teachers, to consider carefully the reasons for its integration into our teaching. Likewise, the literature referred to above reminds us that successfully incorporating technology into our teaching is challenging and should not be included without direction or planning. Perhaps, the next time we receive observation feedback stating 'It would have been nice to have seen more use of technology', think of Thornbury and ask 'Why?'



Use of educational technology : Photo-  
graph courtesy of www.pexels.com

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# Bedaya Center for Entrepreneurship Visits for English for Business Communication Students at Qatar University

Conan Kmiecik, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

From October 23 to 27, 2022, a representative from the Bedaya Center for Entrepreneurship, Mr. Ahmed Al Saygh, visited sections of English for Business Communication, a course in the Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE at Qatar University). In total, the representatives spoke to 11 sections of the course, or roughly 205 students. The purpose of this guest speaker opportunity was to inform the students majoring in business about the center's resources and network of contacts that can help with the development of a new business for the local Qatari market. The visit was organized by Mhammed Chadi, an English for Business Communication faculty member and Mr. Al Saygh.

At the time of the visits, students were in the middle of their Entrepreneurship Project. For the project, they formed teams and were developing a small business idea. Though the students were still working on developing their business idea, the faculty felt it was important for students to be thinking beyond the course project and imagining themselves at the next step of their entrepreneurial journey. Mr. Al Saygh experience and knowledge was of tremendous value to the English for Business Communication students. He spoke for about 30-40 minutes to each of the 11 sections. His visits were in person at the beginning of the week but shifted to virtual delivery in the latter half of the week.



Mr. Ahmed Al Saygh workshops for FPDE students: Photographs courtesy of Conan Kmiecik

The Bedaya Center is a frequent collaborator with English for Business Communication team. Most recently during the Fall 2022 semester, Bedaya Center provided the panel of male and female from their network of local Qatari entrepreneurs for the course's Entrepreneurial Panel Discussion. Additionally, representatives from Bedaya Center have served as judges during the course's Entrepreneurial Competition. The English for Business Communication team is extremely grateful for the continual collaboration opportunities with the Bedaya Center because both partners are committed to the goal of developing the next generation of Qatari business creators.

It is the hope of the English for Business Communication team that someday a student who completes the Entrepreneurship Project turns their business idea into an actual business. By informing students about the Bedaya Center, this hope is likelier to one day manifest.

# Using a Resume Builder to Improve a Writing Assessment


Conan Kmiecik, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

In ENGL 252, English for Business Communication, one of the first graded tasks that students must complete for Unit 1: Professional Profile is the CV/Resume assessment. Students learn about resumes by reviewing worksheets and looking at examples. The ENGL 252 instructor then explains relevant vocabulary and grammar for the resume. The students must next draft their resume and include the following sections: personal information, objectives, education, experience, interests, awards (optional), and reference(s). In the past, the students would draft their resumes using a Word template provided by the teacher, but that posed challenges for students.


First, for most students, this was their first time creating a resume. They were struggling with generating the necessary resume content and following the strict language conventions of the resume in English. Second, as everyone, who has created a resume in Word, knows that getting the layout and formatting of a resume correct is a struggle for novice and experienced writers alike. To keep the resume assessment within one week of the semester, instructors could not spend time helping students with layout and format problems, nor could they penalize misaligned resume content because the focus of the assessment was on content and language. Students with higher English language proficiency spent the extra time fine-tuning their resumes. In contrast, lower-proficiency students focused on writing and maybe revising the language content. The course instructors were unsure about this issue until the co-lead, Issam Affaneh, suggested a possible solution.

In his free time, during Spring 2022, Issam Affaneh came across a free online resume builder called FlowCV. He suggested it to the course lead, Conan Kmiecik, and both of them experimented with the resume builder by creating sample student resumes. To build a resume using the website, you complete an information form for the various sections of the resume. The website then populates the information into a template, automatically formatting the section's content. After all, the resume's content is created, and then the layout and look can be customized without having to rewrite or reformat the content. Conan and Issam knew that the resume builder would streamline the writing process for ENGL 252 students, allow students to personalize the look of their resumes, and digitally enhance the CV/Resume assessment.


**Word Doc Template**



**FlowCV 1**



**FlowCV 1**



Resume builder screenshot: Visual courtesy of Issam Affaneh



During Summer 2022, ENGL 252 first required students to use FlowCV to build their resumes. Then after some feedback from summer instructors, the course incorporated the resume builder during Fall 2022. The initial impulses of the course and co-lead were correct. The resume builder did streamline the resume writing process of the students considerably. Students could focus on content and language generation, without struggling with challenging technical problems in Word. The customization features of the smartphone-friendly website allowed students to personalize their resumes and yielded more varied resumes for instructors to assess. Lastly, students learned to utilize another digital platform to create a document as niche as a professional resume. However, learning to use FlowCV has another benefit for students that extends beyond the classroom.

FlowCV is a free online resume builder. The first resume users build free once they set up a basic account. Users can then add or change the resume as many times as they like, but if they want to build another resume, they must either delete all the information from their first resume or pay for additional resumes. However, how many separate resumes does one build? Most people merely add to or revise their first professional resume. So, once students make a resume in ENGL 252, they have a document that they can add to or revise during the rest of their experience at Qatar University and after they graduate and begin their professional career.

Employing FlowCV in ENGL 252 not only helped streamline resume writing for the course assessment, but it also introduced students to a resource that they can utilize during their professional career.

## Faculty Focus: David Bartsch

Imad Al-Hawamdeh, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

**Interviewer:** Thank you for agreeing to this interview. Please can you tell me a little about your experience working here at the Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE).

**Mr. Bartsch:** I joined FPDE in 2007. This is my 16<sup>th</sup> year at the program, and I've taught the majority of the programs that we have here at the department.

**Interviewer:** What would you say makes a better teacher here at the Foundation Program?

**Mr. Bartsch:** One thing is to have expectations that are in line with the department objectives and with the student realities. However, that can sometimes be challenging because the two sets of goals are not always entirely compatible. One thing that I specifically tried to do is to give students examples that are relevant to their life here in Doha or Qatar. Another thing that I tend to do is to show how what we are doing in our class or what is on the syllabus will be connected to their future life here at the university or their life outside of the university.

**Interviewer:** What is the importance of group work in the classroom, and what are some strategies you use to engage students more effectively in group work?



David Bartsch: Photograph courtesy of David Bartsch

**Mr. Bartsch:** According to the standard Second Language Acquisition methodology, ‘negotiation’ is an important aspect of second language learning. As negotiation can only happen with others, when students work in groups, they develop critical thinking skills. In the broader context, when we think about our past academic experiences, we almost always remember the things we learned through shared discussions on our projects or research papers. So in the small sense, group work helps to do that and gives students an environment for this negotiation to happen. How to do it? Well, in all honesty, sometimes that is a challenge, if we have a certain amount of information and a limited amount of time to cover it. Therefore, it can be challenging to always have group work.

**Interviewer:** How do you engage students, and what are some of the tools do you use to engage students effectively?

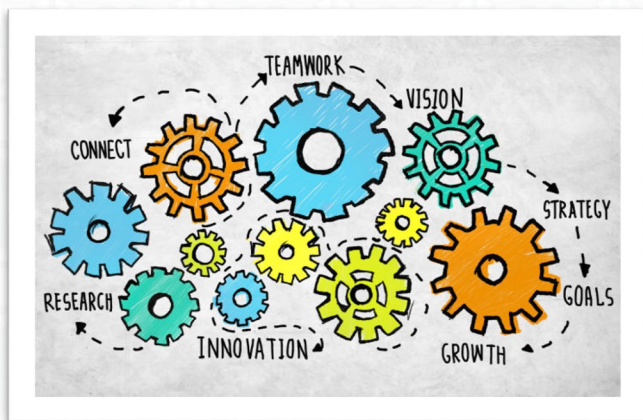
**Mr. Bartsch:** I actually started using Microsoft OneNote several years back. Since the students are going to have their phones in class, we may as well try to make use of that as much as we can. I also see several advantages of using OneNote such as, students can do drafting, and I can see their drafts and give feedback through OneNote. Furthermore, I will have the documentation in OneNote for further follow-up. I would like to mention something about *ChatGPT*, the latest artificial intelligence innovation. It can do things like summarizing, writing essays, and more. However, it can’t do specific things in very precise ways as in content structures. As teachers, I think that we will have to adapt to such technology by modifying our curricula, our teaching strategies in order to deal with this new reality. We should also teach our students how to use this new tool in the right way.

**Interviewer:** How can you establish and maintain rapport with students?

**Mr. Bartsch:** At the beginning of my time here at the department, I was very strict. So I came across as being angry and a little too proud. This didn’t work well with my students. After a while, I decided to take a more relaxed approach in handling classroom interactions. Telling jokes and stories is not something that I do. However, I try to be friendly and kind. This way, the students get the idea that I won’t do things like shouting on them. They also understand that I am willing to work with them if they have mitigating circumstances, and I think that helps to establish and maintain rapport. Sometimes it depends on the course you are teaching. For example, in the teaching of foundation-level courses, I find that students are not completely ready for the university experience. In these courses, I work with students closely and provide them with the support they need, which creates some rapport with the students. On the other hand, in post-foundation courses, there is a lot of content to cover and not much time to connect with students. Students in the post-foundation program tend to be more academically proficient, as well as relationally and socially prepared. However, I still try to provide support when I can.

**Interviewer:** Do you have any specific advice for teachers in each FP program? How helpful is it if teaching at all FP programs?

**Mr. Bartsch:** Right now, I am teaching in foundation and post foundation sub-programs. That helps me on both ends of the spectrum. For example, when I am teaching foundation, I know where the students need to go so I can point them in the right direction and give them the proper support they need. Similarly, when I’m teaching an embedded course, I know where the students have come from and what they studied in the previous courses. So knowing how the course sequence works makes you more able to give good advice to students.



Group work: Visual courtesy of [www.studyinsweden.se](http://www.studyinsweden.se)



ChatGPT: Visual courtesy of [www.flippan.com](http://www.flippan.com)



# The Importance of Sleep

Kenneth Downes, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

The impact of a good night's sleep on wellbeing should not be underestimated. Disrupted sleep patterns and insomnia may have negative health effects on both the body and brain.

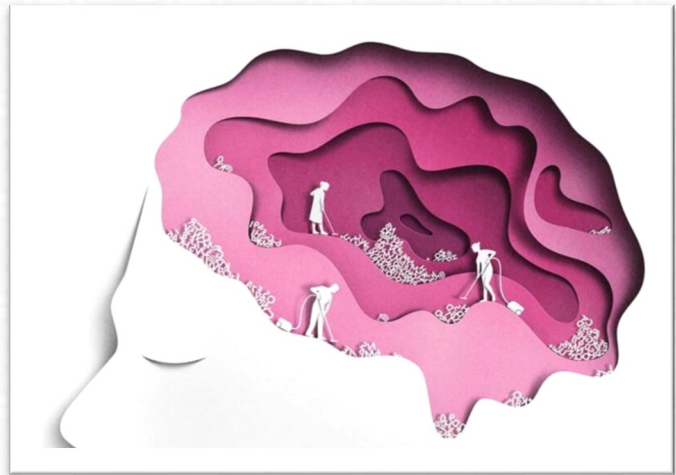


Insomnia: Photograph courtesy of [www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com)

Sleep is vital for the body. During sleep, the antibodies of the immune system are made and released to repair and protect the body from infection. A Californian study on the relationship of sleep to immunity found that participants with less than six hours of sleep were four times more likely to catch a common cold than those who slept seven or more hours. Moreover, a study in Germany found that stress hormones are reduced when people sleep, improving body immunity through greater levels of integrin, a sticky protein that fights infection.

Poor sleep may also cause weight gain, as this affects appetite hormones. King's College London researchers found that sleep deprived participants ate an average extra 385 calories per day, which is the equivalent of a large slice of cake. Furthermore, research in Sweden found that sleep affects melatonin levels that regulate insulin secretion, so those with disturbed sleep had increased risk of type 2 diabetes. Hence, clearly getting enough sleep has positive effects on the body.

Resting well also has positive effects on the brain. In deep sleep, the brain's glymphatic system clears neurotoxin waste. This process is believed to have links to dementia prevention. Moreover, in deep sleep memories are organized and emotions processed which improves mental health by reducing depression.



Glymphatic system: Visual courtesy of University of Copenhagen

So how can sleep be improved? To start, regularly go to bed and get up at the same time every day. This helps the body circadian rhythms and creates the need for sleep at the same time each day. Also, stop eating a few hours before bedtime, as digestion of food raises the body core temperature, which counteracts the body's mechanism to lower temperature and go to sleep. Then at bed time avoid brain stimulation which reduces the ability to sleep. Do this by avoiding bright light and removing electronic devices from the bedroom. If on occasion sleep is not possible after some time, get up and do some light activity such as reading a book or sewing to relax and further help the onset of sleep. These practices all help to ensure a better night's sleep and bring positive benefits to the body and mind.



Female Foundation Building: Photograph courtesy of James Scotland

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