

FP Jareeda

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Welcome to Issue 22

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

Welcome to issue 22 of the Foundation Program's quarterly newsletter, FP Jareeda.

In the Spring 2021 semester, all classes and events were delivered online.

Susan Saafan's article, titled *Math Around the World: A Student Competition*, highlights how the Foundation Program Department of Math (FPDM) successfully adapted this an-

nual event to an online environment; and Conan Kmiecik's two articles, titled *ENGL 252 Bi-Annual Spring 2021 Entrepreneurial Presentations Competition* and *The ENGL 252 Virtual Showcase Spring 2021*, highlight how one FP course is thriving in an online environment.

I hope that you enjoy reading issue 22.



James Scotland: Photograph courtesy of Ahmad Hazratzad

The Foundation Program Distinguished Student Award 2021

Hayat El Samad, Assistant Director for Student Affairs, Foundation Program & James Scotland, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

Every semester, the Student Affairs Office in the Foundation Program (FP) provides students with the opportunity to take pride in and gain recognition for their academic achievement and performance. The FP's Distinguished Student Award celebrates exceptional students who have proved themselves to be high achievers and community service advocates. Nominees must meet a number of criteria which include high academic performance and participation in extra-curricular activities offered by the FP Student Affairs and the FP community.

Students are encouraged to nominate themselves for the award by registering online. Appli-

cants must be registered in at least three FP courses. Eligible students require high marks, with either a B+ or an A average. Evidence of participation in FP workshops, events, activities, or conferences are other requirements in addition to volunteer work, either at Qatar University (QU) or elsewhere. Many applicants volunteered for the annual FP International Language Conference or do community service for various volunteer organizations in Qatar. Students must also ask for a reference letter from one or more of the FP instructors in support of their candidacy.

Award-winners are given a certificate and honored during FP Open Days in the presence of FP management members, instructors, and newly admitted students. Instructors present the winners with a certificate, after which students address new FP students and share their experiences with them. Winners also encourage newly admitted students to participate in FP events and competitions, and to utilize the support services offered such as the FP Success Zone.

The winners of the FP Distinguished Student Award for the Fall 2020 semester were Fatima Al-Obaidli, Alrim Al-Hasani, Khowlod Al-Nemr, Manar Al-

Reyashi, and Mohammad Ibrahim.

Fatima Alobaidli explained that, 'As a foundation-level student, I nominated myself for the Distinguished Student Award. I learned many things during my stay in the Foundation Program. For this award, students are required to submit certificates of participation for events or workshops students have attended. This helps students acquire skills and learn new knowledge. I advise Foundation Program students to apply for the award.'

Manar Al-Reyashi commented, 'This award boosted my confidence in my abilities and was one of the reasons that helped

me to get out of my comfort zone to invest in myself more. It also motivated me not to put an end to my achievements in my future endeavors.'

Ms. Hayat El Samad, Assistant Director for Student Affairs at the FP, stated, 'In order to recognize our students for their academic performance and initiative, we have opened up the Distinguished Student Award to be presented biannually at the beginning of every semester. The Student Distinguished Award is open to all students registered in foundation-level courses. In an effort to encourage students to participate in campus life and in the multiple student initiatives

the Foundation Program and Qatar University have to offer, nominees must present a certificate of participation in student events or volunteer activities. In addition to enhancing student academic success, the Foundation Program is committed to providing opportunities for students to develop their leadership and life skills outside the classroom.'

The FP hopes that the award will motivate students to continue to achieve success on their path to academic excellence.

The Foundation Program Distinguished Student Award

In an effort to promote student excellence, the Foundation Program would like to recognize distinguished students registered in foundation-level courses. Students will be awarded based on their academic performance, participation in workshops or events, especially the ones offered by the Foundation Program, and any other volunteering activities in QU or outside QU.

Students wishing to nominate themselves for the award should register using the QR code below by 29 April 2021.



Students are selected based on criteria listed on the link below.
<http://www.qu.edu.qa/foundation/StudentAffairs/Distinguished-Student-Award/Student-Criteria>

Winning students will be awarded during FP Open Day - Fall 2021.

If you have any queries, please contact us
 Email: fpstudent@qu.edu.qa
 FP Helpdesk: 4403-5328



Math Around the World: A Student Competition

Susan Saafan, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

The Foundation Program (FP) Extra Curricular Committee held their second live team challenge competition called Math Around the World on Monday 8th and Wednesday 10th March. The competition was designed and managed by Ahmed Abdelaziz, co-chair of the FP Extra Curricular committee, in collaboration with the FP Math Success Zone. The aim was to challenge students to explain how math works in everyday life and how the objects that make up their everyday surroundings relate to their math skills. The competition also dovetailed with the university educational excellence themes of *Learner-centric Practice*, *Digitally Enriched Education*, and *Experiential Learning*.

The competition was open to FP students who were registered in either Elementary Algebra or Pre-Calculus courses. Each teacher nominated students who showed a strong mathematical aptitude. To prepare for the competition, the organizers collected images from all around the world, as well as from Qatar, depicting a range of geometric shapes, for example, a photo of an arch representing a parabola.

The competition was held separately for male and female students, and both competitions were hosted by a panel of two judges. The winners were awarded certificates by Dr. Hezam Al-awah, Director of the FP.

The students were divided into three teams. Each team looked at twenty images and was asked to answer questions about each. For example, a team might have to name the shape of a pyramid using the correct mathematical terms. The more correct terminology a team could use to describe their picture, the more points they would be awarded. Each team talked about their assigned slide in turn, with the

other teams watching and listening.

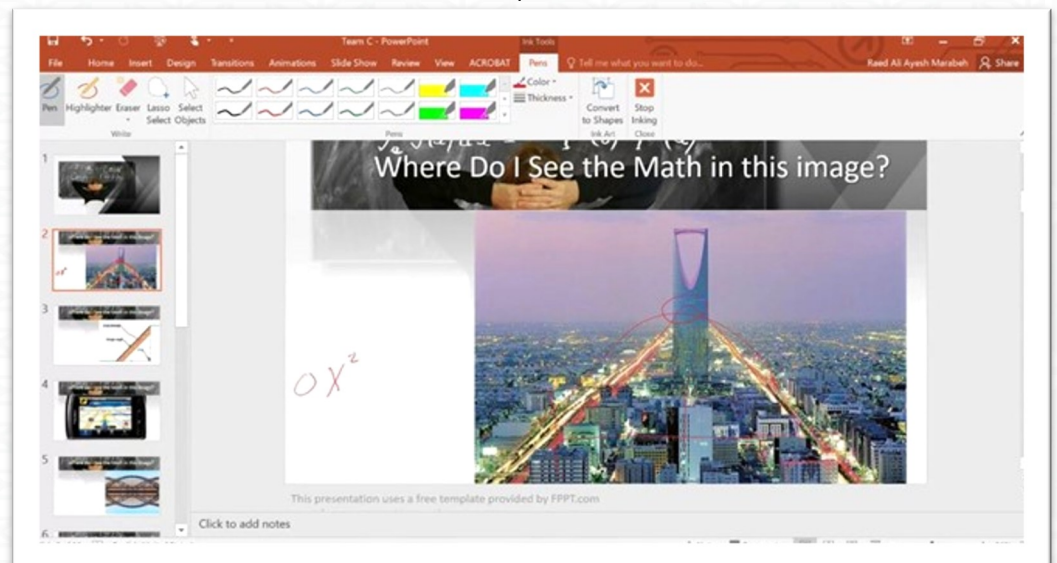
The winning group in the female competition was comprised of Eithar Qambar, Fatima Alobaidili, Fatima Al Fadala, and Alrim Al Hasani. The male category had sixteen winners, with the top five places going to Abdulla Al Mehshadi, Abdulla Al Hail, Abdulla Al Zubiri, Abdulla Jaeran, and Abdulmagid Al-Godimy.

Fatima Al Obaiddli remarked, 'The competition was interesting. I enjoyed this competition, and it was challenging. The teams were cooperative. I learned new words from the competition that I did not know before.' Daneh Khalili also added, 'It was quite a chal-

lenge, but I felt accomplished and proud at the end!'

Ahmed Abdelaziz reflected on the competition, 'The competition was a fantastic opportunity for students to really experience math. It fits in well with our foundation curriculum. Students were engaged the whole time, with many great mathematical terminologies being said. The competition made math come alive'.

The next competition organized by the FP Extra Curricular Committee under the Office of Assistant Director for Student Affairs in the FP will be in the Fall 2021 semester.



A question from the competition: Visual courtesy of Kinan Taleb

Foundation Program Career Development Day

Elisabeth Szewczyk-Méziane, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

On 7th April 2021, the Foundation Program (FP) held its fourth annual Career Development Day. Due to the current Covid-19 restrictions, the event was held virtually on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra (BBCU) from 8.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon for English 2 (ENGL 111) students who are studying in the Embedded Program. Approximately four hundred female students and twenty-four male students attended the event. Career Development Day was organized by Mrs. Shamsa Al Rushaidi, Chair of the Extracurricular Activities Committee, with the collaboration of the QU Career Service Center.

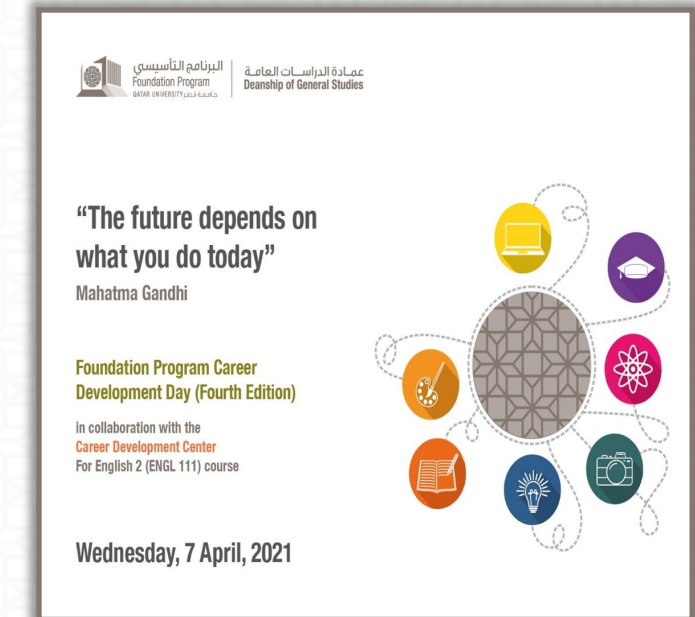
A number of highly qualified and expert professionals from various private sector firms, organizations, and companies were invited to participate in the annual event. The Career Development Day enabled students to learn about employment requirements and job opportunities from experts in the field. The event brought together professionals from various organizations to share their knowledge and expertise with Foundation Program students. It also gave students the opportunity to interact with the presenters by asking them questions as well as raising any important points about a

particular career path.

Communicating in English with workplace professionals reinforced the importance of speaking good English in the work environment and helped give students the confidence and opportunity to use English outside the classroom. Additionally, participants learned about various jobs in the private sector. Private sector companies would like more nationals and permanent residents to apply for jobs with their respective organizations.

The guest speakers included Mr. Muhammed Ameen Hashim, Legal Counsel and Head of Corporate Contracts Department at the Al Sualaiti Law Firm. An interesting presenter was Ms. Hissa Al Kuwari, Social Media and Digital Officer for Qatar Development Bank; this bank offers financial and banking services and loans to help develop various economic sectors in Qatar such as industry, agriculture, health care, education, and tourism. Exciting new developments are taking place in this organization with plenty of career opportunities for ambitious job-seekers.

Ms. Yomna Hamza, Relations Manager, Ms. Naema Aljallabi, Maintenance Engineer, and Ms. Rowan Elshafee, Maintenance Engineer, all work for



Schlumberger Overseas Doha, an Oil and Gas Well Drilling Company. They discussed career prospects and professional development in the gas and energy sector which would like more women to enter the field.

The hospitality sector was represented by three staff members from W Doha Hotel and Residences, an award-winning hotel chain: Ms. Hana-dy Merheg, Director of Human Resources, Ms. Marija Krkic, Human Resources Manager, and Mr. Jason Powels, Director of Learning and Development. They talked about careers in hospitality and the hotel industry. This career path gives employees the oppor-

tunity to work with an international team and clients; there is a lot of scope for professional development and management training.

Career Development Day was a highly successful event; students were delighted to be able to speak directly to professionals about the challenges, benefits, and opportunities in the various sectors they represent.



Al-Qabas Virtual Program 2021 (3rd Edition)

Paul Ames, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

Qatar University's Foundation Program (FP) held its Al-Qabas Virtual Program 2021 (3rd Edition) for female and male high school students from March 21st to March 29th, 2021. The event was organized by the Foundation Program in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOE). The Al-Qabas Program (3rd Edition) is a community outreach initiative delivered by the FP. It aims to educate high school students in grades 10 and 11 regarding the necessary study skills to succeed in their university studies. It further aims to improve their English and math skills in order to enhance their successful enrollment in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) disciplines at Qatar University (QU).

This year, the Al-Qabas Program consisted of two to three online virtual sessions per day, which included various interactive and engaging activities for developing English language and math skills. The program was offered to male students for the first time since its inception in Spring 2019. The Al-Qabas Program is in accordance with QU's strategic plan to encourage the ad-

mission of Qatari students into STEM and medicine fields of study. During sessions such as *Study Skills for Math* and *How to Apply Math in our Everyday Life*, students applied problem-solving skills and learned about different study strategies to enhance their math skills. Similarly, sessions targeting English skills, like *Let's Listen*, provided opportunities to learn about listening, reading, and writing skills through interactive programs such as Quizlet, Kahoot, and Joinmyquiz. Test-taking strategy sessions targeted skills required to pass IELTS and Math standardized tests. During *Succeeding in University Studies* sessions, students learned about life and study skills such as time management and prioritization. In addition, sessions were given by the QU Enrollment Outreach and Engagement Department,

the QU Testing Center, and the QU Career Development Center.

Overall, 250 students attended the sessions, with participation increasing by 80% from 2020. Feedback from anonymous student surveys showed a high satisfaction rate with comments such as:

'Al-Qabas is a very beneficial program, and I advise students... to attend since it offers a wide variety of important information on admission requirements and how to develop math and English skills that are vital for many specializations.'

'This is one the best programs that I participated in during the pandemic. It is very motivating, and it opened our eyes to a lot of things that we were not aware of. I hope that the university continues with such

programs.'

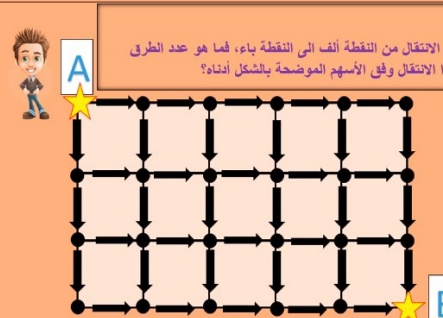
Dr. Hezam Al-Awah observed that, 'The Foundation Program continuously aims to develop the Alqabas Program to provide more educational opportunities for both male and female students interested in joining STEM and health fields of study to develop their life and academic skills and experience university learning firsthand... Students were actively engaged in Alqabas Program's multiple sessions, which reflects their eagerness to successfully join university and to develop their academic skills in English and mathematics.'

The Alqabas Program intends to go from strength to strength in its goal of continuing to empower students to reach their full academic, career, and life objectives.

لتجربة جامعة ناجحة

Problem 4

السؤال:
إذا كان أحمد يريد الانتقال من النقطة ألف إلى النقطة باء، فما هو عدد الطرق الممكنة للقيام بهذا الانتقال وفق الأسهم الموضحة بالشكل أدناه؟



Question:
If Ahmed wants to move from point A to point B, how many paths are there according to the arrows?

A math problem from the Al-Qabas Virtual Program: Visual courtesy of Azah Ahmed

The ENGL 252 Virtual Showcase Spring 2021

Conan Kmiecik, Course-lead for English for Business Communication, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

Since the beginning of English for Business Communication (ENGL 252), the Entrepreneurship Project has been a cornerstone assessment of the course. The project is to create new business ideas for the Qatari market through a multi-stage process in which students learn about definitions of entrepreneurship, pitch their ideas for a business, work with a team to complete a business report, conduct research from potential customers, and present their idea for a business to a wider audience.

Prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, each semester ENGL 252 students would participate in a Showcase Event in which the main halls of the College of Business and Economics would be filled with display boards of student-created business ideas. However, Fall 2019 was the last time the on-site Showcase Event was held.

During Fall 2020, course lead

responsibilities shifted, and the course lead, Conan Kmiecik, was mulling over ideas for how to make the showcase event virtual so that it could continue in the age of social distancing and distance learning. James Scotland, a colleague of Conan, suggested that Google Sites might be a good platform for an online showcase event since it was a free, user-friendly web-building tool. Conan informed the ENGL 252 team about this

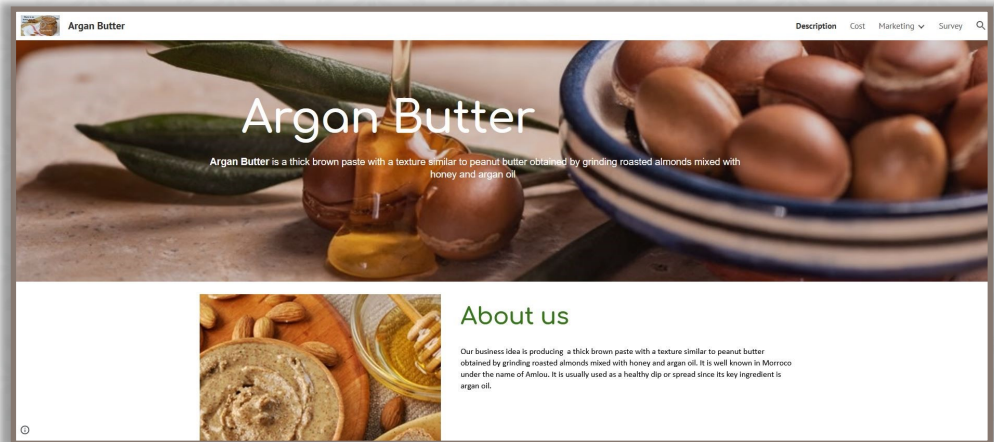
new possibility, and they decided to pilot a virtual showcase event during the Spring 2021.

All semester, the ENGL 252 team kept quiet about the virtual showcase event. They were unsure how the event and website creation, would turn out: would the website be as dynamic as the display boards of the pre-Coronavirus showcase events? As the ENGL 252 students started to build their business websites,

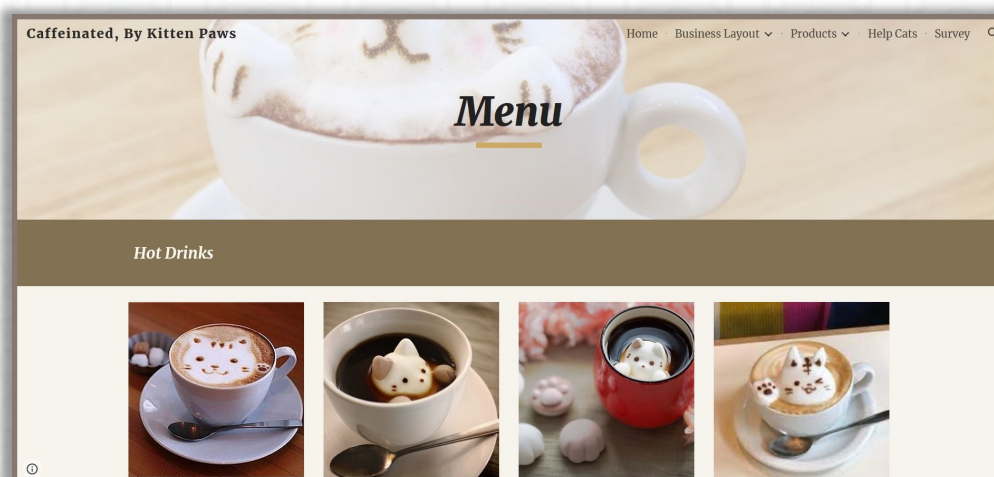
the course instructors were amazed by the hard work and creativity that many students put into them.

Now, the ENGL 252 team is very proud to share the [LINK](#) to the ENGL 252 Virtual Showcase Event Spring 2021. This project perfectly dovetails with three of the Educational Excellence themes of Qatar University: *Learner Centric Education*, *Digitally Enhanced Education*, and *Entrepreneurial Education*. Website creation will definitely continue as a requirement in the course, no matter if classroom delivery continues online or returns to on campus in future semesters.

The creation of the virtual showcase highlights how educators can adapt and innovate to better meet the needs of their students.



A website created by team Argan Butter: Visual courtesy of Conan Kmiecik



A website created by team Caffeinated by Kitten Paws: Visual courtesy of Conan Kmiecik

ENGL 252 Bi-Annual Spring 2021 Entrepreneurial Presentations Competition

Conan Kmiecik, Course-lead for English for Business Communication, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

On Wednesday, April 7th, the English for Business Communication (ENGL 252) team organized its Bi-Annual Spring 2021 Entrepreneurial Presentations Competition for female students. This was the second time that the event was held virtually; the first was in Fall 2020.

The presentation competition is an offshoot event of the ENGL 252 Entrepreneurship Project which requires teams of students to create new business ideas for the Qatari market. For the past several years, the ENGL 252 team has organized a showcase event each semester to allow students to present their business proposal to a wider audience within the university.

In Fall 2019, the ENGL 252 team organized its first Entrepreneurial Presentation Competition for the top business ideas from the showcase event. This was an in-person event and was not able to be held in Spring 2020 because of the Coronavirus pandemic. Subsequently, the team decided to make the event virtual.

This semester's competition was organized by course instructor Mhammed

Chadi. The course lead, Conan Kmiecik, served as the event's moderator on Microsoft Teams. Course co-lead, Issam Affaneh, served as survey organizer and coach for one of the teams.

This annual event represents a collaboration between Qatar University's Foundation Program Department of English, the Center for Entrepreneurship in the QU College of Business and Economics, and the Bedaya Center for Entrepreneurship and Career Development. It also aligns with three of the Educational Excellence themes of Qatar University: *Learner Centric Education*, *Digitally Enhanced Education*, and *Entrepreneurial Education*.

The panel of judges included Mr. Juha Perälampi, the Manager of the Business Incubator at the Center for Entrepreneurship at Qatar University, Mr. Ahmad Al-Saygh, the Entrepreneurship Manager at Bedaya Center, and Ms. Laila Al Qaedi, the founder and CEO of Medad, which is a registered trademark in Qatar specializing in creating product design for mainly stationery.

Three teams of students presented their

business ideas. They had 6-10 minutes to present, and following their presentation, each judge asked one question. The event allowed participating students to demonstrate their business English abilities, apply their knowledge from their Business College coursework, and exposed them to the value of entrepreneurship.

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

Rising Journey - Nursery school

Caffeinated by Kitten Paws – A cat cafe and cat shelter

Argan Butter – Butter that is made of Argan oil, honey, and almond paste

[Click on the above team names to view the websites.]

In the end, the team behind Rising Journey took first place during the event, with Caffeinated by Kitten Paws taking second and Argan Butter placing third.

The ENG 252 team was pleased with the quality of the presentations, the involvement of its judges, and the turnout for the event. In future, the ENGL 252 team will continue to provide high-quality practical opportunities for students to develop and refine their communication skills.



البرنامج التأسيسي
Foundation Program
QATAR UNIVERSITY قطر

عمادة الدراسات العامة
Deanship of General Studies



كلية الإدارة والاقتصاد
College of Business and Economics
QATAR UNIVERSITY قطر

مركز زيادة الاعمال
Center for Entrepreneurship



بداية
Bedaya
مركز تنمية الاعمال والاعمال المهنية
Center for Entrepreneurship and Career Development

**Foundation Program - Deanship of General Studies cordially invites you to attend its
 Bi-annual Entrepreneurial Presentations Competition for
 ENGL 252 Students - Spring 2021**

Wednesday, 7 April, 2021
12:30 pm - 1:45 pm
Via Microsoft Teams



FPDM Professional Development Days

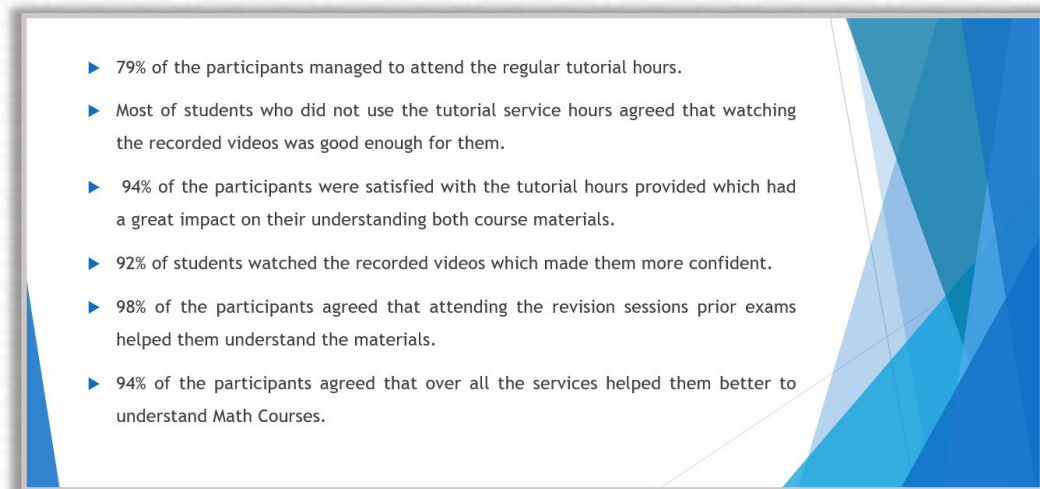
Raed Marabeh, Teaching Assistant of Math, Foundation Program

Recently, the Foundation Program Department of Math (FPDM) at Qatar University (QU), held its Professional Development (PD) Days. This event was held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

FPDM strives to improve and nurture its faculty members through professional development (PD) sessions as the teaching and education journey is a never-ending process. The FPDM Professional Development and E-learning Committee believes that through continuing education and focusing on professional development, faculty members can continually improve their skills to better meet the needs of students.

Over the two day PD event, FPDM faculty members shared their experiences through presentations which promoted engagement and discussion. The highly relevant topics kept the audience engaged and motivated to participate.

The effects of switching to online teaching and new ideas to improve online teaching practices were presented in two talks: Mr. Mahmoud Syam's presentation was ti-



Students' satisfaction survey results of the FP Math Success Zone: Visual courtesy Raed Marabeh

tled, *Online Teaching vs Classroom Teaching*, and Mr. Muneer Al Wadi's presentation was titled, *Learning How to Teach Again, 10 Months and Counting*.

Many of the presentations focused on adapting to new technology such as graphing tools, new apps, and new platforms. Some of the highlights were Mr. Kinan Taleb's talk, *Using Desmos Activities - Pros vs Cons*, Dr. Diana Malaban's talk, *Best Experiences in Digital Learning Environment*, and Mrs. Dima Sharanek's talk, *Discovering Some Features of Online Platforms*.

Other presentations focused on improving the quality of student handouts and implementing differentiation. These sessions included Mr. Ahmed Abdelaziz's talk, *How to Create Math Worksheets That Inspire Learning*, and Dr. Mohamed Chabi's talks, *Why We Should Not Rely Neither on Textbook nor on Basic Note* and *Why Mapping the Course Objective is Essential to Students for Better Learning*.

In his talk titled, *Steps towards Successful Lab Hour Collaboration between Instructors and Teaching Assistants*, Mr. Salim Salim discussed the topic of proper communication and set

out clear roles for teaching assistants and instructors. Finally, a summary about Math Success Zone's services and statistics about student performance was presented by Mr. Raed Marabeh.

The event could not have taken place without the FPDM Professional Development and E-learning Committee. As topics relating to math pedagogy were explored and discussed, the FPDM Professional Development Days were a great success.

2021 TED Talks Competition: Aspiring to Excellence

Tiffany Dyson, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program



This year the FP Extracurricular Committee held its third annual TED Talks competition, Aspiring to Excellence. The March 2021 competition was hosted by the committee chair, Shamsa Alrushaidi, and organized by Hamid Delfi, Sanad Megwar, and Muhieddin Baddour. Each year, the committee aims to provide

Foundation, Post-Foundation, and Embedded students with the opportunity to further develop their English fluency and linguistic skills in an oral presentation.

Due to safety concerns centered around Covid-19, the talks were facilitated through the online platform Blackboard. To participate, students

were instructed to follow a web link and were allotted three to five minutes to share an inspiring story that had impacted their lives. Committee chair Shamsa Alrushaidi commented on this year's event:

'Some of the presentations were amazing. Enas Ghilan talked about the war in Yem-

en. You can't imagine that a student in the Foundation Program Department of English would have a personal experience about waking up to war sounds and noises. Hearing her tell her story was very moving.'

Panel members, Sanad Magwar, Nafisa Halane, Hamid Delfi, Muhieddin Baddour, and Shamsa Alrushaidi, evaluated and ranked the student talks according to a rubric, which focused on the content, language, PowerPoint visuals, and the stories themselves. Because it was difficult to choose just one winner, each student received an achievement certificate. On behalf of the Foundation Program, congratulations to this year's first, second, third, and fourth place winners listed in order, Enas Ghilan, Muneera Qatfa, Asma Elsheteihy, and Mouadh Abderrahim.

The FPDE Extracurricular Committee will hold its fourth annual TED Talks competition during the Spring 2022 semester.



The Foundation Program Reading Hour Sessions

Michele Downie, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

The Foundation Program (FP) continues its commitment to champion the importance of reading for students learning English. One way to foster literacy skills for English learners is to provide group-reading opportunities. This semester, the FP English Success Zone organized the Reading Hour sessions for students to practice their English reading skills.

The Reading Hour sessions took place every Thursday, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Due to the recent Corona virus, sessions were held online via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. Raghda Salah, chair of

the FP English Success Zone Committee, was the official organizer of the sessions, but noted that the Reading Hour sessions were a team effort. Committee members, Maha Al Masri, Fasil Yitbarak, and Dr. Fatma Jalalah, were in charge of running the sessions. Each weekly session was led by one teacher in rotation. Session leaders created the topics, PowerPoint presentations and all materials needed to run the activities during their session. The overall aim was to develop students' critical thinking skills by using a wide variety of reading texts. Students could improve their fluency in read-

ing and become familiar with reading different types of texts, as well as expanding their vocabulary and increasing their reading comprehension skills.

Fasil Yitbarek describes how he chose to lead his sessions, 'Before I invited my students to attend a reading session, I asked them what they would like to read. I gave them a choice between a formal academic text or a story. All wanted to read a story for a change. So, I searched and came up with an interesting story based on a folktale. Students who attended enjoyed

reading it, being engaged in discussion about the story, learning new vocabulary, and applying reading skills in activities that required making connections, using background knowledge, predicting, making deductions, etc. I realized that adding enjoyable reading materials in addition to required academic texts might be one way to foster the habit of reading among students.'

The FP English Success Zone plans to organize the Reading Hour sessions again in the Fall 2021 semester.

انضم إلى ساعة القراءة في ملتقى البرنامج التأسيسي للنجاح في اللغة الإنجليزية
(English FP Success Zone) لتقوية مهارة القراءة والفهم باللغة الإنجليزية



وقت ساعة القراءة أيام
الخميس من كل اسبوع
12:00 – 11:00 صباحا

عبر منصة بلاك بورد ألترا
الرجاء الضغط على الرابط
للموصول الى الورشة

#FPSuccessZone



The Foundation Program Al Majlis Sessions

Michele Downie, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

This year, once again, the Foundation Program (FP) offered students an opportunity to practice and improve their speaking skills. What was formerly known as the Conversation Station has been renamed as Al Majlis to make it more relatable and culturally appealing to students. For those not familiar with the Arabic term, 'majlis' is used to describe various types of gatherings among groups that share a common interest. In Qatar, men often gather outside of their homes to sit and chat

about different topics in a relaxed, social atmosphere.

The Majlis sessions took place every Thursday afternoon from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Due to the current Covid-19 situation, meetings were available to students online via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. Raghda Salah, chair of the FP English Success Zone, was organizer, while committee members, Farzana Lone and Issam Affaneh, ran the weekly sessions. The fundamental aim of Al Majlis was to enhance students' confidence and speak-

ing skills in a non-academic setting. Farzana Lone pointed out that, 'During class time everything is related to the syllabus and assessments, whereas during this hour students could express themselves freely with no fear of being judged.'

During the Majlis hour, the focus was placed on improving students' conversational skills and expanding their informal vocabulary. This was achieved by discussing a wide variety of topics that students could relate to. This semester

most of the topics had to do with students' everyday lives, such as fitness, the pandemic, and online learning. Issam Affaneh expanded on these ideas a bit further to foster deeper conversations on topics other than the ones they were familiar discussing. Issam explained, 'I focused on African-American history, which was convenient as Black History Month is observed in February in the United States. Impressively, the students were familiar with people like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Muhammad Ali, as well as the issues that they were involved in. The Majlis' conversations validated the learners' knowledge and provided me the opportunity to extend my content knowledge while improving their English language skills by allowing the participants to express their views.'

The Al Majlis sessions will resume in the Fall 2021 semester.

البرنامج التأسيسي
Foundation Program
QATAR UNIVERSITY قطر جامعة

عمادة الدراسات العامة
Deanship of General Studies

English Foundation Program
Success Zone cordially invites
you to participate in:

Al Majlis

To Practice Your English
Speaking skills!

Every Thursday
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra:
Please use [the link](#)
to access the workshop

يسر ملتقى البرنامج التأسيسي
للنجاح في اللغة الإنجليزية
دعوتكم لحضور:

المجلس

لممارسة مهارات التحدث
باللغة الإنجليزية

أيام الخميس من كل أسبوع
1:00 - 2:00 ظهراً

عبر منصة بلاك بورد ألترا
الرجاء الضغط على [الرابط](#)
للاوصول الى الورشة



#FPSuccessZone



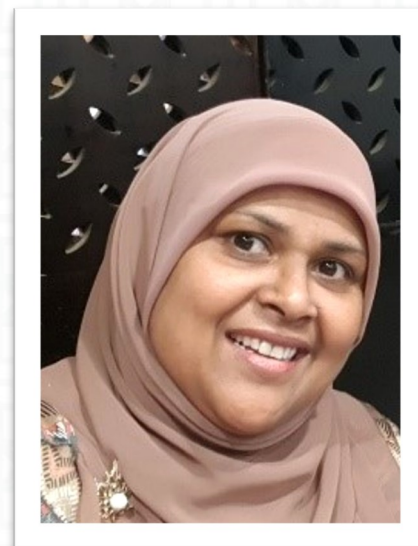




Departing FPDE Faculty

Azlifa Ahmed

It has been a wonderful experience working at the Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE), where I have had many opportunities to learn and grow both professionally and personally. The FPDE has been home and family for the past 14 years, and I treasure every one of you. Indeed, it is with very fond memories and a heavy heart that I leave. I am thankful to the FPDE and Qatar University for the many wonderful opportunities and the great memories I will take with me. I hope at least some of you will remember me fondly and try to keep in touch.



Azlifa Ahmed: Photograph courtesy of Azlifa Ahmed



Glenn Tucker: Photograph courtesy of Glenn Tucker

Glenn Tucker

Back in the fall of 2015, I joined the Qatar University Foundation Program as a lecturer. Over the past six years, I have enjoyed teaching our students and working with my colleagues here a great deal. I have benefitted a lot from being a member of this educational community. I met my wife around the time I began my job with Qatar University. Now I am a proud new father, suppressing the urge to show baby photos to any passer-by and jumping at the chance whenever anyone asks how the baby (Annie) is doing. Since joining QU, I have been able to attend and present at conferences, both local and abroad, which has helped me grow professionally. Although I will be leaving the Foundation Program at the end of the semester, I am looking forward to the next adventure. Don't forget to ask about Annie if you see me around.

Timothy Cullen

Goodbye Qatar and Qatar University! My wife and I are leaving Qatar after six years. I will certainly remember the time I spent here and the many experiences I have had. While here, I have gained new friends and worked with many interesting and helpful colleagues. Thanks to all the people who helped me while I was here, and I wish everyone in the Foundation Program all the best.



Timothy Cullen: Photograph courtesy of Timothy Cullen

Elisabeth Szewczyk-Méziane

I bid a fond adieu to Qatar University (QU) and the Foundation Program (FP) after many years of teaching here. I have thoroughly enjoyed working as a language instructor at QU, first in the English Language Teaching Unit as an Instructor of English for Medical Purposes in the QU Nursing Programme. I worked under Dr. Khalid Al Ali, who later became the Dean of the College of Science and then the first Director of the Foundation Program. We even once shared an office together in the old prefab lab Building 19, which housed the Biomedical Sciences Programme where I also taught medical English courses.

I began teaching general English when the Foundation Program was inaugurated in 2004. My years here have been very fruitful and eventful. It has been a great pleasure to see the FPDE become a major driver of educational excellence at Qatar University under its supportive and dedicated course leads, heads and directors. I shall certainly miss my students and brilliant colleagues; I sincerely wish everyone great success in their future endeavors. Now, I am off to the sunny shores of North Africa to my home in La Marsa, near the ancient Phoenician city of Carthage. Ma'salama.



Elisabeth Szewczyk-Méziane: Photograph courtesy of Elisabeth Szewczyk-Méziane



Fatma Jalalah: Photograph courtesy of Fatma Jalalah

Fatma Jalalah

I have been working for Qatar University for a long time. I first joined the English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU) in 1987 as an English lecturer, and later I became a member of faculty at the Foundation Department (FP). During those years, I held several course lead positions, taught many different courses, and participated in various committees, most recently, the FP Conference Committee and the FP Success Zone. I have always worked closely with students and established a very good rapport with them, not only as their instructor, but also as mentor and advisor. I have motivated many of them to love learning the English language and to enjoy using it. I have also worked with colleagues to enrich the teaching and learning process in the department. During this time, I enjoyed the great spirit of collegiality, the friendship, and the inspiration and respect I received from both colleagues and administration. After all these years of hard work and commitment, I am moving to my lovely new home in the United States of America (USA) to start a new chapter in my life. I will certainly remember every single person in our FP and will miss all of you.

Departing FPDM Faculty: Mohamed Shabeer

Paul Ames, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

The end of this semester will sadly see two of our valued Foundation Program Department of Math (FPDM) colleagues leave for pastures new. We caught up with Mr. Mohamed Shabeer for his reflections on his experiences at Qatar University (QU) and in Qatar.

Interviewer: When did you join QU?

Mr. Mohamed: August 2008.

Interviewer: What do you think has been your main achievement/accomplishment during your time at QU?

Mr. Mohamed: I think as a teacher, I have been transformed from a beginner to a skilled and professional teacher. I have had many opportunities to develop my skills during the last thirteen years. I received an award from Vice President for Academic Affairs Office (VPCAO) for using technology in classes.

Interviewer: What have you enjoyed the most about working at QU?

Mr. Mohamed: Working with colleagues from different academic and cultural backgrounds.

Interviewer: What will you miss the most about working at QU?

Mr. Mohamed: A very friendly environment and lovely colleagues.

Interviewer: How has the FPDM and/or the university changed during your time at QU?

Mr. Mohamed: When I joined, QU was in the process of becoming one of the best universities in the region. QU established many new colleges and departments. They hired faculty from all over the world and transformed the university dramatically. QU started and completed many mega projects, including many new buildings for the various colleges.

Interviewer: What advice would you give to any new faculty joining FPDM?

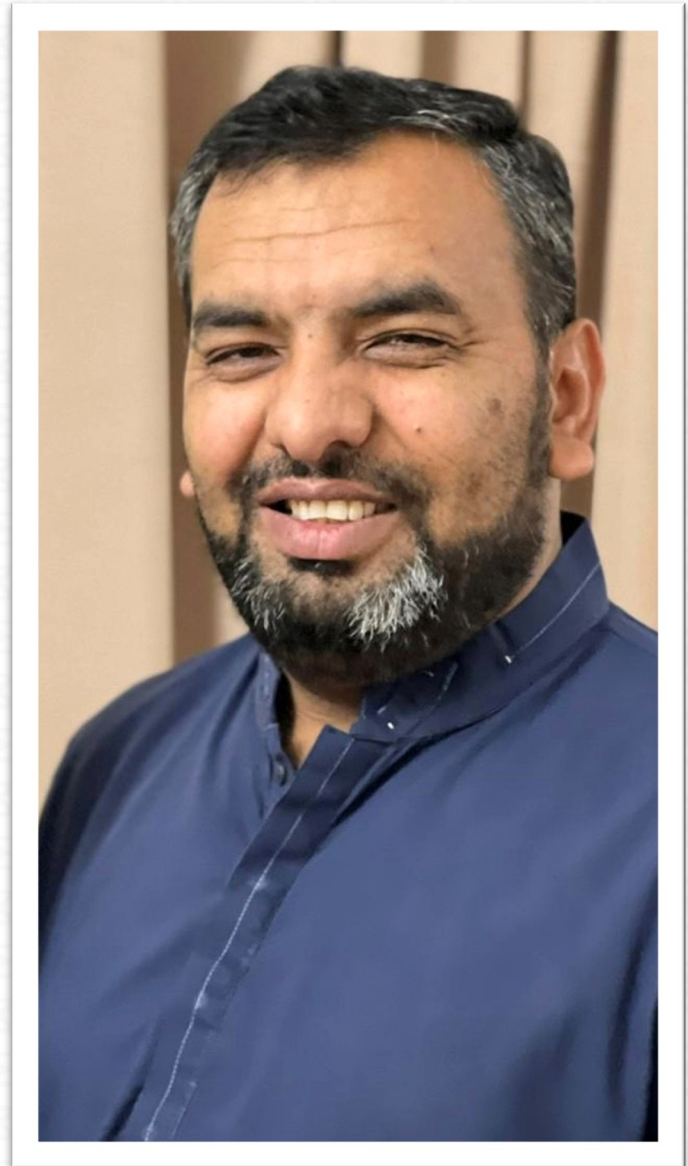
Mr. Mohamed: Be positive and try to adjust in the FPDM as it is a small department and all members work as a team; it's like a family.

Interviewer: If you are leaving Qatar, what will you miss the most about it?

Mr. Mohamed: I had a great social circle and used to meet often with colleagues, family, and friends. That is something that I will miss a lot.

Interviewer: What is your favorite thing to do in Qatar?

Mr. Mohamed: Going out, especially to the beaches, and spending time with family and friends.



Mohamed Shabeer: Photograph courtesy of Mohamed Shabeer

The ENGL 203 Final Term Paper: A Sample of Student's Work

Muhammad Syed, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

The Final Term Paper is the final project in ENGL 203. It is a way to prepare students for real research writing. Students write a paper of 1000 - 1200 words on a self-selected topic. Once the topic is finalized, students work for around three

weeks researching their topic and writing a detailed outline. In Week 10, students submit their introduction, three main ideas, sub-points, evidence from 4-7 sources, and a reference page which follows the guidelines of the American

Psychological Association (APA). The last two weeks of every semester are dedicated to an oral defense of the Final Term Paper. Below is an example of an ENGL 203 Final Term Paper.

Advantages and Disadvantages of FPGAs in Deep Learning

By Mohamed Izham

What is the secret behind an inanimate object made of steel, such as an autonomous car that seems to possess a sense of rationality? The answer lies in deep learning. In this field, computational models are trained using big data before they can turn conventional cars into self-driving ones. The training step is so important that researchers are continuously searching for better hardware accelerators to improve every aspect of the process. Recently, field-programmable logic arrays (FPGAs) have received a great deal of attention due to their unique features. Although they perform well and consume less power, FPGAs take a long time to design in deep learning applications.

Firstly, the FPGA stands out as a hardware accelerator in deep learning due to its good performance. Deep learning, by means of neural networks, is widely used in speech recognition, computer vision, and medical diagnosis in which an immense amount of input data streams into a computer model to be processed. In such usage, the architectures of the neural networks have to be based on parallelism to enable processing. Shawahna, Sait, and El-Maleh (2019) stated that FPGAs can accelerate the CPU- and memory-intensive convolutional neural networks (CNNs) effectively in image recognition and detection applications because they are able to optimize the parallelism of the required tasks. Put more simply, CNNs and artificial neural networks (ANNs) in general call for considerable system resources, especially when used in real-time systems. The author indicated that one effective way to meet these demands is through maximizing parallelism. Due to FPGAs' ease of parallel processing, more data can be processed per unit time, thus improving performance.

From another angle, the flexibility of a hardware accelerator can contribute to its performance. This is because deep learning models are comprised of many types, each of which works differently from the others. Hence, the accelerators that can be customized, especially in terms of their physical construction, to accelerate one model exclusively will perform better than another made for general purposes. Roth and Kinney (2014) described an FPGA as an integrated circuit (IC) that is made up of rows of equivalent logic cells whose interconnections can be programmed. This means that even long after the manufacturing process, the hardware make-up of an FPGA can still be changed. Hence, as opposed to fixed hardware, FPGAs programmability allows for reconfigurability based on the application. For example, if an application entails an unusual feature that is not readily available, which ANNs commonly do, an FPGA can be customized to address that need. Due to these aforementioned features, as deep learning models get more sophisticated and require more data to meet higher accuracy demand, FPGAs offer scientists the best performance benefits compared to other hardware accelerators.

In addition, another trait that gives the FPGA an edge over other hardware accelerators when it comes to deep learning is its high energy efficiency. Training deep learning models such as artificial neural networks (ANNs) requires both large memory capacity and huge datasets to achieve the required prediction accuracy. For this reason, infrastructure that includes servers and data centers is a must to realize such models, which inevitably brings energy costs into the equation. Ovtcharov et al. (2015) found that FPGAs' power consumption was less than 25W when used in a server which translates to relatively insignificant overhead in total power usage. In other words, the energy required to operate an FPGA is much lower compared to other hardware accelerators because of factors such as low heat dissipation during operation. As a result, FPGAs are attractive for deep learning applications as they lower costs to the servers and data centers that are needed to train the models.

Moreover, the programmability of the FPGA means that it can be reconfigured to deliver more output with the same amount of energy input. For example, after customizing a Stratix 10 FPGA to accelerate next-generation Deep Neural Networks (DNNs), Nurvitadhi et al. (2017) discovered that the FPGA outperformed a conventional Titan X GPU up to four times in terms of performance per watt. This means that by consuming the same unit of energy, an FPGA can carry out four times as many tasks as a GPU. This is a considerable improvement and since deep learning is processing-intensive, the energy saved will become more apparent. Therefore, FPGAs should be used to accelerate more models in deep learning because of its desirable energy efficiency thanks to its unique features such as low heat generation and reconfigurability.

However, using FPGAs in deep learning applications necessitates long development times. Before a hardware accelerator can be used to expedite a particular task, it first needs to be set up properly. Thereafter, a verification process needs to be carried out on the accelerator to ensure it performs as expected. These steps vary considerably from one accelerator to another, as does the difficulty, which depends on the quality of the available development tools. For example, the conventional graphics processing unit (GPU) accelerator offers many well-established and documented imaging libraries at the user's disposal. By contrast, the FPGA does not offer the same convenience because it is configured by way of hardware and not software. Bacon, Rabbah, and Shukla (2013) argued that the category of software tools called electronic design automation (EDA) required to program an FPGA are time-consuming and complicated, and the languages used are challenging. Since EDA tools are used throughout the develop, test, and debug phases, the author implied that the overall design process of an FPGA is difficult and long. Moreover, the languages used to write the code are archaic and not user-friendly.

To make matters worse, the number of experts who can properly use the aforementioned tools is small. Bacon, Rabbah and Shukla (2013) claimed that only a small percentage of hardware programmers are able to use the FPGA technology. This is a valid point because reconfiguring FPGA calls for knowledge of hardware programming which differs fundamentally to that of software programming. This presents a high entry barrier for the many software programmers involved in deep learning research who are the most likely candidates to program an FPGA. Furthermore, the stark differences between any two hardware systems mean that it is less probable for any hardware engineer to know how to handle an FPGA. As a result, the lack of experts in hardware programming in this field slows down the development time because fewer people are available to work on a particular task.

To conclude, there are advantages and disadvantages to using the FPGA in deep learning applications. Firstly, the FPGA enjoys top-notch performance because it can support parallel processing to consume data faster and reconfigurability to meet specific demands. Additionally, it is highly energy-efficient as it has low operational energy and high performance per watt. However, it suffers from a lengthy design process due to the lack of user-friendliness in its development tools and to the shortage of experts specializing in the device. Considering how life-changing deep learning has been and the fact that it is here to stay, the continuous research on FPGA guarantees that it will only gain importance hereafter as the main hardware accelerator in this domain.

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History of English Language Teaching at QU: 2006-2007, The Kennedy Years Part 1

Elisabeth Szewczyk-Méziane, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

Fall 2006 was a busy semester. Robert Kennedy replaced Dr. Madani Osman as Head of the English Department, ably assisted by Ahmed Salim who was appointed as Coordinator for Administration Faculty Support. Bob became well known for his Dilbert Desk calendar, which could always add a moment of levity to a conversation in his office. He used to say it was not easy to transition from teacher to administrator, but he always acknowledged and appreciated the support of department coordinators, level supervisors, colleagues, and office staff.

It was the second year of the Qatar University (QU) reform project, which had begun in 2004. This included the establishment of the Foundation Program (FP) with its two departments: English, and Mathematics and Computers. The Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE) also had a Curriculum Coordinator, a Testing Coordinator, a Student Services Coordinator, and a Post-Foundation Coordinator. Allyson Young took over from Mrs. Wafaa Ammar to run the two Student Learning Centers (SLC), one in the Men's Foundation Building

(MFB) and one in the Women's Activity Building. The centers also ran workshops on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and study skills, all of which were taught by FPDE instructors.

In September 2006, the Commission on English Language Programs Accreditation (CEA) paid its first site visit to the FPDE. The Foundation English Accreditation Steering Committee had been established in 2004 under the helm of the late



Ahmed Selim, Robert Kennedy, and Ahmad Hazratzad: Photograph courtesy of Ahmad Hazratzad

Linda Wettlaufer, who oversaw the preliminary CEA self-study requirement. In February 2006, the FPDE successfully passed CEA's eligibility review. The visiting CEA team presented orientation sessions to inform the FPDE faculty members of the accreditation process and provided instruction to the seven members of Accreditation Project Steering Committee, who were responsible for planning and conducting the self-study as well as writing the report on their findings. The CEA team were duly impressed with the department and its efforts to comply with CEA requirements. A few weeks after the visit, FPDE was approved to carry out the rest of the 18-month self-study accreditation requirements, in which information would be gathered to comply with CEA's requisite 52 standards.

Another milestone was the approval of the syllabus for course 81120-1, a new credit-bearing course required by the Core Curriculum Committee. This course was developed by FPDE faculty members Alaeddin Halwani, Hani Al Kuteifan, and Dr. Mohammed Fawzi. A new FPDE group was the English Department Multimedia Group, which was set up to promote e-learning in the FPDE. This included an online writing course launched by Dinos Demetriades. Blackboard Academic Suite Version 7.1, which had been introduced to QU by FPDE faculty Joseph Harrison and Alaeddin Halwani, was inaugurated by QU administration, thus ushering in a new era of online instruction and communication for the whole of the university community.

A big highlight of the Fall 2006 semester was the number of teachers from all three

departments in the FP who were volunteers for the 2006 Asian Games, held under the auspices of the Doha Asian Games Organizing Committee (DAGOC). Volunteers were assigned duties such as flash-court reporters, check-in staff, ushers, and support staff in various venues around Qatar. They were required to take six training sessions offered by an Australian events training team several weeks prior to the games. All volunteers put in at least 30 hours a week for the two-week event, in addition to a full-time teaching load at the FP. Among current staff, Asian Games volunteers included Dr. Ameen Hemyari, Dr. Abir Gafar, and Elisabeth Szewczyk-Méziane.

Two very popular events hosted in the spring of 2007 were the Flower Festival and Sushi Day, both of which were organized by students in the Foundation Program under FEP Student Services. The Japanese Animé Club was set up by faculty instructor Dr. Simone Evans. For the Flower Festival, students wrote and presented haiku poems and decorated the ground floor of the Women's Foundation Building (WFB) with garlands and bouquets of flowers. The event was attended by the Japanese ambassador's wife. The Sushi Festival was held a few months later; students organized traditional Japanese games such as Kendama and Koma and hosted a buffet of Japanese sushi delicacies. This event was attended by the Japanese Ambassador to Qatar, QU President Dr. Sheika Al Misnad, and Dr. Khalid Al Ali, the Director of the FP. During the spring of 2007, The FP Social Committee also organized a well-attended outing for faculty to Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassem Al Thani Museum and

Farm in Shahaniya.

Another highlight of the 2006-2007 academic year was the three-day ELT Mini-Conference, organized by the FP Action Plan Project Group, held from 6th to 8th February in the Ibn Khaldoun Building. The conference theme was Transitions in Teaching. Dr. Zohra Eslami, a cultural studies expert at Texas A & M, hosted a panel entitled Non-native English Speaking English Teachers' Needs. Dr. Mohammed Abbas, a well-known regional educator from the Ministry of Education, Bahrain, gave a talk on Creating a Collaborative English Department Culture. Dr. Abbas later commented very favorably on the international faculty representation; FPDE faculty members gave interesting presentations and workshops in addition to a number of well-subscribed IT workshops.

The late Robert Kennedy, in his end-of-year Word stated, 'I thank each and every member of the Foundation Department, the English Department, the Math and Computer Department, and the students – anyone who has contributed to making this year an overwhelmingly enjoyable experience for me.' A year of many changes and challenges had come to an end.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Mrs. Fatma Alyan, Mr. Alaeddiin Halwani, and Mr. David Ingels for sharing their memories.



New FPDE Faculty

Sehar Mirza, Lecturer of English, Foundation Program

Sehar Mirza has joined the Foundation Program Department of English (FPDE) as a lecturer. She is originally from Pakistan. She has a master's degree (MA) in Applied Linguistics for Language Teaching from Kingston University, United Kingdom. Her dissertation investigated learners' perceptions and preferences for teacher praise and attributional feedback in a Pakistani ESL context. As well as a master's degree, she holds a Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) and a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

Sehar has previously taught in the United Kingdom, Spain, and Pakistan. In a university context, she has taught functional English, communication and interperson-

al skills, public speaking, and technical and business writing.

Sehar thinks that teaching English in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context is thrilling because it requires continuous creativity to make language learning enjoyable for students. She also believes in adapting her teaching methods and strategies to meet students' needs and preferences.

Her interests in English as a Second Language (ESL) include applied linguistics, phonology, and educational technologies. Outside of work, Sehar enjoys playing cricket, traveling, and cooking.



Sehar Mirza: Photograph courtesy of Sehar Mirza

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