



English Language Program Newsletter

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Welcome to the English Language Program

Message from the Head of English Language Program

Dear all,

We are pleased to share with you the publication of the English Language Program's Newsletter.

The English Language Program serves the needs of all the students in the different colleges and schools of the University including Business, Engineering, Aviation and Maritime. Our programs include pre-sessional (Foundation) courses and courses at the Diploma and Bachelor levels to help our students acquire communication, research, and critical thinking skills necessary in their fields of specialization. Our internationally accredited curricula are designed in collaboration with our colleagues in the departments we serve, and in line with international standards. These curricula promote active learning through extensive practice in skills needed in various academic situations and in the labor market and are facilitated by competent faculty with extensive teaching experience and diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

While the present newsletter showcases activities from the department at large, including ongoing research, conference presentations and professional development by faculty, it is mainly a platform for our students, especially those at the Foundation Level, where they can express themselves through skills both within and beyond those required by the curriculum. The contributions of our students include, in addition to excellent academic (research) essays and reports from our Engineering and Business Diploma students, examples of exceptional PowerPoint presentations and brochures from our Level 1 Foundation students, as well as artwork and photography from our students in all units. Furthermore, the newsletter showcases events within the department and wider community including the widely praised Ripple Effect project, which included on-campus events including the Stress Less Fest, motivational presentations and a visit to an elderly care home.

Dr. Abdessattar Mahfoudhi
Associate Professor/Head of English Language Program

List of ELP Faculty

	Faculty Name	Title
1	Dr. Abdessattar Mahfoudhi	Associate Professor/Head of English Language Program
2	Dr. Fajer Bin Rashed	Assistant Professor
3	Suzanne Emmerson	Senior Instructor
4	Rebecca McCloy	Senior Instructor
5	Sara Al Shihab	Senior Instructor
6	Tasneem Hasan	Senior Instructor
7	Hiba Tayara	Senior Instructor
8	Fajer Al Shammari	Senior Instructor
9	Nalin Bahuguna	Senior Instructor
10	Eman Shadouh	Senior Instructor
11	Michael McBride	Instructor
12	Kawthar Haidar	Instructor
13	Arwa Al Shaar	Instructor
14	Andrea Hingston	Instructor
15	Seyda Hidimoglu	Instructor
16	Donia Alalwani	Instructor
17	Abdullah Samateh	Instructor
18	Lamya Al Mousa	Instructor
19	Dina Torkhani	Instructor
20	Bushra Airoud	Instructor
21	Aleksandar Mitrovski	Instructor

List of Honors students

Students that gained 80% or more in their result in Fall 2024/2025 semester:

Fall 2024/2025 semester		
	Student Name	Level code/ section
1	Fatemah Al Sarraf	ELDL1N – E1N1
2	Yousef Al Mulla	ELDL1N – E1N2
3	Ali Al Shammari	ELDL1N – E1N2
4	Bernadet Ahmad	ELDL1N – E1N3
5	Yousef Al Shamari	ELDL1N – E1N6
6	Abdullah Al Shemeri	ELDL1C – E1S1
7	Shaikhah Al Mraished	ELDL1C – E1S1
8	Mohammad Al Hajeri	ELDL1C – E1S1
9	Tasnem Jandeel	ELDL1C – E1S1
10	Turki Alrashidi	ELDL1C – E1S2
11	Abdullah Alrashidi	ELDL1C – E1S4
12	Khalifa Al Munea	ELDL2A – E2A1
13	Ahmed Al Shatti	ELDL2A – E2A1
14	Waleed Al Hudhoud	ELDL2A – E2A1
15	Yousef Al Hijawi	ELDL2A – E2A1
16	Abdullah Al Muhaiteeb	ELDL2A – E2A1
17	Abdullah Al Mutawaa	ELDL2A – E2A1
18	Shaheen Alalawi	ELDL2A – E2A2
19	Meshal Alameeri	ELDL2A – E2A2
20	Abeir Alshammari	ELDL2A – E2A2
21	Meshari Almlaifi	ELDL2A – E2A2
22	Nour Al Zanki	ELDL2A – E2A2
23	Alyaa Mohammad	ELDL2B – E2B1
24	Abdullah Alotaibi	ELDL2E – E2E1

25	Saud Alajmi	ELDL2E – E2E1
26	Abulaziz Al Fouzan	ELDL2E – E2E2
27	Khaled Al Otaibi	ELDL2E – E2E2
28	Salah Al Shanfa	ELDL2E – E2E2
29	Naser Al Mutairi	ELDL2E – E2E2
30	Abdullah Al Habaj	ELDL2E – E2E2
31	Hamad Al Kandari	ELDL2E – E2E4
32	Mohammad Al Foudari	ELDL2E – E2E4
33	Zeinab Buabbas	ELDL2E – E2E4

Students that gained 80% or more in their result in Spring 2024/2025 semester:

Spring 2024/2025 semester		
	Student Name	Level code/ section
1	Ahmad Al Mutairi	ELDL1N – E1N1
2	Jumanah Anki	ELDL1C – E1S1
3	Nouf Al Roumi	ELDL1C – E1S1
4	Salman Alblushi	ELDL1C – E1S3
5	Abdullah Al Shemeri	ELDL2A – E2A1
6	Turki AL Rashidi	ELDL2A – E2A1
7	Mohammad Al Hajeri	ELDL2A – E2A2
8	Tasnem Ahmad Jandeel	ELDL2A – E2A2
9	Abdallah Alali	ELDL2E – E2E1
10	Talal Aldoseri	ELDL2E – E2E1
11	Fatemah Al Sarraf	ELDL2E – E2E1
12	Sarah Alazmi	ELDL2E – E2E1
13	Sultan Al Otaibi	ELDL2E – E2E2
14	Bedoor Aljean	ELDL2E – E2E3
15	Mansour Alattar	ELDL2E – E2E3
16	Fahad Alshayji	ELDL2E – E2E3
17	Dhebaa Alajmi	ELDL2E – E2E3

Student Contributions

Academic:

1. Report for student **Abdulrahman Altaweel** (ID# 240200118):

Description:

This report by Abdulrhman Altaweel (ENGL110/P5) was about The Problem of Inefficiency of Conventional Crop Maintenance Methods and Potential Solutions with Robotics and Mechatronics. His instructor, Bushra Airoud, regarded the report as an exceptional piece of writing, demonstrating a commendable aptitude for academic writing.

Title: The Problem of Inefficiency of Conventional Crop Maintenance Methods and Potential Solutions with Robotics and Mechatronics

Definition of the problem:

Farming and crop management hinges on multiple pillars that include soil, weed, and pest control in addition to planting, harvesting, and irrigation. Conventional crop management methods have been proven inadequate in meeting the dietary demands of the increasingly growing population (Behfar et al 2024). Incorporation robotics and mechatronics to modernize and mechanize conventional farms is essential in reaching the desired produce production rates (Yin et al 2024); The importance is corroborated by a study in China showing that utilizing robotics and mechanized operation in conventional farms can increase their yield by 16.62% while requiring 57.87% less labor and 3.0% less diesel (Yin et al 2024). Robotics and mechatronics can be deployed in most aspects of crop management at little to no loss of resources such seeds, water, pesticides, and electricity (Yin et al 2024).

Causes:

The causes behind the discrepancies in conventional crop management capabilities lies in both infrastructural and methodological aspects. Some of the inefficiencies regarding methodological aspect include the use of primitive irrigation systems, outdated tractors, and relying on manual labor for most farm tasks (Yin et al 2024). Conventional soil sampling methods have notably affected farm production efficiency. These methods are mainly done by hand from random spots on the field or by using designated probes, these samples are then transported to specialized labs for analysis (Kitic et al 2024). Efficiency is often hindered due to these conventional soil sampling methods as a result of delayed data reports and samples collected from inconsistently chosen patches in addition to potential cross contamination and human errors (Behfar et al 2024). As for the infrastructural causes, farms that rely on conventional crop management methods are usually dominated by uneven land, poorly structured roads and paths, and disorganized plowing patches (Yin et al 2024).

Effects:

While insufficient production of produce is a common result of entrusting in conventional crop management methods, multiple other effects impact arises from the use of these conventional methods. On a global scale, conventional crop management methods have been shown to negatively influence the environment through the waste of pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals, destruction of natural habitats, and producing avoidable pollution and greenhouse gases (Kitic et al 2024). Considering only the individual farm, the use of outdated and heavy tractors can compress the soil and cause spoilage (Behfar et al 2024).

Proposed Solutions, Preferred Solution:

This report will examine two possible solutions to the problem of the inefficiency of conventional crop management methods. The two possible solutions are Agrabot Lala (Kitic et al 2024) and a wheeled robotic platform (Behfar et al 2024). After careful analysis and comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of both robots, the wheeled robotic platform appears to be the best solution out of the two due to its flexible and versatile structure, limited impact on the environment and farmland, and the lower and economically friendly cost (Behfar et al 2024)

2. Research Essay and Description for student **Rodaina Alhamdan**
(ID# 240400043):

Description:

This research essay by Rodaina Alhamdan (ENGL111/P2) was about The Problem of Advertising Overload on the Internet and Possible Solutions. Her instructor, Bushra Airoud, regarded the essay as an exemplary piece of writing, showcasing commendable academic writing prowess.



Title: The Problem of Advertising Overload on the Internet and Possible Solutions

The proliferation of advertising on the internet has transformed online spaces into commercial settings, provoking questions regarding the way advertising overload influences consumers' autonomy and cognitive endurance. The primary problem notes that as invasive advertisements on the internet continue to become a growing occurrence, advertisers are seeking methods to tolerably present numerous advertisements and to enhance internet users' exposures by utilizing modification tools and media filtration (Kim 2018). Historically, the expeditious evolution of technology has altered the way individuals communicate with the globe according to Suryadi et al (2024). This evolution has impacted various aspects of everyday life. Consumer behavior in purchasing is one aspect that has been influenced due to this modification in technology (Suryadi et al 2024). This has caused internet advertising to evolve globally as a commonly familiar type of advertisement, this is due to demanding the focus of users and supplying a versatile way to manage the target audience and rate of occurrence; which are all effective ways to boost earnings based on exposure range by advertising as stated by Kang et al (2022). However, from the standpoint of website visitors this may result in experiences of excessive annoyance and lead to mistrust and apathy toward advertisements (Kang et al 2022). As there are a multitude of reasons for advertising overload on the internet, there are multiple solutions. This essay will discuss the problem of advertising overload on the internet, and it will propose and evaluate two potential solutions, which are choosing ads that are relevant to the content of each website and giving users ad customization features. It will be followed by a critical assessment arguing that the latter solution is the most efficient solution, after which the essay will arrive at a conclusion.

One potential solution to mediate advertising overload on the internet is ensuring that ads are relevant to the content of each website on which they are presented. It is crucial to concentrate on how well advertisements equate to the material that is being offered by a website because, when a website offers advertisements that align with its offerings and are relevant to consumers' preferences as well as the website itself, this is a major factor in determining the users' favorable opinions of that particular website (Kang et al 2022). Advertisers are able to provide viewers with an enhanced user experience by integrating their ads into the platform's theme or goal. This solution offers numerous advantages. A notable advantage is that impressions of ad intrusiveness intensified when an advertising disruption was incongruous with the user's primary objective or interest, resulting in heightened aggravation and a propensity to evade the advertisement (Kim 2018). By using the tactic of relating advertisements to the websites, publishers may mitigate irritation among consumers given that users are far more inclined to view advertisements that

they find helpful. Conversely, this solution might come with multiple disadvantages. One significant disadvantage is, whether intentionally or inadvertently, consumers may be overwhelmed by the abundance of information on websites, making it challenging to find pertinent and useful information (Kang et al 2022). Kang et al (2022) continues, that if an excessive number of intrusive ads are there, this is made worse, which contributes to user annoyance and hostility. This demonstrates the significance of establishing a balance among user experience and advertising for the purposes of preserving engagement.

An additional viable solution that could prove effective is giving users ad customization features. During an experiment, Kim (2018) found that the average variations between circumstances indicated that individuals subjected to the personalized ad variation condition perceived the ads comparatively well when compared with individuals subjected to viewing a predetermined ad three times and those required to watch three designated fluctuated ads, despite the fact that neither of the interaction effects of an ad customization and ad variation on attitudes were statistically significant. A potential explanation for this outcome lies in the fact that participants had the ability to choose from a variety of advertising attributable to the repeated ad customization features, which were valued for offering instantaneous incentives (Kim 2018). There are multiple advantages attributed to this solution. A key advantage is as an example according to some discoveries from empirical research, consumers felt that advertising was less obtrusive when it incorporated a control option since, it fulfilled their sense of autonomy and empowerment over the ad material (Kim 2018). Providing consumers the capacity to select the type of advertisement they are exposed to or to withdraw from certain categories offers them a sense of authority over their online experience. Additionally, platforms may maintain their audience while continuing to generate profits by tailoring their advertising to each consumer. On the contrary, this solution might include an assortment of disadvantages. One impactful disadvantage is that academic studies have not yet investigated whether or not in-stream video advertising containing customization components could increase the efficacy of forced advertising exposures and elicit favorable rather than unfavorable reactions to ad reputation (Kim 2018).

In conclusion, this essay has studied the problem of advertising overload on the internet and has assessed two solutions, which are choosing ads that are relevant to the content of each website and giving users ad customization features. While both solutions indisputably play an essential role in rectifying advertising overload on the internet, websites providing users ad customization features is the favored strategy because it will encourage user interaction with the website. There are some applicable recommendations that should be taken into consideration. It is consequential for advertisers to consider the consumer's attitudes towards their ads along with advertisement exposure. Decreasing the amount of repeated ads within a brief period should also be taken into account because this will aid in reducing user irritation. Moreover, creating different variations of the same advertisement should be considered to help with advertisement fatigue. Additionally, more research into which websites ads should be displayed on should be conducted by marketers and website owners. Furthermore, experimenting with different features that give users the ability to control the advertisement they are shown should be conducted. The challenge for advertisers and website developers in the future is to counteract the detrimental impacts of excessive online advertising.

Reference List:

Kang, I, He, X & Ma, I 2022, 'Investigating the impact of coercive exposure on web-advertisement performance: Focusing on the mediating role of advertisement fit', *International Journal of Market Research*, vol. 64, no. 1, pp. 69–88, viewed 6 November 2024,

<<https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=eebbb999-1146-3b82-9e42-cdb428546173>>.

Kim, NY 2018, 'The Effect of Ad Customization and Ad Variation on Internet Users' Perceptions of Forced Multiple Advertising Exposures and Attitudes', *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 15–27, viewed 6 November 2024,

<<https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=f0323219-7da8-3692-bcaf-236739432c59>>.

Suryadi, N, Barinta, DD, Islam Fasie, MF, Firdausiah, A & Nurmasari, ND 2024, 'The Effectiveness of Pop-Up Advertising on Millennial Consumers' Purchase Intentions', *Revista Gestão & Tecnologia*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 112–148, viewed 6 November 2024,

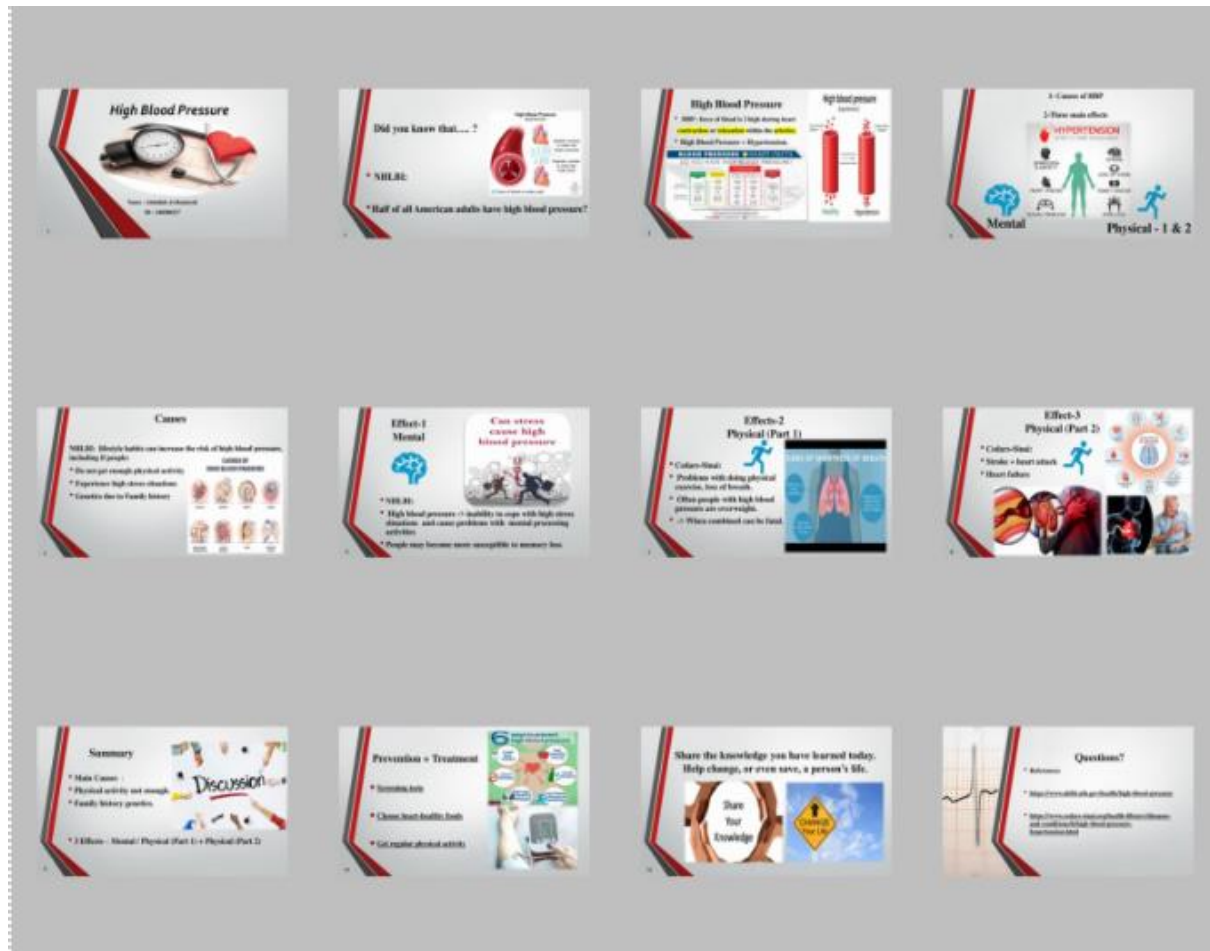
<<https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=22c15fcb-84df-394b-ada5-493b563615b4>>.

3. TAS Brochure for student **Fatemah Al Sarraf** (ID# 240200207):



Fatemah Al Sarraf (ELDL1N - Section 1) designed a colorful, kid-friendly brochure that explains the causes, effects, and solutions for air pollution—making a complex global issue easy to understand and inspiring children to act for a cleaner future.

4. TAS Presentation for student **Abdullah Alrashidi** (ID# 240200217):



Abdullah Alrashidi (ELDL1C - Section 4 produced a PowerPoint about the problem of high blood pressure with treatment options as part of their ELDL1C TAS research assessment.

Creative:

1. Artwork of student **Bader Fahad Ahmad** (ID# 240200252):

Bader's passion for drawing began at a young age. He was introduced to the art of drawing by his mother, a visual artist and the head of the Art Education Department at her school, who played a key role in guiding his artistic journey. In the early stages, Bader started by imitating cartoon illustrations, but over time, he improved his skills and developed a particular interest in character design. For the Fall 2024 semester, Bader contributed illustrations for the Literary Circle in the Reading classes.



2. Student **Salem Alsaffar** (ID# 240200332):

Salem Al Saffar (ELDL1N - Section 4) brings the world of cars to life through his photography. His passion for automotive art is showcased on his Instagram page, @salloum_photo, where each image captures the power, elegance, and beauty of cars with stunning detail.



Instagram link: https://www.instagram.com/salloum_photo?igsh=b3dmeGV5bThlcnF3&utm_source=qr

Faculty Contributions

- Dr. Abdessattar Mahfoudhi

Service to the Community and the Profession

- Dr. Abdessattar Mahfoudhi is on the editorial board of the Arab Journal of Applied Linguistics, which is a forum for researchers working on issues related to language issues in the Arab World. It is an open access journal that is based entirely on volunteer work and does not charge money for all its services (<https://www.arjals.com/ajal/about>). In addition, Dr. Abdessattar is also a member of the editorial committee of the international journal 'Languages,' and Dr. Abdessattar has also served as ad hoc reviewer for the international journal: Reading & Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal.

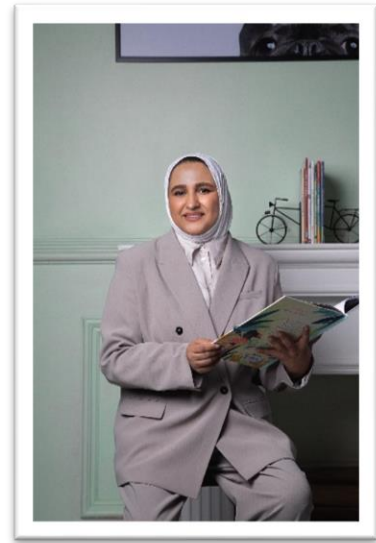


- Dr. Abdessattar Mahfoudhi is also on the board of a non-profit organization: Arab, Speech, Language and Literacy Research Network (ASLL) that gives online free services in terms of access to assessments and publications related to speech, language and literacy with a focus on Kuwait and the Arab World (<https://www.asllnetwork.org/>).

➤ Dr. Fajer Bin Rashed

1. Dr. Fajer Bin Rashed, Assistant Professor in the English Language Program at AU, launched **the Picturebook Club** in Spring 2024/2025. She holds a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on Language and Early Literacy Studies. she is an avid reader and published researcher; Dr. Fajer actively reviews for multi- and interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journals. Her research interests include (early) literacy education, bilingualism, multiculturalism, and social-emotional learning in education, amongst others.

Picturebooks are primarily written and illustrated for young children and are called picturebooks because they feature pictures alongside the text. During the club meetings, participants discussed factors that may influence how picturebooks are selected, approached, and how to read them to children.



The club's biweekly meetings always include a curated selection of Arabic, English, and internationally translated picturebooks. Discussions about the magic of reading to children have entailed addressing the cultural, artistic, and literacy-based aspects of reading picturebooks. The club has both introduced and discussed picturebooks considering social emotional learning and considering cultural responsiveness.

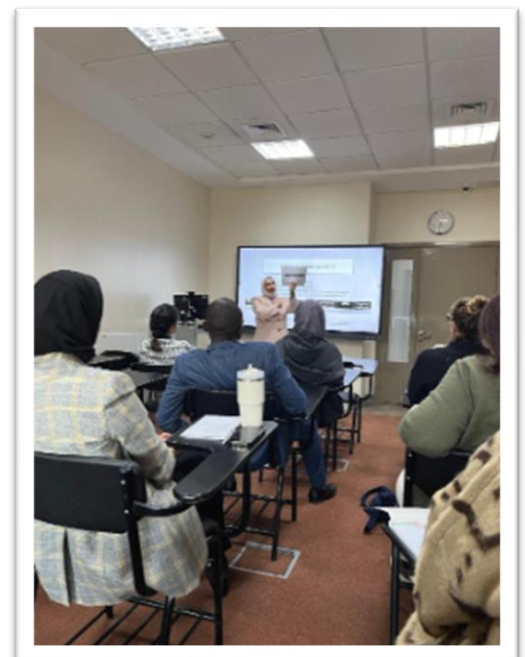


2. Dr. Fajer Bin Rashed recently joined the reviewers' board of Review of Education (RoE), an official journal of the British Educational Research Association (BERA), known for publishing in-depth scholarly articles ranging from 8,000 to 20,000 words. She was also invited to contribute to an upcoming special issue on "Transparency in Assessment," a topic she considers both timely and critical—especially in addressing the importance of transparent reporting of bilingual learners' literacy outcomes.

3. Dr. Fajer Bin Rashed also conducted a workshop titled "**Sustaining Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) Inside and Outside the Classroom**" to the ELP faculty.

Brief introduction about the workshop:

Sustaining Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) inside and outside the classroom necessitates that educators practice the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) framework, which establishes equitable learning environments across five key concepts: empathy, self-awareness, awareness of others, self-regulation, and motivation. In particular, self-awareness, awareness of others, and self-regulation guided the focus of this interactive workshop. The workshop allowed its participants the opportunity to understand and reflect on (implicit) teacher bias(es) through self-awareness. It also supported the participants to recognize cultural similarities and differences among individuals and groups within the local Kuwaiti experience through exercising their awareness of others. Finally, it shared ways that one could utilize for altering cultural perceptions and biases about their learners through self-regulation. Dr. Fajer hopes that through sharing her personal teacher story during the workshop that it in turn inspires its participants to engage in their own introspective journeys about their past and current teaching approaches.



4. Dr. Fajer Bin Rashed co-presented with Dr. Mona Aljanahi, Vice Dean of the College of Education at United Arab Emirates University, at the 2024 BERA Conference and WERA Focal Meeting. The joint international conference was held at the University of Manchester.

Abstract:

Understanding the influence that identity and language affiliation play in Emirati readers' reading for pleasure was the objective of this case study. The study's specific investigation of how the Emirati participants identify as English readers, how community influences their reading endeavors, and how their home language, cultural background, and familial background influence their English reading was guided by Moje and Luke's (2009) literacy and identity metaphors



Dr. Fajer presented at the first London International Conference on Inclusive Education (LICIE) that took place at the IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society on 28th, 29th and 30th July 2025. The event was organized by the UCL Centre for Inclusive Education (CIE). Her presentation was entitled: ***Exploring Male University Students' Insights about the Value of Utilizing Picturebooks for Maintaining Inclusive Education***. This qualitative study is significant in that it revolves around a text type, picturebooks, that are usually not included in higher educational demographics but rather researched through the perception of children, exclusively. In the study setting, picturebooks are considered unique and innovational pedagogical resources used in higher education classes. Moreover, participants' insights not only informed the incorporation of culturally diverse picturebooks but also forecasted insights into their use in early childhood classrooms. After having delivered her talk on the first day of the conference, Dr. Fajer was invited to participate in a Q&A panel to answer questions from the audience.

➤ Hiba Tayara

1. Senior instructor Hiba Tayara conducted a workshop titled **"Pedagogical Application of AI to English Language Teaching in Arab World Higher Education"** with Dr. Marine Milad and Mr. Mohammad Farran at the following conferences:

- Higher Education in the Arab World Conference - Lebanon (April 2025)
- The Future of Higher Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence Forum - Australian University (May 2025)



Brief introduction about the workshop:

A large number of industries, including education, are being revolutionized by artificial intelligence (AI) and this trend is only going to become more popular and widespread with time. The use of AI applications in English Language Teaching (ELT) in higher education in the Arab World is examined in this chapter and its potential for enhancing the teaching and learning experience. This will be done by presenting an overview starting by defining AI, its components, and its potential importance as a teaching tool.

It will also highlight the current role of AI in English Language Teaching and future teaching approaches. Therefore, the application of AI tools, as an instructive guide, will be discussed by giving examples of AI-based language learning platforms that adopt intelligent tutoring systems, such as chatbots, virtual reality and augmented reality and their role in ELT. Thus, Natural Language Processing (NLP), an interdisciplinary subfield of computer science and linguistics, will be discussed to shed light on machine learning applications like Grammarly, Duolingo, and Google Translate which are AI-driven technologies that can assist learners in language learning and teaching.



➤ Fajer Al Shammari

1. Senior Instructor Fajer Al Shammari was a keynote speaker at the **4th Educational NOSS Symposium 2025**. In addition to her keynote address, she delivered a presentation titled **“Learning to Utilize AI: Innovative Tools and Creative Applications for Lifelong Learning”** to empower educators to transform their teaching practices using AI resources as an essential toolkit.



Abstract:

This presentation addresses the transformative potential of artificial intelligence in education and everyday life. While AI may seem complex, this session aims to demystify its practical applications for both educators and students, demonstrating how it can enhance learning, streamline tasks, and foster creativity. Through concrete examples drawn from various subject areas, participants will discover how readily available AI tools can be integrated into daily routines and classroom practices to create impactful learning experiences.

By showcasing some practical examples, this presentation will empower educators to move beyond the theoretical aspects of AI and embrace its potential to transform their teaching practices and equip students with essential skills for navigating an AI-driven world. Participants will leave with actionable insights and a toolkit of AI resources ready for immediate implementation in their classrooms and daily live

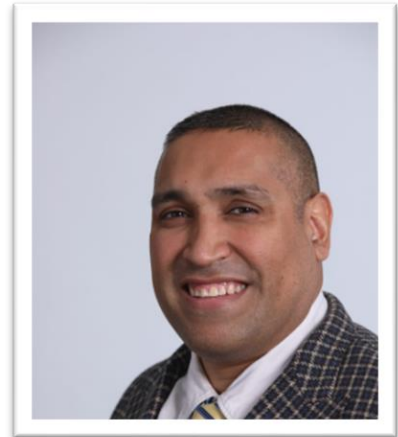


➤ Nalin Bahuguna

1. Senior Instructor Nalin Bahuguna delivered a workshop titled **“Building Society Through Education for Wellbeing”** to the ELP faculty.

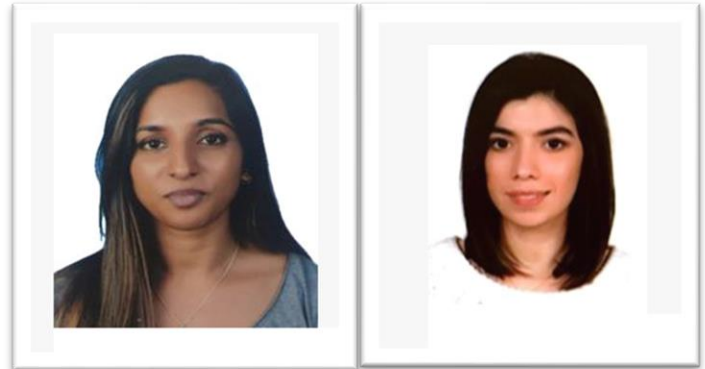
Brief introduction about the workshop:

The workshop summarized a presentation at Kuwait TESOL by Dr. Esra Alesia from Kuwait University (KU), which was attended by Mr. Nalin. Currently around the world, more and more governments are implementing ‘Well-Being’-Frameworks to inform their public policies. This presentation covered the relationship between ‘happiness’, ‘well-being’ and ‘GDP’, with a particular focus on how Finland has managed to for the 7th straight year rate as the no. 1 country in terms of happiness.



➤ Andrea Hingston and Donia Alalwani

1. Ms. Andrea Hingston and Ms. Donia Alalwani co presented a workshop titled **"A Think Thank on AI and Academic Innovation"** for the ELP faculty



Ms. Andrea Hingston

Ms. Donia Alalwani

Brief introduction about the workshop:

This presentation covered summary of the AASU Higher Education in the Innovation Era Summit and AU TLC Forum. It also opened a discussion on the idea of use of AI and ethics. Instructors were then invited to talk about their own use of AI in the classroom this past year.



➤ Dina Torkhani

1. Ms. Dina Torkhani recently published in the American Journal of STEM Education a study titled " **AI-Enhanced Language Learning: The Impact of Talkpal.AI on EFL Undergraduate Students' English-Speaking Skills**". Her study explores how Talkpal.AI enhances EFL students' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, demonstrating significant improvements in their overall speaking skills.



Abstract

AI-Enhanced Language Learning: The Impact of Talkpal.AI on EFL Undergraduate Students' English-Speaking Skills

This study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of Talkpal.AI in improving fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar among 40 pre-intermediate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Kuwait. The participants were informed of the research objectives and implementation. A pretest-posttest design was used within a quasi-experimental design. Statistical analysis showed that students made significant improvements in posttest fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar ($p < 0.05$). While the study's limitations include sample size and lack of sample diversity, this finding emphasizes the potential of AI technologies such as Talkpal.AI in supporting and advancing language learning for EFL students.

Published in: American Journal of STEM Education, 2025-05-15, Volume 11.

DOI / Link: <https://doi.org/10.32674/232w1188>

2. Ms. Dina Torkhani was a keynote speaker, sharing valuable insights on how cognitive development theories can significantly enhance student learning outcomes at the **TESOL Kuwait's 10th Annual Conference 2024**.

Abstract

Cognitive-Based Theories of Student Development: Pathways to Effective Learning

Cognitive development theories have importantly helped educators measure and understand student development. These theories can vastly improve teaching and learning practices. This can also be explored through measuring cognitive engagement and development. This presentation aims to share these insights and their implications for wider application within the classroom.

➤ CSR Initiative: NBK Hospital Visit

On May 25, 2025, a group of AU faculty and staff members paid the NBK hospital a visit, as part of the picturebook club CSR initiative. Under the leadership of Dr. Fajer Bin Rashed, the picturebook club was initiated in Spring 2024/2025 to act as a literacy project, dedicated to the university's staff and faculty members. During the club sessions, the members discussed how to select, approach, and utilize social and emotional learning picturebooks when reading to children. During the hospital visit, a number of faculty and staff members volunteered from the English Language Program, College of Business, the Maritime Department, and the Office of the Assistant to the President for Support Services. The CSR initiative entailed reading English and Arabic picturebooks to the children at the hospital. AU graciously donated gift bags to the children; similarly, Little Bees Bookstore generously donated a number of bilingual picturebooks to the hospital's library.

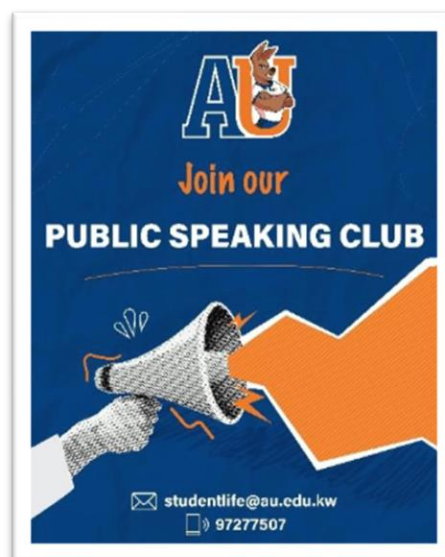


Students' Activities

➤ AU Public Speaking Club

The AU Public Speaking Club is a new club which was initiated and led by Ms. Donia Alalwani this semester in collaboration with Student Life Department.

The purpose of the club is to allow students to practice their speaking, presentation, and public speaking skills in a safe positive environment. It is open for all students of all levels whether in foundation, diploma, or bachelor's programs, including students from the English Language Program (ELP), Business Department (CoB), Engineering Department (CoE), School of Aviation, and Maritime Department. There will be several different types of activities and workshops like engaging speaking activities such as discussions, role-plays, professional presentation skills, and speeches. Ultimately, we are hoping that this initiative will help students to gain more confidence, speak fluently, and learn important life skills like how to communicate effectively in English.



➤ The Ripple Effect

Vision

The Ripple Effect Community Project is dedicated to fostering positive change by engaging with and supporting the local community. Our mission is to stand for the community by addressing their needs and empowering individuals to create a meaningful impact. Through volunteer efforts, resource allocation, and strategic partnerships, we aim to cultivate a more inclusive and supportive environment for all.

The Ripple Effect Community Project is more than just a volunteer initiative—it is a movement that empowers students, strengthens community bonds, and fosters leadership. By working together, we can create a lasting impact that benefits both the university and the wider community. Through engagement, marketing, and continuous refinement, we aim to build a legacy that inspires future generations to become Ripple Makers in their communities.

Objectives

- Instilling the AU core values in students and volunteers
- Building leadership skills among participants
- Strengthening relationships between students and instructors
- Promoting a culture of resilience and well being
- Enhancing community awareness and engagement
- Fostering a sense of pride and belonging to the university



➤ Ripple Makers Bring Joy to Senior Residents at Elderly Home

On Saturday the 30th of November 2024, volunteers from The Ripple Effect community project, known as Ripple Makers, visited a local elderly home to share a heartwarming afternoon with the residents. Over coffee and snacks, they engaged in meaningful conversations, listened to inspiring life stories, and enjoyed fun games together. The volunteers also presented thoughtful gifts from AU, bringing smiles to the residents' faces.

Despite spending their personal time on this visit, the Ripple Makers expressed immense joy and fulfillment. Abdulaziz shared, "I learned a lot from the senior residents and enjoyed their stories." Fatma reflected on the experience, saying, "I was very happy to see the residents interacting with us. It's the first time I feel like this because my grandparents passed away a long time ago." Bernadet added, "It was a great experience, but also bittersweet. I learned that you could make someone happy just with a word or a smile."

Meshaal described the visit as "one of the best experiences," emphasizing how much they enjoyed the residents' stories and games, while Ali appreciated learning about life in the past, saying, "I benefited from their experience." Omar summed up the emotions of the day, sharing, "It was a great and unique experience—full of emotions. I never realized that chatting with older generations could be so interesting and enjoyable."

Ms. Mona, the supervisor of the elderly home, expressed her gratitude for the visit, saying, "This was one of the most enjoyable visits we have hosted. I loved how the volunteers were interacting with the residents. The residents were really happy."

The visit not only brightened the day of the elderly residents but also left a lasting impact on the Ripple Makers, reinforcing the power of connection, kindness, and community.

Stay tuned for more updates on The Ripple Effect and our mission to create meaningful change!





The journey is just as meaningful as the destination! Ripple Effect volunteers from AU shared laughs and excitement on the bus ride, gearing up to spread joy at the elderly home



AU Ripple Effect volunteers brought joy and connection to the elderly home, engaging in heartwarming activities and listening to the residents' treasured life stories.

➤ A Day of Smiles and Stress Relief at the Stress Less Fest

On Wednesday, April 23rd 2025, our campus came alive with laughter, creativity, and connection as the Ripple Effect, in cooperation with the Health & Safety, hosted the much-anticipated Stress Less Fest. From 12:00 to 3:00, students enjoyed a well-deserved break from deadlines and exams—unwinding, recharging, and sharing moments of pure joy.

The day overflowed with creative, interactive activities designed to melt stress away. At the **Gratitude-Tree**, students penned heartfelt notes of gratitude and hung them on branches, watching a tree of thankfulness blossom before their eyes. Over at the **Wishing Well of Worries**, slips of paper carried away burdens, symbolically releasing anxieties into the depths of the well.

The air was filled with the satisfying *pop-pop-pop* of the **Bubble Wrap Blast**, where students gleefully burst away tension one bubble at a time. At the **Paint Your Stress Away** station, colors flowed freely as unique clay molds transformed into tiny works of art. The **Positivi-Tea & Fortunes** station offered coffee, tea and fortune cookies brimming with uplifting words—and a little treat to savor.

Adding to the excitement, the **Spin & Win Challenge Station** invited AU community members to spin a colorful wheel and take on a fun task—whether answering a question, participating in a quick game, solving a puzzle, or attempting a playful challenge. Winners were rewarded with flowers, chocolates, stress balls, and cards filled with positive notes.

For an extra-cool treat, the **Ice Cream Break Station** gave everyone a chance to “melt their stress away” with a refreshing scoop served by the Ripple Makers.

The event also featured a valuable learning experience as students attended an engaging talk by Ms. Dana Mubarak on effective strategies for *dealing with stress*, offering practical tips they could apply in their academic and personal lives.

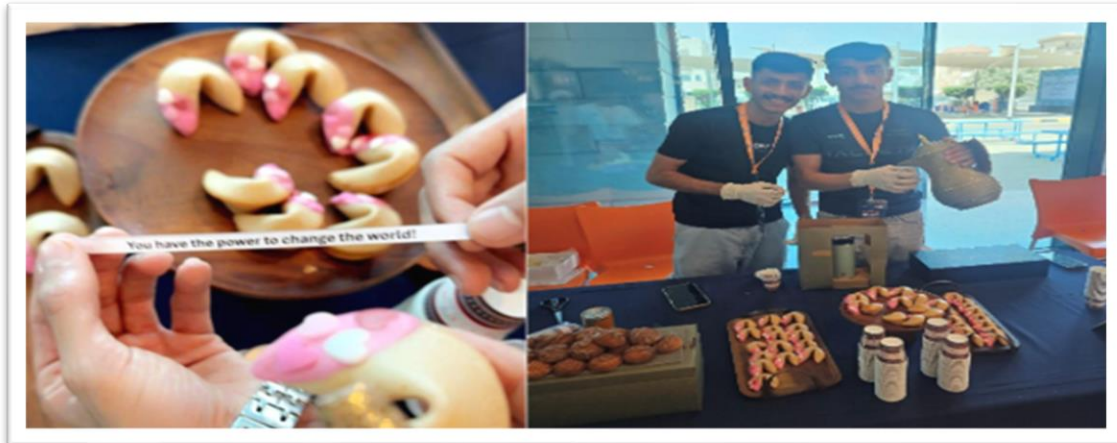
The **Health & Safety Department** brought a wellness-focused touch to the day, offering free blood pressure checks and sharing health tips to help students care for their well-being beyond the event.

By the close of the afternoon, the Stress Less Fest had done more than ease tension—it reminded everyone of the power of community, creativity, and a healthy lifestyle. As one student put it, “*It was exactly the break I needed—it made me feel lighter.*”

The Ripple Effect and Health & Safety teams extend heartfelt thanks to every student, faculty member, staff member, and volunteer who made the day unforgettable. Together, we proved that even in the busiest seasons, it’s always worth taking time to pause, smile, and let go.



Our dedicated Ripple Makers sharing the heart and mission of the Ripple Effect Project with curious AU students at the Info Station.



Ripple Makers spreading smiles with tea, coffee and fortune cookies, offering uplifting words and a warm treat.



The driving force behind the Stress Less Fest! From left to right: Ms. Andrea; Ms. Maryam; Ms. Dana; Ms. Suzanne; Mr. Abdulmohsen; and Ms. Bushra. Together, their dedication and teamwork made this uplifting event a reality for the AU community



Thank you!