



UTEL Symposium 2024



Pedagogical Innovations for Sustaining Excellence in Higher Education

Organized by

University of Bahrain

Unit for Teaching Excellence and Leadership

June 26th, 2024

**University of Bahrain, Sakhir campus
Zallaq Road
Building S45 – Hall 101**



UTEL Symposium 2024

Pedagogical Innovations for Sustaining Excellence in Higher Education

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, higher education institutions face numerous challenges in delivering effective teaching and learning experiences. Therefore, sustaining excellence in teaching and learning practices in higher education is crucial for meeting the evolving needs of students and preparing them for the future. By addressing challenges, leveraging successful examples, and implementing strategies, higher education institutions can create an environment that fosters ongoing innovation and enhances the learning experience for all. Sustainable innovative teaching and learning practices refer to pedagogical approaches, activities, and technologies that are sustainable and innovative in terms of promoting environmental, social, and economic sustainability. These practices help students develop the skills and values necessary to create a more sustainable and equitable world for all.



UTEL Symposium 2024

Pedagogical Innovations for Sustaining Excellence in Higher Education

This much-anticipated symposium will shed light on the significance of innovative practices for higher education by showcasing successful cases, identifying some academic practices that contribute to sustainability, and addressing hurdles. It brings together faculty members to share cutting-edge strategies and techniques for transforming the higher education landscape, for whom cultivating a student-centered environment where students are actively engaged, hands-on, and given the opportunity to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts is the key to effective teaching and learning. Educators may create transformative learning experiences that empower students to become lifelong learners.



UTEL Symposium 2024

Pedagogical Innovations for Sustaining Excellence in Higher Education

Objectives

- Explore pedagogical innovations that enhance student learning and engagement in higher education.
- Exchange innovative practices among faculty related to academic practice including teaching techniques, designing assessment methods, and activating students' enrolment in the teaching-learning process.
- Showcase UTEL participants' projects and efforts that are sustainable to inspire and empower educators to create a positive impact on their students in Higher Education which promote environmental, social, and economic sustainability.
- Foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among educators, researchers, and professionals within the field of higher education.



Dr. Fuad Mohammed Al-Ansari
President
University of Bahrain

UTEL Symposium 2024

Welcome Address

Welcome to the Symposium on Pedagogical Innovations for Sustaining Excellence in Higher Education, hosted by the University of Bahrain's Unit for Teaching Excellence and Leadership. This symposium marks an important step in our mission to enhance the quality of higher education in Bahrain and the region. Our unit is dedicated to advancing teaching and leadership skills among academic faculty at UoB and throughout the Higher Education sector. We strive to be a leading unit for research-informed excellence in teaching and leadership, fostering continuous professional development and encouraging the integration of pedagogical research into teaching practices.

This symposium aims to increase awareness about the importance of teaching skills in higher education and the necessity for ongoing training programs. By supporting academics in adopting learner-centric teaching methodologies and promoting reflective practices, we aim to ensure our education system remains innovative and excellent.

We hope this event will spark meaningful discussions and collaborations, driving forward the quality of higher education in our region. Your participation and contributions are crucial to achieving our shared vision of excellence in teaching and leadership.

We wish you a productive and enriching symposium experience.



Dr. Amal Mohamed Alrayes
Symposium Lead Organizer
Director of the Unit for Teaching
Excellence and Leadership

UTEL Symposium 2024

Welcome Address

On behalf of the Unit for Teaching Excellence and Leadership (UTEL), it is my great honor to welcome you to the Symposium on Pedagogical Innovations for Sustaining Excellence in Higher Education. This symposium is a testament to our collective commitment to pioneering and implementing advanced pedagogical strategies that elevate student learning and engagement. The objectives of this symposium are multifaceted and ambitious. We aim to explore innovative pedagogical approaches that significantly enhance student learning and engagement within higher education. This event serves as a platform to facilitate the exchange of innovative practices among faculty, encompassing teaching techniques, the design of assessment methods, and strategies for actively involving students in the teaching-learning process. Additionally, we seek to showcase the projects and efforts of UTEL participants that are sustainable, aiming to inspire and empower educators to make a positive impact on their students, thereby promoting environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Furthermore, this symposium is designed to foster collaboration and the sharing of knowledge among educators, researchers, and professionals dedicated to the field of higher education. We are thrilled to have received an impressive number of abstract proposals focused on key themes, including the development of teaching excellence in higher education, technology-enhanced learning, active learning and student engagement, and innovations in assessment and feedback. This year, we have accepted 19 paper presentations from the University of Bahrain and other esteemed universities across the Kingdom of Bahrain. I extend my deepest gratitude to our keynote speakers for their invaluable contributions and to all participants and committee members for their dedication and hard work.

May this symposium be a fruitful and inspiring experience for all.

UTEL Symposium 2024

Symposium Agenda

9:00 – 9:30

REGISTRATION - OPENING

9:30 – 9:35

WELCOME ADDRESS

Dr. Fuad Mohammed Al-Ansari

HE. President of the University of Bahrain

9:35 – 9:40

OPENING REMARKS

Dr. Amal Mohamed Alrayes

Director of the Unit for Teaching Excellence and Leadership, UOB

9:40 – 9:55

KEYNOTE SPEECH 1

Does excellence need innovation?

Dr. Catherine Hack (PFHEA)

Lead Consultant Education, Advance HE, UK

UTEL Symposium 2024

Symposium Agenda

9:55 – 10:10

KEYNOTE SPEECH 2

Building Connections, Inspiring Minds: Cultivating Positive Student-Teacher Relationships

Dr. Khalid Almashikhi

Dean, College of Arts and Applied Sciences, Dhofar University, Oman

10:10 – 10:20

KEYNOTE SPEECH 3

Embracing conflict: Why intellectual discord breeds excellence in innovation

Dr. Omar Al-Ubaydli

Director of Studies and Research, Derasat, Kingdom of Bahrain

10:20 – 10:25

Q&A SESSION

10:25 – 10:30

AWARD CEREMONY AND CLOSING REMARKS 1

10:30 – 10:45

Coffee Break and Networking

10:45

Paper Presentation sessions

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Symposium Agenda

10:45- 11:00

PRESENTATION 1

Development of teaching
excellence in HE
Hall S45- 108

Active Learning & Student
Engagement
Hall S45 -07

Assessment & Feedback
Innovations
Hall S45-11

**The Impact of Implementing
SCAMPER Technique on
Students' Problem-Solving
Skills: The Case of Foundation
Year Students at Bahrain
Teachers College in The Study
Skills Course (TCFN039)**

**The Effectiveness of
Cooperative Activities in
Developing Student-Teachers
Critical Thinking Skills about
mathematical teaching aids**

**Effectiveness of Reflective
Dialogue Groups Strategy on
Improving Assessment for
Learning Competency**

Mrs. Zainab Ebrahim Khalil Al
Tooq
Bahrain Teachers College - UoB

Mrs. Shaima Ali Alaam
Bahrain Teachers College - UoB

Dr. S. Salah Alawi Salman
Bahrain Teachers College - UoB

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2024

Symposium Agenda

11:00 – 11:15

PRESENTATION 2

Development of teaching
excellence in HE
Hall S45- 108

Active Learning & Student
Engagement
Hall S45 -07

Assessment & Feedback
Innovations
Hall S45-11

**Empowering Growth:
Understanding the Art of
Feeding-Forward in Higher
Education**

**Enhancing pre-service
teachers’ learning of key
concepts through Teaching
Learning Activities (TLAs)**

**Enhancing Student Clinical
Competence and Mitigating
Test Anxiety through Peer
Assessment: An Action
Research**

Dr. Hawra Jaffar Shaikh
Mansoor
College of Engineering - UoB

Dr. Samira Farhat
Bahrain Teachers College - UoB

Dr. Marwan Kamal Altheeb
College of Health and Sport
Sciences - UoB

Symposium Agenda

11:15 – 11:30
PRESENTATION 3

Development of teaching
excellence in HE
Hall S45- 108

Active Learning & Student
Engagement
Hall S45 -07

Assessment & Feedback
Innovations
Hall S45-11

**Empowering Students to
Become Lifelong Learners: Key
Home Environmental
Resources, Literacy Practices
and Skills, and Affective
Factors Predicting Reading
Achievement**

**Enhancing Speaking Skills in
English Speaking Courses**

**Using a Mental Health Clinical
Simulation Experience to
Decrease Nursing Students’
Anxiety during the Psychiatric
Mental Health Clinical Posting**

Dr. Zainab Allaith
Bahrain Teachers College - UoB

Mrs. Asma Hasan
English Language Center - UoB

Dr. Ahmed Hashem El-Monshed
College of Health and Sport
Sciences - UoB

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Symposium Agenda

11:30 – 11:45

PRESENTATION 4

Development of teaching
excellence in HE
Hall S45- 108

Technology-enhanced learning
Hall S45 -07

Assessment & Feedback
Innovations
Hall S45-11

**Note-taking and reviewing
practices in HE: Enhancement
in retention of lectured-
information**

**An investigation into the use of
CNC machining to enhance
hands-on learning with
Furniture Design students**

**Enhanced Academic
Performance Through
Continuous Assessments: An
Action Research Study on
Third-Year Financial
Management Students**

Dr. Anamika Jiwane
College of Engineering - UoB

Dr. Noor Aldoy
College of Engineering- UoB

Dr. Sara AlBalooshi
College of Business - UoB

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Symposium Agenda

11:45 – 12:00
Coffee Break

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Symposium Agenda

12:00 - 12:15

PRESENTATION 5

Development of teaching
excellence in HE
Hall S45- 108

Technology-enhanced learning
Hall S45 -07

Technology-enhanced learning
Hall S45-11

**An exploration study of
students' attitudes toward
learning Engineering
Mathematics: A case study of
Bahrain Polytechnic**

**Enhancing Student Writing
Performance Through AI-
Powered Feedback**

**A bibliometric analysis of
ChatGPT applications in
Medical Education:
Investigating What? How? And
Where?**

Dr. Basma Salama Abusayam
Bahrain Polytechnic

Dr. Neesha Khan Malik
Bahrain Teachers College - UoB

Dr. Archana Prabu Kumar
College of Medicine & Medical
Sciences, Arabian Gulf
University – Bahrain

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Symposium Agenda

12:15 – 12:30

PRESENTATION 6

Technology-enhanced learning
Hall S45- 108

Active Learning & Student
Engagement
Hall S45 -07

Technology-enhanced learning
Hall S45-11

**Integrating AI and VR for
Immersive Learning: Analysis of
data for implementation and
Future Directions**

**Developing Critical Thinking
and Problem-Solving Skills
Among Biology Students Using
Smart Textbook: An Action
Research**

**Implementing Online
Collaborative Work to Improve
Writing Skills**

Dr. Supriya Haresh Shukla
College of Arts - UoB

Dr. Sabika Allehdan
College of Science - UoB

Dr. Hajar Kadhem
English Language Center - UoB

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Symposium Agenda

12:30 – 12:45

Poster Presentation session

12:45 - 13:00

CLOSING REMARKS AND DISTRIBUTION OF CERTIFICATES



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Keynote Speakers



**Dr. Catherine Hack (PFHEA)
Lead Consultant Education
Advance HE – UK**

Dr Catherine Hack is the Lead Consultant (Education) for Advance-HE. Catherine leads a team of senior consultants to deliver a range of services to the HE sector to support strategic leadership and change in HEIs. She has worked with a diverse range of UK and international higher education providers on key themes which aim to improve the student experience and outcomes. She led, in collaboration with the UK Quality Assurance Agency, the revision of sector guidance on Education for Sustainable Development. Currently her focus is on supporting institutional leaders to develop a strategic approach to their organisation's commitment to sustainability and flexible learning and teaching, and the impact of generative AI on learning, teaching and assessment.



UTEL Symposium 2024

Keynote Speakers



Dr. Catherine Hack (PFHEA)
Lead Consultant Education
Advance HE – UK

Keynote Speech Title:

Does excellence need innovation?

In this keynote presentation Dr Hack will explore the concepts of innovation and excellence in higher education. Reflecting on key innovations that have supported progress towards inclusive and accessible quality higher education for all, she will offer insights on fostering a sustainable culture of excellence across all aspects of higher education provision – from teaching and assessment to student support and delivery methods.



UTEL Symposium 2024

Keynote Speakers



Dr. Khalid Almashikhi
Dean
College of Arts and Applied
Sciences
Dhofar University - Oman

Dr. Khalid Almashikhi is the Dean of College of Arts and Applied Sciences (CAAS) at Dhofar University since 2017. Prior to being appointed as Dean, Dr. Khalid served Dhofar University in several positions: Assistant Dean of CAAS, Head of Education Department, Director of Center of Continuing Education and Community Service. Dr. Almashikhi is the Director of Center for Teaching and Learning and In charge of the Unit for Students with Disabilities.

Dr. Khalid has published several research articles in international peer-reviewed journal in the fields of leadership, teaching and Learning. He has presented in various national, regional, and international conferences. He is actively associated with ongoing research projects in Oman and abroad. Dr. Almashikhi has guided several masters' thesis and has served as examiner to many masters and PhD theses in Oman and abroad.



UTEL Symposium 2024

Keynote Speakers



Dr. Khalid Almashikhi
Dean
College of Arts and Applied
Sciences
Dhofar University - Oman

Dr. Khalid is a passionate educator who prides himself as a classroom teacher. He has won Anderson- Gouttierre Award, USA in 2009 and the best graduate award from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, USA in 2015. Dr. Khalid is the founder of Future Leaders program (FLP) in Oman. The FLP is a youth leadership program for high school students that started in 2013. In the last 6 years, Dr. Khalid has delivered and conducted more than 100 workshops, lectures, and training sessions in schools, and at different NGOs, and government and private organizations. He serves as a member of several committees at the university and in the community.

Dr. Almashikhi is a certified reviewer for OAAA Institutional Standards Assessment and General Foundation Programs Audit. He has been invited by several HEIs to serve as an external institutional and program reviewer.



UTEL Symposium 2024

Keynote Speakers



Dr. Khalid Almashikhi
Dean
College of Arts and Applied
Sciences
Dhofar University - Oman

Keynote Speech Title :

Building Connections, Inspiring Minds: Cultivating Positive Student-Teacher Relationships

In today's evolving educational environments, the role of student-teacher relationship plays a significant role. As higher educational institutions are striving to sustain their quality of education, paying attention to strengthening the relationship between students and teachers cannot be emphasized enough.

The talk will focus on the fundamentals of creating a positive student-teacher relationship. It will also emphasize on creating a fostering and inclusive classroom environment. The audience will gain insights into techniques that foster positive connections in the classroom.

Furthermore, the talk will discuss potential challenges of building a positive relationship between students and their instructors. Various methods of overcoming those challenges will be discussed to ensure inclusivity and equitable experiences for all students.

The talk aims to emphasize on the significance of positive student-teacher relationship and the role it plays in students experience in higher education.



UTEL Symposium 2024

Keynote Speakers



Dr. Omar Al-Ubaydli
Director of Studies and Research
Derasat

Omar Al-Ubaydli is the Director of Research at Derasat, Bahrain. He is also an affiliated associate professor of economics at George Mason University; an affiliated senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center; a non-resident fellow at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington; and a non-resident fellow at Trends, UAE. Al-Ubaydli is also the president of the Bahrain Economists Society. His research interests include political economy, experimental economics, and the economics of the GCC countries. Al-Ubaydli previously served as a member of the Commonwealth of Virginia's Joint Advisory Board of Economists and a Visiting Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago. He regularly publishes his research in international peer-reviewed academic journals, and his mainstream media articles appear in Arabic and English-language newspapers and blogs such as AlHayat, The National, Forbes Opinion, and US News. Al-Ubaydli earned his BA in economics from the University of Cambridge, and his MA and PhD in economics from the University of Chicago.



UTEL Symposium 2024

Keynote Speakers



Dr. Omar Al-Ubaydli
Director of Studies and Research
Derasat

Keynote Speech Title:

Embracing conflict: Why intellectual discord breeds excellence in innovation

In much of the Arab world, the prevailing culture in educational circles is one that emphasizes the need to conform to an intellectually orthodox view, and to regard heterodox thinking as insubordinate and seditious. At a purely intellectual level, this retards the genesis of new ideas, hampering innovation in all domains. In contrast, innovative societies are ones where intellectual disagreement is acknowledged to be an intrinsic part of the advancement of human knowledge, and where the process of discussing differing opinions in a professional manner makes a pivotal contribution to the genesis of new ideas. Muslim societies were aware of this during the Golden Age of Islam, yet they seem to have unlearned this important fact. It is important to relearn it for Arab societies to fulfill their potential.



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UTEL Symposium Abstracts

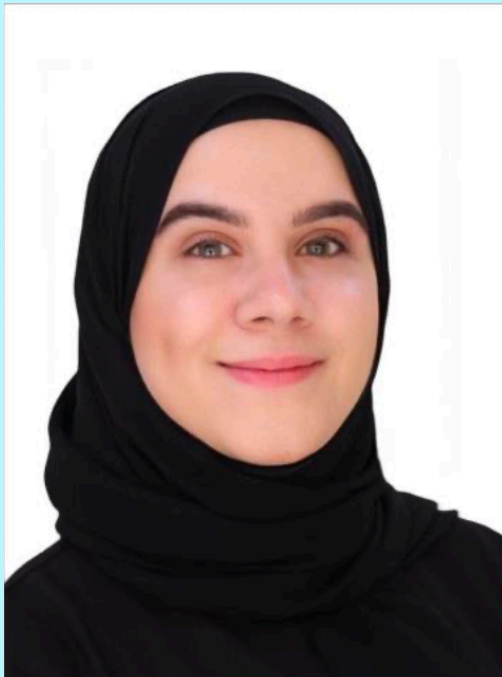
Development of Teaching Excellence in HE



UTEL Symposium 2024

Participants

The Impact of Implementing SCAMPER Technique on Students' Problem-Solving Skills: The Case of Foundation Year Students at Bahrain Teachers College in The Study Skills Course (TCFN039)



Ms. Zainab Al Tooq

**Instructor - Bahrain Teachers College
University of Bahrain**
She holds a Master's degree in Applied English Language Studies from the University of Bahrain and a B.Ed in Education of English Language from Bahrain Teachers College. Her areas of expertise are related to teachers' professional development, curriculum design and assessment, information and communication technology in education, and teaching and learning pedagogy.

This action research aims to measure the influence and effectiveness of the SCAMPER technique on students' problem-solving skills. The outcomes of this research have direct implications for researchers, academics, and students in higher education contexts, as the findings are being used to assist foundation students at BTC who face challenges in applying effective solutions to their academic issues in the Study Skills course. The study was conducted over two research cycles to answer the question related to the extent to which the application of the SCAMPER technique enhances foundation students' capacity to demonstrate creative problem-solving skills and improve their academic performance in the study skills course. The sample consisted of 27 foundation students, and data was collected through students' artifacts, surveys, and structured observations, employing a mixed-method design. Quantitative data was analysed and evaluated using comparative analysis, in which it was interpreted, and reported in charts, tables, and through written explanations. Qualitative data was analysed using the MAXQDA 24 tool and evaluated using a holistic rubric. The results indicate a significant positive impact of the SCAMPER technique on enhancing foundation students' ability to demonstrate creative problem-solving skills and improve their academic performance in the study skills course, particularly in terms of thinking originality, fluency, and novelty. Moreover, problem-solving groups were found to contribute to higher levels of proficiency and creativity compared to individual efforts. Based on these findings, the use of the SCAMPER technique is recommended to approach students' academic issues.



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Participants

Empowering Growth: Understanding the Art of Feeding-Forward in Higher Education



Dr. Hawra Jaafar Shaikh Mansoor

Assistant Professor -FHEA Department of Architecture and Interior Design University of Bahrain She is a PhD holder graduated from Canterbury School of Architecture, University for the Creative Arts, UK, whose work explores interdisciplinary intersections between architecture, philosophy, psychology, and cultural theory. Hawra's research area mainly focuses on considering the immaterial aspects of the user's spatial experience in a user-oriented architectural practice. Hawra is also interested in research that discusses the relationship between architecture as a creative process and the lived experience of people as a way of consuming space as a product of the design process and the context in which architecture exists.

"The Art of Feeding-Forward" emerged as an innovative approach to providing feedback and guidance, especially in higher education, when several researchers highlighted the need to restructure the conventional feedback framework. Recent pedagogical research calls for providing a constructive outline of the skills and implementations that will lead to successful achievements in teaching and learning. Feeding-forward is a forwardlooking feedback approach focusing on future growth and improvement rather than dwelling on past performance. It involves offering specific, timely, and constructive input that empowers individuals to enhance their skills, knowledge, and capabilities. By emphasising strengths, identifying areas for development, and providing actionable suggestions, feeding-forward creates an environment that fosters motivation, selfreflection, and continuous learning. In this paper, the argument depends merely on reviewing the literature, theories, and pedagogical frameworks to delve into the essence and core principles of feeding-forward and highlight its transformative potential in fostering growth and learning. Through this qualitative approach, the paper discusses the benefits of feeding-forward, including cultivating a growth mindset and inspiring individuals to set ambitious goals. It explores the principles of effective feeding-forward as well as practical strategies and techniques to help implement feeding-forward in various settings. Real-life examples and case studies from the literature and practice are also discussed and analysed as part of the collected primary and secondary data to illustrate successful applications of feeding-forward and demonstrate its positive impact on individual and organisational performance. The interpretation and reflection on these examples highlight how feeding-forward can nurture growth, enhance relationships, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. The paper concludes with positive findings that recommend encouraging practitioners to embrace the art of feeding-forward in their own lives, educational institutions, workplaces, or personal relationships. By adopting this approach, individuals can unlock their full potential, nurture growth in others, and create an environment conducive to continuous learning and development.



UTEL Symposium 2024

Participants

An exploration study of students' attitudes toward learning Engineering Mathematics: A case study of Bahrain Polytechnic



Mrs. Basma Abusayam

Lecturer Mechanical Engineering Department Bahrain Polytechnic She holds a master's degree of science in Engineering Management from George Washington University. She is pursuing her Ph.D. studies at the University of Technology Malaysia (UTM). Her research interests revolve around bridging the gap between academia and industry practices, curriculum development, and pedagogical teaching and learning methodologies. Basma has completed her Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCERT), which focuses on innovative teaching and learning methodologies in higher education and pedagogy. Her dedication to enhancing the quality of education is evident in her commitment to explore new approaches to teaching and learning.

The research study investigates the attitudes of students towards learning mathematics in the first-year engineering mathematics course (EN6914) at Bahrain Polytechnic. The primary objective is to identify the challenges students face in mastering the mathematical skills outlined in the course's learning outcomes and to determine the root causes of students' attitudes towards mathematics from both student and lecturer perspectives. The study employs the ABC model of attitude and follows a qualitative approach, utilizing deductive thematic analysis to interpret the data. Data collection involved semi-structured one-to-one interviews with five students exhibiting weak academic performance, and two focus groups were conducted with four high-performing students and four lecturers. The findings indicated that students struggle significantly with calculus, which had the lowest average score in the midterm exam. Several factors influencing students' attitudes were identified, including teaching and learning strategies, teacher attitudes and mentoring skills, previous school experiences and their impact on foundational knowledge, and the influence of parental involvement on academic achievement. Future research could explore the impact of each of these factors on students' academic performance in more detail.



UTEL Symposium 2024

Participants

Note-taking and reviewing practices in HE: Enhancement in retention of lectured-information



Dr. Anamika Jiwane

Senior Lecturer-FHEA Department of Architecture and Interior design University of Bahrain She is an Architect with master's in urban planning and PhD in Architecture from India. She holds a Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice (UOB) and has been awarded fellowship from Higher Education Academy, UK.

She has been in teaching profession of Architecture and Design since last 24 years. She has keen interest in experimenting with different teaching models and performing action research to bring about healthy learning environment in Design studio. Her major area of research interest is Sustainable Development through Community Participation and Participatory Approaches.

Note-taking stands as a cornerstone activity in Higher Education (HE), serving as a crucial means to grasp and recall the intricate information presented during lectures. Ongoing discussions in academia present both challenges and opportunities to reevaluate the effectiveness of note-taking practices and the role instructors play in this context. Existing literature consistently demonstrates that note taking has a pivotal role in achieving academic success, but often goes overlooked by both students and instructors. This concern prompted me to conduct a study focusing on the impact of note-taking and reviewing on student learning, as well as the instructors' role in facilitating this process. The study's central inquiry delves into how note-taking and reviewing can enhance the retention of lectured information, particularly in terms of free recall, accuracy, and comprehension of the information. Customized retention tests were used to assess how well students retained information from their theoretical course lectures, with evaluations conducted through both immediate and delayed tests. The results from these tests were systematically recorded to identify and track retention patterns. Additionally, observations in the classroom and feedback from students contributed to evaluating the effectiveness of note-taking practices. Aligned with previous research, findings of this study highlight the significant role that note-taking and reviewing strategies play in strengthening students' retention and comprehension abilities within an academic environment. Furthermore, this study opens avenues to rethink the instructor's role, emphasizing tailored approaches to traditional note-taking practices that actively support student learning.



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Participants

Empowering Students to Become Lifelong Learners: Key Home Environmental Resources, Literacy Skills and Practices, and Affective Factors Predicting Reading Achievement



Dr. Zainab A. Allaith

**Assistant Professor English Language
Education Bahrain Teachers College
University of Bahrain** Dr. Zainab A. Allaith is a faculty member at the University of Bahrain, Bahrain Teachers College. She is dedicated to equipping pre- and inservice teachers with the fundamental knowledge and skills they need to implement high-quality literacy instruction to foster literacy success for all students. Her areas of expertise and research include literacy acquisition, language learning, and teacher training.

One of the fundamental blocks for achieving sustainable learning is establishing a solid foundation in reading skill. The present study sought to shed light on indicators which are positively associated with successful reading achievement in relation to (1) home environmental resources, (2) literacy skills and practices, and (3) affective factors among GCC students from Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. The data were obtained from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study. Participants completed a reading comprehension test which included literary and informational texts. The instrument measured a range of reading comprehension processes (literal retrieval of information, inference making, interpretation and integration of information, and critical evaluation of content). Additionally, data were collected about the participants' home and school backgrounds using questionnaires. Some participants completed the measures in Arabic, and others in English. Results indicated the strongest home environmental resources predictor of reading achievement was parents' highest educational level for some groups, and parents' occupation level for other groups. The strongest literacy skills and practices predictor of reading achievement was students' early literacy skills prior to school entry. The strongest affective factors in predicting reading achievement were students' confidence in their own reading abilities and not being bullied at school. Other variables also emerged as statistically significant in predicting reading achievement. Results varied by country and language of test. Implications include a call for accounting for factors which are conducive to supporting reading achievement above and beyond instructional strategies for setting students up for reading success.



UTEL Symposium 2024

UTEL Symposium Abstracts

Active Learning & Student Engagement



UTEL Symposium 2024

Participants

The Effectiveness Of Cooperative Activities In Developing Student Teachers Critical Thinking Skills



Mrs. Shaima Alaam

**Instructor Bahrain Teachers College
University of Bahrain** She specializes in mathematics education and has taught different courses related to pedagogical approaches in teaching mathematics. She has a MA in mathematics education from the institute of education, University College London. She has a keen interest in the role technology plays in education, assessment in mathematics education and inquiry. She has an associate fellowship from the UK Advance HE (2023). Her research interests revolve around mathematics education and inquiry.

Student-teachers often struggle to think critically about teaching aids, their potential, and limitations, which can greatly undermine their teaching practice. The course TCMA473 aims to help students overcome this. However, students still struggled to engage in critical thinking about the teaching aids. Thus, this action research project was implemented aiming to measure the extent to which the use of cooperative learning activities (CLA) can help fourth-year student teachers' critical thinking skills regarding teaching aids used in teaching mathematics. The sample consisted of 35 students enrolled in the course TC2MA473 which focuses on teaching aids used in mathematics. The research implemented 4 data collection methods in 2 cycles, which included students' assignment results, structured observation, students' cooperative work samples, and surveys during the last session of each cycle. After the first cycle of CLA was implemented, the 2nd cycle involved integrating guided questions with CLAs to support reflective thinking. The results showed that there was some improvement in students' critical thinking skills regarding teaching aids, especially after the integration of guided questions. This study's results align with research into the role of cooperative learning in supporting the development of critical thinking. However, future research is recommended to examine the role of cooperative learning with reflective thinking in supporting teacher preparation.



UTEL Symposium 2024

Participants

Enhancing pre-service teachers' learning of key concepts through Teaching Learning Activities (TLAs)



Dr. Samira Farhat

Assistant Professor -FHEA Bahrain Teachers College University of Bahrain Dr. Samira Farhat qualifications are Ph.D., Applied Linguistics, University of Carthage (2017); M.A., Linguistics, Higher Institute of Languages, Tunis (2003); B.A., English Literature, Civilization and Linguistics, University of Tunis (1998), and Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice: PCAP, University of Bahrain (2023); Fellow of UK The Higher Education Academy (FHEA) (2023). Dr. Samira Farhat's areas of expertise and research interests are revolved around critical discourse analysis, social semiotics, visual literacy, storytelling, Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL).

Triggered by a significant percentage of students receiving below average grades in their first formative assessment, this action research investigated the effectiveness of using two types of teaching learning activities (TLAs) in enhancing the learning of key concepts in the "Literacy for Primary Teachers" course at Bahrain Teachers College during the 2022-2023 academic year. Specifically, this study aimed at considering the efficiency of aligning TLAs with the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of the course, as well as the learners' style and preferences. The study investigated the use of teaching learning activities among 21 participants and was conducted over two cycles of intervention. During cycle one, students completed work-along exercises individually, with a focus on designing instructions that aligned the exercises with the course's intended learning outcomes (ILOs). In cycle two, a small-group work approach was introduced to encourage inquiry-based activities. The study used a mixed-methods approach, using Atlas.ti software for qualitative analysis and statistical analysis for quantitative data. In terms of triangulation, data collection methods included artifacts gathered on a worksheet during lectures, a survey to determine students' learning preferences, a formative test for evaluating learning outcomes, and an evaluative survey to map learning outcomes. The major findings of cycle one of intervention revealed the correlation between individual work activities and students' understanding of key concepts, especially during the lecture. However, in cycle two, the small group work significantly managed to meet a larger spectrum of learning outcomes related to the mastery of key concepts, as clearly shown through the percentages showing engagement and self-efficacy among students. Designing structured activities that fostered group work before, during, and after the lecture contributed to improving engagement, understanding, and reflectivity. The findings suggest that aligning teaching learning activities with the intended learning outcomes and incorporating small-group work can effectively enhance students' learning of key concepts.



Developing Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills Among Biology Students Using Smart Textbook: An Action Research



Dr. Sabika Allehdan

Assistant Professor Department of Biology -
College of Science University of Bahrain Dr.
Sabika Allehdan is a PhD holder in Human
Nutrition and Dietetics, and she is an Assistant
Professor of Nutrition and Dietetics at Biology
Department at College of Science at University
of Bahrain. She is one of the few distinguished
and well-known in Bahrain in the field of
nutrition. She got research funding from
different agencies. Her research area lies in
examining associations between nutrients
intake and dietary patterns with chronic
diseases including cancers and cardiovascular
diseases, developing dietary tool particularly
food frequency questionnaire, and assessing
nutritional status and dietary habits of
adolescents, adults, and pregnant women.

In the 21st century, critical thinking and problem-solving skills are highly valued. Various teaching approaches, such as active learning, collaborative learning, problembased learning, web-based learning, team-based learning, and enquiry-based learning, can enhance these skills. Recent studies have explored the effectiveness of interactive textbooks in improving critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. This action research aims to evaluate the impact of using a smart book to enhance these skills specifically among biology students. The participants in this action research were students enrolled conveniently from General Biology I course (BIOLS 102). The research was divided into two cycles and a pre-cycle phase. In the first cycle, students were asked to study selected topics from a smart textbook. Their progress was monitored by the researcher, and encouragement was provided when the assigned reading was completed digitally. Digital formative assignments were given to the students to enhance knowledge retention and promote critical thinking and problemsolving skills. Different tools such as a structured questionnaire, quizzes, and learning analytic from the smart book. were used in this action research. The results showed a significant improvement in problem-solving skills and critical thinking across the two cycles. The average achievement in quizzes increased from 6.2 out of 10 in the precycle phase to 8.5 out of 10 in cycle 2. Furthermore, the majority of students (90%) agreed that the smart book was effective in improving their comprehension of biology topics as well as personal skills like communication and independent learning. Overall, the findings of this action research suggest that the use of a smart textbook can effectively enhance critical thinking and problem-solving abilities among biology students.



UTEL Symposium 2024

Participants

Enhancing Speaking Skills in English Speaking Courses



Mrs. Asma Hasan

**Instructor English Language Center
University of Bahrain Asma Hasan is an
Instructor at the ELC, University of
Bahrain. She has ten years of experience
IN ESL/ EFL education. She is very
passionate about research and academic
activities, and she enjoys assisting
students in improving their language and
communication skills.**

Drawing on established literature and frameworks such as the United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF), this research investigates the effectiveness of utilizing guided questions to enhance the oral presentation skills of level two orientation students enrolled in the Listening and Speaking II course (ENGLR006) at the University of Bahrain's English Language Center. Addressing persistent challenges in student performance, the study employs a mixed-methods approach, incorporating observation checklists, assessment rubrics, and questionnaires to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. Two action research cycles were conducted, with the first cycle focusing on guided question-based presentations and the second cycle adapting the task to structured interviews. Results indicate significant improvements in students' oral communication skills, as evidenced by enhanced scores in knowledge construction, self-regulation, real-world problemsolving, and delivery. Observation checklist and assessment rubrics data reveal enhancements in students' voice projection, fluency, and engagement. Questionnaire responses affirm students' positive perceptions of guided questions, highlighting their efficacy in organizing thoughts, reducing anxiety, and enhancing overall satisfaction with the task. The findings suggest the integration of guided question strategies into language learning curricula to promote effective communication skills development.



UTEL Symposium 2024

UTEL Symposium Abstracts

Assessment & Feedback Innovations



Effectiveness of Reflective Dialogue Groups Strategy on Improving Assessment for Learning Competency



Dr. S. Salah Alawi Salman

Instructor Bahrain Teachers College
University of Bahrain Dr. S. Salah have
experience and knowledge to the field of
Gifted Education, having earned his Ph.D. in
the specialization from Arabian Gulf
University in 2016. Prior to his current role,
Salah played a key role in supporting gifted
students as a Senior Specialist at the Gifted
Students Center at the Ministry of Education
in the Kingdom of Bahrain. His areas of
expertise are: Gifted and talented instruction;
education and development; teacher
education and development; Preparing
enrichment programs for gifted students;
developing strategies in critical and creative
thinking; Developing tools for identifying
gifted students.

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the Reflective Dialogue Groups Strategy (RDGS) in improving the Assessment for Learning Competency (AfLC) among Undergraduate Students in the TCTP210 course. The sample of the study consisted of (8) Pre-Service Teachers (P-STs) studied at Bahrain Teachers College (BTC). Employing a mixed-method approach integrating quantitative and qualitative analyses, this research sought to assess the effectiveness of RDGS on Undergraduate Students' AfLC. Qualitative data was gathered through the examination of participants' artifacts using a holistic rubric, while quantitative data was obtained through a survey and observation checklist. Data collection involved a triangulation methodology to ensure a robust and comprehensive research output across two cycles. Cycle 1 findings showed RDGS enhanced AfLC, with qualitative analysis indicating partial improvements and varying levels of improvement ranging from intermediate to high in quantitative analysis. After modifications were made to the RDGS in cycle 2, results demonstrated a further improvement in AfLC compared to cycle 1. Through the analysis of participants' artifacts, it was evident that AfLC was perfectly achieved, as well as the quantitative data indicating high to very high levels of AfLC. The Wilcoxon test confirmed significant enhancements with high rankings, showing RDGS effectiveness. Integrated qualitative and quantitative analyses highlighted RDGS' role in improving AfLC. Despite certain limitations such as a small sample size, brief RDGS implementation, and focus on a specific course, this study affirms the effectiveness of RDGS in enhancing AfLC.



UTEL Symposium 2024

Participants

Enhancing Student Clinical Competence and Mitigating Test Anxiety through Peer Assessment: An Action Research



Mr. Marwan Altheeb

Teaching and Research Assistant -FHEA
Department of Nursing University of Bahrain Mr. Marwan is a graduate of Bahrain's College of Health Sciences in 2010 B.Sc. in Nursing, later pursued an MBA in Strategic Human Resources, Open University of Malaysia, 2014. In 2021, he earned his M.Sc. in Nursing from RCSI-MUB. He gained valuable experience in areas like hemodialysis care, infection control, and hospital surveillance throughout his clinical career. Currently, Mr. Marwan works as a teaching and research assistant at the University of Bahrain's Department of Nursing, where he's passionate about educating future nurses. He gained his HAE Fellowship in 2023. and currently seeking his PHD with an interest in education.

The integrative practicum course assessment marks the culmination of the Nursing B.Sc. program, evaluating graduating students' comprehensive skills. However, recurring issues with test anxiety have been observed to negatively impact performance. This action research aims to assess the impact of peer assessment on nursing students' clinical competency by simultaneously reducing test anxiety and improving clinical skills. A convenience sample of 21 nursing students participated in two cycles of structured peer assessment activities. Data collection involved selfassessment of test anxiety, clinical competency assessments, and perceptions via questionnaires. Results revealed a significant reduction in test anxiety levels and an improvement in clinical performance post-intervention. Participants perceived peer assessment positively, reporting increased confidence and gain of knowledge. Researcher observations validated student feedback, highlighting peer assessment's role in skill enhancement and confidence building. Despite limitations in sampling and generalization, the study findings underscore the importance of exploring the implementation of structured peer assessment sessions in nursing education to foster a supportive learning environment and optimize learning outcomes.



Using a Mental Health Clinical Simulation Experience to Decrease Nursing Students' Anxiety during the Psychiatric Mental Health Clinical Posting



Dr. Ahmed Hashem El-Monshed

Assistant Professor – FHEA College of Health and Sport Sciences Department of Nursing University of Bahrain An Associate Professor of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing at Mansoura University, Egypt, where he earned his Ph.D. in 2017. With over 14 years of experience, he passionately cultivates academic and personal growth among undergraduate and postgraduate students. Dr. El-Monshed fosters dynamic learning environments and has previously served as a career development specialist at Mansoura University's Center for Career Development. In 2022, he joined the College of Health & Sport Sciences at the University of Bahrain. Dr. El-Monshed's expertise spans university quality assurance, program design, and policy development.

Nursing students often face significant anxiety when preparing for clinical postings in mental health settings, potentially impacting their ability to effectively engage with mentally ill patients. Traditional approaches to clinical orientation may not adequately address these anxieties. This action research aimed to explore the effectiveness of Mental Health Clinical Simulation (MHCS) in reducing student anxiety and improving preparedness for psychiatric clinical postings. The study aimed to evaluate the impact of MHCS on nursing students' anxiety levels during psychiatric mental health clinical postings. Action research was conducted in two cycles. Twenty-nine nursing students participated, with anxiety levels measured using the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory. Students' perceptions of MHCS were assessed through self-administered questionnaires, and clinical performance was evaluated using a structured assessment tool. MHCS significantly reduced students' state anxiety levels from pre-MHCS to both cycles ($p \leq 0.001$), indicating its effectiveness in mitigating anxiety. Students perceived MHCS as a valuable learning experience, enhancing their understanding of therapeutic communication and clinical practice. Furthermore, clinical assessment performance improved significantly post-MHCS, suggesting its positive impact on students' clinical competence. MHCS offers a promising approach to reduce nursing students' anxiety and enhance their preparedness for mental health clinical postings. The findings support the integration of MHCS into nursing education curricula, highlighting its potential to improve student learning experiences and clinical outcomes. Future research should explore the scalability and long-term effects of MHCS implementation across diverse nursing programs and settings.



UTEL Symposium 2024

Participants

Enhanced Academic Performance Through Continuous Assessments: An Action Research Study on Third-Year Financial Management Students



Dr. Sara AlBalooshi

Assistant Professor - FHEA Department of Economics & Finance College of Business University of Bahrain Dr. Sara AlBalooshi is an Assistant Professor in Finance and the Head of the Department of Economics and Finance at the College of Business Administration, University of Bahrain. In previous years, she served as the program coordinator for the BSc Banking and Finance program, where she was responsible for reviewing the program curriculum, teaching methodologies, assessments, and prerequisites, all of which contributed to the program's development. Dr. AlBalooshi also serves as the College of Business Administration's Injaz coordinator. She obtained her Ph.D. in Business Administration from the University of St Andrews. Her research interests include Islamic Corporate Finance, Banking, and Microfinance.

This action research investigates the effect of continuous assessments on the engagement and performance of third-year Financial Management students. Traditionally, performance was measured via midterms and final exams, complemented by minimal short assessments. The shift to digital learning during the Covid-19 pandemic revealed issues with this method, such as decreased student engagement and increased stress before major assessments. To address these issues, the assessment structure was redesigned to include 15 small, weekly assessments instead of two larger assignments. These continuous assessments, varied in format (MCQs, essays, video commentary, games, etc.), aimed to enhance engagement by providing immediate feedback and reducing stress. The study involved 41 students and was conducted in two cycles, incorporating feedback and iterative improvements. Results indicated a modest increase in median grades and improved performance in course assignments, though statistical significance was not established. Engagement metrics from the course management system (Blackboard) showed increased student access and interaction with the course materials. A majority of students reported reduced stress and a stronger connection with course content due to the new assessment format. The findings suggest that continuous assessments can positively impact student engagement, aligning with theories of active learning and motivation. However, their effect on academic performance remains inconclusive and warrants further investigation with larger samples and refined methodologies. The study underscores the potential of continuous assessments to transform teaching practices and enhance student learning experiences, especially in a digital learning environment.



UTEL Symposium 2024

UTEL Symposium Abstracts

Technology-Enhanced Learning



UTEL Symposium 2024

Participants

Integrating AI and VR for Immersive Learning: Analysis of data for implementation and Future Directions



Mrs. Supriya H. Shukla

Lecturer Department of English Language and Literature College of Arts University of Bahrain
A distinguished Strategy Management Consultant with over 13 years of extensive HR management, strategic frameworks, process optimization, and digital transformation experience in corporations, currently, a Senior Consultant at Empact Consulting where I have successfully conducted several high-impact digital transformation projects across various sectors including aviation, banking, manufacturing, and construction mainly in Bahrain, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. Besides being a consultant, I have been passionate about teaching for a long, as evidenced by my 5.5 years' of teaching experience at a college in India and at the University of Bahrain

Demands for tailored learning experiences are foremost in the drive to reform education, and emerging technologies drive a paradigm shift in the educational landscape. This paper aims to explore the potential that integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR) offers for enhancing academic success, increasing access to education, as well as addressing different learning styles. Specifically, the focus is on examining practical applications as well as prospects of these tools in education. These include exploring ways through which personalized AI-driven learning systems support students irrespective of disciplines and VR-enabled immersive experiences help them get involved in studies. Evaluating how efficiently they work to improve outcomes for learners is however at the heart of this analysis. Another area looked at by this paper is how individualized learning paths based on student needs are made possible by AI. Theoretical foundations and the efficacy of AI and VR in education will be explored through literature reviews. Practical challenges involved will be elucidated by case studies focusing on successful implementations while data analysis techniques will be used to evaluate the extent to which these technologies affect the learning outcomes of students. Therefore, using data analysis to address the issue of implementing AI&VR in education systems will enable stakeholders to have a more engaging and accessible learning environment for all students.



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Participants

A bibliometric analysis of ChatGPT applications in Medical Education: Investigating What? How? And Where?



Dr. Archana Prabu Kumar

Associate Professor College of Medicine and Medical Arabian Gulf University Associate Professor in Medical Education (ME) and Medical Physiology, with over 17 years of experience in curriculum development, faculty training, and educational leadership. Proficient in designing and implementing faculty development programs (FDPs) and establishing competency frameworks. Ensure quality assurance and accreditation in ME and other Health Professions Education (HPE) courses. Proven track record of teaching, assessment & examiner-ship (UG, PG and Ph. D). Guide students and new tutors, fostering an environment of professional growth and academic inquiry. Strong leadership qualities demonstrated through effective collaboration across departments and contribution to achievement of strategic goals of the HPE institutions.

This study aimed to provide a comprehensive and recent bibliometric analysis of ChatGPT in ME based on the premise that no study has explored the impact of ChatGPT in Medical Education from the bibliographic perspective. This study utilized bibliometric methods to investigate the impact of ChatGPT in ME. The study involved careful collection and analysis of scientific research publications from the Scopus database. The bibliometric data obtained were imported into the Biblioshiny (Bibliometrix) and VOSviewer software platforms for analysis. The indicators employed to gauge research impact and quality were total article count, average citations per article (ACPA), total citation count, total link strength, and the Hirsch index (H-index). Citation, Co-authorship, and co-occurrence analyses were conducted on the data. Three-field Sankey diagrams are employed to visualize relationships among variables. A total of 293 documents were retrieved, and no duplicates were observed. After analysis for relevance, eight articles were excluded. Therefore, 285 articles were included for bibliometric analysis. The documents draw from 185 unique sources, a diverse array of journals, conferences, and other credible sources of publication, with 1015 distinct authors identified. The USA leads with 529 total citations, followed by Pakistan at 188 total citations. The thematic map revealed four distinct research clusters, "Education" and "Clinical Practice" with the highest density, "Human," and "Plastic Surgery" with lower centrality and density. The number of articles extracted indicates that a substantial body of literature focuses on the integration of ChatGPT technology in medical educational contexts. Authorship and citation analyses underscore the broad community engagement, comprehensiveness, and collaborative nature of research in this domain. The results from the analysis indicate that ChatGPT offers a multifaceted toolset to enhance various aspects of ME as well as advance ME across diverse medical specialties specifically.



UTEL Symposium 2024

Participants

An investigation into the use of CNC machining to enhance hands-on learning with Furniture Design students



Dr. Noor Aldoy

Assistant Professor - FHEA Department of Architecture and Interior Design College of Engineering University of Bahrain Dr. Aldoy teaches and coordinates variety of courses such as Computer Aided Interior Design, Computer Animations, Furniture Design, Design Management, and Interior Design Training courses. She worked as a Design and Innovation Manager at Lancaster China Catalyst Programme and as a Senior Knowledge Exchange Associate in London Fusion Project at Lancaster University in the UK. Prior to this, she worked as a Lecturer of Digital Space and Technologies at the Arts University at Bournemouth and was a member of the Design Practice Research Group at Loughborough University. Her work focused on methods of digital industrial design and curriculum development.

Students in the Furniture Design Course at the University of Bahrain study ergonomics, functions, aesthetics, and furniture materials throughout the entire course. They tend to come up with creative ideas, but their understanding of how the piece of furniture can be executed in real life was an issue that needed attention, especially since students had never had the experience of working in any workshops. As a result, a hands-on learning strategy was used to provide the students with the experiential learning needed to produce a small-scale model that is as close to reality as possible by demonstrating the aesthetics, function and joints used to create the piece of furniture in real life. This was done by asking students to design and make a furniture piece that could be produced from plywood using a CNC machine. This paper investigates the journey that 63 level 3 students went through in this project and how this learning by doing pedagogical method enhanced their understanding of executing pieces of furniture. Students worked on this project from concept to execution and received feedback on their work on a weekly basis to improve it. The results of this project are a testament to the students' success in applying their theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios. Students managed to translate their paper-based ideas into tangible three dimensional furniture pieces which enhanced their problem-solving skills and deepened their understanding of furniture design.



UTEL Symposium 2024

Participants

Enhancing Student Writing Performance Through AI-Powered Feedback



Dr. Neesha Malik

Senior Lecturer - SFHEA Bahrain Teachers College University of Bahrain As a teacher educator she has been a part of designing, teaching, assessing, moderating, and accrediting courses in collaboration with colleagues. She currently teaches courses in the BTC's Foundation and Diploma programs. The latter also requires periodic public-school visits to supervise her students in their pedagogy. As a Senior Fellow of the Advance Higher Education Academy (UK), she is a member of the UOB's Unit for Excellence in Teaching and Leadership (UTEL), and mentors faculty in the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program to obtain their Fellowship of the Professional Standards Framework. She is also a faculty in the UOB's Continuing Education Center and delivers inservice courses for private school teachers. Her passion for research has led to the publishing of several research articles and conference presentations nationally and internationally.

The shift towards remote and hybrid learning models in higher education presents new opportunities in providing timely and personalized feedback on student writing. The objectives of the current study were to explore the implementation of an AI-powered feedback system to improve the writing performance of 87 pre university foundation level students. The study utilized a mixed method design that leveraged natural language processing and machine learning techniques in generating tailored feedback on aspects such as grammar, clarity, organization, and content development. The study tools included the AI-powered feedback system, writing prompts, student feedback survey, and assignment scores. The study aimed to evaluate the AI system's effectiveness in enhancing student learning outcomes and reducing the grading workload for instructors. The key findings of the study demonstrated that the Alpowered feedback system had a positive impact on student writing performance. Students reported feeling more empowered as self-directed learners, and for the instructor there was a noticeable reduction in the grading workload. The focus of the presentation will be the implications of this approach in sustaining excellence in higher education and in empowering students to become more self-directed learners.



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Participants

Implementing Online Collaborative Work to Improve Writing Skills



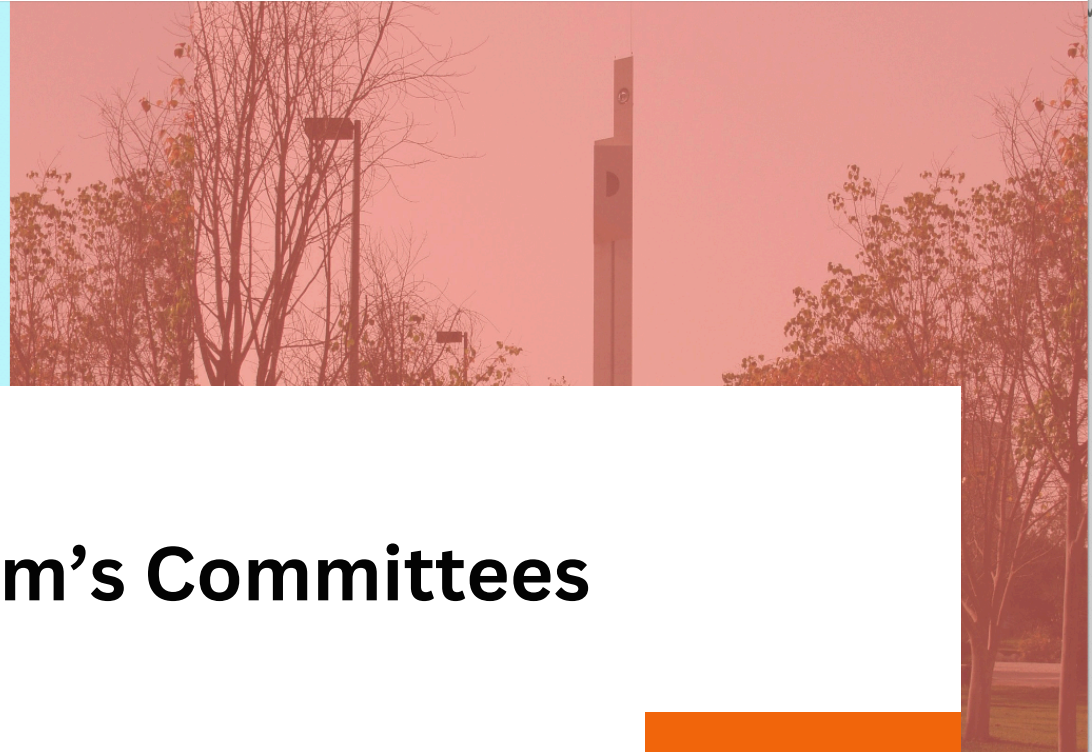
Dr. Hajar Kadhem

Senior Lecturer English Language Center
University of Bahrain Dr Hajar Mahfoodh is a prolific author on global poetry traditions, language teaching, culture, and sustainability, lecturing on English at the University of Bahrain. She obtained her PhD in Literature in 2023 from the University of Surrey, the UK. Hajar is highly interested in education issues and research, focusing on sustainable HE and policies, and she regularly publishes on Higher Education and Sustainability. She is specifically keen on research exploring colonialism and decolonising curricula, postcolonial culture and higher education, higher education in MENA, and developing alternative policies and frameworks that could effectively reform higher education in the GCC region.

This action research report explores collaborative writing using digital platforms as a form of group work among Orientation students at the University of Bahrain. The main problem of these students is their performance in English writing: plagiarised or translated texts with inadequate structure, layout, and writing mechanics. Exploring possible solutions for this problem, this study aims to measure the impact of group work on students' writing skills, specifically focusing on developing students' skills in writing structure, increasing student collaboration and participation, and creating a supportive learning environment. The data gathered for this research is qualitative and quantitative, including surveys, interviews, checklists, and post-tests. It is also based on two cycles: cycle one involves collaborative writing using Blackboard in the classroom; Cycle Two requires students to work in groups outside the classroom using Blackboard. The findings of this study reveal that students can learn through peer assessment, communication, and discussions within group work, and they experience deep learning within an effective learning environment. In addition, they can develop their critical thinking and digital literacy through collaborative work. However, students tend to rely on AI and Google Translate, which comprise a fertile field to investigate in future research on pedagogical practices.



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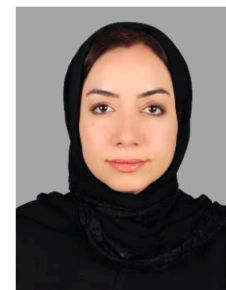
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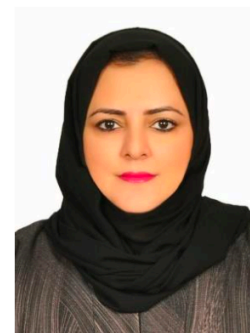
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