

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

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Keywords, expertise (Up to 10): Program development, Course design, Teacher training, Coaching, Materials writing, Research

Introduction:

With my expertise as program developer, trainer, coach and teacher, and based on a successful pilot testing on teaching Arabic to non-native speakers, I am currently working on creating an application to teach the Arabic language to non-native speakers of Arabic (starting from zero level) as well as heritage learners interested in reading and writing the language. The whole program is designed to teach the four language skills (Reading, writing, listening & speaking) and subskills (grammar and vocabulary) while using carefully selected cultural content; the teaching methodologies are modern captivating and engaging; the languages used in teaching are English and French.

Information can be found at this URL: www.edempowerment.space

Main undertaken research projects:

Project 1: Speech presentations as a nontraditional assessment of senior students' preparedness to the workplace. The study addressed the concern about and increased emphasis on the importance of proper communication skills in job performance. In the study, senior students were provided with gradual training on the 11 criteria of good speeches; formative assessment was done after each of the 5 mini-presentation assessments; post-activity evaluations were done (instructor, peers, and self-evaluation) to provide constructive feedback on individual presentations; and summative assessment followed for end-of-period group presentations. Findings indicated that staged training and criterion-referenced assessment of performance would lead to increased and more collaborative learning, account for knowledge building and learning in context, are a means to tapping students' multiple intelligences, and most importantly, improved on-task communication skills.

Project 2: College students' end-of-semester assessment of instructors' performance: Students' narratives are the best interpretive research tool that validates the survey questionnaire results.

Though a common practice, survey questionnaires are not always the best tool for the assessment of instructor performance in the Humanities department. To filter biases of incomprehensive surveys, a combination of normative and interpretive techniques is essential. In this sense, while classroom observations and action research shed light on variables that impact the evaluation process, students' narratives bring about the whole picture of how instructors are performing, how practice can be improved and what policy changes are needed. This study targeted the assessment of instructional practices in the Humanities department to help the administration to make informed decisions.

Project 3: Teaching online/flipped classes during the COVID19 pandemic. This multidisciplinary study was started a while earlier than COVID19 by a group of researchers, including myself. The focus was on reducing in-class time to serve the needs of students committed to full-time jobs and who have families. The study focused on the means to changing the teaching methodologies and assessment measures, and ended in designing a course or two per discipline. Its importance is that the new knowledge exchange facilitated instruction during the COVID19 pandemic.

Recently Completed Research Projects

I am putting the final touches on a study on the impact of the Lebanese economic meltdown on employee motivation and consequently performance after the explosion of 4 August 2020 and after COVID19 has reached a critical stage. A survey questionnaire was used to determine pre- and post-crisis factors contributing to employee frustration level. Results indicated that policy changes are necessary condition for sustained motivation and improved practice.

SUPPORT (GRANTS AND CONTRACTS)

Nahida El Assi had been Head of Humanities and Languages Department & Research and Development committee at HCU, currently independent researcher and program developer.