

FOUNDATION PROGRAM NEWSLETTER



MARCH
2022

FIRST INTERNATIONAL ELT CONFERENCE

On February 18 and 19, 2022, Dhofar University's Foundation Program hosted its first international conference dedicated to English Language Teaching. The Conference Organizing Committee, led by Mr. Faical Ben Khalifa, worked tirelessly to put together this two-day event.

In this newsletter, we look at some of the key highlights from Day 1 and Day 2, as well as meet some of the keynote and plenary speakers, and presenters who took part in the FP's first international conference.

SHAPING NEW UNDERSTANDINGS IN ELT

The field of English language teaching and learning has always been dynamic, but never more so than in the last two decades. Twentieth century skills like critical thinking, collaboration and team work, imagination, creativity, and problem solving are in high demand, shaping new understandings in the field of ELT.

The conference aimed to bring together teachers, educators, researchers and curriculum designers to share best practices and reflect on how we as educators—and students as learners—can better meet these challenges.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Day 1

Thursday, February 17, 2022

- Opening remarks
- Welcome address
- Keynote speaker
- Concurrent sessions 1 – 2
- Plenary speakers
- Concurrent sessions 3 – 4
- Keynote speaker
- Closing remarks

Day 2

Friday, February 18, 2022

- Announcements
- Keynote speaker
- Concurrent session 5
- Keynote speaker
- Concurrent session 6
- Plenary speaker
- Concurrent sessions 7 – 9
- Keynote speaker
- Closing remarks

List of speakers and presenters:

Keynote speakers:

- Dr. Dudley Reynolds
- Professor Shehdeh Fareh
- Dr. Saleh Al Busaidi
- Professor Ali S.M. Al-Issa
- Dr. Maddalena Taras

Plenary Speakers:

- Chris Sowton
- Nathan Waller
- Paul Woodfall
- Dr. Sabina Ostrowska

Presenters:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Mohamad Abdullah | • Faical Ben Khalifa |
| • Dr. Yasser Sabtan | • Dr. Moosa Sulaiman |
| • Greenal Burboz | • Dr. Khadija Al Balushi |
| • Dr. Jamila Al Siyabi | • Sheikha Al Marhoobi |
| • Nathaniel Lotze | • Sumaiah Islam |
| • Millie Paulose | • Mahija Veetil |
| • Dr. Anfal Al Wahaibi | • Carmel Hankins |
| • Dr. Victoria Tuzlukova | • Dr. Moza Al Malki |
| • Rashida Iqbal | • Dr. Yasir Al Yafai |
| • Merin John | • Amal Essa |
| • Dr. Thomas Baby | • Hyder Al Mughrabi |
| • Shahieda Sallie | • Ahmad Al Ani |
| • Daniel Carman | • Alena Slanchak |
| • Dr. Jasmin Cowin | • Dr. Ehsan Sirjani |
| • Dr. Sani Uba | • Dr. Asfiya Khan |
| • David Williams | • Dr. Reema Srivastava |
| • Kawthar Al Harrasi | • Muna Muqaibal |
| • Mohamed Achamsi | • Dr. Abduljalil Hazaea |
| • Dr. Yaqoob Al Ghatrifi | • Sultan Al Mekhlafi |
| • Dr. Julius Irudayasamy | |
| • Dr. Muhammed Chalikandy | |
| • Thangadurai Kadarkarai | |
| • Dr. Ramadevi Sakhamuri | |

EDITORIAL TEAM

Erica Bailey

Merin John

Steven Sampliner

March 2022

DAY ONE HIGHLIGHTS

Introducing the two keynote speakers:



DR. DUDLEY REYNOLDS



PROF. SHEHDEH FAREH

Introducing the three plenary speakers:



CHRIS SOWTON



NATHAN WALLER



PAUL WOODFALL

Looking back...

The first day of the Foundation Program's International ELT Conference started off with the opening remarks, Oman National Anthem, Qu'ran recitation and the welcome address by Committee Chair Mr. Faical Ben Khalifa. The focal points of the day were the two keynote and three plenary speakers, with a number of other presenters from around the region and beyond. Different perspectives of implementing flipped learning in the classrooms was one of the highlights discussed by three presenters, as well as other insightful themes including student-centered learning approaches and quality learning. Many people inside and outside the FP attended the sessions. The day ended well with the second keynote speaker's presentation. Attendees were also given a chance to complete a short survey about the conference.

DAY TWO HIGHLIGHTS

Introducing the three keynote speakers:



**DR. SALEH
AL BUSAIDI**



**PROF. ALI S.M.
AL-ISSA**



**DR. MADDALENA
TARAS**

Introducing the plenary speaker:



DR. SABINA OSTROWSKA

Looking back...

Day two began with important announcements for attendees and speakers. The morning was packed full with two keynote speakers and one plenary speaker before the lunch break. Mixed in with these were two concurrent sessions. Topics ranged from relevant issues in theory to the practical application in the classroom, while looking at how these directly related to Omani educational needs. After the lunch break, the concurrent sessions were in full swing. Attendees were given opportunities to join a number of presentations given by different presenters, some from our very own Foundation Program team! Finally, the conference ended with the last keynote speaker and closing remarks. The Conference Committee was thanked for all their hard work and the two-day event drew to a satisfying end.

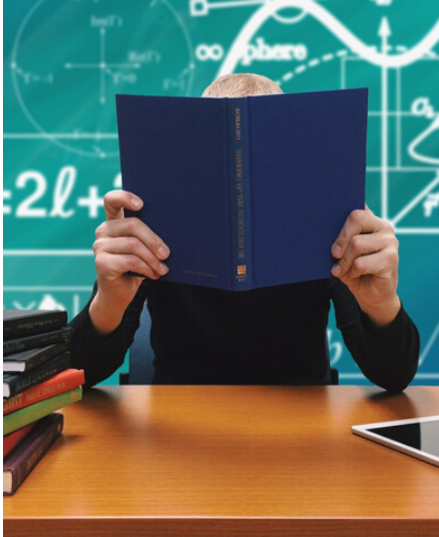
FP STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2031

Spearheaded by the Quality Assurance committee, members of the FPAC finalized the 7 Core Goals with 41 key objectives to the 2021-2031 Foundation Program's Strategic Plan. Taking a bottom-up approach ensures that all stakeholders will help the FP scale new heights in the coming years.

Area	Core Goals
Teaching and Learning	Equip FP students with knowledge, skills, and values to meet college requirements
Research and Innovation	Support research activities
Community Engagement	Strengthen community engagement
Governance and Management	Ensure good governance and effective management
Human Resources	Enhance FP staff capabilities and productivity
Students Environment and Support Services	Enrich FP students' on-campus life experience and general support services
Internationalization	Contribute to the enhancement of the international profile of the university

NEW COMMITTEE



Teaching & Learning Enhancement Committee

In the past, Foundation Program had a Research Committee and a separate Professional Development Committee. This academic year, we combined the two groups to make a stronger committee focused on enhancing teaching and learning among staff. As the goal is to support the professional development and research goals of all staff, we made sure that each FP unit has representation on the committee; therefore, members include teachers from IT, Math, and English.

Research is always a big focus. How can T&LE support staff endeavors related to research?

T&LE provides sessions throughout the year that focus specifically on research. We want to provide guidance on the logistics of research, as well as highlight recent research conducted by researchers both in the FP and more broadly throughout the Sultanate of Oman. In addition, staff are encouraged to submit their research proposals to our committee so the DU Research Board can approve the projects.

What are some of the new approaches T&LE has utilized and hopes to utilize related to offering professional development?

One of the newest approaches we have utilized is holding monthly online discussions about various research articles. Using Moodle, our online learning platform, the committee hosts a forum for staff to read articles relating to Math, IT, and English, and then discuss the research with one another even when time is in short supply.



Looking ahead to Term 3, what events are scheduled for the staff to take advantage of?

For Term 3, we have three exciting journal articles ranging from topics such as applying flipped classrooms in IT to establishing a reading culture in Arabic and English. We're excited to read the reflections and questions this research inspires. We also have two engaging workshops planned for staff. Our Math committee members have organized a training for using MyLab for instruction, and our final workshop for the year will blend our research and professional development objectives: two of our very own staff members will share their recent research findings with us in May.

Lauren Mertens
Co-chair of T&LE Committee



 A Quick Recap

March 2022

Live webinar

MATH ONLINE SYMPOSIUM

Flipped Learning:
Challenges and Solutions

24
FEB





12 - 2
PM



Via **ZOOM**

 **Keynote speaker**
Dr. Atef Abuhmaid

Panel Speakers

-  1 Dr. Hiba Chendeb
-  2 Dr. Mohammad Adm
-  3 Mr. Syed Salman Mahmood
-  4 Ms. Khawla Almuhtaseb



Moderated by:
Mr. Mohammad Mustafa
Math Coordinator

THE BEST OF 2021/22!

