جَامِعَةُ نِزْوَى
University of Nizwa

FI CONNECTIONS

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGANCE

IN THIS ISSUE

UoN 1st Annual English Language Teaching Conference

Where keynote speakers, presentations and panel discussions meet **Accumulated Albums in the Presence of AI**

Dusty memories are back to life

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Student Cornder: Mariam Al-Rahbi

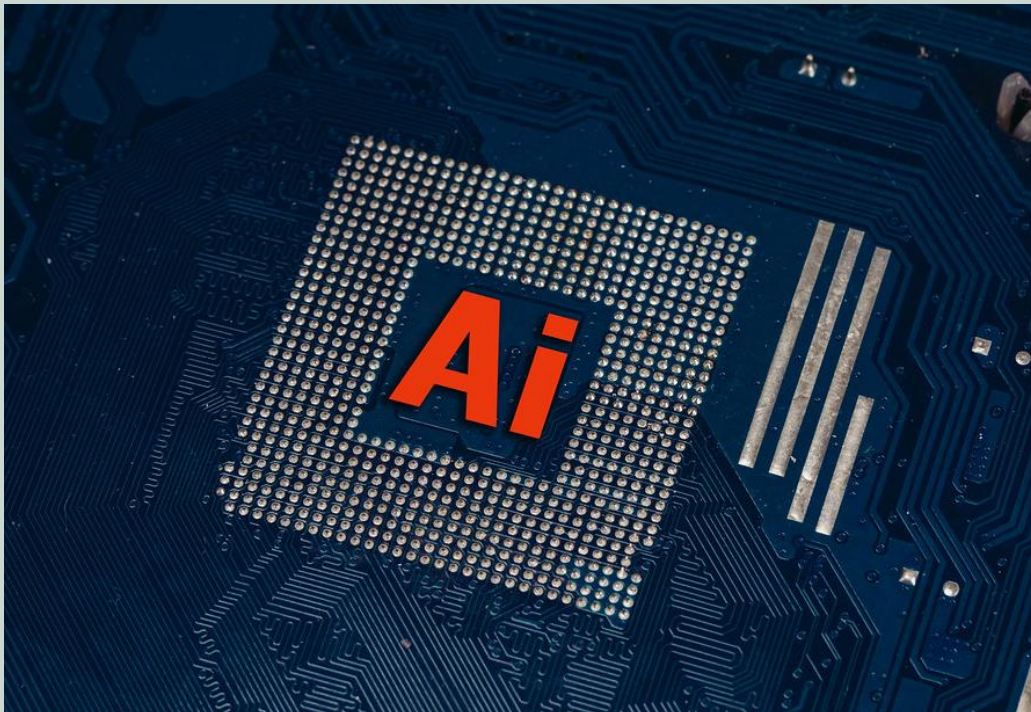Valuable notes and new insights to understand AI from educators' perspectives

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Message from the Director

By Dr. Ahmed Al Rahbi

Respected Readers,

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm we present to you our new version of the FI Connections educational magazine. Education has always been a cornerstone of society, empowering individuals to unlock their potentials and contribute to the betterment of our world. In this educational magazine we offer a window for our small university community to showcase their ideas, potentials and inspirations.

In recent years, we have witnessed remarkable advancements in pedagogy, and our understanding of how people learn. These advancements have presented us with both exciting opportunities and complex questions. This magazine aims to open a window for extra curricula reading and writing of different educational and life topics. It offers a chance for innovation, exploration and learning experiences for our faculty and students in the FI community and the UoN context at large.

We try to focus on academic achievements, the developments of
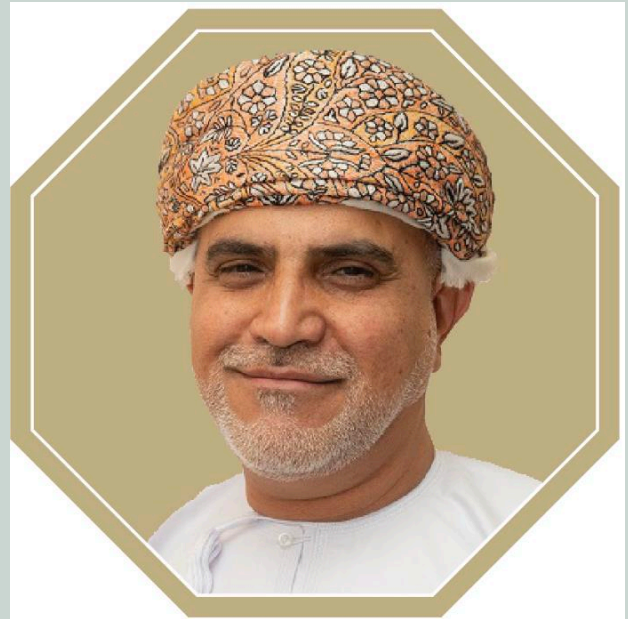
social-emotional skills, ethical values, and resilience in our learners. Therefore, we should empower our students not only to excel academically but also to lead fulfilling lives, make ethical decisions, and contribute positively to society. We hope that this magazine will offer a unique space for all the above values.

In conclusion, I extend my deepest gratitude to all editors of this version. I am also thankful to faculty and students who dedicated their time to contribute to this version of the magazine and in future versions. Enjoy reading every bit of it and we hope to hear your feedback for further development.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ahmed Al Rahbi
FI Director

Message from the Assistant Director for the English Langauge Program

By Mr. Khalid Al Abri

Dear Readers,

Welcome to another exciting edition of *FI Connections*! It is my pleasure to address you as we continue to navigate a world where education is being transformed by innovation and technology. As students of the Foundation Institute (FI), at the University of Nizwa, you are stepping into an academic environment rich with opportunities to harness these advancements, particularly in your journey to mastering the English language and other essential skills.

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, success is not longer just about traditional hard word; it is also about adaptability, resourcefulness,

and embracing the tools that modern education provides. At FI, we believe in empowering you with the skills necessary for your future studies while leveraging cutting-edge resources to enhance your learning experience.

This edition of *FI Connections* features a variety of insightful articles and interviews that explore the role of Aritificial Intellegence in education, innovative teaching methods like task-based learning, and reflections from both educators and students. We hope you find these contributions as inspiring and thought-provoking as we do, and that they provide you with new perspectives on how technology and education are intertwined.

Among our many resources, ANJIZ – our state-of-the-art language resource center – stands as a hub for AI-driven learning tools, personalized tutotrials, and interactive workshops that

completement your Foundation Program courses. We encourage you to make ANJIZ one of your primary destinations throughout the year, as it offers support that will elevate your language skills and foster academic excellence.

To ensure your success in this transformative learning environment, I encourage you to:

- Attend all your classes with punctuality and an open-mind.

- Actively engage with your instructors, leberaging their expertise and insights.

- Utilize AI-driven learning platforms and digital tools, both within ANJIZ and across the university, to maximize your educational growth.
- Participate in discussions and collaborative learning, as these experiences will prepare you for the interconnected, globalized future.

- Manage your time wisely, taking ful advance of the resources provided, including personalized tutotials and AI-enhanced learning support.

The Foundation Program is designed to challenge and prepare you for the future. With the University of Nizwa's commitment to integrating technological innovation and comprehensive support, you are equipped to succeed not only academically but also in adapting to a world that is contansly evolving. Make the most of this opportunity, and I am confident that your dedication will leave to outstanding achievements.

We look forward to seeing you thrive and become leaders of tomorrow. Best of luck on this exciting journey, and we hopd you enjoy this edition of *FI Connections*!

Sincerely,

Mr. Khalid Al Abri
Assistant Director for the English Language Program

Artificial Intelligence: An Inescapable Fact to Accept and a Tide We Are Unable to Hold Back

By Dr. Eyhab A. Bader Eddin

In a world abuzz with new significant breakthroughs arriving on the scene in all spheres of life, it is no wonder that new technologies are profoundly shaping the educational environment and cutting out distinctive shapes that blend in with the requirements of the new educational scene.
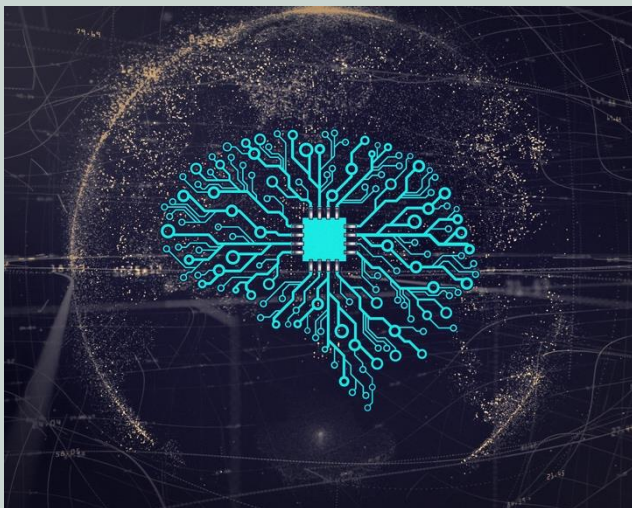
Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the development of computer systems that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. These tasks include learning, reasoning, problem-solving, understanding natural language,

speech recognition, and visual perception. The goal of AI is to create machines that can mimic human cognitive functions and, in some cases, surpass human capabilities in specific domains. There are generally two main types of AI: narrow or weak AI and general or strong AI.

AI encompasses various subfields, including machine learning, natural language processing, computer vision, robotics, and expert systems. Machine learning, a subset of AI, involves the use of algorithms and statistical models to enable computers to improve their performance on specific tasks over time, without being explicitly programmed.

AI technologies are increasingly integrated into our daily lives, impacting industries such as healthcare, finance, education, transportation, and more. While AI presents exciting opportunities for innovation and efficiency, it also raises ethical concerns, including issues

related to bias, privacy, and job displacement. As AI continues to evolve, it is essential to consider and address these ethical implications to ensure responsible and beneficial deployment.

Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools have made their way into language particularly translation, with the advent of Translation Memory (TM) software. This later evolved into Machine Translation (MT), with the third generation of Neural Machine Translation (NMT) becoming an increasingly common part of translation workflows. Other renowned developments include Large Language Models (LLM) or Generative AI (GenAI), such as ChatGPT, which have demonstrated transformational effects.

English learning and teaching is no exception. AI continues to grow to the extent that it is becoming remarkably clear that it has the potential to revolutionise the teaching domain. AI-powered tools can help teachers and students alike work more efficiently and accurately.

AI in Learning

The role of Artificial Intelligence in learning encompasses various aspects that focus on enhancing the individual learning experience. Here are some key ways in which AI contributes to the learning process:

1) *Personalized Learning Paths* where AI systems analyze individual learning styles, preferences, and performance data to create personalized learning paths. Learners receive customized content, exercises, and challenges that match their abilities and progress, fostering a more effective and engaging learning experience.

2) *Adaptive Learning Platforms* are when AI-driven adaptive learning platforms adjust the difficulty and pace of content based on a learner's proficiency and mastery of concepts. This adaptability ensures that learners are appropriately challenged and can progress at their own speed.

3) *Automated Feedback and Correction* is when AI provides instant feedback on assignments, quizzes, and exercises, pointing out errors and suggesting corrections. This immediate feedback loop helps learners understand and rectify mistakes, promoting a more efficient learning process.

4) *Gamification and Interactive Learning* is when AI can be integrated into educational games and interactive simulations to make learning more engaging and enjoyable. Gamified elements, such as rewards, challenges, and progress tracking, motivate learners to actively participate in the learning process.

5) *Language Learning Support* is represented by AI-powered language learning applications utilising technologies like speech recognition

and natural language processing to assist learners in practicing pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. These applications offer interactive exercises and real-time feedback to improve language skills.

6) *Predictive Analytics for Success* is seen when AI analyzes data on learner behavior and performance to predict potential challenges and areas where students may struggle. Educators can use these insights to intervene and provide additional support to ensure learners' success.

7) *Continuous Learning Opportunities* are seen when AI enables the creation of continuous learning environments where learners can access educational content and resources at any time. This flexibility accommodates diverse schedules and encourages a culture of lifelong learning.

8) *Facilitation of Self- Directed Learning* is when AI empowers learners to take control of their educational journey by offering tools and resources that support self-directed learning. This includes access to vast repositories of

information, interactive tutorials, and collaborative online platforms.

AI in Teaching

Distinct from learning, AI is marvelously transofming the field of teaching by enhancing the capabilities and effectiveness of educators. Due to constraints of space, I shall limit my list to a few ways where AI demonstrates its ability to help in teaching. First, AI can be used in personalized instruction. It is when AI assists teachers in delivering personalized instruction by analyzing individual student data. This allows educators to tailor their teaching methods, content, and pacing to accommodate the diverse learning needs and styles of each student in the classroom. Second, AI can be used for automated grading and assessment. AI can automate the grading process for assignments, quizzes, and exams, freeing up teachers' time from routine tasks. This allows educators to focus on more valuable aspects of teaching, such as providing targeted feedback and adapting instructional strategies based on assessment results. Next, AI can analyze large sets of data on student performance and engagement, providing teachers with valuable insights. Educators can use this data to identify areas of improvement, track trends, and make informed decisions about instructional approaches. Fourth, AI can provide intelligent-tutoring systems. AI-powered tutoring systems provide additional support to students by offering personalized guidance and feedback.

These systems can assist with homework, answering questions, and reinforceing concepts outside of regular class hours. Moreover, AI can assist educators in their professional development by recommending relevant resources, workshops, and training programs based on their individual needs and career goals. This personalized approach helps teachers continually enhance their skills. Additionally, AI helps teachers create and customize learning materials tailored to their specific teaching objectives and the needs of their students. This includes generating adaptive content, interactive exercises, and multimedia resources. It can handle routine administrative tasks, such as scheduling, grading, and communication, allowing teachers to focus more on instructional activities and student interaction. Last but not least, AI enables the integration of educational technology tools that enhance teaching methodologies, such as virtual reality simulations, interactive whiteboards, and online collaboration platforms. These tools can make teaching more dynamic and engaging.
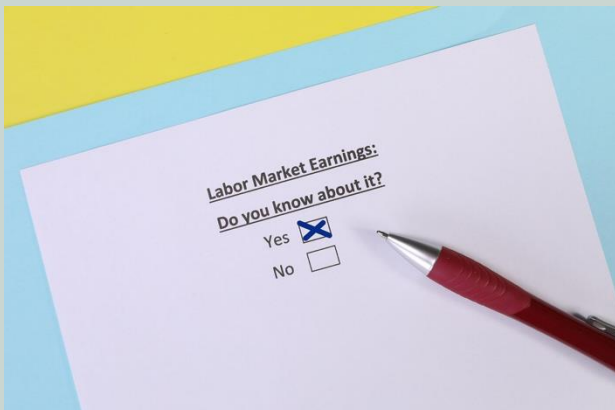
It is essential to convince future teachers and students of the pressing need to know the 'nuts and bolts' when the machines keep improving, much like the ability to read a map when every car has a satellite navigation. Denying AI is not going to make it off the reality map at all. Humans are – and will continue to be crucial, simply because machines can't (yet) do context, exercise judgement or understand cultural sensitivities. With the passage of time, AI technologies will become more and more ubiquitous: they will also become more accessible, lowering the costs of using them. In summary, AI in learning focuses on tailoring educational experiences to the individual needs and preferences of learners, providing them with the tools, resources, and support necessary for effective self-directed learning.

On the other hand, AI in teaching focuses on supporting educators in various aspects of their profession, including instructional design, assessment, professional development, and classroom management. By automating routine tasks and providing valuable insights, AI empowers teachers to deliver more personalized and effective educational experiences to their students. Yet, the future impact of AI-powered tools on the learning and teaching processes remains uncertain. We are – I feel – akin to the Victorians' standpoint (those living during Queen Victoria's reign from 1837 to 1901). We now and they then were uncertain and dubious about what the future would

unfold. Scientific discoveries and technological advancements during the Victorian era, while transformative, also raised ethical and moral questions. The theories of Charles Darwin, for example, challenged traditional religious beliefs about human origins.

The rapid pace of technological change led to concerns about its impact on society, including fears of dehumanization and loss of traditional values. Worries and concerns about AI for the future revolve around a range of ethical, social, economic, and technological issues. Some of these issues could be: job displacement, privacy concerns, lack of transparency, social impact, etc. Interestingly enough is the development of AI-powered autonomous weapons which raises ethical concerns about their use in warfare. The lack of human control in decision-making processes and the potential for these weapons to be used indiscriminately are major worries for the international community. All we can say for the time being is 'hold a deep breath, and let's wait and see what is to come yet'.

Why Task-based Teaching?

By Dr. Mitra Mesgar

Task-based teaching improves English proficiency by promoting active learning and communication. By engaging in tasks that require language use, learners build their language skills and confidence. This approach also encourages learners to use English in real life situations which helps them develop fluency and accuracy. Task-based teaching is a popular method for learning English. It involves doing activities that require using the language in a real-life context. This approach encourages learner to communicate and interact with others, which help them build their language skills. By participating in tasks, learners can practice their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. They can also develop their vocabulary and grammar through these tasks. Additionally, task-based teaching promotes learner autonomy and motivation, which can lead to better learning outcomes.

Task-based teaching is an effective way to improve English proficiency for several reasons. It provides learners with opportunities to use language in a meaningful way, which helps them develop skills. This approach also helps learners develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Additionally, task-based teaching promotes learner autonomy and motivation, which can

lead to better learning outcomes. Task-based teaching is an effective way to improve Ebglish proficiency for several reasons. It provides learners with opportunities to use language in a meaningful way, which helps them to develop skills.

This approach also helps learners to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Additionally, task-based teaching can be adapted to suit the needs and interests of learners, which can help to increase their motivation. Overall, task-based teaching is an effective way to improve proficiency.

Task-based teaching is useful in that it can easily interact with different learning environments. For example, it can be used in traditional classroom settings, online courses, or for one-on-one tutoring sessions. This flexibility makes it a great option for learners who have different schedules or learning preferences. Additionally, task-based teaching can be used to teach a wide range of language skills. This makes it a versatile approach that can suit the needs of many learners.

Task-based teaching is also beneficial because it provides learners with opportunities to use English in a real-life context. This is important because it helps learners develop the skills they need to communicate effectively in a variety of situations. By engaging in tasks that require communication, learners can learn how to express themselves clearly and concisely. They can also learn how to understand others, which is an effective part of communication.

Additionally, task-based teaching can help learners develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are important in many areas of life.

The effectiveness of task-based learning, it must be understood, depends on its efficient implementation and expert facilitation. By carefully balancing task completion and language learning, educators must create projects that are both meaningful and intellectually difficult. Moreover, it is essential to evaluate students' progress and adjust training through ongoing assessment and feedback procedures. Task-based teaching improves English proficiency by promoting active learning and communication. This approach also encourages learners to use English in real life situations which helps them to develop fluency and accuracy. Task-based teaching is a popular method for learning English. It involves doing activities that require using the language in a real-life context.

Students' Corner

Accumulated Albums in the Presence of AI

By Israa Al-Mayahi

Before

After

Memories covered with dust. Pictures in albums are accumulated in a secluded rack. Happiness seems to be the predominant thing about that bunch of albums. Blurry pictures as they were all printed in the 90s. But there is a glimpse of hope using AI turning back over those memories. As if you are living in the moment.

Students' corner
"Friendships will Shine Through…"

By Raaid Al Kalbani

In life full of friendships, I stand alone,

Surrounded by shadows, my heart feels thrown.

They promised loyalty, but it's all a facade,

Leaving me empty, feeling so flawed.

Their laughter echoes, but I'm left behind.

Invisible to their eyes, a forgotten kind,

Their words are hollow, their actions untrue,

Leaving me wondering, what did I do?

But in this darkness, a flicker remains,

A glimmer of hope, breaking these chains,

I'll find my worth, in friendships anew,

Where care and love will shine through.

In life full of friendships, I stand alone,
Surrounded by shadows, my heart feels thrown,
They promised loyalty, but it's all a facade,
Leaving me empty, feeling so flawed.
Their laughter echoes, but I'm left behind,
Invisible to their eyes, a forgotten kind,
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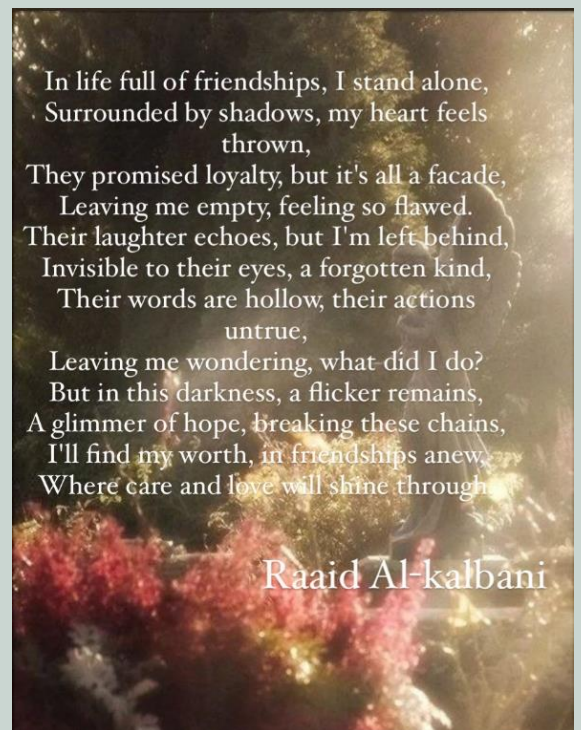
Raaid Al-kalbani

Designed by Raaid Al KAlbani

FI News

The Foundation Institute Celebrates its General Foundation Program Alumni of 2022–2023

In a gathering on 30th January 2024, the Foundation Institute (FI) proudly reunited with its General Foundation Program (GFP) graduates of the Academic Year 2022–2023. The reunion served as a platform for mutual appreciation and insightful feedback and dialogue.

Dr. Ahmed Al-Rahbi, the FI Director, spearheaded the event with a warm welcome to the students. His opening remarks set the tone for an engaging and constructive session. The institute's commitment to educational excellence, continual improvement and the crucial feedback of the alumni was emphasized.

Discussions centered on the quality of the GFP offered by the FI. Alumni were encouraged to openly share their experiences and suggestions, contributing to a rich dialogue on the program's effectiveness and areas where improvements could be considered.

The relevance and effectiveness of the curricula offered by the FI were also discussed, as well as the quality of teaching methodologies, and the program's influence on the alumni's preparedness for further academic studies. Alumni were also offered an opportunity to discuss the academic and non-academic support services they received from the FI, and how these areas have been beneficial for their growth, as well as how services could be improved for future GFP students.

In a warming display of recognition, the FI acknowledged the exceptional accomplishments of its outstanding GFP alumni cohort of 2022–2023. These high-achieving students were applauded for their triumphs in the GFP.

The meeting is a testament of the bond the FI seeks to establish with its alumni and reflects the collective pursuit of excellence in education

FI News
Engaging PD Workshops: Motivation and Differentiation

On 30th–31st January 2024, the Foundation Institute, in collaboration with Cambridge University Press & Assessment, hosted a series of professional development workshops that left teachers inspired and equipped with new strategies to enhance their classroom practices. Led by the well-known education expert, Peter Lucantoni, the workshops focused on two key themes: motivating learners and differentiation in the classroom. FI teachers found the sessions to be informative and engaging, with practical takeaways that could immediately be applied in their teaching.

Focus on Motivation: Creating the Right Conditions for Learner Success

The first workshop was centered on the challenging task of motivating learners. Lucantoni guided teachers through Malcolm Knowles' six principles of adult learning, emphasizing the importance of understanding students' emotional and social experiences in the learning process. Teachers explored how

"Students can use AI correctly by employing it as a tool for learning,

creating the right motivational environment can make a difference, especially for students who may struggle to engage with material. With a strong focus on practical application, Lucantoni demonstrated techniques from *Cambridge Unlock Series*, a curriculum designed to boost student motivation. This provided educators with fresh ideas and strategies to inspire their students.

Differentiation: Tailoring Instruction for Every Student

The second workshop took a look at differentiation, a key concept in today's inclusive classrooms. Drawing on Carol Ann Tomlinson's work, Lucantoni highlighted how responsive teaching – where educators adapt content, process, and product to meet the varied needs of students – can lead to more successful learning outcomes. Teachers discussed and evaluated various differentiation strategies, which allowed instructors to reflect on their current practices and consider new approaches for their students' learning.

seeking assistance, and enhancing their understanding."

Interview with
Dr. Mitra Mesgar

Interviewd by FI Connections Team
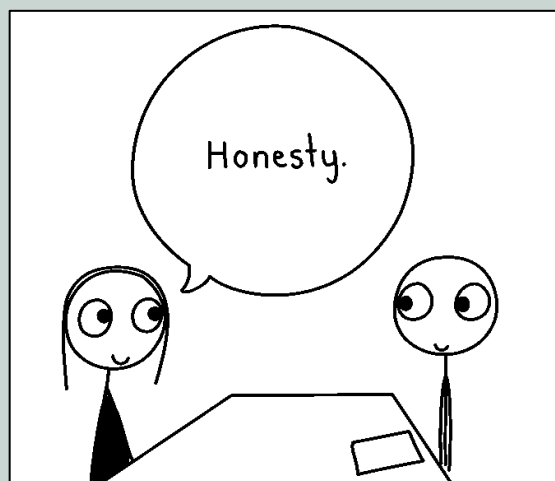
- **What is your name and where are you from?**

My name is Mitra and I am from Iran.

- **Tell us about yourself and your job**

I am a Ph.D. holder in English studies and Linguistics. So, I consider myself as an enthusiastic researcher and teacher who is interested in learnng about new technology use in teaching and using it to enhance students' learning processes. I have worked as an Assistant Professor at various universities in Malaysia and dedicated my time to research, supervision, and teaching Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D. students. Currently, I am teaching at the University of Nizwa in Oman, where I teach English to learners with different levels of English proficiency.

- **How do you like living in Oman?**

Living in Oman as a foreigner has been a unique and enriching experience for me. The warm hospitality of the Omani people have made me feel welcomed and integrated into the local community. The country's rich cultural heritage, stunning landscapes, and blen of traditional and modern elements contribute to a distinctive lifestyle. One aspect I appreciate is the sense of safety and security prevalent in Oman. Living here has provided me with a unique perspective and an appreciation for the rich tapestry of Omani life.

- **Where did you get your PhD from, and what was your research on?**

I earned my Ph.D. In Malaysia. My research focused on online reading strategies used by postgraduate learners with different loci of control. The data revealed differences in online reading strategies employed by two distinct types of learners: those with

interal locus of control and those with external locus of control.

- **What is AI in your own words? Why is it important to integrate it into teaching and learning languages?**

AI, or Artificial Intelligence, refers to the development of computer systems that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. These systems are increasing efficiency and allowing human workers to focus on more complex and creative aspects of their work. AI excels at processing and analyzing large datasets. AI systems can perform tasks with a high level of precision and accuracy, minimizing errors that may occur due to human factors such as fatigue or oversight. AI in teaching enhances personalized learning, automates administrative tasks, analyzes student performance, and provides real-time feedback. It optimizes education delivery, fostering efficient and effective teaching practices.

- **Why are you interested in AI and its role or functions in teaching and learning English?**

I am interested in using AI as a facilitator in my teaching. It should not motivate plagiarism when teachers guide its use and train learners to benefit from it. I recommend ChatGPT for English learning. Some teachers worry about misuse, but, like using machines in

factories, AI's impact depends on how we integrate and guide its use. Proper training ensures beneficial results.

- **Could you please tell us how we can benefit from using AI in teaching and learning English?**

We should tailor AI use to the needs of Omani learners, promoting English engagement and teamwork to overcome shyness and lack of confidence. AI suggests activities to enhance skills, like writing. I introduce AI for students to practice writing topics, then submit two versions: pre-AI assistance and post-AI assistance, aiding in error correction and revision.

- **Many people argue that AI is a tool used by students to acquire information and use them unethically in their work? Isn't that considered cheating?**

Yes, if students use AI to acquire information unethically and present it as their own work, it is considered a form of cheating.

- **How can students use AI correctly?**

Students can use AI correctly by employing it as a tool for learning,

seeking assistance, and enhancing their understanding. It's crucial to use AI ethically, giving proper credit and avoiding plagiarism.

We can do that for personalized learning, by facilitating English practice, and guiding collaborative activities to boost confidence and engagement.

- **How can we implement AI in teaching foundation students here at the University of Nizwa?**

"I am particularly excited about the prospect of leveraging AI to enhance not only language proficiency but also the overall educational experience."

Interview with Dr. Eyhab A. Badder Eddin

Interviewd by FI Connections Team

- **What is your name and where are you from?**

I am Dr. Eyhab Abdulrazak Bader Eddin. I was born in Kuwait to Syrian parents.

- **Tell us about yourself and your job.**

I am an Assistant Professor of Translation at the University of Nizwa. Before joining, I spent 10 years at King Khalid University in Abha, Saudi Arabia, teaching both undergraduate and MA students. My teaching experience spans multiple countries, including Syria, Oman, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.

I hold a PhD in Translation from Jinan University, Tripoli, Lebanon, with my dissertation titled *Semantic Probems in A. J. Arberry's Translation of the Suspended Odes (Mu'allaqat)*. My research focuses on Classical Arabic and its functional translation into English. I have published extensively in refereed

journals such as *Translation Journal, The British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, AWEJ, The International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation, The International Journal of Social Science Research and Review, The Linguist, and Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft (ZDMG)*.

My research interests include **translation theory, literary translation, stylistics, translation training, systemic linguistics, discourse analysis, and the unique linguistic features of the Qur'an in translation.** I contributed a chapter to a **Routledge-published book** titled *Insights into Translators' Training: Issues and Methods of Assessment in Research into Translation and Training in Arab Academic Institutions* (Ed. S. M. Shiyab, 1st ed., Chapter 1, Routledge).

I am a **recognized translator and a full member of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI) in London.** As

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*a **Chartered Linguist, my certified translations, marked with an adhesive seal, are recognized in the UK and several European countries.** I am also a **member of the Arab Professional Translators' Society and serve as a reviewer and editorial board member for multiple high-profile journals.***

*Beyond academia, I have a **deep, personal connection with literature.** In the **quiet solitude of my life**, I find solace in poetry and **English prose fiction**, where **words resonate with the unspoken depths of my soul.** Literature is my **alter ego**, and poetry is my **whispered symphony.***

- **How do you like living in Oman?**

I truly enjoy living in Oman. The country's rich cultural heritage, warm hospitality, and breathtaking landscapes make it a remarkable place to call home. The balance between tradition and modernity creates a vibrant atmosphere, and I deeply appreciate the strong sense of community. Exploring Oman's diverse regions—from historic sites to stunning coastlines—has been an enriching experience. Overall, living here has been a rewarding journey, allowing me to embrace its beauty and welcoming culture.

- **What is AI in your own words? Why is it important to integrate it into teaching and learning languages?**

AI is the modern wizardry that gives machines intelligence, enabling them to learn, adapt, and make decisions—almost like human thinking. It is the brainpower behind smart machines, allowing them to process information, recognize patterns, and improve over time.

Integrating AI into language teaching is crucial for several reasons. AI enables personalized learning by adapting lessons to individual student needs, providing real-time feedback on pronunciation, grammar, and fluency. AI-driven platforms make learning more engaging and interactive, while data analytics help educators refine teaching strategies. Additionally, AI fosters inclusivity, supports global language learning, and prepares students for a tech-driven world where communication and digital literacy are interconnected.

- **Why are you interested in AI and its role or functions in teaching and learning English?**

I am fascinated by the intersection of technology and education, particularly AI's potential to revolutionize English language learning. AI offers personalized learning experiences, provides instant feedback on grammar and pronunciation, and adapts to

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individual student progress. Its ability to generate interactive content, simulate real-life conversations, and analyze learning patterns makes it a powerful tool in language education.

The integration of AI aligns with my commitment to innovation in teaching. It enhances engagement, fosters accessibility, and introduces dynamic methodologies that make language acquisition more efficient and enjoyable. AI is not just a tool—it is a transformative force shaping the future of education.

- **How can we benefit from using AI in teaching and learning English?**

I am deeply fascinated by the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in teaching and learning English. The adaptability and personalized nature of AI-driven language education align with my belief in the power of tailored learning experiences. AI's ability to provide instant feedback on language nuances, along with its capacity to create adaptive learning paths, is a game-changer in addressing individual learning needs. I am particularly excited about leveraging AI to enhance not only language proficiency but also the overall educational experience. Integrating technology into language learning creates opportunities for innovative and interactive methods that engage and empower learners. Embracing AI in English language teaching reflects my commitment to staying at the forefront of educational

advancements and fostering a dynamic and effective learning environment for students.

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into English teaching and learning offers numerous advantages. AI's ability to tailor learning experiences to individual needs, combined with adaptive learning paths that adjust to students' progress, ensures a personalized and engaging educational journey. Instant feedback on pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary enhances language proficiency, while automated grading processes free educators to focus on more interactive teaching. AI analytics provide valuable insights into students' learning patterns, enabling educators to refine their teaching strategies effectively. Moreover, AI fosters global accessibility, inclusivity, and cultural sensitivity, offering continuous learning opportunities and preparing students for success in the digital age.

- **Many argue that AI allos students to acquire information unethically. Isn't that considered cheating?**

The concern about AI enabling unethical academic practices is

valid. However, whether AI use constitutes cheating depends on how students engage with it. AI can be a valuable learning tool when used for research, comprehension, and language practice. However, using AI to plagiarize or complete assignments without genuine understanding is unethical.

The key is to foster a culture of responsible AI use by establishing clear guidelines and promoting academic integrity. Institutions must educate students on ethical AI applications, ensuring that technology enhances learning rather than replacing critical thinking.

- **How can students use AI responsbily?**

Students can use AI responsibly and ethically by treating it as a supportive tool to enhance their learning experience. AI can assist in research, provide valuable insights, and streamline data analysis, while educational apps and intelligent tutoring systems aid in comprehension. AI-powered time management tools can help optimize study routines, and writing assistants can refine grammar and style. Engaging with AI in programming practice and creative projects further highlights its innovative potential. However, students must critically evaluate AI-generated content and avoid its misuse for cheating or plagiarism. By staying informed about AI advancements, seeking guidance from educators, and using technology responsibly, students can integrate AI as a constructive companion in their academic journey, enhancing both their skills and understanding.

Ensuring ethical AI use requires a combination of educational strategies, institutional guidelines, and a culture of integrity. Schools and universities should incorporate discussions on AI ethics, emphasizing critical thinking and responsible application in academic work. Clear policies must outline the consequences of unethical AI use while promoting academic honesty. Assignments that encourage reflection on AI's role can reinforce ethical awareness, and educators should regularly host workshops and discussions on evolving technologies. Encouraging originality, providing specific guidelines on AI tools, and collaborating with parents further contribute to fostering responsible AI use, upholding academic integrity, and preparing students for ethical engagement with technology.

- **How can we implement AI in teaching foundation students here in The University of Nizwa?**

Implementing AI in teaching foundation students requires a comprehensive strategy that encompasses curriculum design, technology infrastructure, teacher training, and student engagement. The process should begin with a thorough needs assessment to identify specific subjects or topics where AI can enhance foundational learning.

Selecting or developing AI-powered learning platforms tailored to foundational education is essential, ensuring alignment with curriculum objectives. Virtual tutors or learning assistants should be integrated to provide additional support, personalized feedback, and interactive experiences. Adaptive assessments that adjust based on individual student progress can further personalize the learning experience.

Consider incorporating language learning apps with AI-driven features to improve language proficiency. Gamification and interactive content should be utilized to engage foundational learners, fostering motivation and interest in the learning process. Providing professional development opportunities for educators is crucial to ensure they are well-equipped to integrate AI tools effectively into their teaching practices. Additionally, establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will help assess the impact of AI integration on student outcomes and facilitate necessary adjustments for improved effectiveness.

Investing in the necessary technology infrastructure is essential to support AI implementation and ensure accessibility for all students. Creating a supportive environment with resources and guidance will help students navigate AI tools responsibly and ethically. Finally, clear ethical guidelines and policies related to AI use in education should be established to promote responsible technology practices within the academic setting. This comprehensive approach ensures that AI is seamlessly integrated into the foundational learning experience, creating a dynamic and technology-enhanced educational environment.

Teachers' Corner

Take a break!

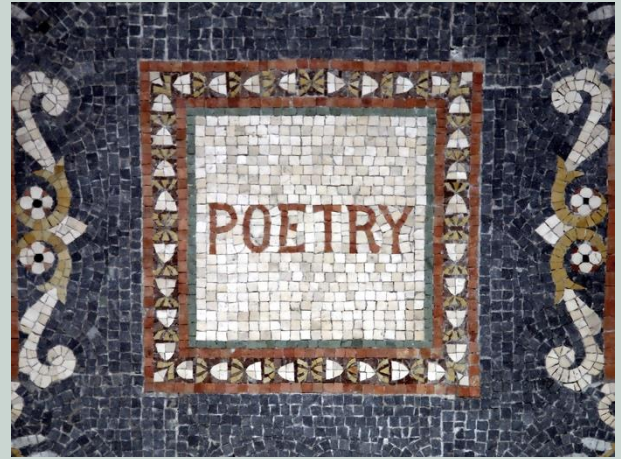# Between *Songs* and *Poetry*.. Interview with Ms. Anfal Al Hadhrami and Ms. Arwa Al Rawahi

FI Connections Team

Ms. Anfal Al Hadhrami's Interview

- **Who is Anfal Al Hadhrami?**

Melody-seeking, laughter-inducing, daydreaming explorer of life's endless possibilities who finds joy in every note and moment.

- **How and when did you begin singing?**

It all started with a love for music. As a child, I used to sing along to my favorite songs on car rides and gradually realized that I had a knack for it.

- **How did you find out about your talent?**

Singing has always been a passion of mine! I discovered that I could carry a tune when I started singing along to my favorite songs and received positive feedback from my family! My parents encouraged and supported me to sing in school celebrations and that gave me the confidence to explore my vocal abilities further. It is all about embracing your love for music and having fun with it.

- **What inspires you to sing?**

The emotions conveyed in a powerful song, the incredible vocal range of many of my favorite artists, the wide range of music genres and tastes, and mostly mesmerizing stories behind all lyrics.

- **Your favorite song/singer?**

I love listening to a wide variety of music so it is hard for me to pick just one favorite artist or song. It depends entirely on my mood. At the time being, I enjoy listening to the iconic rock band Queen and their classic hits including "Bohemian Rhapsody" and "Don't stop me now".

- **What is your best memory of singing?**

I performed in my school graduation ceremony the song "Because You Loved Me" by the iconic singer Celine Dion and it was dedicated to my mother and all the people who supported us along the way. I do remember while I was singing my mother teared up and the audience were clapping and enjoying the performance. This was one of the best moments I have ever experienced.

Ms. Arwa's Interview

- **Who is Arwa?**

There must be another lifetime to be lived so that such a question can be answered.

- **How and when did you begin writing poetry?**

It's a bizarre story! As a child coming from a family fond of literature, it is the most logical consequence to inherit this talent. Yet, I've spent years and years of childhood and adolescence attempting to write prosodically correct verses; it was a lost cause. However, prose was my cup of tea, I used to write essays that won in literary competitions at school. At SQU where I studied my BA, I attended some sessions at the poetry club which heightened my inclination for poetry writing, yet it was beyond my capabilities. Five years later, on the verge of graduation, my dad, my brilliant poet role model, passed away. From that day on, poetry has been innately, instinctively, and spontaneously arising.

- **How did you discover your talent?**

I used to read some of my prose writings to my dad around the age of thirteen and he used to complement the writing style as well as critiquing them. Simultaneously, my Arabic teacher took one of my in-class writing tasks to take part in a literary competition unbeknownst to me, in which I won and my talent was regionally recognized.

Here is what love is:
The cigarette that burned my
barefoot when I, walked in; is love
That suffocates my lungs with
smoke
UnEnabling me to breathe
To walk
To call for help
Is love
That amputates my legs
And hands
And left me with a tongue
To speak poetry
And survive
Is love
That holds me back
From the airport
From the streets
From my luggage
From freedom
Is love
The bird that dies in prison
And dies in the open air
And dies in between
Is inherited
Intoxicated
With something parents, teachers,
all men, and who in-power, call
"love"

By Arwa

- **What inspires you?**

Pain was my first motivator; the pain of loss. Later on, on the other hand, everything around could be inspirational, memories, the past, movies, songs, love of course, home, cats, the sea, sunsets, blood, mad people, beauty, and definitely death. Everything can sound or look poetic.

- **What inspires you the most?**

Nostalgia! There is something too poetic about it, it is like the human brain romanticizes the past when it is looked at from a distance to the extent that every surrounding resembles, reflects, reminds, be fantasize-able, and makes everything more differently meaningful.

Students' Corner

Reflection and Interview with *Maryam Al Rahbi*

Interviewd by FI Connections Team

Reflection

I have successfully completed my foundation program, an important part of my learning journey. Throughout this period, I surpassed my expectations, sharpening my critical thinking, written expression, and presentation skills.

Notably, under the guidance of Mr. Yahya, I engaged in diverse presentations that significantly extended my knowledge and strengthened my public speaking skills. Our spirited debates fostered a collaborative learning atmosphere, enhancing my comfort in articulating ideas. The program also featured extensive writing tasks and grammar lessons, providing a comprehensive test of my language proficiency.

Despite its brevity, the foundation program has finely adjusted my academic understanding. Moving forward, I carry the valuable lessons and newfound confidence, appreciating the enduring impact of this chapter on my continuous growth. I eagerly anticipate applying these refined communication and adaptability skills to navigate future academic and professional challenges.

Interview

- **What is your name and where are you from?**

I am Maryam Abdullah Alrahbi from Muscat, Oman.

- **What is your major?**

I major in Architecture.

- **What are your talents or hobbies?**

While I don't have specific hobbies or talents, I enjoy reading and drawing occasionally.

- **Could you tell us about your experience in the Foundation Institute?**

Completing the foundation program was a significant achievement in my educational journey. Participation in a variety of presentations and engaging in spirited debates, coupled with collaborative learning, fostered an environment that facilitated comfortable expression of ideas. The program's focus on comprehensive writing tasks and grammar lessons thoroughly elevated my language proficiency.

- **What were the challenges you faced?**

Adapting to the new university environment was a significant challenge for me. Additionally, balancing the diverse tasks, from presentations to writing assignments, required strategic time management but was manageable.

- **Do you know how to use AI in your studies? Did you benefit from it?**

Yes, I use AI in my studies, finding it extremely helpful for research, analysis, and organizing information. It enhances my overall understanding of certain topics that I find challenging.
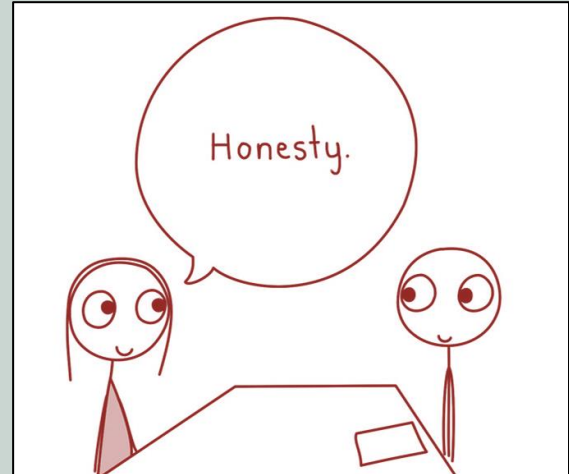
- **What is your advice to the students in the Foundation Institute?**

To new foundation students, adapt to change, manage time wisely, actively participate, build connections, seek guidance when needed, and enjoy the learning process—it's all part of the journey!

Students' Corner

Interview with Meera Al Alawi

Interviewd by FI Connections Team

- **What is your name and where are you from?**

I'm Meera Al-Alawi, and I'm from Al-Dhahirah.

- **What is your major?**

My major is English Language and Translation.

- **What are your talents or hobbies?**

I love reading novels of all genres as well as creative writing.

- **Can you tell us about your experience in the Foundation Institute?**

It has been great so far, everyone from staff to students have been helpful. In addition, the materials used are spectacular.

- **What challenges did you face in your university journey so far?**

Navigating the university and getting used to using the applications offered by the university.

- **Do you know how to use AI in your studies? Did you benefit from it?**

My current computer skills are lacking, so no. However, I know students who integrate AI in their studies, and they have stated that it did make their university life easier.

- **What is your advice to the students in the Foundation Institute?**

I advise them to check out the university forums thoroughly for maximum benefits and to focus on the induction week to get all the information they need to make their lives easier.

Brain Teasers!

Find the following words in the puzzle. Words can go in any direction and they do not share letters.

Affect	capital	celebrate	diamond	discount	expand	export
global	import	key	produce	profit	rural	urban	warming

```
R  V  M  X  U  T  P  C  U  E  M  L  I  H  D
U  Y  F  G  I  V  R  N  A  D  X  F  T  I  R
R  U  O  F  C  R  O  A  P  P  Y  P  S  Q  D
A  O  O  G  O  C  D  J  M  X  I  C  O  N  V
L  R  D  S  A  R  U  A  J  V  O  T  O  R  Z
P  I  X  Q  D  B  C  U  G  U  K  M  A  K  T
H  F  P  R  K  F  E  Y  N  N  A  Q  H  L  H
U  E  R  P  Z  W  Y  T  E  I  I  M  B  V  O
P  E  X  Q  T  E  N  U  D  V  P  M  W  G  P
T  G  U  M  I  L  A  B  O  L  G  M  R  U  T
C  E  T  A  R  B  E  L  E  C  Q  U  Y  A  K
E  I  S  V  E  X  P  A  N  D  R  L  W  E  W
F  Q  X  N  D  K  R  P  O  B  D  F  N  U  K
F  I  J  I  I  I  Y  J  A  Z  O  G  I  A  Q
A  D  X  Z  W  X  T  N  I  M  P  O  R  T  J
```

Best of luck !

Brain Teasers!

Write the correct words in your Criss Cross Word Puzzle!
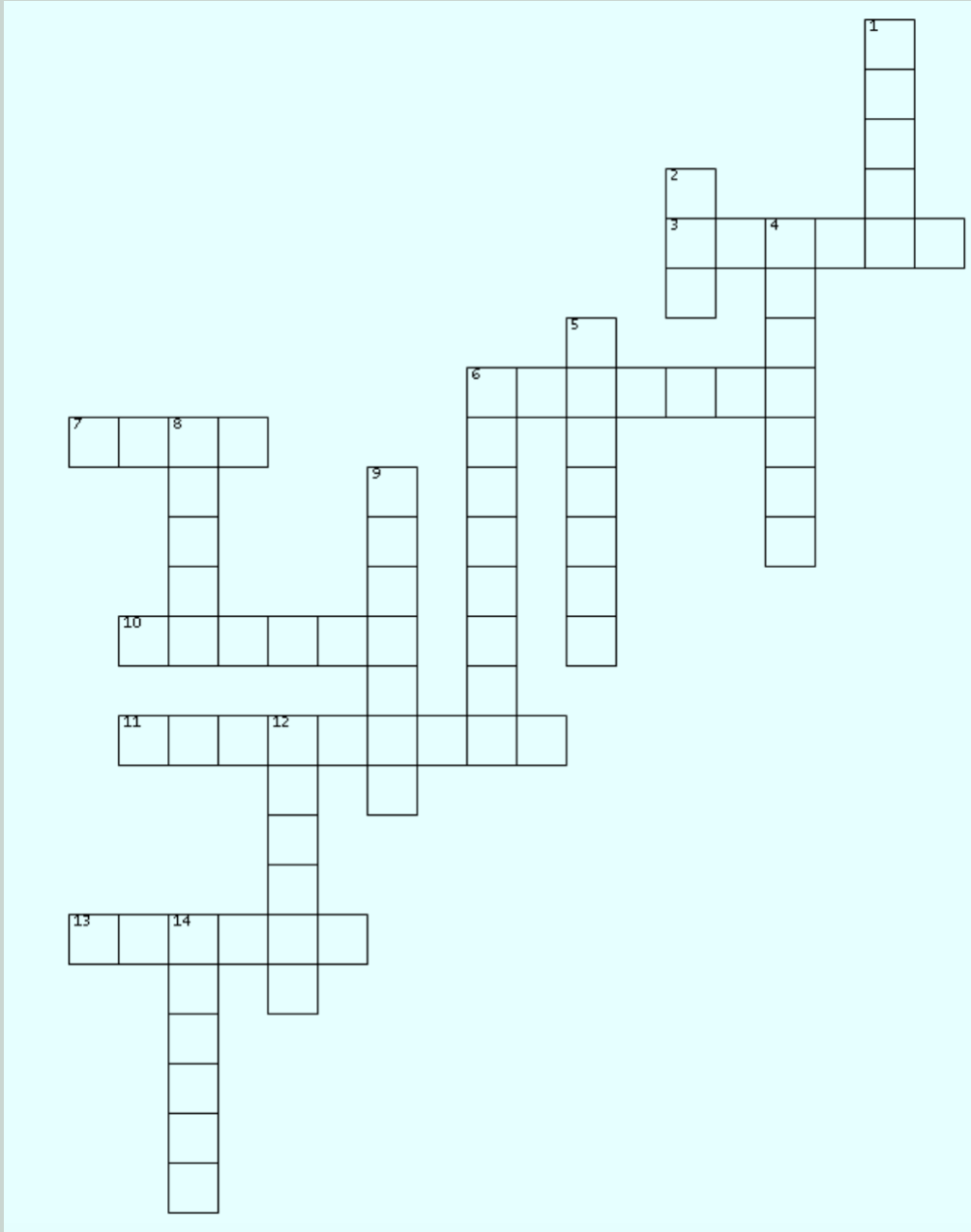
ACROSS

3. (v) make larger

6. (n) a precious stone

7. (n) a place where goods arrive via sea

10. (adj) all around the world

11. (v) to do something special for an important event

13. (v) to bring goods from other countries

DOWN

1. (adj) belonging to, or relating to a city

2. (n) an object to open doors, drawers and safes.

4. (v) to create something or bring it to existence

5. (n) the city where governments and administrative centers are.

6. (n) a reduction in price, sale

8. (adj) a place outside the city. Is quite and mostly farms

9. (v) related to traveling, learning new things.

12. (v) to sell goods outside the country

14. (n) gain money

Best of luck !

You are invited!

Greetings!

Whether an instructor or a student, FI Connections is always looking forward to recive your special contributions and suggestions. You are welcome to contribute to our magazine with your articles, reflections, creative writings, insightful ideas, initiatives or any other innovative work you like to share with our readers. Do not hesitate to get in touch with us at fi-connections@unizwa.edu.om and we will get in touch with you.

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