

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

NEWSLETTER

Term: Spring | Issue 5 | June Newsletter

M Bassyony-Cooper



EXCELLENCE IN INCLUSION

Special Needs Section "Making Inclusion a Reality"

Once only a dream, inclusion today is a national goal, a priority, an imperative, an ethical obligation, an inalienable right, and a measure of excellence in education. Inclusion ensures fair access to educational assets and all the social and financial opportunities these entail. But do we, as teachers, know enough to do our part?

It is a fact that many EFL teachers have received little, if any, training in teaching, invigilating or otherwise accommodating Special Needs (SN) students. It is not an integral part of MA TEFL/TESL programs, of CELTA, DELTA or other recognized teacher certification schemes.

Information is available at the SN Center in the male and female activity buildings, and teachers seek support on a need-to-know basis.



According to Dr. Enita Barret, FP Lead for Special Needs, everyone needs to be prepared. Knowledge is key in inclusion. In addition to presenting workshops, Enita liaises with QU SN Center to train student helpers & recruit volunteers. To volunteer contact Enita enita_barret@qu.edu.qa.

Did you know ?

Modern Braille writing machines are connected to the internet, and as such are not permissible during tests. Students can use them to store information/notes or search for answers online without being detected by the teacher/invigilator. Only SN Center devices can be used. The device is delivered by the SN Center to the teacher/invigilator or helper on the day of the test after being formatted to ensure nothing is stored on it.

It's SUMMER! TAN, TONE & TUNE IN

Adding to one's existent kit of teaching tools may not seem like a priority for teachers who are understandably frazzled at the end of an academic year. However, it could be the right strategy to avoid being at same low point at the start of the new academic year. You can think of it as a long-term investment in avoiding burnout. This, in essence, is what Angela Watson proposes in this excerpt of her audio blog entitled How [to] use summer to Re-energize your Teaching and Yourself.



A good place to start may very well be our own backyard (front yard?) by exploring and making the best use of what we already have. One such untapped resource is the Learning Resource tab on FPDE main page. The tab is designed for self study for students in both the English and Maths departments. However, quick access to preselected material on QU website can save teachers valuable time searching for relevant, or culturally and level-appropriate material. This material can be used to differentiate content in non-homogeneous.

Too many websites and online tools to choose from that it actually wastes your time? This page, based on a collaborative project by students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, has conveniently categorized web-based tools by function into four groups: assessment-, community-, knowledge-, and learner-centered tools. The listed tools assess, share, organize, or personalize information. In addition to in-depth information about each tool, the website suggests innovative ways to use them.

Conference Contact FOR STUDENTS ▾

Black Board Go to Banner Open myQU

E-mail Students Catalog Learning Resources

Online Tools for teaching and learning

Home

The site was designed to help you organize all your digital resources for teaching and learning. This page includes a variety of different tools that can be used for teaching and learning to help you teach and differentiate based on your goals.

If you have questions about the site, or if you would like to add a resource, please contact Tracy Hall.

The author of the website are undergraduate students at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, specifically from the Learning Sciences program.

Assessment-Centered

Community-Centered

Knowledge-Centered

Learner-Centered

Rest a while. Forget it all. Clear your mind. Be a blank slate and you will be surprised what will fill the spaces!

Mary-Frances Winters

CANVA BY CONAN

Swap Shop Team, led by Randy Briones, invites faculty who missed Conan Kmiecik's session on Canva to explore in 8 easy steps this "freemium" service.



Canva is a graphic design website that creates print and electronic content for various purposes. The website provides basic

features free of charge. More advanced features must be paid for.

Canva can be used to create visually engaging announcements and posts to help students notice and understand course information better. Two communication issues stand out: the outdated text heavy BlackBoard (BB) interface and the word limit of Remind posts.

1. Create a free account on canva.com
2. Click on Create a design to select a template . For BB and Remind announcement , Conan recommends the Twitter Post template. Click on Use Custom Dimensions to create a custom template and input your own document dimensions.
3. After selecting a template, name and save the document. Canva saves automatically, but better safe than sorry.
4. Choose a layout or start a blank template. Make sure you choose Free items.
5. Add or change the Text and Elements in your document.
6. Use the Text tab for dynamic font arrangements, or create your own.
7. To add graphics, select from Free Photos, Shapes, Illustrations, or Icons under the Elements tab, or add graphics from other sources by dragging the file into Canva. The graphic will appear in the Uploads tab.
8. Save , download and add to or embed in your BB or Remind announcements.

MAKING THE MOST OF MAGNA

The screenshot shows the Magna website homepage. At the top, there's a banner with the text "Helping Educators Build Personal Expertise". Below the banner are three main sections: "20-Minute Mentors" (described as video-based programs for teaching and learning), "Magna Online Seminars" (described as programs for asynchronous learning), and "Courses" (described as opportunities for higher ed faculty, staff, and administrators). Each section has a "Learn More" button.

20-Minute Mentors

20-Minute Mentors are video-based programs designed to answer a specific question related to teaching and learning.

They deliver actionable insights in highly focused 20-minute presentations designed to fit busy schedules.

Magna offers some answers for questions many teachers ask:

How Can Improving Student Feedback Improve the Quality of Each Educational Encounter?

How Can I Make My Exams More about Learning, Less about Grades?

How Can I Transform My Tests into Learning Tools?

How Should I Respond to Wrong (or Not Very Good) Answers?

How Do I Get Students to Read Their Assignments Before Class?

What more can we ask for? Free, short and interesting!

[Click HERE for full list.](#)

BITE-SIZE TEACHING TIPS



The Video Lessons Team is pleased to have taken on the responsibility of helping FPDE faculty hone their teaching skills by selecting and sharing short useful videos. Keeping your busy schedules in mind, we aim to find video materials that tackle topics of high relevance and are applicable to all FPDE courses.

Each video comes with a short description to help you decide whether or not it matches a particular teaching situation or class. The team is currently working on providing similar descriptions of videos compiled and uploaded in previous semesters as well.

We welcome colleagues who are willing to share teaching tips with the FPDE community by being recorded themselves. Please contact us if you would like to share your swap shop or demo lesson via a video recording. Recording an "exemplary" (read: well-planned) lessons is one way instructors can score 3.8-4 on the class observation criterion of their FPRDS!

Look out for new videos in AEC newsletters, as well as the collection of all past videos on FP Central.

Enjoy your summer break!

Contact us: naimas@qu.edu.qa