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Neil Oby Morris
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Using technology in the EFL classroom in Saudi Arabia

Neil Oby Morris

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Thesis Advisor: Dr. Alex Silverman

Thesis Reader: Melanie Morris

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ERIC Descriptors

Class Activities
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Abstract

This paper explores the ways that technology, specifically the use of laptop computers and cellular phones, may be incorporated in the EFL classroom to enhance learning and lower the affective filter of male Saudi Arabian university students.

Saudi Arabia presents the EFL teacher with many challenges that are unique to this gender-segregated Islamic kingdom. Meeting these challenges and turning them into learning opportunities that other EFL teachers may find useful within their teaching contexts is the purpose of this paper.

The appendix includes a writing rubric and a 40-day materials introduction calendar. The calendar illustrates the day-by-day introduction of material into the classroom. The calendar follows the eight-week, 40-day, analysis contained within the best practices section of this paper.

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Introduction

Technology has changed every aspect of human life and the EFL classroom is no exception. At the end of 2010, there were an estimated 5.3 billion cellular phone users in the world (Associated Press, 2010). Additionally, there were over 2 billion Internet users (Indo-Asian News Service, 2010). Computers, cellular phones, 4th generation smart phones, information search engines, and social networking sites are being used and accessed by more than half of the world's population. Complete Internet and cellular saturation, when the entire world has access to affordable and reliable Internet and cellular service, is not too far off in the future. The world has changed with these new technologies and so must EFL teachers and the EFL classroom.

In developing countries the change is more apparent. Rural areas that may lack potable water and be off of an electrical grid can now have phone and Internet service using solar-powered chargers and propane gas-powered generators. Remoteness is no longer synonymous with isolation.

In more developed countries, EFL teachers are dealing with technologically savvy students and often competing for their students' attention with the latest gadgetry. Even the most dynamic EFL teacher is going to be operating at a loss when it comes to YouTube and Twitter being secretly watched and talked about beneath desks and behind folded books.

For EFL teachers, these technological advances bring challenges and opportunities.

Challenges stem from controlling the degree that students rely on the information available to them on the Internet. How do you integrate cell phones with Internet access into the classroom without the risk of the students ignoring the lesson and simply playing on Facebook or MySpace? How do you teach them to process what they learn on the Internet and not to believe everything they read is true?

Opportunities present themselves in the ways that an EFL teacher can use these fascinating and convenience-providing technologies in the classroom. Activities that incorporate the use of cell phones, laptop computers and other technologies can be used to lower the affective filters of students, challenge them through tasks that they enjoy, and provide effective ways of stimulating learning. Often teachers feel that these technologies detract from the learning experience and they discourage their use in the EFL classroom. In my experience with Saudi male university students, having their cell phones and laptops confiscated is emasculating and heightens their affective filters thus making learning more difficult.

This paper focuses on how I have incorporated technology to enhance learning in my EFL classes at Al Yamamah University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. I provide analysis of my teaching context, examine the challenges of teaching Saudi men and detail ways that I have used technology in the classroom to enhance learning. In the appendix of this paper I provide a writing rubric and a 40-day

materials introduction calendar that illustrates the day-by-day introduction of material that incorporates technology into EFL teaching and learning.

Context

I teach English at Al Yamamah University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. I work for the Saudi Interlink Language Centers (SILC). SILC is contracted to staff, manage and teach the English language courses at Al Yamamah. SILC's focus is an eight-level English language preparatory program designed to move the student from little to no English fluency to college level proficiency in eight quarters (two academic years). All academic courses at Al Yamamah are offered in an English-only format. Students must reach a high level of English proficiency in order to participate and excel in the academic courses and complete their degrees. SILC also administers the college level English courses, 101 and 102, as well as a variety of business and off-site English programs. For this paper, I will focus on the preparatory program at Al Yamamah University.

The educational philosophies of both SILC and Al Yamamah focus upon content-based, student-generated learning through discovery. Al Yamamah and SILC refer to this method of learning as the Heuristic approach. Traditionally, the classrooms are devoid of academic texts; materials are student-generated and based upon the students' curiosities and needs. Teachers assess each student's progress continually and focus on the whole learning of each student.

In the 2010-2011 school year, this approach was modified with the introduction of some academic texts and Common Assessment Tasks (CATs). The CATs are developed by the teachers at each level and administered twice a term. Their goal is to monitor and help maintain level consistency. Despite these changes, the Heuristic approach of learning through trial and error is still the overarching philosophy at Al Yamamah.

Al Yamamah was established in 2001 and began instructing male students in 2004. It began accepting female students in 2006. Male and female students are educated separately and have their own buildings on the divided campus. Under the Saudi Government's strict Wahhabi interpretation of Islam, men and women who are not immediate family members must be separated in all public facilities. Women are required to cover their bodies with abayas and their hair with hijabs whenever men are present. They are not allowed to be on the men's side of the campus except under special circumstances. Men are forbidden to enter the women's side for any reason.

The newly constructed campus is located in North Riyadh and is modeled more on a business center than a traditional college campus. Classrooms are spartan and consist of desk chairs and dry erase boards. There is Internet access available to students and teachers through the school Wi-Fi system.

 Al Yamamah offers two undergraduate plans: Business Administration and Information Technology. It also has an Executive Masters of Business Administration program taught at night and on weekends. The academic professors

primarily teach these courses. This is not a liberal arts university and as such, SILC is directed to focus its entire curriculum toward business and information technology endeavors. This can be somewhat limiting and confines the instructor to business-oriented classroom content.

The SILC preparatory program is divided into reading and writing courses (R) and communications courses (C). Students progress from level one through level eight. The R courses focus on level-appropriate reading and writing tasks that culminate in the researching and writing of a term paper in the highest level, which is 8 R. The C courses focus on listening and speaking with an emphasis on student presentations. R courses are usually held in the mornings for two hours and C courses are typically conducted in the afternoons for two hours. Although the four skills are divided, integration of all four skills occurs and is encouraged in both courses.

When students apply to Al Yamamah, they must take an English language proficiency placement test. The placement test is designed to gauge students' levels in the four skill areas. Students are given reading, writing, listening assessments as well as individual interviews. SILC instructors review scores and students are placed in level appropriate classes based upon their performances on the placement test. For instance, a student who speaks well may place high on the communications sections. However, he may have done poorly on the reading and writing sections so he is placed in a lower level reading and writing course.

Most SILC instructors teach one R course in the mornings and one C course in the afternoons. Ideally, the instructor teaches to different students in both courses but sometimes there is an overlap. Classroom sizes typically range from 10 to 22 students with 12 being the goal classroom size.

Students

Male students in the preparatory program usually range between the ages of 18 and 26. Most have some prior English exposure. I teach exclusively to male students as stipulated by Sharia and Saudi Ministry of Education guidelines.

Most students are of Saudi nationality. Foreign students are not allowed to attend the state-sponsored universities for undergraduate degrees. There are many students from Northern Africa and the Middle East that attend Al Yamamah. The majority of students are Muslim with few exceptions and all are native speakers of Arabic. The socio-economic status of most students ranges from the upper-middle class to the elite; all would be considered economically privileged by western standards.

The majority of students have laptop computers, tablets (such as the Galaxy or iPad), and all have at least one cell phone if not multiple cell phones. It is not uncommon for a student to have a simple Nokia cell phone, a Blackberry smart phone and an Apple iPhone. The majority of these young men are on Facebook and Twitter, have multiple e-mail accounts, and use the Internet regularly. Today's Saudi

Arabia, particularly its youth, has embraced information technology at near-western levels.

Western-style development in Saudi Arabia has occurred mostly within the last sixty years. The discovery of oil in 1938 and the subsequent wealth it has brought to the Kingdom, since full-scale production began in 1949, has changed its entire existence. (Al-Rasheed, 2002) The differences between the generations are striking. The somewhat worldly and tech-savvy students who arrive to Al Yamamah are living in a completely different reality than that of their ancestors. Students love to share the stories of their hometowns and villages where their grandparents live or lived. These young men with their new cars and cell phones recount the stories of their near-ancestors as if they lived five hundred years ago. They have gone from riding camels and oasis-dependency to luxury automobiles and water desalinization plants in just 63 years.

Regionally, Saudi Arabia also has the largest economy within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) formed by Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and the Saudis. (Chauvin, 2010) Recently, Morocco and Jordan became members of the GCC.

Considering this short amount of economic development time, it is understandable why students have problems performing to the western educational levels expected of them. This leads to the examination of the teaching challenges EFL teachers face in Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi educational system

The Saudi educational system has traditionally focused on Islamic teachings and has only in recent years made an effort to incorporate more traditional western topics into its curriculum (Al-Rasheed, 2002). Students follow a western-style Kindergarten through 12th grade educational process. There are the state sponsored "Kingdom Schools" and also private schools. The majority of Al Yamamah students are the products of the private school systems. Private schools are commonly perceived by the Saudi general public to be more challenging than the Kingdom Schools.

Teachers in Saudi K-12 schools are most likely to teach by rote and memorization. Lecturing followed by testing is the status quo with little, if any, encouragement for problem-solving skills and critical thinking. To be fair, most of the instructors at K-12 schools are Egyptians, Syrians, and Jordanians who are paid low salaries and forced to live in cramped quarters with other teachers. Most have not been exposed to more progressive teaching approaches and many only possess teaching certificates rather than college degrees. Additionally, they live in fear of losing their jobs and often acquiesce to their students' demands rather than risk complaints. If the old adage of "*you get what you pay for*" is true, Saudis are getting what they pay for educationally. One exception would be the international schools that are usually staffed with certified teachers from Europe and North America. These teachers are paid well and are expected to perform at a higher standard than their counterparts at Saudi public and private schools.

The government of King Abdullah has been instrumental in the continuing modernization of Saudi Arabia's education system. It has recognized some of the deficiencies in the Saudi education system and has endeavored to improve the education of its citizens. The government has introduced many initiatives to combat the problems associated with the unbalanced education of Saudi graduates and better prepare them for working opportunities with multi-national corporations (Oxford Business Group, 2010).

The principle initiative is a nationwide scholarship fund for all Saudi nationals. Currently, the government is offering to pay half of all Saudi nationals' tuition at any private school and most of their tuition at state schools. This includes tuition at accredited international schools around the world. The government recognizes that in order for Saudis to compete on an international level, and be hired by multi-national corporations, Saudis must meet western educational standards (Saudi Ministry of Higher Education, 2011).

Another initiative designed to integrate Saudis into western-style business practices is called *Saudization*. It is a government law mandating that all foreign businesses operating in Saudi Arabia must have at least 40% of their managerial staffs composed of Saudi Nationals (Arab News, 2011). This initiative has had some implementation problems, but it demonstrates the Saudi government's commitment to obtaining jobs for its people, particularly its university graduates.

Many of the students at Al Yamamah are on government scholarships and some work in jobs secured through Saudization. Additionally, many of the non-Saudi students receive university-sponsored scholarships for maintaining high grade point averages.

Challenges

There are many challenges for the EFL teacher in Saudi Arabia. The main challenges can be examined in two groupings: cultural challenges and classroom challenges.

<u>Cultural challenges</u>

Arguably, the main challenges faced by non-Saudi EFL teachers stem from the differences between their home cultures and the very distinct culture of Saudi Arabia. This is true for both male and female EFL teachers. However, I will focus on the issues that I face as a male EFL teacher interacting with Saudi males.

Saudi men are the heads of their families in this paternal society. Women are considered vulnerable and must be chaperoned at all times by a male relative. Most boys are raised with a lot of freedom and few restrictions upon their activities beyond the compulsory five prayers a day. Boys beyond the age of 12 are generally considered to be men and many begin driving at this age. (The official age for obtaining a driving license is 18.)

As male family members in Saudi Islamic culture, the students have many responsibilities that from their cultural perspectives supersede their academic responsibilities. The main one is the protection and transportation of female family members. In the only country in the world where women are not allowed to drive, it falls upon the male members of each family to provide transportation for the female members. Most families employ a foreign driver to transport the women to where they want to go. However, in most families there are more women than drivers and then the responsibility falls on the men in the family. Students routinely claim that they are unable to attend class or complete projects due to this responsibility.

Additionally, strict adherence to the instructions of mothers and fathers is one of the main messages of Islam. As such, students often have a hard time telling their parents that they must study or attend class when the parents ask them to do something else. Many parents are not familiar with the expectations placed upon students in a western-style university and therefore do not understand why their children must do certain things in a certain manner.

It should also be noted that along with their strict Islamic educations, comes a tremendous respect for authority. Saudi students are generally very respectful in class and usually avoid arguing with their instructors.

Classroom challenges

There are many challenges that EFL teachers face in the Saudi EFL classroom. The main challenges are related to student time management, personal

accountability, students' prior educational experiences, the constraints that they have been educated under and differing cultural expectations between the teacher and the students.

Western standards of student time management and accountability are invalid in Saudi Arabia. Saudis, by virtue of their harsh desert climate and the heat that goes along with it, are more nocturnal than most other peoples. Ideally, they would sleep until three or four o'clock in the afternoon and then go to bed around three to four o'clock in the morning. During Ramadan, the Holy month of fasting between sunrise and sunset, this is exactly the lifestyle they adopt. This lifestyle preference presents fundamental challenges for Saudis wishing to attend western-style universities that observe classes beginning at 8:30 am. Arriving late is epidemic at Al Yamamah and this makes beginning class on time nearly impossible.

There is a high rate of absences at Al Yamamah. The official policy is that students are eligible to miss seven classes per eight-week term. If they exceed this amount they are denied entry (DN) to class. This is the official policy, but rarely is it enforced. Usually students receive excuses allowing them to continue attending class. Additionally, the Al Yamamah administration has begun to *not* count the attendance for the first week of classes to allow students to make changes in their schedules and encourage higher registration rates. Lastly, at the end of the eight-week term, grades and final attendance are to be turned in on the third day of the week (Monday) and students are aware of this fact. Most students do not attend the last two days of the term following the final submission of grades and attendance. In

total, this means that out of the 40 days of classes in each term, students can miss

five the first week, seven throughout the term and skip the last two days resulting in

a permissible amount of 14 days per term without any consequences. In my

experience, most of the students use all seven allowed absences over the course of

the term.

The high rate of tardiness and absences makes it incredibly difficult to

maintain classroom continuity and keep the class moving forward on tasks. Group

projects are difficult to implement because often one group member will be absent.

In reading and writing classes, beyond the differing levels and needs, most students

will be working on different stages of the task due to absences. This results in

teaching multiple classes within one class because every student is working on a

different stage.

The prior educational experiences of the students and the constraints that

they have been educated under also heavily affect what the EFL teacher is capable of

accomplishing in the classroom.

As mentioned in the context section, traditional Saudi education in levels K-

12, follows a religion-focused curriculum with little encouragement for problem

solving and critical thinking. Accentuating the situation is the aforementioned

avoidance of any topics related to religion and politics that could possibly be

construed as being critical of Islam or of the Saudi Government. When politics and

religion are eliminated as topics (and the countless topics somewhat related to

these areas) it places a severe limitation on the number of topics that may be

introduced and used within the classroom. The limited amount of topics creates a

level-to-level redundancy of "safe" topics. In other words, students have been

recycling the same safe topics throughout their entire educational careers; there is

very little thought involved and simply regurgitation of well-worn, non-offensive

ideas.

The inherent problem of teaching reading and writing in English is that

Saudis do not have a strong tradition of reading and writing in Arabic. What little

they do have is typically associated with scholarly studies of the Koran. The Koran is

written in classic Arabic, which is different from the modern Arabic spoken today. It

is written in a style (similar to English calligraphy) that most students do not use

and have difficulty reading. According to what my students have told me, most

Muslims rely on religious scholars to interpret passages from the Koran for them.

Most Al Yamamah students have not had much experience with researching

and writing in Arabic. For example, most students have never written a "situation-

problem-solution" essay in Arabic so they find it tremendously difficult to produce

one in English. What they write is usually confined to text messaging and truncated

e-mails. It is not uncommon for students to write papers that are filled with text-

message shorthand such as "U" instead of "you" and "R" instead of "are."

Reading, whether for pleasure or for gaining knowledge, is a wholly foreign

concept to most students. It is not a skill or pastime that they have developed nor is

it one that is encouraged as in western cultures. This is a society that is more

comfortable passively receiving information from the television than actively

reading and seeking information from books, magazines and newspapers. It can be argued that their late economic development coincided with the widespread availability of television ownership and broadcast reception. What is more exciting to a person who has never been exposed to a book or a television? Of course the television is more exciting and it requires no investment of effort.

Before concluding this section on the classroom challenges, a short analysis of the differing expectations between the teacher and the students on how a course should be conducted is in order. Many challenges arise from these different expectations and can cause a lot of classroom friction.

Many expectations that a western-educated EFL teacher might consider to be standard classroom requirements are not even considerations for students. For example, many students regularly show up for class without pens, pencils, paper and their required binders. They shrug and explain that the necessary materials were left behind in any one of a thousand places and they ask to borrow whatever is needed for the day's task. If it were to happen once in a while, it might be understandable, but it is a regular occurrence.

For students, often there is frustration with the teacher's behavior and seemingly bizarre expectations. For some students, especially those accustomed to their K-12 teachers allowing them to get away with unacceptable behavior, it comes as quite a shock when the teacher does not allow them to turn in late or copied (or both) work. They feel castigated and think it is unfair that the teacher does not

accept the veracity of the endless deaths and hospitalizations of family members

that they often use as excuses.

Negotiating meaning and conveying cultural expectations go beyond the

literal teaching of the English language. The EFL teacher must be aware of the

significance of what is being communicated at the subtextual level. The struggle to

reach a common place where learning can be fostered is part of the challenge and

also the thrill of teaching EFL in Saudi Arabia. The incorporation of technology into

the EFL classroom is one way to address these challenges and to arrive at a common

ground where learning is fostered.

Incorporating technology in EFL classroom

After examining the many challenges faced by EFL teachers within Saudi

Arabia, it is time to introduce the best practices that incorporate technology into the

classroom. Rather than give examples in isolation, I will address them in succession

as if an eight-week course were unfolding. For the sake of specificity, and because I

have taught this course three times in the last two years, I will use examples for a

hypothetical level 8 reading and writing course (8R). This course will have 12

students and is based upon an eight-week, 40-day term. I will detail only the lessons

that pertain to the incorporation of technology into the course.

Although the activities that follow will be based upon this 8 R class, the

concepts can be used at any level. Modifications may be made to adjust for differing

levels. For particularly low-level students, this eight-week sequence can be cycled through several times with more limited vocabulary and shorter writing exercises. For example, the material specific to writing research papers may be substituted with sentence or vocabulary building material.

8 R is the highest-level reading and writing course in the SILC English preparatory program. When students complete this course, they are able to move onto ENG 101 and 102. The main task for the level 8 R course is to write a college-level research paper. Students must use academic sources and understand the information contained within these sources. Additionally, they must use this information to support their research papers following APA standards. The research paper must be 2,500-words and based upon a teacher-approved topic. Students must go through the outlining, researching, and drafting process over the eight-week term.

Teaching rationale

My rationale for incorporating the use of cell phones and computers in the classroom is based upon the fifth hypothesis of Stephen Krashen. His fifth hypothesis on language acquisition involves lowering the affective filter of the learner in order to enhance learning. Stephen Krashen is a teacher and researcher in the field of linguistics from the University of Southern California. His theories of language acquisition and development have been widely used and debated for many years. His research involves how people acquire language, particularly in the field of

second language acquisition (University of Southern California, 2011).

   Krashen put forward five hypotheses about the ways that learners acquire language. They are the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, the Monitor hypothesis, the Natural Order hypothesis, the Input hypothesis, and the Affective Filter hypothesis (Schütz, 2007). While all of these hypotheses are worthy of consideration, I find the fifth one to be highly relevant in dealing with Saudi students.

   On his website, Ricardo Schütz, sums up Krashen's Affective Filter hypothesis most succinctly:

> The **Affective Filter** hypothesis embodies Krashen's view that a number of 'affective variables' play a facilitative, but non-causal, role in second language acquisition. These variables include: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in second language acquisition. Low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety can combine to 'raise' the affective filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. In other words, when the filter is 'up' it impedes language acquisition. On the other hand, positive affect is necessary, but not sufficient on its own, for acquisition to take place. (Schütz, 2007)

Krashen's language acquisition model demonstrates the filter between the learner and his intake of comprehensible information. As shown below in the flow chart, all learning occurs after passing through the affective filter.
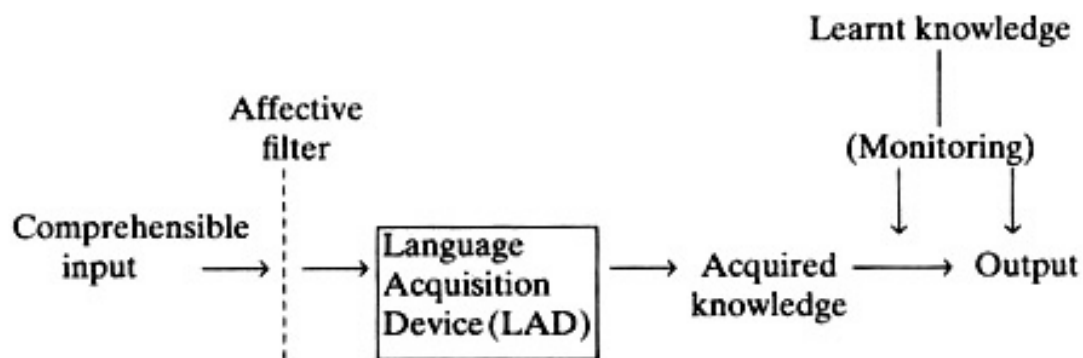
The Input Hypothesis Model of L2 Learning and Production (Krashen, 1982)

Reducing the affective filter to allow the learner the opportunity to process as much comprehensible input is the goal. I have noticed that when students are asked to put away their computers or hand-in their cell phones, their anxiety levels rise. The students may view the confiscation of these items by the teacher as condescending and over-reaching. It translates into a lack of trust on the teacher's part and conveys the idea that the students are not mature enough to use their computers and cell phones appropriately. Additionally, students feel disconnected and focus more on the return of these important devices than they do on their language learning. Incorporating these devices into the lessons eliminates this anxiety and increases the likelihood that the learner will receive a higher amount of comprehensible input.

Best practices

<u>Week one</u>

The first thing to be done, starting on the first day of class, is to collect students' phone numbers and e-mail addresses. This activity is repeated until the teacher has collected every student's contact information. The teacher brings his computer to class, opens his e-mail and has the students type their e-mail addresses in themselves. Often they have complicated e-mails with combinations of numbers and underscores that are easy for the teacher to mistype. Once collected, the teacher wastes no time sending out e-mails to confirm that he has the correct addresses. Once confirmed, the teacher sets up a group list of e-mails in his computer and also on his cell phone. The teacher does this not only for contacting his students but also for assignments that will be explained later in this section.

The teacher asks the students if it is all right for him to send out a master list of names, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers. Students sign a consent form as a precautionary measure. (No student has ever declined to have his contact information shared with his classmates in my experience.) There are two reasons for doing this. The first is that it will aid in future class work that will unfold over the eight-week, 40-day term. The second reason to compile this list is to combat the high-absence rates and poor student accountability. Students will be able to call or e-mail each other in the event of being absent. The teacher informs students that

there will be no excuses for returning to class unprepared since they can call or e-mail other students to find out what was covered in class when they are absent.

If the teacher wishes to do so, a Wiki links sharing site or even a class Facebook site can be set up. Some teachers may have access to university websites like Blackboard or Moodle, which allow them to post class assignments, calendars and messages. Sharing sites set up specifically for classes are very useful; they allow for greater discussion and analysis of classroom activities between students and the teacher. However, for this paper, I will keep the assignments limited to using e-mail and text messaging to enhance learning.

Students are informed that the use of cell phones and computers is acceptable in the classroom as long as they are used for the purpose of the lesson. Most cellular phones have dictionary and translator functions; these features can be quite useful for the student.

The first assignment is a puzzle that requires the participation of the entire class. It is also a means of assessing the student levels within the course. This activity will work for any level and any course emphasis. The teacher selects six comic strips and removes the accompanying dialogues. Each student receives either one comic strip or one dialogue. Students bring what they receive to class and work together to match the dialogues to the appropriate comic strips. For this activity, the teacher may elect to draw his own comic strips or find pre-existing comic strips and delete the captions.

When performing this activity in class, the students who received comic strips describe the action within the comic strips to the class. After all of the students have described their comic strips, they are taped to the whiteboard (or somehow posted for the entire class to see.) Then the students who received dialogues read each caption aloud. Once all have been read and their meanings discussed, the class decides which dialogue goes with which comic strip. Discussion and disagreements are to be expected. If a student is absent, it only adds to the confusion and discussion because there will be either a missing comic strip or missing dialogue. Repeat the activity until each comic has its accompanying dialogue. Since this is the first week, a simple process essay can be assigned to the students following the completion of the activity. They explain the stages of the comic strip activity. Students e-mail this essay directly to the teacher.

This first activity not only incorporates technology, it fosters team building as well as providing the scaffolding for future activities that will follow similar patterns.

Two supplemental lessons are covered during the first week. The first supplemental lesson is a refresher course on attaching documents to e-mails rather than pasting or typing them in the body of the e-mail. This will refresh the students' memories on how to do this procedure, and it will also set the example of how future assignments should be turned in for the remainder of the term.

The second supplemental exercise uses the students' cell phone numbers. The list of grammatical terms, located below this paragraph, is sent in a text from

the teacher to all of the students. They are instructed to use the Internet to research, define and give an example of each of the following terms:

1. Noun/pronoun
2. Verb
3. Subject/verb agreements
4. Adjective/noun agreements
5. Syntax (word order)
6. Paragraph
7. Topic sentence
8. Supporting sentence
9. Punctuation (and list of most commonly used symbols)

Students are also instructed to save the URLs of the websites where they find the information. They make a document with all of the definitions, example sentences and sources. This document is sent in an e-mail to the teacher. They also print a copy and place it in their binders for use as a future reference.

This activity is important because it establishes a classroom vernacular that allows for the future analysis of writing samples using proper grammatical terminology. Students are generally receptive to learning a small set of grammatical terms. I have observed them integrate these terms into their vocabulary and use them during class discussions as well as among themselves when doing peer review and feedback.

This activity allows the teacher to make sure that he has all of the students' correct phone numbers. Additionally, it enables him to compile a master list of definitions, sentence examples, and a list of the websites most commonly used. All of the information compiled from the students can be used in subsequent activities and for the Common Assessment Tasks.

Once this list is compiled, it is reviewed with the class as a whole. Students write in their binders the definitions that the class decides upon. Many of the definitions that the students find will be technical and they will need the teacher's guidance to simplify definitions. Also, when applicable, an example sentence is coupled with each definition.

For the 8 R class, these terms and these activities establish the manner which their research papers will be turned in; how they will proceed through teacher and peer feedback on their work; and the terms necessary for analyzing the writing they will do over the remainder of the term.

(The grammatical terms listed represent the areas that most Al Yamamah students have the greatest difficulty learning. The list can be expanded or contracted based upon the students' needs and levels.)

Additionally, the teacher sends out a separate e-mail containing the rubric for grading the final paper. Students are required to read it, write down any questions they may have about it, and print a copy to be placed in their binders. They bring it to class for week two. (See appendix 1 for the rubric used in 8 R.)

Week two

The first thing to be done during week two is to review all of the points of the rubric. Students have received an e-mail containing the rubric. They have printed a copy and reviewed the categories. Each category is reviewed with the students and questions are answered. This establishes the expectations of what elements their papers should contain. This also lessens the anxiety the students may feel because they know what is expected of them. They have a more definitive idea of what they should be focusing on as they craft their papers.

Building upon the work from week one, the next exercise is peer-correction of the process essays written by the students about the comic strip activity.

In week one, students were instructed to write a short essay describing the comic strip activity and explain which one was their favorite. When completed, they were asked to e-mail this information to the teacher. After receiving all the essays, a master essay should be built using parts from all of the students' submissions. The teacher accomplishes this by cutting and pasting together six paragraphs from different students' essays. The teacher should find the paragraphs that have the most problems and use them in this essay. Each paragraph should be numbered so that the class may easily discuss the essay. Once this is done, the teacher e-mails the essay to all of the students. In this manner, rather than working on just one student's work, it is an amalgamation of all of the students' work. This deflects any embarrassment that a student might feel about having his work reviewed by the class. The teacher never reveals the name of the author of each paragraph.

Students should be instructed to make whatever changes they think will make the essay better with an emphasis on identifying and using the grammatical terminology from week one. They are encouraged to look at the categories contained within the rubric for the final paper. They should try to reconcile the changes they make with the standards indicated within the rubric. They are instructed to print a copy of their modified paragraphs after they have made the changes. They should bring it with them to class for discussion.

Students in the 8 R class should have sufficient background knowledge to engage in this discussion. They will need, and expect, teacher support. (For lower level courses, it can be beneficial to have three model paragraphs. The first paragraph is the unedited student's work. Below this is the same paragraph but with the teacher's correction marks. The last paragraph is the corrected version of the paragraph. This shows students the editing process in stages. This helps foster their abilities to do self-correction and peer editing.)

When the 8 R students return, they are placed in groups of two and instructed to review each other's work on the six-paragraph essay. After 15 minutes, the teacher should assign one paragraph to each group. They should take a few minutes to agree upon the best way to rewrite the paragraph. Once done, they send the final version via e-mail to the teacher. All work is saved and stored in their binders.

The teacher now compiles a new master list of the 6 paragraphs and then distributes it to the students. Using a laptop connected to the overhead projector,

the paragraphs are reviewed by the class as a whole. Each group explains its

changes and why it made those changes. The teacher facilitates the activity by

asking questions that keep the momentum going, but he should not monopolize the

discussion. The emphasis should be on whether the paragraphs make sense. The

teacher points out topic sentences, good syntax, proper subject-verb agreements,

adjective-noun agreements, and the proper use of pronouns and punctuation.

Spelling is corrected, but does not take precedence over the other grammar points.

(The reason for giving spelling a lower level of importance is that spell checking

software is included on most word processing programs.)

    After all of the paragraphs have been reviewed, the students individually

submit final drafts that can either be counted for points or pass/fail. Throughout

this process, the teacher is constantly assessing the work of the students. The

teacher assesses their writing skills, their ability to discuss the work using the

grammatical terms, and their ability to apply lessons learned as the work

progresses. This activity integrates all four skills and gives a well-rounded

assessment of the students' overall abilities. It provides information which allows

the teacher to see where individuals may need help and also if there are areas that

the class as a whole can benefit from more focused instruction.

    All work is returned to the students and placed in their binders. The teacher

should pay attention to how the students use the grammatical terms defined in

week one. Recycling those terms helps students to learn and use them correctly.

Knowing these terms well helps to eliminate ambiguities that may arise when

students are reviewing their work or doing peer editing; it teaches them the necessary terms to accurately break down their writing and the writing of their peers.

During week two, there are two supplemental lessons that should be done. The first uses the websites from which the grammatical terminology was taken by the students. Using the URLs from these websites, the teacher introduces a lesson on correctly citing a website as a reference for a bibliography. Most students rely on web sources for information because there are few libraries and bookstores in Saudi Arabia. This is an important lesson that students will carry with them in all of their future academic writing endeavors. (The Purdue University website OWL has an excellent guide on how to cite web sources.)

The second supplemental exercise is one for determining the nature of each website in an effort to educate students on the differences between web sources. The teacher creates a list of the main types of websites that students will encounter on the Internet when doing research. The main types include scholarly sources such as research studies and published papers in PDF form, open-source sites (Wikipedia, E-How, Ask.com, etc.), broadcast news sites (CNN, FOX, Bloomberg, etc.), blogs, and product websites. The teacher gathers at least two examples of each source. The list can either be e-mailed or sent by group text to the class. Students are instructed to visit each website and review the information on each website. Based upon this information, they decide what type of website it is.

The difference between opinion-biased information and objective research-oriented reporting is discussed. This is important because students usually have no problem distinguishing a blog from a news website. However, they have difficulty distinguishing the opinion/editorial sections from objective research-oriented reporting on news websites. For the 8 R research paper, only scientific studies, scholarly publications, and credible broadcast sources may be used for references. Blogs and opinion pieces should be discouraged as sources in most cases.

Once students have gone to each website individually and have identified what type of source each one is, they discuss it with their peers. Afterwards, the teacher goes over the list on-line with his computer connected to the overhead projector. He visits each website and asks the students to point out all of the things that indicate what type of source each one is. The class is encouraged to discuss them.

During week two, the 8 R class begins the topic selection process for their research papers. The teacher leads a classroom discussion on choosing a topic. It is important to impress upon the students that they will be spending the majority of their time, both in and out of class, on this topic so it should be one they can sustain an interest in for the remaining six weeks. During the discussion, the teacher encourages the students to brainstorm topic ideas as much as possible. As mentioned before, there is a tendency to stick to safe, well-worn topics so any new ideas should be encouraged- at least for discussion. Occasionally a good topic choice may be presented that the teacher has not previously taken into consideration.

Topics that are not suitable for the Saudi context will invariably be raised. The teacher can either eliminate them from consideration or he can allow the students to entertain them for a while. Usually, students in this culture will sidestep them on their own.

After the discussion, the teacher compiles a list of the topics that were presented during the class discussion. If it is a short list, the teacher should feel free to add more topics. The students are then instructed to select their three favorite topics from the list.

When the students have selected three topics, the teacher reviews how to write thesis statements. The best way to do this is to choose one of the topics from the list that was generated by the students. The teacher leads a discussion and helps the students come up with as many appropriate thesis statements about the example topic as possible. The teacher types in the list on his computer connected to the overhead. The class discusses each statement and decides if it is good statement or not. Students learn that there are many ways to approach any given topic and how to write their own thesis statements.

The teacher instructs the students to e-mail him a list of their three favorite topics, a paragraph explaining why they would like to write about each topic, and a proposed thesis statement for each topic.

<u>Week three</u>

By the beginning of week three, students will have learned the following skills:

- Identify the nine grammatical terms being used in the work
- Feel comfortable communicating via text messaging and e-mail with their teacher
- Distinguish different types of Internet sources
- Know how to use a website as a reference and bibliographical source

The acquisition of the aforementioned skill sets provides the scaffolding for the next stage of the writing process.

Once the 8 R students have e-mailed the teacher the list of topic choices, the teacher reviews them. Brief meetings are scheduled with each student. The point of these one-on-one meetings is to review the reasons why they have selected their topics, counsel them on the appropriateness of their topics, and help them to choose and sign off on a final topic. It is crucial to examine the students' thesis statements to determine the topic direction. Additional counseling may be required to help them with these statements. When all students have chosen or been assigned a topic, the teacher sends out a final list to all students with the students' names, their chosen topics, and their written thesis statements. All students should be aware of their classmates' topics. This awareness helps enhance class discussions, peer review sessions, and writing workshops.

The next class project requires division of the 8 R class into four groups with three students in each group. The four groups face off in a research challenge. The students use either their smart phones with Internet access or their laptop computers to research the chosen topics of each student. Each group is assigned one dry-erase board marker in a different color and that is their group name. For example: Black, Blue, Red and Green Groups and each has the corresponding colored-marker.

Using the master list of students' topics, each group finds one article about each topic. Each group finds a total of 12 web sites. Student groups are encouraged to divide the work and cooperate among themselves to accomplish the tasks. (The teacher may suggest that each group member take four topics each and then combine the work at the end.)

The teacher acts as a facilitator during this activity. He assists the students with any questions they have during the activity. He monitors the group work. He makes sure students are going to English websites for their searches because many students use Arabic to search and then translate the results into English. This is counterproductive to the lesson.

The teacher ensures a variety of websites are collected because often students use the first suggestion found on Google or Yahoo! search engines. Redundant websites should be avoided. This is accomplished by writing the list of the topics on the whiteboard with enough space left between each topic so that students can write down four URLs for each name. Students walk to the board with

their groups' colored marker. They write down the URLs next to the each student's name and topic. Once a URL has been posted on the board, other groups cannot use it and must find new sources. Throughout the facilitation of the activity, the teacher asks questions to make sure the students are screening the websites and finding appropriate academic sources. Additionally, the teacher makes sure that there are no duplicate articles coming from different sources. The teacher checks these websites on his computer as the groups write them down on the board.

The first group able to place a URL in each topic section on the whiteboard wins. Since the entries are done in different colored markers, the whole class is able to track the progress of the activity. Students work until each topic has four URLs and each group has placed one URL in each topic section.

The winning students may be rewarded by having one late arrival mark removed from their attendance. This is quite a powerful motivator for most students at Al Yamamah. (The teacher can offer an alternative form of a reward if he would prefer to do so.)

 The teacher facilitates a review all of the sources before bestowing the title of winner. Now the class works as a team now to double-check each URL and discuss them. The reviewing of each website reinforces the students' newly acquired website processing and judgment skills.

At the end of the lesson, each group e-mails their list of 12 Internet sources to the teacher. The teacher compiles a master list of the 48 URLs and sends it via e-

mail to the students. Each student now has four sources to begin his research. Whether he uses them in his final research paper is not important. The important aspect of this lesson is the act of doing the Internet search itself. This activity teaches students how to research and it combines the four skills of language in the process.

For homework, students examine each of the four websites generated by this activity. They review and determine if the suggested material pertains to their research papers. Students write a paragraph summarizing each article and state if the article works for their research topic. Students e-mail this assignment to the teacher.

In class the following day, the teacher schedules short meetings with each student to review their summaries of the four websites and offer additional counseling. They are encouraged to find new Internet sources if they are not happy with the sources. After completing this activity, students have fewer difficulties doing research on their own.

For the 8 R students, a refresher lesson on how to paraphrase, summarize, use direct quotations, and avoid plagiarizing should be included during week three. Again, the Purdue University website, OWL, has excellent examples of these areas.

<u>Week four</u>

As the fourth week begins, students have used both text messaging and e-mail to correspond with the teacher and to hand in assignments. Now, they will begin to use these mediums to communicate with each other. Students are reminded to bring their laptops and smart phones to class for the following activity.

For the next assignment, the teacher e-mails three examples of model research papers to each student. For new teachers, the Purdue University OWL website contains a model APA style research paper. For teachers who have taught this level before, previous students' papers that were well written are preferable. It is important to ask the authors (former students in this case) for permission and have them to sign a release.

In advance of the lesson, the teacher creates a list of questions for the students to answer about the research papers. The questions ask students to identify the components of the paper and include probative questions about the content. Example questions might be:

- Where is the abstract located in the paper?

- Why do you think it is located there?

- What do you think the purpose of the abstract is?

To begin the activity, the teacher divides the students into four groups of three. Students open up each research paper on their phones or laptops and analyze them one at a time. The students can divide the work or work together if they

choose. All of the elements of an APA style research paper are examined. Students find it reassuring to see an actual example of what they are supposed to produce. All of the model papers should include a cover page, an abstract, a table of contents, an introduction, a body, a conclusion, a reference section, and an appendix.

Each group completes the analysis of each paper and answers all of the teacher's questions. When finished, one student from each group is selected to e-mail the groups' answers to the teacher.

During the following class, the teacher attaches his laptop to the overhead and leads a class discussion of each groups' answers. Debate and discussion are encouraged. Any misunderstandings are resolved during this whole-class review.

When the review has ended, a lesson in outlining begins. Students at 8 R level should have experience writing outlines in previous levels. However, reviewing the outlining process is always helpful for students. The following activity is a reverse-outline using a completed research paper. The teacher facilitates the construction of the outline using the components of one of the model research papers.

The students select one of the three examples of research papers. Once selected, the teacher uses the overhead attached to his computer to create an outline. Using standard Roman numerals, uppercase English letters, Arabic numerals and lowercase English letters the teacher and the class write an outline. The teacher attaches his computer to the overhead projector and facilitates the

activity by typing the outline according to the students' instructions. Debate and discussion are encouraged.

This activity provides a behind-the-scenes way for the students to understand how an outline is constructed. They also understand how the material corresponds to the information already in the model research paper; they see the components fit together and understand the rationale behind using an outline. This exercise provides the scaffolding for the students to write outlines for their research papers.

In the following class, the students begin drafting their research paper outlines. They type their outlines on their computers following the teacher-facilitated model done in class. The teacher acts as a guide through this process, moving from one student to the next, monitoring the progress and providing assistance when needed. Students write as much of their outlines individually before receiving any teacher or peer input. All student work should be done on their computers allowing students to make additions, deletions and move information around within their outlines. This eliminates the need for rewriting hand-written outlines. When students have completed their outlines, they e-mail them to the teacher for review. The teacher reviews each submission and identifies any with serious problems. The next class he plans to meet with all students to briefly discuss their outlines. If there are students with serious problems in their outlines, the teacher should begin with those students first.

In the next class, the teacher announces that each student will present his outline to the class and explain how he intends to approach his research paper topic. The student will use his computer attached to the overhead projector and lead the class through each step of his outline.

After making the presentation announcement, the students with workable outlines begin preparing their presentations for the following day. As they work, the teacher briefly meets with each student one-on-one. He begins with the students who have the most problems in their outlines.

During the one-on-one meetings, the teacher pulls up each outline submission on his computer and makes any necessary changes with the student's input. After all outlines have been reviewed, the teacher moves through the class assisting students in the preparation for their outline presentations.

During the next class, students bring their laptops to class and give their presentations. Students attach their computers to the overhead projector and walk the class step-by-step through each section of their outlines. They explain what their papers will be about. The class asks questions, offers suggestions for improvement and praises the parts that are well done.

This is one of the best practices that I have created. Not only does the presentation combine all four skills but it also forces the students to think about the flow of their arguments and ideas within their outlines. They answer fellow students' questions and receive valuable feedback. This exercise clarifies many of

the ambiguities that students may have within their outlines. Through this process,

areas that need more information become obvious. The exercise provides a

complete learning cycle that incorporates all four skills and technology: Students

write, present, and answer questions. They revise, observe, and ask questions. The

activity is beneficial to both presenters and audience participants.

At the end of each presentation, the teacher gives the class two minutes to

send a short text message to the student who has just presented. The texts should

contain two comments including something that could be improved and something

that was good. Each presenter now has 12 comments stored in his phone that he

reviews as he prepares to use his outline to write the first draft of his research

paper.

Week five

Week five is where all of the scaffolding from the first four weeks is brought

together and students produce the first drafts of their APA style research papers. At

this point, students have accomplished all of the following:

- Reviewed necessary skills (paraphrasing, summarizing, using quotes, etc.)

  required for writing their papers

- Complied a list of at least four sources for their topics

- Familiarized themselves with the sections of an APA style research paper

- Completed and presented outlines of their research papers

Using their outlines, the students begin crafting their first drafts. Classroom time during weeks five through eight is divided between addressing the needs and learning gaps that appear for the first hour of class and then assisting the students as they work on their research papers the second hour of class. Students bring their laptops every day for the rest of the term. Students file all of their research work in their binders as well as have a printed copy of their outlines for quick referencing.

Having the students in the center of the room at their desks, islands unto themselves but close enough to engage in peer review, is best for workshop writing. This allows the teacher to weave through the desks, answer questions and monitor the students' progress. When students sit in a horseshoe formation with their backs against the wall, it makes it difficult for the teacher to see their work and assist them. This seating arrangement also discourages the misuse of their computers.

The teacher facilitates the writing of the first drafts by encouraging the students to write down what they said during their outline presentations. Students move sequentially through each section while referring to their outlines. Students are reminded that this is the first draft and mistakes can be corrected later. The important part is for students to follow their outlines and write as much as they can each day.

By the end of week five, students e-mail their first drafts to the teacher. The first drafts include all of the elements of their outlines. When reviewing the first drafts, the teacher reconciles the written work with the students' outlines. Any variances are pointed out and questions asked as to why they have deviated from

their outlines. Students are allowed to change their outlines; however, the teacher

must question the motives behind those changes. When students articulate their

reasons for making changes, they understand the writing process better. Students

are reminded to consult the rubric e-mailed to them during week two. Are they

meeting the areas of evaluation as established by the rubric? If not, the teacher helps

the student with any problem areas.

It is important to refresh the students' memories about plagiarizing during

weeks five through seven. Often students continue to have problems with

summarizing, paraphrasing, using direct quotations and citing sources despite

frequent exposure to these areas. These problems may lead to inadvertently

plagiarizing work from their research. If it is accidental, the student usually is eager

to be corrected and make the necessary changes.

For students who knowingly plagiarize, there are other steps that must be

taken by the teacher. Students know that stealing others' work and attempting to

pass it off as their own is wrong. However, this does not always dissuade them from

doing it. It is important to remind the students that as second language learners the

point of writing a term paper is to improve their skills in the target language, not

necessarily produce a masterpiece. Plagiarizing will not help the student to improve.

Pointing this out to the student can be a more convincing argument against

plagiarizing than lecturing them on the immorality of plagiarizing.

When producing their first drafts, some students may panic about the

quality of their work and resort to plagiarizing. It is usually obvious when a student

plagiarizes, but sometimes it takes a bit of investigation. If the teacher suspects that a student has stolen another's work, he may type in a suspect sentence (including punctuation) into Google or Yahoo! search boxes. It is likely that the full text will be revealed. However, some students are craftier than others and will change some of the verbs, the conjugation, or even weave together many different texts to fool the teacher. In this case, review of the student's outline and research is the best way to find out if he has plagiarized. Often, the register and the vocabulary used are too advanced for the student. Questions about the content of the first draft are usually enough to gauge whether the students know what they have written. Sometimes students will hire a tutor to help them write their papers; however, the tutor often ends up writing the paper for them. In this case, only a one-on-one discussion accompanied by questions about the student's writing can help the teacher determine if the work is truly the student's.

Any first drafts that are plagiarized or contain large sections of plagiarized material, should be privately addressed with the responsible student.

<u>Week six</u>

Students rewrite their first drafts during week six. As before with topic selections and outline drafts, the teacher schedules one-on-one time with each student. These meetings are conducted during class while the other students are working on revisions of their first drafts. These meetings focus on reviewing the

students' first drafts, answering any questions they may have and emphasizing the shortage of time left in the term. As mentioned in the teaching context section of this paper, the eighth week of the term is largely an illusion. At best, the teacher can constructively use the first two days of the week.

Students produce their second drafts by the end of week six. Students e-mail their revised papers to the teacher and he reviews them, makes suggestions and returns the papers via e-mail by the beginning of week seven. If all students are using Microsoft Word, the teacher may add comments using the insert comment features. He need only open the "Insert" section in the Word menu ribbon area at the top of the page and then scroll down to "comment." Wherever the cursor is flashing within the student's paper, a comment box will appear off to the side. There are two things for the teacher to note regarding the use of this Microsoft Word feature. The first is that it can slightly change the formatting of the students work and may cause additional indentations resulting in the student's work scrolling farther down the page. Secondly, students must not send their work in PDF form because this locks out any changes to the document and the teacher is unable to insert comments. Students are advised to leave all of their work in document form.

<u>Week seven</u>

At the beginning of week seven, students have received feedback from the teacher on their second drafts. They make those corrections and print copies of their work to bring to class. In groups of two, students read and review each other's work. This helps them to see how other students are putting their papers together and it provides them with additional feedback. Students are reminded to consult the rubric for the research paper. They make sure that their papers, and those of their peers', are meeting the expectations of each category. Students switch partners as many times as they feel necessary, but no fewer than three times.

Any grammar points or writing areas where the teacher notices the students are having problems are addressed during this week. These may be done in a whole-class session. The teacher uses the overhead projector so the class can make corrections together. Week seven gives the students time to make changes, build up sections that are weak, and receive peer and teacher feedback.

The final draft is due on the first day of week eight. Students have the weekend to make final changes. They must submit both an e-mailed copy and a printed copy for their final submission.

Students are warned one last time about plagiarizing. They are informed that any research paper containing plagiarized material will not be graded and they will be required to repeat the course.

<u>Week eight</u>

The teacher receives the final submissions of student research papers on the first day of week eight. The teacher reads, evaluates and returns the papers by day three. In reality, unless the students have decided to radically alter their work over the weekend, the teacher will already be extremely familiar with the contents of the students' papers. A turn-around time of two days is more than sufficient to evaluate the papers. The teacher uses the rubric to evaluate the paper, since it was the standard set for the students.

Plagiarized papers receive a zero and the student is required to repeat the course.

Depending upon the other work done within the class, there may or may not be additional loose ends to be tied up during week eight. One way to combat low attendance during week eight is to require paper presentations from all of the students. Students may use a PowerPoint presentation if they choose. This presentation should not be too difficult for them since they presented their outlines to the class during week four. This gives them an opportunity to demonstrate the progress that they made on their topics. Students usually enjoy this activity and it gives them an audience to affirm their progress and congratulate them on their hard work.

This concludes the eight-week sequence for 8 R.

Conclusion

Lowering the affective filters of second language learners is something that all EFL teachers should pursue in their contexts. By doing so, they are helping the students to receive the maximum amount of comprehensible input, which increases the likelihood of learning. After reflecting upon my experiences as an EFL teacher at Al Yamamah University, I found that creating ways to allow students to use their laptops and cellular phones constructively is one way to help lower their affective filters and aid their learning.

The eight week, 40-day sequence illustrated within this paper gives the EFL teacher effective ways to incorporate cellular phones and laptop computers into a writing course while taking into account the cultural challenges faced in Saudi Arabia.

Teaching EFL in Saudi Arabia comes with many cultural challenges for non-native, non-Arabic speaking teachers. This paper was written with the intention of helping EFL teachers meet these challenges and offer up ways of successfully incorporating technology into an advanced writing class.

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For English writing help the Purdue University OWL is an invaluable resource. http://owl.english.purdue.edu

This **APA Research Paper Rubric** is based on 30 points. Circle the number above the category that most appropriately describes the content of the APA style research paper. **(Adapted from the 2010 AFS Student Writing Contest Rubric.)**

Scale used for grading:

Unacceptable	Marginal	Acceptable	Good	Exemplary
1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points

1.   **Purpose: Did the writer make the purpose (goal) of the paper clear and understandable?**

1	2	3	4	5
The purpose or argument is unclear.	The central purpose or argument is not consistently clear throughout the paper.	The purpose is somewhat clear but there are many subordinating themes that distract the reader.	The writing has a clear purpose or argument, but may sometimes digress from it.	The writer's central purpose or argument is readily apparent to the reader.

2.   **Content: Does the paper have a well-examined analysis and presentation of information about the topic of the paper?**

1	2	3	4	5
Central purpose or argument is not clearly identified. Analysis is vague or not evident. Reader is confused or may be misinformed.	Central purpose of paper is identified but supporting information does not always contribute to the writer's intentions. The reader gains only minor insights.	Information supports a central purpose or argument at times. Analysis is basic or general. Reader gains few insights.	Information provides reasonable support for a central purpose or argument and displays evidence of a basic analysis of a significant topic. Reader gains some insights.	Balanced presentation of relevant and legitimate information that clearly supports a central purpose or argument and shows a thoughtful, in-depth analysis of a significant topic. Reader gains important insights.

3.   **Organization: Does the writer present the information in an organized manner that informs the reader and achieves the intentions of the writer?**

1	2	3	4	5
The writing is not logically organized. Frequently, ideas fail to make sense together. The reader cannot identify a line of reasoning and loses interest.	Overall, the writing follows some logic but the writer fails to explain it sufficiently to the reader and therefore is unconvincing. The reader has a hard time following the writer's ideas.	In general, the writing is arranged logically, although occasionally ideas fail to make sense together. The reader is fairly clear about what writer intends.	The ideas are arranged logically to support the central purpose or argument. They are usually clearly linked to each other. For the most part, the reader can follow the line of reasoning.	The ideas are arranged logically to support the purpose or argument. They flow smoothly from one to another and are clearly linked to each other. The reader can follow the line of reasoning.

4.   Grammar, Spelling, Writing Mechanics (including punctuation, capitalization, and word/line spacing) and Sentence Structure.

1	2	3	4	5
There are so many errors that meaning is obscured. The reader is confused and stops reading.	The writing has many errors, and they distract the reader.	There are occasional errors, but they don't represent a major distraction or obscure meaning.	The writing is mostly understandable but with occasional lapses in clarity and proper grammar.	The writing is free or almost free of errors.

5.   References are used correctly within the paper and the reference section of the paper is done in American Psychological Association (APA) style.

1	2	3	4	5
References are seldom cited to support statements.	Although attributions are occasionally given, many statements seem unsubstantiated. The reader is confused about the source of information and ideas.	Some sources are given, though not always in APA style. Information cited may or may not support the author's intentions but is connected to the paper's topic.	Professionally legitimate sources that support claims are generally present and attribution is, for the most part, clear and fairly represented.	Compelling evidence from professionally legitimate sources is given to support claims. Attribution is clear and fairly represented

6.   Paper follows the Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines and classroom instructions.

1	2	3	4	5
Format of the document is not recognizable as APA	The format is loosely based on the APA format covered in class.	There are frequent errors in APA format.	APA format is used with minor errors.	APA format is used accurately and consistently in the paper and on the "References" page.
			Total	30

40-Day Materials Introduction Calendar

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
1 Collect Student e-mail addresses and phone numbers	**2** Distribute cartoon puzzle to students via e-mail	**3** Cartoon puzzle activity Refresher on attaching documents to e-mails	**4** Cartoon puzzle essay assigned Grammatical terms sent out via cell phones in text message form	**5** Grammatical terms activity Distribute APA research paper rubric via e-mail
6 Review APA research paper rubric and answer any questions Anonymous corrections on overhead using student work from cartoon puzzle essays	**7** Group work on correcting anonymous cartoon puzzle essays	**8** Using grammatical terms from week one, students rewrite cartoon puzzle essays and explain their rationale to class using overhead	**9** Final drafts of class cartoon puzzle essay turned in Collect list of URLs from grammatical terms activity and make master list: use for workshop on citing sources APA style	**10** Differentiating web-sourced materials exercise Research paper topic selection activity
11 Topics Selected: Student one-on-one meetings to determine final topic choices	**12** Group website research activity using smart phones and computers	**13** Teacher forwards website research activity results to whole class	**14** Students review and judge quality and appropriateness of materials received	**15** Refresher on paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, and plagiarizing
16 Teacher e-mails model APA style research papers to students	**17** Students analyze components of APA style research papers in groups	**18** Backwards outline of a model research paper to review making outlines	**19** Students make outlines for their papers	**20** Meetings or workshops on outlining
21 Students present outlines to class on overhead using their computers	**22** Continuation of outline presentations. Begin drafting papers	**23** Continuation of outline presentations. Begin drafting papers	**24** Assess needs and tailor lessons to address these areas	**25** Draft One DUE via e-mail
2 6 Teacher returns Draft One via e-mail with comments	**27** Assess needs and tailor lessons to address these areas	**28** In-class workshop writing for Draft One	**29** Review rules on paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, and plagiarizing	**30** Draft Two DUE via e-mail

40-Day Materials Introduction Calendar (cont.)

31	32	33	34	35
Teacher returns Draft Two via e-mail with comments	In-class workshop writing for Final Drafts	In-class workshop writing for Final Drafts	In-class workshop writing for Final Drafts	Students have the weekend to polish their Final Drafts
36	**37**	**38**	**39**	**40**
Final Drafts Due	Assess Final Drafts	Final Drafts returned to students with completed grading rubric and comments	Student Research Paper presentations	Student Research Paper presentations