Abdullah Alhasani 0:00

salaam aleikum wa rahmatullah. T1, It's great to have you in this interview. Thanks for agreeing to participate and take part

T1 0:09

you are welcome

Abdullah Alhasani 0:14

the aim of this interview is to investigate Omani ELT teachers perceptions of their experiences in teaching through multimedia authoring or authoring multimedia artifacts, in relation to three aspects: I'm going to look at how this approach to learning involve students in their learning and engages them, and also I'm going to look at some pedagogical aspects of this particular approach to learning, and I'm going to look at some surrounding learning variables to do with the learning environment. And also hopefully we're going to touch on some of the challenges that students faced, and ways they overcome those challenges. Let's get to know you briefly.

T1 1:08

Okay, I'm T1. I have been teaching now for like, six years. I've completed six years actually. I finished my BA in restart College of Education. That was 2011 I did my masters in Australia in TESOL. I started teaching in 2013 and here i am today.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:37

Alright, awesome. Um, have you personally have any experiences authoring multimedia content or multimedia artifacts or products yourself?

T1 1:56

I created once just for my students as a sample, just to show them how things go. But did I do it myself? No.

Abdullah Alhasani 2:08

So what is that? Can you tell me about this thing that you created?

T1 2:11

One of the courses I just decided probably before introducing the students to the podcasting experience, I should do it myself. So I tried it myself. I went through all the process of creating a podcast, and then I started the class by showing it to my students as an example. So I started kind of from the top down, probably

Abdullah Alhasani 2:36

top down in what sense? ,

T1 2:38

I mean, like, where should they finish? Probably. I did not reach the last stage, which is probably publishing the podcast itself. At the end, it was just an example to their students.

Abdullah Alhasani 2:54

Okay, that can be a form of publication in a way coz there is an audience for that. Can you just tell me briefly about the the process that that you went through to create that podcast?

T1 3:05

At first, I picked a topic, right? You know, the main reason for creating this was to show my students as an example. So that was, in my mind when creating this podcast. So at first I fell to the tool that I will use, of course, I considered the goal, my goal, my main goal is to give my students a clear example of a podcast, or write something they can use. So I picked a topic, it was mainly grammar, as I remember, something to do with the grammar, tenses focused mainly, like a simple lesson could be delivered, they could listen to. And I decided to make it as a short podcast, it was like five minutes duration. So I had recorded it, I had to record it actually a numebr of times, and then I put it into audacity. I produced it, and I shared it with the students. But did I like make it open into a public? No?

Abdullah Alhasani 4:15

So recorded a number of times. Why?

T1 4:17

Because I just felt like, if I do it a second time, it would be better. I mean, in terms of even selecting the content to be added there, the duration, instead of cutting it every now and then I just have to repeat it a number of times.

Abdullah Alhasani 4:38

And what equipment do you use?

Audacity. Of course, I used my computer, my laptop>

Okay, so you've got a personal experience in doing that. Now let's get to it. Let's just investigate your perception as a teacher, in relation to author a multimedia artifact experiences. And I'm going to constantly refer to them as a AMA, and that stands for authoring multimedia artifacts, and by artifacts we are just referring to the products and the creations. The first theme we need to address is (learner engagement) in offering multimedia artifact experiences or in AMA experiences. The aim is to explore how AMA experiences engage learners before, during, and after the learning process or experience. We also might investigate some of the challenges they faced based on their experience. Maybe they've talked to you, or stuff that you perceived, or seen yourself. And maybe some of the strategies that you recommended to them, or the strategies you've seen they adopted, and even based on your evaluation of the outcome itself. So let's just look at the first phase, the Planning Stage. How did you as a teacher prepare your students for for the podcasting experience,? we're going to be focusing on podcasting as an experience. .

T1 6:14

Considering the podcasting guys and experience, I think at first, we always have to talk about how does learning happen? How do we learn? How do we prepare our students to learn? and how do they get exposed to information,? alright. So, in my case, I wanted to emphasize on listening as probably one of the most ways that we use to learn. Alright, passively speaking. So, it started with the importance of listening, and I remember, every semester, we usually have to go through a conversation, comparing hearing and listening. And so, it always starts with that. And then we reach a point that listening is an important skill that any language learner should go through always and always, the more you listen, probably the better you get language. Of course, you have to be selective in terms of what to listen to. And usually, we go through the process itself, like, I remember asking them, how do you get to learn something. So first, they will probably say, first, they listen, when they listen, probably if they listened to something one time, then probably they will remember it. If we repeat the same formation, they might understand it, right. So first of all, whatever knowledge we give to students, we agreed in group that we receive, we are receptive of knowledge. So they receive. If we give it a little focus, they will probably be able to understand it. If they understood it, then probably they will remember this information. But is that what we only need, we only need them to remember things? Usually, remembering might lead them to evaluate the knowledge they learned, and compare it with some other kind of knowledge. When they are able to evaluate, they will probably be able to create things themselves, like probably produce and a new product, it could be knowledge, it could be just using the same thing in a different way. But that's like the process of listening. So we usually go through that, we usually have a discussion at the beginning of the class about the importance of listening, and the stages of listening. And based on my little experience, usually, all of my students agree that listening with always starts with receiving information, and probably understanding the information. And probably then remembering, evaluating and then is (what we actually are all looking for probably) mastering this information in a way we can use it in a different context, or creating something new out of it. So mainly, first, we stress the importance of listening; we go through the stages of listening. And usually we reach a conclusion that the more we probably listen to something, probably there is a higher chance of instead of only receiving. If just you receive information, you might not be able to to understand the information; if you understand, you might not reach the next stage, which is the the understanding the stage; And if you just leave it at that stage, then probably you might not be able to, to evaluate it and to produce something out of it. At the end, the main focus was to highlight the importance of listening as a key feature in developing students skills, alright. And this is what I believe. I believe that we really learn through listening more than anything else. And I really believe that in our context, listening is something not really ignored, nut it is something we don't give extra attention to. That is my belief. That was very clear thru highlighting this to my students at the beginning of the classes. So mainly, it starts like this. And then we probably introduce the idea of broadcasting. So, speaking of the stages, introducing this to students first. And by that we highlight the importance of listening. So once making sure that students are aware of the importance of listening, then probably, how do we listen? What do we listen to every day? So we go through different examples of things students use, they listen to their colleagues, they listen to different things. Within that to introduce the idea of podcasting. And usually we start by comparing it to other multimedia tasks like the podcasting, we compare these together. And we compare it usually with different mediums of listening. And once we reach a stage where we probably have a good understanding of what podcasting is, then is the stage where I actually always start with asking them to listen to a podcast first. And usually, we start this by asking them, because probably in week three or four, all students have already picked themes for their final project, which is probably creating learning management system (LMS), probably building a course. And I asked them to look at something within their interest, like to find the podcast within their interest, or to find the podcast that is probably related to the theme they are are working on. Mostly students look at podcast actually they are interested in, or probably things they really want to find out more. So they actually experience how podcast is, what is podcast, they look at podcast. First, I give them some time, so that they listen to this podcast. Of course, they have to subscribe to the pages, like BBC news as an example. Once they do that, I asked them some questions. Starting with the topics, whether they liked what they listen to, whether they found it fruitful or not. I asked them some questions about the duration of this like podcast. Was it short? Was it probably medium? How do they consider it? was a long kind of podcast? I asked them about the type of podcast? Was it like a video cast? Or was it like a podcast itself? Was it kind of enhanced podcast where there is an image added to the to the sound itself? Or was it a novel podcast where it was kind of ebook or whatever they could listen to. Once we go through that. I mean, they they are able to categorize different different types of podcasts, then is the time where we start linking podcast to learning and linking it to language teaching. Okay, so after that, we start looking at the importance. And of course here, what I usually do, I provide different cases studies to students about studies done with languages students in different areas around the world. And they have to actually read these cases, they have to come across the main advantages of podcast to language teaching, and how does it seem from research point of view? So we test it in that respect, we look at the role of podcast in language learning through research. So I divide them to groups, each group look at a case of study. By case studies, I mean, research articles, because some of these research were done in Arab countries, something we're done in some Asian countries, some were done in different areas across the world. And we come in next class, the first thing we start with is usually discussing: What did they found? And usually we start with the importance of listening ,the importance of podcasting in language teaching, and we come up with what did they find out? Usually, we end up agreeing that, well , there is a huge advantage of using podcast. Because most of those research articles were kind of experimental research types, where there are there is control group, and there is the other group. And usually they try both, they come up with a conclusion they reach a conclusion that usually students who has the experience of podcast, to listen to podcast, they actually perform better than those who don't have this at their classes. All right. So from that, the students would probably get the importance of podcasting. Then we start to think about the process. How do we podcast? What should we consider at the first stage? And of course, by that time they have already experienced the types of podcast. Of course, when we are to go through the types, students usually get confused. By titypes,mes do we mean the duration? Is it a video cast? Is it is it a podcast? even we have also to stress that point, actually. So at some time, I remember we actually had a big discussion in the group, comparing video podcast and listening to the podcast themselves. I cannot actually remember what we what we ended up with, but some of the areas students stressed were like, for example, in audio podcast the focus only goes through the listening, so we only listen to the topic. Iit's it's not actually distracting, Compared to the video podcast. and if my students favpr the video podcast, they probably believe that it was mainly because they are able to see people and see the facial expressions of those who speak, how the movement of their of their lips, and probably one of them, actually, I remember mentioning something about pronunciation. We listen to how to pronounce by just seeing how people speak. Alright, so mainly, we always have this kind of discussion.

After that we go through the stages of the process of podcasting. Starting with the preparation stage and file prediction, and publishing their files. So what we actually do here is probably we start first to introduce the project. The project is mainly for students to create two podcasts: one of them is to create an individual a solo podcast, and the other one is probably an interview with someone. And I always actually asked the students about their opinion of what type of podcast they want to do, I give them the freedom to pick like a video podcast or to pick the sound podcast. I also give them the freedom to pick the duration. But usually there are limits, we usually suggest like four, four minutes minimum, which means short podcast is not an option. So we usually suggest whether they pick kind of a medium podcast, which is like five minutes podcast, or a longer one, which could last up to 15 minutes. This is how my students and I actually divided it: we agreed that if there is like a podcast less than three minutes, then we will consider it as a short one. If it's five minutes, that's a medium. If it's 10 to 15 minutes, that's a long podcast. If it's longer than that's a longer podcast. Most of students actually prefer to go with the the five minutes podcast. And I also give them the option to pick the topics. Preferably, I asked him to pick topics related to their theme so that they can make use of that later on in the courses they create later in the semester, and most of students actually go through that as well.

After that we start looking at tools we need. So they are aware of the goal, they are aware of the importance of it, and we start looking at the tools we use. So we experienced the tools we actually already have in our hands like computers, mobile phones. Usually we ended up saying that it's very easy to create a podcast, it's not a complicated process, you can easily create one by using your mobile phone. Of course, some software we also introduce to students, audacity is the free one that we actually use. We look at some add ons as well of how then can transfer their files from MP4 to just make it as mp3 if it's a sound one. I try at the very beginning to tell my students you are that you are going to produce a product, and the ultimate goal is to be able to sell that product to people where it should reach that high level of a quality where you can even ask people to pay for you to listen to your podcast. So assumingly, they start looking at it from that perspective, they want to publish something that even people could buy it actually because of the good quality it has. I leave them at that stage working. Usually students raise questions every now and then. But to tell you the truth, there is always that kind of question mark I can feel it with my students, about the sustainability of doing this. I mean, yes, we always introduce it's important. But at the same time, I think, because they have never experienced this before, like they have never learned in a formal way of learning, they have never learned thorough forecasting. That's why they do not look at it as a way of learning, as something that can really add to them. And the way how usually students see things is probably paperwork and reading tasks, and things like that. And they all agree that one time experience is not enough to actually push them to even use that later on in schools or when doing the teaching it themselves.

but I always stress the point to that, let's now mainly focus on the process of learning itself. Not really looking at the product as the final thing we see. So I always emphasize on the process of learning, again, how important listening to things will help us, of course, through podcasting. Sometimes during this, while they actually work on their podcasts, I usually send some kind of scenarios to them, about a student who might be absent from a class, about a student who is listening to a podcast in the bus, or when waiting for a train, or in any place. So we were looking at things, I mean, in a different way, that with podcasts, you can learn from everywhere, as you are waiting for the bus, going to your school, if you are in a hospital, if you are in the barbershop, if you are wherever. You still can learn. And that is another way probably, especially for those students whose learning style is probably more toward listening than reading itself. During the stage, of course, many questions would be raised by students : technical questions mostly about probably issues they face, probably about they couldn't find people to do the interview with, or probably how do they prepare the content of their podcast. And speaking of the content, I always stress that it should be natural. So they should try themselves to try their best to make it as natural as they can can, not faking kind of information. So they should be really relaxed and speaking about things, I mean, in a relaxed way, not really with any influence of any sorts. And I always keep telling them that I like the podcasts, which I really feel like this one is natural, you are not kind of faking it or just reading it from a paper. Pre prepared podcast, this is what I ended up with. Pre prepared podcasts in terms of the content, like I mean, just reading from the content are the most boring types of podcasts. While the most interesting ones that I usually listen to more than once, are the ones that I feel students were actually not following instructions given or reading from something. And I assume it could be the same case if the teaching classes are recorded. So usually teachers speak by nature, they are not influenced because their voice is recorded or whatever. After that, I usually give students always they they asked for some extra time to make their work ready. But they always submit their work to the latest deadline we make. And asking them about experience, Actually, I don't always ask the students about their experience of a trying it. But mostly they like the experience itself because it is something new, they haven't done before. Mostly they look at it at that way. They haven't done that before. So if I asked them, whether I want them to do research, or to write an article, or to just go to the podcast, they would always prefer doing a project for podcasting. That's actually an option I gave to my differential class this semester as well. So I, I gave them like two options: whether to go to the podcast project, or to go to research where they have to write something. And I ended up most of the class actually were kind of enthusiastic toward the podcasting thing.

Abdullah Alhasani 28:31

So it looks like sufficient detail were provided in the beginning. Throughout the process of creation, do you get to kno,w like, what sort of venues students pick to conduct their podcast or to create their podcasts? Did you have any insights into that?

T1 28:51

About the venues?

Abdullah Alhasani 28:52

Yeah, like, where did they create? Like, did you provide things for them like places?

T1 28:58

we have probably never started that in our talk. But usually, of course, we go through the discussion that of course, whenever we speak, we should have a place where there is an isolated place, where there is less kind of noise from any external source, and we make sure that the time we speak is the time where like, if it's 10 minutes, and then during this 10 minutes, nobody's gonna bother us. We always stress that when talking about probably the steps towards podcasting, and how to do the podcasting itself. But I have never given my students suggestions about that. It was left all to them, but we stress the importance of having a place where there is like kind of no noise in it. Because we also stressed that while experiencing the audacity functions, like the noise reduction for example. Why do I need this? because for example, there was a noise of the AC. Okay, so to avoid that, let's have a place where there is no noise of the AC. So we go through it in that way..

Abdullah Alhasani 30:06

From evaluating the final outcomes, did you get a sense of what venues students picked?

T1 30:13

Most students actually picked probably their bedrooms to record their podcasts. As for the interviews of the one, because students usually do that here in college, it's actually mainly the offices, teachers' offices. And sometimes, actually, because sometimes some students say that they have to book a room like JAWDA, or they have to find an empty class desk to do their podcast, or to prepare it.

Abdullah Alhasani 30:46

What tools did they use for recording? or was it left optional to them?

T1 30:52

it was a Left optional, but usually we introduce I mean, different options. They always can record thru their mobile phones, they always can record with the computers, there are some better equipment. Most of most of my students use their mobile phones, if not all of them actually to record. I remember asking students about this. And it's almost all of them at some time actually usually only use the their cell phones,

Abdullah Alhasani 30:53

and what is the reason for that?

T1 31:00

they believe that cell phones give you a good quality. And it was thrust at the beginning also, that it is an easy process. So it's easy process, then let's use something portable, something I actually have, let's not put extra effort and probably borrow microphone, for example, and making it to that. And probably because they are beginners at podcasting, so probably maybe at later stage, they like to have something with a better quality, they might go for something better. But for now, for that particular project, I myself believe that a cell phone is enough. At least for the recording. Of course for the preparation stage, and for the editing, they must use a computer. And some of the process of the editing stages actually we do it in the class. I mean, they do it in the class, but I usually just observe how `they do it in case they face any issue

Abdullah Alhasani 32:38

Was there a particular process or steps they followed in the creation? Or was it random? did you get a sense of that basedon the questions they raised?

T1 32:49

I mentioned that at the beginning

Abdullah Alhasani 32:50

but is that when they followed?

T1 32:52

Yes. almost almost almost. At the very beginning, when I asked them to look something, like the BBC or whatever, they usually see the final product, and then we break it down into a number of steps. I remember having three main stages. (they do the production, and they do the publishing). So they first kind of prepare everything, making sure that everything is there: they are aware of the content, they have enough knowledge to produce something. In the second stage is the file production. That's the stage where they actually produce the file, where they actually do the recording, do all the editing stages, probably considering all that they have laearned. The final state is publishing the podcast itself.

Abdullah Alhasani 34:01

before we get to the publishing, how important were these stages that they went through to the final completion of the project?

T1 34:15

I think since it's almost the first time for them to do that, it was important, extremely important. They have to be directed in the first place toward these stages. And really, I had to start with them step by step. I have never like just asked them to do it without mentioning the stages, and the importance of the stages they should go through. I don't think they will do it how it's supposed to be done. Even I usually give them kind of we go through some steps. And we always a stress that: first, I always have to consider that the importance of this; then probably the topic that people might be interested in, not only myself; and after that, as I told you, we go through the file production stages, and finally the publishing stages. But of course, going through these stages is something I feel is important.

Abdullah Alhasani 35:46

As first timers, Did you feel after that introduction and these steps that you followed, Where they ready to embark on this task on their own? was that enough for them, was that sufficient? were they ready, like Yeah!, now we can do it? Did you feel that

T1 36:05

To tell you the truth? I'm not 100% sure they were ready for it. But the most impression after that long introduction, because we kind of looked at it from different perspectives, from the importance of listening itself, by looking at some cases studies, and most of these case studies were successful when it comes into the implementation of podcasting. So mostly Yes! but I cannot ensure 100% that was enough. As I told you, this is like a new experience. To those Omani students, it was it was new actually. So to shake them first, I really had to kind of introduce a lot of literature in the first place, in order just to kind of convince them that this could really happen. I mean, we could learn thru this, and you could produce thing. Of course, the most interesting moment to them is the moment where they feel they have already produced something they're on. That is the moment where they really feel like, Well, I have created something!. So they were not only being exposed to the knowledge of it, but they created something themselves, something of a good equality as well. And also, at some time, we listened to some samples of former students who have already finished that course. So we look at that actually,

Abdullah Alhasani 37:38

this was in the beginning of a part of the preparation?

T1 37:40

Yes, at some time, I usually select the best, kind of not really the best, I sometimes also ask him to tell me whether that podcast was good, what wasn't good with it, so that we go through evaluating, they do evaluate some former students' podcast themselves at first.

Abdullah Alhasani 38:02

What was the reason for doing this?

T1 38:03

The main reason is for them to avoid, because they will evaluate it, they will listen to it, and then they will probably be able to tell what went well, and what didn't go well. So that if there is something that didn't go well, and we could probably have a little discussion about it in the class, and they will end up not doing that, avoid doing that while creating their own podcasts.

Abdullah Alhasani 38:32

Based on the questions you received from them, how many approach you for assistance? to help them carry on the production stage? or did you receive?

T1 38:43

Not so many. I always receive, but it's less than it's less than like 30% of the class. If I have 30 students, then it probably it's less than eight, nine students will approach me at that stage.

Abdullah Alhasani 38:58

What sort of questions usually?

T1 38:59

Mostly technical question. Yes. Most of my students usually only asked me some technical questions. And some of them actually asked for help. They wanted to have an interview with probably a teacher, but they couldn't find them. So they asked me probably just to give them their emails, or probably looking at their timetables, and just making the arrangements between the students and the teachers sometimes, if it is for a particular teacher. But most of their questions were technical questions.

Abdullah Alhasani 39:33

Do you feel that they saught assistance from somebody else other than you? like did they help each other? Did they seek assistance from each other, For example?

T1 39:45

I think yes. At some time during even during lectures, I usually ask them to do some group activities, like the case studies themselves. And probably when they listen to other former students' podcast, they actually work in groups to brainstorm the issues that they felt of a particular podcast. Doing this itself means that they are kind of exchanging experiences about it, which will later on probably they could refer to the same people. But yes, usually, I can feel that> I cannot tell you it's 100% happening, but I feel that I'm not the only source of knowledge to them at that point or at that stage. .

Abdullah Alhasani 40:34

Looking at the post-stage, after they finished preparing their podcasts.

T1 40:42

All right. I gave students option, whether to publish their podcast

Abdullah Alhasani 40:50

before publication, i mean. for example the evaluation. Like, did you get a sense that students evaluated the outcomes? Like did you feel a there was effort put in that project, in that work? like they put a lot of effort in that? what sort of effort!

T1 41:08

I always feel that students actually put a lot of effort in that particular activity because it sounds new to them. I mean, probably that's the reason that came in my mind in the first place. Because it's something new. And probably because of extrinsic motivation, they just don't want to lose any marks at that stage. Or probably because they liked it. That's why they really wanted to do their best, and do something with high quality. But it always I mean, some even their questions like, teacher how can we probably use a better app than audacity? we really have some noise, and we want something with no noise at all? So they actually see good quality thing after making sure that they have good content, as well. So do they evaluate their own work? In fact, I did not give them a checklist to go through to tell whether they have evaluated their work, or not. But usually there is a criteria for them to go through in doing this, I mean, in assessing it. So that was something they probably go through when they finalize their their podcasts.

Abdullah Alhasani 42:36

For example, judging by listening to the outcomes, how about like the linguistic mistakes? were they frequent? or like from the students expect to make mistakes,? or where they kind of paid attention to?

T1 42:51

I always listened to their work, considering that I'm expecting to listen to some mistakes, even though I know that they tried their best not to have any kind of linguistic mistakes as they speak, because it's something I will listen to over and over and over again. But it's something common. Not very common, but it is common to listen to students making mistakes, probably some kind of grammar slips here and there, pronunciation mistakes, etc., which could tell you something about: Well, they could spend more effort in creating it!. But I always feel that I think that's the best they could at that stage. I know my students very well, I know that they are not perfect when it comes into language, and I know that they try to give me the best they can when it comes into language

Abdullah Alhasani 44:02

about the technical aspect in the outcome, what was it Like? was it sufficient? Was it good enough for you? Did They do they do a good job in that? in terms of music and effects, and things like that? .

T1 44:16

I think that, even though most of their questions were about this, but I think that was the most enjoyable part they liked actually. Well here it depends, some of the students will give you absolutely excellent work the when it comes to the value of the content itself, when it comes to the background, when it comes to the duration. And you can feel that there was a fourth put at the beginning, at the end, in between. They use different background. So that's something you can actually feel. But at the same time, yes, there are those who probably did not put a lot of effort. And you can tell that the content was not really well prepared. And even the background, they always put background, but the quality of the background itself, the noise, and the other things, all these factors actually impact the final preduct they produce. But a good number of them actually produce really good work. That's something at least I like. And I can easily tell, if I like it I always listened to it more than once.

Abdullah Alhasani 44:23

What was it? Like? How would you evaluate the good work? based on what? is it the same factors: the technical, the linguistic, and the content choice?

T1 45:49

I think these are part of it, yes, but I don't know. It's like I really feel like there was a huge effort to put in this one. You can easily figure the work in podcast, if something was done with good effort. Of course, the technical aspects, the linguistic aspect, and the value of the content itself, play a huge role here. I would say it is mainly the content, the value of the content, the technical part, and probably the language itself. At some point also, because i had some students for example, I had some podcasts not necessarily only related to English, because I gave students options to pick things of their interest. And I have some students, like, picked something about learning French, for example. So the whole 5-6 minutes were about the students speaking in French, and having an interview with a French teacher here in our college. And yes, actually, I cannot tell you that I I fully understand what was the content about, but you can tell that was really good work because of the effort, and the technical aspects were here. I have another student who did something about Korean, and another one about Turkish, and another one about Indian. Like, the student was speaking using the Urdu language, for example, and the quality of that, you can feel the quality itself. The technical aspect is something I can easily judge, and how fluent that student is when they speak. Okay.

Abdullah Alhasani 47:59

Let's talk about the emotions, emotional aspects, in the sense that, did you feel that students were emotionally invested in the whole thing? Like, how did they feel about the outcome? How did that make them feel? because they spent so much time doing it, did you feel it has>>>?

T1 48:20

Yes, they do (were emotionally invested). I think they feel it's something that belongs to them, It's something of their own. And this is something always happening actually, before they just send me their last final word. They sent me: teacher, can you please check my work if it's good? Or if it's not? And let me know what can I change. And I always actually go through this step with them. So I gave them a chance to check their work. Having that itself means they do care about the work itself. Because, see, in teaching language, we do not create a lot of things. That was something they created. I can tell that usually they value it more than anything else, because it is something they can feel, something they can listen to, it is their own task. So they can listen to it once, twice and three times, and they can probably give it to other people, they can pass it, they can publish it. So it is something of their own. Probably that's what might come in my mind as I'm thinking about how valuable it is to them. It is very valuable.

Abdullah Alhasani 49:45

After the project, did they ever talk to you about this? about the whole project?

T1 49:49

We usually have some conversation, especially at the end of the semester, when I asked them about: what did they enjoy the most? most of his students actually end up saying that they enjoy the podcasting thing because it was something new, it was a new experience to them. Mostly, this is what they do. But they also have that fear of that, Will I do this again? Will I have chance to do it again? See, so I can tell they liked it because they usually ask this question, like, will we really do this in school? So even at the end of the semester, they still doubt whether they will actually do it, whether they will be able to do it. They are able to create it, but how about the audience, The students themselves? Mostly, most of my students actually consider the classroom as the environment to that. I always try to take them from that, and consider like the whole world could be your audience, not necessaily your class, your students in the class

Abdullah Alhasani 51:06

Such feelings of enjoyment (since they said, well, we enjoyed podcasting), what does it add? How does it reflect in students' performance? What does it add to their academic performance? Why is it necessary, this kind of feeling,?

T1 51:25

as I told you, at this particular one, the students were exposed through all the stages of learning, starting from probably receiving and then moving to all stages of learning itself. So the process of learning was what really matters more than even the output itself. Because they they know that if the process is not going well, then the final product won't be good. That's why they have to keep probably repeating it, or focusing a lot on the process of learning itself until they produce the final project. And they know that of course, it will depend on the process to have whether a good final project or a poor final project. And that's why I think because at this particular one, they they feel the process, and they go through all the process themselves. So they experienced the process of learning, rather than only looking at the output.

Abdullah Alhasani 52:33

The enjoyment aspect, you said well they enjoyed it, because...

T1 52:36

That's what I feel but looking at their questions, but why did they enjoy it the most? That that's probably what I can tell you. At the end, we as human beings always look at new things, we always want to try new stuff. All right. And if let's say most of our course is kind of writing tasks, and probably quizzes, working on applications, etc. but yet you ask them to produce something that mainly might consider producing a podcast, then that is a new experience.

Abdullah Alhasani 53:15

So, is it important for them to enjoy? To enjoy the experience?

T1 53:20

I think it it is important, at least I'm trying to push this, to make it to make it interesting to them, at least when creating the podcast. Do they enjoy it when they listen to it? That is another question. But do they enjoy it when creating it? because as I told you, they are of course they will be motivated, because they know that there will be marks at the end, and their marks will depend on how good or bad they produce. So that's kind of extrinsic, but the one I was looking for is the intrinsic one, where really I can feel they really like it. They really feel like it, it is important to them. And experiencing the process of learning is one way of doing that.

Abdullah Alhasani 54:12

Alright, cool. Let's talk about the pedagogy of learning through altering multimedia content. Or before that even, What are the major challenges that students faced? apart from what what we talked about, You said some of them had questions to do with technical aspects, finding people to interview, and preparing content. These are like some of the biggest challenges to them.

T1 54:48

One of the other challenges I can add, usually at the beginning is accepting the idea itself. And that's why I told you I really have to first introduce it to them different ways.

Abdullah Alhasani 55:01

What do you mean accepting the idea? The idea of authoring content?

T1 55:07

Probably itself, because they they don't do that quite often here. They don't actually, I know for sure my second year students, for example, they don't consider listening to a podcast as a part of learning process. So that's why we had to highlight it a lot at the very beginning. And I think that could be one of the the issues (that is, lack of experience in this area, and exposure). So once they feel it is important and it can happen actually, they know for sure that they will by the end of these two or three weeks, they will produce something. But what really matters to me was they have to produce something, believing that they could learn through it, and they could probably make something out of it later on. So that was one of the challenges that I face. I feel like they really could have at the beginning, like mostly the technical issues.

Abdullah Alhasani 56:10

Okay, how did they overcome that thing, about the accepting part?,

T1 56:15

As I told you, I usually prepare different ways of passing this knowledge to them, so they have to experience the importance of listening first. Through the discussions in the class we have, we always end up saying that it is very important we listen, yet it is still ignored. In our curriculum, we don't listen a lot. Even in schools, actually some students keep saying: teacher in school we don't listen to English because it's only that 45 minutes where most of their teachers actually might speak in Arabic sometimes. And when they get exposed to real English, to natural English is probably throw the tape recorder itself, I mean, to do the activities themselves in the class.

Abdullah Alhasani 57:10

So you're saying just basically you tried to re-emphasize it in different forms, and try to make them evaluate and appreciate the importance of the task?

T1 57:20

Actually, it is always students pointing out that listening as a skill itself is ignored. I mean, it's not really ignored, but there is no huge emphasis on it in school. They wish they had listened to English more. They wish if there is a way where they can listen to it. So it always starts with that, it always comes from them actually. Of course, I have to ask them questions, but we always reach that conclusion. Starting with this, they start to recognize the importance of it. And of course, then we move to the other cases studies, what research actually approved. If research approved that, if it works in different areas, then probably it also can work with us. And of course, because exams matter a lot to them. So they always look: teacher, sometimes we record important lectures in classes, and we always listen to them before the exam, which is just another way of doing probably the same thing. Even sometimes they actually record teachers' voices or teachers' lectures, without teachers knowing about that. The students keep telling me now, almost every semester I hear that from students. So actually, they do listen to things. At least they know that it is important for exams, and it comes from them in the first place, nobody asked them to record. So they know that it is important. Maybe they know that the content that the teacher will give to them at that particular time is important, but they they use listening as a way to to get to this knowledge again and again. They always also stress actually exams, and we actually prefer if we can listen to some of these podcasts before exams as well. So we look at it from that point as well.

Abdullah Alhasani 59:30

Were there any complaints do with or the timeframe? with the pressure of the task? it's demanding or anything like? Were those challenges?

T1 59:44

The task is new. But I have to tell you, like I always have this feeling every semester, I have students who can easily go through the through the process in an easier way compared to the previous batch. That is a feeling I usually have. So I can tell that probably that's something I felt based on teaching this for like three, four semesters now, consecutive semesters. Every semester I don't have to spend a lot of time considering the softwares and the hardware. Actually, it is them who asked a lot of questions. For example, last semester, I had to introduce another application than Audacity. Students just asked me: is there any other application than audacity? And they came up with Wavepad, as an example also. Some students themselves, I gave them the freedom to select whatever app or software.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:00:55

Do you have any recommendations to overcome some of those challenges? So to feel them the idea of accepting it be the hardest. Beside the other technical, finding people to interview, and preparing content, How can they overcom such? Do you have any suggestions to make it easier?

T1 1:01:15

while doing the tasks?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:01:16

Not necessarily, since they've been involved in experience of producing a podcast, Do you have any recommendations to make that experience even easier for them, and to overcome some of these problems and cha;lenges?

T1 1:01:28

I think first they have to believe that it's important, at the first place, and it kind of play a role in their learning and their self development. And and of course, they have to be motivated to do it. I mean, they should be a reason behind doing it. With no reason, even if they did it, it won't actually has any positive effect. And of course, as for the technical factors, I think watching YouTube tutorials probably will do a lot of help here, because most of their questions are actually questions that could be addressed if they actually watch the tutorials I usually sent to them. So these two could be reasons. Nut I have to tell also, some of the issues they face are very specifical to a particular device they use, or probably to the computer itself, or etc.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:02:39

So some random challenges. Okay. Let's move to the second part of the interview. Let's talk about the pedagogy of teaching through multimedia authoring. Four aspects are emphasized in this sort of pedagogy. One of these is learning by doing, and then authoring products, then student-centered learning, and finally leveraging ICTs in instruction and learning. Let's talk about learning by doing. Since authoring authoring multimedia artifact projects (or AMA projects) involve that aspect of practical learning, How do you think it's valuable to learning in Omani higher education? How do you feel learning by doing is valuable to students at this stage?

T1 1:03:44

Is it valuable to students?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:03:46

Do you think it is?

T1 1:03:47

I think it depends if they are aware of its importance. So you want me to tell you from students perspective,?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:03:56

No, from a teacher perspective, Do you think doing is valuable to them?

T1 1:04:01

I think learning by doing is very valuable to students because as I told you, by doing things they experience the process, and that is what we really need. They really experience the process of how to perform a task itself. So instead of just looking at things as a final product, whether a final written task, they do write themselves. And they go through all challenges. And by the challenges they face, they learn. And I have to tell you , looking at the example of podcasting, they produced a podcast, but at the same time, they gained many other skills. So they were able to overcome the technical issues they face, they were able to manage things, to schedule meetings with their teachers or with whoever they are interviewing, they were able to be selective, to pick the right topic. So they experienced different things. And that is learning by itself. Sso they not only perform the task, I think the process itself is more important than the final product.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:05:21

How do you compare it to other approaches to learning.?

T1 1:05:25

As I told you, this is how I see things. Whether students learn in a passive way. That's it. So they only get passive ways of receiving information, that's it! they receive information, but they do nothing with this information. They might understand them, they might reach a level of being able to evaluate, but again it is different experiencing. The stages and the process of learning is very important.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:06:15

How did students react to the sort of learning approach.?

T1 1:06:19

I think they were fine. Our students are ready for such things, we just have to push it more to them. I think they are really ready. I mean, they just see it from a different way, they just they just enjoy it. That's how I felt about it at some time. As I told you, you asked me if it is important for them to enjoy what they do?. I told you, well, if they are to produce something good, then yes, yeah, they have to enjoy it.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:06:53

we can talk about that. So you said we need to push it more?

T1 1:06:56

We need to push like learning by doing, looking at the process of doing things. Students have to experience doing things themselves, instead of just telling them that, well, this is something we have. Instead of just asking them to experience or to look at the literature itself, they really have to experience the process, they really have to face the challenges themselves and to learn from these challenges until they formulate their final product.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:07:32

Do you feel we need to expand this sort of practical learning, or learning by doing, in the Omani higher education?

T1 1:07:40

I think, yes, we have probably. Of course, there are some challenges we really have to overcome if we are to apply such things. But yes, the challenges are mostly practical challenges. And again, I told you at the beginning, our students are ready, but as teachers are we ready to change our traditional ways of teaching and probably to introduce new things? Again, that will require some changes at that level of assessment as well. So we probably have to even change the way how we assess our students, instead of assessing our students through paper and pencil, we might need to reach a level of assessing them through observation and documentation, which requires a lot of effort, and I know for sure is that it is against how things go here, I mean, the policies themselves. Because at the end of the semester, as a teacher, I have to ask my students to sit for an exam, a paper and pencil exam, it is like a must. And to change that it is something difficult, it's not something easy. I should have a big rationale behind it. So making the change itself is kind of a challenge. But yes, as I told you, I'm fully supporting this way. And this method of teaching. For me, the biggest challenge will be the assessment, because assessment matters a lot. Assessment through observation, and probably documentation, is not something that you can actually apply even though considering that it could work more with the with the multiple intelligences and the learning styles. So instead of assessing students' learning styles through the paperwork, we can just observe them and just decide on what suits them more.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:10:08

Let's move to multimedia authoring itself. you mentioned that creating something in itself, you said it's valuable to them. How do you think is valuable to learning in the Omani higher education context?

T1 1:10:37

Because we rarely create things. Our final product of courses is exam. I mean, that's the way how students see things. They study to pass exam, but here they study to produce some something., so this by itself is a different experience.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:11:02

in what sense?

T1 1:11:03

assessment wise, matters here. Can you repeat your question again?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:11:10

I said how do you see it's valuable to learning in Omani higher education? You said, it's valuable because we rarely create things.

T1 1:11:19

Yeah. And as I told you, I'm stressing again the point it gives extra focus to the process of learning, which is a reason by itself.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:11:42

what would creating things change in our students' learning? what would it add to them?,

T1 1:11:51

I think it will add value that they are not only receptive part of knowledge, but they also can produce things. Having that feeling itself pushes them toward doing more of that.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:12:16

so you compare it always to receptive knowledge, you say productive knowledge is much more valuable to them?,

T1 1:12:20

I think so, of course they do have to have some kind of receptive knowledge first. But again, especially when it comes to assessment, I really feel like we have to give extra focus to the productive task than the receptive things.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:12:39

How do you think students receive such an approach to learning? are students willing to author..?

T1 1:12:46

Based on the experience that I have throughout the four semesters of teaching educational technology course, yes,! I can tell you that I have never had any complaint from students. For me, this is my favorite part of the semester, introducing this, because I always have that feeling. That is something Abdullah not always can be explained or described. Sometimes you feel it in the class that well, there is something good going on. And that's the kind of feeling that I always feel whhile teaching this to my students. As I told you, once they accepted the idea that it can play a part in their lives, it is important, then, actually, they will. And to reach that, I told you at the beginning, we usually introduce it in different ways, until they feel that it is important.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:13:59

You said it adds something to the learning process. But what does it add to the learners themselves? When they create things,?

T1 1:14:10

they get exposure to the learning. They they do learn new skills. They do have some new challenges, like being able to solve a technical problem, that is a challenge which could be solved. Once they solve it, well there is something new they learned. As I told you, the other skills they could also learn. I mean, it's kind of all things related to each other. The interpersonal skills, they actually develop with people, with teachers. And their ability to use the multimedia authoring, the devices itself is also an important factor.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:15:03

Do you personally think that we need to increase more sort of multimedia authoring activities and approaches to learning? So do you think we need to introduce more AMA activities?

T1 1:15:29

Do I think we need to produce more? Yes. But are there other challenges? Yes, there are challenges, and mostly these challenges are cultural kind of issues.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:15:47

how?

T1 1:15:48

Because Abdullah, we are still living in a context where ladies, for example, in my class do not want to share their work, they do not want to publish their work. So it's only the teacher is the one who will listen to my work. I'm telling you, now, we are working on blogger, where we want students to help us, like we want kind of having all of our students podcasts over the past 3-4 years. So I want to publish this, I want to add them all to blogger where students can probably access them, they can enjoy listening at their colleagues considering different topics. I have already asked some students, the female ones mostly actually will disagree with that. Teacher, sorry, I cannot share my work with others because I don't want others to listen to my voice!, which is an issue by itself.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:16:50

They don't want to, just because of that, or is there something...?

T1 1:16:53

Mainly this or probably it could be they have the feeling that maybe if my friends would compare their product to mine, something like this. But mainly, that is a reason. I just experienced it last week by asking some students. Of course, I have never had a problem with the male students, they are always welcome. I have some very good examples of the female students, no matter actually how their final preduct were, but they do not mind. But we still have this group of people, which I totally respect..

Abdullah Alhasani 1:17:31

So not all female students,?

T1 1:17:33

not all female students, but some female students would actually not allow you as a teacher, I mean, if you give them a chance of course, to publish their work.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:17:44

So they refuse publishing!!, Did you dig deeper? Like did you think it has to do with not being confident about their voice, Or is it .....?

T1 1:17:52

To tell you the truth, I never raised the questions about it with my students, but I can tell you mostly it is a cultural thing that if it's female, then it probably my voice should not be kind of go anywhere. Maybe they are afraid that other people might misuse their voices in a way or another. Thoe are only assumptions, but I did not actually ask a students, I always give them chance, I mean, I always give students some kind of vendors where they probably can publish their work, SoundCloud and other examples. And really, some of them actually do it, but because it's not required, I mean, I don't require this as as a must. I just give them option, as extra task they can do.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:18:53

Otherwise you think if it's a requirements...,

T1 1:18:56

If it's a requirement, they will do it.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:18:57

. But like, you cannot just put your finger at exactly what the issue is, you think it is cultural ...

T1 1:19:03

is cultural, but what aspect of culture exactly? What is it? Well, it is a culture, it is only with females, and not all females. And I have to tell you it's not it is not something that have to do with where they live, because I have I have ladies from the capital itselfthey actually they do not want to share their work. So places have nothing to do with this, religion has nothing to do with this, as I believe,

Abdullah Alhasani 1:19:33

but you have not raised it? You haven't discussed in the class?

T1 1:19:36

I haven't raised it in the class. That's why I can't really give you the specific answer. Because such questions are kind of sensitive there. They will say just I don't want to, that's it.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:19:47

Okay, cool. Let's move to the student centered learning as another aspect of multimedia authoring experience. Creating multimedia products involves that aspect of independent, autonomous and centered learning. Do you think this aspect is valuable to learning in Omani higher education? And how do you think it's valuable?

T1 1:20:22

If is it valuable? I mean, if you ask me, it is valuable. I think it's very important that we we really move from this teacher-centered thing to student-centered approach.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:20:37

Why? Why do you think that?

T1 1:20:39

Because your your end goal should be building a student who is an autonomous learner. And to do that, you have you will have to have a responsible students. To have responsible students, you should start giving your students some kind of responsibility. And student centered approach, as I believe, is all about moving these responsibilities from teacher to student.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:21:12

But for Omani students,? away from abstracts, do you think really need to be autonomous. ?

T1 1:21:27

Of course they do. I mean, I believe that they have to be autonomous learners because this is Abdullah how we are talking about 21st century skills, and probably we are talking about students who are critical thinkers, students who are able to solve complicated problems, students who are able... To do this, just teacher-centered approach is not that I thing to use at this aspect. We are talking about students who are able to solve their own problems, no matter what these problems are. And to to have that experience, you will never reach that unless you give your students levels of responsibility.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:22:22

based on those experiences, because most of the authoring multimedia artifact experiences were mostly student-centered, how did students receive and react to this approach,? where they're receptive,? were there problems?

T1 1:22:40

At the beginning, yes, to introduce the idea, they were always kind of receptive But as I told you, I always give them tasks where there is possibility of picking some choices. So for example, they can pick the group they want to work on, they can pick the article they want to analyze and to come up with the recommendations and probably summarize the articles themselves. This amount of choice is, as far as I understand, is little kind of responsibility given to them, and they successfully did it throughout out the stages themselves. Because as as we look at it from literature, they already start doing their work. I have actually some cases of students, in the first day we introduced the idea they were already working on it, considering that once they have a clear rubric, clear stages, things are clear, they start doing it. And having students with no questions at all, probably is another example of a students who did things by themselves. So I think the process of producing podcasting is really a student-centered approach thing. Okay.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:24:22

Do we need to introduce more of student-centred learning? Or is the current practice enough, generally in higher education? Do we need to expound on student centered approach, at this stage, at higher education stage?

T1 1:24:42

At higher education, of course, we do have, and I think that should touch all learning aspect, and how students receive information. See our students now look at the teacher as the only source of knowledge. They still do that. They do not look at the teacher as one source of knowledge, and the facilitator.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:25:16

But do you feel this should change?

T1 1:25:17

This should change, of course, and our students are ready for that.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:25:23

Why should it change?

T1 1:25:24

Because, as I mentioned to you, it is the trend, how things are going. But again, we are preparing students to be responsible to be autonomous learners at the end. And just to to reach that end goal, what we are doing now, the current practice, is not enough.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:25:52

Okay. But would you feel there are challenges to that, to the student-centered learning approach?

T1 1:25:57

Of course, they are challenges. I think it is also about teachers understanding their roles at the first place, and students have tounderstand the teachers roles in the first place. So it is a matter of understanding at the first place. Of course, if you are to change to student-centered approach, then probably we will have to stress many points where we might even have to change the assessment. And I'm stressing on assessment because it matters a lot. All right. And to change assessment, authority might be against you, the environment, the culture, the parents might be against you. They know that, at the end of the semester, they know that they will probably receive a paper saying that their student got A, B or 90 or 100. But it is difficult for them to just accept . By them, I mean, the authority,probably the parents,

Abdullah Alhasani 1:27:12

When you talk about authority, you talk about the HODs, and the ministry, and things like that?

T1 1:27:17

Yes, of course. And as cool as it is the principles, the school masters, etc. So making these changes requires a lot of effort from everyone. And first, we have to understand who shoul do what. Actually some parents come to school telling teachers that your role is to teach. It is not my responsibility at house to teach my kid. That was introduced to me throough some of my differential course' students in their practicum actually. So it is your role as a teacher to teach them. So it is a still kind of cultural, we look at it that way, that teacher is the only source of knowledge and no one else.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:28:14

So in your case, like in the case of podcasting, did you face that problem of understanding the roles with students?

T1 1:28:21

Because of the simplicity of the task, the task is not too complicated. So actually, it wasn't that much difficult. I mean, to be honest, it was student-centered. Was it difficult? No, it wasn't. It went well. And I'm not planning like to make changes. Actually, if I probably discover ways where I can even push it to make it more student-centered approach, I will also move toward that.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:28:49

Okay, let's move to leveraging technology in learning. AMA involves the use of computer technologies and ITs. Do you think using ICTs generally is valuable to students in higher education in Oman?

T1 1:29:11

Do we have even option to say if it's not valuable? If we said it's not valuable. Do I believe? Yes, I believe it is important. And I believe it should be embedded in every course in every class. Because we are dealing with digital native kind of students whose technology is just in their blood. You cannot just live in isolation without giving them tasks just far away from that, engaging technology in the classroom has a very good role, I mean, and it's expanding.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:29:54

How do you compare it to other approaches to learning ? Like Maybe to the no use of computers? What does it add? What do computers add to the whole?

T1 1:30:05

You can you can feel it, Abdullah students are, First of all, because we are trying to push students to look at different sources of knowledge, not only the teacher. Doing that itself is a reason why I need to push technology, because it is the key word they can access all this knowledge. That's one thing. The other thing is, again, we deal with a generation, the students the type of students themselves you are having are students who are ready. So if they are good with it, if it's portable on their pocket, why don't we use it? Why don't we just make use of what they have? It is something they have. It is something we can use. What might stop us from using it?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:30:51

What does it add to the learning process? We talked about the students? What about the learning experience? What does it add? What does technology add?

T1 1:31:07

I think it develops the quality of the learning itself, through accessing different mediums of knowledge. That could be one thing. That's what is in my mind, actually now. .

Abdullah Alhasani 1:31:37

Are you satisfied with the current status quo? When it comes to generally using technology in teaching in higher education in Oman? Did it reach a satisfactory stage? Or do you think we need to invest, to integrate more technology?

T1 1:32:02

I think that are different factors, Abdullah. I think we need to implement it more. I think we need more integration. Of course, actually that's what we need to apply. There are still things which we don't have actually in our classes, which we as teachers wish to implement. We still lack the basic stuff, which should not be even a problem anymore. Internet, the devices, and some other issues are actually things we still have. I mean, we cannot leave these challenges. So there are challenges, and we really must overcome them. And these challenges are not only in college here, but almost across the country. If you look at schools, there are many schools were still teachers suffer actually from the accessibility of internet, from the devices they have, even if they have the knowledge, even if they have the desire to use technology, there are many challenges we have.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:33:18

Do you think integrating that technology or ICT generally, do you think it creates any problems for teaching, for students' learning? does it create any challenges,?

T1 1:33:33

problems to students or problems to teachers? I think, yes, considering the teachers' generation, it will require extra knowledge from teachers, something they really have to move fast with. It doesn't threaten teachers job, but it will require a lot from teachers. So if we, as teachers, use technology it doesn't necessarily mean it will make our jobs easier, even though that's like a belief. In fact, there will be many challenges, there will be a lot of things for teachers to be trying to. And of course, consider the technical issues, etc. The training issues are some other other problems. So mainly, the way how I see it, training, the cost issue itself is also a problem.Training, the cost are two of the biggest problems.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:34:55

The last part of the interview, which is talking about the learning environment or the supporting learning environment to multimedia authoring or creating multimedia products. We're going to be focusing on the role of the teacher, first of all, which contrasts student-centered learning. And we're going to talk about the learning atmosphere, and the nature of learning activities based on project-based learning. Talking about the role the teacher, AMA products involve minimum teacher intervention, and maximum student learning time. Also teachers role should be limited to being facilitators, to being supportive to students, also to empower students to work on their own and to give them the space and time, and to encourage them to assume responsibility and ownership. Do you think teachers roles as facilitators, is valuable to learning and Omani higher education? i.e., Minimizing teachers role to only being the facilitators?

T1 1:36:04

I can tell you based on my experience, we are trying to move I mean, from being teachers to facilitators, and we are trying to push extra responsibilities to students by minimizing the tasks that teachers could do, and giving students extra choices and maximizing probably the opportunities students could get through. That's something I myself to try to do. But is it valuable to the higher education in Oman? I think it's because every now and then, by attending conferences, you see that there is a trend moving towards this student-centered approach. So, you can feel that I mean, if you attend conferences, and let's say, if you just look at the recent published papers, you will see that most of the work from Oman itself, you will find that the most focus is to move. So, it is valuable,

Abdullah Alhasani 1:37:31

Does shifting responsibility for learning to students enhances their learning experience,?

T1 1:37:36

I think yes. And he and I will go back again to the process thing, where because I really feel it is important. As we agreed, the end goal that I want to achieve is to have an autonomous a student. And to build that, it will require a lot of effort from the students, with reducing responsibilities gradually from teachers to students. Of course, you cannot do this, like Well, today you are going to do everything; it should be a gradual process in order to happen. And we are on the track, I think we are doing well.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:38:24

So you're talking about this at the college level?

T1 1:38:26

, I'm talking about the college.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:38:28

So there is a trend huh?

T1 1:38:29

I think there are individual efforts

Abdullah Alhasani 1:38:33

How are students accepting such offers, or such roles?

T1 1:38:40

They they never reject. I mean, I myself have never faced an issue with that. In fact, students like it, when you give them a chance to pick their topics, when you give them chance,probably to choose the day when they want to have their assessment. And I think that's somethingthat could be shared with them.Yeah, I mean, I rarely have issues with the students regarding giving them responsibilities .

Abdullah Alhasani 1:39:09

So no complaints from their part?

T1 1:39:15

Sometimes they might raise some issues that the the level of understanding they have is limited. Trust is another issue, they really have to trust themselves that they can find knowledge. But as I told you, teacher role is still there; teacher is facilitator in case something went wrong, the teacher could probably correct or provide the correct answer in a particular case.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:39:41

But you were with limiting teachers role to being facilitator,?

T1 1:39:46

I am with that or Absolutely, and I'm supporting that, I'm trying to push that in my classes as well.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:39:53

So you think you feel we need less our teacher-centered approaches?

T1 1:39:57

I feel that yes, we need less teacher-centered approaches,

Abdullah Alhasani 1:40:01

and you want to link it here because of the trend? Or is there any other reason?

T1 1:40:05

Not necessarily the trend. Because when we try it, we find it work. So why don't we just carry on with it?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:40:13

just for the sake of trying it?

T1 1:40:14

it's, it's the trend, it is the skills required from students to be learned. There are different factors actually, I do not have them all now. But I can tell you, different aspects, I mean, influencing it. It is a trend, that is right. But also to prepare better students, I think we have to go through that as well. It provides better quality teaching. And, again, we are not only preparing them for exam, or preparing them to get certificates. We prepare them for lifelong learning. And to do that, of course, we have to shift responsibilities.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:41:14

Are there any disadvantages to minimal teacher intervention in higher education education?, Do you see any challenges or or disadvantages or negative aspects to less teacher-centred approaches?

T1 1:41:36

Yes, there are. The culture is one of the issues

Abdullah Alhasani 1:41:47

what culture?

T1 1:41:47

, like the environment itself, I mean, parents won't accept that.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:41:54

You mean the social culture?

T1 1:41:56

Yes probably.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:41:58

You said parents,, even in college?, or Are you talking about the case of schools?

T1 1:42:09

mostly by doing that I refer to the examples my students gave me in schools. So mostly i refer to schools in that one

Abdullah Alhasani 1:42:17

How about at the level of college?

T1 1:42:18

Well, i have never had an issue

Abdullah Alhasani 1:42:21

So do you think there's going to be any disadvantage?

T1 1:42:25

there are disadvantages Abdullah, one of them is this, the other one is misunderstanding the roles. Having that misconception about what is my role as a student, and what is my role as as a teacher, this shifting the responsibility itself will create some other issues about the trust of knowledge that students will receive about a particular topic. They always look at the teacher as as the source of knowledge, they might not trust information they receive from a colleague, from internet, or from whatever. That belief is still something I still feel in their class,. Any other issues? So, there is kind of social-cultural issues. There is a trust issue going on. Issue with assessment as well. I have to stress that again. Doing that will require us to change how we assess our students, but we are behind when it comes into assessment. We try to push student-centered approach in our classes, but we still rely on on probably ways of assessment that mainly they could be perfectly done with teacher-centered approach,

Abdullah Alhasani 1:44:03

So you think existing practices are still teacher-centered?

T1 1:44:08

I told you there are kind of individual efforts for teachers to move towards student-centered approach

Abdullah Alhasani 1:44:16

But apart from that, the dominating role is teacher-centered?

T1 1:44:20

it is, Yes.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:44:24

Okay. Let's talk about the learning atmosphere. Creating multimedia products requires a convenient learning atmosphere, supportive learning atmosphere in the senses we need a learning atmosphere that encourages collaboration, independent learning, trial and error, something like that. Such a learning atmosphere (and I think students have been through that experience where many mentioned recording more than one time, some even up to 10). So, such a learning atmosphere, do you think creating it is valuable to learning in Omani higher education?

T1 1:45:08

No, not necessarily, because we are not mature enough to accept that as a source of knowledge, I mean, at least at the level of students' work . And but there are some good examples we cannot ignore. Look at us, for example, here we are trying to publish things, we are trying to publish students' work and make it accessible worldwide. So I mean, it can happen it can take place.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:45:46

(Repeating Q). To enable such an approach to learning, which is AMA learning, you need to encourage independent learning, collaboration, interpersonal learning, and also learning from trial and error. Such factors, are they valuable to learning in Omani higher education.?

T1 1:46:07

Absolutely, they are. I mean, because students get exposed to some other sources of knowledge than the teacher. The collaboration itself is one example of that. And they do learn from the mistakes they create, they do have kind of continuous feedback from the teacher, probably. And some point, in my class as a case, I push the peer-feedback for particular tasks. So it is valuable, actually.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:46:56

Since you provided that opportunity for them to learn, how did they receive it? How did that resonate with that? the example of learning through creating a podcast? Did they like such learning atmosphere, did they like the independent learning, the trial and error, and the collaborative, sort of ...

T1 1:47:20

I think Abdullah yes, actually because students having that sense of responsibility itself has added something to them. And you can easily tell that in the class. Giving them responsibility, and having them accepting that responsibility of doing that particular task, they looked at it at the beginning of that as a challenge. But then, at the end, they looked at it as an achievement. And I think those two words are important here. They challenge things, but they achieved something. So they always have these challenges, but the task that was given to them is achievable. So that is why I think it went well in that stage.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:48:21

Well, giving them that space, do you think they're gonna be able to manage their learning?

T1 1:48:31

Considering that particularcourse?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:48:38

Or just generally, where we create such an atmosphere for learning, or encourage them to go independent?

T1 1:48:46

as I told you, I teach fourth year students, and I can feel to an extent they are actually responsible. I started pushing some tasks to them, to be done by themselves, and it went well. So far, it works fine with me. I think our students are ready for it. If the teacher is willing to do it, then why not?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:49:15

Do you personally believe that we need to create such learning atmospheres?

T1 1:49:19

I do believe that we `have to create such atmosphere because it is important, because it considers` the importance of learning through looking at the process till reaching the output of a particular task, it considers the skills required for learning. All of these.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:49:45

will they create any sort of challenges or problems?.

T1 1:49:49

Of course, there are always challenges, there are always problems, but they learn through going through these challenges. As teachers, we always have to make sure our tasks given students are at least challenging. That's at least something I believe, but we also have to consider the level of proximal development of activities that we give to our students, as something achievable as well.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:50:24

Let's move to the last part. We're going to talk about the nature of learning activity. Most learning is done on a project-based approach. So PBL, where do you see its value? Or do you think it's valuable as a learning approach in the higher edu context?

T1 1:50:48

the thing is, doing the project is like a good example of shifting responsibilities to students, as you are the owner of that project. Starting from earlier stages, by picking topics, picking groups, going through the assessment, the criteria, all these tasks by themselves. So these are things just given by teacher to them, but they do them in their own and giving them that part of time to work on a particular task. Being able to achieve that task in the allocated time is a good example of student who was given level of responsibility, and they managed to do the task appropriately, and hand it at the time. So, project-based learning is a good example, actually, if we are to foster more learn learning-centered approach in our classes.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:52:04

So do you think we need to do that?

T1 1:52:07

I think we have to, we need to give extra attention to the score. I mean, if there is any chance for a teacher whether to pick between different types of assessments or projects, I would say let's go with a project one. By the way, even though responsibilities are shift to student but that doesn't mean teachers efforts are less. That, in fact, will require extra efforts from teachers to follow up with the students and to be able to manage to reply to their questions as well. Because by doing that students will have to read, let's say articles from different sources, they will reach a good level of knowledge that if they might ask teachers who might not even have answers for the questions they have. So in order to come up with the process, teachers themselves have to put extra effort to probably keep up with the level of the students.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:53:13

All right, but did you feel that students like the idea of a projects? or learing through projects?

T1 1:53:35

They do prefer projects then other types of assessment, like tests, quizzes; they do actually prefer that because with tests and the quizzes there is allocated time and that time is very tight when it comes into like that amount to give them. But with the project, students have a little more freedom to work on it on their own pace, at their own time, and probably to access information from different tools, to do them at the way they feel that they should be done once teachers set the rules to them

Abdullah Alhasani 1:54:18

To apply their thinking styles, you mean?

T1 1:54:20

Kind of, yes. They will be actually able to use whatever suitable way, they will probably be able to involve their own learning styles to fit with that project.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:54:46

Do you think project-based learning might create any kind of problems to teaching or students' learning?

T1 1:54:59

Project-based learning might have issues if rubrics and the assessment criteria were not set well, then probably yes, there might be a problem. And this could be for both teachers and, and the students. For teachers, of course, the monitoring itself is something they have to consider. So they have always to follow up with different groups and/or even individual works, which will require excellent effort from teachers. Will it create or does it have issues with students? If individual students lack the skills that they need to cope up with that particular project, then yes, there will be a problem. Because usually, in specific projects, students are asked to use different learning styles and different ways to produce a task. I can give you an example of a student I had in an educational technology class. That was like three years ago, okay. He has a problem, like he cannot really speak well. And for that particular student, and by the way he is going to be a teacher, really he can never pronounce any single word well. For that particular student, that project was an issue. He even reached a level where, you know, they there there were these kinds of applications where you can just type and the application will pronounce words for you. So he used that application to recognize, which is just something entirely different from what we did. In his case, he was exposed to it, he liked the idea of podcasting, he was involved in all podcasting process. Yet, at the end, I also had to give him an extra task to do, I mean, something just to coover what we have. He has submitted me something, but he used that application, which is something I did not accept. And just looking at his case, I had to ask him to do another task. But within the podcasting thing, it was something to do, like research-based, but within looking at the rule of podcasting.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:55:04

Didn't even try?

T1 1:57:41

he tried, he tried actually, but because he really cannot speak his issue was like he cannot produce the words.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:57:53

He has got a physiological problem?

T1 1:57:57

Yep, physiological problem, that's what I mean; that's what that speaking about. So in his case, producing a podcast was not an option. That's was not really an option at all. And looking at his case, I mean, he was always kind of feeling embarrassed with his friends when we were talking about that particular project. For that individual case, I really had to look at it individually; I had to give that student, I asked him to produce something, I was thinking about it. But I said, Let's see where will he stop. He produced something, yet he used some of these applications to just kind of pronounce the words. So he added the text and the application just pronounced the words.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:58:46

What is he going to do in schools?

T1 1:58:48

I think yes, that is that that was my big question. I don't know what's he going to do in school,

Abdullah Alhasani 1:58:53

this is might give him the training where you can try as many times, record, stop and cut and paste.

T1 1:58:57

Probably, that could be a solution to the problem. But for his case, that particular student I also taught him an assessment course. In assessment, they have to create the listening task themselves. I did not allow them to use any application. Actually, for that, I said I wanted you to do it yourself. It was an individual task. He also had the same issue with listening one. It wouldn't work at all if you put that as a tape and just ask students to listen in class.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:59:40

That's a sort of a radical exceptional case!

T1 1:59:42

Yes, that was an exceptional case for a student, but well, it tells you something, that those cases exist actually, and you have to consider them.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:59:55

Okay, the end of this interview, would you like to add any comment about AMAas an approach to learning?

T1 2:00:09

I think we should embed it, at least giving it a try in our curriculum in schools in one way or another. I mean, not necessarily putting it that way, but introducing the idea to students in schools. Examples of this could be probably introducing students to some good podcasts where they can develop their English in schools, for example, not necessarily by using a mobile phone, by iPod by whatever. Even shifting the way how we reward students. Well, instead of rewarding them probably gifts of different types, let's just give them those little iPods and with some lessons in English, for example, or whatever, just to expose them to the experience. Because I have to tell you that listening is still an issue in schools. They don't look at it as really, ultimately. I believe that listening is almost, I would give it, more than 40% of learning skill itself. And that's only opinion but also based on research. And when it comes into communication, it plays a huge role. And the end, isn't that why we need language? to communicate with others as well? So probably we have to incorporate it in different ways. I like the idea. I can tell my students at the end of courses they liked the idea too, but they still consider it as an idea, not a real practice. I mean, I have seen some initiatives, some examples. Nowadays, we start probably hearing about students, they want to initiate their own probably channels, their own kind of pages online, where they can post their podcasts. But these are individual cases, and we probably really need to push them. There are initiatives.

Abdullah Alhasani 2:02:40

Thank you very much. I appreciate concert your input. Thank you for participating.