Abdullah Alhasani 0:00

Hello, T2. Lovely having you in this interview. I'm begging I'm making a dramatic shift because I'm shifting to okay. It was all in Arabic. OK, cool. So I Rena, welcome to this interview. The goal of this interview is to investigate Omani students, perceptions of experiences, other experiences, and multimedia authoring. They've created different artifacts, including podcasts, and online courses and prezies and things like that. So I'm focusing on three areas, 1) aspects of learner engagement, 2) and then the pedagogy that facilitates the multimedia authoring aspect, and 3) then the surrounding learning environment. We're also going to be tackling some challenges that might have been experienced by those students in these learning experiences that might have been reported: concerns, fears, etc. Let's start by getting to know you. Briefly.

T2 1:13

My name is I arena,. And I have been an English lecturer for so many years now. Probably more than 20 years now. And I've been here in this college for, this is my fifth or sixth year. And so far, I have been teaching English for academic purposes to business and IT students. Also Level A foundation students, and educational technology for IT with the ELT majors, and the debating of communication also with the ELT majors.

Abdullah Alhasani 2:10

of these 20 years how many were in Oman?

T2 2:14

I came 2005. So what is it? 14 years?

Abdullah Alhasani 2:19

So that's 14 years. Six of which is in this college? Do you haveprevious experiences authoring multimedia artifacts prior to this?

T2 2:46

No, when I started teaching educational technology, that was the first time. I saw the software used for it or how to use it. So far, I was only I mean, until that time I had only been using the ready ones and for the listening classes. Yeah. but to create, no!

Abdullah Alhasani 3:08

Alrighty, let's get to it. Three parts are going to be covered: the first part, we're going to talk about learner engagement in authoring multimedia artifacts experiences, we need to explore how such experiences engage students: pre, within, and post stages. At the initial stage or the planning stage, how did you prepare your students for for this experience, we can take podcasting as an example.

T2 3:45

Well, they knew at the beginning of the course that they will have to do something like that. So they were kind of prepared that they will be experimenting with a lot of new things for them, because that's definitely a new area for them. Okay, the software was given to them. And I think it was pre-downloaded to computers. And some students were bringing their own laptops, so software was distributed to them on flash sticks. As for how to work with the software, I decided that I want them to learn it by watching instructional videos, and they could do it in pairs, or they could do it on their own, it was up to them. And then only if they had if they still had issues, then I would address problems with them - like if they couldn't find something. For example, sometimes, although some of those instructional videos will be showing the older version of the program, or the newer version of the program, and they're they're supposed to, and so they wouldn't be able to find certain functions there, so this is when I would come in so. So the as far as the learning how to work with the tool, they were supposed to do it in small groups, or in pairs, which would kind of supports student-centered learning because they are supposed to be sharing the knowledge with each other. And now that YouTube offers this great opportunity to do that. So yeah, so this is how they were, how they were working with it. It took me a while actually to, especially female students, to get them used to the fact that they will have to hear their own voice. Students are not comfortable with listening to their own voice on the audio recording. Even though for example, lots of them use WhatsApp audio messages, but they say it's different when they talk to their friends when they send those audio messages to their friends, or where where they know that somebody else will be listening to that. So they had to kind of deal with this in the process. And I remember there was a girl who was absent in one of the classes and she was supposed to present something, and I wanted her to, and she couldn't come or whatever to the class. And I said to her Okay, in that case, you're going to record your presentation so that other students will be able to see it. And she absolutely refused. Not on the video, okay, I knew that video is going to be a big problem, but not even the audio. She said no, there's no way she can do it. When I tried this audio recording with my foundation students last semester, there was like an activity we were doing in the book and I wanted all of them to practice, and because I had a very large group, so I decided that with the girls, I'm going to ask them to to record the activity as a voice message and send it to me over WhatsApp. And yet still some of them had problems with that. They told me point blank, they said I I hate hearing my own voice on the recording.

Abdullah Alhasani 7:10

So that's the reason you had to convince them, because they hated their voice?.

T2 7:14

Yes, because they hated their voice. Yes. I think it took quite of getting used to for them. And I think that's the reason why a lot of them just treated that past as something they have to put a tick next to. Okay, that's done. And I am done. But they didn't really take it deeper to the next level where, Okay, I record this bit then I listen to it, and then I will see if I can correct something. Because that later on came up with the final product. In the final product, it was very, very clear who didn't do any work with it. They just wanted to record it and have it done.

Abdullah Alhasani 8:02

So software is provided, and then some instruction, they were given space to explore themselves, but they were provided videos to do that. How do you ensure that students were ready to embark on such a project? With this amount of resources?

T2 8:21

well with this course they really had no choice, I mean, because it's a very fast-paced course. So they have no no choice. You know, when the time comes, the time comes. They are usually informed at the beginning of the course, they are given syllables at the beginning of the course, so they're kind of psychologically being prepared for it throughout the weeks, that okay we are approaching this moment when you're going to have to create your own podcast. So they were told, for example, they were instructed like where to do it or where not to do it, like which places would not be a good place to do it. So I said don't do it on a very noisy street, or don't do it in a bathroom because of the Eco. Yeah, so they were told about things like that. But Yeah, they were kind of being informed throughout the course that the time will come when they will have to create a podcast.

Abdullah Alhasani 9:24

All right. So they have no choice but did you feel that beside the stuff that you provided , did you feel that they had the necessary skills? And

T2 9:44

No, No, I don't think so. I think in the process, a lot of them started discovering themselves. For most of them, it was like the first time experience. And later on from what they told me that, some of them hated the experience, Llke I said, they just wanted to get it done. But some students were telling me that they actually really, really enjoyed it, and that they discovered certain skills in themselves even technical skills that they didn't know that they possess, like how to work with software, or those students who are like really trying to perfect whatever they were preparing, you could you could hear it from the final product that they really worked on it. Yes. So those said that they really, really enjoyed it. And that they learned a lot of new things with it. And it was not just the language, it was it was also about the technical skills.

Abdullah Alhasani 10:49

how about the choice of topic?

T2 10:54

They had to prepare two podcasts: one was the solo, one was the conversation that they would have with somebody. Some of the topics.... that was also that I told them, I said choose a topic that you are really passionate about, because if you are passionate about the topic, it will be much easier for you to talk about it. But again, I had a feeling that a lot of students that just tactics tick on the box. So they would pick extremely boring topics, you know, when you as a teacher are listening, and I told them with some of them I was literally falling asleep. Because first of all topic was boring, and because it was boring, it was delivered in a boring way. But some students who had passion about something and they picked a topic, where they will talk about it. Yeah, there was a huge difference, even in the in the tone of their voice, in how they would delay, the intonation, how they would implement music elements into the podcast. Yeah. So there were a big difference there.

Abdullah Alhasani 12:08

But sure they were given to freedom to choose.?

T2 12:10

yes

Abdullah Alhasani 12:12

What about the resources, beside the software, that you provided? and The tutorial?

T2 12:17

Well, first of all, they were directed to the website, six minutes English, which is like the pocdcast web website of BBC. And they were asked to listen to a few podcasts to see how it is done. Because for a lot of them, it was like a new thing. They thought it was just enough if they just record themselves talking, but I was trying to show them that it's much more than that. Some of the students, after watching the videos that were recommended to them, they would go on YouTube and look for for other videos to get a bit more information or to get more examples of of how a good podcast is done.

Abdullah Alhasani 13:07

It was just personal effort?. they went beyond that?

T2 13:11

yes

Abdullah Alhasani 13:17

Did you provide any technical support throughout the way?

T2 13:20

Yes, when they were in the lab, because these classes are taking place in the lab, if they already had the audio file that had to be uploaded to Audacity, and they had problems with, for example, how to cut it or how to input the music there or how to fade it in, fade it out?, Yes, they could approach me in class. Or even in my office, if they brought their own laptop, they could do it. They could do it in the office. Because many of them chose not to record with audacity, they were recording with the mobile phone, and then just working with them with the audio files. So we could do we could do it in the lab. Yeah, so absolutely. They could they could ask me for help.

Abdullah Alhasani 14:10

Okay. And the (during) phase, that was the preparation phase, sort of, what were the steps that students followed during the creation process?

T2 14:25

Okay, the steps were, I mean, the instruction was given, I think, if I remember step by step in Google Classroom, where they were told, okay, so they chose the topic, they already kind of had the content, so they had to look for a place where they would record it, and it was done outside of the classroom. Some of them chose to, for example, during the classroom time they would choose to go outside of the classroom and sit in the corridor, especially if they chose to record it with the friend that they don't see that often, to record it there in the corridor, and then they would come with the ready file that will be on their mobile phone, then they were told where to look for the royalty free mus ic for their fading in, fading out. So they were directed to websites where they wouldn't violate any copyrights. Then, they were also told how to convert those files from the whatever weird formats their phones created them into the mp3, and how to how to upload it int Audacity. And then basically, they were working usually like if it was like, for example, a dialogue that they were doing they would be working in class together on how to how to work on the file. Yeah, the A lot of them, unfortunately settled for whatever first attempt they had, and they were just working with whatever they had. So they didn't see any need to go: Okay, I listened, I listened to it, there was something wrong there, so let me try and record it again. Just like they don't work from feedback that we give them in general, it was the same problem with the podcast. So very often, I would end up with podcasts where I literally had to be ready to remove my headphones anytime because you will have a podcast where there is a really, really loud music on the intro, then you can barely hear students talking, and then suddenly there is a very loud music somewhere in the middle, and you just literally go deaf. Yes. So yeah, so that was the issue.

Abdullah Alhasani 16:59

All right. following these steps, how did they reflect on their work, getting the topic ready, choosing the content themselves,...

T2 17:12

they were supposed to write blogs, there was like a blog style entry where they were supposed to reflect on the whole process. Like did they enjoy it? what they liked? what they didn't like?. And that was... supposed to be submitted through a blogger account, because by that time, they were already familiar with the blogger. So they were supposed to write short blogs. But unfortunately, the reflection that I wanted to get from them, I was almost never getting because they would just describe the process of how they did that. So they will tell the steps, they would take like screenshots of the the software that they were using, telling readers like what to press when you want to do this, or you want to do that, but they really didn't know how to reflect on the whole experience, like did they enjoy it? They didn't enjoy it?. Some of them were saying yes that they learned new things, that they discovered, like new software, for example. But as far as the whole idea of why we were doing it?, and what was the purpose of doing that? And what did they learn from it? It was just from few students that I got it.

Abdullah Alhasani 18:47

Throughout the creation process, they approach to you? What mainly the support they required, was it to do something to do with the editing,? how to edit.?

T2 18:57

With editing, Yes. How to edit?

Abdullah Alhasani 18:59

Is there any kind of support? like they wanted personal, sort of emotional support?

T2 19:06

No, not really not. I mean, not with. Like I said, those students who had problem with hearing their voice, they just had to power it through.

Well, they had no other choice. So you lose the mark basically if you don't do it, Yeah. And because podcast was worth, like 10 marks, I think out of 100. So that woule be quite a big loss. Yeah.

Abdullah Alhasani 19:19

did you push them?

Do you feel they sought help from each other?

T2 19:42

Yes, yes. And I think there were more comfortable. I had these moments that I really, really liked when you walk into the classroom, and you see one student showing the other students how they did that, or how they should do that. So this is what I really liked. So they started asking each other. So for example, if one student already submitted a podcast, and the other was still working on it, I could always say, okay, go and ask Ahmed, because he already did that, so he can help you. And they were really, really supportive towards each other, and they knew how to explain things as well.

Abdullah Alhasani 20:20

Why did you like it?

T2 20:21

I like it because doesn't that support a whole student-centered learning that we're talking about? And where they're supposed to be like independent learners, and the whole social constructivism and everything else? Where they get knowledge from each other, rather than from the teacher? So actually, I mean, I wouldn't mind if they asked me for help, but I really liked to see that they were helping each other in class,

Abdullah Alhasani 20:46

because that supports your own approach to learning.?

T2 20:48

Yes, Absolutely.

Abdullah Alhasani 21:01

Alright, the post stage, it's called the reflection, let's call it prior to around grading those projects. Did you feel that students gave some thought to the final outcome? did they evaluat it in one way or another? from the outcomes that you received

T2 21:27

I would say very few. For the majority it is just one more task that they had to do. I think if students really gave any value to it, a lot of them wouldn't stop with that one podcast that they had to submit. They would probably get into it a little bit more. Once they submited their podcasts, I would have a spreadsheet and the marks will be given, and they will they will be given comments on every mark. So they knew why they were getting this mark, for every single podcast. So as I'm listening, when they talk I would be writing comments, and the comments were quite detailed. But yet, even though they were given those comments, I didn't have even one student who, like if they were unhappy with their mark, would approach me and say, Okay, I want to improve my mark, is it okay, if I do it, again, correcting all these mistakes that I had? but I didn't have a case like that. So I don't know if it meant that they were not engaged, because again, going back to the fact that it's a very heavy course. And it's like really no flexible ability in time there. So even though we can move certain things, we can postpone certain things, but they know that other tasks are coming. And because podcast come, ifremember correctly, week eight or nine in the program. So there's not that much time left to do any corrections. But I think if they asked, they would be given a chance to correct it.

Abdullah Alhasani 23:29

Having listened to some samples of the podcast, (judging the quality of the outcomes) Would you feel that put effort on that?

T2 23:39

Again, it really depends on the students and depends on the topic. Like if they picked a topic that they liked, that they have a lot to say about? Yes. I mean, they would make the same language mistakes that they make in speaking. Okay. They did not appreciate the fact that on the podcast, you can always go back and correct it. But this language accuracy is what everybody's complaining about here.

Abdullah Alhasani 24:11

So, you fee that problem was recurring.?

T2 24:13

Yes, it was. And this is what I would also be telling them. Okay, certain podcasts sounded extremely rehearsed. In the sense of, I knew, and you could even hear that students had a piece of paper from which they were reading and not very well. So I mean, rehearse in the sense, like, it was not a natural conversation, (deivery style?) but it would be something that they prepared in writing. But even though it was prepared in writing, they didn't read it enough to be able to deliver it in a smooth way. So I told me that I know immediately when somebody is reading from a piece of paper, even if I don't hear that rustling paper on the recording, but I told them I can hear it because of the intonation, because of where they cut the sentence. And I said, I know when it's red, and I know when it's delivered naturally, so when you have a natural conversation. And that's why I told them to not choose topics that are difficult, where you have a lot where you find a lot of difficult words that are difficult to pronounce for you. Go for something easier Where you can have like a natural conversation with somebody. But very often, yeah, it was like so so obvious that oh, my God, it's read from the paper, andd they didn't practice it at home enough even.

Abdullah Alhasani 25:39

so, you think it's from the lack of practice and not to do with the skill?

T2 25:42

No, I don't think so.

Abdullah Alhasani 25:46

Is that a clickable across the board? even to those guys who were the good ones?

T2 25:51

With the good the good ones, I mean, if there are good at language in general, they wouldn't have a problem. I can't recall any case where somebody would have terrible difficulty ,technical difficulty dealing with the program or something. If their language was good, it's the weak ones. The week students, students who we consider week in general, weak in English. They weould really struggle, I mean, some podcasts I could barely understand what they were saying because the pronunciation was so bad. Even though they were told, remember, you see it on the piece of paper, but I cannot see what you're trying to read. So you have to really work on your pronunciation. So you don't know the word, go to the dictionary, check how it is pronounced before you start recording. But to prepare something like that it would require a lot of time. And I know for a fact that some of them probably remembered it like two days before they were supposed to submit it. So they didn't spend that much time working on it. So even though they were already familiar with the software and how it works, but the whole process of creating podcasts, thy would do it like in two day'. Well you can't really do a good job if you only have two days to do that.

Abdullah Alhasani 27:15

So you feel like time pressure was a problem?

T2 27:17

yeah.

Abdullah Alhasani 27:33

Either way, so how did you feel Or were you told that they repeated the recording process more than once? And for whatever reason?

T2 27:55

I never asked Really. No, I wouldn't know I wouldn't No.

Abdullah Alhasani 28:02

Like even for those who thought they were still repeating the same linguistic mistakes, or language mistakes?

T2 28:08

No, I don't think so. I had a feeling that some of them did not even listen to the final product. That was even worse. Because like I said, when they submitted it, and I showed one of the examples in class and I said, on this part, you can barely hear anything, and then you have this background noise coming in. Because I showed them in class how to fade in & fade out the music, and I told them please do not leave any music playing in the background as you speak because I will not be able to hear anything, unless it's a really, really soft music. But it was clear that some of them never even listened to their final product. Again, they had no time for that, because if they prepared something last minute there was no time to do it. I'm trying to remember if there was anybody who wanted to resubmit the podcast, but don't think I had a case like that.

Abdullah Alhasani 29:12

Do you think that students were emotionally somehow invested in the outcome?

T2 29:20

I think it comes from a personality, I mean for personality of them as students. I mean, those students who are, let's say, high achievers, who work really really hard, who try new things, Yes, they would spend a lot of time a lot of time doing it, and they would be really into it. But those students who are struggling in general with other subjects. There were students who actually hated the subject itself, I mean, the educational technology Because they were telling me, I hate computer, I hate doing anything with the computer. So they would be really, really struggling with that,even with that; but those who are good students, I think they enjoyed it. What was the question? I forgot the question.

Abdullah Alhasani 30:12

I said if they were emotionally invested in such projects?

T2 30:15

Yes, Yes, I think so.

Abdullah Alhasani 30:29

Did any from seek feedback for some of the outcomes? You said you provided detailed feedback. Do you think they sought feedback from somebody else? Other than you?

T2 30:44

I don't think so. Like I said, if they didn't even listen to ( some of them, I'm not saying all of them) But some of them they didn't even listen to what they recorded. Yeah, I don't think so. And I never asked, like did you let your family listen to it or something? No, I didn't ask. Even here, I don't know, students never take it one step further on any of the subjects that I taught. So the feedback is given, but they don't really know what to do with this, they don't know how to work with this. And because we have no time to guide them through it, we really hope that they are, like, independent enough. Nothing much happens after feedback, be it written, be it recorded in any way. Because I even observed it like in writing classes, when you give them back the writing with detailed feedback, what they do, they just have one glance at the paper, they fold it, they put it inside the book, and nothing happens with that paper after afterwards. And it was the same with podcasts. Like they got the detailed feedback from me, probably read it, but nobody approached me to say :teacher, can I like do it again? Or this is where I had the problem. Can I redo the podcast?

Abdullah Alhasani 32:03

So that's a common problem. ?

T2 32:05

Yes. it is

Abdullah Alhasani 32:08

Do you think (talking about the good ones or even the bad ones) that outcome, the whole thing they created (the podcast), would have an impact and sort of impact on their learning of future...?

T2 32:24

See, this is what I think. Because the creating podcast is just part of this particular course. But this is what we were trying to do last year, last year I had this idea of it's a creation, it's a whole creation process. And I had this idea of selecting the best podcasts and showcasing them somewhere. So I thought, okay, there must be a way of either creating a website where we can upload, of course with students consent, where the best podcasts can be uploaded so that others can hear it. Because I have a feeling that if students were aware that their work goes somewhere beyond the classroom, because whatever they submitted, it was just between me and them, I don't know how many would let their friends listen to what they created. Other than those dialogues that they were recording, you know. I have a feeling if they knew that this will go somewhere furtherm out there, maybe they would have put more effort to it. Because I have a feeling that the fact that whatever you do stays anonymous, and nobody knows about it, and nobody will hear it, and I do it just for the purpose of assessment. Maybe that's why they don't put much effort. So maybe if they knew that it's gonna be published somewhere, for example, in one way or another where other students can can hear that, maybe they would put more effort.

Abdullah Alhasani 33:59

public display purposes?. Did you feel some of the outcomes were worthy of display?

T2 34:11

I can't remember now the topics now that they were discussing...But

Abdullah Alhasani 34:15

But in terms of quality? in terms of delivery or presentation.?

T2 34:21

Some of them, probably. I mean, I wouldn't say a lot of them, but some of them probably yes, I could, I could easily think of like from each section of let's say 25 students, I could easily easily think of five podcasters I would select that I could select and publish them somewhere.

Abdullah Alhasani 34:41

because?

T2 34:42

because of the topic choice, because of how they did it in a in an interesting way. I remember, I think it was the first time that I taught this course, there was this boy who was like we can English in general, but he was the only one in the whole section who got the whole idea of what the podcast should sound like. So he had this really, really amazing intro that he created himself. And it was clear that he probably listened to quite a few podcasts or radio programs to know what it looks. The content of the podcast, because he was talking about computer parts or something like that, Okay so it was not very something very engaging, but the whole intro and outro I was really, really impressed about how he created it. So I don't know, if they were told, like for example, when they have these writing competitions, right? They say okay, the best essay will be chosen to be published somewhere, right? So maybe if they were told the same here with this with the podcast, like the best three podcasts, for example, in the group will be uploaded somewhere, maybe they would apply more effort. Although with the female students, I'm not sure. Because some of them, psychologically, the whole concept of their voice being publicly heard somewhere, it's already scary to them. But with the maybe with the boys. I don't know about the girls, some of them are quite open-minded about these things, but some of them psychologically are just not ready for it.

Abdullah Alhasani 36:24

All right. I think we addressed already the challenges. Okay, How did they overcome some of those challenges that they faced, do you they think?

T2 36:43

talking to each other, Going on YouTube looking for solutions. Because this is what I always tell them to do in class. Like, they would have a problem, I say Okay, can you please go and try it to find the solution by yourself?.

Abdullah Alhasani 37:02

So you push them in a way?,

T2 37:03

yes, If you can. If you still cannot, then we can do it together, then I can help you, I can show you how to look for things. But quite a few of them were helping each other a lot. So they would be sitting together. For example, I would have three or four students around one computer station, where they are pointing to things and showing things to each other. Yeah. But basically I pushed them to be a little bit more independent and not wait for the teacher to give all the ready answers. And I would also tell them that sometimes it is not the destination, you know, it is the journey that you take, because I always tell them that people learn in different ways. So you can get to the same destination going in loops, you can do it in the straight line, you really have to find your own way there. So letting them do certain things by themselves, or pushing them to do that, Yes, I hope it taught them something.

Abdullah Alhasani 37:07

Do you have any suggestions to overcome some of those challenges?

T2 38:17

I don't know, maybe more time should be spent doing that, because we didn't really have that much time to do it in class. But I think time limitation. Yeah, it's a big issue here. Maybe before they do the podcast, maybe they should have like one or two activities. Let's say in Google Classroom, we have these discussions where you propose a question. Maybe we should have like one or two activities prior to that where they actually have to record an answer to a question, or they get used to hearing the Sound of their voice.

Abdullah Alhasani 39:00

All right. Let's move to the second part. We're going to talk about the pedagogy of multimedia offering. One of those emphases is given to learning by doing, the practical aspects of learning. Do you think it is valuable to them at this stage in higher education in Oman?

T2 39:28

Well, it kicks them a little bit off their comfort zone because they are used to being instructed all the time, or given clear directions of how to do it. I don't know, but either in writing or in the verbal instruction, but I don't think the this is the way people learn nowadays. Like, I don't know, a very simple thing. I didn't know how to how to clean my washing machine the other day. Okay. So what you do? you go on YouTube, and you basically watch the video and you just follow the steps, right? Nobody's like instructing you how to do it. They're just watching it. Yes. So and I also tell them that if they learn something, not just reading about it, but by actually trying to do it, they will remember things better. I don't know if it makes sense. .

Abdullah Alhasani 40:38

yea, So by "things" you remember the skills or the knowledge?

T2 40:43

remember the skills, you acquire new skills, you acquire the knowledge, you know. And it was very obvious when they were instructing others. So okay, this is what I learned. Now I can pass on this knowledge to my friend, by showing him how to do it. So I don't know, for me, it kind of works like a chain.

Abdullah Alhasani 41:09

How do you compare such an approach to other approaches to learning? or How do you judge the value of learning by doing compared to other approaches?

T2 41:17

What are other approaches like one?

Abdullah Alhasani 41:19

That's interesting? Yeah. Because you always you said something that's not how students learn, it means the approach would be: getting used to by being instructured, for example,

T2 41:29

yes, here? Yes, absolutely. They are still very teachers teacher-centered, and they treat the teacher as a knowledge giver, and not just as a facilitator. I think a lot of them are uncomfortable with the fact that they come to class, and for example, the materials are not handed into them in the hard copy. This is what they're used to. Right. And now you tell them, okay, the syllables and something was uploaded for you in the Google Classroom! A lot of them are still struggling, where do I go into the Google Classroom? Where do I look for this stuff? And I always tell them, okay, you access the application, or whatever, or the website, and you start clicking on tabs, until you figure out where things are on the platform. For me, that's learning by doing, and then you will remember it much much better, rather than every time you're asking me, where do I find this? Where do I find these things? With the podcast, I think it is the same thing. I mean, I don't think they would learn anything, if, for example, I recorded a video for them even how to create a podcast - they wouldn't learn anything from it, you know. So when they were working on audacity, and sometimes they would make a mistake somewhere, and they would go, Oh, my God, I lost something. I would always say no, you can always go back to it. Okay, you lost it. Okay, create another one. Because you already now know how to do it until this step, where you took the wrong step. You already know the steps. So

Abdullah Alhasani 43:10

how did they react to such an approach to learning?

T2 43:13

Oh, my god, it was very, very different. I mean, it really dependent on students. I think it depends on how engaged they are in the whole learning process in general, because there are a lot of students who are completely withdrawn, I don't know, even sometimes why they come to this college to be honest, because they're not really interested in studying, you know. But those students who are really into it, who really likes studying, who are very engaged, they love the fact that they are given the freedom of how I get there, that I don't have to follow the same steps as teacher is telling me, because I can still get there, but in my own way. Yeah. I think, again, it comes with the personality of them as a person as a student.

Abdullah Alhasani 44:04

Do you think we need to increase this approach? In this context?

T2 44:10

Yes, absolutely. Absolutely.

Abdullah Alhasani 44:14

Because of the reasons you mentioned, or are there something else also?

T2 44:17

I mean, I don't know. I'm trying to remember myself as a student many, many, many years ago. I don't know if it comes with the culture, with the country, or with the college itself, we never have to be told, like what to do. I mean, we were like, Okay, this is the literature for the semester. When you're going to read it, or whether you read it, or whether you do it, it's entirely up to you. So we were very independent, the students I mean. There was this threshold that you pass from secondary school. Once you go to the college, you become a very, very independent learner, because you have to, even some of the secondary schools, it really dependent where you where. I remember that the simple skill of note-taking was taught to me by our history teacher in secondary school, when it was not a common practice that time. Common practice was dictation. So the teachers would dictate what we're supposed to write. He was the first guy who taught us how to take notes from the lecture. So he was basically sitting and talking, and we have to write really, really fast. This is how I learned how to how to take notes. So I never had a problem when I got to the university. But here, I'm surprised that we have to teach them a very, very basic thing. Like for me, it comes instinctively, if there is a word I don't understand, and the teacher puts it on the board, the first instinct would be for me to take a pen and write that word down in my notebook. And even that I have to instruct the students to do. So if the word is on the board, you have to write it down into your notebook, if you don't know it. Even that simple thing, I have to instruct them how to do it. So they're not very independent learners,

Abdullah Alhasani 46:05

Do you see any disadvantages to such learning approach to higher education, to learning in higher education generally?

T2 46:18

Disadvantages would be, I don't know. Maybe the fact that... how would you manage giving feedback on on steps to students, like if you have a lot of students, for example, in the class, you are not able to follow each one of them? I mean, I understand that it's much easier for a teacher to give a set of instructions, where every student has to follow it the same way, rather than having students learning in different ways. Because then for you, as a teacher, it is going to be very, very difficult come to follow with large groups. Yeah,

Abdullah Alhasani 47:05

as a process?

T2 47:05

Yes, it's a process, because, I mean, assessment, it's another thing, it's another story. But how did they get there? It will be very, very difficult. It's very difficult with large groups.

Abdullah Alhasani 47:17

Do you think that's the reason? We don't have much learning by doing? Because it's harder to follow?

T2 47:22

maybe. maybe. And maybe also, I don't know, maybe because teachers themselves are not comfortable with that approach. Because learning by doing, that means I need to first find out how to do it before I will be able to assess whether my students are doing it correctly or not. Do you know what I mean? Like learning by doing approach, I think it requires a lot of new learning all the time, Like a teacher himself has to learn a lot of new things all the time.

Abdullah Alhasani 48:10

From the part of the teacher huh?

T2 48:11

aha

Abdullah Alhasani 48:20

Okay, let's move to the second part of the authoring itself, authoring multimedia artifacts or products. Do you think creating artifacts or engaging in a process of creating artifacts is valuable to learning for Omani students at this stage?

T2 48:48

I don't know to be honest because I keep thinking about the fact that (if We're talking about the podcast), we are teaching the ELT majors. Yeah, because for these students, like, the ultimate goal is that they have good English and that they are able to teach others Okay. Now, while we were creating podcasts, if they were weak language-wise, and on top of that, they had to struggle with the technical skills, I think it was at times overwhelming for them. Like, they didn't see the clear purpose of doing it, Why do we have to do it? They didn't see like any learning value in it, because some of them told me that they're never gonna do that ever again. Like, that was just like one time off. And that's it. Sorry, I forgot the question.

Abdullah Alhasani 49:57

the authoring experiences, authoring artifacts, such as multimedia artifacts, is valuable to learning in higher education.?

T2 50:13

Maybe not on this? I don't think it's I don't think they're ready for it.

Abdullah Alhasani 50:16

So they're not ready.?

T2 50:18

Okay.

Abdullah Alhasani 50:22

But do you believe its value?

T2 50:23

I think it's valuable. Yes, I think it's valuable. I mean, when I hear this word, author, sometimes they don't even have a concept of what the author is or who the author is, when they plagiarize stuff, they don't understand that they're taking something that belongs to somebody else. So they don't have this concept of authorship. Okay, that they have to acknowledge the person who created something, so that whole concept is very, very big for them. So I'm not sure if they're ready to see the value in creating content themselves. Again, it probably comes with, I don't want to say lack of publicity of that, but it's just they know that it doesn't go anywhere beyond the classroom. It's just something that the teacher asked them to do.

Abdullah Alhasani 51:18

What if it does (go beyond the classroom)?,

T2 51:22

we should try to see what happens. if they know that, for example, something will be published somewhere, and others will hear it.

Abdullah Alhasani 51:31

. My other question, like do you think we need to introduce more,?

T2 51:37

probably, Yeah, probably. I just remembered that I had a case of a student, it was not the podcast. But before I started teaching this semester, I asked one of my former students who is so much into technology, I mean, there are people who really, really enjoyed this course, because like I said, they discovered the new side in them, and there was this girl who would every a single class that she would come to, she would start with: teacher, I would like to show you something. And then she would show me a new application that she discovered and what that application can do. And like halfway through the course I told her, I said, I think you're in the wrong program. I think you should go into media department, she was really, really good at that. And she really enjoyed it. And her English was not that good. She's working on it. But the English is not that good. But she was like, so into technology. And I asked her to create a video I wanted to show to my foundation students at the beginning of the semester, because I'm trying something new with them. And I said to her, do you know how you have all these super characters and super villains in all those comics? movies? I said, I want you to pick like a Superman or Batman. And, can you like, do a short video compilation of what their strengths are. But I said to her, don't forget to include your name somewhere there. Because I told her I have a plan of uploading this to YouTube. Okay. I mean, she generally puts a lot of effort into this stuff. Okay. But the minute I uploaded it into the YouTube, I think she immediately informed her friends who were helping her that were giving voices, that that video is on the YouTube and the video started receiving likes, and likes and likes, and people were leaving comments. And she was so pleased with that. And that's what I mean by when your work is out there somewhere, that somebody can see it. I know, they do it a lot through Instagram. For example, I'm not an Instagram user, so I wouldn't even see that. But YouTube has like a much wider audience, you know. But for example, if we had a program here in the college running a program, like they tried to do something with this radio program, where we play such things for other students to listen to. Maybe they would put more effort there.

Abdullah Alhasani 54:06

Okay. This multimedia authoring experience, what do you think it adds to the learners and the learning process?

T2 54:31

They discovered things. They discover different ways of doing those things. I think they realize that something that they never had anything to do with, like when they see having something from zero, and then they create this at the end, because this is what I always tell them. I said, Do you remember yourself at the beginning of this course? and see all your achievements, what you have created what you have done by yourself? Do you realize how big it is? It's like a completely new experience. You know, I think for some of them it is quite empowering, that they can actually do something like that, that sometimes they didn't even know that they have the power of doing it. Sometimes They didn't have a need for it, and they discovered it for themselves. So yeah, I think so.

Abdullah Alhasani 55:38

what about to The learning process, what does it add?

T2 55:41

again, it's like, there are different ways of learning things. And sometimes through like, I don't know, maybe they are less scared to make a mistake, because they see that going through mistakes is also like a learning process. So maybe they would be a little bit more courageous to try new things, And not to be worried about the failure right from the beginning. Because I think that's what a lot of students, that's why they are so hesitant to try new things, because they they think from the beginning that they will fail. I don't know how to do it?. That's their attitude, right? but once they go through that, once you push them through that, I think they kind of get confidence that they can learn things, that they can learn new things.

Abdullah Alhasani 56:36

Alright? Do you see any challenges, possibly, to such an approach to learning?

T2 56:46

Again, it's gonna go back to large groups; not being able to follow every single students' progress. The university teacher that we have now, she has a sentence that I also adapted, do not suffer in silence. And I keep telling my students the same thing. So I said, if you have any problems, come and tell me because then we can find a solution to that. But quite often they are worried to admit that they don't know how to do it, or that they tried, but they failed. And therefore they kind of lose any interest in that. Yeah, so the challenge you would have to have a really individual approach to each student with a process like that.

Abdullah Alhasani 57:38

Do you think that's a cultural thing?

T2 57:40

Could be

Abdullah Alhasani 57:43

struggle, struggle, struggle! All right. Um, let's talk about student centered learning. Multimedia authoring affords students the space, the opportunity to take learning on their own hands. Do you think that sort of role is valuable to learning in Omani higher education?

T2 58:11

students taking control?

Abdullah Alhasani 58:13

Yes, yes. student-centred learning? or student-centred learning generally?

T2 58:23

Probably but Why? You mean the learning by doing? Or what?

Abdullah Alhasani 58:32

No student-centered learning

T2 58:35

Yes, yes. But again, I don't know if it's a cultural thing. I don't know. I mean, we try really, really hard to create like independent learners. And most of the time we fail still. So I don't know if it comes with the culture, with the way they are brought up at home where they rely on their family a lot, on their parents a lot, on instructions, I don't know how they are taught in schools. Because I swear to God, the first time I heard about the students-centered learning is when I came here to Oman, we didn't have such a concept when I was a student. I mean, if you are a student, you are taking care of your own learning. Okay. But here, for example, this was my very, very new experience that a parent would come to inquire about the student who is in the college. It was like, it would never happen. First of all in Poland, nobody would ever give you that information. Because once you are 18, that's it. You're, you're of age, you're an adult, and no parent can come and ask about you. So all these concepts are kind of new to me. So intuitively, for me they existed long time ago. But it's only now that they started emphasizing this in all the literature, that we have to go back to student-centered learning. But for us it was always like that. So I don't know if it's a cultural thing.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:00:11

How do you think it's going to help them decide? Like, in what ways being independent? how's that gonna be helpful to them?

T2 1:00:18

Because they need to take control of what they do. They need to take responsibility for their mistakes as well. Because I think also partially it is that they don't want to be responsible for their failures. Like, quite often, they would come and say, well, teacher, I was absent, like, they didn't do something. Okay. Why didn't you do this x x? I was absent. But how is that my problem? You were absent, so I suppose it was your responsibility to go and ask your friend, what we did in class, okay, this cannot be an excuse. But I have a feeling that they still see it, like, this is not my problem. Even though I was absent, this is not my problem, Like the teacher didn't inform me about it. You know what I mean? But I think this kind of approach is student centered approach, but, first of all, all the teachers have to be consistent in that. So we are all doing it that way. We're not spoonfeeding them. But if they're used to spoon feeding from one teacher, and then they come to the teacher, like this class, I remember the first time I taught this course, I had, like lots of stories going around, she's really, really tough; And you have to do like a lot of things, you know. B but then a bunch of students that was with me, I think the second time, they really, really enjoyed it. And they started saying to other students, well you're going to learn a lot of new things, but you have to do it on your own. So there is like a support from the teacher, but she's not going to tell you how to do it, she can only direct you to where you can find help. But she's not going to show you how to do it. And you have to do it anyway. So again, I think this is kind of empowering them. They are adults, but sometimes they behave like children. But this kind of makes them realize that they are capable of things that they were not even aware that they're capable of. Yeah, especially when they have to prepare like, okay, not even the, the podcast, but for example, when they had to prepare a topic. They do a lot of micro-teaching here for other courses, for example, yes. But it's, it's one thing when you read about it, and you prepare a PowerPoint presentation, and you tell others what you read about. It's another story if you ask them, okay, this is the tool, you have to go and explore how to use this tool, and then you are going to teach others how to use it. Okay, so it's more about how to work with this tool. And you're not telling them about the tool. You're not describing it, but you have to show them step by step. When we were doing Google applications, this is what they had to do. I said, I don't want to hear any lecture here. No PowerPoints, it's a workshop, hands-on workshop. So you go, you explore what is Google Docs, you know all its ins and outs. And you have to tell the students, but you have to do it in a way where they also learn. So you're not just showing them on the board, but they have to follow your steps. So you give them small task, and they have to go and perform it.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:03:32

So how do you feel students reacted to such an approach when they were given such responsibility?

T2 1:03:37

I think they liked it. Although, Yes, it required a lot of learning because they were like, these were things that were new to them. Imagine you have to teach somebody about something that you have no idea about. So you have to go and learn it first but not from the teacher.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:03:57

Do you think we need to introduce more?

T2 1:03:58

Yes, Yes, I think so. They have to, because they are gonna be future teachers, so they have to start feeling as a teacher. And it can start with something small. The other day, I had a student who made a mistake with the word (work) and (job), something like that, a foundation student. And I said, Okay, you're going to be an English teacher. So tomorrow, you're going to come back here, and you tell your classmates, what's the difference between job and work? When do we use one? When do we use the other? And he did a really good job for somebody who did it the first time. Yes. We went to one of the symposium from Malaysia they came, and they said that this is the the concept that introducing the university. So if somebody studies medicine, for example, from the moment they enter medical field, from the moment that they enter the university, they are sent straight away to the hospital, to have like on-job training, even though they have absolutely no idea what they're doing at that point. But they said, If you start feeling like a doctor, you will start behaving like a doctor. You know, so I think this is what these students need to be aware of, like they are going to be future teachers, so you have to start behaving like a future teacher. So you need to be able to explore things yourself to be able to teach others.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:05:22

Cool. With that, do you think there might be some challenges? or disadvantages to student-centred learning?

T2 1:05:36

No, I think the whole education is going towards it. No. I don't see any any disadvantages in this to be honest. Other than, you have to be very critical about the source of information. Because in the past, it was a teacher who was like the expert in everything, right. But nowadays, you can get information from anywhere. So you have to become a very critical thinker, and selector of the right information, which is not easy probably for them

Abdullah Alhasani 1:06:12

so do they need preparation?

T2 1:06:14

I think it comes with practice. I hope it comes with practice, like, when you are able to separate one from the other.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:06:24

Okay, cool. Let's move to the last part of the pedagogy, which is learning through ICT. multimedia offering involves heavy use of technology. And how do you see the value of that in the Omani context of higher education? to students, I mean,

T2 1:06:50

their knowledge of technology is quite limited in the sense of, they know technology as their mobile phone. But you give them a laptop, and a lot of them get lost. Like even their mobile devices, because I keep telling them, I mean, the reason why you have these really nice smartphones, is because you can do so many things with them. But for example, when they were supposed to record the audio, some of them didn't even know how to do it on their mobile phone, where do I find the application for it? If they're on your phone, but they never use these! like, for example, they would be sending WhatsApp messages so that it's there inside there. But if they have to go and find the application, and this is where they get lost. And it's the same with laptops, for example. Students bring their laptops, you would think that they should already know how to use them by now because they had computer 1 & computer 2, and you tell them, like, open a new tab, and they have absolutely no idea what you're talking about; or refresh the page, and they have absolutely no idea what they're talking about. So I think sometimes we overestimate what they already know, when they actually don't know it.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:08:09

This is what they call it, digital natives, but they're not really like that. What do you think it adds?

T2 1:08:25

This is the 21st century skills. the digital literacy, Isn't that like all over the world? All the older educational systems are trying to get there?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:08:43

are you saying They need to keep up with the world?

T2 1:08:45

Yeah, of course. Absolutely.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:08:49

Why is that important?

T2 1:08:52

So That the country's not left behind.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:09:04

How do you think students resonate with? With more ICT in their learning? how do you think students receive that?

T2 1:09:16

more ICT in their learning, other than in the college? I don't see where they get it to be honest. What do you mean? Like, where do they learn?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:09:25

Like, would they receive it Well? in the sense that would they welcome the approach of integrating more technology?

T2 1:09:30

Well, well, again, this is like, overestimating this digital natives thing, because not all of them are. I did come across students who absolutely hate technology. Their mobile phone is a WhatsApp device. That's it. Yes, very, very basic use. But nothing more than that. WhatsApp, instagram and twitter device, this is what the mobile phones are for them.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:09:59

So just for fun?

T2 1:10:00

Yes, yes. But it's very, very difficult to get them convinced to use it for any other purpose. Like, let's say dictionary, how about you use it? How about you install... All my new students, I have to prep them: These are the applications that I want you to install in on your mobile phone devices, and you're going to use them. So like dictionaries, like okay, some of them to translators. But I don't think they are there yet. I don't know. They're heavily dependent on technology. On the one hand, because they cannot live without mobile devices, try to take it away from them for 45 minutes, and you will see them shaking like, you know, like their Sugar Rush, right!. But at the same time, they don't really know. I mean, this is what they probably have to be taught about, like how to use them in a in an effective and advantagous way, in a proper way. That also comes as a 21st century digital skill, digital literacy kind of thing, you know?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:11:12

So they lack the knowledge and the how to use it properly?

T2 1:11:16

Yes.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:11:19

So, do you think we need to integrate more tech?

T2 1:11:21

We need to integrate our tech, but it probably has to be done already from elementary school or secondary school. This is what I don't know what they use. Because every student that I asked, they always say that the internet was not available for them in school, they were not allowed to use mobile devices in school. So

Abdullah Alhasani 1:11:41

so, infrastructure is being a challenge?

T2 1:11:43

Yeah, I think so. Yeah. Internet internet is terrible here. I mean, this is Like, Oh, my God, it's terrible here.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:11:53

sorry we are not polland!

T2 1:11:56

I don't know. Because I don't know how it is in Polish schools. And when I was a student, we didn't have the internet. But I think that I think they have to be taught how to use technology in a responsible way before they come to the college, so that we don't have issues of confiscating mobile phones in class because somebody is on WhatsApp rather than being on a dictionary, you know? I think if they were taught about it, starting from secondary school, I don't think we would have these problems.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:12:30

All right. The last part of the interview, we're talking about the learning environment, Authoring multimedia artifacts requires a lot of things, in terms of the learning environment. Talking about the role of the teacher, such projects require that teachers role be limited to being facilitators and providing guidance, etc. and, by contrast, giving students the freedom. This sort of role, how do you see it valuable to students to learning in higher education?

T2 1:13:10

Again, comes with independence, being quite independent, being given freedom. May be in the process, students will be able to discover what kind of learners they are. Because some of them don't even know what kind of learners they are. They, by not being limited by the teachers, in that sense, it's like a road to self discovery. So they can discover their own ways of doing things. I think it's really, really important; if students are to be independent, yes, this is very important.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:13:59

How was your experience with that, in this module, for example,?

T2 1:14:06

it really depended on students. With some of them, it was really a lot of pushing, and it required a lot of effort on my part in the sense of pushing students to do something. But I really appreciate the students where I could have like, shortly instructed them what they're supposed to do, what are the learning outcomes from it, what is expected from them, and then gave them the freedom, and then they will come back with the ready product after two weeks or three weeks. I think I really appreciated students like that. Because, I don't want students to be heavily dependent on me, I want them to find their own ways, I want them to find their own learning. So as a teacher, I will be looking into it.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:15:06

it doesn't threaten your role?

T2 1:15:08

No, not at all, because, I'm on my gosh, we know it's coming. I know, this is why I know that a lot of teachers are afraid of letting go of the control. Yes. And that's why I told you, I mean, if there's a certain approach that the institution takes, teachers have to be united in this. But there are teachers who are really, really afraid of letting go of that control over the class. And things have to be done exactly in that way. Right.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:15:40

afraid of Letting go, !!.

T2 1:15:41

Yeah. Because it's also, kind of, our comfort zone, you know, where you know, that you are here, students are here, and then suddenly, you know, the balance shifts a little bit. For example, i had quite a few cases where a student would correct me, but they would be scared to do that, because they would think I would get upset about, especially when it comes with technology. And I always laugh it off because I keep telling them with technologies, like this morning I'm going to check the application and it looks like this. And then I come to class two hours later, and it looks completely different. And as a teacher, you have to be ready for those changes. Because I can't remember which which application it was like that I was checking it at home, and it was still working fine. And then I come to the college and suddenly looks completely different. Okay, and you have to find your way. So, if you are not threatened by this, then you probably wouldn't have any problem of letting go of the control in the class. But there are teachers who are really afraid of that, because they're afraid to be challenged by students. The students are quite challenging. Nowadays, yeah.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:17:04

So are you with restricting teacher-centeredness?

T2 1:17:09

I am with restricting teachers-centeredness. Yes, absolutely. Because we have to be ready for students who are challenging. Students are smart. And because nowadays, people like these, you will have different skills. I actually like when students feel so proud that they can come to class, and they can teach a teacher something that they discovered, like the example of this girl, she would come and say, teacher, I wanted to show you something, you know, and they really appreciate the fact that the teacher does not get upset about it, and welcomes these kinds of ideas. Because I told them from the beginning, I said if you discover anything new, don't be afraid to share it with the class, with me, because we are all here to learn, you know, so they have to understand that. Teachers have to understand lifelong learning, right? So it's not only what you learned in the past, now the knowledge changes quickly. Okay, so teachers also have to be ready for these changes.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:18:18

What impact does that create when students disocver something and come to teach it to the teacher?

T2 1:18:23

Oh, I love it. I mean, and also students, like, it's because this kind of knowledge comes from their friends, and they're so happy that the friend knew it, and the teacher didn't know it, you know, but of course, it depends on how you as a teacher are going to approach it, because if you're gonna get upset about it, it's not gonna work. But it always worked in my classes because I gave them the freedom on the platform, I gave them the freedom of uploading things. So I said, if you find anything that you think is worth sharing, please do so, because we're all here to learn.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:18:59

Right? Do you see any advantages beside these? in terms of the role of the teacher? Students who threatens, it's very hard for them to let go, do you see the culture playing and aspect there, or the educational system?

T2 1:19:14

Yeah. Because probably it's a little bit of, I don't want to say who is the master of the ceremony, But, like, who is the leader here? Basically, kind of thing, you know,

Abdullah Alhasani 1:19:29

so balances, Authority controls?

T2 1:19:32

Yes, Yes

Abdullah Alhasani 1:19:41

Okay, um, would you want to say, it says any thing about the educational system? it says something about the culture? What do you think the education system has something to do with it?

T2 1:20:03

i don't know if it's the educational system or what they bring from home? Again, I don't know, because I have no experience in schools here. So I don't know how, what is the relationship, you know, teachers, students, how they are taught receive?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:20:18

how do you see the educational system here at higher education?

T2 1:20:21

They are I mean, they still behave like kids here. And this is what I don't really don't like, I mean, sometimes you don't feel like you're dealing with adults, you know,

Abdullah Alhasani 1:20:30

so we're talking about students?

T2 1:20:30

Students, yes.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:20:34

But are teachers doing their part, giving them the freedom, giving them the choices? does curriculum prepare them for that?.

T2 1:20:41

I wouldn't know. Curriculum is quite again, we're not talking about our subject (educational technology) that gives kind of freedom. But there are subjects that are quite rigid in terms of, like, you can't really make a lot of changes there, because it's all centralized, comes from ministry. Our universities (in Poland) have a little bit more of autonomy, and teachers within the University have all the autonomy. So I remember when I was a student. But here, just the fact that some programs are really, really old, and it takes like ages to revise them, it doesn't go hand in hand with how quickly things change nowadays, with the use of technology. Everybody talks about the world develop develops rapidly, blah, blah, blah, all that, but you can't see it in educational system here.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:21:46

All right. Now, let's talk about the learning atmosphere. Authoring multimedia artifacts, or multimedia content, requires creating an atmosphere where you support students to work individually, to work in groups, and to work from trial and error. Creating such an atmosphere, how do you judge it value in the learning context of higher education?.

T2 1:22:11

How what?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:22:12

creating a learning atmosphere that encourages students to work independently, to work in groups or collaboratively, to work from trial and error, because that's what the whole experience was all about - try, and make mistakes, and relearn again. Creating such an atmosphere, do you see it is valuable in higher education context?

T2 1:22:33

Yes, because we don't want to replicate a secondary school setting, where a teacher is lecturing, and students are listening and taking notes or not taking notes. Again, I'm going back to what is called "social constructivism" where the knowledge is shared and co-created. Of course, there should be a certain balance where the teacher is still a teacher in the class as an authority, but I don't think so much as authority of knowledge anymore. It's like an authority in keeping discipline in a class where there's no disruptive behavior and things like that. But when it comes to teaching and learning, I like the way where students are sitting in the lab, and they are showing things to each other, and they can show things to the teacher. And I think I don't know, I think it's a great learning atmosphere for that, where they feel free to voice their concern, or where they feel free to ask a question, or they feel free to give information, even, that they got.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:24:14

How do you see the trial and error working, like, reflecting?

T2 1:24:22

Yeah, I don't know if it, again, comes with the culture where they're so scared of making a mistake or failing. I don't know. It comes, for example, I can never understand why students are cheating here on the exams, because the GPA that they get, I don't know if it has any value for the ministry per se. Because to be offered a job in the school, they have to get IELTS band six, and they have to pass the educational exam, right. Does it have anything to do with their GPA that they get here from the from the college?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:24:59

for scholarships, for employment offerings, to get a job, I think that's sort of for benchmarking purposes, a Priority first thing.

T2 1:25:12

okay, because I could never understand why are they cheating on the exam?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:25:16

Everything is about GPA, unfortunately. Well, there you go ago. And how do you think students resonated with such a learning atmosphere? from the Ed-tech course?

T2 1:25:29

Well, you would probably have to ask students, that question.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:25:32

But how did you feel as a teacher?

T2 1:25:34

Again, it came with, Do they students like technology? Do they like working with technology? Or do they hate it? Do they like this teaching style, because not all the students even like it, where they have to make that extra effort of going and finding information and learning from the information that is not given to done by the teacher? Okay. So again, I think it comes with the personality of them as a student, or what kind of students they are. Because if they are used to learning from page one to page five, only what is given by the teacher, then they wouldn't appreciate this, I think. So they would find it difficult, but students who like a little bit of freedom I think they liked it a bit more.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:26:27

So the responses you got were mixed.. Are you with encouraging and expanding such a learning atmosphere?

T2 1:26:33

Yes, Absolutely. And I really wish that the curriculum gave us that freedom.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:26:42

What would you do?

T2 1:26:44

Well, I'm trying already to introduce it in one of my classes . Well you heard about the KODOS from the girls, that was like one of the ideas that I have. But did they tell you about the gifts that they got at the end?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:27:00

Gifts?

T2 1:27:00

Yes.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:27:02

Well they mentioned an example about the dua-lingo how one student hacked >>>

T2 1:27:07

yeah, that was that was, like, amazing. I gave KODOS to that point. I did not penalize him for that. I actually gave him points for that. And he shows others how to do it. But then it also told me, Ok, these are the things I have to watch for? Because the reason why they were doing it, and because they were in competition. I told them the person who is going to score the highest point is going to get the gift.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:27:34

How did he manage? I got his name down. I was like, we need this guy.

T2 1:27:37

Iman Al-Shaquille. I think. Yes. He was amazing. I mean, honestly, yeah, these are the things you know, this is when you know how good they are with technology, and the things that they can do. You heard my story about the QR codes, right? How they tried to cheat with that.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:28:01

Yes, You told me that.

T2 1:28:01

this tells you this, I mean, so you give them some idea, and they kind of go and they think let me do something, let me fool the teacher, you know, kind of thing. So it was the same with the duo-ling. But actually the whole point was that they were getting a gift from me. So I got iPads for the best student. Yes, so in one group I had two students who were given gifts, because there was a large group, 35 students. So I had one boy and one girl, okay. And in the other group, I had one student who was given because I knew he's interested in manga, and drawing, he's really, really good. He got one of those pads for drawing.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:28:10

cool.

T2 1:28:17

So were giving gifts. This semester, with the with the foundation students I'm trying to re-design the course as a game. So we still have to cover the material that is given by the Ministry, prescribed by the book, headway, but I want them to be more involved or engaged in what they do. So I asked them to create avatars for themselves and give themselves cool nicknames. And we have this leaderboard kind of thing. And I create quests. So for each chapter that we study in the book, I call it "level". And I create, like, a narrative around the chapter, so that they kind of know what we're going to do. And then for each chapter, I design quests, and they are not compulsory, I said it's only for those people who want to do them. So for example, today to both groups, they are only foundation students, to both groups I introduced BOLOTOGON, storyboard-Dat and Voice Threat. And they have a quest that is connected with it. So instead of writing a book review, I want them to create either a movie that is going to be recreation of a scene from a film that they liked, or they can have like a dialogue with a friend about the movie. Or, they can do the same with the comic strip (storyboard-Dat) but they have to put voice into it. So they have to use voice threat. So once they download it as a PowerPoint, they upload the PowerPoint slides into the voice thread. And now they have to start recording the narration to that story. Okay, so just to get them a little bit more engaged. Again, students who are not interested in learning in general, and who are not interested in (who I don't know why they're here in the college), they would never be engaged in this. But I already spotted a couple of students who are like always there in class, or most of the time, do their homework, always take that one extra step to learn something. And today, they were like sitting and listening. And then you know, I told them, You have to choose which which way you want to go, if it's a blotogon, I need to add your name to the license. If it's a storyboard-dat, I showed them how it works, how the Voice Thread works, it's all free software. So I said to them, you decide how you want it. And they started working today, they started creating movies, comics, you know,

Abdullah Alhasani 1:31:26

that supports the concept of authoring multimedia!

T2 1:31:30

Yes

Abdullah Alhasani 1:31:31

Cool. Do you see any disadvantages to creating such a learning atmosphere? that supports individuals, like independent learning, and that supports collaborative learning, trial and error? ,

T2 1:31:47

Well, again, I think it comes from the limitations of the institution and the system itself. So we have large classes, small classrooms, the setting of the classroom is not appealing at all, it's not inviting at all - moving those desks or chairs to create groups takes time. Quite often you come to the lab, and there is no internet or half of the computers are not working. So it comes kind of with the infrastructure. So I think the institution itself would need to have a good system to introduce this kind of learning.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:32:33

Yeah, cool. Moving to the final part, we're going to cover the nature of the learning activity. Authoring multimedia artifact experiences depends on project and project based learning. Do you think learning thru projects is valuable to learning in Omani higher education,?

T2 1:32:50

learning to projects.? you mean, like, Collaborative or any?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:32:54

or generally PBL, compared to exams?

T2 1:33:00

I don't know if it's going to be valuable here in this system, simply because of the amount of cheating that is happening here. Like in the exams, they are strictly monitored not to cheat, right? But with these projects, I mean, we already have experience with a simple research project where they just cannot help themselves to plagiarize. And again, going back to the example of today's class, the task was explained to them, and then I come to one of the computers, and I see that the boy found the story on the internet and basically all he does, he cuts and paste dsialogues into the storyboard-dat. It's like they can't help it sometimes. So if that is to work, there should be some kind of a system developed, where cheating is minimized, where there are stricter consequences, where it's easier to be detected. Because even like a simple picture that they take from the internet, you know, that does not violate copyright issues. Right. That's, also a problem. How do you manage that in the system? So yeah, I think that there should be like a good support system for that.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:34:42

Oh, right. Um, but how do you think students receive such an approach or resonate with such an approach to learning, PBL , given these aspects that you mentioned?

T2 1:34:57

Again, this would have to be like, you know, each student would have to be interviewed individually, like, How much time do they spend? Okay, Google Docs, for example, gives you the option of checking their progress through revision history. So you would see how much time a student spends writing the project. But some students, even though they are told at the beginning of the semester, plz work only with Google Docs, they still bring stuff from Word document, and you don't know how much time they spent working on it? Who was helping them in the process? So there's like no good monitoring system for certain projects. And also, sometimes the syllabus of the subject itself does not give you the flexibility of doing that, where you can, like have, checkpoints. If you have a very heavy course, you wouldn't have time, if you have, like, 25-30 students to monitor them individually. So yeah, so I don't know how it would be done with large groups. To be honest, for certain subjects, I think that doing a project, whether it's a group project or individual project is just a waste of assessment mark.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:36:24

Like what subjects?

T2 1:36:25

Yeah, well, I don't know, some of the ELT subjects that are taught, I didn't teach them So I wouldn't know, but I think every single subject in the ELT has some kind of a research project. But why do they have to do the same thing over and over and over again? What are they learning from it?

Abdullah Alhasani 1:36:45

So you mean the repetition? you are more concerned about seeing Similar projects?

T2 1:36:49

Yes, yes. I don't see much of a scaffolding done in in that sense. Like, for example, students. In foundation level, when they are taught English, maybe they should be taught on the level of a sentence. Like, their language accuracy is really terrible, until they graduate college. But I think it is because things are repeated, every semester we repeat things, but we don't scaffold them. So like, every semester they would be writing essays. They have a subject called Advanced writing one, they write essays. They have a research project there. Then they have a subject called research project, and then again, they have a research project there. even there was this subject "debate and communication", that was the semester when I didn't teach that, but the teacher who was teaching that subject that time, instead of having them doing short speeches, she introduced presentations. And what did they do? They presented the project that they already presented in another subject,for another teacher. But you wouldn't know that.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:38:04

They reproduce,?

T2 1:38:05

yes, they reproduce because they want to do it with the least effort to get the highest gains, you know what I mean? So the institution itself, or the system itself would have to develop a certain mechanisms of how to deal with this.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:38:31

challenges. Okay. So you're with increasing, with the condition that we need to produce a system?! How can that be achieved, You think?

T2 1:38:49

I have no idea, you would have to change the mentality of people, I think

Abdullah Alhasani 1:38:53

So how does that work in other contexts?

T2 1:38:56

I can't member ever having any PBL when I was a student. Now that I'm a student in this masters, we don't have any projects, we have submission of semester assignments. But for example, the subject that we studied "research methodologies", the assessment was divided into three parts. The first part was dealing with quantitative research. And within the quantitative research, you have like three different tasks, so you have to develop questions, this is how many marks it is worth. Then you have to analyze the answers that you collected from certain students. And then you had to analyze the answers that were given by the teacher. So that's what I mean by scaffolding, you are not repeating this, I mean, you are working within the same scope, quantitative research. But the tasks are very, very different, the way you would be doing it, as you are doing the research project. Okay, the same within the qualitative part of the research. So one task was to develop questions for qualitative research, then you had to describe the process of how you created the questions, where you put them, how you disseminated the questionnaires, and so on. And then the last part was to analyze the answers, but the answers were supplied by the teacher. So you were not analyzing the answers that you got from the students? Do you know what i mean?, because for me, that was the very good example of scaffolding things. So you're working within the same scope, but you're not repeating the tasks. But here is quite often it's the repitition of the same thing

Abdullah Alhasani 1:40:43

Exactly. repetition. So maybe this is one of the suggestions to the system? You want to create a system that attends to that. So like, for example, the podcasts that students created, they can be repurposed in another way, but with an addition or ..

T2 1:40:59

Yeah.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:41:01

Okay. It's interesting. Right. Now, that will be it. any final comments? and suggestions to

T2 1:41:15

No I think I said a lot. Oh, my God, look at how much he wrote.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:41:20

Yeah. Oh, it's quite impressive. And because the sample of teachers is quite limited. That's why I want to extract as much as possible. It was quite insightful. So, how do you rate the overall authoring multimedia artifact experiences for students? any final, goodbye notes?

T2 1:41:40

Again, there are some who probably loved it, there are some who hated it, there are some who will never do it again. I think it's a very, very individual thing for each students. And they also have this love-and-hate relationship with the subject in general,

so that's the emotional sort of investment?

yes, they come to the subject already hearing from their friends, (this is what my students were telling me), we heard from our friends, that this is the the most difficult subject in the whole course or program, but they said it's also the one where we learned the most. So it was like the most interesting, but at the same time is very, very challenging.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:42:03

How do they balance the whole thing?

T2 1:42:17

I don't know, I think the way the assessment is done in this course, I loved it, I mean, I literally, I really, really love the content of it and everything, you did a really, really good job on redesigning it. Because I told them look at how many different assessment parts you have. So you fail in one, it does not mean the failure of the whole subject. You know, I said you have the chance to make it up in another way. And the whole purpose of KUDOS is that, OK, you fail here, you fail here, you feel that you are losing track of things, you feel that you want to catch up, but you are already so many steps behind everybody else on marks. So here is your chance, create something interesting, introduce something interesting in class, you'll be given extra points that will be later on at the end of the semester converted to marks, that you lost in the process somewhere else.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:43:30

It is cool actually, gets them more engaged and involved in the whole thing.

T2 1:43:34

Yeah. Because then they don't give up halfway through the course. Because if you remember, every week, they have at least two or three different assessments. It's either a small quiz or the blog that they have to write, or the question that they have to answer, the small project that they have to write, you know. So I know that it was overwhelming, but kind of compensated for them. I said, Okay, so here is another chance. What's more, I made those kudos transferable. So I said, you want to help your friends, you can transfer some of your kudos.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:44:07

Oh. That's cool. And Has anybody done that?

T2 1:44:13

Yeah. Because they got more. I mean, they already got full A. And they still had kudos left.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:44:21

So looking at students' grades in the overall course, what do you see the tendency like?

T2 1:44:30

I think I had a good bell curve in all the groups. Dr. Hamed complaint at some point in time that there are lots of A's in the group, you know. But the HOD said, No, no, these students are good with technology, so it's okay. Some students were really really engaged in the whole thing, you could see that they really enjoy it. I used to have them in my office all the time asking questions, you know, sharing things with me and showing me things.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:45:00

So it helped unlock some doors?

T2 1:45:05

Yes. Yes. Honestly, this girl is amazing when it comes to art and media and stuff like that. and she loves doing it with technology.

Abdullah Alhasani 1:45:17

That's impressive. Thank you very much. Really appreciate your input, and that you were willing to participate in this interview. Yeah, cool. Let's hit stop.