“Enhancing Linguistic Expression and Transmitting Culture”

—Motto of the English and Translation Department
A Message from the President

It gives me immense pleasure to introduce you to the fourth issue of EThos Magazine. This publication’s efforts to promote reading and writing within and outside the walls of Effat is commendable, and this is reflected in this issues’ selection of articles and fiction.

Expression of ideas and opinions through EThos’ articles shows among our students a higher level of critical thinking and an ability to engage formal learning with their surroundings. I believe Doa Alghamdi’s article on how she has overcome the obstacle of visual impairment to progress in life is an inspiration to all. It shows that if we as the Effat family collaborate, we can truly help person who is challenged in any way to realize their goals.

I am grateful to the English and Translation department and all students working on EThos for their efforts. I hope this magazine continues to positively represent Effat University and its aspiration to achieve.

Dr. Haifa Reda Jamal Al-lail
President of Effat University

A Message from the Chair

My sabbatical absence from the Department has proved beyond doubt that although I had a productive year in Canada, being the Chair of the E&T Department is my true and ardent calling. I am delighted to see you all, the former members and the ones that have newly joined our folds. What a pleasure to see our Department grow and thrive and achieve its goals: the graduation of senior students, the heartening progress of all others, and this term’s healthy registration. Let us not forget about other causes for jubilation, including our partnership with the University of Western Sydney, Australia, the NCAAA accreditation, and the production of yet another brilliant EThos.

I would like to thank all students who have made this issue possible. Indeed, I am thrilled to see that Effat students have joined hands with E&T peers to use EThos as a platform for sound communication and self-expression.

Dr. Sanna Dhahir
Chair of the English and Translation Department
Editorial

Laura Bashraheel’s article about her experiences after graduating from Effat does make one realize that life can often take unexpected turns, which is a pervasive theme in many of this issue’s reflective articles. The academic 2011-2012 year saw quite a few guest speakers, from Dr. John O’Regan, who spoke of English as a Lingua Franca, to Mr. Todd Fine, who introduced listeners to the life and works of novelist Ameen Rihani. The series of English and Translation Seminars were no less enlightening, as attendees were familiarized with the various projects taken up by faculty members.

I am grateful to our faculty supervisors, whose creative insights, guidance in the selection of articles and continuous support were essential. Although we are saddened by the departure of Dr. Yulia and Dr. Gerald from Effat University, our best wishes will always remain with them. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the ETHos team— it is because of their dedication that this publication is what it is today!

We hope our readers enjoy reading this issue as much as we did creating it. Suggestions and submissions for subsequent issues are welcome, and can be sent to ethos@effat.edu.sa.

Sana Abdul Salam
Editor-in-Chief of ETHos

Mission and Vision of the English and Translation Department

Vision
The Department of English and Translation aspires to be one of the leading providers of high-quality and internationally recognized education in English and translation. In an intellectual setting which is stimulating and challenging, and in which diversity of approach and opinion is highly valued, the Department strives, with unwavering determination, to prepare students to be an innovative community of responsible leaders.

Mission Statement
The Department of English and Translation fosters a holistic learning experience through a multi-streamed program which upholds international standards in its course offerings and methods of education. To this end, it promotes a solid appreciation of English and comparative literature, cultivates the fundamentals of linguistic science, and addresses the complex array of issues involved in translation. This is achieved in a supportive environment in which students are mentored by highly qualified faculty from all over the world. Students graduating from our department will acquire a solid education which will prepare them for graduate-level studies in English and translation, for teaching English as second/foreign language, or for other dynamic careers in which English language skills are essential.
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“Elements of Mediation in Audiovisual Translation”
The Sixth E&T Seminar by Dr Ahmad Khuddro
Reported by Nada Bushnak

On October 11, 2011, Dr. Ahmad Khuddro presented the first seminar for the academic year 2011-2012. Dr. Khuddro is an Assistant professor of Translation at Effat University and he specializes in Interpretation. "Translator is treasure" he said, and the seminar began. Dr. Khuddro talked about the Elements of Mediation in Audiovisual Translation (AVT), and then discussed the common forms of translation in the audiovisual domain. He also discussed potential issues that may arise in one’s endeavor to produce a well executed AVT piece. The common forms of such translations are audio to audio, visual to visual, audio to visual and visual to audio translations.

The audience was given the translated script of a movie, and Dr. Khuddro discussed the fundamental aspects of translating an AVT piece. Then, the differences between audiovisual translation and other forms of translation, like text to text translation, were discussed. This led to an interesting discussion about the ethics of translating an AVT piece. Dr. Khuddro explained that the job of a translator is not the same as that of a machine translator. This is because even though the machine is the most “literal” and possibly faithful translator, it is unable to send the message clearly to the target audience while keeping the original intention of the writer in mind. We may, however, correct mistakes and apply domestication translation strategies to the source text, rather than ‘foreignizing’ ones, in order to meet the standards of our culture. This is important because if the the target audience does not understand the message, then, as Dr. Khuddro said, “you have failed as a translator.”

“Back to The Beach: The Generation X Novel Revisited”
The Seventh E&T Seminar by Dr. Gerald Naughton
Reported by Afnan Linjawi

On January 1, 2012, Dr Gerald Naughton presented the seventh E&T seminar. Around twenty-five attendees, from students to faculty, gathered to listen to his review on what was argued as one of the most profound novels about Generation X – The Beach by Alex Garland.

The novel narrates the story of a young man who sets out on a journey to discover something new, to escape his sheltered life. In this journey, the man discovers an island which symbolizes paradise to him. This symbolism is interpreted as the Vietnam War of 1969. This paradoxical image raised the question of how could the young man may have seen this island as paradise. Does this young man have a different interpretation on the island from the reader? These questions sparked the most debated topic of the seminar, which was the essence of “a thing.” Is a thing different from an object? Dr. Naughton referred to Bill Brown’s Thing Theory. Brown’s theory defines an object as what is unnoticed to us while a thing is...
something that adds significance no matter how small it is to our lives. Dr. Abdel-Moniem El-Shorbagy demonstrated this theory in the field of Architecture and how architects carefully alternate between the terms “place” to mean an occupied and defined place and “space” to mean a vacant unregistered space. Dr. Abdel-Moniem gave an example of such significance when he said “you don’t ask someone to come to my space.” Though this sounds very philosophical, it is important because we must be aware of what items are considered things and what items are considered objects to a generation and its precedents. Towards the end of the seminar, Dr. Naughton stated, “in order to protect the island, you must corrupt its value.”

On February 7, 2012, Dr. Sanna Dhahir presented the eighth E&T seminar. She began her talk by introducing famous Saudi woman writer Badria Al-Bishr, and her work *Hind Wal A’askar*, which she had been translating. She discussed different literary works by Saudi women writers and mentioned that these writers deal with sensitive issues which are otherwise rarely addressed in their culture. She made note of inspiring pioneers in Saudi literature, such as Sultana Al-Sudairi, Sameera Khashqaji and Hind BaGhaffar, making special reference to BaGhaffar’s work *Albara’a Almafqooda*. She also dwelt on the works of recent authors, such as Raja Alem, Laila Al-Juhani, and Amal Al-Shatta.

Dr. Dhahir stated that she is currently working on her long-term project entitled *Anthology of Saudi Women Writers*. She concluded the seminar by describing Saudi literary works as satisfying “the reader’s taste for something Saudi as well as universal.”
On March 18, 2012, Dr. Eman Mohammed presented the ninth E&T seminar. Her seminar illustrated an integrative model developed to analyze related academic texts and paid special emphasis on the organization and presentation of texts.

Dr. Mohammed began her talk by expressing her long interest in academic research, which prompted her analysis of the varying organizational structures used in theses and research articles to present and organize meaning. She aims to formulate a model of analysis that can be used to analyze texts that are related through considering their “semantic organizational pattern” – the way meaning is conveyed in a text.

Dr. Mohammed referenced different organizational models, such as the top-down and the bottom-up approach - in which texts are analyzed from larger to smaller structures - and countered “problem-solution” approaches that have been used by previous models of analysis. Instead, she proposed a “question-answer” approach, where a question is proposed within the text and subsequently answered, instead of solutions being offered to problems.

This approach forms an integral part of her proposed model for text analysis, which consists of two aspects: the organizational plane and the semantic plane. She demonstrated these aspects through an analogy of skeletons and muscles, stating that the organizational plane can form the skeletal structure of a text, while the semantic plane would consist of muscles.

Application of the model would include using questions to better determine the organization of the text at different levels. This would be followed by finding answers to these questions by processing the text for “propositions” (units of meaning), which could act as “eligible semantic realizations.” The model has been so far applied to ten theses and the thirty-three research articles that were derived from them.

The seminar was concluded by a Question and Answer session that brought up the potential of a single thesis to generate multiple research articles, a phenomenon Dr. Mohammed has observed more applicable in scientific theses that to those in the humanities.
Asha Manoharan wins QECA 2011-2012

On 26 November, 2011, English and Translation student, Asha Manoharan, won the Queen Effat Citizenship Award (QECA) for the year 2011-2012. Asha, who majored in Linguistics, was an active member of the student body. She was a founding member and editor of EThos Magazine, and a representative to the Council of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences as well as the founding president of the E&T Students’ League. Each year, the winner of the QECA Award is appointed as the president of the Student Shura, an organization which bridges the gap between students and administration. The runners’ up for the award, Shahad Al-Mehdar (ECE) and Noor Sahabuddin (ECE) served as Shura representatives for the College of Engineering, while Shaima Bashoeb (BA) and Manal Ansari (PSY) served as representatives for the Colleges of Business and Humanities respectively.

Afnan Linjawi
Vice President of Student Government (2012-2013)
TEDxEFFATU Project Manager

Nada Bushnak
President of the Drama Club (2011-2012)

Samiah Haque
Winner of the second place in the Effat University Short Story Contest (2012)
Winner of the best referenced-paper for the Undergraduate Research Event (2012)

Sana Abdul Salam
Winner of the Effat University Poetry competition (2012)

Esraa Ghouth
Member of Student Government as a Clubs Advisory Office Member (2012-2013)

Alaa O. Bamashmoosh
President of the Translation Club (2012-2013)

Aisha Almasri, Muna Faisal, Nadia Alaragg, Marwa Helabi, Dina Maddah, Mei Alqashqam and Afnan Linjawi
Interpreters for TEDxEFFATU
On December 14, 2011, Todd Fine gave a lecture at Effat University. The lecture was organized in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the publication of the first novel written by an Arab-American writer, Ameen Rihani’s novel *The Book of Khalid*.

In his talk, Fine discussed his efforts to resurrect the reputation of important Arab-American writers such as Ameen Rihani, and his long-overlooked novel *The Book of Khalid*. He then discussed the life of Ameen Rihani. Rihani was an Arab-American writer who was born in the early 1900s, and passed away before the First World War. He was a traveler, a scholar, a writer and a poet. His close circle included the writer Khalil Jibran, and he aspired to give Arab youth a better sense of direction during changing times. Fine stated that Rihani’s ideas and aspirations are as valid for today’s Arab youth as they were a hundred years ago. He then shifted his discussion to the courageous, honest and intelligent women portrayed in Rihani’s novels *Juhan* and *Wajdah*.

Todd Fine holds an MA in International Relations from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University. He is the Director of ‘Project Khalid,’ which was conceived in 2010. He established a global campaign to honor the 100th anniversary of the first Arab-American novel, organizing events at the U.S. Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, and over a dozen other institutions in the United States and the Middle East. His lecture at Effat University was the last stop of his Middle East tour.

Photo by Samiah Haque and Dr Yulia Naughton
Effat University celebrates ‘Reading Day’

By Fatema Quresh

On April 8, 2012, Effat University celebrated ‘Reading Day.’ The event was organized by the Independent Learning Centre (ILC), in conjunction with ETHos Magazine and the Effat Library.

The event began with silent reading for 20 minutes. This was then followed by students participating in Reading Circles to discuss different genres in writing. The circles were: Poetry, Popular Readings, Non-Fiction and Classics.

Participation in Reading Circles was followed by playing of games, which revolved around books and writing. The two main games that were played were: Life-sized scrabble and book charades. In the first game, students were divided into two rival groups and were asked to re-assemble a group of randomly selected letters into words. The group which could put together the longest word was declared the winner. Book charades was similar to regular charades, with the exception that players were to use book titles only. In this game too, the participating students were divided into two groups.

Game time was followed by the announcement of the winners of the Short Story Competition. Soha Ahmed won first place for her story “Tantamount,” while Samiah Haque and Reem Al-Muraishid won second and third places for their stories “Spiro, Spere” and “Unforgettable Day” respectively. The event ended with the announcement of the winners of the Best Literary Costume Contest, for which contestants had dressed up as their favorite literary characters. Ms. Reema Barqawi, though not a contestant, looked incredible as the Mad Hatter from Alice in Wonderland. Sana Abdul Salam as Cinderella, Hanan Asghar as Leila, Maryam Abedi as Captain Jack Sparrow, Syeda Zarlish as Coco Chanel, Manal Ansari as Paro, and Anbreen Sheikh as Anarkali were the contestants. Anbreen Sheikh’s Anarkali won Best Literary Costume, while Manal Ansari won the runner-up positions.
Dalia Mogahed visits Effat University
By Fatema Quresh

On March 4, 2012, Dalia Mogahed visited Effat University and presented a lecture. She began her talk by praising Effat University’s efforts to promote women’s education in Saudi Arabia. She then spoke about how her own education and experience related to the majors offered at Effat, stating that she holds an undergraduate degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Wisconsin and a Master’s in Business Administration. Her work experience includes research in the Social Sciences and Humanities concentrating on the Muslim community.

Mogahed then introduced her work the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies, of which she is the Executive Director. She said that the centre has conducted research in approximately 150 countries. The centre has conducted studies about the dynamics of respect between the Muslim and Western worlds. The research was conducted by going to the homes of the interviewees and gaining a better understanding of their opinions. Dalia Mogahed is an advisor on the White House Office of Faith based and neighborhood partnerships. She is co-author of the book, Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think (Gallup Press, March 2008), and her work has appeared in major journals like Harvard International Review and The Middle East Policy Journal.

TedX at EffatU
By Marwah Helabi

On the April 12, 2012, Effat University hosted TEDxEffatU with “Aspire to Achieve” as its theme. The event spanned from 5-11 pm, with around 15 speakers (English and Arabic) speaking about their achievements, innovations and inspirations. TEDxEFFATU was organized by the Effat Student Government, while students from the English and Translation department were responsible for interpreting from English to Arabic and vice versa. At the end of the ceremony, gifts of appreciation were given to participants for making the event a success.
“English as a World Language,” a Seminar by Dr. John O’Regan
Reported by Sana Abdul Salam


One of the key ideas presented was the concept of English as a Lingua Franca, a language without a singular stable form, but rather a plural form used around the world. Hence, there is not a single ‘English’, but rather multiple ‘Englishes’ such as Korean English, Chinese English, Indian English and so on. Each of these variants has distinct characteristics elicited through the influence of the region’s native language. For example, in Chinese English, the sentence structure is modified from the traditional subject-verb-object to object-subject-verb. According to the view of English as a Lingua Franca, such modifications would not be seen as errors, but rather, accepted as idiosyncrasies of English specific to the region.

While native speakers are generally considered to use language in its ideal form, Dr. O’Regan stated that the idiomatic expressions inherent in native speakers may marginalize them due to what he referred to as their “Unilateral Idiomacy” – which makes a native speaker’s speech difficult to understand for those who speak the same language in a different region. Due to this, business deals are negotiated in “Globish,” a more comprehensible and adapted version of the language.

The seminar concluded with a lively Question and Answer session in which various professors and students raised relevant issues. By the end of the discussion, it was evident that while the practicality of English as a lingua franca may be contested, it is certainly a novel way to approach the language.

Dr Badria Al-Bishr’s lecture at Effat University
By Afnan Linjawi

April 29, 2012, Dr. Badriah Al-Bishr, a renowned Saudi woman writer, gave a lecture at Effat University. Dr. Al-Bishr began her lecture by speaking about her work as a journalist, which spanned over twenty years. She then spoke about her will to re-conceptualize women in society. For this she gave the example of Princess Nora bint Abdulrahman, the founder of Princess Nora bint Abdulrahman University and Mei, a protagonist in one of her novels. Dr. Badriah also reflected on the lack of confidence women across different cultures have developed due to their coercive circumstances, something which she felt should be addressed in literature. Dr. Al-Bishr left her audience with a quote from Simone de Beauvoir, “One is not born a woman, one becomes one.”

From the right: Dr Badriah Al- Bisher with Dr Kholod Ashgar, Ms Molook Al-Sheikh and Effat Students Afnan Linjawi and Isra Al-qassas

Photo by Afnan Linjawi
Could you imagine a blind person living or studying with people who can see? Do you think they would be able to adapt in such a situation? The answer is—yes, they can! I am going to tell you a story, and let you decide for yourself. My name is Doaa Alghamdi. I was born prematurely as my mother gave birth to me after seven months, which meant that I was kept in a nursery for two months after my birth. In the nursery, I was given more oxygen than required. As a result, my eyes were damaged and I was not able to see after that. However, being blind has never stopped me from doing what I wished to do.

When I was five years old, I attended a special school for blind children, and learned how to read Braille— with the alphabet being represented in raised dots, so blind people could feel them. I continued there until high school, and after that I had to think about where I was going to study further and which major I would choose. I chose English and Translation because I like to learn other languages. I was also interested in helping other people in the same situation as I am in: to help them learn English and to translate for them. When I joined Effat University, at first it was very difficult for me. It was a new experience for the faculty as well, as this was the first time that a blind student had come to Effat. Initially they could not help me read and write. In the first year, I was disappointed and did not want to study. I wanted to leave the university, but my family supported me every day - especially my mother. She was the one who helped me by asking the faculty to find additional resources for me. I use the same kind of laptop computer everyone else does, as I know all the keys on the keyboard. I have now found software for reading my lectures, so I can read by myself. If I need anything I ask someone else, like family members or friends, to help me. Now, I am in the second year and things have been much better than before. I have a tutor who helps me. I have made a lot of very good friends, and from them I have learnt how to be stronger, and more sociable.

Finally, I would like to tell you that in any situation, do not let anything stop you from progressing. I always tell myself that I will be successful, and I hope to be like my hero Helen Keller, as she helped people around the world to become more self-reliant.
An Effat Graduate, Now a Journalist

By Laura Bashraheel

Many students get into college not really knowing what to expect, as our education system does not really produce critical thinkers who are able to draw a career path that begins at graduation. Unfortunately, the system produces aimless young women and twelve years ago, I was one of them—until I found Effat.

I joined Effat University (then Effat College) in 2001 to study computer science. At that time, Internet has just taken Saudi Arabia by storm and information technology was the next best thing. However, I could not deal with numbers so I turned to studying the art of words—English literature, as I always loved the idea of writing. I was introduced to the beauty of words through Greek mythology, Shakespeare’s dramas, Homer’s Iliad, Freud’s theories in psychology and countless other works. I had amazing tutors, who I still remember as they are still a part of who I am today. Their willingness to teach us was immense, and for that, I am truly grateful to them.

Writing this article brings back so many memories, mostly good ones. At college I had made many friends with whom I still in touch with. I graduated in 2005-2006, with no clue about what to do except for working as a translator. At the time, this sounded like the most suitable career after four years of taking translation and linguistics courses. After a one-year break, in 2007 I joined Arab News as a translator. For some reason, my editor saw potential in me as a reporter. I really was surprised and told myself that perhaps he wasn’t wearing his glasses! But as it turns out, he is still my editor today.

In 2010, I decided to pursue my higher education in London. So, I left my fulltime job at Arab News and went on a journey of self-discovery. You see, studying isn’t only the process of learning, writing papers and getting an ‘A’ grade. There is more to college life than what appears on the surface.

In a male oriented society, my father taught me to depend on myself since I do not have any brothers. He insisted that I get a proper education, believing that one day it will lead me somewhere. And here I am in 2012, a senior reporter at Saudi Gazette. Working as a journalist has opened doors for me and taken me to places I never imagined I would go. No career path comes without its hurdles, but thankfully I have had a strong support system composed of my parents, friends and editors.

After all these years of studying hard and working harder, I finally have my five-year-plan ready and set to go. So here’s my advice to students—college years serve as an opening into the real world, which you are forced into upon graduation. It adequately prepares you for this next step in life in a way that is unparalleled. However, learning does not end with college. You learn something new every day, and this adds to your inner growth. It’s only a matter of having an open mindset and be willing to learn from experience.
How can you get more students interested in pursuing a degree in computer sciences? How can we increase employee loyalty? What motivates a volunteer? Is there a relationship between family income and self-confidence? These were just a few of the questions addressed at Effat University’s Undergraduate Research Event.

The event was held on March 6, 2012, and was organized by the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research. The objective of this event was to showcase research projects undertaken by Effat’s University’s undergraduate students. The audience was treated to a total of nine paper presentations and three poster presentations by students from the Humanities and Engineering colleges. And as a special activity during lunch, there was a workshop by Carla Castillo on using the Socratic dialogue in classroom activities.

The day started with two contributions from two talented English Literature students: Samiah Haque and Sana Abdul Salam. Samiah eloquently presented the archetype of the hysteric, unstable, uncanny woman as she appeared throughout history in literature and movies. In the next presentation, Sana made us see fashion in a very different way: our clothes are not only garments but instead convey a message about our culture, our time, and our perception of gender, to name a few. During discussion following her presentation, it became clear that Saudi Arabia might present a unique picture for fashion discourse analysis, with the complex interdependencies between the Abaya and whatever is worn underneath.

The presentations from the Engineering College focused on development and implementation of technology to improve our lives. Sarah Wahab and Sumeyra Ustaoglu are enthusiastic Computer Science students and want more women to join the club. Thus, they took it upon themselves to design an interactive guide that can inform prospective students on the fun and benefits of studying computer science. They are well
on their way and hope to conduct user evaluations. Such evaluations were already undertaken by Mome Hussain, but these focused on the experiences with the Effat Student Planners. She startled us with showing that only very small percentage of the students actually used the Planner in 2010-2011, whereas in the preceding year usage was far greater. For this, both aesthetics and functionality of the design were to blame. But is this planner more successful than the last one? We will only know after new user evaluations.

The next engineering student, Bayan Al Nawaimi presented her work on analyzing the capabilities of the Kinect for Xbox360 for respiratory surface motion tracking, which will allow for more accurate diagnosis and treatment of tumors using MRT scanners. The work of Bayan and her research colleagues of Suffolk University in the UK, where she worked as an intern, was recently accepted for publication, indicating a clear value for the scientific community.

The last session of the day was dedicated to students of the Psychology department. Manal Ansari started the psychology session talking about her planned research on employee loyalty and motivation. Her conducting this study at Al Baik is bound to provide very valuable knowledge for them, for business community and perhaps also for Effat in recruiting and nurturing its’ human capital. Similarly, the study by Hanan Ashgar may give us good insight on what drives people. Her proposed research on motivation of volunteers will bring a wealth of data on a diversity of factors influencing people to contribute to society without expecting tacit rewards. Interestingly, Anbreen Shaikh’s research also involved tacit rewards, or more specifically money, but not the absence of it, rather the presence of money (family income) and its’ relation to self-confidence. Although the audience was keen to know the answer, Anbreen only added to our questions, since she did not find any clear evidence for any relationship yet. Nevertheless, her account of her research was lively and inspiring – giving us an idea of what it really takes to conduct such a study. Finally, the last presentation of the day was by an Effat graduate, Zarlish Syeda, and we were very happy that she had come back to Effat specifically for this event to present her research. For her study, she and three of her fellow students Jana Zarea, Laila Arab, and Manal Vohra, had conducted interviews at supermarkets to gain insight in the relationship between self-appraisal and reflected appraisal on buying decisions. They interviewed 196 supermarket customers, both Saudi and Fillipino, and found no difference between these groups on self-appraisal, but did find that Saudi consumers scored higher on reflected appraisal. Zarlish described the difficult process of women approaching and interviewing men, and how this may have biased their results somewhat.

The day ended with the Award Ceremony. The best presentation award was given to Mome Hussain, who presented her work on the Effat’s Student Planners. The Jury liked the interdisciplinary nature of the study, and was specifically pleased by the fact that the students had chosen a very common and practical problem and approached that in a scientific way. The two other awards were for the best paper and best-referenced paper, which were awarded to Anbreen Shaikh and Samiah Haque respectively on the day of the Graduation Ceremony for the class of 2011-2012.
The Drama Club 2011-2012
By Fatima Mayet

Of late the Drama Club has been one of the most active clubs at Effat University. Through their humorous yet meaningful plays, they have managed to captiv their audience, and last year was no different. Over the course of one year (Fall 2011–Spring 2012), they were able to produce three phenomenal plays.

In Fall 2011, the drama club enthusiastically participated in the student orientation, presenting a play that depicted the admission and registration process at Effat. The play was entertaining and through their unique brand of humor, they depicted the experience of most new students. They gave something that all of us, as students, could relate to. By the end of the play, everyone, including the faculty, was impressed with the accurate yet light-hearted presentation of the Effat environment.

In Spring 2012, once again, the club was at the forefront by contributing twice – once in the student orientation and again in a mid-semester play. The theme of the Spring 2012 student orientation play was quite different. With the expectation bar already set so high, they decided to do an imaginary depiction of Effat’s future 50 years from now, with advanced technology in use. The mid-semester play was titled “Once Upon a Time there was a Princess,” which bore the theme of women empowerment. In the play, Disney princesses – Cinderella, Pocahontas, Snow White, and many others – along with the introduction of a new princess, sought to convey a message about women’s identity based on their courage to stand up and face the world.

The bar of expectations for the drama club has risen yet again, and we hope to see more diverse issues depicted in an interesting and enjoyable manner.
An isolated orange juice vesicle
By Sana Abdul Salam
- Winner of the Effat Annual Poetry Competition -

Shaped like a teardrop
A luscious little fruity gland
Perfectly taut, encasing a world of juice
Ready to burst
at the slightest provocation

A real life story that never made it to the newspapers
By Samiah Haque

the sea walked into town today
the children were screaming the adults
were weeping as they packed their clothes
but he took everything that came near him
their parasols and their working shoes
and the little boys and girls who surrendered
to his thunderous might and his easy stroll
when everything was gone, the land lay
humble and supplicant
and I, with my little eyes and my little feet
watched her birth a rainbow.

Imaginary Note
By Sana Faruqi

Glittering glimmering crystal bubbles, drift down slowly, settle;
Pop.
Golden shimmering seraphim, wings beating, suddenly gracefully;
Stop.
Sweet soft melodies twisting, turning, blending, like rain;
Drop.
We were exactly alike, just like looking in a mirror; same hair, same mark on the cheek. But her right was my left, that was the only difference. We did everything together, my sister and I. Carly was my best friend, I told her everything and she confided in me. My name is Cathy and I’m the other twin.

When Carly was little, her grandma always told her one thing, that people are not bad, they just act in a way that we don’t understand. Today, I know that that’s all a big lie. At six, Carly’s parents passed away and she was moved to a foster home. The foster family was as perfect as any, yet it was all dysfunctional from the inside. Mr. and Mrs. Holmes were silent but communicated with Carly without words. She would cry all night from the horror that would take place every day if the slightest leaf was moved from its place. At age eight, her body became like a maze, it was damaged, distorted yet still flawless. But there were more scars inside that stung and that’s when I was born. Exactly twenty four days before her ninth birthday, Carly called my name for the first time, Cathy, and there I was, taking her place in an instant. It became like a deal, whenever Carly was called by one of the two adults I would show up. Carly told me that since they couldn’t see me, I would feel no pain.

Every night I would dress up in the same dress Carly wore and endlessly wait. Then we would switch places, I became Carly and she became me and there it was, the perfect concoction for no pain at all. I saw everything from then onwards and it all made sense. Every slash, cut, I took it all in and then after it was all done, we became ourselves and went on as if nothing had happened. To forget the bad, we would run away every weekend to the small beach at noon, when Mrs. Holmes went out for lunch.

One day at school Carly was unable to walk properly. “Carly come on”, I told her but she couldn’t help but limp to class. And so I had to take over and help her get through the day. One intrusive teacher insisted on knowing what had happened. The next day, we woke up to police sirens and social services knocking at our door. Once again, we were moved back to the adoption center.

Ten years later, when Grandma Annie found us, there were appointments made with psychologists, doctors, psychiatrists and neurologists. Multiple Personalities, that’s what they called it, and they started to trap me inside forever. One night, it took me all my power to tell Carly to let me out one last time, and she agreed. We went to the house again, and there they were, Mr. and Mrs. Holmes. I told Carly to wait outside, since she’s the scared one. Starting at the door and the two small windows, I lit the entire house on fire.

The wind picked up slightly, brushing the waves like an invisible hand. It was heaven to be here, on this beach again, as beautiful as I’d remembered--- the sky slowly softening into the low orange of evening. Carly suddenly sat down on the sand. “Let’s stop for a moment” she said. “I want to ask you something.” “Sure,” I sat yeadown to the sand, “You know you can ask me anything.” So, after everything... after all THAT...was it worth it?” I laughed out loud then. I couldn’t stop it even if I’d tried. “Oh yes.” I said. “Without a doubt.”
We were like two orange seeds, cohabiting in delicious tension within a nourishing fleshy pulp; until life chanced upon us with a hungry bite, and we were spat out rudely, subject to the whimsies of our respective trajectories which spanned continents and seas. Yet we would gravitate towards each other, and were held to each other by a thread stronger than the molecules of a spider’s web - a mysterious connection which some call destiny.

It began with the water, my sister’s eyes softening with the waves. She had cried for hours the night before and nothing I said could comfort her. Along the shore was a steamboat the sun shining brightly on the lettering which I would only later know the meaning of: Dum spiro, spero – while I breathe, I hope. My sister looked at me and I knew what we would had to do. We would leave at last, we would leave the orphanage she would cry no longer and we would find those elusive parents of ours; we would find our home.

We never did find our parents. The steamboat carried us together to another land where we were torn apart, where we had to grow up, sooner than our time. But it also brought us together again and again. Years later, with children of our own and graying hair we meet by the beach where my sister’s eyes had been so full with sadness. The wind picked up slightly, brushing the waves like an invisible hand. It was heaven, to be here, on this beach again, as beautiful as I’d remembered--- the sky slowly softening into the low orange of evening. My sister suddenly sat down on the sand. “Let’s stop for a moment” she said, catching my hand. “I want to ask you something.”

“Sure,” I said, sinking to the ground beside her, “You know you can ask me anything.”

“So, after everything...after all that...was it worth it?” I laughed out loud then. I couldn’t stop it even if I’d tried.

“Oh yes.” I said. “Without a doubt.”
It all started on a beautiful Monday morning. The sky was painted in clear blue with small rays of purple and orange. The sun’s radiant light penetrated the peaceful sky, and the fresh breeze of air could revive the soul. The daily alarm woke Sarah and her brother Ahmad up at 6:30 for school. Fighting fatigue, Sarah got out of bed, got dressed, and joined her family for a quick breakfast.

“Hurry up! you’re going to be late for school.” Her mother said. Sarah and her brother quickly gave their mom and dad a goodbye kiss and hopped into the school bus, while their dad drove his car away to work.

On the way to school, Sarah and Ahmad were enjoying a game of thumb war, while kids in the bus were talking and exchanging stories about their weekend. Suddenly, a loud noise that caught their attention. After a moment of silence, the blasting sound of a gunshot emerged.

The children’s expressions simultaneously changed into looks of panic and fear. Sarah held Ahmed’s hand tightly and looked at him with worried eyes. After that, things began to get hectic. Cars were running past stop lights, people were screaming, shop owners ran out of their stores leaving them as an easy target to burglars, and the sound of non-stop gunshots spread terror among people. Shouts and cries of horror arose in the bus. Khaled, the bus driver, did not know what to do. His only concern was getting the children to a safe place. “Everybody! duck your heads and remain calm!” he shouted, with a tone of fear. A continuous sound of gunshot and bombing filled the air. As the driver was thinking of a safe place, a loud cry of help emerged from the background. “She’s been shot! Maha’s been shot!” Khaled ran to the back to see the child’s arm bleeding. He tore off his shirt, wrapped it around her arm, went back to the steering wheel and thought to himself, “The hospital is the safest place at the moment.”

As he drove like a maniac, streets were drenched with blood, glass of the stores’ windows was scattered everywhere, and bodies lay there, lifeless. Trying to avoid looking at the horrible scene, Khaled reached the hospital. “Hurry! Everybody off the bus! Leave Maha, I’ll carry her.” The children, with eyes wide open, shocked and in tears, went off the bus and into the hospital’s entrance. All of them were gathered in one place, with nurses swirling around to calm them down and look at their minor injuries.

The chief of the hospital called their parents to inform them that their children were safe. Sarah sat in the corner. A sad feeling took over her. “God, please let my parents be safe, protect us all. Mom, I really want to hug you right now. Dad, I just want to tell you that you’re the best Dad in the world. God, I promise I’ll never cheat in my exams again. I won’t tease Lama about her big nose. I even will stop fighting with Ahmed. Just please, make my wish come true.”

As soon as Sarah and Ahmed heard that the administration called their parents, they hurried to the entrance eagerly and waited. Suddenly, the image of their mom,
On a cold hazy morning, the breeze of the last pack of my tulips woke me up. I left my bed and started to look at them with nostalgia. They were lying on my broken glass window. I said to myself, “Oh my sweet tulips, I am so sorry, but this is your last day alive!” Suddenly, my eyes fell upon the reflection of an old glimmering jewellery box. I walked around the room to search for it, and finally found it under my antique commode. After wiping the dust off, I opened it. I found her pearls, which were like no other. Oh yes! They were so special, exactly as my mother had described them.

Then I thought of her and how she would look wearing them. I wish I had a picture of her, or at least a painting. I have never seen her, but just thinking of her life, a tear fell down my cheeks. My mother then entered the room and said, “My dear, why are you not ready yet? Sweetheart, I know it is hard for you to accept it under these circumstances, but this is your day honey. You must get ready with a smile, not with tears. And what is that in your hand, Evangeline?” I turned my back, showing her the box. She was amazed. “Where did you find this, Evangeline? This is unbelievable! At least you can wear her splendid pearls with your white obsolete dress. I believe this is what she wants too.” “But mother, I wanted her to be with us in this special day, or this how I should call it.” “Oh no sweetheart, don’t be frustrated. I’m sure everything will be fine; and besides, those pearls where around my neck on my wedding day too. You know she helped me wear them. It is a tradition in our family to pass pearls on from mothers to daughters on their wedding day.” “Okay mother, I will get ready now,” I replied.

My mother then left the room, while I started to get ready. The sounds of rockets and bombs were like my wedding’s music, the crashed glass on the road was my sparse blossom and the smell of our peoples’ blood was my perfume. I must neglect everything; this is where I belong. This is how it meant to be, and I can’t change it. Now I am ready, ready to accept the wedding vows. I am ready to become a mother and give birth to my unfortunate children. There I was, standing in front of my mirror, looking at my reflection and thinking, “Oh, Evangeline… look at you! When are you going to be happy? You were...
born like this, in this miserable life, and now you are passing it on to them. When will the moment come when you will taste relief? When?

Looking at my mother’s gorgeous pearls, touching their surface, I thought of her luxurious life. She lived back when the garden smelled of roses and beautiful melodies played in her house. We lived in two different worlds, and we have never seen each other. But yet, she is part of me and I am part of her.

I opened the door and walked through the lobby. Holding my bouquet of tulips, I faked a smile only to make them happy. This was the least I could do for them. Reaching the wedding hall seems impossible now... may God be with us!

I walked down the stairs, looking at their poor smiling faces—my father in his tuxedo and my sister in her gown. My whole family was all gathered together, waiting for me, waiting for the bride.

“Evangeline, look at you! I can’t believe my eyes,” exclaimed my father. “Let’s go darling. The car is outside waiting for you.” I just smiled in response.

With fear inside us, all of us drove away from our home to streets full of smoke and gore, to streets full of savages; to an unknown fate. I could not believe myself— I was wearing white when I should have been wearing black. I was choking from the inside. The road’s distance seemed like the longest in my life. Deep inside, I wished for all of this to end.

Moments passed, and my ominous foretelling came true— a gun fired, making our car crash by the side of the road. My eyes went around the circle, from my brother, sister, mother, and finally to my father. There were all at the side of the road, scratched and bleeding, our best clothes torn to rags. No one spoke. There would be time enough for that. Yet we all felt it, the rising happiness and relief. We were alive, and most importantly, we were together.

NOTE

The following endings, which were given as prompts for the Short Story Contest, were used in the stories in Expressions:

Ending 1:

Her eyes went round the circle, from her brother, to her sister, to her mother, and finally to her father. There they were, at the side of the road, scratched, bleeding, their best clothes torn like rags. No one spoke. There would be time enough for that. Yet they all felt it, the rising happiness and relief. They were alive, and most importantly, they were together.

Ending 2:

The wind picked up slightly, brushing the waves like an invisible hand. It was heaven, to be here, on this beach again, as beautiful as I’d remembered---the sky slowly softening into the low orange of evening. My sister suddenly sat down on the sand. “Let’s stop for a moment” she said, catching my hand. “I want to ask you something.” “Sure,” I said, sinking to the ground beside her, “You know you can ask me anything.”

“So, after everything...after all THAT...was it worth it?”

I laughed out loud then. I couldn’t stop it even if I’d tried.

“Oh yes.” I said. “Without a doubt.”
Hedayh F. Menkabo is a self-taught photographer who is pursuing a degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering at Effat University. She is passionate about photography because, as she says, it enables her to “show beauty in places where not many people would look for it.”
Mashael Zaydan is an English and Translation student at Effat University. She paints and sketches as hobbies.
Reflections of an Expected Graduate

By Dina Ismail

For many Effat students, Effat University was an expected landmark in their lives. For others, it was an unexpected detour. I am one of the latter. In my junior and senior years of high school, I recall lofty aspirations of attending medical school at George Washington University and eventually becoming a plastic surgeon. Many of my peers are surprised to learn this about me, assuming that Business Administration fits my personality far more. However, as unexpected as it was to become a College of Business student at Effat University, it is with unwavering gratitude that I write this today.

Effat University taught me a lot about myself and about the parts of myself I hadn’t bothered to acknowledge in the past. My ties to my native country of Saudi Arabia, my familiarity with Islam, my interactions with young women who had far more conservative upbringings -- while I could have studied abroad, I would have lost an important component of my heritage in the process. People say that our college years are the times when we find ourselves. For me, my time at Effat helped me discover not only who I was, but who I wanted to be.

This is not to say that I loved every second of it, of course. There are many things I will not miss about Effat University. The never-ending stream of emails, having to retake MATH 160, student/professor politics, the looming possibility of a DN (which I’m more familiar with than I care to admit)— aspects of Effat life which make me glad to be graduating. But there are countless other things I will miss dearly, such as making friends in unexpected places, watching Effat grow over the last few years, taking naps in the library, Chai Lattes from Coffee Bean, getting an A on the midterm when I was expecting a C … and various other things perhaps every Effat student can relate with.

Barring potential DNs, it will be a bittersweet moment when I leave the Effat community behind. It was an experience that reminded me that happiness can thrive in the unlikeliest of places and that life really does happen to you, as the aphorism goes, when you’re busy making other plans. I don’t know if I’ve “aspired to achieve,” but I’ve definitely achieved a valuable education and cherished memories.

The Hunt

By Dana Foudah

I’ve been hunting ever since the last day of my final exams.

I was an amateur hunter and therefore took baby-steps to seek my ultimate prize. I started by kindly asking people to help me in my quest but then soon discovered that they could not help me. I was not completely dependent on them though, and searched on my own. I prepared by checking my university e-mail everyday for new sightings, scoured newspapers, and joined websites that promised to make it easier to track my target.

All this to no avail. While I stumbled around like a headless chicken, I discovered that I had competition — others were after the very same thing I wanted! Tons of seekers with the same skills, same experiences, and the very same target!

Oh yes, this was going to be tough. I had wasted enough time as it is, the target is moving, and the opportunities are slipping. I’d better run, and run fast! Jump and throw myself at my target, claim it to be mine and glare at everybody to back off.

Yet, hours turned into days… days turned into weeks… and weeks turned into months. Before I knew it, the summer was over and I never caught a single one.

I suppose I need to polish my hunting skills and maybe I’ll have a better shot next time. To say that finding a job is merely ‘difficult’ in the crazy world out there doesn’t really do the situation justice. It’s a jungle; a survival of the fittest! And if you don’t know what you are doing, you can kiss your chances of getting a job goodbye.
Value Points and the Ambassadors Program: Are They Really Working?

By Wojood Rozi

As an Effat student, I have to earn 50 value points every semester; these points make up 5% of the final grades in all my courses. This value point system, along with the ambassadors program, is designed to help Effat students improve their professional and life skills outside the classrooms. But is it really working for us? Not from where I stand.

The main problem with such a quantitative system is that it forces students to concentrate on collecting value points instead of focusing on learning and improving their skills. It enforces a how-many-good-deeds-have-I-collected-today mentality instead of placing importance on the qualitative value of these good deeds.

While the Ambassador’s Program aimed to address this issue, it instead caused the value point system to become worse.

Students now have less freedom to choose the activities they are interested in and are forced to attend lectures that often do not correspond to their academic level. Moreover, the program does not take into consideration the differences of the students within the university, which enrolls a variety of different students, many of whom are older, working, or mothers.

Most of the materials presented in the classes are easily accessible through search engines such as Google or eHow. Furthermore, some of the guest speakers attempt to indoctrinate students with their personal beliefs and opinions.

What makes it all worse is that lectures are frequently cancelled and replaced with YouTube videos or online articles. Such situations defeat the purpose of the Ambassador’s Program.

When I became a senior I was stunned to discover that ten hours of volunteer work is required from senior students. The irony in this is that my colleagues and I were more involved in volunteer work during our freshmen and sophomore years. During these years, students have more free time and volunteering can help new students become actively involved in the community and develop communication and teamwork skills. However, senior students work under tight time constraints, coping with graduation projects, internships, as well as job and graduate school applications.

At the end of the day, if students want to improve their abilities and learn professional skills, they will do it with or without a value point system in place.

The day I got an ‘F’

By Reham Moamena

Whenever I heard the saying “what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger,” I could not help but think that “what doesn’t kill you” should be followed by something like “will kill you later” rather than “makes you stronger”.

But that changed when what I imagined as the worst academic happened to me. I woke up one day right after finishing my finals in the second semester of my freshmen year, and found out that I had acquired a big fat ‘F.’ From the moment I had joined university, I knew I was an average student, and though I fell below the average a couple of times, I was ok with it. I had no intention of trying to improve my performance until the day I got that ‘F.’

Unlike what others may have done, I did not cry. I did not even get sad or angry, but rather, was as cool as ice. However, something inside of me changed. From then onwards, my GPA remained at 3.8/4.00 and the lowest grade I received from was a ‘B.’

I’m not trying to say that failing is good. I don’t know how a straight ‘A’ student would react to an ‘F.’ However, I now know that it is possible to make the best out of the worst. And maybe, after all, what doesn’t kill you can in fact make you stronger.
An Overlooked Bias
By Rawan Al. Amari

We live in a world plagued with prejudice; racism, sexism and ethnic discrimination to just name a few. Yet beyond this is a hidden bias that has been overlooked -- the preference society has for extroverts.

In Dr. Marti Olsen Laney’s *The Introvert Advantage: How to thrive in an extrovert world*, introverts are described as “energy conservers” who acquire their energy from their internal world of ideas, emotions and impressions. This energy may be hard to retain in today’s fast paced society, which the author claims makes introverts feel out of home.

Society values extroverts who cope well with constant communication, gregarious atmospheres and large gatherings, which may overwhelm introverts. They are not, as is the misconception, shy and anti-social but rather introspective and function best in solitude or in intimate social gatherings. Society’s bias against introverts further manifests itself in various ways, ranging from the floor plans of corporate buildings where offices have little to no privacy, to school and university where students are forced to work in group projects.

In order to maximize talents, people must be placed in a zone of stimulation suitable for them. As an introvert studying architecture at Effat University, my friends often meet and work in the studios present on campus, while I prefer the quiet atmosphere of home. Often, my friends misconstrue my decision as my lack of interest in them but many have come to understand being alone in a quiet place allows me to exercise my creativity best.

While teamwork and social gatherings should not be put to an end, the demand for constant group work must be limited in order to make room for introverts in society. A cultural shift is in great need to overcome the bias towards introverts and allow them to be themselves without fear of discrimination.

Our Calling
By Bushra Siddiqui

No one could have said it more accurately than John Lennon: “Life is what happens when you’re busy making other plans.” Most of us are busy following plans which may not be of our choosing, or what we want. We are moving with the tide and have no particular destination in mind. Some of us dream and yet leave those dreams unfulfilled. When following plans not meant for us, our lives become complicated.

The clamor of materialism, the rat-race and the craving for social acknowledgement is making us ill, and drenching us in depression, insomnia, and fatigue. Are we doing what we would do if no one was watching? Are we doing what our liberated self would do? Most of us live so far away from our ideal life that we don’t even notice that we are living a life of silent desperation. Some of the brave among us don’t accept this desperation and dare to fight against their misery.

I believe there are many mysteries in the universe, but discovering our life’s purpose should not be one of them. Discovering our purpose in life and living out our dream is perhaps the most rewarding things one can do, but most often we are trapped in the taxing affairs of routine life that we tend to forget the very purpose of our existence. It is rightly said that “if Satan can’t make you bad, he’ll make you busy.”

We have to acknowledge that we have dreams and that those dreams deserve to be lived. Once we acknowledge our dreams, it becomes easier to realize them. Only when we face the fears that keep us from living out our dreams can we overcome them.
Getting some Drive before Driving!

By Khayra Bundakji

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, has unwritten social systems considered unique in the international community. Apart from publicized topics such as gender segregation, immigrant labor rights, elitism, and racism, are minor social habits, which can be chalked up to “laziness,” This “laziness” - or what I consider lack of awareness - directly relates to the widespread debate on women driving. The behaviour of local women is wildly different from that of their counterparts in other parts of the world. In particular, a statistically average female's level of awareness of her surroundings is minimal. As a more internationally aware Saudi studying in an all-female university in Jeddah, I perform seemingly mundane social obligations of keeping doors open for the next person and saying “excuse me” when bumping into someone. However expected it may seem, these actions are surprising if returned by any other local women.

Being quiet in an audience out of respect for interested members is a concept so alien that anyone asking that person to be quiet would be loudly told off. Blocking doorways and paths to chat obliviously is common and people appear surprised when I ask them to let me through.

Here’s the main “What came first?” question: is it a good idea to put people with this level of awareness behind the wheel on already deadly roads? Or is it the anti-driving laws that prevent mothers from teaching their daughters the importance of paying attention?

Now with an actual hope of changing the law, women have the responsibility of changing their habits to get ready for the life they have been demanding. Survival traits like competitiveness and achievement rely on understanding and participation in a person’s direct surroundings. Every time a female shuts off her sensors and becomes less aware of her environment, it is a sign that we are not ready to take the bull by the horns - or the car by the wheel, as it were.

By not having a participatory culture amongst ourselves as women, we are shaping generations of blank looks, empty demands, and intellectually stunted beings. It is time now to open our eyes to the world, and to each other.

An Unprecedented Experience

By Noor Al-Safeh

One fine day in April 2010, I received an email from a friend, informing the university that she was arranging for a trip to the Disabled Children’s Association. I was about voluntary work for entertaining handicapped children. Hence, I got excited and registered my name. My decision to go and what happened next determined my interests in life.

The trip was very significant, as after I came back as a sheer different person. Spending time with disabled people was incredible. Hearing and even watching anything about them was nothing compared to actually being with them, interacting with them, and closely monitoring how they were treated. I participated in different activities which drove me to face a shocking reality. In that centre students were not getting the attention they deserve, although they had many capabilities that could be exploited.

One of the occurrences that showed me how students were discouraged from making their own decisions was when I saw the interaction between a curt helper and a nine year old boy who wanted to play with clay and make some shapes. Since I was responsible for this activity, I asked the child his name. The helper answered on his behalf, saying “Ahmad”. I ignored her. Then, I asked him to choose the shape he desired. The helper answered “a house”. I repeated the question and directed it to the boy. He had some trouble speaking, so he picked the flower shape among
others and made it. All that was left was to paint it. So I asked him to choose the color. Again, the helper answered “blue.” Although I did not say anything, I showed the helper that I was really furious with her insulting attitude towards the boy. I asked the boy about the color again and he said that he wanted brown. After he was done, he was very happy and I too felt happy for him. Here, I just tried to be courteous with the helper as well as considerate to the boy by not making him feel as if he was incapable of making his own choices.

That was just a helper, though. What surprised me the most was the children’s family’s behavior and how they discriminated between siblings. Once a four year old girl with a brilliant smile was talking to me and my friends, and we enjoyed her company. A while later, her mother came and asked us, “Is she bothering you?” I disliked her attitude and the way she dealt very nicely with her other non-handicapped daughter. So, I tactfully replied, “No, she is adorable. I love your daughter!” The mother was wide-eyed and did not say anything. I hope she got the message.

That for me was a day to remember. It introduced me to another world of which I had never thought of. My enthusiasm to help these people has increased remarkably. That day motivated me to take part in activities and workshops related to helping the disable. Even now, I insist on rectifying people’s perceptions about differently-able people. As an information systems student, I then resolved to choose a topic related to helping the disabled and hope to make a real difference in their lives.

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Empty Vessels Make the Most Noise

By Afnan AlShareef

The word ‘communication’ refers to the exchange of information, and statistics show that humans spend 70 percent of their time communicating. It is often said to us that the ability to communicate with others is a sign of success and showcases a strong personality. Purposeful communication can help solve problems, and maybe for this reason educational institutions offer public speaking and writing courses. Especially in schools, participation in discussions is supposed to increase learning outcomes. Speaking, however, can be very dangerous when isolated from the rest of our functions, such as synthesizing information and decision making, which often does not require the act of speaking. In schools, for example, a student who speaks the least in a class may seem the least intelligent. In fact, a student’s non-participation may be because the student has confidence of his ability to access information in another way, a way other than to sit on a chair and act as an output device. This, I believe, is the correct answer to the question— why did the student who shared a lot of knowledge in the classroom get a very low grade, while the silent student got a better one? The reason simply is that much talk may indicate a serious concern about transfer of current information and a complete absence in the ability to absorb new knowledge. This happens everywhere: in school, work, and even among our relatives. There is always someone who speaks like an expert in everything and has an opinion about everything. However, we discover one day that he is unable to accomplish anything concrete.

The greatest tragic accident a nation has suffered from in 2011 was Japan earthquake. However it did not turn their country into a media spectacle. The Japanese have addressed their problems in utmost silence; with sharing information in a very civilized manner. In contrast to the Japanese, we all have seen the Egyptian example and events of the revolution that lasted only for a month and was much less disastrous than the Japanese tragedy. The media in Egypt created much chaos as every reporter aimed to transmit his own version of the story. However, the decision to use funds on telling stories rather than in the service of the helpless that really need it reflects a sense of irresponsibility.

The rule that you are not working while talking may explain why the Japanese were able to contain nuclear contamination within 6 months. I personally bet that by the time Japanese overcome their crisis, Egyptians will be still commenting on the first day of their revolution.