Bridging Arabic Instruction from High School to Higher Education:
The Role of DC- Arabic Teachers’ Council
(DEIA-Enhanced CoP)

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DC-ATC
What are the main challenges that you face as Arabic educators?
Major challenges in TAFL

- Diglossia
- Diverse teaching methods
- Heritage learners
  - Student retention
- Arabic morphology,
  - phonology,
  - orthography
- Shortage of materials
  - and resources
  - (online/culture)
- Policies/Attitudes
  - towards language
  - learning
- Artificial Intelligence
- Lack of funding
- Lack of professional
  - training
- Lack of qualified or
  - experienced teachers
- Lack of networking
  - opportunities
- Feelings of isolation
  - “outsiderness”
- Gap between HE
  - institutions and
  - schools

Theory & Practice
Need for innovative solutions...

How did these challenges impact you and your students?

Need for innovative solutions to address these challenges

Al-Batal, 2007; Al-Batal, 2001; Albirini, A., & Chakrani, B., 2017; Ayoub, 2001; Barbeco, 2019; Busaidi, 2015; De Felice et al., 2019; Palmer, 2007; Snowden et al., 2016; Soliman, R., & Khalil, 2022; Younes, 2014
Addressing Challenges and Embracing Innovation

Pressing need for innovative approaches to professional development

Tailored strategies to address specific challenges in TAFL

Incorporation of broader imperatives like Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA)

Recognition of the evolving landscape of TAFL
Unity/Collaboration
Community

Unity/Collaboration
Community
Theoretical framework: Communities of Practice (CoP)

“Individuals united in action” (Liedka, 1999, p.5).

“A CoP (a) provides an alternative to a traditional top-down approach to innovation, (b) allows space for uncertainty and trust, (c) closes the gap between espoused theory and theory in use about special expertise, and (d) dilutes the effects of power imbalances.” (Mortier, 2018, p.1)
Characteristics of CoP

• Shared interest, profession, or goal
• Alternative to top-down approaches
• Fostering trust
• Bridging theory and practice
• Minimizing power imbalances
# DEIA-Enhanced CoP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>DEIA-Enhanced Arabic CoP</th>
<th>Goals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communities where participants share knowledge, best practices, and experiences focused on advancing DEIA. Ensuring DEIA principles are central to the community's structure, goals, and activities.</td>
<td>Establishing a supportive and inclusive space for Arabic educators.</td>
<td>Addressing challenges faced by Arabic teachers. Ensuring equitable access to resources, professional training, and networking opportunities. ➤ Fostering an environment embodying DEIA principles in Arabic language education.</td>
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DC Arabic Teachers Council (DC-ATC): Exemplary of DEIA-Enhanced CoP

Supported by Qatar Foundation International (QFI)

Established as a collaborative group in the DMV region

DC-ATC’s mission:

- “creating opportunities for teachers of Arabic at all grade levels to meet, network, share resources and ideas
- supporting schools that want to start or increase Arabic language teaching
- sponsoring community-based events that elevate the teaching of Arabic language and culture.”
“The key to advancing Arabic teaching and learning as a communal language lies in the collaboration between universities and schools.” (Soliman & Khalil, 2022, p.10)

Bridge between Higher Education and Schools

• DC-ATC bridges higher education and schools.
• Collaboration enhances Arabic teaching and learning. 
• Partnership provides research to schools and insights to universities.
• Cooperation creates clear learning pathways.
• More advanced Arabic graduates expected.
• Graduates can become proficient Arabic teachers.
• Teachers trained in progressive teaching methods.
• ➔ **Supporting the entire Arabic language ecosystem**
### Workshops Organized by DC-ATC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Workshop Title</th>
<th>Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 JAN 2020</td>
<td>Interpersonal Communication: A Workshop for Arabic Instructors</td>
<td>Online</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 FEB 2020</td>
<td>Project-Based Learning: A Workshop for Arabic Educators</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 APR 2020</td>
<td>Asserting Identity in Children and Youth Literature</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 MAY 2020</td>
<td>Student-Centered Activities in the Arabic Classroom</td>
<td>Online</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 NOV 2020</td>
<td>SIMA and Using Film in the Arabic Classroom</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 DEC 2020</td>
<td>From Morocco to Dubai: Engagement and Immersion with Virtual Reality</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 JAN 2021</td>
<td>Social Justice and Foreign Language</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 MAR 2021</td>
<td>Beyond the Boxes: Increasing Student Engagement in Remote Learning</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 MAY 2021</td>
<td>MovieTalk in the Classroom</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 JUL 2021</td>
<td>K-5 Arabic Teachers’ Resource Exchange and Social Hour</td>
<td>Online</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 AUG 2021</td>
<td>‘Anamel’ a Collaborative Online Anthology of Arabic Modules</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 SEP 2021</td>
<td>Arabic Teacher Workshop on Teaching Arabic Language &amp; Culture through Food</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 DEC 2021</td>
<td>Engaging Heritage Learners through Creative Activities in the Arabic Language Classroom</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 JAN 2022</td>
<td>Assessing Language Learning with LinguaGrow</td>
<td>Online</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Addressing Pedagogical and Professional Challenges

- Diverse topics covered in workshops.
- Technology integration
- Cultural competence
- Assessment strategies
- Diglossia
- Culture and extracurricular activities
- Networking
- Funding opportunities through QFI
Feedback: What did you find most effective about the event?

“I am very pleased to participate in interdisciplinary, inter-university events.”

“I like very much that since covid institutions have been inviting speakers from beyond the US. These perspectives are always interesting, as I think each geographic area sort of ossifies in its ways. Good to reach beyond ourselves.”

“Very helpful ideas in the presentation. Also terrific for networking.”

“the way she was able to lead a skeptical audience to a realization of the richness of art as a tool for all students, not just specialists in art”

“Hearing about others in the DMV area and other places passionate and working on Arabic learning”

“It was terrific. I learned a lot. Enjoyed meeting and discussing professional ideas with colleagues.”
Limitations: What was least effective or useful about the event?

"Not enough time to try and explore the different activities and to ask about the best use of them."

"longer workshop, or make it a few sessions, please."

"online sharing was bad in delivering the voice."

"Cannot think of anything in particular, would have just liked to hear more about the DC Arabic Teachers Council, who organizes it, its activities and how to get involved."

The food was not the best. Also water is essential, not everyone drinks soda.
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Concluding discussion

- Challenges faced in TAFL
- Progress and improvements
- Role of DC-ATC and DEIA-Enhanced CoP
- Pedagogical gaps, social dynamics, professional deficiencies
- A more inclusive and interconnected Arabic language education ecosystem.
- My personal experience
“Thank you for organizing this event and connecting us over our shared love of the Arabic language.”
لا تلمني في هواها
لا تلمني في هواها... أنا لا أهوى سواها
لست وحدي أفتديها ... كلنا اليوم فداها
نزلت في كل نفس ... وتمشّت في دماها
فيها الأم تغنت ... وبها الوالد فاها
وبها الفن تجلّى ... وبها العلم تباهي
كلما مرّ زمان ... زادها مجدًا وجاها
لغة الأجداد هذي ... رفع الله لواها
فأعيدوا يا بنبها ... نضحة تحبي رجاها
لم يمت شعب تفانى ... في هواها واصطفاها

الشاعر نحيم بن إبراهيم جريس نجوس (1888- 1957)
Connect with Us: Stay Engaged

• QFI
• Let’s stay connected!
• Arabic-Network-NA
• Ideas for workshops/professional development
• rahmounik@vcu.edu
References

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