

A Reading Lesson

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Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested : that is some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read, but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.

-Francis Bacon

Reading and writing are the two sides of the same coin. It is to writing what hearing is to speaking. Sometimes we don't hear what people are really speaking about. This is applicable to reading as well. You must remember that the book is not about yours and you are reading it in order to get something out of it. According to Canadian Novelist Robertson Davis, one must read selectively, listen to the inner music of the writer's voice and reread books that give you pleasure. I believe that one has to read a book more slowly than some modern teachers recommend. The reason is that the reader is trying to find out what the book has to say. I am sure that you have no intention to finish the book somehow or the other. If you don't like the book, do not strain unnecessarily. Put it aside and read something that interests you. But if you like the book, take your own time, do not rush at it. Read it the pace at which you can pronounce and hear every word in your head. In other words, one has to read eloquently. You are reading for pleasure and incidentally, it may bring information and enlightenment, but if it doesn't bring pleasure, you should ask yourself why you are reading it.

People who teach Reading are against what they call "verbalizing". According to them if you verbalize, you lose time. But you are not reading to save time. You are reading for pleasure and understanding. During the Middle Ages people used to read aloud and the story of a scholar who had to discontinue his studies because he had a sour throat, is a well known one. In fact verbalizing is one of the best critical procedures especially while reading poetry. While teaching poetry I always ask the students to read it loudly. Read aloud so that you can hear what is read with the inner eye, and it is an important critical method for good reading practice. Try to read a passage loudly from a book that you find it difficult to understand. There is every possibility that you will start understanding the passage soon!

So, in order to read well, first of all you need to derive

pleasure in what you read. Secondly we need an open and flexible mind. You see, we can't take words at face value. We must see them contextually in order to make sense. And this context is ever changing. It is generated by the words of a given text, where the text itself is generated by the writer who will generate contexts which a conscious reader can envisage. A good reader has to see all that in a text.

The problem is there is always some sort of discrepancy between what a text says and what it means. So, the reader has to figure out what a text really means on the basis of what he reads. In other words, a reader often has to construe the meaning on the basis of various clues given in the text. For example, consider the following two different expressions: "They kicked him upstairs" and "They put him out of pasture". Though different, there is something similar here and the similarity is that both these expressions could mean "they forced him into early retirement." Again, observe the following contradictory expressions in English language (Oxymoron), "act naturally" and "found missing". To "act naturally" actually means to act in such a way as to seem not to be acting at all. And it is intelligible to say, that while looking for something, we came to the conclusion that something was missing. The point is that this so-called oxymoron makes sense provided we don't read them with simple-minded literalness.

Hermeneutical philosophy says that in order to understand the whole you must know the parts, but in order to understand the parts, you must first understand the whole. It appears that according to hermeneutical circle, real understanding of a text is impossible. Probably the way to get out of this circle is to reach that point in reading a text where the reader can see how the given parts constitute a certain whole and not some other. In other words we are out of this dilemma when we see that the parts and the whole which they constitute converge into a perfect harmony, a

harmonious unit. "You can't see the forest for the trees". This saying echoes the hermeneutical circle as well as the whole idea that though the evidence for a given interpretation is in the text, it is the text itself that needs interpreting in the first place. The idea is to see the "forest" because of and not in spite of the "trees".

Reading then is an active enterprise (as is rereading of course). The good reader pays attention to every aspect of a text and does not jump into conclusions prematurely. The good reader allows the text suggest the context within which it is to be understood. The bad reader either ignores the context or changes it. The good reader implicitly recognizes the fact that an interpretation is not something superimposed on a given text, but something suggested by it.

Many readers think that once you have read a book, it has been read for ever. For example, you have read Shakespeare's "Othello" when you were an undergraduate. You must read it again when you are 25, 50, 55, 60, 70. When you read it again and again you derive more and more insight about the play. Perhaps you may not read every page at these later years, but you should really take another look at a great book, in order to find out how great it is, or how great it has remained to you. Great writers and artists deserve this kind of careful consideration. The more you read a great book the more you derive great pleasure and insight.

And I believe that you must read some rubbish also because an exclusive diet of masterpieces will give you spiritual "indigestion". How can you know that a mountain peak is glorious unless you have scrambled through dirty valley? Similarly while reading great books, read also some current books, periodicals, news papers etc. They will help you to take the measure of the age in which you live. Remember that our aim is not to become immensely widely read (if you do it, it is fine) not to become an expert reader, but to have read deeply with pleasure and understanding and to have invited a few masterpieces into your life.

جامعة نزوى ترعى أسبوع التوجيه المهني



■ تحت رعاية جامعة نزوى تنظم مدرسة أم الخير للتعليم الأساسي أسبوع التوجيه المهني، وذلك في الفترة من ٢٣ إلى ٢٧ فبراير ٢٠٠٨ م، تحت شعار "مستقبلي تخطيط وعطاء" في قاعة الشهباء بجامعة نزوى، وقد افتتح الأسبوع سعادة الشيخ: زايد بن خليفة بن غالب الراشدي - عضو مجلس الشورى ممثل ولاية إزكي-، وذلك يوم السبت ٢٣ فبراير الماضي، وقد تضمن الحفل إلقاء قصيدة ترحيبية بالراشدين، ثم عرضاً غنائياً قامت به مجموعة من طلاب مدرسة إزكي للتعليم الأساسي، بعد ذلك تم عرض مسرحية، كما ألقى عدد من المحاضرات كانت غايتها توجيه الطلاب نحو الإيجابية في الحياة والسعي إلى تحقيق الطموحات. حضر الحفل الأستاذ محمد العديوي نائب الرئيس لشؤون الطلاب بالجامعة، وبعض الموظفين، ومجموعة من طالبات المدارس المشاركة في هذا الأسبوع. ■

جامعة نزوى تشارك في الحلقة الأولى لمشروع قاعدة بيانات إحصائية للتعليم العالي

وقد جاءت فكرة إنشاء مشروع قاعدة بيانات إحصائية عن قطاع التعليم العالي بالسلطنة: نظرا للحاجة الضرورية والملحة لوجود بيانات تفصيلية عن هذا القطاع، ولأهميتها في عملية التخطيط والتطوير، وإجراء البحوث والدراسات. وتقوم فكرة المشروع حول جمع ونشر المعومات الخاصة بقطاع التعليم العالي في السلطنة؛ وذلك من خلال مختلف مؤسسات التعليم العالي الحكومية والخاصة؛ وذلك لتكون مرجعا لمن أراد التخطيط والبحث والتدقيق في شؤون التعليم العالي بالسلطنة، بحيث تكون قاعدة البيانات الإحصائية المصوب الذي تتدفق إليه البيانات التفصيلية عن التعليم العالي.

وقد مثل جامعة نزوى في هذه الحلقة كل من: سالم بن منصور الصباحي مدير مركز التميز العلمي وضبط الجودة، وأمانى بنت صالح الحنشي مديرة القبول والتسجيل بالوكالة. ■

كتب - سالم الصباحي:

■ شاركت جامعة نزوى مؤخرا في الحلقة الأولى لمشروع قاعدة البيانات الإحصائية للتعليم العالي والتي جاءت بتنظيم من مركز القبول الموحد تحت إشراف وزارة التعليم العالي. جاء افتتاح الحلقة تحت رعاية معالي الدكتورة رابوة بنت سعود البوسعيدية وزيرة التعليم العالي وبحضور ممثلين من مؤسسات التعليم العالي والخاصة والجهات ذات العلاقة بالمشروع، وقد احتوت حلقة العمل على أربعة محاور رئيسية، وهي:

نبذة عامة عن مشروع قاعدة البيانات الإحصائية، ومناقشة مقترح آلية جمع البيانات، وضمان الجودة، كذلك الآلية المقترحة للنظام الإلكتروني لعملية تبادل البيانات، ومناقشة مقترح حقول البيانات الخاصة بالمشروع، إضافة إلى ذلك استعراض الآليات المطلوبة لتطبيق قاعدة البيانات.

Teaching English to Young Learners

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The importance of teaching a foreign language has led many language instruction specialists to conduct different studies about how best a foreign language can be taught. Language is the tool that communities use for the joint construction of meanings necessary to engage in productive work. This shows that language is part and parcel of man's life. In fact, language is a communicative instrument that can be adopted to different interactional and transactional situations. Hence, knowing a foreign language offers people better opportunities for employment all over the world. In other words, it ultimately provides a competitive advantage in the workforce by opening up additional job opportunities. For example, speakers of a foreign language in the Arab World have more job opportunities than monolinguals. In addition, a foreign language gives practitioners and researchers great opportunities to have access to very up-to-date references and research studies in their field of scientific research. English is the first foreign language taught at all stages of education in the Arab

World. In many private and government schools, English is used as the medium of instruction. The teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL) in the Arab World has expanded into the primary school setting since early 1980s. Literature tells us that introducing English to pupils at this stage is highly beneficial to young pupils. Among these benefits are:

1. Pupils have the ability to learn and excel in the pronunciation of a foreign language.
2. Pupils who have studied a foreign language during elementary school achieve expected gains and even have higher scores on standardized tests in reading, language arts and mathematics than those who have not.
3. Pupils who have studied a foreign language show greater cognitive development in such areas as mental flexibility, creativity, divergent thinking, and higher order thinking skills.
4. Pupils who have studied a foreign language develop a sense of cultural pluralism (openness to and appreciation of other cultures).
5. Pupils studying a foreign language

have an improved self-concept and sense of achievement in school. It, then, could be stated that teaching English at all stages of education is an important issue that has its own positive linguistic, cognitive, cultural and mental outcomes.

In addition, pupils of foreign languages have access to a greater number of career possibilities and develop a deeper understanding of their own and other cultures. Furthermore, school reformers think that if it is important that our young generation understand the differences in cultures, there is no better way to achieve it than to have them learn it as early as possible.

Experience has proved that pupils learn new languages very easily because they are given special ability to learn new languages. The process of language learning depends mainly on how the new language comes to the learner and how the learner comes to the new language. In the Arab world context, however, the classroom is usually the main environment in which learning a foreign language takes place and the teacher is the main source of knowledge.

Indeed, the quality of education cannot exceed the quality of teachers. These skills and knowledge make the demand for qualified, competent, and well-trained teachers of English necessary and urgent. The quality of any educational system depends on the quality of teachers and how they are prepared, and the development of teachers education is a main factor for the improvement of education in any society. A well trained teacher should be prepared in four areas of teacher competence to be effective in bringing about intended learning outcomes. These four areas are:

1. Command of theoretical knowledge about learning and human behavior.
2. Display of attitudes that foster learning and genuine human relationships.
3. Command of knowledge in the subject matter to be taught.
4. Command of technical skills of teaching that facilitate student learning. In other words, the teacher should be theoretically, psychologically, methodologically and cognitively competent in order to be able to bring about the intended learning outcomes.

جماعة الشهباء للأدب تنظم أمسية شعرية

كتب - فهد المنذري:

■ في إطار الجهود التي تقوم بها جماعة الشهباء للأدب بجامعة نزوى، أقامت الجماعة أمسية شعرية حضرها طلاب وطالبات الجامعة، وكوكبة من الأساتذة برعاية الأستاذ الدكتور: محمد عبدالمنعم إسماعيل عميد كلية العلوم والآداب؛ إذ استضافت الجماعة كلا من الشعراء سعيد بن محمد المكتومي، وهشام بن ناصر الصقري، وعامر الحوسني.

استهلّت الأمسية بأيات عطرة من الذكر الحكيم تلاها الطلاب مروان المحروقي، ثم دُعي الشعراء للوقوف على المنصة، وإلقاء قصائدهم، وقد استهل الشاعر سعيد المكتومي قصائد الأمسية وتلاه الشاعر عامر الحوسني ثم تبعهما الشاعر هشام الصقري. الجدير بالذكر أن الأمسية لاقت تفاعلا ميمزا من قبل الجمهور وكان لها وقع ملموس في نفوس الحاضرين. خاتما قام راعي الحفل بتكريم الشعراء المشاركين، ثم أخذت الصور التذكارية للشعراء مع راعي الحفل. ■

