

Contact: D. Murry Evans
+974 4454 8490
dmevans@qatar.cmu.edu

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Rania Moussly
+974 7021 8268
raniam@bljworldwide.com

Carnegie Mellon Qatar hosts workshop on Arabic language learning pedagogy

Schoolteachers introduced to 'Arabiyyatti' program supported by the Qatar National Research Fund

DOHA, QATAR –Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar recently hosted an ‘Enhancing Teaching Arabic in Qatar’ workshop for 25 primary, private and independent schoolteachers in an attempt to complement their language learning pedagogy.

Led by Zeinab Ibrahim, Ph.D., professor of Arabic Studies at Carnegie Mellon Qatar and a renowned sociolinguist, ‘Enhancing Teaching Arabic in Qatar’ introduced the teachers to the linguistic theories behind the Arabiyyatti project, which is supported by the Qatar National Research Fund’s National Priorities Research Program (NPRP).

Ibrahim said Arabiyyatti aims to introduce teachers to recent best practices in teaching Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) to schoolchildren. While Arab children are able to speak their local dialect, they are often unable to communicate using Modern Standard Arabic, otherwise known as *fus’ha*.

“There are common problems with teaching Arabic across the entire region, and Arabiyyatti is the result of research indicating the need to support educators by introducing them to updated teaching methods as well as recent linguistic theories that deal with language acquisition and learning. I hope the participating instructors gained value from the workshop, and that it will inspire them to use Arabiyyatti in their classrooms, not only for the benefit of their students, but also for the preservation of the Arabic language,” Ibrahim said.

The Arabiyyatti research team, led by Ibrahim, set out to not only help primary school students learn to read and write Arabic, but also build positive attitudes toward MSA by engaging them through interactive programming and gaming. The project was piloted at Qatar Academy in fall 2013, where it was known as the Aladdin project.

Munir Tag, Ph.D., program manager, information communication technologies at QNRF said, “Arabiyyatti is funded by QNRF and aims to simplify and enhance Arabic language learning in schools across Qatar, through the use of modern technology and interactive gaming, and we are very pleased with the results it has yielded so far.”

He added, “As a member of Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D), QNRF invests in cutting edge-research to enhance a culture that supports Qatar Foundation on its mission to build Qatar’s innovation and technology capacity, and help the nation develop into a hub of research excellence through Qatar Foundation’s science and research pillar, QF R&D.”

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About Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar

As a global leader in education, Carnegie Mellon University is known for its creativity, collaboration across disciplines, and top programs in business, technology and the arts. The university has been home to some of the world’s most important thinkers, among them 19 Nobel Laureates and 12 Turing Award winners.

Carnegie Mellon University Qatar

In 2004, Qatar Foundation invited Carnegie Mellon to join Education City, a groundbreaking center for scholarship and research. The campus continues to grow, now providing a prestigious education to more than 400 students from 40 countries. The university offers five undergraduate degree programs in Biological Sciences, Business Administration, Computational Biology, Computer Science and Information Systems.

Students in Qatar join more than 13,000 Carnegie Mellon students across the globe, who will become the next generation of leaders tackling tomorrow's challenges. The university's 98,000 alumni are recruited by some of the world's most innovative organizations.

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