

***ARE WE TEACHING / ARE THEY LEARNING?
ACADEMIC WRITING BLUES...***

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Student Motivation, Involvement and Autonomy

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THIS IS THE WAY IT GOES...

- Background

What, where, what for, who, why, etc.

- Blues

Teacher and student woes and complaints

- Blues ends here

Writing projects:

Idea, structure, implementation, goal, outcome

- Challenge and Inspiration

Experience, interaction, engagement

The missing link



BACKGROUND:

WHAT + WHERE + WHAT FOR

- The Academic Bridge Program (ABP) – centre of the Qatar Foundation (QF), in Education City (EC), Doha, Qatar: two-semester, co-educational programme preparing local students for English-language universities in Qatar and abroad
- Teaching English for Academic Purposes (advanced) + and TEFL, Teaching English as a Foreign Language, with elements of academic English (foundation)
- For more details, visit www.qf.org.qa



BACKGROUND: WHO + WHY

- Students: mostly Qatari, from newly reformed independent schools
- Reason and goal: to improve their English and other academic skills for admission into universities in EC or abroad
- Focus: English reading and writing skills, critical and analytical thinking skills, ability to use and cite sources, independent study skills, time management skills



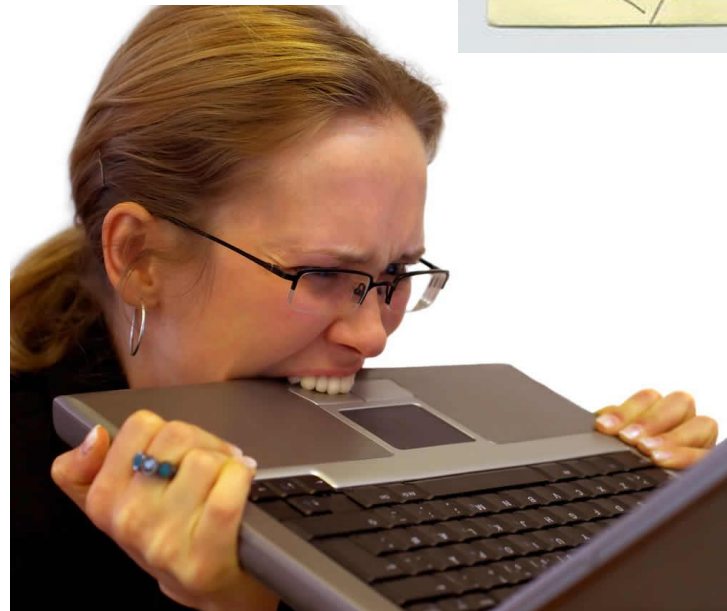
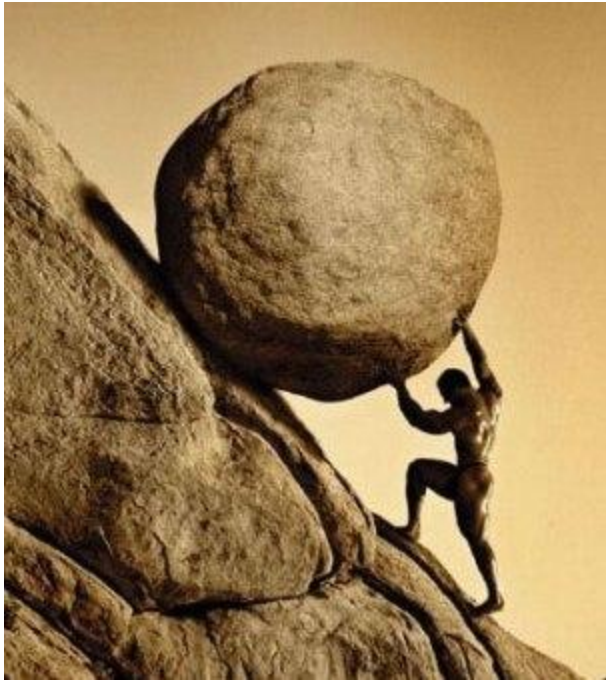
ACADEMIC WRITING COURSE

- Textbook: J. E. Aaron, (ed.), *The Compact Reader*.
- Writing manual with citation styles and grammar support: D. Hacker, *Rules for Writers*.
- Assignments: narrative/descriptive, comparison/contrast, definition, argument essays
- Standard topics: *childhood recollections, school versus university, family relationships, public safety, racism, etc.*
- Requirements and expectations: academic, impersonal way of writing, references to background knowledge, academic integrity, good standard grammar, syntax, vocabulary



BLUES

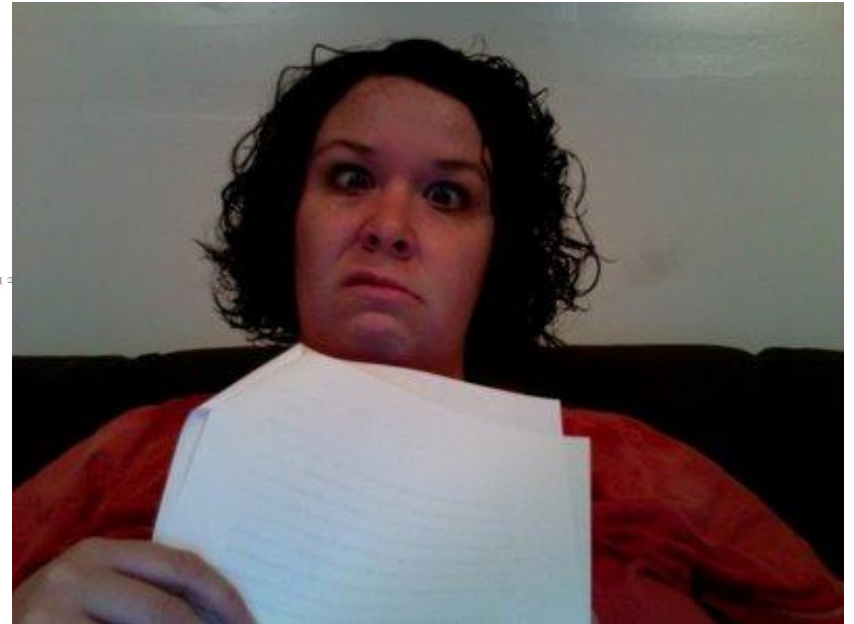
- Teacher woes and complaints
- Student woes and complaints



BOREDOM



BOREDOM drawing 1
21 x 29 cm
pen on paper



BLUES ENDS HERE...

Writing project's structure:

- *Idea* – personal interest/personal contacts
- *Framework* – preparation, background, more in-depth approach (reading, discussion, guest lecture, field trip, observation)
- *Implementation* – planning, organisation, cooperation
- *Final goal* – competition, publication, active input
- *Outcome* – informed, engaged, self-critical writing, interesting to write and READ





WRITING PROJECTS SO FAR

- MIA
- Mathaf
- Arabic vs. English
- *A Class Divided*
- Globalisation and Social Change in Qatar
- *Kony 2012*
- Rhetoric
- “The Science of Persuasion”
- Multiple Intelligences
- Geology





GEOLOGY PROJECT: SPRING 2012

- **Introduction:** ppt presentation (my personal experience) + rock samples
- **Preliminary readings:** articles on geology as a major, new trends in geology, the new National Museum in Qatar
- **Documentary:** *Crude* (oil formation)
- **Guest lecture:** “Desert Rose and Geology in Qatar” by experts from ExxonMobil and QP
- **Field trip:** led/assisted by the experts to desert sites near Mesaieed
- **Essay:** hands-on geological experience + ideas for displaying geological exhibits in the new museum, based on evaluation of educational content and appeal of the geology project => to be reviewed by museum officials







CHALLENGE AND INSPIRATION

*Borrowed from Georgetown's own motto:
to challenge and inspire*

Challenge – a new and difficult task that tests somebody's ability and skill

Inspiration – the process that takes place when somebody sees or hears something that causes them to have exciting new ideas, makes them want to create something or makes them want to be better, more successful, etc.



ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL WRITING PROJECT

- Ideas – essential but insufficient
- Experience and interaction – necessary
- Engagement – crucial
- Is that enough?



THE MISSING LINK



YES, IT'S ABOUT...

○ **us as much as it is about them**

WHY?

Motivational strategies in action (Dörnyei, 2001)

- Personalising your teaching
- Common aim: boredom prevention
- Building knowledge: teaching is about learning and learning is a lifestyle
- Developing, sustaining and protecting the motivational environment of your classroom – teacher's pivotal role

Teaching is not for everyone.





THANK YOU
for listening!

