

Rufo Project

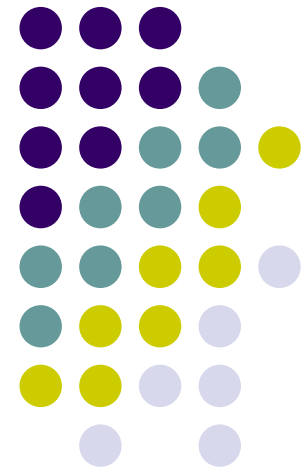
&

Remedial English

By: Dr. Insaf Abbas

Al-Quds Open University

for the ITCT 3rd Day





Abstract

- This presentation will give an introduction about what is termed as the ***Rufo Project***. It will give a brief description for the project stating its goals and missions, its beginnings and developmental stages. The participating universities and their projects and a brief idea about one the five projects will be presented.

Abstract

con.



- Some highlighting is to be given for the formation, work and recommendations of the committees that were formed to set standards for the evaluation of the projects. There will be a focus on the "Remedial English" project which was carried out by Al-Quds Open University and Birzeit University . A rather detailed demonstration about the project and its implementation will be presented.



Introduction

- **Why apply technology in teaching?**
General Reasons:
- **Technology has become an indispensable component of the educational process.**
- **The amazing and accelerating progress of educational technology.**
- **The revolutions in the communications systems**

Why apply technology in teaching? (con.)



- Specific Reason
- QOU adopts the system of ODL in its educational strategy, so it becomes increasingly important to utilize the options provided by modern educational technology to maximize the values of using this system.



The Rufo Project

- What does Rufo stand for ?
- It is the Interuniversity Network for Open and Distance Learning. It is part of the Tempus projects.
- What is “Rufo” Project?

It is an e-learning project which comprises a consortium of five universities in the West Bank, three in France, two in Spain and one in Belgium.

<http://www.cnam.fr/rufo/>

- Each of the five Palestinian universities was to develop an on line course jointly with another university in the West bank.

Major objectives of The Rufo Project



- Examining the potential of incorporating e-learning at tertiary educational institutions in Palestine.
- Production of e-learning projects.
- Increasing cooperation between Palestinian and European universities.



The five Projects of Rufo

- Remedial English : Al-Quds Open University & Birzeit University.
- Science and Technology: Al-Quds Open University & Birzeit University.
- Remedial Computing: (PPU) Polytechnic, Hebron & Al-Quds Open University.
- Fuel Injection (Mechanical Engineering) PPU & An-NAjah University.
- History of Jerusalem Al-Quds University & Al-Quds Open University



Training for the project

- The project offered training courses for participants. Birzeit University & Al-Quds Open University participated in giving this training.
- The Project mainly depended on the strategy of **learning by doing**.
- Seven workshops were conducted through the stages of the project to insure the development of the project & to discuss any impediments.



Committees

- Three committees were formed from the participating teams to insure the implementation of the standards & criteria of developing these projects .These were:
 1. The Delivery Committee
 2. The Pedagogical Committee
 3. The e-learning Development & Evaluation Committee.

“The Remedial English “ project



- The online English course called "Remedial English" is part of the Rufo Project:
- “Remedial English” is a partnership between Al-Quds Open University and Birzeit University with Al-Quds Open University as the coordinator.
- The course was developed to suit the English course 113 given to Al-Quds Open University first year students.

Description of the course



- **It is a an on line general English course aimed at the intermediate level students to improve their English language skills.**
- **Target Group: first year students at two universities: Al-Quds Open University and Birzeit University.**



The team of the project

The team includes five members:

- Four members as subject matter experts and instructional designers:
- Dr. Insaf Abbas – Al-Quds Open University, Coordinator of the project.
- Mr. Nael Abu Arqoub- Al-Quds Open University.
- Mrs. Faten Khalaf – Birzeit University.
- Mr. Mahmoud Abd Alfattah- Birzeit University.
- Mr. Tareq Battat as multimedia specialist - Al-Quds Open University.



Credit hours

- At Al- Quds Open University, the course is offered as a (2) credit hour course for all university students at first year level.
- At Birzeit University, it is part of an (8) credit hour course.
- Pedagogical Specifications:
 - It is be blended e learning course.
At QOU, 60% of the course will be on line and around 40% will be face to face.
At Birzeit , 20% of the course will be on line.

Added Educational Values for the Course



- “Remedial English” is expected to:
- provide training in studying by a blended system of e-learning.
- facilitate the role of the learner by enhancing his autonomy and self motivation.
- involve synchronous and asynchronous interaction and collaboration between the learners themselves and the teacher.

Added Educational Values for the Course (con.)



- help personalize learning and emphasize the identity of the learner and increase his creativity and involvement.
- combine formal and non-formal ways of teaching.

Expected Outcomes for the Project



- Enhancing good cooperation between two universities.
- opening the way for more endeavors of the sort.
- producing new strategies for autonomous learning.
- providing English e-learning on formal and non formal levels.

Major Challenges Encountered



- Infrastructure
- Lack of experience
- Electronic illiteracy
- Resistance to change traditional Teaching methodology.
- Cooperation between team members.
- Time
- Cost



First Implementations

- The first trial implementations were at Al-Quds Open University in two regions:
Ramallah and Hebron during the second semester 2008.
Two groups were used each consisted of 20 students.
The following site was used <http://courses.qou.edu>
- **Results: See following table**
- **Feedback:**
- **students' preliminary fear,**
- **Satisfaction of students by the end.**
- **More demanding and time- consuming for teachers.**

Students' Results of 1st implementation at QOU



learners	Pass	Fail	Total	Percentage
E-learners (2 groups)	21	9	30	70% Pass
Traditional learners (2 groups)	18	12	30	60% Pass
Total	39	21	60	



Implementation of the course

The second trial implementation was at both universities: Birzeit University and Al-Quds Open University during the first semester 2008/2009.

It involved around 60 students at Birzeit and 40 at Al-Quds Open University.

In the second semester, further implementations were made at both universities.

A new server has been provided to improve connectivity and to solve the technical problems which were faced.

The website now is :[http:// moodle1.qou.edu/rufo](http://moodle1.qou.edu/rufo)

Image for coming implementations



- Wider scale of implementations.
- More students involved.
- Content fully developed with the help of feedback received from parties involved.
- Providing more training for teachers and students involved.

Image for coming implementations CON.



- Solving technical problems .
- Working on providing better technical infrastructure.
- Sustainability of the project.

Image for coming implementations

CON.



- Content to be more developed and constantly revised with the help of feedback received from parties involved.
- More interactive tasks and techniques to be used including holding virtual classes.
- Providing more training for teachers and students so that more teachers and students will be encouraged to use the course.
- Providing better technical services for the blended courses.



Evaluation

- Evaluation was made to:
 - check the quality of the course .
 - get feedback from users.
 - guide the project team to how they can work on improving any aspects in the course.



Evaluation Tools

These three major tools have been used:

- **Quality control checklist for online courses.**
- **A Questionnaire addressed to users to get their opinion on various aspects.**
- **Interviews with samples of students who used the course.**
- **Taking view from actors of the course.**

Quality Control Checklist



It included Measuring many items related to

- Learning objectives & program outcomes. Assessments and grade distribution.
- Class schedule & assignment due dates
- Technology requirements.
- Course information : title, number, and term. Course instructor's name, contact information, and office hours. Course description etc.
- Required text and/or other resources.

Quality Control Checklist con.



- Content issues:
 - Content is made available to students in manageable segments.
- Easy navigation.
- Supplementary resources made available as part of the course content.
- The content and requirements are as demanding as a face-to-face course with identical or similar content.



Interaction and collaboration

- Frequent instances where the instructor takes an active role in moderating discussions, providing feedback, and facilitating other interactive components.
- Communication/collaboration tools are used in the course.

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT



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- More interactive tasks and techniques to be used including holding virtual classes.
- Providing more training for teachers and students so that more teachers and students will be encouraged to use the course.
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Evaluation Questionnaire

- A questionnaire was developed to be answered by students to gather their reflections and opinions about the course and the experiment.
- It was given to samples of students from the two universities.
- The results revealed mixed feelings and opinions about the experiment, the insufficiency of needed technical equipments specially on the part of the learners, the need for more training and orientation about the culture of e learning.



Actors' Views

- Actors of the project recommended :
- Better communication and more effective cooperation between participants.
- Providing better technical services from institutions involved.
- For future projects, participants must be given full support from all partners involved at all levels: load reduction, academic incentives etc.
- Ministry of higher education must be involved directly and in a constructive manner in the selection process and approval stages of academic projects in Palestine.



General Recommendations

- Defining and implementing a strategy for elearning at the national level.
- Sustainability of projects.
- Recognition of the different actors.
- Building and improving competences of actors.
- Processing an evaluation methodology.
- Raising the bottom line of ICT literacy and language competences for learners.