

Teaching Computer and Business Skills for
Arabic-Speaking Residents of Australia:
Online Application of English for Specific Purpose Theory

Book Chapter Proposal



for

Optimizing Online English Language Learning and Teaching

under the theme of

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by

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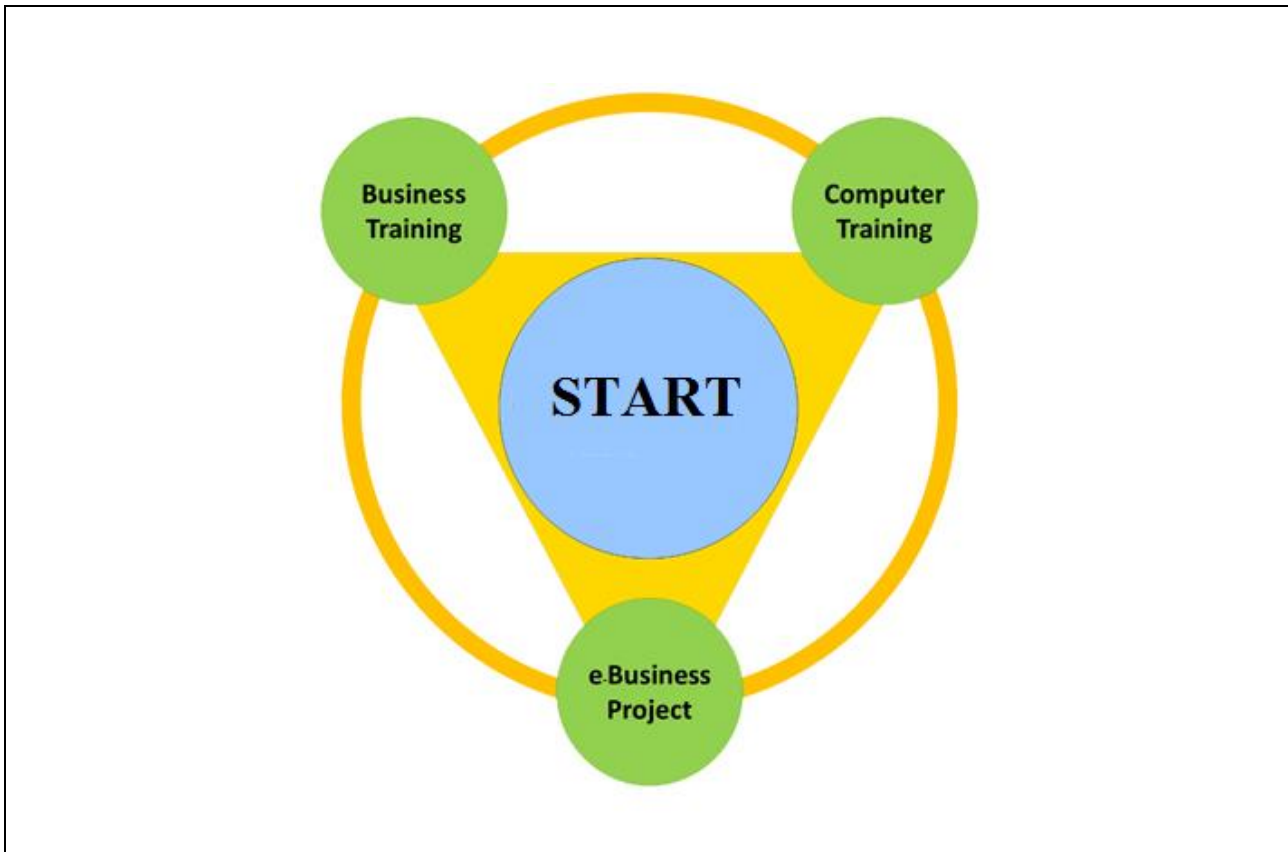
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Teaching Computer and Business Skills for Arabic-Speaking Residents of Australia: Online Application of English for Specific Purpose Theory

Migrants and refugees to the Western World face many challenges. Australia is one of the destinations for migrants where English is widely spoken. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, one-fifth of the Australian population speaks a language other than English in their homes (ABS, 2016a). Even with tighter migration policies, there are migrants who come to Australia with poor English capabilities. According to data obtained from the Department of Home Affairs, only around 27% of migrants have good to very good English skills (Hanna & Conner, 2020). One of these challenges is migrants' needs to develop their language skills (Cranitch, 2010). This chapter focuses on the challenges that Arabic-speaking migrants have that result in their high rate of unemployment and what can be done to address some of their challenges.

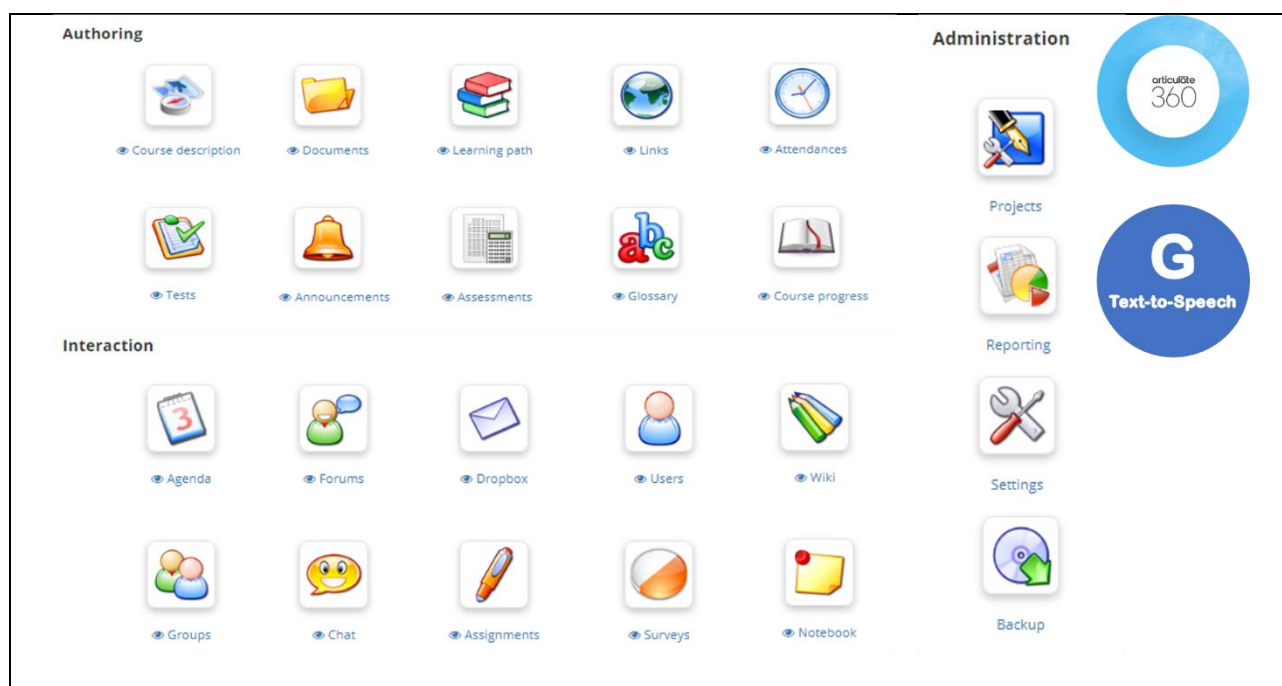
In Australia, 1.4% of the total population speaks Arabic at home, which is considered the second spoken language other than English (ABS, 2016a). Arabic-speaking migrants, including refugees, are especially of concern because they experience a very high unemployment rate (~21%) (Hanna & Conner, 2020), which is 3-times higher than the average unemployment rate in Australia (~7%) (ABS, 2016b). The reasons for this high unemployment rate among this group is suggested to be due to their lack of English skills as well as the lack of computer skills (Hanna & Conner, 2020), as well as the lack of professional skills including critical thinking, problem-solving, networking, decision making, and teamwork skills (Castellazzi, 2016; Dengler, 2019). The lack of equal opportunity also contributes to the challenges that Arabic-speakers migrants face (Booth, Leigh, & Varganova, 2012; Pinkerton, 2013). This chapter discusses the design of an intervention to help migrants to overcome these challenges. Building on the application of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Theory (Hang, 2012; Paltridge & Starfield, 2013; Tarnopolsky, 2012), we proposed the Smart Training for Arabic Residents on Technology (START) as an educational intervention (Figure 1), that aims to enhance computer skills for the Arabic-speaking residents and towards helping them establish their online businesses (Hanna, Conner, & Sweeney, 2020).

Figure 1: Intervention of Smart Training for Arabic Residents on Technology START



In terms of designing the intervention, the ADDIE Model was adopted (Branch, 2009; Piskurich, 2015; Salas, 2018) to produce the START e-Business Training in all its different phases: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. START Training provides computer and business training in English, but Arabic translation is accessible, by clicks, within START Training. Furthermore, during the online support sessions, translanguaging is available, since previous research has found that the dynamic use of two languages enriches the language learning experience (Krompák & Meyer, 2018; Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012; Mazzaferro, 2018; Xerri, 2018). Chamilo Learning Management System (LMS) (Chamilo, 2020) was installed on the server to manage the 10 learning modules that were implemented using Articulate 360 Storyline (Articulate, 2020) while the associated audios were produced using Google Text-to-Speech API (Google, 2020). Other Chamilo LMS tools that were used are wikis and forums for collaborative learning activities, as well as the glossary to provide Arabic-English descriptions of key definitions (Figure 2). Data was collected from the Arabic-speaking trainees, through built-in tests and surveys as well as the recoded logs and observation notes during the online support sessions. Findings of data analysis help in refining the START e-Business Training, as an ultimate goal of Design-Based Research DBR.

Figure 2: Tools used in START Training Implementation (Chamilo LMS, Articulate Storyline 360 & Google Text-to-Speech API)



The significance of this study is that it contributes to Design-Based Research, by blending empirical educational research with the theory-driven design of learning (McKenney & Reeves, 2013). This study draws on the application of English for Specific Purpose – namely English for business and computer training. Furthermore, this study advances ESP Theory beyond formal education to explore its application to adult/vocational education. While previous studies have dealt with the lack of different skills in isolation, this study explores the application of ESP online to teach two intersected topics (computer skills and business skills) in English while translation and translanguaging are accessible or available. Moreover, as Bakker (2018) has identified the need for genuine contributions to intervention studies in vocational education, this study fills this gap and provides a genuine example of an intervention study beyond formal education. This study contributes to the application of educational interventions that aim to address challenges for a group of Arabic-speaking residents in their employment by reskilling them to establish their own online businesses.

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Author Biographies

Dr Amelie Hanna

Dr Amelie Hanna (PhD) has 25 Years of Academic and Professional Experience in Public and Business Administration and Information and Education Technology. Dr Amelie Hanna has Postgraduate Qualifications in Public & Business Administration and Information & Education Technology from Egypt, USA, and Australia. Amelie Hanna has received a number of awards during her professional & academic life. Amelie is Egyptian-Australian Citizen and speaks Arabic and English fluently. She has taught different subjects in different fields: Information Technology, Education Technology, Management and Administration, Migration and Multiculturalism. Amelie Hanna has a range of experience of working in Professional and Academic Organisations in Australia and Egypt including as a Researcher, University Tutor, Website Developer, and e-Learning Designer. Currently, Amelie Hanna is interested in teaching Arabic migrants to Australia to help them establish their own e-businesses.

Professor Lindsey Conner

Prof Lindsey Conner is an internationally renowned education expert who is known for her research on innovation in education and teaching. Her commitment to social justice and prioritization of specific actions, underpins her philosophy and leadership to empower people to stretch their potential for individual, social and economic mobility. She strongly believes that it is through education that people can achieve great things and have greater life experiences.

Currently at Flinders University, Prof Conner is Professor n Digital Education and Innovation. She was the Dean People and Resources until end of June 2019 and since February 2019, concurrently the Dean Education (academic development and course quality assurance) in the College of Education, Psychology and Social Work at Flinders. Lindsey was previously the Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor, Associate Dean Postgraduate Research and Dean (Education – teaching and learning) at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand.

Prof Conner has a passion for leading change. Her leadership of staff and professional learning is drawn from nearly 20 years as a researcher and teacher educator in science education. Prof Conner has a strong international profile and led the 7 country Pacific Circle Consortium research project on Teacher Education for the Future. In 2013 Prof Conner was invited as a consultant to NIER (Japan) working with the Ministry of Education Japan on infusing competencies across the curriculum. Prof Conner was also a funded visiting teaching and research fellow at SEAMEO RECSAM, Penang Malaysia (2013) and a consultant in the development of science teaching standards for the South East Asian Ministries of Education (2014). Prof Conner has developed courses and supported researchers from universities in Bangladesh, China, Malaysia and Korea.

Her research on the application of technologies in a wide range of educational contexts and translational research for teaching, has had outstanding impact. For example, Prof Conner was the New Zealand coordinator for the OECD Innovative Learning Environments Project and Education Commissioner for the New Zealand Olympic Committee. Projects related to these roles had impact on all New Zealand schools. Prof Conner has also led an international partnership project on implementing ICT in schools and was Director of the Science and Technology Education Research Hub at the University of Canterbury.

Currently, Prof Conner supervises different research projects – including:
Addressing unemployment through ICT skill development for Arabic-speaking migrants,
Digital standards for online learning
Integrating STEM in higher education
Use of digital tools for learning (IB schools and schools in Saudi Arabia)
Pre-service teachers' use of technology in Saudi Arabia.

Dr Trudy-Ann Sweeney

Dr. Trudy Sweeney is a senior lecturer in digital media in the College of Education, Psychology and Social Work. She is passionate about transforming learning and assessment with innovations in educational technology. Trudy received the Australian Council of Computers in Education's Leader of the Year award in 2014 in recognition of her sustained leadership of educational computing at state and national levels. She worked for the Department of Education and Children's Services for 17 years as a primary school teacher, ICT Coordinator, Assistant Principal (Teaching and Learning), and Education Consultant and Leadership and ICT Project Coordinator at the Technology School of the Future. Trudy's PhD focused on understanding teachers' work in a context of global and local school reform. This work has informed her systems thinking approach to innovation in educational technology. Trudy was previously the Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) and the Director of Initial Teacher Education.