

# NileTESOL



## Revolutionizing Our Teaching !

I often stop to think about my teaching and about my students' learning. Am I doing the right thing for them? Are they really learning? I can see eager eyes waiting and wanting to learn, but I am not satisfied. Something is missing. I thought about this long and hard. They are getting the grades, but is it enough to pass a course or an exam?

I get bored very easily, so I work on varying my material and my tasks and I can tell that my students appreciate the effort and are making progress. But it seems that I am the problem. I am never satisfied. I am always looking for ways to do things differently. This is a good quality in any type of teacher, whether novice or veteran. I often look for new readings, new themes, and new angles to "attack" a grammar point. But the monster teacher in me is still hungry for more.

I participated in group discussions that yielded the conference 2013 theme, and the word "revolution" was agreed upon and linked to our teaching. Now I am wondering, "What does this idea mean?" Is it the books we use, the sup-

plementary materials, the computers, or the classroom setting? I think the best answer would be all. But still, there must be more. What about the students? Where do they fit in? I asked and was met with the expected answer. "It is all for the benefit of our students." But, still there must be more.

I have and will always be an advocate of professional development. I attend and present at conferences, I give teacher training workshops, I publish articles, and I edit EFL journals. I always suggest the same scenario to young, budding teachers. I keep up to date and I read a great deal of articles dealing with best classroom practices. But, still something is missing!

It must be me then. Yes it is me. I must revolutionize ME. I must keep the spark in me. I have been teaching for 20+ years. I taught young and old students. I taught foreign and Egyptian students. I taught ESP and EAP. I taught all skills. What keeps me going is that I am motivated to teach. I simply love teaching.

Motivation is contagious. No matter

how boring or bored the students may seem when you walk into class, the fire in you will quickly catch on.

Your enthusiasm spreads quickly like a wild forest fire. The revolution should start from within, thus preventing us from teaching on auto-pilot. We should never allow ourselves to become dinosaurs. We owe it to ourselves before we owe it to our students. They can tell. They are pleased when they see a bit of grey hair walk into class. They believe it is value added. You know experience, wisdom, and knowledge! But at the same time, they immediately search for the fire within. Revolutionize yourself first then consider revolutionizing your teaching. Believe me I tried it and it works!

**Rania Jabr**

**Editor, NileTESOL Newsletter**  
**ELI-AUC**



## Change and Growth

Five years ago, a small group of English language professionals initiated a vision of an “association for all those individuals who are actively involved in the development of the teaching of English and in teaching content in English.” This vision became NileTESOL, officially launched in 2009 when we held our first conference. Since then, we have grown, weathered the challenges of a revolution and political uncertainty, and continued to grow as a community of like-minded education professionals, united in the mission of creating a professional forum for discussing and debating issues, providing opportunities for professional development, encouraging the development of research, offering opportunities for networking, providing opportunities for professional service and leadership, and contributing to the continuous improvement of professional standards of teaching.

The last year has seen quite a lot of change at NileTESOL. In January, we held our conference for the first time at AUC’s New Cairo campus. Despite having only one day for the conference, attendance was very high, and the modern and spacious facilities were well appreciated. In January, NileTESOL was also honored to have our President-Elect, Dr. Deena Boraie, elected to be the 2013 TESOL President, the first ever Arabic-speaking TESOL president. Although this meant she was unable to serve as NileTESOL president, the honor was well worth the adjustment to our plans. We were grateful that 2011 NileTESOL president, Kathleen Saville, was willing to extend her term until the end of June when I could take over the duties of President six months earlier than scheduled.

NileTESOL has grown in the last year as

well. New members are constantly joining us, and the professional development events we conducted, in May and October, had more attendees than any previously held events. We are grateful to AUC, AMIDEAST, and the British Council for hosting these events and making them very successful by sponsoring several of the speakers. Additionally, the RELO office of the US State Department has been helping to further our mission by providing a number of grants to NileTESOL members, including travel grants to regional and international conferences, as well as training programs conducted in Egypt and online.

One of the core operating principles of NileTESOL is inclusion. Since the founding of this organization, we have strived to open our doors to as many professionals as possible, and to solicit participation from all sectors of the Egyptian TESOL community. We are proud that the Board of Directors now includes members from public and private universities, language schools and centers, as well as teachers from national schools. We believe that the future of our organization depends on the transparent transfer of responsibility, and so our focus for the next year will be on developing an apparatus that facilitates this transfer so that all are welcome to participate, and we can continue to grow and fulfill our mission.

**Jonah Moos**

**NileTESOL President, 2012-13**



## Studying on-line

Last winter, I decided to become an e-moderator for the British Council. When I took the plunge, I had only a vague idea of what the course entailed, but it sounded the sort of thing I should be doing to keep myself up to date and to get my IT skills in ship shape.

The course would prepare me to become an online tutor – when I successfully completed the course I would become a teacher trainer in a virtual classroom. I spent 7 weeks learning how to navigate Moodle – an e-learning software platform, how to moderate forums and populate wikis, and looking at interesting on-line materials to include in the course.

When I joined, I was initially quite daunted. I found myself online with another 15 or so other would-be moderators and our master moderator. The thing that struck me most was the amount of information I was bombarded with all at once. Whereas in a face-to-face course tasks are presented in a linear way and one has the illusion at least of being able to control the speed at which information arrives, online I found that each piece of new information very quickly generated many other pieces of related information; not only was I able to ‘meet’ my co-participants but I was party to their meeting each other; I would answer a forum post, but so would 5 others, generating 6 new threads to the discussion, which spiralled off into the horizon. This was all in addition to the exercises and assignments. I very quickly learnt to be very discerning about which discussions to participate in and make clear choices about how to



organise my studies in order not to waste time or go off at tangent. Apart from the exercises and assignments, most of our learning process happened on the forums.

Now I am moderating my first group - teachers in Oman doing the TKT Essentials course. The first unit of the course concentrates on getting everyone familiar with Moodle. They can practise messaging and posting on forums and access tutorials which guide them through adding a photo to their profile, uploading documents, and populating wikis.

When they start the TKT course, they study the materials and complete a series of tasks for each subject, but the most interesting part of the learning process takes place on the forums. I start discussions in order to encourage them to talk about what they read in the online materials which make up the course, relating it to their own practical experience in the classroom. In this way, the course participants (CPs) are reflecting on their own teaching experience and comparing it to the experiences of their peers. Whereas the words in a face-to-face discussion are lost, a forum is a document we can refer to, reflect on and add to, and we can take time to collect our thoughts before we post.

I have a very strong feeling that this is the way learning is going. People can follow a course at times which are suitable for them – I notice that my CPs log on all through the night till early morning! In fact, when following the moderating course I felt that I was really able to tailor the course to my own needs, explore the parts that really interested me in more depth, and, most important, teachers from different geographical regions are able to work together and share experiences.

For more information log on to <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/> and go to [teacher training -moderated courses](#).

**Fiona Robertson**  
**British Council**

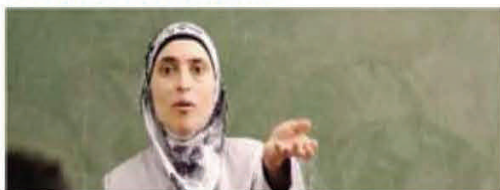
# Inspire yourself Inspire others

## Let us help you become the English Teacher you aspire to be!

The British Council is internationally renowned for its English language teacher training programmes and courses. A carefully considered selection of these is now conveniently available to you on the internet. The courses aim to help you develop your skills at key points in your teaching career. All programmes link to the British Council Continuing Professional Development Framework (CPDF), enabling you to find the right course for you. Every course is moderated by a British Council trainer to give you all the support you need.

Online English  
Training Courses

## Courses include



**TKT Essentials:** learn about communicative approaches to language teaching



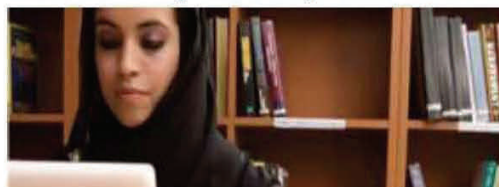
**CLIL Essentials:** for teachers interested in bilingual education, team teaching and teaching curricular subjects in English



**CISELT Proficient and CISELT Advanced:** the two levels of CISELT provide an extensive in-service development course for teachers working with 11-18 year old students.



**Primary Essentials:** a practical course for teachers working with 7-11 year old students



**Learning Technologies for the Classroom:** for new and experienced teachers, on how to use Information Communication Technology in language classrooms

**Starting at just US\$ 160 per programme, our online training courses are affordable and can be accessed from anywhere at a time that's convenient for you. To find out more and register online [click here](#)**

[www.britishcouncil.org/teachenglishbetter](http://www.britishcouncil.org/teachenglishbetter)

## NileTESOL in Social Media

The use of social media has been a recurring theme in most EFL class materials after the January 25<sup>th</sup> Revolution. The NileTESOL Board of Directors seeks every chance to communicate with English language teachers and professionals in the ELT community. Therefore, the Nile TESOL IT committee has made a decision to maintain and update the NileTESOL website ([www.niletesol.org](http://www.niletesol.org)), create a Facebook page, and a Twitter account with the purpose of publishing the activities of the organization and communicating with the English language teaching community in Egypt and around the world.



NileTESOL website provides information on the latest conference updates, in addition to the latest professional development events organized by NileTESOL. The professional development page on the website provides information, including guidelines to apply, on RELO grants to NileTESOL members.



NileTESOL Facebook page keeps you up-to-date with the latest news on the activities of the organization, whether PD events, grants, or even any ELT-related news in Egypt. Please like our page to stay tuned! The link to our NileTESOL Facebook page is: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/NileTESOL/174796202647723?ref=ts&fref=ts>

On NileTESOL Twitter account, you can get the latest information about NileTESOL organization. You can even send us your feedback on any of our activities, which would be taken into consideration. So, I invite you to visit NileTESOL website, like NileTESOL FaceBook page, and follow us on Twitter to stay posted!

**Amira Salama**  
**Al-Azhar English Language Resource Center**



### **Nile TESOL PD events: Challenging, yet rewarding**

One of the main aims of NileTESOL is to provide opportunities for professional development for members of the association and the profession as well. Professional development events are an invaluable asset in this respect. In 2012, there was a boost in NileTESOL PD events in terms of frequency, variety, and number of attendees. We held a successful event on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012. This event included a number of select workshops on a variety of topics as well as a book raffle. The day included sessions on *'Using Jokes in Classrooms'*, *'Experiential Learning for Teacher Development'*, *'Visually-impaired Teacher & Learners' Unique Teaching Experience'* and *'Submitting a Proposal for TESOL International Convention'*. Thanks to RELO, AMIDEAST, and members of the PD committee, the event was a great success. The presentations were well-received by the attendees who enjoyed a full day of PD activities.

On October 6<sup>th</sup> 2012, NileTESOL PD committee and the British Council organized the first fall professional development event. It mainly focused on teaching large classes, including sessions about '*Practical Tips for Teaching Large Classes*', '*Being Resourceful in Teaching Large Classes*', and '*Writing and Submitting an Effective Conference Proposal to NileTESOL Conference*'. This successful event was very well attended with seventy-five ELT professionals present. Many were new members of NileTESOL. The feedback we received from the attendees was extremely positive, which means that our events are gaining increasing popularity.



Our plan for PD events involves organizing – at least – four events every year. This year's events are scheduled for December, March, and May. The topics being covered range from '*Teaching Pronunciation and Developing Fluency*' to '*Using Technology in EFL Classrooms*'. Our May event will be created based on input from a survey to gain insight into what topics best address the needs of our members. We look forward to seeing more NileTESOL members participate in and attend our events, which mainly aim at supporting the professional growth of ELT professionals in Egypt.

**Waleed Nureldeen**  
**Chair, NileTESOL PD committee**

## **Letter from the Chair, NileTESOL 2013**

As chair of the organizing committee and conference, I would like to announce, and invite you all to attend, the upcoming Seventeenth NileTESOL Conference which will be held this coming January 28th and 29th, 2013, at the American University in Cairo's New Cairo campus in Kattameyya. The title and theme of the conference is Revolutionizing TESOL: Techniques and Strategies. In addition to the conference, there will be a one-day pre-conference event sponsored by Oxford University Press, which will be held at the same campus on January 27th, 2013,

This year's conference and pre-conference event promise to be very professionally stimulating and rewarding first, in terms of the number of world-renowned plenary speakers, all of whom will be sharing their experience and expertise and are luminaries in the field of teaching English, and second, in terms of the number of presentations and workshops being given at the conference by local and international scholars in the fields of EFL, ESL, and Applied Linguistics, to name but a few. The four plenary speakers for the conference are Christine Coombe, Deena Boraie, Jeremy Harmer, and Scott Thornbury. The plenary speaker for the pre-conference event is Gordon Lewis.

On a personal note, I would like to end by thanking the previous conference chair, Rania Jabr, and the NileTESOL Board of Directors for selecting me and giving me the opportunity to chair such a large conference and wonderful organizing committee. I have learned a lot from the experience and it has been a real privilege to work with my tireless colleagues and professionals on the organizing committee, Alissa Nostas, Nermine Saleh, Rania Jabr, and Susanne Rizzo.

I look forward to welcoming you all at NileTESOL 2013!



**Mariam Osman**

AUC New Cairo

NileTESOL/AUC Conference XVII

January 28 – 29, 2013



**"Revolutionizing TESOL:  
Techniques and Strategies"**

## Changes to Membership Policies

As always, membership in NileTESOL is open to all individuals who are actively engaged in the development of the teaching of English and in teaching content in English. Membership is free to qualified applicants. Candidates may apply for membership by completing an online application form. Go to [www.niletesol.org](http://www.niletesol.org) and click on NileTESOL Membership icon at the bottom of the page.

To keep pace with our increasing membership, some new policies have been instituted, the first of which is an annual renewal policy. Current members will recall that they were asked in October to renew their membership by filling out a new membership form. Professionals who are not currently members may also join NileTESOL by filling out this form. Starting this year, all members will be asked annually by email to renew their membership. The second policy eliminates the previously existing levels of membership (Associate and Active). As the number of members has continued to grow, and many of our existing members move, change jobs, change email addresses and so on, the Board of Directors voted to approve “Active” membership for all members who renew their membership annually.

Members of NileTESOL will continue to enjoy the same benefits they have had since the inception of this organization. These benefits include voting privileges in NileTESOL’s annual election of Board Members, access to NileTESOL Professional Development (PD) events, such as seminars, workshops, and presentations, the opportunity to provide input for and present at PD events, advance notice of NileTESOL events, and access to travel grants to various TESOL annual conferences in different countries. NileTESOL

membership benefits are designed to facilitate and foster teaching/leadership skills among dedicated EFL/ELT practitioners.

Although the annual conference and most Professional Development events continue to be held in Cairo, the Board hopes to organize events in other parts of Egypt, in light of the fact that membership outside of Cairo is growing rapidly. Nearly every governorate in Egypt is currently represented in our membership and we hope to continue to expand and offer benefits to members all across Egypt. NileTESOL also encourages you to spread the word among your colleagues to join us in order to enjoy our membership benefits.

**Mai Magdy,  
Chair, NileTESOL  
Membership Committee  
Knowledge Valley British  
International School**





## English in Egypt: The Language of Access and Opportunity

It's a normal day in Cairo. Scenes around you include a businessperson chatting on a cell phone, a student searching the Internet on her iPad, and a tourist asking for directions. A likely common denominator in all these scenes is the language used to get things done – English. The ability to use multiple languages, and specifically English, is increasingly recognized as indispensable for citizens of all ages, backgrounds, and professions. As a first or second language, English is now directly linked with information access, economic opportunity, and global participation. Along with IT, in fact, it is often cited as the 21<sup>st</sup> century skill that will set you apart.

Based on the nearly 60 years that my organization has been present in the Middle East and North Africa, the current demand is unprecedented in terms of scope and complexity. In Egypt, like elsewhere, our experience tells us that this can be attributed to the convergence of three factors, from three different perspectives – global, national, and individual. On the global arena, English is the *lingua franca* of international communication, the language of business. In a survey of almost 70,000 global workers in 18 countries, nine out of ten felt that English was critical for their jobs and over half reported they used it daily (yet, interestingly, only eight percent considered their English abilities adequate). Research in more recent years supports these workers' assumptions and links English language proficiency with increased trade, business results, and even personal income.

On a national level, the importance of foreign investment in such sectors as tourism, banking, and telecommunications underscores the critical role English plays for Egypt. This also helps to explain the increased demand for much more specialized, work-related English courses that go beyond practicing four skills and encompass everything from intercultural communication to critical thinking to negotiation skills.

On an individual level, Egyptians understand more and more that improved English language skills can lead to a better job, more academic options, and even a larger network of friends. Many are willing to invest time and money on lessons and resources that supplement the years of language instruction received in school. But in contrast to the more passive learners of the past, they now come to English classes not to listen primarily to the teacher, but to communicate with each other and practice language in which meaning gets more attention than mistakes. The traditional lessons on grammar rules have long been

replaced by highly interactive classrooms where students analyze how to use English in such scenes as those at the start of this piece and practice transferable language skills for the real world of work, school, and leisure.

These are indeed exciting times for an organization like ours, devoted to educational opportunities and cross-cultural understanding, and whose largest component is English language teaching. But the unprecedented demand we're experiencing also raises the bar considerably and represents an increased responsibility to keep up with the economic and social changes around us, and to really do things differently. The typical language classroom of ten, even five, years ago is no longer good enough. One-size-fits-all or imported models need to be re-examined and re-invented more than ever. The real challenge for English language organizations and educators is how to go much further in applying the lessons from the research and in drawing stronger links between language learning experiences and economic opportunity for a country like Egypt. This translates into programs that equip young students with cross-cultural competence, university graduates with transferable job skills, and workers with the English needed for their real job functions. And very importantly, it also means preparing teachers for a more complex, creative, and specialized world of language learning and teaching.

From this perspective, education and training leaders need not only ask if Egypt is keeping up with the rest of the world, but if training – in this case English – is keeping up with Egypt.

**Helena Simas**  
AMIDEAST

## Teaching and Testing EFL Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are better represented in all areas and levels of education than they were just a decade ago, especially in countries like Egypt. Every year, our knowledge about disabilities, the resources and services that exist, and the acceptance of those with disabilities have improved worldwide. However, in many settings, students with disabilities are still uncommon enough that educators find themselves in a difficult position when trying to determine how best to teach and test a student with a disability.

As an instructor and assessment specialist at the American University in Cairo, I have had the experience of working with students with disabilities of many types, whether physical, psychological, or intellectual, as well as students with condi-

tions that are temporary (such as a broken arm) or chronic (such as cerebral palsy). The one thing I can safely say I have learned from these experiences is that there is no clear set of rules for teaching or testing students with disabilities!

Just as much as our non-disabled students are individuals who have different learning styles, preferences, and interests, so are our students with disabilities. In addition, the diversity, complexity, and degree of severity of disabilities can present an additional challenge for educators who teach and test students, as it is often difficult to know which accommodations are appropriate or fair. This article is not intended to describe specific accommodations to be made for students with disabilities; obviously, the accommodations for a student with a broken

arm would be very different from those for a student with hearing impairment—and even students with the same disability will have different preferences and needs for accommodations.

It is important to recognize and accept that the teaching and testing of skills may change significantly. Students who are blind may not read Braille and may instead need texts read to them; in this case, reading comprehension becomes listening comprehension. Students with speech impediments may be asked to write a paper rather than give an oral presentation. Students who are deaf may read lips, but may be more dependent on the written word than the spoken word for input, requiring teachers to provide handouts or use PowerPoint slides to present information. Students with dyslexia may need to be tested orally or have an amanuensis if they struggle with handwriting.

Several years ago, I worked with a student who was blind. Although he read Braille and had the majority of his readings converted to Braille, the multiple-choice reading exam posed a particular problem. This student was unused to standardized exams and the formatting of multiple-choice questions was completely unfamiliar to him. While he had no difficulty understanding the texts he read, he was unable to *demonstrate* his understanding the same way his classmates were able to. We experimented with several different methods of assessing his reading comprehension skills until we finally found one that he was comfortable with and which allowed our program to be confident in the reliability of the procedures and the validity of the results.

With this blind student and with every other disabled student I have worked with, materials were adapted or presented in different ways, and often the methods by which achievement was

tested varied. However, at no time were the standards lowered for these students. Lowering standards or expectations would have prevented these students from participating in class to the fullest extent, depriving them of the challenges they needed to overcome to make progress and the experiences to which they were entitled. Above all, our students with disabilities need our respect, support, and sensitivity, but never pity. We must do our best to assist them, as we do for all our students, in achieving or maintaining self-determination and independence and to respect their rights to appropriate instruction and assessment.

I've found that the two keys to finding the most appropriate methods for teaching and testing students with disabilities have been information and honest communication. Educators must have as much information as possible, whether from physicians, therapists, advocates, parents, or the students themselves (or a combination of these). Some educational institutions have staff who can assist in selecting the most appropriate accommodations. For those that don't, the internet offers a huge number of free resources, including the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities ([www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)). But even this cannot take the place of honest and direct communication between teacher and student to decide together on the most appropriate and fair accommodations for teaching and testing for each individual. EFL professionals are well-known for their patience, flexibility, creativity, and persistence in the classroom; they are more than capable of using these qualities to ensure that students with disabilities receive the educational experience they deserve.

**Elizabeth Arrigoni**  
ELI-AUC

## **An Educational Unit Ready for Changing Times**

The English Studies Division (ESD) of the School of Continuing Education at AUC has a strong reputation as a provider of high-quality English language training which is now aligned to the international standard of CEFR (the Common European Framework of Reference). The Division offers regularly scheduled and customized or tailored programs in General English, Conversational English, English for Specific Purposes, and English for Test Preparation. In addition to being distinguished as a prime provider of high-quality English language training for individuals and organizations to develop English language skills or upgrade professional capabilities, ESD has for many years been recognized for its Certificate Programs in Teacher Training, such as the Math and Science Teacher Training Certificate, the Fundamentals of English Language Teaching Certificate, and the International Legal English Certificate. Our target audience includes learners from all ages aiming to complete their general or specific English language requirements. Corporate training is catered for both on campus and at client premises based on clients' needs.

ESD offers a variety of customized programs in the form of varied-length programs for a wide range of organizations and firms wishing to upgrade the capabilities of their workforce, as well as tutorials for individuals wishing to develop or improve their English language skills. Customized programs provide participants with the knowledge and skills needed to communicate effectively in today's dynamic marketplace as well as the academic language skills needed to pursue university or graduate studies in English.

ESD also funds and supports NileTESOL, which is a professional association for all individuals who are actively involved in the development of teaching English and in teaching content in English in Egypt and globally. NileTESOL is the affiliate of TESOL International Association (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages).

The School of Continuing Education at AUC is a body accredited from IACET (International Association of Continuing Education and Training) in the US. In line with this, ESD is in the process of acquiring CEA accreditation from the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation. Our full-time administrators and staff are highly qualified to ensure the highest standards. All ESD teachers are highly qualified EFL professionals who possess native-like proficiency in English in addition to one or more of the following qualifications: Teaching Certificates, MA, or PhD Degrees in English; they were enrolled in several US-sponsored education and training initiatives in Egypt, and have attended and participated in teacher training programs and conferences in the US. The pool of instructors at the School of Continuing Education naturally includes native speakers of English.

As part of AUC, ESD has easily-accessible and spacious facilities in New Cairo, Tahrir/Downtown, Heliopolis, and Zamalek. These are well equipped with comfortable seating as well as state-of-the-art instructional and audio-visual aids.

**Ihab Abdalla**  
**School of Continuing Education, AUC**

**NileTESOL Board Members & Officers 2012-2013**

NAME	Affiliation
<b>Kathleen Saville</b> <i>Past President</i>	AUC - Dept. of Rhetoric & Composition
<b>Magda Hayek</b> <i>Executive Director</i>	AUC – School of Continuing Education
<b>Jonah Moos</b> <i>President</i>	AUC – English Language Institute
<b>Ihab Abdalla</b> <i>Member</i>	ESD Assistant Director
<b>Mai Magdy</b> <i>Member</i>	Knowledge Valley International School
<b>Abdel Fadeel Faid</b> <i>Member</i>	The Egyptian Ministry of Education
<b>Helena Simas</b> <i>Member</i>	AMIDEAST
<b>Amira Salama</b> <i>Member- Webmaster</i>	Al Azhar University – English Language Resource Center
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<b>Elizabeth Arrigoni</b> <i>AUC at Large</i>	AUC – English Language Institute
<b>Maha El Said</b> <i>Member</i>	National Universities
<b>Dr. Mariam Osman</b> <i>Conference Chair 2013</i>	AUC – English Language Institute
<b>Waleed Nureldeen</b> <i>Member</i>	Menoufiya University



