Teaching K-12 Arabic
Success Stories, Communities, Resources

The Arabic language today is native to more than 400 million people, and is an influential scriptural language for the more than 1 billion Muslims worldwide. It is also the fifth most commonly spoken language in the world. These facts alone should underscore the importance of teaching Arabic to our young people. Although a negative event (the 9/11 attacks) has inspired a rapid growth in Arabic language programs across the United States, teachers and students have discovered that learning Arabic introduces rich opportunities that extend well beyond national security interests. Arabic bears the fruit of cultures with deep histories of poetry, literature, music, calligraphy and the visual arts. Arabic is a language of global media and international business. It is an important historical language of math, science, and medicine. Any student of the language will testify that Arabic is a valuable tool for engaging in today’s world. While it is still a young field, teachers of K-12 Arabic have written curricula and formed professional associations, creating a valuable support network across the country. This issue details some of the efforts of these educators, providing guidance for others who perhaps are already offering Arabic, but especially for those considering starting an Arabic program. We hope you will be inspired by their success!

Developing a Global Citizenry
Arabic Proficiency as a Means for Youth Success

By Angela Jackson, Founder and Executive Director, Global Language Project

By 2043, the United States is projected to become a majority-minority nation for the first time in its history. Parallel to this shift, new technological developments and modes of communication are bringing different groups of people together from the public and private sectors more than ever before. This increasingly globalized and interconnected environment defines our everyday mandate that our youth have the professional skills to contribute to the world in meaningful ways. Part of equipping our youth with these necessary competencies can be achieved by providing them with an opportunity to learn and master a second language.

This new prioritization of becoming fluent in another language is what guided my decision to found Global Language Project in 2009, a non-profit organization that seeks to provide elementary school students in underserved and underprivileged areas with after school foreign language instruction. Our 2009 pilot program at PS368-Hamilton Heights School in Harlem, New York was able to successfully provide students from the levels of kindergarten through fifth grade with an introductory knowledge of our two start-up languages, Spanish and Mandarin. Since then, our program has expanded to three sites,
President’s Message

Learning Arabic: The Cool Factor

The growth in the teaching of Arabic at the K-12 level over the past decade has been remarkable. I certainly hope that this trend continues and that the quality and innovative nature of instruction keeps pace with this expansion.

Arabic presents unique challenges to instruction at the K-12 level. The script is a challenge at the outset (although I’ve found that if you sell it as a kind of secret code, it can be a plus!). Moreso, the political views toward countries and communities of Arabic speakers often introduce serious challenges.

Given these difficulties, it becomes all the more important to make it worth students’ effort every day with engaging exercises and cultural content, rather than the sort of traditional language learning pedagogy that often stresses rote learning and grammar over real-world proficiency and relevance. That’s why I’m so excited about the new teacher training initiatives and curriculum we profile in this issue.

I’m writing this President’s letter with a bit more of a personal perspective than I normally might. Two of my children are currently taking Arabic online, as an extracurricular activity. I wish they could take it for credit, but the local school won’t grant credit for an external course. I’m proud that they have both chosen to study Arabic on their own and stuck with it (and I’ve tried hard to stay in the background and not stick my ‘anf in).

Their blend of online instruction and one-on-one contact has been key—the online activities are relatively standard steps toward functional proficiency but the conversations allow them to talk about things they’re interested in. How different this is from the “The Amir has conquered the city” exercises I suffered through twenty years ago!

As they study, I see them becoming interested in the history and culture of the Middle East, in Arab music and art, and in the news from the region. They want to cook kefta and make baklawa; we take couscous to potlucks; we take couscous to potlucks; they listen to Arabic hiphop. They’ve also brought their new skills and insights into their other classes, starting a new kind of Arabic cool by being able to show off their ability to write and read in Arabic.

Maybe the cool factor will inspire the local district to think about offering Arabic….

Barbara Petzen
MEOC President
including PS368 and PS261 in Brooklyn as well as the Harlem Village Academies. We currently serve over 840 students and have expanded the breadth of languages that we offer to include French and Arabic. Along with instruction, we have found that it has been critical to consistently demonstrate to students why knowing a second language would afford them more educational and professional opportunities.

Integrating Arabic in our curriculum carried particular value for us as we thought about which languages would best equip our students to participate in an increasingly globalized workforce. We realized that the kinds of opportunities that would be afforded to our students who learned Arabic would be a promising and diverse set. Currently Arabic is the fifth most widely spoken language in the world and in 2006 the US State Department identified Arabic as one of several critical needs languages.

While government jobs value those who are fluent in Arabic, the opportunities for Arabic speakers do not end there. As awareness about the importance of the language has increased, other fields such as law and international development have reached out to Arabic-speaking demographics, making someone who knows Arabic a particularly valuable asset. Other sectors that actively search for Arabic-speaking employees are trade, media, education, finance, translation and consulting.

If we buy the idea that the structure of a language is inextricably linked to the ways of life of those who speak it—that you cannot fully grasp one without having a certain kind of sensitivity toward the other—then fluency in Arabic is also a critical step in developing a working knowledge of the diverse ways of life in Arabic-speaking societies. At Global Language Project, we aim to mold young students into global citizens, who care about and are deeply aware of how they are connected with others in their immediate and not-so-immediate communities. We believe fluency in Arabic will enable these students to approach their professions as young adults with an ethos of cultural sensitivity, awareness, and appreciation for the new people and places they will encounter in their travels and interactions. In our classes, young students from kindergarten through fifth grade learn grammar and vocabulary in conjunction with lessons on holidays celebrated in the Arab world, diverse cuisines, and ideas about family and social cohesion.

One of the core tenets of Global Language Project is that language learning should begin at the early elementary level. Whether it is Arabic or another language, if young students are afforded an opportunity to cultivate foreign language knowledge, the benefits do not reside solely in mastering a particular grammatical structure or vocabulary, but also in the ability to hold meaningful relationships with a wider array of people and to make a positive impact on different parts of the world. On a personal level, our students feel more empowered to help themselves, their families and their communities. They are inspired to move beyond the systemic poverty and lack of access to educational resources that has erected so many barriers (both bureaucratic and personal) to their potential for academic and professional success. Perhaps most importantly, attaining knowledge of Arabic is one way to achieve self-empowerment— one way to begin conceiving of oneself as able and prepared to participate in our increasingly interconnected, mobile, and dynamic global environment.
The Arabic Language and Culture Initiative
Opportunities for Schools

By Carine Allaf, Qatar Foundation International

Of the 33 million elementary school students in the United States today, only 24% receive global language instruction, and less than 1% study Arabic. In the United States, most students do not begin studying a second language until the age of 14, putting us behind 21 of the top 25 industrialized countries. Arabic is the 5th most widely spoken native language in the world. The US Government recognizes Arabic as a critical language, yet, surprisingly, less than 1% of public and public charter schools offer Arabic.

The National Research Council (2007) found that children who study a foreign language show great cognitive development in areas such as mental flexibility, creativity, and higher-order thinking skills. They also develop a sense of cultural pluralism that allows them to value, understand, and respect different cultures in the United States and abroad. And foreign language learning improves students’ self-concept and sense of achievement in schools.

Despite this, the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) has been slashed and more threats remain of additional cuts to Middle East National and Language Resource Centers across the country. This is unfortunate as one in five jobs in the United States is tied to foreign trade. Children in US public schools are not prepared to take advantage of the global economy because they are not literate in a second language.

Qatar Foundation International (QFI), LLC, is a U.S.-based member of Qatar Foundation (QF). Its mission is to connect cultures and advance global citizenship through education. QFI is a not-for-profit organization in Washington, D.C. focused on grant-giving and programmatic activities that promote education as a force to facilitate collaboration across geographical, social and cultural boundaries. Responding to the need for deeper, more positive engagement between people living inside and outside the Arab world, QFI launched the Arabic Language and Culture Initiative (ALCI). The program provides new opportunities for students from a wide variety of backgrounds in public and public charter K to 12 schools in the Americas to acquire basic Arabic, learn more broadly about the Arab world’s history and culture, and meet their peers - both virtually and in person. QFI recently put together a short video about the importance of learning Arabic that can be accessed here: http://www.qfi.org/video/275/QFI%27s-ALCI-Presents:-The-Benefits-of-Learning-Arabic.

ALCI seeks to build bridges across cultures by increasing the number of young people in the United States and other countries with deep knowledge and understanding of Arab culture. To do this, QFI supports: school programs to increase the number and quality of Arabic programs in the Americas; teacher professional development to increase the supply of highly qualified teachers of Arabic and raise the visibility of the profession; and curriculum development to ensure that standards-based instruction is taking place and that authentic and quality materials are available and accessible.

As of March 2013, QFI supports in-school Arabic Language and Culture programs in Boston, MA; Washington, DC; Portland, OR; Honolulu, HI; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Houston, TX; Los Angeles, CA; and New Orleans, LA. Additionally, in 2012 ALCI granted over 35 one-time grants (amounts ranging from $5,000 to $25,000) to support Arabic language classrooms, school programs, and curriculum development projects in the United States.

One of QFI’s newest initiatives supports the teaching of Arabic in the U.S. by funding local networks for K-12 teachers (Teacher Councils), giving them the opportunity to meet, network, share resources and ideas, assist schools that would like to start new programs, and advocate in their communities for...
Arabic programs in the schools. Currently Teacher Councils are hosted by DePaul University for the Chicago-land area in Illinois; Occidental College for the Los Angeles area in California; George Washington University for Washington, DC, Virginia, and Maryland; and The Marhaba Project in Boston, Massachusetts. Examples of activities conducted via these councils include: supporting grants for teachers’ attendance to conferences across the country; holding an Initiation Luncheon, attended by 150 people, to introduce the Teacher Council’s activities for the year; and allowing teachers time to share what is working well in their own schools and classrooms like using project based learning in the Arabic classroom.

Most recently, high school students from Los Angeles and Portland studying Arabic at Level 2 or above joined their peers from Qatar on an educational program in Doha that explored expressions of identity, Arab language and multiculturalism. The trip offered a unique opportunity for 32 U.S. public and public-charter high school students and 27 students from two independent schools in Qatar to meet, participate in a language curriculum, and work on a collaborative, cross-cultural artwork that integrates themes of language, culture and identity, which was featured at the Qatar Arab Museum of Modern Art. The trip, named Aber: Expressions of Culture, Identity and Language, took place from March 22-31st. Aber is an Arabic word, which means to express one’s feelings and thoughts, or to move across from one side to the other.

To learn more about QFI’s ALCI and other programs please visit: http://www.qfi.org/list/180/2/Arabic-Language-&-Culture.

Arabic Without Walls
Scholarships to Study Online

By Maggie Nassif, NMELRC, Brigham Young University

Distance learning is the way of the future and BYU’s federally-funded National Middle East Language Resource Center (NMELRC) is leading the way in introducing the study of a critical language to high school students and adult learners across the nation. Now, through a grant from Qatar Foundation International (www.qfi.org), this opportunity is available to students who otherwise could not afford it. Students begin with an intensive one-day Arabic language and culture camp in their hometown or region. NMELRC has run camps in Hawaii, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, Oklahoma, as well as a camp on the BYU campus in Utah. After the camp, students continue their study of Arabic in a highly interactive format via Arabic Without Walls (AWW). The course includes regular live interaction with a BYU-based tutor and assists camp participants in acquiring practical skills in Arabic.

ONLINE COURSE (HIGH SCHOOL)

With the rising interest among students in learning Arabic, the U.S. Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education funded the University of California Consortium on Language Learning & Teaching and the National Middle East Language Resource Center (NMELRC) to develop Arabic Without Walls (AWW), an innovative distance-learning program that allows interested learners to study Arabic regardless of their age or geographic location. A team of highly respected curriculum developers designed AWW to take advantage of the latest technology, while simultaneously ensuring the critical human contact essential for successful language learning. In order to provide a rich learning environment that exposes learners to the depth and breadth of Arab culture, they collected authentic materials and engaging interviews that introduce learners to a sample of real Arabs from various regional, educational, professional, and religious backgrounds. AWW is based on the widely-used textbook Al-Kitaab fii Ta’alum al-Arabiyya (Brustad et al., Georgetown University Press). The content and scenarios of the interviews parallel the content of the lessons in Al-Kitaab and are used as the basis for online learning activities that help students acquire real facility in using Arabic.

A high school student from Los Angeles and a Qatari student work on an assignment together in Doha during the Aber trip.
The field of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language has seen an exponential growth in the past decade, first at the post-secondary level and more recently in K-12 public and private schools. As school districts and private school boards race to develop and support new programs, there remains a lack of established pedagogical and professional structure from which other fields benefit. In response to this pressing need, teachers, administrators, curriculum specialists, and others have coordinated efforts to support K-12 Arabic teachers through curriculum support, teacher training, and professional networks. A selection of these resources follows.

**CURRICULUM**

**The Marhaba! Project** is a four-year curriculum production project that developed, tested, and disseminated a standards-based middle school and high school curriculum, including sample student work, a professional development DVD, and step-by-step guide to using the curriculum materials.

The project was developed by Boston Public Schools and received support from the U.S. Department of Education, Harvard University’s Outreach Center at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Boston University School of Education, and STARTALK. This curriculum is published commercially as Marhaba! An Invitation to Arabic and is available from Cheng & Tsui. For more information on the Marhaba Project: http://www.marhabaproject.org.

**The Teachers of Critical Languages Program (TCLP)** is a cross-cultural initiative funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State and administered by American Councils for International Education. TCLP is designed to increase the number of Americans teaching and studying Arabic by funding Egyptian teachers to participate actively in a public or private American high school as Arabic teachers. TCLP has been collecting lesson plans, curricula, syllabi, and online resources for several years. These materials are available here: http://bit.ly/15gQwSJ. For more information on TCLP: http://www.americancouncils.org/TCLP/.

**TEACHER TRAINING**

The New England Association of Arabic Teachers (NEAAT) has been offering free workshops for K-12 Arabic teachers since 2008. These sessions are an important opportunity for public and private school teachers to swap best practices and inform each other of area resources and materials. NEAAT offers workshops in cooperation with Harvard University’s Outreach Center at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, and currently has small grant programs for teachers to invite guest speakers to their classrooms, attend professional conferences, and organize school-based Middle Eastern festivals. For more information on NEAAT: http://cmes.hmdc.harvard.edu/node/2792.

The Arabic Institute for the Next Generation (AING) is an intensive summer high school teacher training program hosted by the Harvard University Outreach Center at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies and offered at no charge. This two-week program brought together about 30 undergraduate students from three countries and ten states to introduce them to pedagogical skills and content knowledge that is aligned with Massachusetts state licensure requirements. This program was funded by a grant from STARTALK, which supports K-12 student and teacher summer programs in critical need languages like Arabic. For more information on AING: http://cmes.hmdc.harvard.edu/node/3227.

Teachers of Arabic gather at the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL), which has developed a strong Arabic strand.
in the past several years. This year the conference provided a hospitality suite for Arabic teachers, so that all of the presentations and informal networking sessions were held in a comfortable and central area. The registration costs of most K-12 Arabic teachers were supported by a generous grant from Qatar Foundation International. For more information on NECTFL: http://on.fb.me/111xGN0.

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

The National Capital Language Resource Center publishes the Arabic K-12 Bulletin as part of the Arabic K-12 Teachers Network, a website that provides teachers with research, teaching materials, resources, and professional development opportunities. The Bulletin is a bi-weekly newsletter that includes information on jobs, grants, study opportunities, teaching resources, and the latest news from the field. The listserv recently changed formatting for improved readability. For more information on the Arabic K-12 Teachers Network: http://www.arabick12.org. To sign up for the newsletter, send an email to: arabick12@gmail.com.

The Teachers of Arabic Language K12 (TALK12) is an informal social networking site for teachers to swap information, chat with each other, and find out what’s happening in the field. The site has been active since 2008 and is based on the Facebook platform. TALK12 has yearly networking meetings at regional and national conferences, such as NECTFL and ACTFL. TALK12 also supports biweekly Virtual Coffee Hours, where teachers dial into a thematically-based conference call with other teachers. For more information on TALK12: http://www.talk12.org.

QATAR FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

NMELRC in cooperation with Qatar Foundation International and Brigham Young University Independent Study is currently offering this award-winning hybrid online course for high school students. The high school implementation of Arabic without Walls, winner of the 2010 Distance Education Course Award and the 2012 K-12 Distance Learning Course Award, covers the basics of both spoken and written Arabic. BYU is accredited through NWAC and DETC (http://is.byu.edu/site/about/accreditation.cfm). Students may receive high school credit for the online course by obtaining school approval prior to enrollment.

STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

Isaac Earl, a high school senior, enrolled in our 2007 STARTALK camp and continued his studies during the academic year with Arabic Without Walls. During summer 2008, he studied in Cairo with State Department funding. As a result of a lot of hard work and favorable learning conditions, both here and abroad (including a great homestay experience), he returned with significant proficiency in Arabic and was able to join the BYU Intensive Arabic Study Abroad Program in Jordan during summer 2009. He acquired speaking and writing skills typical of BYU’s better graduating seniors, before he even began studying at BYU as a freshman. He is now on track to reach Superior-level proficiency in Arabic as an undergraduate.

Mollie Korewa, a 19-year old from Salt Lake, is currently a junior at Yale. Inspired by her teacher, Laila Lamani, Mollie pursued Arabic for two years at West High in Salt Lake City, did intensive Arabic summer camps at BYU for two summers, and continued taking Arabic at SLC Community College while still in high school. Korewa ended up in Morocco in the summer of 2011 on a State-Department-funded NSLI Youth scholarship. She is studying History and languages (Arabic, Chinese and Spanish) at Yale.

These success stories represent a rising demographic of students who are charting their educational paths through nontraditional opportunities in less-commonly-taught languages. They know that Arabic opens doors—and more and more students are starting their study of the language and culture earlier.

For more information visit www.nmelrc.org.
2012 MEOC Book Awards

Established in 1999, the Middle East Book Award recognizes quality books for children and young adults that contribute meaningfully to an understanding of the Middle East and its component societies and cultures. Books are judged on the authenticity of their portrayal of a Middle Eastern subject, as well as on their characterization, plot, and appeal for the intended audience. For the purposes of this award, “The Middle East” is defined as the Arab World, Iran, Israel, Turkey, and Afghanistan. Nominations for the Middle East Book Award are made by publishers, educators, librarians, and the general public, with eligible books published in the period from January 1, 2011 to August 1, 2012. The MEOC Book Award Committee consists of volunteer MEOC members representing primary, secondary, and post-secondary educational institutions.

PICTURE BOOK

CO-WINNER: Folktales from Turkey: From Agri to Zelve by Serpil Ural, illustrated by Dilara Arin (Citlembik Publications)

Folktales from Turkey is a wonderful blend of folktales and stories in combination with historic, geographic, and cultural content. Evaluators especially enjoyed the format: short stories with side panels that offer information on a wide variety of topics. The book is well-written, nicely illustrated, and offers teachers many opportunities for follow-up research or art projects. Overall, “it is an unusual book and reflects tremendous research and creativity on the part of the author and illustrator.”

CO-WINNER: The Wooden Sword: A Jewish Folktale from Afghanistan by Ann Redisch Stampler, illustrated by Carol Liddiment (Albert Whitman and Co.)

The Wooden Sword is a charming story with “vibrant illustrations with rich, sensuous colors that epitomize the beauty of the Middle East.” Reviewers also loved the repetition of the phrase “I have faith that everything will turn out just as it should,” which is reassuring to children. It is well-written, engaging, and colorful.

HONORABLE MENTION: What’s the Buzz? Honey for a Sweet New Year by Alison Ofanansky, photographs by Eliyahu Alpern. (Kar-Ben Publishing)

What’s the Buzz? received praise for its information on the Jewish celebration of Rosh Hashanah traditions, the bee industry, and life in Israel. Written for young children, it fills a huge hole in non-fiction for early grade levels. Reviewers especially loved the photographs showing real Israeli children in everyday life.

YOUTH LITERATURE

CO-WINNER: Alif the Unseen by G. Willow Wilson (Grove Press)

Alif the Unseen is a witty fantasy written for the cyber age and its youthful members. During the course of a mythical and political thriller, it teaches about Islam, jinns, gender relations, Gulf politics, the importance of freedom with responsibility, and much more. With themes that teenagers will embrace, settings that fascinate, and characters that are bizarre and entertaining, it is a book for high school students who loved Harry Potter but want to explore a gritty fantasy world of both magical and internet wizardry, grounded in the issues and complexities of the Middle East. Note: Some strong language and sexual content.
CO-WINNER: *Jerusalem: Chronicles from the Holy City* by Guy Delisle (Drawn and Quarterly)

*Jerusalem* is a graphic “novel” that gives an account of daily life in contemporary Israel by an outsider who is unsentimental but drawn in, bemused but empathetic. Delisle, a Canadian, sees and wonders at the complications, absurdities, and joys of living in East Jerusalem, and explores other communities in Israel and the Occupied Territories. He comes with little knowledge and few preconceptions, but while on the ground, he provides a roadmap for students, teachers, and readers for living and travel in this complex region. His drawings are informative and entertaining. They will draw students in and delight teachers.

YOUTH NON-FICTION


*Beyond Bullets* documents photojournalist Rafal Gerszak’s experiences during the year he spent embedded with American forces in Afghanistan. However, it is much more than a war story. There are textures and layers to the book as the author struggles to get beneath the surface and reach a deeper understanding of life in Afghanistan. Reviewers commented that the book “shows the power of photojournalism and gave a unique perspective” and that it is especially powerful for high school students whose parents served in Afghanistan but have not yet unwrapped the experience. Overall, the book is an insightful, highly personal reflection.


*Bye Bye Babylon* is a graphic novel/memoir of the author’s experiences as a child (age 7-11) in war-torn Lebanon. Reviewers described the book as “fun and colorful” but also appreciated how it “took the graphic novel approach a little further by adding historical context to the memoir.” They concluded that young people will love it – and will also learn more about the transformation of everyday life in Beirut during the 1970s conflict.

HONORABLE MENTION: *Living Through the Arab-Israeli War Since 1948* by Alex Woolf (Heinemann-Raintree)

*Living Through the Arab-Israeli War Since 1948* is commended as an excellent resource on the Arab Israeli conflict because of its “honest attempt to present both sides while not offending any moderates.” It is also very readable, making a complex subject accessible to a high school audience.

For a full list of past book award winners, see our website: www.meoc.us

STARTALK supports engaging summer programs for students (K–16) and teachers of Arabic (among other languages). This summer 2013, Arabic courses (teachers and students) are being held in the following states: (CA, CT, DC, IA, IL, IN, KY, MA, MD, MI, MN, MT, NY, OH, PA, TX, UT, VA, WA)

STARTALK SUMMER 2013 OPPORTUNITIES: HTTPS://STARTALK.UMD.EDU/
Ellisheva Cohen
Portland State University

Where, what and who do you teach?

I am the Outreach Coordinator for the Middle East Studies Center at Portland State University. I work primarily with middle and high school teachers to support education about the Middle East. This year our educational programming has been conducted under the theme of ‘Global Education through Film’ and all of the materials we have developed and workshops we have held have fit under that theme.

I also teach an elective at a local high school called Introduction to Arab Culture through Film, which uses music, film, and literature to introduce students to various aspects of Arab culture.

How and when did you first become interested in learning and teaching about the Middle East?

I moved to New York City in August of 2001, about three weeks before the World Trade Towers were hit. As people around me began talking more about Islamic extremism and Arab terrorists, I began asking questions and exploring the culture, the religions, and history of the Middle East in order to better understand what was happening in the world and in my city. My search led me to study a language that it turned out I loved (Arabic) and inspired me to travel to a region that turned out to be
warm and welcoming! As I came to understand the Middle East and see it as a vibrant and diverse region, I felt a growing frustrating with the lack of understanding around me and an obligation to share my knowledge with those around me. That led to my professional career in education and outreach.

**How have you obtained first-hand knowledge of the region?**

Growing up, I visited Israel many times with my family and spent a semester studying in Jerusalem in high school. As a college student, I studied abroad in Cairo, Egypt and Tel Aviv, Israel. During this time, I traveled multiple times to Jordan. Following my college graduation, I traveled through the region and interned at a shelter for victims of domestic violence in Haifa, Israel. From 2006-2009 I served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in a rural town in southern Morocco where I worked with teenage girls who had dropped out of school and preschool students and teachers. During this time, I grew intimately familiar with the country, its culture, people and language.

**What do you find most challenging and rewarding in teaching and outreach?**

I love being able to introduce people to new ideas and cultures in the Middle East. So many people know so little about the region and assume it is a homogenous area full of violence and anger. I love being able to show people the diversity of the region and the richness of its cultures and histories. While this is the most rewarding part, it is also the most challenging part of the work. Getting people to think outside the box and think differently about the Middle East takes a lot of work—but when successful, it is great!

**What upcoming Middle-East related project are you most excited about?**

The Middle East Studies Center in partnership with the local library will be hosting a six-part Middle East book club next year called “A Day in the Life: Memoirs of the Middle East.” We received grant funding to provide copies of the books and bring in some of the authors to speak. I think this is going to be a great opportunity to engage the community in thoughtful discussion about daily life in the Middle East and for people to see a different side of the region.
Join the Middle East Outreach Council!

Members gain access to MEOC’s forum, where you can get timely answers to questions you post about resources, travel opportunities, or other topics; copies of Perspectives, our semi-annual curriculum newsletter; web space to showcase your events and curriculum; and more!

MEOC Enrollment Form

Check your desired membership:
__Educator membership ($10.00)*
__Outreach Professional membership ($25.00)
__Joint MEOC-MESA membership ($35.00)**
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Name:
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For teachers enrolling at the joint MEOC-MESA rate:

Grade levels taught:

Subject areas taught:

Return this form with your check made out to the Middle East Outreach Council to:
MEOC
c/o Melinda McClimans
Office of International Affairs
321a Oxley Hall, 1712 Neil Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1219

*Individual members must pay by personal check; institutional checks will not be accepted for individual memberships

**This joint MEOC-MESA membership is available to K-12 classroom and community college teachers only. If you are enrolling as a joint MEOC-MESA member, you must provide your institution name as well as information on the grade levels and subject areas you teach.