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Gain Experience
With Digital Literacy
Course



DIGITAL LITERACY

(FALL 2023)

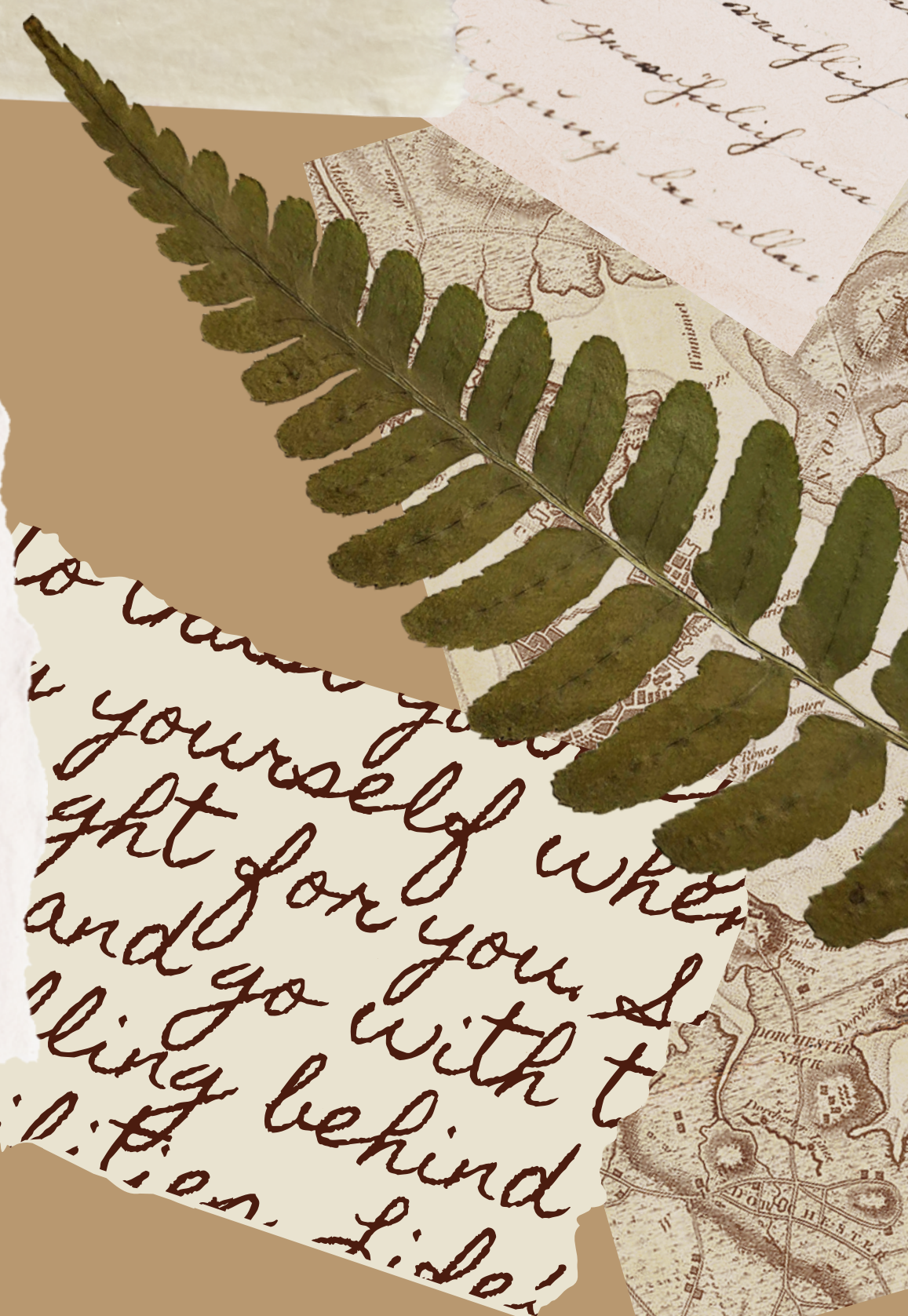
WHAT I LEARNED IN THIS COURSE?

Digital literacy is one of the courses that I took this semester. Honestly, when I registered to this course, I did not understand what digital literacy mean. I just registered because I couldn't find other places in the core courses that I wanted. However, throughout the semester, I realized that this was one of the best choices I made. This course has taught me not just academic knowledge, like any other courses, but also about myself, my social life, and my career path. It is really, as I consider it, a lifelong learning experience. Therefore, I would like to thank Dr. Maha for this wonderful experience that I had throughout the semester.

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF?

Discovering my identity: One of the most valuable things I learned in this course was discovering myself through the VIA survey. When I did this survey, I learned what my top 5 strengths were. These strengths surprised me, as I expected to have different ones. However, after reflecting on the survey results, I realized that these strengths are indeed part of who I am and what I value in life. It also helped me to appreciate myself, as I always think about my weaknesses and try to improve, ignoring my strengths and neglecting the importance of knowing both strengths and weaknesses.

Another activity that helped me discover my identity—I remember well—that we did in class was writing down 10 things that express who I am. I remember that this was challenging for me to think of 10 things that reflect my personality. At that time, I could only think of some general aspects, such as being a student at AUC and an Egyptian citizen, to complete the 10 characteristics, although I know that my identity is more than that. However, when Dr. Maha asked us to eliminate the five least important traits, I found it easy. It was easy because I eliminated the general things that I wrote, leaving only the important ones. This helped me to think of my true character, which has been shaped over time. Therefore, after I finished this class that day, I asked myself why it was really hard for me to write 10 things about myself. Then I figured out that it is okay not to know a lot, but I knew new things about myself, my values, and my character. That is why, I think that discovering myself is a long journey that is still continuing with me in the future.



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IN MY ACADEMIC LIFE

Informal writing skills: I always used to write formally, even when it came to writing reflection. However, I learned that writing blogs and reflecting should be more personalized, as we are expressing ourselves freely. Although I write reflections a lot in other courses, I experienced how we can write freely in this course. Yet I feel that I understood the message late: that we can express ourselves and write in an informal way in our blogs. I think that making learning more personalized is one of the most interesting things for me because it helps me express myself through writing, even without the need for the use of AI.

Making Presentation Accessible:

For me, this was one of the most important topics that benefited me. As Dr. Maha said in class, we should be careful when we do our presentation, slides, or even font size for our audience and how to make them accessible for all people, especially for people with special needs. I learned that we should be careful that we are not living alone in this world. I personally started to take care of such things. For example, I begin to look at the alternative text in every presentation I do and write explanations for images, taking care of the colors and the font size as well. Not a lot of people think of these topics, and that is why I'm grateful for taking this course.

IN MY SOCIAL LIFE

Teaching through games: Teaching has been one of the things that I have been doing for a couple of years. Yes, I teach children in my church. But I have never realized that we can actually learn through games. One thing Dr. Maha mentioned to Dana when we were planning for our school visit is to never do something that has no meaning. Everything has meaning, even games. This really impacted me and my thoughts about everything I do in my life. So I thought, why shouldn't I also use games to deliver my message? Not only that, I also started to use this method in my presentations, where I start my introduction with a little game that introduces my topic. Therefore, I think this helped me in both social and academic life.

Empathy and culture building: The way our Dr. started her class was one of the best ways to make me feel that I was in my comfort zone. It impacted my well-being, as I was going to class every day full of pressure from the workload that I had. However, by sharing how we felt at the beginning of the class, I felt less stressed. This course helped me to have empathy and build connections and trust with others not only within our class but also outside of the class. Also, this course was eye-opening to me as it shed light on the idea of microaggression. This was one of the new things that I learned in class, especially when we did a role-play about it. It made me realize how we sometimes discriminate against others without realizing it, considering this a joke.

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IN MY CAREER

Communicating with others: participating in Soliya program has increased my communication skills with people from different cultures. It was my first time exploring different cultures and talking to people about various topics. Also, seeing atheist people was shocking for me. I always hear about them, but I never realized that I could, actually, meet atheists. When we were in the breakout rooms in Soliya, I had the chance to explore their different religions and cultures, which made me respect them more and their perspectives.

Leading: leading is another skill that started here, in class, and I hope to develop throughout my life. It started first when we were doing school visits, but I noticed it in the Soliya program. Dr. Maha was saying to most of my classmates, "Think of a way to make your experience different. What would you do to enjoy your Soliya experience?" These words were in my head every time I did my Soliya, and that is what helped me develop this skill. When we were in the breakout rooms, I was leading the group and managing the discussion. Since then, I have noticed that I can really lead others. Therefore, I hope to become a better leader in my future career and in my life as well.

I'm grateful to take Digital Literacy course this semester as it was one of my favourite courses. Thank you Dr. Maha for making the class atmosphere a safe zone and for a wonderful experience.

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IF I WERE TO SHOW SOMEONE MY LEARNING IN THIS COURSE, I WOULD USE THESE THREE THINGS:

The first thing I would like to show them is the digital narrative game that Janna, Dana, and I created. I would not tell them what the game is about in the beginning, and I would like them to play it. Then, listen and know if they got the message from it and understood that it was about emotional intelligence or not. The reason I want them to play it is that we worked hard to create a game that gives meaning to its players. As I mentioned before, I liked the idea of learning through games. Therefore, I would like to see how everyone will interpret the meaning of the game and then tell him what the game is about.

The second thing that I would like to show someone is some of my blog posts on school visits, such as the first school visit and the final school visit. The reason I want to show people these is because they express my feelings at the beginning of the school visits and at the end. I want to show them how I was able to discover and overcome challenges through this journey. They express how learning can come in the form of activities, not just studying material and exams. I think they will enjoy reading them, as I was sharing with some of my friends about my experience with school visits.

The last thing that I would like to show them, or that I actually showed them, is the plot where I grew plants. I would like to show them how learning can be enjoyable and beneficial at the same time. Also, doing the plot taught me discipline and responsibility because I felt that I was responsible for something living and that I should be disciplined and check on the plants from time to time. I would like to show them the weeds that we remove so that the plants can grow healthy, which helps our health. Indeed, one day I was crying because I was stressed, and my friend saw me while I was walking towards the plot. She went with me, and I told her how much doing the plot helped my well-being through all the stress and anxiety I went through during the semester. When I told her what we do in class, she was surprised. And after our conversation, I felt more comfortable.



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IF I COULD CHANGE 2-3 THINGS ABOUT THE COURSE TO IMPROVE IT, I WOULD CHANGE THESE THINGS...

The first thing I would like to change is the plot. The reason I want to make some changes is that doing the plot is a very important thing and a learning process. However, I felt that I lacked most of the knowledge needed to do something like that. Although we used AI and Google Lens to help us, I felt we needed a human being who could explain everything to us. Therefore, I would like to dedicate some classes to the plot and bring guest speakers to talk more about this experience and how we can take care of the plants. Also, some of the class should go to the plot together so that everyone can help each other if they are stuck in something.

Another thing I would like to change is the way schools visit. I would like to make some of the school visits at AUC in addition to going to school. I think this will help the students get more insights and make them more active. It will also help us to create and plan for more active lessons and activities, as I think it will give them different experiences and foster the outcome. I think visiting the AUC and experiencing the active learning classrooms would be a valuable opportunity for them to participate in different kinds of learning activities that are more interactive and meaningful. For example, we make activities for the on the board like we do in class and many other things that could give them valuable meaning.

Lastly, I would increase the intercultural experience by having classes similar to what we did with the German students. That is because we were exposed to different cultures, perspectives, and ways of learning. I would also like each student to make a presentation about topics they are interested in and present it to the class or to another class. For example, one of our classes presents a topic for the German students. I think this will make a difference in the learning experience for all students, as I know that we learn more when we teach something to others.

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IN ONE SENTENCE: WHAT KIND OF PERSON SHOULD TAKE THIS COURSE?

In my opinion, this course is suitable for people who would like to see a difference in the way of teaching every time. People who feel bored, because I believe they will never feel bored in this course. Also, it is for the kind of people who like writing as it increases their writing skills and also people who love technology, given that we explored different types of websites and platforms that are very interesting.

TELL ME MY FRIEND WOULD YOU LIKE TO TRY THIS COURSE EXPERIENCE?

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Core 2096 (Digital literacy)
with Dr. Maha Bali

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