

Original Research

Received 03 June 2026

Revised 23 June 2026

Accepted 19 July 2026

Natural Resources for Human Health 2026, Vol. 6 (9s): 1097–1105

KEYWORDS:

Saudi higher education; humanities; heritage interpretation; bilingual storytelling; graduate employability; curriculum design

Translating Heritage into Professional Practice: Bilingual Storytelling and Career Formation and Future Economies in Saudi Humanities Education

Safaa Sayed Mahmoud¹, Ali Ramadan Elbaoui Shaddad^{2*}

¹Department of Business Administration, College of Business, University of Bisha, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

²College of Education, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

*Correspondence: a.shaddad@psau.edu.sa

ABSTRACT: Saudi humanities education faces a consequential question: how can students develop professional opportunities through cultural work without reducing inherited knowledge to marketable content? This conceptual article proposes a curriculum centred on bilingual heritage storytelling, understood as the researched, ethically accountable interpretation of cultural practices for Arabic and English audiences. It brings graduate employability scholarship into dialogue with heritage studies and intercultural education, then develops a teaching model organised around source inquiry, narrative interpretation, translation, collaborative production and portfolio presentation. The argument distinguishes language proficiency from the capacity to explain cultural meaning, and distinguishes employability from employment secured. Illustrative assignments show how students might produce exhibition narratives, audio scripts and interpretive texts while documenting uncertainty, attribution and community participation. These examples are proposed teaching applications, not findings from an implemented intervention. The article argues that professional preparation becomes educationally defensible when cultural accountability forms part of assessment and when universities provide equitable access to supervised practice. It concludes with an evaluation agenda addressing learning gains, community judgement, portfolio credibility and subsequent career experiences. Bilingual storytelling offers a productive meeting point between disciplinary study and public practice, provided that heritage bearers retain meaningful influence over how their knowledge circulates.

1. INTRODUCTION

A student translating a short account of a traditional craft encounters more than a vocabulary problem. Someone made the object, learned its techniques, supplied its materials and remembered its significance. A visitor may want an engaging explanation, while the practitioner may want recognition of labour and continuity. The student must decide what to explain, whose account to prioritise and which uncertainties to retain. Such decisions reveal a form of professional competence that sits comfortably within the humanities: the ability to make meaning accessible while remaining answerable to evidence and people.

The connection between language education and the creative economy is therefore more demanding than the familiar assertion that English improves employment prospects. Language can support access to audiences and professional networks, but fluent expression alone does not establish historical accuracy, cultural sensitivity or editorial judgement. Equally, knowledge of a cultural tradition does not automatically produce an effective exhibition label, interview or audio narrative.

The educational problem concerns the relationship between these capacities and the conditions under which students learn to combine them.

Saudi Arabia provides a pertinent setting for considering that relationship. The Human Capability Development Program places education and preparation for future work within the national development agenda, while the Quality of Life Program includes culture and tourism among its fields of activity (Saudi Vision 2030, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). These policy directions justify examining possible connections between humanities curricula and cultural practice. They do not establish how many relevant jobs exist, which graduates obtain them or whether any particular curriculum improves employment. Those questions require evidence beyond policy statements.

This article develops a distinctive response through bilingual heritage storytelling. Its concern is the organisation of learning: how students move from reading cultural materials to producing accountable public narratives and explaining their professional contribution. The proposed model treats Arabic as a language of knowledge, analysis and creative production, alongside English as a means of communication with additional audiences. Neither language is assigned a permanently subordinate role. The central claim is that employability education can strengthen disciplinary learning when it makes interpretive work visible instead of replacing it with generic skills training.

Three questions organise the discussion. What capabilities distinguish bilingual heritage interpretation from general language proficiency? How can university assignments turn these capabilities into assessable professional practice? Under what ethical and institutional conditions could such practice support career formation? The contribution is a conceptual curriculum model and an explicit evaluation agenda. No student dataset, institutional survey or measured employment effect is reported. The article therefore offers a reasoned proposal for development and testing, rather than a claim that Saudi humanities programmes already exhibit the practices described.

2. CONCEPTUAL APPROACH AND EVIDENTIAL BOUNDARIES

The article uses a selective conceptual synthesis. Sources were chosen for their relevance to three intersecting problems: the nature of graduate employability, the interpretation of living heritage and the assessment of communicative learning. The core scholarly contributions are Tomlinson's graduate capital model, Bridgstock's account of career management, Deardorff's discussion of intercultural competence, Smith's understanding of heritage and Boud's work on sustainable assessment. Official Saudi programme descriptions establish policy context, while UNESCO materials provide a documented heritage illustration and an ethical reference point. The selection is purposive rather than exhaustive.

The synthesis proceeds through conceptual comparison and curriculum construction. First, it separates concepts frequently collapsed in educational discussion, including proficiency and interpretation, outputs and outcomes, and heritage visibility and cultural accountability. Second, it identifies teaching activities through which these distinctions could become observable. Third, it specifies the evidence needed to evaluate the resulting model. This approach is appropriate for developing a proposal before implementation, but it cannot estimate prevalence, determine causal relationships or substitute for consultation with Saudi students, employers and heritage practitioners.

The cited literature is not uniformly Saudi in origin. Its concepts are used as analytical resources, not as proof that educational structures or labour markets operate identically across countries. Graduate capital, for example, helps identify resources that students might need, but their recognition depends on institutional and occupational circumstances. Intercultural competence likewise provides useful questions about interpretation and communication without prescribing a culturally universal model of professional behaviour. Adaptation requires local discussion of appropriate interaction, linguistic expectations, disciplinary traditions and access to cultural organisations.

All teaching scenarios below are constructed illustrations. They contain no invented interview testimony, participant quotations or numerical findings. UNESCO's description of Al-Qatt Al-Asiri grounds one example in a documented cultural practice; the corresponding assignment is the article's proposal. This distinction matters because a plausible classroom activity can easily acquire the appearance of an observed case study when written in an empirical register. Here, proposals remain conditional, and the evaluation section identifies what would have to be collected before claims about educational effectiveness could be made.

3. EMPLOYABILITY BEYOND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Employability should be distinguished from the event of obtaining a job. A graduate can develop substantial capabilities while facing limited vacancies, restrictive recruitment practices or geographical constraints. Conversely, a graduate may obtain employment through circumstances that reveal little about curricular quality. Bennett (2018) frames employability in relation to navigating complex working lives rather than simply preparing for an initial appointment. This wider perspective is especially useful when discussing cultural work, where possible pathways include organisational employment, commissioned projects, further study and combinations of activities.

Tomlinson (2017) identifies human, social, cultural, identity and psychological forms of graduate capital. The value of this account lies in its refusal to make subject knowledge the sole explanation of transition into work. Bridgstock (2009) similarly argues that career management deserves attention alongside disciplinary and generic capabilities. Together, these contributions direct attention towards how graduates recognise opportunities, communicate their strengths and sustain professional development. Neither framework warrants the assumption that students can overcome structural disadvantage through confidence or self-presentation alone.

For the present proposal, language proficiency is necessary but insufficient. A student may write grammatically accurate English yet remove the social relationships that give a heritage practice meaning. Another may know a tradition intimately but struggle to organise information for an unfamiliar audience. A third may produce an appealing narrative while misrepresenting the provenance of its claims. Professional preparation must therefore address the relationship between linguistic resources, interpretive knowledge and accountable production. Treating these dimensions separately would reproduce the very fragmentation the curriculum seeks to overcome.

Career formation enters this relationship through explanation. Students need to describe what they contributed to a project, how they resolved a problem and why their decisions were defensible. A portfolio caption that merely says “translated a heritage text” conceals substantial work. A stronger account identifies source checking, audience analysis, terminology decisions, revision and consultation. The aim is not exaggerated self-promotion. It is a precise correspondence between claims of competence and inspectable evidence, including acknowledgement of collaborators and the limits of the student’s responsibility.

There is nevertheless a danger in making every educational activity justify itself through anticipated earnings. Historical inquiry, literary interpretation and language study have intellectual and public value beyond recruitment. The proposed model protects these purposes by selecting professional tasks that require disciplinary depth. Students do not abandon close reading when they write an exhibition narrative; they explain why one interpretation is stronger than another. Employability becomes a possible consequence of making that work communicable, while the quality of interpretation remains an educational end in itself.

4. HERITAGE AS RELATIONSHIP AND INTERPRETIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Heritage is often presented as a collection of objects, places and customs waiting to be described. Smith (2006) challenges the assumption that heritage value simply inheres in material things, emphasising the cultural practices through which significance is recognised and asserted. This perspective changes the translator’s task. The issue is not merely whether a label names an object correctly, but how the account distributes attention, authority and recognition. A compelling narrative may still be inadequate if it makes practitioners disappear behind a generalised image of national tradition.

UNESCO’s ethical principles provide a complementary emphasis on respect and the role of communities in safeguarding intangible heritage (UNESCO, n.d.-b). For curriculum purposes, this suggests that community engagement should affect editorial decisions rather than function as a ceremonial endorsement. Consultation becomes meaningful when contributors can correct descriptions, clarify boundaries and influence attribution. The article’s proposed classroom procedures extend this ethical orientation into teaching; they should not be mistaken for a complete statement of institutional research requirements or a substitute for locally appropriate agreements.

Narrative form matters because stories organise causal relationships. An account can describe a craft as an unchanged survival, an individual artistic achievement or a practice sustained through teaching and adaptation. Each framing highlights some relationships and suppresses others. Students should learn to ask what their chosen beginning and ending imply. Does a

narrative make contemporary practitioners appear less authentic because they innovate? Does the text suggest that commercial activity necessarily diminishes cultural value? These are interpretive questions requiring evidence, rather than assumptions that a fluent translation can resolve.

The treatment of uncertainty is equally important. A source may provide a secure description of technique but only a tentative explanation of a motif's origin. An interviewee may remember a practice differently from a published account. Students should neither flatten disagreement into a single confident statement nor overwhelm a general audience with unresolved detail. They can distinguish a documented fact, an attributed memory and a proposed interpretation. Such distinctions demonstrate professional judgement because they preserve both readability and the reader's ability to understand the status of a claim.

An ethical curriculum must also recognise the value of withholding publication. Access to a photograph or personal recollection does not automatically make it appropriate for unrestricted circulation. An assignment can succeed academically when a student explains why certain material remains private and produces an alternative public text. This principle prevents visibility from becoming the unquestioned measure of achievement. It also makes respect operational: students are rewarded for sound editorial decisions, including decisions that reduce the apparent scale or spectacle of their final output.

5. BILINGUAL STORYTELLING AS DISCIPLINARY PRACTICE

Bilingual storytelling is defined here as the production of related Arabic and English narratives whose organisation, explanation and voice respond to audience needs while remaining accountable to shared evidence. The two texts need not be identical in length or sentence structure. They should, however, maintain compatible factual commitments and make significant additions or omissions explainable. A translation may require contextual information that its source audience takes for granted, but explanatory expansion must not become an opportunity to invent cultural meaning.

Arabic should remain central to inquiry as well as presentation. Students may analyse terminology, compare registers and develop an initial account in Arabic before producing an English version. They may also discover, through English audience questions, that the Arabic text needs clarification. Translation thus becomes reciprocal editorial work rather than the final transfer of a completed original into a supposedly more prestigious language. Assessment should recognise the quality of both texts, including the handling of regional expressions and the relationship between spoken testimony and formal written prose.

Literary study offers particularly useful resources for this work. Attention to voice helps students distinguish an institution's explanation from a practitioner's recollection. Analysis of imagery reveals when a promotional metaphor overshadows material detail. The study of narrative perspective clarifies who is positioned as observer, expert or participant. These resources can be practised through close reading before students address public genres. Their professional application does not turn literature into a collection of techniques; it demonstrates how interpretive habits travel into other settings without losing their critical force.

Deardorff (2006) connects intercultural competence with knowledge, attitudes and interpretive abilities, and recommends assessment through multiple forms of evidence. Applied cautiously here, that perspective suggests that the success of an English narrative cannot be judged through grammatical accuracy alone. Students need to consider what a reader understands, which assumptions remain unexamined and whether explanation invites engagement without stereotyping. The present curriculum does not adopt a single score for cultural competence. It proposes observable decisions and audience responses that can be discussed and revised.

Audience categories themselves require scrutiny. "International visitors" are not a homogeneous readership, and Arabic readers do not share identical regional knowledge. A useful brief specifies the communication situation: an adult reading a short label, a school group listening to an introduction or an online reader encountering a practice for the first time. Students then justify vocabulary, pacing and background information in relation to that situation. The goal is a workable audience hypothesis, tested where possible, rather than an imagined opposition between culturally knowledgeable insiders and uninformed outsiders.

6. A CURRICULUM ORGANISED AROUND INTERPRETIVE PRODUCTION

The proposed curriculum can operate as a supervised module within an existing humanities programme. Its defining feature is a connected sequence of tasks rather than a collection of unrelated employability workshops. Students begin with a bounded

cultural topic and carry it through inquiry, narrative development, bilingual production, review and portfolio explanation. A modest brief is preferable to an ambitious multimedia project that leaves little time for source evaluation. The sequence should make revision visible and give students more than one opportunity to respond to criticism.

During source inquiry, students assemble a small dossier of relevant materials and record what each can support. An official description may establish terminology, while a practitioner's account may illuminate experience without settling a historical controversy. Students identify authorship, date, purpose and access conditions, then distinguish agreement from unresolved difference. The dossier is assessed for relevance and judgement rather than sheer volume. In programmes without access to community partnerships, carefully selected public materials can support an initial version of the assignment, with its limitations explicitly stated.

Narrative development follows. Students formulate a central question and propose an account that answers it for a defined audience. They identify the voices included, the sequence of information and the relationship between concrete description and interpretation. A short editorial conference allows peers to challenge unsupported transitions or romanticised language. Students then prepare Arabic and English versions, maintaining a terminology record that explains consequential choices. The record should capture difficult decisions, not mechanically list every noun. Its purpose is to reveal reasoning that polished prose might otherwise hide.

Production and review introduce practical constraints. A text may need to fit an available display area, work aloud or remain intelligible without accompanying images. Students should learn to reduce length without removing qualifications essential to accuracy. Review can involve a lecturer, a peer and, where feasible, a community or professional contributor, each responding from a clearly defined position. Disagreement is documented rather than hidden. A practitioner may question representation, an editor may question clarity and a teacher may question evidence; these judgements require careful reconciliation.

The final stage asks students to assemble a portfolio entry comprising the finished output, selected drafts and a concise account of contribution. They explain the brief, identify revisions and state remaining limitations. Collaborative projects also require an individual record so that group quality does not conceal uneven participation. The portfolio should demonstrate the ability to learn from review, not merely showcase attractive products. Its credibility depends on a traceable relationship between the student's claim, the work submitted and the decisions the student can explain orally.

7. ILLUSTRATIVE APPLICATIONS IN SAUDI CULTURAL SETTINGS

Al-Qatt Al-Asiri offers one documented starting point. UNESCO describes it as a traditionally female practice of interior wall decoration associated with the Asir region and records its inscription on the Representative List in 2017 (UNESCO, n.d.-a). A proposed assignment could ask students to develop a bilingual introductory text that acknowledges practitioners, domestic setting and cultural continuity. Students would use the documented description as an initial source, then identify which additional claims require further evidence. They would not infer the meaning of every pattern from visual appearance alone.

The first teaching challenge would be framing. A text organised exclusively around colour and geometry might be visually appealing but leave the reader without a sense of the people involved. Conversely, an account filled with general praise could offer little concrete explanation. Students could compare two drafts and identify what each enables the reader to understand. Any practitioner quotation would require a genuine source and appropriate permission; an imagined quotation would be unacceptable. A classroom exercise can model an editorial problem without pretending that community consultation has already occurred.

A second constructed assignment could concern an everyday object documented in a university collection. Students would prepare a short label and an audio introduction from the same evidence dossier. The written label might prioritise identification and provenance, while the audio version could guide attention towards material features before explaining use. Where provenance is incomplete, both versions should acknowledge the gap. The learning opportunity lies in adapting genre while preserving evidential consistency. Success would not depend on attaching an elaborate story to an object whose history remains uncertain.

A third assignment could invite students to revise a publicly available heritage description for a clearly specified educational audience. The task would involve checking source conditions, identifying ambiguous terms and producing an accessible Arabic version alongside an English adaptation. Students would explain the difference between simplification and distortion.

They might replace a dense institutional sentence with two clearer statements while retaining its scope. Because the source is public, the exercise can be undertaken without inventing a fieldwork relationship, although public availability still does not justify unacknowledged reproduction.

Across these applications, the important unit is the editorial decision. Why was a term retained in transliteration? Why was background information added? Why was a dramatic claim removed? Students should answer with reference to audience, evidence and responsibility. Such questions connect classroom learning to potential professional practice more securely than asking whether a finished product looks commercial. They also allow different institutions to adapt the model to available collections, disciplinary expertise and partnerships without claiming that one cultural example represents the diversity of Saudi heritage.

8. ASSESSMENT, PORTFOLIOS AND CREDIBLE EVIDENCE

Assessment should distinguish four dimensions: evidential accuracy, bilingual communication, interpretive responsibility and professional process. Evidential accuracy concerns the relationship between claims and sources. Bilingual communication concerns clarity, register and the compatibility of the two versions. Interpretive responsibility concerns attribution, cultural framing and justified handling of uncertainty. Professional process concerns revision, collaboration and fulfilment of the brief. Separate judgements prevent elegant English or attractive design from compensating invisibly for serious weaknesses elsewhere. Weightings should be agreed locally and communicated before work begins.

Certain failures also need explicit treatment. Fabricated testimony cannot be treated as a minor stylistic defect, and unauthorised disclosure should trigger the institution's relevant procedures. At the same time, students need a learning environment in which an initial mistake can be identified and corrected before publication. Private assessment drafts and public release should therefore be separate decisions. A project may be ready for grading while still requiring permission or editorial review before circulation. This separation encourages experimentation without confusing classroom approval with unrestricted publication authority.

Boud (2000) argues for assessment that supports learners' capacity to judge work beyond the immediate course. The proposed application is a revision commentary in which students compare an early and final passage, explain the criticism received and evaluate their response. They should also identify one unresolved weakness. This requirement makes self-evaluation concrete without assuming that self-reported confidence demonstrates competence. An oral discussion can establish whether students understand choices made within a group and can apply similar reasoning to an unfamiliar passage.

Portfolio credibility requires restraint. Students should identify whether a product was a simulation, an assessed project or a commission actually used by an organisation. Naming a professional audience does not make a classroom text a professional commission. The same clarity should apply to collaborative contribution and translation assistance. An honest account of a small project is more informative than an inflated account of responsibility. Universities can support this practice by providing a consistent portfolio description format and examples of proportionate claims.

9. INSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION

The curriculum depends on arrangements that individual enthusiasm cannot sustain alone. Teaching teams need time for feedback, manageable project sizes and access to relevant expertise. A language lecturer should not be expected to authenticate every historical claim, while a cultural practitioner should not be asked to provide unlimited unpaid editorial labour. Partnerships require agreed purposes, responsibilities and schedules. Their educational value rests less on the number of organisational logos associated with a module than on whether students receive informed, timely and usable guidance.

Access must be designed rather than presumed. Travel costs, caring responsibilities, disability, digital equipment and prior language exposure can shape participation. A model that awards the strongest opportunities to students already able to travel or volunteer extensively risks reproducing inequality. Institutions should provide equivalent routes through local collections, supervised remote collaboration and accessible production formats. These alternatives need comparable intellectual demands. Equity does not require identical tasks, but it does require that the route available to a student does not predetermine the quality of evidence they can produce.

Employer involvement should inform curriculum without controlling its intellectual boundaries. Professional contributors can explain briefs and discuss quality, while academics retain responsibility for disciplinary standards and fair assessment.

Community contributors should likewise have a meaningful role in judging representation without being burdened with the entire marking process. A short, clearly focused review is more feasible than an open request to evaluate a complete student portfolio. Institutions should budget for contributor time where possible and recognise that participation may reasonably be declined.

Digital tools introduce another institutional responsibility. Students may use translation or writing assistance, but they should disclose significant assistance and verify factual and terminological decisions against sources. Polished output is not proof of independent competence or reliable cultural interpretation. Assessment can combine process evidence with a supervised task requiring students to explain and revise a passage. The purpose is to establish judgement and responsibility, not to prohibit every form of assistance. Any use involving personal or restricted cultural material must follow the applicable institutional arrangements.

10. MECHANISMS CONNECTING LEARNING AND CAREER FORMATION

The proposed connection between storytelling and employability requires more than an attractive sequence of activities. A curriculum must explain why its tasks might change what students can do and how others recognise that capability. Four mechanisms are proposed: making disciplinary reasoning explicit, practising revision under constraints, establishing credible evidence of contribution and developing informed occupational judgement. These mechanisms are analytically distinct. A student could improve interpretive performance without becoming better at describing it, or produce a stronger portfolio without discovering a suitable occupational direction.

The first mechanism concerns explicit reasoning. Conventional assignments sometimes allow students to demonstrate knowledge without explaining the decisions that organise their presentation. A bilingual production brief introduces competing demands that make those decisions harder to conceal. Students must identify why additional context is necessary, which wording preserves a qualification and how a narrative remains consistent across versions. The educational gain would arise from repeated explanation and correction of these decisions. A plausible proposition is that explicit editorial justification improves transfer to unfamiliar interpretive tasks, provided that feedback addresses reasoning as well as surface accuracy.

The second mechanism concerns revision within practical limits. Students encounter a brief that restricts length, audience, format or production time, then assess which changes preserve the account's essential meaning. Constraints alone do not produce learning; they may simply encourage rushed simplification. Learning depends on supervision that helps students distinguish expendable detail from necessary qualification. The corresponding proposition is that repeated, guided revision strengthens the ability to reconcile clarity and accuracy more effectively than a single final submission. Evaluation should examine the quality of successive decisions, including whether students introduce new errors while shortening an otherwise reliable passage.

The third mechanism concerns professional recognition. A portfolio makes capabilities inspectable when it contains sufficient context to explain the task and enough process evidence to substantiate responsibility. Its proposed value is informational: a reader can assess work that a degree title or generic skills statement leaves invisible. This does not mean that employers will necessarily examine portfolios or reward the capabilities displayed. Recruitment practices may favour other signals. The proposition is consequently conditional: portfolios can improve the communication of relevant competence where prospective collaborators have the opportunity and motivation to review them.

The fourth mechanism concerns occupational judgement. Through bounded contact with professional and community contributors, students can compare their expectations with actual tasks and responsibilities. They may discover an interest in editing, educational communication or further specialist study. They may also decide that a particular form of cultural work does not suit them. Either result can represent informed development. Career formation should therefore include decisions against an unsuitable pathway. A curriculum that counts only increased enthusiasm risks overlooking the educational value of a well-founded change of direction.

These mechanisms also clarify possible failures. Strong classroom performance may not travel beyond university when students cannot access professional networks. Good external connections may provide opportunities without adequate disciplinary preparation. A polished portfolio may privilege students with design experience, while a culturally careful project may attract little attention because its value is difficult to display quickly. Programme evaluation should examine these

mismatches instead of assuming a smooth progression from capability to recognition and employment. Institutional support becomes important precisely where the proposed connections break down.

The model therefore anticipates different outcomes for different students. Initial proficiency, available time, prior cultural knowledge and confidence in seeking feedback can influence participation. These differences should be recorded in a pilot without being treated as fixed deficits. Students may bring substantial regional knowledge that conventional academic assessment has not recognised, while others may contribute stronger formal writing or production skills. Collaborative work can create opportunities for exchange, but role allocation must allow everyone to develop beyond existing strengths. Repeatedly assigning one student translation and another design would limit that development.

Finally, the mechanisms establish a boundary between educational ambition and evidential claims. A successful pilot would need to show which changes occurred, for whom and under what conditions. Satisfaction, publication and employment would each answer different questions. The model would deserve revision if students produced better narratives but learned little about evidence, or if professional recognition increased while community contributors lost influence. Its strongest justification would be the combined development of interpretive capability, accountable practice and informed career choice, supported by evidence appropriate to each claim. Such evaluation should remain open to unexpected benefits and costs rather than selecting only indicators that make the proposed curriculum appear effective or institutionally attractive.

11. EVALUATION AGENDA AND LIMITATIONS

Evaluation should begin with learning rather than employment promises. A pilot could compare students' responses to equivalent bilingual interpretation tasks before and after the module, using a shared rubric and assessors unaware of the assessment occasion where feasible. Tasks should require transfer to new material rather than repetition of the practised example. Rater preparation and examination of agreement would be necessary before interpreting score differences. Improved performance would support a claim about the measured capabilities, not automatically establish a broader improvement in employability.

Qualitative evidence would address aspects that scores cannot adequately explain. Student revision accounts could reveal how feedback changes interpretation, while community reviews could identify recurring problems of representation. Interviews with participating organisations could explore whether portfolio evidence is intelligible and relevant to particular roles. Such work would require appropriate institutional approval and consent before recruitment. Analysis should retain disagreement and negative cases, including situations in which a well-written output remains culturally unsatisfactory or a positive student experience produces little observable improvement.

Longer follow-up could examine how graduates use their portfolios, which opportunities they pursue and whether the work contributes to career decisions. Employment status alone would be too narrow. Relevant information could include the nature and duration of work, its relationship to study, opportunities for learning and graduates' own assessments of fit. Attributing outcomes to the module would remain difficult because prior proficiency, networks, economic conditions and self-selection could influence participation and subsequent experiences. A credible evaluation would acknowledge these alternative explanations and report uncertainty.

The model also has conceptual limits. Its emphasis on heritage interpretation does not encompass every humanities discipline or every creative occupation. Some students may reasonably prefer research, teaching or work unrelated to cultural production. Public storytelling cannot replace specialist translation training, historical expertise or professional curatorial preparation. Moreover, the selective literature base leaves room for additional Saudi research and community perspectives. These limitations define the proposal's scope: it offers one adaptable educational pathway whose value must be established through practice and evidence.

12. CONCLUSION

Bilingual heritage storytelling provides a concrete way to connect humanities learning with professional preparation. Its value lies in the relationship between inquiry, interpretation, communication and revision. Students can learn to produce accessible narratives while documenting sources, explaining linguistic decisions and recognising the authority of those whose knowledge they represent. Portfolios make this work visible only when claims of competence remain proportionate to what students

actually did. Universities must support the process through equitable access, informed supervision and carefully organised partnerships.

The proposed curriculum therefore treats career formation as an educational possibility rather than a guaranteed outcome. Its success should be judged first through the quality of student reasoning and cultural representation, then through evidence of subsequent use. Saudi humanities programmes can contribute to cultural work without surrendering their critical purposes when professional tasks demand, rather than dilute, disciplinary judgement. The next step is a locally designed pilot that allows students, academics, cultural practitioners and professional partners to test the model together.

FUNDING:

The author extends their appreciation to Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University for funding this research work through the Project number (PSAU/2026/02/44665).

DECLARATIONS

Data availability: The article analyses public institutional webpages. The source register and representative Romanized excerpts are included. A reusable corpus should be archived only after checking institutional copyright, webpage changes, and journal data-sharing requirements.

Ethics: The corpus contains no private or personal data. Institutional texts are quoted briefly for scholarly analysis.

Conflict of interest: No conflict of interest is declared.

Author contribution note: The manuscript is a research-development draft. Before submission, the named author should verify all primary pages, add independent second coding, and adapt formatting and disclosure statements to the target journal.

REFERENCES

- [1] Bennett, D. (2018). Graduate employability and higher education: Past, present and future. *HERDSA Review of Higher Education*, 5, 31–61. <https://www.herdsa.org.au/herdsa-review-higher-education-vol-5/31-61>
- [2] Boud, D. (2000). Sustainable assessment: Rethinking assessment for the learning society. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 22(2), 151–167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713695728>
- [3] Bridgstock, R. (2009). The graduate attributes we've overlooked: Enhancing graduate employability through career management skills. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 28(1), 31–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360802444347>
- [4] Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241–266. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315306287002>
- [5] Saudi Vision 2030. (n.d.-a). Human Capability Development Program. <https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/en/explore/programs/human-capability-development-program>
- [6] Saudi Vision 2030. (n.d.-b). Quality of Life Program. <https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/en/explore/programs/quality-of-life-program>
- [7] Smith, L. (2006). *Uses of heritage*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203602263>
- [8] Tomlinson, M. (2017). Forms of graduate capital and their relationship to graduate employability. *Education + Training*, 59(4), 338–352. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-05-2016-0090>
- [9] UNESCO. (n.d.-a). Al-Qatt Al-Asiri, female traditional interior wall decoration in Asir, Saudi Arabia. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/al-qatt-al-asiri-female-traditional-interior-wall-decoration-in-asir-saudi-arabia-01261>
- [10] UNESCO. (n.d.-b). Ethics and intangible cultural heritage. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/ethics-and-ich-00866>