



AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITY  
OF BEIRUT

## AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

FOURTEENTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
EFFECTIVE TEACHING & LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Conference Theme:

**“Teaching and Learning in Higher  
Education during Times of Crisis”**

Friday, April 11, 2025

Online using WebEx

Following are the Presenters' Bios



### Catherine Bou Nasr

Catherine Bou Nasr is a Phd candidate at the Lebanese University, holds a Masters degree in Linguistics and is a dedicated educator with expertise in English Language teaching (ESL and EFL). With 15 years of experience teaching at Lebanese as well as American high schools, Catherine is passionate about fostering a love for language and communication in students. Her research focuses on Community-based learning, research-based practices, AI in education, Linguistics ( Phonology, Semantics and Pragmatics), the Reading/Speaking Skills, and Interdisciplinarity. Catherine has contributed to two publications (articles). Outside the classroom, Catherine enjoys reading, watching plays and hiking.



### Dana Kakoun

A PhD candidate at Saint Joseph University in Beirut, specializing in Educational Sciences with a focus on developing speaking skills in English learners. She holds a Master's in TESL and a Teaching Diploma, and is pursuing a second diploma in Career Guidance at Haigazian University. With nine years of teaching experience and two years in teacher training, she has contributed two published articles on English language education. Dana is a certified public speaker and has worked with the NGO NRDC, where she supported special needs students.





### Eman Saleh

PhD. In English language from the Lebanese University , Teaching diploma in Education , International Diploma in training  
Assistant Professor at the Lebanese University and AUL  
Education Officer , NGO  
English teacher and coordinator  
Head of English Department at Almanafeth educational journal



### Faten Yassine

A passionate and experienced English Language instructor with over a decade of teaching experience at various educational institutions. I hold a Research Master's degree in English Language and Literature and an MBA. Throughout my teaching journey, I have consistently prioritized my students' well-being, focusing on creating a supportive stress-free classroom environment. I have also enhanced my emotional intelligence to understand better and address students' needs, ensuring they feel valued and motivated to learn. Based on this perspective, I am thrilled to participate in the conference to share my research on best practices for supporting students in higher education in Lebanon, particularly in the aftermath of the recent turmoil caused by the war, the catastrophic Beirut Blast, and their impact on student's mental health.





## Hana Moudallal

Hana Moudallal is an adjunct faculty member in Management Information Systems at Oakland University in Michigan USA, and a passionate advocate for leveraging digital technologies to foster global connections. With extensive experience in leading change initiatives, process improvement, and project management, she has served as a Digital Facilitator since 2022. Hana's current doctoral research in Organizational Leadership focuses on Collaborative Online International Learning Virtual Exchange (COIL VE), with a mission to make global learning accessible to underserved students and communities.

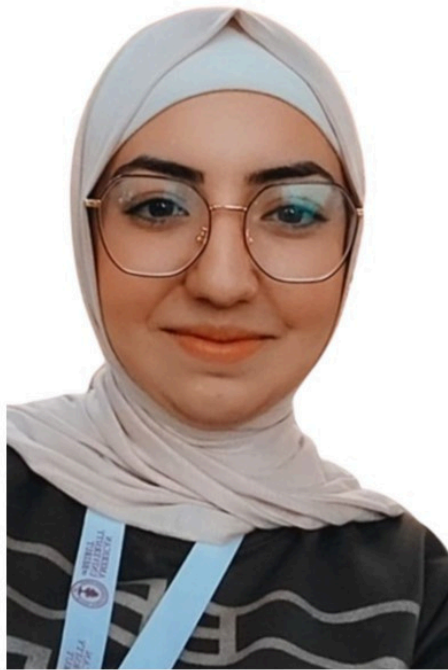
Growing up in Lebanon's pluralistic society and studying abroad in Switzerland and the USA, Hana deeply values cultural exchange as a tool for peacebuilding. Through COIL VE, Hana seeks to equip students with the intercultural competencies and global mindset needed to navigate today's interconnected world, aligning with her commitment to innovative teaching practices and fostering inclusivity in higher education.



## Hanadi Mirza

Dr. Hanadi Mirza is an experienced English language educator, trainer, and consultant with over 24 years of expertise in teaching English and training language professionals. As an assistant professor and coordinator of English at the Lebanese University, she specializes in methodology, research, assessment, and teacher training. Dr. Mirza is renowned for guiding MA students through academic research and for coaching professionals to master Business English and interview skills. She excels in improving English and Arabic pronunciation, offering personalized strategies to enhance clarity and fluency. A patient and motivational mentor, she is dedicated to empowering learners and educators to achieve excellence in language proficiency.





## Israa Cheikh

PhD Candidate, Biomedical Sciences Program, American University of Beirut

Israa holds a Bachelor's degree in Biochemistry from Jinan University (2017–2020) and a Master's degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics from the American University of Beirut (AUB), where she conducted research under the supervision of Dr. Nadine Darwiche (2020–2022). She then advanced directly into the PhD program in Biomedical Sciences at AUB, where she completed her coursework with a GPA of 4.0/4.0. In her first year as a doctoral student, Israa obtained the Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education from AUB's Center for Teaching and Learning, equipping her with valuable pedagogical skills and teaching experience. Over the past three years, she has been assisting Dr. Darwiche in teaching the Molecular Biology of Cancer (BIOC303) and Molecular Biology of Cell Death (BIOC317F) courses. Her responsibilities include grading class participation and exams, providing guidance on course content, and organizing team-based learning activities. As a co-investigator with Dr. Darwiche, Israa secured a grant from the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning program in 2024 to evaluate the effects of team-based learning on student satisfaction and academic performance in BIOC303 courses. In her upcoming presentation with Dr. Darwiche, she will discuss how team-based learning influenced students' learning outcomes, performance, and overall course satisfaction.



## Jasmina Najjar

An academic, communication consultant, author, copywriter, and Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing. Before joining AUS, she taught academic writing, technical communication, and business communication at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and was a journalist, editor-in-chief, and senior advertising creative with major pan-Arab accounts. While at AUB, she impacted course-specific and program-wide development as a Course Coordinator and Program Coordinator. Passionate about digital pedagogy and innovation, she's received recognition for teaching excellence.





### Joseph Georges Samia

A Ph.D. student at Saint Joseph University of Beirut specializing in English language education and a full-time secondary public-school teacher of English and German. Additionally, I serve as an English Language Instructor at the Lebanese University Faculty of Health, Cnam University in Beirut, and Amideast. With 25 years of teaching experience, I have attended numerous professional development workshops in the USA and Germany, continually seeking to expand knowledge and skills.



### Laila Khalil Mortada

A PhD candidate at Rovira i Virgili University. Her research focuses on Artificial Intelligence, technology, Emotional Intelligence, Metacognition, and writing skills among others. . She has a strong background in English language, literature, and education, having taught courses in these fields. Laila has also presented her work at international conferences and authored several papers, demonstrating her commitment to scholarly research and dissemination. Her actual work explores the implementation of Artificial Intelligence in the leaning process and its potential impact on Education. She is proficient in English, Portuguese, Arabic, and Italian Prior to her doctoral studies, Laila has a MA in Applied Linguistics and TEFL, and she believes that learning is an endless journey to knowledge.





## Maher Abdessater

A urologist and researcher specializing in urological surgery and kidney transplantation at the American university of Beirut medical center.

His dedication extends to medical education and public health research, aiming to advance medical sciences and impart knowledge to future generations.

In addition to his clinical roles, Dr. Abdessater is affiliated to the national conservatory of arts and crafts, in Paris, France where he continues his research on medical education through simulation training.

Dr. Abdessater's scholarly work includes publications on topics such as surgical skills, education and adult training, reflecting his active engagement in advancing urological and medical knowledge.

His professional mission encompasses applying his leadership, educational, research, and clinical skills to benefit his organizations and leave a lasting impact on the higher education community.



## Milton D. Cox

PhD, Mathematics, founded the Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching at Miami University where he initiated and directed the annual Original Lilly Conference on College Teaching, now in its 43rd year. In 1990 he founded the Journal on Excellence in College Teaching (JECT), serving as Editor-in-Chief for 35 years. Milton has been project director and systems convener of federal grants establishing faculty learning community (FLC) programs and has visited over 100 institutions in the U.S. and abroad presenting on issues in higher education. In 2023 these included Mainland China and Portugal with virtual conference presentations in Lebanon and Cyprus. In addition to many publications, Milton is currently contributing forewords to three new edited books about FLCs, and he is Guest Co-Editor of JECT's special issue involving social learning spaces—Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner's latest work on systems convening, value creation frameworks, and communities of practice.





## Mustafa Cem BABADOĞAN

An associate Professor at Curriculum department in Ankara University. He is the writer of 267 studies and has 67 attributions. In addition, he made 22 projects and is the consultant of 26 thesis. Now he is also the consultant of Saadet ÇINAR' s thesis.



## Nadine Darwiche

Tenured professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics at the Faculty of Medicine at the American University of Beirut (AUB). She earned her PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from George Washington University. She further expanded her expertise through Harvard Medical School's Cancer Biology and Therapeutics program and a Healthcare Management and Leadership Diploma from AUB.

She teaches courses in genetics, biochemistry, the molecular biology of cancer, and the molecular biology of cell death. She oversees the department's seminar series and serves as the coordinator of the Graduate Program in Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics. Dr. Darwiche has played a key role in developing AUB's doctoral programs, including those in Cell and Molecular Biology, Biomedical Sciences, and Biomedical Engineering. She previously served as the Director of the PhD Program in Biomedical Sciences at AUB and has mentored over 60 MS and PhD students as a graduate thesis advisor. She has received numerous honors, including AUB's and the Faculty of Medicine's Teaching Excellence Awards. She was elected as a full member of the Sigma Xi Scientific Research Honor Society. Her research focuses on cancer prevention, and targeted cancer therapies and drug development, particularly using retinoids and natural products. She has published over 90 scientific articles, with 5,200 citations and an h-index of 38. Dr. Darwiche is also passionate about fitness and enjoys outdoor activities like hiking. In her upcoming presentation with Ms. Israa Cheikh, she will discuss how team-based learning in cancer-related courses influenced students' learning outcomes, performance, and overall course satisfaction.





## Najwa ElGerges

Has a BSc in Nursing from Lebanese University (1988), a Master in Public Health (Concentration: Health Services Administration) from American University of Beirut (1991) and a Doctorate in Education from University Haute-Alsace France (2018). She is currently an assistant professor of Nursing and the nursing program academic advisor at the Faculty of Nursing & Health Sciences at Notre Dame University. Dr. ElGerges contributed to the review of the nursing curriculum, learning objectives, establishing the clinical lab, networking with the clinical settings and the graduation of highly skilled nurses at NDU and acted as an academic consultant for some Lebanese Universities.

Dr. ElGerges has an extensive experience in teaching nursing, master of public health and master of health administration.

On the research level, she collaborated in the writing of several research papers, she presented her research work at local and international conferences.

at the professional level, she is a member of the committee of the nursing colloquium at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.



## Neamat Midani

An English instructor at LIU university. She has 15-year-experience in teaching English in different private schools. She has worked for 6 years with the UNICEF in teaching refugees English language as a second language. She has been teaching at LIU for 3 years, and she is recently completes her PhD study at URV university in Spain.





## Saadet ÇINAR

Saadet Teacher has been an English teacher for 18 years in Ankara, the capital of Turkey. She also served as the assistant to the headmaster for 6 years, and this year, she began working at a primary school. She has co-authored two essays. Additionally, she is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Curriculum Studies. Her thesis is titled "The Concept of Micro-credentials in the Context of Curriculum."



## Salam Syagha

A dedicated educator with over two decades of experience, marked by continuous academic and professional growth. Beginning her teaching career in 1998 while earning her Bachelor's in English Literature and Language from the Lebanese University (2001), she quickly advanced to coordinator roles at Irfan School and HNC. In 2008, she secured a position as a high school English teacher through the Government Civil Service Exam. Simultaneously, she earned an MBA from AUL in 2010 (GPA 3.54). Returning to Hasbaya, she taught at multiple high schools and expanded her impact by joining the faculty of the Lebanese International University (LIU) in 2011. Demonstrating her commitment to educational leadership, she completed a Master's in Education from LIU in 2018 (GPA 3.78) and is currently a doctoral candidate in Education at the Lebanese University. Beyond her teaching and academic pursuits, Salam Syagha is a published author, co-authoring the "My Kindergarten Cosmo" book series. She has also presented at numerous international conferences at AUB and achieved second place in the Arab Oscar's short story writing competition for the MENA region.





### Sarah-Joe Chamate

A psychosocial and mental health program manager with extensive experience in humanitarian settings and a clinical psychologist practicing evidence-based practices. She specializes in community mental health support, with a focus on prevention, intervention, and postvention approaches. Her work has supported victims of war, survivors of sexual violence, families of missing persons, and other vulnerable populations. Sarah-Joe is currently holding the role of Director of the Counseling Center at the American University of Beirut, where she strives to fulfill the center's mission of serving students by providing accessible mental health care and fostering a supportive campus environment.



### Samer Kharroubi

Prof. Samer A. Kharroubi is a tenured Professor of Statistics and Health Economics and the Director of the Statistics Support Clinic within the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences at the American University of Beirut (AUB). He also serves as the Associate Dean of Student Affairs at AUB and holds the position of Honorary Professor of Medical Statistics at the School of Medicine and Population Health, University of Sheffield, UK. Prof. Kharroubi's research specializes in the theory and applications of Bayesian Statistics, with a focus on methodological and computational advancements. His work spans statistical modeling and its applications in Health Economics, alongside extensive interdisciplinary collaborations in areas such as nutrition, medicine, public health, and other health-related fields. With over 100 peer-reviewed publications in leading journals across various disciplines, he has demonstrated significant scholarly impact and interdisciplinary expertise. In 2023, Prof. Kharroubi was recognized among the top 2% of the world's most cited researchers in the field.





““

### Zein Shweiry

Has been a poet and academic for over a decade, teaching literature and language courses in the Middle East and Canada. With a PhD in English Studies from the University of Montreal, he currently teaches collegial and university-level 20th-century literature and academic writing courses at the Royal Military College in Quebec. He has given several language acquisition training sessions to the Canadian civil servants of six of the biggest federal departments. When he is not teaching, he is writing poetry. His latest poetry chapbook collection titled *Montreality* was published in 2021. He also has a passion for drawing that is translated into his digital artwork and acrylic paintings.



““

### Zinnia Shweiry

An educator and researcher with a PhD in Applied Linguistics. Her research interests include linguistic landscapes, the use of L1 in language learning, critical thinking, teaching and learning in higher education, AI and its impact on education, translation studies, community-based learning, creative and academic writing, plagiarism, interdisciplinarity, and multidisciplinary as well as the use of art in teaching. She has extensive experience teaching languages, communication skills, translation studies, and humanities at institutions such as the American University of Beirut (AUB) and Saint George University of Beirut (SGUB) where, in addition to teaching, she serves her role as the Humanities Coordinator and Book and Movie Club founder. Her most recent publication is a book titled *Arabizi as a Learning and Teaching Resource: A Linguistic Study of Arabic in a Foreign Language Classroom* (Feb, 2025). Her hobbies are painting, reading, traveling, hiking, and baking.

””

””