Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)
Office of Innovation and Transformation
Communication Skills Program
American University of Beirut
Beirut, Lebanon

FIFTEENTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ON EFFECTIVE TEACHING & LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Conference Theme:

"Reimagining Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: A New Perspective for Generation Alpha"

Friday, April 17, 2026 | Online using WebEx

Center for Teaching and Learning

The mission of the Center for Teaching and Learning is to promote and support high quality teaching and learning at the American University of Beirut in keeping with the mission of the University, particularly the University's commitment to excellence in teaching and the enablement of students to think independently and become life-long learners.

Office of Innovation and Transformation

The Office of Innovation and Transformation strives to provide AUB with an IT enabled environment and innovative solutions that facilitate creative teaching, high quality research, effective learning, as well as professional skills, collaboration, and development. We perform our responsibilities transparently to empower our stakeholders (students, faculty, donors, alumni, Provost's Office, and administration) with IT services in order to smoothly excel and lead in educational advancement and research.

Communication Skills Program

At the heart of AUB's goals to foster liberal arts education, the Communication Skills Program prepares students to be effective writers within a variety of rhetorical situations both in the academic community and beyond. The Program views writing as a process involving multiple modalities and promotes critical reading, thinking, and research skills in line with principles of academic integrity. Using interactive inquiry-based pedagogies, our Program nurtures students' potential to become life-long learners, to transfer skills between disciplines, to ethically engage with their world, and to navigate the challenges of the 21st Century.

The Fifteenth International Conference on Effective Teaching and Learning In Higher Education

"Reimagining Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: A New perspective for Generation Alpha"

Virtually via WebEx, Friday, April 17, 2026

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), the Office of Innovation and Transformation and the Communication Skills Program at the American University of Beirut welcome you to their "Fifteenth International Conference on Effective Teaching and Learning in Higher Education".

The conference includes five strands: Assessment of Program and Course Learning Outcomes in Higher Education; Community-Based Learning; E-learning and Pedagogy; Teaching, Learning and Assessment Procedures in Higher Education; and Writing Instruction and Research in Higher Education.

Assessment of Program and Course Learning Outcomes in Higher Education. Learning outcomes at the program and course levels have become an integral indicator for assessing curricula in higher education. In the context of evidence-based reporting, learning outcomes present themselves as an inevitable source of data for assessing academic programs and student performance. Therefore, departments and programs which are keen on assessing their students' attainment of a set program and course learning outcomes develop learning outcomes, design assessment procedures, collect data, analyze it and use the results in order to improve their curriculum and student learning performance. In this strand, presenters are expected to share, reflect on and generalize from their ongoing research, published papers or field experience in planning, developing, and assessing program/course learning outcomes of different programs in higher education including general education.

Community-Based Learning. Community-based learning, teaching, and learning strategy, that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. It is a hands-on approach to mastering content while fostering civic responsibility. Community-Based Learning builds stronger and more relevant academic skills and provides a context for learning in terms of what students are as citizens, and how they are able to contribute to the needs of society. In this strand, papers should reflect on, present research or field experience in the domain of Community-Based Learning.

E-learning and Pedagogy. Innovation in teaching inevitably brings forward different delivery formats and modern teaching methodologies. Furthermore, E-Learning is a comprehensive umbrella that incorporates technology tools to support and enrich the learning experience. This strand provides an opportunity for faculty members, graduate students, and instructional designers to discuss and share research, best practices, collaborations, and ideas on integrating technology in learning. Topics may include but are not limited to: Innovations in teaching technologies, Web-Enhanced Learning, Blended Learning, Online Learning, Mobile Learning, Quality course design, Creative uses of Learning Management System (LMS).

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Procedures in Higher Education. The focus in this strand relates to research on issues in teaching, learning, and assessment. Research reports can be on instructor cognition, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, student understanding and learning, and conceptual change at the university level.

Writing Instruction and Research in Higher Education. Teaching writing at the college level presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities for educators. Researchers need to test various pedagogical approaches in order to understand which classroom practices work best to help students become more critical and successful writers. In addition, research is needed to better understand how, why, and when writers write. In this strand, presenters are encouraged to share and reflect upon the philosophies that guide their approach to writing instruction, the pedagogical practices used in the classroom to engage students, and/or assignments that help enrich students' writing and thinking practices in critical ways. This strand also encourages proposals that report on the results of qualitative or quantitative research related to writing practices and pedagogy. Innovative proposals representing a range of writers and writing courses, including first-year writing, writing-in-the-disciplines (WID), writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC), and ESP/EAP, are welcome.

Conference Organizing Committee

- **Amal BouZeineddine**
  Interim Director, Center for Teaching and Learning, AUB

- **Emma Moughabghab**
  Lecturer, Communication Skills Program, AUB

- **Jana El Kadi**
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- **Lamia Husseiny**
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- **Malaki Khoury**
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- **May Mikati**
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- **Raghda Ziyadeh**
  Project Manager, Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service

- **Rayane Fayed**
  Senior Digital Learning Manager, Office of Innovation and Transformation, AUB

Conference Schedule

Time	Activity
9:30 am - 9:55 am	**Welcome Note:** Dr. Amal BouZeineddine CTL Interim Director **Opening Note:** Dr. Lina Choueiri, Deputy Provost and Director of IAID

Concurrent Sessions 1-1 **10:00 am – 11:30 am** **Session Moderator:** ***Lamia Husseiny***
AI Starter Kit: Scaling Practical AI Literacy for Working Professionals Ammar Mohanna, Ruba Hamade, American University of Beirut **Abstract:** AI literacy is increasingly a baseline competency for students and professionals who must evaluate, communicate with, and use AI tools in everyday work. In 2025, the American University of Beirut launched the AI Starter Kit, an eight-week online course hosted on AUBx, in response to rising demand for practical and accessible AI upskilling in Lebanon and the wider region. Course modules were selected based on a needs assessment that surfaced common learner pain points and target learning outcomes, including writing and analysis with generative AI, workflow automation, reporting, and multimedia communication. To address chronic attrition in massive open online courses, the AI Starter Kit paired self-paced materials with predictable weekly deadlines and a human element through live support and interactive sessions. Learning activities are scenario-based and culminate in two competency-based projects that mirror workplace tasks. Learners receive feedback and may revise until meeting the required standard. In the first large-scale cohort (August to November 2025), 925 learners enrolled and 603 completed all requirements, yielding a 65% completion rate. End-of-course survey feedback (n = 175) indicated strong perceived workplace transfer: 94% reported they were able, or expected to be able, to apply what they learned in current or future work, and 73% rated their likelihood to recommend the course as 9 or 10 out of 10. This proposal summarizes the program design choices, evidence of outcomes, and practical lessons for institutions seeking to scale AI literacy programs that balance flexibility with structure and maintain engagement in fully online settings.

The Effect of Using NotebookLM on Student Perception, Engagement, and Achievement in a University-Level Multilingualism Course

Nadine El Dandachli, Lebanese University

Abstract:

This research proposal investigates the structured integration of the AI tool NotebookLM as a guided learning partner in a university-level multilingualism course incorporating neuroscience concepts, addressing the common struggle English majors face with complex scientific material in interdisciplinary settings. The study aims to fill a significant gap in literature on source-based AI by holistically evaluating its impact on student perception, engagement, and academic achievement. Employing a convergent mixed-methods design, quantitative data will be collected through pre-/post-course neuroscience tests, engagement surveys, and assignment analysis, while qualitative data will be gathered via focus groups and reflective journals. NotebookLM will be pedagogically scaffolded for specific tasks: critiquing AI-generated summaries, co-constructing a dynamic glossary of neuroscience terms, and guided self-review of assignments for conceptual clarity. The research is guided by three questions exploring NotebookLM's effect on cognitive, behavioral, and emotional engagement; its impact on academic achievement; and student perceptions of its usefulness for understanding neuroscience within a multilingual framework. Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including paired-sample t-tests, and qualitative data will undergo thematic analysis. The integrated findings are expected to demonstrate that this structured use of NotebookLM significantly enhances student engagement, improves learning outcomes, and increases perceived conceptual clarity. By providing empirical evidence on AI's role as a cognitive and pedagogical mediator in demanding interdisciplinary contexts, this study aims to contribute substantially to research on AI in higher education and offer practical, actionable insights for curriculum design and inclusive, student-centered teaching methodologies in public universities.

Designing Clear Learning Journeys for Generation Alpha via the Digitally Enhanced Courses (DEC) Playbook: An Engineering Learning Lab and Abdulla Al Ghurair Hub Collaboration

Mohammad Harb, Nathalie Al Kakoun, Issam Srour, American University of Beirut

Abstract:

Many instructors want the benefits of digitally enhanced courses (better engagement, clearer structure, stronger feedback loops) yet struggle with where to begin, how to avoid tool overload, and how to sustain change beyond a single semester. This Best Practices proposal introduces the Digitally Enhanced Courses (DEC) Playbook: a practical, low-friction workflow for designing coherent learning journeys for today's students, including Generation Alpha learners who expect clarity, pace, and multimodal support. The Playbook frames "digital enhancement" as intentional pedagogy, supported by selective tools, reusable templates, and incremental adoption. It comprises five phases (Discover, Design, Develop, Deliver, and Evolve) paired with plug-and-play actions (weekly learning arcs, aligned pre/in/post-class tasks, short accountability loops, and light analytics for iteration). The session synthesises course redesign applications (studio-based and flipped), student feedback, instructor feasibility reflections, and implementation artefacts. Participants leave with a replicable process, sample templates, and decision rules for responsible tool choice.

Concurrent Sessions 2-1
11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Session Moderator:
May Mikati

AI - Driven Writing Processes: Analysis of Skilled and Unskilled Revision Activity

Aissa Hamzaoui, Ahlem Rouabhia, Echahid Echeick Larbi, Tebessi University

Abstract:
While research underscores that AI tools offer writer new possibilities to fulfil the writing task in general and the revision activity in particular, these AI tools potential use to boost the writing quality through the pivotal role of revision activity is yet unexplored in the Algerian EFL context. This study, therefore, traces the revisions the skilled and unskilled writers make while interacting with ChatGPT interface to do their writing assignments. A qualitative exploratory study that gathers data out of the analysis of ChatGPT-writer interaction which is copied and pasted in word document, semi-structured focused interviews with the writers and writers` reflection journals is carried out to gain insights about students` interaction patterns related to prompting, feedback evaluation and response to ChatGPT deep thinking. The study is expected to model the revision activity process, provide constructive insights regarding AI- human interaction and might redefine the notion of skilled writer, altering the poor/good writer divide.

Motivating Writing Development through Virtual Exchange

May Mikati, American University of Beirut

Abstract:
Technical writing can appear dry and formulaic for students. To motivate the learning of composition, a collaborative online international exchange was organized in a section of Technical English at the American University of Beirut, in conjunction with a Management Information Systems course at Oakland University in Michigan. After studying Hofstede's cultural dimensions, with special emphasis on workplace culture, students discussed cultural differences between Lebanon and the United States. Then, cross-cultural teams were required to produce brief analytical reports on topics related to cultural differences in technology use and business communication, again focusing on Lebanon and the United States. The purpose in Technical English was to practice synthesizing IMRD type reports in preparation for the final research report prepared with their peers as a feasibility/ recommendation report while gaining knowledge and experience in cross-cultural collaboration. The course objectives of Technical English at AUB include collaborating to construct and refine meaning, and composing for different audiences. They also include applying the stylistic and linguistic conventions of technical communication to produce messages that are concise, direct, clear, precise, and evidence-based. The innovative context, though perceived as somewhat challenging, produced notable results. The students of the COIL section generated better writing and scored higher on the course in general than those of the two parallel sections that collaborated only with others in their own class. It is only logical to recommend virtual exchange for further exploration as a potential source of innovation, student motivation, and enhanced learning outcomes.

Using the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) to Develop Collocational Competence in ESL Writing

Rania Hussein, Beirut Arab University

Abstract:
Using corpora in foreign language training is one of the best approaches to offer solutions for writing challenges. This can be accomplished by utilizing corpus technologies to assist the

content or by developing corpus-based teaching methodologies. Second language learners, especially university students, face several challenges in their quest to become proficient writers. One of these challenges is using English collocations in writing since it might be hard to understand them and determine which words collocate. Because English collocations come in so many different forms, it may be difficult for second language (L2) English learners to use them effectively in their writing. These collocations are crucial for attaining fluency, accuracy, effectiveness, and coherence in writing despite these difficulties. In order to support students' acquisition of different English collocations and ensure that they use them correctly in their writing, this paper examines the role of corpora in collocation learning, reviews previous research, and focuses on teaching students how to use the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) more skillfully. In order to produce more precise and representative collocation findings, this proposal also offers examples of search concordances and methods that might be applied on COCA to provide more accurate and representative results.

Concurrent Sessions 2-2
11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Session Moderator:
Rayane Fayed

Revisiting the ADDIE Model in the Age of GenAI - Quality and Ethics in Higher Education
Fatimah Hussain Alebrahim, Wissam Tawileh, Qatar University

Abstract:
The rapid diffusion of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in higher education has intensified long-standing concerns regarding instructional quality, ethical responsibility, and institutional governance. While GenAI tools are increasingly used for content creation, assessment support, and learning design, instructional design models have rarely been theorized as ethical or governance structures for AI-mediated educational practice. Among established frameworks, the ADDIE model remains widely applied due to its systematic and evaluative structure. This conceptual research synthesizes research on ADDIE, GenAI, quality assurance, and ethics in higher education. Through critical synthesis, it identifies theoretical convergence, unresolved tensions, and underexplored relationships, particularly the absence of empirically grounded governance models for GenAI integration. In response, a conceptual framework is proposed that reconceptualizes ADDIE as a governance-oriented scaffold for ethically grounded GenAI use.

From Gen Z to Gen Alpha: Setting the Academic Integrity and AI Stage through a Faculty Learning Community at AUB
Jihad Makhoul, Tamar Kabakian, Hans Muller, American University of Beirut

Abstract:
The rapid rise of generative artificial intelligence (AI) is challenging long-held assumptions about academic integrity, student learning and assessment in higher education. This context necessitates AI literacy for both educators and learners, and a reorientation away from conventional, monological approaches to education (Walter, 2024). In Spring 2025, CTL launched a campus-wide Faculty Learning Community (FLC) on Academic Integrity and AI in teaching and learning, bringing together faculty from diverse disciplines to discuss academic integrity practices and AI use for them and Gen Z students in an AI-dominant environment. Our work is forward-looking, as institutional responses and preparations today will shape the learning conditions inherited by Generation Alpha.

Over multiple meetings, the FLC engaged with resources from the European Network for Academic Integrity, the International Center for Academic Integrity, and emerging scholarship on AI in education to examine how academic integrity is framed and enacted globally. We recognized that addressing academic integrity and AI requires 'dialogical' teaching approaches that are active, participatory and enable critical reflection to become a habitual part of learning. Such approaches stand in contrast to 'monological', teacher-centered models, in which meaning is fixed and integrity is communicated primarily through rules and sanctions.

Our review of AUB's Student Code of Conduct reveals that it is predominantly oriented toward addressing misconduct, with limited guidance on promoting academic integrity or supporting the ethical use of AI tools. In response, the FLC drafted a flexible policy on AI use that includes guiding principles, acceptable and prohibited use of AI, accountability and roles, which can be adapted across course, emphasizing transparency, shared responsibility and responsible AI engagement.

We present key elements of the proposed policy arguing for dialogical pedagogy in teaching, learning and assessment to nurture academic integrity and responsible AI use among Gen Z students, while preparing AUB for Generation Alpha.

Higher Education in the Modern Era: Challenges and Best Practices

Liliane Said, Lebanese International University

Abstract:

The last decade has brought significant national and international changes affecting higher education, particularly teaching, grading, and student motivation amid constant uncertainty. Professors face challenges integrating modern practices to maintain attendance and increase success rates with demotivated students. This presentation outlines current best practices to help faculty and students overcome these modern obstacles while improving learning quality.

First, key areas addressed include grading and course assessment, where methods must adapt to advancements in science and technology. To counter the rise of generative AI, alternative assessments are suggested to prevent cheating and plagiarism, and prepare students for careers. Second, student motivation should not be overlooked either. This is important to provide a sense of purpose and connection to their field of study. Third, preparing students for the future should be reconsidered because of the scientific and technological race we are facing. From nurturing innovation to communication enhancement and market involvement, all are important aspects in today's learning experience.

As a conclusion, blaming students for not learning enough is insufficient. Practical solutions, expert input, and adapting to global advancements are key elements to keep pace with the modern world.

Concurrent Sessions 2-3
11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Session Moderator:
Malaki Khoury

Internet Slang and English Language Learners' Critical Language Awareness

Christina Michaud, Boston University

Abstract:
As digital communication becomes a dominant mode of social interaction, English language learners (ELLs) increasingly encounter examples internet slang that may challenge their traditional notions of "standard English." This presentation explores how engaging with internet slang can serve as a powerful vehicle for developing learners' Critical Language Awareness (CLA)—that is, their ability to recognize how language both reflects and constructs social hierarchies, identities, and power relations. Drawing on classroom experience and discourse analysis of online language practices, this presentation examines how ELLs interpret, adopt, and resist digital slang across social media and academic contexts. When teachers frame internet slang as a form of legitimate linguistic creativity rather than as "incorrect" English, students gain deeper insights into issues of register, authority, and language ideology, which not only enhance their metalinguistic competence but also position them as active agents in shaping what counts as English in today's world.

Reimagining Higher Education through Digitalisation and Englishisation: Meeting the Learning Needs of Generation Alpha

Zakia Djebbari, Tlemcen University Algeria

Abstract:
Higher education institutions are currently facing unprecedented challenges as a new generation of learners, known as Generation Alpha, enters academic spaces. Born into a world dominated by digital technology, artificial intelligence, and instant global communication, these learners possess different cognitive patterns, learning preferences, and expectations from traditional educational systems. However, in many contexts, including Algeria, higher education remains largely rooted in conventional pedagogies that no longer meet the needs of this digitally native generation. This paper examines how the dual processes of digitalisation and Englishisation can contribute to the progress of higher education in order to better respond to the learning characteristics of Generation Alpha. The main objective of the study is to explore the potential of integrating digital platforms, AI-powered tools, and English Medium Instruction (EMI) to enhance student engagement, promote autonomous learning, and prepare students for participation in a globalised academic and professional environment. The study adopts a qualitative and conceptual methodology, drawing on recent scholarly literature, higher education policy analysis, and preliminary observations. The findings highlight that digitalisation increases accessibility, interactivity, and personalisation in learning, while Englishisation strengthens students' academic mobility, employability, and international communication skills. The paper further argues that these transformations can help reduce educational inequalities, particularly between urban and rural institutions, if supported by adequate infrastructure, teacher training, and strategic policy reforms. Ultimately, the study advocates for a systematic and inclusive approach to educational transformation that aligns pedagogical practices with the realities of Generation Alpha and the demands of a digitally interconnected world.

Transformative CLA Moments: Critical Language Awareness for University Reading Instruction

Dorota Fleszar, American University of Beirut, Tania Harb, Lebanese American University

Abstract:
Remedial or basic reading literacy instruction at a liberal arts university continues to be predicated on the false belief that reading is a skill that can be mastered once and for all and thus the road can be paved for more meaningful university education. The reality however is that "reading is no reading is no reading" (Theriault in Sroka, 2023) or that no two reading occasions are alike and reading difficulties persist even among experts as they navigate new genres, contexts, and disciplines. Also, reading practice itself can provide meaningful, transformative experiences, especially when realized in a rich multilingual reading space, such as a basic reading class. This presentation tells a story of a reading student and her instructor as they both make sense of basic reading instruction within their classroom roles and as they navigate texts, the city, and personal experiences in the process of meaning-making. At the base for their search lie Hibbert's (2023) drive toward transformative rather than normative approaches to curriculum, Wilkinson & Son's (2011) understanding of reading as a complex, dialogic interaction and a social process, and Shapiro's (2022) critical language awareness approach built around *CLA moments* or "opportunities to draw attention to issues of language, identity, power, and privilege" (p. 280).

Concurrent Sessions 3-1
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Session Moderator:
Jana El Kadi

Reframing Early Syntax Instruction through Inquiry and AI-Supported Analysis
Claudia Hassan, Lebanese University

Abstract:
This presentation describes a practice-oriented redesign of the first six weeks of an undergraduate Introduction to Syntax course. The redesign emphasizes hierarchical structure, ambiguity, grammatical functions, and thematic roles through inquiry-based tasks, authentic linguistic data, and guided comparison with AI-generated analyses. Rather than positioning AI as an instructional authority, students are asked to evaluate and critique automated outputs alongside their own analyses. Using a design-based approach, data were collected through short student reflections, syntactic analysis artifacts, AI comparison logs, and instructor field notes. Preliminary classroom observations suggest that students more consistently justify syntactic decisions using linguistic tests and demonstrate increased awareness of the distinction between grammatical form and semantic interpretation. The session shares concrete classroom activities, data collection tools, and early insights, while acknowledging the limited scope and exploratory nature of the findings.

The Classroom Blog: Fostering Learning, Identity and Community
Zinnia Shweiry, American University of Beirut

Abstract:
In the diverse landscape of Lebanese higher education, which attracts students from all over the world and is characterized by multiculturalism and multilingualism, language and culture courses provide a unique opportunity for students to serve as ambassadors of their own heritage. This presentation details how a collaborative class project bridged the gap and collapsed the 'barriers' among students from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. They worked together in perfect harmony through a shared language to fill the blog with personal accounts of traditions—both cultural and linguistic, ranging from culinary heritage and traditional forms of art to linguistic idiosyncrasies of their native tongues.

Moving beyond textbook material, this project empowered students to become experts on their own cultural and linguistic agency. By working together on a collective digital publication from setup to completion, the students experienced a shift from learners to narrators, creators, and teachers. Their focus on authentic topics that have been woven into their lives since birth boosted their motivation and reduced their diffidence. The project enhanced their intercultural competence, as they revised each other's entries and commented constructively for the betterment of the final product, turning the class into a free, safe, and inclusive space (digital and real) for cross-cultural expression.
All this collaboration brought the students together as one community, shifting this group of assorted individuals into a unified team of original digital content creators. The confidence they exhibited by the end of the course was considerable in comparison to the shy, reticent group at the beginning of the course. The process they shared made the class diversity richer and more cohesive, leading to social validation and better language retention.

Writing Courses for Gen Alpha: Lessons from Best Practices Today

Jasmina Najjar, American University of Sharjah

Abstract:
Generative AI is shaking up writing instruction in higher education, presenting both opportunities and challenges related to academic integrity, assessment, digital literacy, and the very approach to and nature of writing courses. This research synthesizes two IRB approved mixed-methods studies conducted at a prominent UAE university, involving surveys of 29 educators who teach writing courses and librarians and 103 Gen Z students, complemented by in-depth interviews with 9 faculty and 84 students. The research investigates how current experiences with AI in advanced academic writing courses can inform the design of curricula and assessment frameworks for the upcoming "AI-native" Generation Alpha. Current findings reveal uneven AI literacy, ambiguity around acceptable AI use, overreliance concerns, tensions between detection-based approaches and the pedagogical integration of AI, and question marks about course design and assessment. Drawing on international frameworks, sectoral guidance, research on university level writing courses, and the IRB approved primary research, the proposal identifies current best practices for transparent AI-use policies, process-oriented assessment, course design, assessment, and ethical instruction. It further recommends future-focused strategies for writing courses that support cognitive independence and a different approach to AI literacy for Gen Alpha while addressing curriculum design, assignment, and assessment approaches. It offers faculty and institutions a roadmap for fostering ethical, critical, and human-centered writing course development for a generation raised in an era of ubiquitous AI.

Concurrent Sessions 3-2
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Session Moderator:
Rayane Fayed

Technology-Enhanced Learning for Critical Thinking Through Project-Based Learning in Higher Education

Fatme Khalife, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Mariam Khalife, Lebanese International University

Abstract:
Higher education is increasingly expected to cultivate graduates who can analyze information critically, collaborate effectively, and solve complex, authentic problems. For digitally fluent learners - including Generation Alpha - technology-enhanced learning

environments provide new opportunities to reimagine teaching and learning beyond content transmission. This study investigates how the integration of educational technology (EdTech) within project-based learning (PBL) and structured problem-solving scenarios supports the development of students' critical thinking. Grounded in constructivist perspectives and aligned with higher-order cognitive processes in Bloom's taxonomy, the study examines both measurable learning outcomes and learner perceptions. Using a mixed-methods design, undergraduate students will participate in EdTech-supported PBL activities implemented in courses delivered in blended and online formats and, where relevant, compared with more traditional instructional approaches. Quantitative data will be collected using a pre- and post-test design with a validated critical thinking assessment (Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal), and results will be analyzed to identify differences across learning environments. Qualitative data will be gathered through focus groups and semi-structured interviews with students and instructors to explore how specific technologies (e.g., LMS tools, digital collaboration platforms, simulations, and AI-driven feedback) influence reasoning, reflection, and decision making. Expected outcomes include evidence on the effectiveness of technology-enhanced PBL for critical thinking, identification of EdTech features that best support problem solving, and actionable recommendations for faculty on implementation and assessment. The study also highlights constraints such as access, digital divide concerns, and educator preparedness.

An Assessment of the Digital Transformation Process in a Regional Public University Branch (Nabatieh, Lebanon)

Salam Syagha, Neamat Midani, Lebanese International University

Abstract:

This study investigates the mandatory digital transformation that was crucial to the survival of the Lebanese University, Nabtieh branch due to the outbreak of war in 2023. Rather than a planned evolution, the institution underwent a sudden, 100% shift to online modalities—primarily via Microsoft Teams. We applied a convergent parallel mixed-methods design in which we had the chance to have first-hand knowledge from the students and faculty to assess the lived digital experiences of over 2,000 students and instructors across the Nabatieh Caza. Quantitative data from student surveys (around 200) were collected via Google Forms and analyzed in SPSS 21 maps the cold reality of the digital divide, and our semi-structured interviews with 15 faculty members capture the human day to day of maintaining an academic life under fire. Our findings indicate that "online learning" in a crisis zone is far from a uniform experience; it is a fragmented process that was hindered by localized infrastructure fatigue and significant gaps in academic digital literacy. By documenting these intersections of technical barriers and personal resilience, this study transcends theoretical frameworks by documenting the intersections of technical constraints and personal resilience, we have the chance to establish a practical, empirical foundation for digital policy in higher education contexts characterized by resource limitations and conflict.

Redefining Quality in Online and Blended Higher Education: Instructional Design Perspectives for Generation Alpha Learners

Sarah Jouma Ahmad Debbek, Wissam Tawileh, Qatar University

Abstract:

The expansion of digitally mediated learning in higher education has renewed attention to how instructional quality is defined, enacted, and sustained for emerging learner populations. As Generation Alpha (learners shaped by continuous exposure to interactive, multimodal, and technology-rich environments) begins to enter higher education, existing conceptions of quality course design require re-examination. While established approaches such as Community of Inquiry (CoI), Quality Matters (QM), and Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

offer valuable guidance, they are often applied as parallel or compliance-driven structures rather than as integrated design logics responsive to generational learning conditions.

This paper synthesizes scholarship on digital course quality and Generation Alpha learning characteristics to clarify the core components that define quality in digitally mediated learning environments. Through critical analysis of relevant instructional design literature and alignment with established quality standards for online and blended learning courses and Generation Alpha learner characteristics, the paper identifies recurring design priorities: structural coherence, engagement optimization, accessibility integration, pedagogical alignment, and adaptive responsiveness as interdependent conditions of quality. Rather than framing quality as a function of technological sophistication, the paper positions it as the outcome of intentional instructional design decisions that shape learner experience, interaction, and equity.

The analysis further reveals a shift in instructional designers' perspectives on quality, from operationalizing predefined standards toward designing coherent learning systems that integrate pedagogy, learner needs, and contextual constraints. Implications underscore the importance of collaborative faculty, designer relationships, recognition of instructional designers' pedagogical expertise, and institutional support for design-led approaches to quality in digitally mediated learning environments.

Concurrent Sessions 3-3
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Session Moderator:
Lina Kadi

Nurturing Learner's Accurate Intuitions – Personal Insights
Ahmad Smaili, American University of Beirut

Abstract:
Regardless of what one thinks, an undeniable fact is that technology innovations are reshaping the world, and fast. While higher education has a lot to "blame", institutions have no choice but to evolve, adapt, transform, and set free from anchors of past practices to keep pace with the burgeoning changes it has helped create. No denying, effort is being made to leverage technology and shift from traditional to learner-centric models to produce impactful learners. Yet, the approaches and assumptions that shaped old paradigms may have to bend in favor of bolder ones to navigate the complex interdependencies of the multitude of factors that influence learning - curricula, teaching approaches, learning context, technology, academic policies, etc. This article is not meant to offer a magic formula, such a thing does not exist, and it is the mission of the collective lot to ponder, but in the hope to be part of the conversation, it draws on research findings in cognitive science to offer personal insights on a few learning implements.

Pedagogical, Ethical, Attitudinal and Technical (PEAT Model) dimensions of Student Teacher Digital Competence Development in Lebanon
Dareen Nasr, Lebanese International University

Abstract:

Several studies show that education institutions train teachers through digital tools whereas pre-service teachers worldwide demonstrate limited proficiency with these learning technologies according to surveys. The mismatch between digital access capabilities and meaningful digital competency makes up a crucial issue. The current study evaluates Lebanese students who are preparing to become teachers regarding their self-assessed digital competence through the PEAT framework within ethical and technical dimensions alongside attitudinal and pedagogical subcategories in a region with minimal existing research. A cross-sectional survey design utilized data from a total of 300 pre-service teachers enrolled in a Lebanese university. Research data collection happened through an online questionnaire which followed the PEAT model structure. The study analyzed quantitative answers from 150 participants using IBM SPSS Statistics 28 program. Qualitative data from open-ended questions underwent thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke's (2012) methodology. The study showed pre-service teachers possess strong technical knowledge and favorable perceptions about ICT while their pedagogical and ethical competencies fall in the average category. The study proves that digital competence involves multiple dimensions thereby supporting the requirement for complete training strategies. As a solution university should implement genuine digital teaching programs along with complete training on digital ethics during their teacher training programs. The research methodology based on PEAT provides an example for designing assessment frameworks that monitor digital competence growth within different multicultural educational environments. Researchers should extend their analysis through time and geographical scope to understand how digital competence develops during teachers' professional development process.
Keywords; Digital competence, educational technology, ICT integration, Pedagogical practices, PEAT model, Teacher education programs

Bridging Pedagogy and Media: A Collaborative Experience-Based Model for Preparing Effective Online Learning Content for Generation Alpha

Nour El Saify, Rozan Dakroub, American University of Beirut

Abstract:

Designing effective online courses requires intentional collaboration between faculty, instructional designers, and instructional media designers, yet the literature consistently shows that such collaboration remains underdeveloped. Research highlights limited understanding of how these relationships function, unclear task distribution, and the persistent need to leverage "each other's talents to do what they could not have done alone" (Wildavsky, 1986; Richardson et al., 2018, 2019). This practice-oriented session addresses these gaps by presenting a structured, experience-based model implemented at the American University of Beirut that innovates upon the classic ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) framework. This approach matters because it provides faculty and academic support units with a practical pathway for designing online courses that respond to the learning expectations of Generation Alpha while maintaining pedagogical rigor and academic integrity. We demonstrate how a clear division of labor and integrated teamwork across all ADDIE phases empowers faculty to create learning experiences tailored for Generation Alpha. We will highlight how close coordination between Instructional Designers, Subject Matter Experts, and the Instructional Media Team supports the translation of academic content into engaging and pedagogically sound online learning experiences. The session will outline key stages of content preparation, including learning objective alignment, content analysis, and media selection with a focus on applying pedagogical principles through purposeful media design rather than the media itself. These key stages are finalized through close agreement with the Subject Matter Expert, ensuring alignment with the academic vision, consistency across the course structure, coherence between learning objectives and pedagogical approach, and the relevance of selected media. Participants will leave with a practical toolkit and lessons learned to cultivate their own successful collaborations, ultimately creating online environments that meet the digital, interactive, and bite-sized content preferences of Gen Alpha learners.

Concurrent Sessions 4-1
2:30 pm - 4:00 pm

Session Moderator:
Rima Shadid

An intervention to Promote Teaching and Learning about Academic Integrity and AI at the Faculty of Health Sciences

Jihad Makhoul, Tamar Kabakian, Mayada Kanj, American University of Beirut
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

Abstract:
This presentation will discuss how the results of a baseline survey of graduate and undergraduate students at FHS, and two focus groups with faculty to assess their knowledge, practice and challenges about integrating academic integrity practices in teaching and learning in the age of AI were used to inform a teaching and learning intervention. The tailored intervention aimed at faculty in the Faculty of Health Sciences at AUB, consisted of three round table discussion sessions developed based on an assessment with faculty and students to promote the practice and teaching of academic integrity and the ethical use of artificial intelligence. The assessment revealed misalignment between faculty approaches to academic integrity and AI use with students' understanding and practices. The intervention provided a platform for faculty to discuss and learn together from facilitated sessions using content matter from the online Educause Teaching with AI, ENAI and other open access resources.

Case Study and Call for SoTL Research: Retirees Teaching Retirees

Milton Cox, Phyllis Cox, Miami University
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

Abstract:
A search revealed scant SoTL research about retires teaching retires in higher education. Thus, as a case study, as retirees we designed and co-taught retirees in our multidisciplinary course in our home about our 1903-1910 Greene and Greene arts and craft architecture and the related cuisine of that period. In this session we will share our related findings and recommendations for SoTL research projects. Miami University's Institute for Learning in Retirement, which provides an important administrative structure for managing teaching and learning in retirement, will be discussed. To provide context for the case study, we will include a brief background about Greene and Greene arts and craft architecture and co-teaching with your spouse in your home. As a surprise, we found the fountain of youth in retirement teaching and learning.

Concurrent Sessions 4-2
2:30 pm - 4:00 pm

Session Moderator:
May Mikati

Best-Practice Framework for Curriculum Innovation, Generation Alpha

Marie Claire Chamieh, Sarah Zaki, American University of Beirut

Abstract:
This session will introduce a comprehensive framework to design new academic programs that combine traditional education and the demands of the modern workforce, technological and societal needs. We will target Alpha Generation and explore a model focusing on competency-based education, modular learning, and micro credentials. Attendees will be provided with tools for curriculum mapping that integrates experiential learning and technology-enhanced instruction. Participants will gain practical resources to evaluate existing programs and redesign them into flexible innovative structures supporting diverse learners.

Creativity in Preservice Science Teacher Education: A Curriculum Analysis Using the Creativity Analysis Framework

Nadeen Fayyad, Hanadi Chatila, Lebanese University

Abstract:
Creativity is commonly defined as the capacity to generate ideas, solutions, or products that are both original and contextually appropriate, particularly within educational environments that foster exploration, imagination, and possibility thinking. In science education, creativity plays a critical role in supporting inquiry, problem-solving, and meaningful knowledge construction.
This study examines how creativity is integrated into the pre-service science teacher preparation program at the Lebanese University Faculty of Education, with particular attention to curriculum objectives, learning outcomes, instructional methods, and classroom observation tools. A qualitative research design was employed to analyze curriculum documents and observation checklists using the Creativity Analysis Framework developed by the researchers.
Findings indicate an uneven distribution of creativity dimensions across curriculum components. While Creative Application is strongly emphasized, other key dimensions—such as Knowledge Transformation, Imagination, Imaginative Use of ICT, and Appreciation of Creativity—are minimally represented or largely absent. This imbalance suggests a limited conceptualization of creativity that prioritizes application over deeper cognitive, affective, and reflective creative processes.
The findings underscore the need for a more systematic and intentional integration of creativity within science teacher education programs. In particular, greater emphasis is required on metacognitive processes that enable future teachers to recognize, reflect on, and deliberately cultivate creativity in their teaching practices. Fostering creativity in science education therefore necessitates not only curricular revision, but also sustained professional training and reflective practice that position creativity as a core competency.

Integrating AI in the Classroom to Promote Cognitive Performance and Learning Autonomy

Stephanie Farah, Lebanese American University

Abstract:

Various studies have shed light on students' cognitive decline caused by their use of AI while other studies have devised strategies to protect and promote cognitive performance stating that AI integration in education could lead to positive effects only if its integration is carefully and meticulously designed by the instructor. This presentation will detail three adaptable exercises that address the potential cognitive decay and loss of learning autonomy caused by AI use; each exercise is applied in a university-level academic English course section of around 25 students. The three exercises shift the focus from the product generated by AI to the process that students follow to complete these exercises. They teach students to interrogate, direct, and audit AI outputs, strengthening their metacognition, critical judgment, ownership of process, and persistence, thereby making students autonomous learners. The session will provide a step-by-step guide to implementing these exercises across disciplines and encourage empowering students to build an internal compass for life-long learning in an AI-saturated world.

Concurrent Sessions 4-3
2:30 pm - 4:00 pm

Session Moderator:
Raghda Ziadeh

Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) Concerning Artificial Intelligence in Medicine and Healthcare: A cross-sectional Study in Lebanese Medical Students

Najwa El Gerges, Notre Dame University

Abstract:

Background: The integration of Artificial intelligence in different domains, including healthcare is advancing rapidly. Doctors and future doctors are increasingly exposed to AI technologies, while there is lack of information whether these individuals have adequate knowledge in this field, or either they are prepared or have already integrated this technology in their future practice. The aim of this study is to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices of Lebanese medical students and residents towards artificial intelligence in medicine and healthcare.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was employed in this research among medical students and residents from different Lebanese universities. Participants' knowledge, attitudes and practice were assessed using pre-existing scales. Data were gathered using a survey and analyzed using SPSS statistical software.

Results: Among 432 medical students, the results showed a moderate knowledge score (9.61 ± 2.22) and a generally positive attitude (34.07 ± 4.12) towards AI applications. Therefore, the application of AI in healthcare remained scarce as a significant number of medical students and residents still didn't apply AI tools in their practice. Moreover, key determinants of AI knowledge included experience with AI technologies, frequency of usage, formal training in AI and self-rated understanding of AI. Therefore, attitudes were affected by the University of Enrollment, the year of medical school, the experience with AI technologies, the frequency of usage, and the self-rated understanding of AI. Furthermore, practical adoption of AI in medical practice included the year of education, the prior use of AI technologies, the frequency of usage, the formal training in AI, as well as the self-rated understanding of AI. Further, knowledge scores and attitudes are significantly associated with direct experience with AI technology among medical students and residents. Therefore, there still exist barriers to the usage of AI technologies in healthcare, including lack of training, the concerns about the reliability of AI tools, the cost of implementation, ethical concerns, as well as the resistance to change that might exist among some professionals. **Conclusion:** This study highlights the growing significance of artificial intelligence in healthcare and the need to better prepare future physicians to integrate AI into their practice.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Medical Students, Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, Factors Associated, Lebanon.

AI systems to reduce skepticism and build trust among future doctors, as well as foster discussions among healthcare professionals and students to address concerns about the integration of AI, focusing on how it can complement rather than replace human expertise.

Student Agency as an Impetus for Teacher Professional Development

Olga Fleonova, Shenzhen MSU-BIT University, China

Abstract:

Learner-centered approaches recognize the importance of student agency in the process of student acculturation into a foreign language. Educators believe that learners' "needs," "lacks," "wants" and "rights" have to be accounted for when designing course syllabi. There is, however, a need for more empirical studies evaluating affordances for student agency in specific local contexts and identifying spaces in educational programs conducive to fostering transformation and situated pedagogical decision-making. This paper reports on how classroom-based qualitative research (CBQR) into student agency helped accommodate learners' perspectives and led to teacher professional development. The study was conducted over the course of two academic years on two different cohorts of literature and linguistics Masters students at a Sino-Russian university in China. The designed intervention used a negotiated syllabus and co-constructed grading rubrics as potential ways of involving students in decision making. The intervention allowed the researcher to introduce student-initiated changes into the English for specific purposes (ESP) course syllabus and analyze students' perceptions of their active role. Data collected through such instruments as students' written responses, focus-group interviews and classroom field notes was analyzed qualitatively. The findings and the reflective process integral to practitioner-driven classroom research allowed the researcher-practitioner to appraise affordances for and constraints to student agency, consider new modes of interaction between the instructor and students, as well as reflect on various aspects of syllabus design and materials development for an ESP course, thus promoting teacher professional development.

Best Pedagogical Principles for Teaching English as a Second Language for Alpha Generation

Eman Saleh, Lebanese University

Abstract:

The child is the son of his environment. With the quick transformation in the digital era, alpha generation has been generated. The Alpha generation has been born since 2010 from millennial parents. They are characterized by having technology as an essential element in their life which affects their cognitive development and processing style. Thus, textbooks have lost their brilliance as a tool for teaching English as a second language. Alpha generation needs other tools to develop their communicative competence on learning English based on digital integration, project-based instruction, gamification and AI involvement. Thus, this explanatory mixed method paper will investigate the best strategies for teaching ESL for alpha generation. It will also investigate the effectiveness of these strategies in developing English skills and increasing affectional skills to 50 students from grades 7 and 8 at the Lebanese Public School based on the national textbook syllabus.

Time 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Key Note Session
Session Moderator: **Lina Kadi**	Dr. Jason Gulya Professor, Berkeley College **Title: What Does Process-Focused Teaching Look Like, in The Age of AI?** **Abstract**: Since the arrival of ChatGPT in 2023, the phrase "teach process over product" has become a mantra for many educators. The idea: if Generative AI programs can so closely imitate human-sounding product, then we need to start looking at the process. But what does process-focused teaching look like, in practice? That will be the central question of this keynote address. I will argue that (1) process-focused teaching is a powerful way to push against the transactional model of education that focuses on grades and degrees and (2) teaching process is extremely challenging, and requires us to think about concerns such as equity, alternative assessment, and metacognition.

THANK YOU