



Awards Arab World 2025

Most Innovative Teacher of the Year

Institution Name	Zahy Ramadan, <i>Lebanese American University</i>
Submission title or project name	Metaverse class: innovation in times of crisis
Nominee / key personnel	Zahy Ramadan
URL	https://news.lau.edu.lb/2024/metaverse-learning-pioneering-innovation-in-times-of-crisis.php
Submission	<p>In the face of war and mass displacement, I pioneered Lebanon's first metaverse classroom (also one of the first in the Middle East) to ensure that education thrived despite crisis. This initiative provided students with an immersive and interactive learning space in which they engaged in discussions, collaborated on case studies and experienced a sense of normality amid chaos. The metaverse classroom not only sustained education but also demonstrated resilience, inclusivity and innovation, breaking accessibility barriers for displaced and conflict-affected students. This achievement builds on my efforts to redefine education through experiential learning. Over the years, I have introduced interactive case studies, live market simulations, AI-driven competitions and virtual reality experiences to enhance engagement. My aim is to push the boundaries of education and prove that, even in adversity, learning can continue. The metaverse classroom stands as a testament to the power of innovation in transforming education especially in times of crisis.</p>



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Institution Name	Amr Mamdouh, <i>Alamein International University</i>
Submission title or project name	The student-driven shape grammar course: fostering engagement and career readiness
Nominee / key personnel	Amr Mamdouh, assistant professor of digital architecture, Alamein International University
URL	https://forms.office.com/r/F3dmgXNkwb
Submission	<p>By implementing a student-driven contract in Introduction to Shape Grammars, I shifted from a passive learning model to one of active co-creation. This innovative approach – in which students select topics, co-design assessments and lead presentations – has significantly boosted motivation (92 per cent increase) and developed career-ready skills. Notably, strategically assigning leadership opportunities to lower-CGPA students fostered an 80 per cent improvement in their confidence and subsequent academic performance. This pedagogical shift demonstrably cultivates crucial career skills, evidenced by a 22 per cent increase in final pass rates and a 2024 alumni survey in which 45 per cent of respondents credited their internship success to skills honed within the course. Student feedback continuously informs improvements, with a university-wide collaborative design toolkit as a future goal. This model fosters engagement, ownership and demonstrable student success.</p>



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Institution Name	Dana Kakeesh, <i>The University of Jordan</i>
Submission title or project name	Redefining marketing education through real-world collaboration and active learning
Nominee / key personnel	Dr Dana Kakeesh, associate professor of marketing, University of Jordan
URL	https://www.facebook.com/DrDanaKakeesh
Submission	<p>Dr Dana Kakeesh, associate professor of marketing at the University of Jordan, pioneers blended learning and experiential teaching in marketing education. She integrates real-world collaborations with companies and start-ups into her courses, empowering students to solve genuine business challenges and enhance their critical thinking skills. Her innovative pedagogy emphasises active learning, field experience and professional engagement, creating an educational environment in which students thrive as self-driven and market-ready professionals. Through initiatives such as her long-term partnership with BookAgri, collaboration with SMEs, and active alumni involvement, Dr Kakeesh redefines student learning, fostering creativity, industry connectivity and leadership.</p>



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Institution Name	Chhaya Akshay Divecha, <i>National University of Science and Technology</i>
Submission title or project name	Reimagining learning: an innovative escape room pedagogy for enhanced student engagement and holistic development
Nominee / key personnel	Dr Chhaya Akshay Divecha, paediatrician and educator
URL	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wmemuJ97NcrXZuY5BHU3JZL02e0IY8YV/view?usp=sharing
Submission	<p>Dr Chhaya Divecha developed educational escape rooms to enhance essential professional skills in higher education. These immersive experiences replace recreational puzzles with authentic clinical tasks, such as patient examinations and diagnostic scenarios, under realistic time pressure. The escape rooms, designed using student needs assessments, guide students through clinical tasks, with facilitators providing guidance and feedback. The initiative, refined through the FAIMER Fellowship, has improved students' knowledge and received positive feedback. To address logistical challenges, digital escape rooms with AI-driven challenges and virtual patients were introduced. These adaptations have benefited medical, pre-clinical and high school students. Future plans include module refinement, expansion to other specialities, faculty development and more research. Dr Divecha has received awards for her work, mentored student research, obtained grants and disseminated her work through presentations, publications and workshops. Her transformative approach has created engaging learning environments with significant potential for transferability to other institutions.</p>



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Institution Name	Fouad Zablith, <i>American University of Beirut, Suliman S Olayan School of Business</i>
Submission title or project name	Innovative teaching through technology, enquiry and design
Nominee / key personnel	Dr Fouad Zablith, associate professor and associate dean for online programmes
URL	https://sites.aub.edu.lb/datavisualization
Submission	<p>Dr Fouad Zablith, associate professor and associate dean at the American University of Beirut, has transformed the student experience through innovative, technology-driven teaching and a deep commitment to real-world relevance. His courses empower students to explore and solve complex challenges using enterprise systems, data visualisation and human-centred design. In 2024 alone, his students published more than 400 data stories on national issues and ranked among the top global teams in the ERPsim business simulation competition. Through the Design2Transform initiative, students co-created impactful solutions to social challenges in interdisciplinary teams. Dr Zablith's new Executive MBA course, AI in Business, is equipping current and future leaders to navigate emerging technologies responsibly. He continuously adapts his teaching through feedback, reflection and cross-sector collaboration, fostering a learning environment that is inclusive, engaging and future-ready. His approach exemplifies what it means to inspire students to learn with purpose and to lead with impact.</p>



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Institution Name	Azzam Abu Rayash, <i>Hamad Bin Khalifa University</i>
Submission title or project name	How Dr Azzam's collaborative classrooms fuel start-ups, certifications and sustainable futures
Nominee / key personnel	Dr Azzam Abu Rayash, assistant professor in the Division of Sustainable Development, College of Science and Engineering, Hamad Bin Khalifa University
URL	https://www.hbku.edu.qa/en/staff/azzam-abu-rayash
Submission	<p>Dr Azzam Abu-Rayash redefines education by merging academia with Qatar's innovation vision. His Social Innovation and Green Buildings courses empower students to solve real-world challenges through entrepreneurship and sustainability. Under his mentorship, students have launched five start-ups (including Dawa'ak, addressing eldercare), secured QR25,000 (£5,000) in grants, and earned LEED GA certifications (90 per cent pass rate). By partnering with industry leaders such as Snoonu's CEO and Sheikha Hissa Al-Thani and organising field trips to Sidra Hospital, Dr Azzam bridges theory and practice. His responsive teaching – gamified exam prep, pitch labs and inclusive adaptations for diverse learners – has produced 13 peer-reviewed papers and internships at the Earthna Center for a Sustainable Future. Students credit his "build, test, iterate" philosophy with transformative growth; one undergraduate, Mohamed Elhadi, said: "I entered as an engineer. I'm leaving as an entrepreneur." Aligned with HBKU's mission, Dr Azzam cultivates leaders who advance Qatar's sustainable future. His classrooms are springboards for societal impact.</p>



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Institution Name	Murad Al-Rajab, <i>Abu Dhabi University</i>
Submission title or project name	Code of inspiration: transforming classrooms into launch pads for innovation
Nominee / key personnel	Murad Al-Rajab
URL	
Submission	<p>Murad Al-Rajab, assistant professor at Abu Dhabi University, is a transformative educator known for blending academic rigour with creativity and compassion. In 2024, his students secured multiple national and international awards, research grants and publications under his mentorship. Through gamified learning, project-based curricula and signature events such as “Web Design Got Talent”, Dr Al-Rajab turns theory into action. He cultivates an emotionally supportive environment by listening deeply, advising beyond academics and encouraging students with empathy and motivation. His SET scores rose from 4.4 to 4.9, consistently exceeding benchmarks. His approach includes flipped classrooms, hybrid teaching and active tools such as AhaSlides to create memorable, impactful learning experiences. He founded the ADU Computing Club and ACM Chapter, connecting students globally. Dr Al-Rajab’s enduring commitment to student success and innovation exemplifies excellence in modern higher education. He chairs campus-wide events such as Cybersecurity Days and Software Engineering Days in collaboration with industry experts.</p>



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Institution Name	Imad Barsoum, <i>Khalifa University</i>
Submission title or project name	Dr Imad Barsoum, associate professor of mechanical and nuclear engineering, Khalifa University
Nominee / key personnel	
URL	
Submission	<p>Dr Imad Barsoum, recipient of the 2024 Khalifa University Faculty Teaching Excellence Award, has consistently transformed engineering education through innovative, practice-based teaching. His hands-on mentorship has led student teams to national recognition, including a first place win at the Think Science competition, with projects even acknowledged by Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum. Drawing on his extensive industry experience, Dr Barsoum designs interactive courses that blend theory with real-world engineering. He enhances accessibility through recorded sessions, evening tutorials and digital tools such as MATLAB and Blackboard. His custom teaching aids – such as foam beams and 3D-printed gearboxes – make abstract concepts tangible. He mentors students in research and in competitions, guides senior design teams and organises industry field trips to link learning with professional practice. Student feedback consistently praises his clarity, encouragement and ability to instil confidence. Dr Barsoum’s teaching philosophy fosters engagement, innovation and student-centred culture.</p>