

EDITORIAL

COVID-19 Era – The Silver Lining in Distance Education

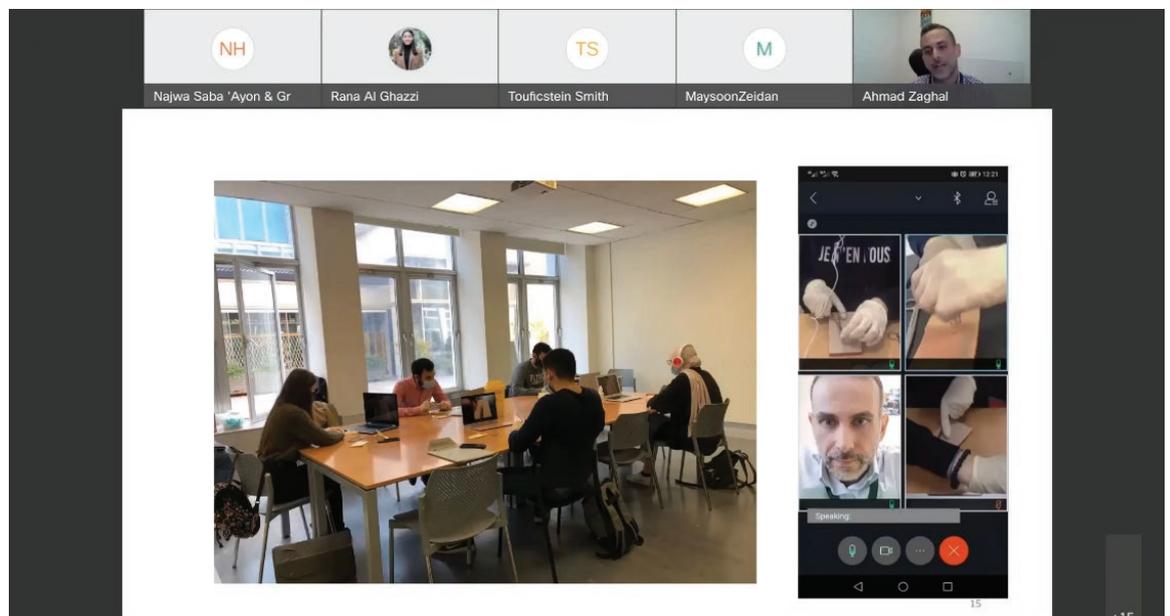
*By Dr. Ahmad Zaghaf, Assistant Professor of Clinical Specialty,
Department of Surgery*

Over the past two decades, we have witnessed a trend towards maximizing the utilization of distance learning. Despite its promising features including reliable, equitable, efficient, and cost-effective education, many educators were slow at adopting it until the COVID-19 era erupted. Medical education is not an exception; the majority of programs resorted to remote teaching strategies to protect students from acquiring the virus and preserve the scarce supplies of personal protective equipment resulting in an exponential rise in the innovative use of information technology and web-based instructional methods (Daodu et-al, 2020).

Because of the lack of solid experience in online teaching of medical knowledge and skills, and scarcity of available data on its effectiveness, medical students and educators voiced their concerns about the impact of this fast transition, during the pandemic, to distance learning on the quality of medical education and the future of healthcare at large (Papapanou et-al, 2021). Clinical education, as we know it, has always relied heavily on

hands-on experience such as history taking and physical examination; hence, the heightened concerns that remote learning of these skills may not be sufficient for the acquisition of medical students' optimal competency and confidence.

Teaching technical skills is a particularly difficult component of clinical education to achieve remotely (Newsome et-al, 2020) owing to its heavy reliance on physical interactions and immediate technical feedback between the teachers and learners. Classically, learning basic surgical skills, such as suturing, occurs in a simulated environment utilizing part-task trainers to allow the learners to achieve competency by deliberate practice under direct face-to-face tutoring and supervision. This physical interaction became impossible during the extended periods of lockdown imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic which prompted educators all over the world to improvise and use the available online communication technologies to teach basic surgical skills. A recently published



systematic review (Co et-al, 2021) confirmed the feasibility of the remote approach in acquiring surgical skills in novices.

At AUB-Faculty of Medicine, during the lockdown period, we utilized a commercial teleconferencing platform to deliver synchronous online teaching sessions whereby the tutors demonstrated the basic suturing skills, in a simulated setting, to the third year medical students who in turn practiced suturing remotely and received real-time feedback on their performance. We learned from the post-session surveys that although the students enjoyed and benefited from the sessions, the online approach was more demanding than its conventional "face-to-face" counterpart, particularly while explaining certain concepts that rely on visuospatial abilities, such as teaching the proper techniques of mounting the needle on the needle holder. This was our first experience with remote teaching of basic suturing which lead our group to run a randomized controlled trial to compare the acceptability and effectiveness of distance learning of basic suturing to the classic face-to-face approach (Zaghal et-al, 2022). The results of this study indicated that remote learning of basic suturing is as effective as the traditional method, and it is accepted and perceived as beneficial and enjoyable by the students. I believe that distance learning is not here to replace the hands-on experience; it can be utilized as an adjunct in this setting; some benefits of face-to-face interactions with an expert are difficult to measure such as role modelling and acquiring technical nuances (Bello et-al, 2005).

Reflecting on the matter, one may wonder how different are the two approaches? Are they really different? Post digital education is a philosophical stance towards online learning that blurs the distinction between electronic and face-to-face learning (Fawns, 2019); all kinds of learning (digital or not) utilize both physical interactions and electronic tools and, if meaningful and relevant, are all socially and emotionally embodied regardless of whether the educational events happen under the same roof or not. Teaching surgical skills via a teleconferencing platform also involves physical (even if remote) and emotional interactions with the students just like

the face-to-face encounters. That said, distance learning is not a mere process of uploading face-to-face educational content on the internet; each method requires specific set of expertise and skills and has its own joys and challenges.

COVID-19 pandemic seems to have its unsung silver lining after all; it prompted us to explore uncharted waters in education and understand our true potentials. Finally, I cannot stop thinking about how resilient our love and dedication for education; nothing can stop education, in all its forms and shapes, not even an outbreak from the Abyss of Hades.

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The Case for Gender Education at AUB

*By Dr. Blake Atwood Associate Professor of Media Studies,
Chair Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Media Studies*

Over the last several years, the gender curriculum at AUB has undergone a tremendous transformation. The reasons for this transformation are manifold and include: (1) increased student interest; (2) the longstanding commitment of faculty members, especially those affiliated with the Women and Gender Studies Initiative; and (3) new resources through programs like MEPI-TLS. Gender studies at AUB now includes a multitude of undergraduate courses that come from many disciplines and faculties across the University. Students can study gender through a number of different lenses—as humanities courses, social sciences, natural sciences, and quantitative thought. Our diverse course offerings in gender—which range from English to Statistics, Philosophy, Public Health, Nutrition, Business, Political Studies, and Media and Communication—make gender curriculum at AUB one of the richest, most dynamic, and most comprehensive in the world.

Given the successes of gender studies at AUB over the last several years, it would be tempting to rest on our laurels. But there is still much work to be done. Gender should figure into every department at the university and should be a part of every student's experience here. Already there is progress on that front. The new General Education Program proposed by the Director of General Education, Dr. Bana

Bashour, includes a requirement related to social injustices, including gender. However, we can push this progress further by imagining gender studies not as an academic subject but rather as a commitment to social justice and equality. In this sense, all of our disciplines have something to offer gender education by understanding how difference is created through social systems, knowledge production, and access to resources and by researching possible solutions. Certainly, every course—regardless of its topic—can exercise a gender-responsive pedagogy that prioritizes inclusivity and resists traditional hierarchies. This, too, is a way to participate in gender education at AUB.

Integrating gender into the curriculum is not easy, but it is important. By analyzing and discussing gender in our courses and practicing a feminist ethics of care in our classrooms, we are providing a corrective to a system of knowledge production that has been dominated for too long by particular kinds of people, often at the exclusion of others. Just as important, we are also preparing students for a world in which complex social relations shape almost every aspect of their personal and professional lives. Ultimately, giving them a vocabulary to describe their experiences and to improve the lives of others is at the heart of our mission as educators at AUB.



General Education (GE) Courses and Liberal Arts Education

By Bana Bashour, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy

AUB is one of the few Liberal Arts universities in the region, and this has always been one of its strengths. The General Education Program at AUB, therefore, is one of the backbones of this institution that brings the idea of diverse learning to a region where it is not the norm. This provides the University with a unique opportunity to develop its own General Education Program, one that is informed by international best practices, but also innovative enough to suit its own needs.

The history of GE at AUB started as a traditional set of courses following “the great books” model, with students all over campus being introduced to a set of collected works that were considered foundational in the history of mankind. Historically, this was accompanied by various cultural activities such as public film screenings and general discussions. It created a sense of community with everyone at the university sharing intellectual experiences. However, due to the significant increase in the number of community members, as well as developments in education, these activities as well as curriculum have significantly changed over the past decades. To make the curriculum more suited for the times, there was a major revamping effort in 2005, and a new program replaced the great books model with one focused on skill development. The main idea was to move away from providing students with a uniform set of ideas they ought to be exposed to, but allow them to develop the skills that are helpful for them not matter what domain they wish to utilize them in. To this end, students were no longer only required to take a number of courses in the history of ideas, but were given more flexibility, as long as they are exposed to a variety of disciplines (e.g. humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, quantitative reasoning).

The most recent efforts in evaluating and designing a new GE program have spanned several years with a few GE Directors tackling different elements. The result has been a new proposed program that seeks to bring back the best in the older curriculum (particularly by reintroducing a requirement in the history of ideas) with the most valuable features of the existing curriculum (by keeping the aspects related to skill development). It also adds new features that were missing from both curricula, specifically by focusing on recognizing and examining values and one’s role in society. Those are tackled through introducing requirements in Ethics, Community Engaged Learning (which includes a theoretical component as well as a practical one that requires students to spend a certain number of hours in the field) and a requirement covering the theme of Social Inequalities. One final move regards changing the designations of the categories and moving away from disciplinary designations (e.g. social sciences and humanities) to designations that are more descriptive about the content the students are learning (e.g. Societies and Individuals, Cultures and History etc...) The idea is to make those requirements more transparent in their content to the students fulfilling them. The general framework of knowledge then becomes central to the mission of the GE Program which, on the new proposed system, includes helping students understand themselves, the world and their role in it.

These new developments are meant to address the purpose of education more broadly while tailoring it to the specific context of Lebanon. While facing numerous crises, our students will get a chance to think about their values and their roles in society while keeping in mind those most vulnerable.

What is C-THE for PhD students?

The Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education (C-THE) has been established to provide training in teaching for current PhD students at AUB. This certificate program falls within the university’s greater aim of enriching PhD candidates’ academic experience and professional skills, and serves the specific purpose of engaging them more formally in teaching activities and duties. The program also serves as a valuable part of one’s employment portfolio, giving PhD students an edge when applying for a teaching position. C-THE is a coordinated effort between the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), the Graduate Council (GC), and the Department of Education at AUB with CTL providing the program design and instruction. C-THE was piloted in 2020/2021 and offered for the first time as a graduation requirement from all second year PhD.

students in the academic year 2021/2022, as per the decision of the University Senate on November 30, 2020. PhD students register for the C-THE program under EDUC 401 (fall semester) and EDUC 402 (spring semester). The description of the C-THE program appears in the AUB Catalogue under the Department of Education as per below:

Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education (C-THE)

The Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education (C-THE) provides training in teaching for PhD students at AUB. The certificate aims at equipping students with best practices and professional skills in teaching in higher education. It consists of two courses, one taken in the fall term (C-THE I) and the other taken in spring term (C-THE II). PhD students are required to enroll in the C-THE during their second year in the PhD program.

Course Descriptions

EDUC 401 C-THE I: Teaching in Higher Education – Theory I 0 cr.

This course is an introduction to teaching in higher education, face-to-face and online. The course covers topics such as course syllabus design, learning outcomes, and teaching methodologies such as transformative learning, learner-centered classes and flipped classrooms. Annually in fall term. Pre-requisite: consent of instructor.

EDUC 402 C-THE II: Teaching in Higher Education – Theory II & Practicum 0 cr.

This course is a combination of in-class sessions and teaching field experience. The first part covers topics such as assessment, presentation skills, and teaching portfolio. The second part consists of practical observations and practice teaching under the supervision of designated mentors. Annually in spring term. Pre-requisite: EDUC 401 and consent of instructor

“C-THE, a Transformative Experience”

By Roula Shehadeh Joudi, PhD Student, HSON

In life, there are many experiences that are reframing. For good or bad, each instance changed the course that my life has taken and taught me something new. In the past 2 years of my Ph.D. journey, I lived through many learning experiences that taught me a lot and reshaped my views and outlook on life. One of the most transformative experiences was the C-THE experience.

The program is an eye-opener to teaching and learning strategies that are engaging, interactive and innovative. I still recall the first session of C-THE I, that afternoon I signed out from the online session in an absolute state of excitement. I anticipated that this experience will be exceptional and indeed it was. As a nurse and Graduate Teaching Assistant in nursing practicum, teaching is a deeply integrated competency in my role at all levels: with patients, their families, nurses and nursing students. However, the program elevated my skills in teaching with enthusiasm and innovation. The topics covered through the C-THE program each week did not only increase my knowledge in many areas, it also grew an interest in me for not only teaching but for learning as well.

The sessions were always full of energy and active vibes, as if it is a workshop in continuous action, you can never be attending one of the C-THE sessions and not be engaged in thinking or performing... That's the trick! The program design made it practical and attractive. The interactive class activities enriched my student's academic experience and professional skills in teaching in general and in higher education in specific through enhancing my knowledge and skills. The C-THE I supported us with new teaching methodologies relevant to specific learning outcomes, and taught us the knowhow of designing course syllabus during the fall semester, followed by practical training on selecting assessment methods that are key to modern teaching practices. In addition, we were taught new assessment procedures specifically designing and creating rubrics and MCQs relative to each discipline, and developing presentation skills. We learned how to compile a teaching portfolio, do in-class observations, and seek teaching opportunities practiced in C-THE II during the spring semester. This rich learning journey was a game-changer for me as a Graduate Teaching Assistant in nursing for nursing students at my faculty,

as I applied what I learnt in class sessions I conducted. I could not but notice the difference in how I perceived myself as a teacher and on another level, how my relationship with my students became more interactive and special.

One more exceptional thing about C-THE, is that, it is the only program that gathered PhD students every week coming from different faculties and majors across AUB to learn together, share their experiences in teaching, and apply what is learnt in

the sessions to different real life examples and backgrounds. The program brought us together for two quality hours every week not only for improving our teaching skills, but it rather formed a connection among us. Creating a space for relating and making friendships across AUB, made lifelong memories that I will always fetch each time I will design a course syllabus or just present a lecture. This program established in me a mission for creating the best learning experiences everywhere I go.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) 2022-2023

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at AUB invites proposals for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) grants program annually. These grants are offered to support faculty members' projects which examine and reflect upon the teaching and learning practices in specific disciplines, and which use research methods and make the results known to the campus community and beyond. CTL encourages proposals that focus on creativity and innovation in teaching at large and on teaching with technology and the use of new instructional technologies and tools that have the potential to impact student learning.

Three project proposals by AUB faculty members were selected to receive the SOTL grants for the academic year 2022-2023. The first proposal is titled **The Impact of a Blended Elective Health and Wellness Course on AUB Students' Wellbeing, Behavior, Academic Performance and Mental Health**, primary investigator Dr. Maya Romani, MD (PI), Family Medicine, FM, Co-Investigators, Dr. Jumana Antoun, and

Dr. Jihane Khaywa, FM, in collaboration with FAFS; OSB; and Charles W. Hostler Student Center. The second proposal is titled **Cultivating Change through Peer Assisted Learning**, Primary Investigator Dr. Lina Abi Fakher Kantar, Clinical Associate Professor, HSON. And the third proposal is titled **"Impacts of Student-Run Makerspace on the AUB Engineering Student Community"** primary investigator **Dr. Mohammad Harb**, Assistant Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering, MSFEA

The selection process of the SoTL grants includes a review of each submitted proposal done by two faculty members and is based on a rubric that is shared with the proposal authors and the reviewers. Proposals are also sent to a third reviewer in case there was a wide discrepancy between the two reviewers. The scores provided by the reviewers are averaged and the three proposals that receive the highest averages are funded.

For more information about the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, please follow this [link](#).



TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD & INNOVATION IN TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY AWARD

AUB teachers honored for excellence and innovation

By Safa Jafari; Senior Writer; Office of Communications

AUB held its annual ceremony to present the AUB Teaching Excellence and the Innovation in Teaching with Technology awards to faculty members who were nominated by their colleagues and students and presented work that demonstrated outstanding work.

The **AUB Teaching Excellence Awards** are presented based on evidence of teaching effectiveness and contributions to the advancement of AUB's educational mission. They recognize faculty members who, using innovative and holistic approaches, demonstrate scholarly endeavor and pursue activities that most enhance their contribution as mentors and educators. Winners of this award this year were AUB alumnae: Dr. Bana Bashour and Dr. Angela Massouh.

Dr. Bana Bashour is an associate professor of philosophy at the Department of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. She was described in testimonials as the "go-to» person who is always very welcoming, compassionate, and a great listener. Keeping everyone in class fully motivated and engaged with the content and motivated to give their best, she was described as a great mentor with a unique teaching style who makes the material modern, relevant, and of interest. One testimonial stated, "With a captivating style, she is an excellent example of a teacher who does not quit her role outside the classroom,» another added, "She is a real educator who maintains a very humane relationship with every student.»

Dr. Angela Massouh is an assistant professor of adult and critical care nursing, heart failure clinical nurse specialist, and nurse leader for research, education, and innovation at AUB and AUBMC. She has been commended in testimonials nominating her for her passion and commitment to the profession and her teaching abilities that portray the nursing science as an art in itself. Whether in the clinical site, the classroom, or through assignments on Moodle, her methods were described as unconventional and progressive. Her role as a teacher was also said to never cease, even after graduation, as she supports her students and "constantly drives them forward to fulfill certification, present in a conference, or attend a workshop." Inspiring and engaging her students in critical thinking, testimonials added that she constantly improves their academic and clinical journeys.

The **Innovation in Teaching with Technology Award** honors creativity and innovation in teaching with the use of new instructional technologies and tools that make a positive impact on student learning. Winner of this award this year was Dr. Kirsten Scheid.

Dr. Kirsten Scheid is an associate professor in the Sociology, Anthropology, and Media Studies Department, and affiliated faculty at the Department of Fine Arts and Art History. She is cofounder of the Anthropology Society in Lebanon, and cofounder and producer



of the Hikayat Walad min Bayrut. In academic year 2019-2020 she was the Clark-Oakley Humanities Fellow at the Clark Art Institute at Williams College in Massachusetts where she completed her forthcoming book, *Fantasmic Objects: Art and Sociality from Lebanon, 1920-1950*. She was nominated by students and colleagues and selected based on the award package she has presented, describing her work and course design demonstrating innovative teaching with technology.

This year, the ceremony was held in person, after suspending the ceremony

for two years due to the pandemic and other pressing circumstance. Professors awarded in 2020 and 2021 were acknowledged and present at this year's ceremony.

"With their extraordinary commitment, their skill, their ability to innovate, to overcome despair, today's recipients and last year's and 2020's exemplify the leadership, the mentorship, the dedication, and the engaged citizenship that we aspire to at AUB," said AUB President Fadlo Khuri. "For that we thank you, you inspire not only your students, you inspire us to try harder."

Teaching Excellence Award Speech

Dr. Angela Massouh, Assistant Professor, HSON

I am very happy today! This award will always remain the closest to my heart because I have always felt like I was born to do this. Ever since I was a kid, I always knew I loved teaching. At 6, I had a blackboard and all. I gave classes to my parents, sister, and cousins. I took attendance seriously and I had style, an impeccable handwriting, a drop dead serious attitude, and a sarcastic and dynamic persona all while I was a **makeshift teacher**.

At the outset of my career in academia, I knew my teaching tools were still unripe and were based on critical reflections of what I thought was good or bad teaching from my days as a student at AUB. So, I started experimenting. The only thing I was sure of is that each student and I were a **unique dyad** and that our **interactions and experiences will shape each other's world views**. So, I vouched to always remember that in each and every student encounter.

Allow me to share some words of wisdom that I have collected during my academic career:

1. The best thing about teaching is that it *matters*. The hardest thing about teaching is that it *matters every single day* [Tidd Whitaker]. Educators impart more by way of **example than precept**, and students are very perceptive in recognizing when a teacher does not practice what she/he preaches. As such, I made sure to remain true to myself and this extended beyond my classroom to my day-to-day functions as a clinician at AUB Medical Center. I knew my students noticed this and I

started bringing into my class real life stories of my patients and my clinical practice; this was definitely a game changer that have helped shape my classes to date.

2. Education is not *the filling of a pail*, but the *lighting of a fire* [William Yates]. I took it upon me to keep my students' sense of **positive skepticism** and **lure** in the world around us. Only if answers to life questions continue to come from students, will the questions continue to flow.
3. The true teacher defends his pupils *against his own personal influence* [Amos Bronson Alcott]. I pledged that I will help my students **deconstruct their preconceived ideas** and what they view as *logical* before they adhere to it throughout their careers. Doing this with my student nurses reinforces their observation skills, assessment abilities, empathy, ability to actively respond to patients' needs, and communication skills.
4. Great teachers do not **celebrate mediocracy**. They stretch students to their utmost potentials. Set the bar high and students will follow your lead.
5. The best teachers are the *ones that change their minds* [Terry Heick]. I have learned that teaching requires you to **listen more** and **talk less**, for me an acquired skill.
6. A teacher is **vulnerable**. And this is ok. I have been put in a rollercoaster of emotions with my students. I have cried with them and laughed with them,

sometimes both on the same day. I cry with them when they fail my course and think this is the end of the world, or when they share with me a life altering personal secret and the heaviness of this engulfs me. I laugh with them when it is funny. I celebrate with them their successes and life events. I am there for their big moments.

7. And finally, I have learned that it takes a faculty, **not just an individual faculty member**, to educate a student. I care. And so does every faculty member here at AUB. Students, just like us, are struggling to make ends meet. Unlike us, they are more fragile, unsure what their future holds for them, and untrusting of Lebanon and their lives here. We have to be there for them.

The key to growing as an educator is to keep company mainly with teachers who uplift you, whose presence inspires you and whose dedication drives you. This is what CTL and AUB provided me! I was lucky to have beautiful diverse mentors and faculty, some of whom don't know their impact on my career.

1. **Nuhad Dumit**, who taught me that students and patients may forget what you said but they will not forget how you made them feel.

Teaching Excellence Award Speech

Dr. Bana Bachour, Associate Professor, FAS

Receiving this award has been quite peculiar to me. It felt like someone offered you a delicious dish and then rewarded you for eating it well. Constant interaction with students is energizing in a way many other aspects of our work are not. In addition, convincing students of how important and significant philosophy is, especially at a time like this, is deeply rewarding.

The world is facing an epistemic crisis. While the information age brought with it countless opportunities for access to knowledge that were unthinkable before, it also brought misinformation using the same tools. This is even more aggravated in places that are facing crises of different kinds, such as Lebanon in which the animosity aggravated by these tools has reached worrisome levels in the population. With the rise of social media platforms on which fake news has become widely disseminated, it has become crucial, now more than ever, to acquire

2. **Rula Baalbaki**, my English 204 Instructor in 2005, who believed in me and taught me to love my students and push them. I have so much of you in my teaching style.

3. **Inanna Ataya and Saouma Abou Jaoude**, who inspired me to write my own teaching philosophy and own it.

4. **Wadad Hussein**, my teacher [some 21 years back] and now friend, who taught me to love my students unconditionally and to build lifelong friendships with them after they graduate.

5. **My mama**, a school lead administrator herself and my first teacher, taught me to be tough, set the bar high, but remain grounded and kind. I still follow this advice mama.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to my selfless colleague **Silva Dakessian** and former and current students and mentors who nominated me for this Award and to the Selection Committee for conferring the Award. It is an honor and a privilege to join the list of prior Teaching Excellence Award winners, many of whom I have known, admired, and been inspired by from the start of my academic career.

the skills necessary for discerning fact from fiction, or inconsistent inflammatory rhetoric from genuine attempts at understanding one another. I believe that the role of philosophy is central to these efforts. The role of a teacher of philosophy has become one not restricted to the classroom in which she teaches, but as one who needs to think about the effect she has on her students' welfare, both professional and personal.

My first time teaching a class at a university level was when I first arrived to start my PhD program at CUNY's graduate center. I approached the first session with a combination of dread and excitement, never realizing what would happen the next day. My very first class was at LaGuardia Community College in New York City (Queens) on September 10, 2001. The next time I met with my students, their whole worlds had changed and they could not quite believe what had happened. This posed a bigger challenge

than I had expected, and shaped the way I approach teaching. Philosophy cannot simply be a curiosity for those interested in some historical contexts, but is a tool one can use in her daily life. In addition, the experience of beginning teaching as I began studying for my PhD made me see teaching and learning as inseparable, and I still cannot imagine doing one without the other.

The first classes I taught at AUB were in the fall of 2006-2007 following the summer war of 2006. I found the same issues I had experienced in New York City in 2001, namely a student body that was extremely tense and wanted to make sense of the difficulties surrounding them. These issues are ones that I still see today, especially in the last couple

of years where students faced more difficulties than anyone their age should have to. I believe that enabling students to think critically about emotionally charged subjects gives them skills that are valuable to any pursuit they wish to undertake, no matter how stressful.

Today in Lebanon we are in a time of crises, a time in which we especially need education and critical reasoning. The education sector is fundamental, and it is crucial that we all play a part in empowering it. Whether it is through improving teaching internally at AUB or externally through collaborating with other universities, it is valuable to pool in our efforts to ensure that this sector, which is currently under threat, has its own guardians.

Innovation in Teaching with Technology Award Speech

Dr. Kirsten Scheid, Associate Professor, FAS

My nominator, singular or plural, remains a mystery to me, so I take this occasion to thank not only them but all the students whose classroom presence (or subversion of it!) called upon me to develop new ways of thinking, communicating, and embodying pedagogy. They challenged me to see the world differently and to trust myself doing so. I also want to thank my colleagues who shared teaching tips and coping strategies; notably, some of those colleagues were former students in my classroom.

This recognition means a lot to me, and I wish I could share it with everyone else who has worked in some way to make their classroom contribute to the extremely meaningful project of teaching our AUB students. I often think we don't get enough recognition here, in our daily struggles and our tiny triumphs, especially as teachers. That is why I chose to focus in my application

statement on the very small, extremely accessible, mundane ways we can spark awareness of our personal creativity and capacity for approaching infrastructural and logistical burdens.

When lockdown drowned us all in the super-local and the over-familiar, while stripping us of most conventional resources, I parlayed my own research of creativity into developing simple tools for students to rethink and research the creation and creativity of the normal that is at-hand. I focused on turning the calamity into an opportunity for new kinds of explorations and discoveries to get my main message across: disciplinary commitment to local knowledge; creation in everyday life, of family, of boundaries, of social trajectories.

I used an online meeting platform with break-out room and screen-sharing options and a suite of online, jointly accessible applications for reading,



drawing, and analysing our findings collectively. All of these are applicable within an on-campus classroom, but crucially, I deliberately avoid reproducing a conventional experience of learning. Invoking the anthropological motto of “making the familiar strange,” I encouraged students to play with the camera frame when onscreen together, and to inventory and articulate their personal ways of living at the micro-scale. This back and forth work de-familiarized a certain Lebanese hegemony that tends to creep into teaching spaces and amplified students’ cross-cultural sensitivity and curiosity. By alerting them to ways of looking, seeing each other, that make them stop taking the normal for granted and by continually exposing them to the tiny choices that accumulate to make their worlds seem concrete and stable, I helped them develop a stronger sense of control and purpose and acceptance of difference at a time when the strange felt

overwhelming and threatening. Hence the second part of the anthropological motto, “making the strange familiar.” Though various social background, friend group, and personality barriers often, in my experience, have hindered classroom teamwork, the participation in small discussion groups where cameras were more likely to be turned on (when possible) and shyer participants effectively integrated, brought students back to the screen of thirty no-longer interchangeable squares with a voice warmed up and eager to participate. They learned together how to unpack assumptions about everyday life, from where and how we learn to what life is about to become aware of their investment and personal agency. To know firmly that culture isn’t an inert force that speaks through them but something they give life to and can change. Thank you to all of them, and to the committee and staff who assessed my application file.

Eleventh International Conference on Effective Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

The Eleventh International Conference on Effective Teaching and Learning in Higher Education was held online using WebEx on April 8, 2022. The Conference was organized by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), the Office of Innovation and Transformation, and the Communication Skills Program at the American University of Beirut.

The theme of this year’s Conference focused on: **“Negotiating New Norms of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education”**. The Conference targeted university faculty members and other individuals who are interested in the scholarship of teaching and learning in

higher education. The Conference also aimed at networking with the community of faculty members in higher education locally, regionally, and internationally. In addition to the formal research-oriented sessions in the program, the Conference featured a keynote session by Dr. Mary Dean Sorcinelli titled **“Building a Culture of Teaching and Learning on Campus”**. The Conference included 24 presentations, 100 participants from around the world. We had participants from Algeria, Canada, Greece, Lebanon, Qatar, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and United States. For more information on the Conference, kindly use this link: <https://www.aub.edu.lb/etlhe/Pages/default.aspx>



Activities July 2021–June 2022

The work of CTL between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022 included organizing seminars and workshops, the Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education program (C-THE), and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning grants. In addition, CTL organized the annual AUB Teaching Excellence Award, the AUB Innovation in Teaching with Technology Award, and provided individual consultations

Seminars, Workshops: CTL gave a series of webinars: Webinar on the experience of two faculty members with proposals to the AUB Innovation in Teaching with Technology Award (ITTA) Committee and their practical experiences in teaching with technology on September 30, 2021. A webinar held on “Assessment of Student Learning in Our Courses on November 11, 2021. A webinar on “Best Practices in Digital Course Design and Delivery” on October 21, 2021, 10:00 ET time. Webinar on “Using Dynamic Digital Tools to Enhance Teaching & Learning”, on November 25, 2021 in collaboration with The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In addition, a seminar on “Developing a Teaching Portfolio for the Teaching Excellence Award” on December 2, 2022.

Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education program (C-THE): CTL offered C-THE part I (EDUC 401) between September 13 and November 20, 2021. Fourteen PhD students participated in the 10 sessions that focused on teaching methodologies and course syllabus design. In addition, EDUC 402 CTHE part II between February 15 and April 19, 2022.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) grants: Year ten of the SoTL grants program was organized, and three proposals were supported within the framework of the SoTL.

Annual Conference: the Eleventh International Conference on Effective Teaching and Learning in Higher Education was organized on April 8, 2022 virtually between 10:00 am and 5:00 pm using WebEx. The conference included 24 presentations, 100 participants from Algeria, Canada, Greece, Lebanon, Qatar, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and United States.

AUB Teaching Excellence Award: The Teaching Excellence Award Committee of 2022 voted to present this year’s teaching excellence award to Dr. Bana Bashour, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and Dr. Angela Massouh, Associate Professor, Hariri School of Nursing.

Innovation in Teaching with Technology Award: This award was initiated in AY 2020-2021. The Innovation in Teaching with Technology Award committee voted to present this year’s award to Dr. Kirsten Scheid, Assistant professor, Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Media Studies.

Collaboration with Saint George University of Beirut, Faculty of Medicine. CTL provided a series of workshops on methodology of teaching and assessment in higher education to Saint George University Faculty members.

Individual Consultations: Individual consultations based on faculty requests were held and covered: course syllabus design, compiling a teaching portfolio, program-learning outcomes.

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