



Bluenotes **MENA** 2019  
CONFERENCE



# Conference Program

NOVEMBER 5-6

إستراتيجية التعلم المستمر في رحلة التعليم - استخدام التحليلات  
لقياس التقدم ودعم القرارات

Continuous Learning in the Journey of Education - Using  
Analytics to Measure Progress and Inform Strategic Decisions

## Bluenotes MENA 2019 Conference

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### About Zayed University

The United Arab Emirates has established itself as a global hub for business and development, and Zayed University is certainly at the forefront with its state-of-the-art campuses in the country's two main cities, Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Prestigiously named in honor of His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the country's first president, Zayed University boasts six colleges and is the newest government sponsored higher education institution in the United Arab Emirates and the first federal university in the UAE to be internationally accredited. Such success can be attributed to the adherence of their core values of collaboration, innovation, teamwork, leadership, and openness, all within an environment of mutual respect and professional ethics. Visit [www.zu.ac.ae](http://www.zu.ac.ae) for more information.

### About Explorance

Explorance, a Learning Journey Analytics provider, supports organizations in making the right decisions with fact-based feedback data. Through its Blue suite of products, Explorance is at the heart of the learning organization's continuous improvement strategies. By assessing needs, expectations, and competencies, organizations can analyze with the full picture in mind and monitor improvement over time.

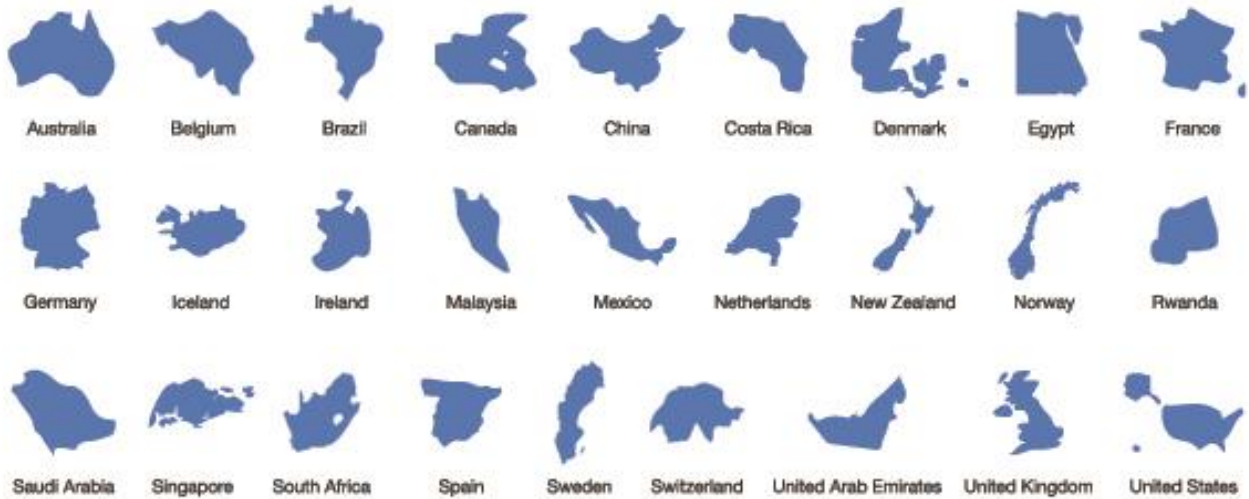
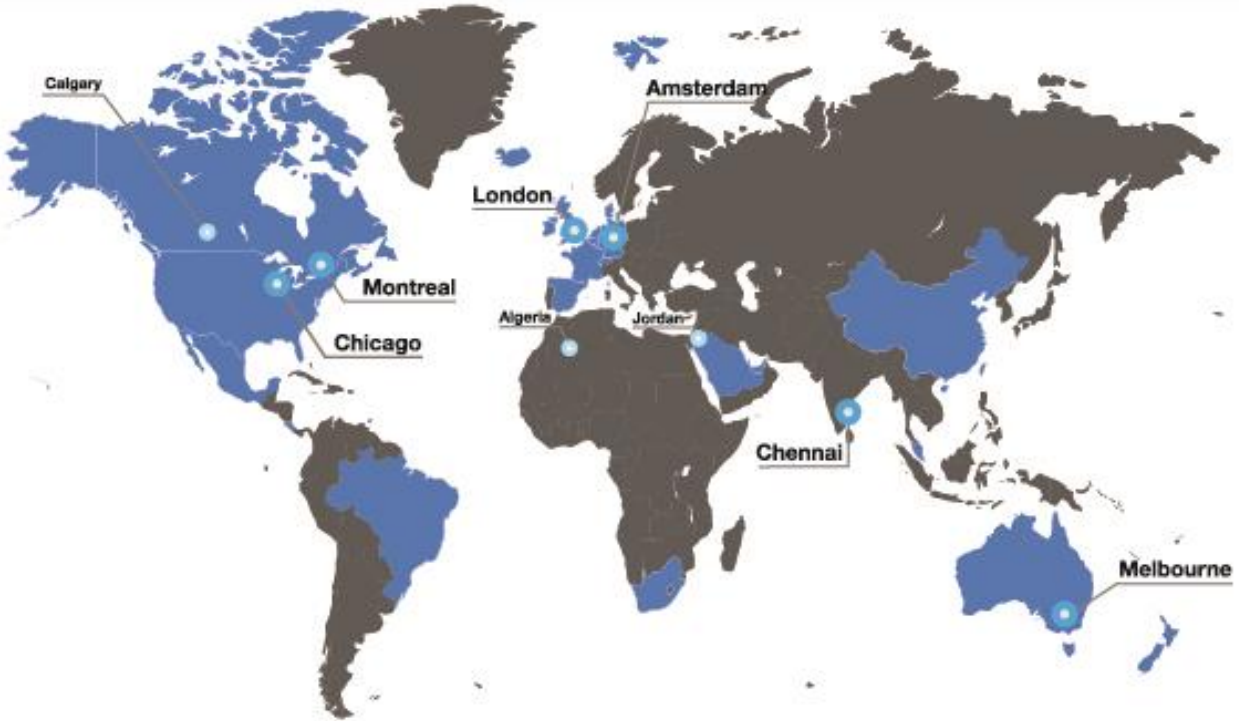
Founded in 2003, Explorance is a privately held corporation with offices in Canada, US, Asia-Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa. Since 2014, Explorance has been consecutively ranked as a top employer by the Great Places to Work Institute®. Explorance's clients include academic institutions across the globe such as University of Louisville, Princeton University, University of Pennsylvania, University of Melbourne, University of Toronto, Zayed University, University of Sharjah, American University of Beirut, King Saud University Medical School, Saudi Electronic University, IESE Business School, Durham University, Liverpool John Moores University, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, and organizations including Aramco and NASA. Learn more about the [Explorance approach](#).

### Explorance

- Explorance Office
- Explorance Satellite Employee
- 215 global employees

### Customers Worldwide

- 28 Countries
- 600+ Institutions and organizations



## Keynote Speaker



**Brad Wuetherick**

*Keynote Address:*

***Putting Students at the Centre of our Work:  
Using Data and Evidence to Drive Change in Higher Education  
Teaching and Learning***

**Brad Wuetherick** is the Executive Director of Learning and Teaching at Dalhousie University. In addition to overseeing the Centre for Learning and Teaching, he serves as a member of the senior management team in the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) with responsibility for supporting teaching and learning, and championing the adoption of evidence-based practices in teaching and learning, across the institution.

Prior to coming to Dalhousie, Brad served as the Program Director of the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching Effectiveness at the University of Saskatchewan (where he oversaw a team of educational developers, instructional designers, and curriculum developers, as well as taught several course for graduate students and faculty on teaching and learning in higher education). Before that, he held several positions at the University of Alberta in the area of undergraduate research, educational development, student services, and continuing education.

Brad's research focuses on several aspects of higher education teaching and learning. In particular, he has been involved with several projects on undergraduate research and the development of research skills at the undergraduate level, inquiry based learning, threshold concepts in the disciplines, the scholarship of teaching and learning, faculty attitudes and practices in teaching and learning, curriculum development and course design in higher education, academic development, academic analytics, and educational technologies (in particular e-portfolios and computer-assisted language learning).

In addition to his work at Dalhousie University, Brad is an Associate Member of the Centre for Higher Education Research and Evaluation at Lancaster University in the UK. He has served previously as the VP for Canada on the Board of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, as the Chair for SoTL on the Board of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, and as a member of the editorial boards for both the Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and the International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

## PROGRAM AT A GLANCE – DAY 1

Time	Tuesday, November 5
8:30 – 9:25	Registration and Morning Refreshments
9:25 – 9:40	<b>Opening Remarks</b> Samer Jaffar, COO, Explorance Dr. Reyadh Al Mehaideb, Vice President Zayed University Kate Starkey, Consul (Embassy of Canada)
9:40 – 10:20	<b>Dr. Brad Wuetherick (Dalhousie University) – Keynote Speaker</b> <i>Putting Students at the Centre of our Work:</i> <i>Using Data and Evidence to Drive Change in Higher Education Teaching and Learning</i>
10:20 – 10:40	Morning Refreshment Break
10:40 – 11:20	<b>Explorance Vision Forward</b> <i>Implementation of a holistic Student Journey Analytics (SJA) framework at your institution</i> Presenter: Samer Saab, Explorance
11:25 – 12:15	<b>Debate</b> <i>Student Evaluations of Teaching are an Important Assessment Tool for Evaluating Overall Faculty Performance</i> For the motion: Dr. Adam Marks (Zayed University), Prof. Esam Agamy (University of Sharjah) Against the motion: Dr. Aziza Ellozy (AUC, Egypt), Suzan Abu-Shakra (KAUST, KSA) Debate Facilitator: Samit Lotlikar, Zayed University
12:15 – 13:15	Lunch Break
13:15 – 13:50	<i>Utilizing Stakeholders' Feedback for a National Universities Classification Model</i> Presenter: Maryam Khan, Ministry of Education, UAE
13:55 – 14:30	<i>The Importance of Listening to, Valuing and Acting on Student Feedback: a perspective from the UK</i> Presenter: Dr. Sarah Williamson, Loughborough University, UK
14:35 – 15:10	<i>Navigating Change: Redesigning End of Semester Student Evaluations</i> Presenter: Dr. Aziza Ellozy & Nada Matar, American University in Cairo, Egypt
15:10 – 15:30	Afternoon Refreshment Break
15:30 – 16:05	<i>The Digital Challenge for HE today is Philosophical First &amp; Organizational Second; it isn't Technology</i> Presenters: Gweneth O'Gorman & Tina Montgomery, Sohar University, Oman
16:10 – 16:45	<i>The Age of Continuous Connections</i> Presenter: Nitin Sharma, Explorance
16:45 – 17:00	<b>Drawing for First Door Prize</b> <b>(Trip to Bluenotes Global 2019 - Chicago, USA)</b>
17:15	<b>GROUP PHOTO</b> End of First Day
18:15 – 20:30	<b>Bebabel Dubai Mall</b> Bluenotes MENA Networking Dinner

## PROGRAM AT A GLANCE – DAY 2

Time	Wednesday, November 6			
8:30 – 9:15	Registration and Morning Refreshments			
9:15 – 9:50	<i>Effective Course Evaluations Reporting Ecosystem</i> Presenter: Samit Lotlikar, Zayed University, UAE			
9:55 – 10:30	<i>Learning, Constantly Improving: The Case of the University of c's College of Arts and Sciences</i> Presenter: Heather Thompson, University of Carolina at Chapel Hill, United States			
10:35 – 11:10	<i>AUS Course Evaluation Journey from Manual to Full-Automation with Blue</i> Presenters: Nabil Amireh, Waseem Abed & Rizwan Hassan. American University of Sharjah, UAE			
11:10 – 11:30	Morning Refreshment Break			
11:30 – 12:05	<i>Promoting Evidence-based Decisions in a Tertiary Education Setting: A Case-Study of Start-up Univ.</i> Presenters: Reem AlGurg, Rima Ezzeddine & Farah Otaki, MBRU, UAE			
12:10 – 12:45	<i>Dynamics of Evaluations at a Medical School</i> Presenter: Dr. Syeda Asma Fatima Gulf Medical University, UAE			
12:45 – 13:45	Lunch			
13:45 – 14:30	<p><b>Panel Discussion:</b> <i>Formative Assessments and their Role in Improving the Students Performance</i></p> <p>Panel Members: Dr. Brad Wuetherick (Dalhousie University), Prof. Abhilasha Singh (American University in the Emirates), Dr. Ghada Jasim (University of Bahrain), Prof. Ibrahim Tabche (University of Dubai), Panel Facilitator: Samer Jaffar, Explorance</p>			
14:35 – 15:20	<i>BlueX Next Generation Survey Software</i> Presenter: Samer Saab, Explorance			
15:20 – 15:40	Afternoon Refreshment Break			
15:40 – 16:30	<b>Leadership Roundtables</b>			
	<p><b>Roundtable 1:</b> <i>Leveraging Student Feedback for Continuous Improvement</i></p> <p><b>Chairperson:</b> Dr. Heather Friesen (Abu Dhabi University)</p> <p><b>Facilitator:</b> Zelbrey Bedard</p>	<p><b>Roundtable 2:</b> <i>Making the most of qualitative feedback: Using Blue Text Analytics at Dalhousie University</i></p> <p><b>Chairperson:</b> Dr. Brad Wuetherick (Dalhousie University)</p> <p><b>Facilitator:</b> Samit Lotlikar</p>	<p><b>Roundtable 3:</b> <i>Benchmarking between Universities: Would it be possible to use joint Course Evaluation Surveys?</i></p> <p><b>Chairperson:</b> Dr. Assem Al-Hajj (Khawarizmi College)</p> <p><b>Facilitator:</b> Nitin Sharma</p>	<p><b>Roundtable 4:</b> <i>Course Evaluation Response Rates and Quality of Feedback using Various Techniques</i></p> <p><b>Chairperson:</b> Prof. Esam Agamy (University of Sharjah)</p> <p><b>Facilitator:</b> Bushra Naseem</p>
16:30 – 16:40	<i>Drawing for Second &amp; Third Door Prize (Trip to Bluenotes Global 2019 - Chicago, USA)</i>			
16:40 – 16:50	<b>Closing Remarks</b> Samit Lotlikar, Zayed University & Samer Jaffar, Explorance			
17:00	<b>End of Second Day</b>			

## SESSION DESCRIPTIONS (Day 1)

Tuesday, November 5

**Session Time:** 9:40 – 10:20**Keynote Address:** *Putting Students at the Centre of our Work: Using Data and Evidence to Drive Change in Higher Education Teaching and Learning***Keynote Speaker:** Brad Wuetherick, Executive Director, Learning and Teaching, Dalhousie University

Are the interventions we make at the course, program or institutional level having the impact that we intend to improve learning? What other interventions might we undertake in the future that would improve the learning experiences for our campus communities? This presentation will explore two key themes that are critical for higher education professionals to explore as they consider how to advance teaching and learning – involving students as partners in higher education, and creating environments that enable data and evidence-informed decision-making across our campuses. Using examples from Dalhousie University's student evaluations of teaching, we will explore how these two overarching themes manifest in our efforts to drive change in teaching and learning across campus.

**Session Time:** 10:40 – 11:20**Session Title:** *Explorance Vision Forward – Implementation of a holistic Student Journey Analytics (SJA) framework at your institution***Presenter:** Samer Saab, CEO, Explorance

Explorance's CEO, Samer Saab, will share the vision forward in supporting the implementation of a holistic Student Journey Analytics (SJA) framework at your institution. Higher Education institutions are facing increasing challenges due to ever-changing government regulations, an increasingly competitive landscape, and the digitization of the economy. The focus on student success and other key indicators such as first-year retention, engagement, and graduation rates, are fast becoming top priorities for every academic leader. Through this session, you will learn how the Blue SJA solutions can be leveraged to help you better support your students throughout their academic lifecycle with a connected experience management process, continuous listening strategy, and robust decision support capabilities.

**Session Time:** 11:25 – 12:15**Debate Title:** *Student Evaluations of Teaching are an Important Assessment Tool for Evaluating Overall Faculty Performance***For the Motion:** Dr. Adam Marks (Zayed University), Prof. Esam Agamy (University of Sharjah)**Against Motion:** Dr. Aziza Ellozy (American University in Cairo), Suzan Abu-Shakra (KAUST)**Facilitator:** Samit Lotlikar, Zayed University

This debate will examine the importance of student evaluations and to what degree it should be used as an assessment tool for evaluating overall faculty performance. Several institutions use student evaluations as an important criteria to form a part of the instructor's tenure promotion and/or contract renewal while others argue that it should only be considered for improving the teaching and overall learning experience. The panelist will argue for and against the motion while the audience will be given the chance to vote before and after the panelists' discussions.

**Session Time:** 13:15 – 13:50

**Session Title:** *Utilizing Stakeholders' Feedback for a National Universities Classification Model*

**Presenter:** Maryam Khan, Ministry of Education in UAE

Ministry of Education (UAE) has been working on developing a classification model for universities which will also be used as a quality assurance and performance management tool. A significant number of indicators on the model depend on Stakeholders' feedback. The speaker highlights the value of this feedback and how the model makes use of this data. Several survey tools which were designed and used for this framework will also be discussed in detail.

**Session Time:** 13:55 – 14:30

**Session Title:** *The Importance of Listening to, Valuing and Acting on Student Feedback: a perspective from the UK*

**Presenters:** Dr. Sarah Williamson, Loughborough University

The National Student Survey (NSS) surveys all final year undergraduate students across all UK HEIs and the outcomes from the survey are a major contributing factor to the national league tables for universities. The increasing importance of student engagement and the 'student voice' in the UK was affirmed when the NSS question set was revised in 2017 and a new bank of questions on the Student Voice was included to ascertain whether students felt that they had the right opportunities to provide feedback and whether this feedback was listened to, valued and acting upon. Module evaluations have an important role to play in helping to demonstrate the value placed on their views and opinions. This presentation will outline how Explorance Blue has been implemented to enhance activities in this area, including the openness and transparency with which the outcomes from module evaluations are shared with staff and students and how the feedback loop back to students can be closed using Blue so that students understand what happens as a result of their feedback.

**Session Time:** 14:35 – 15:10

**Session Title:** *Navigating Change: Redesigning End of Semester Student Evaluations*

**Presenter:** Dr. Aziza Ellozy & Nada Matar, American University in Cairo

End of semester student evaluations have become a fixture in many universities, and although questions have recently arisen regarding their validity as effective measures of quality, they still remain one of the most relied upon instrument to evaluate a course and the instructor. This presentation will outline the process by which we, at the American University in Cairo, are undertaking to redesign our student evaluation form, and how we seek input from all stakeholders in the hope of designing a more useful and thoughtful survey. The process started a year ago and is still going on with the aim of launching the survey in Spring 2020. We will share a roadmap and detailed steps, as well as the expected and unexpected challenges we have experienced so far. In addition, by adopting Blue as our new software, and using its formative assessment features, we are hoping that faculty will have more meaningful results to act upon.



**Session Time** 15:30 – 16:05

**Session Title:** *The Digital Challenge for HE today is Philosophical First & Organizational Second; it isn't Technology*

**Presenter:** Gwenth O'Gorman & Tina Montgomery, Sohar University

This presentation will reflect on Higher Educational Institutions understanding of the types of data they require to inform decision making. It will reflect on the risks HEIs face of ambition exceeding need, and one size data sets not being fit for purpose. The presentation will also focus on the added value of staff knowing what data is available and how it can be used to support achievement of their goals and student success (individual) in addition to achievement of the HEI mission and vision (organization). Finally, the paper will look at the impact of internal versus external data to support strategic planning and to promote HEI sustainability and growth

**Session Time** 16:10 – 16:45

**Session Title:** *The Age of Continuous Connections*

**Presenter:** Nitin Sharma, Explorance

Connect. Engage. Improve. Bluepulse puts improvement at the fingertips of everyone within your institution (administration, faculty, staff, students, etc.). See first-hand how Bluepulse can help you ensure that no one is left behind. Through direct, indirect and recurring check-ins you can start gathering the insights you need to shape the teaching and learning experience. Let's bring feedback into the moment.

## SESSION DESCRIPTIONS (Day 2)

## Wednesday, November 6

**Session Time:** 9:15 – 9:50**Session Title:** *Effective Course Evaluations Reporting Ecosystem***Presenter:** Samit Lotlikar, Zayed University

Course evaluations and surveys are centrally administered by Institutional Research Office at Zayed University to ensure smooth operations and to increase the response rates. This session is to showcase how we use blue platform to administer course evaluations and faculty reflections of the course and then further explore structuring and reporting possibilities at different levels at the institution (University, College, Program, Course, Program Learning Outcomes and Section). We will also present variety of reports by course, section, college, program, Program Learning Outcome and a separate instrument to measure course learning outcome. We will highlight some of the initiatives taken to streamline report distribution using Learning Management System and specifically Content Management System. We will also show how the data is synchronized using Web Services provided by Blue into Data Warehouse System to provide comparative analysis to the senior administration.

**Session Time:** 9:55 – 10:30**Session Title:** *Learning, Constantly Improving: The Case of the University of c's College of Arts and Sciences***Presenter:** Heather Thompson, University of Carolina at Chapel Hill

As a centralized piece within a decentralized university course evaluation process, the College of Arts & Sciences has some unique challenges at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill that I've learned aren't necessarily unique in the Bluenotes Community. Every institution has its quirks, but after two Explorance training certifications, three full years, fifteen evaluation cycles, three Bluenotes Global conferences, and a myriad of phone calls and meetings with new Blue users within and outside UNC as well as Explorance professional services and customer support staff, I've learned that there's always something to teach and something to learn. In this presentation I'll be discussing the basics of how UNC administers course evaluations, some of the unique challenges the College of Arts & Sciences faces, and the lessons I've learned along the way.

**Session Time:** 10:35 – 11:10**Session Title:** *AUS Course Evaluation Journey from Manual to Full-Automation with Blue***Presenter:** Nabil Amireh, Waseem Abed & Rizwan Hassan, American University of Sharjah

Our Journey with Course Evaluation started with a fully manual process by using Scantron, a paper-based method to conduct the evaluation, after which we moved to a semi-automated computerized system that was used for over a decade. Two years ago, the American University of Sharjah then transitioned from the semi-automated system to an automated system; Blue. Within this period, we have utilized many of Blue's features to enhance and improve our Course Evaluation process from importing data to the creation and publishing of reports. By using Blue platform, we have improved our user experiences for all our users by providing survey flexibility and accessibility. Moreover, we are able to improve the experience for our Faculty and Course Administrators by providing access to real time response rate updates and providing them with access to a variety of reports. In this presentation, we share our experience with the system; how Blue has improved our

process in conducting evaluations, report generation and distribution. In addition, we will talk about the challenges faced and how we overcame them. We will also talk about our plans to utilize more of Blue's features to further improve our students, faculty and administrative staff's course evaluation experience.

**Session Time:** 11:30 – 12:05

**Session Title:** *Promoting Evidence-based Decisions in a Tertiary Education Setting: A Case-Study of a Start-up University*

**Presenter:** Dr. Reem AlGurg, Rima Ezzeddine & Farah Otaki, Mohammed bin Rashid University of Medicine and Health Sciences

Over the past decade, a lot of attention has been directed towards improving the quality of tertiary education. Several international institutions took the lead to define the meaning of quality in the educational realm, and to develop standards that would enable universities to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency. This mainly involves requiring higher education institutions to live up to pre-set criteria. Integral to this approach is the paradigm of Quality Assurance (QA), which is defined as the maintenance of quality through careful attention to each stage of delivering a product and/ or a service<sup>1</sup>. This methodology of quality maintenance proved to be of great added value to the educational sector, contributing to major strides in the theory and practice of the subject matter. In its continuous quest for excellence, MBRU adapted an innovative, homegrown QA and Institutional Effectiveness framework that will not only meet any present criteria, but aims at instilling and sustaining a culture of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)<sup>1</sup> and lifelong learning. All of which feeds into the realization of the institutional vision of becoming a global hub for innovative and integrated healthcare education and research at the service of humanity. The application of this QA and Institutional Effectiveness framework relies first and foremost on listening to and engaging with all the University stakeholders. Accordingly, MBRU moves away from viewing institutional processes linearly and in isolation, to a more holistic perspective: Systems Thinking<sup>2</sup>, that takes into account all aspects of the University and their interrelations.

**Session Time:** 12:10 – 12:45

**Session Title:** *Dynamics of Evaluations at a Medical School*

**Presenter:** Dr. Syeda Asma Fatima, Gulf Medical University

This presentation will demonstrate the dynamics of evaluations which were administered during AY 2018-19 at Gulf Medical University (GMU) and how the evaluation results were used in planning, and decision-making process, specifically improving quality of the curriculum, teaching/learning, and assessment methods and helping students to achieve the program learning outcomes effectively. GMU offers a large number of medical and health sciences programs for both UG & PG levels, which requires a robust quality measurement system to measure its stakeholder satisfaction. GMU conducts variety of internal & external stakeholder evaluations which play a vital role in assessing the areas of improvement and subsequently helps the management in directing its strategy & resources in the appropriate direction. Students' clinical trainings and posting at different clinical sites is what isolates a medical school when compared to other discipline. The complex nature of trainings and teaching /learning/ assessment methodologies need to be accurately captured in evaluations so as to get a true picture of improvement areas.

**Session Time:** 13:45 – 14:30

**Panel Title** Formative Evaluations and their Role in Improving the Students Performance

**Panelists:** Prof. Abhilasha Singh (American University in the Emirates), Dr. Ghada Jasim (University of Bahrain), Prof. Ibrahim Tabche (University of Dubai), Brad Wuetherick (Dalhousie University)

**Facilitator:** Samer Jaffar, Explorance

Every higher educational institution administers end of term course/instructor evaluations from a summative perspective. With the increase use of social media and opportunities for more frequent engagement, students are expressing their thoughts and expectations on various mediums. During this panel, the panelists will examine whether formative evaluations play a role in improving the overall teaching experience and students' performance. The panelists will address the role the institution, faculty and students can play in implementing an effective formative evaluation process. They will also share their own experience and/or initiatives implemented at their institution.

**Session Time:** 14:35 – 15:20

**Session Title:** BlueX, Next Generation Survey Software

**Presenter:** Samer Saab, Explorance

Surveys are being used to gather data at every level of your institution. At this very moment, a professor or student could be conducting a study, or maybe an administrator needs feedback on a new policy that was introduced. Chances are each stakeholder is using a different survey tool to capture the information they need with little oversight. BlueX offers a fresh approach to centralizing the survey process. It was built to feel as familiar as a word processor. Not only can anyone create surveys on demand, but critically surveys can be governed at the institution level. Now, it's possible to keep track of everything that's going on while giving users independence to create the surveys they need. BlueX is a free form editor that was built to feel as familiar as a word processor. BlueX is like a blank canvas; your creativity is your only real limit. It was developed by working with 49 institutions for over three years.

## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS (Day 2: 15:40 – 16:30)

### Roundtable 1: Leveraging Student Feedback for Continuous Improvement

**Chairperson:** Dr. Heather Friesen, Abu Dhabi University

Does the use of student feedback questionnaires improve the overall quality of teaching? How do faculty and administrators use this feedback? While largely debated in faculty offices and in the literature, student evaluations of teaching remain an important tool for assessing the quality of instruction, and often guide institutions in terms of tenure, promotion, awards, and overall improvement of teaching. The extent to which these data are used, however, varies widely among institutions. Join this discussion to share how institutions can better leverage these data to improve evidence-based decision making and improve teaching and learning.

### Roundtable 2: Making the most of qualitative feedback: Using Blue Text Analytics at Dalhousie University

**Chairperson:** Brad Wuetherick, Dalhousie University

For many instructors, the richness of student feedback provided from the qualitative questions asked is the most valuable part of the student evaluation process. Yet, from an institutional perspective, the qualitative feedback from students is difficult to analyze meaningfully and act upon for either formative or summative purposes. This roundtable session will include a brief discussion of how Dalhousie University, a medical-doctoral research university located in Atlantic Canada, historically grappled (rather unsuccessfully) with our qualitative data, and then unpack how Blue Text Analytics has opened up different possibilities to support institution, faculty, and departmental use of qualitative data to improve teaching and learning, and the potential of using Blue Text Analytics to support alerts related to threats, or harassment and discrimination, that might inform key interventions to support students and instructors. In addition, this session will explore the possibilities for using Blue Text Analytics with other student feedback data gathered through other institutional surveys to improve our understanding of the student experience.

### Roundtable 3: Benchmarking between Universities: Would it be possible to use joint Course Evaluation Surveys?

**Chairperson:** Dr. Assem Al-Hajj, Khawarizmi College

What are the benefits of benchmarking for the higher education institutions? How do universities compare in the UAE, regionally and internationally? What are the areas and methods of benchmarking? Benchmarking helps amongst other things to share ideas and good practices in universities and provides information to compare quality and performance areas. Benchmarking provides a strong means for making informed decisions for improving higher institutions' competitive advantage. It helps raise awareness of your own institution and of others, visibility, and reputation. Furthermore, benchmarking can be the process to self-assess the institution, facilitates an understanding of processes and their executions and is a means for continuous improvements. Through benchmarking universities and other higher education institutions can be involved in a collaborative strategy to drive their needs into a better future in a structured manner.

**Roundtable 4: Course Evaluation Response Rates and Quality of Feedback using Various Techniques****Chairperson: Prof. Esam Agamy, University of Sharjah**

Course evaluations, often termed student evaluations of teaching or course experience survey are prevalent in higher education institutions. Data gathered through course evaluations are pivotal for the development of courses, curriculums, and instructors, where the incorporation of the instructors' pedagogic efforts' evaluation in the annual review has permeated higher education institutions. The use of SETs is expanding globally, and more emphasis is placed on its data for promotion and tenure. Adequate response rates for the population are a major key to valid results, minimizing the risk of sampling errors and biased results. Many institutions of higher education have switched to using online methods of administering SETs instead of the traditional paper-and-pencil method. Shifting to online SETs resulted in less participation from students. Institutions used different strategies for increasing student response rates in online evaluation. The University of Sharjah was able to increase response rate to over 90% over the last three years. The aim of this roundtable is to discuss different strategies to increase student response rate and address issues such as: 1) Students commitment to respond vs. student rights; 2) To what extent institutions can force students to respond by blocking registration, grades, etc. (ethics vs. commitment)?; 3) Is it ethical to use incentives, especially extra grades, to enhance student response to surveys?; 4) What are the possible effects of implementing these strategies on the quality of student feedback?

## Join Bluenotes GLOBAL 2020!

**BN GLOBAL 2020**, in collaboration with University of Louisville  
@ Chicago, USA: August 2-5, 2020

**Come a few days early, get trained and Blue-Certified!**  
**Blue Administrator Certification (BAC) Training Camp**  
**Blue Report Master Certification (BRMC) Training Camp**  
**Blue Expert Certification (BEC) Training Camp**

KEY DATES	TO REMEMBER
October 2019: NOW OPEN	Early Bird Registration. <a href="#">Register Today!</a>
December 6, 2019: LAST DAY	Deadline for <a href="#">faculty grant proposal</a> submission
December 20, 2019: NOTIFICATION	Notification of faculty grant awards to selected faculty
February 28, 2020: LAST DAY	Deadline for <a href="#">presentation proposal submission</a>
May 1, 2020: LAST DAY	Early Bird Registration Ends
July 17, 2020: LAST DAY	Conference Registration Closes & Last day for <a href="#">hotel special rate of \$199 USD/night</a>
July 30 – 31, 2020: Training Camp	<a href="#">Blue Administrator Certification (BAC) Training Camp</a>
July 30 – August 1, 2020: Training Camp	<a href="#">Blue Report Master Certification (BRMC) Training Camp</a>
July 30 – August 1, 2020: Training Camp	<a href="#">Blue Expert Certification (BEC) Training Camp</a>
July 31, 2020: LAST DAY	Deadline for <a href="#">Conference registration fee payment</a> ; Early bird rates will be honored to those who register before the early bird pricing ends.
August 2 – 5, 2020	<b>Bluenotes GLOBAL 2020</b> (Pre-conference activities on Aug 2)

Visit [www.bluenotesgroup.com](http://www.bluenotesgroup.com) for full details  
 Or [BNcommunity@explorance.com](mailto:BNcommunity@explorance.com)

## Notes

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**Thank you for attending Bluenotes MENA 2019**