

Mariam Dahbi Zniber, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Pedagogy | Institute of Education Sciences (ISE) | Université Mohammed VI Polytechnique (UM6P)

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PROFILE

Education researcher focused on strengthening the quality of teaching and learning in Morocco, with over 10 years of applied research and policy advisory work spanning the Moroccan Ministry of Education, international organizations, and multilateral institutions. Expertise in early childhood education, multilingual literacy, and curriculum design, grounded in a Harvard Ph.D. in Human Development, Learning, and Teaching. Track record of designing and leading mixed-methods studies, training field teams, and facilitating multilingual stakeholder processes to improve pedagogical quality and learning outcomes. Author of peer-reviewed publications on language and literacy development, technical and policy reports for USAID and ICESCO, and a book chapter on early grade Arabic reading in Morocco. Current research centers on education quality in multilingual, postcolonial contexts — with a focus on early childhood, the science of reading in Arabic, competence-based pedagogy, and evidence-informed policy design.

KEY EXPERTISE

- Education Quality and Pedagogical Reform in Morocco
- Early Childhood Education and Preschool Policy
- Multilingual Literacy and the Science of Reading in Arabic
- Competence-Based Curriculum and Assessment
- Evidence-Informed Education Policy
- Arts in Education and Human Development

EDUCATION

Harvard University, Graduate School of Education | 2022

Ph.D. in Education (Human Development, Learning, and Teaching)

- Dissertation: An Ecological Framework to Support Multilingual Learners in Preschool Classrooms
- Committee: Catherine Snow; Meredith Rowe; Paola Uccelli

Harvard University, Graduate School of Education | 2015

Ed.M. in Language and Literacy

- Concentration: Language and Literacy

Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane | 2011

B.A. in International Studies (Minor: Business Administration)

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENT

Assistant Professor of Pedagogy | Present

Institute of Education Sciences (ISE), Université Mohammed VI Polytechnique (UM6P), Rabat, Morocco

EDUCATION RESEARCH AND CONSULTING EXPERIENCE

Co-Principal Investigator, Morocco Innovation and Evaluation Lab (MEL) | Apr 2025-present

Collaboration between UM6P, J-PAL, and Harvard Center for International Development

- Co-led a confidential diagnostic study on early childhood education; managed consultant onboarding and coordinated the data collection team.
- Led qualitative data collection design and implementation, including observer training, field tool adaptation, site visits, and interviews.
- Applied a competence-based lens to assess early childhood pedagogy and quality indicators, aligned with Morocco's national transversal skills framework.
- Co-authored a bilingual final report synthesizing field findings and team analysis to inform future research and policy planning.

Senior Research Advisor, Morocco Bridge to Middle School Project | 2023-2025

FHI 360 / USAID, Morocco

- Led a national needs assessment on upper primary science curriculum implementation across three regions, combining literature review, classroom observations, and teacher interviews to inform Ministry decision-making.
- Authored a literature review on effective science instruction for upper primary levels (internal technical report, 2024).
- Conducted a field study on inquiry-based science instruction in upper primary classrooms (internal qualitative study report, 2024).
- Designed and piloted a classroom observation tool for the scaled-up English curriculum; subsequently adopted by the Moroccan Ministry of Education for assessment and teacher training purposes.
- Advised on piloting and refinement of middle school teaching and learning materials in Arabic, science, and English.
- Designed implementation research on Grade 7 English curriculum implementation and a teaching support package for upper primary science (both paused due to Stop-Work Order).

Education Expert, Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) | Feb-Jul 2024

Rabat; ICESCO 3rd Ministerial Conference on Education and ICESCO-OECD PISA Conference

- Coordinated the scientific committee's preparation for the ICESCO 3rd Ministerial Conference on Education.
- Contributed content to the ICESCO-OECD PISA Conference (Baku, Azerbaijan), with a focus on PISA adaptation in the Islamic world; supported facilitation of plenary sessions.
- Assisted in drafting speeches, briefing notes for senior leadership; advised on strategic change priorities in the education sector.

Senior Associate, School Readiness Consulting (SRC) | 2022-2023

United States. Selected projects:

- North Carolina Department of Child Development and Early Education: stakeholder engagement study (project support; report writing).
- Heising-Simons Foundation: national evaluation of the policy advocacy portfolio (project support; report writing).
- Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute: psychometric support and instrument development (Equity in Early Learning Assessment).
- Robins Foundation: project management and support (Early Childhood Evaluation Framework refresh).
- National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine: literature review and report writing.

Cabinet Member (Short-Term Consultant), Moroccan Minister of National Education | 2022

Morocco

- Provided expertise on universal preschool policy and strategy development.

Cabinet Member and Policy Advisor to the Moroccan Minister of National Education and Professional Training | 2016

Morocco

- Advised on language and literacy development and instruction; supported curriculum development initiatives.
- Co-developed a pilot middle-school French language curriculum.
- Developed and maintained relationships with institutional partners; represented the Minister at official events.

Research Assistant / Research Coordinator | 2015-2022

Harvard University (HGSE and affiliated partnerships)

- Universal PreK Research Policy Partnership with Boston Public Schools, MDRC, and the University of Michigan.
- Language and Music Project (Meredith Rowe).
- Global Learners Project (Paola Uccelli).
- Language for Learning (Paola Uccelli).
- Catalyzing Comprehension through Discussion and Debate (Catherine Snow).

PreK Teacher | 2013-2014

Al Akhawayn School of Ifrane, Morocco

Instructional Assistant (Grades 2 and 5) | 2011-2013

Rabat American School, Morocco

PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

Peer-reviewed journal articles

Kirby, A. L., **Dahbi, M.**, Surrain, S., Rowe, M. L., & Luk, G. (2023). Music uses in preschool classrooms in the U.S.: A multiple-methods study. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 51(3), 515–529.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-022-01309-2>

Rowe, M. L., Kirby, A. L., **Dahbi, M.**, & Luk, G. (2023). Promoting language and literacy skills through music in early childhood classrooms. *The Reading Teacher*, 76(4), 487–496.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.2155>

Book chapters and edited volumes

Dahbi, M. (2017). From Language Choice to Language Use: Rethinking the Early Grade Arabic Reading Text. In A. Chekayri (Ed.), *Teaching Reading in Arabic: New Approaches* (pp. 165-178). Al Akhawayn University Press. [In Arabic]

Technical reports and selected grey literature

Dahbi, M. (2024). Literature Review: Effective Science Instruction for Upper Primary Levels. USAID / FHI 360 / Ministry of Education Morocco. (Internal technical report).

Dahbi, M. (2024). Field Study Report: Implementation of Inquiry-Based Science Curriculum in Upper Primary. USAID / FHI 360 / Ministry of Education Morocco. (Internal qualitative study report).

Dahbi, M., Stevenson-Garcia, J., & Sharpe, N. (2023). Listening to and Learning from the Community: North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education Stakeholder Engagement Study Community Report. School Readiness Consulting.

Stevenson-Garcia, J., **Dahbi, M.,** Pittman Fields, A., Strueby, S., & Sharpe, N. (2023). Listening and Learning from the Community: North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education Stakeholder Engagement Study Technical Report. School Readiness Consulting.

Valladares Kahn, S., **Dahbi, M.,** Howard, M., et al. (2022). Heising-Simons Foundation Evaluation of the National Policy Advocacy Portfolio. School Readiness Consulting.

Valladares Kahn, S., **Dahbi, M.,** Howard, M., Sharpe, N., Montgomery, G., & Allard Agnamba, L. (2022). Stepping Up to the Plate: How One Foundation Set Out to Examine Its Role in Building an Equitable Early Childhood Field. School Readiness Consulting.

Montoya Avila, A., Hawkinson, L., Curenton, S., Miller, E. K., **Dahbi, M.**, House, S., Tabifor, F., & Manning, M. (2022). Literature Review on Preschool Curriculum Quality for the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. School Readiness Consulting.

PhD dissertation

Dahbi, M. (2022). An Ecological Framework to Support Multilingual Learners in Preschool Classrooms. Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University. <https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.INSTREPOS:37372063>

SELECTED MEDIA

- Interview on education quality in Morocco. *Science et Civilisation* (television). Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3A30uYc-T-c>

INVITED PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS (SELECTED)

- 2026. Organizer and Moderator, “Convergences for Human Development: Aligning Research, Policy, and Practice in Education.” ISE Panel, UM6P Science Week, Benguerir. Panelists: Dr. Koumbou Boly Barry (former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education), Dr. Anna D’Addio (UNESCO GEM Report), Dr. Amin Marei (Harvard GSE), Mrs. Imane Fahli (Moroccan Ministry of Education).
- 2026. Facilitator, Roundtable on “L’éducation préscolaire: socle des apprentissages” [Preschool Education: Foundation for Learning]. 2nd Forum National de l’Enseignant, Rabat (3,500 attendees; under Royal Patronage).
- 2025. Music and Education: Towards a More Harmonious Morocco. Junior Chamber International, Morocco
- 2020. Multilingual Conversations in Early Grade Classrooms. Education in Africa Conference, AUI x UM6P (online).
- 2019. Intercultural Fluency Survey: An Initial Attempt at Measuring U.S. Adolescents’ Attitudes Towards Other Cultures. American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), Washington, DC.
- 2016. Vision 2015-2030: The Moroccan Educational Reform. Education for a Better Morocco Conference, Morocco.
- 2015. Workshop on inter-rater reliability in a qualitative methods practicum (invited by Dr. Robert Selman), Harvard University.
- 2015. Invited lecture on fluency in reading instruction (invited by Dr. Pamela Mason), Harvard University.
- 2015. Invited lecture in statistics (invited by Dr. Terrence Tivnan), Harvard University.

ACADEMIC CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (SELECTED)

- 2021. Music in American Preschool Classrooms. Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development (online).
- 2021. Intercultural Fluency Among U.S. Adolescents: An Exploratory Study. Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (online).
- 2019. Measuring Adolescents’ Attitudes Towards Other Cultures: A Structural Validation Study. Society for Research in Child Development, Baltimore, MD.
- 2018. Rethinking the Early Grade Arabic Reading Text through EGRA, a Leading Measure Still Under Development. Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), Mexico City.
- 2018. Vocabulary Development Across the Preschool Year: Examining Gaps in a Diverse Sample of Dual Language Learners. CIES, Mexico City.

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Dissertation Fellowship, Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS), 2021
- Doctoral Research Travel Grant, Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE), 2019

- Jeanne Chall Reading Lab Doctoral Research Travel Grant, Harvard University, 2018
- Fulbright Scholarship, Moroccan-American Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange, 2014
- Harvard Arab Alumni Association Scholarship, 2014

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Lecturer | 2024

ESSEC Africa

- Courses: Learning Together; Productive Behavior (undergraduate, ~30 students).

Teaching Fellow / Course Staff | 2015-2020

Harvard Graduate School of Education

- How People Learn (Pr. Catherine Snow & Pr. Matthew Miller), Spring 2020.
- Introduction to Statistics for Educational Research (Dr. Hadas Eidelman), Fall 2018 and Fall 2019 (graduate, 100+ students).
- Bilingual Learners: Literacy Development and Instruction (Dr. Paola Uccelli), Fall 2015 and Fall 2018-2019.
- Multi-Modal Learning Analytics (Dr. Bertrand Schneider), Fall 2018.
- Research Practicum: Exploring Quality in Early Childhood Education (Dr. Catherine Snow), Fall 2018-Spring 2019.
- Empirical Methods: Introduction to Statistics for Research (Dr. Terrence Tivnan), Fall 2015 and Fall 2016.
- Reading Instruction and Development (Dr. Pamela Mason), Fall 2015.

Professional Education Workshop Facilitator | 2015-2019

Harvard Program for Professional Education

- The Opportunity of Bilingualism: Serving Today's Young English Language Learners (Dr. Nonie Lesaux) - Oct 2018; Apr 2019; Oct 2019.
- Learning to Talk by Talking (Dr. Catherine Snow) - Dec 2015; Jul 2018; Nov 2018; Jun 2019.
- Learning through Discussion and Disagreement (Dr. Catherine Snow) - May 2017; Aug 2017; Mar 2018; Mar 2019.

Additional teaching roles

- Independent Study Advisor to an Ed.M. student (Ed.M. 2021).
- Thesis Workshop Facilitator, Mind, Brain, Behavior Initiative, Harvard College (2016-2017).
- PreK Teacher, Al Akhawayn School of Ifrane, Morocco (2013-2014).
- Instructional Assistant, Grades 2 and 5, Rabat American School, Morocco (2011-2013).

PROFESSIONAL AND SCHOLARLY SOCIETIES

- Member, American Educational Research Association (AERA)
- Member, Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD)
- Harvard Arab Alumni Association

OTHER AFFILIATIONS

- Harvard Graduate School of Education (Alumna; former research assistant/coordinator and teaching fellow)
- Harvard Alumni in Morocco
- Fulbright Scholar (Moroccan-American Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange)

SERVICE AND PEER REVIEW

- Peer reviewer, Applied Psycholinguistics (2020)

CERTIFICATIONS AND RESEARCH SKILLS

- CLASS Pre-K Observer (2022)
- COEMET Observer (2022)
- CITI - Research with Human Subjects
- Software: Stata, Tableau, CLAN, ATLAS.ti, NVivo
- Observation/assessment tools: MELQO, CLASS Pre-K, COEMET

LANGUAGES

- English, French, Arabic - native-level fluency (oral, reading, and writing)
- Spanish, Amazigh - basic conversational fluency

COLLABORATORS (SELECTED)

- Catherine Snow (Harvard University)
- Meredith Rowe (Harvard University)
- Paola Uccelli (Harvard University)
- Paola Guerrero (University of California, Irvine)
- Fernando Reimers (Harvard University)