

Salam Albustami, PhD

Special Education Specialist | Disability Inclusion & Early Intervention Researcher

| Portage-Trained Practitioner

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Special Education specialist and university lecturer with over 10 years of experience in disability inclusion, early intervention, and special educational needs. Delivers family-centred early intervention, individualized assessment and educational planning, and Training of Trainers programmes for educators, caregivers, and community-based services. Advanced training in the Portage Guide for Early Learning, with sustained applied practice supporting children with Down syndrome, school personnel, and families. Strong academic and applied research background in education and disability.

EDUCATION

- PhD in Special Education, Lahaye University | 2017-2019.
- MA in Educational Administration, An-Najah National University | 2011-2014.
- Diploma in Accounting, Arab Center | 1993-1994.
- BA in Islamic Studies, An-Najah National University | 1982-1986.

CORE QUALIFICATIONS

- Family-centred early intervention and parent/caregiver coaching.
- Developmental needs assessment and individualized educational planning (IEPs).
- Advanced training in the Portage Guide for Early Learning (2016).
- Program and training design; curricula, facilitator materials, practical exercises, and assessment tools.
- Training of Trainers (ToT) and capacity development for educators, parents, caregivers, and frontline personnel.
- Advising and supporting inclusion of persons with disabilities in kindergartens and schools.

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Assistant Professor

An-Najah National University, Faculty of Medicine and Allied Medical Sciences | Nablus, Palestine | 2017-Present

- Delivers coursework across special education, early childhood development, learning disabilities, inclusive education, and child mental health for undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- Designs comprehensive course materials, assessment tools, and blended/online learning resources; regularly updates curricula to reflect current evidence-based practice.
- Conducts and presents peer-reviewed research on Down syndrome, early intervention, and technology-enhanced learning (see Publications).

Trainer

Mothers School Society | Nablus, Palestine | 2019-2025

- Delivers training programmes for educators and caregivers in shadow teaching, learning difficulties, Montessori education, individualized learning, and the CoRT (Cognitive Research Trust) Thinking Programme.
- Trains parents to support children with special needs and prepares individualized evaluation and educational plans for children and families.
- Delivers training on child mental health and effective teaching methods for students with learning difficulties.

Down Syndrome Specialist and Trainer

Project Hope | Nablus, Palestine | 2015-2018

- Supported children with Down syndrome through individualized assessment, educational planning, and developmentally appropriate activities.
- Coached parents and caregivers on home-based strategies for learning, communication, self-help, social participation, and inclusion.
- Trained school staff and community stakeholders to strengthen inclusive practice, coordinating support around the child and family.

Trainer

Swiss World Doctors | Palestine | 2018

- Delivered training for medical and health-sector staff on supporting children with special educational needs and family/educational support strategies.

INNOVATION, DIGITAL LEARNING AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN TRAINING

- Flipped Classroom (2023).
- Arab Programme for Innovation Awareness (2023).
- Modern Assessment Methods in E-Learning (2020).
- Advanced Training Course in Moodle and Zoom (2019).
- Designing E-Learning Courses and Activities (2019).
- Instructional Design and Modern Assessment in E-Learning (2019).
- Advanced Training Course in Computerized Examinations (2019).
- Forty-hour theoretical and applied e-learning training, E-Learning Centre, An-Najah National University.

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

- Data Analysis Using SmartPLS 3 (2020).
- Qualitative Research in Educational Sciences: From Preparation to Publication (2018).
- Advanced Training in the Portage Guide for Early Learning (2016).
- Training of Trainers - ToT (2015).
- Children and Learning Difficulties (2015).
- Reality Creation Training Course (2015).
- Basic Training Workshop on the CORT Programme (2009).
- Financial Management Certificate, Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Foundation (2009).
- Project Management Certificate, Welfare Association, Jerusalem (2005).

SELECTED COURSES TAUGHT

- Childhood Problems and Methods of Behaviour Adjustment for Kindergarten; Learning Difficulties at Kindergarten Level.
- Child Mental Health; Psychological Health for Preschool Children.
- Creative Thinking; Psychological Counselling.
- Inclusive Education; Inclusive Education for Gifted Students.
- Managing a Child's Learning Environment; Integrated Kindergarten Curriculum.
- Child Mental and Language Development; Care for Children with Special Needs.
- Communication and Interpersonal Skills; Skills for Success and Personal Development.

E-LEARNING EXPERIENCE

- Uses e-learning as a complement to face-to-face teaching since 2017.
- Uses Zoom, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, and Moodle for teaching, communication, and assessment.
- Attended workshops on assignment design and computerized and online examination assessment.
- Delivered teaching across fully online semesters during 2019-2026.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Programme planning, training design, facilitation, monitoring, evaluation, and report writing.
- Microsoft Office; Microsoft Teams; Zoom; Google Classroom; Moodle; Smart PLS 3.
- Qualitative and quantitative educational research; evidence review and academic writing.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Prevalence of Violence Among Primary School Students in Palestine: Nablus Governorate as a Case Study. http://iijoe.org/v9/IJJOE_14_02_09_2020.pdf. SAEP-Volume 114_Issue 114_Pages 23-40, (October 2019).
- Experiences of Kindergarten Teachers in Teaching Children with Down Syndrome in Palestine (Nablus Governorate - Case Study). http://iijoe.org/v9/IJJOE_14_02_09_2020.pdf.
- Teaching Mathematics to Students with Down Syndrome in the Basic Stage in Palestine in Light of Experimental Studies and Contemporary Trends. http://iijoe.org/v9/IJJOE_14_02_09_2020.pdf.
- Proposed Special Education Paradigm for Mental Disability People in Palestine in Light of International Trends and Standards. <https://www.aisrp.com/journal/index.php/jeps/article/view/2460/2326>.
- Foreseeing Digital Education and Learning Post COVID-19. http://iijoe.org/v9/IJJOE_14_02_09_2020.pdf. The 55th issue of the Arab Journal of Scientific: (May 2023).
- Attitudes towards Scientific Publishing for Postgraduate Students at the College of Education in AN-Najah National University. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XrDO1HY8MkUvOGWhVdjHHfIO1BVso-q/view>. The 57th issue of the Rihan Journal for Scientific Publishing: (March 2025).

- The Perspective of Workers in Palestinian Civil Society Organizations on the Development of Citizenship among Palestinian Children. <https://hesj.org/ojs/index.php/hesj/article/view/1567>. Humanities and Educational Sciences Journal, No. 49 (2025)

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND WORKING PAPERS

- Virtual Reality Environments as an Innovative Educational Tool for Developing Academic and Cognitive Skills in Students with Down Syndrome: An Analytical Literature Review” Paper presented at the 4th International Conference on Educational Creativity: “Education in the Arab World: Toward a Creative Vision in the Age of Artificial Intelligence” | Tunisia (Nov. 13, 2025).
- Trends in the Use of Virtual Reality (VR) to Develop Emotional Awareness in Children with Down Syndrome: A Systematic Review” Paper presented at the 12th International Conference on Artificial Intelligence, Digital Transformation, and the Humanities, Social, and Applied Sciences | Turkey (Dec. 2–3, 2025).
- Foreseeing Digital Education and Learning Post-COVID-19” Paper presented at the 3rd International Conference on Learning and Teaching in the Digital World, An-Najah National University | Palestine (May 9, 2022).
- Attitudes Towards Scientific Publishing Among Postgraduate Students at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, An-Najah National University” Paper presented at Conference on Scientific Publishing | Jordan (Apr. 28, 2021).
- Teaching Mathematics to Students with Down Syndrome” Paper presented at Special Education Conference: “Toward a Distinguished Service System” | Palestine (Sep. 30, 2020). Prevalence of Violence among Primary School Children in Nablus Governorate Schools - Higher Education Systems Conference, Beirut, Lebanon (2019).
- Prevalence of Violence Among Primary School Children in Nablus Governorate Schools” Paper presented at Higher Education Systems Conference | Beirut, Lebanon (Apr. 17, 2019).
- Early Intervention with Down Syndrome Children: A Personal Experience” Paper presented at Care of Children with Complex Disabilities Conference, ALEH Foundation | Jerusalem (Dec. 19, 2018).

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Earlier finance and administration roles included Financial Advisor, Birzeit University Continuing Education Center (2009-2011); Financial Officer, MPDL (2005-2009); Financial Manager, Health Care Committee (2001-2007); Financial Manager, Mothers School Society (1998-2009); and Accountant, Nablus Zakat Committee (1988-1998). These roles strengthened project administration, budgeting, documentation, accountability, and coordination skills.

LANGUAGES

- Arabic - Native proficiency.
- English - Professional working proficiency.