

Blerim Jashari

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Cognitive Development • Children's Learning • Causal Reasoning • Social Learning • Curiosity and Exploration

Education

Harvard University / Ph.D., Human Development, Learning, and Teaching

2025–present

Cross-registration at MIT Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences. Coursework in Computational Cognitive Science, Social Psychology. Advisor: Elizabeth Bonawitz.

Harvard University / M.A., Psychology (Cognition, Brain & Behavior)

Expected May 2027

Coursework in Cognitive and Social Psychology. Developing a thesis project on whether children ask more questions and learn more when they believe they are interacting with a teacher rather than an AI. Advisor: Tomer Ullman.

Harvard University / Master's, Learning Design, Innovation, and Technology

2025

Completed coursework in Intermediate and Advanced Statistics, Cognitive Development, and the Science of Learning. Co-led the AI Literacy initiative.

Minerva University / B.S., Cognition, Brain, Behavior & Cells, Organisms

2021

Liberal arts college with focus on effective communication and critical thinking. Studied in the United States, England, South Korea, and Germany.

Reports & Publications

Jashari, B., Bass, I., Mills, C., Ullman, T., & Bonawitz, E. (in preparation). *Children learn more when they think their teacher is AI*. Harvard University.

Jashari, B., Sonnert, G., Sunbury, S., & Saddler, P. (in preparation). *Seeing Yourself in Science: Role Models and Students' STEM Identity*. Harvard University.

Jashari, B., Sonnert, G., Sunbury, S., & Saddler, P. (in preparation). *Friendships as a Social Context for STEM Identity*. Harvard University.

Jashari, B., Sonnert, G., Sunbury, S., & Saddler, P. (under review). *The Impact of Pre-College Mentorship on the Development of Students' STEM Identity*. Harvard University.

Connolly, K., **Jashari, B.**, Esch, M., Gashi, A., & Della Libera, L. (report). *A theory of teaching as deploying context-sensitive techniques*. Minerva University.

Jashari, B. (undergraduate thesis). *Deploying active-learning: The role of cold-calling in online active-learning classrooms*. Minerva University.

Presentations (Talks and Posters)

Jashari, B., Sonnert, G., Sunbury, S., & Saddler, P. (2026, August 18–21, forthcoming). The impact of pre-college mentorship on students' STEM identity. European Association for Research on Adolescence, Utrecht, the Netherlands.

Jashari, B., Bass, I., Mills, C., Ullman, T., & Bonawitz, E. (2026, July 17). Children learn more when they think their teacher is AI [Poster presentation]. Workshop in Social Cognitive Development (WISCD), Harvard University.

Majumder, S., **Jashari, B.**, Bass, I., Schulz, L., & Bonawitz, E. (2026, July 17). Is curiosity contagious? A study of social transmission of curiosity [Poster presentation]. Workshop in Social Cognitive Development (WISCD), Harvard University.

Jashari, B., Sonnert, G., Sunbury, S., & Saddler, P. (2026, June 17, forthcoming). The impact of pre-college mentorship on students' STEM identity. The Future of Education — 16th Edition International Conference, Florence, Italy.

Pizza, L., Harrington, Sh., **Jashari, B.**, Song, J., & Thomas, A. (2026, April 10). Do people value plants over non-living entities? The influence of biology knowledge on moral considerations in adults and young children [Symposium Talk]. 2026 Cognitive Development Society (CDS) Meeting, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Jashari, B., Bass, I., Mills, C., Ullman, T., & Bonawitz, E. (2026, April 9). Children ask more questions when they think their teacher is AI [Poster presentation]. 2026 Cognitive Development Society (CDS) Meeting, Children and Technology Pre-Conference Workshop, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Jashari, B., Sonnert, G., Sunbury, S., & Saddler, P. (2025, May 8). The impact of pre-college mentorship on students' STEM identity [Talk]. Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.

Jashari, B., & Kim, D. B. (2025, April 6–9). The functional, critical, and rhetorical AI literacy for students [Presentation]. ASU+GSV Summit, San Diego, California.

Jashari, B., & Esch, M. (2021). A theory of teaching as deploying context-sensitive techniques [Presentation]. Minerva University Summer Research Program, San Francisco, CA.

Connolly, K., **Jashari, B.**, & Esch, M. (2021). A theory of teaching as deploying context-sensitive techniques [Presentation]. Minerva University Faculty Research Presentation.

Jashari, B. (2021). Deploying active-learning: The role of cold-calling in online active-learning classrooms [Talk]. Minerva University Educational Psychology Tutorial.

Jashari, B. (2021, March 2). The role of cold-calling in student engagement and stress in class [Poster presentation]. X-DBER Education Conference.

Ongoing Projects

Question-Asking and Learning with AI Versus Human Teachers

CoCoDev Lab

Part of a project investigating how children ask questions after learning challenging scientific content when told they will interact with either an AI chatbot or a human teacher. Developing study stimuli and procedures, recruiting participants, and running the study.

Belief Revision and Learning Measured with EEG

CoCoDev Lab

Trained in electroencephalography (EEG) and assisting on an ongoing project examining belief revision in children ages 5–9 using a water displacement task. The study compares prediction, explanation, and baseline conditions to understand how children update beliefs.

Research Experience

Graduate Research Assistant / Early Childhood Cognition Lab

MIT, Apr 2026–present

Investigating the development of social curiosity in children ages 4–6 under the supervision of Dr. Laura Schulz.

Graduate Student Researcher / Computational Cognitive and Development Lab

Harvard GSE, Jun 2025–present

Graduate Researcher / Science Education Department

Harvard-Smithsonian, Sep 2024–Jun 2025

Investigated the association between pre-college mentorship and STEM identity among first-year students at minority-serving institutions in the United States.

Graduate Research Assistant / Thomas Lab

Harvard, Sep 2024–May 2025

Conducted research on how children develop moral consideration for plants and nature under the supervision of Dr. Ashley

Thomas and Dr. Lizette Pizza.

Research Intern / Ministry of Education Science Technology and Innovation

Kosovo, Sep 2021–Mar 2022

Researched the impact of screen time on children to inform decisions about curriculum design during the COVID pandemic. Assisted in drafting the national law for early childhood education.

Research Assistant / Affect Regulation and Cognition Lab

Yale, May 2020–Jun 2021

Conducted meta-analysis projects on children's emotion regulation and postpartum depression. Collected data using hundreds of COVID-19 news headlines for sentiment analysis.

Research Assistant of Psychology and Learning / Cognition, Brain, Behavior Faculty

Minerva, May 2020–Sep 2021

Contributed to the development of a new teaching framework informed by cognitive science and psychology under supervision of Dr. Kevin Connolly.

Field Intern / UNICEF

Kosovo, Jun 2019–Sep 2019

Conducted research and data analysis on youth and adolescent development programs. Worked on a literature review on children with disability in Kosovo.

Teaching

Workshop Instructor / Workshop for Educators in India, Telangana University

Mar 2025

Designed and led a workshop on AI in education for university faculty across Telangana, as part of a four-day international webinar co-organized by Telangana University and Harvard Ed.M. Fellows.

Course Designer and Instructor / AI Tools for Learning Design, Harvard GSAS

Jan 2025

Designed and taught a three-day active-learning mini-course on the use and critical evaluation of AI tools in learning design.

Workshop Instructor / PromptED, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Oct 2024

Led a workshop on the use of AI tools.

Instructor / Minerva Baccalaureate High School Program

2021–2024

Taught Algorithmic Thinking, Statistical Reasoning, Biology, and Chemistry, including university-level courses.

Invited Lectures & Guest Speaking

Guest Lecturer / Curiosity in Learning and Development, Harvard University

Fall 2026

Led part of a session introducing curiosity.

Invited Panelist / A Conversation with Experienced LDITers!, Harvard GSE

Fall 2025

Spoke on a panel of Learning Design, Innovation, and Technology alumni for current students in the program.

Expert Panelist / Curiosity in Learning and Development, Harvard University

Fall 2025

Participated as an expert, giving feedback on students' projects.

Training

Curiosity Summer School / Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Germany

Jul 21–24, 2026

Attended the two Neuroscience and Computational Models of Cognition workshops offered as part of the program.

Learning Design

Learning Design Head, AI Literacy Tutorial / Gia Microschool

May–Sep 2025

Designed a school-wide AI literacy tutorial, developing content for both students and academic staff. Working with a team of five students, co-designed a mandatory tutorial centered on three core dimensions: functional AI literacy, critical AI literacy,

and rhetorical AI literacy.

Learning Design Fellow / Harvard Graduate School of Education
Co-designed the AI literacy tutorial for all incoming HGSE students (approximately 700 students), a mandatory requirement prior to the start of coursework.

Apr–Jun 2025

Course Designer and Co-Instructor / Harvard GSAS
Designed and co-taught a three-day active learning mini-course focused on the use and critical evaluation of AI tools in learning design. The course received over 100 applications for 20 available spots.

Dec 2024–Jan 2025

Curriculum Designer and Instructor / Elite Open School
Co-designed high school courses including Introduction to Esports, Business of Esports, and Ecosystem of Esports. Taught STEM courses including biology, algebra, and pre-calculus. Coordinated students across California, Japan, and South Korea.

Jun 2021–Aug 2024

Curriculum Designer / Minerva Baccalaureate
Co-designed interdisciplinary, active-learning courses for secondary students across North America and Asia, contributing over 100 lesson plans and 15 interdisciplinary assignments.

Dec 2022–May 2023

Chemistry Curriculum Designer / School of Humanity
Designed two chemistry units for a globally distributed high school population, including lesson plans, online simulations, and assessments.

Jun–Sep 2024

Professional Experience

Data Science Assistant / Data & Visualization Lab, Harvard University
Support graduate students at Harvard Graduate School of Education with data science and data visualization, from study design and analysis to presenting results.

Oct 2026–present

AI+ Learning Differences Initiative Assistant / Harvard GSE
Help organize a two-day co-design hackathon for 200 participants, including people with learning differences and students from across the Boston area, supporting the website, participant data, and logistics.

Aug 2026–present

Student Services Manager / Minerva University
Managed internal technology systems and student information processes, coordinating with teams across five global cities and supporting students studying in Berlin, San Francisco, Hyderabad, Seoul, and Taipei.

Jun 2023–Jul 2024

Accomplishments & Awards

Mind Brain Grant	Mind Brain Interdisciplinary Grant, Harvard University (\$6,000)	2026
Travel Grant	Curiosity Summer School, Göttingen, Germany (€500)	2026
HGSE Grant	Professional Development Grant, Harvard Graduate School of Education (\$550)	2025
Fulbright Scholar	Fulbright Grant, U.S. Department of State (\$80,000)	2024
Gold Medal	Golden Climate International Olympiad, Nairobi, Kenya (participants competing from 30 countries)	2016
Silver Medal	ISWEEEP International Olympiad, Houston, Texas (participants competing from 70 countries)	2016
Bronze Medal	Genius International Olympiad, Oswego, New York (participants competing from 90 countries)	2016

Media Coverage

Radio Dukagjini (2026, June 20). [Interview on children's curiosity research](#) [Broadcast interview].

Fulbright Kosovo (2025, August 30). [Fulbright Foreign Student Program Master's Degree Spotlight: Blerim Jashari](#).
Hyderabad Mail (2025, March 21). [Telangana University and Harvard collaborate on 'Reimagining Higher Education in India'](#).
Harvard Graduate School of Education News (2025, January 30). [J-Term Mini Course Helps Educators Think Differently About AI](#).

Mentorship

* Mentored an honors thesis or research project.

Thalia Stavropoulos	Harvard College (Fall 2026–present)
Kelly Gurdeniz	Harvard Extension School (Jun 2026–present)
Johanna Setiawan*	Harvard GSE (Jun 2026–present)
Subhashree Majumder*	Harvard GSE (Spring 2026–present)
Sophia Zhang	Harvard GSE (Fall 2025–present)
Arzu Abay Gurz	Harvard GSE (Fall 2025, Spring 2026)
Dilnaz Zhalmagambetova	Harvard GSE (Fall 2025, Spring 2026)
Gertrude Ncube	Harvard College (Summer 2025)
Justin Oh	Gia Microschool (Summer 2025)
Joshua Kim	Gia Microschool (Summer 2025)
Hajun Kang	Gia Microschool (Summer 2025)
Daniel Hwang	Gia Microschool (Summer 2025)

Technical Skills

Programming	Python, R, LaTeX
Statistical Methods	Regression Analysis, ANOVA, Factor Analysis, Meta-Analysis, Probabilistic Modeling
Research Tools	Qualtrics
Software	Microsoft Office, Google Suite, CANVAS, Moodle
Languages	English (fluent), Albanian (fluent), Turkish (conversational), German (A2)