CAHE Workshop Conference 2025 Program:

Time	Activity	Venue NAB
08:00-09:00	**Registration and Welcome Coffee**	2 floor
09:00-09:30	**Opening Ceremony**	Hall 1
09:30-10:15	**Plenary Speech** Dr Kenneth R. Bartlett, University of Minnesota Improving University Student Engagement through Faculty Engagement	Hall 1
10:15-10:30	Break	2 floor
10:30-12:00	**Workshop 1** Dr. Juldyz Smagulova & Olga Karpushina, MA The Silent Decline: Understanding and Addressing the Global Reading Skills Crisis in Higher Education	Hall 1
12:00-12:15	Break	2 floor
12:15-13:45	**Workshop 2** Dr. Rustam Atadjanov Beyond the Surface: Critical Reading and Evaluation Skills for the Age of Information Overload	Hall 1
13:45-14:30	Lunch & Networking	--
14:30-16:00	**Workshop 3** Dr. Sham Haidar Evidence-Based Explicit Instruction for Teaching Reading and Literacy Skills in Academic Argumentation	Hall 1
16:00-16:30	Break	2 floor
16:30-18:00	**Workshop 4** Karina Narymbetova, CSc & Yekaterina Rudenko, MA Scaffolding Academic Reading through Engaging Task Design and Text Evaluation	Hall 1
18:00-18:30	**Closing Ceremony**	Hall 1

About CAHE

The Central Asia Higher Education (CAHE) Workshop Conference is an annual platform hosted by the College of Human Sciences and Education at KIMEP University that brings together educators and scholars to engage with pressing pedagogical challenges in the region's higher education systems.

Unlike traditional academic conferences centered on one-sided presentations, CAHE adopts an interactive, workshop-based format. Each session emphasizes practical application, collaborative dialogue, and the co-construction of pedagogical solutions informed by research and practice.

The conference was created in response to a widening gap between global educational research and the realities of teaching in Central Asia. It seeks to bridge this divide by fostering regionally relevant academic conversations that acknowledge local institutional, cultural, and policy contexts.

CAHE is guided by three goals:
1. Promote dialogue grounded in Central Asian higher education realities.
2. Build pedagogical capacity through evidence-based training.
3. Cultivate collaboration across institutions and disciplines.

With its focus on active learning and regional relevance, CAHE offers a distinctive space where educational theory and classroom practice converge.

CAHE 2025 Theme: The Reading/Literacy Skills Crisis in Higher Education

The 2025 CAHE Workshop Conference focuses on a growing problem many educators have begun to recognize in their classrooms: the decline in students' reading and academic literacy skills. If you have noticed students avoiding assigned texts, struggling to follow complex arguments, or producing weaker written work, this theme will speak directly to your experience.

Studies from both global and regional contexts confirm the trend. Students are increasingly reading at a surface level. They rely on summaries, skim rather than analyze, and rarely engage with full-length academic texts. This shift has been accelerated by the rise of AI-powered tools. Many students now turn to these tools to generate responses or summarize content instead of processing the material themselves. When this happens, critical thinking and independent academic writing begin to weaken.

In Central Asia, the challenge is made worse by limited support for reading as a structured academic skill. Students are often assumed to be proficient readers, but few courses provide explicit instruction or guidance in how to approach complex texts.

This year's conference encourages you to consider how this issue affects your students and your teaching. It offers research-based strategies that can help you strengthen students' engagement

with reading in ways that are realistic and context-specific. The focus is on practical solutions that you can begin applying in your own work.

Conference Goal and Format

- Main Goal: Provide research-based strategies to identify and address the decline in students' academic reading and literacy skills.
- Focus: Move from awareness to practical, classroom-ready interventions.
- Format: One-day intensive event.
- Components:
  - Keynote address
  - Four expert-led workshops
  - Each workshop runs for 90 minutes and is repeated to ensure all participants attend all sessions
  - Built-in time for group discussions and peer exchange
- Approach: Combines conceptual insight with hands-on, solution-focused activities

Keynote Speaker

We are honored to welcome **Dr. Kenneth R. Bartlett**, Professor of Human Resource Development and Hellervik Chair in Leadership and Adult Career Development at the University of Minnesota, as the keynote speaker for the 2025 CAHE Workshop Conference.

With over three decades of experience in workforce development and academic leadership, Dr. Bartlett brings deep insight into the intersection of faculty development, institutional leadership, and student learning outcomes. He has worked with organizations in more than 40 countries and currently serves as a senior academic in the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development at the University of Minnesota.

Keynote Address: Improving University Student Engagement through Faculty Engagement

In his keynote, Dr. Bartlett will explore the link between student reading habits and faculty engagement. Drawing on research evidence, he will show how low motivation, poor study habits, and mismatched expectations between students and faculty contribute to the reading skills crisis. He argues that fostering stronger faculty engagement is key to improving student outcomes. The presentation will offer actionable strategies to enhance engagement across both levels and highlight the institutional conditions needed to support these efforts.

Dr. Bartlett's keynote situates the reading crisis not only as a student issue, but as a shared responsibility that requires commitment from faculty and leadership alike. His contribution sets the tone for a day focused on practical, research-based solutions.

Workshop 1

Title: *The Silent Decline: Understanding and Addressing the Global Reading Skills Crisis in Higher Education*

Facilitators:

- **Dr. Juldyz Smagulova**, Professor of Sociolinguistics, Dean of the College of Human Sciences and Education, KIMEP niversity

- **Olga Karpushina, MA**, Senior Lecturer in TESOL, College of Human Sciences and Education, KIMEP University

Abstract

This workshop addresses the growing decline in university students' academic reading skills, as shown by international assessments such as PISA and NAEP. Contributing factors include digital distractions, shifting curricular demands, and reduced reading stamina. Dr. Juldyz Smagulova will explore the global and regional scope of the crisis and its cognitive, technological, and educational causes. Olga Karpushina will then present practical strategies to foster deep reading, strengthen engagement, and support sustainable reading habits. The session concludes with collaborative group work to localize solutions within participants' own institutional contexts.

Session Objectives:

- Understand global and regional data on the decline of reading skills.

- Explore systemic, cognitive, and technological causes of the crisis.

- Share and evaluate practical classroom interventions.

- Reflect on local institutional challenges and opportunities.

- Build a collaborative foundation for future solutions.

Expected Outcomes:

- A shared understanding of the reading crisis and its root causes.

- Concrete pedagogical tools for improving student reading engagement.

- Increased awareness among faculty of their own and their students' role in reshaping reading culture.

- Foundations for institutional collaboration and continued professional development.

Workshop Focus and Structure:

- **Part 1: Framing the Crisis** *(Dr. Juldyz Smagulova)*

  o Overview of global and regional literacy trends (PISA, NAEP, PIRLS)

  o Impact of digital media on attention and comprehension

  o Curriculum changes affecting reading stamina and motivation

  o Case studies from international and Central Asian university settings

- **Part 2: Rebuilding Reading Practices** *(Olga Karpushina, MA)*

  o Cognitive framework for deep reading (relevance realization)

  o Classroom strategies including annotation, reading logs, and discussion tasks

  o Personalizing and localizing reading materials

  o Promoting social learning through peer discussion and oral responses

- **Part 3: Group Activities and Discussion**

  o Small-group analysis of the reading crisis in participants' institutions

  o Exchange of challenges and current practices

  o Whole-group discussion on actionable next steps

- **Part 4: Wrap-Up**

  o Summary of key takeaways

  o Preview of follow-up workshops or institutional initiatives

Relevance to the Conference Theme:

This workshop offers both a diagnostic framework and practical teaching strategies to address the reading crisis in higher education. It supports faculty in recognizing systemic causes and equips them with tools to improve student engagement and comprehension through evidence-informed methods.

Facilitator Backgrounds:

Dr. Juldyz Smagulova holds a PhD in Sociolinguistics from King's College London. She has published widely in the fields of bilingualism, language policy, and sociolinguistics. At KIMEP University, she teaches courses on second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, and bilingual education.

Olga Karpushina is a DELTA-certified TESOL professional and a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh. With over 27 years of experience, she has taught in the U.S., Canada, Russia, and Kazakhstan, specializing in student-centered approaches to English language instruction.

Workshop 2

Title: *Evidence-Based Explicit Instruction for Teaching Reading and Literacy Skills in Academic Argumentation*

Facilitator:

- **Dr. Sham Haidar**, Associate Professor of Education, College of Human Sciences and Education, KIMEP University

Abstract:

This workshop focuses on using explicit, evidence-based instruction to develop students' academic reading and critical analysis skills. Participants will explore structured approaches for teaching argumentation in academic texts, including how to identify claims, evaluate evidence, and support student reasoning. The session combines theory with hands-on activities, offering adaptable tools for analyzing and teaching complex texts. By the end of the session, participants will leave with practical strategies for scaffolding academic literacy in their own classrooms.

Session Objectives:

- Identify main claims and arguments in academic texts using scanning strategies

- Apply explicit instructional techniques to analyze claims, evidence, and reasoning

- Design scaffolding tasks to support comprehension of complex academic discourse

- Practice interactive teaching methods for developing students' critical reading skills

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased capacity to guide students in analyzing academic arguments

- Practical tools for teaching the structure of claims, evidence, and reasoning

- Deeper understanding of how to scaffold reading in diverse learning contexts

- Participant-generated activities for immediate use in academic literacy instruction

Workshop Focus and Structure:

- **Part 1: Introduction & Theoretical Foundations**

    o Overview of evidence-based explicit instruction and its relevance to literacy

    o Challenges students face in reading academic argumentation

    o Review of supporting research on instructional strategies

- **Part 2: Deconstructing Academic Argumentation**

    o Guided analysis using the CARS model of academic writing

    o Identifying claims, evidence, warrants, and reasoning structures

    o Group activity: Apply analytical strategies to selected texts

- **Part 3: Scaffolding Critical Reading Skills**

    o Techniques for modeling and guided practice

    o Tools such as think-alouds, graphic organizers, and annotation

    o Task design: Create scaffolding activities for classroom use

- **Part 4: Interactive Teaching Demonstrations**

    o Small group teaching practice using explicit instruction

    o Peer feedback and discussion on adaptation for varied student groups

Relevance to the Conference Theme:

This workshop directly addresses the reading and literacy skills crisis by offering structured, research-based methods for teaching students how to read academic texts critically. It emphasizes practical, classroom-ready strategies that support the development of deeper comprehension and reasoning.

Facilitator Background:

Dr. Sham Haidar is an Associate Professor of Education at KIMEP University with more than 20 years of experience in TESOL, sociolinguistics, and language policy. His work explores the intersection of language, identity, and power, with a focus on English language education in non-English-speaking contexts. He has led research and development projects with the U.S. Department of State, USAID, and the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. His publications appear in international journals and edited volumes.

Workshop 3

Title: *Beyond the Surface: Critical Reading and Evaluation Skills for the Age of Information Overload*

Facilitator:

• **Dr. Rustam Atadjanov**, Associate Professor and Associate Dean, School of Law, KIMEP University

Abstract:

In an age where information is abundant but often unreliable, the real challenge lies in evaluating its credibility, relevance, and intent. This workshop focuses on developing students' critical reading and evaluation skills in the context of higher education, with particular relevance to the fields of law, humanities, and the social sciences. Participants will explore how algorithm-driven content, confirmation bias, and unchecked information flow contribute to shallow comprehension. Through hands-on activities using academic and media texts, the session demonstrates how to teach fact-

checking, source analysis, and contextual interpretation. The workshop emphasizes that passive reading is no longer sufficient in a world where misinformation can influence public opinion, policy, and legal outcomes. It offers educators practical strategies to cultivate deeper intellectual engagement and restore academic rigor in their classrooms.

Session Objectives:

- To develop participants' ability to critically engage with academic and media texts;

- To build habits of fact-checking and source triangulation;

- To identify and counter common traps of information overload: bias, false authority, and superficial comprehension;

- To reinforce the responsibility of intellectuals, especially in law and humanities, to uphold analytical depth.

Expected Outcomes:

- Toolkit of techniques for teaching and modeling critical reading

- Clear understanding of the risks of shallow analysis in academic and public discourse

- Strategies to embed evaluation habits into classroom routines and institutional culture

- Strengthened regional commitment to information ethics and analytical rigor

Workshop Focus and Structure:

- **Part 1: Case Study Analysis**

    o Close reading of academic and media excerpts (e.g., law, humanitarian reports)

    o Group evaluation of credibility, argument framing, and evidence

- **Part 2: Bias and Framing Drill**

    o Identify linguistic markers of bias in headlines and short texts

    o Discussion on implicit messaging and agenda-setting

- **Part 3: Fact-Checking Challenge**

    o Participants verify claims using academic databases and trusted fact-checking tools

    o Brief presentations and discussion on research process

- **Part 4: Strategy Building Discussion**

  o Design classroom strategies (e.g., reading checklists, media literacy tasks)

  o Share practices for embedding critical evaluation in curriculum

Relevance to the Conference Theme:

This workshop expands the scope of the literacy crisis by addressing how critical reading is compromised by digital saturation and algorithm-driven consumption. It offers educators concrete methods to guide students beyond passive reading toward deeper, more responsible engagement with texts.

Facilitator Background:

Rustam Atadjanov, LLB, LLM, Dr. iur., PhD, is Associate Professor and Associate Dean at KIMEP University School of Law, Almaty, Kazakhstan. He is an editor and co-editor in several academic books and periodicals including the Central Asian Yearbook of International Law and International Relations, the Journal of International Peacekeeping, the Ukrainian Law Review, and the Journal of Humanity, Peace and Justice. His areas of expertise and research include public international law, international human rights law, international criminal law, international humanitarian law, diplomatic and consular law, law of treaties, theory of law and state, constitutional law, criminal law, and more. At the School of Law, Dr. Atadjanov teaches Public Law and International Law-related courses.

Workshop 4

Title: *Scaffolding Academic Reading through Engaging Task Design and Text Evaluation*

Facilitators:

- **Karina Narymbetova**, Assistant Professor, College of Human Sciences and Education, KIMEP University

- **Yekaterina Rudenko, MA**, Senior Lecturer, College of Human Sciences and Education, KIMEP University

Abstract:

This workshop addresses the reading and literacy crisis in higher education by focusing on two core areas: designing text-driven reading tasks and evaluating reading complexity. The first half introduces the Text-Driven Approach (TDA), which promotes affective, reflective, and analytical engagement with texts through sequenced classroom activities. The second half presents tools for assessing text difficulty and student engagement using both quantitative readability metrics and qualitative criteria such as genre, density, and cultural assumptions. Participants will leave with adaptable strategies to select appropriate materials, foster deeper reading, and support learners with diverse needs and academic goals.

Session Objectives:

- Apply the Text-Driven Approach to foster personal and analytical engagement with texts

- Use tools to assess reading comprehension, engagement, and learner strategies

- Evaluate the complexity of academic texts using mixed measures

- Align reading materials with learner profiles and academic expectations

Expected Outcomes:

- Familiarity with task-based methods to scaffold reading comprehension

- Practical experience using text complexity tools and engagement measurement strategies

- Clear framework for designing reading tasks aligned with student needs

- Expanded toolkit for supporting deep reading in various disciplines

Workshop Focus and Structure:

- **Part 1: Warm-Up and Orientation**

    o Icebreaker and initial discussion to establish a shared focus

- **Part 2: Unpacking the Text-Driven Approach**

    o Explore core principles of the approach (Tomlinson, 2023)

    o Identify components that support reflective and analytical reading

- **Part 3: Demystifying Reading Complexity**

  o Introduce tools for assessing text complexity

  o Use of readability metrics and qualitative text features

- **Part 4: From Text to Task and Learner Engagement**

  o Demonstrate task sequencing around authentic academic texts

  o Discuss reading response journals, self-reflection logs, and rubrics

  o Share strategies for monitoring and supporting learner engagement

Relevance to the Conference Theme:

This session provides a foundational approach to student-text engagement, complementing workshops focused on argumentation and evaluation. By equipping educators with tools for task design and text selection, it contributes to broader efforts to rebuild academic reading stamina and literacy in higher education.

Facilitator Backgrounds:

Karina Narymbetova holds a Candidate of Philological Sciences degree in Literature from al-Farabi KazNU and an MA in TESOL from KIMEP University. Her research interests include instructional materials development, textbook evaluation, and education policy.

Yekaterina Rudenko is a Senior Lecturer with an MA in TESOL. Her work focuses on ESL/EFL methodology, second language teacher training, and technology-enhanced language learning.