

Laila Lamani, Teacher of the Year for the Utah Foreign Language Association, teaches Arabic and French to 7th-12th graders at West High School in Salt Lake City, Utah. She holds a Master of Art in second language acquisition and teaching and a Bachelor of Art in political science with a minor in French from Brigham Young University (BYU). Laila started her career teaching at the college level. She taught at BYU, the University of Utah, Salt Lake Community College, and Middlebury College in Vermont. She also served as director of the Startalk Arabic student program at BYU, a federal grant program funded by the National Security Agency.

Laila was a finalist for the 2020 Teacher of the Year Award for the Salt Lake School District. Laila is a faculty advisor for many student clubs at West High that promote diversity and highlight students' backgrounds and abilities. During her 14 years of teaching for the Salt Lake City School District, she developed the curriculum for the Arabic language program and was part of a team that reviewed and developed the French language program curriculum. Laila has served as president of the Utah Arabic Teachers Association. Her students' language achievements have been recognized at state, national, and international levels.

Laila strives to give every one of her students the chance to write their own success story. She strongly believes in the power of building meaningful relationships with students and their families to have a better understanding of their backgrounds and interests. To her, teaching a foreign language is a privilege that allows her to guide the students towards drawing connections between language, culture, history and other disciplines.

Nelson Mandela said "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart." Laila loves hearing from former students about how they have experienced this saying through different situations by applying their foreign language skills.

[Candidate Video](#)