



# HIGH IMPACT PRACTICES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Evidence from Digital and Physical Learning Environments



Scholarship of Teaching & Learning  
Annual Conference 2021 | Online



مركز الابتكار التربوي  
Center for Educational  
Innovation

ZU  
CEI

# OUR SCOPUS INDEXED JOURNAL

*Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives* is a peer reviewed, Open Access journal, which focuses on all aspects of Higher Education research with a regional focus on the Gulf, but with global relevance and readership.

LTHE aims to present and discuss issues and research of relevance to university and college educators in the Arab Gulf Region. LTHE is a refereed journal published by Emerald Publishing Group. The journal is intended to be of relevance to people teaching in any discipline, or supporting learning in other ways, in higher education in the Gulf, although the readership is worldwide.



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# ABOUT THE CEI

The Center for Educational Innovation (CEI) is driven by:

- Connecting** faculty, research and practice
- Evolving** efforts to meet emerging professional learning needs
- Innovating** learning and teaching experiences

## Our Vision

To empower faculty to enhance learning experiences in ways that are responsive to a dynamic and evolving higher education context.

As a result of interactions with the CEI, faculty are supported to improve student learning experiences within the ZU educational context. Faculty are able to:

- Implement new practices in course design and assessment.
- Incorporate a scholarly approach to teaching and learning.
- Reflect critically on their teaching practice.
- Contribute to an academic community which challenges and critiques current practice.
- Experiment with pedagogical interventions to increase student engagement.
- Explore new ideas in learning and teaching.
- Identify, evaluate and integrate appropriate tools for the purpose of enhancing learning and teaching.

# Message from the Provost

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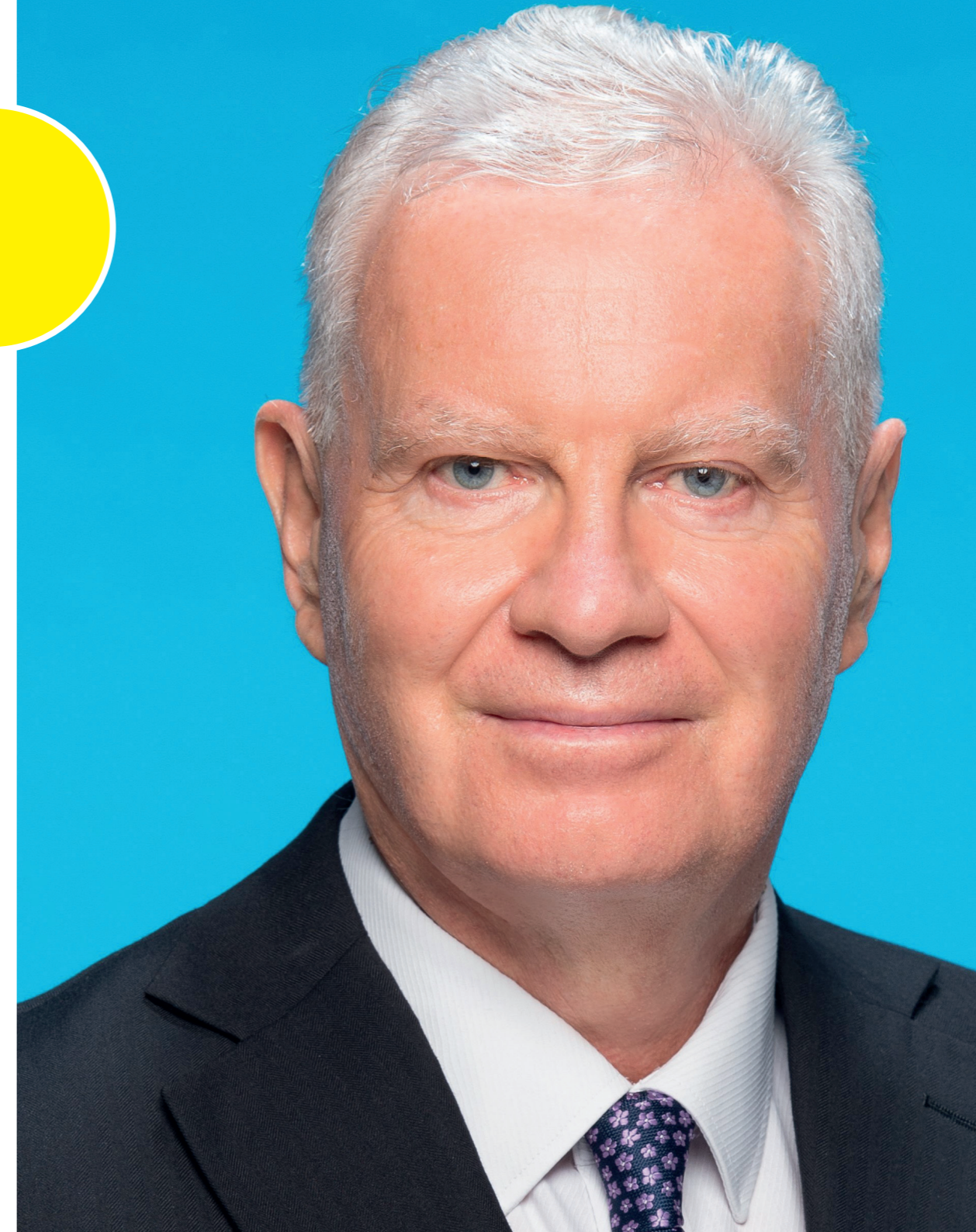
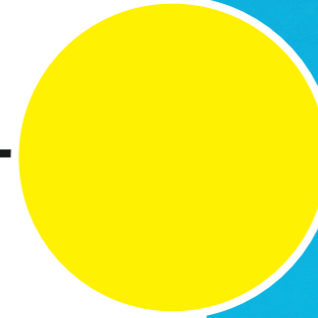
I am delighted to welcome you to the 6th Annual Conference of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. The focus, High Impact Practices for Student Success, is true to the ethos of SoTL – the sharing of evidence-based best practices for enhancing student learning.

Using classroom-based SoTL inquiries to measure the impact of teaching approaches on student learning, is of particular importance this year as we underwent the sudden shift to Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning during the pandemic. It is now time to reflect on and examine what worked and what lessons we have learned from this experience.

SoTL 2021 is the perfect platform for sharing research and discussing best practices both from digital and physical learning environments. I hope you take advantage of this opportunity to engage with the presenters and start conversations of your own about these important issues as we transition out of the pandemic.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Center for Educational Innovation (CEI) for organising this event and for continuing to be instrumental in showcasing and promoting best practices in higher education.

Clayton MacKenzie  
Provost  
Zayed University, UAE



# Message from the Office of Research

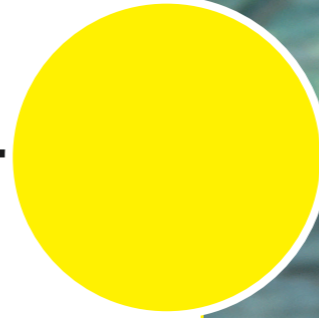
The theme of this year's Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Conference is both old and new. It is old because finding the practices that will have the greatest impact on student success is what teaching is all about. This is a large part of the reason why we embarked on academic careers in the first place. But the theme is also new because of the changing context of higher education. None of us could have predicted the disruptions that the pandemic would bring to our normal educational practices, whether teaching or research.

We might have had an easier time, however, predicting at least some of the creative responses that faculty developed, because some of these innovations were already in the works. That's the nature of education—ongoing innovation in the service of an enduring ideal. Trends that were already appearing prior to the pandemic disruption will now increase in speed and impact, as the development and refinement of practices that will contribute to student success in a dramatically changed environment have taken on new urgency.

The fact that there are participants from nearly two dozen countries indicates that this focus on transforming the educational experience concerns educators throughout the world. We are all asking the same question: How can we be better at what we do?

Thank you for your participation in this conference, and for your dedication to one of the noblest professions of all.

Michael Allen  
Assistant Provost for Research  
Office of Research  
Zayed University, UAE



## Message from the Conference Chair

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 6th Annual Conference of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning hosted by the Center for Educational Innovation at Zayed University, Dubai, UAE.

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) is a field of research and study that aims to improve teaching and learning in the higher education context. Engaging in SoTL is considered as the most effective and transformative method of teacher professional development because SoTL practitioners inform their practice by the research that they conduct in their own classrooms. SoTL research is always carried out in naturalistic environments and when shared with others who are working in similar contexts and facing similar challenges in the classroom, it can be extremely powerful in developing individuals and bringing about change on a large scale by increasing the quality of teaching and learning in higher education institutions.

SoTL 2021 features 36 oral presentations that focus on practical examples and tools of teaching interventions. Each presentation is a classroom-based inquiry with the ultimate aim to inform practice and promote evidence-based teaching. Given the shift to online teaching and learning during the recent pandemic, it is no surprise that the majority of the papers address issues in online teaching and learning and provide useful insights from different perspectives. This year the presenters and attendees of SoTL 2021 tuned in from 24 different countries making this year's event the most international so far!

Finally, a huge thank you to the CEI team: CJ Davison, Michael Pazinas, Nicholas Yates, Ghalya Al Suwaidi, Samar Shamia and Aisha AlShaheen. A special thank you to Dr. Wafa Zoghbor who was instrumental in helping us set up the virtual event.

Thank you for being part of SoTL 2021.

Christina Gitsaki  
Research Coordinator  
Center for Educational Innovation  
Zayed University, UAE



# The Cambridge Higher Education Consortium

## The Cambridge Higher Education Consortium

During Covid 19 lockdown, Cambridge Assessment launched a new platform for Higher Education institutions in the Middle East and Africa called “The Cambridge Higher Education Consortium”. The main aim of this consortium is to increase teaching effectiveness and to promote and share best practices during and beyond the COVID-19 lockdown.

### Objectives:

- Increasing effectiveness through sharing best practices.
- Proposing intervention solutions
- Webinars and Professional Development to practitioners
- Impact Research
- Expand market presence and outreach
- Maintain and create new recognition opportunities in Higher Education

### Institutional Membership criteria:

Members of the Consortium should:

- be recognised in their countries
- have a minimum of 500 students enrolled at the date of joining
- have a research agenda as part of the Institutions’ strategic plan.
- deliver the majority of its programmes in English.



**Cambridge Assessment  
English**

Higher Education Consortium



**Hisham Alsaghbini is the Senior Regional Recognition Manager META, Cambridge Assessment English.**

Prof. ALSaghbini comes with more than 15 years of international experience. He started his career as researcher at various institutions in the United Kingdom. Hisham designed various inclusive education and employment programmes for people with special needs in the UK and the UAE and published a number of publications on Learning approaches and assessment techniques.

Hisham holds a Bachelor in Business, a Masters in Strategy in Education and his doctorate was on Inclusiveness in Education and bridging the (under)achievement gap in Higher Education in the UK.

# Measuring Study Style and Resilience using CPSQ



This talk explains the science behind a dynamic, online questionnaire that measures non-academic factors that support students' success. It will offer examples of how it has been used in higher education.

**Lyn Dale, Assessment Psychologist and Senior Assessment Manager - CPSQ**

Lyn is an expert in the design, validation and use of personality and behavioural assessment. She specialist knowledge is how to use assessment with coaching and mentoring to improve student motivation, wellbeing and learning success. She has an MSc in Occupational Psychology and is an ILM trained coach.

# Cambridge Higher Education Consortium Conference 2021

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES POST PANDEMIC

**03 November 2021**  
09:00 - 17:00 (UAE Time)



Higher Education Consortium

Registration  
[bit.ly/heconsortium](https://bit.ly/heconsortium)



# International Reach of SoTL 2021, UAE





# LIST OF PRESENTERS

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Abdurrahman Almekhlafi	Curriculum and Instruction, Education, UAE University	UAE	<a href="mailto:almekhlafi@uaeu.ac.ae">almekhlafi@uaeu.ac.ae</a>	R3-7
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Wafa Zoghbor	College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Zayed University	UAE	<a href="mailto:wafa.zoghbor@zu.ac.ae">wafa.zoghbor@zu.ac.ae</a>	R4-4
Yasamiyan Alolaywi	English Language and Translation, Qassim University	KSA	<a href="mailto:ysma343@gmail.com">ysma343@gmail.com</a>	R3-4

# PROGRAM BY ROOM

## ROOM 1

9:00 - 9:20 **Opening Ceremony**

9:30 - 9:50 **SESSION R1-1**

*On-campus composting for teaching environmental sustainability in a Dubai University*  
**Carole Ayoub Moubareck**

10:00 - 10:20 **SESSION R1-2**

*The gap between students' perceived knowledge and actual knowledge in public speaking: An exploratory study*  
**Elamparathy Selvarasu, Meethiyen Kunju Parellil & Joseph Stephen**

10:30 - 10:50 **SESSION R1-3**

*Application of differentiated instruction for academically diverse English language learners*  
**Syeda Saima Ferheen Bukhari**

11:00 - 11:20 **SESSION R1-4**

*Self-directed learning readiness evaluation in Sharjah medical students*  
**Emad Nosair**

11:30 - 11:50 **SESSION R1-5**

*Culturally-responsive teaching in an undergraduate Interior Design Studio*  
**Asma Bukhammas & Azza Aboualam**

11:50 - 12:30 **Virtual Lunch Break**

12:30 - 12:50 **SESSION R1-6**

*Cultural and linguistic inclusion for Emiratis during COVID-19 online learning*  
**Sarah Hopkyns**

13:00-13:20 **SESSION R1-7**

*Culture in the classroom or culture of the clash room? Reflective glimpses of online classes in Oman*  
**Abdelrahman Salih & Lamis Omar**

13:30 - 13:50 **SESSION R1-8**

*Assessment of teaching and learning experiences in virtual lab practice*  
**Manikandan Ramadurai**

14:00 - 14:20 **SESSION R1-9**

*A perspective of educators while handling the teaching and learning domain during the Covid-19 pandemic*  
**Manishankar Chakraborty & Khwaja Mansoor Ali Khan**

14:20 - 14:30 **Closing Session**

*Measuring study style and resilience using CPSQ*  
**Lyn Dale**

## ROOM 2

9:00 - 9:20 **Opening Ceremony**

9:30 - 9:50 **SESSION R2-1**

*How to make online learning of linguistics effective*

**Marta Tryzna**

10:30 - 10:50 **SESSION R2-3**

*Envisioning the synergy between computer-mediated intercultural communication and the coronavirus memory archive: An intrinsic case study*

**Ioannis Karras & Angeliki Ypsilanti**

11:30 - 11:50 **SESSION R2-5**

*The effect of Think-Pair-Share in guided inquiry learning of mental mathematics*

**Ruby Thomas**

11:50-12:30 **Virtual Lunch Break**

12:30 - 12:50 **SESSION R2-6**

*E-assessment practice in terms of the Saudi National Qualification Framework*

**Shadma Iffat Rahmatullah**

13:00 - 13:20 **SESSION R2-7**

*Online assessment: Learners' voices*

**Najah Al Mohammedi, Maha Al Habbash & Safa Al Othali**

13:30 - 13:50 **SESSION R2-8**

*Revolution or evolution? Flipped classrooms in transition*

**Hala Dalbani, Sharifah Fatimah Syed-Ahmad & Safaa Eissa**

14:00 - 14:20 **SESSION R2-9**

*Scaffolding second/foreign language writing through customized feedback using screencasting technology*

**Surya Subrahmanyam Vellanki**

14:20 - 14:30 **Closing Session**

*Measuring study style and resilience using CPSQ*

**Lyn Dale**

## ROOM 3

9:00 - 9:20 **Opening Ceremony**

9:30 - 9:50 **SESSION R3-1**

*Transforming teaching and learning experiences through e-learning technology*

**Jigar Jogia**

10:00 - 10:20 **SESSION R3-2**

*The @Lab Innovator Program at Zayed University*

**Michael Pazinas & Christina Gitsaki**

10:30 - 10:50 **SESSION R3-3**

*Teaching with online simulation games: Identifying and overcoming hurdles to adoption*

**Tim Rogmans**

11:00 - 11:20 **SESSION R3-4**

*Teaching online during the COVID-19 pandemic: Teachers' perspectives*

**Yasamiyan Alolaywi**

11:50-12:30 **Virtual Lunch Break**

12:30 - 12:50 **SESSION R3-6**

*Transformation into emergency remote discourse: Teaching practices of EFL Writing*

**Abduljalil Hazaea**

13:00 - 13:20 **SESSION R3-7**

*Blended learning in higher education: UAE University students' perceptions regarding its usefulness in effective teaching and learning*

**Abdurrahman Almekhlafi & Hamda Kazim**

13:30 - 13:50 **SESSION R3-8**

*Will the real Miss please stand up.....*

**Nicole Shammass, Susan Carter & Pushpa Sadhwani**

14:00 - 14:20 **SESSION R3-9**

*The impact of social media on learners' English speaking and writing skills: A study of students and teachers in UAE universities*

**Ghadah Al Murshidi**

14:20 - 14:30 **Closing Session**

*Measuring study style and resilience using CPSQ*

**Lyn Dale**

## ROOM 4

9:00 - 9:20 **Opening Ceremony**

9:30 - 9:50 **SESSION R4-1**

*Impact of the flipped classroom approach on learner engagement in a hybrid learning course*

**Maria Gregoria Concepcion**

10:00 - 10:20 **SESSION R4-2**

*Tapping into Bloom's Taxonomy higher order cognitive processes: The case for multiple choice questions as a valid assessment tool in the ESP classroom*

**Iryna Lenchuk & Amer Ahmed**

10:30 - 10:50 **SESSION R4-3**

*Exploring perspectives of Saudi female students at King Khalid University on the use of Blackboard in a sight translation course during the Covid-19 pandemic*

**Ali Albashir Alhaj**

11:00 - 11:20 **SESSION R4-4**

*Translanguaging practices in an EMI university in the UAE*

**Wafa Zoghbor**

11:30 - 11:50 **SESSION R4-5**

*Innovative classroom practices: What teachers need to know*

**Lana Hiasat, Christine Coombe & Faouzi Bouslama**

11:50-12:30 **Virtual Lunch Break**

12:30 - 12:50 **SESSION R4-6**

*Assessment - Face to face or behind the camera?*

**Claudette Asgarali-Sing**

13:00 - 13:20 **SESSION R4-7**

*Supporting students of determination online: A case of universities in Dubai*

**Lawrence Meda & Hala Albukhari**

13:30 - 13:50 **SESSION R4-8**

*Fostering a sustainable learning environment by promoting students' agency and empowerment*

**Rana Khan**

14:00 - 14:20 **SESSION R4-9**

*The techno-pedagogic turn in the online translation classroom*

**Lamis Omar & Abdelrahman Salih**

14:20 - 14:30 **Closing Session**

*Measuring study style and resilience using CPSQ*

**Lyn Dale**

## Session R1-1



**Carole Ayoub Moubareck | z9901@zu.ac.ae**

**Department of Life and Environmental Sciences, College of Natural and Health Sciences, Zayed University**

*United Arab Emirates*

Carole Ayoub Moubareck is a Pharmacist who got a PhD in microbiology from Paris Descartes University. She joined Zayed University in 2014. Her research interests are in examining the potential for recycling organic materials into compost. This project involved the direct participation of microbiology students over five semesters.

## On-campus composting for teaching environmental sustainability in a Dubai University

Higher Education institutions have predominantly employed lecture-based pedagogy, but this approach alone cannot impart meaningful sustainability education. In this study, a composting project incorporated into a Dubai university's microbiology course was assessed for teaching environmental sustainability and compared to a compost lecture. The study included 47 students who performed the composting project, 43 students who attended a composting lecture and 34 control students who did not participate to either of the teaching interventions. A questionnaire was given to all students to probe composting interest and current waste management practices. Pre-test and post-test were filled by students who attended both interventions. Additionally, for project students, poster presentations were employed to assess knowledge improvement. After both interventions, there were significant increases in average test-scores, with post-project increase (20.9 points) being higher than post-lecture (12.3 points). Project students presented insightful posters, some displaying their compost pile pictures at different stages. The questionnaire results revealed that composting was not commonly practiced, but 23% of project students started household composting during the on-campus project. The students most satisfied with the project outcome were willing to spend higher prices for a composting box for their homes ( $p=.036$ ). Incorporating the composting project to the existing microbiology curriculum proved to be more efficient than a lecture for teaching an environmental sustainability practices to undergraduate students. Developing similar university project-based learning approaches focused on locally relevant environmental challenges would greatly advance the quest for developing future environmental sustainability leaders.

## Session R1-2



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**English Language Center, University of Technology and Applied Sciences**

*Oman*

Dr. Elamparithy is an inquisitive researcher with a keen interest in ELT, Public Speaking, Literary Theory, and Culture Studies. He has published more than 20 research articles in various national and international journals. He has also been the external evaluator for more than 20 PhD theses from different universities in India. Currently, he is heading the research team at University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Ibra, Oman.



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Lecturer in English at University of Technology and Applied Sciences for the last 11 years. More than 30 years of teaching experience in India and Oman.



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**English Language Center, University of Technology and Applied Sciences**

*Oman*

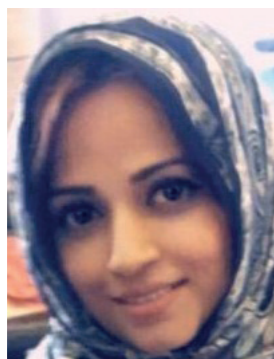
Lecturer at The University of Technology and Applied Sciences - Oman.

## The gap between students' perceived knowledge and actual knowledge in public speaking: An exploratory study

This exploratory study investigated the gap between students' perceived knowledge and actual knowledge of public speaking with a view to designing better strategies and methods for teaching public speaking to students. The researchers organised a National Speech Contest on the 50th Omani National Day and the nine student contestants are the study participants. This study followed a mixed methods approach as it elicited both qualitative and quantitative data. The researchers asked the participants to answer a questionnaire and used the judges' ballots to measure the gap between the contestants' perceived and actual knowledge of public speaking. The results showed that there was an evident gap between the contestants' perceived knowledge and actual knowledge. The analysis of the judges' ballots showed lack of students' knowledge in important areas of public speaking like structure, organization, voice and attention to audience, while the students claimed to know most of the important aspects of public speaking. The results also showed that there was a gap between knowledge and execution in public speaking. It is pertinent to note that the participants of the contest were among the best students. Therefore, the results of this study would certainly help teachers adopt better strategies and methods to teach public speaking. In addition, the results reiterate the importance of practice and feedback in actualizing knowledge and enhancing student skills.



## Session R1-3



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With an M.Phil. degree in English Linguistics and M.A. in English, Syeda Saima Bukhari is currently working at ELI-University of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. She is a certified teacher-trainer and her passion for research in the field of ESL & EFL teaching and learning always keep her engaged in scholarly activities.

## Application of differentiated instruction for academically diverse English language learners

Academic diversity compels teachers to focus on compatible frameworks of English language teaching and learning in order to adopt some useful strategies. Executing certain approaches to teach ESL/EFL learners with varied academic learning experiences and proficiencies is highly challenging and needs timely planning and preparation of tasks which are constructive, engaging, and challenging. Based on a cross validation approach, the study was conducted with 65 learners in two phases, over an academic year. During the first phase of study, a pre-test was administered and the learners were tested on a short text closely related to comprehending a historical event. The second phase was the instructional phase during which, first, the preparation of reading tasks was carried out with an interval of two weeks. Then, the tasks were administered twice. The tasks were marked and the scores were analyzed using SPSS v 21.0. The comparative analysis of the scores showed that the majority of the learners were able to complete the tasks within a set-timeframe and achieved a desired level of accuracy. The analysis also indicated a significant increase in the level of learners' accurate input in the second reading comprehension task. Overall, the analysis of the test results highlights that tiering techniques comparatively proved to be successful in a dual sense, to improve reading comprehension skills and to promote accuracy in a timely manner. This study provides a detailed procedure of the implementation of differentiated instruction which can easily be implemented in any classroom setting. A practical contribution of the research is that it offers an insight for educators to refine, reconstruct and validate the language teaching methods and techniques in diverse settings.

## Session R1-4



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I am an Assistant Professor of Anatomy, Head of Student Assessment Committee, and one of the founders of the College of Medicine, University of Sharjah. I have a rich cumulative experience in managing and developing different medical curricula with a MSc. of Leadership in Health Professions Education”- RCSI &UOS.

## Self-directed learning readiness evaluation in Sharjah medical students

Although the College of Medicine, University of Sharjah (COMUOS), since its foundation in 2004, adopts a hybrid PBL curriculum, which depends on self-directed learning (SDL), yet measuring the readiness of our students towards self-direct learning has never been performed. In this cross-sectional study, a SDL readiness instrument has been completed by three undergraduate medical student cohorts in the UAE with a total number of 386 students; one cohort adopted hybrid PBL (N=200, 51.8%) and two cohorts were in non-PBL programs (N=186, 48.2%). The instrument consisted of 20 items classified into four domains of learning motivation, planning and implementation, self-monitoring, and interpersonal communication and used a 5-point Likert scale. The additional demographic data collected included gender, the final year grade, and the early, middle, and final year levels in the programs. Out of 410 students, 386 (94.1%) consented to be assessed for readiness toward SDL. The overall mean SDLR score was  $59.0 \pm 18.2$ . In both programs, the high-achieving students scored a SDLR of  $64.7 \pm 18.0$  (N=112) which was statistically significantly higher than the medium/ low achievers,  $57.8 \pm 17.2$  (N= 224). However, the overall SDLR score showed no significant difference in gender, or between PBL and non-PBL programs. Although the SDLR increased as PBL students advanced in the program, it decreased in the non-PBL curricula. However, this difference was not statistically significant. Measuring SDLR can be used as a guide for teachers to formulate well-structured, student-centered courses with independent learning activities, which enhance students’ abilities and skills in knowledge acquisition and in promoting life-long learning. Furthermore, it can be used to classify students before distributing group assignments according to their level of readiness.

## Session R1-5



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Asma Bukhammas serves as an Interior Design Instructor in the College of Arts and Creative Enterprises at Zayed University, Dubai. Asma's research interests revolve around inclusive design curricula. Her current research grant is titled "Re-imagining the Design Studio: Towards a Culturally-Responsive Curriculum in the UAE".



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Azza Aboualam is an Assistant Professor at Zayed University, Dubai. She acquired her M.Arch from Yale University. She is known for her work with the UAE's Ministry of Culture's Architecture Initiative, where her field research and writing were published in *In Search of Spaces of Coexistence: An Architect's Journey*.

## Culturally-responsive teaching in an undergraduate Interior Design Studio

This study was developed in response to the fact that Zayed University, like many institutions around the world, employs a design curriculum that is largely based on euro-centric/anglo-centric design pedagogy and canons. As such, much of what is shown in the classroom as 'good examples' of design work is very much separated from the everyday experiences of the students. With this in mind, the following research question was formulated: does the fact that most of the course materials, built projects and texts used in our classrooms being western-centric hinder students' learning? An intervention was designed for two sections of the Interior Design Studio I course. This course is a major requirement for Interior Design students in Zayed University and it is the first interior design studio out of a total of five. A quasi-experimental research approach was adopted primarily using two projects that extend over a period of eleven weeks in the Spring 2020 semester. The two sections alternated in their role as the Control Group - exposed to course content and pedagogy that is considered 'typical', and Experimental Group - exposed to course content and pedagogy that is considered culturally-relevant. The students' feedback, supported by qualitative data and course outcomes, suggest that the experimental group students developed better critical thinking skills in comparison to their counterparts. However, the students' ability to leverage their existing wealth of knowledge to develop a successful interior design project was directly correlated to their understanding of basic interior design principles. It should also be noted that some students found some culturally-responsive teaching applications that were used in the study to be restrictive and un-inspiring. In addition to that, the findings also challenged what the course instructors had identified as 'relevant' to the students. The outcomes of the study could prompt the need for larger-scale classroom-based studies that measure the implications of more comprehensive culturally-responsive curricula on design students' performance. Although there have been several studies conducted on this topic worldwide, very few have looked at studio-based design courses in particular.

## Session R1-6



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Sarah Hopkyns is an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics at Zayed University, UAE. Her research interests are English-medium instruction, translanguaging practice, linguistic landscaping and cultural identities. She has published widely and is author of *The Impact of global English on Cultural Identities in the United Arab Emirates* (Routledge, 2020).

## Cultural and linguistic inclusion for Emiratis during COVID-19 online learning

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented shifts in education worldwide. Since the onset of the crisis, classes abruptly changed to ‘emergency remote teaching and learning’. While the UAE has been praised for its swift response, cultural and linguistic dynamics presented challenges for online teaching and learning. This presentation shares empirical data from a qualitative phenomenological case study investigating female Emirati university students’ (N=69) perspectives on the use of video cameras and microphones in online classes. Students wrote reflective essays and researcher observations were made in a researcher journal in Fall 2020. Data were analyzed thematically using the analytical tool of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) together with Goffman’s (1959) theories of everyday interaction, stigma and relative deprivation, through which complexities of learner identities were explored. Students’ reflective writing and researcher observations revealed discomfort using video cameras and microphones due to a range of cultural and linguistic factors. Such factors included Islamic beliefs relating to modesty, home as a gendered space, noise considerations, concerns about privacy, struggles with language in English Medium Instruction (EMI) higher education and fear of judgement from peers. Practical suggestions are provided on ways to adapt online learning to better suit the cultural and sociolinguistic realities of periphery contexts. It is argued that greater efforts need to be made toward inclusion of marginalized learners during the COVID-19 period.

## Session R1-7

### Culture in the classroom or culture of the clash room? Reflective glimpses of online classes in Oman



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Lamis Omar is Assistant Professor of Translation at Dhofar University, Oman, and a professional translator and interpreter since 2001. She holds a doctorate in Translation Studies from Durham University, UK. She has experience in teaching different courses including translation, ESL, culture in the classroom, and literary criticism formerly in Damascus University and currently in Dhofar University. Her research interests include translation studies, cognitive metaphor theory, Shakespeare's metaphor.

This study is an attempt to examine the emergence of instances of students' cultural values as a part of classroom culture in virtual spaces and their impact on the classroom environment. The study is exploratory in nature and combines qualitative and quantitative approaches. 25 teachers and 50 students responded to a questionnaire. The questionnaire focused on cultural values perceived as crucial by the participants. Results revealed cultural values resistance to online learning which hindered class interactive spaces as well as cultural values that were considered normal in onsite classes. The study draws on the significance of understanding the role of students and teachers in negotiating cultural constraints when implementing any online learning mode and the best solutions to overcome any cultural clashes in the classroom such as implementing a blended learning approach.

## Session R1-8



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Manikandan Ramadurai received B.E. degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from Madras University, in 1998, the M.E. degree in Power System Engineering from Annamalai University, India, in 2001. Currently he is working as a Lecturer in the University of Technology and Applied Science Ibra, Sultanate of Oman. His research interests are Restructured power systems, Carbon emissions reduction, Engineering instructional design and Educational Technology.

## Assessment of teaching and learning experiences in virtual lab practice

This empirical case study articulates the preliminary phase of a research agenda that is concentrated on exploring the helpfulness of virtual laboratories in a High Voltage Engineering course at a research-intensive Technical Institute in Oman. Analyzing different sets on usage of high voltage virtual labs along with a conventional lab, our studies have found evidence in enhanced performance in teaching and learning processes. Run-through analysis and surveys show that high voltage virtual labs are substantial elements in adaptive learning process in a blended traditional classroom environment. The study also indicates some of the problems faced by virtual lab users. The main objective of the virtual lab is to encourage inquiry-based student-centered learning which extends interaction, transforming the learner from passive listener to a dynamic role player in teaching and learning processes. The assessment of the effectiveness of the high voltage virtual labs was accomplished with the help of surveys. To estimate the outcome of virtual labs as a learning instrument, we performed a qualitative and quantitative analysis with a group of students. The group was previously introduced to high voltage engineering concepts and did not have any past experience with virtual labs. They were then asked to perform experiments virtually. The basic laboratory concepts were familiarized with the support of a flipped classroom activity. In the virtual lab, students were allowed to change any one of the parameters, instantly witnessing the effects in the visually presented results and also getting feedback on their particular action in the experiment. After the virtual lab session, we administered a set of surveys to assess the students' experience in using virtual labs. Learners and teachers alike found the prompt feedback provided by the virtual lab a fulfilling task. This decreased the burden for educators while it motivated students in the subject. This kind of educational technology provides an advanced student-centered learning environment and perfectly meets their educational needs. These virtual spaces offer a high level of flexibility and freedom from constraints of time and place in engineering education. In the perspective of evolving students' abilities in engineering design and scientific inquiry the undergraduate laboratory plays critical role in engineering curriculum. To expand engineering learning competence, a virtual laboratory experience is highly mandatory; it strengthens the knowledge comprehension, application of theory, and provides a dynamic, collaborative learning experience.

## Session R1-9



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An active researcher currently with Higher Colleges of Technology, working as Academic Program Chair, heading the Quality Management Program.

## A perspective of educators while handling the teaching and learning domain during the Covid-19 pandemic

This case study provides a firsthand understanding of the transformation that has happened in the teaching and learning domain during the COVID-19 pandemic. The perspectives shared by the educators provide a panoramic view of these changes that influenced all the stakeholders. Interviews were conducted with selected educators in the business domain. The interview questions covered the experience of the educators while dealing with the teaching and learning domain during the COVID-19 pandemic. Perspectives from selected few students were also collected to understand their experience. The results reflected the experience of the educators as they moved from a face-to-face set-up to an online set-up. The challenges and opportunities were highlighted in the study, culminating in the building of a platform to leverage this experience to support the evolution of teaching and learning. The recommendations provided form the basis for blending the old practices with the new practices and provide a better experience to the learner-facilitator duo. The study provides suggestions for future research and a roadmap to the educators, academic administrators as well as the students to understand the new normal that is going to evolve post pandemic.

## Session R2-1



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Marta Tryzna (PhD) earned her doctorate in linguistics at the University of Iowa and is currently employed as assistant professor of linguistics at Gulf University for Science and Technology in Kuwait.

## How to make online learning of linguistics effective

Learning linguistics, specifically phonetics and phonology, but also sociolinguistics, dialectology, applied linguistics and many other subfields is challenging, particularly in the online setting. The pandemic disrupted a dynamic learning process thus creating a need for redesigned online courses with personalized content and one-to-one interaction to engage students and guarantee their success. This study is based on a mixed method approach. The participants (N=62) are undergraduate students in the English program at a private university in Kuwait. A survey was filled by the participants at the end of a linguistics course and in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 most successful students in the course. Results indicated that online instruction requires clear links between theory and practice, with emphasis on the latter. Practical application and personalized content were more valued by students in linguistics, specifically in online classes. The content should also be interactive and provide ample opportunities for student-led activities. Immediate feedback on assignments and personal communication with students is a must to maintain motivation and engagement. Most students responded well to flexible deadlines and a system of rewards rather than punishment. Redesigning the content and activities in linguistics courses can lead to better motivation and higher levels of success for the students.



## Session R2-3



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Ioannis Karras is Associate Professor in Applied Linguistics & Intercultural Communication at Ionian University, Greece. He has lectured at universities around the world, has delivered talks at international conferences and has conducted seminars/workshops with international audiences. He has authored a book, a number of edited book chapters and articles in journals and conference proceedings.



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Angeliki Ypsilanti is an English language teacher in secondary education. She has an MA in Teaching English as a Foreign/International Language (TEFL/TEIL) from the Hellenic Open University (HOU). Her MA dissertation was on 'Transforming the EFL classroom into a globalized context during the COVID-19 pandemic'. Her research interests are related to creative writing for teaching and learning purposes.

## Envisioning the synergy between computer-mediated intercultural communication and the coronavirus memory archive: An intrinsic case study

With reference to teacher professional development, studying for a postgraduate teaching qualification at an open university does not axiomatically mean that general distance learning skills are implementable in the domain of effective professional practice. In view of the unavoidability of distance learning instruction dictated by COVID-19, the students/EFL teachers pursuing the Hellenic Open University's (HOU) Master's degree in TEFL/TEIL have felt the practitioners' want of specific training to reform outdated web-teaching methods. This paper explains how the HOU's module in Intercultural Approaches to English Language Teaching has aided EFL teachers in self-regulating their online teaching through the development and evaluation of a Computer-Mediated Intercultural Communication (CMIC) project within the context of a course assignment. This presentation reports on the intrinsic case study into the genesis and effectuation of a single student's CMIC project centered on the compilation of a globally impactful coronavirus memory archive as an alternative CMIC approach to supporting the EFL graduate teaching community in imparting study skills. The data were obtained from online classroom observation using personal experience essay elicitation. The method of narrative analysis is employed to pilot the intra- and inter-cultural sustainability of the creative writing skill through online collaborative review processes. Although the evidence here is not conclusive, the results of the case study indicate that teaching prompt-driven life-writing skills under the aegis of CMIC project design can be purposefully used in remote learning instruction during special learning circumstances. Upon completion, the applicability of this coronavirus memory archive model of CMIC training to suitably factor in the development of a tailored, teaching-focused learning initiative was evaluated by the course's tutor against a set of specific criteria applicable to CMIC projects. Overall, it was surmised that the sustenance of this reflective writing tool can assist graduate EFL teachers in procuring and enhancing intercultural competence training even in times of crisis. This study holds implications for the development of a community of practice not only amongst the HOU's graduate EFL practitioners but also amongst globally-minded ELT professionals to support the authentic contextualization of their distance learning skills using the transformative possibilities of any given digital space. The proposed CMIC project can either create a link between different level education stakeholders or become a primary transit point for the documentation of their online teaching and learning efforts during corona times.

## Session R2-5



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*Bahrain*

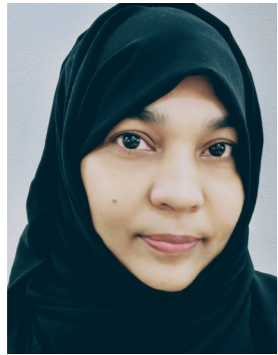
Ruby Thomas, a faculty in the department of Mathematics at Bahrain Teachers College under the University of Bahrain, prepares teachers of the Ministry of Education in Bahrain. She is a self-motivated person, keen to improve herself by learning new things. She is a Microsoft Certified Educator (MCE) and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, UK. Her areas of research interests are teaching, learning, and subject didactics.

## The effect of Think-Pair-Share in guided inquiry learning of mental mathematics

Students are over dependent on calculators and lack mental calculation skills. They lack conceptual understanding and thus they are unable to perform calculations on their own. By taking the focus away from rote memorization and emphasizing mathematical fluency, students are more likely to gain a deeper understanding behind the value of mental mathematics. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used in this research. The tools used were: an observation checklist; regular mental math tests; and, semi-structured interviews. The participants were 61 teacher trainees in their second year of study. Most of them were not confident in doing mental calculations. The study was conducted in two cycles: Cycle 1: the students were exposed to learning experiences of mental math techniques using a guided IBL approach. Cycle 2: the IBL approach was continued with embedding a collaborative learning strategy, Think-Pair-Share (TPS), that encourages students to exchange their ideas in learning and practicing mental math strategies, to be more confident and efficient in basic calculations. From the data analysis, it is obvious that the IBL approach coupled with TPS, in learning mental mathematics resulted in improved mathematical efficiency and confidence of the participants. The test results revealed that both approaches in teaching increased student achievement but remarkable increase was made after the second cycle. A naturalistic observation focusing on students' engagement and confidence, proved that with the incorporation of TPS, the level of engagement increased and they became very confident. Interview data were categorized into three themes: attitude, learning experience and confidence. The analysis showed that students liked this way of learning mental mathematics. These activities should not be restricted to mental mathematics alone but should be used in other topics as well as other subjects. Student-engagement hindrances can be eliminated while discussing with peers in a comfortable learning environment. It is important to include challenging but enjoyable collaborative activities while providing chances for learners to express their concepts and views. This directly implies to the teachers to adapt the responsibility to foster a sense of independence and confidence in learning.

## Session R2-6

## E-assessment practice in terms of the Saudi National Qualification Framework



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This research study aimed to explore whether the comprehensive e-assessment scenario would assist the attainment of the specified course learning outcomes as well as the program learning outcomes of an institution in accordance with the National Qualification Framework (NQF). Using qualitative and quantitative approaches, data were gathered through questionnaires that were administered with faculty (N=38) and female undergraduates (N=100) at King Khalid University (KSA). In addition, both formative and summative e-assessments of undergraduates (N=145) and their subsequent grades for three consecutive semesters (2020-2021) were closely evaluated. The findings asserted that the prevalent online assessment procedures do not establish the learners' actual learning achievement. The higher test score of a large majority of students may not detect their learning efficiency that correlated with their critical thinking or analytical skills. Though the multimodal pattern of test questions ascertained the attainment of the predefined learning outcomes, students' subjective answers did not manifest their critical thinking skills which replicated the cognitive domain of their learning. Despite its feasibility and flexibility, remote e-assessment practices can lead to learners' misconduct and dishonesty as teachers have no control over the assessment setting.

## Session R2-7

## Online assessment: Learners' voices



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Mrs. Maha Alhabash has an MA in Second Language Teaching and Learning. She is currently a PhD candidate at the UAE University, Department of Curriculum, and Instruction in language and literacy domain. In her PhD thesis, she is exploring the idea of trans-identity space construction for bilingual learners.



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Mrs. Safa AlOthali has an MA in Leadership and School Administration. She is currently a PhD candidate at the UAE University, Department of Curriculum, and Instruction in language and literacy domain. In her PhD thesis, she is exploring promoting classroom interaction when using videos.

With the marvelous vicissitudes in the educational sector as a result of COVID-19, the use of online assessment has become more popular and widely adopted. Therefore, some fundamental issues of assessment need to be reconceptualized in unconventional spaces. This study aimed at exploring the nature of online assessment from the perspectives of college students. Students' views can help in detecting the obstacles of online assessment implementations. An exploratory sequential mixed methods design was employed. The qualitative phase featured semi-structured interviews followed by a quantitative phase that utilised a self-report questionnaire. Results revealed that online assessment showed a kind of adaptability and practicality. However, issues related to test specifications were raised, which may create important opportunities for improvements. Some considerable recommendations were highlighted by the researchers.

## Session R2-8



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Hala Dalbani is a Professor in Applied Linguistics at Prince Sultan University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. She holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Leeds, UK. Her research interests are mainly in foreign language teaching/learning, e-learning, blended learning, curriculum design, and quality assurance in Higher Education.



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## Revolution or evolution? Flipped classrooms in transition

In view of a lack of studies that examined the transitional period that instructors go through in their initial attempts to flip their classrooms, this study explored the perceptions of female higher education instructors making the transition. The study employed quantitative and qualitative data elicited from interviews and surveys of 37 female faculty members representing the six different colleges at a small private university in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Data was analyzed using Garrison et al.'s Community of Inquiry (CoI) Theoretical Framework whereby its three interdependent elements of teaching, cognition and social presences are examined. This research offers a unique perspective into a context in the Gulf region where women are making the transition to flipped teaching and are taking the lead in promoting innovative pedagogical approaches. The objective is to establish that flipping is not an approach that will dramatically change the traditional culture overnight, but it is an evolution to a teaching/learning approach where the classroom culture moves smoothly into learner-centeredness. Findings contribute to our understanding of what is flipped learning and how it can be implemented especially in the wake of COVID-19 and the pressing need for distance and blended learning. The transition into flipping is not a revolution that will change the prevalent culture overnight, but rather an evolution to a teaching and learning approach that will allow the classroom culture to move smoothly into learner-centeredness.

## Session R2-9

### Scaffolding second/foreign language writing through customized feedback using screencasting technology



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Methods of giving feedback to students have become more significant now in remote teaching/learning contexts as the lack of students' physical presence has challenged the effectiveness of traditional feedback methods. Hence, the present study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of giving corrective multimodal feedback to improve students' writing skills. The study adopted a mixed-methods design and collected quantitative data using a questionnaire, and qualitative data using an informal virtual group discussion, to analyze how students (N=38) perceived the multimodal feedback on their writing given by the teacher in a technical writing course conducted at a university during a period of eight-weeks in the remote teaching context. The teacher delivered writing lessons on the three prescribed topics, conducted two writing tasks per week, and gave students multimodal feedback on their essays. The collected writing drafts were analyzed to ascertain any significant improvement in their writing. Data were collected through a questionnaire and an informal virtual group discussion. The analysis of the results shows that students were in favor of multimodal video feedback for various reasons. First, most students said that it was the first time they received feedback that way and would like to get such feedback in their future courses too. Second, they perceived that such feedback was more motivating and effective than just the written feedback. They felt that the feedback was more personalized, it was easy for them to understand their errors, and it helped them organize and improve their writing. Despite the positive perception of multimodal feedback by students, the study is not devoid of any challenges. Providing multimodal feedback is time-consuming for teachers but would certainly contribute to teachers' professional development. The assessment model is a big factor in determining students' interest in utilizing the feedback in an effective way.

## Session R3-1

## Transforming teaching and learning experiences through e-learning technology



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*United arab Emirates*

Dr. Jogia is a Chartered Psychologist accredited by the British Psychological Society, member of the American Psychological Association and a Fellow of the HEA specializing in neuropsychology, mental health and organizational psychology. Currently Associate Professor of Psychology at Zayed University where he led the development and accreditation of a postgraduate program.

This study contributes to the related literature in this field of research by investigating the learners' perspective on both formats of learning -online learning and traditional in the classroom learning- by addressing the following research question: How does online learning influence students' perceived engagement and perceived strength and weakness of online and traditional learning? A total of 25 female Emirati college students attending Zayed University (ZU), Dubai Campus, participated in this study. ZU is a federal university in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the language of instruction is English. We utilized a Quasi-experimental design as students went through the two conditions: traditional learning (in the classroom on campus) and online learning (using Adobe connect). We found a significant difference between traditional learning (in the classroom on campus) and online learning in comprehension, attention and interaction with peers. Overall, the results indicate a preference for students' engagement in traditional courses. The findings of this study have implications at the organizational level, instructional level and individual level in order to transform teaching and learning experiences through e-learning technology. Online learning in its present form is not as effective as the traditional learning in the classroom.

## Session R3-2

## The @Lab Innovator Program at Zayed University



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Michael Pazinas, is a Specialist in Pedagogical Innovation and Effectiveness at the Center for Educational Innovation, Zayed University, UAE. He is an Apple Distinguished Educator, and the Lead Apple Professional Learning Specialist in the UAE. Michael is involved in learning experience design and educational content creation. He has designed hundreds of technologically enhanced activities, learning experiences and training materials for Apple, Cambridge University Press, the British Council and telecommunications companies like Etisalat, several educational app companies and a large number of universities and schools.



**Christina Gitsaki | christina.gitsaki@zu.ac.ae**

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Professor Christina Gitsaki is an Apple Professional Learning Specialist and the Research Coordinator at the Center for Educational Innovation (CEI) at Zayed University, Dubai, UAE. At the CEI she oversees the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Certification Course in Higher Education Teaching and the development of resources for research, and she provides advice and mentorship to faculty who are interested in engaging in classroom-based inquiry and measuring the impact of their teaching practice on student learning.

The @Lab Innovator Program aims to develop Faculty in using innovative Apple technology to create materials for their learning contexts. The program comprises 3 phases. In the first phase, Spring 2021, participating faculty (N=45) were equipped with a new iPad, Apple Pencil and Smart Keyboard, they completed their Apple Teacher Certification and attended a series of practical workshops twice a week all of which aimed at creating unique teaching materials to engage students. In the second phase, Fall 2021, faculty are involved in designing teaching interventions using Apple technologies and the skills acquired through the @Lab workshops. Faculty are supported in designing their interventions and applying for ethical clearance. In the third phase, Spring 2022, faculty will carry out their classroom interventions and collect evidence of the impact of their materials on student learning. Results from the first phase of the study showed positive attitudes and perceptions towards the training program and the usefulness of the skills embedded in the program.



## Session R3-3

### Teaching with online simulation games: Identifying and overcoming hurdles to adoption



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Dr. Tim Rogmans is Associate Professor in Management at the College of Business at Zayed University in Dubai. His research work is in the areas of corporate sustainability strategy, business simulation games and Foreign Direct Investment.

Although the use of simulation games (SG) in higher education has grown, there are still many instructors who have never taught with SG. Existing research has primarily used quantitative surveys to identify the obstacles that prevent faculty from teaching with SG. In order to understand the interplay between different obstacles to adoption to SG and the appropriate levers to encourage adoption, two focus group discussions were held with 10 business school faculty who are currently not using SG. Due to the restrictions on movement during the COVID-19 pandemic, focus group discussions were held virtually through an online communication platform. An analysis of the obstacles and potential levers to affect change has resulted in a range of actions that can be taken by university management and by SG publishers. The levers that are controlled by university management can be classified into availability of resources, provision of information and training, and organizational changes. Not all levers are appropriate in all circumstances and several levers have a particular organizational context in which they can be expected to be most effective. Most actions to be taken by university management consist of encouragement and support, and do not require significant financial resources.

## Session R3-4

### Teaching online during the COVID-19 pandemic: Teachers' perspectives

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Dr. Alolaywi is an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics at the Department of English Language and Translation, Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. Her research interests include teacher professional development, pragmatics, and translation. She has presented research at national and international conferences. She has also published research in ranked journals.

Although the use of simulation games (SG) in higher education has grown, there are still many instructors who have never taught with SG. Existing research has primarily used quantitative surveys to identify the obstacles that prevent faculty from teaching with SG. In order to understand the interplay between different obstacles to adoption to SG and the appropriate levers to encourage adoption, two focus group discussions were held with 10 business school faculty who are currently not using SG. Due to the restrictions on movement during the COVID-19 pandemic, focus group discussions were held virtually through an online communication platform. An analysis of the obstacles and potential levers to affect change has resulted in a range of actions that can be taken by university management and by SG publishers. The levers that are controlled by university management can be classified into availability of resources, provision of information and training, and organizational changes. Not all levers are appropriate in all circumstances and several levers have a particular organizational context in which they can be expected to be most effective. Most actions to be taken by university management consist of encouragement and support, and do not require significant financial resources.

## Session R3-6

## Transformation into emergency remote discourse: Teaching practices of EFL Writing



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Abduljalil Hazaea completed his Master and PhD in English Language Studies from the National University of Malaysia. He is an associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at Najran University in Saudi Arabia. He has a keen interest in intercultural communication, creative media literacy, MALL and critical discourse analysis.

In Saudi education, the face-to-face teaching practices of English as a foreign language (EFL) had been suddenly shifted into distance teaching due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Subsequently, Saudi universities have been transformed into 'emergency remote teaching' (ERT). At the preparatory year (PY) of Najran University, lecturers and teachers used to deliver their face-to-face classes to several sections under the same course. With ERT, however, these individual sections were merged under one general section using Blackboard. Lecturers and teachers had to prepare and deliver team-work virtual classes. The data was collected from the recorded virtual classes delivered by the team of writing course. Nineteen sessions were collected; each session ranged between 45 minutes and one hour. A conceptual framework that integrates ethnography of speaking, conversation analysis and critical discourse analysis was used to analyze the data. The primary findings indicate that the team gradually recouped their traditional teaching practices. They progressively adapted to virtual teaching. This representation is manifested in a number of hybrid (traditional and virtual) discourses of teaching practices including hybrid teaching identity, discourse of teacher-centeredness, discourse of technical problems, discourse of stress, discourse of repeating uncovered materials and discourse of revision. These findings have some implications for teaching EFL writing in the context of the Gulf countries. PY can benefit from the Blackboard system to enhance EFL writing among students.

## Session R3-7



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Dr. Almekhlafi is an associate professor of educational technology at the UAE University. Dr. Almekhlafi received his MA and PhD degrees from ASU in the USA where he also was an ad hoc professor teaching technology courses. Dr. Almekhlafi has published more 20 research papers at international journals and is the author of a number of books, in addition to being a certified trainer on technology and pedagogy.



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Hamda Kazim is a teaching assistant at the United Arab Emirates University. She holds a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, and is currently perusing her master's degree in Early Years Education at the University College London.

## Blended learning in higher education: UAE University students' perceptions regarding its usefulness in effective teaching and learning

COVID-19 impacted the educational system worldwide. In recent times, technology has played a fundamental role in education. It is being used in various ways by students, for example, to do research, prepare assignments, and submit work online. This has led to the introduction of the blended learning approach. A mixed methods design was used in this study using a questionnaire focusing on three areas: students' preference and satisfaction, students' perception of the effectiveness of blended learning in terms of content, and students' perception of the effectiveness of blended learning in terms of teaching, and a focus group interview with selected participants to elaborate on points identified from an initial analysis of the quantitative data collected by the questionnaire. The results of our study showed positive perceptions towards blended learning. Results indicated that students at the UAEU have a positive perception of the use of blended learning for teaching and learning and it was seen to be preferable than face-to-face courses. In addition, the study revealed a few challenges in blended learning that need to be taken into consideration to improve its implementation in the university. The implications of the study point to the importance of using blended learning as a method for teaching and learning at higher education. This could be generalized to K-12 schools. However, more in depth research should be conducted to look into the factors influencing the satisfaction levels and perception of blended learning among UAEU students and faculty members as well.

## Session R1-8

## Will the real Miss please stand up.....



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Dr. Nicole Shammam is from New Zealand and taught in the Dominican Republic and South Korea prior to coming to the UAE in 1999. She teaches in General Studies at the Higher Colleges of Technology, Dubai. Nicole has a MA from SIT, and Doctorate from USQ on developing intercultural sensitivity.

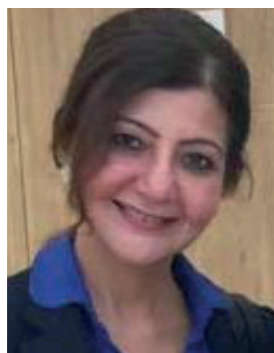


**Susan Carter | scarter@hct.ac.ae**

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Susan Carter has over 25 years experience within education and management in the UK. Susan has been working in HCT Dubai Women's College for 10 years within General Studies. Active member of cohort 3 for the UAE Ministry of Education and Stanford University in the Innovation and Entrepreneurship mandatory program.



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Pushpa Sadhwani is a Senior Lecturer in the General Studies department and has been a faculty at HCT for 14 years. Previously she has taught in Thailand and Qatar. Her MA dissertation was on 'Orthographic Knowledge of Emirati Speakers'. Pushpa currently teaches at Dubai Women's College.

With the shift to online teaching it is imperative for both teachers and students to discuss best practice to determine what is most effective. This presentation provides practical 'tips and tricks', learnt from our experience to help maximize online efficacy for those working in an online environment in the Arabian Gulf. This study takes place in a government tertiary institution in the United Arab Emirates. As classroom teachers concerned with optimizing the classroom learning experience, a mixed methods, action research design was employed, allowing the teacher/researcher to step back and reflect on their practice. Data were collected over a 6-month period with 80 student participants. Student perceptions of learning were captured as part of their normal classroom learning through polls, formal post-course feedback, and chat responses. Teacher-researcher data were collected through observation journals where regular reflections on the lessons were recorded; including successes, challenges, and surprises. Our results showed that there is robust evidence to suggest that online learning is equally effective as traditional 'brick and mortar' learning, when it comes to student attainment. That students have a positive perception of classroom practice such as Flipgrid and Nearpod; and of classroom pedagogy. Results also demonstrate that an online environment has a significant capacity to build community and develop bonds and relationships. Finally, we showcase the use of Minecraft Education Edition (MEE) and present student feedback indicating its potential to develop students' soft skills such as learning agility, creativity, collaboration, problem solving and risk taking. This study contributes to a scant body of knowledge in the field by presenting insights around online learning regionally. It addresses the daily needs of the online classroom practitioner by offering a useful toolkit for practice.

## Session R3-9

### The impact of social media on learners' English speaking and writing skills: A study of students and teachers in UAE universities



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Dr. Ghadah Al Murshidi is an associate professor in the department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, UAEU. She is a recipient of different awards including: "The Best Arab Youth Researchers" and "Young Emirati Researchers Prize". She has many publications including Scopus indexed journals such as: Videotaped teaching and learning methodology: An experiential learning and action research approach. She is an active peer reviewer for international educational journals.

Based on the immense importance of learning English as an international language and the issues that teachers face to motivate students towards learning English as a foreign language, data was collected from EFL teachers (N=45) and EFL students (N=124) teaching and studying at Universities in the UAE. The results of the study revealed that social media significantly impact EFL students' speaking and writing skills based on the understanding that students respond positively in language classrooms when exposed to modern technology. Therefore, teachers must focus on enriching their teaching process by appropriately using social media for promoting a global understanding among the EFL learners for effectively interacting and communicating in the English Language.

## Session R4-1



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Dr. Maria Gregoria Concepcion is an Assistant Professor at Higher Colleges of Technology, UAE. Her main research interests focus on Applied Linguistics, Technology and Pedagogy, Hybrid Learning, Sociolinguistics, Language Studies, and Assessments. She has presented her research at International Conferences and has published her papers in refereed journals. She holds a PhD in Education in English Language Teaching.

## Impact of the flipped classroom approach on learner engagement in a hybrid learning course

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically transformed teaching and learning in higher education. Most colleges and universities have switched from traditional face-to-face to hybrid learning to ensure learning continuity during the surge of the virus. The flipped classroom instruction is one essential element of hybrid learning which prepares the students prior to in-class or virtual learning. This mixed methods study focused on the adult learners' experiences on how flipped classroom instruction enhanced their learning and their views on how flipped classroom instruction could be improved. The participants of the study were 49 Arab EFL learners enrolled in a General Studies course. The participants answered an e-survey as the first data gathering instrument. In addition, the participants were divided into five groups and participated in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD). They answered five questions and shared their learning experiences, views, opinions, and suggestions on how to improve the flipped classroom instruction. The results of the study revealed that 82% of the students were actively engaged during the virtual class; 79% were prepared prior to the in-class session; 76% had become independent and responsible learners; 72% had improved their problem solving skills, while 75% had enhanced their technical skills. Furthermore, using the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), the participants' suggestions were to design flipped classroom tasks to a minimum, to chunk the topics and tasks with ample time given for task completion; to provide rubrics and guide them on task accomplishment, to provide learner support, and educational technology orientation to help them deal with technical issues. Based on the findings of the study, it can be noted that flipped classroom instruction has a positive impact on students' engagement in both face-to-face and virtual learning. However, it is imperative that teachers and course designers should look into the course design and take into consideration the lesson planning, topics, assessments, synchronous and asynchronous activities, collaborative and engaging activities as well as the time allotted for the flipped classroom implementation. Furthermore, as flipped classroom instruction demands self-regulation of students, teachers should use strategies to track and ensure that students complete the flipped classroom tasks prior to the virtual or face-to-face class. When students are prepared, learning becomes more meaningful.

## Session R4-2



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Iryna Lenchuk is an Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, Dhofar University, Salalah, Oman. Her research interests include task-based instruction, interlanguage pragmatics, and pedagogy and methodology of second and foreign language learning. She has been teaching ESL, TESL and courses in applied linguistics in Canada and Oman.



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Dr. Amer Ahmed is an Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, Dhofar University. His research interests are in the areas of linguistic interfaces, second language acquisition, second language pedagogy and methodology, and Arabic diglossia. He has been teaching ESL and courses in linguistics in Canada and Oman.

## Tapping into Bloom's Taxonomy higher order cognitive processes: The case for multiple choice questions as a valid assessment tool in the ESP classroom

This presentation describes the results of an action research conducted in an ESP classroom of a private Omani university. This action research raises the following question: Can an online multiple choice question (MCQ) quiz tap into the high-level cognitive skills of apply, analyze and evaluate? This question was also critical at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic when Omani universities switched to the online mode of learning. The investigation took place through an online MCQ quiz administered to 35 undergraduate students enrolled in an ESP course for Engineering and Sciences. The questions were first coded for one of the levels of Bloom's taxonomy that different types of questions are developed to target. The average scores for each question that reflected a level of Bloom's taxonomy were calculated and compared for the purpose of identifying which levels of the taxonomy caused the most difficulties for the students enrolled in the course. The results of the study showed that, contrary to the arguments against the use of MCQs as a valid measure of higher order thinking skills, it is possible to develop a MCQ quiz that taps into the higher order thinking skills when the stem of the MSQ is presented in the form of a task or a scenario. The results of the study also revealed better performance on the MCQs that tap into lower order thinking skills. This result can be attributed to the prevalent practice in Oman to develop assessment tools that tap only into the base level of Bloom's taxonomy; a level, which only involves the cognitive process of retrieving memorized information. The significance of the study is in its important pedagogical applications. The study calls for the use of teaching and assessment practices that target the development of higher order thinking skills, which is in line with the country's strategic direction reflected in Oman Vision 2040.



## Session R4-3

### Exploring perspectives of Saudi female students at King Khalid University on the use of Blackboard in a sight translation course during the Covid-19 pandemic



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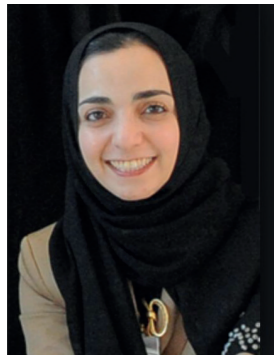
*Saudi Arabia*

Dr. Ali Albashir Mohammed Alhaj received his first Ph.D. in English literature from University of Khartoum, in 2003, his second Ph.D. in translation from Omdurman Islamic University, in 2014, and his third Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from Sudan University of Science and Technology in 2018. His 4th Ph.D. is in theoretical linguistics from Bahri University. Ali published 60 papers in ISI, DOAJ and SCOPUS Journals and 40 books. Eight of his books were translated into 8 languages.

The current study is an endeavor to obtain the perspective of Saudi female students of translation at King Khalid University on the use of the Blackboard platform for delivering a sight translation course during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purposive sample of the study consisted of 48 students of translation who were requested to complete a 20-item questionnaire. Results revealed that students of translation were generally agreeable and developed positive attitudes towards the use of Blackboard as they fully accepted and appreciated it. Moreover, students showed that their performance in sight translation was enhanced and their interaction and engagement with their e-professors of translation were boosted notably. The study also revealed a minority of students of translation disagreed with the use of the Blackboard platform for delivering a sight translation course. The study also recommends that training is needed for both e- professors and students of translation at King Khalid University on the use of the Blackboard platform for translation courses. The merits of the use of Blackboard platform technology for delivering a sight translation course are that it offers the e-professors and students a flexible teaching and learning instrument that can boost interaction among them. It can enhance the performance of students of translation in all courses of translation in general and students of sight translation in particular.

## Session R4-4

## Translanguaging practices in an EMI university in the UAE



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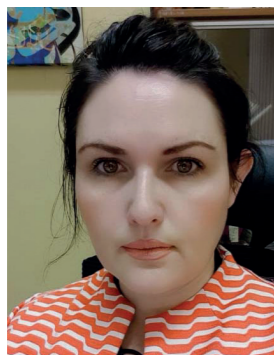
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Dr. Maria Gregoria Concepcion is an Assistant Professor at Higher Colleges of Technology, UAE. Her main research interests focus on Applied Linguistics, Technology and Pedagogy, Hybrid Learning, Sociolinguistics, Language Studies, and Assessments. She has presented her research at International Conferences and has published her papers in refereed journals. She holds a PhD in Education in English Language Teaching.

The UAE higher education system is built on English-medium instruction (EMI) allowing translanguaging practices and models for interaction between Arabic (Emirati learners' L1) and English (the main medium of instruction). This presentation discusses translanguaging practices and pedagogy in Math and Science classes in an EMI higher education context in the UAE. Data were triangulated from self-reflections by 40 Emirati second year students (10 male and 30 female students) followed by interviews with five female students and four instructors teaching Math and Science where English is used as a medium of instruction (MOI). The findings show that English as a MOI is considered a form of multilingual education and one, but not the only, MOI. Arabic was itself considered to have a positive impact on students' thinking about these subjects and can be used in teaching while the significant role of English in their education and future careers is simultaneously emphasised. The presentation draws conclusions and recommendations about a model on how to achieve balance between meeting the demands of English in a global market and the benefits of Arabic in enhancing skill development and knowledge acquisition in EMI contexts.

## Session R1-5

## Innovative classroom practices: What teachers need to know



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A senior lecturer, senior Fellow HEA, and program team leader. She has a doctoral degree in educational leadership with specialization in educational technology. Her research interest and publications are in future foresight, emotional intelligence, artificial intelligence, smart learning, blended learning, educational leadership, and intercultural intelligence



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Christine Coombe has a PhD in Foreign/Second Language Education from The Ohio State University and is an Associate Professor at Dubai Men's College, HCT. She served as President of the TESOL International Association from 2010 to 2013.



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Faouzi Bouslama is an Associate Professor of CIS, HCT. He received his Ph.D. in Electronic Engineering from Shizuoka University, Japan. Dr. Bouslama has more than 30 years of experience in Soft-computing, Computational Intelligence, and Emotional Intelligence. Dr. Bouslama is the recipient of HCT Excellence Award in Academic Innovation 2020-2021, the HCT Pioneering Employee Medal 2020, and he is the HCT nominee for the 2021 Cycle of the Prime Minister Medals.

The purpose of this study was to research innovations in higher education teaching environments with a view to determining what characteristics teachers need to have or acquire to be innovative in the classroom. The study also sought to determine the role students play in innovative classroom practices. A mixed methods approach was used including a series of six questionnaires as well as focus groups. Results showed that a number of characteristics were impactful in the classroom especially the presence of emotional intelligence in all stakeholders. The study also showed the importance of empathy and other elements of EI for academic success and innovation.

## Session R4-6

### Assessment - Face to face or behind the camera?



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Claudette Asgaralising-Ohlsson's area of expertise is Applied Linguistics and sustainable teaching with a special interest in varilingualism and bilingualism. She works with undergraduate students from diverse departments using a combination of face-to-face and online synchronous methodology. If you are curious about varilingualism, explore great Caribbean Nobel Prize writers such as V. S. Naipaul and Derek Walcott and expose your literary palate to Caribbean literature.

This quantitative research study focused on evaluating and analyzing the effectiveness of online formative quiz assessments to predict students' performance in summative face-to-face on-campus (FTFOC) examinations. Recent studies highlight the benefits of online quizzes (Wallihan et. al., 2018). One such benefit being enhanced understanding and active learning (Cook & Babon, 1997). Conversely, Kennedy et al. (2000) question distance/online learning, suggesting that it may increase academic dishonesty. The COVID-19 pandemic caused students worldwide to experience a sudden shift from FTFOC and hybrid delivery to full online synchronous delivery. This shift has generated statistics for unsurveyed research. To examine this, quantitative data was collected over 23 months from August 2019 to June 2021. The sample included 300 participants from four cohorts, all English Second Language (ESL) Higher Education (HE) undergraduate males aged 18–35 years old. The data source was a science elective course at a local HE institution. 45% of the assessments were quiz-based. Grade sheets were downloaded from Blackboard Learn (BBL), and Pivot tables were created. Coding was used to locate and create patterns. Visual statistical graphs were used to illustrate correlations. The results suggest a direct correlation between the increased class sizes and increased FWA failure rate. Further, correlations changed as students adjusted to the online delivery and this was significant with each new cohort. Additional research can examine assessments and trustworthiness. The study helps management understand the importance of reduced class sizes when transiting from face-to-face on-campus classes to full online assessments. Additionally, the study opens the doors for research in academic dishonesty and trustworthiness.

## Session R4-7

## Supporting students of determination online: A case of universities in Dubai



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**College of Education, American University in the Emirates**

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Hala Abdullah Al-Bukhari, a special education specialist and anthropologist worked as a faculty member, for 16 years. She holds M.Sc. in cross-cultural anthropology of children, childhood and youth development, and special education, Brunel University London (2009). She is currently pursuing her PhD in Inclusive education, at BUiD, and she is a member of ILM international leadership and management.

The purpose of this study was to examine the nature and impact of support afforded to students of determination in online learning. The study was conducted using a mixed methods approach within a pragmatism paradigm. Simple random sampling was used to select 60 students of determination. Purposive sampling was used to select 10 faculty members and 15 support staff. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and a survey. It was found that the nature of support offered to students of determination online determines their success in online learning. There is a need for differentiating support and implementing a systems approach where necessary. The study points to the need to intensify institutional support systems in order to cater for the diverse needs of students of determination.

## Session R4-8

## Fostering a sustainable learning environment by promoting students' agency and empowerment



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Rana Khan holds a master's degree in English Literature and Business Administration besides a teacher's certificate in CELTA. Currently, she's pursuing her doctorate in Education from University of Bath. Rana is the president of TEFL Kuwait and has served as chair to the Conferences Professional Council, TESOL International Association (2021). Her main research interests are CALL and blended learning. Presently, she is working as Academic Coordinator to the IEP at Algonquin College, Kuwait.

Challenges in online learning should be dealt with continuous innovative approaches and classroom-based research to motivate students for sustainable learning. Formative assessments for learning, translanguagism, synchronous and asynchronous technology-assisted guidance can result in improved motivation and sustainable learning environment. The study tested innovative approaches during the spring semester with foundation program students to see if empowering them would drive them to attend classes and participate in various learning activities. Project-based learning replaced summative assessments to give students more control on their learning. Additionally, translanguagism was tested as support for weaker students. Student leaders and peer support groups were created to remind students of upcoming assignments and provide support and additional assistance if needed. Synchronous and asynchronous monitoring and guidance was facilitated through technology. Data on student performance were collected before and after the implementation of the approaches. Results showed a noticeable change in student attendance and performance levels. Allowing students to decide on topics of expression encouraged participation and noticeable change in engagement. Breakout rooms proved very effective for group learning. First language support through translanguagism helped struggling students in learning new vocabulary and better retention. Assigning student leaders promoted accountability and encouraged guidance through peer support. With digital tools like OneNote and Google Docs continuous monitoring and tracking of student progress with learning support was possible. Students admitted that the new digital learning environment posed challenges but provided them with new learning opportunities. This classroom-based research and its results have emphasized the need for student autonomy empowerment and peer support for sustainable learning and retention. If students are provided with engagement and freedom of expression, they can be motivated to participate in classroom activities even in a virtual environment.

## Session R4-9

### The techno-pedagogic turn in the online translation classroom



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*Oman*

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This study aimed to research the applicability of machine translation (MT) as a pedagogical tool in the online translation classroom. Empirical data were collected using a student survey on the use of MT in the online classroom. The results showed that applying MT in the translation classroom raised students' awareness about translation issues and strategies, built their self-confidence, and enhanced their critical reflection. The results further promoted MT as an effective pedagogical tool that can be used to train translation students online and prepare them to become the competent translators of the future. The study has implications for preparing translation students for the labour market in a way they can compete with professional translators rather than fall behind by relying on traditional translation methods.

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