

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FORUM

### 1. FEATURED SESSION

**Saturday, April 20, 10:00-10:45 AM**

**Location: Incubator**

**Title: *Transforming the Future of Early Childhood Education in the Context of the UAE:***

***HCT Competency-based Pre-service Teacher Education Model***

**Session Description:** Following the UAE government strategy on developing the early childhood sector so it aligns with UAE 2071 centennial plan, a number of government entities have been established to support the national drive for recalibrating early childhood education in the country. Inspired by this national plan, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program at the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) has engaged in revamping the program so it contributes to preparing pre-service teachers for the early childhood stage who are equipped with 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies guided by principles of the national identity, innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainability. With reference to UAE ECE teacher standards and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAYEC) standards, the program has developed a competency-based framework that embraces a holistic approach to child education capable of promoting ECE teachers who would support the national goal of discovering and nurturing talents at an early stage. The presentation will outline the main characteristics of the framework and the mechanisms that support its implementation.



**Presenter: Dr. Slim Khemakhem**

**Academic Chair of the Early Childhood Education Program, HCT**

**Bio:**

Dr. Slim Khemakhem is the Academic Program Chair of the Early Childhood Education Program and an assistant professor at the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT). Slim has a long history in Education in the UAE both as a teacher in primary schools and as an educator and trainer for the pre-service early childhood teachers at HCT. Slim contributed significantly to the development and accreditation of the Early Childhood Program at HCT.

## 2. BA Students' Presentations & Poster Sessions; Higher Colleges of Technology, UAE

Saturday, April 20, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Location: HUB-107

### A. PRESENTATIONS

- 1- **Presentation Title:** The Effect of Combining Teacher-Centered and Student-Centered Approaches on Early Childhood Learners' Performance

**Presenter:** **Alya Almarzooqi**  
Bachelor of Education – Early Childhood Program  
Higher Colleges of Technology, *Abu Dhabi Women's College*

- 2- **Presentation Title:** The Impact of interactive activities on the control and development of students' behaviors in UAE ECE classrooms

**Presenter:** **Shaikha Alali**  
Bachelor of Education – Early Childhood Program  
Higher Colleges of Technology, *Ras Al Khaimah Women's College*

- 3- **Presentation Title:** Improving UAE Kindergarteners' English Reading Proficiency through Collaborative Strategic Reading

**Presenter:** **Salamah Almheiri**  
Bachelor of Education – Early Childhood Program  
Higher Colleges of Technology, *Sharjah Women's College*

- 4- **Presentation Title:** Synthetic Phonics Approach as a Method to Develop UAE Preschoolers' Reading Skills

**Presenter:** **Fatma Abdooli**  
Bachelor of Education – Early Childhood Program  
Higher Colleges of Technology, *Sharjah Women's College*

- 5- **Presentation Title:** Self-Assessment as a Strategy to Develop UAE ECE Students' Letter Recognition Skills

**Presenter:** **Hajer Alshamsi**  
Bachelor of Education – Early Childhood Program  
Higher Colleges of Technology, *Sharjah Women's College*

## A- POSTER SESSIONS

1- **Poster Title:** Nurturing the desire to read in young Emirati learners

**Presenter:** **Hamdah Abdulla**  
Bachelor of Education – Early Childhood Program  
Higher Colleges of Technology, *Al Ain Women's College*

2- **Poster Title:** The Impact of podcasting on language acquisition and literacy development at the KG stage

**Presenter:** **Shamma Ateeq**  
Bachelor of Education - Early Childhood Program  
Higher Colleges of Technology, *Al Ain Women's College*

## 3. PANEL DISCUSSION

Saturday, April 20, **1:00-1:45 PM**

**Location:** Incubator

**Title:** *Redesigning the Early Childhood Landscape in the UAE: Aspiration, Challenges, and Mechanism for Success*

**Session Description:** The panel discussion will address the national drive towards redesigning the early childhood landscape in the UAE so that it meets the expectation of the country's centennial plan 2071 for the education sector. The Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority (ECA) and three main higher education institutions in the UAE: Emirates College of Advanced Education (ECAE), Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT), and United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) are represented on the panel to discuss their action plans, the encountered and expected challenges, and the implications for the short and long runs.

### **Panelists**



**Dr. Suha Al-Hassan**

**Early Childhood Development Advisor at Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority**

**Bio:** Dr. Suha Al-Hassan is a professor of Early Childhood Special Education and Applied Behavior Analysis. She is currently an ECD Advisor at Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority. She is an active researcher, established policy influencer and advocate, and has many years of experience in ECD field in different capacities.



**Dr. Priti Verma**

**Associate Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education, HCT**

**Bio:** Dr. Priti Verma is an Associate Executive Dean and assistant professor at the Faculty of Education, Higher Colleges of Technology, United Arab Emirates. She is a researcher and a specialist in early childhood education whose work has been focusing on improving the Early Childhood Care and Education sector and studying the impact of ECEC quality on child development outcomes in the United Arab Emirates.



**Dr. Rachel Takriti**

**Chair of the Curriculum and Instruction Department at the College of Education, United Arab Emirates University**

**Bio:** Dr. Rachel Takriti is an associate professor and Chair of the Curriculum and Instruction Department at the College of Education, United Arab Emirates University. She graduated with a PhD from the University of Surrey in the UK. Rachel's research interests are: starting school experiences; science education in the early years; and cross-cultural differences in educational experience.



**Dr. Anna Dillon**

**Associate Professor, Emirates College for Advanced Education**

**Bio:** Anna Dillon is an associate professor at Emirates College for Advanced Education, with research interests in bilingual education, early childhood education, translanguaging, and teacher education. She has worked in teacher education for over 10 years between the UAE and Ireland and has also served as a primary school teacher and principal.

#### **4. Featured Session**

**Saturday, April 20, 2:00-2:45 PM**

**Location: Incubator**

**Title: Exploring Social-Emotional Teaching & DIY Learning for Early Years**

**Presenter: Fatmah A Ali, MEET-ACT Center, Saudi Arabia**

#### **Session Description:**

In this session, teachers of young learners will delve into the dynamic world of Social-Emotional Teaching and DIY (do-it-yourself) Learning for Early Years. The session will explore innovative strategies to foster social-emotional development in young learners while embracing the power of hands-on, do-it-yourself learning experiences. Through interactive discussions and practical examples, teachers will gain valuable insights and tools to create a nurturing and empowering educational environment for children.

**Bio:**

Fatmah Azam Ali is the Program Director of postgraduate vocational training qualifications and master's degree programs for MEET-ACT Center, in Saudi Arabia. She is also the President of KSAALT TESOL, an ELT organization based in Saudi Arabia. With nearly two decades of training and managerial experience, Ms. Ali has won several awards from MENA and Global Forum of Education for managing and leading innovative educator training programs in the Middle East.

## **5. Featured Session**

**Saturday, April 20, 3:00-3:45 PM**

**Location: Incubator**

**Title: Navigating Tomorrow: Adapting and Unleashing Linguistic Wonders in Early Education**

**Presenter:** Jeff Pionek, Perfection Learning

### **Session Description:**

In the dynamic landscape of language education, the early education sector plays a pivotal role in shaping young learners' linguistic and cognitive development. This presentation delves into key features and critical points essential for effective teaching and learning in this domain. We explore innovative methodologies, the transformative role of technology, and strategies to create a nurturing and supportive learning environment for our youngest language learners.

### **Bio:**

Jeff Piontek is an author, keynote speaker, and teacher. His work centers on fostering literacy, language acquisition, and cultural competence among diverse student populations using technology as the modality to affect change. His career began as a dual-language science and math teacher in the South Bronx, NYC, where he witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by ELL students. He recognized the need for innovative strategies to bridge language gaps and empower these learners. His approach combines technology, personalized learning, and culturally relevant content to engage ELL students effectively. As the Director of Instructional & Informational Technology in NYC, and as the Director of Science for the State of Hawaii, he championed initiatives that leveraged digital tools to enhance language skills. His commitment to 21st-century skills led him to collaborate with schools globally, sharing best practices in education affecting change and innovation.

## **6. Featured Session**

**Saturday, April 20, 2024 4:00-4:45PM**

**Location: Incubator**

**Title:**  
Incorporating Play-Based Learning: Workshop

**Presenter:**

Matthew Broadhurst, Compass Publishing

**Abstract:**

Research has shown that play has multiple benefits for the development of young children. Despite this, much early-years teaching is still heavily teacher-led. In this presentation, we will look at the conversation around play-based learning (PBL) and talk about how to effectively incorporate PBL into the classroom, finding the balance between children's natural aptitude for play and the need for teacher-led instruction.

**Bio:**

Matthew Broadhurst is an experienced ELT publisher with 15 years in the industry. He is currently the Deputy Team Head of the Overseas Content Development Team at Compass Publishing. He began his ELT career in 2009 as a teacher at an English academy in South Korea, and recently 'topped up' his teaching experience when working at the headquarters of a large kindergarten chain in Seoul. Outside of teaching, he has extensive editorial experience and has worked at both Macmillan Education and Pearson Education in London, working on coursebooks for learners of all ages. Matthew has written and produced many book series for Compass Publishing, including *Splash!*, *STEAM Reading*, *Boost English*, *Writing Framework*, and many more.