PSC FORUM
UTAS-ALMUSSANAH

جامعة التقنية والعلوم التطبيقية
University of Technology and Applied Sciences
المصنعة
Al-Mussanah

3rd Online PSC Forum

Enhancing Learner Autonomy Strategies for a Digital Age



Prof. Jo Mynard

Jan 7 | 9 :30 AM



Prof. Cem Balcikanlı

Jan 8 | 9 :00 AM

7 January 2026



Ms. Sonia V Soans

11:00 – 11:45 AM



Dr. Mahdi Rouhi Athar

12:15 - 1:00 PM



Dr. Zahra Zargaran

1:30 - 2:15 PM

8 January 2026



Ms. Weam Al Jilani

10:30 – 11:15 AM



Dr. Fatemeh Ranjbaran

11:45 AM -12:30 PM



Dr. Toufiq Al Gheilani

1:00 – 1:45 PM

Forum Etiquette

Be Respectful:

- Treat all participants with courtesy and respect, even when you disagree with their opinions.
- Avoid personal attacks, offensive language, or any form of discrimination.

Stay on Topic:

- Keep questions relevant to the forum's theme or specific topic.

No Spamming:

- Refrain from posting repetitive or irrelevant content.
- Avoid self-promotion; instead, contribute meaningfully to discussions.

Mind Your Language:

- Use clear and appropriate language to ensure effective communication.
- Refrain from using excessive caps, emojis, or overly informal language.

Respect Privacy:

- Do not share personal information about yourself or other participants without consent.
- Be cautious about sharing sensitive data in chat discussions.

Report Misconduct:

- If you encounter inappropriate behaviour, report it to the moderators.
- Avoid engaging in flame wars or public disputes; report issues privately.

Be Patient:

- The presenters may not respond to your questions immediately. Allow moderators the time to raise your questions in the Q&A.
- Avoid double-posting; edit your existing message if needed.

Follow Forum Guidelines:

- Familiarise yourself with and adhere to the specific rules and guidelines of the forum.

Disclaimer

This online forum is a platform for participants to engage in discussions, share information, and connect with others. The views expressed by individual participants are their own and do not necessarily represent the views of the forum administrators or moderators.

The forum administrators and moderators reserve the right to:

- Remove any content that violates the forum guidelines.
- Remove participants who engage in persistent misconduct from the session.
- Modify or update the forum rules as necessary.

Participants are responsible for their own contributions and should exercise caution when sharing personal information. The forum administrators are not liable for any content posted by participants, but will make reasonable efforts to maintain a positive and respectful community.

By participating in this forum, participants agree to abide by the established guidelines and accept the consequences for any violations. The administrators and moderators appreciate your cooperation in fostering a welcoming and constructive environment.

Important Note:

Certificates of attendance will be sent via email to participants who successfully complete the satisfaction survey at the end of each session. Please ensure that the survey is completed with accurate details of your name and email address. The forum will not be liable for any mistakes in the spelling or capitalisation of participant names or for not receiving the certificate due to wrong email input.

Forum Opening



Dr Said Hamed Al Rubaii
Vice Chancellor of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences



Dr Nasser Salim Al-Baimani
Assistant Vice Chancellor of UTAS-A



Ms Amani Saif Hamed Al-Jabri
Head of Preparatory Studies Centre, UTAS-A

The forum will commence at **9.00 a.m. on 7 January 2026** with the recitation of verses from the Holy Qur'an. This will be followed by the inaugural address delivered by **Dr Said Hamed Al Rubaii**, Vice Chancellor of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, and welcome remarks by **Dr Nasser Salim Al-Baimani**, Assistant Vice Chancellor of UTAS-Al Mussanah.

Subsequently, the first keynote address will be delivered by **Professor Jo Mynard** from Kanda University of International Studies, Japan. The second keynote address will be delivered by **Professor Cem Balçıkanlı** from Gazi University, Türkiye, on **8 January 2026**.

The forum will conclude with closing remarks by **Ms Amani Saif Hamed Al-Jabri**, Head of the Preparatory Studies Centre at UTAS–Al Mussanah.

Please note that the opening and keynote speech can be accessed via the same link. You can find the link below.

Date and Time	7 January 2026 - (MCT) 9:00 AM
Session Link	Click here.

The closing remarks, on 8 January 2026, will be addressed after session 8. Therefore, the link created for session 8 will be used for this purpose. You can access the link below.

Date and Time	8 January 2026 - (MCT) 1:00 PM
Session Link	Click here.

***Note**: Certificates of attendance will be sent via email to participants who successfully complete the satisfaction survey at the end of each session.*

Keynote Speech (Day 1 Session 1)

The Enduring Appeal of Language Learner Autonomy: Navigating a Rapidly Evolving Digital Landscape

More than forty years after Henri Holec defined autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec, 1981, p. 3), the concept continues to shape research and practice in language education. As David Little noted, it remains "one of the most widely discussed concepts in second language education," with "apparently no end" to the published work (Little, 2020, p. 8). This keynote explores why learner autonomy endures as a central concern (Mynard, 2024) and why it is especially vital to reconsider it in today's rapidly evolving digital landscape.

The presenter will examine how recent developments, such as the global pandemic, advances in psychology, and the rise of generative AI, have expanded, challenged, and occasionally disrupted established understandings of autonomy. Drawing on patterns and gaps in the literature, as well as shifts in pedagogical practices (teaching, advising, self-access), Prof. Mynard will consider what has changed, what has remained stable, and how educators can navigate these changes while maintaining a principled commitment to fostering learners' capacity to take charge of their learning in meaningful and sustainable ways.

About the Keynote Speaker

Professor Jo Mynard



Dr Jo Mynard is a Professor in the Faculty of Global Liberal Arts, Director of the Self-Access Learning Centre (SALC), and Director of the Research Institute for Learner Autonomy Education (RILAE) at Kanda University of International Studies. She holds an M.Phil. in Applied Linguistics (Trinity College, University of Dublin, Ireland) and an Ed.D. in TEFL (University of Exeter, UK). Her research interests include learner autonomy, advising in language learning, the psychology of language learning, and learning beyond the classroom. She is the Editor-in-Chief of the *Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal and Relay* Journal, and she is the Series Editor for the Autonomous Language Learning book series.

Date and Time	7 January 2026 - (MCT) 9:30 AM
Session Link	Click here.

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Day 1 Session 2

Empowering Self-Directed Learners through Digital Intelligence: AI, Mobile, and Immersive Technologies in Modern Education

In this session, participants will explore practical strategies to enhance learner autonomy using digital and intelligent technologies. They will learn how Learning Management Systems (LMS) can support self-directed learning through personalised content, progress monitoring, and reflective practices. The session will also demonstrate how mobile learning and microlearning applications promote continuous, flexible learning beyond the classroom. Participants will also gain insights into the use of AI-powered learning assistants and chatbots for providing instant feedback, adaptive guidance, and conversational practice. Additionally, the session will introduce immersive tools such as Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR) that create engaging, experiential learning environments. By the end of the session, participants will understand how these digital tools can empower learners to take ownership of their learning, develop metacognitive awareness, and build the autonomy required for success in a digitally evolving educational landscape.

About the Speaker

Ms Sonia Victor Soans



Ms Sonia Victor Soans is a distinguished educationist and AI researcher with 29 years of teaching experience in higher education. A gold medallist from Pune University, she holds advanced academic qualifications in Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, Computer Applications, and Computer Science, reflecting her strong multidisciplinary expertise. She is currently pursuing a PhD in AI–Computer Vision and serves as a member of the prestigious ISESCO Chair for AI Ethics. Her expertise spans artificial intelligence, machine learning, computer vision, and digital pedagogy. A dynamic and engaging speaker, Ms Soans is also an active researcher who has published extensively and led numerous academic and community initiatives. She is deeply committed to promoting innovation, ethical AI practices, and creating transformative, future-ready learning experiences for educators and learners alike.

Date and Time	7 January 2026 - (MCT) 11:00 AM
Session Link	Click here.

***Note**: Certificates of attendance will be sent via email to participants who successfully complete the satisfaction survey at the end of each session.*

Day 1 Session 3

Developing Metastrategies for Grammar-focused Learner Autonomy in EFL: Applications to UTAS Foundation and Post-foundation Courses

In this session, participants will learn how metastrategies can be systematically integrated into grammar instruction to enhance learner autonomy in EFL contexts. The presentation introduces the concept of metacognitive, meta-affective, and meta-sociocultural strategies based on Oxford's Strategic Self-Regulated (S2R) Model, with a specific focus on grammar learning. Participants will gain practical insights into how these metastrategies support learners in planning, monitoring, evaluating, and regulating their grammar learning processes. Drawing on empirical findings from a PhD study on grammar strategies-based instruction, the session demonstrates how metastrategies can be embedded within existing curricula through task-based cycles and the form–meaning–use ("grammaring") framework. By the end of the session, participants will be able to identify metastrategy-focused classroom practices suitable for Foundation (Pathways 1–3) and Post-Foundation (EAP and Technical Writing) courses and adapt them to promote independent, reflective grammar learning.

About the Speaker

Dr Mahdi Rouhiathar



Dr Mahdi Rouhiathar is a Lecturer in English Language at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS), Salalah, where he has been teaching for more than three years. His academic interests focus on EAP effectiveness, performance assessment, and rater reliability, and research-informed pedagogy in higher education. He is currently leading an internally funded UTAS research project investigating the effectiveness of Microsoft Learning Accelerators in enhancing students' English language learning. Before joining UTAS, he worked as a teacher educator at Farhangian University in Iran, contributing to pre-service teacher education and professional development.

Date and Time	7 January 2026 - (MCT) 12:15 PM
Session Link	Click here.

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Session 4

Maximising Writing Success through Learner Autonomy and Innovative Feedback Approaches

Participants in this session will discover practical, research-informed strategies to foster learner autonomy in IELTS and general academic writing classes, a critical factor for long-term writing success. They will explore the strengths and limitations of three feedback approaches: traditional teacher feedback, AI-generated feedback, and a powerful blended model that combines AI tools with collaborative peer discussions. Through real classroom examples, attendees will learn how to seamlessly integrate user-friendly AI platforms into their teaching while maintaining meaningful human interaction to deepen student engagement and critical thinking. The session provides actionable techniques to shift students from passive recipients of correction to independent writers who self-assess, set goals, and actively use feedback. By the end, teachers will leave with ready-to-implement methods, activity templates, and technology recommendations that enhance writing outcomes, increase learner confidence, and make feedback more efficient and effective in any writing classroom.

About the Speaker

Dr Zahra Zargaran



Dr Zahra Zargaran holds a PhD in ELT and is a lecturer at UTAS–Shinas, Oman. She is a certified trainer with the British Council, IDP Australia, and Cambridge, and has trained hundreds of teachers since 2011. Her expertise spans teacher education, curriculum design, active learning, and psycholinguistics, and she has numerous publications and conference presentations.

Date and Time	7 January 2026 - (MCT) 1:30 PM
Session Link	Click here.

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Keynote Speech 2 (Day 2 Session 5)

Autonomy in Language Learning: Myth, Magic, or Measurable Reality?

Learner autonomy has long been celebrated as a cornerstone of effective language education—an empowering ideal that promises motivated, self-directed and lifelong learners. Yet in many real classrooms, autonomy feels less like a clearly achievable goal and more like a beautifully framed myth we keep hanging on our conference walls. This keynote challenges that gap between rhetoric and reality. Drawing on current research, classroom-level evidence, and lived experiences from diverse educational contexts, it explores a central question: Are we genuinely fostering autonomy, or merely celebrating the idea of it?

The talk re-examines what autonomy looks like in practice, what teachers can—and cannot—control, and how institutional, cultural, and emotional factors shape learners' ability to take charge of their learning. It argues that autonomy is neither a myth nor a miracle, but a continuum: a set of micro-behaviours, classroom rituals, and mindset shifts that accumulate over time. Participants will walk away with research-grounded insights, teacher-tested strategies, and a fresh, honest perspective on what it truly means to build autonomous learners in the 21st-century classroom.

About the Speaker

Prof. Dr. Cem Balçıkanlı



Prof. Dr Cem Balçıkanlı is a professor of English Language Teaching at Gazi University and the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Language Teaching and Learning (since 2011). His research focuses on learner and teacher autonomy, technology-enhanced language learning, and second language teacher education. He has contributed chapters to volumes published by Routledge, Candlin & Mynard, and Peter Lang. His books include 50 Soruda Dil Öğrenme, Çocuğum İngilizce Öğreniyor (with Prof. Dr Kemal Sinan Özmen), Yeni Nesil Dil Öğrenme (with Çilem Akar), Yabancı Dil Perisi, and Derinleş: Bir Öğretmenin Kendisine Sorması Gereken Sorular.

Date and Time	8 January 2026 - (MCT) 9:00 AM
Session Link	Click here.

***Note**: Certificates of attendance will be sent via email to participants who successfully complete the satisfaction survey at the end of each session.*

Day 2 Session 6

From Instructor to Facilitator: Digital Strategies for Learner Autonomy

The current session aims to equip participants with practical strategies for fostering learner autonomy in digitally enhanced learning environments. Participants will explore the evolving role of instructors as facilitators who guide and support student independence through effective scaffolding, structured choice, and gradual release of responsibility. Additionally, the session will demonstrate classroom-based practices that encourage self-directed learning, reflection, and learner responsibility, supported by digital tools such as Padlet, Flip, Canva, and Google Slides. Participants will examine concrete examples of how technology can be integrated to motivate students, promote active engagement, and enhance productive skills in English language learning. Moreover, the session will provide guidance on designing classroom activities that empower learners to make decisions about their learning process, engage in peer and self-assessment, and develop critical thinking. By the end of the session, participants will be able to implement technology-enhanced strategies that enhance learner autonomy and create an interactive, student-centred learning environment in higher education contexts.

About the Speaker

Ms We'am Mohammed Al Jilani



Ms We'am Mohammed Al Jilani is an English lecturer at the Preparatory Studies Centre, University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Salalah. She holds a master's degree in TESOL from the University of Reading, UK, with her thesis titled "Using Short Clips in Teaching the Simple Past Tense." She has previously worked at Dhofar University and Salalah Vocational College. Her academic and professional interests include technology integration in ELT, enhancing students' productive skills, and motivating EFL learners. She has published research on technology integration in language teaching and is also a professional trainer certified by the Ministry of Labour through the Ejada system.

Date and Time	8 January 2026 - (MCT) 10:30 AM
Session Link	Click here.

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Day 2 Session 7

Personalised L2 Argumentative Writing Instruction through GenAI-enhanced Corpus-based Language Pedagogy: An Intervention Study

In this session, participants will learn how GenAI can be combined with corpus-based language pedagogy to personalise L2 argumentative writing instruction. They will see a practical workflow for (1) compiling learners' essays into a small corpus, (2) using Custom GPT to build individualised linguistic profiles, and (3) designing tailored support (writing tips, coherence/cohesion checks, vocabulary lists, and grammar practice). The audience will also gain insight into the study findings about short- and long-term gains and which features (customised feedback, interactivity, and easy access) may explain the impact.

About the Speaker

Dr Fatemeh Ranjbaran Madiseh



Dr Fatemeh holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Tehran, Iran. She is currently a faculty member at the Centre for Preparatory Studies, Department of English for Sciences, Sultan Qaboos University. Her most recent publications have appeared in Applied Linguistics, Computer Assisted Language Learning, ReCALL, CALL-EJ, Education and Information Technologies, Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, and European Journal of Education. Her research interests primarily include technology-enhanced language learning, CALL, EAP, and Collaborative-Online International Learning (COIL).

Date and Time	8 January 2026 - (MCT) 11:45 AM
Session Link	Click here.

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Day 2 Session 8

From Implicit to Intentional Autonomy: Redesigning UTAS Foundation Mathematics for Self-directed Learning in a Digital Age

In this session, participants will learn how to redesign General Foundation Program (GFP) mathematics courses (FPMS0001/FPMH0001) to move from implicit to intentional support for learner autonomy and self-directed learning. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and self-regulated learning (SRL), the session will clarify key concepts (autonomy, SDL, SRL) and demonstrate how they can be translated into practical design decisions in Course Delivery Plans, assessment, and classroom practice. Participants will explore a working lens of "Autonomy-Supportive Digital Mathematics," examine examples from UTAS GFP documents, and identify where current practices support autonomy and where gaps remain. Practical strategies using Moodle, GeoGebra/Desmos, learning analytics, and AI tutors will be introduced to scaffold planning, monitoring, and reflection without fostering over-reliance. By the end, participants will leave with a clearer conceptual map and a set of practical ideas to pilot in their own GFP mathematics teaching.

About the Speaker

Dr Toufiq Al Gheilani



Dr Toufiq Badar Abdul Razaq Al Gheilani is an Assistant Professor at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences–Sur. He holds a PhD in Statistics from the University of Newcastle (2020), focusing on value-added models in education; an MSc in Statistics from the University of Waikato, New Zealand (2011), and a Master of Education in Curriculum and Teaching Methods of Mathematics from Sultan Qaboos University (2003). His expertise includes statistics and teaching strategies. He has served as a session chair at the UTAS–Sur Annual Scientific Research Forum and is a member of the JASTi editorial board.

Date and Time	8 January 2026 - (MCT) 1:00 PM
Session Link	Click here.

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