Finding Young Voices: Lighting Pathways to Early Literacy in EFL Contexts

In many EFL contexts such as Vietnam, early literacy instruction is shaped by fragmented curricula, limited preparation in phonics pedagogy, and the challenge of adapting international resources to local classrooms. As a result, phonics is often taught through repetition and drills, with limited attention to phonological awareness, reading development, and learner agency. This workshop responds to these challenges by exploring how systematic phonics, integrated with the Color Vowels approach and multimodal scaffolding, can support young learners to read, spell, and self-correct more independently.

The workshop introduces a practical pedagogical framework that connects phonological awareness, phonics instruction, and early literacy development. Participants will engage in hands-on demonstrations of classroom routines designed to address common cross-linguistic challenges faced by Vietnamese EFL learners, particularly the mismatch between shared Latin letters and contrasting sound systems in English and Vietnamese. Activities include colour-supported decoding, vowel-based movement routines, guided blending and segmenting, and structured opportunities for oral reading and spelling.

A central component of the session is collaborative lesson design. Participants will work in small groups to adapt existing phonics and early literacy materials to their own teaching contexts and co-construct short teaching sequences that balance explicit instruction, learner interaction, and meaningful practice. Sample artefacts such as phonics chants, decoding frames, and scaffolded mini-reading tasks will be modelled to illustrate how learner-generated products can enhance engagement, confidence, and early literacy agency.

By linking teacher professional learning, material adaptation, and classroom practice, the workshop supports educators in developing context-responsive approaches to early literacy instruction in EFL settings. Participants will leave with a set of adaptable classroom routines, sample lesson templates, and a concise toolkit for phonics-informed literacy teaching that they can immediately apply in their own classrooms.