

EdYOU Fest

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In this issue:

- EdYOU Fest Derry, Northern Ireland
- EDYOUTH MARATHON

EDYOUTH GALLERY.COM/EDYOUTH MAGAZINE



***EdYOUFest Derry 2026 & EDYOUMARATHON:
Two Events, One Global Community***



INDEX



EDITORIAL

EdYOUFest Derry & EDYOUTMARATHON: The 2026 Kick-Off

A new year begins, and with it a renewed sense of energy, purpose, and connection.

This EDYOUTMAGAZINE issue comes out at a very special time: the **first week of February**, exactly when the EdYOUFest community is preparing to meet again — both **in person** and **online** — through two initiatives that represent the heart of our mission: **EdYOUFest Derry 2026** and **EDYOUTMARATHON**.

EdYOUFest is not just a conference. It is not just a training event. It is a living educational ecosystem built on one powerful belief: **teachers grow best when they grow together**.

Why this issue, why now?

Because this is a *countdown* issue — a moment to pause, reflect, and get ready.

With **EdYOUFest Derry (13–15 February 2026)**, we are bringing our community to a place with a strong identity, a unique spirit, and a deeply human atmosphere. Derry is

not only a venue: it becomes a symbol of what EdYOUFest stands for — **culture, dialogue, openness, and learning through experience**.

At the same time, **EDYOUTMARATHON** represents the other side of our identity: the ability to connect educators beyond borders, time zones, and distances, proving that meaningful training can also be **global, accessible, and continuous**.

Together, these two projects show something important:

EdYOUFest is a community that moves.

In classrooms. In cities. Across countries. Online and offline.

A theme that matters

EdYOUFest Derry will focus on a timely and urgent question:

Human Intelligence in the Age of Technology: Key to Future Teaching?

In a world that is increasingly shaped by AI and digital transformation, education cannot lose what makes it deeply meaningful: the human dimension. This is the real strength of teachers — not only knowledge, but empathy, intuition, creativity, critical thinking, and the ability to inspire others.

Technology may change how we teach, but it must never replace *why* we teach.

A magazine for real educators

In this issue, you will find:

- highlights and previews of **EdYOUFest Derry**
- spotlights on speakers, themes, and practical guidance for participants

- a clear introduction to **EDYOUTHATHON**, its format and educational value
- reflections on how these projects connect into one common vision

Most importantly, you will find the voices of educators who make EdYOUFest what it is: **a shared home for professional growth.**

A simple invitation

Whether you are joining us in Derry, following the Marathon online, or discovering EdYOUFest for the first time through these pages, our message is the same:

You belong here.

Welcome to the 2026 kick-off. Let's build, guide, and inspire — together.

Giovanni Rottura
EdYOUFest Founder



EdYOUFest Derry



13th - 14th - 15th

February 2026

Spotlight on EdYOUFest Derry 2026

Welcome to Derry

Welcome to **Derry**, one of the most fascinating and culturally vibrant cities in **Northern Ireland**. Located in the north-west of the island, Derry is a place where history and modern identity come together in a truly unique atmosphere. The city is well known for its impressive **17th-century walls**, among the best preserved in Europe, offering unforgettable views and a powerful sense of heritage.

Crossed by the **River Foyle** and connected by the iconic **Peace Bridge**, Derry also represents resilience, renewal and community spirit. Today, it is recognised as a creative hub, rich in festivals, arts and cultural initiatives — an energy that made it famous as the **UK City of Culture (2013)**.

For EdYOUFest participants, Derry is more than a destination: it is an experience. A welcoming city where

learning, inspiration and meaningful connections naturally happen.

..... We are looking forward to coming together to share ideas, spark conversations, and inspire one another. You'll discover that the only thing warmer than our welcome is our passion for learning, connection, and collaboration.

We can't wait to see you soon and share the true heart and spirit of our wonderful city with you.

John McGowan

*Managing Director,
The Northwest Academy of English*



The Programme

The programme of **EdYOUFest Derry 2026** is designed to offer a complete experience: high-profile plenary sessions, themed workshops, poster sessions, panel discussions, and the certificate

ceremony. What makes the Derry edition truly unique are also the social moments: the gala dinner, Irish music and dance, and a guided cultural day tour to discover the city

13th February 2026:

08.30 – 09.15: Meeting at the host school

09.15 – 09.55: Local authorities and organizers welcome

10.00 – 11.30: **First Plenary Session: Charles Browne**

The Vocabulary Revolution: How Corpus Tools, Extensive Reading, and AI Can Transform Learning

11.45 – 12.30: Workshops:

Board Room - Clare Heane

Igniting the Fire Within: Motivating Learners in the EFL Classroom

Room 2 - Qasserras Lhoussine

Local Games, Global Skills: Moroccan Culturally-Based Gamification for Developing 21st-Century Competencies in EFL Education

Room 3 – Anna Lipina

Can teachers realistically create a “digital clone” to handle routine work—or is it just a tech myth?

12.30 – 13.45: Lunchtime

14.00 – 15.30: **Second Plenary Session: Catherine Mantadaki**

Mediation in EFL Teaching: Enhancing the Human Advantage in Learning

15.45 – 16.30: Workshops:

Board Room - Alex Mackenzie

Flexibility over formula: post-method language teaching

Room 2, Alona Korniienko

Inside the Mental Lexicon: Coaching the Brain Toward Language Autonomy

Room 3, Lawrence Body

The creative heart of teaching. Integrating mindfulness and compassion into the classroom

16.45 – 18.00: **Third Plenary Session: Robert Howard**

You Can't Program Passion - Why AI Can't Replace the Heart of Teaching

18.00 – 19.30: Free time

19.30 – 22.30: Gala Dinner with Music and Dance

14th February 2026:

09.30 – 09.50: Meeting at the host school

10.00 – 11.30: **Fourth Plenary Session: Thomas Jones**

Teaching for tomorrow

11.45 – 12.30: Workshops:

Board Room – Olena Kuzmenko

AI for teachers who don't have time: tools that save planning hours

Room 2, Eng Hai Tan

Happy Hormones in Action – Energizers to Boost Motivation, Focus, and Classroom Dynamics

Room 3, Ruairi O'Connor

Tip and Tricks for AI in the classroom and recognising in its use with students

12.30 – 13.45: Lunchtime

14.00 – 14.50: Poster sessions

15.00 – 15.50: Workshops:

Board Room, John Dobbins

Introductory Irish-language session

Room 2, Antonina Devitska

Voice, Identity and AI: Creating Speech Portraits of Students through Voccent

Room 3, Inesa Melnyk

Beyond the Algorithm: Crafting Human-Centered AI Experiences in EFL

16.00 – 17.00: Panel with **Rob Howard, Charles Browne** and **Mantadaki**

17.00 – 18.00: Certificate Ceremony

18.00 – 20.00: Irish music and dance

15th February 2026:

Cultural Day Tour

Start time: 09:00 am

Meeting point: Guildhall Square (central, easy to find)

Route & Stops:

1. **Guildhall Square**
2. **Walk part of the City Walls**
3. **St Columb's Cathedral / Long Tower**
4. **Cross via Peace Bridge**
5. **Bogside & Murals**
6. **End at Museum of Free Derry**

EdYOUFest Derry, The Local Team

The local team is made up of staff members from **Northwest Academy**, the language school that will host EdYOUFest Derry. They have worked with great dedication and enthusiasm to support the organisation of the event, taking care of logistics, coordination and the overall participant experience. Their commitment and hospitality play a key role in creating the warm and welcoming EdYOUFest atmosphere we all value.



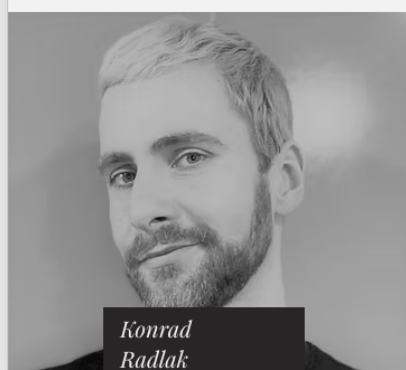
*Francesca
Giacomini*



*John
McGowan*



*Clare
Heaney*



*Konrad
Radlak*



*Magda
Boyle*



*Chris
McGowan*

Behind the Scenes of EdYOUFest Derry: The Local Team Making It Happen

But behind every successful event, there is always something that remains almost invisible to participants — yet it is essential: **the local team**.

EdYOUFest is not only a conference. It is a movement built on professional growth, collaboration, and shared educational values. And that is exactly why

each EdYOUFest edition depends on the energy, dedication and competence of a local group of people who work with care to make everything possible.

In Derry, this commitment is represented by a team drawn directly from **The Northwest Academy** — teachers and staff members who not only work in education every day, but who believe deeply in what EdYOUFest stands for.

This article is dedicated to them.

Why hosting EdYOUFest matters

At The Northwest Academy, we have always believed that education goes beyond delivering language lessons. A language school is a place of learning, but also a place where identity is shaped, confidence grows, and individuals discover new possibilities. For this reason, professional development is not something “extra” — it is part of our core mission.

Hosting EdYOUFest in Derry represents an important step in this direction.

Meet the Local EdYOUFest Team

The Local EdYOUFest Team for the Derry edition is made up of people from our school. Their work reflects the spirit of EdYOUFest: **collaboration, reliability, and genuine human connection.**

What makes this local team special is the balance between the professional and the personal. Some members contribute through coordination and planning, others through logistics and hospitality, others through communication and direct support for speakers and participants.

Every role is different, yet each one has the same purpose: **to create the conditions for learning, exchange and inspiration.**

Although participants may not see the preparation behind the scenes, they will experience its results constantly: smooth organisation, clear schedules, supportive guidance, and an atmosphere that encourages meaningful conversation. A local team is not just a group of organisers. It is a community in action.

EdYOUFest/Derry

- International Speakers
- Practical Workshops
- Teacher Networking

Location:

The North West Academy
Northern Ireland
37 Great James St,
Londonderry BT48 7DF

Recommended Airports:

- Derry
- Belfast
- Dublin



More Information
www.edyoufest.org/derry



2026

Derry

13 - 15 February



In Collaboration with

THE NORTH WEST
ACADEMY
of ENGLISH



www.edyoufest.org/derry

Speakers

EdYOUFest Derry 2026 will welcome an inspiring line-up of international speakers, bringing expertise, fresh perspectives and practical classroom ideas. The programme includes **4 plenary sessions, 12 workshop sessions, 1 panel session, and 1 poster session**, offering participants a rich mix of theory, innovation, and hands-on professional development. Each session is designed to encourage reflection, interaction and meaningful discussion, making EdYOUFest a truly engaging learning experience.

Theme

The theme of the 2026 edition offers a highly topical reflection: **Human Intelligence in the Age of Technology: Key to Future Teaching?** At a time when AI is increasingly entering the classroom, EdYOUFest invites educators to rediscover the value of genuinely human skills: empathy, creativity, critical thinking, communication, and the ability to inspire.



**TITLE:**

THE VOCABULARY REVOLUTION: HOW CORPUS TOOLS, EXTENSIVE READING, AND AI CAN TRANSFORM LEARNING

SPEAKER: CHARLIE BROWNE

PRESENTATION TYPE: PLENARY

Abstract

Vocabulary knowledge is the single strongest predictor of reading success, yet many learners spend years studying words they seldom encounter. This plenary argues for a more efficient, evidence-based approach—one that brings together corpus research, extensive reading, and emerging AI technologies into a coherent system for accelerated language growth.

We will examine how high-frequency word lists such as the NGSL can provide a powerful backbone for instruction; how extensive reading offers the volume of meaningful input essential for mastery; and how new AI-enhanced tools can support teachers by generating level-appropriate materials, profiling texts, and personalizing learning pathways in real time.

Rather than overwhelming learners with complexity, this integrated approach creates clarity, efficiency, and momentum—giving teachers more time to teach, and students more opportunities to enjoy using English. Participants will leave with practical techniques and free tools they can immediately apply in their classrooms.

Biography

Dr. Charles Browne is Professor of TESOL & Applied Linguistics at Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo, where he directs the English Department's MA and PhD programs and founded its EFL teacher-training track. He is internationally recognized for his contributions to second language vocabulary research and as co-creator and Director of the New General Service List (NGSL) Project. His corpus-based word lists and more than 15 freely available online tools are used by teachers, researchers, ministries, and publishers around the world.

Across four decades in Japan, Dr. Browne has shaped research-informed approaches to vocabulary development, extensive reading, and technology-enhanced language learning. In recent years he has become a leading figure in integrating AI into principled pedagogy, developing NGSL-aligned text-creation tools, lexical profilers, and digital resources that support teachers while expanding learner autonomy.

A sought-after speaker, he has delivered more than 75 plenary and keynote addresses internationally and has presented two TEDx Talks on vocabulary acquisition. As CEO of CBC Consulting, he advises publishers, boards of education, EdTech companies, and global organizations on designing effective, scalable language-learning systems—and remains open to new collaborations that advance innovative, research-driven English education.

**TITLE:****MEDIATION IN EFL TEACHING: ENHANCING THE HUMAN ADVANTAGE IN LEARNING****SPEAKER:** CATHERINE MANTADAKI**PRESENTATION TYPE:** PLENARY

Abstract

In a rapidly evolving educational landscape where AI and digital tools are transforming learning, the future of teaching depends on distinctly human capacities: connection, meaning-making, and shared understanding. This presentation explores CEFR Mediation as a powerful expression of human intelligence in language education. Mediation goes beyond linguistic accuracy; it requires emotional sensitivity and nurtures empathy, collaboration, critical thinking and intercultural awareness — skills uniquely human and essential for deeper understanding. These competencies empower learners to co-construct knowledge and communicate purposefully across diverse contexts. The session highlights practical strategies and classroom applications that integrate Mediation in the EFL classroom, demonstrating how teachers can enhance the human dimension of learning and prepare students not only to use English but also to connect meaningfully in a technology-rich world.

Biography

Catherine Mantadaki has been teaching English as a foreign language for over 25 years, specialising in supporting students with dyslexia and other SEN. As a Senior Educational Consultant and Teacher Trainer at Express Publishing, she is dedicated to advancing educational practices worldwide. Her scientific research and interests include neuroscience, educational technology, and inclusive education, reflecting her commitment to fostering accessible, engaging and effective learning environments.

**TITLE:**

YOU CAN'T PROGRAM PASSION - WHY AI CAN'T REPLACE THE HEART OF TEACHING

SPEAKER: ROB HOWARD

PRESENTATION TYPE: PLENARY

Abstract

In an age where AI tools are transforming classrooms, one element remains irreplaceable: teacher passion.

This talk explores why passion is central to English language teaching and how it fuels motivation, creativity, and resilience in learners. While AI can assist with practice, feedback, and efficiency, it cannot replicate the human spark that inspires students to take risks, persevere, and find joy in language learning. Drawing on classroom stories, practical examples, and reflections, the session will highlight how teachers can harness technology while protecting and amplifying the passion that makes their work transformative.

Biography

Rob Howard is the owner of the Online Language Center and Business Language Training Institute. He is a teacher, writer and frequent worldwide speaker and trainer on Business English, Teacher Development, Entrepreneurship, teaching online, and using technology and images. He is the current IATEFL Poland president, former Joint Coordinator of the IATEFL BESIG, Gallery Teachers Masterclass presenter, iTDi TOEFL course trainer, member of the C Group, as well as co-founder of the Independent Authors & Publishers. Rob is also the creator of EFLtalks, teachers teaching teachers, nominated for the 2016 British Council's ELTon Award for Innovation in Teacher Resources.



TITLE:

TEACHING FOR TOMORROW

SPEAKER: THOM JONES

PRESENTATION TYPE: PLENARY

Abstract

"Relevance in revolution"

All of our certainties are gone...

As the myriad evolution of the 'calculator for the mind' that is AI leads to a revolution in education and the potential death of language learning, where do teachers find any chance to remain relevant or even guess what our students might need in a future we cannot know? Is this new? Where do we learn what future students will need to succeed tomorrow? With an obvious ecological, economical and political tide sweeping established ideas and systems away, what comes next? Can we help shape it? Should we try?

The world we knew is gone. Into this new tomorrow, what can we offer? Do any of the values or ideas we hold dear need to be transmitted to future generations? Which skills really matter? Can we teach values? Should we try? What can education today do to help the learners of tomorrow? As we say the triumph of the easy answer, what price reflection? Education? Tolerance? At what point do our educational efforts become indoctrination? Where do we stand? Where should we stand? Who gets to decide? There will be discussions, Workshop elements and a massive crowd of clever people asked difficult questions. Bring your own clever.

Biography

Thom Jones has lived in more than a dozen countries and delivered training in over 70. Having been a truly useless student (and proving it frequently by failing all the exams he was set) he started his professional life as a waiter before going into teaching, then management, before going freelance. Formerly part of the senior executive at Embassy CES before becoming Director of Operations USA for Studygroup he returned to the UK to work with Trinity College London and now works with a range of organisations on a wide variety of projects. He is College Principal for an international summer programme in Cambridge each summer. He presents regularly at conferences around the world on a range of topics and is a guest lecturer at four universities. He is also a freelance trainer in business and management. Ten years ago he cycled from the UK to Turkey, travelling through 11 countries. He is Ambassador of Buzz for Express publishing.

He is rubbish at maths. His mother thinks he is great.

TITLE:

Local Games, Global Skills: Moroccan Culturally-Based Gamification for Developing 21st-Century Competencies in EFL Education

SPEAKER: Qasserras Lhoussine

PRESENTATION TYPE: WORKSHOP

**Abstract**

Developing 21st-century skills—collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity—has become a key priority in English language education. While gamification is widely promoted as an engaging pedagogical approach, many models depend heavily on digital tools and overlook the value of local cultural resources.

This session presents a culturally responsive approach to gamification derived from the Moroccan context, demonstrating how traditional and community-based games can be adapted to enhance both language learning and transversal skills in EFL classrooms. Drawing on classroom practice and teacher-training experiences, the presentation connects theoretical foundations of gamification with practical, low-tech strategies accessible to diverse educational settings.

Participants will explore Moroccan-inspired activities such as storytelling circles, movement challenges, and collaborative competitions that promote teamwork, problem-solving, and learner autonomy. By moving from theory to actionable classroom techniques, this session highlights how local culture can generate globally relevant skills and create more meaningful, inclusive learning experiences.

Keywords: gamification, Moroccan context, culturally responsive pedagogy, 21st-century skills, EFL, active learning



2026



TITLE:

Can teachers realistically create a “digital clone” to handle routine work—or is it just a tech myth?

SPEAKER: Anna Lipina

PRESENTATION TYPE: WORKSHOP

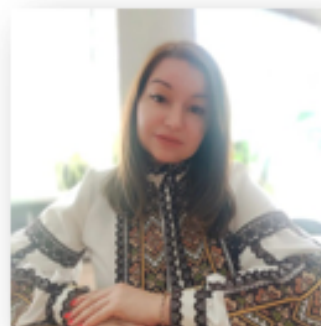
Abstract:

Can teachers realistically create a “digital clone” to handle routine work—or is it just a tech myth?

This session explores how no-code automation may allow ELT professionals to delegate repetitive administrative and classroom tasks to simple workflows. By automating processes like feedback delivery, scheduling, and documentation, teachers and managers can reclaim time and mental energy for teaching and decision-making. The focus is not replacement, but professional amplification: using automation to support, not overshadow, the human role of the educator.

Bio:

Anna Lipina, PhD, is an academic and research director, linguist, and teacher trainer with over 15 years of experience in English language education. DELTA certified, she has led international research on digital transformation in education and directed a university language department serving over 1,000 students annually with a team of 39 associates. Her expertise spans linguistics, ESP, and digital learning.



TITLE:

Beyond the Algorithm: Crafting Human-Centered AI Experiences in EFL

SPEAKER: Inesa Melnyk

PRESENTATION TYPE: WORKSHOP

Abstract

Her work emphasizes human-centered reshapes language education, the essential question shifts from 'How advanced is the technology?' Her work underemphasises human-centered hands-on workshop demonstrates how Cognitive Load Theory guides effective AI integration, showcasing three categories of practical tools: adaptive learning applications that personalize practice through intelligent algorithms; generative AI for rapid creation of differentiated, level-appropriate materials; and AI-enhanced assessment tools providing timely feedback at scale. Through interactive activities including cognitive load scenario analysis, tool selection exercises, and prompt crafting workshops, participants develop immediately applicable skills for choosing and implementing AI based on pedagogical principles rather than technological novelty. Participants gain hands-on experience with specific tools, templates for creating customized materials, and a decision-framework for sustainable integration—demonstrating that effective AI use in language teaching requires neither technical expertise nor classroom transformation, but rather thoughtful application of student-centered design principles that enhance learning while preserving the irreplaceable human elements of teaching.

Bio

Dr. Inesa Melnyk is an Associate Professor at Carpathian National University in Ukraine, with over 20 years of experience in English language teaching and pedagogical innovation. A TEFL-qualified educator, PhD specializing in adaptive teaching methodologies and AI integration in language classrooms, she has presented at TESOL International Convention and Expo (Tampa, 2024), NYS TESOL Annual Conference (2023), TELIC 2025 and conferences throughout Europe. Her work emphasizes human-centered design principles that enhance teacher capabilities while maintaining the essential human connections that make education transformative.



TITLE:

**Inside the Mental Lexicon: Coaching the Brain
Toward Language Autonomy**

SPEAKER: Alona Kornirko

PRESENTATION TYPE: WORKSHOP



Abstract:

What happens in the brain when learners suddenly “forget” a word and how can we help them retrieve it?

This session steps inside the mental lexicon - the brain’s living network where words, meanings, and experiences connect - to explore how language moves from input to activation. Drawing on applied linguistics, neuroscience, and language coaching, we’ll uncover how to awaken neural pathways to recall.

Participants will experience practical language coaching strategies to help learners self-retrieve words, regulate recall, and build language autonomy.

Bio:

Ms pecialize in brain-based learning and personalized accredited NeuroLanguage Coach* (ELC & ICF) and the founder of the Language Coaching Center. For the past 15+ years, I’ve been helping professionals and organizations transform the way they approach English - not as a subject to study, but as a tool for leadership, growth, and meaningful connection.

My background includes leading the English Project for the Military as a project manager, training teachers on the Teachers’ Upgrade platform, and working as an interpreter at international events such as maritime navigation, UN negotiations, the Columbia Business Summit in Dubai, marketing & tourism negotiations in Romania and Ukraine. At the Language Coaching Center, my team and I support entrepreneurs, managers, and freelancers in building confidence with English-speaking clients. We also help companies strengthen business communication by integrating NeuroLanguage Coaching* into their strategy.

I specialize in brain-based learning and personalized language coaching for English learners.



TITLE:

Tip and Tricks for AI in the classroom and recognising in its use with students

SPEAKER: Ruari O'Connor

PRESENTATION TYPE: WORKSHOP

Abstract

A workshop to discover how simple mindfulness techniques and emotions can enhance student participation, creativity and performance and help build a safe and nurturing classroom atmosphere.

Proposed activities:

1. Integrating simple mindful breathing spaces to enhance learning.
2. The exploration of an everyday object with the aim of writing a poem.
3. An active listening exercise where participants share information about an event or situation they have experienced in the classroom connected to an emotion of their choice.

Bio

Lawrence Body

MSc in Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence, MEd in Social Change and the Education Profession. English teacher for 25 years at the University of Málaga. Teacher trainer and coach in mindfulness and emotional intelligence in schools and universities including ERASMUS+ programs in Ireland, the UK, Turkey and Spain. Expert in CLIL and bilingual programs. Cambridge examiner B1, B2, C1 .

**TITLE:**

**AI for teachers who don't have time:
tools that save planning hours**

SPEAKER: Olena Kuzmenko

PRESENTATION TYPE: WORKSHOP

Abstract

Teachers everywhere share the same challenge: too much to do and too little time to do it. Lesson planning, materials design, assessment, documentation, reporting, and communication often compete with the thing that matters most – actual teaching. In this workshop participants will explore practical AI tools that can simplify the daily workload and assist in creating lesson plans, generating tasks, adapting texts, producing worksheets, and managing routine tasks. The focus is simple: how to have smarter lessons, less stress, and more time to be the teacher you want to be – not the one buried under paperwork.

Bio

Olena Kuzmenko is a PhD and Associate Professor at Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, where she teaches English, cultural studies, communication, and methodology. Passionate about supporting modern teachers, she brings together academic expertise and practical classroom innovation. Her interests lie in language teaching, intercultural communication, English teaching methodology, and educational design.

Olena is the author of scholarly articles in philology, methodology, and cultural studies, contributing actively to the academic community and shaping contemporary approaches to language education. Beyond her university work, she has extensive experience organizing field trips, charity initiatives, and educational events that connect learning with real-world engagement.

From 2015 to 2019, she participated in the pilot phase of the “New Generation School Teacher” project earning a trainer certificate that allows her to support both in-service and pre-service teachers.

In 2020, Olena completed a CELTA internship where she gained the internationally recognized CELTA certificate, which qualifies her to teach English to non-native speakers around the world.

Today, she continues to combine methodological expertise, international professional development, and innovative approaches to help teachers thrive in a rapidly changing educational landscape.

**TITLE:**

Happy Hormones in Action – Energizers to Boost Motivation, Focus, and Classroom Dynamics

SPEAKER: Eng Hai Tan

PRESENTATION TYPE: WORKSHOP

Abstract

This interactive workshop explores how brain-based teaching strategies enhance student motivation and focus. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and neuroscience, participants will discover how the brain's "happy hormones" (dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin, and endorphins) support emotional well-being, memory, and learning. A central feature of the session is the use of no-preparation energizers, simple, adaptable activities that immediately increase attention, participation, and classroom dynamics for learners of any age. By combining theory with hands-on practice, educators will leave with practical, easy-to-apply strategies and a clearer understanding of how to create positive, motivating learning environments where students thrive.

Bio

Eng Hai is an experienced educator and Associate Professor at Meio University, Okinawa. With over three decades of teaching, leadership, and teacher training experience, he specializes in educational psychology and brain-based learning. His work focuses on motivating classrooms using neuroscience insights and practical strategies that engage learners of all ages.

**TITLE:**

Tip and Tricks for AI in the classroom and recognising in its use with students

SPEAKER: Ruairi O'Connor

PRESENTATION TYPE: WORKSHOP

Abstract

This fast-paced practical session shows English language teachers how to weave AI into lesson planning, differentiation, materials design, and feedback—without compromising academic integrity. Drawing on training delivered in AI in Digital Banking, Generative AI in Healthcare, and Generative AI for Statistical Analysis, we'll focus on classroom-ready adaptations rather than theory. Using Copilot and ChatGPT alongside focused assistants for writing, reading, speaking, and assessment, participants will draft prompts, compare outputs, and adapt tasks to CEFR levels and classroom realities. We will build simple routines that foreground students' offline skills—task analysis, outlining, note-taking, paraphrasing, source-checking, and style control—and agree a plain-English disclosure policy for AI use. Attendees leave with reusable templates and low-prep activities they can run tomorrow.

BIO

Ruairi O'Connor is a UK-based L&D leader and ESL/Soft Skills Trainer with 15+ years' experience. After several years teaching in South Korea and Japan, he now designs and delivers AI-enabled English programmes for teachers and corporate learners globally, with a strong footprint in the Middle East. A CELTA, TEFL, AET level 3 qualified educator with an M.Ed, he integrates AI responsibly for planning, differentiation, and feedback while strengthening learners' offline skills. He has trained 500+ leaders internationally, achieving ~90% completion and outstanding feedback.

TITLE:

Happy Hormones in Action – Energizers to Boost Motivation, Focus, and Classroom Dynamics

SPEAKER: John Dobbins

PRESENTATION TYPE: WORKSHOP

**ABSTRACT:**

This introductory Irish-language session invites learners into the world of everyday conversation. Through lively, hands-on activities, students explore essential greetings and practice, introducing themselves using simple, friendly Irish phrases. By the end, participants will be able to say hello, share their name, and make a first connection—*as Gaeilge*—in a way that feels natural, social, and fun.

BIO:

John Dobbins graduated from University of Ulster, Coleraine with a Bachelor's Degree in Irish and Media Studies in 2009. Following this, he worked as an Irish language Classroom Assistant until 2011 and then completed his PGCE in Irish medium primary Education in 2012. He taught in various Irish medium schools in Derry and Belfast and spent many years as leader and teacher in summer schools in the Gaeltacht. He took up a post in Culturlann Uí Chanáin in 2014 as a tutor for the highly successful Léargas Language programme, a department of Education language scheme based in Derry, in 2014. After 10 years amazing years he has been the Deputy Education Co-ordinator since September 2023.



2026

TITLE:

Igniting the Fire Within: Motivating Learners in the EFL Classroom

SPEAKER: Clare Heaney

PRESENTATION TYPE: WORKSHOP



Abstract

Motivation is widely recognised as a key determinant of success in SLA, yet sustaining learner engagement in the EFL classroom remains a persistent challenge for teachers working with diverse linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds. This workshop explores the nature of learner motivation and examines practical strategies for fostering sustained engagement across a range of EFL contexts.

Drawing on established theories of motivation in language learning, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and self-determination theory, the session encourages participants to reflect on their own teaching practices and learner profiles. The workshop integrates research-informed principles with hands-on activities, demonstrating how task design, goal setting, feedback, autonomy, and relevance can be leveraged to enhance motivation at all proficiency levels.

Participants will engage in collaborative discussion and experiential tasks aimed at adapting motivational strategies to their specific teaching contexts. By the end of the workshop, teachers will have developed a toolkit of practical, adaptable techniques designed to create a supportive, engaging learning environment and to empower learners to take ownership of their language development.



TITLE:

**Flexibility over formula:
post-method language teaching**

SPEAKER: Alex Mackenzie

PRESENTATION TYPE: WORKSHOP

Abstract

Post-method language teaching, as proposed by Kumaravadivelu (2003), is a response to the limitations of fixed teaching methods (like grammar translation or the communicative approach). Instead of prescribing a best method, it empowers teachers to adapt, design and theorise based on their own classroom realities.

Its three key parameters are:

1. Particularity → Teaching must be sensitive to local context: learners' needs, institutional constraints, cultural realities.
2. Practicality → Teachers are not just consumers of theory; they generate usable knowledge from their own practice.
3. Possibility → Teaching is transformative: it should empower learners, address inequalities, and open space for critical thinking.

The implications for teachers are that flexibility is favoured over formula, their role is as a reflective practitioner and decision-maker and that classroom practice is shaped by context.

Students benefit from content tailored to context, culture and needs, a more inclusive classroom environment and increased empowerment and agency.

This workshop will give teachers a platform to share their own experiences with fixed methods, discuss how they use them in their own teaching practice and any limitations they have found. Together we will explore the key parameters and relate them to our own teaching contexts before putting them into action in a micro-design lesson snippet planning activity.

The takeaway from this session is that teachers will be able to utilise the parameters of post-method language teaching, combined with their own experience and knowledge of their learners to help to create relevant, flexible, empowering and practical lessons which value student context and identity.



TITLE:

Voice, Identity and AI: Creating Speech Portraits of Students through Voccent

SPEAKER: Antonina Devitska

PRESENTATION TYPE: WORKSHOP

Abstract

As AI transforms educational assessment, evaluation focuses on a multimodal understanding of voice, oracy, and student identity. This workshop showcases how Voccent enables the creation of speech portraits - dynamic, evidence-based profiles that capture students' changing communicative identity through acoustic analysis, emotional intelligence metrics, and oracy development tools. Participants will learn how Voccent's semantic and emotional analytics, combined with real-time speech clarity assessments, can support personalized learning pathways, social-emotional learning tracking, and proactive support for students who are not involved or under stress. Participants will gain hands-on experience creating speech portraits that inform learning strategies while developing the confident, articulate graduates demanded by today's world, demonstrating that effective education must teach not only knowledge, but also expression, emotional readiness, and authentic human connection.

Bio

Antonina Devitska is an Associate Professor in the Applied Linguistics at Uzhhorod National University, Ukraine. She is a teacher trainer, mentor, and course facilitator specializing in digital pedagogy, social and emotional learning, trauma-informed practices and resilience. As a frequent conference presenter and designer of transformative online courses and educational programs, she works at the intersection of well-being, innovation, and reflective learning. Her practice focuses on human-centered and future-ready approaches that enable educators to integrate technology with emotional intelligence.

EDYOU MARATHON



EdYou MARATHON

12H ONLINE EVENT FOR ELT TEACHERS
18TH MARCH 2026

18th March 2026

EdYou MARATHON

9 Live Webinars for English Language Teachers



EYOUMARATHON is more than a webinar series: it is a space where teachers meet, share, and learn together. Across **9 live sessions**, our speakers will inspire educators with new perspectives, practical ideas, and meaningful reflections for today's classroom. A full **12-hour online journey** dedicated to innovation, inclusion, and growth.

EDYOUMARATHON 2026: Teaching for Tomorrow – Innovation, Inclusion, Impact

In a world where education is evolving faster than ever, teachers need more than occasional updates—they need **connection, inspiration, and practical development opportunities** that are truly global in spirit.

This is exactly where **EDYOUMARATHON**, the international online format created by **EdYOUFest**, makes its impact.

EDYOUMARATHON is a **unique 12-hour online teacher development experience**, designed to connect educators across countries, cultures, and teaching contexts through expert input, live sessions, and immediately applicable classroom ideas. It is not simply a webinar day—it is a global gathering for those who believe in **continuous professional growth** and the strength of an international teaching community.



The 2026 Edition: 18 March 2026

The next edition of EDYOUNMARATHON will take place on **18 March 2026**, marking the **12th EDYOUNMARATHON event** since the project began. Over the years, the event has become a symbol of EdYOUFest's core identity:



- **high academic quality**
- **teacher development excellence**
- **international networking**
- **inclusion and inspiration**

The 2026 edition will be a vibrant milestone that continues to reflect the EdYOUFest style—professional, warm, dynamic, and deeply community-driven.

EDYOUNMARATHON 2026 will feature **nine international webinars**, delivered by outstanding speakers from different educational and cultural contexts. What makes this edition truly *one of a kind* is the participation of **five**

Special Guests—high-profile professionals who are usually keynote speakers or teacher trainers themselves, but this time will take on a special role: they will **introduce other teacher trainers**, creating a dynamic chain of professional recognition, collaboration, and community celebration. It is a rare and powerful concept: **teacher trainers supporting teacher trainers**, united in one shared educational space.

Theme 2026:

Teaching for Tomorrow: Innovation, Inclusion, Impact

The theme offers a powerful lens through which educators can explore what matters most today:

Innovation, not as a trend, but as meaningful change in classroom practice

Inclusion, as a daily responsibility and a long-term educational vision

Impact, focusing on real professional growth and learner outcomes It is a theme that speaks directly to the future of education—one where teachers are not only instructors, but leaders of transformation.



A Unique Format: 9 Webinars, 5 Special Guests, One Global Community



Charlie Browne - from 09:00 to 11:30 GMT



George Kokolas - from 11:45 to 14:00 GMT



Rob Howard - from 14:15 to 17:45 GMT



Thom Jones - from 18:00 to 20:15 GMT

EDYOUTH MARATHON 2026 will feature **nine international webinars**, delivered by outstanding speakers from different educational and cultural contexts. What makes this edition truly *one of a kind* is the participation of **five Special Guests**—high-profile professionals who are usually keynote speakers or teacher trainers themselves, but this time will take on a special role:

they will **introduce other teacher trainers**, creating a dynamic chain of professional recognition, collaboration, and community celebration. It is a rare and powerful concept: **teacher trainers supporting teacher trainers**, united in one shared educational space.

The Programme (GMT)

09:00 (GMT) – Start: A warm welcome from the EDYOUTEAM

09:15 (GMT) – Webinar 1 – Joël Laurier *(Introduced by Charlie Browne)*
Title: A review of Japanese education reforms in a paradigm shift

10:30 (GMT) – Webinar 2 – Robert Stroud *(Introduced by Charlie Browne)*
Title: Growing Global Minds: Awakening Curiosity Through Meaningful Cultural Connections

11:45 (GMT) – Webinar 3 – Sophia Mavridi *(Introduced by George Kokolas)*
Title: Beyond the algorithm: a critical classroom approach to AI bias

13:00 (GMT) – Webinar 4 – Daniel Xerri *(Introduced by George Kokolas)*
Title: Leading and Teaching on Empty: Understanding Burnout in ELT

14:15 (GMT) – Webinar 5 – Alastair Grant *(Introduced by Rob Howard)*
Title: Engaging the students of 2026: Generation Alpha and beyond

15:30 (GMT) – Webinar 6 – Marjorie Rosenberg *(Introduced by Rob Howard)*
Title: Activities to Encourage Learner-Generated Content for the ELT Classroom

16:45 (GMT) – Webinar 7 – Maria Araxi Sachpaxian *(Introduced by Rob Howard)*
Title: Maximizing the potential of your Coursebook

18:00 (GMT) – Webinar 8 – Dorothy Zemach *(Introduced by Thom Jones)*
Title: Too Good To Be Bad; Too Bad To Be Good

19:15 (GMT) – Webinar 9 – Hind Elkhatim Elyas *(Introduced by Thom Jones)*
Title: The "Why" and "How" of Writing: Activating Higher-Order Thinking with the EDRC Probing Framework

21:00 (GMT) – Finish: Closing Remarks and Event Wrap-Up

Supported by an Outstanding International Network

EDYOUTMARATHON 2026 is proudly supported by an international group of institutions and partners, including:



On **18 March 2026**, teachers from all over the world will once again meet online for twelve hours of inspiration, reflection, learning and exchange.

Because **teaching for tomorrow begins today.**

EdYou MARATHON
12H ONLINE EVENT FOR ELT TEACHERS
18TH MARCH 2026

THE 12-HOUR GLOBAL TRAINING EVENT
A unique format created to unite the global education community: 12 hours of non-stop training, with nine speakers and participants from every continent.

09:00 - 09:15 START A WARM WELCOME FROM THE EDYOU TEAM HOSTED BY: THE EDYOU TEAM	09:15 - 10:15 WEBINAR 1 JOEL LAURIER HOSTED BY: JOEL LAURIER	10:30 - 11:30 WEBINAR 2 ROBERT STROUD HOSTED BY: ROBERT STROUD	11:45 - 12:45 WEBINAR 3 SOPHIA MAYRICH HOSTED BY: SOPHIA MAYRICH
13:00 - 14:00 WEBINAR 4 DANIEL KERN HOSTED BY: DANIEL KERN	14:15 - 15:15 WEBINAR 5 ALASTAIR GRANT HOSTED BY: ALASTAIR GRANT	15:30 - 16:30 WEBINAR 6 MARJORIE ROSENBERG HOSTED BY: MARJORIE ROSENBERG	16:45 - 17:45 WEBINAR 7 MARIA ARAKI SACHPAKIAN HOSTED BY: MARIA ARAKI SACHPAKIAN
18:00 - 19:00 WEBINAR 8 DOROTHY ZEMACH HOSTED BY: DOROTHY ZEMACH	19:15 - 20:15 WEBINAR 9 HIND ELAKATIM ELVAS HOSTED BY: HIND ELAKATIM ELVAS	20:30 - 20:45 FINISH	REGISTER NOW QR CODE EVENT POWERED BY EdYou Fest

EACH WEBINAR OPENS WITH A SPECIAL GUEST:

CHARLIE HODGE	OSCAR GARCIA	BOB HODGE	YOUNG JONES
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Speakers

EDYOUTMARATHON, brings together an inspiring line-up of international speakers, teacher trainers, academic experts, and classroom practitioners from across the world. This edition includes **9 live webinars**, designed to offer English language educators a rich mix of **inspiring ideas**, **practical methodologies**, and **fresh perspectives** on teaching and learning.

The EDYOUTMARATHON format encourages:

- short, dynamic sessions
- a variety of global perspectives
- interactive reflection and discussion
- practical strategies for the classroom
- continuous professional development



Each webinar is led by a carefully selected speaker, ensuring a high-quality learning experience and making EDYOUTMARATHON a truly engaging international journey for teachers.

Theme

The theme of this EDYOUTMARATHON edition reflects the challenges and opportunities of modern education: **Teaching in a Changing World: Innovation, Inclusion & Teacher Growth.**

At a time when teaching is evolving rapidly—through technology, new student needs, and global educational trends — EDYOUTMARATHON invites teachers to explore:

- how to keep lessons meaningful and motivating
- how to build inclusive and supportive learning environments
- how to strengthen professional confidence and teaching identity
- how to innovate while staying connected to real classroom practice

EDYOUTMARATHON is more than a series of webinars: it is a global learning space where teachers can feel inspired, valued, and connected.



Introduced by
CHARLIE BROWNE

DATE
18 Mar, 2026

TIME
09:35 - 10:15 CMT

A REVIEW OF JAPANESE EDUCATION REFORMS IN A PARADIGM SHIFT

SPEAKER: JOËL LAURIER

Abstract

The current educational paradigm shift facing the world has increased the push from countries the world over to urgently map out their strategies on their adoption of AI and to further enhance their drive for sustainable living. In Japan, such concerns have led to the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) programs. To reach its own societal and educational goals, The Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sports, and Technology - Japan (MEXT) has mandated school boards to develop soft skills within their students through the employment of collaborative learning. Such a call has been met with resistance from various segments of society.

This presentation looks at the MEXT's further shift away from traditional teaching methods in a historically proud and globally successful Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC). Using data from the presenter's PhD research as well as Japan-based literature, the focus will be on the dichotomy between MEXT policy and the traditions of practitioners in classrooms in Japan. It will introduce a more student-centered and teacher-friendly pedagogy to reach the intended goals. Recommendations will be provided to harmonize the 21st reforms with a culturally sensitive approach.

Biography

Joël Laurier is co-director of the Intensive English Program in the Keio University (Japan) Faculty of Law. A French-Canadian who began learning English He graduated from Columbia University with an M.A. (TESOL) and is currently a PhD candidate at Sophia University (Japan). He is a cooperative learning practitioner and trainer, as well as the proud father of three wonderful sons.



EdYouMARATHON

Introduced by
CHARLIE BROWNE

SPEAKER: ROBERT STROUD

**GROWING GLOBAL MINDS:
AWAKENING CURIOSITY THROUGH
MEANINGFUL CULTURAL CONNECTIONS**

DATE
18 Mar. 2026

TIME
10:30 - 11:30 GMT

Abstract

Low-stakes, intercultural exchanges give students the chance to explore new perspectives, ask questions, and think deeply about the world around them. By engaging in supportive online dialogue, learners build confidence, curiosity, and critical thinking skills while connecting with peers from different cultures. This session introduces one such project and shows how educators can bring these enriching experiences into their own classrooms.

Biography

Dr. Robert Stroud, professor at Hosei University, Japan, specializes in tools for scaffolding, structured planning, and AI-driven engagement to ease anxiety and boost classroom engagement. As editor of 'The University Grapevine' newsletter and co-author of the 'SMART communication' textbook series, his work blends academic rigor with practical strategies for transformative language learning.



Introduced by
GEORGE KOKOLAS



SPEAKER: SOPHIA MAVRIDI

EdYou MARATHON



DATE
18 Mar. 2026



TIME
11:45 - 12:45 GMT

BEYOND THE ALGORITHM: A CRITICAL CLASSROOM APPROACH TO AI BIAS

Abstract

The rapid uptake of artificial intelligence in education has intensified debates around misinformation and bias, as these can perpetuate societal inequities, stereotypes, and other ethical issues. Students therefore need to develop a critical lens towards the use of these technologies. This session focuses on how language teachers can empower students to engage critically with AI. Drawing on classroom-based examples, it introduces practical materials and step-by-step pedagogical strategies that can support students in identifying, questioning, and responding to AI bias. Participants will leave with a clearer understanding of why teaching about AI bias matters, alongside practical takeaways and adaptable classroom materials to use with their own students.

Biography

Sophia Mavridi is a Senior Lecturer in Educational Technology and TESOL at De Montfort University (UK), where she leads digital learning initiatives. She specialises in digital pedagogy, online learning, and AI in education and has worked as a teacher educator with major organisations such as the British Council, NILE, and the Bell Foundation. She publishes extensively on technology in language education, drawing on strong theoretical foundations and sustained engagement with classroom and teacher education practice. She is committed to bridging research and practice so that teaching is evidence-based and research reflects classroom realities.



Introduced by
GEORGE KOKOLAS



SPEAKER: DANIEL XERRI

DATE
18 Mar. 2026

TIME
13:00 - 14:00 GMT

LEADING AND TEACHING ON EMPTY: UNDERSTANDING BURNOUT IN ELT

Abstract

Burnout is an increasingly urgent issue in English Language Teaching, affecting not only teachers but also the school leaders who support and manage them. Drawing on recent research, this plenary explores the shared and contrasting experiences of burnout among teachers, Directors of Studies, and Academic Managers. It examines the causes of emotional and physical exhaustion in demanding educational environments, the impact on wellbeing, performance, and staff retention, and the ripple effects across school communities. The session also highlights evidence-based strategies for preventing and mitigating burnout, including systemic, organisational, and individual approaches. By foregrounding the voices of both educators and leaders, this talk aims to spark reflection on how ELT institutions can cultivate healthier, more sustainable workplaces where everyone – teachers and leaders alike – can thrive.

Biography

Daniel Xerri is an Associate Professor in Applied Linguistics and TESOL at the University of Malta, and the Chairperson of the ELT Council. He has published widely on different areas of English language education. He has delivered plenary talks and keynotes in 20 countries and his research has been awarded international prizes. His main research interests are teacher research, school leadership, and professional learning. His most recent book is *Innovative Practices in Early English Language Education* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023).

www.danielxerri.com



Introduced by
ROB HOWARD



SPEAKER: ALASTAIR GRANT

DATE
18 Mar. 2026

TIME
14:15 - 15:15 CMT

ENGAGING THE STUDENTS OF 2026: GENERATION ALPHA AND BEYOND

Abstract

"Motivation is no longer the primary key for successful learning" (Mercer, 2019). Even the most motivated student can get distracted in these difficult times, and we can hardly blame them. Not only is the world around our learners an ever more challenging place to live, but since life online became the new normal, what chance do we stand as teachers, trying to hold their attention? The answer is Learner Engagement, which has been described as "one of the hottest research topics in the field of educational psychology" (Sinatra, Heddy & Lombardi, 2015). In this session we will look at the three key steps of fostering learner engagement in teens: creating learner willingness to engage, triggering active engagement and then keeping our learners engaged, to ensure that a much higher level of learning is taking place. Come and find out why engagement is now being called "the holy grail of learning" (Ibid.)

Biography

Alastair Grant is an experienced teacher trainer, academic director, ELT author and public speaker. He is the founder of Alastair Grant Teacher Training, which delivers professional education programmes such as the Cambridge Delta, for teachers worldwide. Alastair is lead trainer for the Cambridge Delta 3 teaching diploma at International House Mexico, and lead trainer for International House Montevideo, where he runs the Cambridge Delta 1 and Cambridge Delta 3 teaching diplomas. Alastair works for the Directorate of Languages in Education (DILEDU) at the Ministry of Education for the City of Buenos Aires, and is Head of English at Colegio Nuevo de Las Lomas in Buenos Aires. In 2025, Alastair was appointed to the position of Visionary Expert at the Ministry of Education of Ukraine, responsible for the English language consultancy on their Education for Life policy initiative. Alastair has taught on the profesorado de inglés at the Universidad Tecnológica Nacional in Buenos Aires, where he has lectured on both Discourse Analysis and Methodology. He has also taught at the Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia San Juan Bosco, and was Director of Studies at International House Montevideo, at International House San Isidro, and at Colegio San Luis in Victoria, Buenos Aires as well as being an Educational Consultant for Macmillan Education. Alastair holds an Honours Degree in English Literature and Philosophy from the University of Warwick in the UK, has completed the International House Certificate of Advanced Methodology, all modules of the Cambridge Delta and the Cambridge Train the Trainer Certificate. Alastair has delivered teacher training at international conferences, at online conferences, for teachers' associations, for a variety of publishing houses, universities and at local schools worldwide, as well as at schools in underprivileged neighbourhoods in Buenos Aires. In 2022, Alastair founded the Together for Ukraine teacher development project, a series of free talks and webinars to support teachers from Ukraine. Alastair is also the co-founder of the We're All in This Together teacher development project, which was set up to support teachers worldwide during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Introduced by
ROB HOWARD



SPEAKER: MARJORIE ROSENBERG

EdYou MARATHON



DATE
18 Mar. 2026



TIME
15:30 - 16:30 GMT

ACTIVITIES TO ENCOURAGE LEARNER-GENERATED CONTENT FOR THE ELT CLASSROOM

Abstract

As today's English learners need the language for a variety of reasons, it is important to directly address their needs. Providing frameworks that learners can complete with their own content makes learning more meaningful to them, lets them express their own ideas and increases their confidence. This talk will demonstrate classroom activities which can be adapted to different levels of competence. Learners can then put what they have learned into practice in the real world.

Biography

Marjorie Rosenberg has been teaching English in Austria for over 40 years at tertiary level and in the adult education sector. She has published both course books and methodology books for a number of publishers. Marjorie is the current Joint Coordinator of IATEFL BESIG and is a Past President of IATEFL.



Introduced by
ROB HOWARD



SPEAKER: MARIA ARAXI SACHPAXIAN

DATE
18 Mar. 2026

TIME
16:45 - 17:45 GMT

MAXIMIZING THE POTENTIAL OF YOUR COURSEBOOK

Abstract

Teachers are promised a virtual wonderland when looking at materials and yet very often the material does not satisfy the teachers when it is applied in practice. What are the reasons behind this discrepancy? This webinar explores the various factors that might stop coursebooks from being fully functional. We will discuss the place of the coursebook in the modern language classroom and examine how poor initial choices, lack of in-school development of the material and over-extending the life cycle of the Coursebook can render the material ineffective.

Biography

Maria-Araxi Sachpazian BA education / RSA dip/tefl (hons) is a practicing EFL Teacher and a Lecturer in the Department of Humanities of CITY College, University of York Europe Campus. She is the owner and Managing Director of Input on Education, a company that provides Academic and Business support services for foreign language schools. Maria frequently presents at conferences and writes articles related to her special research interests which are materials evaluation and adaptation, digital teaching, and the construction of teacher identity. She is the current Secretary to the Board of Trustees of IATEFL and she serves on the board of TESOL Macedonia-Thrace, Northern Greece.



Introduced by
THOM JONES



SPEAKER: DOROTHY ZEMACH

EdYou MARATHON

DATE
18 Mar, 2025

TIME
18:00 - 19:00 GMT

**TOO GOOD TO BE BAD;
TOO BAD TO BE GOOD**

Abstract

This session grew out of a question someone asked me when I complained that it was harder to edit AI-generated text than text from a human being, even if the latter contained more of what we would consider “mistakes” with the language. Why would it be harder to work with more correct language? I’ll share that answer with you, and then take you along with my further explorations, which started small (“Can you always tell if a text is AI-generated?”) and ended large (“Why do humans use language?”). And yes, there will be direct implications for your classroom—and yourself.

Biography

Dorothy Zemach taught ESL and other foreign languages for over 20 years, in Asia, Africa, and the US. She holds an MA in TESL from the School for International Training in Vermont, USA. Now she concentrates on writing, editing, and publishing ELT materials and textbooks and conducting teacher training workshops. A frequent plenary speaker at international conferences, her areas of specialty and interest are teaching writing, teaching reading, academic English, testing, and humor. In 2012, Dorothy launched Wayzgoose Press, a small independent publishing imprint for fiction, non-fiction, and educational materials.



Introduced by
THOM JONES



SPEAKER: HIND ELKHATHIM ELYAS

DATE
18 Mar. 2026

TIME
19:15 - 20:15 CMT

THE "WHY" AND "HOW" OF WRITING: ACTIVATING HIGHER-ORDER THINKING WITH THE EDRC PROBING FRAMEWORK

Abstract

This 50-minute virtual session presents the E-D-R-C Cycle (Expand, Deepen, Refine, Connect) as an engaging, structured tool, the Probing Question Wall, to guide English Language Students toward sophisticated written responses. We will show how this framework systematically addresses common challenges in L2 writing: ensuring Vocabulary & Structural Clarity (E), justifying language choices and evidence (D), correcting and polishing Grammar/Syntax (R), and integrating the learning with broader language and cultural contexts (C). Participants will experience the power of the EDRC Probing Questions in virtual quick-drills, demonstrating a clear path to transforming basic English responses into advanced, well-formed pieces.

Biography

Hind works as an English Instructor at the National Aviation Academy, Tayaran Niagara College in Saudi Arabia. She is heavily involved in PD and her current roles include the IATEFL Global Issue, Issues Month Coordinator, the Chair of the TESOL International Professional Development Professional Council, a TESOL International membership Guide and a member of the Womentorship in ELT committee which is TESOL International's most recent PLN. Hind's former roles include the Executive Secretary at Africa ELTA, Acting Vice President of TESOL Sudan and Professional Development Coordinator at KSAALT TESOL (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Association for English Language Teachers). Hind is also a founding member at the English Language Testing Society (ELTS) and her main areas of interest include testing, curriculum development and student engagement. Hind enjoys curriculum development and she served as a National Geographic Advisory board member for the development of a new academic skills series. She is also interested in student engagement, differentiation and 21st century teaching and learning. Her most recent achievements were being selected as a 2021 TESOL International Leadership Mentoring Program Award recipient and a TESOL International Convention Ambassador.



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- Talks and workshops
- Professional exchange



Participants only contribute to cover direct expenses (such as dinner, material). ▶ ◆ ●



Optional contributions keep EdYOUFest free and improve the ecosystem.



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Next Issue, 3rd April 2026

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