

ENGLISH UK SOUTH WEST

Annual Conference and AGM

Resilience through Emotion, Laughter and Curiosity

SATURDAY 14TH NOVEMBER 2026

DoubleTree by Hilton
Bristol City Centre
BS1 6NJ

Resilience through Emotion, Laughter and Curiosity

Dear English UK South West colleagues and friends,

It gives me enormous pleasure to welcome you to the English UK South West Annual Conference 2026, and to my first conference as Chair of English UK South West.

This year our theme is Resilience through Emotion, Laughter and Curiosity.

Resilience is something we talk about a great deal in our sector, but it is about much more than simply carrying on through difficult times. It is also about how we respond to change, support one another, stay curious and continue to find energy, creativity and joy in what we do.

Our programme brings those ideas to life in many different ways.

We are delighted to welcome George Kokolas, who will open the conference by exploring how we can reignite students' zest for learning through positive psychology, confidence and a greater sense of ownership over learning. Later, his workshop will look at character strengths including resilience, curiosity and perseverance.

Our second plenary speaker, Boelo van der Pool, will explore neurodiversity on both sides of the classroom, helping us recognise hidden barriers while also seeing neurodiversity as an opportunity. His practical workshop will offer accessible strategies for creating more neuro-inclusive classrooms.

Across the rest of the day, Gareth Davies will encourage us to turn our students into Language Detectives, Giuliana Bonvini will help schools think practically about AI adoption, and we will also hear important updates and ideas around accreditation, AI policy and the wider sector.

And because our theme includes laughter, we will finish the afternoon by practising what we preach, with an uplifting Laughter Yoga session with Clive and Jackie.

A conference like this would simply not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors and exhibitors. Their contribution enables us to bring our community together, offer such a varied programme and keep the day accessible to colleagues from across the region. We are enormously grateful for their continued support of English UK South West and our sector.

Most of all, this conference is about our community. It is a chance to learn from each other, share experiences, make new connections and remind ourselves that we do not face the challenges of our industry alone.

I hope you leave the day with some practical ideas, new connections, renewed curiosity, plus a little more energy and resilience to take back to your students, colleagues and organisations.

I very much look forward to welcoming you to Bristol.

Slavenka Vukovic-Bryan
Chair, English UK South West

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Our exhibitors and sponsors



















SCHEDULE

09:15 - 10:00	Registration, tea and coffee, and visit exhibitor stands			
10:00 - 10:05	Main Room - EUKSW Chair - Slavenka Vukovic-Bryan - Welcome and Housekeeping			
10:05 - 10:25	Main Room - Welcome from English UK			
10:25 - 10:30	Main Room - Introduction from Tyser, our Gold sponsor			
10:30 - 11:30	**Main Room - Plenary 1: George Kokolas - Reigniting Students' Zest for Learning in Today's Classroom (sponsored by Express publishing)**			
11:30 - 11:35 11:35 - 12:00	Intro by Silver Sponsors - Trinity and Pearson Tea and coffee break, and visit exhibitor stands - Sponsored by all our sponsors			
12:00 - 12:45	Strand 1 Leadership / Sales Giuliana Bonvini **AI - Talk - Make 2027 Your AI Adoption Year**	Strand 2 Welfare / Activities Alison Tudor **Accreditation updates from British Council**	Strand 3 Workshop / round tables George Kokolas Workshop - **Crafting Characters through Language Learning**	
12:45 - 13:45	Lunch (Dining Hall) - Sposored by all our sponsors Visit Exhibitor Stands during / after lunch			
13:45 - 14:45	**Main Room - Plenary 2 - Boelo van der Pool - Neurodiversity on both sides of the classroom**			
14:45 - 15:15	Tea and coffee break, and visit exhibitor stands			
15:15 - 16:00	**EUKSW AGM**	Strand 1 Leadership / Sales Neil Harris **AI Policy**	Strand 2 Pedagogy Gareth Davies **Language Detectives**	Strand 3 Workshop Boelo van der Pool **Tips for Neuro-inclusive classes**
16:00 - 16:35	**Inspirational and uplifting activity - Laughter Yoga with Clive and Jackie**			
16:35 - 17:00	Exhibitors raffle + Chair closing the conference			

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Travel guidance for delegates – DoubleTree by Hilton Bristol City Centre, Redcliffe Way, Bristol BS1 6NJ

Please use PUBLIC TRANSPORT where possible. The hotel is a short walk from BRISTOL TEMPLE MEADS and well served by local buses.

• BY RAIL: From Bristol Temple Meads, it is approximately a 5 minute walk to the hotel via Redcliffe Way. Taxis are available outside the station.

• BY BUS: The nearest stops include REDCLIFFE WAY and TEMPLE MEADS STN; multiple city routes serve these stops.

• BY CAR / CAR SHARING: Please CAR SHARE where possible. The hotel offers ON-SITE PARKING (approx. 118 spaces) with self-parking currently listed at £18 per day; EV CHARGING POINTS are available on site. Use the SATNAV POSTCODE BS1 6NJ.



ABOUT ENGLISH UK SOUTH WEST

English UK South West, formed in 2009, is a regional association of language centres in the UK. We aim to promote the South West region of the UK as a top language travel destination and an area of educational excellence.

We have over twenty member organisations offering a full range of English language courses from intensive executive training to junior summer camps. All centres are accredited by the British Council and members of English UK. English UK South West members offer high quality English language tuition and have a solid reputation amongst agents worldwide.

Our member schools are located throughout the South West, providing prospective students with a wide variety of options for every preference and interest.

Objectives:

- To raise and enhance the profile of the region to anyone with an interest in the language travel business.
- To organise marketing and sales initiatives to maintain and grow business for its members.
- To encourage the maintenance and development of the highest professional standards in the teaching of English as a foreign language within the region.
- To gain full advantage from our collective membership of English UK.
- To lobby regional and national government and non-government organisations on behalf of the membership.

ENGLISH UK SOUTH WEST COMMITTEE



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The Speakers

Huan Japes

Main Room - Main Room - Welcome from English UK - 10:05 - 10:25



As Membership & Policy Director at English UK, Huan brings a frontline perspective on the current realities of the UK's ELT sector.

He has been with English UK since 2012, supporting member language centres through policy shifts, accreditation processes, and professional development initiatives.

He also brings experience from Trinity College London, EF English First, and classroom teaching in Italy and the UK.

Huan will bring a perspective on the challenges facing ELT in the UK and globally as well as key market and pedagogical trends.

He will focus on English UK's strategy to 2030 and what we have done this year and will continue to do in the three key areas of promoting sustainable growth, broadening the membership base and creating a financially secure membership.

George Kokolas

Main Room - Plenary 1 - 10:30 - 11:30

Strand 3 - Workshop: Crafting Characters through Language Learning - 12:00 - 12:45



George Kokolas has been working at Express Publishing for 25 years and serves as International Academic Director and International Speaker. A licensed Level 5 Positive Education Practitioner with a Level 5 Diploma in Positive Psychology, he's a certified LEVEL 7 TEFL teacher and ADVANCED Neurolanguage Coach®.

With a BA in English Literature, George has co-hosted the Teachers' Coffee podcast since 2017. Voted a top ELT influencer in Greece in 2022, he's presented at over 1,000 international conferences and also works as a “Public Speaking Mentor”.

He served as Vice Chair of TESOL GREECE.

Plenary: Zest is considered one of the fundamental strengths for a positive psychology mindset. We often think it comes naturally, but recent findings show it is the result of a self-driven, conscious process. The speaker will review some key elements related to generating zest in an ELT classroom. He will also indicate how zest can serve as a bedrock for developing positive feelings in teaching and how we can debunk negativity when it knocks on our students' doors.

Workshop: This session introduces a holistic approach to character development in education, using the Seligman and Peterson framework to shift focus from academics to a strengths-based model. Educators will learn practical activities to identify and nurture student character strengths, fostering resilience and personal growth.

The workshop emphasises teacher self-reflection and collaborative classroom environments as keys to transforming educational practice.

Boelo van der Pool

Main Room - Plenary 2 - 13:45 - 14:45

Strand 3 - Workshop: Tips for Neuro-inclusive classes - 15:15 - 16:00



Boelo has 30+ years of experience in ELT. He is a neurodiversity expert, international teacher trainer, and course developer. Being dyslexic and ADHD himself, he helps language teachers and schools worldwide to create awareness of neurodiversity and adopt neurodiverse friendly teaching strategies.

He's a board member of the European Dyslexia Group and a committee member of the IATEFL IP&SEN SIG and has recently published a global white paper on Neurodivergent Language Teachers.

Plenary: We will talk about neurodiversity and how it affects both students and teachers. We will look at the results from the Global White Paper; Neurodivergent Language Teachers, a lived experience study.

Workshop: During this session we will talk about how to make your classes and materials neuro-inclusive. This is not about making your work harder, but rather about doing it smarter.

You will walk away with easy-to-implement strategies that will work not only for your dyslexic, ADHD or autistic students, but benefit the whole classroom. And we will also look at a 6-step process to make any text dyslexia friendly. But you will also briefly experience what it feels like to have a dyslexic brain.

Giuliana Bonvini

Strand 2 - Leadership - AI - Talk - Make 2027 Your AI Adoption Year - 12:00 - 12:45



Giuliana Bonvini is an AI Architect and founder of EduSolv Consultancy & Solutions, a London-based AI consultancy serving international education institutions worldwide.

With 18 years as a commercial leader in the sector, working across every side of the industry as a student, agent, education provider and service provider, she became an AI Specialist for the international education industry.

She designs and implements AI solutions for institutions becoming AI-enabled, and delivers AI literacy through in-company training, seminars, keynotes and workshops.

Make 2027 Your AI Adoption Year: A Practical Roadmap for English Language Schools

Most school teams are not short of AI curiosity. They are short of a clear path from experimenting with tools to running real, repeatable processes. This session addresses the gap between "we've tried ChatGPT" and actual operational change.

Drawing on accessible, all-levels frameworks that show clear pathways and a grounded understanding of what AI really is and what it can do for the schools in the room, this session gives attendees a concrete roadmap to take back to their teams the same week. No coding, no IT dependency, no vague theory.

Attendees will leave knowing exactly where their school sits on the adoption curve and how to get started before the close of 2026, making 2027 their year of real AI progress.

Alison Tudor

Strand 2 - Accreditation updates from British Council - 12:00 - 12:45



After a long career in architecture, including significant experience in quality assurance and compliance, Alison made the move to the British Council's Accreditation Unit three and a half years ago. Since then, she has worked to develop a thorough understanding of the Accreditation UK scheme and the diverse organisations that make up the ELT sector.

Now leading Accreditation UK, Alison is committed to ensuring the scheme continues to support excellence while adapting to the realities facing providers today. From international competition and changing recruitment landscapes to safeguarding, staff development and the growing role of technology, she believes accreditation has an important role to play in helping the ELT community navigate change with confidence and maintain the highest standards for students.

Accreditation updates from British Council:

This session will explore what inspection outcomes are telling us about the sector, comparing findings from 2026 with previous years. We'll identify where providers are making significant improvements, highlight the areas that continue to present challenges, and discuss the practical steps centres can take to achieve successful inspection outcomes.

As the ELT market continues to evolve, many providers are diversifying their offer, entering new markets, or developing alternative and non-traditional programmes. We'll consider how Accreditation UK can support innovation while maintaining quality standards, and share guidance on managing strategic changes, introducing new provision, and navigating a shift in direction while remaining within the accreditation scheme.

Gareth Davies

Strand 2 Pedagogy - Language Detectives - 15:15 - 16:00



Gareth is the author of Teaching Outside the Box, a brand new book full of creative ideas published by Pavilion ELT. He is a teacher, teacher trainer and storyteller based in Pontypridd, South Wales. He has been involved in English language teaching since 1995 and has been a teacher trainer since 2001.

Since 2023, Gareth has been teaching teens and adults at Celtic English Academy in Cardiff, before that he also taught in Czechia, Portugal, Spain, Japan and Croatia as well as delivering teacher training across the world. Gareth is a spellbinding storyteller, working with schools, community groups and mental health charities both locally and around Europe and regularly uses stories with his English Language students.

Language Detectives

Are we getting our students to think enough in traditional classrooms? We tend to provide the students with information - maybe a reading or listening text, maybe a grammar exercise or a speaking task, and the students do it on autopilot. What if we got our students to think like detectives, to look for clues, find the information, find connections, and try to use that to help them develop their English?

In this talk we will look at why it is important to encourage our students to become language detectives and suggest ways to adapt our classroom materials to give students more power and to encourage them to think more and become future fluent.

Neil Harris

Strand 1 Leadership - AI Policy - 15:15 - 16:00



Neil Harris has over 30 years of experience in ELT in a number of management roles.

Based at CELT in Cardiff, Neil has developed and facilitated face-to-face and online training sessions and programmes for teachers from all over the world and delivered AI training for English UK, Macmillan and Global ELT.

AI Policies for ELT: The What, The Why And The How

With AI becoming ever more integrated in workflows across all aspects of UK ELT, there is an urgent demand for the sector to embrace AI policies to the benefit of our institutions and to protect us from harm.

This session explains what an AI policy is, puts forward a rationale for the writing of a contextually appropriate AI policy and suggests solutions which providers can adopt to develop fit-for-purpose AI policies for themselves.

Clive and Jackie

Inspirational and ulifting activity - Laughter Yoga - 16:00 - 16:35



Clive & Jackie St James are experienced Laughter Yoga teachers and facilitators who are passionate about using laughter to boost wellbeing, energy and connection.

Together, they deliver lively and highly interactive Laughter Yoga sessions for organisations, healthcare professionals, community groups and events across the UK.

Their unique BLAST approach combines Breathing, Laughing, Antics, Stretching and Takeaway, giving participants simple techniques they can continue to use beyond the session.

Clive is also the UK Laughter Yoga Ambassador for Laughter Yoga International and brings many years of experience as an entertainer, comedian and speaker. Together, Clive and Jackie create sessions that are joyful, inclusive and wonderfully energising – proving that you don't need to be naturally funny to experience the benefits of laughter.

At the English UK South West Conference, expect to get involved, let go of your inhibitions and, most importantly, laugh!

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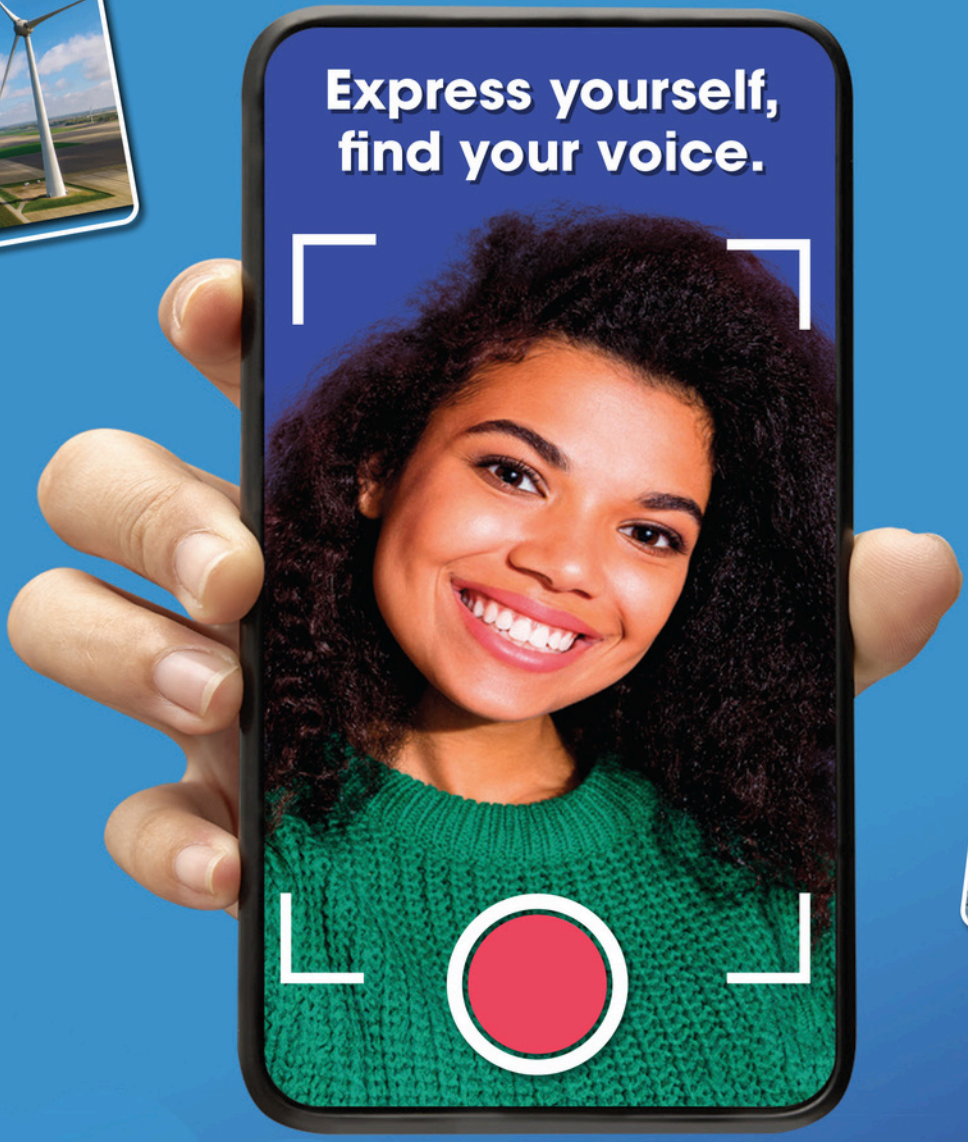
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