

## **Maria Davou**

Maria Davou is a school owner, teacher, teacher trainer, researcher, author and storyteller. She has a BA in Philosophy, Cambridge DELTA, an MA in TESOL, St Michael's College, Vermont, and has studied for a PhD in Applied Linguistics at Lancaster University, UK, completing her Doctorate degree in Athens. Maria held an ESRC research award. She has more than thirty years' experience in teaching, teacher training and syllabus design in Greece, the UK and the US. Maria is a language school owner in Athens, promoting alternative and experiential models of teaching. She is an international trainer and academic consultant for publishing companies, private schools and Ministries of Education. Maria is an adjunct professor for the Hellenic American University (HAEC), where she teaches TESOL Management and for the MA in Creative Writing at the University of West Macedonia. She's the co-founder of QUALIFY, teaching Trinity CertTESOL and DipTESOL.

### **How Learning Happens**

In this talk, we'll explore how young learners acquire a second language, focusing on engaging, age-appropriate methods that make learning fun and effective. We'll discuss Total Physical Response (TPR), which integrates movement with language to enhance understanding, and how songs and rhymes play a crucial role in making language memorable. We'll also cover what motivates young children, including curiosity, play, and the desire for interaction, emphasizing how these factors shape successful language learning at an early age.

### **PBL and how it affects learner motivation and engagement**

This talk will focus on how Project-Based Learning (PBL) can transform English Language Teaching (ELT) for teenagers, fostering motivation and engagement. We'll explore how PBL gives students real-world tasks, encouraging critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. By involving teens in hands-on projects, we tap into their natural curiosity and desire for relevance, helping them develop language skills in meaningful, interactive contexts. The session will highlight practical strategies to create dynamic, learner-centred environments that keep teens actively involved in their language learning.

## **Shaun Wilden**

Shaun teaches and trains both face-to-face and online courses. He is the manager for online courses for the International House World Organisation overseeing their suite of asynchronous teacher development courses and is a consultant to a number of educational organisations to assist them in their synchronous and asynchronous course provision. He is currently serving as IH world's digital innovation advisor. He also works in the University of Oxford's Department for Continuing Education, where he teaches digital literacy, as well as short courses in online course design, and online tutoring. He has written about a number of technological areas including, Mobile Learning, a book published by Oxford University Press.

## **AI-mazing Classrooms?**

This session looks at the emerging role of generative AI tools in English language teaching. Participants will gain an overview of generative AI platforms and their potential uses for lesson planning, material creation, and student engagement. It will highlight both the benefits and limitations of AI in language instruction, addressing concerns about academic integrity and the importance of maintaining the teacher's critical role. Practical examples and guidelines for responsible AI integration will be provided, empowering English teachers to leverage these tools effectively while fostering authentic language learning experiences.

### **Level Up Learning:**

**Gamification Strategies for Engaging Classrooms** This session explores the power of gamification to transform the classroom into an immersive and motivating learning environment. Participants will discover how gamification elements can be strategically integrated into language instruction to boost student engagement, as well as consider potential downsides. The presentation will cover key gamification principles, practical implementation strategies, and tools that can be easily adapted for various language skills and proficiency levels. Through real-world examples, attendees will learn to design gamified activities that not only make language learning more enjoyable but also enhance retention and promote long-term learner