

Article

TESOL Teacher Education in 2034: Some Predictions

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Abstract

This article compares the answers to four questions about teacher education ten years hence - who, what, where and how - from, on the one hand, twenty experienced teacher educators and, on the other, three Large Language Models (LLMs). The trainers expected comparatively little change in who their trainees will be over the decade, anticipated greater use of technology (mostly in the development of existing practice, however), emphasised the importance of soft skills training, and made it clear (implicitly) that for them TESOL is a vocation. The LLM answers differed significantly one from another but in general foresaw more innovative uses of technology than the trainers did and predicted an even greater emphasis on soft skills. The article ends with the author's own view, which is that more will have changed by 2034 than either colleagues or LLMs have predicted - with the latter perhaps intentionally hobbled by their creators.

Keywords

AI, teacher education, predictions, 2034, TESOL

1 Context

When Richard Watson Todd, the editor of this special issue, invited me to contribute, he said

I believe it is important that the leading members of the TESOL community propose directions for the field to move forward and cope with a changing world yet most journals do not publish more speculative articles. I'm glad that IJTS has agreed to this special issue.

I was attracted by the idea of a speculative article but unconvinced of the value of my own solitary individual speculation. As luck would have it, soon afterwards, with Richard's invitation bubbling away on the back burner of my brain, I made a visit to Norwich, to the Norwich Institute for Language Education (NILE), for whom I work part-time after my retirement from the British Council. My visit coincided with NILE's busiest period of the year in terms of face-to-face courses, and I found it buzzing with professional energy. I told Thom Kiddle, the Director of NILE, about Richard's invitation and it was Thom's suggestion that I survey my NILE colleagues' views and produce an article based on their collective speculation and thinking about the future of TESOL.

Accordingly, a little later in 2024, I invited my NILE teacher-educator colleagues to answer the following four questions:

Imagine you've been tele-ported ten years into the future to 2034. You still work with NILE and you're magically not a day older than you are at present.

Who will you be training, working with? *TRAINEES*

What will you be training? *CONTENT*

Where will you be training? *LOCATION*

How will you be training? *TECHNOLOGY*

I deliberately left the prompts fairly general, anticipating that Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Large Language Models (LLMs) might feature in many of the answers but not wishing to steer my colleagues in that (or any other) direction.

I should first of all express my gratitude to the twenty colleagues who answered my four questions: without them this article would not exist. They are an experienced bunch, with typically two or three decades of rich global experience as TESOL teacher-educators, both face to face and remote, with much of that experience gained outside the UK. I've anonymised the responses but the full team, including the magnificent twenty respondents, can be found here <https://www.nile-elt.com/catalog?pagename=Consultant-trainers>

I also asked three LLMs – Claude, DeepSeek and ChatGPT – the same four questions, and I'll review and compare their answers, both with one another and with my colleagues' answers, in the second section of this paper. I'll first, though, review and comment on my colleagues' answers to each of the four questions in turn.

Before reading on, please note that this article focuses on teacher education. On AI and ELT more generally, a recent British Council publication, *Artificial intelligence and English language teaching: Preparing for the future* (Edmett et al., 2024), covers the ground well, and a recent piece in EL Gazette by Matt Sussman, *Adapting speaking AI*, offers a glimpse of the possibilities that AI is opening up for practising one skill, speaking (Sussman, 2025).

A consistently useful (and astonishingly rich) daily digest on education more generally and AI is Stephen Downes's Online Learning Daily (Downes, 2025)

2 Question 1: Who Will You Be Training, Working With?

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose? I was surprised by the confidence with which many of my colleagues declared that not much would change over the next ten years. Trainer 11 answered: *"In just 10 years, I think there will still be **much the same needs** as today"* and Trainer 4 declared: *"I'll still be working with **many of the same people** I work with today"*. Trainer 3 said: *"I can imagine training teachers in other countries, those teaching in state and private language schools. I also imagine training new teachers from scratch, mainly those outside of the UK, who want to teach English. **That isn't a lot different from now.**"* and Trainer 20 believed that: *"In-service primary and secondary school teachers will still remain the main focus"*. (My emphasis throughout)

Two other trainers – but only two at this stage - expressed less confidence in their future role in their answer to Q1. Trainer 6 observed: *"Good question, and a lot of it will depend on whether people will still be learning languages formally in ten years' time"*. Trainer 10 predicted: *"that 'training' won't be part of our vocabulary. We may be 'engaging with' newly qualified educators, if indeed such a body of professionals still exists and is needed by society"*.

Trainer 16 offered two scenarios, one positive, one less positive:

Positive scenario: more diverse groups with participants from around the world if hybrid technologies improve to enable teacher trainers to integrate remote participants into f2f classes more easily (e.g. via more widely available high-speed internet, integrated cameras, and speakers around the classroom?); more high-quality training will be able to be delivered in country to those teachers who need it most (and who previously haven't been able to access CPD very easily)

Less positive scenario: travelling for CPD in person becomes a luxury for the wealthy, those with 'passport privilege', and the divide between those who can and can't use their English in international contexts or access in-person training becomes even greater.

Trainer 17 thought that

the age of EFL students will be higher as it appears to me that many countries are introducing English earlier in schools and to a much better standard. Therefore, it will be those in employment who did not have a solid foundation at school.

There was general agreement among the trainers that the numbers of trainees from Europe would have reduced considerably by 2034, with more trainees coming from 'Asia, Africa and the Middle East', 'Central Asia, MENA and Sub-Saharan Africa', 'the Global South' and 'Non-European countries', and as Trainer 13 observed: *"The pool widens all the time in terms of diversity of international trainees"*. Trainer 7 was uniquely optimistic in observing that *"Depending on geopolitical conditions, there may be more demand for teacher training from China and perhaps Russia"*.

It's not quite clear to me what underpins this widely shared belief that trainees will come from further south and further east in ten years' time. A sense that the job will have been done in Europe? Growing wealth in the global south that will mean people can more easily afford to take a course? Certainly not, given the tenor of my colleagues' answers to other questions, a sense that technology will have rendered language teachers redundant in more technologically advantaged countries.

Trainer 16's observation above on 'passport privilege' and travelling for CPD in person becoming a luxury for the wealthy struck a chord with me and was echoed by the LLMs in their answers. I'll return to the topic below.

3 Question 2: *What Will You Be Training?*

My NILE colleagues did not expect to be doing much straightforward, "bread and butter" work with teachers of EFL in 2034.

Trainer 5's list of topics was typically non-mainstream-TEFL in nature:

Key issues in effective language education management and leadership; language materials development; the use of AI to support LOLA (Learning-oriented language assessment), offering learners and teachers coherent, planned integration of individualised programmes within a common core syllabus.

AI loomed large here - as content, as delivery mechanism, and as rival - and was welcomed by some, accepted by some with resignation, and viewed by others with hostility.

While, on the one hand, Trainer 4 declared: *"I have yet to see any instance or iteration of AI that has made me consider its use"*, Trainer 2, on the other hand, skewered such scepticism using an analogy with the calculator in earlier times:

I've also now got people in my training courses that have used GenAI since their early teens - this is normal for them, but not for everyone. Some people are still sceptical, but I suspect they're the same people that would have championed mental arithmetic over calculator use last century.

I'm not sure what Trainer 4's views on calculator use are ...

Trainer 1 joined the ranks of people harbouring doubts about the longevity of the profession, saying:

(it's) hard to predict: perhaps using English to manipulate AI (rather than using AI for English), or whatever successive generations of AI will morph into. A question that arises is: will people still need to learn other languages, or will technology make language learning redundant?

Trainer 2 expressed the hope that by 2034 we'll have stopped 'floundering around' and come to terms with GenAI:

The idea of what we are (in 2034) assessing in language assessment has broadened again recently, and it had to after a few years of floundering around. The advent of ChatGPT and other GenAI tools shook us up a little - many people's idea of what should be learned and therefore tested became too formulaic and, of course GenAI could help learners produce the language.

Trainer 18 had a clear and attractive hope-cum-vision for the 2034 young learner classroom:

There isn't as much AI you can use with ELL between ages 3-6 at the moment (i.e. 2024) as there is for older learners to use, so I'm expecting there will be (in 2034) more AI-powered tools to use in early childhood classrooms (more interactive storytelling bots, cute robots children can interact with in speech, not requiring reading and writing skills).

Trainer 12 saw AI doing much of the humdrum work, freeing up teachers to do more 'human' and creative work:

With the current pace of technological change, it is likely that many of those we are teaching will have AI teaching assistants in some form. We will be equipping teachers to collaborate with these assistants and effectively leverage AI tools, AR and VR in the classroom. We may see a shift in the teacher's role as they focus more on the social and emotional sides of learning (due to AI) – we will be supporting them on these aspects. There is likely to be increased emphasis in classrooms on 'human' skills less easily fulfilled by AI – creativity, collaboration, intercultural communication, etc. – and we will be training teachers on these

Trainer 7 enjoined us all (including Trainer 4?) to view AI as a friend to be treated well:

Capable of supporting the teacher in many different ways. An important area of training will relate to AI, and this is an area to keep a close eye on. I imagine it will be important to look at this in relation to assessment, curriculum and so on, but also in relation to how we can help learners use tools effectively, autonomously and honestly. Children will need to understand and be able to live with AI after all. Similarly, teachers can be supported in their use of AI for lesson planning, materials development, etc, and for their own CPD. There will need to be a shift in attitude in many places, I imagine, so that AI is seen as a friend to be treated well, rather than as an enemy at the gates.

Trainer 3 anticipated the wheel having turned full circle by 2034, with face-to-face teaching staging a comeback 'after a lot of tech years', and also made a point they described as far-fetched about 'language implants' which the Claude LLM did not find at all far-fetched – more on that below:

I feel this will have changed quite a bit, as there may well be much more focus on methodology rather than English, since the English will be much more available online/technologically. This may include methodology of how to teach using certain technology, but perhaps also re-training some teachers in the art of face-to-face teaching and dealing with classroom dynamics, which may have resurfaced as a need/want after a lot of tech years! There is another point, which I can

envisage, but perhaps it is too far-fetched for 10 years in the future. Language implants will be used and so the teaching role is appropriacy and refining of language rather than teaching the language itself.

Trainer 10 (as part of their answer to Q4) was perhaps most optimistic of all on the content front, albeit a little anxious about the future of their profession more generally:

My mum, who was born in 1918 and trained as a Primary teacher in the 1930s, used to say (to her six children, of which I was the youngest) “Education will never go away”; “You’ll always have a job if you work in education”. She was mainly thinking of the teaching of children, and I never doubted her prediction. So, I guess in 2035 we’ll still be working with the kind of YL content we’re working with today, if teacher training still exists in the form we are currently familiar with.

I wonder if Trainer 10 could come to terms with the storytelling bots and cute robots that Trainer 18 envisages delivering ‘the kind of YL content we’re working with today’?

4 Question 3: Where Will You Be Training?

In many ways, Q3 produced the most uniform set of answers, with “remotely”, “online” and “from home” all featuring prominently, and “face to face” only wistfully:

At home, mostly. I hope I’ll still get to work in Nile’s Delta House from time to time, as well as an occasional glamorous overseas trip (or even a not so glamorous one) – though these, I suspect, will be rare. (Trainer 4)

Although I prefer face to face training, I think any training will happen online and we’ll all be working from home. I think there’ll be even more online communities of practice and hopefully we’ll manage to support each other from there (although I plan to retire before then). (Trainer 6)

Almost exclusively online. (Trainer 9)

Online / remotely. (Trainer 10)

Some colleagues were less accepting of online working from home by default:

I currently train mostly online, remotely, and I don’t expect that to change. Although the trend may continue to shift towards remote training, I think that f2f in-person training will remain important, as any teaching and learning involves real human interaction. (Trainer 7)

I think there will still be the need for face-to-face and online courses. I don’t see technology completely replacing face-to-face courses in English speaking countries in 10 years. (Trainer 11)

I will remain hybrid, which means working for some institutions/groups fully online (either in a local or international context) and working with local institutions to deliver in-person training/observations. I do not think that the need for balance and to be IN the classroom will ever go away. While online training has really taken off since Covid, it was a firm possibility when I started teaching 25 years ago and like back then there are huge cohorts who prefer some element of in-person. (Trainer 13)

Trainer 18, whose cute robots we encountered above, clearly felt less threatened by technological development than many of their colleagues, as this answer, which blended the *where* with the *how*, amply demonstrated:

More and more online, in more sophisticated AI-boosted environments/metaverse campuses (I don’t even know what that means!!), immersive sessions in virtual reality spaces, replicating real classrooms with AI.

Virtual conference/classroom stages, where you are your own emoji type character and move around the stage (???), or some kind of interactive tutor hologram to make online training feel more personal, and could demonstrate effective teaching techniques or explain key topics.

Virtual reality (VR) spaces to simulate a pre-primary classroom where teachers can practise classroom management techniques or learn strategies through interactive experiences.

5 Question 4: How Will You Be Training?

As noted above, Question 3 and Question 4 overlapped significantly. Does virtual reality offer an answer to the question ‘where’ or an answer to the question ‘how’? I’m not sure that I know the answer to that question!

Trainer 7’s answer to Q4 covered much the same territory as Trainer 18’s answer to Q3 but was distinctly less enthusiastic – and perhaps ever so slightly in denial:

This is difficult to predict. In 10 years, I’m not sure there will be a huge change. Platforms such as Zoom, etc. will develop and improve their functionality to better replicate a ‘real’ classroom, and online offerings (such as NILE courses) will become more varied and numerous, but I don’t think that 10 years will see us using VR, holographic presence, etc., or at least not as a norm.

Trainer 8 was keen to keep all their technology options open:

- *Using a piece of paper and a pen / a whiteboard and a marker*
- *Using AI-driven adaptive learning systems*
- *Using collaborative learning platforms*
- *Through mobile apps*
- *Through VR and AR simulations*
- *Using interactive, gamified learning platforms*
- *Using data analytics tools to track progress and tailor learning programmes*

Trainer 2 offered a note of caution from the perspective of 2035, mindful possibly of current (2025) geo-political developments:

A word about technological access and design though - way back in the 1990s we were unable to do much with video in our ‘distance’ courses, without actually posting the content or having access to it through the television. There were some golden years of video access (when ‘everyone’ had those so-called smartphones) and could watch at will. These days, with the world order being a little less stable, access to content via what used to be referred to as the internet (a term that seems to be redundant now) can be problematic. Everyone is used to outages, whether accessing the content via satellite or cable.

Trainer 9 made an interesting point about the porosity of the boundaries between groups of trainees, leading to a version of continuous enrolment on steroids: pop in wherever and whenever you like 24/7?

On communications platforms that have an ever-increasing variety of interactive functions. Training/learning interactions will be diverse, to cater for personal preference, capacity and accessibility within a group – and the boundaries of particular ‘groups’ will be more porous as the interaction options will allow for greater freedom of movement.

And Trainer 9 also had some interesting (and potentially career-changing) thoughts on the implications of this porosity:

The implications for this on me as a professional will be that my own work patterns will be a paradoxical combination of greater individual control, as timetables will be completely flexible, and much higher demand, as I will need to meet the expectations of timely engagement with a wider variety of learner requirement.

In addition, synchronous public commentary on the courses and my role in them will be an increasing feature of my experience, with participants sharing their 'Personal Learning Diaries' on their social media feeds with a variety of motivations:

Some of this commentary will be with the aim of furthering collegial professional learning within the sector;

Some of this commentary will be with the aim of garnering followers/a higher professional profile;

Some of this commentary will be in order to influence their relationship with the course, their fellow participants and/or their graded outcomes, or their relationship with me as a tutor.

No matter the motivation, the extent to which this makes me publicly visible as an individual is the one feature of the future landscape that will most influence whether or not I stay in the sector. The higher the visibility, the more likely I will retrain as a carpenter.

In keeping with a number of trainers who expressed the hope that teachers might have moved up the food chain by 2034, away from the drudge work of correcting spelling, for example, towards more creative interventions in the learning process, Trainer 19 modestly hoped for

Self-correcting technology so teachers won't be spending too much time correcting but giving feedback for improvements and changes.

Although Trainer 12 and Trainer 16 both emphasised the importance of access and equity, they did so from opposite ends of the technological spectrum:

Advances in technology will have a big impact on content and mode of delivery for both teachers and teacher trainers. Let's hope the increased integration of technology will allow for more equitable access to training and allow teachers and trainers to focus their efforts on areas where they can have genuine impact on the participants (while AI takes care of the rest!) (Trainer 12).

There will still be a need for technology-light teacher education in the Global South/contexts where there is limited access to technology. Many people still won't have their own mobile phones in 2035. (Trainer 16)

I wonder if Trainer 16's prediction about mobile phone ownership (and the free access it will afford to AI) will hold good? The data is untidy, but some estimates already have many countries with smartphone (rather than feature phone) ownership at well over 60% of the population, for example 68% in both Indonesia and China, 82% in the USA, 78% in Japan and 73% in Russia. Josh Howarth offers a comprehensive recent summary ([Howarth, 2025](#))

Access, diversity and equity were areas of striking difference between the three LLM answers and will also be returned to below.

6 The Overarching Humanity of Language Teaching

In their answers to all four questions, a recurrent theme for my colleagues was the essentially humane, idealist character of language teaching, which was clearly a major factor in their choice of vocation – I've chosen that last word with care.

Here's a selection of their comments on the topic:

None of the above would mean abandoning some basic educational beliefs and principles, most of which are timeless: humanism, the importance of relationships, subordinating teaching to learning, active listening, empathy, etc. The list goes on. I would opt out completely if technology or AI started to dictate the content of teacher education and the core values that underpin it. (Trainer 15)

I'll still be talking to people, and listening to them. I'll be reading them, and they'll be reading me. Even if I've been uploaded into a virtual avatar, it'll still be some version of 'me,' and that person knows that talking to people and reading what they write is still the best way to learn a language. (Trainer 4)

I would hope that there will be increased opportunities to work with participants from marginalised or conflict-affected communities (and) that there will be even more focus on inclusivity in the classroom and embedding themes of sustainability and climate literacy into language lessons. (Trainer 12)

I will be working with teachers from across the world, to train them in supporting their students with learning differences/ neurodiversity needs. (Trainer 14)

'How to be human' in a digital world - humanistic approaches, intercultural awareness, 'soft' communication skills etc. (Trainer 16)

We are very focused on individual differences, on micro assessments, on personalised learning and assessment. (Trainer 2)

Trainer 7's hopes, however, have possibly been trumped (sic) by recent events:

*As the world becomes more aware of the needs of individuals within a rapidly changing global society, the soft skills of teaching and other content areas related to **diversity, equity, inclusion**, developing learner autonomy and digital skills, etc. will become more important and much more common as content areas for training at different levels.*

One final note of caution from the technology enthusiast, Trainer 18, at the end of their answer to Q4:

Many teachers might not need me as much, and might just ask Chat GPT: "What would (my trainer) say if I asked them: " (scary!).

The twenty sets of trainer responses to all four questions are consolidated and anonymised in the Appendix.

7 LLM Answers and Critique One of Another

As mentioned above, I also asked the three LLMs to answer the same four questions:

It would be helpful if you could answer the following four questions that I have asked my teacher-educator colleagues at the Norwich Institute for Language Education (NILE). What I asked my colleagues was:

Imagine you've been tele-ported ten years into the future to 2034. You still work with NILE and you're magically not a day older than you are at present.

- **Who** will you be training, working with?
- **What** will you be training?
- **Where** will you be training?
- **How** will you be training?

An accidental (and interesting) difference arose here, because Claude thought they were being asked for their views on their own likely role as an LLM in ten years' time, whereas ChatGPT and DeepSeek adopted the perspective of a human trainer in their answers.

One striking difference soon emerged: DeepSeek was markedly more alive than either of the other two LLMs to issues to do with the Global South, varieties of English, the digital & technological divide, sustainability, environmental awareness, global citizenship, access and equity, and so on. Surprisingly, neither ChatGPT nor Claude (with the proviso that Claude was answering on their own behalf, as an LLM, rather than as a trainer) raised any of these issues. ChatGPT seemed unaware of them. Was ChatGPT tuning in presciently to President Trump's DEI and USAID agendas? Precautionary prescience or not on ChatGPT's part, DeepSeek's answer was the more rounded answer, as summarised by DeepSeek itself here:

Summary of My Vision for 2034: *In 2034, I see myself working with a diverse, global group of trainees, many of whom are non-native English speakers teaching in multilingual contexts. The content will focus on integrating AI and technology into teaching, while also emphasizing cultural competence, sustainability, and creativity. Training will be delivered primarily through hybrid and online models, with some use of VR and AR for immersive experiences. Technology will play a central role, but I'll also ensure that training remains accessible and human-centred, balancing innovation with inclusivity and ethical considerations.*

While I think it's fair to say that all three LLM responses placed greater faith in technology than most of my NILE colleagues did, especially as regards VR and AR, Claude's answer to the 'how' question – from the perspective of an LLM in ten years' time – stood out (and echoed Trainer 3's 'language implants' referred to earlier):

The technology of 2035 would likely allow for much more sophisticated and nuanced interactions. I imagine utilizing advanced neural interfaces that allow for more direct thought-to-thought communication, holographic displays for complex concept visualization, and adaptive learning systems that can instantly adjust to each learner's needs and preferences. The training experience would likely be highly personalized, with real-time translation across languages and cognitive styles, and the ability to create and modify training scenarios on the fly based on learner responses and needs.

ChatGPT's answer to the same question was less futuristic but still more tech-reliant than most of my NILE colleagues:

The technology I would use in training would be at the forefront of pedagogical tools. Some possibilities might include:

Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR): *Using VR to create simulated classrooms where teachers can practice managing students in various situations or observe real-time lessons conducted in different cultural settings.*

AI-driven classroom assistants: *These assistants would help teachers track student progress, provide feedback, and suggest personalised lesson plans based on AI analysis of classroom performance.*

Language-learning apps with real-time translation: *Training teachers to use apps that not only help students but also help teachers understand and communicate with students in multiple languages, breaking down barriers in multilingual classrooms.*

Data analytics tools: *Using data to track the progress of both teachers and students. Teachers would be able to optimise their teaching strategies based on the performance metrics provided by these systems.*

The four sets of LLM answers to my initial four questions (two from Claude, as LLM and as trainer), along with the LLM responses to my further questions can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/mw9ds7uj>.

I next asked the three LLMs to compare their three responses and highlight any differences between the three.

I also asked the [ChatGPT] [DeepSeek] [Claude] LLMs the same four questions as I asked you and my colleagues, and I've collated the three different sets of answers in the attached document. What would you say are the significant differences, if any, between the three sets?

This is where Claude's LLM perspective - with its focus on technology, including neural interfaces and holographic displays, etc. - provided a useful contrast.

ChatGPT's final verdict was:

If you're looking for a balanced, tech-forward yet traditional TESOL perspective, ChatGPT is the most aligned. If you're interested in a progressive, decolonial, and ethically conscious TESOL future, DeepSeek offers the most comprehensive vision. Claude, while fascinating, is the least relevant to actual TESOL training.

DeepSeek's conclusion stated:

While all three responses share a common thread of integrating AI and technology into TESOL, they differ in their focus and level of speculation. Claude's responses are the most futuristic and abstract, reflecting its identity as an LLM. ChatGPT's responses are practical and grounded, focusing on current and near-future teaching methodologies. DeepSeek's responses strike a balance between technology and human-centred teaching, with a strong emphasis on accessibility, inclusivity, and ethical considerations.

Claude summarised as follows:

ChatGPT took a straightforward approach as a teacher trainer, focusing on practical, current trends extended into the future.

I (Claude) apparently took a distinctive approach by answering as an AI system training both humans and other AIs in 2035, rather than as a TESOL trainer. This created quite a different perspective focusing on human-AI collaboration rather than language teaching specifically.

DeepSeek provided the most detailed and contextually-aware responses, particularly emphasizing regional differences, non-European contexts, and accessibility concerns.

The most pragmatic and immediately applicable responses came from ChatGPT and DeepSeek, while my responses were more speculative and focused on AI-human interaction rather than traditional TESOL training.

Finally, I asked each of the LLMs to reflect on their analysis of the responses from their fellow LLMs and to adjust their own response as and if they felt appropriate:

Thank you for the analysis you did yesterday of the three LLM responses to my questions about the future of TESOL. Would you now alter your own views in the light of the summary, perhaps moving closer to either [ChatGPT] or [DeepSeek] or [Claude]? I've attached your analysis for ease of reference.

I'll quote only the response Claude gave in the role of trainer (rather than LLM) here, which it said 'built on the best elements' from both ChatGPT and DeepSeek's approaches:

WHO? *I'd work with a diverse global group of teachers, particularly focusing on non-native English speaking teachers and those in emerging English-teaching markets. Like DeepSeek suggested, I'd emphasize supporting teachers in adapting global methodologies to local contexts.*

WHAT? *I'd combine ChatGPT's focus on cutting-edge teaching methodologies with DeepSeek's*

emphasis on cultural competence and ethical considerations. The content would cover both technical skills and crucial “soft” elements like intercultural communication and sustainable teaching practices.

WHERE? *Following DeepSeek’s more balanced approach, I’d use a hybrid model that acknowledges different levels of technological access - offering both high-tech virtual training and traditional face-to-face workshops where needed.*

HOW? *I’d adopt DeepSeek’s pragmatic approach to technology, ensuring that while we embrace innovative tools, we also provide alternatives for teachers in less-resourced environments. The focus would be on pedagogical effectiveness rather than technological sophistication for its own sake.*

8 Why Do The LLMs Think People Will Continue to Learn A Language?

Clearly, if teacher-educators are still going to be in business in 2034/35, they’ll need teachers to work with, and those teachers will in turn need pupils to work with in their classes, wherever those classes are located. (I’ve avoided the words *train* and *teach* in that sentence!)

Prompted by Trainer 16’s mention of ‘passport privilege’, I asked the LLMs if they thought people would still want to learn languages in 2034/35. They all said yes, but for a variety of what I would call ‘privileged’ or ‘luxury’ reasons, much more ‘nice to do’ than ‘must do’, it seems to me.

Chat GPT suggested the following reasons why people would still be learning languages:

- *Cultural and Emotional Connection*
- *The Cognitive Benefits of Learning a Language*
- *Personal Growth and Identity*
- *The Limits of Technology*
- *Professional and Social Advantages*
- *The Joy of Mastery and Human Connection*
- *Technology and Human Collaboration*

Claude’s list of reasons was broadly similar:

- *Direct human connection*
- *Professional advantage*
- *Cognitive benefits*
- *Cultural appreciation*
- *Personal satisfaction*

As was DeepSeek’s:

- *Cultural and Personal Connection*
- *Cognitive and Educational Benefits*
- *Professional and Academic Advantages*
- *Intrinsic Motivation and Passion*
- *Limitations of Translation Tools*

*People will continue to learn languages, ChatGPT said, **not because they need to communicate** (my emphasis), but because it’s a deeply enriching and humanising pursuit.*

*What fascinates me, said Claude, is how this might lead to a paradox: as translation technology improves, the people who do choose to learn languages might do so with even greater dedication and **for deeper cultural and personal reasons rather than just practical necessity** (my emphasis).*

*While translation tools may reduce the need to learn foreign languages for basic communication, concluded DeepSeek, they are unlikely to eliminate the desire to learn them. Language learning offers unique cognitive, cultural, and **personal benefits that go beyond mere utility** (my emphasis). For many, the ability to speak another language is not just about communication—it's about connection, understanding, and personal growth. So, even in a world with near-perfect translation tools, there will likely still be plenty of people who want to learn foreign languages for the richness and depth they bring to life.*

9 Final Thoughts

Nearly all my NILE trainer colleagues thought they would still be working as teacher-educators in ten years' time, in one way or another, working with teachers of English (be that EFL or CLIL) who would still have students to teach.

I'd like to think that my colleagues are right, but if I stick my own neck out at the end of this piece, I actually think that the LLM version of Claude - with its talk of virtual and augmented reality, holographic displays and neural interfaces - is more likely to be an accurate forecast of language learning in 2034/35 than any of the LLM 'trainer' forecasts or the NILE trainer forecasts. Why?

The LLMs have clearly been programmed by their makers not to frighten the horses: "Of course we'll still need humans (teachers) in 2034!" "Of course people will still want to learn languages!" Unsurprisingly, none of my NILE colleagues forecast their own obsolescence either.

The LLMs can't be guilty of wishful thinking – not yet at least! – but humans can. When we look at the extraordinary technological developments over the last ten years, surely 2034/35 technology must be way beyond our current imagining, unless technological development gets somehow stuck on a plateau – be that legislative, or environmental, or ethical. If no plateau intervenes, I'd like to think that technological advances will have made it possible and affordable for everyone – everyone who wants, that is – to have the command they need (or want) of English or any other language.

A recent piece in *The New Yorker* by Joshua Rothman, *Are We Taking A.I. Seriously Enough?* (Rothman, 2025), describes the author's use of the most powerful, 'pro', version of ChatGPT 4.5, a subscription to which at the time of writing costs \$200 a month. This powerful and productive use, says Rothman, "was both an "Aha!" and an "uh-oh" moment. It's here, I thought. This is real."

Rothman discusses the idea – hope, even, on some people's part? - to which I refer above that technological development might plateau. This can be summarised, he says, as "a comforting, wait-and-see attitude" but one that he suggests is highly unlikely to prove correct. More wishful thinking, maybe?

Rothman's conclusion reads

In any case, to control A.I., we need to debate and assert a new set of human values which, in the past, we haven't had to specify. Otherwise, we'll be leaving the future up to a group of people who mainly want to know if their technology will work, and how fast.

Two people that almost certainly belong in that 'group of people who mainly want to know if their technology will work' are Elon Musk and Sam Altman.

A piece in *The Guardian* by Jenny Kleeman in February 2025 (Kleeman, 2025) described how in 2024 Elon Musk's Neuralink company put a chip in the brain of a quadriplegic in the USA which has enabled him to send e-mail, use a computer, and play and beat his friends at video games and chess - all through the power of thought alone. Regardless of one's views of Neuralink and its ethics, with

this technology it surely wouldn't be too difficult to have the chip help him (or anyone else) also speak French or Chinese or Arabic, would it?

Sam Altman, the founder of OpenAI, the company that launched ChatGPT (and possibly issued it with that 'don't frighten the horses' edict), posted 'Three Observations' on his blog on 9th February 2025 which recast Moore's well-known Law regarding the development of computing power in AI terms and suggested that the speed of development of AI has been, and will continue to be, many times quicker, reducing, he suggests, the \$200 monthly subscription to which Rothman refers to \$20 within the year, with a corresponding impact on the power of the free AI to which we will all have access (Altman, 2025)

Altman's conclusion, which covers the same period of time as this article, is both exciting and frightening.

Anyone in 2035 should be able to marshal the intellectual capacity equivalent to everyone in 2025; everyone should have access to unlimited genius to direct however they can imagine. There is a great deal of talent right now without the resources to fully express itself, and if we change that, the resulting creative output of the world will lead to tremendous benefits for us all.

I'm keenly aware that the final section of this article has strayed off the beaten track of teacher education, but I make no apology for that and suggest that the TESOL profession needs to ensure that it has access to the 'unlimited genius' Altman describes, in order to contribute to, and share in, those 'tremendous benefits for us all'.

The human values underpinning teacher education in 2024, by which many NILE colleagues clearly lay great store, as we saw at #6 above, could conceivably remain the same in 2034 – but only if we have the serious – existential? – conversation that Rothman suggests we must, to “debate and assert a new set of human values which, in the past, we haven't had to specify”. What TESOL cannot do is bury its head in the sand (*pace*, Trainer 4) and not engage with the intellectual capacity that AI will make widely available and the serious intellectual debate which that capacity will – we can only hope – provoke.

Appendix: NILE trainer responses

Trainer 1

Who will you be training, working with?

TRAINEES in non-European areas of the world, many of whom will have had little if any access to pathways which share (post-) communicative, experiential and participant-centred underpinnings. Collaborative learning and (co-)constructivist learning may well be unfamiliar to them. They may be unaware of western academic (n)etiquette and principles.

What will you be training?

CONTENT is hard to predict: perhaps using English to manipulate AI (rather than using AI for English), or whatever successive generations of AI will morph into. A question that arises is: will people still need to learn other languages, or will technology make language learning redundant?

Where will you be training?

LOCATION will be remote.

How will you be training?

TECHNOLOGY will be whatever successive generations of AI will have morphed into – if I had a crystal ball for this it could be very lucrative!

Trainer 2

Who am I training, working with?

I think I am probably still a language assessment specialist, but I'm working with a wide variety of people - these are not just teachers, but other stakeholders such as students, parents and the general public. I'm not imparting knowledge but co-constructing assessments - a bit like I was doing in 2024 but the bottom-up approach is currently the main trend. People used to be very trusting of 'expertise' but having gone through the major distrust events of the late 2020/ early 2030s we are now coming out the other side and there is appetite again for facilitation by experts.

I've also now got people in my training courses that have used genAI since their early teens - this is normal for them, but not for everyone. Some people are still sceptical, but I suspect they're the same people that would have championed mental arithmetic over calculator use last century. Horses for courses, I think.

What am I training?

The idea of what we are assessing in language assessment has broadened again recently, and it had to after a few years of floundering around. The advent of ChatGPT and other genAI tools shook us up a little - many people's idea of what should be learned and therefore tested became too formulaic and, of course genAI could help learners produce the language.

So, what are we actually training? We are very focused on individual differences, on micro assessments, on personalised learning and assessment. The one-size-fits-all approach seems to have lost traction (except in the English school system where the new government has decided this is the only way to bring back standards). The CEFR has developed into a SPFR (Shared People's Framework of Reference for languages - the CoE decided against retaining Common as the first word once the second was agreed) and has interaction at its core, but this now includes interaction with non-human interlocutors. Additionally, what we used to refer to as EDI/ JEDI seems a little antiquated given our emphasis on personalisation. 'Language' means different things to different people and there is no norm from which to be different.

'Language' is no longer solely about what people do themselves but what they can make technology do too - it's a facilitatory tool rather than an end product. The SPFR has just published its long-awaited descriptors on machine-machine interaction, layered with the human role in this.

Where will you be training?

I train in many locations, both physical and virtual, synchronously and asynchronously. The variety is quite refreshing actually! A kernel of organisations are still signing up for NILE VR courses (and the less dynamic NILE Online courses) but there does seem to be an appetite for the old days of face-to-face training. People have missed this - it's a treat for everyone to travel occasionally, to meet others from around the world and to break bread. Courses as a whole tend to be much shorter and less structured than they used to be though - there is more micro-credentialling/ micro-training and people dip in and out. Courses are often attached to other events, such as conferences and exhibitions. Face to face courses sometimes include travel showcases; seeing other places is always such a highlight, especially as it has become rarer to travel for leisure.

How will you be training?

A word about technological access and design though - way back in the 1990s we were unable to do much with video in our 'distance' courses, without actually posting the content or having access to it through the television. There were some golden years of video access (when 'everyone' had those so-called smartphones) and could watch at will. These days, with the world order being a little less stable, access to content via what used to be referred to as the internet (a term that seems to be redundant now) can be problematic. Everyone is used to outages, whether accessing the content via satellite or cable.

Trainer 3

Who will you be training, working with?

I can imagine training teachers in other countries, those teaching in state and private language schools. I also imagine training new teachers from scratch, mainly those outside of the UK, who want to teach English. That isn't a lot different from now. However, I think there will also be training of trainers in relation to methodology.

What will you be training?

I feel this will have changed quite a bit, as there may well be much more focus on methodology (see points below) rather than English, since the English will be much more available online/technologically. This may include methodology of how to teach using certain technology, but perhaps also re-training some teachers in the art of face-to-face teaching and dealing with classroom dynamics, which may have resurfaced as a need/want after a lot of tech years! There is another point, which I can envisage, but perhaps it is too far-fetched for 10 years in the future. Language implants will be used and so the teaching role is appropriacy and refining of language rather than teaching the language itself.

Where will you be training?

I think there will be a mix of online learning and face-to-face in further-flung regions, those which currently don't have the infrastructure or means to develop English Language Teaching, such as some areas of the Middle East, Africa and Asia. While there may still be some face-to-face courses at NILE, I think these will have continued to decline and will not be so numerous as now.

How will you be training?

I think a lot of training will be using technology and looking at how to use AI (whatever state that will be in) for teaching. It may also be the case of how to 'manage' AI so that it is doing what we want it to do and not what it has decided for us by that stage. Technology may well have developed so much that we have classes that are much bigger, and each participant is able to contribute and we are assisted by AI bots as classroom 'assistants'.

Trainer 4

Who will you be training, working with?

I'll still be working with many of the same people I work with today: young people (by which I mean 17-25 year-olds) who are making their way into an uncertain world and need language skills (of various kinds) to do that; people who have been teaching for a while and might benefit from my (by now) massive accumulation of knowledge, experience and wisdom, or – more accurately perhaps – with whom I can share knowledge, experience and wisdom in part of an ongoing communal attempt to learn how to teach more effectively; jobseekers, migrants and asylum seekers, those looking for something which can enrich their lives (or help them escape from something which is demeaning them.) I'm expecting, however, that there will be fewer Europeans, and more people from the global south.

What will you be training?

I'll be teaching features of the English language – lexis, pronunciation, grammar; and reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. None of that will change. I will, however, be placing a greater focus on different varieties of English, and the key precepts of register, appropriacy and context, as well as a grammar model which is based around facts, patterns and choices rather than 'rules.'

I firmly hope that the use of literature in language teaching will have made an overdue comeback, and that creative writing skills will take more of a front seat. Given that LLMs will be able to accomplish basic writing tasks with perfunctory satisfaction, more energy and importance will be unleashed for the creative and affective powers of writing. I'll be encouraging learners to make something unique, something distinctive, something that no AI can do.

Where will you be training?

At home, mostly. I hope I'll still get to work in Nile's Delta House from time to time, as well as an occasional glamorous overseas trip (or even a not so glamorous one) – though these, I suspect, will be rare.

How will you be training?

Given my answer above, I'll be glued to a laptop or phone or some such. It might be Zoom or Whereby or Webex or whatever has replaced them for that month or two. Other than that – I'll still be talking to people, and listening to them. I'll be reading them, and they'll be reading me. Even if I've been uploaded into a virtual avatar, it'll still be some version of 'me,' and that person knows that talking to people and reading what they write is still the best way to learn a language.

Though the original explosion of the web meant that a plethora of great teaching materials and resources were suddenly widely available and accessible, there is still no substitute for a good, informed interlocutor and/or skilled teacher. I'll be more of a guide than an instructor, but that's fine with me. I have yet to see *any* instance or iteration of AI that has made me consider its use. (Moreover, I suspect that at some point there will have to be a reckoning with the environmental impact of AI energy use, and its use of massive training models – which, so far, have hardly been recompensed.)

Trainer 5

Looking 10 years ahead, given the pace of change I feel less confident about any predicting than I was in 1995, when I did the same thing and got a lot right (including the possibilities for NILE). But

Who will you be training, working with?

Working with NILE, the British Council, education ministries, training institutions and worldwide teachers' associations to provide CPD opportunities for teachers and trainers.

What will you be training?

Key issues in effective language education management and leadership; language materials development; the use of AI to support LOLA (Learning-oriented language assessment), offering learners and teachers coherent, planned integration of individualised programmes within a common core syllabus.

Where will you be training?

In Norwich (at home in my study and at NILE) and around the world, some face-to-face, but more online.

How will you be training?

Still some face to face periods in 'smart' classrooms, with intensive, 'live' group learning for specific interactive purposes, complementing more extended periods of online working, both synchronous and asynchronous.

Trainer 6

I wonder whether people will still 'need' to learn languages in 10 years' time and also about the future of ELT and teacher training.

Who will you be training, working with?

Good question, and a lot of it will depend on whether people will still be learning languages formally in ten years' time. I mainly work with secondary school teachers – will teenagers still need to learn languages or will the tech translation tools be good enough? If students are still learning languages at school, I hope I'll still be working with a range of ELT professionals—new teachers eager to try fresh

ideas, experienced ones looking for new challenges, and trainers or consultants wanting to upskill. I also think there'll still be considerable work in developing local trainers.

What will you be training?

If students are still learning languages, I think the focus will be on making the most of technology so that students can learn for themselves but hopefully without losing sight of the basics—good teaching and learning. I also hope there'll be a heavy emphasis on 'people skills' and on learner autonomy, inclusivity, and well-being. I imagine big issues like sustainability and the digital divide will still be on the agenda.

Where will you be training?

Although I prefer face to face training, I think any training will happen online and we'll all be working from home. I think there'll be even more online communities of practice and hopefully we'll manage to support each other from there (although I plan to retire before then).

How will you be training?

I imagine using a lot of tech: AI tools for personalized support and interactive online platforms for collaboration. As I mentioned above, we'll be probably all be working from home and there'll be little travel.

Trainer 7

I don't really see 10 years as being all that much of a game changer overall. I could well be wrong, though, and it would be difficult to peer much further into the future! So, nothing ground-breaking in my responses, sorry!

Who will you be training, working with?

There seems to have been a palpable shift in region in terms of demand for teacher training towards central Asia, MENA and Sub-Saharan Africa. I imagine the shift would continue to become more marked in this respect. Depending on geopolitical conditions, there may be more demand for TT from China and perhaps Russia.

I expect there to be a continued need for training to teachers within the mainstream education systems, especially for teachers of young and very young children.

In terms of trainer training programmes, there could be more ministry level training in/with some of the above countries/regions, and projects where these ministries would like to train up their own training and CPD teams for school systems. These teams may be responsible for both TT and PD among teachers in their country.

More outreach/remote training or training to teachers /trainers who will practise remotely is likely.

What will you be training?

It seems clear that technology will become more and more important and relevant in education as the needs of language learners change; teachers will need training in this area, be that the integration of ICTs into the classroom, the digitisation of teaching and learning, remote teaching and learning and so on. This may include more and more online teaching practice as more teaching is done remotely, especially in areas/regions where the population is dispersed, inaccessible or under-resourced locally. This is a current trend already, which I think will continue into the future.

As the world becomes more aware of the needs of individuals within a rapidly changing global society, the soft skills of teaching and other content areas related to diversity, equity, inclusion, developing learner autonomy and digital skills, etc. will become more important and much more common as content areas for training at different levels.

Similarly, as the needs of children growing up in our time change, so will the curricula for language education, and therefore learning needs of the teachers. They could incorporate a focus on developing

critical and independent thinking skills, self-reflection on learning, ethics and wellbeing for example. This is already happening in many places, but others (such as those above) are still a little lacking in this area.

There may be a greater focus on teacher wellbeing and self-help, CPD and so on.

I don't think other content areas of training will disappear, though. They will remain important as long as the physical classroom exists.

An important area of training will relate to AI, and this is an area to keep a close eye on. I imagine it will be important to look at this in relation to assessment, curriculum and so on, but also in relation to how we can help learners use tools effectively, autonomously and honestly. Children will need to understand and be able to live with AI after all. Similarly, teachers can be supported in their use of AI for lesson planning, materials development, etc, and for their own CPD. There will need to be a shift in attitude in many places, I imagine, so that AI is seen as a friend to be treated well, rather than as an enemy at the gates.

Finally, and with the advent of AI tools for language production (e.g. translation and interpreting tools), there could be a shift away from teaching and learning English specifically in the curriculum in many places. It may be bundled up as broader 'language education', to include other languages (e.g. as an MFL), or it could be perceived as a developmental skill in other areas (e.g. a tool for communication and relationship building, or as a cognitive skill). Alternatively, it may fall off the curriculum to be replaced with another language, which may depend again on geopolitics (could be Mandarin, for example, in many places). There is also a risk that language education becomes a curriculum subject to be 'learned' again, and reverts back away from its current status as a communication skill and tool (so going against CEFR principles, for example).

There may be a renewed need for reflection on the purpose of language education among teachers, and a focus on MFL and ELF as much/more than EFL.

Where will you be training?

I currently train mostly online, remotely, and I don't expect that to change. Although the trend may continue to shift towards remote training, I think that f2f in-person training will remain important as any teaching and learning involves real human interaction.

How will you be training?

This is difficult to predict. In 10 years, I'm not sure there will be a huge change. Platforms such as Zoom etc will develop and improve their functionality to better replicate a 'real' classroom, and online offerings (such as NILE courses) will become more varied and numerous, but I don't think that 10 years will see us using VR, holographic presence etc, or at least not as a norm.

There is likely to be a greater use of video media as people shift towards this in their lives, and perhaps Social Media, which may change the mode of training delivery.

Trainer 8

Who will you be training, working with?

- Experienced and novice teachers of various foreign languages from around the world
- Educators in general seeking professional development in areas related to using AI and technology in general, as well as various other topics such as growth mindset, management in education etc.
- Teacher trainers aiming to develop their expertise in methodology-related areas and areas related to technology
- HR and L&D specialists working with multinational teams

- Managers of educational institutions seeking consultancy and professional development in management

What will you be training?

- Initial teacher training qualifications
- In-service professional development programs tailored to schools' needs
- Advanced methodologies in language teaching
- Integration of AI-powered tools and adaptive learning platforms in the classroom
- Growth mindset strategies for both teachers and learners
- Soft skills for a multinational workplace
- Custom course design for niche industries, such as tech, healthcare, and social media marketing
- Anything related to management of educational institutions, e.g. project management, team management, sales, customer care etc
- Strategies for developing learner autonomy and personalized learning programs

Where will you be training?

- Anywhere in the world
- Online, face-to-face, and blended learning mode

How will you be training?

- Using a piece of paper and a pen / a whiteboard and a marker
- Using AI-driven adaptive learning systems
- Using collaborative learning platforms
- Through mobile apps
- Through VR and AR simulations
- Using interactive, gamified learning platforms
- Using data analytics tools to track progress and tailor learning programmes

Trainer 9

Who will you be training, working with?

I'll be working with more diverse combined groups of teachers, mentors, managers and certainly with more freelancers, or at least those who do not regard themselves as an employee of a particular institution.

What will you be training?

I'll be training much more on the development of critical thinking and diversity, with a focus on how to support both ourselves as development professionals and those we teach/train/manage in their capacity to negotiate their engagement with mass communication and social/mainstream/AI-generated media.

Where will you be training?

Almost exclusively online.

How will you be training?

On communications platforms that have an ever-increasing variety of interactive functions. Training/learning interactions will be diverse to cater for personal preference, capacity and accessibility within a group – and the boundaries of a particular 'groups' will be more porous as the interaction options will allow for greater freedom of movement.

Implications

The implications for this on me as a professional will be that my own work patterns will be a paradoxical combination of greater individual control, as timetables will be completely flexible, and much higher demand, as I will need to meet the expectations of timely engagement with a wider variety of learner requirement.

In addition, synchronous public commentary on the courses and my role in them will be an increasing feature of my experience, with participants sharing their ‘Personal Learning Diaries’ on their social media feeds with a variety of motivations:

Some of this commentary will be with the aim of furthering collegial professional learning within the sector.

Some of this commentary will be with the aim of garnering followers/a higher professional profile.

Some of this commentary will be in order to influence their relationship with the course, their fellow participants and/or their graded outcomes, or their relationship with me as a tutor.

No matter the motivation, the extent to which this makes me publicly visible as an individual is the one feature of the future landscape that will most influence whether or not I stay in the sector. The higher the visibility, the more likely I will retrain as a carpenter.

Trainer 10

Who will you be training, working with?

I predict that ‘training’ won’t be part of our vocabulary. We may be ‘engaging with’...newly qualified educators, if indeed such a body of professionals still exists and is needed by society. The relationship might be a type of mentoring without being called ‘mentoring’. But an institutional approach to teacher education, if it continues, might encourage peer-matching rather than training (which Ivan Illich predicted in his 1971 book *Deschooling Society*!). That said, qualifications may still hold water and training ‘courses’ may still be needed. but AI might be the decider of that!

What will you be doing training?

Reciprocal and / or reverse mentoring, but possibly labelled differently.

Where will you be doing it training?

Online / remotely.

How will you do it?

Via new ed technology (both hardware and software) that hasn’t yet been developed.

By the way, I realise, looking back at what I sent you, that I didn’t mention CONTENT. That’s where I’m stumped but I suppose I shouldn’t be.

I started working in this business in 1986, never imagining that 40 years into the future, we’d *still* be teaching young children spoken language and developing their literacy skills via songs, chants, poems and stories, and training teachers to do so in *almost* the same way as....40 years ago.....or even 60 years ago! I had a bilingual education from age 6 and can still recite the chants and songs I learned by rote in 2 languages now, nearly 60 years later!

My mum, who was born in 1918 and trained as a Primary teacher in the 1930s, used to say (to her 6 children, of which I was the youngest) “Education will never go away”; “You’ll always have a job if you work in education”. She was mainly thinking of the teaching of children....and I never doubted her prediction.

So, I guess in 2035, we’ll still be working with the kind of YL content we’re working with today, if teacher training still exists in the form we are currently familiar with.

Trainer 11

Who will you be training, working with?

In just 10 years, I think there will still be much the same needs as today. However, as technology continues to develop and as new generations embrace these “improvements”, needs will change and the demand for our services may well diminish and perhaps even disappear.

What will you be training?

I think the content will still be much the same. Language will continue to develop globally, but not so significantly over 10 years. However, on CELTA courses, there will be the need to teach the advantages of AI and any new technology that gets developed in the next 10 years.

I also think that AI will challenge assessments relating to how they are designed, executed and marked. This will then impact on what we teach.

Where will you be training?

I think there will still be the need for face-to-face and online courses. I don't see technology completely replacing face-to-face courses in English speaking countries in 10 years.

How will you be training?

Teachers will embrace new devices, and activities using them will be more common in classrooms. Online platforms like Zoom will continue to improve and there will be new apps too.

Trainer 12

Who will you be training, working with?

We will still be supporting the professional development of early- and mid-career ELT teachers and leaders. If current trends continue, we are likely to be working with an increased number of teachers of other subjects required to teach in English. I would hope that there will be increased opportunities to work with participants from marginalised or conflict-affected communities.

What will you be training?

With the current pace of technological change, it is likely that many of those we are teaching will have AI teaching assistants in some form. We will be equipping teachers to collaborate with these assistants and effectively leverage AI tools, AR and VR in the classroom. We may see a shift in the teacher's role as they focus more on the social and emotional sides of learning (due to AI) – we will be supporting them on these aspects. There is likely to be increased emphasis in classrooms on ‘human’ skills less easily fulfilled by AI – creativity, collaboration, intercultural communication, etc. – and we will be training teachers on these. I would hope that there will be even more focus on inclusivity in the classroom and embedding themes of sustainability and climate literacy into language lessons.

Where will you be training?

Who knows? We may be used to working in virtual training rooms by 2034 – with immersive VR training environments allowing, for example, trainees to observe classes in real time. We might be ‘beamed’ into local training hubs where trainer and remote participants can interact with those attending in person.

How will you be training?

Again there are many possibilities - More adaptive learning providing personalised learning pathways? AI training assistants offering feedback, instant translations? Holograms? More Augmented Reality in the training room?

Advances in technology will have a big impact on content and mode of delivery for both teachers and teacher trainers. Let's hope the increased integration of technology will allow for more equitable access

to training and allow teachers and trainers to focus their efforts on areas where they can have genuine impact on the participants (while AI takes care of the rest!).

Trainer 13

Who will you be training, working with?

The pool widens all the time in terms of diversity of international trainees, so as the tech becomes (even) better so more areas will be reached. I think EFL and state teachers are requesting more aligned training and so I expect that to grow.

What will you be training?

I think the flipped classroom/online delivery is still a hot topic now but in 2034 it will be considered the norm and so not as necessary or as hot a training topic. AI will keep changing (rapidly) over the next decade and so training in that area will still be current, but also I foresee a back to basics approach. Can teachers/trainers still apply basic pedagogical principles to their training?

Where will you be training?

I will remain hybrid, which means working for some institutions/groups fully online (either in a local or international context) and working with a local institution to deliver in-person training/observations. I do not think that need for balance and to be IN the classroom will ever go away. While online training has really taken off since Covid it was a firm possibility when I started teaching 25 years ago and like back then there are huge cohorts who prefer some element of in-person.

How will you be training?

It is harder to imagine how the tech will change, there does need to be more research into UX/UI of many platforms, even some of the bigger companies (am looking at you Google) are still rolling out and relying on below par UX. The client/consumer expects a smooth experience and an intuitive one and so I see existing platforms improving in this area.

Trainer 14

Who will you be training, working with?

I will be working with teachers from across the world, to train them in supporting their students with learning differences/ neurodiversity needs.

What will you be training?

I will be looking at how to support learners who have dyslexia, ADHD, Autism, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia and visual stress (as well as a little content on physical disabilities). I will be looking at strategies and teaching and learning resources.

Where will you be training?

Mainly online and in Norwich.

How will you be training?

I will be using Zoom for online sessions and in this and face-to-face sessions, I use a number of digital educational tools such as: Padlet, Wordwall, Kahoot, Mentimeter and Vevox.

Trainer 15

Who will you be training, working with?

Probably with teacher educators.

What will you be training?

Help with curriculum design in teacher education, but in any case I'd be responding to stated needs.

Where will you be training?

Anywhere where there is a demand. But the training is likely to be at distance as well as face to face. For me that would mean working from home for much of the time.

How will you be training?

I'll probably have to become more proficient in my use of technology and in coping with the influence of AI.

However, none of the above would mean abandoning some basic educational beliefs and principles, most of which are timeless: humanism, the importance of relationships, subordinating teaching to learning, active listening, empathy, etc. The list goes on. I would opt out completely if technology or AI started to dictate the content of teacher ed and the core values that underpin it.

Trainer 16***Who will you be training, working with?***

Positive/best case scenario: more diverse groups with participants from around the world if hybrid technologies improve to enable teacher trainers to integrate remote participants into f2f classes more easily (e.g. via more widely available high-speed internet, integrated cameras, and speakers around the classroom?); more high-quality training will be able to be delivered in-country to those teachers who need it most (and who previously haven't been able to access CPD very easily) - most of this will be delivered by skilled local teachers/trainers in-country with contextual knowledge (who have completed remote/hub-training with NILE support?)

More pessimistic scenario: The aviation industry still hasn't evolved to use climate-friendly fuel, flights are becoming prohibitively expensive which may impact how (many) participants travel to training courses in person. International migration is likely to be the big political issue of the coming decade, so by 2035 it could be much harder for some nationalities to get short-term student visas for (educational) travel - travelling for CPD in person becomes a luxury of the wealthy/those with 'Passport privilege'; the divide between those who can and can't use their English in international contexts/access in-person training is even greater.

What will you be training?

As above - we feel this will very much differ depending on the training recipients, and whether or not they come from a more developed context. However, in general:

- Teaching English as one of several 'world' languages?
- Digital literacy/ethical technology use
- Global citizenship / critical (media) literacy (getting more important by the second!)
- An even stronger focus on sustainability and environmental-awareness (including outdoor learning, especially for teachers of YLs)
- More English for Specific Purposes (for teachers, as well as learners)
- 'How to be human' in a digital world - humanistic approaches, intercultural awareness, 'soft' communication skills etc.
- A more healthy integration of work-life balance/technology use.

Where will you be training?

- (Largely) remotely, from the (home) office
- UK universities increasingly offer remote teacher education programmes
- (Occasionally?) in-country
- Hopefully also still for NILE/in Norwich...!

How will you be training?

- Using a much wider range of ‘every-day’ technologies
- Increasingly more VR spaces in online training (however, I’m a bit sceptical that everyone will want to become an avatar - I think we’ll be increasingly seeking more ways to find real **human** connection in a world of AI)
- There will still be a need for technology-light teacher education in the Global South/contexts where there is limited access to technology. Many people still won’t have their own mobile phones in 2035 :-(

Trainer 17

Who will you be training, working with?

I think the age of EFL ss will be higher as it appears to me that many countries are introducing English earlier in schools and to a much better standard. Therefore, it will be those in employment who did not have a solid foundation at school.

Teacher training - I see these trainees being more from central Asian / African countries.

What will you be training?

Again, I think there may be more of a leaning towards business English for the reason mentioned above.

For teacher training, I see a continuation of methodologies with a focus on communicative approach and being more student-centred.

Where will you be training?

Online with possibly a few f2f courses

TT – also predominantly online with occasional ministry sponsored f2f courses.

How will you be training?

Hopefully on more teaching friendly and collaborative platforms!

Using well-designed interactive digital resources.

Trainer 18

Who will you be training?

- Many, many more pre-primary teachers, as this is a level that is expanding around the world and children are being taught English at earlier and earlier ages.
- Teachers who are backed up by AI for their ideas and plans, and who no longer need to have those first ideas, but instead learn to adapt AI ideas and be creative enough to customise them for their specific context. Teachers who need to know how to use more complex technology, but who have actually been brought up in a more technological world anyway.

What will you be training?

- The judicious and professional use of AI for planning and use in the classroom. There isn’t as much AI you can use with ELL between ages 3-6 at the moment as there is for older learners to use, so I’m

expecting there will be more AI-powered tools to use in early childhood classrooms (more interactive storytelling bots, cute robots children can interact with in speech, not requiring reading and writing skills).

- There is already quite a lot of training out there on integrating STEAM in pre-primary classrooms, so I expect something on those lines, but more innovative still: around the lines of integrating coding and programming in EFL pre-primary, like digital literacy and equipping teachers to help children understand computers and robots and how they work.
- How to use interactive holograms (see this idea that actually came when thinking of “location”), to replicate children in a classroom or story characters that come to life (a crazy thought, I know!).
- How to create/programme/code a robot who speaks to students (like a class mascot or puppet, but an AI one that teachers can create themselves for the needs of their class, maybe voice-recognition toys for language practice.
- Although my first thought is AI-related, I believe there still needs to be some “humanizing”, more so in pre-primary education, so I wouldn’t stop training about how the young child’s brain learns, neuroscience in early childhood, how young brains develop and how language acquisition can be optimized through movement, play, and sensory experiences, drama, social and emotional learning.
- There will also be a big need to train teachers to teach eco-education/sustainability to inspire environmental awareness in the youngest individuals.

Where will you be training?

- More and more online, in more sophisticated AI-boosted environments/metaverse campuses (I don’t even know what that means!!), immersive sessions in virtual reality spaces, replicating real classrooms with AI.
- Virtual conference/classroom stages, where you are your own emoji type character and move around the stage (???), or some kind of interactive tutor hologram to make online training feel more personal, and could demonstrate effective teaching techniques or explain key topics.
- Virtual reality (VR) spaces to simulate a pre-primary classroom where teachers can practise classroom management techniques or learn strategies through interactive experiences.

How will you be training?

- As a hologram!! or emoji or avatar!!!
- Using a lot of AI generated content.
- Replicating simulations of real classrooms with AI/AR Augmented reality, in contrast to showing footage from real classes where you need permissions from parents for children to be in the video.
- Collaborative platforms amongst teachers around the world: networking, resource sharing...
- Micro-learning: shorter and shorter sprints of focused text, video, audio.
- Many teachers might not need me as much, and might just ask Chat GPT: “What would (my teacher) say if I asked them:” (scary!).

Trainer 19

Who will you be training, working with?

Teachers in different contexts but primarily state/public school sectors who outsource some specialised training. Possibly older teens.

What will you be training?

Future and Life Skills, Using AI in learning, Learning to Learn and related skills - moving into metacognitive skills. Creating and using content that's been "produced" in real time using a variety of tools online.

Where will you be training?

Probably mostly online / blended models with online and some f2f meetings.

How will you be training?

Platforms designed for courses, much like Nile's, supporting online platforms from books and publishers; many platforms will probably have integrated AI support models in them; lots of AI created content - so using / having subscriptions to websites, tools which allow you to create content. Self-correcting technology so teachers won't be spending too much time correcting but giving feedback for improvements and changes.

Trainer 20

Who will you be training, working with?

In-service primary and secondary school teachers will still remain the main focus I believe.

What will you be training?

I think CLIL will become more widespread in Europe especially parts of Eastern Europe. ESP/Business English where technologically advanced tools will soon break down barriers for non-native teachers.

Where will you be training?

In hybrid spaces, digital platforms or in the actual teacher location

How will you be training?

Real-time interaction with trainers and peers using AI-driven personalization to blend traditional language skills with future-focused needs, analyse classroom teaching, identify strengths and areas for improvement.

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