

RAINBOW OF LIGHT: new beginnings

8TH MINDFUL EFL DAY



*Join us for some
inspiration!*

Speakers:

Anna Pires

Boglárka Spissich

Chantelle Walsh

Fran Seftel

Sónia Ferreirainha

Xana de Nagy

Zeynep Koçali



17th January 2026
APPI Zoom Platform
9:00 - 13:00
ACD 4h



Rainbow of light: new beginnings invites us to pause at the start of a new year and step into a space of reflection, presence and quiet connection. In the midst of busy classrooms and full schedules, this online mini-conference offers a moment to breathe, to notice where we are, and to recognise the light we each bring to our teaching and to our community.

As we begin again, we explore how simple, mindful practices can help us create classrooms where students feel seen, supported and part of something larger. Through shared activities, conversation and gentle reflection, we look at how belonging is built in small moments of attention and care.

This event is a partnership between the APPI Mindful EFL SIG and the European Mindful and Compassionate ELT Project, and it carries with it the quiet inspiration of José Moura Carvalho, co-founder of both initiatives, whose warmth and vision continue to guide the spirit in which we come together.

As we reconnect with ourselves as educators, we open the year with renewed clarity and purpose, standing together in the hope, compassion and community that define our shared work.

The APPI Mindful EFL SIG Team (Anna, Xana & Fran)



17TH JANUARY

9:00 - 9:10	Opening Sónia Ferreirinha
9:10 - 9:30	Rainbow of Light: celebrating José Moura Carvalho Sónia Ferreirinha, Anna Pires & Chantelle Walsh
9:30 - 10:15	Finding Light in Darkness. <i>What Winter Teaches Us About Learning, Hope, and Human Connection</i> Chantelle Walsh (moderator: Anna Pires)
10:15 - 11:00	The Colours of our Learning Journey Anna Pires (moderator: Sónia Ferreirinha)
11:00 - 11:15	BREAK
11:15 - 12:00	Mindful Scrolling? - Mindfulness, Social Media, and Conscious Language Learning Boglárka Spissich (moderator: Fran Seftel)
12:00 - 12:30	Calm Minds, Confident Voices: Using Mindfulness to Cope with Speaking Anxiety Zeynep Koçali (moderator: Xana de Nagy)
12:30-13:00	New Beginnings Anna Pires, Xana de Nagy & Fran Seftel

Programme

9:00 - 9:10 - Opening (Sónia Ferreira - President of APPI)

9:10 - 9:30 - Rainbow of Light (Sónia Ferreira, Anna Pires & Chantelle Walsh)

This session is a celebration of our dear friend José Moura Carvalho, whose warmth, vision and quiet generosity continue to guide us. As co-founder and co-coordinator of the APPI Mindful EFL SIG and the European Mindful and Compassionate Project, José helped shape spaces of care, connection and shared humanity. This session honours his legacy and the light he brought to our community.

9:30 - 10:15 - Finding Light in Darkness. *What Winter Teaches Us About Learning, Hope, and Human Connection* (Chantelle Walsh)

Winter invites stillness, reflection, and a slower pace, something teachers rarely get. In this webinar, we will explore how winter's lessons can help teachers and school communities cultivate resilience, presence, warmth, and hope. Drawing from hygge, mindfulness, and nature-connectedness, this session invites educators to rethink darkness not as something to endure, but as a season with its own forms of light. Participants will leave with practical strategies for the classroom, tools for educator well-being, and new ways to support students during the darker months of the year.

10:15 - 11:00 - The Colours of Our Learning Journey (Anna Pires)

In this practical session, Anna uses the image of the rainbow to share seven colours of learning she carries from her work with José Moura Carvalho. These are simple ideas that have gradually found their way into her teaching and have helped her understand the role of mindfulness in the EFL classroom. This session enables us to pause with each colour, reflect on how personal learning becomes classroom practice, and try a few practical activities that teachers can take away to build presence, connection and a gentler space for students.

11:00 - 11:15 - BREAK

11:15 - 12:00 - Mindful Scrolling? - Mindfulness, Social Media, and Conscious Language Learning (Boglárka Spissich)

Scrolling and gaming are often framed as distractions that fragment attention and undermine deep learning. But what if the problem is not digital engagement itself, but the absence of awareness in how we engage? Drawing on research into social media and video games in EFL learning, this workshop explores how digital environments can become spaces for mindful attention, intentional interaction, and meaningful learning. Rather than advocating digital detox, the session invites participants to consider how mindfulness and media literacy can help learners notice language, manage cognitive load, and cultivate consciousness in online environments

12:00 - 12:30 - Calm Minds, Confident Voices: Using Mindfulness to Cope with Speaking Anxiety (Zeynep Koçali)

Why do even capable language learners remain silent when asked to speak? This session examines foreign language speaking anxiety through a mindfulness lens, highlighting how awareness, acceptance, and emotion regulation can transform learners' speaking experiences. Alongside a brief theoretical overview, the talk offers concrete classroom techniques and activities that help learners reconnect with their voices and engage more confidently in spoken interaction.

12:30 - 13:00 - New Beginnings (Anna Pires, Xana de Nagy & Fran Seftel)

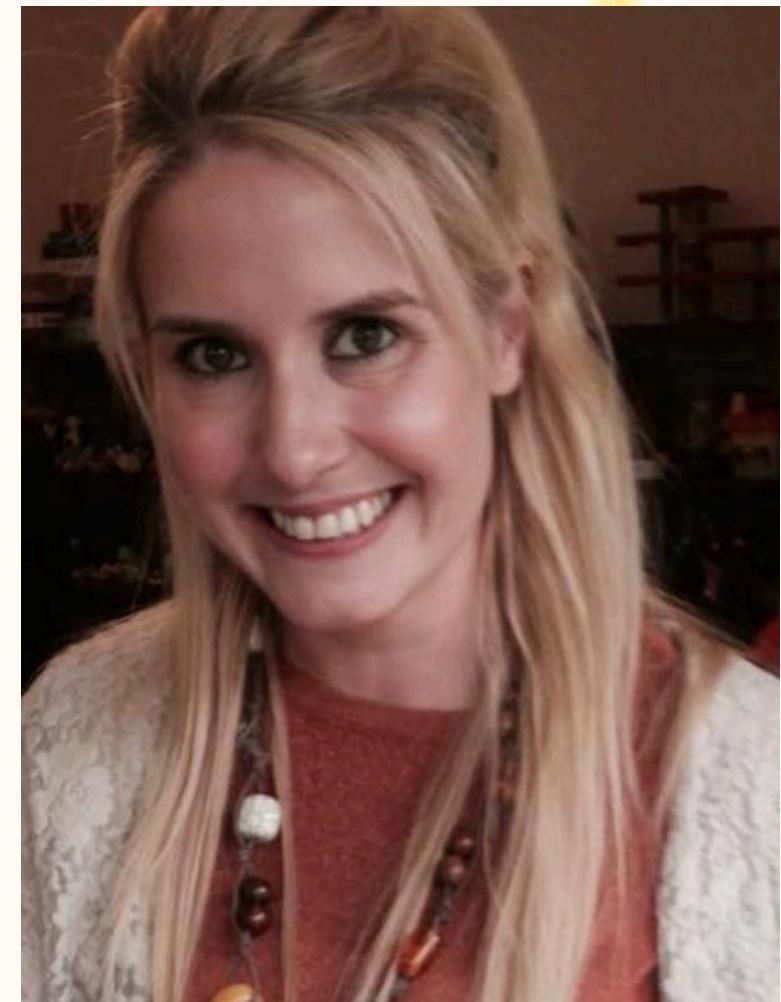
Join us for a conversation with the new coordination team, Anna, Xana and Fran, as we begin a new chapter together. We will talk about who we are as teachers, the practices that shape our work, and how we approach our classrooms. Participants are invited to ask questions, share reflections, and take part in an informal exchange as we get to know one another.

13:00 - CLOSING

Meet the speakers!

Chantelle Walsh

Chantelle Walsh is an experienced teacher and trainer from Ireland who has lived and worked in Italy for 25 years. Passionate about supporting both learners and educators, Chantelle has increasingly focused her work on mindfulness and well-being in education. Her approach emphasizes the creation of positive, reflective learning spaces that nurture empathy, encourage thoughtful pauses, and highlight the value of human connection in the learning process. Chantelle speaks at national and international conferences, collaborates with language schools across Italy, works as an educational inspector for AISLi, and helps co-ordinate the European Mindful and Compassionate ELT project.



Anna Pires

Anna Pires, originally from Canada, has over 30 years of experience teaching English to learners of all ages. She is a coursebook writer for Portugal, Angola, Mozambique, Cabo Verde and Timor Leste, and the author of two children's books for Angola and Mozambique. Anna is co-founder and coordinator of the APPI Mindful EFL SIG and a teacher trainer for APPI and Pilgrims, with a focus on humanistic teaching. She is passionate about working with teenagers and enjoys integrating mindfulness, music, art and literature into her classes.

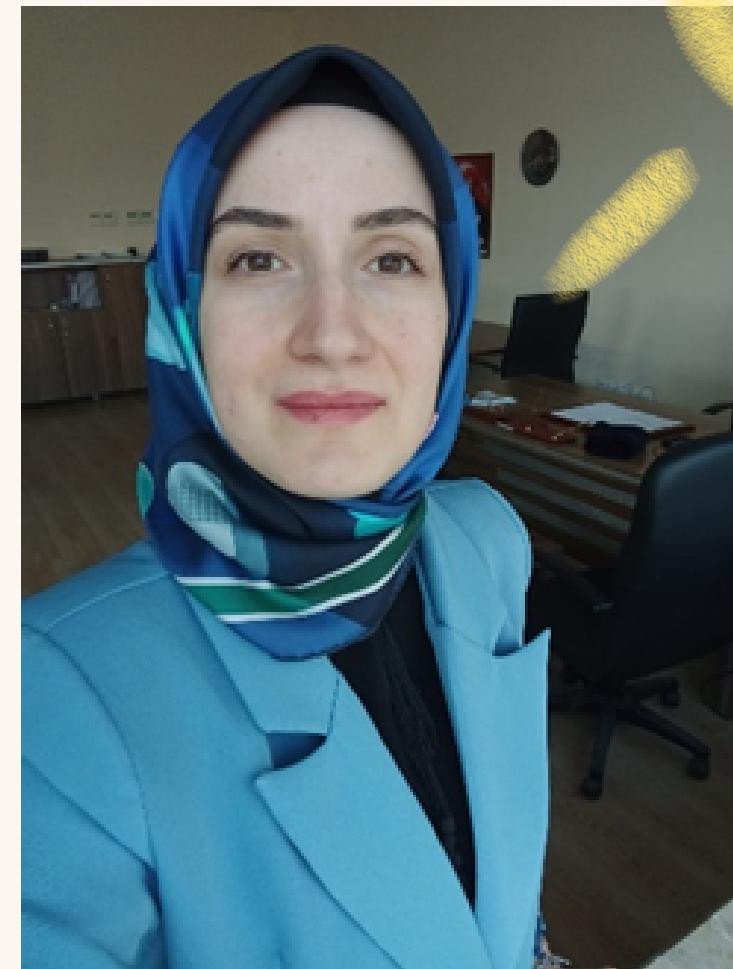
Bogi Spissich

Boglárka Spissich holds a PhD in Language Pedagogy and English Applied Linguistics from Eötvös Loránd University and is a lecturer at Széchenyi University in Győr. Her main research interests include EFL learning and teaching through films and social media, with a particular focus on the pedagogical use of well-known digital applications. She is actively involved in teaching at various language schools, working with learners from different age groups. Boglárka has over ten years of experience teaching English, has been a teacher trainer for five years, and currently serves as Vice President of TESOL Hungary. Alongside a brief theoretical overview, the talk offers concrete classroom techniques and activities that help learners reconnect with their voices and engage more confidently in spoken interaction.



Zeynep Koçali

Zeynep Koçali is an instructor teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) at the tertiary level. She holds a PhD focusing on integrating mindfulness into EFL teaching. Her research interests include teaching English to young adults, positive psychology, mindfulness in language education, and instructional technologies. She is passionate about creating supportive and engaging learning environments that enhance students' confidence and well-being.



Xana de Nagy

Xana de Nagy has been a teacher and teacher trainer for many years working on CELTA, DELTA and YL courses. She has taught students of all ages and has always had a keen interest in teaching YLs and training on YL courses. She thrives on learning from students and trainee teachers and is particularly interested in fostering wellbeing in the classroom and in education in general. Xana is also a co-coordinator of the APPI Mindful EFL SIG

Fran Seftel

Fran Seftel is an EFL / CLIL teacher and trainer at International House Braga, with many years of experience at all levels. Her special interest is teaching young learners through a more holistic approach, integrating English in a range of interconnected areas like science, art, music, drama, and PE. She has also coordinated three Erasmus+ projects that focused on learning through play, stories and STE(A)M. Fran is a co-coordinator of the APPI Mindful EFL SIG.



Sónia Ferreira

Sónia Ferreira is the President of APPI and has been a strong supporter of the APPI Mindfulness SIG from day one. She has consistently advocated for our work and helped create the conditions for it to grow and flourish. We are deeply grateful to Sónia and to the whole APPI team for their trust, encouragement and ongoing support.