Trinity Teach English Online: Measuring the impact of Trinity's online teacher education course

What is Trinity Teach English Online?

Trinity Teach Online is an asynchronous, online self-study course for in-service teachers. The course helps teachers make the transition from an in-person teaching context to an online one. It also supports experienced online teachers, giving them relevant pedagogical grounding, as well as introducing new teaching resources and techniques for their online teaching practice.

The course consists of **three modules**, comprising **10 units**.

The modules focus on:

◗ Key features for making the online classroom an effective, flexible and interactive learning environment

◗ Best practice for teaching listening, reading, speaking and writing in the online classroom

◗ Identifying, adapting and creating resources for online teaching

There is no formal assessment element within the Trinity Teach English Online course. However, teachers can extend their learning with the Trinity Certificate in Online Teaching (CertOT), an Ofqual-regulated Level 4 qualification. Separate research has shown that completing the CertOT consolidates the impact of learning from the Teach English Online course and further develops the knowledge, skills and practical techniques foregrounded in the course.

Critical needs of teachers

Trinity designed the Trinity Teach English Online course in response to the rapid growth in online teaching and increasing use of digital resources. While most English language teacher training courses are focused on tools and techniques relevant to a traditional classroom environment, they are unlikely to provide effective, up-to-date support for the online space. The Trinity Teach English Online course meets these needs and helps teachers identify further development opportunities for professional growth.

Trinity Teach English Online: Key learning aims

Developing teachers' ability to use online learning tools effectively	Helping teachers identify online tools that meet learning needs	Using interaction that encourages communicative learning in an online environment
Using online assessment techniques that meet learning needs	Helping teachers create a motivating environment for online learning	Increasing teachers' confidence in facilitating online learning

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Who the course is for

Trinity Teach English Online has been developed in collaboration with pedagogical experts in online learning. The 30-hour course has been designed to support teachers with English as a first or as an additional language, with course content accessible to those with a CEFR B2 level of English. Those with a B1 level will still benefit from the course, although it may take longer to progress through the self-study material.

Measuring the impact of the Trinity Teach English Online course

In 2020 and 2021, Trinity undertook research to explore the impact of the Trinity Teach English Online course. The aim was to establish how much the course had increased teachers' confidence in managing the online learning environment; their confidence in teaching online; and their attitude to teaching online. A further aim was to identify how far these effects had been sustained over time.

How Trinity did the research

Surveys were sent to a pilot cohort of teachers before they started the Trinity Teach English Online course. The survey asked questions relating to teachers' confidence in planning lessons, selecting content for an online environment, and their confidence in being able to meet learning needs. They were then asked these same questions again after they had completed the course. Five months later, participants were sent a follow-up questionnaire, in which teachers reported on changes to their teaching as a result of having taken the course. A total of 35 teachers from the initial cohort sent in responses.

What Trinity learned

The course was very well received by participants. Teachers responses indicated that the course had a decisive impact on both their planning and confidence levels in delivering learning in an online environment.

Comments from participants further suggest that course impact was sustained and strengthened over the five months after teachers had completed the course.

Fostering a communicative learning space

For a communicative-based approach to language learning, it is crucial that language is used meaningfully in the classroom, and this can be facilitated by encouraging different interactions within the classroom (eg learner-to-learner, learner-to-teacher). There is a perception that this is one of the hardest things to do in the digital space, where the grouping of learners and the setting of meaningful communicative tasks requires different skills and tools. Our study concluded that on completion of the Trinity Teach English Online course, teachers felt strongly supported in this fundamental area.

'*I've used some of the ideas and websites in my lessons and it really has made a great improvement...the Teach English Online course has made me aware that online teaching can be as productive and enjoyable as face-to-face teaching.*'
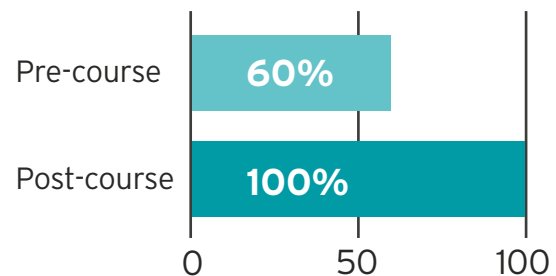
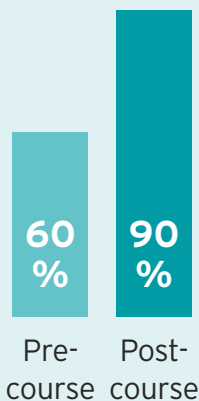*Teacher*

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Having completed the course:

◗ Teachers are now much more confident in **using appropriate interaction patterns** in their online lessons. Agreement increased from 50% to 95%.

◗ Teachers are now much more confident in **identifying online learning tools and resources** to meet individual learning needs in an online lesson. Agreement increased from 40% to 95%.

◗ And they are now much more confident in **setting learning outcomes which are appropriate for an online lesson** too: before the course 60% agreed with this statement, rising to 95% after completing the course.
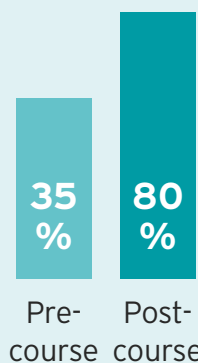
100% of teachers reported that they were able to **use interaction patterns effectively** after the course, up from 60% prior to it.

Pre-course	**60%**
Post-course	**100%**

0   50   100

Responses also tell us that having completed the course:

| 60%	90%		35%	80%		40%	90%		65%	90%
Pre-course	Post-course		Pre-course	Post-course		Pre-course	Post-course		Pre-course	Post-course

◗ **90%** of teachers can **use online learning tools effectively** – up from 60% before the course.

◗ **80%** of teachers have confidence in **using a variety of online learning tools** – up from 35% before the course.
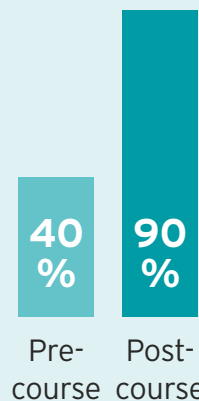
◗ **90%** of teachers can **use assessment techniques that meet learners' needs** in an online lesson – up from 40% before the course.
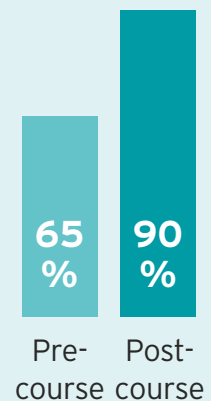
◗ **90%** of teachers have confidence in **using teaching techniques which meet learning outcomes** in an online lesson – up from 65% before the course.

What teachers say about Trinity Teach English Online

Using online learning tools and resources

I have revisited my practices and resources and introduced new ideas into my teaching online. I learnt how to use new programs. I have created new resources that I believe appeal more to my younger students.

The course gave me the confidence and inspiration to explore online tools.

The Teach English Online course has been so useful, not only in providing a wide variety of websites but also demonstrated how to use these new tools effectively for the online learner. Due to the current global pandemic, I and my colleagues were quick to adapt to online teaching but had a short list of tools to use. I now feel happier using these new resources, thanks to this course.

Changes in teaching that have helped teachers meet learning outcomes in online lessons

My planning makes more use of materials specifically designed for online lessons. I have a more efficient way to share my assessment with students and colleagues. Students are more engaged in the review of their progress.

By using some of the proformas which were demonstrated on the course, I've made changes in the way I plan each class.

Using interaction in online lessons

My use of interaction patterns has changed vastly as I feel much more aware of the need to take things slower, allowing each student to contribute their ideas or opinions and have less teacher-student interaction and more student-student or groups working together. At first, I felt it was my responsibility to keep talking as there seemed to be long silences. Now I feel that with the help of breakout rooms students can interact with each other in a more 'private space'.

I have been able to examine carefully in my own time all the information gained from this course and evaluated how I could best implement this into my online classes more effectively...It has helped me have a clearly defined lesson plan and carry this through each class.

Trinity's mission statement

Trinity College London believes that effective communicative and performance skills are life-enhancing, know no bounds and should be within reach of us all. We exist to promote and foster the best possible communicative and performance skills through assessment, content and training which is innovative, personal and authentic.

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