

KOTESOL reaches out for conference

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Korea Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages has joined forces with the Korea Association of Foreign Language Education for its conference this weekend at Coex in Gangnam, Seoul.

The annual conference invites speakers from all over the world to share insights on language education, but this year's event has widened its scope by involving several new organizations.

KOTESOL's members are teachers at all levels, from kindergarten to university, and about 70 percent of them are expats, while KAFLE comprises mostly Korean professors of various languages. Conference chair Ralph Cousins says that the partnership was part of the conference's focus on embracing change.

"To truly embrace change you need to embrace the community more," he said. "This conference is all about reaching out to the community and working with a number of organizations to put on a truly great conference."

As KAFLE includes professors in several languages, the partnership means there will be presentations in Korean and German this year.

"Bringing the two organizations together broadens the scope of the conference, and attracts a new market of attendees," he said.

The main speakers at the conference have also been shared between the two groups.

Keynote speaker Michael Long will speak on interaction, creativity and acquisition for learners of second languages. Long is a professor at the University of Maryland and has studied various language learners, including Korean students of English.

Among plenary speakers, Scott Thornbury, curriculum coordinator at the New School in New York, will speak on innovation and creativity in English language teacher education.

Ahmar Mahboob of the University of Sydney will speak on understanding language variation in teaching, while Brock University associate professor David Hayes will talk about embracing change from the perspective of his work as a teacher educator and exponent of Dogme ELT, a communicative teaching approach that shuns textbooks.



Officials from the Korea National Commission of UNESCO (KNCU) pose with representatives from Korea Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages and the Korea Association of Foreign Language education at the Seoul. The KNCU has agreed to support the KOTESOL-KAFLE International Conference this year. From left to right: Lee Jun-ho, chief of the KNCU's education team; Dorothy Nam, who will host the conference's opening ceremony; KOTESOL conference chair Ralph Cousins; Chang Kyung-suk, head vice president of the conference for KAFLE; and members and conference cochairs Carl Dusthimer and Lee Jun-hoen (KOTESOL)

"We were searching for speakers who could help our attendees and language teachers in Korea to 'think outside the box' and bring true creativity to the language classroom," Cousins said.

There will also be 12 featured speakers, including Anaheim University's David Nunan, who will also host a webinar on online teacher training.

In total, there will be 220 workshops and presentations on language education from Friday to Sunday.

Cousins pointed out that many of Friday's workshops would be put on by their invited speakers.

"Offering a three-day conference has added to the workload, but our conference team was focused on bringing more value for attendees," he said.

"They are small class sizes ranging up to 40 attendees in each session. This is a wonderful opportunity for our invited speakers to offer real hands on workshops for foreign language teachers in Korea."

KAFLE is not the only new partner for the conference. Conference organizer Global Fairs and Conferences has been involved, taking charge of overseeing the venue. GFC organizes EnglishExpo at the same venue each year, and KOTESOL will hold a conference at this December's edition of the event as part of the arrangement.

In addition, the conference has received sponsorship from the Korea National Commission of UNESCO. The event coincides with UNESCO's World Teacher's Day and will include a speech to mark the occasion from the EBS "Daily Morning Show" cohost Lee Bo-young.

An agreement has also been made with members of Korea Toastmasters to help run the conference's speech contest.

"The skills of Toastmaster members are attractive to both members of KOTESOL and KAFLE," Cousins said. "Members of Toastmasters will also host some training workshops on presentation and leadership."

The conference is open to anyone. Preregistration is closed, but those wishing to attend can sign up on the day. For more information, visit koreatesol.org/ic2014.

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