

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dateline: (Daegu) May 19, 2014

Hundreds of Korea's English teachers and scholars will meet in Daegu May 31st for the annual KOTESOL National Conference, held this year at Global Plaza (Kyungpook National University).

Change in the classroom: Principled Pragmatism

A teachers' conference with practical applications, useful experiences, and fresh ideas for teachers of English.

The theme of KOTESOL's 2014 National Conference is "Change in the classroom: Principled Pragmatism." According to KOTESOL President and Conference Chair Peadar Callaghan, "Instead of teaching through new-age methodologies or expecting technology to solve all classroom problems, it's time for teachers to wisely select and utilize the most appropriate tools from the many resources developed over the past fifty years."

KOTESOL's Daegu conference features 8 hours of presentations, including plenary sessions by world-renown authors Marc Helgesen and Dr. Charles Browne, a Webinar by Dr. Ken Beatty on authenticity in the classroom, and more than 60 other teacher-led sessions.

This conference, unlike many in Korea, recognizes the need to bring classroom realities to the forefront: busy teachers, limited resources, and the fact that not all learners are eager to study.

As Callaghan explains, "Most language educators in Korea are expected to produce results without expensive technology, or same-level learner groups. Yes, there are a few language learning programs that use specialized learning approaches for their ideal students, but this is not the norm, and we have to deal with realities."

Pragmatic approaches and classroom realities are central elements in most of the days 60+ workshops and practice-based presentations, all delivered in English.

Principled Pragmatism is not only the theme of this year's national conference, but has guided selections of the presentations. Reports of Action research became a primary focus, the conference includes sessions representing a diverse range spanning from Korean MA students to tenured professors in the USA. Action research showcases how issues have been addressed in real teaching contexts through reflection on the relevant literature and cyclical research involving all the participants in the classroom setting. This focus compliments some of the

more traditional workshops and presentations.

Rob Dickey, Conference Co-chair, pointed out that teachers want tools they can use in their classrooms. “Our surveys tell us that conference attendees favor sessions that they can use in the very next week of school.”

Korea TESOL is perhaps best known as a multicultural teachers’ society, this aspect is enshrined in the group’s constitution and obvious in all aspects of the society’s activities. While the current president is Irish and the secretary is South African, the first and second vice-presidents and the treasurer are all Koreans, as is a quarter of the general membership. “The strength of our organization,” said President Callaghan, “is in our diversity -- Koreans, Americans, Canadians, Filipinos, and more. This diversity broadens the idea pool, which in turn contributes greatly teacher’s professional development.”

The KOTESOL National Conference rotates across the peninsula, each spring in a different location. The annual KOTESOL International Conference is held each year in Seoul, this year it will be located at COEX as part of World Teachers’ Day and in collaboration with the Korean Association of Foreign Languages Education. More than 1200 teachers attend the autumn international conference each year.

QUICK FACTS

Date: May 31, 2014 (Saturday)

Venue: Global Plaza, Kyungpook National University, Daegu

Participants: 200+ teachers, 50 presenters, 10 overseas visitors for 60+ presentations and workshops

Korea TESOL (KOTESOL, Korea Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 대한영어교육학회) was founded in 1992, and is the official Korean affiliate of both TESOL International (USA) and IATEFL (United Kingdom) as well as a partner in the Pan Asian Consortium of Language Teaching Associations.

KOTESOL has more than 700 teacher-members: 25% are Korean teachers of English and 65% are expatriate teachers in Korea. There are 11 local chapters across the Republic of Korea, from Seoul to Jeju, including Daegu, Daejeon, Gwangju, and Busan. KOTESOL’s overseas members are located in more than 20 countries, from Japan and China to the Philippines and Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, the United States and Canada, Australia and New Zealand, Pakistan, Qatar, and more, encompassing roughly 10% of the membership.

KOTESOL website: <http://koreatesol.org>

Learn more about the conference at <http://koreatesol.org/nc2014>

Media kits and Photos, along with extensive background information on the organization, is available at:
<http://koreatesol.org/media>

* IATEFL – The International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (based in the United Kingdom) includes more than 4,000 members across the globe. <http://www.iatefl.org/iatefl/welcome>

** TESOL International (Alexandria Virginia USA) hosts over 12,000 members in more than 180 countries.
<http://www.tesol.org>

The KOTESOL 2013 National Conference was held at Korea National University of Education (“Gyowondaе”), the 2012 National Conference at Busan University of Foreign Studies. Information on earlier conferences is available upon request.

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