



Korea TESOL Happenings and News

Spring 2025

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Contents



Member Spotlight: Gabriela Villafradez	2
International Partners Conference Report	6
Chapter News	9
Special Interest Group News	17
Committee News	20
National News	25

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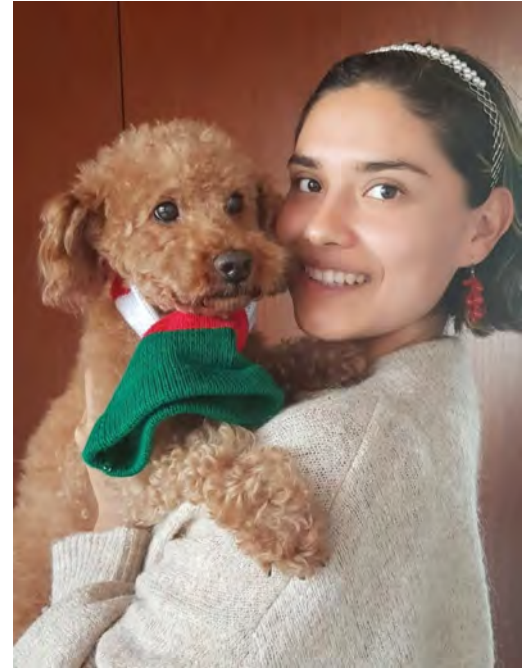
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Member Spotlight: Gabriela Villafradez

She was part of the Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter delegation to KOTESOL Connections Day a year ago. She can be seen presenting on different aspects of well-being at chapters around the country. She is part of the KOTESOL 2025 international conference team. She was at Connections Day again this March and at the annual Leadership Meeting – this time as Busan Chapter president! To get to know more about this busy KOTESOL individual, we bring you this interview with Gabriela Villafradez.



HAN: Thank you, Gabriela, for your time for this interview. As you are probably aware, these Member Spotlight interviews usually start off in the same way. So, would you tell us a little about your life before Korea?

Gabriela: Thank you for featuring me. I am so happy to be able to take part. It feels like an eternity ago that I left Europe. I grew up in London and that was home until my mid-twenties. After completing my bachelor's in psychology, I completed a placement with a charity called Teléfono de la Esperanza, as I thought I would be a clinical psychologist. I found the work significantly mentally and emotionally demanding, so I changed route and started writing and working in fashion. That was exciting and fun, but I also did not find it fulfilling. I stumbled into teaching English as a second language as a means of traveling. I started in Italy, then Malta, Colombia, and finally, Korea.

HAN: What was it that lured you from western Europe to the far eastern region of Asia?

Gabriela: It happened by chance. A British film channel focuses on “seasons,” where it dedicates a time slot every week to a country’s film industry and screens its films. By accident, I stumbled on Korean season, and ended up watching films such as *Old Boy* and *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter*. This opened a new world for me, and I started to consume other arts. First books and then food, and dramas. Soon, I realized that I wanted to travel there, and since I was already teaching TESOL, I took advantage of Korea’s English education program. And, here we are.

HAN: And here we are in a KOTESOL interview! How and when did you first get involved with KOTESOL? Was it mainly for professional development, for social interaction, or some combination of these?

Gabriela: I first heard about KOTESOL through Rhea (Seoul Chapter president). She spoke about her work there and how it had benefited her career. When I finally decided to make the leap to work at a university, she encouraged me to join KOTESOL for professional development as well as to network with like-minded individuals. I joined and soon after got a university job. So, I guess she was right. After attending my first chapter meeting, Anika (previous Busan Chapter president) encouraged me to join the Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter officers’ team. I started as secretary and then became the president. A year in, I am still involved in KOTESOL for professional growth and the people.

HAN: I see that the Busan Chapter is launching a Dual-Purpose Initiative. The title doesn’t give much insight into what the program actually is. I do see that it is scheduled throughout the semester. Could you describe exactly what the initiative focuses on?



SUP yoga, APP World Tour Event, Gwangalli Beach, Busan.

Gabriela: Thank you for noticing. We have been working on our 2025 calendar since the last few months of 2024. With the team, we decided that we wanted to focus on a more academic and career-growth timetable, which led to KC Washington, our VP, developing DPI (Dual-Purpose Initiative). The program was designed to help educators in Korea who feel stuck in their career or are ready for a new chapter either here or abroad. This program has two tracks. Track one is for educators in Korea who would like to enrich their life here through educational development and expanding their social circle in Korea. The second track focuses on those educators who would like to foster their skills with the intention of returning to the job market back in their home country or elsewhere. We have introduced DPI to our members, but at the end

of March we hosted an event to further explain DPI and presented two talks, each focusing on one track.

HAN: And it's not just the Dual-Purpose Initiative that the Busan Chapter has going. I see that the chapter's schedule of events for the first half of the year looks about twice as busy as that of other chapters. What all do you have planned?

Gabriela: We started the year with part two of Alvaro Fuentes' talk at our Fall Symposium last year. This was followed by a presentation by Victor Reeser in February on how to represent KOTESOL at international conferences. That same month Christina Savvidis and Tom Wyatt, Busan Chapter members, led a workshop on phonology deafness. We closed that month with a membership meeting to discuss the 2025 calendar and to connect with our members. March has seen a Wellness Evening hosted by me and will conclude with the DPI Launch at Youngsan University.

April has two events. An in-person meeting in Jinju, starting with a walk around the cherry blossoms leading to Gyeongsang National University where Wesley Martin will present. At the end of April, we will have a Zoom presentation on how to complete a master's degree, and a sister event will take place in June at the University of Ulsan, focusing on a PhD. We will take a break in July and return with our annual beach hop in Busan in August. This will be followed by a networking workshop and practical event in September at the Busan International Film Festival. We have some projects in the works for October and November, and we will celebrate the end of the year hosting a Christmas lunch in December.

“Teaching has taught me to stay on my toes.”

HAN: A full schedule for 2025 for sure! I've also seen that your chapter is applying for a grant sponsored by the Busan Global City Foundation. If your application is successful, what would that allow the chapter to do?

Gabriela: Our chapter officer, Aulia Djunaedi, introduced us to the grant and guided us on the application process. It was straightforward but time consuming, as you can imagine. We will hopefully get the good news soon. We plan to use that money to pay for venues, travel stipends, and promotional material. It is not a big grant, so we have to focus on the items that usually consume most of our budget.

HAN: You are also busy around the country as a presenter, presenting on yoga, meditation, and breathwork. How did you get involved with these aspects of well-being?

Gabriela: I grew up in a holistic household that introduced me to yoga, meditation, and healthy habits early on. As an adult, I started practicing yoga and Pilates more consistently, which led me to completing a Yoga Alliance certified teacher training course in Hatha Vinyasa, followed by one in Yoga Nidra. I started teaching by hosting free classes for my friends, and that gave me the confidence and experience to branch out into the community. I have incorporated other aspects of wellness through aromatherapy, Qigong, meditation, singing bowls, and breathwork. These practices have fulfilled my life, and I know that they can do the same for others.

For this reason, I am trying to start the Well-Being and Personal Development SIG to help busy educators relax our nervous system and nurture mental peace. [Editor's note: The Well-being and Personal Development SIG was recognized at the National Council meeting, March 30.]

HAN: That would be a great SIG to have available. I don't know a single educator who is not busy and needing to relax. You're an educator at the University of Ulsan. Could you tell us what your teaching situation is like?

Gabriela: I work in the language department focusing on English communication and presentation. Furthermore, I teach Screen English, and presentation to pre-meds. I find my job very rewarding and fun. I follow a curriculum, but I have the freedom to be creative with my classes thanks to a flexible syllabus. I particularly enjoy vacation camps, as I can create my classes to my liking and the students chose to be there. I love Ulsan, and this job has allowed me to find a great work-life balance. Teaching at a higher education level can be demanding as grades can determine a student's academic trajectory, but most of the time it is stimulating and exciting.

HAN: From your teaching situation do you have any "aha" moments, teachable moments, or just plain interesting classroom anecdotes that you would like to share with us?

Gabriela: Teaching has taught me to stay on my toes. There have been several times where I have curated an entertaining lesson and taught it to different classes. Some have loved the activities and others have found them boring. I now spend the first few weeks of a term learning and observing which classes like a more textbook-heavy lesson and which ones like kinesthetic activities. You can put your foot down and force every class to do what you planned, but you are the one stuck with those students for several hours. I make notes on my textbook for different activities and go with the flow of my students. It sounds like more work and time consuming, but I promise you that it keeps you sane and less stressed. Years of teaching experience have given me the confidence and skills to guide my students by following their cues.

Springboarding from the role of well-being in my life, I taught a well-being week during Winter Camp at my university. Students took part in yoga, daily meditation, and continuous aromatherapy. I found that these practices created a sense of tranquility, which led to calmer learners, promoted effective communication between students, and resulted in a happier environment. I will be presenting this case at the international conference this year.



Paddleboarding, Crazy Surfers, Gwangalli Beach, Busan.

HAN: What are your plans for the near, and the not so near, future? Do they involve staying at your present institution, moving to another location, additional study?

Gabriela: I have planned this year, but that is it. I am trying to go with the flow, so for now, I am planning on developing existing projects, but I am open to new ventures.

HAN: What do you like to do when you find some spare time?

Gabriela: I enjoy reading, doing yoga and Pilates, dancing, hiking, swimming at the beach, eating at new vegan restaurants, helping at the local dog shelter, and spending time with my loved ones.

HAN: Before we conclude this interview, is there anything else that you would like to add for our readers?

Gabriela: Thank you again for this interview. I hope to meet some of your readers in the near future. If you are attending the international conference, please come and talk to me. I look forward to meeting new faces and familiar members at our events.

Interviewed by David Shaffer.



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International Partners Conference Report

The ThaiTESOL 2025 International Conference Experience: A Conference, a Community, and a Vanishing Table

By Andrew White

Welcome to the Show

It begins, as all good things do, with a hotel. A sprawling, glass-and-steel behemoth rising in the chaotic elegance of Bangkok's skyline. The Swissotel. A name that suggests efficiency, precision, a well-oiled machine of conference hosting. It was here, at the 44th Thailand TESOL International Conference, that I found myself once again, armed with KOTESOL journals, and *The English Connection* magazines, as KOTESOL's chosen representative to ThaiTESOL's annual conference, January 26–27.



Andrew White with Dr. Thanakorn Thongprayoon, President of Thailand TESOL.

ThaiTESOL, in its ever-gracious fashion, had arranged for three nights of accommodations to cover the two-day event – one night before and one night after. I opted to extend my stay, five nights in total, with my daughter in tow for some bonding vacay time, and the hotel, possibly out of goodwill or perhaps sheer administrative apathy, granted me the same preferential rate given to conference attendees.

The schedule was packed. A Welcome Dinner for the inner circle of invited speakers set the tone the night before the conference, followed by another Reception Party dinner on the first night, open to all attendees. Buffets abounded: breakfasts at the hotel, luncheons of opulent spreads, and coffee breaks that ran with military precision. Two each day, at which free-flowing coffee and tea acted as lifelines for jet-lagged academics and overworked teachers.

The Mystery of the Disappearing Affiliates

I had been assigned – or so I believed – the honor and duty of manning the KOTESOL table. That was the understanding. Tables, I was told, would be provided. Upon arrival, however, it seemed that no such table had been allocated. My requests were met with polite confusion. I had traveled across continents to represent an organization that, officially speaking, had no space. This same omission had occurred the prior year, at the 2024 ThaiTESOL international conference in Chiang Mai, which I also attended. I feel it had somehow become ThaiTESOL operating procedure, and yet KOTESOL still hadn't gotten the message.

I did what any self-respecting academic guerrilla would do – I took a table. A lone, empty island in the sea of paid exhibitors and their professionally assembled booths. In my mind's eye, I envisioned a row of fellow affiliates, ready to exchange ideas and information. Instead, I stood alone, my modest pile of literature looking rather underwhelming next to the dazzling corporate displays. The other affiliates? Nowhere to be seen. There was a sense of isolation to it all – an unwelcome kind of solitude, considering this was supposed to be an academic community.

Despite the unexpected circumstances, I soldiered on. Attendees filtered past, some stopping, some pausing just long enough for a polite nod. I engaged as many as I could, ensuring that by the time I returned to Korea, my suitcase was significantly lighter. Every last bit of literature had been given away, a minor triumph amidst the confusion.

A Conference Fit for Royalty

Registration began at the ungodly hour of 7:00 a.m., but I arrived at a respectable 9:00 a.m., rested, caffeinated, and ready to immerse myself in the grandeur of Swissotel's conference floors. The venue itself was nothing short of regal. High ceilings, open spaces, an atrium-style layout that made navigation a breeze. One look around, and I could immediately pinpoint where the major presentations and ceremonies would unfold.

The opening sequence of events was a powerhouse of academic discourse, with keynotes, plenaries, and talks that challenged and inspired. Dr. Thanakorn Thongprayoon, president of Thailand TESOL, gave the warm and welcoming opening address, while sadly announcing he would shortly be stepping down as ThaiTESOL president and conference organizer. Moans and awes responded, as he assured the audience his replacement would carry



ThaiTESOL 2025 conference hosts and invited speakers.

on the conference's success. Gary Barkhuizen's talk on narrative knowledge delved into the ways stories shape learning and meaning-making. What is a story, you might ask? It narrates experiences and reflects upon them, has a temporal timeline, embodies action, and makes reference to who, when and where. It was engaging, methodical, and, for those inclined toward short story analysis, a treasure trove of insights. Later in the day, Willy Renandya took the stage to discuss technology's impact on pedagogy – how it can either enhance, transform, or barely alter teaching methods at all. His talk was lively (they both were!), the kind that sparks real reflection and audience interaction, long after the applause fades.



Willy Renandya guided the audience in a discussion on technology's impact on pedagogy.

Meanwhile, I continued my vigil at the KOTESOL table, greeting curious passersby, explaining KOTESOL's mission. My spread of magazines, journals, and Korean-themed Daiso chipboard die-cut hanbok-attired doll cards was slowly dwindling, to my satisfaction.

The Heart of the Matter

As conferences go, ThaiTESOL was a masterclass in organization. Presentation rooms were sleek, well-equipped, and cleverly designed – walls could vanish, transforming two smaller rooms into one expansive venue in mere moments. My own

presentation, scheduled for the second morning at 8:35 a.m. (a slot that should, by all rights, be a graveyard for audience engagement), surprisingly drew a strong crowd. The Swissotel's grand ceremony hall, divided into two, still provided more than ample space. Attendees listened, questioned, and later reached out to me for more information – which in itself made the conference worth the trip for me.

Beyond the formal sessions, the conference's greatest strength lay in its ability to foster community. Every aspect of the venue was leveraged to encourage networking. The hotel itself, the site of both accommodation and conference proceedings, created an immersive experience. Meals were communal, coffee breaks turned into impromptu discussion forums, and the physical layout of the venue made it impossible not to run into familiar faces throughout the day. At the Reception Party held at the end of the first day, organizers, speakers, attendees and event MC's mingled through the banquet tables in a casual manner that promoted networking and additional academic comradery.

Another standout feature of the ThaiTESOL Conference was the incredible team of Thai student volunteers who helped keep everything running smoothly. These young professionals were the heart and soul of the event – kind, attentive, and always ready to assist with a warm smile. Whether guiding attendees to presentation rooms, handling registration with efficiency, or ensuring that speakers had everything they needed, their dedication was evident. Beyond their organizational skills, they embodied the essence of Thai hospitality, offering a welcoming presence that made international guests feel at ease. Their enthusiasm and willingness to engage with participants not only showcased their professionalism but also served as a perfect introduction to Thailand's culture of warmth, generosity, and graciousness.

And yet, despite this carefully constructed camaraderie, something still nagged at me. The lack of representation from other affiliates at the conference. Was it an oversight? A logistical mishap? Or just the personal choice of the representative selected? Whatever the reason, it left an impression, one that lingered beyond the grand buffets and expertly orchestrated plenary talks.

Final Thoughts: What ThaiTESOL Got Right (and What We Can Learn)

There is much to admire about ThaiTESOL's execution. The seamless integration of conference and accommodation created an environment that fostered professional connections and meaningful discussions. The attention to detail – the well-organized presentation spaces, the



Gary Barkhuizen's presentation on narrative knowledge explored how stories influence learning and the construction of meaning.

strategic use of the venue, the inclusion of high-quality dining options – all contributed to an experience that felt both prestigious and welcoming. It's something KOTESOL could learn from.

ThaiTESOL 2025 was, in many ways, an extraordinary event – brilliantly organized, intellectually stimulating, and deeply immersive. And as with all conferences, its success was an opportunity for reflection, for growth, and, hopefully, with a new president and organizing leadership, for a continued strong, cohesive presence at next year's event.

Chapter News

Busan-Gyeongnam

By **Gabriela Villafradez**, Chapter President

Fighting!

The first quarter of 2025 has been a vibrant and enriching time for the Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter, filled with engaging presentations, insightful workshops, and meaningful connections. From academic discussions to wellness initiatives, our events brought together members from across the community, fostering professional development and personal growth.

January: Exploring the Frontiers of AI in Education

Kicking off the year, we delved into the ever-evolving role of artificial intelligence in education with Dr. Alvaro Fuentes's "Frontiers of AI in Education (Part II)" on January 16. Held on Zoom, this presentation built upon the success of its predecessor in our Fall Symposium, sparking lively discussions on AI's potential and challenges in the classroom. Attendees left with fresh insights and innovative ideas to implement in their own teaching practices.

February: Representation, Phonology, and Community Engagement

February was an action-packed month, featuring a variety of events that catered to different aspects of professional and

personal development. On February 12, Victor Reeser spoke about "How to Represent KOTESOL at International Conferences" and provided members with essential strategies to confidently showcase KOTESOL abroad. This was followed by our Members' Annual Meeting on February 18, which was a fantastic opportunity for members to connect, share ideas, and discuss the future of our organisation. This interactive workshop underscored the strength of our community and our shared commitment to excellence in ELT.

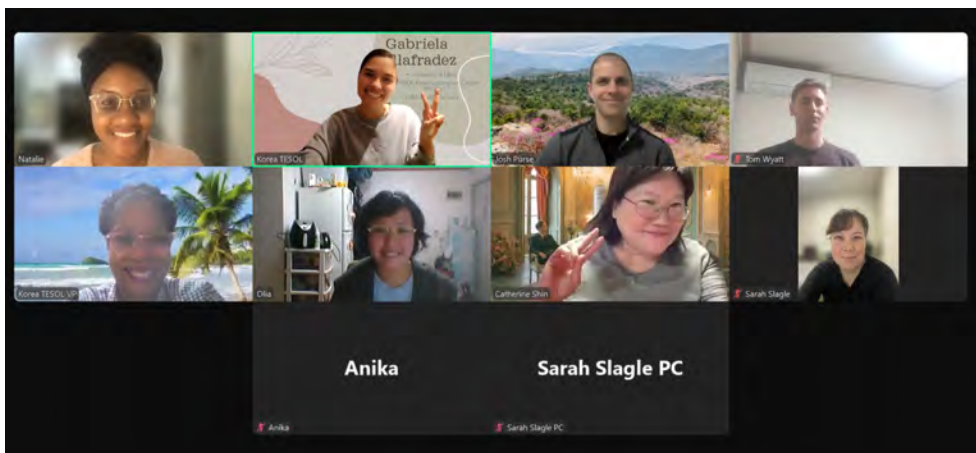


BG President Gabriela Villafradez and VP KC Washington were guests on *This Korea Life* podcast.

Mid-month, BG President Gabriela Villafradez and VP KC Washington were guests on *This Korea Life* podcast. The experience was fun and productive. We look forward to listening to the episode soon.

Finally, closing out the month, "Phonology Deafness and You" was led by Christina Savvidis and Tom Wyatt on February 22

tackling language learning. The presentation explored how phonological awareness (or the lack thereof) impacts language acquisition, leaving participants with a deeper understanding of how to support learners with varying phonetic sensitivities.



The chapter held its Members' Annual Meeting on February 18.

Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter (cont.)

March: Wellness and Career Growth

March brought a holistic approach to professional and personal well-being guided by Gabriela Villafradez. On March 12, our Wellness Evening invited members to unwind and focus on self-care through yoga, meditation, and breath work.



On March 22, we hosted our first in-person event of the year – The Dual-Purpose Initiative Launch and “How to Apply for University Teaching Jobs in Korea.”

Then, on March 22, we hosted our first in-person event of the year – The Dual-Purpose Initiative Launch and “How to Apply for University Teaching Jobs in Korea.” This academic session was both a celebration and an informative workshop led by KC Washington, Lowell Sanborn, and Gabriela Villafradez. Attendees gained practical knowledge on university job applications while witnessing the launch of the inspiring Dual-Purpose Initiative, which aims to support educators in dual career paths.

Daejeon-Chungcheong

By Rosemary Sorg, Membership Chair

Happy spring, everyone! Here is what the KOTESOL Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter has been up to since the new year.

In January, some of the new leaders for 2025 got together on Zoom to plan our leaders' retreat. We had a great time at our retreat at Geumsan Forest Park from February 14 to 16. I highly recommend the venue for anyone looking to get away from the city and enjoy some time in nature. We had a lot of food and fun enjoying the rural area and going on a nature walk to explore the park together that



Join other English educators in the Daejeon-Chungcheong area as we take a walk around Wonsusan Wetland Ecological Garden (원수산습지생태원) in Sejong.

Saturday. We also made many plans for the 2025 academic year for our chapters' social, workshops, and KOTESOL-wide events.



Leaders' retreat at Geumsan Forest Park, Feb. 14–16, planning the year's events.

On March 8, we had our Pizza Palooza event in Daejeon, where we ate pizza together at Mr. Pizza and got ready to take on the new semester. Next month, we plan to have our Spring Swing Walk in Sejong on Arbor Day, April 5. We plan to walk around together and enjoy the cherry blossoms. Afterward, we plan to go to lunch, and the attendees will

Daejeon-Chungcheon Chapter (cont.)

select the cuisine! We had this event last year, and, fingers crossed, this year will hopefully be an equally beautiful day to stroll through Sejong's beautiful natural areas.

On May 10-11, we plan to attend and volunteer at the KOTESOL International Conference. On June 21, we plan to have our annual Summer Picnic and new Sports Festival at Hanbat Arboretum to play games and enjoy a barbecue. On September 6, we plan to have a workshop and dinner with our members and guests. On November 15, we plan to have our annual Thanksgiving Symposium and Dinner in Daejeon. Finally, we plan to have our End-of-Year Party at Ashley's Buffet in downtown Cheonan on December 14.

We have a busy year planned and look forward to all the events. Feel free to join our chapter for any or all of our exciting events!

Gangwon

By **Michael Free**, Interim President

Things remain quiet in the Gangwon Chapter, where there is not a lot of activity. Until we up our membership, this pace will likely continue. That said, we did have a happening, and we do have some news!

The Happening: The now-stateside but always awesome Kara Waggoner presented online for us. Her presentation was titled "Sorting Through Class," and in it she helped attendees with streamlining their LMS's content. Of particular interest was the idea of "stows and shows," which helped us categorize and sort our information in a clear manner. She also cleverly incorporated musicals into her presentation! It was great to have her join us, and hopefully she'll come back soon.

The News: Michael Free has agreed to be the interim president for the chapter, and in so doing setting free the wonderful Reece

Randall. Reece did the chapter a huge favor by staying on as president for a time, even though he moved to a different province and was super-busy. A big thank you to Reece! In other news, Michael has been accepted into the Doctorate of Education (Educational Technology) program at Boise State University. Too old to go back to school? Not for him!

We don't have any chapter meetings set up for the next while, as we're focusing on the upcoming international conference in May. Rhea Metituk is leading the team in the creation of what is sure to be an excellent event, which you should all attend! Gangwon will be represented by Michael, who will give a workshop, "How Present Are You, Teacher? Fostering Teacher Presence in Tech-Supported Classrooms," which looks at "teacher presence," a cornerstone of the Community of Inquiry framework. He will also be part of a panel "AI and ELT: Balancing Humanity and Innovation in the Rhetorical Triangle," alongside Kara Mac Donald and Victor Reeser.



Friday, February 21, 2025 at 9 PM EST
"Sorting through Class"
with Kara Waggoner
 Public · Event by Michael Free and KOTESOL-
 Gangwon Chapter

Gwangju-Jeonnam

By Dr. Maria Lisak, Chapter President

After a well-deserved winter break in January and February, our Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter kicked off the year with fresh energy in March. Here's a look at what we've been up to and what's ahead!

March Workshop: We returned with a fantastic afternoon of professional development on March 8 at Gwangju National University of Education (GNUE).

Workshop 1: "The Finer Points of Organizing Students into Pairs and Groups": Bryan Hale (Jeonnam Foreign Language High School) led an insightful session on how strategic grouping of students can make or break classroom dynamics. He shared practical strategies to address common challenges, such as reluctant pairings, dominant group members, and disengaged students. The workshop provided a wealth of hands-on activities to help educators refine their approach.



Bryan Hale leads a workshop, providing a wealth of hands-on activities to help educators refine their approach, March 8 at Gwangju National University of Education (GNUE).

Workshop 2: "The Unfolding of Careers – Why Some Expatriate English Teachers Leave the Profession": Dr. Ian Moodie (Mokpo National University) explored findings from his research on expatriate ELT professionals and why some decide to leave the field. His analysis of 15 participants' experiences revealed intriguing insights about career satisfaction, job opportunities, and the impact of specific turning points.

A compelling session for all educators contemplating their professional journeys!

As always, we wrapped up the day with a lively dinner at Buukgan, featuring great food, wine, and conversation.



Dr. Ian Moodie explores findings from his research on why some educators decide to leave the field, March 8 at Gwangju National University of Education (GNUE).

April Workshop: Join us for another engaging workshop on April 12 at GNUE's Creativity Convergence Building. We have two exciting presentations lined up:

Workshop 1: "Art in Language Learning." Art is a fantastic way to engage young learners! Ide O'Connell will walk us through how to use creative projects to enhance language learning. Attendees will even get to create their own chalk pastel drawing of the Northern Lights – an activity that merges creativity with education.

Workshop 2: "Fandom in the Classroom." Fandoms are more than just hobbies – they can be powerful tools for language learning! Courtney McLaren will explore how fan culture can enhance literacy, identity formation, and global citizenship. Expect an interactive session full of fresh ideas for bringing students' passions into the classroom.

Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter (cont.)

Of course, we'll follow up with another great dinner to continue the conversation!

Closing Thoughts: As we move through 2025, we're excited to keep growing as a community of educators and lifelong learners. Whether you're attending workshops, publishing research, or just connecting over dinner, your participation makes Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter a vibrant part of KOTESOL.

Looking forward to seeing you at our upcoming events!

Gyeonggi

By André Jacobs, President

Birth of the Gyeonggi Chapter. The Suwon-Gyeonggi and Yongin-Gyeonggi Chapters of KOTESOL made the intrepid leap and merged into the larger Gyeonggi Chapter since it was discovered that our combined members are spread across the region and inhabit several Gyeonggi cities already. Ranging from Cheonan, just across the Gyeonggi border on the south, to Namyangju, on the eastern border with Seoul, our members are spread far and wide, and to better serve our region, it would benefit us to recognize this anomaly.

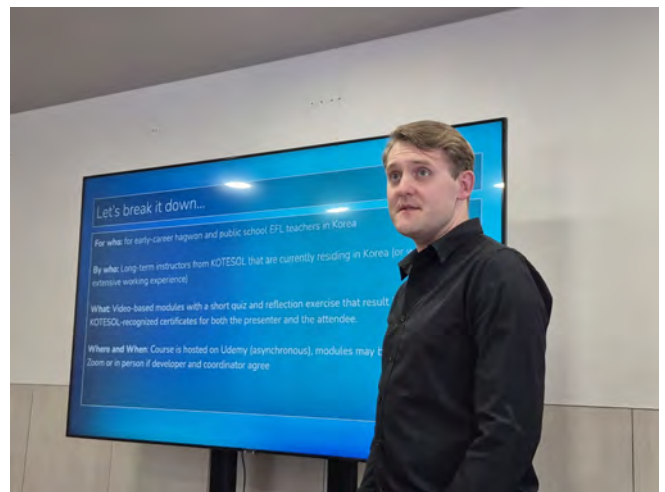


Gyeonggi leaders planning moves for the newly merged chapter.

In the spirit of inclusion, we held our first joint meeting close to Suwon station on March 22. It was an interesting gathering of mostly well-

known faces, where information was shared and history was made. Tina Tsoy updated us on her efforts to drag KOTESOL into the digital spaces of the present era, and Wesley Martin presented on the Gyeonggi KOTESOL Teacher Training (GKT) series of workshops he is currently leading the creation of. We also had a short, but eye-opening, discussion on how to reach teachers not currently benefiting from KOTESOL's professional development.

In high spirits, we parted and hopefully set the stage for a timely rejuvenation of the KOTESOL community in the larger Gyeonggi-do area. With an energized "Watch this space!" we leave you. Until next time!



Wesley Martin presents on the Gyeonggi KOTESOL Teacher Training (GKT) series of workshops, March 22.

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Incheon

By **Madison Brand**, Vice President

The first three months of 2025 were a season of anticipation for the Incheon Chapter, as we look forward to both the slowly warming weather as well as several KOTESOL events in the upcoming few months.

Both of our chapter meetings this quarter were heavily focused on planning and preparing for the symposium that we will be hosting this spring. This free symposium, titled "Classroom Tested, Educator Approved: Evidence-Based Practices for Student Success," will be held in Songdo at the SUNY Korea campus on April 12, 2025, and will feature presentations from educators around the country. As this is one of the first larger-scale events held by our relatively new chapter, the initial interest has been quite promising, and we are excited by the prospect of hosting similar events in the future.

In the midst of our preparations for the symposium, several chapter members are also busy preparing for the 2025 KOTESOL International Conference coming up in May. Victor Reeser, Hyunju Kim, Chris Houghton, Lizzie May, and Corrine Spencer will be presenting at the conference, and even more members are planning to attend. Lizzie May has also been a recent and welcome addition to the leadership of this chapter, joining in the role of secretary.

Looking forward into spring, as the Incheon Chapter membership continues to grow, we are excited to offer more opportunities for fellowship and growth for our members, ranging from academic events to more casual member outings. Hopefully we will see you all at the upcoming symposium, and stay tuned for more Incheon events coming soon!



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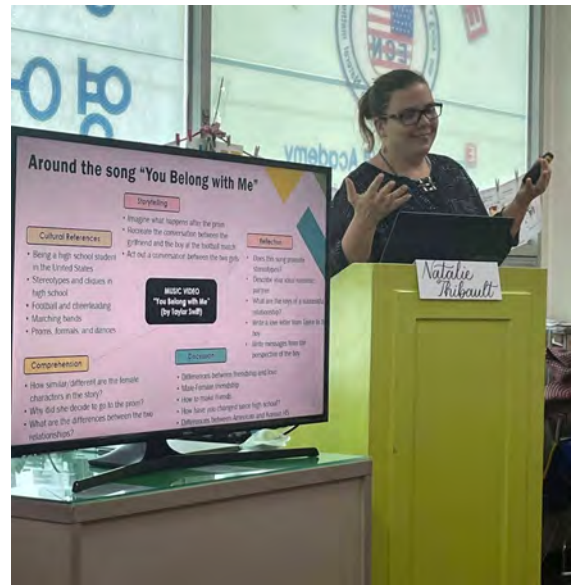
Jeonju-North Jeolla

By **Ingrid Zwaal**, Treasurer

We have a full council for the first time in over a decade, and it is all female. We decided to change our meetings from the third Saturday of the month to the first Saturday. We also decided to have a New and Returning Officers Welcome Dinner on January 11. We took care of business after eating, and everyone now has a better idea of their position and traded information. We decided that having a local conference in March 2026 would be a good idea. We had another meeting February 15 for our chapter officers and discussed duties over coffee after a late lunch. During the last week of February most of us visited Allison Bill's house to offer a little help, say goodbye, and wish Allison all the best on her return to Canada and the next part of her adventure.

Jeonju-North Jeolla Chapter (cont.)

March 8 was our first workshop of the year. Natalie Thibault kicked things off with suggestions on how to use pop music beyond filling in the gaps. She brought some music to help us, with the Beatles' *Penny Lane* and Taylor Swift's video *You Belong with Me*. Some of the suggestions were vocabulary building, listening comprehension, pronunciation, multiple learning styles, cultural understanding, critical thinking, and more, plus my favorite: singing along.



Natalie Thibault offers suggestions on how to use pop music.



Jeonju-North Jeolla Chapter members gather.

After a break, we had three presenters talk about International Women's Day in their countries. One common theme was that all women get flowers on that day. Any male readers out there, remember flowers are more than just a Western culture idea.

Aida Ulukbekova began with a history of women in Kyrgyzstan and how their lives changed with their country's independence in 1991. Lilian M. Tintin from Ecuador and Maria Vasquez from Costa Rica spoke on how women started with suffrage and gained power over the years. Women's influence and power are not the same in each country, but all have risen in power, not all in the same way or time, but wives and mothers are honored now and earned their rights and respect. Each country had a distinct story and interesting heroines to compare.

Three members turned out for the March 15 ICC meeting / KOTESOL Connections Day and two stayed for the Chapter Leadership Retreat. At the leadership retreat, Yuying Kang accepted an award on Allison Bill's

behalf, the Lifetime Service Award, in recognition of a lifetime of service, dedication, leadership, and mentorship in a variety of roles in KOTESOL from National President Lindsay Herron. I know this means a lot to Allison, who has served on the National Council in a variety of roles including the IOC and has been chair of the International Conference Committee as well as program chair, not to mention president of JNJ for a number of years. There may be other things I have forgotten. I think it is wonderful that all that work over the years has been recognized.

Join us on April 8 as we welcome back Aaron Snowberger and his most recent presentation, "Smarter, Faster, Better: ChatGPT for Fun and Profit," and "Keeping on Track: Managing Behavior for Effective Lesson Time" by Eve Kim. Starting time is 2:45 at the "I Can!" Academy in Jeonju.



Departing member Allison Bill (far right) with Jeonju-North Jeolla Chapter execs.

Seoul

By **Melvin Dixon**, First Vice-President

The year of 2024 was another great year for the Seoul Chapter with new members, new activities and events held in new locations. We've captured that energy and brought it with us into 2025.

This year has gotten off to a busy start, anchored by planning and strategy meetings. One of the fruits of these meetings was the launch of the *Seoul KOTESOL Newsletter*, led by Christopher Miller, chapter secretary. It's an exciting resource of information and motivation. In fact, it is the source for much of the content in this messaging.

On the weekend of March 15-16, our executive team as well as other members were in attendance for the ICC Meeting and KOTESOL Connections Day (March 15) and the Chapter Leaders' Retreat. It was a productive weekend for many people and a great opportunity to socialize with friends old and new.

Our executive team has been hard at work in an array of roles related to the International Conference. Our Seoul Chapter president, Rhea Metituk, is International Conference chair; our membership officer, Meerbek Kudaibergenov, is the program director; our webmaster is the IC webmaster; our 2nd vice-president, Julie Ha, will serve as the communications chair; and our vice-

president, Melvin Dixon, is serving as a Presenters' Lounge manager. As you can see, many of our members will be involved with the IC, but we're still working hard for our own chapter as well.

On March 19, our chapter held an online presentation hosted by Meerbek Kudaibergenov. The presenter, Dr. Nathanael Rudolph of Kindai University in Japan, guided us through an insightful presentation titled "Attending to Being, Becoming and Belonging: A Call for Transdisciplinary, Community-Based Approaches." While many of the examples he presented centered on Japan and Japanese contexts, he weaved in Korean issues to make his topic more immediate and relatable to the majority of his audience. This method also gave us useful perspectives to our current situation.

We have our next chapter presentation for Saturday, April 19 at Sookmyung University. A location that many of you will certainly know well. We'll be in Injaegwan Room 207 from 2-5 p.m. Our two speakers are Dave Shaffer, "Trekking Through Korea's Past Half Century: Historic Snapshots," and our national president, Lindsay Herron, with a topic TBA. Hope that you can join us.



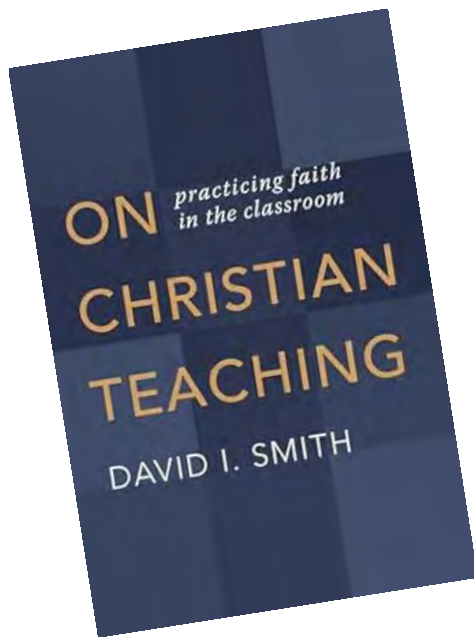
Dr. Nathanael Rudolph guided Seoul Chapter through an insightful Zoom presentation titled "Attending to Being, Becoming and Belonging," March 19.

Special Interest Group News

Christian Teachers SIG

By Heidi Vande Voort Nam, Facilitator

The Christian Teachers SIG held its first book club meeting through Zoom on March 12, 2025. We discussed the first chapter of *On Christian Teaching: Practicing Faith in the Classroom* by David I. Smith. During the conversation, we talked about the potential for discrepancy between a teacher's intentions for an assignment and students' interpretations of the assignment, and we suggested ways of encouraging students to give honest feedback about lessons.



Members of the group had differing opinions on the extent to which faith could or should impact different aspects of teaching, such as course goals, relationships, instructional strategies, and assessments.

The CT SIG plans to continue holding book club meetings on the second Wednesday of the month. We'll talk about Chapter 2 of *On Christian Teaching* on April 9, Chapter 3 on May 14, and Chapter 4 on June 11. Those who want to join future CT SIG book discussion meetings can register to receive the Zoom link at <https://forms.gle/ZLRZuaPpuZJcERzQA>.

Multimedia and CALL SIG

By Victor Reeser, Facilitator

The MCALL SIG is focusing on digital literacy and AI in education. Here are the latest updates:

Tech Talk with Clare Kaneko: On Wednesday, April 2, the MCALL SIG will host an online Tech Talk featuring JALT President Clare Kaneko. She'll present on a digital literacy course she designed to teach students skills like content creation and how to train bots using free, accessible tools. This session is a great chance to learn practical ideas for integrating digital skills into language instruction.



AI Research Collaboration: A group of SIG and non-SIG members is currently discussing the use of AI in higher education in Korea and other Asian contexts. The group is looking for collaborators interested in this area of research. If you'd like to get involved, please contact Victor Reeser at vreeser@duck.com.

Social Justice SIG

By Jocelyn Wright

In this first quarter, the KOTESOL Social Justice (Critical Educators in Korea) Special Interest Group (SJ-SIG) hosted an online book club that connected five expats and a Korean across the Pacific Ocean. Every Sunday morning from 9:00-10:30ish over nine vacation weeks, this diligent group met via Zoom to discuss a chapter of *World Englishes: The Local Lives of a Global Language* by Bertus van Rooy. Discussions were lively! As one participant, Robert Dickey, put it, “There were a number of questions voiced about the underlying perspectives and coverage of topics within the book, where personal experiences were shared and past readings contributed to our individual interpretations of the text. Several members in the group were also active in examining some of the references cited in the book.”

Meanwhile, exchanges on the SIG’s Facebook page posted by Jocelyn Wright included the following topics:

- Letter of release (LOR) debate initiated by the first-ever union for foreign English teachers in Korea
- Government plans to enhance education for students from so-called multicultural families
- A bill to require hospitals to register babies of non-Korean nationals
- A school stabbing in Daejeon
- The deepfake crisis in schools
- Han Song-mi’s freedom speaker story about her final hours in North Korea
- Myths about North Korean refugees

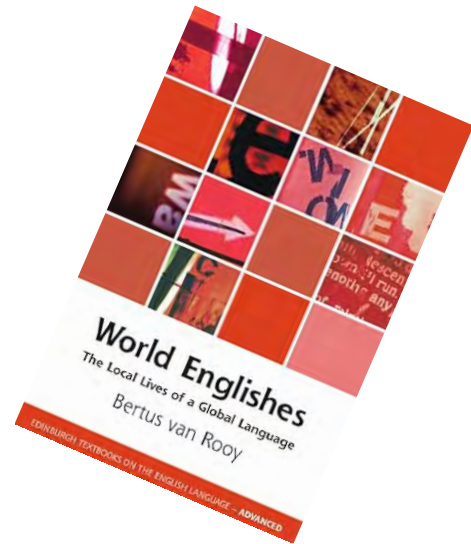


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The last two articles were written by one of our members, Casey Lartigue Jr. of Freedom Speakers International, and we read his and Song-mi’s book *Greenlight to Freedom* in this SIG a few years ago.

The following events were also advertised:

- Seoul Chapter presentation entitled “Attending to Being, Becoming, and Belonging: A Call for Transdisciplinary, Community-Based Approaches”
- AsiaTEFL webinar “Sociolinguistics in English Education: A Decolonial Project in Teacher Education”
- 2025 KOTESOL International Conference

In addition, Conor O’Reilly posted a request to support a colleague doing research on training for working with international students in higher education.

Our contact information follows:

KOTESOL Social Justice SIG:
<https://koreatesol.org/content/social-justice-critical-educators-korea-sig>
 Email: sjsig@koreatesol.org
 Social Justice (Critical Educators in Korea) SIG Facebook group:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1695951900638611>

We are always looking for members to get involved in this SIG, both on- and offline. Please get in touch!

Young Learners & Teens SIG

By **André Jacobs**, Facilitator

The YLT SIG has not been very active in the past few months, owing to substantial changes in the structure of the chapter that most of the officers belong to. There are some signs of light on the horizon, though, and some plans brewing within the Gyeonggi Chapter to create a series of workshops aimed at teachers of young learners in the private and public education sector. This program is currently referred to as the Gyeonggi KOTESOL Training (GKT) program.

Wesley Martin, member of the Gyoko (Gyeonggi Chapter) Academic Committee and KOTESOL 2nd VP, is working on the program along with Rhett Burton, a member

of the YLT SIG and owner of Burton's School; André Jacobs (Gyoko president); and Joseph Van Dorn, chair of the Academic Committee and Gyoko executive officer.

The program will consist of 12 units covering three broad categories:

1. Introductory Modules on the EFL environment in Korea, basic English, and classroom management skills
2. Core Skills focusing on teaching speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar
3. Extended Applications including teaching methodology, planning, technology in the classroom, assessment, and motivation

If anyone is interested in participating in the GKT program, please contact Wesley at 2vp@koreatesol.org or André at yltsig@koreatesol.org

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Committee News

Diversity Committee

By Melvin Dixon, Chair

On March 15 the Diversity Committee participated in KOTESOL Connections Day for 2025. The event offered a time for a short presentation to create awareness and seek team members. It was a great opportunity for face-to-face contact and to network with KOTESOL members. The Diversity Committee chair, Melvin Dixon, gave the committee presentation on the mission, target, and outlook for the future.

The committee looks to establish a social media presence, offer online workshops, and develop a resource list for members and students with themes of diversity and awareness.



Diversity Committee Chair, Melvin Dixon speaks on the mission, target, and outlook for the future, at Connections Day, March 15.

It's exciting to welcome new members to the committee. Raquel Santiago, a new Seoul Chapter member, has agreed to join. We are in the process of building the team with more enthusiastic members. Efforts are being made to reach out to individuals who have shown interest and others who have been identified as possible members. Please come share your talent, skills, and knowledge with us. If you are interested in more information or joining the committee, please send a message to diversity@koreatesol.org.

International Conference Committee

By Martin Sketchley, PR Director

The International Conference (IC) is now less than two months away and much is being shared on social media. The International Conference Committee (ICC) met at Sookmyung Women's University on Saturday, March 15 and was chaired by Rhea Metituk.

Since the last update from the Invited Speakers director and Financial Affairs director, David Shaffer, invited speakers have confirmed their attendance at the IC and the Registration director, Lindsay Herron, highlighted that current registration for presenters is now just over 200. Furthermore, the dedicated IC website now includes further information for invited speakers for the KOTESOL 2025 International Conference. Pre-registration for regular attendance at the event has now opened up.

In terms of publicizing the event, the small PR team have been beaver away behind the scenes to ensure that interest in the event is maintained. The PR team has decided to create a variety of posters that could be shared with invited speakers, as well as presenters who have successfully submitted their proposals. Presenters would be encouraged to share these posters on social media and would take the form of "I'm presenting at the KOTESOL 2025 International Conference." On the other hand, attendees would be offered an alternative poster of "I'm attending the KOTESOL 2025 International Conference," which they could also share on social media.

The International Conference is seeking volunteers to help out during the conference, and the PR team will certainly need volunteers to help capture photos, media, and other content to promote during and after the event. There are other teams

International Conference Committee (cont.)

involved in organizing the conference and are always on the lookout for motivated volunteers to help out before, during, and after the IC. If you feel like you are able to contribute, then there is a dedicated page on the IC website: <https://ic2025koreatesol.org/join-us/>.

Finally, the theme of the conference is “Embracing Humanity in the Age of AI: Enhancing ELT Through Emotional Intelligence, Creativity, and Innovation” with the conference aiming to balance both the human aspect and technology in the classroom to enhance English teaching.

Not long to go, and we look forward to the International Conference on May 10 and 11, 2025!

International Outreach Committee

By **Victor Reeser**, Chair

The International Outreach Committee (IOC) has continued its mission of strengthening KOTESOL’s global connections through active participation in international events and new outreach opportunities. Andrew White represented KOTESOL at the 2025 Thailand TESOL International Conference earlier this year in January. As our delegate, he engaged with attendees from across the region, promoted the upcoming KOTESOL International Conference, and helped maintain our strong partnership with ThaiTESOL.

Looking ahead, Gabriela Villafradez has been selected to represent KOTESOL at the JALT2025 International Conference, which will be held at the end of October in Tokyo, Japan. We are confident she will make a valuable contribution and continue building on our longstanding relationship with JALT.

The IOC is excited to welcome four representatives from our Pan-Asian Consortium of Language Teaching Societies

(PAC) partners at this year’s KOTESOL International Conference. Six of our additional international affiliate organizations have also accepted our invitation to present at the conference. We remain committed to supporting meaningful international exchange and look forward to continued collaboration with our partner organizations throughout the year.



Photo by PixelAnarchy, <https://pixabay.com/photos/glasses-wine-glasses-meal-262762/>

Membership Committee

By **Dr. Lindsay Herron**, Chair

The KOTESOL Membership Committee is pleased to announce the renewal of our partnership with the International Teacher Development Institute (iTDi)! As part of our collaboration, all KOTESOL members are entitled to a 50% discount on iTDi’s advanced skills self-study courses, self-paced online courses taught by ELT luminaries and covering a diverse range of subjects. In addition, participants at the 32nd Korea TESOL International Conference will have an opportunity to win a \$100 voucher that can be applied to any iTDi online course or a voucher for a free ebook.

Speaking of the 32nd Korea TESOL International Conference, members should be sure to take advantage of their member discounts on conference registration and tickets to our annual gala social event, The Social @KOTESOL2025. Conference pre-

Membership Committee (cont.)

registration and reserved tickets to the Social are both available online through April 30.

The Membership Committee is also excited about our gorgeous new branded merchandise: 350 ml (12 oz.) black tumblers featuring a stainless-steel interior and silver KOTESOL logo. These tumblers will be available for purchase at the upcoming international conference. In addition, the Membership Committee is in the process of reprinting our popular black-and-gold ceramic mugs, the multi-color KOTESOL pens, and our KOTESOL logo magnets.

**Nominations and Elections Committee**

By Dr. David Shaffer, Chair

Though KOTESOL national elections are six months away, it's never too early to think about running for national office. Policies and procedures for the 2025 National Council elections will closely follow those of last year: The nominations period will be in August – September, the voting period will be in October, and election results will be announced at the annual business meeting soon thereafter. We are hoping that more members express interest in running for an elective office this year than has been the case in recent elections. Consider how you may wish to advance the contribution that you are making to KOTESOL.

MEET THE INVITED SPEAKERS

IC2025KOREATESOL.ORG



Luciana de Oliveira



Kang Nam-Joon



Milan LaBrey



Han Zheng



Jared McKee



Anna Loseva



Michael Griffin



Maria Teresa Martinez Garcia



Robert Stroud



Kinsella Valies



Diane Rozells



Richard Rose



Ashley Ford



Alvaro Fuentes



Cheryl Woelk



Mark Carver

Publications Committee

By Dr. David Shaffer, Chair

The fact that you are now reading the Spring issue of *Korea TESOL Happenings and News (HAN)* is evidence that the Publications Committee has been active during the first quarter of the year. *HAN* is now one year old, and the response to it has been positive. We are very pleased that it is keeping our membership (and others as well) better informed about the works and workings of our organization. But *HAN* has not been the only KOTESOL publication that has been occupying the committee's time.

The English Connection (TEC), the ELT magazine to which *HAN* is a companion publication, was published on the KOTESOL website on March 1. This Spring issue is a preview of our upcoming 2025 Korea TESOL International Conference. It is "conference" from cover to cover, with seven articles and three interviews provided by our plenary and featured speakers.

With the publication of issue 20-2 of the *Korea TESOL Journal (KTJ)* at the end of last year, work is now focused on *KTJ* 21-1. Expect to see it up on our website by the end of summer. We are projecting it to contain about ten research papers and up to two book reviews. If you are interested in publishing in *KTJ*, consult the information on our website pages. Issue 21-1 will be our first

digital-only publication of *KTJ*. We also hope that it will be our first issue that has DOIs (digital object identifiers) for each article. The plan is to incorporate a DOI platform into our new website as soon as the prioritized portions of that website are completed. We thank Rob Dickey and Victor Reeser for their commitments to this project.



Publications Chair Dave Shaffer speaks on KOTESOL's vast publishing options at Connections Day March 15.

KOTESOL Proceedings is a post-international conference publication. A call has gone out to all accepted presenters to the international conference (IC) to consider also writing up their presented work and submitting it to *Proceedings 2025*. The manuscript submission period is May 15 – July 15. If you are an IC 2025 presenter, consult the submission details and consider having your presentation appearing in print. We are projecting the acceptance of about 30 papers and a publication date of before the end of the year.



Submissions Welcome

KOREA TESOL JOURNAL

- **Brief Reports**
- **Full Research Papers**
- **Book Reviews**


KoreaTESOL.org/node/331

Research Committee

By Ian Moodie, Chair

Following the application deadline for the 2025 KOTESOL research grants (March 31), the recipients of this year's awards will be notified shortly and will be announced at the international conference in May. However, if anyone is interested in applying for a grant in 2026, the committee accepts applications throughout the year. For more information on KOTESOL's research grant program, please visit <https://koreatesol.org/research-grant>.

Sponsorship Committee

By Robert Dickey, Chair

Sponsorship/marketing in KOTESOL is slowly climbing back from the Covid era. Book vendors and TESOL training/degree institutions are finally reactivating their marketing efforts. But this year, KOTESOL has also introduced some new opportunities that both bring funds to KOTESOL and create exciting opportunities for members.

#MarketplaceKOTESOL is a new project led by Lisa MacIntyre-Park and Rhett Burton of the Sponsorship Committee. Teachers and non-teacher small businesses are invited to display their commercial wares and services at the KOTESOL International Conference for

a more modest fee. KOTESOL current members who also register for the International Conference are offered a weekend-long display table for only 30,000 won. And this year, all conference displays receive a free banner-ad on the International Conference website Displays page. Candles, cakes, crafts, and other goodies will be on offer alongside more traditional ELT products and services.

Some organizations will choose to purchase advertisements through the website or in the conference program, and of course, there are banner-ads in the monthly KOTESOL e-news, and on the International Conference website and the official KoreaTESOL.org website. Once again, we have a sponsor for the conference volunteer's T-shirts – thank you National Geographic Learning!

Members are strongly encouraged to visit our sponsors, click their banners, and purchase from them – your purchases incentivize them to continue their support of KOTESOL!

We are looking for more members for the Sponsorship Team, so we can develop new possibilities...

Suggestions, especially contacts, for new potential sponsors to KOTESOL are of course very welcomed!

sponsor@koreatesol.org



#MarketplaceKOTESOL

Shop handmade goods, tasty treats, and teaching materials, or explore opportunities for professional growth.




National News

President's Corner

By Dr. Lindsay Herron,
KOTESOL President

As I sit here with my new KOTESOL tumbler, amazed at all the events popping up on the KOTESOL website (while studiously avoiding my own to-do list), I can hardly believe it's already a quarter of the way through 2025! I hope your spring is off to a promising start.

KOTESOL was hard at work throughout the winter, bursting forth this spring with a wide variety of opportunities and options for members. First, we renewed our ties to TESOL International, maintaining our position as the only Korean affiliate of this august organization and ensuring our members sundry related privileges. We also brushed off our relationship with iTDi, and now our members can enjoy half off self-paced online programs taught by the luminaries of ELT. Our "triple-header" weekend on March 15 and 16 was very well attended, with enthusiastic participants opting into the combination of their choice: an International Conference Committee meeting, KOTESOL Connections Day, and/or the KOTESOL Chapter Leaders Retreat. I hope everyone left with new ideas, inspiration, and connections!

The chapters are keeping it lively, as well, offering an amazing variety of workshops (both in-person and online), conferences, and social events this spring. The International Outreach Committee is offering travel and conference grants to represent us overseas later this year, the Research Committee is just about ready to close the book on the 2025 KOTESOL research grants, and the Publications Committee is hard at work selecting the recipients of our annual publication awards.

The highlight of the year, for many, is coming up in a few short weeks: The 32nd Korea

TESOL International Conference will be held May 10–11, and pre-registration is open through April 30. If you aren't able to pre-register, though, never fear; onsite registration is also available for a slightly higher price. Bring plenty of cash to the conference this year: You'll need it to purchase lunch and maybe some of the handicrafts on offer at the artisans market in the lobby! Furthermore, our annual gala event, The Social @KOTESOL2025, will be held the evening of May 10. Tickets are available for advance purchase through April 30, and it promises to be an elegant evening of camaraderie and canapés.

I'm also delighted to welcome our newest special interest group, the Wellbeing and Personal Development SIG, which focuses on self-care and personal growth, two oft-overlooked but essential pre-requisites for successful professional development. Anyone who is feeling frustrated or burned out, who's looking for new and personally meaningful challenges, or who just needs a moment to rejuvenate will undoubtedly find this SIG refreshing and rewarding.

Congratulations and kudos to all our volunteers who keep this organization so active and flourishing! I admire and appreciate every single one of you, and I hope to see you at a KOTESOL event soon.

New Lifetime Member

KOTESOL is delighted to welcome the following new lifetime member:

Yeji Seok

We offer our heartfelt gratitude for your ongoing support and dedication. Thank you for choosing KOTESOL – and welcome to a lifetime of perks, privileges, and opportunities!

Connections Day

By Wesley Martin and Robert Dickey

For over 25 years KOTESOL leaders have met for an intensive session of planning, budgeting, building bridges, and making connections between the various chapters, SIGs, and committees of our organization. This has been known over the years by a couple of different names, but most recently, the event has been affectionately called Connections Day. The event is crucial for developing the organization in several ways, including planning projects, promoting membership, and showcasing the numerous opportunities and manifold talents that KOTESOL has to offer.

This year, the event was held on March 15 at Sookmyung Women's University, and it featured a panel of committee heads presenting on what their committees do for KOTESOL and its members. There was also a presentation from the head of the Membership Committee and current KOTESOL president, Dr. Lindsay Herron, where she highlighted the benefits of membership in the organization, and pushed to further expand the membership of KOTESOL. This year's Connections Day also included sessions to provide feedback on the organization's website, as well as a project-planning session meant to further the development of KOTESOL in accordance with its mission statement. Over the years, these sessions have been essential for furthering the organization and for developing the next generations of leaders in KOTESOL,

and this year's event was a further example of how its members are dedicated to its success and are striving to move our organization forward.



Wesley Martin, KOTESOL 2nd Vice-President, seamlessly facilitating Connections Day.

Chapter Leaders Meeting

By Mike Peacock, First Vice-President

Our Chapter Leaders Meeting was held on Sunday, March 16, at Sookmyung Women's University in Seoul. Fifteen leaders from across the country gathered to exchange ideas, share experiences, and discuss strategies for strengthening our chapters and advancing KOTESOL. The meeting was an excellent platform for networking, fostering a sense of unity, and setting goals for the upcoming months. We didn't have time for Gabriela Villafradez's workshop, so we decided to reschedule it for the National Council meeting on March 30.



Participants at KOTESOL Connections Day 2025, Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul.



Victor Reeser provides updates on the rollover to the new KOTESOL website, at Connections Day, March 25.



Congratulations to Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter President Eric Reynolds on being named a Woosong University "Distinguished Professor" of 2024.



2025 Conference Travel Grant Recipients Announced

The recipients of KOTESOL's new conference travel grant were announced in February. The grantees for 2025 are Sayed Rafiqul Hasan Milon of Rajshahi College (Bangladesh); Thanh-Huong Dang of Vietnam National University (Vietnam); and Dammar Singh Saud of Far Western University (Nepal; online only). Sponsored by KOTESOL lifetime member and *Korea TESOL Journal* editor-in-chief Kara Mac Donald, this new grant is designed to help presenters with financial need participate in the 32nd Korea TESOL International Conference. The grants include waived registration fees, a one-year international membership, and up to a million won for travel expenses to and from the conference.

Members' Publications

Bryan Hale (Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter) – Getting on the Level About Learner Levels (*Gwangju News*, March 2025).

Lindsay Herron (Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter) – Expanding Perspectives, Engaging Empathy: Critical Cosmopolitan Connections in a Virtual Exchange in Korea (in *Virtual Exchange as Justice-Oriented Practices*).

Interview with Maria Lisak (Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter) – Professional Development and Korea TESOL (*Gwangju News*, February 2025).

Jocelyn Wright (Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter) – ECO: Let's Regenerate! (*Humanising Language Teaching*, 26(4)).

– Advancing Peace Linguistics (*English Language and Linguistics*, 30(3)).

Education

Michael Free (Gangwon Chapter) – Accepted into the Doctorate of Education (Educational Technology) program at Boise State University.

NELTA Conference 2025

KOTESOL President Dr. Lindsay Herron was a plenary speaker representing our organization at the 29th NELTA International Conference. Held at Little Angels' School in Lalitpur, Nepal, on February 27 – March 1, the conference hosted nearly 1,000 participants from 22 countries and included five keynote sessions, twelve split plenary sessions, and four featured sessions. Among

the other partner organizations sending representatives to the conference were ELTAI (India), ELTAM (Mongolia), JALT (Japan), MELTA (Malaysia), NATE (Russia), TEFLIN (Indonesia), and ThaiTESOL (Thailand). KOTESOL's space at the conference included magnets, membership bookmarks, copies of *The English Connection*, and postcards advertising the upcoming 32nd Korea TESOL International Conference. Lindsay reports she particularly enjoyed meeting a wide range of people at the conference, and she felt her session was well-received. She hopes to return to this conference again in the future.

Editor's Note: More information on KOTESOL Travel Grants to represent our organization overseas is available in this issue of HAN.



Dr. Lindsay Herron's plenary at NELTA2025.



Dr. Lindsay Herron with NELTA president Dr. Laxman Gnawali.