

# Korea TESOL Happenings and News

Winter 2025

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## Member Spotlight: André Jacobs

*In this interview, we talk with a KOTESOL member who stayed out of the spotlight for quite some time over on the other side of the Taebaek Mountains in Gangneung. He's now in Yongin and much more visible. You'll see him at many KOTESOL events and at Gyeonggi Chapter meetings, where he has spent the past year as chapter president. Let's hear more about André Jacobs...*

**HAN:** Hello, André. It's a pleasure to have this opportunity to do this interview with you.

**André:** Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

**HAN:** Would you begin by telling our readers what you did before coming to Korea and when you came? Also, what wind in your sails directed you to a landing in Korea?

**André:** Coming to Korea was a combination of necessity and a thirst for adventure. While I was studying, one of my university classmates ended up teaching in Korea. She was unlucky though, and after a short stint, and having to steal back her own passport, she returned to South Africa at the back end of a midnight run.

After spending two years post-graduation working in London – a city I found deeply disappointing for being way too similar to cities back home – and then another two years barely surviving in South Africa, the thought of going to Korea struck me as a splendid adventure. I don't think you can get further from South Africa than Korea, before you start returning. Korea was a complete unknown, and I was ready to have my mind blown.

I was motivated into action by my bank manager, who informed me not long before that it would take just short of 100 years to repay my student loan at my current rate. At that stage, I had just opened a new branch office for a media monitoring company in the belly-button of South Africa, and my income was barely enough to survive on. I saw an advertisement in a local newspaper for a teaching job in Korea, reached out, and was accepted.

**HAN:** That was when?

**André:** I arrived in Korea on a late Saturday afternoon, April 6, 2001, after a 23-hour flight at a rather intimidating Incheon International Airport. My recruiter, who I mostly communicated with via email up to that point, would meet me at the airport and drive me to a bus terminal to put me on a night bus to Gangneung on the east coast. This was the plan anyway, and I had to trust that this was what would happen. It was a time before cell phones so a fair amount of trust was involved in any endeavor undertaken. I later learnt that I was this particular recruiter's first import, but on that specific night, he remained true to the arrangement, and soon I was hurtling east-bound along a darkening highway in a foreign-smelling Korean bus.





*Wedding day for André.*

**HAN:** And when, why, and how did you first get involved in KOTESOL? Was it while you were in Gangneung?

**André:** I'd been aware of KOTESOL since I arrived in Korea but was never in a position to join the organization. Most of the time I spent in Korea was in Gangneung on the east coast. Which is far from Chuncheon, where the Gangwon KOTESOL chapter is centered. I also spent a couple of years at Suwon University, but that was when my daughter was born, and as wonderful as kids are, they are also little black holes for free time. I moved to Yongin in March 2021, though, and one of the first things I did after unpacking was join KOTESOL.

**HAN:** Before talking more about KOTESOL, I'd like to ask you about teaching. Where have you taught here in Korea, and what age and language proficiency levels have you worked with?

**André:** I think I have worked in every possible language arena in Korea and covered the complete range of proficiency. This means I have taught students from the pre-kindergarten level to retirees. I've taught in hagwon, public schools, universities, government offices, and businesses.

**HAN:** Yes, that pretty much covers the entire ELT field! Which is your favorite group to teach? And what is most rewarding for you about teaching?

**André:** I enjoy teaching elementary school kids the most. It is hard work, but I find at this age, children are still malleable enough to learn, and they learn really fast as well. Students seem to reach their peak learning age at around fourth and fifth grade of elementary school, and then they get knocked down a few pegs when puberty hits. Seeing students learn and grow is my biggest reward. I am constantly experimenting with different learning approaches, which means I also fail a lot, so when something actually works, it makes what I am doing worth the effort.

**HAN:** You've spent 2025 as the president of the Gyeonggi (aka GYOKO) Chapter – the newly formed chapter from the merger of Yongin-Gyeonggi and Suwon-Gyeonggi Chapters about a year ago. How has the chapter done since the merger, and what plans do you have for the coming year?

**André:** We are making progress through choppy seas. That is what it feels like. There seems to be a general issue with attracting new members, and we are working on approaches to remedy this deficiency, but we are also having fun doing it. We have a couple of live wires in our chapter that keep us on our toes and dancing to the beat.

Our plan for GYOKO 2026 is to forge more connections with local organizations and businesses, but it is a plan that is still taking shape. In the meantime, we are trying to grow our community, which is how we see the Gyeonggi Chapter.

**HAN:** You're also the facilitator of the newly formed Young Learners and Teens Special Interest Group

(YLT SIG). What are the main activities of this SIG, and what plans do you have for the SIG in the coming year?

**André:** I haven't had much time to spend on the YLT SIG recently, but our chapter's general focus is towards young learners, so what we are doing in the chapter is also helping to keep the YLT SIG afloat. One of our aims for the new year is to engage smaller hagwon owners in our chapter activities, and we are working on establishing a support network of business owners in our chapter. Rhett Burton and Wesley Martin are also working on a program for young learners, and we are expecting a workshop on their efforts soon.

**HAN:** What do you like to do in your free time – if you have any – and what are the items at the top of your bucket list?

**André:** I don't have a lot of free time these days, but I enjoy reading and researching topics I find interesting. Philosophy is my passion, and I've been working on a pet research project for the past decade that I'm looking forward to getting down on paper... as soon as my kids are out of university. That is at the top of my bucket list.



*André with his children.*

**HAN:** Where do you see yourself being, and what do you see yourself doing in, say, the next five to ten years?

**André:** I have just registered an education consulting business, and it feels like Christmas and I've been given the toy that I've been eyeing since January. I've been meaning to start my own education business for a while now, and somehow this moment in time seems to be appropriate. I'm excited about developing this business and seeing in which direction fate sends it.

**HAN:** Well, I hope fate sends it in a rewarding direction. In wrapping up this interview, is there anything that you would like to say to our readers?

**André:** I would like to see more collaboration in KOTESOL at the chapter level. We treat GYOKO as a community, and our members have a lot to offer, and gain from, other chapters. I would also like to thank KOTESOL and its leadership for creating this opportunity for me and teachers in Korea. What KOTESOL is doing is sorely needed, and I hope it will grow and strengthen as an organization.

**HAN:** And your efforts are helping KOTESOL grow. Thank you, André, for this opportunity for me as well as our readers to get to know you better.

Interviewed by **David Shaffer.**

# IOC Travel Report

## My Participation at the 2025 PALT International Conference

By Meerbek Kudaibergenov

My participation at the PALT 2025 International Conference (Nov. 27–29, 2025), hosted at the historic campus of the University of Santo Tomas (UST) in Manila, was a deeply meaningful professional and personal experience. As a representative of KOTESOL, I attended with a special mission – to build and strengthen networks with KOTESOL’s partner organizations and to promote the upcoming 2026 KOTESOL International Conference. In addition, I delivered a talk focusing on the experiences and positioning of transnational teachers in Korea, a topic that resonates strongly with my ongoing research trajectory.

From the moment I arrived at UST, the warmth and hospitality of the organizers and student volunteers made me feel genuinely welcomed. Their friendliness set the tone for what became a highly informative, social, and enjoyable event. Throughout the three days, I had the opportunity to reconnect with old colleagues, meet new friends, and engage deeply with educators, researchers, and practitioners from across Asia. It was particularly pleasant to meet partners from organizations such as PALT, JALT, ThaiTESOL, MELTA, and the English Teachers Association of India. The sense of regional collaboration and shared purpose in language education was indeed tangible.



*Dr. Sterling Plata (De La Salle University) during her talk.*

The conference opened with a vibrant ceremony that reflected both Philippine hospitality and UST’s rich cultural heritage. The keynote and plenary speeches that followed set the intellectual tone for the event, addressing the theme of the conference “Upskilling and Upscaling: Moving up with the 8Ms of Language Teaching.” Later, during an interactive segment, I taught the audience a few Korean expressions such as “좋은 날이에요” (Good afternoon), “예쁜 여자” (beautiful girl), and “멋있는 남자” (handsome boy). Their enthusiasm and laughter created a warm, inclusive atmosphere. Between sessions, I took part in networking activities that allowed me to learn about colleagues’ research and institutional initiatives while also sharing information about KOTESOL’s vision for 2026. One of the most memorable aspects of the day was the cultural program. I was invited to participate in a traditional Filipino dance, which was both fun and humbling. The first day closed with a sense of excitement and anticipation for what was still to come.

The second day began with plenary speeches that continued to explore practical and theoretical issues relevant to ELT. After these sessions, it was time for my own presentation on transnational teachers in



*Partner organization speakers at the closing ceremony.*

landmarks was both relaxing and inspiring. The students shared stories about campus traditions, university history, and their personal experiences. Their pride in their institution and sincere friendliness made the tour feel less like a formal activity and more like spending time with new friends. It was one of the highlights of the entire conference.

The final day began with an unexpected icebreaker, a K-pop dance activity that I was asked to join along with a MELTA representative. It was great fun as I hadn't danced for ages! Afterwards, I attended the PALT Business Meeting and Recognition Session, which provided valuable insights into the organization's long-term direction, collaborative initiatives, and commitment to supporting teachers in the Philippines and beyond. This was followed by the closing ceremony, which brought together all participants for one final moment of reflection and celebration. As photos were taken and goodbyes exchanged, the camaraderie built over the three days became even more evident.

Now that I am back in Korea, I reflect that the PALT 2025 International Conference was not only academically enriching but also socially meaningful. The hospitality of the organizers, the energy of the UST students, and the spirit of collaboration among participants created an atmosphere that I will remember fondly. I returned to Korea with strengthened networks, new insights, and renewed motivation to continue my work and to promote the 2026 KOTESOL International Conference with even greater passion. The event was a wonderful blend of learning, culture, and friendship – an experience that will remain a highlight of my professional journey.

### **The Author**

Meerbek Kudaibergenov serves KOTESOL as the chair of the 2026 International Conference Committee and is a regional editor for the *Journal of International Students*. He also serves on the editorial board of *SageOpen*. Dr. Kudaibergenov is an assistant professor of English at Seoul National University of Science and Technology (SeoulTech) in Seoul. His research focuses on transnational teacher identity, legitimacy, and international student experiences.



Korea. I discussed how different identity categories such as race, nationality, and marital status can create both privilege and disadvantage for expat teachers in Korean ELT. The audience was highly engaged, asking thoughtful questions that enriched the discussion and helped me reflect further on my research. I was grateful for their attentiveness and openness, which made the session particularly rewarding. Following the academic sessions, UST student volunteers generously offered an evening tour of the campus. Walking through the iconic Arch of the Centuries, the majestic Main Building, and other historical

# Chapter News

## Busan-Gyeongsang-Daegu Chapter

By **Gabriela Villafradez**, President

### A Season of Connection, Collaboration, and Transition

The final quarter of the year marked a period of sustained activity, meaningful collaboration, and thoughtful reflection for our chapter. From national-level engagement and community celebrations to internal planning and strategic transition, October through December showcased the chapter's continued vitality and commitment to its members.

### October: National Engagement and Leadership Change

October was an especially active month for us, highlighted by strong representation at the KOTESOL National Conference hosted by the Incheon Chapter. Aulia Djunaedi and Gabriela Villafradez represented the chapter with professionalism and enthusiasm. Aulia delivered an engaging and well-received presentation, while Gabriela contributed as a conference volunteer. Both members actively promoted the BG Chapter at the chapter tables, strengthening inter-chapter relationships and showcasing the



*KOTESOL National Conference, hosted by the Incheon Chapter. Aulia Djunaedi (second from left) and Gabriela Villafradez (right) represented BG Chapter by presenting and volunteering.*

breadth of work being done in the Busan-Gyeongnam region.

October also marked the BG Chapter elections. The process ran smoothly, with results published in November. Sincere appreciation is extended to Heidi Nam for her guidance and support throughout the election period. While the chapter was sad to see Members-at-Large Catherine and Aulia step away from leadership roles, their years of dedication, hard work, and steady support are deeply appreciated.

### November: Collaboration, Community, and Celebration

November brought the chapter together through collaboration and shared celebration. The BG Chapter proudly co-hosted the DCC Thanksgiving Dinner, an event that proved to be both professionally rewarding and personally meaningful.



*The BG Chapter proudly co-hosted a festive DCC Thanksgiving Dinner.*

The success of the evening was made possible through the dedicated efforts of the organizing team. Catherine Shin led publicity with creativity and precision, Aulia Djunaedi delivered a well-received presentation and coordinated catering with exceptional care, and Gabriela Villafradez

served as program director, ensuring a smooth flow and welcoming atmosphere throughout the event.

In addition to community-facing events, the chapter held an internal planning meeting to map out the upcoming year. The discussion focused on professional development, member engagement, and sustainable community-building. A full calendar overview is scheduled for publication in January.

### **December: Reflection and Professional Growth**

The year concluded on a reflective and inspiring note. Christopher Miller, president of the Seoul Chapter, delivered an insightful Zoom session for the BG Chapter on reflective practices. His presentation encouraged thoughtful dialogue and offered practical tools for both personal and professional development. The chapter extends sincere thanks to Chris for sharing his expertise and for fostering a meaningful and engaging discussion to close the year.

### **BG Annual Christmas Bruch**

Another amazing festive brunch with wonderful members of our KOTESOL and Gyeongsang community. We had people coming from Jinhae, Jinju, Ulsan, and all areas of Busan to spend time



*BG Christmas Brunch and Book Swap at Soul of Life Taphouse, Busan.*

together and enjoy large slices of pizza while overlooking Gwangalli Beach. What more can we ask?

### **Chapter Absorption and Renaming**

Following careful consideration and open discussion, it was agreed that the Daegu-Gyeongbuk Chapter would be merged with the Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter. Multiple meetings took place among national and regional leadership to ensure that the transition would be managed with transparency, procedural accuracy, and care for members. The final decision set December 2025 as the effective date of transition.

As part of this transition, the chapter adopts a new official name: The Busan-Gyeongsang-Daegu Chapter. This change will be reflected on the KOTESOL website and chapter social media platforms beginning in January 2026, with website updates to follow as soon as possible.

## **Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter**

**By Rosemary Sorg, Membership Chair**

The final quarter of 2025 was a dynamic and rewarding period for the Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter of KOTESOL. Between September and December, the chapter hosted professional, cultural, and social events that reinforced its role as a vibrant hub for English language educators.

The quarter began with the Homecoming Workshop: Life in ELT Beyond and After Korea, a hybrid event that invited educators to reflect on evolving career pathways after they left Korea. Through candid speaker narratives and open discussion, participants explored how ELT careers develop across countries, roles, and life stages. Our deepest thanks to the featured speakers: Christy Lochrie from Grants, New Mexico; Terri Beadle of the United Arab Emirates University in Al Ain; Tim Thompson, an English language fellow in Guatemala; and Tash Jardine Binstead, Christopher Binstead, and Justin McKibben of Wenzhou-Kean University in China.



*Mad revelry and plenty of schwag on the Buyeo Cultural Trip.*

In October, members participated in a Buyeo Cultural Trip, enjoying historical sites, local cuisine, and the Baekje Cultural Festival. The trip offered a welcome opportunity for informal connection and intercultural learning outside classroom and conference settings.

Thanksgiving Symposium. This symposium featured diverse presentations and workshops on AI, EMI, inclusion, and pedagogy. Special thanks to our plenary speaker, Kevin Kester from Seoul National University, and our featured speaker, Hasan Tinmaz from Woosong University. The symposium provided a full day of intellectually engaging and practical professional development. Participants consistently described the event as both rigorous and welcoming. Afterwards, participants enjoyed a delicious Thanksgiving dinner together at our favorite local restaurant near Woosong University: Ugly Delicious.



*Interchapter mingling from Busan, Daegu, and Cheonan.*

DCC members also traveled together and volunteered at the KOTESOL National Conference in Incheon, strengthening collegial ties and sharing ideas along the way. This collective journey reflected the chapter's strong sense of community.

Amidst the holiday celebrations, we received the sad news of the passing of one of our chapter fixtures for over a decade, Liz Bailey. Thus, we would like to offer our condolences to all her



*Rest in peace and joy, Liz Bailey.*

The highlight of the quarter was the Daejeon Chungcheong and Busan-Gyeongnam

loved ones and a moment of remembrance for Liz in honor of her years of service to the chapter. Rest in peace, Liz.

The quarter concluded with an end-of-year holiday dinner in Cheonan, where participants enjoyed a meal at Ashley's Buffet and participated in a rocking gift exchange.

Overall, the final quarter showcased the chapter's continued commitment to connection, inquiry, and care, leaving members energized as they look ahead to the coming year.



*Joyous holidays to all and the happiest of New Years from DCC Chapter.*

## Gangwon Chapter

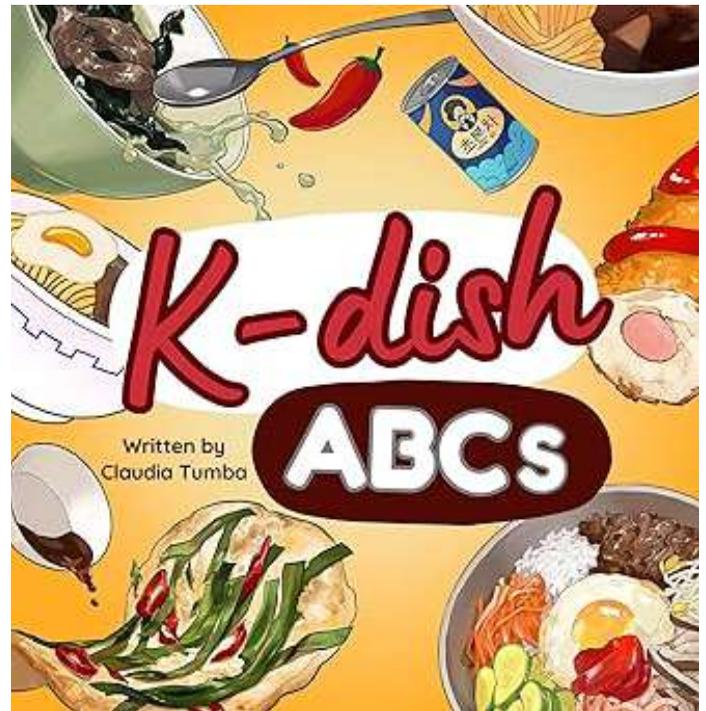
By Michael Free, President

What has Gangwon been up to?

### Recent Meetings

Gangwon was in support mode in the last while, with Michael Free presenting "Agency by Design: Crafting Improved AI Prompts as Scaffolding Partners" at the National Conference in Incheon. He also gave another iteration of that workshop at Dongseo University in Busan and almost did it again at the annual DCC-BG KOTESOL Thanksgiving Symposium (the end of the day had taken its toll on the audience, which does happen). He did manage to give a well-received talk, "Possibilism as a Disposition for Language Educators in the Age of AI." Sticking with AI, and putting into practice what he's learning in the EdD program at Boise State, he also penned a short article on AI classroom-level policy in [The University Grapevine](#).

Member extraordinaire Claudia Tumba has been spreading her love for storytelling both here and abroad: She had a chat with Martin Sketchley on his Sunday Social, which you can see [here](#). She also gave a webinar for the British Council, "How Storytelling Transforms Learning," which, luckily for us, was [recorded](#). If you're a young learner educator, or have a YL in your life, you can also check out her book! It's available internationally on [Amazon](#), and if you're in Korea, you can get in touch with her via the Gangwon Chapter: [gangwon@koreatesol.org](mailto:gangwon@koreatesol.org)



*Claudia Tumba's book "K-Dish ABCs: A Fun Way to Learn the ABCs with Korean Food" is available on Amazon.*

Gangwon would also like to welcome its newest member, Maiah Hollander! She's new to Korea but brings considerable knowledge and experience with her!

Last but not least: We'll be having the inimitable Kara Waggoner back via Zoom on January 24 to talk about Google Docs and getting organized!



## Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter

By Maria Lisak, President

### Recent Chapter Events

This autumn, the Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter gathered educators across settings for hands-on workshops, reflective dialogue, and shared meals, blending professional development with care-centered community building.

### Halloween Dinner Gathering

Date: October 31, 2025

Format & Location: Informal social gathering, The Alleyway (chapter discount partner).

A low-pressure dinner meetup designed to sustain connection during a lighter programming month and welcome prospective members through social engagement.

### Games, Clubs, & Creativity in Language Learning

Date: November 8, 2025

Format & Location: In-person workshop and panel, GNUE English Café

This interactive event explored gamification, creativity, and multilingual learning practices. Ingrid Zwaal demonstrated classroom adaptations of the Go Fish card game, while a panel moderated by Maria Lisak – with Jocelyn Pages and Jocelyn Wright – shared strategies for language clubs, exchanges, and community-based learning. Nearly all attendees joined a post-event dinner, extending the conversation informally.



November Dinner at Mario Chef.



Presenters Anjee DiSanto and Kyeong-a Lee.

### Year-End Workshops & Chapter Elections

Date: December 13, 2025

Format & Location: In-person workshops, GNUE  
Two creative, hands-on workshops closed the year: "Creative Writing Using Songs and Children's Literature" (Anjee DiSanto) and "Hangul Calligraphy for Seasonal Cards" (Kyeong-a Lee). The chapter also held annual elections (Jocelyn Pages, elections officer), with the current leadership team re-elected.



Thank you to Jocelyn Wright for reminding us to take a group photo in December.

### Upcoming Chapter Events

Format & Locations: In-person and online across Gwangju and Jeollanamdo

In 2026, the chapter aims to revive a vibrant monthly rhythm while keeping events human-centered and sustainable. Planned activities include online workshops, coffee connections, double workshops in community spaces, a May 18 Archives meet-up, and a Jeollanamdo

summer coffee tour (Damyang, Yeosu, Suncheon, Mokpo, Boseong – based on interest). Core themes will include Holistic Student Development and Innovative Pedagogies for Changing Classrooms. To support expanded 2026 programming, the chapter is seeking members interested in short- or long-term service, including two proposed roles: membership coordinator and HAN writer (chapter correspondent.)

### Chapter Highlights

This fall, the chapter continued to experiment with creative and inclusive programming, blending workshops, swapshops, panels, and shared meals in ways that supported both professional learning and a sense of belonging. Accessibility remained an active value rather than an abstract goal; in December, the chapter underwrote childcare for participants, making it possible for parents to attend while keeping the focus on adult-centered professional development. Across events, there was growing interest in multilingual practices, community-based learning, and well-being-centered pedagogy, reflecting members' evolving classroom realities. These efforts were sustained by the generosity of the community itself, with members consistently contributing donations, snacks, and care that made each gathering feel welcoming and shared.

### Closing Notes

Thank you to our presenters, volunteers, donors, and steady core of members who continue to show up with curiosity, generosity, and care. Whether you joined us once this year or every month, you are part of this community. We warmly invite educators across the region to connect with us in 2026 as we continue exploring creative, humane, and responsive language education – together.



## Gyeonggi Chapter

By **André Jacobs**, President

GYOKO has concluded elections for the executive council of 2026. The new executive members are as follows:

- Kristina Kauss - President
- Christina Tsoy - First Vice-President
- Joseph Van Dorn - Second Vice-President
- Rhett Burton - Secretary
- David Kim - Treasurer
- James Rush - Membership Coordinator
- Martin Todd - Graduate Student Representative
- Nick Nee - Undergraduate Student Representative
- Greg Lewis - Member-at-Large
- Andre' Jacobs - Immediate Past President

For more information on our new executive council, please follow the link: [GYOKO Executive](#).

We would like to thank our 2025 executive council for their hard work, and we are looking forward to a great year in 2026 and some fundamental changes in how our chapter operates.



*November in Suwon: Coffee in hand and a meet-up well done.*

GYOKO had a number of events in the last quarter of 2025. In October, a couple of our chapter members presented at the SUNY National KOTESOL Conference, and shortly after, we had an online debrief to share what we

learnt. In November, we had a coffee meet-up in Suwon, and in December we held our first Christmas potluck party.

The GYOKO Podcast has also been busy. We had interviews with Colleen Chapco and George Balareza as well as a more philosophically oriented panel discussion on “The Nature of the Self.” To share in the fruits of our labor, please visit our YouTube channel by clicking on the link: [GYOKO YouTube](#).



*In December, GYOKO rang in the season with our very first Christmas potluck.*

In a first for GYOKO, we signed an MOU with the Teachers’ Training Institute of Agama Islam Miftahul Ulum Tanjungpinang, Indonesia. James Rush made this initiative possible, and we are looking forward to collaborating with the college via the Gyeonggi KOTESOL Training initiative.

GYOKO has also established a local special interest group focused on business owners, appropriately called BOSS. We had our inaugural meeting on December 13, and we are planning an in-person brainstorming meeting in January. To learn more about the initiative, visit us here: [GYOKO BOSS](#).

All in all, 2025 has been a productive year for GYOKO, and we are looking forward to growing.

## Incheon Chapter

**By Victor Reeser, President**

The Incheon Chapter closed out the year with a relaxed December coffee hangout event, bringing together a small but engaged group of members. While attendance was limited, the conversation was lively with members discussing personal and professional goals for the year ahead.

The chapter is currently in the process of holding elections as we prepare for leadership transitions and the next phase of chapter activities. We appreciate the continued involvement and interest of members during this period and look forward to welcoming new officers soon. As we move into the spring semester, the Incheon Chapter is excited about what lies ahead. With the renewed energy coming off a well-deserved winter holiday, we look forward to an active and engaging spring filled with opportunities for connection and professional growth.

## Jeonju-North Jeolla Chapter

**By Ingrid Zwaal, Treasurer**

In October, we had no workshop in Jeonju because the National Conference was being held, but that does not mean our members were taking a break. Natalie Thibault presented at the National Conference on ten questions to ask yourself before doing a postgraduate degree. Lisa’s daughter, Heidi, has been hired as KOTESOL’s new bookkeeper and will be helping the national treasurer.

In November, Ingrid Zwaal presented on using Go Fish to practice English for the Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL monthly workshop, and at the ABM, our president, Lisa MacIntyre-Park, deservedly was awarded a KOTESOL Outstanding Service Award. We had our second workshop of the fall on November 1 at Jeonbuk University. Courtney McLaren introduced us to K-pop fandom in the classroom. People who share

fandom of any sort can also share lived experiences, age, nationality, gender, and ethnicity, among others. The audience was invested intellectually and emotionally. Others can share comfort, enjoyment, community, identity, and positive experiences. Why does this matter in the English classroom? It provides a unique opportunity for high engagement and motivation to encourage English conversation. Our second presenter of the day was Andrew McNulty, who spoke on using visuals as language bridges. Visuals help with memory retention, fill language gaps, and encourage critical thinking. Motivation, engagement, and creativity spark joy and interest. He explained that he used Canva to create the wonderful visuals that he shared with us. In addition, visuals can be personalized or Koreanized with things like banana milk or ramyeon to boost student interest.



*A fun and informative November workshop.*

For our December 6 meeting, we had one presenter and chapter elections. Our presenter was Lim JeongEun from Jeonbuk National University. Her presentation was on innovating EFL education in the age of AI. She explained how platforms like Speak, Plant, and Pengtalk increase speaking opportunities and personalized learning. These, in turn, help with attitudes and confidence, and appeal to learners' interests, which of course fuels motivation. After the break we had elections. Lisa MacIntyre-Park is returning as president, Suhhee Kang as vice-

president, Ingrid Zwaal as treasurer, Natalie Thibault as secretary, Daisy Lee as promotion coordinator, and HyunHwa Choi as member-at-large. In January and February, our executive officers will be meeting to plan for the rest of the year, and we will have workshops again beginning in March.



*Warm winter well wishes from the JNJ chapter!*

## Seoul Chapter

**By Christopher Miller, President**

On October 8, we held an online event facilitated by Pariwat Imsa-ard, who is based in Thailand. The event was entitled "Think Before Ink: Practical Strategies for Metacognitive Reading and Writing." The event was set up in large part by Meerbek Kudaibergenov.



*We hit the trails at Inwangsan, led by President Christopher Miller and Vice President Melvin Dixon.*

On October 25, Seoul KOTESOL held a hike at Ingwangsan, jointly hosted by President Christopher Miller and Vice President Melvin Dixon.

On November 22, near City Hall, Seoul KOTESOL held a face-to-face event with two sessions: Bilal Qureshi presented his experiences related to obtaining a DELTA, and Corrine T. Spencer facilitated a session on using ethnography to raise awareness and foster more equitable practices in the classroom.



*Our November 22 City Hall event featured sessions by Bilal Qureshi and Corrine T. Spencer.*

On December 20, Seoul KOTESOL held our annual end-of-year dinner. We would like to give a special shout out to Melvin Dixon for helping to secure the venue.



*Wrapping up the year in style: Seoul KOTESOL's annual end-of-year dinner on December 20.*

## Chapter Elections

The results for the Seoul KOTESOL 2025 elections are as follows:

- President: Christopher Miller
- Vice-President: Melvin Dixon
- 2nd Vice-President: Julie Ha
- Membership Officer: Meerbek Kudaibergenov
- Social Media Officer: Rhea Metituk
- Webmaster: Ryan McCurdy
- Treasurer: David Bae

Seoul KOTESOL would like to extend our thanks to Heidi Nam for supervising our elections.

Seoul KOTESOL is exploring opportunities for holding a symposium in mid to late March. Details will be made available on our social media pages (Kakao and Facebook) as well as at [koreatesol.org](http://koreatesol.org).

## The 33<sup>rd</sup> Korea TESOL International Conference

### Criticality, Innovation, and Compassion

JOIN THE KOTESOL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
VETTING TEAM

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

We have received many great proposals for KOTESOL 2026, but we need vetters to help us review them!

- Training provided (through January)
- Experienced and helpful leads
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by 9 JANUARY 2026

# Special Interest Group News

## Christian Teachers SIG

**By Heidi Vande Voort Nam, Facilitator**

On the first of October, the Christian Teachers SIG continued its discussion of the book *On Christian Teaching*, focusing on Chapter 8, which described how a class of German language students applied the communal reading practices that are outlined in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life Together*.

During our next book club meeting on November 12, we focused on the effects of physical arrangements of a classroom on learning, and we discussed the tension between pressure to "cover" a certain breadth of material and students' need for more in-depth learning. Several members of the CT SIG had the opportunity to meet David Smith, the author of *On Christian Teaching*, when he visited Korea later that month. A few of us caught his lectures at Suwon Christian Academy or Chongshin University, and James Rush and Megan Beard participated in the INCHE conference at Handong University, where Smith gave the plenary lecture.

We compared notes from the November lectures at our regular book club meeting on December 10, where we also discussed Chapter 10 of *On Christian Teaching*, touching on the importance of building community.

Our next CT SIG Book Club meeting will be on January 22. As we approach the end of *On Christian Teaching*, we are considering what to do next as a SIG. We've raised the possibility of discussing a different book, such as Bonhoeffer's *Life Together* or Smith's *Everyday Christian Teaching*.



## Multimedia and CALL SIG

**By Victor Reeser, Facilitator**

The Multimedia and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (MCALL) SIG is currently looking for a new facilitator. This role presents an exciting opportunity for a member interested in educational technology, professional community-building, and digital pedagogy.

The MCALL SIG facilitator plays a key role in supporting the group's activities by hosting and organizing webinars, moderating discussions and shared resources on the MCALL Facebook group, and helping promote *Tech Briefs*, the SIG's online publication hosted on the KOTESOL website. The position offers a chance to shape conversations around technology-enhanced language learning and to connect with educators who are actively experimenting with tools, platforms, and emerging practices.

Interested members are encouraged to consider stepping into this role. Further details and transition support will be provided to ensure a smooth handover. If you're interested in getting involved or would like more information, please reach out to the MCALL SIG leadership.

## Research SIG

**By Meerbek Kudaibergenov, Facilitator**

Join the KOTESOL Research Special Interest Group (Research SIG)! The Research SIG is a vibrant professional community for educators and researchers interested in advancing English language teaching through systematic inquiry. It offers a supportive space where members can engage with research across diverse contexts, share ongoing and completed studies, and develop their research knowledge and skills. Through conference sessions, workshops, publications, and collaborative projects, the

Research SIG seeks to bridge theory and practice, foster critical dialogue, and promote ethical, context-sensitive research that responds to the needs of language teachers and learners in Korea and beyond. Be sure to keep an eye on the KOTESOL website and mailing lists for exciting events and opportunities the SIG has offer!

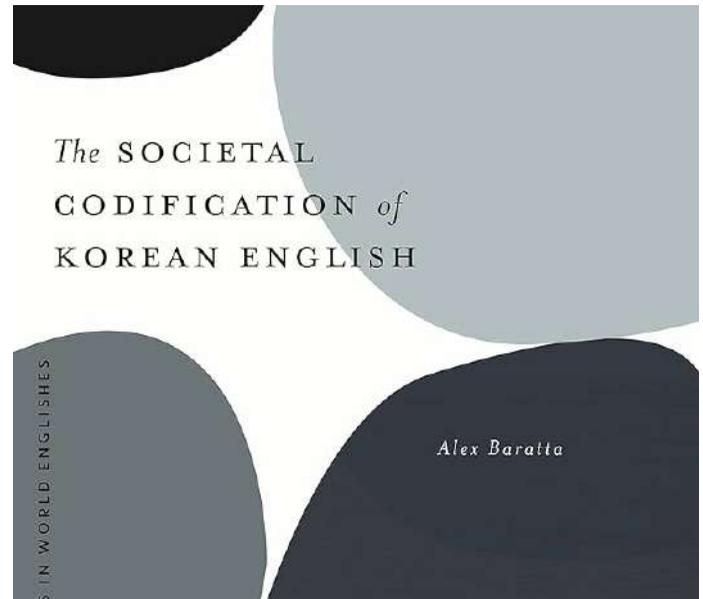
## Social Justice SIG

By **Jocelyn Wright**, De Facto Facilitator

In the final quarter of the year, the main activity of the KOTESOL Social Justice (Critical Educators in Korea) Special Interest Group (SJ-SIG) was to complete the book review that members of the SJ book club started in the summer related to *The Societal Codification of Korean English* (Baratta, 2022, Bloomsbury) and engage in shoot-off activities. Robert Dickey successfully delivered his presentation entitled “Korean Researchers Defining ‘Konglish’ – Not Just Errors” at the 2025 KOTESOL National Conference in October and gave another presentation on World Englishes at a conference for area teachers at Nusa Cendana University (Indonesia) on the 15th of November via Zoom. Jocelyn Wright is preparing to open an undergraduate course, which she labeled “Understanding K-English” (K-영어의 이해), choosing the empowering K-form the reviewers came up with in their discussions. Additionally, to continue their learning, to share what they have discovered about Korean English and to engage in dialogue with conference participants, the three book club participants are planning to submit a proposal to the KOTESOL International Conference in May. The SIG is also open to discussions on the next book and invites all those with ideas to share them through our Facebook discussion page or via email (see below).

In line with KOTESOL’s motto of “Teachers Helping Teachers,” various types of events and resources related to diverse social justice topics were shared with SIG members through their interactive Facebook page over the past few months. Events shared include a free, two-week online British Council conference called ASEAN

Teaching English Online Conference 2025, a one-off TESOL Webinar organized by the Bilingual-Multilingual Education Interest Section titled “Multilingual and Multimodal Counter Storytelling as Anti-Racist Pedagogy,” and a British Council webinar series pertaining to accessibility in language assessment, which spanned policy to practice.



The resources included an article co-published by a long-time SIG facilitator, Jocelyn Wright, and George M. Jacobs, titled *Leveling the Playing Field: Artificial Scarcity in Language Education and Strategies to Resist or Overcome It*, a new, Multilingual Matters book featuring meaningful narratives, *Untold Autoethnographic Stories of (In)Justice, Teaching, and Scholarship*, and a British Council lesson plan aimed at the prevention of violence and bullying, including cyberbullying, targeting secondary school learners.

Also, from a more sociological perspective, a *Korea Herald* article reporting on the inclusion of same-sex couples identifying as spouses in the national census, which questioned the extent of progress, was shared along with another announcing that Korea would be revising depictions of Africa and Africans in textbooks in a culturally sensitive direction.

Finally, there was some discussion about the possibility and viability of non-hierarchical or

leaderless SIGs, a reflection of this SIG's reality over the past few years and the issue of coexistence within an organization that sometimes operates quite vertically. Drawing on Hilary Janks' idea of working within and against system, Maria Lisak, a former facilitator, asked a very pertinent question: "Why must the Social Justice SIG – whose mission is dialogue, solidarity, and critical inquiry – operate not only within KOTESOL structures but also against them?" She goes on to remark that "if anything, the longevity and consistency of this SIG show[s] that horizontal, emergent leadership works. The community has thrived precisely because it has operated relationally, with shared labor and distributed stewardship." As we approach the end of 2025, we celebrate 10 years as a SIG working to promote nonviolent justice through alternative ways of thinking and operating. Hopefully, we will be able to survive, and ideally flourish, another 10 years and continue to contribute to KOTESOL in unique ways!

To this end, we always welcome new energy and help! If you are a KOTESOL member looking to get involved in this SIG, both on- and offline, and you would be willing to help us (co-)facilitate, please get in touch via our [KOTESOL Social Justice SIG](#) webpage, [email](#), or Social Justice (Critical Educators in Korea) SIG [Facebook group](#).

## Well-Being and PD SIG

**By Gabriela Villafradez**, Facilitator

This quarter, we decided to take all our events outside. We wanted to enjoy our time in nature and grow our muscles whilst spending time as a community.

### Literature in Motion (October)

In October, we hosted a walking book club that combined light exercise, fresh air, and shared reading. We met at Changwon Bus Terminal nice and early, and walked together through Dogye-dong while individually listening to the audiobook of *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho.

After the walk, we traveled by bus to Junam Reservoir, where we shared lunch at a popular fresh potato ongsimi sujebi restaurant, and discussed key themes from the book. We were so involved in the story and the moment that we forgot to take pictures of the walk, the food, and us.

### Palyongsan Hike (December)

We closed 2025 with a group hike up Palyongsan in Changwon, offering our members an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors together in a relaxed and accessible setting. We met at Changwon Bus Terminal in the morning (again) before traveling to the trailhead as a group.



*Closing out 2025 on the trail: a joyful group hike up Palyongsan in Changwon, bringing together fresh air, exercise, and community.*

The hike itself was relatively easy and suitable for a wide range of fitness levels, with clear paths and a steady pace. After completing the hike, we gathered for lunch at the local traditional market for authentic Thai food, providing time to rest, socialize, and continue conversations in a relaxed setting. The event struck a good balance between physical activity and social connection and was appreciated as a simple, enjoyable way to spend time together outside the classroom.

# Committee News

## International Conference 2026

By **Meerbek Kudaibergenov**, Chair

In times of rapid technological change, shifting geopolitical realities, and increasingly diverse learner needs, how can English language education respond with both insight and heart? As conference committee chair, I am particularly excited to welcome educators, researchers, and practitioners to the 2026 KOTESOL International Conference, where we will come together to explore this question through the interconnected lenses of criticality, innovation, and compassion. Looking ahead, the conference promises to be a vibrant, reflective, and forward-thinking space for reimagining language teaching and learning as an ethical and transformative endeavor.

The 2026 conference theme invites participants to engage deeply with the challenges and possibilities facing English language education today. “Criticality” encourages us to question long-standing assumptions, confront inequities, and reflect on the sociopolitical dimensions of our work, from classroom interaction and curriculum design to institutional practices and global ELT discourses. “Innovation” calls for creative exploration of new pedagogies, technologies, and frameworks that can respond effectively to emerging educational realities. At the same time, “compassion” reminds us that meaningful teaching is grounded in human connection, empathy, and care, affirming learners’ and teachers’ diverse identities, experiences, and aspirations.

Preparations for the academic program are moving steadily forward, with an exciting lineup of speakers who will anchor and enrich these conversations. We are delighted to welcome two distinguished plenary speakers: Thomas Farrell (Brock University, Canada), whose pioneering work on reflective practice continues to shape language teacher education worldwide, and

Nathanael Rudolph (Kindai University, Japan), whose research on language, identity, and equity in global Englishes challenges educators to rethink their roles in multilingual and transnational contexts.

The conference will also feature an outstanding group of featured speakers, including Hyun-Sook Kang (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA), Kilryoung Lee (Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Korea), Ju Seong Lee (Education University of Hong Kong), Michael Rabbidge (University of Waikato, New Zealand), Kyungja Ahn (Seoul National University of Education, Korea), and David D. Perrodin (Mahidol University, Thailand). Their diverse expertise – spanning language education, migration, identity, technology-enhanced learning, teacher cognition, professional development, and critical pedagogies – will offer participants rich opportunities for learning, dialogue, and inspiration.

Interest in the conference continues to grow, and we are anticipating a very strong response to the call for proposals. To date, we have already received over 220 submissions from educators and researchers across Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Vietnam, Nepal, Canada, and many other contexts, with more expected as the deadline approaches. The vetting process is scheduled to begin after the regular submission deadline on January 31, 2026, and it will be quite selective given the high volume and quality of anticipated proposals. The program team is preparing carefully for this stage, ensuring a fair, rigorous, and transparent review process while maintaining clear and supportive communication with submitters.

Looking ahead, January will mark a major push in conference promotion. The conference team has developed exciting promotional materials that will be shared widely across KOTESOL’s social media platforms, helping to build

momentum and reach an even broader international audience. In addition, we are actively recruiting volunteers to support the conference. Volunteering offers a wonderful opportunity to gain hands-on experience, being fully to a major international event within the ELT community! If you are interested in volunteering, do not miss this exciting opportunity to be part of our team!

As plans continue to build professional networks, and contribute meaningfully, the International Conference Committee is also looking forward to the March gathering of directors, which will provide a valuable space for debriefing, coordination, and informal exchange. With strong collaboration, shared enthusiasm, and a clear vision for what lies ahead, the 2026 KOTESOL International Conference is well on its way to becoming an engaging, inclusive, and inspiring event for our TESOL community.

#KOTESOL2026

## The 33<sup>rd</sup> Korea TESOL International Conference

### Criticality, Innovation, and Compassion

#### Rethinking Language Education in Times of Change

In these times of uncertainty, how can we, as language professionals, respond with insight, imagination, and heart?

Join us for:

- Critical Conversations
- Innovative Pedagogies
- Compassionate Teaching



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 #KOTESOL2026

May 16–17, 2026

Sookmyung Women's University  
 Seoul, South Korea

## International Outreach Committee

**By Victor Reeser, Chair**

The International Outreach Committee (IOC) has concluded a strong year of international engagement supporting KOTESOL's presence at conferences across Asia and continuing to build relationships with long-standing partner organizations.

In the latter half of 2025, KOTESOL representatives participated in several key regional events, including the ELTAM International Conference, the JALT International Conference, the ETA-ROC International Symposium, and the PALT & PAC Conference. These engagements provided valuable opportunities to promote KOTESOL, exchange ideas with regional partners, and reinforce collaborative ties within the Asia-Pacific ELT community.

Planning is already underway for 2026, with confirmed representation at early-year events such as CamTESOL 2026, and additional conferences currently being scheduled. The IOC will continue coordinating representation across a wide range of partner conferences throughout the year.

Looking ahead, the committee will actively recruit new representatives for upcoming 2026 events, including conferences in Taiwan, Japan, and other parts of Asia. Members interested in international outreach are encouraged to follow IOC announcements and consider applying.

## Membership Committee

**By Dr. Lindsay Herron, Chair**

The KOTESOL Membership Committee continues to send out our monthly email newsletter (KOTESOL News) to nearly 2,000 recipients. We also hosted a table featuring free promotional materials and our popular branded merchandise at the KOTESOL National

Conference in October. Membership perks in the coming months include a limited number of discounts available for the TESOL 2026 International Convention and Expo (March 24–27, 2026, in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA). And of course, don't miss out on the other perks of membership, including discounts on KOTESOL regional conferences and symposia throughout the country, iTDi self-study courses, and IATEFL membership. KOTESOL's conference grants, travel grants, and research grants also welcome applications from members this spring.



Membership table at the 2025 KOTESOL National Conference.

## Nominations and Elections Committee

By Dr. David Shaffer, Chair

National elections are held every autumn. Results of our most recent elections were announced at the November 1 Annual Business Meeting. The officers elected were as follows:

- President: Dr. Lindsay Herron
- First Vice-President: Mike Peacock
- Second Vice-President: Gabriela Villafradez
- Secretary: Heidi Vande Voort Nam

There were no nominations for the positions of International Conference Committee co-chair, Nominations and Elections Committee chair, and

treasurer. However, at the December National Council meeting, the council approved Gabriela Villafradez as ICC co-chair and Dr. David Shaffer as N&E Committee chair, following guidelines set forth in the bylaws. The position of national treasurer is still vacant; if any member has interest in the position, you can contact our committee at [elections@koreatesol.org](mailto:elections@koreatesol.org).

It is now 2026, a new year, and a time for making resolutions and plans for the cycle. It is not too early to think about running for a national office this fall. Similar to this past year, the committee will be surveying member interest in the elected offices throughout the summer, the formal nomination and document submission period will be in September, and online elections will be held over a two-week interval in October, with election results announced at the November 1 Annual Business Meeting. How do you plan to contribute to KOTESOL?

### 5 REASONS TO JOIN KOTESOL TODAY

**#5: A voice in the organization**

Only members can run for office, participate on national committees, and vote in KOTESOL elections!

**#4: Special discounts**

Members get a variety of discounts, including on online courses at Bridge TEFL and iTDi, IATEFL membership, subscriptions to various ELT-resource providers, tickets to partner organizations' conferences, and more!

**#3: Exclusive opportunities**

Publish in KOTESOL publications; represent us at events; apply for grants and awards; attend members-only events; earn co-branded credentials; connect with other members; and more!

**#2: KOTESOL publications**

Members receive immediate online access to all our publications, including The English Connection and the Korea TESOL Journal! Printed copies available on request.

**#1: KOTESOL needs you!**

KOTESOL is an all-volunteer organization funded largely by membership dues. Join or renew your membership today to help us continue offering outstanding programming and opportunities!

JOIN OR RENEW TODAY!

## Publications Committee

By Dr. David Shaffer, Chair

Due to the number of publications that the Publications Committee is in charge of producing, there are always several issues that are in some stage of the production process. As you can see, production of this Winter issue of Korea TESOL Happenings and News (HAN) is now complete, and the planning for the Spring issue will soon begin.

December 1 saw the publication of the Winter issue of our other quarterly publication, *The English Connection* (TEC). It contains six ELT articles and three regular columns in addition to the Editorial and the President's Message. Planning is also underway for the Spring issue of TEC. This is the annual International Conference edition and will be carrying articles by and interviews of our invited speakers to the upcoming conference, as well as other conference information. Look for it on March 1.



Much work is ongoing with KOTESOL Proceedings 2025. Due to the quantity of submissions this year, we will be publishing the proceedings in two volumes. Volume 1 will contain papers by our invited speakers to last spring's international conference (7 papers) and research papers by concurrent session presenters (28); Volume 2 will contain reports on workshop presentations, panel discussions, approaches and techniques, a couple pecha kucha, and a roundtable discussion (24 articles). That will make a total of 59 articles arising from our IC presentations – the most ever!

All of the Proceedings papers have now been copyedited. Those for Volume 1 have been finalized with their authors and are now undergoing layout; Volume 2 articles are still in the finalization process, but we hope to see both volumes published before the spring thaw. Similarly, the *Korea TESOL Journal* (KTJ) is in the production process. KTJ 21-2 is undergoing pre-layout copy-editing on its planned ten research papers and two book reviews. A similar number of papers are planned for KTJ 22-1, for which many of the articles are at some stage in the editing/revision process. We expect KTJ 21-2 to be out before the last snowflakes melt.

We are also considering publication of a proceedings for the 2025 National Conference. We are still accepting several promised papers. If those papers do come in, we should have enough papers to produce a small National Conference Proceedings 2025.

And let's not forget about Scribes Square – it is continually operational on our website. If you have something to say related to ELT in any way, write it up today, and submit it online you may! Scribes Square has an archive of interesting articles to read during your winter break. The same is true of TEC, KTJ, and Proceedings. They have ELT articles literally going back decades, and many of them are still quite relevant. Many of the columns of the less recent TECs have also been collected into PDF compilations, such as Reflective Practice, Professional Development, Techniques, Young Learners, Training Notes, Grammar Glamour, and many more. Check them out also. You'll be glad you did!



## Research Committee

**By Dr. Ian Moodie, Chair**

The KOTESOL Research Committee invites all members to submit proposals for a research grant. The committee will award up to two research grants, one for 250,000 KRW and another for up to 750,000 KRW, depending on the merits. The smaller grant is suitable for action research or smaller projects, whereas the larger grant is only available for original research projects. Application deadline: March 31st, 2026. For more information on KOTESOL's research grant program, please check [here](#).

# National News

## National Conference Review

By **Victor Reeser**, Conference Chair

The 2025 KOTESOL National Conference, held on October 18, 2025, was a resounding success and a proud moment for our community. Hosted at SUNY Korea in Songdo and organized by the Incheon Chapter, the conference brought together educators from across Korea and around the world for a full day of professional exchange, reflection, and inspiration.

Centered on the theme “Transforming Voices: Inspiring Identity and Agency,” the conference delivered both depth and diversity. A total of 102 attendees participated in 43 sessions led by 42 presenters and representing seven countries: Korea, Japan, China, the UK, the USA, New Zealand, and South Africa. This wide international representation enriched discussions and highlighted the truly global nature of KOTESOL’s professional network.

A major highlight of the day was the plenary session by Dr. David Tizzard, whose talk offered a thoughtful and engaging exploration of identity and agency within the Korean context. His session resonated strongly with the conference theme and set the tone for a day of reflective, meaningful dialogue.

The event also stood out for its exceptional organization and support. More than 60 volunteers, including 55 SUNY Korea student volunteers, contributed their time and energy, ensuring smooth room transitions, reliable technical support, and a welcoming atmosphere throughout the day. Attendees benefited from clear signage, efficient scheduling, and easy navigation of the venue.

Above all, the 2025 National Conference demonstrated the strength of KOTESOL’s community: engaged presenters, active

participants, dedicated volunteers, and supportive institutional partners all working together to create a memorable and impactful event. It was a celebration not only of professional development but of the shared commitment that continues to move KOTESOL forward.

## Annual Business Meeting

By **Heidi Vande Voort Nam**, Secretary

The KOTESOL Annual Business Meeting was held via Zoom on November 1. Our outgoing treasurer, Jocelyn Wright, offered a financial report, and David Shaffer announced the results of the national elections. Returning to elected positions this year are Lindsay Herron as president, Mike Peacock as first vice-president, and Heidi Nam as secretary. Gabriela Villafradez joins the team as second vice-president, with the positions of treasurer, Nominations and Elections Committee chair, and International Conference Committee co-chair remaining vacant. We looked back at the highlights of a successful year, including the well-attended International Conference and the National Conference, hosted by the Incheon Chapter.

### Appointments of Committee Chairs

Directly following the ABM, the National Council met to appoint the following committee chairs: Melvin Dixon (Diversity Committee), J. Tom Wyatt (Financial Affairs Committee), Victor Reeser (International Outreach Committee), Lindsay Herron (Membership Committee), David Shaffer (Publications Committee), Lisa MacIntyre-Park (Publicity Committee), Ian Moodie (Research Committee) and John Phillips (Technologies Committee).



## National Council Meeting

By Heidi Vande Voort Nam, Secretary

On December 7, the National Council held its annual budget meeting to approve next year's budget. The 2026 budget is largely unchanged from the previous year, but we are saving money by making the *Korea TESOL Journal* (KTJ) a digital publication only. To reflect the need for promotional materials and rising costs, we raised the allocations for event publicity, banners, hospitality, and web hosting. In addition to the budget discussion, the National Council made several other important decisions. The Daegu-Gyeongbuk Chapter and the Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter will be merged into a single chapter, which will be called the Busan-Gyeongsang-Daegu (BGD) Chapter. The council reappointed David Shaffer as Nominations and Elections Committee chair and confirmed Gabriela Villafradez in the role of International Conference Committee co-chair. The council also approved the recommendations by the SIG ad hoc committee, which clarify procedures for establishing, maintaining, and deactivating SIGs. The name of the Classroom Management SIG was updated to Classroom Practices SIG. Overall, the meeting helped the organization prepare for the coming year.

## President's Corner

By Dr. Lindsay Herron, President

This past year has been a very busy and successful one! The 32nd Korea TESOL International Conference saw an increase in participation numbers and also turned a small profit, moving us more toward our pre-COVID numbers. The 2025 KOTESOL National Conference hosted by the Incheon Chapter in October was also a huge success, boasting more than a hundred attendees and over forty sessions throughout the day. KOTESOL Connections Day and the Chapter Leaders Retreat back in March were both well-received and inspiring, while The Social @KOTESOL2025

enticed around 100 people for an evening of food, friends, and fun. Our publications are now more eco-friendly and economical than ever, with all but *The English Connection* shifting to a digital format only. Our domestic and international relationships are thriving, as well, as standout KOTESOL members and leaders have consistently represented our organization proudly at partner conferences, and new partnerships have been forged. In the past twelve months, I personally attended the 2025 NELTA International Conference (Nepal), the 2025 ELTAM International Conference (Mongolia), and the 2025 ETA-ROC International Conference (Taiwan), and all three beautifully demonstrated the dedication and energy of our sibling associations.



Lindsay with partner representatives from PALT and ThaiTESOL at the 2025 ETA-ROC International Conference.

The year also saw new initiatives at both the national and chapter levels. Multiple chapters embraced innovative opportunities to serve their members' needs and enhance awareness of their offerings; several special interest groups (SIGs), including our new Well-Being SIG, coordinated creative options for participants; and KOTESOL expanded our connections to the local community by cultivating new domestic partnerships and creating the Marketplace @KOTESOL, a space at conferences for artisans and micro-businesses to share their crafts and other products with participants. Kudos and congratulations to everyone thinking outside the box to help ensure our organization

stays relevant and continues to serve the ever-evolving needs of educators!



*Lindsay at the KOTESOL table at the 2025 ELTAM Conference in Mongolia.*

Looking forward to 2026, I'm already excited about our spring offerings. We have KOTESOL Connections Day and the Chapter Leaders Retreat on March 14 and 15, respectively, providing members with a wonderful opportunity to share insights, brainstorm new ideas, and explore how we all can step up our volunteerism in the coming months. Also in March, presenter registration for the 33rd Korea TESOL International Conference will begin, with regular attendee pre-registration opening April 1. Note, too, that we have some key deadlines approaching quickly; applications are now being accepted for research grants, certain travel and conference grants, and our presenter travel grant (supporting travel expenses to our own international conference). Equally pressing, though, is our need for a national treasurer. Details are available online; please consider applying!

I look forward to seeing all of you in 2026. In the meantime, I hope you have a relaxing, rejuvenating winter break!



## Upcoming KOTESOL Events

Looking for ways to engage with KOTESOL in the new year? Check out these upcoming events! More information can be found on the [Events page of the KOTESOL website](#).

### January

- An Evening with Stellar Artist Claudia Tumba
- Navigating Google Drive with Kara Waggoner
- Frozen Trivia Night (Zoom)

### February

- Valentines Day Jazz Bar Event
- Towards Meaningful Student-Faculty Interactions in Higher Education with Natalie Thibault

### March

- KOTESOL Connections Day
- Chapter Leaders Retreat 2026
- Starting a Business in Korea with Ina Udonava

### April

- Cherry Blossom Viewing and Hanbok Experience
- Emotional Social Intelligence with Dr. Milan Devi LaBrey

### May

- [KOTESOL 2026 International Conference](#)

## New Lifetime Members

### New Lifetime Members

KOTESOL is delighted to welcome the following new lifetime members this quarter:

- Lisa MacIntyre-Park (Jeonju-North Jeolla)
- Rhea Metituk (Seoul)
- David D. Perrodin (International)

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!

## 2025 KOTESOL SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

# Congratulations

### Meritous Service Award

Dr. John Baker  
Rhett Burton  
Wesley Martin  
Rhea Metituk  
Heidi Nam  
Mike Peacock  
John Phillips  
Jocelyn Wright

### President's Award

Dr. David E. Shaffer

### Outstanding Service Award

Robert J. Dickey  
Dr. Kara MacDonald  
Lisa MacIntyre Park  
Victor Reeser  
Dr. Andrew White

### "Stepping Up" Award

Dr. Meerbek Kudaibergenov  
Gabriela Villafradez

### Recognition for Service

- Robert J. Dickey, Sponsorship Committee Chair
- Melvin Dixon, Diversity Committee Chair
- Michael Free, Gangwon Chapter President
- Bryan Hale, Immediate Past President
- Virginia Hanslien, Christian Teachers SIG Co-Facilitator
- André Jacobs, Young Learners & Teens SIG Facilitator, Gyeonggi Chapter President
- James Kimball, Classroom Management SIG Facilitator, Reflective Practice SIG Facilitator, Daegu-Gyeongbuk Chapter President
- Dr. Meerbek Kudaibergenov, International Conference Committee Co-Chair
- Dr. Maria Lisak, Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter President
- Dr. Kara Mac Donald, *Korea TESOL Journal* Editor-in-Chief
- Lisa MacIntyre-Park, Publicity Committee Chair, Jeonju-North Jeolla Chapter President
- Wesley Martin, 2nd Vice-President
- Rhea Metituk, International Conference Committee Chair, Environmental Justice SIG Facilitator
- Chris Miller, Seoul Chapter President
- Dr. Ian Moodie, Research Committee Chair
- Heidi Nam, Secretary, Christian Teachers SIG Co-Facilitator
- Mike Peacock, 1st Vice-President
- John Phillips, Technologies Committee Chair
- Victor Reeser, International Outreach Committee Chair, National Conference Chair, Multimedia & CALL SIG Facilitator, Incheon Chapter President
- Dr. Eric Reynolds, Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter President
- Dr. David E. Shaffer, Nominations & Elections Committee Chair, Publications Committee Chair, KOTESOL Proceedings Editor-in-Chief
- Gabriela Villafradez, Well-Being SIG Facilitator, Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter President
- Dr. Andrew White, *The English Connection* Editor-in-Chief, *Korea TESOL Happenings and News* Editor-in-Chief
- Jocelyn Wright, Treasurer
- J. Tom Wyatt, Financial Affairs Committee Chair