

Report on TESOL Conference 2026 Attendance Funded by Eötvös Loránd University

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This report describes my experience attending the TESOL 2026 International Convention & Expo, held from March 24 to 27, 2026, in Salt Lake City, Utah TESOL. This was a landmark event celebrating 60 years of advancing the field of English language teaching. My participation was made possible through a travel grant generously provided by my university, which covered the cost of my plane ticket and significantly reduced the financial burden of attending such a prestigious international event. Without this vital support, the considerable expense of travel and accommodation would have made attendance extremely difficult, if not impossible.

The TESOL International Convention & Expo brought together thousands of English language teaching professionals from around the world TESOL, offering an exceptional platform for intellectual exchange, professional development, and global networking. The convention featured over 700 engaging sessions, an expansive Expo, and numerous opportunities to connect, learn, and grow TESOL — all centered around the latest research, innovations, and practices in the field of English language teaching.

Receiving this travel grant not only enabled me to attend but also carried a deeper significance: it reflected my university's confidence in my professional development and its commitment to fostering international academic engagement. Being present at such a distinguished gathering allowed me to represent my institution on a global stage, contribute to scholarly conversations, and bring back valuable insights and knowledge that will directly enrich my work and benefit my students and colleagues. This report aims to capture the key experiences, sessions, and takeaways from those four days in Salt Lake City, as well as to demonstrate how the investment made by my university through this grant has yielded meaningful academic and professional returns.

As I mention before, the TESOL Conference brings together English teachers, researchers, and educators from all around the world to share ideas, research, and teaching practices. It is one of the most important events in the field of English language teaching, as it creates a space for professionals to exchange knowledge, discuss challenges, and explore new directions in education. As a PhD student, attending this conference was a valuable opportunity for both my academic and professional development. It allowed me to better understand the current conversations in the field and to see how my own research fits within a broader international context.

I also had the opportunity to present my work at the conference, which was one of the most meaningful parts of the experience. Presenting my research allowed me to share my ideas with an international audience and to receive feedback from other researchers and practitioners. This helped me reflect more critically on my work and consider new perspectives. It also gave me more confidence in my ability to communicate my research and to participate actively in academic discussions. Being part of the conference not only as an attendee but also as a presenter made the experience more engaging and rewarding.

During the TESOL conference, I not only attended as a presenter, but I also gained many insights into what other teachers and researchers are currently doing in their teaching practices and studies. One of the main topics I noticed throughout the conference was the growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) in language teaching. Many presentations focused on how AI tools are being integrated into classrooms, particularly in the teaching of writing, feedback processes, and student engagement. This topic is very relevant to me, both as a PhD student working on my dissertation and as a teacher, since I am currently in charge of a university writing class as a tutor.

It was very interesting to see how professionals from different parts of the world are using AI and rethinking the way academic writing is taught. Some sessions showed how AI can support

students in brainstorming ideas, organizing their writing, and improving their language use. Other sessions raised important questions about the ethical use of AI, including issues related to academic integrity and the role of teachers in guiding students in using these tools responsibly. These discussions helped me develop a more balanced view of AI, not only as a tool, but also as something that requires careful consideration in educational contexts.

These ideas gave me useful insights into how I can use AI tools to support both my own development and my students' learning. As a tutor responsible for a writing class, I found these discussions especially relevant. They helped me think about how I can introduce AI in a way that supports learning rather than replaces it. I also started to reflect on how I can guide my students to use these tools critically and responsibly, helping them develop their own skills while benefiting from technological support.

During my presentation, I also had the opportunity to connect with teachers and researchers who have conducted work in my home country, Ecuador. We had meaningful conversations about the challenges and policies related to English teaching there, especially the need for more support for teachers. These discussions were very important to me because they are closely connected to my dissertation topic, which focuses on self-efficacy and motivation in novice English teachers. Talking to others who understand the context of my country allowed me to see my research from new perspectives and confirmed the importance of my study.

Overall, the conference gave me a broader perspective on teaching English as a second language. I was able to learn not only about the situation in the United States, but also about how English is taught in different parts of the world. I found it especially interesting to observe how teaching practices vary depending on cultural, institutional, and social contexts. I also found it meaningful to see how English teaching is approached within the Latin community in the United

States and how this connects to my own background. This helped me better understand different approaches, challenges, and opportunities in English language teaching globally.

During the conference, I had the opportunity to interact with a wide range of researchers, teachers, and institutions working in similar educational settings. I connected with several professionals whose work relates closely to my own interests, which made our conversations especially meaningful. These interactions allowed me to exchange ideas, learn from others' experiences, and reflect more deeply on my own work.

I also met a classmate from Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), who was also presenting at the conference. Sharing this experience with someone from my own academic environment was very special. Together, we were able to represent our university at an international level, which made me feel proud and connected to my institution. It also showed the presence of our university in an important global event.

In addition, I had the chance to reconnect and exchange ideas with Ecuadorian colleagues, which made the experience feel both professional and personal. Speaking with colleagues from my home country allowed me to reflect more deeply on the educational context in Ecuador and to share experiences and challenges that are specific to our reality. It was comforting to meet people who understand the same struggles we face every day as teachers in Ecuador, such as working with limited resources, reaching students with very different needs, and trying to improve the quality of English teaching in our schools and universities. We shared ideas, talked about what has worked in our classrooms, and encouraged each other in ways that felt very real and meaningful. These conversations reminded me that, even though we work in different cities or institutions, we are all working toward the same goal, and that coming together — even briefly, at an international

conference — can give us the motivation and fresh ideas we need to keep improving our practice back home.

These interactions also opened up new opportunities for collaboration. For example, I connected with colleagues from Guayaquil, another province in my country, who invited me to be part of a thesis revision committee. This is an important professional opportunity that would not have been possible without attending the TESOL conference. It allows me to contribute to academic work in my home country and to stay connected with the research community there.

I also reconnected with a former colleague who invited me to give a talk in his research classes. In addition, I was invited to share information about the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship with students at his university. This is something I find very meaningful, as it allows me to support other students who may be interested in international study opportunities. These experiences show how attending the conference not only benefited me personally but also allowed me to contribute to others.

Overall, these connections were not only meaningful in the moment but also have the potential to support my future academic and professional development. They opened doors for collaboration, teaching opportunities, and further engagement with the academic community.

This event had a strong and meaningful impact on my current research. As I am studying self-efficacy and motivation in novice English teachers, the insights I gained during the conference encouraged me to continue with my work and reminded me of its importance. Listening to different presentations and discussions helped me see how relevant these topics are not only in my own context, but also globally. It made me feel that my research is valuable and connected to a wider academic conversation.

One of the most important things I observed was how other countries support their teachers, not only at the beginning of their careers but throughout their entire professional journey. This made me reflect on the situation in Ecuador and the need for stronger support systems for English teachers. It also helped me think more critically about how my research could contribute to improving these conditions. I began to see my project not only as an academic requirement, but also as something that could have a real impact on teachers' professional lives.

The conference also came at a very important moment in my PhD process. As I am moving into the second phase of my research, which involves data collection after completing my comprehensive exam, this experience provided me with both motivation and practical ideas. Through conversations with colleagues, I was able to explore different ways of approaching data collection and to identify potential participants and contexts. These connections gave me more confidence and a clearer direction for the next steps of my study.

In addition, interacting with other researchers allowed me to receive informal feedback on my ideas, which helped me refine my thinking and improve my research design. It also showed me that collaboration can play a key role in the research process, especially when working across different contexts and countries. The support and openness I found among colleagues is something I truly value and appreciate from this experience.

Finally, being exposed to a wide range of studies and perspectives also inspired me to think about future research possibilities. I discovered new topics and approaches that I had not considered before, particularly related to teacher development, educational support systems, and the use of new tools in education. This experience not only strengthened my current research but also expanded my academic interests and motivated me to continue growing as a researcher in the future.

The grant was used to cover the cost of my plane ticket to attend the TESOL conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. The airfare was extremely expensive, and without this financial support, it would have been very difficult for me to participate in the event. I am truly grateful for the assistance provided, as it made this important academic and professional experience possible for me.

In conclusion, attending the TESOL conference was a highly valuable experience that contributed significantly to my academic, professional, and personal development. It allowed me to present my research, learn from experts in the field, connect with colleagues, and gain new perspectives that will directly support my current and future work. I deeply appreciate the opportunity given to me through this grant, as it not only supported my participation in the conference but also opened new doors for collaboration, research, and growth as an educator and researcher. This experience has strengthened my motivation to continue my PhD journey and to contribute meaningfully to the field of English language teaching in the future.

In the following section you will find pictures of my participation in the conference.



*Figure 1. First day of conference as participant*



*Figure 2. Connecting with my Hungarian classmates who also participated.*



Figure3. Presenting at the Conference





*Figure 4. Connecting with other teachers from Ecuador from different provinces*

