

THE MONTHLY

# NETWORKER

JUNE 2025 | VOL.10



"INSPIRING EXCELLENCE IN EVERY LESSON."



## WORDS FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues:

A few weeks ago, we had the pleasure of hosting the first National Conference of English Language Teachers; a truly successful and enriching event. Educators from across the country came together to share experiences, exchange ideas, and foster professional growth.

One of the standout features of the conference was the Gallery Showcase, an innovative space where teachers presented their best practices and classroom strategies. This initiative fostered meaningful dialogue and collaboration, reinforcing our shared commitment to student learning. The conference also opened the door to valuable networking opportunities. A particularly impactful session featured national specialists involved in the development of the new curriculum. Their insights into the standards and implementation process provided participants with greater clarity and a deeper understanding of the curriculum's vision for public schools.

The quality of the presentations and the level of engagement from attendees were exceptional. Many presenters expressed appreciation for the enthusiasm and dedication demonstrated by participants throughout the event.

We extend our sincere thanks to all who took part in the conference. We encourage you to continue the momentum by becoming knowledge multipliers-sharing what you have learned with your colleagues and communities.

Ms. Cole

At the Ernesto T. Lefevre Educational Center, first-grade teacher Angélica Ávila and her students performed stories like The Magpie and Little Red Riding Hood in vibrant costumes, exciting and engaging the entire school community.

Assistant principal Yamilka Bellido thanked parents for their continuous support in helping their children's storytelling and emphasized that all children can write creative stories with proper teacher guidance.

Participants from public and private schools across Panama's 16 regions compete in eight categories. The festival aims to strengthen communication skills by fostering critical reading, thinking, and reflection.

National coordinator Teodora Marquínez said the festival inspires students, promotes culture, creativity, and literacy, and unites the community. The first phase is underway, with regional selections next week and a final awards ceremony at the International Book Fair.



## REGIONAL NEWS &amp; UPDATES

## CELEBRATING STORIES: PANAMA'S NATIONAL FESTIVAL BOOSTS READING AND CREATIVITY

*Press Center of the Ministry of Education*

More than 21,297 students, educators, and parents have enthusiastically submitted stories to the Fourth Story Creation Festival (Festicrec), organized by the Ministry of Education through the National Network of Spanish Teachers (Rednade). This exciting event celebrates imagination, enthusiasm, and talent within the educational community.

## REGIONAL NEWS &amp; UPDATES

## MEDUCA 2025 INTER-SCHOOL GAMES INAUGURATED WITH MUSIC, DANCE, AND SPORTSMANSHIP

*Press Center of the Ministry of Education*

Surrounded by a clamorous crowd with the presence of hundreds of children, teachers, parents, and special guests, the Meduca 2025 Inter-school Games were officially inaugurated, with competitions taking place in various sports arenas across the capital city.



The Minister of Education, Lucy Molinar, delivered the welcome speech and even pledged, as the godmother of the 2026 games, the First Lady of the Republic, Maricel Cohen de Mulino, one of the special guests at the event held at the Vasco Núñez de Balboa Convention Center.



The event featured a notable performance by contestants from the TV reality show *Canta Conmigo* and a folkloric ballet from the Rubiano Institute.

After the cultural and musical acts, and the introduction of special guests, athletes from the sports delegations of each of the 16 regional education offices took photos on stage with the minister, the First Lady, the director of Pandeportes, the city mayor, and other dignitaries.

In addition to artistic presentations, the event was enlivened by the Martin Luther King General Basic Education Center's War Band from San Miguelito and the Music Band of the Ing. Tomás Guardia School from La Chorrera.

### LETTER FROM OUR EDITOR

Dear Readers,

This edition of the Monthly Networker brings you a collection of inspiring stories that reflect the passion and dedication of Panama's English teaching community. Across our pages, you'll find examples of creativity, collaboration, and growth that are shaping the future of English education nationwide.

In Regional News and Updates, we celebrate Panama's Story Creation Festival (FESTICREC), a wonderful event that encourages reading and sparks creativity among learners. The Meduca 2025 Inter-school Games come alive with music, dance, and sportsmanship, uniting students in vibrant cultural and athletic expression. Meanwhile, the after-school program at Escuela Normal Juan Demóstenes Arosemena is nurturing the next generation of teachers with new skills and enthusiasm.

Our Feature Story highlights the unveiling of the New Competency-Based English Curriculum at the National Congress—a groundbreaking development in teaching and learning. The Spotlight section offers thoughtful insights from the panel discussion on this curriculum and shares knowledge from the recent IATEFL Conference, showcasing collaboration and innovation at its best.

For practical tips, explore our Tips and Best Practices article on classroom management, and get ready for the future with the curriculum training opportunities featured in *The Road to Implementing the New Curriculum*. Our Resource Corner introduces a user-friendly platform designed to inspire student writing and collaboration.

We also recognize the incredible work of the DNELE staff during the national conference in our Thumbs Up section, and don't forget to enjoy some fun trivia in Fun Fact.

Happy Reading!

*Raúl Sieiro*  
Editor, *The Monthly Networker*



## REGIONAL NEWS &amp; UPDATES

**EMPOWERING FUTURE TEACHERS: AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM BEGINS AT ESCUELA NORMAL JUAN DEMÓSTENES AROSEMENA**

By María del Pilar Guerra

The After-School Program at Escuela Normal Juan Demóstenes Arosemena in Santiago de Veraguas has officially begun.

The program is specifically designed for students in tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade of the Bilingual Pedagogical High School Program at Escuela Normal Juan Demostenes Arosemena. Its goal is to provide additional academic support, enhance language proficiency, and strengthen pedagogical skills through interactive and engaging activities conducted outside of regular school hours. This initiative reflects the school's commitment to fostering well-rounded, future educators who are confident in both English and Spanish.





## FEATURE STORY

## NEW COMPETENCY-BASED ENGLISH CURRICULUM UNVEILED AT NATIONAL CONGRESS

By Raúl Sieiro



The recent National Congress of English Teachers marked a milestone with the launch of the new competency-based English curriculum. The ceremony featured Minister of Education Lucy Molinar, Academic Vice Minister Agnes de Cotes, National Director of Foreign Language Teaching Davina Cole, and other important representatives from the Ministry of Education, along with other special guests, highlighting the significance of this reform.

Teachers from across the country, gathered for the conference, witnessed the unveiling of a curriculum designed to better equip students with practical language skills, emphasizing real-world communication and

critical thinking. The new framework focuses on developing competencies that empower learners to use English confidently in diverse contexts, moving beyond traditional mechanical memorization.

Special guest speakers were also present at the event, alongside educators eager to explore the promising changes ahead. The National Directorate of Foreign Language Teaching is proud to support this transformative step, which promises to enhance English teaching and learning nationwide. As educators, we look forward to embracing the new curriculum and fostering a generation of learners prepared to thrive in a globalized world.



## SPOTLIGHT SECTION

## CONVERSATIONS THAT SHAPE THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

By María del Pilar Guerra



During this engaging panel discussion, key experts who have played a fundamental role in the development of Panama's new competency-based English curriculum came together to share their insights and experiences. These dedicated professionals have helped shape a forward-thinking vision where students are not only improving their English skills but also connecting learning to the diverse social and cultural realities of our country.

One of the greatest strengths of this innovative new curriculum is its action-oriented approach, thoughtfully designed to empower students through real-life situations, authentic communication, and meaningful tasks. It encourages learners to become active, responsible agents of change in their communities while building the language skills and confidence they need to thrive in an interconnected world.

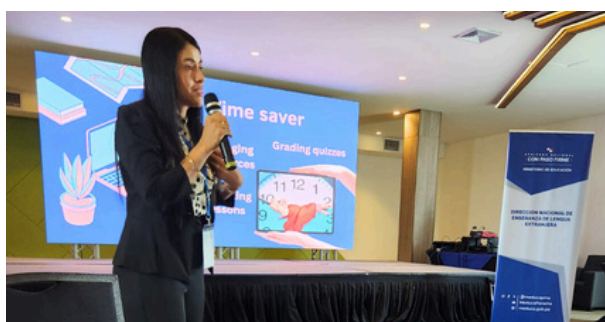
## COLLABORATIVE GROWTH: SHARING KNOWLEDGE FROM THE IATEFL CONFERENCE

By Claudia De León

The National Conference of English Teachers served as a dynamic platform for educators in Panama to connect, collaborate, and advance in their professional development.

For those educators who attended the 2025 IATEFL International Conference and Exhibition in Edinburgh, Scotland, it was an excellent opportunity to share the insights and experiences they gained from participating in one of the world's leading forums on English language education.

These educators returned with cutting-edge perspectives and innovative strategies, which they eagerly shared with their colleagues.



"INSPIRING EXCELLENCE IN EVERY LESSON."



## NETWORK CHRONICLES

## 2025 NATIONAL CONGRESS OF ENGLISH TEACHERS OPENING CEREMONY

Relive the highlights from Day 1 of our English Conference where passion for teaching brought us together from the very start.



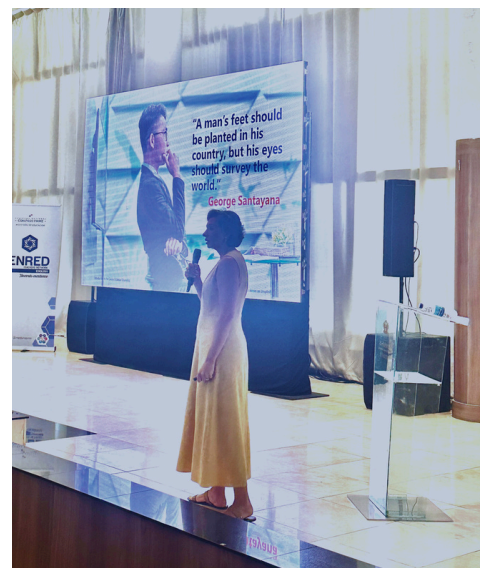
"INSPIRING EXCELLENCE IN EVERY LESSON."



## NETWORK CHRONICLES

**2025 NATIONAL CONGRESS OF ENGLISH TEACHERS  
PLENARY SESSIONS**

A glimpse into the plenary sessions that energized, challenged, and connected us during this amazing journey.



"INSPIRING EXCELLENCE IN EVERY LESSON."



## NETWORK CHRONICLES

## 2025 NATIONAL CONGRESS OF ENGLISH TEACHERS WORKSHOPS



Throughout the week, experts led workshops sharing tools and strategies to support classroom success and teacher growth.



"INSPIRING EXCELLENCE IN EVERY LESSON."



## NETWORK CHRONICLES

## 2025 NATIONAL CONGRESS OF ENGLISH TEACHERS GALLERY WALKS

Each region showcased effective English teaching techniques. Kudos to all for their creativity and dedication!



PANAMA CENTRO



CHIRIQUI



PANAMA NORTE



GUNA YALA



COLON



PANAMA OESTE



VERAGUAS



BOCAS DEL TORO



COCLE



HERRERA



SAN MIGUELITO

"INSPIRING EXCELLENCE IN EVERY LESSON."



## TIPS AND BEST PRACTICES

## 10 PROVEN WAYS TO IMPROVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

By María del Pilar Guerra

Classroom chaos doesn't need to be dramatic to affect your teaching. Even subtle disruptions can wear down your focus and energy.

Thankfully, effective classroom management is within reach no matter your experience level. Here are 10 research-based strategies you can start using today:

### Model the Behavior You Expect

Students learn by example. Show them how to interact respectfully by role-playing a mock conversation using polite language, eye contact, and active listening.

### Build Rules Together

Involve students in setting class expectations. This not only fosters a sense of ownership, but often results in rules that are even stricter than you'd expect.

### Post and Review Class Rules

Document agreed-upon rules, distribute them, and display them in class. This reinforces shared responsibility and gives you a reference when issues arise.

### Correct Individuals, Not Groups

Avoid punishing the entire class. Address disruptions with kindness and specificity: "Do you need help focusing?" works better than scolding.

### Foster Student Initiative

Challenge eager learners by inviting them to work ahead or give brief presentations. This can inspire others to rise to the occasion



### Praise with Purpose

Recognize effort and specific achievements. Whether it's thoughtful participation or improved behavior, authentic praise reinforces good habits.

### Use Nonverbal Cues

Enhance learning with visual tools and movement-based activities like stations or hands-on materials to keep students engaged.

### Celebrate Progress

Occasional classroom celebrations—even simple ones can serve as motivation. Set clear behavior or academic goals tied to these rewards.

### Give Meaningful Rewards

Use small incentives like raffle tickets to reinforce positive behavior. Make the criteria and rewards clear to encourage consistent effort.

### Connect with Families

Send home positive notes or make encouraging phone calls. Students feel proud, and parents often become more supportive of classroom goals.



Effective classroom management isn't about control—it's about connection, clarity, and consistency. By using simple, research-backed strategies like modeling behavior, celebrating progress, and involving students in the process, you create a learning environment where everyone can thrive. Start small, stay consistent, and you'll see lasting results.

Taken from: <https://www.prodigygame.com/main-en/blog/classroom-management-strategies>



## THE ROAD TO IMPLEMENTING A NEW CURRICULUM

## STEP INTO THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH EDUCATION: CURRICULUM TRAINING NOW OPEN

By Claudia De León



Registration is now open for training on the New English Curriculum, aligned with Competency Standards, on El Portal Educativo!

This initiative will offer ten enriching courses designed for various educational levels: two for preschool, elementary, middle school, high school, and two focused on educational leadership, along with one dedicated to differentiated instruction.

This training initiative aims to empower public school English teachers through the New English Curriculum, which prioritizes Competency Standards.

The courses offer more than technical training; they are tailored specifically for the needs of Panamanian English teachers, providing clear guidance, interactive content, and tools aligned with the curriculum to support classroom transformation and implementation.

### Structured Learning for Effective Teaching

Courses are designed with a modular structure, divided into two tabs (modules) for each course. Each module comprises four units, and each unit is divided into four progressive lessons. Progression is strictly sequential, meaning that teachers must complete one lesson before they can unlock the next one.

This clear and consistent layout ensures that all teachers follow a logical learning path, aligned with the step-by-step development of curriculum understanding and application.



Each lesson features a diverse range of engaging content types, including full-length videos with transcripts, tabbed reading materials, expandable sections, flip cards, and slideshow presentations. These resources promote active learning and critical thinking, enhancing your educational experience.

### Don't Delay—Register Today!

Register now at:  
<https://www.educapanama.edu.pa/?q=teacher-registration-training-new-curriculum>



## MEET OUR TEAM

## DENNIS CONCEPCIÓN

*English Regional Coordinator for Panama Centro*



Born in Panama City in 1979, Dennis Concepción's journey as an educator has been defined by purpose and resilience. After high school, she moved to the U.S. where she studied English intensively in Colorado and Nebraska,

earning multiple ESL certifications, including recognition from the Colorado State Department of Education

Motivated by the growing need for English in Panama's workforce, Dennis returned home with a mission to impact young learners. In her late 30s, she began her Bachelor's in English Teaching at Universidad Especializada de las Américas, graduating in 2022. She later earned her Secondary Education Diploma in English Teaching, followed by a Higher Technician diploma in Conversational English in 2024. Her academic path reflects a deep commitment to both personal growth and national development.

From 2020 to 2024, Dennis worked as an English Instructor at Academia Bilingüe Panamá Para el Futuro, where she helped guide students to prestigious opportunities, including IB programs and scholarships to Walton University in the U.S. Her work has left a lasting mark on learners from across the country, helping to elevate not only their language skills but also their confidence and aspirations.

Inspired by her mother and guided by faith, Dennis believes "it's never too late for a fresh start." She brings humor, humility, and heartfelt purpose to everything she does, always focused on making a meaningful difference through education and empowerment.

## PROFILE OF THE MONTH

## DELIA STEWART

*English Teacher at Colegio José Guardia Vega*



My name is Mrs. Delia Stewart. My journey began at Colegio Bilingüe Eben Ezer a small private school where I taught my first group of students with limited resources but unlimited dreams.

I hold a degree in English and a master's in TESOL. My philosophy is simple: education should empower students to become thoughtful, compassionate individuals, critical thinkers who are ready to contribute positively in making the world a better place and building a strong foundation for their future success.

Over the years, I have led literacy programs in my community (Bocas del Toro), helped implement English learning tools in under-resourced schools, and worked hand in hand with indigenous families to support students facing difficult circumstances.

Of course, this journey hasn't been without challenges. Adapting to online teaching during the pandemic was one of the most difficult times in my career because technology was not my best friend. Yet, it taught me resilience and creativity. I developed engaging virtual lessons and stayed closely connected with my students, making sure they felt supported and motivated, even from a distance.

The most fulfilling part of my work is inspiring others; students thank me for believing in them, and colleagues value my support. I enjoy reading, learning new teaching methods, visiting Bocas del Toro, and volunteering. I plan to pursue a doctorate in Educational Leadership to help ensure every Panamanian child has access to quality education.



# THUMBS UP!



We would like to take a moment to sincerely thank and recognize the incredible efforts of the entire DNELE team during the English Teachers' Congress. Your dedication, professionalism, and teamwork were essential in ensuring the success of this important event.

From the registration desk team who welcomed participants with efficiency and kindness, to those who carefully organized and distributed every kit, and the hospitality team who ensured that every guest felt supported and comfortable, your hard work did not go unnoticed.



Each task, no matter how big or small, was carried out with care, attention to detail, and a spirit of collaboration that made a lasting impact.

We are proud of the way everyone came together to deliver such a well-coordinated and meaningful experience. Your commitment reflects the true heart of DNELE.

Thank you for your remarkable efforts. We truly appreciate each and every one of you!



## RESOURCE CORNER

## UNLEASH YOUR STUDENTS' CREATIVITY WITH BOOK CREATOR

By María del Pilar Guerra

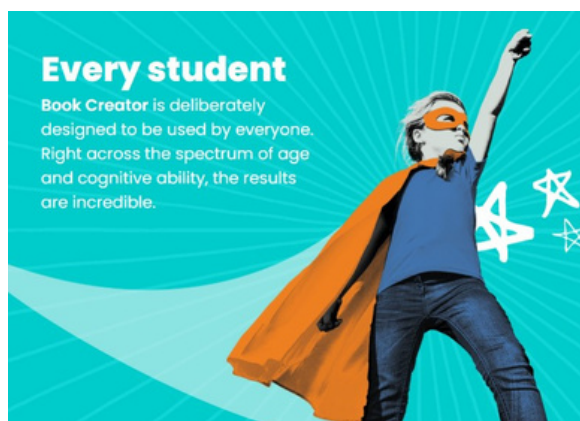
Looking for an easy way to get your students writing, collaborating, and creating? Book Creator is a free, intuitive tool that lets students and teachers make digital books with text, images, audio, video, and drawings—all in one place.



## BOOK CREATOR

It's perfect for story writing, journaling, project work, or even class anthologies. Younger learners can use it for picture books or vocabulary journals, while older students can create persuasive texts, biographies, or research projects. The drag-and-drop interface makes it accessible to all tech comfort levels.

One great feature is real-time collaboration—students can co-author a book together, whether in class or online. Teachers can manage books in a secure virtual library and provide feedback directly within each project.



Book Creator works on tablets, laptops, and Chromebooks, and it's web-based, so there's no installation needed. The free version gives you one library with 40 books—more than enough to get started.

Get started here: <https://bookcreator.com>

*Bonus idea: Have students create "About Me" books at the start of term—it's a creative, confidence-building way to get them writing in English.*



Did you know that the Corpus Christi festival in La Villa de Los Santos has been lighting up Panama since the 16th century? Introduced by Spanish colonists, this vibrant celebration is a colorful blend of Catholic tradition and local folklore that's truly one of a kind. Picture this: dramatic dances like the diablicos sucios (yep, the "dirty devils"!), elaborate masks, and theatrical parades that symbolize the eternal battle between good and evil.

But it's not just a local affair—this cultural spectacle is so unique and important that it's been recognized by UNESCO as part of our Intangible Cultural Heritage. If you ever get the chance to see it in person, get ready for music, mischief, and a whole lot of Panamanian pride. 😊



## Contact Us:

- **Raúl Sieiro** (National English Teachers Network Coordinator and newsletter editor): [raul.sieiro@meduca.gob.pa](mailto:raul.sieiro@meduca.gob.pa)
- **María Del Pilar Guerra** (The Monthly Networker Editing Assistant): [maria.guerra@meduca.gob.pa](mailto:maria.guerra@meduca.gob.pa)
- **Angela Distin** (The Monthly Networker Editing Assistant): [angela.distin@meduca.gob.pa](mailto:angela.distin@meduca.gob.pa)
- **DNELE Office: 524-9832**





