



# Seo June's story

## From Science to Teaching: Seo June's New Journey at NZTC

### Student profile

Name: Seo June

Nationality: South Korea

Programme: Graduate Diploma  
in Teaching (ECE) (Level 7)

Seo June studied Biomedical Science and later explored design and branding, where creativity and communication became central to his work. These experiences reignited his passion for education, leading him to teach biology and mentor students in Korea. Through these roles, he discovered the importance of helping learners grow not only in knowledge but also in life attitudes. Now, he is preparing to begin the Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Early Childhood Education) at NZTC in New Zealand, aiming to become an educator who inspires curiosity and resilience.

### Why NZTC

#### Q1. Among all the options, why did you choose NZTC? Tell us about the decisive moment that truly moved you.

My initial interest in NZTC came from a friend who had graduated from there. That connection prompted me to look for more information, but those details alone did not directly determine my choice.

Personally, I believe strongly in the power of time. In my view, NZTC has proven its value in Aotearoa New Zealand over time. That means many people from diverse backgrounds have gone through this institution, and there must be a rich database of stories and experiences. The thought that I could also learn from that accumulated knowledge and "know-how" was what ultimately led me to choose NZTC.

### The challenge of English test preparation

#### Q2. The Master of Teaching and Learning program has a high English requirement. How did you feel when you first learned about that standard? And what strategies and efforts did you use to achieve the required score?

As many people know, studying overseas requires not only tuition fees but also significant living costs. From the beginning, I did not make this decision from a place of financial ease, so I combined my personal brand work with another job and started preparing while working in two roles. It was never easy to finish my first job, then make products for customer orders, work on branding, and find short pockets of time to study.

However, I endured that demanding period with the passion of someone who, for the first time in a while, was determined to push themselves to the limit to achieve something.

I wish that passion had carried me through the entire preparation period without faltering, but at some point my motivation dropped. At times I felt depressed, and because I did not have enough time to take care of my physical health, I also became exhausted.

During that season, I kept repeating two sentences to myself as I studied: "Face the things you really don't want to do. Don't despair, because you are doing your best." and "Just sit at your desk. Focus for even one minute." Holding onto these thoughts, I forced myself to sit down whenever I had a moment, listened to English podcasts, sat mock tests on the weekends, worked through practice questions, and did phone-English lessons to improve my speaking.

In doing so, I created an "English environment" for myself. Thankfully, my efforts were reflected in my test results, and I was able to achieve a score that allowed me to apply for this programme.

### About scholarship

#### Q3. How did you feel when you learned you received the \$10,000 scholarship?

At first, I did not fully grasp what was happening. Then, all at once, I felt relief, joy, pride in myself, and deep gratitude. In that moment, I was reminded once again that we all live with the help of others.

Just as someone once helps us and, in turn, we are able to help someone else, I realised that I want to live in a way that does not give in to a world that constantly tells us to value only ourselves. Instead, I want to be someone who both gives and receives help along the way.

### Looking ahead

#### Q4. What are you most excited about in the Master of Teaching and Learning program starting in February 2026?

What I both look forward to the most and feel the most vague anxiety about is, of course, the practicum. I am excited at the thought of meeting children from diverse backgrounds, but at the same time I worry about making mistakes as someone who comes from a different background.

I sometimes wonder whether I will be able to respond as appropriately as I would in Korean. However, I also believe that, just like the whānau that New Zealand is proud of, there will be many people around me who will support me. That thought gives me courage. I am genuinely looking forward to meeting them as well.

#### Q5. After completing this program, how do you picture yourself?

I imagine that my face will show a wider range of expressions than it does now. Among those, I simply hope that my smile will appear more often and more fully. I am always afraid when I stand before a new challenge, but I have learned that once I take that first step, I grow broader, deeper, and ultimately happier. In the same way, I believe that after completing this programme, I will become a better and more mature adult.



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### Experience from Korea

#### Q6. How do you think your academic and teaching experiences in Korea will empower your studies and teaching in New Zealand?

In terms of professional expertise, I know that I still have many gaps compared to others I will meet in the future. However, I believe that this is something I can develop by learning well.

At the same time, I am confident that my diverse experiences will help me adapt more effectively to studying and teaching in New Zealand. There are clear differences between the academic cultures of Korea and New Zealand, and it is true that there are many weaknesses in the Korean education system.

However, in the area of “learning” itself, Korea also has definite strengths. I believe those strengths will also be a great asset for me. In addition, because I already have experience as an educator, I think I will be able to approach my studies from the learner’s perspective with a broader and more varied point of view.

In educational settings, I hope to draw on my previous teaching experience so that I can adapt in a more mature way and continue to grow.

### Message to future students

#### Q7. For students considering a similar path, what message would you like to share through your story?

No matter what kind of life they have lived so far, I believe that anyone standing in front of a challenge like mine will feel fear. I hope people will not think of that fear as something strange or as something they must get rid of.

For me, the fear I feel before a challenge is completely natural. That is why I think that a person who moves forward while carrying their fear is, in some ways, more admirable and stronger than someone who feels no fear at all.

Long ago in the Pacific, Voyagers set out in small wooden boats to search for new islands, after exchanging blessings for the wellbeing of their people. I imagine that their hearts might not have been so different from ours today as we prepare to depart on our own journeys.

I believe that people who have dared to try a different path are somehow changed by that experience. I do not yet know how this challenge, with all the experiences and emotions that come with it, will shape my life in the future. But I am sure that once we grow into people who can hold our fear instead of simply trying to overcome it, we will eventually discover the true meaning of this journey.