

# English In Georgia



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## ETAG 8th Conference Educational Reform and English Language Teaching



Opening of the conference: from left to right: Maya Kipshidze, British Council, Georgia, Peter Evans, Assistant Public Affairs Officer, US embassy, Tbilisi, Simon Janashia, the Ministry of Education and Lisa Harshbarger, Regional English Language Officer, US Department of State.



The conference was attended by 131 participants and invited guests

On May 19-21 English Teachers' Association of Georgia hosted the 8th National conference "Educational Reform and English Language Teaching" in Tabakhmela.

131 teachers from all over Georgia attended the conference among them 60 were from the regions including representatives from Gali and Tskhinvali. Keynote speakers of the conference were Peter Grundy (the UK), Linda Gajdufek. (the USA) and Simon Janashia (Georgia). Twenty four workshops were conducted out of which 18 were Georgian presenters.

The main themes highlighted at the conference were: educational reform, curriculum development for universities, using the new textbooks effectively, incorporating global education themes into ELT classes, new approaches to teaching English, and new ways of assessing students.

Here's what the conference organizers, presenters and participants shared about the conference:

*"English is not merely a foreign language, but it is an important language for international communications, cultural exchanges and becoming acquainted with*

*It is very important that we not only share ideas with each other, but initiate these ideas. Such associations should actively get involved in discussing textbooks and decide which to choose."* **SIMON JANASHIA,**  
Ministry of Education



English Teachers from Kutaisi at the conference

*the world. This is essential for improving our future life,"*- Rusudan Tkemaladze, the British Council ELT development manager.

Diane Millar, Senior English Language Fellow, US Embassy: *"There are so many changes in the Georgian educational system that it is important that teachers acquire this information."*

Nino Jobava, teacher trainer from the Cultural Educational Association for Women in Gali: *"Such training is very important and useful for us and we can share the knowledge gained during the training with our pupils in Gali schools, where studying is not easy."*

*"We try to help children who are interested in broadening their knowledge by inviting them to study at our club. Our club is free of charge and mostly children who are short of money study here,"* - Ketino Gogokhia, teacher-trainer, Gali

Simon Janashia, the Ministry of Education: *"it is very important that we not only share ideas with each other, but we should additionally initiate these ideas. Such associations should actively get involved in discussing textbooks and decide which to choose."*

Acknowledgment: The quotations used in this article are reprinted from the "Messenger," of May 23, 2006

# Alternatives in Assessment, Plenary

Linda Gajdusek, the USA



Teachers will always "teach to the test", so if we want teachers to adopt communicative performance-based methodologies, we must

not only teach, but assess, real-world performance.

Assessment is defined as judgement of a student's performance. Assessment results are often generalized and taken as proof of learning and, therefore, ability. Unlike traditional assessment which uses systematic, planned sampling techniques to appraise student achievement, alternative assessment is an on-going process involving student and teacher in making judgements about student progress toward specified learning goals.

Positive feedback is achieved when teachers state objectives and expectations clearly, give guidelines and materials that will be included and communicate assessment criteria.

Teachers should provide students with meaningful feedback not just a score. The most characteristic to alternative assessment is that it focuses on what students can do rather than what they can recall. Portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work over time. It includes a self-reflection component. It is illustrative of what the student has learned and gives him ideas what to change and why. Portfolios and scoring rubrics not only ensure objectivity and transparency but also provide the motivation for teachers to adopt new methodologies as they prepare their students to succeed in their careers and on their tests.

## Workshops

### Teaching Knowledge Test

Rusiko Tkemaladze and Ana Tikaradze, the British Council, Georgia

Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) is a new certificate from Cambridge ESOL available internationally. It is for pre-service and novice teachers of English, as well as for in-service teachers of English to primary, secondary and adult learners who wish to get certification. In order to successfully pass the test, teachers need to understand different classroom management methods for different needs. Apart from different teaching methodologies, the test takers should have the descriptive knowledge of language systems and language skills. The awareness of different learners and their learning strategies is important to manage the test.

The Cambridge ESOL website-[www. Cambridge ESOL.org](http://www.CambridgeESOL.org)-gives detailed information, including the syllabus, sample papers and test administration terms.



**Pre-activities for teaching Speaking and Listening Tasks, Farrell Payne, Senior English Language Fellow, US Embassy Vanadzor, Armenia.**



Often times, teachers ask the students to listen to a tape or speak on a topic without former preparation of topic, vocabulary, grammar points, or checking their background knowledge. Preparation for a speaking/listening task is more important that the task itself if the students are to learn and internalize the language needed.

The general aims of a pre-activity is to: create desirable expectations about the language so that learners may have a better understanding of the events to be presented, give them a reason/ purpose to perform the task, which will in-turn motivate them and make the learning of a language more meaningful and effective.

### School Leaving Exams, Maya Kiasashvili, Tbilisi State University

Teachers of English should get to be familiarized with the scope of the language tested at the school-leaving exams by focusing on the practical aspects of dealing with its seven parts.

**Reading** Various techniques leading to effective reading are designed to clarify the structure of the text, its layout and meaning, which can assist learners to successfully match the headings (skimming).

**Grammar** A significant part of the test is devoted to sentence transformation techniques, which has caused most controversy among the teachers and their students likewise. Special attention is paid to grammar (correct tenses, prepositions and articles) and lexical accuracy, as well as to careful consideration of the original sentence.

**Writing** Among the productive skills, writing is the most problematic for the students across the country, thus their poor performance at the exams. Teachers should be aware of such aspects of writing as task completion, text organization, layout, appropriate use of connectives and linkers within the text, and grammatical accuracy.

### Becoming a Teacher Trainer - Options for Teachers' Professional Development, Lela Abdushelishvili, ETAG Tbilisi Head

Abdushelishvili, ETAG Tbilisi Head



The quality of teaching has the greatest effect on the quality of education. The underlying principle is that teachers' professional development has to be based on the individual motivation, active participation and responsibility of teachers themselves as well as the efforts of the institution they work for. It will help teachers and trainers to be better equipped to cope with the challenges ahead while empowering the institutions they work for to become better learning places.

### Keeping Students Alert

Vika Kuprashvili, School N189

The education reforms have increased the concerns of the teachers. The question bothering all the educators is how? How to encourage the students be independent thinkers, think critically and obtain experience in expressing themselves, defending their stand in discussions. Success depends on creating new class management and environment in order to make teaching and learning more enjoyable and effective.

# Current Developments in Curriculum Implementation in Georgia, Plenary

Simon Janashia, The Ministry of Education, Georgia



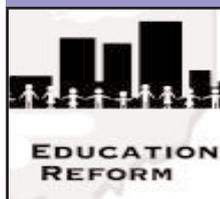
The main goal of the national curriculum is to create a citizen who will have the appreciation of national and international values, be independent and have ability to contribute to the development of civil society. The main theme of the plenary was the process of piloting the National Curriculum in Georgian schools that started in September 20005. 100 schools were chosen for piloting 1st, 7th and 10th grade textbooks. 7 centres were established in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Zugdidi, Akhaltsikhe, Gori, Gurjaani for professional development of the teachers. Out of the 100 piloting schools approxi-

mately 30 teachers were selected who will be working as facilitators from a new school year when the piloted textbooks will be implemented on a national scale. The facilitators will actively participate in training the teachers. The piloting of the textbooks was preceded by the baseline study of the situation. The hypothesis was to check what influences the pupils' motivation more: environment or teaching materials. At the end of every week starting from September the teachers were supposed to reflect on their teaching. Besides the teacher's self-observation, which was reflected in the journal, the pupils also reflected and analysed the lesson. For reliability of the data, the trainer read and analysed both journals. On the basis of the qualitative and quantitative data gained in the piloting process, the textbook authors are supposed to make changes in their textbooks.

## Teacher Initial Education and Continuing Professional Development

Marina Zhvania, the Ministry of Education

Teachers' higher education program should meet, on the one hand, professional standard and , on the other hand, national curriculum (standard documents). It can be achieved only on the basis of the collaboration of the three institutions-higher institution, the creator of the professional standard and the institutions responsible for the national curriculum.



The mission of the Teacher Professional Development Center (TPDC) is to create in Georgia an effective national quality assurance system to help teachers, school leaders, schools and providers of teacher education reach internationally acceptable standards of performance. It is a self-regulating professional body for teachers. It seeks to raise the status of teaching by maintaining and promoting the highest standards of professional practice and conduct on behalf of teachers, pupils and the general public. In the workshop the presenter explained the rationale, mission and goals of this new center.

## 7th grade textbook meeting the new standards of education, Tatiana Bukia, Chavchavadze state university



Education reform aims at developing, besides the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), also independence in learning - learning to learn - and acquaintance with different cultures of the world, parallel to one's own, nurturing tolerance to all the existing cultures.

The present, transitional standard considers the beginner level of the 7th grade students, although some reach this stage with 5-year history of learning English, and some - just 2. The purpose is to bring the learners of the whole country to a common level of language proficiency. So the material, both lexical and grammatical, is trying to cater both for advanced students, at the same time being a challenge for them, and real beginners.

The presentation dealt with different stages and ways of acquiring the language of "Food" topic through reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

## Workshops

### Pre-service Methodology Course

Rusiko Tsitsishvili, Tbilisi State University

"Curriculum Development for Pre-Service Teacher Training in Tertiary Level Institutions" is the project, which was initiated by ETAG in conjunction with the British Council, Georgia. The ultimate goal of the project was to produce a methodology course that will make dramatic improvements in the area of English Language Teaching by replacing the dominant old-fashioned, discipline-oriented teacher training style with a modern, interactive, learner-friendly training style. In addition to knowledge, preservice course should prepare students-future teachers with a variety of techniques and strategies for acculturating into their profession. One of these aspects is building up professional terminology necessary to get acquainted with modern trends in methodology and active participation in the conferences, seminars and workshops on national, as well as on international level. The presentation illustrated the contents of the course materials and focus on the standardized stages of each chapter. Reflection questions, reading of the model lesson and discussion, pre-teaching of professional terminology through different tasks, listening to the lecture with a specific aim in mind, checking answers and journal writing.

### Educational Reform and Philosophy of Language Curriculum

Marina Chkhikvadze, school N 51

Georgia, as one of the Euro Union member states, has entered culturally diverse space. Georgian school curriculum aims at corresponding national standards to the Euro Union language levels and defines corresponding stages due to certain Euro Union standard level.

The state framework outlines the philosophy of curriculum development, standard documents, structure, content and assessment plan. It includes analysis of challenges and problems that surround the language program implementation at the school level. Practical classroom activities demonstrated in the workshop helped gain a better understanding of standard document, material resources, such as textbooks at appropriate level and support materials for the types of instruction recommended in the framework.

Teachers should be provided with the opportunity to realize how various components of National Curriculum are used in the classroom. The workshop focused on the use of appropriate skill Standards of the English Language and its integration into many curricular areas.

## Yielding Place to New: Democratizing English in Georgia, Plenary

Peter Grundy, The UK



we need to look again at the English we teach in view of the changing needs of its learners and its rapidly developing status as a lingua franca. The talk was built around three short English conversations. The first was taken from a coursebook and enables us to explore the changing reasons for learning English and the small but crucial differences between classroom English and real world English. The second raised issues about the ownership of English and the varieties of English appropriate for use in lingua franca intercultural communication.

The third drew attention to the importance of the English that is actually used in communication, including especially its metapragmatic properties. The first conversation suggested that we should abandon the explicit language of coursebooks for a more natural English rooted in real context; the second suggested that second language intelligibility is more important than native speaker idiom; and the third suggested that pragmatics is a more important level than has usually been acknowledged, so that as teachers we now need to privilege use (pragmatics) over usage (syntax and phonology).

## Some of the ETAG Conference Impressions...

### *Sophie Chkhobadze* *Kutaisi State University*

May 19 - 21 were unforgettable days in my life. For the first time I was given a wonderful possibility of attending ETAG 8th National Conference 'Educational Reform and English Language Teaching'. From my colleagues I knew that the previous conferences were extremely successful, but as they say 'Seeing is believing.' What I saw and experienced was beyond my imagination. The conference was organized in such a way that it provided every teacher with valuable and up-to-date information about educational reform and new methods of teaching. I took an active part in the workshops and shared my knowledge and understanding of modern teaching methods with other participants. The conference will help me to keep my classroom fresh with new ideas and to overcome the common problems I face.

Thank you ETAG, British Council and US Embassy for giving me a chance to attend the conference. Now, I am full of new ideas how to create more effective lessons, to be a more reflective teacher and to use new teaching techniques and strategies.

Dear teachers! Join ETAG and you will be the next.

### *Nino Nizharadze* *Kutaisi State University*

What I appreciated most about the conference was the possibility to share experience with colleagues all over Georgia. It helps you realize the problem you face in your practice, your fears and insecurity, which are quite common with the profession. And this gives you a sense of solidarity and a new kind of self-confidence.

### *Eka Topuria* *Kutaisi State University*

On the threshold of the facing reforms in the University studies, the Tabakhmela Conference appeared to be the great experience, an unchangeable chance of sharing the most updated responses for the successful completion of the ongoing changes in the Georgian educational sphere.

The importance of the conference was highly marked professionally as well as on terms of friendly and warm communication.

The gained experience and already existing form relations among the ETAG branches will by all means have the further development and perfect consequences for the prosperity of the English Language teaching and conducting in Georgia.

## Workshops

**The New Internet Based TOEFL**, Eddie McGee, English Language Senior Fellow, Ganja, Azerbaijan



The previous versions of the Paper Based TOEFL (PBT) and Computer Based TOEFL (CBT), are gradually being phased out and replaced by the Internet Based TOEFL (iBT). The new iBT, offered on the internet, assesses listening, speaking, reading, and writing (LSRW) skills in an integrated fashion.

The iBT consists of four sections each focused on one of the language skills (LSRW). Each section is worth 30 points for a maximum score of 120 points. The iBT requires such knowledge and skills as: **Knowledge:** academic subjects; humanities, sciences and social sciences, the U.S. education system, campus life

**Skills:** inferencing, synthesize information from more than one source, show relationship between texts, distinguish between essential and non-essential information, take notes on key information, organize ideas, speak clearly in an organized manner.

### *Tamriko Mgeladze* *ETAG Batumi Head*

Dear Rusiko, Tsisana, Lali!

Thank you all for the opportunity of seeing our peers and sharing with each other our experience, success and problems. Tabakhmela conference turned out to be very productive, it is an impetus for further development, for further sharing and further creative ideas. On Sunday ETAG meeting we shared our impressions with our colleagues and decided to include the material we've got with us in our workshops. In spite of being a minor group, we could attend almost all workshops thus we're having enough ideas at hand to use them for our future work.

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