

English In Georgia



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ETAG is an associate of IATEFL and an affiliate of TESOL



Ekaterine Archvadze at the speaking workshop



At the opening ceremony of the conference



John Scafidi giving teachers tips for writing grants

Batumi Regional Conference Advancing towards Quality

John Scafidi, Senior English Language Fellow. *Tbilisi State University*

ETAG's Ajara Regional Conference "Advancing Towards Quality" was held at Batumi State University on 9-10 March, 2007. After an opening ceremony and welcomes by ETAG Director Rusudan Tkemaladze, the plenary talk on Friday was given by Dr. Dori Nielson from the GEDA project on educational reform in Georgia. Rusudan Tkemaladze gave Saturday's plenary on the future challenges for ETAG and Barrie Watson on the use of pair-work in the classroom. For two days the 70 participants from the Ajara region and representatives from ETAG's regional offices had a choice of attending twenty-five concurrent workshops on various methodological topics ranging from developing teaching skills in grammar, reading, idioms and writing to student evaluation and leadership development. Other workshops covered the new Business English course for teachers, the format of the national English exam, student

70 participants from the Ajara region and representatives from ETAG's regional offices had a choice of attending twenty-five concurrent workshops on various methodological topics.

motivation and the professionalisation of educators. After two days of workshops, exchange of ideas and meeting and socializing with old and new colleagues and friends the conference ended with fond memories, goodbyes and thank yous. Special thanks go to ETAG's Tbilisi staff Rusiko Tkemaladze, Tsisana Tsiskaridze and Lali Mdinardze and Batumi ETAG staff especially Nelly Kukhaleishvili for arranging and hosting such a successful conference.



At the writing workshop



Tsisana Tsiskaridze and Nana Shavishvili at the Business English workshop



Tamuna Kvachadze, British Council giving a plenary session on resources for teachers

ETAG Branches make difference

Rustavi

Lela Abdushelishvili, ETAG Teacher Trainer conducted a session on Encouraging Critical Reading in the EFL classroom on February 24, 2007. Teachers from different schools of Rustavi, as well as Bolnisi and Kazreti attended the session. At the end of the session they expressed their opinions about the questions presented.

Bloom's Taxonomy in Action was presented by Tatiana Bukia on March 24, 2007. The participants showed a great interest in the topic and emphasized its importance while working with the students. At the end of the session, Ms. Bukia answered a lot of questions.

ETAG Rustavi members joined International Teacher Project suggested by UK song writer Paul Weston. The Project is called "Future Song Project".

The song is called "We are the future". ETAG members Marina Ckhetiani, Galina Paposhvili, Tiniko Vanishvili and Nino Pasieshvili translated the song from English into Georgian and sent it to Paul Weston. He is going to put the Georgian translation of the song on international website.

On March 18, 2007 ETAG board members attended an English lesson at school # 24. The topic of the lesson was working on a project: "Green School Garden". The teacher shared her experience about doing a project which she got at the training conducted by Ministry of Education.

On March 24, 2007 ETAG members participated in the Peace Corps led project: "Essay Writing Competition".

Batumi

On January 20 - February 11 MLLT training was held in Batumi ETAG office by trainers from Batumi University and a special guest trainer from the Kutaisi University Rusudan Gvilava. 16 trainees from different educational Institutions attended the training. Kobuleti Private School English language teacher, Izolda Zhizhavadze shares with us her experience:

"I cannot help to express my gratitude to all ETAG trainers, especially to Nelly Kukhaleishvili, Tamar Mgeladze, Manana Mitaishvili and Nino Kvantaliani for their useful and necessary work.

During all steps of the training, the trainees tried to perform purposefully and were emotionally involved. Although all of us were tired, we were eager to ask for more time when whole discussion were scheduled to finish. All trainees were actively engaged in the training. Every activity presented at the training was practised in our classes the other day. And when we met, we shared our impressions.

This very way of learning, has a strong reputation, ambition and a bright future. It is really a miraculous way of mastering the language and if we have ambition and care about the future we (Teachers of English) have to recognize the value and importance of this educational method and we have to contribute to increasing its necessity.

I wish such trainings were conducted more frequently and all the teachers of English were encouraged to attend them

in case they dare to be teachers.

"They who dare to teach must never cease to learn". Let us try not to forget these words.

I am looking forward to other trainings, meeting all ETAG members and listening to the correct and beautiful English of our trainers.

Finally, I'd like to thank once more our trainers who are doing the greatest job, to thank them for their energy and professionalism."

Gori

On March 24 ETAG Gori members met for the usual Saturday meeting. Manana Tetunashvili conducted a workshop "How to be a good teacher". The teachers liked the session and took an active part in it.

Peace corps volunteers in conjunction with Akhaltsikhe Center of Development are working out a five day intensive training "Teacher's Retreat 2007" for English teachers from throughout the regions of Georgia. ETAG Gori branch has been offered to cooperate with Peace Corps in creating sessions and /or facilitating trainings during the retreat. We gladly accepted the offer and now we're organizing a meeting of the branch trainers and the project organizers. We also sent the application forms to other branches of ETAG.

In April a Senior English Language Fellow John Scafidi is visiting ETAG Gori. He is going to hold a two-day workshop in writing. We are looking forward to meeting him again at our branch.

Test Design: Rationale and Development

Many language teachers harbour a deep mistrust of test and testers. The starting point

for this article is the admission that this mistrust is frequently well-founded. It cannot be denied that a great deal of language testing is of very poor quality. Too often language tests have a harmful effect on teaching and learning, so-called backwash; and too often they fail to measure accurately whatever it is they are intended to measure. The question is: why are tests inaccurate? Nowadays the causes of inaccuracy are somehow identified. The first of these concerns test context and techniques, the

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second source of inaccuracy is the lack of reliability.

In spite of many controversies it is accepted that tests are necessary and if we care about testing and its effect on teaching and learning, the conclusion is that we should do everything that we can to improve the practice of testing. We will describe the general testing problem in a little more detail. The first thing that testers have to be clear about is the purpose of testing. We consider the following points to be the most

wide-spread, we test:

- To measure language proficiency regardless of any language courses that candidates may have followed
- To discover how far students have achieved the objectives of a course of study
- To diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses, to identify what they know and what they do not know
- To assist placement of students by identifying the stage or part of a teaching programme most appropriate to their abilities.

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Why do teachers keep joining ETAG?

Since its creation in 1995 ETAG stimulates teachers all over the country to join and stay. Why do teachers keep joining ETAG? Naniko Gilauri, ETAG Newsletter assistant editor and a teacher at Tbilisi State University looked at ETAG activities in 2006, its current work and future prospects.

What distinguished the 2006 from other years?

A number of services were added and some were renewed in 2006. It's worth noting that ETAG resource centres have been expanded with lots of newly published books mainly oriented on teacher development, teacher classroom resources and also, on exam preparation textbooks. The increasing interest towards these kinds of books is mainly due to the recent, modern standards in the field of education, i.e. the question of testing teachers for improving the level of proficiency has influenced the previous course of the ETAG library considerably. Apart from this, the national entrance exams and generally the modern trend for passing English tests have played a decisive role in focusing on exam-oriented textbooks.

As for the other services such as free newsletter for the ETAG members and Saturday ETAG meetings continue informing its members about the recent developments in the sphere of teaching English and therefore, give the English language teachers the

opportunity to keep in touch, share their experience and ideas with one another.

ETAG resource centre also helps its members to learn more about different updated web-sites and links oriented on modern methods in teaching English language.

It should also be highlighted that 2006 was greatly productive according to the trainings held in all the branches. All in all, 44 teacher trainings were held to train 594 teachers in advancing teaching skills, language development, writing, modern English text-book usage and Teaching Knowledge Test.

A novelty in 2006 was offering the ETAG members 40-hour trainings instead of 20-hour ones.

In June 2006 training - Books in a Box was added to the long list of trainings initiated by ETAG. Trainers from different branches have been trained during this seminar in order to give them an opportunity to do workshops later in their branches.

Training in Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) was offered to English language teachers, which prepared them for test. After the training 16 teachers were certified, who later got international Cambridge Certificates.

The new series of trainings at Ilya Chavchavadze State University was initiated by Maya Kiasashvili. On the example of a textbook - Inside Out, which has been chosen as a coursebook at Ilya Chavchavadze

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State University, the training introduced modern approaches in teaching English language.

Future Plans

Training of trainers in Business English will kick off in summer. It will give the trainers a wonderful opportunity to train teachers in their branches.

NQT (Newly Qualified Teachers) 10-hour training which was held in Batumi by Nelly Kukhaleishvili and Marina Chkhikvadze will be continued. The second part of the course will be piloted by the end of April.

On the basis of the current ETAG activities, we are proud of the fact that ETAG provides English Language teachers with tremendous support to improve their experiences in the classroom and to keep in line with the modern methodology.

Seattle convention for ensuring quality teaching

Rusudan Tkemaladze, ETAG national director and the British Council ELT development manager participated in TESOL Convention held in Seattle, State of Washington on March 21-25. "It was a big honour and privilege for me to represent Georgia at such a big and important ELT event as TESOL is", says Rusudan. "I made a presentation on the ELT education reform and tried to highlight major directions of the reform taking place in Georgia today. It is evident for everybody how important the role of a qualified English teacher today is, as more and more schools choose English as their first foreign language. How do

we, as teachers, respond to this? What do we do to meet society's demand for quality teaching? I tried to focus on these questions in my presentation and hope that the audience got answers to the questions they had. I am grateful to the American Embassy who made my participation in this very important educational event

possible for me", says Rusudan Tkemaladze.



Rusudan Tkemaladze presenting at TESOL Convention in Seattle

*Continued from p. 2***Test Design: Rationale and Development**

We use tests to obtain information. The information that we hope to get will, of course, vary from situation to situation. It is possible to categorize tests according to a small number of kinds of information being sought. Tests tend to fall into one of the following broad categories: placement, progress, achievement, proficiency and diagnostic.

When constructing a test, its designers should be aware of the test's specifications that provide the official statement about what the test tests and how it tests it. The specifications are the blueprint to be followed by test and item writers and they are also essential in the establishment of the test's construct validity. There are needed by a range of different people. Since specifications vary according to their uses, specification writers must first decide who their audience is and provide the appropriate information. Test specifications should include most of the following:

- The test's purpose
- Description of the test taker
- Test level
- Construct (theoretical framework for test)
- Description of suitable language course or textbook
- Number of sections
- Time for each section

- Weighting for each section
- Target language situation

- Text-types
- Text length
- Language skills to be tested
- Language elements to be tested
- Test tasks
- Test methods
- Scoring procedures
- Descriptions of typical performance at each level
- Sample papers
- Pre-testing
- Post-test Analysis

These specifications are the essential steps to be followed taking into consideration the item types: objectively-marked and subjectively-marked items. The first one includes dichotomous, matching Information, transfer ordering tasks, editing, gap-filling, cloze, c-test, dictation, multiple-matching, short-answer questions. The latter comprises: compositions, essays, summaries, oral interviews, information-gap activities.

It is to be hoped that most test developers in different institutions are conscious of the continuous need to improve their procedures and products. Language testers also have an array of procedures which are generally thought to be appropriate to the development and administration of tests if those tests are to represent the best of professional practice.

25-27 May!

Wonderful Opportunity for ETAG members to attend the workshops by Michael Berman, old friend of ETAG, currently a teacher at Oxford House College in London.

Abstracts of one of the workshops to be offered. If you are interested call ETAG central office on the numbers below and find out the details!

The way of the Kabbalist 'In seeking Wisdom, the first stage is silence, the second listening, the third remembrance, the fourth practising, the fifth teaching' - Rabbi Solomon ibn Gabirol, 11th century (a philosopher, a poet, a Kabbalist, a prolific writer and a mystic). It will be shown in this workshop how the model outlined above can be applied in the classroom by making use of storytelling in the form of an information gap activity.

EPD, another acronym, but what does it stand for? (new) Come along and find out. What I can guarantee is that you will leave this session, whoever and whatever you happen to teach, not only with material you can make use of in class that requires no preparation but also with increased self-knowledge. And surely that should prove to be more than enough "food" for even the most hungry of teachers!

The Lesson as a Ceremony A tripartite ritual framework was explained by Arnold van Gennep in 1909, consisting of separation from

everyday life, the ritual proper, and then reintegration back into everyday life. The model was later developed further by Victor Turner (1969). Cahill and Halpern (1991) also suggest there are three distinct stages in ceremony which need to be honoured for the experience to touch us deeply - Severance, entering Sacred Time & Space, and Reincorporation. This workshop will show how the model can be used in the classroom through the use of storytelling.

Working with Wisdom Tales According to educational psychologist Howard Gardner, in his book *Leading Minds*, what makes a leader is the ability to tell a compelling story that resonates with the audience. Such stories can broaden our horizons, connect us to a vision and provide an overarching narrative for our journeys through life. All the major religious traditions have made use of metaphorical stories to communicate their teachings as they have long been recognised as a means of bypassing the set attitudes and limitations of the conscious mind. Stories not only entertain; they can also alter our experience so as to facilitate growth and change and the stories that will be presented in this session have all been chosen with this aim in mind.

Once upon a Story Since stories first began being told, one of the methods of passing on a culture's teaching has involved a student sitting at his teacher's feet and listening to the tales that teacher had to tell of times and people gone by. The stories of early India, the Greek fables, Taoist, Zen, Sufi and Hasidic tales are all examples of trying to pass on not just a cultural tale but a valuable lesson as well. Several such stories will be presented with follow-up activities and hand-outs will be provided with detailed lesson plans and worksheets.

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