

English In Georgia



January-February
2007
ISSUE NO 56

ETAG is an associate of IATEFL and an affiliate of TESOL

Helping Teachers' Associations to Take Next Steps

NELLY KUKHALEISHVILI
ETAG teacher trainer

The British Council Seminar on Teacher Associations took place on December 10-15 in Cambridge.

I was one of those 4 lucky and successful candidates out of 26 who had a Hornby-funded place at the seminar. The seminar was a great event as I met enthusiastic, committed, and motivated teachers from over 30 countries who represented teacher associations. I was impressed me by the quality of the presenters chosen and a solid variety of topics necessary for further development of teacher associations. As for the presenters, it is sufficient to name George Pickering, the director of the event, and Jeremy Harmer, writer and teacher trainer. Teachers of our association remember George Pickering's impressive and reflective plenary session "Teacher Development: Mission Impossible or Voyage of Discovery?" at the Second South Caucasus English Language Teachers' conference in 2005, Tbilisi.

The main themes of the seminar in Cambridge were: leadership, succession planning, project management, promoting the association and communication, marketing the association and involving members, finding grants and sponsorship, websites and MOODLE (Modular Objects-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) - interactive platforms and teacher development programmes.

At first glance reading through the topics, readers of our "Newsletter" might think: "Don't they take us away from teaching?" But if we take some time and reflect at least on one topic, such as "Marketing the association" and ask ourselves the question what the purpose of our



Nelly Kukhaleishvili presenting on ETAG activities in Cambridge

realize these aims, we need to know who our customers are and what services they want from us, how we can differentiate our membership, find more about our members and their needs, analyze the reasons of membership increase or decrease and think of the ways of targeting new members. For instance, Batumi branch felt how important it was to know the needs of different target groups, when at the end of 2006, we discovered that membership of secondary school teachers was decreasing.

Continued on p.3

What is the purpose of our association?
Who are our customers?
What services do they want from us?

association is, the answers will be various: from improving the standards of teaching /training to motivating and involving more teachers; from sharing new methods with our peers to establishing contacts with other branches and encouraging cooperation between other associations, and so on. To be able to

Editorial

Dear readers,

The New 2007 starts with rethinking and reflecting on the challenge of keeping the Teachers' Association grow and develop. Nelly Kukhaleishvili is sharing with us her impressions of the British Council seminar on the future of the Teachers' Associations.

ETAG central branch has a new Head. Nana Shavishvili, the dedicated and active member of ETAG will lead the organization for the next two years. You can read the farewell letter of Lela former head on p. 2. Find out more about the new events! Good reading!

Tamuna Mardaleishvili
Editor-in-Chief

Contents

Helping Teachers' Associations take next steps..... 1

ETAG has a new Head..... 2

ETAG Branches make difference..... 2

Why ETAG Trainings?..... 3

What is ELTeCS and how can I benefit from it?..... 4

Teaching Knowledge Test

Cambridge Test for English teachers

On 16 January sixteen English language teachers - school as well as university - took Teaching Knowledge Test, University of Cambridge test for EL teachers. This was the first wave of teachers in Georgia willing to take an international test for teachers. Successful applicants will receive the University of Cambridge certificate. Applicants took 20 hr. preparation course in ETAG. This was supported by the British Council. Second wave of teachers willing to take the TKT exam will be registered in mid spring.



Teachers are taking a TKT test

From the Outgoing ETAG Tbilisi Head

ETAG central office Head gets elected every two years. At the last Saturday meeting of 2006 Tbilisi branch members nominated and elected their new Head who is Nana Shavishvili, an experienced school teacher and trainer. What is it like to be heading the central branch of the most successful Teachers' Association in the Caucasus? Lela Abdushelishvili former Head shares her experience and insight about this challenging job.



ETAG Tbilisi old and new Heads

Feel the fear and do it anyway. These were the words going through my mind when I was offered to become the ETAG Head. I joined this organization in 1995 while being a last year student and since then I have gone through all the stages: a listener, a participant, a presenter, a trainer and the Head. Working with ETAG developed my managerial skills considerably, especially, action planning. If we do not have a shopping list, we may forget some essential items, but if we stick to our list, we may not notice something new. Here, we can see a clear parallel with managing the organization. One advice that I would like to give the incoming Head is to set a target to accomplish some action or series of actions. It also involves making oneself responsible for those actions. Here, it is the commitment which is the important aspect of this job.

What we achieved during these two years: considerable increase in membership, more schools willing to join us, teacher training courses run in regions, meaningful and effective Saturday sessions.

As I complete my years as a Head, I thank ETAG and you all for being such an amazing group of people. The talent, dedication, variety, joy, imagination you display underscore the variety of this profession and this organization. You have elected some outstanding people; we are in good hands. It was my great pride and honour to enter this position since I do believe that ETAG is a very strong organization of highly qualified, trained and committed professionals who are dedicated to excellence in teaching.

This achievement has taken a lot of years to accomplish and many thanks and high appreciation need to be extended to Rusiko Tkemaladze, Tsisana Tsiskaridze and Lali Mdinardze for their commitment of time and energy to make sure ETAG remains strong.

I am also pleased to be in a position to be able to give back a little of what I got from ETAG: involvement in some

management duties, choosing cutting edge issues for regular Saturday sessions, designing training courses, training teachers and trainers, publicizing ETAG activities inside and outside the country, publishing various articles.

Nana, you should be proud of having the opportunity to head this association. We are all helpful to give you further advice and tips on doing it successfully. I will continue cooperating with ETAG in different ways. We need to be strong because we face many daunting challenges.

What we achieved during these two years: considerable increase in membership, more schools willing to join us, teacher training courses run in regions, meaningful and effective Saturday sessions.



After the elections there was a raffle which made all the teachers winners!

ETAG Branches make difference

Batumi

**ETAG Regional Conference in Batumi
9-10 March, 2007**

Batumi ETAG core team met twice this month on 5 and 21 January and discussed the most important issues concerning the upcoming ETAG regional conference. The conference coordinator Nelly Kukhaleishvili is busy appointing trainers responsible for arranging the event details, designing and distributing of presen-

ters' and participants' forms, posters, badges and many more. The main themes of the conference are going to be: new textbooks and training courses, teacher development and leadership, activities for academic courses, revision of ETAG training courses, course-book adaptation and incorporation of ETAG training activities into school and new ways of assessing students. ETAG Batumi team is looking forward to a successful and fruitful conference.

At present ETAG Batumi office is hosting a 17 trainee MLLT course.

Participants from different secondary schools, State University and Kobuleti Private School-Lyceum are eagerly participating in the activities being presented by Nelly Kukhaleishvili, Tamar Mgeladze, Manana Mitaishvili and Nino Kvantaliani.

Batumi ETAG Head Tamar Mgeladze

Akhaltshikhe

On December 10 a Senior English language Fellow John Scafidi visited Akhaltshikhe ETAG. He held a two hour workshop - Beginning Academic Writing. It is significant to note that

Continued on p.4

Why ETAG Trainings?

ETAG courses have been very popular for the past year. According to statistical data from January 2006 until January 2007 the total number of the in-service training courses came up to 43. MLLT (more learning, less teaching) took the lead. It totalled 17. The next are DWS (Developing Writing Skills) and MELT (Modern English Language Teaching) courses. They were held 10 times. LDELTA (Language Development For English Language Teachers) course-4. Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) preparation course -1 and Modern English Textbook Seminar -1. The courses were held by 64 trainers. 570 trainees have attended the courses and 515 have been certified.

Here is what some of the Trainers think about the courses:

Babi Kenchuashvili ETAG Gori MELT trainer

I have been conducting MELT training course for three years. Nowadays it is a must for language teachers to update their classes. In the competitive world you have to meet the needs of modern English teaching. Some of our teachers haven't had any training at all. Others took them many years ago. A lot of things have changed in language teaching since then. There are completely new and different approaches that changed teacher centered classes to student oriented. More and more teachers, some novice and some already experienced feel that they need to do MELT course in order to work with new textbooks and teach all the four language skills successfully. MELT is the course which presents theoretical, as well as practical aspects of teaching in an easily accessible and interesting way. Teachers' favourite topics are: Bloom's taxonomy activities and lesson planning.

Tamar Mgeladze ETAG Batumi MLLT trainer

There are a lot of good aspects of being a trainee for MLLT course. Firstly, teachers come across with various activities which turn out to be adaptable to their classes and their needs. Also, they can use them without any complicated material and spending too much time on preparation. Secondly, these activities are oriented on communicative approach to teaching /learning process, practicing different language skills. Finally, students are more motivated. And student-oriented activities ensure their involvement in the learning process.

I readily recommend these course to any English teacher. By attend-

ing it, you will definitely enrich your experience and prevent yourself from falling into a routine.

Eka Topuria ETAG Kutaisi DWS trainer

This course is beneficial for the English teachers from some perspectives. It provides teachers with basic knowledge and understanding of modern methodology and gives them an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of theoretical and practical issues of teaching. Teachers are led step by step to process/product oriented writing classes with more emphasis on positive feedback and encouragement. With this approach students are not inhibited any more and produce highly imaginative pieces of writing with the hope that it is the content that is of utmost importance, and not only the language errors.

Mzia Skhulukhia, ETAG Tbilisi teacher trainer recommends:

MLLT 1 for those who would like to fill their 'Bag-of-Tricks' with some valuable, ready-made activities for their teaching.

MELT 1, 2 –to those who would like to raise their knowledge of the achievements of modern methodology.

LDELTA 1 – to the teachers who were busy with teaching most of the time and had less opportunity to articulate what they did or render them in a written form. Accordingly they can brush their oral or written habits of the English language.

Upcoming Events

John Scafidi will conduct a two-day ten-hour workshop on academic writing which will be focused toward university and high school English teachers in spring.

USA Embassy supports Rusiko Tkemaladze's participation in TESOL Convention in Seattle, US on March 19-23. At this worldwide forum of English teachers Rusiko will be making a presentation on ELT

developments and education reform in Georgia.

Readers Project is within the framework of ETAG overall development project. ETAG is authorized to sell a pack of a hundred readers at the price of 200 GEL to state schools and 245 GEL to private schools or the members of association.

Please contact *Tsisana Tsiskaridze*
ETAG Central office

Office hours: 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Tel: 25 08 56

Helping Teachers' Associations to Take Next Steps

Continued from p.1 ing, in fact, we were losing our members. The board analysed the situation, got feedback from its peers and decided to hold a one-day mini-conference "Model Lessons for School Teachers". As a result, we managed to get back our old members and get the new ones. True, we didn't know that it was thanks to 'marketing', so rephrasing Galileo's quotation the seminar" helped me to find it within myself "and made me realize how essential for teacher development are such factors as promotion and leadership.

One of the themes of the conference was teacher development programmes. Brana Lisic (British Council, Serbia) led a discussion together with Amol Padwad (English Teachers' Association of India) and me. Brana and Amol told us about informal gatherings of teachers to encourage discussion and exchange ideas in a relaxed atmosphere,

thus to appeal to those who are shy to attend formal trainings and help them build confidence. One golden rule for such gatherings is to help teachers feel comfortable. I closed the session with a presentation of our ETAG, its structure and development over the years, a wide range of training courses of different levels and degrees of specialization, which were developed as a result of needs analysis, train-the-trainer conferences and rules of approving trainers.

What is important to note is that three teacher associations from three different countries, have their own ways of teacher development which is a positive factor as it leaves options for sharing and learning. Another vital factor is that participants have the MOODLE site at their disposal for networking during and after the seminar, they are encouraged to post articles, take part in forums and continue post-seminar projects.

In this connection I would like to underline the importance of blogs, diary-type commentaries, which featured the ongoing chronicle of information throughout the seminar and thanks to blogs I restored the information in details while writing this article.

Going back to the title of this article, I want to say that our association is already taking steps. ETAG Batumi Branch is going to hold a regional conference "Advancing Towards Quality", with the help of the knowledge received at the seminar and with the experience accumulated by ETAG, our branch will acquire first-hand experience at organizing conferences.

I would like to express my gratitude to the British Council, the organizers of the seminar and ETAG for the opportunity to participate in the seminar, acquire knowledge, collaborate and share our experience of teacher development with peers.

What is ELTeCS and How Can I Benefit From It?

■ ELTeCS membership is around the 15,000 mark - and rising. That is, our list totals give us 14,500 subscribed members, of whom some are 'duplicates', i.e. members of more than one list. We take duplicates into account in our calculation of total membership as if it were 'readership' (i.e. similar to newspaper circulation, given that many members pass on what they receive to their colleagues in institutions, TAs (Teacher Association) and clubs). This multiplier effect leads us to our conservative estimate of 15,000 plus.

■ Please do encourage teachers in your country to join ELTeCS - especially experienced, influential, networking ones! ELTeCS is free, time-saving and technically undemanding; it's a great source of info about UK and local events, courses, competitions, products and offers; and it gives teachers a sense of professional community and support, connecting them with what their colleagues are grappling with/trying out elsewhere in their region and the world. They can join online at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/eltecs-join.htm> (mini registration form at <https://survey.britishcouncil.org/wix/p4711904.aspx>).

■ The six regional list Editors are continuing to post at least one digest a week to members. Some of the items are relevant to all (e.g. the BC website news); other items are of more interest to a particular region. Reminder: Please do post BC ELT news items to the ELTeCS lists yourselves, especially if they will be of interest to ELT practitioners in other countries in your region or elsewhere, as well as in your own country. The Editors' email addresses are below, if you would like to send your items direct to them. If you have questions contact:

*Penny Trigg - Manager English Language Networking
English and Exams British Council
10 Spring Gardens London SW1A 2BN
Email: penny.trigg@BritishCouncil.org
T: +44 (0) 207 389 4336
F: +44 (0) 207 389 4464*

English Teacher Opening

The American Academy in Tbilisi announces an opening for the position of a full-time English teacher, starting in August, 2007. Applicants must have a university degree in English, must be fluent in English, must have a Master's

Degree in the humanities or in teaching from an English language university, and must have teaching experience. Together with the AAT application form, interested persons must submit a resume, copies of their degrees, a statement of purpose, and two letters of recommendation.

ETAG Branches make difference

Akhaltzikhe

the workshop was very interesting and fruitful, there was a very warm and friendly atmosphere in ETAG office, teachers enjoyed the Sunday workshop, they were grateful as they acquired knowledge about topic sentence, major supporting sentence, minor supporting sentence, concluding sentence, thesis statement, etc. They were glad to welcome Mr. John *Scafidi*.

On December 24 Akhaltzikhe ETAG held the last Sunday workshop of 2006. The session was on Christmas Activities, it was very interesting and enjoyable. The teachers took active part and showed the activities they had done in their classes.

Gori

ETAG Gori branch is renewing its traditional Saturday sessions on February 17. We are still trying to select interesting materials for the teachers and conduct the speakers.

In February ETAG Gori will have only one session. The speaker will speak about the new textbooks. How they work in the classroom. How they help students get ready for writing topics for the National Exams.

From February a new course will be introduced to ETAG Gori teachers. LDEL I trainers Marina Chauri, Maya Bolashvili and Maia Makharashvili will conduct the course.

Teachers from Gori and different villages keep coming to the branch office, borrowing books and discussing issues of concern.



After an English test with particularly disastrous results, the teacher scolds the class and then she asks that everybody, who thinks that they are not particularly good at English, should stand up. For quite a while all students just look at each other, but nobody moves. Finally, little Johnny slowly stands up. "Very good, Johnny", says the teacher, "at least you realise where your weakness is and that gives you an opportunity to improve". "Oh, but I don't think I'm very bad at English, Madam" says Johnny, "but I simply felt sorry for you standing there all alone."

Tamuna Mardaleishvili - Editor-in-chief

Eka Tkavashvili - Assistant Editor

Naniko Gilauri - Assistant Editor

Rusudan Tkemaladze - Editorial advisor

Comments, suggestions and contributions to this publications should be sent at etag_newsletter@yahoo.com, or delivered to your local branch office.

ETAG Central office: Chavchavadze Ave. 36, University 5th building, 2nd floor, r. 8. Tbilisi, Georgia

Office Hours 2:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Tel: 25 08 56 e-mail: etag.tbilisi@caucasus.net

Website: www.etag.ge