



News Bulletin

January-February 2008

Working with Learners

News from Young Learners SIG:

EEC Children's 4th Conference



What do our students know?

Imagine that the students will be sending their proposals outlining plans to foreign countries, to America, to the UK. They inform the populace, they will also design draft posters that illustrate their plan. These posters will be posted throughout the "city".

They role-play a New York City town discussing reactions to the draft and alternative. They have prepared a scripted speech and are prepared to answer any of the questions. They are about the women of the world, about the other countries' culture, about the traveling, and of course about the life. Students gathered chronology they can write a series of newspaper articles for their newsletter covering the events as if the students were journalists at this time. Students create a map that identifies the location of incidents during the traveling. They can stage a debate on the different issues. Students can explore civic issues such as the rights and responsibilities of citizens to protest versus a responsibility to their government. Students can use one of the several published diaries of letters written by eye witnesses, create a guided imagery exercises to help other students imagine what one of the events might have been like. Students can share their ideas, founded, and prepared materials to others to explore diverse points of view. Students can analyze and interpret literature and then compose their own poetry that illustrates some aspects. At last they can give presentation in front of the large audience, use computer and astonish, surprised all the audience, well educated teacher trainers with their excellent work.

Inside this issue

- News from the SIGs
 - EEC 4th Conference
 - EECs in the regions
 - Reflection of Online Learning Experience
 - Making Learning Enjoyable and Memorable
- News from the Branches
 - Teacher Training in the branches
- Miscellaneous
- Your column
- You will read in our next issue
- Let's laugh together

AzETA would be very grateful for any comments on and/or contribution to our News Bulletin. We need your support.

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AzETA have branches in Baku, Ganja, Khachmaz, Lenkaran, Mingechevir and Sheki.

But this is not a dream. It is a real life. A world of discovery is waiting for the future generation. I think our students are ready for it. Students have gained and gaining a unique perspective on history, ancient cultures and scientific research.

On 2 February EEC (Enjoy English Club) held its next conference in Baku Slavic University. Members of the club are children from different schools of Baku. Club really improves children's knowledge on history, geography, literature.



Conference was organized well. The students' work is the mirror of their future professional career. Thanks to the leadership of AzETA this conference gave an opportunity to learn, to serve on, to prepare for and present at the conference. This is also one of AzETA's development programs that unites the students and teachers from different schools of Baku to come together, share experiences and learn from one another.

EEC members Eldar Ayutov, Leyla Abdullazadeh, Nigar Talibova, Ozal Aliyev, Aynur Damirova, Ali Agali, Ajdar Hacıyev made presentations at the highest level achieving to involve all the participants in active discussion, sharing views, answering questions.

There were also participants from Ganja, Lankaran, Qabala and Khachmaz.

The Conference was co-funded by IREX and AzETA. We are grateful to IREX who regularly supports different activities of the EEC and encourages club members to make more achievements.

By Ayna Sadigova
Editor-in-Chief

Welcome new Enjoy English Clubs



AzETA is delighted to welcome the regional Enjoy English Clubs that have recently joined Baku EEC.

Seeing the effectiveness of EEC Baku, the US Embassy supported AzETA's proposal on establishing EECs in 5 more regions of Azerbaijan, including, Ganja, Khachmaz, Kurdemir, Lenkaran and Salyan. Ministry of Education sent a support letter to the Education Departments of these regions to create all conditions for the Clubs to function successfully.

AzET Mingechevir Branch was also encouraged from this and decided to establish EEC in Mingechevir, too.

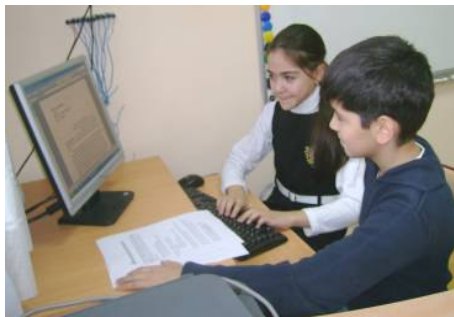
The co-coordinator of this club is Gulnaz Hajiyeva. EEC Children's 4th Conference was a positive impact for her which stimulated her to establish EEC in AzETA Mingechevir Branch.

This is how she shares her impressions: "I was given a great opportunity to participate in the 4th EEC conference in Baku. After Conference I decided to establish EEC in Mingechevir. AzETA leadership gave me a lot of advice. Thanks to them I organized this Club on 9 February 2008.

I have gathered a lot of materials for teaching new members of Mingechevir EEC. Baku EEC gave me action plan of the Club. The first lesson was on 16 February. There were 10 members. I began my lesson with making story, put questions and answers. The children were very active and happy. They worked in pairs and groups. I think this kind of methods of teaching will encourage all my students to learn English better. Sevil Nuriyeva and Peace Corps volunteer Carolyn participated in my lessons. Our Club opens every Saturday at 10.30. I invite teachers and students from different schools English to our Club. I believe that our Club will develop further."

MANAGING THE CHALLENGE

Reflection of Online Learning Experience and Collaborative Project Integration



Macmillan English Dictionary defines “challenge” as something that needs a lot of skills, energy, and determination to deal with or achieve, especially something you have never done before and will enjoy doing. I think this definition perfectly fits for the situation with my online learning experience.

Before starting the “Creative Writing and Language Arts” course I had only the slightest idea about online studying. Whenever I heard that someone was taking online courses I asked myself: Can I study online? Am I prepared enough for this? If I take the course, will I have time to accomplish all the assignments? I must confess that the answer was not always positive. For me it was something challenging that I tried not to think about. But the time has passed, and now my story begins.

One day, in October when I was at our weekly meeting in Azerbaijan English Language Teachers’ Association I found out that some of our members were going to participate in the online courses. To tell the truth I got very happy and at the same time excited having realized that my name was on the list. It was not only great honor for me but also great responsibility, as I was among the online “pioneers”.

The course started on the 15th of October. I had to get acquainted with International Education and Resource Network, read Welcome message and look through the objectives of the course. In my case it was not a very easy task to do. I couldn’t get online! Thanks to our facilitators! If they hadn’t helped me, I wouldn’t be writing this paper now. IEARN welcomed me and I became a member of the great international community. I liked iEARN from my very first steps. I was impressed by the number of forums, collaborative projects.

Actually, reading and responding other people’s postings took all my evenings, but I enjoyed it. I talked to people who I had never met before and probably will never see, and moreover, I felt that I am a member of a big family. In my opinion, it is essential that people communicate and collaborate within the community they belong to. Besides, “iEARN is a community of educators who share the vision that online collaborative projects can both enhance learning as well as the quality of life on the planet”. In my opinion, SHARE is an important part of educational process. I would add to this CARE and EXPLORE. I think it helps students learn how to collaborate with teachers and students all around the world for better future and find answers to the questions: “What is my place in the World Community” - What can I do for building a better world?”.

My role as a teacher was to create secure environment for my students so that each of them could feel comfortable and be certain that their steps even small ones were valued and actively encouraged.

So, we started the project “Write On – the World is small”. As it was our first experience, we were learning together and it made the work more exciting and fruitful. I believe that our students need to see that we are involved learners and we must create, write along with them. It doesn’t mean that we have to make them write without stops. In my opinion, frequency of writing is not associated with improvement of writing. Specific and direct instruction, purposefulness, real audience, positive teacher comments are more effective in promoting writing skills. They can inspire and motivate the students.

Effective instruction includes the use of sample papers from other students’ writing and literature as well as the teacher’s own writing. We have to introduce them to the techniques before we can expect them to do a great job. I personally liked the idea of peer conferences which can be of great help here. Students will sooner share with a peer as it makes them feel comfortable. Students are learning to write and to invite peace, love and harmony into their classrooms.



If asked, many teachers would say that they know much about project based learning, but not all of them had a unique opportunity to do it online. Our first experience, in my opinion, was a success. It was beneficial for both teachers and students as they learned how to collaborate online and select the problems that are relevant to them and think Globally about Local.

They have become members of a big community (much bigger than their classroom) where everybody has their own responsibilities and where the outcome of the work very much depends on the effort and contribution of each member. Online communication makes students search using technological tools and Internet, analyze, try to find solutions to the problems and learn real life. The students learn how to become independent learners.

The course approached its finishing line. We received good training, gained very useful experience and now we are ready to apply iEARN projects in our classrooms.

As for me, at the moment I am interested in attending special courses for teacher-trainers where the participants could share and spread iEARN experience throughout the country they live in and in this way involve more people in the project work. If iEARN provides such a course I would be happy to participate in it and on completing it organize teacher-training workshops. When the teachers are aware of online courses structure, they will easily manage their challenges.

Elmira Ilizarova
AzETA International Relations Officer

Making Learning Enjoyable and Memorable



The 5th NQT Project trainings on Units 9 and 10 (Starter Pack) were held on February 3rd in Sumqayit and Ganja. There were 12 participants in Sumqayit and 13 participants at Ganja session. The observer of Ganja session Gulshan Huseynova was satisfied with the preparation work done by both trainers: Xalida Aliyeva and Vafa Maharramova. The observer of Sumqayit session Gulshan Samadova highly appreciated the great support by Sumqayit Educational Department, especially Gulbahar khanum given to our trainers Farida Huseynova and Ayna Sadigova in the organization of the session and both trainers and the observer are thankful for the venue. Baku session was held on February, 10 Sunday. Everybody was waiting for the session eagerly, as we promised the trainees a surprise. Yes!!! The trainees got discs with their photos and two lovely melodies. Furthermore an English language fellow from Georgetown University Ronny McDonald made a 30 minutes presentation on International Professional Associations for English teachers as well as on his activities within AzETA which also was a surprise for our NQTs. Baku session trainees and observer, especially noted Amalya Musayeva's wonderful performance and high level organization and conduct by Gulshan Samadova during the session. The observer of Baku session was Huzura Agayeva – a real friend of NQT project. She observed Ganja, Sumqayit and Baku sessions at different times and her professional feedback helped the trainers to design their session's best way. We are looking forward for the next and last session in March, which we hope will be as successful as the previous ones. Special thanks to BC for the financial support in the organization of the trainings. We would also want to note that an article on NQT project was published in the official issue of Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan "ELM, TEHSIL, MEDENIYYET" on February, 8. The article enlightens the importance of the project for the NQTs and gives information about regional sessions.

Teacher Trainer SIG.



Two AzETA members Ayna Sadigova and Khalida Rustamova were in Mingechevir AzETA Branch on 9 February under the AzETA Outreach Teacher Training Project with the financial support of the Open Society Institute - Assistance Foundation. The topic was:

” Classroom skills and competence”. The aim of this workshop was to help the teachers to create the conditions in which learning can take place. Classroom management is importance if you have poor classroom management skills, the chances are that your lesson won’t work. We gave and shared a lot of suggestions about classroom management. What can you do if there is small room; it is difficult to move from the narrow space, where the polished cement has been painted black to serve as blackboard, Students have no books. There is no electricity; you have only a piece of chalk. How can the students work in groups, or in larger classes? Who will be centred the classes? How can we use student centred methods?

As you see there are a lot of questions. Teachers must be not only the Pedagogue but also Physiologist. They must be ready for all the difficulties and for their solutions. They must know how to work in heterogeneous classes. They must try to find new ways of coping with the large number of students, managing the classes, using pair and group works to encourage cooperative learning, motivating students in heterogeneous classes.

During the workshop all the teachers were very active. They shared ideas, skills.

We tried to show all the methods for making learning better, more fun and useful for both Trainers and Trainees.

Ayna Sadigova
Teacher Trainer

GCE collaborates with AzETA

In February all Azerbaijani teachers involved with the GCE program were busy with their students working on and entering into new collaborative projects with schools in the US and around the world. 2 teachers with 60 students have registered for the new round of Learning Circles- team of 6-8 teachers and their classes joined in the virtual space of an electronic classroom. Both teachers have recently completed the Professional Development Course, enjoyed the collaboration so much that decided to experience the new type of team work with groups of teachers and students from other countries. They had a round table talk at AZETA’s weekly meeting about the benefits of the course, the knowledge they got and the skills their students built during the collaborative work. As a result, 2 more teachers applied for the course using the scholarship granted to Azerbaijan by GCE program and have just started the online classes. Teachers involved in “Folk Tales” and “YouthCan” projects got high appreciation of their work by the coordinators of these projects. “Green Way” society of Ismailil students working on Environmental issues made experiments on water samples, took photos of rubbish in the area and had a meeting with local authorities to introduce their researches. GCE teachers conducted training for primary school students on how to keep the environment clean and held the campaign of cleaning the school yard and the small park nearby. We want to emphasize the role of Peace Corps volunteers in implementing the projects in the regions where teachers and students have less opportunities and don’t have good English language skills. On February, 2 three iEARN alumni presented the iEARN program to 20 Baku schools at the Enjoy English Club (EEC) annual conference, “Empowering Youth Through EEC,” hosted by the Azerbaijan English Teachers Association (AzTEA). The alumni discussed their involvement in iEARN projects, particularly how the projects helped them improve their English and qualify for exchange programs in the U.S. The alumni talked about the positive impact of the global outreach and how involvement in iEARN projects made a difference in their lives. We placed the Mini grant information at AZETA and encourage the teachers to apply for them. A number of teachers have already come up with interesting ideas and we are awaiting great events in near future.

Irada Samadova

Informal gathering of EAMP teachers



EAMP teachers with Dr Lisa Harshbarger

On 8 February Dr. Liza Harshbarger, Regional English Language Officer for Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia from the US Embassy in Kiev and US Embassy Education Assistant Afet Ibrahimova and AzETA Prezident Ragsana Mammadova had a working supper at the "Bibi" restaurant with EAMP teachers. The aim was to get to know EAMP teachers' activities on Microscholarship project. Ragsana Mammadova emphasized US Embassy long-lasting support to AzETA and mentioned Afet Ibrahimova's great attention to our Association.

We had a good time around the table and also discussed a lot of things about AzETA's activities, especially Microscholarship project. Dr Harshbarger shared her impressions with us, mentioned how much she valued our work and learned many things of this project: our classes, cultural events and madrasa students' work on journalism. We had warm discussion around table and she supported all the teachers and shared her experiences from other countries and mentioned that cultural diversity of the people from other countries helps develop opinions and span the continents.

We tasted very nice Persian pillo : zerish pillow , pomegranate pillow under Persian music. This restaurant is an oriental style restaurant and was decorated with ancient examples of Azerbaijani and Persian history.

Liza Harshbarger liked all of them, wished us all the best with our important work and we had a family photo with her.

Farida Huseynova
EAMP teacher

YOUR COLUMN

Did you know? The History of Valentine's day

As early as the fourth century B.C., the Romans engaged in an annual young man's rite to passage to the God Lupercus. The names of the teenage women were placed in a box and drawn at random by adolescent men; thus, a man was assigned a woman companion for the duration of the year, after which another lottery was staged. After eight hundred years of this cruel practice, the early church fathers sought to end this practice... They found an answer in Valentine, a bishop who had been martyred some two hundred years earlier.

According to church tradition St. Valentine was a priest near Rome in about the year 270 A.D. At that time the Roman Emperor Claudius-II who had issued an edict forbidding marriage. This was around when the heyday of Roman empire had almost come to an end. Lack of quality administrators led to frequent civil strife. Learning declined, taxation increased, and trade slumped to a low, precarious level. And the Gauls, Slavs, Huns, Turks and Mongolians from Northern Europe and Asian increased their pressure on the empire's boundaries. The empire was grown too large to be shielded from external aggression and internal chaos with existing forces. Thus more of capable men were required to be recruited as soldiers and officers. When Claudius became the emperor, he felt that married men were more emotionally attached to their families, and thus, will not make good soldiers. So to assure quality soldiers, he banned marriage.

Valentine, a bishop , seeing the trauma of young lovers, met them in a secret place, and joined them in the sacrament of matrimony. Claudius learned of this "friend of lovers," and had him arrested. The emperor, impressed with the young priest's dignity and conviction, attempted to convert him to the roman gods, to save him from certain execution. Valentine refused to recognize Roman Gods and even attempted to convert the emperor, knowing the consequences fully.

On February 24, 270, Valentine was executed.

YOU WILL READ IN THE NEXT ISSUE

1. **EAMP students celebrate
Easter and Novruz in Gabala**
2. **AzETA member is in TESOL
conference**
3. **Report of EAMP teachers**
4. **News from branches**
5. **News from SIGs**

NOW IT IS TIME TO LAUGH



These are real comments made by teachers on their student report cards.

1. Since my last report, your child has hit rock bottom and has started to dig.
2. I would not allow this student to breed.
3. Your child has delusions of adequacy.
4. Your child is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot.
5. Your son sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them.
6. The student has a "full six-pack" but lacks the plastic thing to hold it all together.
7. This child has been working with glue too much.
8. When your daughter's IQ reaches 50, she should sell.
9. The gates are down, the lights are flashing, but the train isn't coming.
10. If this student were any more stupid, he'd have to be watered twice a week.
11. The wheel is turning but the hamster is dead

A little boy goes to his father and asks: 'Daddy, how was I born?'

The father answers: 'Well, son, I guess one day you will need to find out anyway! Your Mom and I first got together in a chat room Yahoo. Then I set up a date via e-mail with your Mom and we met at a cyber-cafe. We sneaked into a secluded room, where your mother agreed to a download from my hard drive. As soon as I was ready to upload, we discovered that neither one of us had used a firewall, and since it was too late to hit the delete button, nine months later a little Pop-Up appeared that said: 'You got Male!'