

Teachers Helping Teachers in Kyrgyzstan 2021



Introduction

Teachers Helping Teachers (THT) works to help fellow educators and students in and around Asia. To accomplish this, THT provides teacher-training workshops that exhibit practical and teacher-friendly approaches to language education that are informed by current research in the field. This poster describes the activities of THT in Kyrgyzstan, Central Asia, where THT offers a series of workshops every September tailored to the needs of instructors in the Kyrgyz context.

(1) The state of teaching in Kyrgyzstan

Facilities in schools and universities lag behind those in the advanced industrialized OECD countries but the country is trying to catch up. Universities are pursuing international partners and accreditation. Mobile phones are now widely used. Yet schools still lack enough good quality textbooks, resource books and teaching materials. There are insufficient blackboards, marker pens, computers or moveable desks and chairs, even in the cities. Teachers are in desperate need of the kind of training we provide.



(1) The state of teaching in Kyrgyzstan

(2) Partnership with the English Teachers' Association, FORUM

The local equivalent of JALT in Kyrgyzstan is the FORUM English Teachers' Association. For several years, THT has partnered with FORUM to provide annual seminars in Bishkek. In addition, THT works with FORUM in its efforts to assist teachers in less accessible parts of the country. Working within the limitations of the country's infrastructure, we have run workshops in Karakol, Jalal-Abad, Osh and Talas Abad.



(2) FORUM English Teachers' Association

(3) Working with our university host institution in Bishkek

THT is fortunate to have willing university partners who provide us with classrooms, gather the participants together, and offer us wonderful hospitality. This will be our 13th year at Bishkek State University (BSU). Many graduates of BSU become diplomats, interpreters, language teachers and translators. Our interactions there are with instructors of both Japanese and English.



(3) Bishkek State (formerly Humanities) University

(4) Presentation types

Our THT delegates run workshops in a variety of classrooms, PC labs, seminar rooms and even lecture theatres, with participants ranging from deans of university faculties to novice school teachers and university students specializing in pedagogy and languages. Here, participants are seen retelling their traditional folk tales as narrative texts using a roll of perforated reusable whiteboards (top), attending a plenary (centre), and gathered for an opening lecture (bottom). Local teachers also present with us as co-presenters and host poster presentation sessions. Last year was held as an online seminar, involving around 20 international and local presenters with dozens of participants. In 2021, we are anticipating online only or hybrid seminars (online plus face-to-face).



(4) Presentation types

(5) What to expect in Kyrgyzstan

There is an enormous sense of accomplishment in making a difference. THT is about sharing what we know with other teachers who may not have had the same opportunities for professional development as us. At the same time, THT delegates gain enormously from their interactions with Kyrgyz teachers, who of course know much more about the local teaching context than we do. We become more accomplished teachers through hosting workshops, trying new ideas, putting our research into practice, and gaining new insights and feedback regarding our teaching. We also make lifelong connections and friendships. And besides the seminars, most of us are overwhelmed by the wonderful Kyrgyz people, food and hospitality (top), the cultural icons such as the hats and crafts (middle), and the nomadic lifestyle symbolized by the yurts (bottom).



(5) What to Expect in Kyrgyzstan

