



EWB NEWSLETTER



MARCH 2026

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ISSUE NO. 16

**CELEBRATING 5 YEARS OF LEARNING
AND MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS!**



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FROM THE EDITORS

Dear EWB Members, welcome to the 16th issue of the EWB Newsletter!

This issue is especially meaningful for our community because it brings together several important occasions.

*First, we are proud to celebrate the **fifth anniversary of the EWB Network**. Over the past five years, our community has been filled with growth, learning, challenges, and meaningful connections. Together, we have gone beyond the ordinary in supporting teachers and students across Tajikistan.*

We are deeply grateful to every member of our Network, as well as to our partners and supporters who have believed in this project from the beginning. We are committed to our mission because we know that together we are making both small and meaningful changes in the lives of teachers and students throughout our beloved Tajikistan. We see the results: more confident educators, stronger professional connections, improved teaching practices, and the growth of our students.

*Second, **March is Women's History Month**, which holds special significance for our community. The majority of EWB members are women—dedicated teachers who inspire their students every day. Many of them successfully balance multiple roles in their lives: they are professionals, daughters, wives, and mothers. We are proud to work alongside these remarkable and often unsung heroes of our society.*

*Finally, this month brings one of our most beloved celebrations—**Navruz**, the holiday of renewal and new beginnings. Navruz reminds us of the beauty of nature's awakening and the cycles of life that bring hope and fresh opportunities. May this Navruz bring warmth, harmony, and joy to you and your loved ones. In times that may feel uncertain, may you find strength and support in your families, friends, and community.*

As always, this issue of the newsletter brings together inspiring stories from our members, articles on TESOL and teaching practices, and updates about the work and achievements of the EWB Network. We hope you will find the materials both useful for your teaching and inspiring for your professional journey. Please note that all materials in this newsletter belong to their respective authors, and thank you to all the contributors of this newsletter!

*Happy 5th anniversary, dear EWB members!
Happy Women's History Month!
And happy Navruz!*

MARCH 2026



CONTACT US!

The 16th EWB Newsletter features information about EWB activities, updates, opportunities, and teaching tips compiled by the EWB team.

Other articles are contributed directly by their respective authors and reflect their own views. If you wish to quote or use any information from this newsletter, please make sure to acknowledge the source and authorship.



**Nasiba
Mirpochoeva**
EWB Director
E.: director@ewb.tj



**Gulnoro
Zulobieva**
EWB Program Manager /
Content Curator
E.: zgulnora82@gmail.com



**Zuhro
Saidova**
Public Relations (PR) &
Social Media Marketing
(SMM) Specialist
E.: pr@ewb.tj



**Karin DeJonge-
Kannan**
EWB Proofreader; Emeritus
Principal Lecturer of
Linguistics, Utah State
University
E.: karin.dejongekan@usu.edu

We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to our respected proofreader, **Professor Karin DeJonge-Kannan (U.S.A.)**, who generously volunteers her time to review our newsletter.

If you wish to contact any member of our team, please use the information provided on this page. We look forward to receiving your suggestions and ideas!



FEEDBACK & SUGGESTIONS

Have something to share or suggest? Email us or drop by the EWB office.

 www.ewbn.org

 45 Mirzo Tursunzoda Street, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

 info@ewb.tj

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PROJECT UPDATES

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2025 EWB National Conference

ENGLISH WITHOUT BORDERS TURNS 5!

On March 1, English Without Borders Network (EWB) celebrates its fifth anniversary — a meaningful milestone reflecting years of dedication, collaboration, and a shared commitment to strengthening English language education across Tajikistan. This anniversary is not only a celebration of the Network's staying power, but also a tribute to the educators whose passion and perseverance have transformed classrooms and inspired learners throughout the country. Five years ago, this vision began with a simple yet powerful belief: **when teachers grow, students succeed.**

English Without Borders Network launched on March 1, 2021, with a clear purpose: *to support the Tajik government's agenda to enhance the country's English language teaching and learning capacities by 2030*, and is officially supported by the Ministry of Education and Science of Tajikistan. Particularly, the Leader of the Nation, President Emomali Rahmon, has positioned the learning of English as a strategic national goal, labeling it a key *"language of science and progress"*, which is a recurring theme in his annual addresses to the Majlisi Oli (Parliament).

Since 2021, EWB has built a community of English teachers through accessible professional development to foster a culture of continuous learning and collaboration. For many educators, particularly those working in rural and remote areas, opportunities for training and professional exchange were limited previously. EWB emerged as a bridge — connecting teachers, sharing expertise, and creating pathways for professional growth and leadership through introducing TESOL methodologies both through online and in-person training sessions.

Over time, what began as a small initiative has grown into a vibrant nationwide network. Educators from diverse regions and abroad now participate in a professional community grounded in mutual support, reflective dialogue, and a shared commitment to excellence in teaching and learning. Through this growing network, teachers are no longer working in isolation; they are connected to colleagues who share ideas, challenges, and solutions.

Through workshops, informational sessions, webinars, mentorship sessions, speaking clubs, master classes, conferences, and peer-learning initiatives, EWB equips educators with practical strategies that bring learning to life. Teachers explore **student-centered methodologies**, active learning techniques, critical thinking, and inclusive classroom practices, along with the introduction of **American AI tools** that foster innovative teaching and student engagement and participation in EFL classrooms.

The impact of this work is visible in classrooms where teachers report more confidence, better rapport with students, improved teaching practices, and professional growth, all of which enrich students' learning experience. *"Before attending EWB trainings, my lessons were mostly teacher-centered. Now my students work together, share ideas, and take responsibility for their learning. The classroom atmosphere has completely changed,"* shared **Gulrukhsor Navruzova**, a secondary school teacher from the Khatlon region.

Another educator, **Mehri Niyozshoeva** from the Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO), reflected: *"EWB helped me rediscover my motivation as a teacher. I realized that professional development is a lifelong journey, and I am proud to be part of a community that inspires growth."*

A defining strength of EWB is its emphasis on **mentorship** and **leadership** development. Through its Training of Trainers model and regional representation, experienced educators guide their peers, organize local learning opportunities, and ensure the sustainability of professional growth within their communities. This approach nurtures local leadership while strengthening the national professional network.

"EWB is more than a network — it is a professional family. We support each other, exchange ideas, and celebrate each success together," noted **Parvina Sultonova**, an EWB Master trainer from the Sughd region.



From left to right: **Nasiba Mirpochoeva**, **Madina Kamolova**, **Gulrukhsor Navruzova**, **Mukaddam Abdurahmonova**. EWB Training of Trainers in Hisor, Tajikistan



In the center, **Mehri Niyozshoeva**, EWB National Conference 2022, Dushanbe, Tajikistan



From left to right: **Farzona Saifuddinova**, **Parvina Sultonova**, **Yodgorjon Ochildiev**. EWB Training of Trainers in Dushanbe, Tajikistan

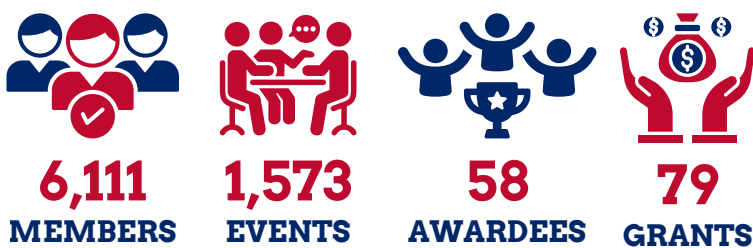


EWB online launching ceremony 2021

This five-year mark is a milestone that has been reached through the dedication of the EWB core team, trainers, regional representatives across all regions, active members, and partners who generously contribute their time, knowledge, and enthusiasm.

As English Without Borders marks this anniversary, we look ahead with purpose and optimism. The Network's mission remains **to expand opportunities for teachers, strengthen regional engagement, and promote sustainable and innovative approaches to professional development to follow the global and national agenda.**

Five years of progress affirm the transformative power of collaboration, shared vision, and professional commitment.



As EWB enters its next chapter, its foundation remains strong — built on cooperation, integrity, and the unwavering dedication of educators who believe in the transformative power of education. As Helen Keller once said: *Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much!*

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the **Ministry of Education and Science of Tajikistan** and the **U.S. Embassy** for their ongoing support, as well as all **EWB members, trainers, regional representatives,** and **partners** in the country and abroad for their commitment, passion, and hard work in shaping this remarkable community and inspiring the next generation of learners.

Happy 5th Anniversary to English Without Borders — and to the inspiring community of educators shaping the future of English language education in Tajikistan!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY WISHES FROM OUR MEMBERS

Happy 5th Birthday, EWB!

Looking back, I am filled with gratitude for the conversations we have shared and the knowledge you have built. This community has been a steady source of insight and encouragement. Thank you for five wonderful years – I can't wait to see what the future holds!

I wish for EWB to keep inspiring, connecting, and empowering educators for many years to come. May its impact ripple outward, touching classrooms and communities everywhere.

Happy 5th birthday – and here's to the next five!



Bakhtibegim Mamadrayonova,
English Teacher, SPCE, UCA,
Khorugh, GBAO, Tajikistan

EWB has always been more than just an organization for me — it feels like home. It has shaped my professional journey, strengthened my teaching philosophy, and allowed me to grow as a regional representative, regional leader, speaker, and webinar facilitator. Through conferences, training sessions, and collaboration with inspiring educators, I have not only developed my own skills but also supported other teachers in their growth. I am truly grateful to be part of such a warm, visionary, and borderless international community.

Congratulations to the entire EWB family on its 5th anniversary!

My wish is for EWB to continue expanding globally, empowering even more teachers, and creating transformative educational opportunities without borders. May it remain innovative, inclusive, and impactful, building bridges between cultures and educators worldwide. I hope EWB continues to nurture leaders and inspire sustainable change in education.



Bakhtiyor Davlatmurodov,
English Teacher & Teacher
Educator, Fulbright FLTA at the
University of Kansas, U.S.A.



Dilfuza Sharipova,
English Teacher, Intellectual and Educational Center "Nasli Dono", J.Rasulov District, Sughd Region, Tajikistan

On EWB's 5th birthday, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the EWB team. Since becoming a member of this community, I have learned a lot, developed professionally, and met very great teachers from across our country and other countries.

EWB has opened new doors for me. I have participated in the Regional Conference and met a lot of wonderful people who have motivated me to work more and harder. In online sessions, I am learning a lot from the teachers across our country.

I hope EWB will continue for at least another 5 years in order to help us English teachers around our country.



Mahina Asrorova,
English Teacher, Secondary School #47, Hisor, Gymnasium Donishvar-1, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Happy 5th Birthday, EWB!

I'm grateful to be part of this network. EWB has helped me a lot as a teacher — I've learned new ideas, joined useful courses, and felt real support from the team. I've participated in the ToT program and became a Teacher Trainer! Very, very thankful that EWB is always ready to help and encourage us!

I wish EWB more success, more projects, and many happy teachers in the future. Keep growing and inspiring us!



Mehrangez Khujaeva,
English Teacher, Abdurahmoni Jomi Private School, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Happy 5th Birthday, EWB!

Five years of impact, growth, and meaningful collaboration are truly impressive. Thank you for the inspiration, opportunities, and positive change you've created. Wishing you continued success and an even brighter future ahead.

I wish EWB a future filled with growth, success, and new opportunities. May it continue to inspire people, bring positive change, and make a real difference in many lives. I hope each year becomes stronger and more impactful than the last.

Happy 5th birthday, EWB!

Thank you for creating so many opportunities for teachers and learners to grow, connect, and inspire each other. I really appreciate all the training, resources, and support you provide. Wishing you continued success and impact!

My wish for EWB's future is to have more offline trainings and sessions held in smaller cities. Most opportunities currently seem to be available for teachers in major cities like Dushanbe and Khujand, while places like Isfara have very few such chances. Expanding to these smaller towns would allow more teachers to benefit from EWB's programs.

Happy birthday, dear EWB!

I wish you success and prosperity. It's truly a great community with really kind members. I found a lot of like-minded friends among EWB participants.

Also, I'm grateful for the opportunities and weekly webinars that make us professionals.

My wish is for EWB to remain the same with all its weekly seminars, trainings, conferences, and great opportunities. Thanks for everything that you do for educators.

Happy 5th birthday to EWB!

During these years, EWB has made a great improvement in the lives of English teachers by creating strong professional connections across Tajikistan. It has motivated teachers, provided valuable opportunities to develop their knowledge, and introduced us to colleagues from all regions of our country. This network has become a source of inspiration, cooperation, and growth. Thank you for empowering teachers and strengthening English educators in our beloved country, Tajikistan.

My wish is that EWB continues to grow, reach more teachers in Tajikistan and other countries, and keep inspiring educators to learn and work together. May it always create new opportunities for development, connections, and success. I hope we will stay united and one day celebrate even 100 years of EWB together.



Nigora Olimova,
English Teacher, Private
Intellectual School TORUAN-
Mahmudova, Isfara, Sughd Region,
Tajikistan



Nuriya Oshurmamadova,
English Teacher, International
University of Tourism and
Entrepreneurship, Dushanbe,
Tajikistan



Ramazon Hayitov,
English Teacher, Secondary School
#26, A. Jomi District, Khatlon
Region, Tajikistan



Munavar Zaripova,
English Teacher Trainer, PO Safinai
Durakhsh, Khujand, Sughd Region,
Tajikistan

I am grateful to the EWB Network for the great opportunity given to me to be a member and Regional Representative of Sughd Region for 3 years. Together with EWB, I have grown as a professional trainer and shared my knowledge with a lot of teachers from different areas. This Network has become valuable for everyone who needs to improve his/her skills and get professional support by participating in professional development workshops, speaking clubs, and regional and national conferences. We enjoy learning and relaxing by taking part in ToT programs in the most beautiful places of Tajikistan, such as Green Wood House and Safeddara. I feel happy when I see our members winning awards.

My wish for EWB is to continue flourishing and growing its membership, because it is the only platform where everyone can find what he/she needs for growing professionally. I wish EWB staff, who are doing a great job for teachers, prosperity, good luck, and enjoyment in their activities.



Bahridin Mandonov,
English Teacher, Secondary School
#38, Jayhun District, Khatlon
Region, Tajikistan

Being surrounded by people who motivate and inspire you is everyone's dream, and creating such a team isn't easy. But for English teachers in Tajikistan, such a network was already created five years ago under the name EWB. It helps teachers not only in our country but around the world unite as a team.

Congratulations on EWB's fifth anniversary, and I wish you continued success!



Mukaddam Abdurahmonova,
English Teacher, Secondary School
#27, Unji Village, Bobojon Gafurov
District, Tajikistan

My journey with EWB began five years ago, and I proudly consider myself part of this amazing team. All of my achievements have been possible thanks to the support of this unique platform, the first of its kind in Tajikistan, which has truly connected English teachers from across the country and provided us with opportunities to develop our professional skills through guidance from some of the best educators in the world.

I cherish EWB like my own child; coincidentally, my daughter was also born five years ago.

I believe that every educator who wants to improve their professional skills should join this supportive community. Together, we can learn, share, and grow!

Mavluda Aliboeva,
English Teacher, Institute of Economy and
Trade of Tajik State University of Commerce,
Khujand, Sughd Region, Tajikistan

So happy being with this network.

I regularly join your online sessions, and
they help me to develop my career.

May you be with us for many more years.
Happy birthday!

Zukhra Nazarbekova,
English Teacher, Access Scholarship
Program, Tajikistan

Dear, EWB Team, from the bottom of my
heart I congratulate you with a such
remarkable day!

I wish you continued success in helping
English teachers in building their bright
future!

Nargis Safolova,
English Teacher, Tajikistan

May collaboration and dedication within
EWB bring us even greater achievements
and positive change across the globe.

Wishing the EWB team ongoing success
in creating lasting impact, improving
lives, and inspiring future English
teachers.

Somoni Kiromov,
English Teacher, Secondary School
#41, Tajikistan

First of all, I send my greetings and
regards to each of you, members of EWB,
and allow me to congratulate all of you on
the occasion of this valuable and
honorable celebration, the 5th
anniversary of EWB.

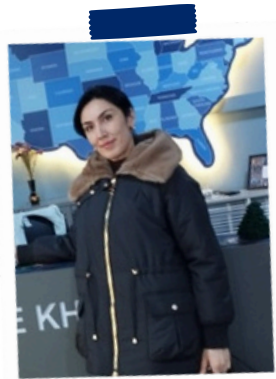
I wish all of you success and progress in
your careers and endeavours. May the
EWB family always be united, friendly,
and supportive of one another. I also
express my gratitude to the organizers of
EWB and to the respected national
leader, his excellency Emomali Rahmon,
for their attentive care and serious
dedication to English language learning.
Thank you, EWB!



Zokirjon Nazarov,
English Teacher, State lyceum
#1 of Abdurahmoni Jomi
district, Khatlon region
Region, Tajikistan

I wish all the best for
our network. May our
collaboration and
cooperation never end.
I'm so happy to be a
member of this
network.

Greater success and
worldwide fame are my
wishes for EWB.



Parvina Sultonova,
English Teacher, Khujand,
Sughd Region, Tajikistan

My best congratulations
on your 5th birthday!

Live long EWB and
never stop supporting
teachers. You are the
one where all educators
rely on for our career
development.



Yodgorjon Ochildiev,
English Teacher, Secondary
School #110, Vahdat, Tajikistan

Thank you and happy
birthday, EWB
Network!

I have been a member
of EWB since 2025. It
is the best program to
develop our
knowledge and help us
improve.

My wish for EWB is to
continue going
forward in helping
English educators and
scaling up its
contribution!



Zeboniso Murodova,
Coordinator of English Resource
Center at Bokhtar State University,
Khatlon Region, Tajikistan



Farzona Vatanieva,
English Teacher, Otambek
Ilchibekov's Secondary School #9,
Tajikistan



Zumrat Alishaeva,
English Teacher, Juma Sangov's
Secondary School #4, Rushan,
GBAO, Tajikistan

Happy 5th Birthday to English Without Borders!

From my first days as a Regional Representative to becoming an Honorary Member, I have witnessed its incredible growth and cherished every moment of being part of this community. I am grateful to Nasiba and the amazing team for their passion, leadership, and dedication. The webinars, English clubs, and courses have inspired me and so many teachers across Tajikistan. Wishing EWB continued success, joy, and even greater achievements!

My only wish is that EWB not only continues to grow but also becomes a place where ideas sparkle like fireworks, friendships bloom like gardens, and every teacher discovers a little magic in learning English. May EWB surprise, inspire, and delight us for many anniversaries to come!

Happy Birthday to an outstanding English teaching team!

Keep inspiring, educating, and transforming lives through the power of language.

Love you! May your future be as bright as the knowledge you share and as strong as the foundation you've built.

Your dedication to breaking language barriers and creating opportunities through English learning truly makes a difference. Because of your commitment, many teachers' lives have changed. Teachers are developing professionally because of you.

Wishing EWB prosperity, luck, and collaborative working among English teachers and organisations around the globe.



EWB ToT Winter 2026 cohort, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

EWB TRAINING OF TRAINERS (TOT) WINTER 2026

From January 2 to 6, 2026, **17 English language teachers** from across Tajikistan successfully completed the EWB Training of Trainers (ToT) program, an intensive, practice-oriented professional development experience designed to strengthen national capacity in English language education.

This **five-day training** represented far more than a series of workshops. It was a strategic investment in human capital: a deliberate effort to cultivate a new generation of **teacher-leaders** equipped to design, deliver, and evaluate high-quality professional development initiatives throughout the country.

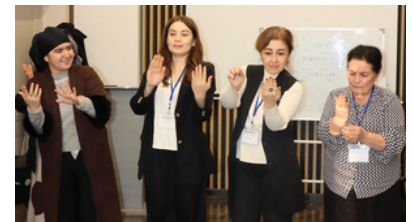
The program focused on:

- Writing structured and engaging **event highlights** to document impact
- Preparing rigorous **workshop proposals**

- Formulating **SMART goals** and clearly articulated learning outcomes for professional development sessions
- Applying principles of **andragogy** to ensure adult-centered, needs-responsive training
- Designing and facilitating **demo workshops** using the experiential learning cycle

Beyond design and facilitation skills, participants explored **tools for assessing workshop quality**. They also took part in **model sessions** demonstrating effective approaches to teaching language skills using the newly introduced **Grade 10 and 11 English textbooks**.

Working collaboratively, teachers designed and **delivered their own demo workshops**, receiving structured, constructive feedback from trainers and peers. This iterative process fostered reflective practice, strengthened instructional confidence, and reinforced a culture of professional accountability.



EWB ToT Winter 2026 cohort, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

A significant highlight of the training was the visit of **Amber Aura**, Public Affairs Officer from the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe. With the support of the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe, the new English textbooks—central to EWB ToT—were developed and introduced into schools across the country.

Amber Aura's presence underscored the importance of **international partnership in advancing national educational priorities**. During the visit, participants received special gifts as a gesture of encouragement and recognition for their dedication and excellence. This symbolic act reinforced a shared commitment to strengthening English language education in Tajikistan through collaboration and mutual support.



EWB ToT Winter 2026 cohort, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Professional growth is most powerful when it occurs within a supportive community. A half-day **teambuilding** retreat in Safed-Dara provided participants with an opportunity to connect beyond the formal training environment. In this setting, teachers strengthened professional relationships, built trust, and cultivated a sense of shared mission.

Such moments are not peripheral to professional development; they are foundational. Strong networks of educators enable peer mentoring, knowledge exchange, and long-term collaboration—key drivers of sustainable impact.

The ToT directly advances the vision of EWB: to unite English teachers into an active professional community committed to continuous growth, leadership, and excellence. By equipping teachers not only with pedagogical skills but also with the capacity to train others, EWB is building a multiplier effect—expanding access to quality professional development across regions.

At a national level, the initiative aligns closely with Tajikistan's strategic priorities, which emphasize improving teaching quality, modernizing curriculum implementation, strengthening competency-based instruction, and enhancing students' communicative proficiency in English.



EWB ToT Winter 2026 cohort, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Most importantly, the ToT embodies a forward-looking philosophy: **sustainable educational transformation begins with empowered educators**. When teachers are confident designers of learning, reflective practitioners, and collaborative leaders, the impact extends far beyond individual classrooms.

We are proud of all 17 graduates and expect their leadership to generate that their leadership will generate meaningful change in schools and professional communities across Tajikistan. Their journey does not conclude with the completion of the training—it begins there.



EWB ToT Winter 2026 cohort, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

EWB WINTER TOT PARTICIPANTS DELIVER FOLLOW-UP TRAININGS ACROSS REGIONS

The EWB Winter Training of Trainers (ToT) initiative reached an important milestone as participants completed a series of **post-ToT follow-up trainings** in Dushanbe, the Districts of Republican Subordination (DRS), Sughd, and Khatlon. These cascading trainings were designed to extend the impact of the January ToT program by equipping more educators with practical strategies for implementing the new **Grade 10 and 11 English language curriculum** developed by the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe.

Led by dedicated ToT graduates, the follow-up sessions engaged more than **70 English language teachers** in intensive, hands-on professional learning. The trainings focused on the **practical application of modern pedagogy**, supporting teachers in shifting from rote memorization toward **communicative, learner-centered classrooms**. Participants explored effective strategies for teaching vocabulary, listening, and reading, while observing expert modeling of classroom techniques.

A key highlight of the program was collaborative **microteaching**, where teachers worked in groups to design and deliver demo lessons. These sessions provided a valuable bridge between theory and practice, allowing educators to apply new methods in a supportive environment while receiving constructive feedback from trainers and peers.

The training series concluded with certificate ceremonies recognizing participants' commitment to professional growth.

Teachers expressed deep appreciation for the guidance and mentorship provided by the EWB Network and highlighted the value of collaboration in strengthening English language teaching across regions.

Through these follow-up trainings, EWB continues to expand its professional learning network and ensure the sustainability of the ToT program by empowering trained educators to cascade knowledge, support their peers, and foster high-quality English language instruction throughout Tajikistan.



Guljahon Mirzoeva and Yodgorjon Ochildiev's workshop at the Youth and Children's Creative Center, Vahdat, Tajikistan



Bibisoro Ramazonova's workshop at the Secondary School #33 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan



Gulandom Hukumatova's workshop at International Presidential School in Dushanbe, Tajikistan



Nargis Safolova's workshop at the International Presidential School, Dushanbe, Tajikistan



Mehrangez Khujaeva and Parvina Hakimova's workshop at Gymnasium #74 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan



Farzona Latifi and Parvina Sultonova's workshop in the American Space Khujand, Tajikistan



Farzona Saifuddinova's workshop at the Secondary School #1 in Hisor, Tajikistan



Dilovar Sadulloev's workshop in the Skills Development Center, Danghara, Tajikistan



Farzona Latifi and Parvina Sultonova's workshop in the English learning center "Intellect", Khujand, Tajikistan

HOW THE EWB TOT PROGRAM TRANSFORMED MY TEACHING JOURNEY

My name is **Dilovar Sadulloev**, and I am an English teacher at School #8 in the Dangara district. For many years, my focus was solely on the four walls of my classroom and the success of my individual students. However, my perspective on education shifted significantly when I joined the English Without Borders (EWB) Network. Seeking to expand my horizons, I applied for and was accepted into the intensive Training of Trainers (ToT) program, a journey that has fundamentally redefined my professional identity.

I officially became an active member of the EWB Network in 2023. While I had attended various webinars, the turning point was my participation in the EWB Training of Trainers (ToT) program in January 2026.

The program focused on advanced pedagogical strategies, including adult learning principles, workshop facilitation, and the integration of critical thinking into English Language Teaching (ELT). Unlike standard professional development, the ToT challenged me to think not just as an educator, but as a mentor capable of guiding my peers.

Before the ToT program, one of my greatest professional challenges was the isolation of rural teaching. In Dangara, resources can be limited, and the opportunity for high-level collaborative training is rare. I often wondered if my methods were truly aligned with international standards.

The ToT program provided the solution. I learned how to utilize Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) even in resource-constrained environments. Since implementing these techniques at School #8, I have observed a 25% improvement in my students' speaking proficiency scores. More importantly, I gained the confidence to stand by my colleagues and lead them.

My professional trajectory has improved since attending the English Without Borders (EWB) Training of Trainers ToT Course. This training is more than just a course; it is a testament to my ability to facilitate change. Because of the skills I gained, I have successfully conducted 4 follow-up activities for English teachers in the Dangara district. The recognition I've received from the EWB network has validated my hard work and established me as a key resource person in my local educational community.

In the spirit of EWB's culture of sharing, I am committed to mentoring newly graduated teachers in our district. I believe that by "training the educators," we create a ripple effect that benefits thousands of students rather than just the few dozen in our own classrooms.

The EWB Network has been the bridge between my potential and my performance. It has taught me that while one teacher can change a classroom, a network of teachers can change a nation. I am deeply grateful to EWB for believing in the educators of Dangara in the Khatlon region. To my fellow teachers: do not just teach—inspire, share, and engage with this network. As the proverb goes, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Through EWB, we are going further than ever before.



EWB ToT Winter 2026 cohort, Dushanbe, Tajikistan



EWB ToT Winter 2026 cohort, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

MY JOURNEY FROM CLASSROOM TEACHER TO GLOBAL MASTER TRAINER



EWB ToT Winter 2026 cohort, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

My name is **Gulandom Hukumatova**, and I am a National Trainer, Program Coordinator, and Education Specialist based in Dushanbe. I currently serve as a Coordinator, Test Assessment Specialist, and English Teacher at the International Presidential School (IPS). My career, which began with a diploma in Linguistics and Intercultural Communication in 2002, has been dedicated to international education and high-level pedagogical development. I officially joined the English Without Borders (EWB) Network in 2023, a partnership that has served as a cornerstone for my professional evolution.

In January 2026, I was selected for the EWB Master Workshops & Training of Trainers (ToT) Program, an intensive 30-hour professional development seminar. This program was specifically designed to create a cohort of Master Trainers capable of delivering advanced teacher training and mentorship across Tajikistan.

The impact of my EWB membership has been transformative for my career trajectory. By completing the EWB ToT Program, I am eligible to receive the EWB Master Trainer Certificate and nationwide recognition at the EWB National Conference 2026. These newly acquired skills complement my extensive experience as a Lead Trainer for The Tajikistan Secondary School English Teachers Professional Development Program (TSSET), implemented by American Councils in close collaboration with English Without Borders, supported by the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe, where I conducted capacity-building workshops for secondary school teachers to improve nationwide pedagogical standards. This experience has successfully bridged the gap between my administrative expertise and my passion for classroom excellence.

Building on my Master Trainer status, I am currently leading an exclusive Professional Development Workshop series at the International Presidential School (IPS) during January and February 2026. Supported by the Ministry of Education and Science, the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe, and EWB, this series focuses on "New Curriculum Mastery" and the "Deconstruction" model for core language skills.

In the future, I plan to utilize my position to support other educational institutions and apply for an EWB mini-grant to organize additional regional workshops. My long-term aspiration is to help build a more communicative and effective language classroom environment throughout Tajikistan.

English Without Borders is more than just a network; it is a catalyst for professional evolution. The EWB ToT seminar has equipped me with the technical and pedagogical skills necessary to lead the next generation of Tajik educators. I am deeply grateful for these opportunities and encourage my colleagues to engage with EWB to reach their full potential. As the saying goes, "The best way to predict the future is to create it."

Throughout this seminar, I achieved several key professional milestones:

- **Andragogy and SMART Goals:** I mastered the principles of adult learning (andragogy) and learned how to set SMART goals and clear learning outcomes for professional development sessions.
- **Curriculum Implementation:** I explored best practices for teaching based on the new English textbooks for grades 10 and 11, ensuring my training methods align with the latest national standards.
- **The Deconstruction Model:** A major focus of my training involved mastering the "Deconstruction" framework to effectively teach listening, reading, vocabulary, grammar, and writing.
- **Workshop Design and Evaluation:** I gained hands-on experience in drafting workshop proposals, managing budgets, and assessing training quality through pre- and post-tests and feedback collection.



Gulandom Hukumatova and Tagoimurod Davlatov

MEHRANGEZ KHUJAEVA'S JOURNEY FROM EWB PARTICIPANT TO TRAINER

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the ToT program for English teachers. I am truly thankful to all of you- Mrs. Nasiba Mirpochoeva, EWB Director, Mrs. Gulnora Zulobieva, EWB Program Manager & Content Curator, Ms. Zuhro Saidova, EWB PR & SMM Specialist, Mrs. Mehrbonu Abdulloeva, EWB Regional Representative in Dushanbe and the District of Republic Subordination (DRS), as well as the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe and EWB Network — for your guidance, support, and encouragement throughout this journey. This program has been a very meaningful and valuable experience for me.

I still remember attending your sessions in Khujand in 2022 and quietly dreaming of becoming a trainer one day. At that time, it felt like a distant goal. Today, I am grateful for the opportunity to take a step in this direction thanks to your trust and support.



EWB ToT Winter 2026 cohort, Dushanbe, Tajikistan



Mehrangez Khujaeva and Guljahon Mirzoeva

When I joined the recent training sessions, I had some doubts about myself, but your belief in me helped me feel more confident and motivated. I truly appreciate the opportunity you gave me to grow professionally and to learn from your experience.

After my first session, I felt grateful for the positive atmosphere and the constructive feedback from the participants. I am now preparing for the next session and looking forward to continuing this learning process.



Mehrangez Khujaeva and Parvina Sultonova

This program has helped me gain more confidence in my professional abilities. I usually teach children at school, so teaching English teachers was a new and important experience for me. I am thankful for everything you have taught me and for the example you have set as trainers and educators.

Once again, thank you all for your dedication, professionalism, and support. I am very grateful to be part of this program and to be learning from such inspiring educators.



Nasiba Mirpochoeva, Mehrangez Khujaeva, Gulnora Zulobieva



By vaeenma from Getty Images via Canva Pro

CALL FOR PROPOSALS: EWB MASTER WORKSHOP **MINI-GRANT** SUMMER 2026

EWB is pleased to announce the opening of applications for the EWB Master Workshop Mini-Grant Program.

This opportunity is **exclusively available to EWB Master Trainers and Regional Leaders** — educators who have completed the EWB Training of Trainers (ToT) and Leadership Camp programs and are prepared to lead high-quality professional development initiatives in their regions.

The EWB Master Workshop Mini-Grant supports experienced teacher-trainers in organizing impactful, regionally based **professional development workshops for English language teachers across Tajikistan**.

Each selected Master Trainer may receive **up to \$500** to design and implement a structured four-day workshop that:

- Strengthens classroom practice,
- Promotes modern English language teaching methodologies,
- Integrates technology effectively,
- Builds sustainable local professional learning communities.

Master Trainers should submit a detailed workshop proposal including:

- Clear learning outcomes
- Workshop agenda (4 days)
- Budget plan (up to \$500)
- Mentorship and follow-up strategy

All proposals will undergo review before approval and fund disbursement.

APPLICATIONS OPEN: APRIL 24-MAY 24, 2026

Approved grantees will:

- Conduct a four-day, in-person Master Workshop
- Train 15-20 English teachers from their region
- Focus on priority instructional themes aligned with national needs

To ensure sustainability and measurable impact, Master Trainers must:

- Maintain engagement with participants for at least two months after the workshop
- Observe 7-8 participants applying new strategies (in-person or online)
- Provide coaching, feedback, or model lessons
- Encourage participants to join EWB activities
- Submit a comprehensive follow-up report

Outstanding trainers may be invited to lead future ToT cohorts or advanced national workshops.

Eligible EWB Master Trainers are invited to submit their proposals by **May 24th, 2026**.

Detailed submission guidelines and templates are available on our website: <https://ewbn.org/the-ewb-master-workshops-training-of-trainers-tot-program-copy/>



TESOL CONFERENCES 2026: ENHANCING ELT, EMPOWERING LEARNERS IN AN AI-INCLUSIVE ERA

As part of its commitment to advancing equitable and sustainable English language education in Tajikistan, on February 6-8, 2026, the English Without Borders team, including Nasiba Mirpochoeva, EWB Director, and Gulnoro Zulobieva, EWB Program Manager & Content Curator, proudly participated in the **TESOL 2026 - 30th International Conference and Exhibition**, held at the American University in Dubai. 'TESOL Conferences', as an international event, was jointly organized with the American University in Dubai. TESOL Conferences (formerly TESOL Arabia) is a UAE-based association that strives to advance expertise in English language teaching in multilingual contexts.

The Conference brought together English language teaching professionals and education leaders who represent a wide variety of contexts for 2 days of debates, workshops, presentations, and plenary sessions. Participants were engaged in discussions about the evolving landscape of language education and the role of technology and innovation in shaping the future of teaching and learning under the theme of "Enhancing ELT: Empowering Learners in an AI-Inclusive Era." Celebrating three decades of TESOL's global impact, the conference gathered educators, researchers, and leaders from around the world to explore how English Language Teaching is evolving in an era shaped by artificial intelligence and innovation.



TESOL 2026, American University, Dubai

For EWB, participation in TESOL 2026 was a strategic investment in strengthening local capacity. Many sessions addressed challenges that closely mirror those faced by English teachers in Tajikistan, such as limited access to professional development opportunities, digital divides, and the need for practical, context-sensitive approaches to innovation and ethical use of AI. Discussions on AI in ELT, reflective practice, critical thinking, and teacher agency offered models that can be adapted for low-resource and rural teaching environments.

Over the two-day conference, the EWB team participated in more than 25 workshops and professional sessions, gathering tools, frameworks, and case studies to inform future teacher training across Tajikistan. These insights will be cascaded through EWB's national network via training-of-trainers programs, regional workshops, and online professional learning spaces, ensuring that international expertise reaches classrooms even in the country's most remote regions. Moreover, the EWB team participated in the pre-conference Master Class on February 6 with Dr. Ron Morraine from the U.S.A. and Germany on topics such as AI, creativity, and real-world learning.

On February 7, as TESOL Conferences marks its 30th anniversary, the special PechaKucha session brought together founding voices and long-standing leaders to reflect on three decades of growth, change, and professional evolution within the field. Through the fast-paced PechaKucha format (20 slides x 20 seconds), presenters shared personal narratives that trace their journeys as educators, innovators, and leaders in TESOL. EWB Director Nasiba Mirpochoeva delivered a compelling session on EWB Agents of Change: Sustainable Professional Development in Tajikistan during the PechaKucha presentation session. Her presentation described an approach to overcoming geographical, economic, and technological obstacles to teacher professional development through a training program designed to reach teachers even in the most remote areas of Tajikistan. Participants explored the module creation and training process and heard highlights and lessons learned during the project.

Overall, the TESOL Conference was dynamic, enriching, and connected the EWB team with global professionals who are ready to network and collaborate with the EWB Network in Tajikistan after the conference.

PRE-ORIENTATION SESSION | FEBRUARY 6, 2026

The EWB team, Nasiba Mirpochoeva, the Director of English Without Borders, and Gulnoro Zulobieva, the Program Manager and Content Curator of English Without Borders, also attended a **pre-conference Master class of Dr. Ron Morrain**'s on February 6, 2026, which supported effective engagement with the conference program. The Master Class session was focused on topics such as AI, creativity, and real-world learning that are in full motion right now. Ron Morrain, as a leading and inspiring professional, delivered a hands-on deep dive into AI-powered Project-Based Learning for EFL - where teachers design authentic PBL cycles, explore differentiated strategies, and rethink assessment for the future. The energy in the room was dynamic, the ideas were practical, and the innovation was exciting. This is the kind of professional learning that transforms classrooms and makes educators more creative.



Dr. Ron Morrain's Master Class, American University, Dubai

For EWB, the pre-orientation played a critical role in translating global discourse into local action. Early networking and guided reflection helped frame how TESOL's global innovations can be responsibly and realistically implemented within Tajikistan's educational system - reinforcing EWB's role as a bridge between international expertise and local teacher empowerment.



TESOL 2026, American University, Dubai

EWB PARTICIPATES IN THE SCIENTIFIC SEMINAR PROGRAM IN DUSHANBE



Moscow State University in Dushanbe

On January 23, Nasiba Mirpochoeva, the EWB Director, participated in the program's scientific seminar in Dushanbe, where she delivered a workshop on the topic "5 Tips for Becoming a Better Educator" for 25 participants at Moscow State University Branch in Dushanbe.

The event brought together English language instructors and students from the faculties of Linguistics and International Relations to discuss both theoretical and practical aspects of teaching. The program covered a range of topics, including developing students' critical thinking through classroom activities, a research presentation on idiomatic expressions with gastronomic vocabulary in Tajik and English, and student presentations on indigenous and artificial languages.

The seminar aimed to support teachers' professional growth and connect theory with practical teaching. Participants learned tips to become better educators, ways to boost students' critical thinking, and insights from linguistic research. As a result, they gained practical skills, new ideas, and a stronger connection between teachers and students.

REGULAR ONLINE EWB EVENTS

EWB Mentor Series

The EWB Network is nurturing teacher growth through its **weekly one-hour mentorship sessions on Telegram**. Led by practicing English teachers, these sessions create a supportive space for sharing real classroom experiences, practical strategies, and inspiration. They foster a culture of collaboration and continuous learning.

Join us and be part of this growing community of passionate educators!

- **Every Wednesday at 6 PM**
- **EWB Telegram Group**



EWB Thursday Webinars

The EWB Network continues to empower educators through its popular Thursday Webinars—weekly online sessions dedicated to professional growth and innovation in English language teaching.

Each webinar features inspiring local and international speakers who share practical ideas, new methodologies, and success stories from their classrooms.

- **Every Thursday at 6 PM**
- **EWB Facebook Page & Zoom**



EWB Speaking Club

The EWB Network supports learners and teachers alike through its interactive Online Speaking Club, designed to help participants build confidence and fluency in English. Led by enthusiastic facilitators, these weekly sessions create a friendly, inclusive environment where members discuss diverse topics, exchange ideas, and practice communication skills in real time.

- **Every Friday at 5 PM**
- **EWB Telegram Group**



The EWB Network continues to inspire and connect educators across Tajikistan through its range of **regular online events**, including Thursday Webinars, Weekly Mentorship Sessions, and Online Speaking Clubs.

These interactive programs offer continuous professional growth, practical teaching ideas, and opportunities for meaningful collaboration.

Whether learning from expert speakers, exchanging experiences with peers, or practicing English in a supportive environment, participants become part of a vibrant community dedicated to **innovation, lifelong learning, and teaching without borders**.

NEWS FROM EWB REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES



Image: EWB Regional Representatives on the map of Tajikistan

MEHRBONU ABDULLOEVA: DUSHANBE & DRS

From December 2025 to February 2026, EWB significantly expanded its footprint across Dushanbe and the Districts of Republican Subordination (DRS), combining strategic outreach with sustained, practice-oriented professional development.

The period began with active engagement in higher education institutions. In December, informational sessions at the Republican Center for Identification of Talents and the Russian Tajik Slavonic University introduced university educators, pre-service teachers, and students to EWB's mission and professional development ecosystem.

By late December and January, outreach expanded both offline and online. Through WhatsApp and Zoom sessions, teachers from Dushanbe, Tursunzoda, and Vahdat joined discussions about membership benefits, TOEFL and IELTS preparation opportunities, and long-term engagement pathways within the Network. Demand-driven follow-up sessions demonstrated growing trust and interest, particularly among pre-service teachers eager to bring their peers into the community.

Alongside network expansion, EWB delivered intensive multi-day Professional Development (PD) trainings focused on the effective implementation of the new English Language textbooks for Grades 10 and 11.

In Tursunzoda (DRS), secondary school teachers completed a structured training cycle that culminated in microteaching demonstrations. Participants modeled textbook-based lessons, applied active reading strategies, experimented with grouping techniques, and engaged in structured peer feedback.

In Dushanbe, similar three-day training cycles were implemented at School #34, School #71, and School #80, where teachers progressed from foundational methodology to fully executed demonstration lessons followed by analytical reflection sessions.

This three-month period reflects a strategic balance between network expansion and instructional depth. EWB did not simply introduce itself to new audiences; it embedded itself within school communities through sustained, skill-based training aligned with national curriculum reforms.



Educational Department of Tursunzoda



Secondary School # 71, Dushanbe



Secondary School # 71, Dushanbe



Secondary School # 80, Dushanbe

ALISHER ALIQULOV: KHATLON REGION



Education Department, Shahritus District, Khatlon Region



Lyceum #2, Qubodion District, Khatlon Region



Secondary School #1, Jaloliddini Balkhi District, Khatlon Region



Education Department, Shahritus District, Khatlon Region

From January to February 2026, EWB strengthened both learner engagement and teacher capacity across the Khatlon Region under the leadership of Regional Representative Alisher Alikulov. The period was marked by a strategic balance between student-centered activities and structured, multi-week professional development cycles for educators.

On January 19, at State Lyceum #2 in Qubodion district, 14 English language learners participated in an interactive Speaking Club focused on *"The Effective Use of Social Media."* The discussion moved beyond casual conversation into analytical thinking: students evaluated digital habits, debated the educational value of platforms, and reflected on maintaining mental health and digital balance. The session strengthened communicative competence while promoting responsible digital citizenship.

This learner-centered momentum continued on January 29, when EWB collaborated with State Lyceum #2 to organize a Spelling Bee contest for 39 students. Conducted in competitive rounds, the event fostered vocabulary development, public speaking confidence, and academic motivation.

Beginning January 24, a month-long PD cycle engaged 14-15 educators at the Shahritus Education Department. Across five sessions, teachers observed and analyzed model lessons on Vocabulary, Reading, Listening, Grammar, and Speaking using the updated Grades 10-11 textbooks.

On February 7, a larger-scale PD program launched at School #1 in Jaloliddini Balkhi district, engaging 30 educators. The first day integrated an informational session about EWB's professional growth roadmap with methodological training on SMART lesson objectives and lesson staging (warm-ups, lead-ins, PPP, and assessment).

The work of the English Without Borders Network in Khatlon demonstrates a clear developmental trajectory: empower learners, model excellence, transfer methodology, and build sustainable professional communities.

ZOKIRJON NAZAROV: KHATLON REGION

From December 2025 to February 2026, EWB Network strengthened its presence across the Khatlon Region through coordinated outreach led by Regional Representative Zokirjon Nazarov.

The outreach began on December 13 at Dangara State University, where informational sessions and a discussion club engaged university English teachers and pre-service teachers. Participants were introduced to EWB’s mission, membership structure, and opportunities. The discussion component focused on the role of technology in higher education, highlighting how digital tools can enhance engagement, personalize instruction, and improve assessment—while requiring ethical implementation and institutional support.

Following the university engagement, we expanded activities across Norak, Vose, and Dusti districts, combining informational sessions with structured Professional Development Sessions (PDS).

In Norak Town, 22 secondary school English teachers participated in an informational session followed by a Professional Development (PD) workshop on writing SMART lesson objectives.

In Vose District, 16 teachers joined an informational session and a PD workshop focused on the effective use of the new Grades 10 and 11 English textbooks. Demonstration segments modeled learner-centered strategies and interactive techniques aligned with curriculum requirements.

In Dusti District, 15 teachers attended another informational session and PD workshop centered on “How to Use AI Tools in English Language Teaching.” Participants explored AI-supported lesson planning, classroom activity design, and formative assessment strategies.

Beyond teacher development, direct learner engagement was prioritized. On January 21, a Speaking Club was conducted with 18 learners at State Lyceum #1 in Abdurahmoni Jomi district. Through structured pair and group work, learners developed fluency, expanded topic-specific vocabulary, and practiced critical thinking.



Dangara State University



Secondary School, Norak Town



Secondary School, Dusti District, Khatlon Region



Secondary School, Vode District, Khatlon Region

SAMIRA BOYMATOVA: SUGHD REGION



Institute of Economics and Trade of the Tajik State University of Commerce in Khujand



English Learning Center "Zamima", Khistevarz



American Space Khujand



International Job Fair, Tajik State University of Commerce



From December 2025 to February 2026, EWB demonstrated sustained and strategic growth in the Sughd Region, combining intensive professional development, higher education partnerships, AI integration, and public engagement under the coordination of Regional Representative Samira Boymatova.

The momentum began in early December with focused workshops on effective lesson planning. At the Institute of Economics and Trade of the Tajik State University of Commerce and later in Bobojon Gafurov District, teachers and pre-service students strengthened their ability to design SMART lesson objectives. Through hands-on drafting, peer feedback, and structured reflection, participants left with ready-to-use templates and clearer alignment between objectives, activities, and assessment.

By mid-December, the focus expanded to technology integration. At the English language center "Zamina" in Khistevarz, teachers explored how AI tools could support lesson planning.

January marked a shift toward large-scale institutional collaboration. At the Mining and Metallurgical University of Tajikistan (MMUT) in Buston, 25 university English teachers participated in a three-day intensive workshop. The training moved systematically from interactive lesson planning to the practical integration of AI tools such as Grammarly and Canva, culminating in participant-led demo lessons with structured peer feedback and certification.

Simultaneously, continued teacher training at the Tajik State University of Commerce focused on Task-Based Learning (TBL) and the art of effective feedback. Educators analyzed classroom scenarios, practiced formative assessment strategies, and refined communicative tasks aligned with learning outcomes.

Throughout January and February, Sughd-based sessions consistently integrated American AI tools into instructional design. Workshops at the University of Tourism and Entrepreneurship of Tajikistan in Khujand focused on improving writing instruction through AI-supported paraphrasing, grammar feedback, and content generation. Teachers practiced using tools such as Copilot and QuillBot while simultaneously discussing academic integrity and responsible AI use.

Additionally, on February 21, EWB participated in the International Job Fair hosted at the Tajik State University of Commerce. The event gathered over 20 national and international organizations and highlighted employment pathways and professional networking opportunities.

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SUCCESS STORIES

Image: Esra Afşar from Pexels via Canva Pro

FROM VILLAGE CLASSROOM TO GLOBAL STAGE



Alisher Aliqulov,
English Teacher,
Khatlon Region,
Tajikistan

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”
– Lao Tzu

Hello, dear colleagues! My name is Alisher Alikulov, an English Language teacher at State Lyceum #2 in the rural Kubodiyon district of Khatlon region. For the past six years, I’ve been teaching English—not just as a subject, but as a bridge to inspire, support, and connect with my students.

From the very beginning, I sought ways to make my lessons engaging and meaningful. I joined every professional development session I could, eager to learn more. Then, on October 29, 2021, everything changed. A guest trainer at one of our PD sessions introduced us to the English Without Borders (EWB) Network Project. Inspired, I immediately registered, and within weeks, I found myself at the first EWB National Conference and EXPO 2021, which was organized in Dushanbe, the capital of our country, Tajikistan. That moment opened an entirely new world of opportunities and marked the start of a new chapter in my career.

In 2022, I also applied for the EWB Master Workshop Mini-Grant and was honored to be selected as a finalist, which allowed me to further contribute to my teaching community. Later, I joined the English Teaching Mentor (ETM) Program, supported by the U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan. This program equipped me with the knowledge and confidence to grow as a teacher-trainer, enabling me to lead professional development sessions and give back to my colleagues with greater impact.

Afterward, I noticed that EWB was seeking a regional representative in Khatlon. I applied and was accepted. This role allowed me to support not only my local teachers but hundreds across the region. Over the years, I built confidence, became a better trainer, connected with amazing educators, and continued growing myself, all while contributing to a strong national network focused on “Community, Capacity, Connectivity.”

As Thomas Carlyle wisely said, “Go as far as you can see; when you get there, you’ll be able to see further.” Reaching new heights with the EWB Network, I wanted deeper education, stronger professional development, and broader knowledge of teaching English. That desire led me to apply for the Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement (TEA) Program. The process was challenging—it required persistence, hard work, and patience—but luckily, I was selected as a finalist, opening the door to one of the greatest journeys of my career.

Arriving in the United States as a Fulbright TEA finalist was unforgettable. I, along with other fellows from different countries, studied at UMass Lowell in Massachusetts, attended intensive courses on pedagogy, and explored innovative teaching strategies, classroom management, and technology integration. We also had the chance to visit museums and libraries, and learn about American history and culture firsthand. One of the most exciting parts was learning to use modern digital tools and even artificial intelligence in education, which showed me new ways to make learning more interactive and meaningful.



Fulbright TEA finalists 2025

Every week, I observed lessons in an American school, learning directly from a mentor teacher. These experiences reminded me that teaching is more than textbooks and classrooms—it is about cultural exchange, human connection, and global community.

Beyond academics, I was proud to present my country—its history, culture, traditional foods, and clothes—both at UMass Lowell and at an American school, introducing students to Tajikistan. Once a week, I visited an American school, observing lessons and learning new teaching methods directly from my mentor teacher. I also met teachers from across the globe, exchanging ideas, sharing challenges, and building a true community of educators without borders. These experiences enriched my perspective, showing me that teaching extends beyond classrooms—it is about cultural exchange, human connection, and sharing knowledge globally.

When I returned to Tajikistan, I felt like a transformed educator. I applied the strategies and technologies I had learned, designing interactive, student-centered lessons. My students became more curious, motivated, and engaged. I also shared my experiences with other teachers, organizing workshops, and encouraging the use of AI and modern tools. Most importantly, I brought back inspiration—the belief that education can break borders and open opportunities. My students now see that if their teacher can reach a global stage, they too can dream big.

As I reflect on my journey from a small classroom in Tajikistan to the Fulbright stage in the USA, it proves that persistence, passion, and lifelong learning truly matter. Teaching is not just a profession—it is a mission to inspire, connect, and create change. If one teacher from a small village can reach such heights, then every teacher, no matter where they are, can keep learning, growing, and believing that everything is possible. As Walter Elliot said, *“Perseverance is not a long race; it is many short races one after the other.”*



THE FULBRIGHT TEACHING EXCELLENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT (TEA) PROGRAM

The Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program brings approximately 100 international **secondary-level teachers** to the United States for a six-week program to take academic seminars for professional development at a host university and to observe and share their expertise with teachers and students at local secondary schools.

The Fulbright TEA provides general academic seminars focusing on new teaching methodologies, student-centered learning, content-based instruction, lesson planning, and instructional technology training for teachers.

After returning home, teachers who successfully complete the program will be eligible to compete for small grant awards for essential teaching materials, follow-on training for other teachers, collaborative projects between participating American schools and their home schools, and other activities that build on the exchange experience.

The FTEA fellowship is fully funded and provides:

- Funding to cover Internet-based TOEFL (iBT) testing
- J-1 visa support
- Round-trip airfare to and within the United States
- An end-of-program workshop in Washington, DC.
- Academic program fees
- Housing (generally shared with other program fellows) and meals
- Accident and sickness medical insurance coverage
- A daily allowance for meals and incidentals during the academic program
- A book/professional development allowance

Read more about the program on the U.S. Embassy website: <https://tj.usembassy.gov/the-fulbright-teaching-excellence-and-achievement-tea-program/>.



Fulbright TEA finalists 2025

TURNING PROFESSIONAL PASSION INTO REGIONAL LEADERSHIP



Mehrbonu Abdulloeva,
EWB Regional
Representative in
Dushanbe and DRS

My name is Mehrbonu Abdulloeva, and for over 15 years, I have dedicated my life to the art of education. My current roles are as diverse as they are fulfilling: I serve as an English Language Instructor at the Aviation English Center, a Teacher Trainer, an EWB Regional Representative, and most recently, an EL Instructor for the Access Program. Although my entry into the world of English Language Teaching (ELT) began almost by accident, these years have transformed a mere profession into a lifelong calling.

Upon graduating from the Institute of Foreign Languages with a degree in Linguistics, I fully intended to follow the trends of the time and build a career as an interpreter. However, fate intervened in the form of my mentor, Kholida Azizovna, who had been my teacher for five years. Seeing a potential in me that I had yet to recognize, she encouraged me to stay at the institute as a teacher assistant and pursue an academic future. Looking back, I am profoundly grateful to my dedicated "master-guru" for leading me down this path; what started as a recommended career move blossomed into a deep-seated passion for teaching, training, and connecting with the global ELT community.

My journey with English Without Borders (EWB) began in 2021, following the challenging global period of COVID-19. While the world moved online, a critical gap was exposed in Tajikistan: the lack of a unified digital platform for the English Language Teaching (ELT) community.

Specializing in ESP (Aviation English) Purposes, I felt completely isolated, and I wanted to evolve my teaching skills and leverage my knowledge, but unfortunately, there was no central hub for networking or sharing best practices in our country. Consequently, I began exploring international free online resources and courses, even those that didn't provide certificates. When EWB launched in 2021, it wasn't just a website; it was the professional home every EL teacher in our country had been dreaming of. When I first encountered EWB on social media, I was overwhelmed with happiness as it was the realization of a collective need for a connected teaching community. I started following them and joined as an active member, recognizing EWB's transformative potential.

While 2024 was a year of professional milestones, it also dealt a devastating personal blow: the loss of two of my siblings within just six months. In the wake of this overwhelming grief, I faced a choice. I chose to channel my sorrow into service. Seeking a role that would demand my full focus and energy, I made the conscious decision to dive deeper into the EWB mission. This drive to stand strong amidst the storm was the primary reason I applied to become an EWB Regional Representative for Dushanbe and DRS.

In 2024, I was honored to be appointed to this leadership position. It was a defining shift—I moved from simply benefiting from the community to becoming one of its architects, actively building its core pillars: Community, Capacity, and Connectivity. During this period of profound loss, the demanding work within the EWB Network became my sanctuary. Coupled with the unwavering support of my EWB family, my wonderful colleagues across Tajikistan and beyond, and my own family and friends, this mission provided a crucial source of solace and purpose.



Mehrbonu Abdulloeva

I discovered that contributing to the development of other teachers was no longer just a professional responsibility; it was a lifeline. By immersing myself in the empowerment of others, I was able to navigate my grief and find a renewed, powerful meaning in my work. It proved that when we give back to our community, the community gives us the strength to carry on.

What makes EWB truly unique is its generosity: while the platform is free, the opportunities are vast. For active members who contribute their time back to the network, EWB - with the great support of the U. S. Embassy Dushanbe - even provides a yearly free TESOL International membership, connecting us directly to a global stage of educators - another dream realized through the EWB Network's support. The transition from a passionate member to a leadership role as a Regional Representative was my defining professional shift. I moved from being a learner on the platform to becoming an architect of change, capable of cultivating the next generation of trainers. I now see my role, as well as my fellow regional representatives, as central to the sustainable development of our teaching community, where a small individual contribution creates a ripple effect.

To fuel this growth, I participated in the English Teaching Mentor (ETM) Program and later in EWB Training of Trainers (ToT) Program led by a lovely International TESOL Specialist Lisa Mann. These courses were incredible, intensive journey focused on experiential education and modern teaching techniques. Collaborating with a dedicated group of Tajikistan's best educators was a privilege that moved beyond simple mentorship—it was a life-long transformation.

As a dedicated lifelong learner, I pursued the OPEN Global course in "Professional Development for Teacher Trainers". My journey reached its highest point when I joined the prestigious ranks of alumni of the US government-sponsored professional development programs after finishing the OPEN Global course in "Professional Development for Teacher Trainers" with exceptionally high scores. Having already been actively delivering workshops for EWB, I found that the rigorous course material flowed naturally; it served as a masterclass to polish my existing skills. My instructor, Erin Tamayo, described my work as "masterful," highlighting my commitment to quality and my ability to invite participants into active collaboration.

Through this program, I mastered:

- Needs Analysis: Learning to collect objective and subjective data to design trainings that address specific pedagogical needs.
- Student-Centered Strategies: Implementing the 80/20 rule of TTT (Teacher Talk Time) to ensure I act as a facilitator, not a dictator.
- Long-term Sustainability: Prioritizing Peer-Mentoring and Communities of Practice (CoP) to ensure that the impact of training lasts long after the session ends.

Today, the impact of this training is visible in every classroom I enter. Whether I am empowering underserved youth through the Access Program or providing specialized instruction for pilots and air traffic controllers, I utilize these student-centered strategies. These methodologies ensure that my students—regardless of their background—become the protagonists of their own learning journey.

My journey has led me to the global stage as a speaker at EWB Conferences in 2024-2025 and the Freedom 250 Live Showcase Webinar in 2026. Looking forward, I have expanded my role as a Regional Coordinator for the OPEN Central Asia Regional Interest Community (RIC), and also established digital communities of practice to support novice teachers.

The work we lead is the future of professional development for teachers. It is the work of turning vision into reality on the ground, despite challenges like technology access or venue availability. As one of our Masters mentioned at the ETM graduation, "English is the language of science, medicine, aviation, and technology. By empowering teachers with new skills, we ensure their students are equipped to excel in these critical fields." This resonates deeply with me, as I believe the insights we shared will have a lasting ripple effect across our educational institutions. As the saying goes, "To teach is to learn twice." Let us continue to turn challenges into success together.



Mehrbonu Abdulloeva and Dilovar Butabekov



Mehrbonu Abdulloeva and Zeboniso Murodova



Mehrbonu Abdulloeva and Access Program students

ONLINE PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH NETWORK PROGRAM (OPEN)

The OPEN Program offers 8-week professional development courses developed by U.S. universities on topics such as Teaching Grammar Communicatively, Using Educational Technology in the English Language Classroom, Teaching English Academic Writing to Speakers of Other Languages, Teaching English to Young Learners, Professional Development for Teacher Trainers, Creating and Implementing Online Courses, TESOL Methodology, and Fostering Student Motivation and Engagement.

Candidates should be highly motivated pre-teachers, teachers, teacher trainers, or ministry officials who are both dedicated to their own professional development and willing to share their knowledge with colleagues.

Read more about the program on the U.S. Embassy website: <https://tj.usembassy.gov/online-professional-english-network-program-open-2/>.

FROM LEARNING TO LEADING



Samira Boymatova,
EWB Regional
Representative in
Sughd Region

"Honesty is the foundation of trust, and trust is the beginning of real success."

My name is Samira Boymatova, and I am an English language teacher and teacher trainer from Tajikistan. I am honored to be a U.S. Government (USG) alumna of the OPEN Program and an active member of the English Without Borders (EWB) Network.

For the past three years, I have served as an EWB Network Regional Representative in the Sughd region, a role that has significantly shaped my professional growth, leadership skills, and vision for educational development. I strongly believe that sustainable progress in education is achieved through collaboration, shared responsibility, and mutual support. For me, growing together as a community is essential. When educators work collectively, share experiences, and support one another, they not only enhance their own skills but also create a lasting impact on students and communities.

My engagement with the EWB Network began when I was selected to participate in the OPEN professional course "Professional Development for Teacher Trainers." Completing this course was critical for my career, equipping me with advanced knowledge, practical skills, and a professional mindset oriented toward leadership, innovation, and excellence.

As an active member of the EWB Network, I have participated in numerous

professional development initiatives aimed at strengthening teacher training capacity and improving the quality of English language education.

The course was conducted entirely online and led by Ms. Claire, whose expertise and guidance provided a strong foundation in adult learning theories, modern training methodologies, and facilitation techniques. Throughout the program, I was fully trained to design and conduct training workshops for English language teachers, enabling me to:

- Design and implement structured, interactive, and effective teacher training workshops
- Apply adult learning principles to practical teaching and training contexts
- Strengthen communication, leadership, and mentoring skills to guide fellow educators
- Develop a reflective, ethical, and supportive approach to professional growth

The course challenged me to combine theory with practice and to design training activities that were engaging, meaningful, and adaptable for diverse classroom settings. Through consistent hard work, discipline, and active engagement, I completed the course with the highest final score of 99.75 out of 100. This accomplishment reaffirmed my belief that meaningful goals are achieved only through dedication, perseverance, and focused effort, and it confirmed my readiness to assume greater responsibility as a teacher trainer and regional leader.



*Samira Boymatova, Zamira Sabzalieva,
and Mehrbonu Abdulloeva*



2024 EWB National Conference

Today, as a USG OPEN alumna and EWB Network Regional Representative, I actively apply the knowledge, skills, and values gained through this program to empower educators, support regional initiatives, and promote collaborative professional learning environments. I truly believe that "A strong community is built by leaders who listen, learn, and lead with purpose."

I continue to mentor English language teachers, facilitate training workshops, and guide emerging educators to become confident, innovative, and reflective practitioners.

This journey has strengthened my conviction that when educators work together with purpose, honesty, and commitment, they can create meaningful and sustainable impact. The OPEN Program not only elevated my professional capacity but also inspired me to lead with integrity, serve with dedication, and contribute to the continued growth of the EWB Network and the broader educational community in Tajikistan.

Through this experience, I have learned that effective communication, continuous learning, and a commitment to shared success are the cornerstones of professional and personal growth. I am committed to applying these principles to every aspect of my work, ensuring that the teachers I train are equipped to inspire and empower the next generation of learners.

BRIDGING OPPORTUNITIES IN TAJIKISTAN



Mirzosharif Sharipov,
English Teacher,
Dushanbe, Tajikistan

I am Mirzosharif Sharipov and would like to tell you that my journey as an English teacher has been deeply shaped by the opportunities and support I found through the EWB Network. As a linguistics graduate of the Russian-Tajik Slavic University with a master's degree obtained in Moscow, I entered the teaching profession with strong academic preparation. However, it was through EWB's programs and community that I truly transformed my classroom practice and professional identity.

Before joining the Network, I was already passionate about teaching English to young learners and adults. Yet, like many teachers, I faced challenges in keeping my lessons interactive and in motivating students with limited exposure to English outside the classroom. The trainings and professional development workshops I attended through EWB provided me with innovative methodologies, practical resources, and most importantly, a supportive network of fellow educators from across Tajikistan.

I first had the honor of participating in the EWB First National Conference in 2023 as a poster presenter. This experience allowed me to share my teaching ideas with fellow educators and gain valuable feedback from the broader EWB community. Following this, I had the privilege to serve at an EWB regional conference for almost a year, dedicating my efforts to organizing, coordinating, and supporting the event.

Serving in this role was a great honor and provided me with hands-on leadership experience while deepening my connection with the Network.

One of the greatest milestones I achieved with the support of EWB was becoming a finalist for the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) program in the United States. This experience allowed me to teach Tajik and share my culture abroad while also learning new teaching methods and leadership skills. The FLTA year helped me grow both personally and professionally, giving me the confidence to take on new challenges at home.

Another important step in my journey was participating in the C5+ONE Edu program in Almaty. This opportunity further broadened my perspective as an educator. I learned about innovative approaches such as scaffolding, storytelling to build speaking confidence, and integrating digital tools into language learning. Working alongside educators from across Central Asia, I was able to refine my own teaching methods and return to Tajikistan with practical strategies that continue to shape my classroom.

Today, I proudly serve as a classroom teacher for the C5+ONE program in Tajikistan, where I work with adult learners, including official workers and professionals who need English for their careers. Teaching this group has been especially rewarding because I can see the immediate impact of English on their professional growth and ability to connect internationally. I am also now a teacher for Access students in my hometown, Tursunzoda, and I am especially proud that this program has finally reached my region. It brings unique opportunities for young learners to develop their English skills, build confidence, and broaden their horizons.

In addition, I actively share my knowledge with fellow teachers. I have conducted professional development sessions for colleagues from five regions of Tajikistan, focusing on how visuals, gestures, and scaffolding techniques can support learners. Seeing my colleagues successfully apply these methods has been one of my proudest accomplishments.



FLTA Program participants



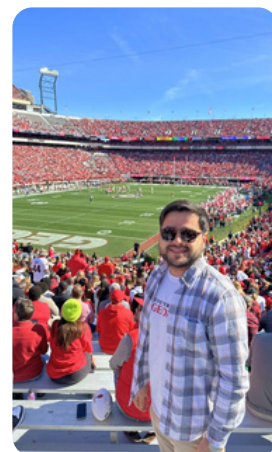
Mirzosharif Sharipov



C5+O.N.E. Ed. Program participants



Access Program students



Mirzosharif Sharipov

Looking back, I can confidently say that the EWB Network has been central to my success—helping me achieve ambitious goals such as a Fulbright FLTA, building my leadership through C5+ONE and regional conferences, and inspiring me to empower learners and teachers across Tajikistan.

FROM A SMALL CLASSROOM TO A WIDER WORLD



Iroda Murodova,
English Teacher, Sughd
Region, Tajikistan

My name is Iroda Murodova, an English teacher and the founder of the “Nur” Education Center in Jabbor Rasulov, Tajikistan. For more than ten years, teaching English has been more than a job for me — it has been a mission to open doors of opportunity for young people in my community. I believe that education can change lives, and this belief has guided every step of my professional journey.

I joined the English Without Borders (EWB) Network several years ago while looking for ways to improve my teaching skills and connect with other educators. At that time, one of my main challenges was limited access to professional development opportunities. In a small district, it was not always easy to find modern teaching resources, training, or international perspectives. As a result, my lessons sometimes felt traditional, and I wanted my students to be more active, confident, and engaged.

Through EWB, I participated in various training sessions, workshops, and educational events focused on interactive teaching methods, student-centered learning, and professional collaboration. These activities introduced me to new strategies such as pair work, project-

based learning, and communicative tasks. Step by step, I began applying these approaches in my classroom and at my education center.

The results were noticeable. My students became more motivated and confident in speaking English. Classroom participation increased, and learners started taking more responsibility for their own progress. I also began sharing what I learned with other teachers by organizing small workshops and peer discussions in my community. EWB helped me understand that growth is stronger when knowledge is shared.

In 2025, another important milestone in my journey was my participation in the Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSI) program, where I was honored to represent Tajikistan as the only participant from my country among representatives from over 60 nations. During the program, I visited Massachusetts, Boston, New York, Arizona, and Washington, DC. We explored the U.S. education system, history, and culture through lectures, school visits, and discussions. I observed lessons in two schools, visited museums, took part in community service activities, and helped organize a cultural event to share our traditions. We also attended a live baseball game and other engaging activities that allowed us to experience American life beyond the classroom.

This international experience broadened my perspective and strengthened the skills I had developed through EWB. After returning home, I introduced more interactive lessons, leadership opportunities for students, and community-based projects at my center. My goal is not only to teach English but also to help students become confident, responsible, and globally minded individuals.



Iroda Murodova with the participants of the SUSI program



Iroda Murodova

Looking ahead, I plan to continue developing my education center, conduct teacher training sessions, and support other educators in my region. I hope EWB will continue providing professional development opportunities, collaboration platforms, and new learning resources.

At the same time, I am ready to contribute by mentoring young teachers, sharing materials, and actively participating in EWB events. EWB has shown me that when teachers connect and support each other, real change becomes possible. As the saying goes, “One teacher, one book, and one student can change the world.” I am grateful to be part of a network that makes this change possible every day.

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ARTICLES ABOUT EL TEACHING

*Image: Ionut Dabija's Images
via Canva Pro*



Ece Yavuzarslan

ABSTRACT

This article aims to explore an angle on bridging pedagogy for English language teaching, particularly vocabulary instruction, and recent developments regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI). This discussion focuses on the three-dimensional questions: “what”, “why”, and “how” regarding practical AI implementations into vocabulary teaching through defining linguistic terminology such as lexical item and lexical phrase, introducing vocabulary teaching techniques, expanding English language teachers’ AI literacy about prompt engineering, and presenting AI models like Claude.ai and Google AI Studio.

As recent documents by United Nations associated agencies like UNESCO demonstrate, easy access to Artificial Intelligence (AI) carries a unique potential, which might bring both opportunities and challenges to education, including language learning and teaching. Therefore, responsible AI integration has become an essential 21st-century skill in order to achieve a meaningful learning environment that is needed for vocabulary acquisition as well as to prevent unethical practices. Given that the English language is exceptionally rich in synonyms and homonyms, vocabulary instruction might be challenging for English language teachers. Thanks to AI, these challenges can be mitigated and meaningful context can be provided for the learners.

INTEGRATING AI INTO VOCABULARY TEACHING: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

By **Ece Yavuzarslan**, English Language Teacher, PPC Councilor (TESOL Türkiye), Global Coordinator (OPEN Central Asia RIC)

“WHAT” ARE THE PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES FOR VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION?

It is essential to consider what constitutes *knowing a word* before designing a vocabulary teaching lesson. To truly know a word, it is necessary to investigate both *receptive knowledge*, which is about understanding the word while reading or hearing, and *productive knowledge*, which is the ability to use the word in written or spoken text (Laufer & Goldstein, 2004). We can also view this through *linguistic lenses*, which highlight the relation between lexicology and meaningful context, defining explicit teaching and implicit teaching approaches as well as vocabulary teaching techniques.

According to Haznedar & Uysal (2020):

- Explicit Teaching involves visible form, meaning, and use. This practice is suitable for a top-down approach.
- Implicit Teaching is a gradual process where students learn vocabulary by-products. It is suitable for a bottom-up approach. Repeated encounters to gain full knowledge of a word are essential.

As stated by Thornbury (2002), key vocabulary teaching techniques include semantic mapping (placing a word in the center and drawing branches to related words), contextualization (introducing the word inside a meaningful sentence), and word-formation analysis (identifying word families and creating new words using the same root).

“WHY” IS AI INTEGRATION ESSENTIAL?

The paradigm of AI has been shifted and is no longer merely a tool; it has actually become one of the critical mediators of vocabulary teaching and learning experience, which creates an inevitable connection between technology and human-centered approaches. Our approach discusses this relation by defining the benefits of using AI in classrooms, such as saving teachers’ time to develop materials, tasks, activities, and educational games, and increasing students’ engagement.

Emerging technologies like AI and the rapid-paced developments enable English language teachers to provide a meaningful and authentic context rather than introduce vocabulary as a single unit. This context can be varied from a generated story book, 3D vocabulary maze games, to songs and podcasts.

“HOW” TO INTEGRATE AI INTO VOCABULARY TEACHING?

Studies by higher education institutions indicate that AI implementations consist of three fundamental components: input (prompt), tools (e.g., Claude.ai), and output (the generated product). Our suggestion presents “prompt engineering” to provide strong prompts and guide AI into classroom practices, considering AI’s persona, students’ background, learning objectives, and the intended format. It also offers concise explanations of AI tools, specifically Claude.ai and Google AI Studio:

- **Claude.ai** allows users to create their own “Artifacts”. When it is prompted, a separate window that shows a document or interactive game appears. It is important to note that publishing is needed to share it.
- **Google AI Studio** allows users to create their own “apps”. The users do not need to know about coding to design their apps. Also, 3D games or semantic maps can be generated.

CONCLUSION

Our approach bridges the gap between pedagogy to instruct vocabulary and AI literacy that promotes knowledge transfer into classroom practices. By focusing on the three-dimensional questions “what, why & how”, this discussion presents an angle on vocabulary teaching techniques, prompt engineering, as well as generative AI models. Through using AI tools, teachers not only guide AI with their pedagogical expertise but also generate games, materials, and lesson plans that enhance authentic language exposure.

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Gaurav Misra

BEST PRACTICES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS: INSIGHTS FROM THE AWARD-WINNING FRAMEWORK “LIVING CONVERSATIONS”

By **Gaurav Misra**, English Language Teacher, Life Skills Coach, UPES Private university in Misraspatti, India

Teaching English today is not just about grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation—it’s about connecting language with life. The workshop “Living Conversations: An Award-Winning Framework for Language & Life Skills Training” emphasized that English educators must evolve beyond traditional instruction to create meaningful, experiential, and transformative learning journeys. Here are ten key practices every English language teacher can embrace, each drawn from the core principles of this innovative framework.

1. BEGIN WITH A TRAINING NEED ANALYSIS (TNA)

Before entering any classroom, teachers must first understand what their learners need. Conducting a brief TNA helps identify linguistic gaps, skill requirements, and learner expectations. For instance, in the Living Conversations model, teachers used a Reflection Workbook to analyze students’ learning behaviors and challenges, forming a foundation for targeted instruction.

2. KNOW YOUR LEARNERS

The age, background, and prior exposure of learners determine the teaching style and content design. English teachers should never assume a one-size-fits-all method. For example, in the Peer Mentorship Program SPEAK (Support Program for English Advancement and Knowledge), fluent students guided less fluent peers. This peer-led model celebrated diversity and encouraged mutual learning based on students’ unique linguistic starting points.

3. EVOLVE CONTINUOUSLY

Teaching should never stagnate. English language instruction must evolve with the learner’s journey. Teachers can constantly update their materials and methods to suit new contexts. A great example is student submissions of self-recorded video and audio, replacing traditional written assignments. These help students practice tone, confidence, and real-time communication—skills that static written work cannot develop.

4. UNDERSTAND GEN Z LEARNERS

Gen Z doesn’t just consume content—they create it. They think visually, interact dynamically, and expect interactivity. Teachers can harness this creativity through initiatives like a Mini Film Festival, where students watch and analyze diverse short films to discuss language, emotion, and culture. This method makes English alive, visual, and relatable.

5. ADAPT TO LEARNING STYLES

Each learner processes information differently—some learn by seeing, others by listening, reading, or doing. Using the SODAS Model (Situation, Options, Disadvantages, Advantages, Solution) for structured communication appeals to multiple learning styles simultaneously—visual learners can chart options, auditory learners can discuss, and kinesthetic

learners can act them out.

6. EMBRACE ANDRAGOGY FOR ADULT LEARNERS

Adult learners bring life experience and intrinsic motivation to class. English teachers must honor this by connecting lessons to real-world relevance. The framework uses real-life projects—interviews, volunteering, and mentoring—to bridge classroom learning with lived experience. This approach encourages adult learners to see English not as a subject, but as a life skill.

7. INSPIRE, DON'T INTIMIDATE

A good teacher ignites curiosity, not fear. Positive reinforcement builds confidence far better than punitive measures. Living Conversations implements Stars & Virtual Badges (on a 17-point scale) to recognize progress. This system motivates students intrinsically, creating an environment of encouragement and healthy competition.

8. KEEP FEEDBACK INTERACTIVE AND MEANINGFUL

Feedback is not just correction—it's connection. Teachers can encourage reflection and cognitive curiosity by framing challenges as puzzles or stories. An effective strategy teachers might use is meaningful reflection prompts, such as analyzing non-verbal cues or writing thank-you notes after cultural exchanges. These foster empathy, awareness, and authentic communication.

9. GAMIFY LEARNING AND MAKE IT REAL

Gamification transforms classrooms into dynamic ecosystems of engagement. Incorporating live leaderboards to track progress or weekly challenges instead of assignments helps students stay committed and excited. When learning feels like a game with achievable milestones, language acquisition becomes joyful, not mechanical.

10. BE A STORYTELLER AND FACILITATOR OF PARTICIPATION

The best teachers are not lecturers—they are storytellers who spark conversations. Flipping the classroom can help students take ownership of their learning. Practices such as rotational leadership in student teams and diverse group projects encourage collaboration and dialogue. This not only improves language fluency but also nurtures empathy, leadership, and teamwork—key 21st-century skills.

IN SUMMARY

The art of teaching English lies in merging communication with connection, structure with spontaneity, and grammar with growth. The Living Conversations framework has shown that when teaching becomes human-centered and interactive, language learning transforms into life learning. Whether it's through storytelling, gamification, peer mentorship, or reflection, the best teachers do not merely teach English—they awaken voices, nurture confidence, and create a lifelong love for expression. In the end, the true success of an English teacher is not measured by fluency alone but by how deeply their students learn to *think, feel, and communicate* through the language.



Photo by fizkes from Getty Images via Canva Pro



Savriniso Musrifshoeva

ACTIVE CLASSROOMS: NEW STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING READING

By **Savriniso Musrifshoeva**, English Language Teacher, co-author of the new English textbooks developed by the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe

approach strengthens critical thinking, builds confidence, and encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning (Andersen & Andersen, 2017).

ABSTRACT

This article explores practical student-centered strategies designed to create active and effective English classrooms for Grade 10–11 learners. Emphasizing a balanced lesson structure of approximately 30% teacher focus and 70% student engagement, the discussion highlights methods that promote deeper comprehension, critical thinking, and learner confidence. Drawing on Andersen and Andersen (2017) and Kerimbayev et al. (2023), the article outlines interactive reading strategies, collaborative learning techniques, and effective monitoring practices that support meaningful student participation.

INTRODUCTION

As the co-author of the Grade 10 and Grade 11 English textbooks, my primary goal is to promote modern, student-centered teaching approaches. Today's classrooms require a shift from traditional teacher-centered instruction to dynamic learning environments where students actively participate in the lesson. Effective teaching should prioritize student engagement, ensuring that learners actively analyze, discuss, and apply knowledge rather than passively receive information.

Student-centered teaching focuses on learners' needs, interests, and active involvement rather than solely on the curriculum or teacher explanations. It acknowledges students' diverse backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles. This

STUDENT-CENTERED CLASSROOM PRACTICES

In a student-centered classroom, the teacher serves as a facilitator rather than the main speaker. Instead of simply explaining a reading text, the teacher guides students to question, analyze, and interpret it. Several practical strategies can enhance reading instruction and classroom engagement.

TRUE OR FALSE LINE ACTIVITY

The True or False Line Activity is an interactive method for developing reading comprehension. After reading a text, students stand in a line while the teacher reads statements related to the text. Students move to one side if they believe the statement is true and to the opposite side if they believe it is false.

Students must justify their answers using textual evidence and are encouraged to persuade classmates by explaining their reasoning. This activity promotes deeper text analysis, critical thinking, and persuasive communication skills while ensuring active participation.

CONCEPT CHECKING QUESTIONS (CCQs)

Concept Checking Questions (CCQs) are essential for assessing genuine understanding. Rather than asking general questions such as, "Did you understand the text?" teachers should ask focused, concept-based questions that check comprehension of key ideas and vocabulary.

CCQs encourage students to think critically about meaning and context. Additionally, students can create and ask CCQs to one another, increasing independence and engagement. This strategy ensures that comprehension is accurately measured and reinforced.

Pair Work and Group Work

Collaboration plays a central role in student-centered learning. Pair and group work provide opportunities for students to exchange ideas, clarify concepts, and support each other's learning. Peer explanation often enhances understanding, as students may relate more easily to their classmates' perspectives.

Through structured collaboration, learners not only strengthen reading comprehension but also develop communication, cooperation, and teamwork skills.

MONITORING: ACTIVE AND SILENT

Although the classroom focus shifts toward students, the teacher's role remains vital. During pair and group work, effective monitoring ensures that learning objectives are achieved.

Active monitoring involves circulating around the classroom, listening to discussions, and offering guidance when necessary. Silent monitoring allows students to work independently while the teacher observes without

interrupting the learning process. At the conclusion of activities, constructive feedback and correction of common errors help consolidate understanding.

Both monitoring approaches support a productive and well-managed student-centered environment.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

To implement active classroom strategies effectively, educators should:

- Structure lessons to maintain a 30% teacher focus and 70% student engagement balance.
- Encourage analytical discussion and evidence-based responses.
- Use CCQs to assess and reinforce comprehension.
- Promote collaborative learning through pair and group work.
- Apply active and silent monitoring techniques to guide progress.

These practices align with research supporting student-centered and technology-supported learning environments (Kerimbayev et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

Modern education requires increased student involvement and meaningful interaction. When learners actively analyze texts, engage in concept-based questioning, collaborate with peers, and receive meaningful feedback, they develop deeper understanding and stronger academic skills. A classroom structured around active participation fosters motivated, confident, and independent learners prepared for future academic and professional success.

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ABOUT THE NEW TEXTBOOKS

In support of President Rahmon’s goal to teach Tajik children to speak English, the U.S. Embassy, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science and implementing partner Aga Khan Education Service in Tajikistan, developed modern English textbooks and curricula for Tajik students in grades 10 and 11.

These English textbooks meet the standards set out by the Ministry of Education and Science for its English language education programs. They incorporate the most modern approaches to language learning—student-centered, communicative, and task-based learning that promotes critical thinking. The textbooks and activities utilize Tajik cultural contexts and history alongside cultures from around the world.

Please read more here: <https://tj.usembassy.gov/u-s-government-provides-242000-english-textbooks-for-schools-in-tajikistan/>.



*Left to right:
The Aga Khan Development Network Resident Representative **Qozidavlat Qoimdodov**,
Minister of Education and Science **Saidzoda Rahim Hamro**, U.S. Ambassador **Manuel Micaller**.*

An official handover ceremony of 242,000 English language textbooks for secondary schools in Tajikistan.



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TEACHING TIPS

Image: Vlada Karpovich from Pexels via Canva Pro

LESSON PLAN: BALANCING CAREER, FAMILY, AND PERSONAL GROWTH

By Zuhro Saidova, EWB PR&SMM Specialist

We are pleased to share this lesson plan as a supplementary teaching resource for English teachers working with high school students. The lesson encourages learners to reflect on the many roles women play in modern society and to discuss themes such as personal growth, leadership, and balance in life. We hope teachers will find this material useful for creating meaningful classroom discussions while also helping students develop their English communication skills.

We warmly encourage teachers to adapt the activities to their students' needs and classroom context.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand and use vocabulary related to roles, balance, and personal growth.
2. Read and comprehend a short text, identifying key ideas and supporting details.
3. Discuss and give opinions using modal verbs and opinion phrases.
4. Analyse real-life scenarios and suggest solutions in spoken English.

Level: B1 (Intermediate)

Materials: Board, printed handouts with the text, printed scenario cards (optional)

Phase	Time	Activity / Teacher Instructions
Warm-Up	7 min	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write the following roles on the board: <i>Mother, Daughter, Wife, Professional, Learner, Friend, Leader.</i> 2. Ask students to identify which three roles they believe are most important for women in Tajikistan today. 3. Ask, "Which role do you think takes the most time?" and "Which role gives the most happiness?"
Vocabulary	7 min	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce 6 key words from the board: <i>balance, authentic, well-being, boundary, emotional intelligence, guilt.</i> 2. Quick-check: students write one word that matches each definition you read aloud. Peer-correct.
Reading	10 min	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute a short text explaining that "perfect balance" is often a myth. Instead, women can create their own "rhythm of life" by shifting focus between work, family, and personal development at different times. 2. Comprehension questions: Do experts say women must have perfect balance? What can women focus on at different times of life? What helps women succeed? 3. Opinion Discussion: Do you agree that there is no perfect balance in life? Which idea from the text is most useful for women in Tajikistan? Do you think young women today have more opportunities than before? <p>The text: <i>Modern women often want both: a meaningful career and a happy family. This can be challenging, but many experts say the goal is not perfect balance. Instead, women can create their own rhythm of life.</i></p> <p><i>Some women focus strongly on work at certain times. At other times, they focus more on family or personal development.</i></p> <p><i>Research suggests that women succeed when they:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>lead in their own authentic style</i> 2. <i>take care of their well-being</i> 3. <i>ask for help and support</i> 4. <i>create clear boundaries between work and home.</i> <p><i>Every woman's balance is different, and it may change during different periods of life.</i></p>

Group Work	15 min	<p>Split into 3 groups. Each group gets one scenario and discusses the questions for 5 minutes, then shares a 2-minute summary with the class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario A: A woman is offered a promotion but must work longer hours. Should she accept? What factors (family support, personal goals) must she consider? • Scenario B: A mother feels guilty because she works full-time and spends less time with her children. Is this guilt common? What advice would you give her to reduce this feeling? • Scenario C: A woman wants to start a business or study, but her family expects her to focus only on the home. How can she communicate her needs? Is her personal growth important?
Wrap-Up	5 min.	Ask the class: What support do women need in our society?
Exit Ticket	2 min	Each student writes ONE sentence on a slip of paper or in their notebook: " True feminine power means _____ to me. " This tells the teacher whether students understood the central idea of the lesson and can express an opinion in English.

LANGUAGE SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

USEFUL OPINION PHRASES

- I think / I believe that / In my opinion...
- I agree with this because...
- I disagree because...
- This is similar to / different from Tajikistan because...
- One important point is...
- The most useful idea for our society is...

MODAL VERBS FOR ADVICE

- She should / shouldn't...
- She could try to...
- It would be better if...
- Women might feel...
- Families need to / ought to...
- One solution would be to...

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY NOTE

The scenarios touch on real tensions in Tajik society between professional ambition and family expectations. Frame all discussions as exploratory and respectful — **there are no 'right' answers**. Encourage students to share their own perspectives without pressure, and validate all views as part of a genuine conversation about modern life.

ASSESSMENT

Observe students during pair and group work. Check for: use of target vocabulary, ability to give reasons, willingness to engage with the topic. No formal grading is necessary — this is a communicative lesson.



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NEWS & OPPORTUNITIES

*Image: Leung Cho Pan via
Canva Pro*



2024 EWB Regional Conference in Dushanbe



Bakhtibegim Mamadrayonova, EWB Online Speaking Club session

2026 EWB REGIONAL CONFERENCE

EWB is pleased to announce that applications are now open for the **2026 Regional Conferences: Innovative Teaching Methodologies in the Era of Artificial Intelligence**.

These full-day professional development conferences will bring together experienced English language teachers from across Tajikistan to explore cutting-edge methodologies, practical AI integration strategies, and innovative approaches to communicative language teaching.

- **Khatlon Region: 11 April 2026**
- **Dushanbe & DRS: 18 April 2026**
- **Sughd Region: 25 April 2026**

Each regional conference will host 30-40 selected EWB members, ensuring a focused, interactive, and high-impact professional experience.

Applicant must:

- Be an active EWB member
- Be a practicing English language teacher
- Have at least 3 years of teaching experience
- Commit to conducting one follow-up knowledge-sharing session after the conference to disseminate learning within their professional community

We encourage committed, forward-thinking educators to apply and become part of this regional movement toward innovative, AI-informed English language teaching in 2026.

Please note:

- No accommodation or transportation will be provided.
- Participation is free of charge for selected applicants.

Read more and apply here: <https://ewbn.org/2026-regional-conferences/>.

ONLINE INTENSIVE COURSE

EWB Network is pleased to announce the opening of applications for a new professional development opportunity for English teachers in Tajikistan: **the Online Intensive Course "Teaching Communicative English with Grade 10-11 Textbooks."**

This course is designed for secondary school English teachers who want to transform textbook lessons into dynamic, communicative classroom experiences that actively engage students in meaningful language use.

This intensive course will equip teachers with practical tools and methodological knowledge to effectively facilitate communicative lessons using Grade 10 and 11 textbook materials. Participants will explore ways to integrate speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills while encouraging collaboration and authentic communication in the classroom.

The course will be facilitated by **Bakhtibegim Mamadrayonova**, an experienced English language educator and teacher trainer with expertise in communicative language teaching and classroom methodology.

- Mode: Online
- Dates: April 13 – May 22, 2026
- Session Duration: 90 minutes each
- Total Course Duration: 20 hours with 15 hours of live online sessions and 5 hours of guided self-learning
- Platform: Zoom and Telegram
- Participants: 25–30 English teachers
- Target Audience: Secondary school teachers from Tajikistan working with Grades 10-11

Read more and apply here: <https://ewbn.org/courseforteachers2026/>.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF ERAJ ZIYODALIEV

*It is with deep sadness that we share the news that our active member and valued community member from Khatlon Region, **Eraj Ziyodaliev**, has passed away.*

Eraj was a dedicated educator and a supportive colleague who was always willing to share ideas, contribute to discussions, and encourage fellow teachers in the English Without Borders Network. His enthusiasm for teaching and his commitment to professional growth made a meaningful impact on many of us.

Beyond his professional contributions, Eray will be remembered for his kindness, generosity, and positive spirit. He was a person who genuinely cared about education and about the people around him.

The EWB community extends its heartfelt condolences to Eray's family, friends, students, and colleagues. His presence will be greatly missed, but the inspiration he gave to others will remain part of our community.

May his memory live on in the work he loved and in the lives he touched.



Eraj Ziyodaliev, 15/09/1984 - 2/02/2026



MARCH 2026



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📞 992 938883358

🌐 www.ewbn.org

📍 45 Mirzo Tursunzoda Str., Dushanbe

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