



academic year with materials I collected at the workshop.”

*Zarima Zaitova  
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“More colleagues from our institution should attend next time because it will be very difficult for us now to implement all the innovations we have learned here.”

“I simply got energized by all the different approaches and methods.”

“I was not aware, how many important projects were going on in my region.”

“One does not necessarily have to go to the West to learn about new initiatives in higher education.”

## “The Key to Reform is Problem-Driven Interdisciplinary Education...”

**Janet Helin, CEP Russia 1997–1999**

The *Third Regional Workshop on Teaching Strategies in Higher Education* took place in Szeged Hungary. The special “flavor” of the event was given by the fact that the war in Yugoslavia just broke out 5 days earlier and the conference site was at 20 kilometers away from the bombings in Zombor. Nevertheless, 90 academics from 18 countries of the region came together to exchange experiences, ideas and materials on this topic so often neglected in academia. The structure of the Workshop was also exceptional: there were concurrent workshops in the morning: *Motivating Students; Conducting Successful Class Discussions; Making it Happen! The Influence of the Structure and Culture of your Institution; Dealing with Cultural Differences; New Roles, New Goals: Rethinking the Educational Paradigm.* In the afternoons participants had the choice between 3 panels or Teaching Strategy Presentations. There was a consensus that these events should continue and maybe similar ones should be initiated in other countries. Notable: Some of the initiators of the guest lecture series on Innovative Teaching Methodologies in Romania participated in the previous Szeged Workshops.

### Some comments:

“Having gained new ideas regarding interactive teaching and motivating students, I decided to share these ideas with my colleagues at our faculty meeting. Now, I am planning to put together a textbook for the coming



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Benő Csapó, Head  
of the Education  
Department  
of JATE;  
Rezső Mészáros,  
Rector of JATE;  
Rita Galambos,  
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of CEP Hungary*

## Beyond Teaching ON THE REGIONAL LEVEL

### Confidence Building in the Caucasus

Despite its strategic importance, rich history and still unresolved ethno-territorial conflicts, the Caucasus is perhaps the most understudied region of the former Soviet Union. It was exciting therefore to see students from the region tackling the common issues facing Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan at CEP’s first Caucasus student conference. The inter-disciplinary conference held in Tbilisi in April 2–4, 1999 was entitled “*The Caucasus: Challenges and Opportunities.*” The response to the call for papers was overwhelming, with issues of nationalism, the relationship to Russia and politico-economic reform appearing as consistent concerns of the students.

Not surprisingly, given the presence of fossil fuel reserves in the region and its location as a potential pipeline for oil and gas from Central Asia, energy politics also appeared as an important conference theme. Selected on the basis

of their proposals, roughly 30 students from the region presented papers and debated (often in a spirited fashion) common problems.

Following the student presentations invited guests led sessions entitled “*Building Democracy in the University*”, “*Study Opportunities Abroad*” and “*Security in the South Caucasus.*” As GIORGI CHIGOGIDZE, a second year student at the Georgian Technical University puts it, “*the conference was a chance for me to express my understanding of challenges facing the region and to compare my sentiments with the views of my peers from other Caucasian states.*” Given the presence of conflict in the region, the conference also represented a modest contribution to confidence building between the Caucasian peoples.

*Chris Waters  
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