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Ukrainian educators deliver professional development presentations at international convention in Florida

by *NICHOLAS GORDON* 7 MINS READ

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Photo courtesy of Maryna Tsehelska

Ukrainian educators at the 2024 TESOL International Convention and Language Expo in Tampa, Fla., in March. Through funding and support from the U.S. Embassy's Regional English Language Office in Kyiv, the Ukrainian English language educators traveled to the conference from various regions of Ukraine. Fourteen Ukrainian educators gave presentations on professional development topics in the field of English language teaching to conference attendees from all across the world.

TAMPA, Fla. – With 37 attendees and 14 presentations on professional development topics, Ukrainian educators made a strong impact at the 2024 TESOL International Convention and Language Expo in Tampa, Fla., in March.

Through funding and support from the U.S. Embassy’s Regional English Language Office in Kyiv, the Ukrainian English language educators traveled to the conference from various regions of Ukraine. The Regional English Language Office is a branch of the U.S. Department of State’s English Language Programs, which provides opportunities for teachers from the U.S. and different countries to work together to build English language teaching and learning capacity around the world.

“The regional English language office at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv is thrilled to have been able to support the participation of 37 Ukrainian English language educators from all levels of education, including secondary teachers, university English for Specific Purposes instructors, teachers’ association representatives, and teacher educators from pedagogical universities at the convention,” said Jen MacArthur, the regional English language officer currently based at the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw who is working with Ukraine, Hungary, Romania, and Moldova.

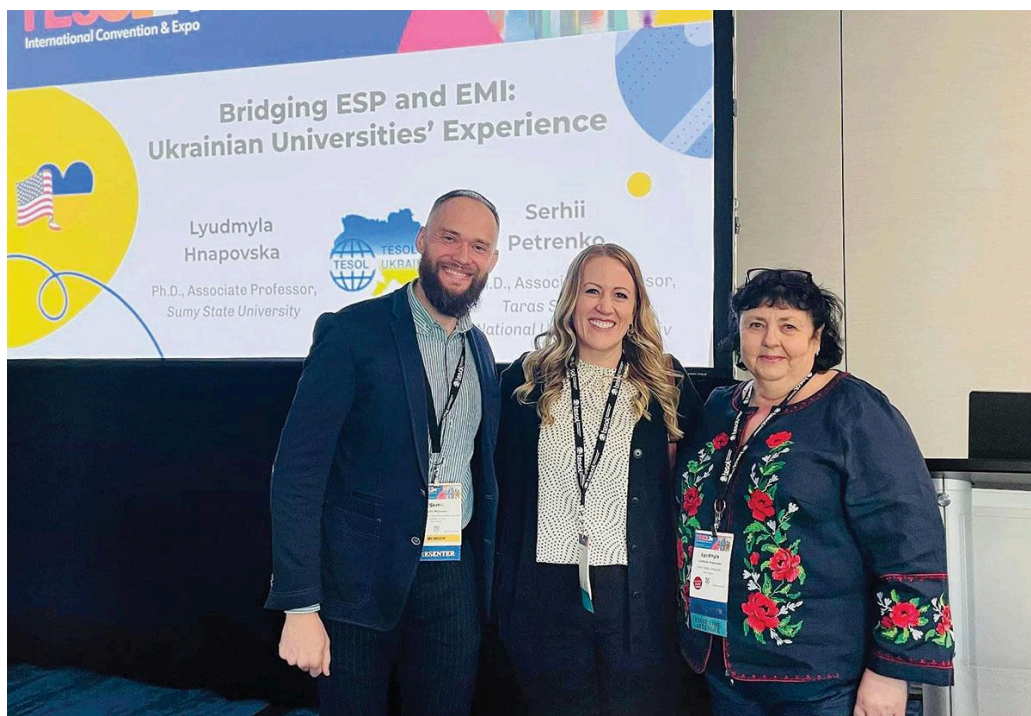


Photo courtesy of Serhii Petrenko

Pictured at the 2024 TESOL International Convention and Language Expo in Tampa, Fla., in March are (from left to right) Serhii Petrenko, associate professor of foreign languages at Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv; Wendy Finlayson assistant professor of English as a second language at Salt Lake Community College; and Lyudmyla Hnapovksa, associate professor of foreign languages at Sumy State University.

“The Ukrainian educators shared their experience and expertise at the conference with participants from across the United States and around the world throughout the four-day event in Tampa,” Ms. MacArthur said.

Founded in 1966, TESOL International (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) is the largest professional development event in the English language teaching field. With a program offering hundreds of different education sessions, the event brings together thousands of attendees from all over the world to share the latest teaching strategies and methodologies, research, resources, opportunities and publications.

Serhii Petrenko, associate professor of foreign languages at Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv, gave two presentations at the conference. Together with Lyudmyla Hnapovksa, associate professor of foreign languages at Sumy State University in Ukraine, he co-presented a session titled “Bridging English for Specific Purposes and English as a Medium of Instruction at Ukrainian Universities.”

Approximately 30 people attended their session, offering Mr. Petrenko and Ms. Hnapovksa positive feedback and thoughtful insights on their presentation.

“For this session, we shared a study designed to reveal the concerns and challenges that Ukrainian universities are facing with regard to using English as a medium of instruction for different subjects of study,” Mr. Petrenko said in an interview with a correspondent of The Ukrainian Weekly at the conference.

For his second session, Mr. Petrenko co-presented with Iryna Zuyenok, associate professor in the Department of Foreign Languages at Dnipro University of Technology, on “Building relationships through cross-cultural endeavors: Ukrainian Outlook.” In the presentation, the two educators shared how building cross-cultural relationships through networking, resource-sharing, conversation clubs and project-based learning can enhance language learning and promote the value of cultural understanding.

“It was a great honor to present at TESOL 2024 and to be able to share my knowledge, experiences and ideas with so many incredible English languages teachers,” Mr. Petrenko said, adding that he’s looking forward to collaborating with teachers from the U.S. and France that he met at the conference.

Tracy Mannon, a virtual English language educator through English language programs who had two three-month projects working with Ukrainian teachers and students at the Kharkiv Municipal Pedagogical Academy, teamed up with her Ukrainian colleague, Violetta Panchenko, to deliver the presentation “Creating ‘normal’ in English language courses in war-torn Ukraine.”



Photo courtesy of Maryna Tsehelska

Pictured at the 2024 TESOL International Convention and Language Expo in Tampa, Fla., in March are (from left to right) Jen MacArthur (Regional English Language Officer currently based at the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, Poland, working with Ukraine, Hungary, Romania, and Moldova); Maryna Tsehelska (Associate Professor at Kryvyi Pedagogical University) Lilia Kuznesova (Head of the English Philology Department at O.M. Beketov National University of Urban Economy); and Olena Iliencko (Assistant Professor of English at Lviv National University).

In their session, they shared the social-emotional learning activities they found most helpful to support students academically and emotionally during a time of unprecedented hardship. They also highlighted the positive effects on students' learning and well-being through strong teacher-student relationships and the creation of a calm, low-stress classroom environment.

“Having the opportunity to present at TESOL 2024 with my colleague and friend, Violetta Panchenko, was a wonderful experience,” said Ms. Mannon, who is based in Virginia. “I have so much admiration and respect for the Ukrainian students and educators I’ve been working with, all of whom I consider superheroes, even though they do not see themselves as such.”

Three teachers with the TESOL Ukraine Association – Maryna Tsehelska, Lilia Kuznesova and Olena Iliencko – gave a presentation titled “Using Metacognitive Schemes for Teaching Young Learners.” They received an “overwhelmingly positive” response from their attendees who expressed

appreciation for the presenters' collaborative approach and sharing of practical examples and resources.

“This was a very rewarding and enlightening experience,” Ms. Tsehelska said. “Collaborating with Ms. Kuznesova and Ms. Ilienکو allowed for a broad range of perspectives and ideas to be explored. It emphasized the power of collaboration in driving positive change in education and reinforced my commitment to using innovative and research-based teaching approaches in my classroom.”

Ms. Tsehelska is an associate professor at Kryvyi Pedagogical University in Ukraine. Ms. Ilienکو is the head of the English philology department at O.M. Beketov National University of Urban Economy and Ms. Kuznetsova is an assistant professor of English at Lviv National University.

Ms. MacArthur, who has also served as a regional English language officer in Morocco, Serbia, Pakistan and Mexico, expressed appreciation for the Ukrainian educators' professionalism and commitment to the field of English language teaching during a time of war.

“The Ukrainian educators' stories of resilience and their engagement in professional development during such challenging times to benefit their students, their communities and the future of Ukraine is truly inspiring,” Ms. MacArthur said.

Additional presentations by Ukrainian educators at the convention included: “Empowering learners through activism: fostering critical thinking, creativity, and citizenship” by Lidiia Aizikova, professor at Sukhomlinsky Mykolaiv National University, and Alla Spichenکو of Ukraine's English Access Microscholarship Program; “Dynamic assessment of ESP students' reading competence” by Tetiana Korol of the National University Yuri Kondratyuk Poltava Polytechnic; “Creating culturally responsive inclusive EFL classroom environment through visual arts” by Nataliia Lazebna of Julies-Maximilians University of Wuerzburg and Natalia Marakhovska of Mariupol University in Ukraine; “The smart observation app to support peer observation” by Laura Baecher of Hunter College, Yulia Datsko of Ivan Franko National University, Antonia Devitska of Uzhhorod National University, and Inesa Melnyk of the Precarpathian National University; “Socio-emotional response in preservice classrooms: changing teachers to change curriculum” by Ms. Datsko, Ms. Davitsa and Ms. Melnyk; “SEL technique to suit students' abilities and preferences in crisis” and “SEL in formative assessment in the English language classroom” by Natalia Dmitrenکو of Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky State Pedagogical University, Olena Hladko of Kryvyi Rih Pedagogical University, and Ms. Panchenko; and “Contextualizing and integrating learning for Ukrainian students vis new curriculum” by Oksana Lozhnikova, Bohdana Saliuk and Alla Spichenکو of the Ukraine English Access Microscholarship Program, and Heather Tatton-Harris, an English language specialist with the U.S. Department of State's English Language Programs.



Photo courtesy of Tracy Mannon

Violetta Panchenko (left) and Tracy Mannon teamed up to deliver the presentation “Creating ‘normal’ in English language courses in war-torn Ukraine” at the 2024 TESOL International Convention & Language Expo in Tampa, Florida, in March. Ms. Panchenko teaches at the Kharkiv Humanitarian Pedagogical Academy. Ms. Mannon is a Virtual English Language Educator through the U.S. Department of State’s English Language Programs, working with Ukrainian teachers and students at Kharkiv Humanitarian Pedagogical Academy.