

# ILTA Workshop Report

## Enhancement of Assessment Literacy of University English Language Teachers in Ukraine

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**Anthony Green**

**Olga Kvasova**

**September 18-19, 2015**



### **Introduction**

The 2-day workshop sponsored by ILTA was held September 18-19, 2015 at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, the leading institution of higher education in Ukraine. The main objective of the workshop was to inaugurate a Ukrainian LTA association which will act as a beacon for the enhancement of LTA literacy among university FL teachers across the country. The workshop, led by Anthony Green, was aimed at laying a sound theoretical and practical foundation for the association by updating the participants' knowledge and skills in LTA inline with recent developments in classroom-based assessment at the university level.

### **Workshop Participants and Presenters**

The participants were 32 teachers of English who work in leading classical and teacher training universities in Ukraine, thus representing all regions of the country:

#### The capital/Northern Ukraine

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv  
M. Dragomanov National Teacher Training University (Kyiv),  
Kyiv National Linguistic University

#### Eastern Ukraine

H. Skovoroda National Teacher Training University of Kharkiv

## Central Ukraine

B. Khmelnytsky National University of Cherkasy

## Southern Ukraine

I. Mechnikov National University of Odesa

V. Sukhomlynsky National University of Mykolaiv

## Western Ukraine

Ivan Franko National University of Lviv and

V. Hnatiuk National Teacher Training University of Ternopil

Two further participants, who work for ESP departments in the National Academy of Aviation (Kyiv) and the National Academy of Banking (Sumy), were invited on the grounds of their expertise in LTA and willingness to share it.

All workshop participants either hold or are seeking a PhD in the field of FL teaching methodology or linguistics. The majority of them are experienced university teachers and teacher trainers who have already received some training in LTA within British Council Ukraine projects, workshops conducted by European or Ukrainian experts and e-courses in LTA. As intended, some young and promising researchers were involved as participants, which helped ensure inter-generational communication in taking on new challenges and generating new approaches towards LTA literacy enhancement.

Six of the participants are involved in the management of FL departments in their universities, which makes them very motivated in the enhancement of the teachers' assessment literacy within their programs. Two of the participants work for the host university's Office for International Relations and Office for Academic and Research Affairs who supported the event and contributed to its organisation.

Representatives of the British Council Ukraine and IATEFL Ukraine, two NGOs that promote professional development for Ukrainian teachers of English, attended the opening of the workshop and its first sessions and expressed their readiness to collaborate with the newly established LTA association.

The main presenter at the workshop was Professor Anthony Green, University of Bedfordshire. His co-presenters on Day One were Dr. Olga Kvasova and Dr. Roksoliana Vikovych, both working for Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv.



## Workshop Organisation

The workshop was held at the Institute of Continuing Education of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv which offers comfortable premises for conferencing and refreshments. The venue is situated on the university campus and is within convenient reach for resident participants; the non-residents were accommodated in the university Conference Centre hotel nearby.



The sessions ran from 8.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., with half-hour breaks for refreshments and an hour break for lunch. The detailed schedule is given below.

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<b>September 18</b>	
<b>Registration</b>	8.30 – 9.00
<b>Opening</b>	<b>9.00</b> – 9.30
<b>Session 1.1.</b>	9.30 – 11.00
<b>Coffee break</b>	11.00 – 11.30
<b>Session 1.2.</b>	11.30 – 13.00
<b>Lunch break</b>	13.00 – 14.00
<b>Session 2.1.</b>	14.00 – 15.20
<b>Coffee break</b>	15.20 – 15.50
<b>Session 2.2.</b>	15.50 – <b>17.10</b>

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<b>September 19</b>	
<b>Session 3.1.</b>	<b>8.30</b> – 10.00
<b>Coffee break</b>	10.00 – 10.30
<b>Session 3.2.</b>	10.30 – 12.00
<b>Lunch break</b>	12.00 – 13.00
<b>Session 4.1.</b>	13.00 – 14.30
<b>Coffee break</b>	14.30 – 15.00
<b>Session 4.2.</b>	15.00 – 16.30
<b>Inaugural meeting of Ukrainian Language Testing Association</b>	<b>16.30 – 17.00</b>
<b>Close.</b>	

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## Workshop contents and activities

As planned, the workshop consisted of four sessions covering the issues of immediate interest and value for the participants the majority of which had relatively high level of initial assessment literacy. The content of the workshop covered the issues given below:

Day One
Session One:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Defining basic terms</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Relationships between teaching, learning and assessment</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The assessment cycle</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Qualities of useful assessments</li></ul>
Session Two:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Assessing receptive skills</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Designing reading and listening items / tasks</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Administering assessments</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Evaluating reading and listening items/ test tasks</li></ul>
Day Two
Session Three:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Assessing written and spoken production and interaction</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Designing assessment tasks</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Scoring, marking, and interpreting results</li></ul>
Session Four:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Using assessment within educational systems</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engaging learners in the assessment process</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Feedback and feedforward in the language classroom</li></ul>
Evaluation of the workshop and action planning



The workshop materials were developed by the main presenter, Professor Anthony Green, in consultation with the local organiser and tailored for the participants' level of LTA literacy and immediate training needs.

Drawing on the recent *Exploring Language Assessment and Testing* (Green 2013), the training sessions included a balanced combination of theoretical input presented to the whole group, discussion and practical assignments consolidating information from the readings assigned before the workshop and stimulating analysis activities carried out in groups.

Participants were provided with a pack of essential readings on LTA, a copy of *Fundamentals of Language Testing* (Kvasova 2009, in Ukrainian) and materials used as hand-outs by workshop facilitators.



Part of Session One was allotted to a talk about the *State of Assessment Literacy and Training Needs of University Teachers of English in Ukraine* given by the local organizer, Dr. Olga Kvasova. Both she and Dr. Roksoliana Vikovych were co-presenters in Session Two facilitating workshops on *Constructing and validating classroom reading test tasks* and *Developing listening test tasks using TV news items*.

## Evaluation of the workshop

- Q1. Please give an overall rating for the workshops (5-point scale: Very useful – Not useful at all).
- Q2. How would you rate the presentation of the workshops (5-point scale: Very good – Very poor)?
- Q3. How would you rate the group activities (5-point scale: Very good – Very poor)?
- Q4. Which aspect of the workshop did you find most useful (Open-Ended Response)?
- Q5. Which aspect of the workshop did you find least useful (Open-Ended Response)?
- Q6. Please describe briefly any further training you would like from ILTA (Open-Ended Response).

Please add any additional comments here. - Open-Ended Response  
The workshops were generally well received. 19 of the participants completed a brief online feedback form following the event. All 19 reported (using a five point scale) that they had found it 'very useful' with 'very good' presentation. None of the responses were negative (Not very useful/ Not useful at all; Rather poor/ Very poor) or neutral (Neither useful nor not useful/Neither good nor poor). The group activities were rated as 'Very good' by 14 participants and 'Fairly good' by five.

Question	Very useful/good	Fairly useful/good
Please give an overall rating for the workshops.	100%	
How would you rate the presentation of the workshops?	100%	
How would you rate the group activities?	74%	26%

Participants were asked to share their views on aspects of the workshop and their comments generally reflected a high level of satisfaction with the event. Indicative comments are included below:

Overall

- *Even for those who have been previously trained in the key issues of language testing and assessment, this workshop was a splendid chance to get FOOD FOR THOUGHT, realise how many challenges teachers in Ukraine have to face if they plunge into this (new for them!!!) field, and decide if they are committed enough to get on in their professional development.*
- *The workshops have a very high practical value, and the theoretical basis may be immediately implemented in the assessment of university students.*

- *My strong belief is that when involved in testing you learn all the time. Even if you have learned something, read something concerning this or that area, each time new issues arise, new prospects open. At the seminar I learned new things, and, moreover, it ignited my wish to do more and prompted some ideas for my research.*

#### Presentation

- *Well-prepared, full of both educational and entertaining element, vivid and convincing.*
- *The information was well structured, presented in an interesting form and very thought provoking*

#### Group activities

- *The group activities were motivational. The participants were encouraged to interact during the seminars.*
- *The moderators managed to involve the audience in brainstorming and task solving sessions, so I can say that the audience participated eagerly in the workshops, fulfilling different task and sharing personal experience.*
- *Sitting around small tables would make them more interactive and close.*

Asked 'Which aspect of the workshop did you find most useful?' (Q4) six participants mentioned speaking, six writing, four reading and two listening, suggesting that all parts of the workshop were useful. Other comments mentioned such elements as 'the core understanding of test writing and other assessment-related issues', 'applying rating scales and feedback in the classroom' and 'good cooperation of the moderators and the audience.'

As for the least useful aspect of the workshops (Q5), seven respondents made comments such as 'everything was useful' or 'everything was useful and to the point.' However, the European Language Portfolio was mentioned three times, suggesting that this aspect could be improved if the sessions are held again.

With respect to further training (Q6), all 19 respondents made suggestions. Some wanted a focus on an area of language ability: six mentioned speaking, five writing, and one receptive skills. Two mentioned sociocultural competence and one translation. Three asked for training in classroom assessment with others expressing an interest in test development, task design, item writing, relating tests to frameworks, rating scales, test administration and the use of technology.



#### **Action planning**

The workshop was rounded off by a meeting during which the participants agreed on setting up the Ukrainian LTA Association, collaboratively determined its short-term and long-term objectives, and elected the committee (President, two Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer and four Members-at-large).

The newly established Association will be an NGO with five regional (Northern, Central, Western, Southern and Eastern) branches, sustained mostly by the individual membership fees. It is also expected to receive support from the leading universities of this country in hosting the Association's regular (annual)

conventions, offering reasonably (non-commercially) priced services for publishing the Association members' research articles and other materials (curricula, notes on workshops, etc.) and providing premises and funding for setting up LTA centres on university campuses.

It was decided to initiate activities of regional LTA centres in Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, H. Skovoroda National Teacher Training University of Kharkiv, B. Khmelnytsky National University of Cherkasy, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv and Illia Mechnikov University of Odesa. The centres are viewed as hubs of activities to promote enhancement of LTA literacy of Ukrainian university teachers of English. The elected leaders of these centres, together with the Committee, will participate in planning the Association's activities and coordinate their implementation.

The immediate plans of the newly set-up Association consist in organizing Winter school (2016) for LTA trainers who will elaborate strategies to organize efficient training of broad teacher constituency at regional centres, develop workshop materials, and plan joint events. This event will be hosted by Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv.

We also intend to set up a web-site which will make the materials developed by the Association members available online. The web-site will also serve a forum for sharing ideas and expertise in LTA nationally.

Special attention is to be paid to training student teachers and young researchers, thus the second event is planned to take place in the Fall of 2016 at H. Skovoroda National Teacher Training University of Kharkiv where a Course for pre-service LTA training has been implemented for several years.

It was agreed that the expected long-range impact would consist in involving both experienced and novice university teachers of English in participating in workshops conducted by the trained Association members, conferences and round-tables in order to promote better teaching and assessing in universities in Ukraine.

The members of the Association will be encouraged to make their contribution to the development of LTA beyond Ukraine, participating in international LTA events. In due course, we would like to affiliate to ILTA.

