Report to UCAP from Borislaw Bilash II

August 25, 2026

Executive Summary

The generous grant from the Ukraine Children's Action Project (UCAP) was invaluable in supporting our recent professional development workshops for educators in Ukraine. This summer, we successfully delivered highly interactive sessions to K-12 science educators, equipping them with modern methodologies and essential instructional resources. By providing these tools, we are actively helping to normalize the educational process, ensuring that children's learning continues to progress despite the ongoing challenges of war—a mission that aligns directly with UCAP's goals.

While this report primarily focuses on the outcomes of my role as the lead instructor for the science program, it also highlights key strategic developments from my expanded capacity as Director of the Summer Institute, demonstrating the broad, systemic impact of UCAP's support.

Introduction

My name is Borislaw Bilash II, and I have dedicated my 39-year career in the United States to science education and teacher professional development. I lead the science education program as part of the Summer Institute, an initiative of the Institute for Professional Development of Teachers (IPDT), sponsored by the International Educational Coordinating Council (IECC) of the Ukrainian World Congress (UWC).

This year, I was appointed Director of the Institute. In this leadership capacity, I oversee the operational and administrative aspects of the entire initiative, managing 9 lead instructors and 32 co-instructors across eight concurrent programs: principals, vice principals, special education teacher teams, primary grades, language arts, mathematics, primary science, and high school science. To ensure our initiatives closely align with the immediate needs of Ukrainian schools, I collaborate directly with key regional leaders, including Lesia Prystavska, Director of the Center of Professional Development of Teachers for the city of Lviv, and Andriy Zakaliuk, the Director of Education for Lviv.

Balancing the directorship with my deep commitment to the science curriculum has been a highly effective synergy. I continue to serve directly as the lead instructor for the two science programs (K-5 and 6-12), supported by an exceptional and growing team of nine co-instructors—four in primary science and five in high school

science—ensuring the rigor and quality of our science instruction is continuously elevated.

Project Activities and Team Growth

The core mission of our workshops is to empower Ukrainian teachers with the skills needed to advance science education through hands-on, experiential learning. This year, the Institute conducted training sessions in two primary locations. Chernivtsi hosted 44 participants in the science programs out of over 200 total attendees. Our second location, Davydiv, hosted 40 science participants out of over 150 total Institute attendees. Notably, the Davydiv session marked a significant and proud milestone for our initiative: it was our inaugural program specifically dedicated to educators from rural schools. By intentionally focusing on rural communities, we are ensuring that high-quality, modern professional development reaches educators who often face the greatest geographical and resource-based disparities, empowering them to deliver exceptional science education to underserved student populations.

To support this extensive outreach, my team of science teacher co-instructors expanded by two this year. This strategic growth increased the opportunity for individualized instruction during our hands-on laboratory activities, which remains a cornerstone of effective science pedagogy. These individuals bring invaluable new perspectives, including one instructor who currently works at the Center of Professional Development of Teachers in Lviv. Having co-taught the curriculum for several years, my Ukrainian partners are now independently leading instructional modules. This shift demonstrates to their peers a successful mastery of North American teaching methods, allowing them to provide authentic, practical examples tested within their own classroom environments.

Our 2026 curriculum trained participants in a variety of innovative instructional methods, focusing on the following key areas:

- **Continuous Assessment Strategies:** We introduced real-time formative assessment techniques that enable educators to accurately gauge student comprehension and adjust their instruction immediately, making the learning process highly dynamic.
- **Experiential Outdoor Education:** Teachers were trained to extend learning beyond the traditional classroom setting. By engaging in a hands-on environmental scavenger hunt, they acquired a practical framework for designing their own meaningful scientific field trips.
- **Inverted Classroom Models:** Led by co-instructor and program alumna, Pani Kateryna, we dedicated significant time to the "Flipped Classroom" instructional

model. Participants learned to produce their own educational videos for at-home viewing, preserving valuable classroom time for interactive, hands-on scientific inquiry.

- **Translating Academic Standards:** We guided teachers through the complex process of converting national educational standards into accessible, student-friendly "I Can" learning objectives. Recognizing the universal value of this skill, my co-instructor who specializes in this topic for science education also presented it in general terms to both the principal and vice principal programs. As Director, deliberately sharing specialized expertise across our eight programs is a highly successful model I plan to implement fully next year.

It remains deeply rewarding to witness the enthusiasm science teachers exhibit for this experiential learning model. School administrators consistently report that participating educators return to their respective institutions with a renewed passion and dedication for their profession.

Distinguished Guests and Leadership Engagement

It was a profound honor to welcome Archbishop Dr. Borys Gudziak of Philadelphia as our keynote speaker in both Chernivtsi and Davydiv. In the educational sphere, he is renowned as the builder and president of the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv—a modern center of quality education, academic freedom, and innovation. Today, Dr. Gudziak stands as one of the most powerful and respected global voices defending the dignity of Ukraine. His ability to inspire was palpable; much like his address at the World Economic Forum in Davos, where a hall of world leaders sat in absolute silence listening to his testament of the Ukrainian people's courage and moral strength, his words deeply moved and motivated our participating educators.

We were also deeply appreciative of the dedicated presence of Liuba Lyubchyk, Director of the International Educational Coordinating Council (IECC) of the Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) who traveled from Paris to Chernivtsi and spent the first two days of the Institute with us, demonstrating a wonderful commitment of international support for our mission.

Furthermore, it was an immense pleasure to host Ms. Yulia Kardash, Regional Director of the Ukrainian Children's Action Project, on the final day of the Institute in Davydiv. We were also privileged to have Member of Parliament Natalia Pipa serve as our closing speaker for the Davydiv session. MP Pipa facilitated a highly valuable question-and-answer period specifically for the participating school principals, providing them with a unique opportunity to learn firsthand about current and

upcoming educational initiatives within the parliament. Both Ms. Kardash and MP Pipa were able to observe the final project presentations delivered by the participating schools, witnessing firsthand the tangible culmination of the week's intensive professional development.

Curriculum Resources

We expanded our science curriculum significantly this year to include focused discussions on integrating Artificial Intelligence into the classroom, directly addressing needs identified by our participants in previous surveys. Furthermore, the Center of Professional Development of Teachers in Lviv successfully printed the comprehensive textbooks utilized in both programs. The *Curriculum Materials for Primary Grades Science* is 127 pages, and the *Curriculum Materials for High School Science* spans 156 pages. Each text provides a thorough summary of every presentation, alongside associated worksheets and reproducible examples for classroom use.

Challenges and Technological Adaptability

Executing educational programs in Ukraine requires continuous adaptability. We successfully conducted our sessions without the interruptions of air raid alerts or power outages this year. Our primary logistical hurdles were technological.

Because our instructional design relies heavily on rich visual aids, the lack of sufficient Smartboards at the host facilities presented an initial challenge; each school could only supply equipment for seven of the eight programs offered by the Institute. Fortunately, the science program—bolstered directly by UCAP's support—utilized battery-operated portable projectors, ensuring our visual presentations proceeded without interruption.

Additionally, certain classrooms experienced limited to no Internet connectivity. We adapted swiftly by utilizing our mobile phones as hotspots, providing the necessary bandwidth to bring guest speakers into the classrooms via Google Meet. This solution also allowed one of our instructors, who was in the final days of pregnancy, to safely and effectively deliver her modules from home. In total, the Institute successfully managed three simultaneous virtual broadcasts across the science, vice principals, and special education courses. While we successfully navigated these unforeseen technical disruptions in real time, it reinforced the critical need for meticulous equipment preparation and rapid technical troubleshooting training for all instructors ahead of future sessions.

Outcomes, Impact, and Evaluation
Last winter, we conducted a 100-day impact evaluation survey of our 2025 Summer Institute participants. Utilizing the research-based frameworks of educational researchers Thomas Guskey and Laura Desimone, this evaluation moved beyond measuring initial satisfaction to focus strictly on actual classroom implementation. Participants provided invaluable feedback on the relevance of the topics presented and shared actionable examples of how they implemented these methodologies in their classrooms.

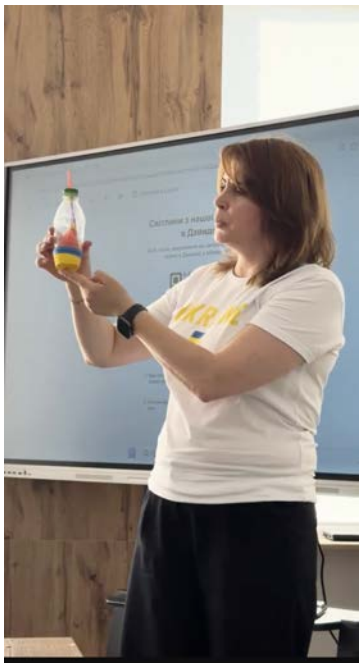
On the final day of this year's Institute, participants completed a forward-looking survey entitled "What can the Institute do for Ukrainian Education?". The resulting data indicated a pressing need for practical support and physical equipment to facilitate hands-on inquiry-based learning, resources for AI integration, specific national standard assessment rubrics, and inclusive teaching strategies.

Future Plans
Looking ahead, the demand for our programs continues to grow. We have already been formally asked by the Director of Education for Lviv to conduct a one-week Institute there next summer. In the coming months, I will be working closely with my Co-Director in Lviv, Lida Andrushko, and the Center of Professional Development of Teachers to arrange a second Institute in another city in western Ukraine, as at least three municipalities have already expressed strong interest.

Furthermore, we are actively working to expand opportunities for individual schools from eastern Ukraine to send their teaching teams to our programs. In recent years, we have proudly hosted resilient educators from frontline and eastern regions, including Donetsk, Kharkiv, and Poltava, and we aim to increase their participation next year. We are currently forming a focus group of 9 Ukrainian educators to deeply analyze the recent survey data, which will heavily influence our structural and curricular planning to meet these evolving needs.

Acknowledgements
I extend my deepest gratitude to Karen and Irwin Redlener and the UCAP team for their unwavering support. Your generous contribution significantly enhanced the quality and impact of this project. Your support continues to make a substantial and lasting difference in the lives of educators and students in Ukraine. Diakuiu - Thank you!

Photos and Visual Documentation



Top: Participants developing models to explain a phenomenon
Middle: Instructor modelling how to conduct an demonstration
Bottom: Participant presenting a demonstration to the class

Top: Cooperative games and experiencing the importance of inclusion
Middle: Troubleshooting technology: Broadcasting from Toronto to Davydiv using a portable projector connected to a phone acting as both as a hotspot and video camera to see the class
Bottom: Analyzing soil during a multi-station lab experience

Left: Applying the inquiry method to lighting a lightbulb with one battery and a paper clip. Right: Write it- Do it: Analyzing the results of a technical writing assignment and the product built as a result of the written directions.

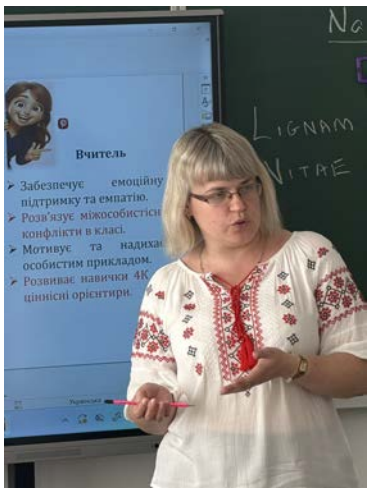
Left: Constructing a freestanding tower from only three sheets of paper.
Right: Textbook for high school science program

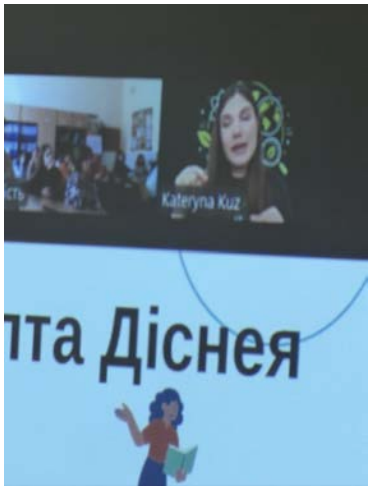
Participants of the Institute in Chernivtsi, July 6-10, 2026. Primary group on the left, secondary group on the right.

Participants of the Institute in Davydiv, July 13-17, 2026. Primary group on the left, secondary group on the right.

My team of co-instructors:

Lida Andrushko, Myroslava Pariy, Olia Rozpytna, Iryna Skolska, Svitlana Romaniv, Maryana Hrudlevska, Volodymyr Tsyfra (Missing, Kateryna Kuz and Lidia Holosova)
Lead Instructor: Borislaw Bilash II.





Top: Iryna Skolska presenting "Using AI to Develop Comprehensive & Effective Lesson Plans"
Middle: Kateryna Kuz broadcasted to Chernivtsi from Lviv
Bottom: Volodomyr Szufra coaching teachers during activity

Institute of Professional Development of Teachers (IPDT), sponsored by the International Educational Coordinating Council (IECC) of the Ukrainian World Congress (UWC), Chernivtsi, Ukraine, July 6-10, 2026.

Institute of Professional Development of Teachers (IPDT), sponsored by the International Educational Coordinating Council (IECC) of the Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) Davydiv, Ukraine, July 13-17, 2026.