

Title: Developing Russian Language Proficiency via L2 Debates
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Integrated and contextualized teaching of multiple language skills is one of the crucial factors that affect current perspectives on L2 teaching (Henkel, 2006). Researchers in L2 learning and teaching generally agree that to make language learning as realistic as possible and to assist learners to reach higher proficiency levels, a range of L2 skills needs to be addressed simultaneously, not in isolation (Ellis, 2003; Henkel, 2006; Lazaraton, 2001; Snow, 2005). Debate is one of the ways to employ skills integration and focus on the development of language fluency (Westfall & McCarthy, 2004).

The presenter will demonstrate how listening, reading, and speaking can be tied together via debates to assist L2 learners develop TL proficiency including persuasive speaking skills and conversational fluency. She will offer concrete steps in implementing L2 debates and provide some recommendations on how to select debate topics using authentic reading and listening materials. The presenter will share results of informal surveys and statistical data which support her hypothesis that integrated and contextualized teaching of multiple language skills via debates promotes L2 proficiency. The presenter and the participants will brainstorm some of the main metacognitive, cognitive, and socioaffective strategies that effect concepts related to L2 proficiency and the participants will be invited to share their vision of the settings in which debates could be organized and customized to fit their specific environment.