

Title: The Use of PRS Clickers in the Russian-Language Classroom
Author: Yuliya Ilchuk, Colgate University

In the past decade, a series of social networks have popped up with V Kontakte.ru (VK) being the largest European social network with more than a 100 million active users whose primary language is Russian. This paper presents the results of the long-term use of VK in Russian language teaching. The evident advantage of using Russian social networks is that they make language learning more fun, efficient, interactive and interesting. The average Russian language student can turn an arduous task like studying something enjoyable by interacting with native language speakers from around Russia and post-Soviet republics. The paper admits that social network websites will never replace other forms of language instruction. Moreover, native speakers may interject slang and bad grammar into their speech and conversation, making it difficult for foreign students to learn from scratch. But social network media represent an opportunity for what every language teacher dreams of - fluid conversation with native speakers about common interests, instead of stilted conversations driven by a vocabulary list.

First, the paper analyzes advantages of the use of v kontakte.ru over a Russified version of facebook.com for Russian language learning. Then, it proceeds with the demonstration of language activities designed to increase peer-learning and cultural awareness. And finally, it provides rationale for the use of VK as the motivational tool that supports life-long interest in learning Russian.

Research has shown that motivation is a major determinant of success in second and foreign language learning. The definition of motivation employed in this paper is drawn from Matthew Peacock's definition of motivation as inspiring "interest, persistence, attention, action, and enjoyment" in learners (144). The other scholar, Larry Vandergrift, stresses the importance of both *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation in successful L2 learning. Intrinsic motivational satisfaction comes from a "sense of competence, autonomy, and relatedness," while extrinsic comes from the social reward, in this case coming in the form of a good grade. The danger to language learning of the extrinsic motivation is that once the external coercion is removed the desire to learn the language decreases. Under this paradigm, once we stop testing our students and requiring them to attend language classes their motivation to study Russian would decrease.

Russian social network VK serves to help students develop intrinsic motivation that is more self-determined and is focused more on enjoyment and self-satisfaction.

- Peacock M. (1997). "The Effect of Authentic Materials on the Motivation of EFL Learners." *ELT Journal*, 51, 144–156.
- Vandergrift, L. (2005). "Relationships among Motivation Orientations, Metacognitive Awareness and Proficiency in L2 Listening." *Applied Linguistics*, 26(1), 70–89.