

Title: Project-Based Curriculum in Russian Heritage Classroom

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Abstract:

Project-based learning (PBL) has become an accepted practice as it emphasizes a student-centered teaching approach that helps make learning relevant to students by establishing connections to life outside the classroom and by addressing real world issues. Project-driven classrooms allow students to acquire a deeper knowledge through active exploration and development of problem-solving, social and writing skills. In heritage language (HL) classroom, PBL is an especially suitable approach (Kagan and Dillon 2001, 2008, 2009; Carreira and Kagan 2011) as it builds on learners' prior strengths in speaking and listening to improve their writing and reading abilities. This presentation will discuss a model of PBL-based curriculum for a semester-long Russian heritage language course at Harvard University. It was designed to facilitate the development of presentational speaking and writing skills in the HL, increase their linguistic and cultural awareness, while connecting content to students' personal goals and motivations vis-à-vis their HL and validating their hybrid identities as Russian Americans.