

Title: Global Russian, Local Classrooms: Telecollaboration Projects at Connecticut College
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Abstract:

The presentation will describe a collaborative teaching partnership between the Russian programs of Connecticut College and Trinity College. With only two full-time faculty at each of these small liberal arts colleges, it is, as in other less commonly taught languages, a struggle to sustain a high quality, four-year language program. The colleges, meanwhile, offer parallel curricula in language and culture, with similar courses being taught simultaneously at both institutions, including the “one-room schoolhouse” style advanced language courses that combine third and fourth year students, a strategy pedagogically undesirable, but — given the small numbers of students in them — administratively necessary. A grant opportunity led faculty at both colleges to recognize an opportunity to reduce our duplication of efforts and to expand the course offerings available to students of Russian at both institutions by establishing a collaborative partnership between the two colleges. In the Spring 2015 semester, three courses were shared between the two colleges via teleconference. The presentation will describe the courses as they unfolded, the planning and coordination process, and the technologies used for synchronous and asynchronous coursework together with their challenges and affordances. Finally, the presentation will offer preliminary conclusions as to whether the sharing of such courses can improve student learning outcomes while permitting a more efficient use of faculty resources.