

Title: New Approaches to Teaching Reading Through Technology
Authors: Shannon Spasova, Michigan State University
Zarema Kumakhova, Michigan State University

Abstract:

Teaching reading is a time-consuming and difficult process. Most students need targeted and intensive help in order to be able to puzzle through authentic texts and learn to interpret patterns of word formation in context, but this kind of help can be awkward to conduct in class, with students working at different paces and tempted by English.

This session will present a project that puts much of the help that might normally be provided by a teacher in person online and at the fingertips of learners as they read, potentially preparing them to spend more of class time in productive discussion of the text. The end goal of the project is the group of lessons that assists students in getting over the hurdle of reading authentic Russian literature with extensive support for vocabulary development using stories by Pushkin, Lermontov, and Chekhov. The lessons feature exercises that lead to gains in reading proficiency while also allowing students to feel a sense of accomplishment as they begin to be able to read literature without a dictionary. Assistance with vocabulary is structured in a way that allows more advanced readers to move quickly through the exercises, while those attempting to read literature in the original for the first time can get the help that they need. Additionally, while the main texts are classical literature, the vocabulary in the lessons is also practiced within modern contexts.

Leading up to this, the project also includes reading texts aimed at beginners as well as shorter pieces of literature that serve as students' first foray into reading authentic literature. These texts include audio help that mimics the guidance of a teacher.

The presenters will show examples of these reading activities and discuss strategies for incorporating them into class, as well as initial student feedback on the lessons.