

**Title:** Assessing Writing at Intermediate and Advanced Levels

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One of the primary goals of domestic Russian Flagship programs is to help students achieve Advanced-level (ILR 2) proficiency in all four skills by time of application to the academic year capstone program at St. Petersburg University. This raises the bar for domestic Russian programs considerably, since studies by Irene Thompson and Benjamin Rifkin have shown that the majority of undergraduate Russian majors achieve proficiency levels at Intermediate Mid or, in some cases, Intermediate High. Thus instruction at the third- and fourth-year levels must focus on development of proficiency levels in all skills from Intermediate Mid to Advanced. One of the most difficult areas to assess within this framework is, paradoxically, writing, because ACTFL general proficiency guidelines for writing leave a great deal open for interpretation and closely reflect the oral proficiency guidelines, and because ACTFL proficiency guidelines for writing have not yet been developed specifically for Russian. Thus this presentation will discuss programs in both proficiency (standardized) and achievement (classroom-based) testing in writing at the University of Wisconsin – Madison Russian language program. The co-authors will focus on criteria and methods of assessment of writing, including grammar and syntax, structure and cohesion, and functionality, both for writing as an aid to oral expression and in various genres specific to the written word. As the co-authors teach separate third-year courses, one focused on grammar and writing and the other on conversation, we will discuss ways in which writing assessment instruments in these courses both differ and complement each other, in order to improve student performance in the independent, standardized UW-Madison proficiency testing program, developed by Benjamin Rifkin and continually updated.

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