

CDIPS Final Project.

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Part I. Executive Summary:

I plan to teach diverse and inclusive material to a select group of students, and present them with a larger picture of the Russian speaking world. The Russia-centered model in the US was established by the literary minded emigre writers and scholars, who had founded contemporary Russian departments. Interested US students were learning about Russian literature's preeminent authors, they were learning the basics of Russian language, but not going far beyond the metropolis. Later, with Perestroika and onward, borders were opening up and the students received opportunities to study outside of major Russian cities, such as Moscow and St. Petersburg, and extend their outlook on the Russian speaking world. As far back as 1991, when I was teaching at MIIS during the summer, I had a student, originally, from California, who had gone to Kyrgyzstan to participate in a polo competition. Today's college students can take advantage of study abroad opportunities, such as SRAS, which offer a range of programs, from the Caucasus to Central Asia. In addition, college students have taken advantage of exchange programs at AUCA in Kyrgyzstan and the Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan. My audience today are high school students, and my goal is to inform them about those potential opportunities, were they to choose Russian in college, while teaching them material that opens

up the world beyond the established Russian literature and Russia-centered topics. I draw inspiration from the many workshops (ACTR and CDIPS) that I have attended over the years, as well as from an educator, such as Gloria Ladson-Billings, who states:

- Knowledge is not static; it is shared, recycled, and constructed.
- Knowledge must be viewed critically.
- Teachers must be passionate about knowledge and learning.
- Teachers must *scaffold*, or build bridges, to facilitate learning.
- Assessment must be multifaceted, incorporating multiple forms of excellence.

(Ladson-Billings, 1995, 481)

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Part II: **Analysis**

With a diverse group of high school students, often requiring individualized customized instruction, my tasks tend to evolve into several projects:

- Current events in various parts of the former Soviet Union.
- Travel experiences of people young and older in the similar areas.
- And what about Pushkin? Pushkin's family background and his unfinished historical novel *Аран Петра Великого*. (Excerpts in English, and, in the original, for heritage speakers).
- They live in Russia. Profiles of non-ethnic Russians from the areas of Literature, Theater, Music, and Sports, including more recent transplants to Russia following the 2014 Olympics.
- Individual student interests and travel experiences around the world related in Russian to a wider audience.

The students at the Wheeler school vary from US-born non-Russian speakers to US-born heritage speakers to students of Asian background interested in Russia and Asia.

In class, we focus on the development of language skills which also include level-appropriate videos, film, reading and writing. For the past two years, my classes were virtual, and we made wide use of the *Mezhdunami* textbook for elementary students, of excerpts from *Golosa* for intermediate students, excerpts from *Russian for Russians*, the site *Uchites* (originally, from the *Russian Life* magazine) for advanced students.

With heritage speakers, we tend to read classical and/or contemporary authors, widely available from the Internet.

Problem areas: how do we approach the discussion of the war in Ukraine? How do we talk about migrant discrimination in Russia proper? How do we talk about LGBTQ issues in Russia and the Russian speaking countries? With high school students, my target audience, I would tend to concentrate on individual, human interest stories. Have they heard of anyone offering humanitarian assistance at the Ukraine/Russia border? Can they talk about the importance of carrying a passport while staying in Russia for certain migrant groups? What do they know about the LGBTQ protests in Russia in the past several years?

Part III: **Design**

Performance Objectives:

Elementary level high school students will learn to identify names of major Russian speaking regions, and be able to discuss examples from current news.

Intermediate and advanced Anglophone students will learn to speak more extensively on the above-named topics.

Heritage speakers will learn more about linguistic tensions and migrations created by the Ukraine war.

Students will present short videos on one of the above topics of their choice that will include the use of language (Russian) and content (in English for elementary level students; in Russian for intermediate and advanced students and heritage speakers).

Learning Assessments and Grading:

Short quizzes for language competency, and a video project as the final project.

I will use the ACTFL scale for language assessment, and the grade rubric for content assessment.

Strategies, Activities, Methods:

Individual research

Audio and video assignments

Group projects, when possible

Part IV: Development

Resources:

AATSEEL. How Can We Teach Slavic Languages and Literatures During the War in Ukraine?:

<https://www.aatseel.org/resources/wartime-teaching/>

ACTR teaching materials: <https://www.actr.org/teaching-materials.html>

Kagan Olga and Akišina Tat'jana E. *Russian for Russians. Russkij Dlja Russkich*. Slavica 2010.

LitRes: <https://litres.com/>

Meduza: <https://meduza.io/en>

Multirussia: <https://www.youtube.com/user/multirussia>

Mezhdunami: <https://www.mezhdunami.org/>

Operation Wedding, documentary. Israel, Latvia, 2016. (Documentary about the Russian Jewry

struggle for freedom in the 1970s): <https://www.operation-wedding-documentary.com/>

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Сибирь. Реалии: <https://www.sibreal.org/> (Current news about Siberia and the Far East).

SRAS: <https://geohistory.today/category/research-aids/geohistories/>. Accessed on 8/28/2022.

Uchites: <https://russianlife.com/uchites/>

Svoboda: <https://www.svoboda.org/> (<https://pressroom.rferl.org/navigation/allsites> — English version, with a lot of information about the Russian speaking countries and regions).

Part V: Implementation

Practicing anti-racist, anti-oppressive education. Consulting with the school Unity and Diversity coordinator about discussions and workshops taking place at school at large.

Discuss the overall goal for the course.

Discuss potential trigger issues, such as uncomfortable topics, listed in the analysis section.

Part VI: Evaluation

Feedback from Students

Feedback from Students is extremely important in terms of determining their interests and what works in the classroom. At my school, students are required to give feedback via their advisors, so any problems will be reported back to me, and I will try to find the right balance to address the issues at hand.