

Title: The Study of Russian Language and Culture in a Small Community
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AATSEEL members have the privilege to be the ambassadors of Russian language and culture in the United States. Our knowledge and enthusiasm determines how widely we spread appreciation of Russian culture in this country. Providing it in small communities may be challenging, because most of them have little or no access to university programs in Russian studies. Nevertheless, there are many options.

One of them can be teaching different aspects of Russian language and culture through a Community Education Center very much like the one we have at the two-year College of Southern Idaho in Twin Falls. This system brings into class adults, often with excellent education and rich experience. Missionaries and descendants of Russian immigrants, school instructors and medics, travelers and businessmen, artists or locals searching for international marriages and friendship with Russians have a desire to learn about Russia. Their diverse curiosity and knowledgeable input helps to develop the study program and give it significant life. The program can provide traditional curricular activities but with less formality.

Community members may also be involved in non-traditional out-of-class activities that develop greater interest in Russian language and culture. There can be locally organized exhibitions of Russian artifacts from private collections; classes on Russian cuisine; tours to an Orthodox Church; discussions about works of Russian writers at a library; meetings with Russians living there; informative writings and contests published in a newspaper about Russian culture.

Interaction and integration of curricular and extracurricular activities help develop language skills and increase cross-cultural awareness of its participants, provide native language examples in real situations, and create an exciting and enthusiastic learning environment.