

# *Russian Classroom* **Roundtable at REECAS**

Russian Language Within and Beyond School  
Settings:  
How to Engage and Motivate Students

May 2015

The 21st Annual Northwest Regional Conference for Russian,  
East European and Central Asian Studies



# Working with Heritage Learners: Best Practices from the UW STARTALK Summer Program

## *Russian in the Sky and Outer Space*

May 2, 2015

*Russian Classroom* Roundtable at

The 21st Annual Northwest Regional Conference for Russian,  
East European and Central Asian Studies

*Dr. Svetlana Abramova,  
University of Washington*

# In this session we will:

- look at who are the heritage learners;
- look at some major pedagogical implications of research on working with heritage learners;
- share our STARTALK program's best practices in working with heritage learners: projects, interviews, and field trips to the Museum of Flight (Seattle).

# Who Is A Heritage Language Learner?

- **Narrow definition:** those who have been exposed to a particular language in childhood but did not learn it to full capacity because another language became dominant. FUNCTIONAL PROFICIENCY
- **Broad definition:** those who have been raised with a strong cultural connection to a particular language, usually through family interaction. CULTURAL AFFINITY

(Polinsky and Kagan 2007)



# Another Way to Look at it...

**...heritage speakers are early bilinguals** who learned the second (majority) language in childhood, either simultaneously with the heritage language, or after a short period of predominant exposure to and use of the minority language at home.

**...the heritage language becomes, structurally and functionally, the weaker language.**

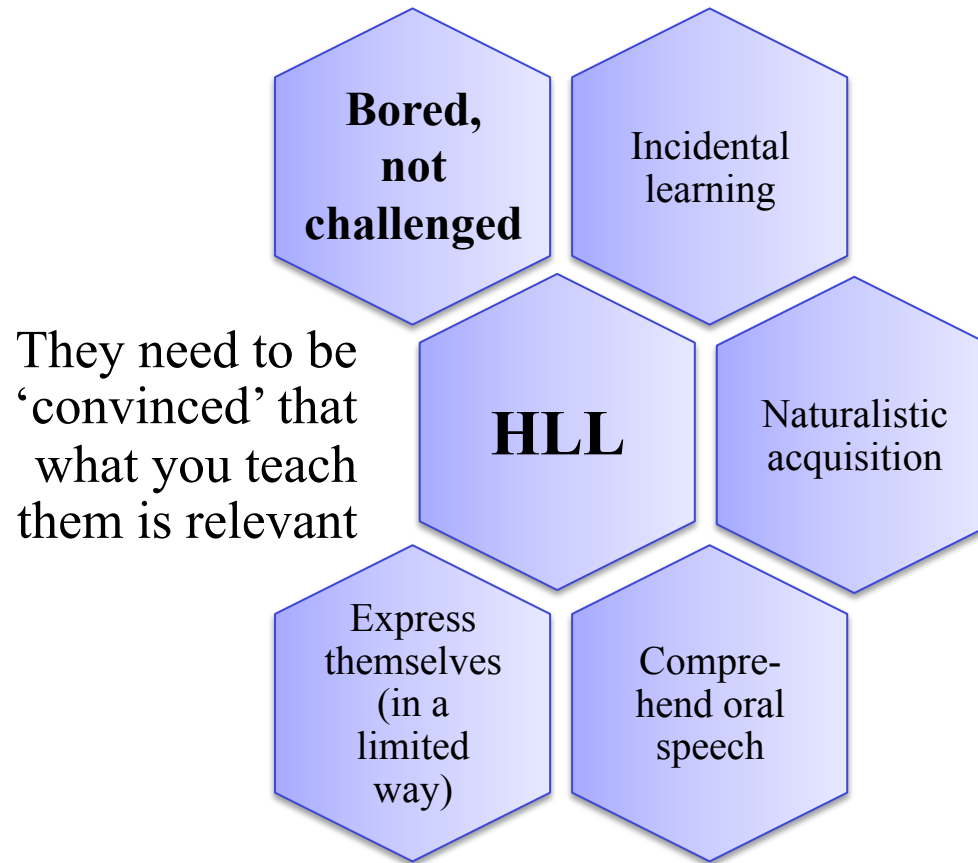
(The NHLRC White Paper)

# Limited Language Exposure

- Incomplete grammar
- Limited vocabulary
- Limited pragmatic competence

**BUT:** near-native pronunciation and fluency are in a high range

# HLL's 'Resistance' to Learning



# Convincing HLLs...

- Show them what they CAN do
- Explain what they NEED to learn
- Use authentic materials
- Adopt authentic tasks
- Make sure they are enjoying the process

# Authentic Tasks: Real Life Purposes

- Communicating in writing (e-mail, blogs)
- Reading (a variety of genres)
- Interviewing
- Translating
- Interpreting

**Purpose:** Acquiring linguistic and cultural literacy while engaged in a meaningful task



# UW Student Program for Russian Heritage Speakers

## *Russian in the Sky and Outer Space*

- 4-week intensive (5 hours/day) language program at the University of Washington
- Designed for high-school age Russian Heritage Language Learners (HLLs)
- Focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) and academic language to increase language proficiency





# UW STARTALK 2014

## Student Profiles

- 22 students (ages 14-17 years old)
- Born in the US or arrived before age 3 **(13)**
- Age at immigration: 4-9 **(4)**
- Age at immigration: 9-14 **(5)**
- Target language proficiency (*according to ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*):
  - ✓ Intermediate Mid or higher in Speaking/Listening
  - ✓ Intermediate Low or higher in Reading/Writing





# UW STARTALK

## Russian Program



**STEM Unit Lessons**  
**Voyage to Mars**  
**Airplanes**



**Role plays and labs at the Museum of Flight**  
**Voyage to Mars**  
**Pilot for a day**



**Interviews with professionals**  
**Boeing**  
**Microsoft**  
**Philips**



**Elective Projects**  
**Lego Robotics**  
**Linguistics**  
**Russian History**



# Interviews with Professionals



# Why Interviews?

- Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational modes of communication;
- Real-life, authentic task;
- Preparing students for interviews as a complex genre of communication;
- Content-based communication;
- Academic language style in use;
- Thank-you letter (via MOODLE Forum)  
Increases students sensitivity to cultural norms



# Preparation to Interview with Boeing Engineer

## *Student Activities:*



# Interviews with Professionals: Standards and Expected Outcomes

- Meet, greet and introduce people in formal and informal settings (Communication: Interpersonal);
- Listen to and understand oral presentation about STEM topics (Communication: Interpretive);
- Begin to use social registers and academic language style in discussing STEM topics with peers and a guest speaker (Communication: Interpersonal);
- Ask questions and understand answers about history of aircraft building and aerodynamics (Communication: Interpersonal);
- Recognize differences in Russian and American educational approaches for studying scientific disciplines through interviews with Russian professionals (Culture, Comparisons);
- Express post-activity feelings and experiences in short reflections using Moodle and thank-you letters (Communication: Presentational).

# Post-Interview Student Reflections

## Russian 499 STARTALK 2014

Home ► Courses ► Startalk ► Russian 499 (2014) ► August 4-15 ► Напишите благодарственное письмо Вячеславу Станиславовичу Чернявскому ► Спасибо за такую замечательную лекцию!



Search forums

### Administration

- Course administration
- Switch role to...
- My profile settings

Display replies in nested form



### Спасибо за такую замечательную лекцию!

by [DMITRY BASOV](#) - Friday, 8 August 2014, 11:52 AM

Уважаемый Вячеслав Станиславович,

Спасибо большое за очень поучительный урок про самолёты! Вы очень инересно и поучительно рассказали, я совсем не ожидал, что всё будет так интересно! Пожалуй, эта лекция была одной из самых инересных в Стартоке. Теперь-то я знаю все основные плюсы, минусы, опасности и остальные ньюансы при покупке и управлении самолёта. Мне так же очень понравилось с каким энтузиазмом Вы говорили на эту тему, так как это сделало Ваше выступление ещё более эффектным и интересным. После такого хорошего пиара самолётов я обязательно куплю себе самолёт, когда вырасту. Приходите в Старток и в следующие года, пожалуйста, ибо я не могу представить лучшего краткого рассказа про самолёты, ваш рассказ был очень хорош. Ещё раз спасибо!

С уважением,

Митя Басов

Reply

# Field Trips

- provide opportunities for experiential learning
- help develop learners' interest and motivation
- collaboration with community resources and museums bring a language to life and make the learning of complex vocabulary and language structures worthwhile



# “Voyage to Mars” Simulation at the Museum of Flight

- Introduction of specific vocabulary and structures students need to understand and use to complete the simulation
- Job application
- Role-play communication during flight simulation
- Post-activities reflection



Mission Control



Spacecraft

# CREW MANIFEST

## VOYAGE TO MARS / ПОЛЁТ НА МАРС

UW STARTALK Russian Student Program

1. Заполняйте таблицу сверху вниз.
2. В каждой группе (Центр управления полётом и Экипаж корабля), представляющей служебную позицию, должно быть равное количество членов. Для нечетного количества участников добавьте дополнительного человека в команду "Служба проб".

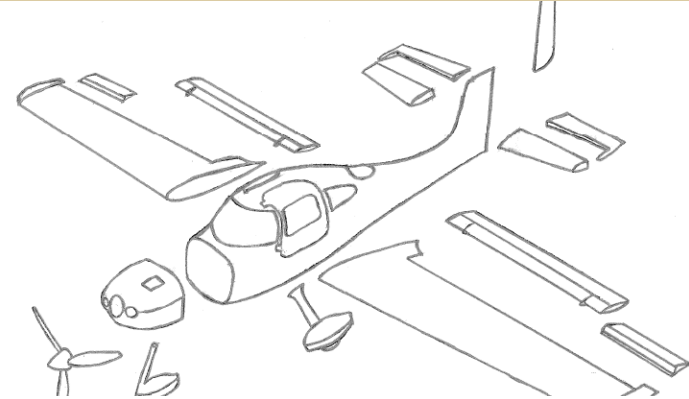


| КОМАНДЫ  | ЦЕНТР УПРАВЛЕНИЯ<br>ПОЛЁТОМ НА МАРС | ЭКИПАЖ<br>КОСМИЧЕСКОГО<br>КОРАБЛЯ |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>COM</b> (Communications)<br>СЛУЖБА СВЯЗИ                            |                                     |                                   |
| <b>DATA</b><br>СЛУЖБА ИНФОРМАЦИИ                                       |                                     |                                   |
| <b>NAV</b> (Navigation)<br>СЛУЖБА НАВИГАЦИИ<br><br>(Минимум 1 человек) |                                     |                                   |
| <b>PROBE</b><br>ЗАПУСК ЗОНДОВ<br><br>(Минимум 1 человек)               |                                     |                                   |
| <b>LS</b> (Life Support)   |                                     |                                   |



# “Aviation Learning Center” at the Museum of Flight

- Introduction of specific vocabulary and structures that students need to talk about how airplanes are constructed and why they fly
- Lab work stations, create a flight plan in Russian and conduct a pre-flight check
- Post-activities reflection



Предполетный осмотр (Cirrus SR-20)



# Student Activities: Lab at the Museum of Flight



# Projects: So Many Choices

- Linguistic research project “The Life of Words in Another Language”
- Research Project in Math/Robotics “Mars investigation with LEGO-robotics”
- Historical project “Russia in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century”

Other projects in the past:

- Drama
- Film and Culture
- Digital Storytelling



# Why Projects?

- meet students' various interests by giving a choice of a project and a research topic
- extend the main theme of the program above and beyond the STEM topics
- provide a deep cultural context connecting STEM with historical, social, cultural and linguistic content and explore it through the use of various authentic materials in Russian
- give heritage students a real-life task to make an oral presentation of their findings in academic style
- involve Russian community at the end of the program “conference”

# Projects: Setting Goals

## **Interpretive tasks:**

- Read and understand authentic texts: Russian dictionaries, linguistic articles and technical instructions;
- Understand other students' presentations, video and audio materials, take critical notes;

## **Interpersonal tasks:**

- Discuss ideas and opinions related to their research topics;
- Participate in after-presentation discussions with peers and experts;

## **Presentational tasks:**

- The students write PowerPoint Presentation to make an oral presentation of their findings at the end of the program in front of their parents, teachers, classmates, and experts
- The students orally present their findings from research projects using computer presentation slides.



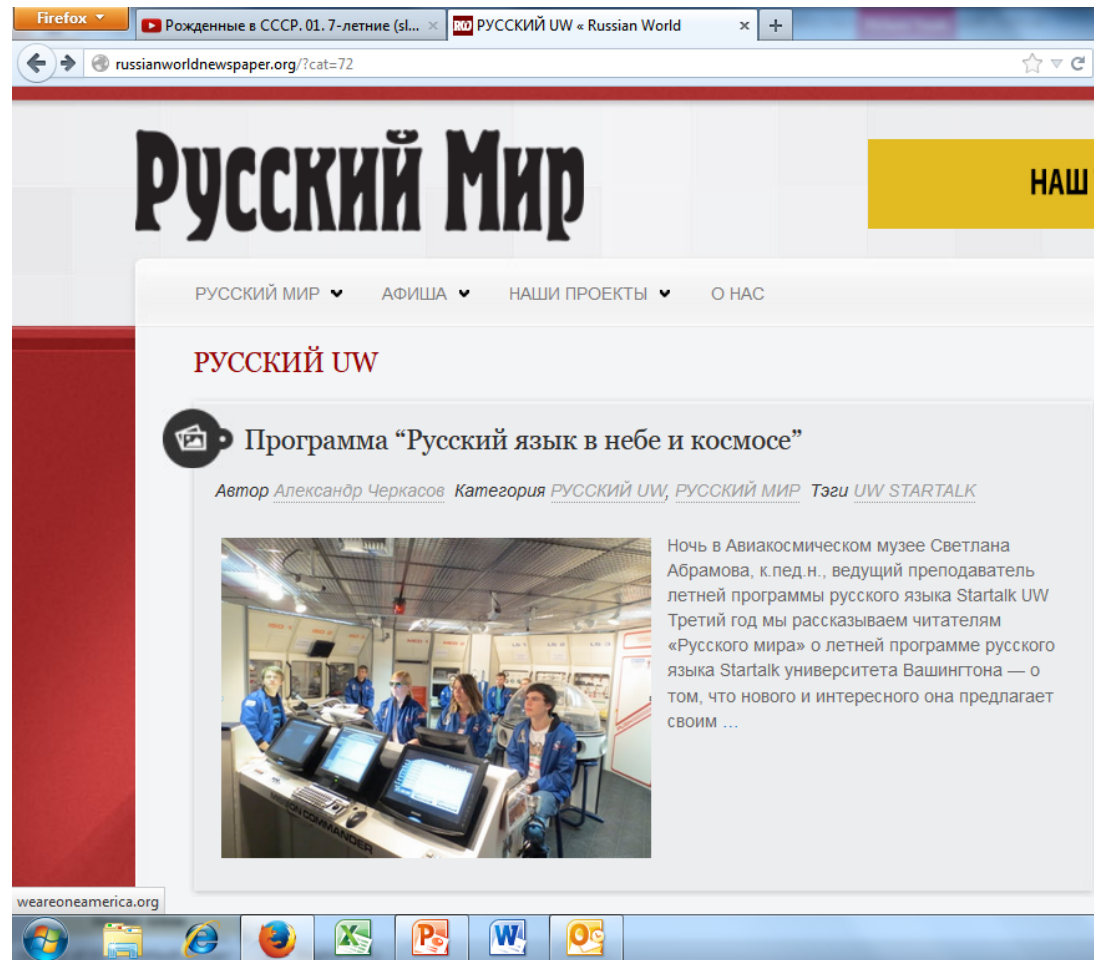
# Student Research Projects Conference

- **Choose** elective projects from Linguistics, Robotics & Astronomy, and History;
- **Explore** research topics through the use of various authentic materials in Russian;
- **Create** a PowerPoint presentation in the target language;
- **Present** orally their research findings in front of their classmates, parents, teachers, and experts;
- **Compete** to be the best presenter of the project;
- **Get feedback** from the Russian-speaking experts from the local Russian community.



# Collaboration with Local Russian Newspaper “Russkiy Mir”

- Tell Russian community about the program
- Advertise the program to attract students
- Publish students’ articles



# Students' Articles

## Город на Марсе

Алексей Быкович, студент программы 2013г.

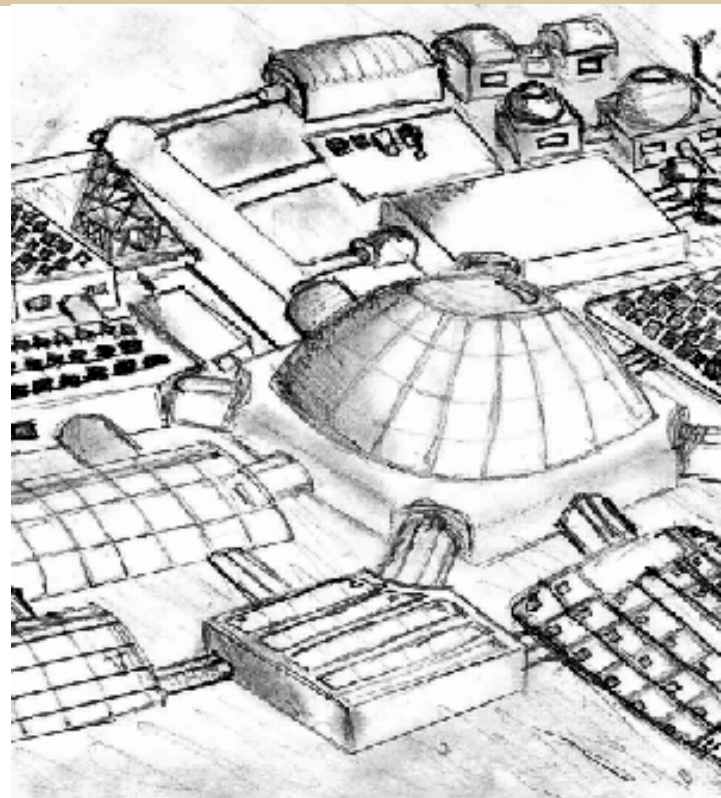
Планета Марс была загадкой для ученых многие годы, но мы все ближе к тому моменту, когда человеческая нога станет на эту красную планету. Люди всегда мечтали о человеческом поселении на Марсе, но могли ли эти сказки стать реальностью? Всего 40 лет назад такие вещи как смартфон были фантазией, и мы продвигаемся в развитии технологий каждую минуту. Что может принести нам будущее?

Чтобы человек жил на другой планете, ему нужны кислород, вода, еда... Проблема в том, что на Марсе существует нехватка всего этого. А также там очень низкое давление, ядовитая атмосфера, нет кислорода и повышенный уровень радиации.

Поскольку свинец хорошо поглощает  $\gamma$ -излучение, он используется для радиационной защиты в рентгеновских установках и в ядерных реакторах. Поэтому на первом этапе наш город будет под свинцом. Потом под городом можно будет строить туннели. Второй этап – терраформирование. Биосфера планеты будет защищать людей от солнечной и галактической космической радиации.

Также для жизни на Марсе нужно электричество, которое предполагается получать из солнечных батарей и ветряных мельниц.

Ниже приведен проект города на Марсе, в котором будут электростанции, оранжереи, научные лаборатории, квартиры для людей...



[russianworldnewspaper.org](http://russianworldnewspaper.org)



# Materials and Resources

- You Can See and Use Our Materials at UW STARTALK website <http://depts.washington.edu/startalk/>
- National Heritage Language Resource Center (NHLRC) at UCLA <http://web.international.ucla.edu/nhlrc/>

# THANK YOU!