

How to Enrich a Language Program and Motivate Students with Elective Projects

Svetlana Abramova

Heritage Language Symposium, University of
Washington, Seattle, February 10, 2018

STARTALK

Russian Heritage Student Programs

Russian in the Sky and Outer Space

- Focus on STEM
- 4-week long
- Int.H. in Speaking and Listening, Int.L. in Reading and Writing



Bridges to Russia: Culture and Social Science

- Focus on Culture & Social Science
- 3-week long
- Int.M. in Speaking and Listening, Nov.M. in Reading and Writing





Russian Heritage Student Programs

- Intensive (5 hours/day) summer language programs
- Designed for Russian heritage high school students (14-17)
- Content-based (focus on STEM/ Culture & Social Science)
- Collaboration with the local museums
- Interviews with native Russian-speaking professionals
- Afternoon elective projects

Projects Timeframe and Materials

- Amount of time: 22 h. + a conference
- Groups of 5-7 students
- Authentic materials
- Access to university library
- 1-2 museum field-trips
- Access to a computer lab and Internet
- MOODLE (or another learning platform)

Project Products

- Drama Performance
 - Model of LEGO robotic Mars rover
 - Newspaper
 - Digital story
 - Linguistic research
-
- At the end of the program --- presentations of students' projects at Conference or Closing Ceremony

Language Goals

Interpretive

- Read and understand authentic texts: articles, technical instructions, dictionaries
- Listen to and understand video lectures and other students' presentations, take critical notes
- Interpret graphs, pictures, posters, cartoons, and art objects

Interpersonal

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

Presentational

- Write a PowerPoint Presentation based on a research
- Present findings from research projects orally in front of parents, instructors, classmates, and experts at the student conference.

Elective Projects for Heritage Learners



Elective Projects for Heritage Learners

- Language and linguistic reflection
- Life-long linguistic skills
- Critical thinking



Student's Voice



I loved the Startalk program last year. It opened my eyes to so many things that I wouldn't have otherwise encountered. From talking to war veterans and hearing their incredible experiences to delving deeper into the life of Mark Chagall, to hearing a variety of Russian songs (beyond Visotskiy) I had an incredible learning experience that I would have never had otherwise. I also became friends with Russian speaking peers, not only from Boston, but across the U.S. I would love to have the opportunity to continue to expand my knowledge of Russian culture, meet Russian speaking peers, and contribute to the Startalk program.

Gwyneth, Harvard Startalk, 2017

More Options for Differentiated Instructions



Hands-on Learning and Creativity



How to Motivate Students with Elective Projects

- Explore your students' interests
- “Sell” projects
- Let students choose elective projects
- Let them choose their roles in a group project or research topic
- Let them compete at student conference

“Selling” a project: Demo lessons



Лингвистический проект: выбираем слово для исследования

Ваше имя: _____

Напишите, пожалуйста, чем вы интересуетесь, увлекаетесь и любите (или мечтаете) заниматься в школе и в свободное время _____

1. Выберите из списка самое интересное слово, которое вы хотели бы исследовать:

совет, культурный, кремль, верста, большевик, дача, комиссар, самиздат, совхоз, гласность, субботник, самовар, интеллигенция, дружина, товарищ, аппаратчик, народ, пуд, копейка, мужик, рубль, перестройка, погром, дума, тайга, балаклава.

Почему вы выбрали именно его? _____

2. Какое еще слово вам кажется интересным? Запишите его: _____

3. Выберите и запишите третье слово, которое вам интересно: _____

Student Project Conference

Challenges:

- To judge or not to judge?
- Who are the experts?
- How to prepare the experts to judge/grade students' presentations?
- How to celebrate students' success?



After-Project Students' Reflection

Students were asked about

- What they have learned during the project;
- How they can use their new knowledge and experiences;
- What was the most interesting part of the project?
- What was the most challenging part of the project?
- How (if so) the project has changed their attitude toward studying Russian?

What Students Like about Projects?

- Making their own choices
- Field trips vs. classroom routine
- Hands-on learning
- Competition
- Challenges
- Research and exploration
- Creativity

After-Project Students' Reflection

Student's Voice



- *What was the most challenging part of the project?*
- *Making the final presentation and being able to speak on a confident level, with confidence, with people who obviously knew about the subject more than me.*
- Ilia, UW Startalk, 2015

New Elective Projects

- Translation
- Biology
- Cryptology

Thank You

You can see and use our materials

- Units and lesson plans
- Scenarios and texts
- PowerPoint presentations
- Videos of the lessons

on UW STARTALK website

<https://depts.washington.edu/startalk/russianstudentresources2014.php>