

# UW STARTALK 2021: Going Remote with a Successful In-person STEM Program for Heritage Russian Students

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UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

STARTALK

*Start Talking!*



# UW Russian StarTalk Program 2021 Team

- > **Dr. Paul Aoki, Principal Investigator,**
- > **Angie McMillan, Program Director**
- > **Dr. Russell Hugo, Technical support and consultant,**
- > **Dr. Michele Aoki, consultant**

# UW Russian StarTalk Program 2021 Team

- > **Dr. Svetlana Abramova, Lead Instructor,**
- > **Dr. Veronica Muskheli, Project Lead,**
- > **Alexey Kuznetsov, Project Lead**

# Converting the Program to Online Format

- > Zoom livestreaming classes and meetings;
- > Materials and assessments in UW LLC Moodle;
- > Additional online learning tools (Padlet);
- > Online Testing (STAMP)

# Major components of the UW Startalk Russian Summer Program (2012-19)

- > Morning STEM classes -- two units:
- > Two Museum of Flight visits
- > Interviews with Russian-speaking professionals
- > Pulsar (language self-assessment online tool)
- > Three afternoon elective projects on students' choice
- > Student Project Conference
- > Proficiency tests: WPT and OPIc

# Russian Summer Program 2021 to Online Format

- > Morning STEM classes: *Voyage to Mars* and *Airplanes*
- ~~Two Museum of Flight visits~~
- > Interviews with Russian-speaking professionals
- ~~Pulsar~~ Language Portfolio (via Moodle)
- > Two afternoon elective projects
- > Student Project Conference
- > Proficiency tests: proctored STAMP

# Adjusting UW Startalk Russian Summer Program 2021 to Online Format

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## Morning STEM classes

- > Carefully designed schedule;
- > Using breakout rooms and online tools for effective small group work/collaboration during livestream meetings;
- > Reviewing and developing materials for self-pace work;
- > More time and 'space' for individual interests and comprehension reading (Library day)

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## Summative Assessment: Interviews with Russian-speaking professionals

- > Reading a guest-speaker bio
- > Preparing interview questions
- > Listening a guest-speaker's presentation
- > Interviewing guest-speakers
- > Reflecting and writing a thank-you-letter



# Reflection

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## Interviews with Russian-speaking professionals

- > Most steps were easy to adjust;
- > More flexibility to find and invite guest-speakers;
- > More meaningful written communication (Moodle Discussion Forum)

# Program Director's Notes

- > Number program applicants in 2021– 66;
- > Program enrollment –20 (13 at the end);
- > 2 students needed additional time (a week) to complete the program and earn university credits.

# Testing Results

- > Pre-program and at the end of the program proctored STAMP testing;
- > 70% students gained their proficiency on one sub-level at least in one of the modes of communication;
- > 40% students gained their proficiency on 2-3 modes of communication

# **Program Results**

- > Number of participants received high school and UW credit -13;
- > Number of participants qualified for the Seal of Biliteracy -12.

# Program Results

- > Students also met other personal goals
  - making new Russian-speaking friends,
  - learning about STEM, research and presentational skills,
  - having a better understanding and appreciation of the value of language learning

# What Have We Learned from Online Program Experience

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- > Ask students before the program starts if they are aware of the online format and are willing to study online;
- > Allocate time to explain how all online tools work, repeat it several times and be prepared to help students anytime;
- > Have a backup plan in case something goes wrong (testing, program deadlines and so on).

# How Online the Format Contribute to the Program Success

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- > Student enrollment: We were able to enroll students from different states, not only from Great Seattle area;
- > Balance between synchronous group tasks and self-pace activities;
- > Carefully selected advanced level authentic reading materials with a totally new program assessment--  
*Library Day;*

# How Online the Format Contribute to the Program Success

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- > Dedicated time for guided writing tasks, which is very important for heritage learners with already advanced speaking skills and Int.L-Mid. writing skills;
- > Meaningful communication writing tasks, such as Thank-you letters to guest-speakers and Discussion Forum posts (“Write a review/ Recommend an article you have read in your library day”).