

Mastering Russian Language Proficiency: Expanding Students' Lexical Repertoire through Exposure to the Regional Context

Julia R. Kobrina

Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, USA

Email: j.kobrinacoolidge@dliflc.edu

Abstract:

Focusing on both-- theoretical foundations and practical classroom strategies, the presenter will explore innovative and effective approaches in the Russian language instruction facilitated through focus on the regional context. Expanding curriculum beyond Russia's borders by utilizing resources that highlight Russian as a global language helps to bridge the gap between textbook theory and real-world application. The presenter will offer insights on teaching Russian gained from the American Councils Summer Russian Language Teacher Program in Almaty, Kazakhstan highlighting the country's unique multilingual landscape and regionally nuanced materials (i.e. localized media and cultural artifacts, glimpses into local life, community-based and "funds of knowledge" approach). The presentation will emphasize the pedagogical value of incorporating regional Russian materials since these resources can promote students' active learning, continued development of intercultural competence, and engagement with the broader Russian-speaking world. Drawing on this approach, the session demonstrates how exposure to real-world language-- both in form and content-- can deepen students' linguistic competence, cultural understanding, and learner motivation. By expanding the boundaries of what is traditionally taught, this presentation offers practical teaching tools and adaptable models to help students navigate complex communicative situations and prepare them for meaningful interactions in academic, professional, and everyday contexts. The presenter aims to engage the audience in a conversation about best practices and evolving trends in vocabulary instruction inviting participants to share their own methodological approaches, vision, and experiences.

Keywords: regional studies, student motivation, vocabulary instruction, real-world language

